Museums and Social Responsibility

A Theory of Social Practice

Kevin Coffee

Routledge

Museums and Social Responsibility
Kevin Coffee

"Kevin Coffee's new book – *Museums and Social Responsibility* – is much needed by researchers, administrators and practitioners alike. Coffee tackles the hard problems of ideology and social responsibility in cogent, logical ways not often seen in museum reform critiques. A fundamental tenet, with which I wholeheartedly agree, is that museums are not neutral organizations. Nor should we expect them to be. Coffee fearlessly tackles the 'isms' – racism, sexism and so on, as well as power and privilege in ways that make us sit up and re-think past stances in new ways."

Doris Ash, Ph.D., *Professor of Science Education, Emerita, University of California Santa Cruz*

"Kevin Coffee is a veteran scholar/practitioner having spent his career thoughtfully using method and theory to inform museum practice, and vice versa, with a critical assessment of its signs, symbols, values, and meaning. Museums are at a crossroads of accountability and relevance, and this book provides essential guidance in the transformation of museums as a learning experience."

Robert R. Janes, *Founder: Coalition of Museums for Climate Justice: https://cmcj.ca/*

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Museums and Social Responsibility

Museums and Social Responsibility examines inherent contradictions within and affecting museum practice in order to outline a museological theory of how museums are important cultural practices in themselves and how museums shape the socio-cultural dynamics of modern societies, especially our attitudes and understandings about human agency and creative potential.

Museums are libraries of objects, presenting thematic justification that dominant concepts of normativity and speciality, as well as attitudes of cultural deprecation. By sorting culture into hierarchies of symbolic value, museums cloak themselves in supposed objectivity, delivered with the passion of connoisseurship and the surety of scholarly research. Ulterior motives pertaining to socio-economic class, racial and ethnic othering, and sexual subjugation, are shrouded by that false appearance of objectivity. This book highlights how the socially responsive practitioner can challenge and subvert taken-for-granted motivations by undertaking liberatory museum work that engages subaltern narratives, engages historically disadvantage populations, and co-creates with them dialogical practices of collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting. It points to examples in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, not as self-contained entities but as practices within a global web of relationships, and as microcosms that define normality and abnormality, that engage users in critical dialogue, and that influence, are conditioned by, and disrupt taken-for-granted understandings and practices of class, ethnicity, sex, gender, thinking and being.

Suitable for students, researchers, and museum professionals, *Museums and Social Responsibility* presents a comprehensive argument and proposes critical, reflective processes to the practitioner, so that their museum work may more effectively engage with and change their societies and the world.

Kevin Coffee is a museum practitioner and museologist who has worked in the museums sector for more than 35 years, including as head of exhibitions for the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the Chicago Academy of Sciences, and within the National Park Service. During that time, he has advised, managed, and directed scores of projects for a range of museums and cultural organizations in North America, Europe, and Asia, and in that work has engaged culture creators and users in developing new forms of exhibitions, programs, landscapes, and museums. He currently resides in Lowell Massachusetts, United States.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Museums and Social Responsibility

A Theory of Social Practice

Kevin Coffee

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Cover image: Museo del Estallido Social. Source Museo del Estallido Social, Chile, www.museodelestallidosocial.org, used with permission.

First published 2023
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2023 Kevin Coffee

The right of Kevin Coffee to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN: 978-1-032-11860-4 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-12053-9 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-22281-1 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811

Typeset in Bembo
by Taylor & Francis Books

Contents

Figures

Acknowledgements

This work is the result of several decades of social practice, much of it in museums but also in other learning environments. During that time, I've had the opportunity and good fortune to work with and learn from thousands of friends, acquaintances, co-workers, colleagues, teachers, museum users, and so many others not so easily classified. I cannot possibly name them all but, as some of my friends and colleagues are aware, I frequently conjure those past experiences in my current practice, and I will always be in their debt.

Of course, I am very grateful for the generous and specific contributions to this book. I have been privileged with insights from practitioners around the globe, including those who spoke and corresponded with me at length, and whose own practices frame this book: Danny Chivers, Emily Donovan, Hannah Novillo Erickson, Molly Jessup, Diego Leonardo, Chao Tayiana Maina, Madan Meena, Jeni O'Malley, Bridget Peregrino, Laurel Racine, Narain Rathwa, Vikesh Rathwa, Beth Rebisz, Mandy Sanger, Maggie Schmidt, Tina Smith, Marcel Sola, and Mackenzie New-Walker.

I am also very grateful for all who commented on drafts of this text, especially Doris Ash, Emily Donovan, R. Freriks, Robert Janes, Michael Lesperance, Mandy Sanger, Willard Whitson, and of course the editors and editorial staff at Routledge: Heidi Lowther, who guided my proposal, Emmie Shand, Matt Gibbons, and especially Kangan Gupta, Manas Roy, Rebecca Wise, and Dominic Corti.

A further and important inspiration for writing this book is the many readers who've found my work online. In just one month, that includes readers in Ahmedabad, Bogotá, Sapporo, Manchester, Esbjerg, Kyiv, Kuala Lumpur, Alice, Amman, Tianjin, Lahore, Lagos, Saint Petersburg, Bonn, Móstoles, Edinburgh, Rotterdam, Tokyo, Quezon City, Hong Kong, Yogakarta, Megelang, Utecht, Cambridge, Rome, London, Camberwell, Montreal, Fontenay-aux-Roses, Ankara, Oslo, Sydney, Baltimore, Colorado Springs, and Brooklyn. I am humbled by that interest. This book is written as part of my continuing obligation to those world-wide explorations, and I take full responsibility for its content.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Introduction – Can there be a liberatory museum?

This book is written for museum practitioners, those who aspire to work in museums, and those interested in how museums act within society. The social responsibility envisioned by the title is very broad, but it presumes that museums are key societal actors and deeply influential of our understandings, including of how our societies are organized. The route to museum work is often circuitous, and contingency is also an important thread throughout the following pages. In the American and European museums which I have visited and with which I am most familiar, museum work is not a highly paid career choice. A large number of museum workers, globally, are precariously employed, for a fixed term or only part-time or as volunteers. These practitioners who actually 'do the work' are often treated as expendable by those who do the deciding. All the same, many of us are drawn to museum work because we value the preservation of heritage, experiences of art and material culture, and the public discourse such heritage experiences provoke. It is that social responsibility that I interrogate in this book.

The social responsibility I am advocating has four key objectives, the rationales for which are argued in the following chapters. First is the objective of making museums inclusive of and centered in the socio-cultural activity of the breadth of society, of non-elites, of the historically disadvantaged, and of themes and narratives that advance their social creativity. Second is the objective of enacting dialogic engagement as the guiding methodology of all museum work, especially public programming of all kinds. Third is ensuring active participation in museum policy and operation of those who have been socio-culturally elided from museum representation and politically excluded by museum governance. Fourth, and foundational to the others, is that our practice must be sweepingly anti-colonialist and reject all of the residual colonialist attitudes and understandings of race, class, sex, ancestry, gender, expropriation, extraction, and subjugation.

The societal position of modern museums is and has been as sites of elite behaviors. Annual high-status galas and private fetes are merely the most obvious expressions of that elitism. We might debate at length the historical genesis of museums in the Mediterranean world – which seems to be the originating region most often considered by European museologists, as well as

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811-1

prima facia evidence of the discursive hegemony of colonialism – but for the sake of discussion, let's put a metaphorical pin in a timeline at the third century BCE at Alexandria, Egypt. There, the Macedonian general Ptolemy reportedly directed the creation of a library and museum filled with information and objects obtained as tribute or loot from the far reaches of Alexander the Great's empire (Lee 1997). During the intervening centuries, other hegemonic centers have established museums and libraries to assert their own dominance in the wider world. In the present day, we see that same rationale behind the large 'universal' museums in Europe and North America.

This highlights a major thread in this book, namely the foundational importance of contradiction and contention in museums as agents of specific socio-cultural interests: class, ancestry, sex, gender, and the other divisors by which hegemony is claimed by some and denied to others. The principal form of hegemony I discuss here is one of ideology. Museums are created for producing ideologies, and not simply for repositing the symbolic importance of specific artifacts. As any museum mission statement makes clear, museums are advocates of certain ways of thinking and being. Museums have always had social purposes, just not often purposes beneficial to most of humanity or the natural world. This book will therefore explore at length the place of contention as a general condition of museum work, and contradiction as a motive force in society. In the course of that exploration, I have identified a range of case examples. Those examples are drawn from practice around the world and in an effort to decenter North American and European practice. This book cannot be an encyclopedia, but I have written it to engage a wide, if Anglophone, readership precisely because liberatory museology requires inclusive, outsider, and trans-national engagement.

The literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin wrote that no one is 'the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe' (Bakhtin 1986, 69). Following Bakhtin, this book takes its place within an ongoing dialogue. My entry point is necessarily framed by my own experience of Anglo-American museum practice. Due to the historical facts of colonialism and imperialism, those museums are globally influential, even as colonialism and imperialism are being vigorously contested around the world. Those contestations – including by curators and other museum workers in America and Europe – also inform my world view and choice of examples presented in this volume. My intention – perhaps 'hope' is more accurate – is that this examination will be useful to everyone interested in a critical museum theory and practice.

Euro-American museums, and indeed all museums, exist to demonstrate the social practices of their societies; activity informed by social divisions of class, ancestry, sex, gender, physical ability, and other unequal social relationships. The modern museum is a product of societies in which there is a strict hierarchy of labor (Smith 1776, 5–26). From those eighteenth- and nineteenth-century beginnings, museums today frame their collections and interpretations following such a hierarchical worldview. In class-divided societies, museums generally, and often specifically, validate the privileged minority that dominant

that social hierarchy. Despite any claims to the contrary, modern museums were never intended to act as neutral arbiters of culture or narratives. Rather, these museums have always been advocacy organizations that presume to define and describe normative practices and understandings to the rest of us (Bennett 1995; Coffee 2006; Janes 2009). In recent decades, those advocacy positions have been codified in mission statements and planning documents, but they have always and most widely been promulgated through public exhibitions and programs.

Museum practitioners, as members of societies grounded in socio-economic and political inequalities, face a conceptual problem: the challenge to choose sides, figuratively and literally, in one's work and attitude toward organizational policies and programs; to construe and be construed by a wider body of social practice, and to be measured against those constructions. Acknowledging the contradiction between a singularly specific museum and the diverse society in which it operates tests the intent and agency of the practitioner – who sought out museum work and is not otherwise acting under duress – and is often the initial act of self-aware, critical museum practice. This book is therefore an assessment of some current, but certainly not all, exemplary, public-facing practice and museology, with the object of contributing to and challenging the process of self- and societal awareness that aids museum work; contributing to museum theory that is not insular but is centered in socially engaged practice.

In recent decades, and across a range of disciplines in the humanities, scholars and practitioners have increasingly employed 'critical', 'reflexive', and 'self-aware' study. This turn to critical studies owes its genesis to social forces and changes that are perennially swirling around scholarship. Social movements have directly and indirectly engendered debate and internal changes in museum practice certainly from the 1920s and 1930s onward. Debate and action to decolonize museums has re-emerged in the 2010s and 2020s, and lives within a continuum that includes both contemporary protest against violent repression and to the anti-colonial struggles and social movements for civil rights and cultural representation that reasserted themselves at the close of the 1939–1945 world war.

Emerging from the fog of received traditions, the museums we know today are modern phenomena. European museology typically defines its start date with the creation of the Ashmolean Museum or the Musée du Louvre, rather than as dilettantish exoticism. Our modernity is a global process of appropriation and hegemony and the results of those processes include the objects on display in the universal museums of London, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Los Angeles, and New York. The aggregation of material culture and visual arts takes place alongside colonial imposition and extraction, and as the expropriation of persons and territory in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Regardless of its legal provenance, or from whom it was stolen, any exhibition of Spanish colonial silverwork, for example, was made possible by the *mitayos* compelled to work in the Petosi mines, but rarely includes those stories.

After many decades of deflecting social protests and diverting public discourse, the governance of some modern museums has begun to acknowledge and conduct 'participatory' and 'democratic' practices that engage larger circles of constituents. But in those adjustments, the governance of major museums does not seriously question the power of its own insider status or consider fully abandoning the exclusionary processes upon which their institutions are based. Public participation in museum policy deliberations has always been conditional, shallow rather than deep. Museum boards have traditionally and presently consisted mostly of those who control economic and political power, rather than 'ordinary' citizens. One may find an artist, administrator, or shopkeeper seated alongside corporate or government executives on museum boards of trustees, but never a factory or custodial worker. In any case, the latter know instinctively that most museums are not for them.

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, during a time when monuments to slave traders and colonialists are being removed from view and their names deleted from pediments, when public sentiment demands that large, and not so large, museums sever their ties with petroleum and drug companies, some also ask: can museums truly be 'decolonized', or should they be abolished along with other monuments of colonialism? Can museums divest their privileges and promote social equality while acting within a society for which inequality is foundational? Is this a matter of adjustment or abandonment? Can museums become liberatory? These are questions I examine in the following chapters.

Social practices are iterative and dialectical processes. Those processes are made up of singular and collective acts, interactions, and trajectories. Those interactions and trajectories are oppositional forces through which we change our social and physical reality. To abandon all museums as hopelessly elitist is to also abandon processes through which meaningful change can be made. Curatorial and interpretive decisions are often made with an understanding or at least an internalized sense of the insistence of societal power. This is demonstrated repeatedly even in public displays of 'controversial' topics, the moments of which are shadows of a free-floating *habitus* through which ideological hegemony is enacted (Bourdieu 1977, 77–78). At other times, decisions are prompted by public discourse, in response to social forces pushing and pulling the museum entity; by forces outside the party of cultural trustees. Those public engagements are where we must focus our attention.

We expect, of course, that our libraries and museums are stocked with examples of what is uniquely important among our social practices. That expectation is apparent in natural history specimens, in documentary archives, and perhaps no more so than in art museums where pride of place is assigned to the lone artist. A valid theory of social practice must contend with such facts. It cannot be hypothetical or speculative; its rationale must be proven in action. The proof of intention resides in effect.

Following that logic, Chapter One examines dialectical materialism as an enabling philosophy of social change. I contrast that dialectic to the dualist

subject-object dichotomies employed as foundational museum strategies, curatorial policies, interpretations, and explicit social engagement practices, including how we construct modes of perception and rationalization. A dialectical understanding recognizes the inherent contradictions present in human and natural processes as opposite qualities acting upon and transforming each other. As organizations and as collectives of individual agents, museums are active, internally and externally, in social and natural transformation. We can see the results of those transformative process in the ways we think and in how we act viz the material reality of the world. Indeed, the objective of human agency is to act in the world and to change it – as humans have done for thousands of generations. As we consider this analytical frame, we learn to appreciate the conditions in which we act as well as our own actions. In describing the 'farce' of the second French empire, Marx famously wrote that humans 'make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past' (Marx 1969, 398). Societies and their museums have histories, of which we are all co-creators, with millions of others, across time.

Chapter Two uses that analytical framework to decipher the public ideological role played by museums in reproducing class, sex, ethnic, and other social inequalities; the general function of museums as ideological producers. In that examination, I take specific aim at ideologies of universal rights – which underlie claims of universality by some museums – with the argument that what is required is not a return to first bourgeois principles but rather the creation of new liberatory principles. This chapter draws on examples from Euro-America metropoles and from the formerly colonized 'global south' – Winnipeg, Sao Paulo, and Bhopal – comparing legacy practices and mentalities with recent co-creative and liberatory efforts that contest or reinforce the ideological functions of those museums. Ideology is a universal human activity that serves an overarching social purpose and manifests in a wide range of implicit and explicit particularities, several of which I specifically describe as pernicious influences within public discourse. In recent years, several of those particularities – for example, racist mentalities – have been brought into sharp focus via their operation in public memory and in symbols of memory. I also identify a few of the extra-museal agents that influence museums and comprise a dominant set of stakeholders.

Chapter Three explores how ideologies are produced and enacted via the dialogical uses of exhibitions and programs, that our thought processes are inherently social. Thereby, museums are technologies for thinking (Appadurai and Breckenridge 2017). This compels me to critique the subjective empiricist theories of mind and knowing that are particularly dominant in American education theory, especially James, Pierce, Dewey, Gardner, Hein, and their hypotheses of additive sense-making and thought construction. In contrast to that pragmatist pedagogy, I discuss dialogical theories of mind based in the experimental practices of Vygotsky, Luria, Shotter, Wertsch, Ash, and others

who test cognition and cognitive ability as transformative socio-cultural practices. My discussion is illustrated by a range of examples and in turn complicates our understanding of the public interpretation performed by museums. I emphasize dialogism not as simply a pedagogical method, but as the theory of mind that explains our thought processes, our intentionality, and thereby our abilities to act in every arena and to enact conceptual leaps as products of those actions.

Chapter Four builds upon the earlier chapters to explicate in theory and with practical examples how socially enforced inequalities play out and are strengthened or weakened by public museums. Inclusion and exclusion are not solely internal contradictions. Social forces condition museum practice within a general pattern of exclusionary and inclusive practices, and this chapter cites specific instances in the United States, Europe, South America and Asia. The incremental interpretations that comprise much museum work – either the aggregate of collections that are reserved for specialists or the exhibition hall that has been on view for decades – enable museums to construct ideologies 'in the background' and to be taken for granted. Museums acquire and confer a legitimacy that enables them to exert out-sized influence at key moments. However, during those same moments, the social nature of collections and of interpretation are revealed as received tradition and alternately prompt demands for transformation by those who bear the burdens of those traditional relationships. As ideological media, museums can enable conceptual leaps that guide practical transformations.

Chapter Five follows these lines of inquiry further to specifically argue against a dichotomous analytic frame or an insider-outsider view of museum practice, and in support of a dialectically self-critical and socially responsible museum practice. I describe practices – such as by Museo del Estallido Social, West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, Museum of British Colonialism, District Six Museum, Mill City Museum, and Lowell National Historical Park – that demonstrate the efficacy of museum practices that enable social change; outlining the objectives of such changes and proposing the routes through which change is being made. I also engage the deprecation of symbols, as the toppling of colonialist monuments. Statue-tipping may appear distinct from museology but in close examination we see that many of the same ideological and political processes found inside the building are represented in the statues that front many of them. Just as decolonize movements demand re-curating exhibitions and collections to give voice to 'people without history' (Wolf 2010), so too the removals of portraits of Colston, Lee, Rhodes, Roosevelt, et al, represent public history curated from below.

Chapter Six culminates the discussion in an ongoing, energized public discourse about whether and how museums as particularities and singularities can not only be 'decolonized' but actively subvert social injustices. That discourse advocates for the structural transformation of individual organizations and of the sector as a whole. And so, while this study does not attempt to review every facet of museum practice, it contributes strategic guidance for undertaking that

work. The practices and interrogations that follow have arisen collectively, over decades of museum practice, and engaging thousands and millions of users. The conclusions have been tested, not as thought-experiments but in further practice.

Cultures comprise what people *do,* and the role of culture – and of cultural organizations – is not simply to describe the world but to change it. This must also be the test for museum practice.

References

Appadurai, Arjun and Carol Breckenridge. 2017. 'Museums are Good to Think,' in *No touching, No spitting, No praying: The Museum in South Asia*, eds. Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh, 173–183. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1986. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin TX: Univ. of Texas Press.

Bennett, Tony. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coffee, Kevin. 2006. 'Museums and the Agency of Ideology,' *Curator*, 49 (4): 435–448.

Janes, Robert R. 2009. *Museums in a Troubled World*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Lee, Paula Young. 1997. 'The Musaeum of Alexandria and the Formation of the Muséum in Eighteenth-Century France,' *The Art Bulletin*, 79:3, 385–412.

Marx, Karl. 1969. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Selected Works v1, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Smith, Adam. 1776. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London: Strahan and Cadell.

Wolf, Eric R. 2010. *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

1 Particularities and generalities

Museum work involves a range of 'cognitive and motivating structures' (Bourdieu 1977, 78) that derive from the shared functions of a distinct collective of practitioners. Any museum is simultaneously part of a general category (museum), part of a particular category (art, history), and a singularity (British Museum). Each of these categories – general, particular, singular – is socially construed in relation to each other: the museum sector is an aggregate of unique actors, but no museum stands apart from that aggregate. Of course, society is an essential condition throughout, raising questions of how specific museums engage society, how each museum co-creates itself, and the role of each museum in co-creating all museums. But sociality is a fuzzy concept. Who is included in 'society' and what are our dependencies and responsibilities with each other?

For several thousand generations, humans have been transforming themselves and their environments. We speciated in Africa and obviously now inhabit much of the planet. Collectively we've discovered fire, invented languages, invented agriculture, built massive structures, invented writing systems, smelted and cast metals, synthesized explosive weapons, and practiced mass homicide, all as social practices. As Eagleton put it, human culture traces an arc from 'pig-farming to Picasso, tilling the soil to splitting the atom' (Eagleton 2000, 1). In the course of this collective experiment, humans have displayed amazing creativity in working together and in adapting to vastly different environments. All told, humanity speaks in approximately 6,900 different languages, with at least that many distinct extended and cooperative societies.[1] Our language groups range greatly in size and extent. English, Spanish, and French, by way of colonialism and imperialism, are spoken by hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Among the 3.9 million inhabitants of the island of Papua-New Guinea, an estimated 832 languages are used – roughly one language per 4,500 people (Anderson 2010, 2). The symbolic diversity that humanity displays in forms of speech is an impressive indicator of our creativity, adaptability, and community.

A survey of written history also suggests that undo emphasis has been placed upon describing the distinctiveness of human groups rather than our commonalities, and such compartmentalization is and has been an essential function

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811-2

of modern museums. To borrow jargon from paleoanthropology, curators and historians tend to be 'splitters' rather than 'lumpers', sorting out distinct events and activities as they attempt to categorize humanity. The specificity of 'splitting' is often useful – to better understand the features and practices of one or another arc of events or practices – but it can also lead to narrowly viewing individual trees while not comprehending the forest ecology that fostered the growth of the tree in the first place. Thus, I argue that we should approach the question of 'society' using both a close-up lens of human particularity and a panoramic view of human generality. Considering the relationships between particularity and generality will better enable us to theorize our current conditions of life and how humanity has arrived at this point over the course of thousands of generations, with each collective cleaved from its predecessor in space and over time.

Humans are *what we do socially*. Some of us may imagine ourselves to be completely unique, but most of us understand ourselves by way of our shared lifeways, past experiences, symbolizations, and aspirations. Our practices are transformative of ourselves and each other. We learn from and teach each other, and our attitudes and understandings change through activity. Shared experiences and understandings form the core of any society. But our practices are also what we do in nature. Our soil-tilling and atom-splitting cultures are transformative of our surroundings. We have borrowed from, adapted to, extracted, restructured, and built-over natural ecologies wherever we've settled. Our understanding of the natural world has grown over thousands of years but remains incomplete. We've cast clay into bricks and built cities over marshlands. We've cleared forests for farmland and turned grasslands into deserts. We've migrated along with thousands of other species, disrupting – sometimes irrevocably – long-established ecologies, extirpated thousands of species, as well as killing millions of our own kind. Industrial production has consumed so much coal and petroleum in the last two hundred years that the resulting gases and particulates threaten all life on the planet. But threats are also teachable moments; we are capable of critically examining our mistakes as well as our successes, and thereby altering our future practice. An experimental attitude is a central feature of human culture.

Modernity and capitalism

Our global present is directed by a global colonial capitalism and the overt and latent inequalities written on every one of its ledger sheets. The 'credits' side – the parasitical super-wealthy of the imperial centers and the conditions of 'developed' lifeways made possible by imperial extraction – are offset by the 'debits' of impoverishment and human misery elsewhere. One may, for example, compare the rank-and-file living and working conditions of workers in one of Foxconn's factories in southeast China with the sleek opulence of browsing for iPhones in Apple Marché Saint-Germain. The communicatory and ideological processes of capital – what Gramsci (1971) referred to as

'hegemony' – urge us to view an Apple Store as normative and aspirational but the Foxconn factory as an aberrant sweat shop. The reality of global capitalism is that the two are reciprocally linked. Even the World Bank must admit that nearly half of the world's population subsist on *annual* incomes that amount to less than the purchase price of a couple of iPhones, and that more than a quarter of the world subsist on less that $3.20 per day (World Bank 2018). At the start of 2020, there were three Apple Stores in Paris and eleven in New York City; in all of Africa there were none. The point is not that an Apple Store is needed in Cape Town or Lagos, but rather that the distribution and consumption of industrial product is also an indicator of global imbalances. These imbalances have grown with increasing rapidity over the last 200 years.

Coupled to this human toll is the environmental extraction on which the material culture of colonial capitalism also depends. The rare earth elements, petrochemicals, silica, copper, and titanium in the mobile telephone – assistive interpretive devices in some museum environments – are the latest extractive commodities and products coveted by global capital. They join the cotton, palm oil, rubber, tin, coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and all the other tributary products that have comprised global commerce since the beginning of the modern era. Capital processes are destroying rainforests from Brazil to Borneo to Liberia (WWF 2020). Tens of thousands of tons of discarded plastic objects now form an artificial ecosystem three times the size of France, as a gyre of microplastics on the north Pacific Ocean (National Geographic Society 2012).

Convincing a population that their experiences of inequality, poverty, and environmental harms should not be understood as systemic or normative requires a daily and incessant Panglossian message that such harmful experiences are still the best of all possible worlds. Broadcast and Internet commentators, podcasters, and social media 'influencers' are all obvious messengers, but just as influential are specialist intellectuals and public museums. While many museums serve as exchanges and repositories of cultural capital, most museums also envision themselves in a parallel role as formative, ideological hegemons, educating 'the public' in select interpretations of history, natural science, art, and high and pop culture generally. The claim to educational purpose is written into the mission statement of nearly every museum. All of this underscores the importance of creating alternate museum practice that is counter-hegemonic, that complicates taken-for-granted narratives, and is liberatory.

The definitional museum

Although many quickly envision or conjure a meaning for the word 'museum', collecting and exhibiting institutions are in themselves widely diverse. Museums are concurrently a general type of practice and particular practices, as assemblages of paintings and sculptures, batik textiles and medieval armor, handcrafted and industrial designs, musical instruments and office machines, documents and oral histories, bird eggs and dinosaur bones. Museums are specific forums for the understanding of cultural history. Museums are also singular spaces in which

school children explore new (to them) things and encounter new concepts, and into which societal elders commit memories and mementos.

As singularities museums elude a common description. In addition to the wide range of subject matter and organizing themes, some are state-sponsored, others are privately owned wealth and property, still others are autonomous and popular projects. The largest national European and American museums originate as testaments to colonial and imperial domination and are situated in the imperial metropoles, with the densest concentration of wealth and thereby also social imbalance. The modern museum form was transplanted out of Europe – along with economic relationships, languages, and religions – as an instrument of the civilizing mission of colonialism. Transnational touring museum exhibitions are another late-modern technology by which hegemonic narratives are circulated. In addition to those forms, late twentieth-century neo-colonialism has engendered the export of museums, directly managed or as franchises, such as the Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, the Louvre, or the Smithsonian Affiliates, which license the trade names and collections of the master organization.

There are tens of thousands of museums in the world, and so the question 'what is a museum' is freighted and fraught. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) erupted in a contentious internal debate in 2019–2020 over just how to define 'museum.' The debate turned on whether or not museums should be described as inclusive, public-facing, and public-purposed organizations. The revised definitional statement prompted multiple executive board members to resign – citing a 'catastrophic failure of good governance' – and elicited statements of recrimination from the administrators of several major European and American museums. The problematic text read as follows.

> Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people.
>
> Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.
>
> (Adams 2019)

Opposition to this text, from within ICOM, was both general and oblique, including accusations that the proposed text did not explicitly include 'education' as a purpose and/or that the drafting process was not sufficiently consultative. This despite the fact that the proposed text does identify 'enhance(d) understandings' as a key museum objective and that the drafting process took

place over the course of many months, included multiple invitations to participate, and considering hundreds of individual comments. The intention of the process was to write a definitional statement that acknowledged museum practice as guided by a critical and publicly-engaged museology, rather than the sole domain of elites in governance or specialisms.

At the time of this debate, ICOM's long-standing definitional statement read as follows.

> A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.
>
> (Adams 2019)

While one might debate the possible meanings or relative importance of stipulating that museums should be '*inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures, acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present*', the loudest debate within ICOM focused on reframing of museums as active partnerships that '*contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing*'. According to *Museums Journal*, 'the committees calling for a delay include France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Canada and Russia, along with the international committees of five museums' (Adams 2019). The chair of ICOM France, Juliette Raoul-Duval, denounced the new definition as an 'ideological manifesto' (Noce 2019). The museologist François Mairesse, professor at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle and the chair of the International Committee of Museology, denounced what he described as 'a statement of fashionable values' that 'would be hard for most French museums – starting with the Louvre – to correspond to' (Noce 2019). Here we see internalized ideologies of privilege, that museum specificities derive from general conceptualizations, and how the proposed revisions to what is, after all, a rather general definition threatened specific museums at their governing cores.

Indeed, how might the Louvre, British Museum, or Metropolitan Museum of Art contribute to human dignity, social justice, global equality, and planetary wellbeing? The foundational premise of those museums was to aggregate collections that would guide a universal understanding of aesthetics and heritage, specifically situating European heritage in relation to the rest of the world. The Louvre's original collecting practice was proposed to the first (1795–1799) republic as 'by its strength and superiority of its enlightenment and its artists, (France was) the only country in the world which can give a safe home to these masterpieces' looted from Greece, Rome, Egypt, and elsewhere (Quynn 1945, 439). Does it make sense to compare the proto-imperial mission of the Louvre with a local history museum or cultural center?

Indeed, subsequent to the debate over reframing ICOM's conceptualization of museums, the body commissioned two more proposed redefinitions, which

it publicized in May 2022. Neither of these restatements address social inequality or critical dialogue, as proposed in the 2019 statement. Rather, each is simply an additive revision to the existing definition:

> Proposal A:
> A museum is a permanent, not-for-profit institution, accessible to the public and of service to society. It researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage in a professional, ethical and sustainable manner for education, reflection and enjoyment. It operates and communicates in inclusive, diverse and participatory ways with communities and the public.
>
> Proposal B:
> A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.
>
> (Adams 2022)

Notably, both of the 2022 statements (B was ultimately ratified) assert that museums *de facto* are 'in the service of society' and that all museums 'foster diversity and sustainability' – not as aspirational goals that museums *should* pursue but rather as existing states of being. Such an exercise in declarative reality – asserting that something is true regardless of evidence to the contrary – suggests a concerted and reactionary denial of the contradictions that in 2019 and since then, more than ever before, confront museum practitioners. Specifically, this debate within ICOM recalls the processes by which modern museums were created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to project a triumphal message of cultural supremacy. The universal museums were concurrently imagined as the reliquaries of lesser and subjugated culture and societies, distanced by time or deprecated by racialized ideology, stocked via 'salvage' ethnography and the romantic looting of other civilizations (Gruber 1970; MacGregor and Hill 2022; Steinmetz 2004).

This debate within ICOM challenges us to examine the ideological premise of museums as a general category of cultural activity. Ways of viewing the world are, ultimately, the internalized conceptualizations of how we live. This is not to suggest that our every view is precisely accurate – the world as it exists is distinct from the world as we perceive it to be. However, the perception and subsequent internalization of experience as knowledge frame further interactions among humankind and with the natural world. How we live engenders how and what we think, is the basis of contemplation and reflection, and is dialectically redirected by those intentional actions and willfulness.

All of this is impossible apart from our sociality. And while one may perceive themself to be unique or fully autonomous, anyone's existence is predicated on interactions with others. We validate our experiences in relation to those of each other. We join in discourses that are ongoing and precede us; no one of us is 'the first speaker in the universe' (Bakhtin 1986, 69).

As will be examined at length in Chapter Two, ideologies exercise hegemony and are actualized through dialectical social processes as well. Thus, the ideologies of capitalism and colonialism became dominant through transoceanic practices of extended economic and political influences, military force, and the intellectual agents of that colonialism. Spanish expeditions into the western hemisphere included a cadre of priests to convey the royal Catholic faith as well as to record and interpret conquistador activity (Kress et al 1931); Napoleon's military excursions through Europe and the Mediterranean were intended to extend French national values and accompanied by curators for an imperial collection in Paris (Quynn 1945); expeditionary armies from the United States carry with them pocket-sized catalogues of heritage sites to explore (Archaeology 2007). Throughout its tenure, European colonialism has remorselessly obliterated non-European cultures. Imposed under duress, those hegemonic relationships have morphed and adapted a wide range of social specificities which are now assumed to be business as usual. Those assumptions are nonetheless predicated on the inequalities from which they have arisen, and the assumptions regenerate those unequal practices according to otherwise changing social conditions. Importantly, a petit-bourgeoisie of so-called mental workers in academia and museums is enabled and rewarded to articulate the logic of hegemony in a chorus of perspectives – from scholarly to vernacular – which thereby reinforce perceptions of the normativity of capitalist social relationships (Bourdieu 1977, 72–95; Gramsci 1971, 3–23; for colonial agents: Gomez 1935; Holt 1979, 79–89; Lemkin 1973, 79–95).

A theory of praxis

A dialectical approach to museums considers the dynamic interactions within a museum and between that museum and its society. Dialectical interaction is not endlessly repetitive or cyclical but rather a process of transformation and creation. Understanding universal, general, particular, and singular qualities of museums enables us to accurately assess how any specific museum collective functions or how we as practitioners might operate going forward.

Consider that a universal quality of museums is their material presentation of human culture – art, science, history – as expressed through time. Immersed in this presentation, users often engage first emotionally and then intellectually. Encompassed by that universal quality are material assemblages that share general qualities, such as painting and sculpture, biological and geological specimens, documents and material culture, structures and landscapes, and so on. Each of those general groupings includes specific types defined by collections or presentational modalities. Thus, art museums possess shared qualities that are

distinct from those qualities shared by natural history museums. Such analysis also enables us to recognize museums as singularities; as specific social practices that are contingent upon place and time, and that in turn contain other singular objects or exhibitions – the mummified Tutenkhamun or the Rosetta Stone, for example.

The purpose of this analytical framework is not solely descriptive. Dialectical analyses enable us to differentiate what is essential from what is tangential, the primary from the secondary or tertiary. It is thereby important for constructing immediate practice and for conceptualizing a strategic, forward plan of activity. It enables us to comprehend museums as dynamic rather than static; museums are human collectives that change over time, because the societies in which they operate also change.

The authors of the several ICOM museum definitions are attempting to generalize the qualitative data of known museum practices and thereby synthesize a definitional theory of museum practice. One might just stop there. However, in life, as in ICOM meetings, transformation is ongoing and arises from the contradictions that emerge in the course of practice and from the practitioners themselves. The impetus to revise the ICOM definition was and remains the diverse social change constantly underway around the world.

Museums embody general qualities that are common to all museum organizations: an impulse to memorialize human culture, a set of interpretive themes, systems for care and display, and public communication of those themes through objects. This complex of generalities is important but not the entire story. It may usefully describe a great majority of museum or museum-like organizations, and in doing so help us comprehend what we mean by the word 'museum.' But even so, that shorthand expression will conjure a variety of responses because of the range of specific experiences any one of us will have within the generality. Thus, even considering the exact same entity – the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, for example – one might imagine completely different features or activities, whether those encounters are with ancient Greek art, Dutch Renaissance paintings, or a disorienting maze of galleries. Our image of 'museum' resides in experience. Therefore, a useful theory of museum practice should distinguish between the universal, general, particular, and singular qualities that make up museology, without confusing internal with external or general with particular features.

In the dispute among the national committees of ICOM, we can see the influence of the 'decolonize' and repatriation movements, of the new museology, and of calls for inclusive and accessible policies and programs. In its most general sense, the revised but rejected definition proposed that ICOM support those calls for museums to be more deeply and socially responsible. The objectives of that proposed support included providing '*spaces for critical dialogue*', '*addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present*', '*safeguard diverse memories*', '*equal access to heritage*', and so on. Importantly, none of these particularities are absolute values and each of them must be further translated into practices. We also see the influence of convention, tradition, hegemonic

ideologies – challenged but far from overcome, and retaining enough energy to counter the challenge to their authority and predominance. A critical dialogue is not simply multiple concurrent conversations. It is not a collection of individuals each having their say, talking but not listening. It is a participatory process in which multiple threads intersect, but it is also purposeful; the process through which the subject is transformed or replaced. The underlying problem in a deeply divided society is: how can museum practices escape the limitations imposed by political, economic, and ideological power imbalances inherent in such a society?

How do we create ideas?

Our thoughts appear to be our own. As we silently read this page, we transpose words on the page with the mental function of thought, and we relate and categorize newly-arriving thoughts by comparing them, rather quickly, with other, prior thoughts. While the neurological condition for thinking exists in our central nervous systems, those thoughts we have are not inherent in our brains. They derive from our prior experiences.

Experiential and theoretical processes are portrayed in some epistemologies and pedagogies as separate or even exclusive. However, the strict separation of 'doing' from 'thinking' is an illusion derived from how thought happens, and elides the conceptual leaps that are enabled by shared experiences. As science and engineering methods demonstrate, practical application and experimentation are essential to knowing. One cannot know the taste of a specific apple without biting into it. The biting of several apples enables us to formulate a general conclusion about how 'apples' taste, and may eventually enable us to recognize one variety of apple from another. Our shared social practice helps us to understand apples as food and also informs our experimentation with apple trees as horticulture, and the theories that explain and direct the cultivation of apples.

Typically, what we assume to be 'true' derives its validity from direct and indirect experience. What we perceive can, of course, be inaccurate. Likewise, we may draw the wrong conclusion from what we've observed, or we may misunderstand an event completely. Thus, the general proof of any theory is that it is replicable and testable. In the social sciences, experiment and testing are complicated by virtue of our cognitive dynamism. Because we are not automatons, and our actions not limited to finite sets of instructions, each of us is capable of altering our behavior, of predicting alternate outcomes, and of altering the conclusions we've drawn from practices. Such is learning. But likewise, *how* we associate thought and practice – our mental processes – is also not fixed forever. Because our cognitive ability is closely connected to our sociality, any changing attitudes, understandings, or behaviors may be shared or acquired by others. Peer-to-peer learning is demonstrated daily in all manner of formal and informal environments. Thus, our actions are transformative of both object and subject. In the process of changing our world we also change ourselves.

By extension, our collective ideologies are linked to what we collectively do. Ideology is not simply what we think, it is a complex set of taken-for-granted assumptions shared among a population. The collective assumes their shared beliefs and values are normative, and they actualize those beliefs in their lifeways. Conversely, alternate beliefs, values, and actualizing practices are considered abnormal, and are often prohibited and criminalized. Bourdieu described the social process of sustaining and re-creating taken-for-granted assumptions as the *habitus*, the 'durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations' (Bourdieu 1977, 78). Foundational to that process of regulated improvisation, Marx theorized that 'the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life processes in general' (Marx 1969b, 503), that social existence determines consciousness. Examples of this relationship are commonplace, and population groups coalesce around shared beliefs and 'common sense' assumptions about how to think and act. Thereby, social stratums coalesce around distinct ideologies related to how each social stratum exists – according to socio-economic, biological sex, and caste-like divisions based in ancestry or heredity. Gender is a salient example of taken-for-granted inequalities mapped as sets of prescribed and prohibited behaviors and practices. No ideological manifestation is unchanging, but they persist precisely because they arise from group practices. The racialized categorization of humans is intricately connected to European colonialism, as justification for the enslavement of African people on colonial plantations. That original concept of white supremacy has morphed to fit the modern needs of capital, including how 'whiteness' is defined.[2] Thus, white supremacy is both a relic of fourteenth-century colonialism and an active ideology of twenty-first-century global capitalism (Blackburn 1997, 12–20, 33–34; Wolf 1997, 380–381).

Particularity and contingency

The modern museum is contemporary with Euro-American colonialism and capitalism. Museums evaluate and pronounce social distinctions via objectification and are not merely assemblages of objects untethered from their social-practical origins. Audiences are meant to assume that objects in a museum are inherently precious and special, and not merely that museum are collections that have been valorized by elites.

The art market demonstrates the valorization of symbolic expressions as exchange values sold to the highest bidders. Museum collecting and exhibition practices appear to be detached from vulgar monetization and rather solely interested in aesthetics, provenance, and symbolic importance. Thereby, museum practices sanctify some objects as meritorious while consigning others to symbolic – and sometimes physical – oblivion. In the crassest examples, arts and antiquities are purposefully exhibited to increase the market value of patron-owned material, while those same patrons govern the museum's exhibition plan. Twenty-first-century examples in the United States museum

sector include major patrons of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, such as museum trustees who also financed Greek and Roman art galleries that exhibit objects from their collections of illicitly obtained antiquities (Eakin and Kennedy 2005; Fincham 2008; Povoledo 2005). A series of private dealers in New York and Los Angeles have been prosecuted in Europe and America for trafficking and possessing stolen antiquities via museums (Campbell 2013; Eakin 2005; Mashberg 2021; Riding 2005). Attorneys working for the Getty Museum determined at one point that 'half the masterpieces in its antiquities collection were purchased from dealers now under investigation for allegedly selling artifacts looted from ruins in Italy' (Felch and Frammolino 2005). More generally, museum service to wealthy stakeholders is widely understood by museum governance to be the natural right of the bourgeoisie (Massing 2019; Stevenson 2016; see also Bourdieu 1984, 63–85).

Thereby we see that political and ideological objectives combine to guide organizational strategy. Any museum – and especially a large 'universal' museum – is not simply one social actor among billions. Museums inform and reinforce understandings about art, material culture, history, science, and other cultural practices and beliefs. The cultural prestige invested in museums casts a large shadow on the thinking of the society in which they operate. They are important agents in defining who is included and who is excluded in the exchange of cultural capital. That process is demonstrated daily in acquisitions, exhibitions, programs, funding activities, and in the dependability of the institution as a center of cultural expertise. The process of affirming and denying status simultaneously expresses and feeds the sharp ideological contention and socio-cultural conflict – 'culture wars' – that flare up from time to time.

Case in point – Roosevelt Memorial, American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA

An oversized statue of former US president Theodore Roosevelt guarded the main entrance to the American Museum of Natural History, for 80 years – 1942 to 2022. Roosevelt was portrayed on horseback, flanked by the bare-chested figures of an Indigenous African male on one side and an Indigenous North American male on the other. The African and Native American figures were depicted as Roosevelt's porters. The white supremacist message of the statue made it a target of protest since at least 1971 when six citizens of the Comanche, Cherokee-Seneca, and Navajo tribal nations were arrested for splashing it with paint and denouncing Roosevelt as a 'fascist killer' (Oelsner 1971).[3] As recently as 2017, a mayoral advisory commission of financiers and academics was convened to craft a response to growing public objections to racist and misogynist city monuments, and proposed that the Roosevelt monument should remain. Some commissioners even argued that it depicted 'Roosevelt's belief in the unity of the races' (Walker and Finkelpearl 2018, 25–27; Cascone 2018). In line with that attempt at historical revisionism, the museum composed a small exhibit to 'contextualize' the statue. One

prominent museum anthropologist dutifully told the *New York Time*s, 'we're supposed to be building some bridges into Indigenous communities, and this is a tough way to do it … (but) I don't think that we ought to just blow it up' (Coleman 2019). Yet, the following year, 2020, amidst a nation-wide upsurge of protest against racism and police murder of African-Americans, the museum president and the mayor of New York City suddenly reversed themselves, declaring 'it's time to move the statue and move forward' (Pogrebin 2020). Finally, in January 2022, the statue was reverently draped and carefully removed under cover of darkness (Small 2022).

Theodore Roosevelt had a lifelong connection with the American Museum of Natural History, where his father was a founding trustee. The cavernous entrance hall displays large murals of Roosevelt at key imperial moments and epigraphs articulating his worldview. That ideology was articulated in the dedication speeches given when the memorial was opened in 1936 (Roosevelt 1936). It is also hardly coincidence that the memorial was erected as a public works project during the prolonged, global economic crisis of the 1930s, or that, ever since, while visitors queue for admission, they are surrounded by murals and epigrams extolling American imperialism.

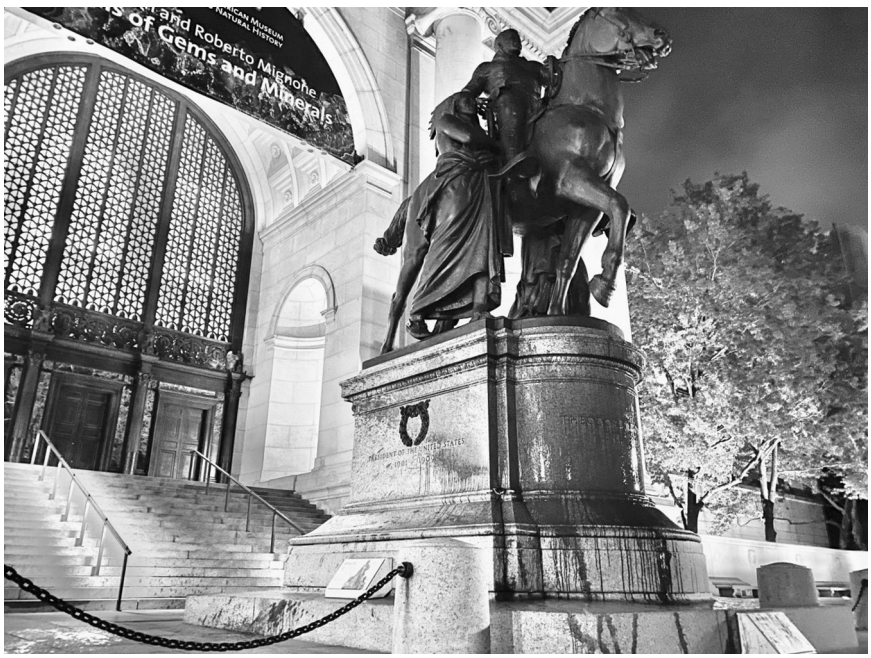

Figure 1.1 Paint-splashed statue of Theodore Roosevelt in front of American Museum of Natural History, October 2021
Source: Photo by Hakim Bishara for *Hyperallergic*, used with permission.

Case in point – Museum of the Social Uprising, Santiago, Chile

In October 2019, Chile 'awoke' (Conca-Cheng 2019) in a wave of protest against systemic social inequality and that swept Santiago and other cities. Sparked by persistent economic hardships – and specifically the latest increase in train fares – protests rapidly expanded to target a range of injustices and to include a wide cross section of students, intellectuals, and workers.[4] The central government declared a state of emergency and filled the capital streets with water cannon and tanks, which older residents recognized as weapons of the Pinochet dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s (Conca-Cheng 2019). These further outrages brought more than one million persons into the streets of central Santiago. This social movement included hundreds of visual and performing artists who 'added their rebellious and nonconformist creativity to the fight to recover the dignity of Chileans. Walls, facades, monuments, statues, have been filled with color, slogans, artistic motifs, turning the urban landscape into a true museum of works of art' (Nómada Espacio Artistico 2020).

One important result of this outpouring is the creation of the Museo del Estallido Social / Museum of the Social Outbreak, which combines the exhibition of street art with the material culture of public protest: expended tear

Figure 1.2 Artist-curators of Museo del Estallido Social, Santiago, Chile
Source Museo del Estallido Social, Chile, www.museodelestallidosocial.org, used with permission.

gas cannisters, work gloves, spray paint cans, and other objects collected during the protests. Artist-curator Marcel Sola describes the focus of the museum as the 'implicative dynamics of the different communities and territories that through different expressions have raised their voices for dignity and social justice in Chile' (Marcel Sola, personal communication, 11 April 2021).

The Museo del Estallido Social is a museum that is 'co-curatorial and co-creative with the communities, thus the exhibitions and elements that nourish the collection come from the same groups of protesters who are horizontally linked with the organization' (Marcel Sola, personal communication, 11 April 2021). Rather than an aloof and esoteric interpretation of the public displays of resistance by the millions involved in the social upsurge, Museo del Estallido Social is made by resisters and directly expresses their practices and thoughts. Both the artwork exhibited by the Museo del Estallado Social and the gallery space itself encourage a liberatory catharsis of emancipated thought. Much of the media is impermanent; the quotidian object of the street is recontextualized by the means and methods of its creation and use, and exhibitions are collective events and not curatorial soliloquies.

These two mediational moments – in Santiago and New York – are concentrated expressions of the antagonism between narratives of oppression and their liberatory opposites. Those contradictions do not remain in equilibrium. The oppositional forces push and pull against each other, propelling and transforming the contest and, ultimately, the antagonism. That outcome will be the product of agency – what we do and how we act has impact and changes the world, for better or worse. The quality of the transformation is not predetermined, but the process itself is inescapable. The theatrical protest, the alternative exhibition, co-creative processes and social engagement are all potentially subversive of ruling ideologies. But that subversion is not teleological; a transformative outcome must be intentionally made. In the particularity of these examples, we can map general characteristics that they share in that effort; processes of intention, materiality, and effect. Those general qualities consist of dialectical opposites: the preciousness of elite power heritage versus the lived experience of the sub-altern and the street theater of the oppressed; the imperious curatorial pronouncement of experts versus the polyphony of popular rebellion.

Singularities

Although they share important characteristics, the public curation of an American imperial museum and the associated removal of the Roosevelt statue in New York, and the social outbreak against the inequities and iniquities in Chilean society that co-produced symbolic expressions of that outbreak in Santiago, are independent and distinctly different events. This raises the important question of how each comes into being, operates, and is transformed as singularities, and thereby are not fully reproducible social practices. These events were produced by specific and dynamic practices that shaped and were shaped by their

practitioners. We might model and even replicate certain features of these events, but it is improbable that either can be duplicated exactly in another context, even if many of the general or particular qualities from which either arose are also present.

The protests of Roosevelt's statue and its removal are both socially- and site-specific within a maturing political and ideological contest over whether to reanimate or renounce American imperialism.[5] The specific event is informed by other renewed and widespread – collective and individual – repudiations of racism, colonialism, state-organized terror and repression, and the other inequalities upon which American and European imperialisms depend. The installation of the Roosevelt Memorial was a gesture of imperial triumphalism at a point of deep economic and political crisis of global capitalism. The persistent defense of the symbol can be read as defense of that triumphalism. The American Museum of Natural History is a key locus of American ideo-cultural hegemony and thereby an important target of that repudiation. Although outwardly similar, those who splashed red paint on the statue in 2021 are not reenactors of those who also splashed red paint on it in 1971, and the transformative outcomes are also unique.

The social uprising that created the Museo del Estallido Social is the collective agency of millions of Chileans against specific abuses and an ongoing erosion of civil, political, and economic rights. Museum organizers understand those attacks as the practices of global neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism which point directly back to the US-directed coup against the Chilean government in 1973, the military suppression and murder of thousands of citizens, and the decades of neo-fascist repression that followed that coup. These collective experiences prompt comparisons between the 'democratic' water cannons of 2019 and those of 1973, but the two sequences of events are distinctly different in societal context. The subaltern and subversive Museo del Estallido Social is an important singularity of the social, dialogical production of thought and practice described as 'social awakening' (Museo del Estallido Social 2019).

Conjunctures

Singular events are contingent upon their time as well as their place. They are engendered by specific sets of social practices – activities and events during which dramatic, qualitative change is enabled. That change is not predestined but results from a convergence of previously distinct, intentional actions. Diderot defined 'the coexistence in time of many related facts, which change the one to the other […] the circumstances of the times' as 'conjunctures' (Koivisto and Lahtinen 2012, 267). Likewise, French philosopher Louis Althusser defined conjuncture as a 'state of overdetermination of the contradictions at any given moment' – in other words, an alignment of social forces that defines specific outcomes (Althusser 1970, 311). Using these frames, we can more accurately theorize why and how specific moments produce specific outcomes, contingent upon a range of contending efforts and social forces.

One might not doubt conjuncture to be expressed in individual works of art or material culture. More controversial, however, is the assertion that it is universally expressed throughout human and natural history. The acknowledgement of conjuncture is simultaneously the recognition of chance, transformative agency and the denial of predestined first causes; it is a subversive concept.

There should be no doubt that political social forces exert themselves in culture. For example, in 2020, successive murders committed by police in America sparked widespread outrage, including a Black Lives Matter movement that became transnational in scope, and challenging practitioners to critique how museums engender racist ideology. The specific brutality of the murder of George Floyd in May of that year, and the immediate outcry in Minneapolis, converged with other widely felt anti-racist and anti-colonial sentiments to focus a shared sense of outrage. Police officer Derek Chauvin expected to murder George Floyd with impunity, one of the tens of thousands of murders of African-Americans by police in the United States over the last 50 years (Edwards et al 2019; Krieger, Chen, et al 2015; Krieger, Kiang, et al 2015), and just one of the millions of brutal events within African-American history (Alexander 2012; Baptist 2014).

Conjuncture describes context in which singularities occur. By definition, singularities are not all of the same scope, magnitude, or cascading effect. Some exert short-term influence, while others reverberate and induce actions over long periods of time. This second type is sometimes acknowledged as 'historic' moments of dramatic change, although careful scrutiny usually complicates our understanding of those events and their influence on subsequent events. Also important are the singularities that are not recognized as such, where opportunity is lost, so to speak, where the chance convergence appears and disappears along with the present moment. In all instances, however, the ability to recognize and shape the singularity depends upon our comprehension of general and particular social relationships from which it emerges. Those social relationships are themselves contradictory elements that drive specific moments to prominence and that enable some form of resolution. We make our own history, but we don't make it however we please (Marx 1969a, 398). Nor do our cultural activities follow an arc of inevitability, or progress triumphant and ever forward. The recognition of conjuncture includes within it the acknowledgement of our own individual and collective responsibility in shaping the outcome of such moments.

Collections of unique events

Museums and archives typically collect and exhibit tangible and intangible symbolic or material culture that is representative of general categories of social practice, or of particular practices or singularly significant events. In many instances, such recognition is retrospective and objects are accessioned long after the moment of their creation or use. Collection policies and plans usually

describe the general object qualities that merit preservation and interpretation. Encountering specific examples of those general qualities is quite obviously contingent upon many contributing factors. Thus, museums are concurrently collections of general types and of unique objects that enable a distinct response.

A museum object also carries an assigned ideological value that is independent of its materiality – a token of its symbolic utility. That symbolic use underlies all other values, including the object's exchange value, the price at which the object might be bought or sold. The value of any specific object or historical narrative cannot therefore be universal. Although the object has symbolic value to multiple persons or collectives, its symbolic value to those persons or collectives may not be uniform. A monumental statue of Theodore Roosevelt in New York city exemplifies non-equivalent symbolic values assigned to the same object – values weighted by other political significances.

In market-centered societies, the exchange value of an object also informs its symbolic value. The bourgeois art collector may buy an artwork less for the ideological purpose intended by its maker, than for its perception by the collector and others as an expression of societal prestige or as a financial investment that will appreciate over time. At the same time, the symbolic use of an object reflects ideological and socio-cultural currents and tensions within society, where the intents and effects of ideology and economy interact. Thus, the symbolic utility of objects, particularly visual art and material culture, is denatured by their circulation as exchange values, with the object often moving very far from the ideo-symbolic intentions of its creator. Heritage looting – such as burial desecration – is perhaps the most extreme example of this denaturing process through which the original physical and ideological contexts for an object are destroyed. Museum patronage is rife with examples of such contention between symbolic use and economic exchange.

One well-known example of such contention was the fresco 'Man at the Crossroads' created in 1933 by Diego Rivera for the grand entry foyer of the office building at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York. That entry lobby was envisioned as gateway to the prestigious industrial, legal, and financial firms that would be headquartered there.[6] The various symbolic values presented in Rivera's iconography were read – correctly – as contradicting that triumphal message of the Rockefeller Center project, prompting Nelson Rockefeller to cancel Rivera's commission and to order the destruction of the painting. Rivera's *contract* was honored and he received his commission fee even though the painting was destroyed; its symbolic value overrode its exchange value (*New York Times* 1933).[7] A later example is a monumental site-specific sculpture, 'Twisted Arc', created by Richard Serra and installed in 1981 in the plaza of a government building in lower Manhattan. The symbolic value of Twisted Arc was conveyed in a non-literal yet overwhelmingly sensorial form, described as affectively disruptive by some of the functionaries working in the surrounding federal offices, further prompting the commissioning agency to disassemble and remove the sculpture to a storage yard in Brooklyn, where it

remains. As with Rivera, Serra was paid his commission fee, but the disruptive. symbolic effect of the artwork overrode its economic value to the client government agency (GSA 2019).[8]

These types of collisions continually take place in museums. Directors and curators make decisions about object acquisition and exhibition, enacting processes and criteria in which they have been trained to perform. Those 'best practices' typically result from business management consultancies and the directions of a governance who are often prominent members of the bourgeoisie or their junior associates. Decision processes weigh a narrow range of criteria but not without internal contentions that frequently turn on a comparative analysis of the prestige value of the object in comparison with its market valuation, or the explicit symbolic reading of objects by insider stakeholders in comparison with their communicatory effect upon public perceptions of those objects. This general process is enacted through various specific forms: objects are accessioned to favor collector-donors; objects are deaccessioned into the auction market; special exhibitions are staged to validate objects or collections; artists are prohibited from exhibiting all or a specific work; those proficient at implementing these practices are lauded; violators of these norms are sacked and even criminalized.[9] These often crudely practiced processes are enacted by museums in order to collect and exhibit 'high' symbolic culture.

Building upon Marx's analysis of early (pre-industrial) capital accumulation (Marx 1996, 704–707, 738–748), Bourdieu described the primitive accumulation of cultural capital as 'the partial or total monopolizing of the society's symbolic resources … by monopolizing the instruments of appropriation of those resources' (Bourdieu 1977, 187). Bourdieu's formulation well describes processes by which cultural work and its products are appropriated and converted by museums to service the cultural hegemony by the bourgeoisie. The centrality of this process within the larger ideological superstructure of society is demonstrated by the vociferousness with which the ruling elites rise to defend their hegemony and attack any and all ideo-cultural expressions, from whatever quarter, that threaten it.

Subversions

Disrupting the bourgeoisie's hegemonic museology, which some have aptly described as 'nineteenth century infrastructure' (De Cesari 2020, citing Renzi), requires social forces within and without museum organizations that will take aim specifically at those instruments of appropriation. These disruptions can only be social practices that join with the collective agency of museum users and cultural producers. As we have seen repeatedly in recent years, social activism is capable of redirecting specific hegemonic museum practices indicating that such collective action can effect positive change.

The targets of such activity are usually particular practices, especially curation or interpretation, and museum governance has attracted attention for its

role in leading regressive and reactionary policies. But systematic transformation will not be successful if it is approached as a solely or primarily incremental process directed at individual examples. This does not mean that only an 'all or nothing' approach is meaningful. Specific examples of hegemonic abuse do need to be not only opposed but halted. But repatriating specific stolen objects, for one example, will not eliminate colonialism, or even the dispossessive processes by which objects are looted and acquired. The hegemonic ideological and practical control by capital manifests itself across a spectrum of social practices, including museum practices. Therefore, contesting and overturning that control of museums must also take a wide field approach and critique all aspects of museum work, from policy to programs, and the social relationships on which policies and programs are based.

We will now turn to examine some of those specificities.

Notes

1 One measure of distinct languages comes from Christian missionary societies that translate their proselytizing literatures for prospective converts. Thus, the missionary organization SIL International reported 6,909 distinct languages in 2009 (Anderson 2010).
2 The United States Census defines 'whiteness' as 'of European descent' except in regard to Spanish-speaking persons. The initial concept of 'whiteness' did not include most southern and eastern Europeans or the Irish, and that view persisted throughout the nineteenth century in Britain and the United States (Ignatiev 2008).
3 In 1988, during my tenure at the American Museum of Natural History, I was tasked with coordinating the removal of red paint from the statue. The *Guardian* and *New York Times* reported protests in 2016, 2017, and 2018 (Sidahmed 2016; Moynihan 2017; Small 2018). It seems very likely, over the course of several decades, that other protests were made but not reported.
4 The website of Museo del Estallido Social has archived many public declarations and manifestos, at: https://museodelestallidosocial.org/declaraciones/.
5 The Roosevelt Memorial contest is parallel in time but also distinctly different from the 'retain and explain' position of the Conservative UK government regarding British colonialist monuments.
6 Notable among those enterprises is the Rockefeller family's 'home office,' which has occupied three upper floors of the building since it opened.
7 Much of the conflict focused on a section depicting a multinational grouping of workers and soldiers. The *New York Times* described this section as 'a figure of Lenin joining the hands of a soldier, a worker, and a Negro … in the background were crowds of unemployed' (*New York Times* 1933, 1).
8 Symbolic value is not the same as 'intellectual property' or 'moral rights' as described by the Berne Convention. Those concepts, along with patents and trademarks, are distinct to later capitalist economies.
9 There are scores of examples, but a few are: the White-Levy collection, which included objects known to be looted antiquities, is prominently displayed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Eakin and Kennedy 2005); the Metropolitan Museum of Art regularly sells recently obtained objects at auction and lists those in its year-end report; Ernest Erickson's collection of antiquities – also of questionable provenance – was exhibited at multiple New York museums as a condition of its transfer to those museums (Reif 1987); 'provocative' artwork is too-often removed from

exhibitions in museums and galleries, worldwide; the museum director who presides over controversial projects risks being fired, as was the head of the Cincinnati, USA, gallery who organized in an exhibition in 1990 of Robert Mapplethorpe photographs and was tried for violating local 'obscenity' laws (Dobush 2015).

References

Adams, Geraldine Kendall. 2019. 'Rift emerges over Icom's proposed museum definition', *Museums Journal*, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2019/08/22082019-rift-over-icom-definition/ (accessed 2 March 2021).

Adams, Geraldine Kendall. 2022. 'Icom publishes two proposed museum definitions', *Museums Journal*, 13 May, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2022/05/icom-publishes-two-proposed-museum-definitions/#msdynttrid=WoYJKwpL12sPRr2Jy-GBNOcERFw1oUjelwui98QF_EI (accessed 15 May 2022).

Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow*, New York: The New Press.

Althusser, Louis. 1970. *Reading Capital*, London: Parthenon Books.

Anderson, Stephen R. 2010. 'How Many Languages Are There in the world?', Washington DC: Linguistic Society of America, Brochure Series.

Archaeology. 2007. 'Desert Solitare', Archaeological Institute of America', https://archive.archaeology.org/0707/trenches/solitaire.html (accessed 13 June 2022).

Bakhtin, M. M. 1986. 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *Speech Genres & Other Essays*, Austin TX: University of Texas Press. 60–102.

Baptist, Edward E. 2014. *The Half Has Never Been Told*, New York: Basic Books.

Blackburn, Robin. 1997. *The Making of New World Slavery*, London: Verso.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction, a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Bunch, Lonnie and Tom Loughman. 2020. 'ICOM-US Statement: A Message from our Leadership', https://mailchi.mp/e2ac3fc7007c/icom-us-newsletter-4030577?e=[UNIQID] (accessed 25 June 2020).

Campbell, Peter B. 2013. 'The Illicit Antiquities Trade as a Transnational Criminal Network: Characterizing and Anticipating Trafficking of Cultural Heritage', *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 20 (02): 113–153.

Cascone, Sarah. 2018. 'NYC Decides Not to Tear Down Controversial Monuments—But Will Add Historical Markers Instead', artnet news. 12 January, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/nyc-controversial-statues-1198181 (accessed 15 May 2020).

Coleman, Nancy. 2019. 'Angered by This Roosevelt Statue? A Museum Wants Visitors to Weigh In', *New York Times*, 15 July, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/15/arts/design/theodore-roosevelt-statue-natural-history-museum.html (accessed 15 May 2021).

Conca-Cheng, Andrew. 2019. 'The Reality in Chile', North American Congress on Latin America, 25 October, Washington DC.

De Cesari, Chiara. 2020. 'Heritage beyond the Nation-State?', *Current Anthropology* 61 (1): 30–56.

Dobush, Grace. 2015. '25 years later: Cincinnati and the obscenity trial over Mapplethorpe art', *Washington Post*, 24 October.

Eagleton, Terry. 2000. *The Idea of Culture*, Malden MA: Blackwell.

Eakin, Hugh and Randy Kennedy. 2005. 'Doubts on Donors' Collection Cloud Met Antiquities Project', *New York Times*, 10 December, https://www.nytimes.com/

2005/12/10/arts/design/doubts-on-donorscollection- cloud-met-antiquities-project.html (accessed 2 February 2022).

Eakin, Hugh. 2005. 'An Odyssey in Antiquities Ends in Questions at the Getty Museum', *New York Times*, 15 October, B7.

Edwards, Frank, Hedwig Lee, Michael Esposito. 2019. 'Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race–ethnicity, and sex', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116 (34): 16793–16798.

Felch, James and Ralph Frammolino. 2005. 'Getty Had Signs It Was Acquiring Possibly Looted Art, Documents Show', *Los Angeles Times*, 25 September, http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/la-me-getty25sep25,1,3136932,full.story (accessed 1 October 2005).

Fincham, Derek. 2008. 'Shelby White Returns 10 Antiquities', Illicit Cultural Property weblog, http://illicitculturalproperty.com/shelby-white-returns-10-antiquities/ (accessed 16 June 2022).

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. 'The Intellectuals', in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 3–23. New York: International Publishers.

Gomez, A. R. 1935. *Documentary Evidence for the Spanish Missions of Texas. Spanish Borderlands Sourcebooks 22*, New York & London: Garland Publishing.

Holt, Elizabeth Gilmore. 1979. *The Triumph of Art for the Public*, New York: Doubleday.

Gruber, Jacob W. 1970. 'Ethnographic Salvage and the Shaping of Anthropology', *American Anthropologist* 72 (6): 1289–1299.

Ignatiev, Noel. 2008. *How the Irish Became White*, London: Routledge.

GSA. 2019. 'Richard Serra's Tilted Arc', U.S. General Services Administration, https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/art-in-architecture-fine-arts/fine-arts/fine-arts-collection-faq/richard-serras-tilted-arc (accessed 26 February 2019).

Koivisto, Juha and Mikko Lahtinen 2012. 'Conjuncture, politico-historical', *Historical Materialism*, 20 (1): 267–277.

Kress, Margaret Kenney, Fray Gaspar Jose de Solís, and Mattie Austin Hatcher. 1931. 'Diary of a Visit of Inspection of the Texas Missions Made by Fray Gaspar Jose de Solis in the Year 1767–68', *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 35 (1): 28–76.

Krieger, Nancy, Jarvis T. Chen, et al. 2015. 'Police Killings and Police Deaths Are Public Health Data and Can Be Counted', *PLOS Medicine*, 12 (12): e1001915, 1–7.

Krieger, Nancy, Matthew V. Kiang, Jarvis T. Chen, and Pamela D. Waterman. 2015. 'Trends in US deaths due to legal intervention among black and white men, age 15–34 years, by county income level: 1960–2010', *Harvard Public Health Review*2015, 3 (January): 1–5. http://harvardpublichealthreview.org/190/ (accessed 4 February 2022).

Lemkin, Raphael. 1973. *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, New York: Howard Fertig.

MacGregor, Neil and Rosemary Hill. 2022. 'Romantic History: Waterloo to the British Museum', *London Review of Books*, 27 April, https://www.lrb.co.uk/podcasts-and-videos/podcasts/close-readings/romantic-history-waterloo-to-the-british-museum?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20220426podcast&utm_content=20220426podcast+CID_92e0a54a86572e6e7ccd966bcf17b213&utm_source=LRB%20email&utm_term=Read%20more (accessed 8 May 2022).

Marshall, Alex. 2020. 'What is a museum? A dispute erupts over a new definition', *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/06/arts/what-is-a-museum.html (accessed 6 August 2020).

Marx, Karl. 1969a [1852]. *The Eighteen Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Sel. Works, v. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, Karl. 1969b [1859]. *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Sel. Works, v. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, Karl. 1996 [1867]. *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy*, Marx and Engels Collected Works Volume 35, New York: International Publishers.

Mashberg, Tom. 2021. 'Antiquities Dealer Pleads Guilty for Role in Sale of Looted Items', *New York Times*, 5 October, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/arts/design/antiquities-dealer-l…ls&pool=pool/91fcf81c-4fb0-49ff-bd57-a24647c85ea1&imp_id=896257869 (accessed 6 October 2021).

Massing, Michael. 2019. 'How the Superrich Took Over the Museum World', *New York Times*, 14 December, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/14/opinion/sunday/modern-art-museum.html (accessed 15 December 2019).

Moynihan, Colin. 2017. 'Protesters Deface Roosevelt Statue Outside Natural History Museum', *New York Times*, 26 October.

Museo del Estallido Social. 2019. 'Museo', https://museodelestallidosocial.org/museo/ (accessed 31 January 2021).

National Geographic Society. 2012. 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch', https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/ (accessed 28 January 2022).

New York Times. 1933. 'Rockefellers Ban Lenin in RCA Mural and Dismiss Rivera', *New York Times*, 10 May, pp.1, 3.

Noce, Vincent. 2019. 'What exactly is a museum? ICOM comes to blows over new definition', *The Art Newspaper*, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/what-exactly-is-a-museum-icom-comes-to-blows-over-new-definition (accessed 19 August 2019).

Nómada Espacio Artistico. 2020. 'Exposición Estallido Artistico, Testimonios creativos de la agitación social', 16 June 2020, https://museodelestallidosocial.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/catalogo_nomada_exposicion_estallido_artistico_2020.pdf.

Oelsner, Lesley. 1971. 'Six Indians Accused of Defacing Theodore Roosevelt Statue Here', *New York Times*, 15 June, 35.

Pogrebin, Robin. 2020. 'Roosevelt Statue to Be Removed From Museum of Natural History', *New York Times*, 21 June, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/arts/design/roosevelt-statue-to-be-removed-from-museum-of-natural-history.html (accessed 10 October 2021).

Provoledo, Elisabetta. 2005. 'Confrontation with Italy Looms at the Met', *New York Times*, 21 November.

Quynn, D. M. 1945. 'The Art Confiscations of the Napoleonic Wars', *The American Historical Review*, 50 (3): 437–460.

Riding, Alan. 2005. 'Why Antiquities Trials Focus On America', *New York Times*, 25 November.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. 1936. 'President's Speech at Theodore Roosevelt Memorial', *New York Times*, 20 January.

Progrebin, Robin. 2020. 'Roosevelt Statue to Be Removed from Museum of Natural History', *New York Times*, 25 June.

Provoledo, Elisabetta. 2008. 'Collector Returns Art Italy Say Was Looted', *New York Times*, 18 January, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/18/arts/18collect.html?_r=1&ref=arts&pagewanted=all (accessed 16 June 2022).

Reif, Rita. 1987. 'Antiques: A Treasure Goes Public', *New York Times*, 8 March.

Sidahmed, Mazin. 2016. 'Take down "racist" Theodore Roosevelt statue, activists tell New York museum', *The Guardian*, 11 October, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/

oct/11/museum-natural-history-theodore-roosevelt-statue-protest (accessed 15 May 2021).

Small, Zachary. 2018. 'Around 1,000 People Attend Anti-Columbus Day Tour at American Museum of Natural History', Hyperallergic, 8 October, https://hyperallergic.com/464475/american-museum-of-natural-history-third-annual-anti-columbus-day-tour/ (accessed 28 March 2022).

Small, Zachary. 2022. 'Theodore Roosevelt Statue Removal Begins at Museum of Natural History', *New York Times*, 19 January, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/19/arts/design/theodore-roosevelt-statue-natural-history-museum.html (accessed 19 January 2022).

Steinmetz, George. 2004. 'The Uncontrollable Afterlives of Ethnography: Lessons from "salvage colonialism" in the German overseas empire', *Ethnography* 5 (3): 251–288.

Stevenson, Alexandra. 2016. 'Kenneth Griffin Joins Elite Rank of Hedge Fund Art Patrons with $500 million Deal', *New York Times*, 18 February.

Walker, Darren and Tom Finkelpearl. 2018. 'Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers', Report to the City of New York, January.

Wolf, Eric R. 1997. *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

World Bank. 2018. 'Nearly Half the World Lives on Less than $5.50 a Day', Washington DC: World Bank Group, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/10/17/nearly-half-the-world-lives-on-less-than-550-a-day (accessed 29 January 2022).

WWF. 2020. 'Deforestation Fronts: Drivers and Responses in a Changing World', Gland, Switzerland: World Wildlife Fund, https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/deforestation-fronts-drivers-and-responses-in-a-changing-world-summary (accessed 29 January 2022).

2 The agency of ideology

A fundamental premise of this book is that museums are not neutral organizations but are active social participants. How that activity influences and is a reflection of the encompassing society with its history and internal dynamics of socio-economic power is a matter of ongoing debate and political conflict – over exhibitions, governance, funding, and the persons enmeshed in those conflicts. This general condition of museum work is therefore important for museologists to examine and to understand carefully.

While museums serve many social purposes, fundamentally they define and express narratives written by individuals who align with specific social strata or classes. Museums are assemblages of objects, curated and interpreted by those who have determined the relative symbolic values of those objects. The narratives of disadvantaged and subaltern populations – in aggregate, the majority who the dominant class relies upon as social producers, but whose actual lives it otherwise deems unimportant, voiceless, powerless – are infrequently presented or interpreted by those experts, which makes subaltern presentations all the more special where they do occur. Museum collections thereby perform both a communicatory and legitimizing role. Narratives conveyed by museums are observed as definitive and authoritative, and the objects are presumed to be emblematic or normative cultural expression.

As debates within the International Council of Museums (ICOM) demonstrate, simply asking the question 'what is a museum' challenges existing power relationships and triggers wider conflict. The ICOM debate over definitional descriptions in 2019–2020 was so existential as to expose 'catastrophic failure of good governance' (Abungu et al 2020) in that transnational body. As that debate revealed, distinct and oppositional camps exist among that governance and they self-identified in response to the proposal to replace the phrase 'in the service of society' with the more explicit and directed charge to provide forums for 'critical dialogue' that 'address the conflicts and challenges of the present.' One camp, which includes museum directors in the United States, warned of further societal irrelevance: 'we believe that a more inclusive and socially responsible definition of museums would do much to restore ICOM's standing as an institution that points museums towards a meaningful future' (Bunch and Loughman 2020). A second view was articulated by the

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811-3

chair of ICOM France, speaking on behalf of that committee but apparently also voicing a concern shared with the national ICOM committees of Italy, Spain, Germany, Canada, and Russia, who denounced the redefinition as 'an ideological manifesto' (Noce 2019). A third position was expressed by George Abungu, former director of Kenya's National Museum, who pointedly observed that the proposed definition 'was not convenient for Westerners who want to continue like they live in the past, in the 19th century' (Marshall 2020). As others have observed, the genesis of the major museum projects in the modern period – that is since the fifteenth century – is closely linked with the births of nations and the constructions of national identity (Bennett 1995; Coombes 2004; Duncan 2004; Singh 2015). Museums also describe social practices that are specific in place as well as time. That geographical centering has been modified in the current era of salvage capitalism – aka neo-liberalism – to include trans-national projects, some of which are less about binding peripheries with metropoles than they are about tracing the specificities of and intersections among those peripheries (Mathur and Singh 2015). Despite the domineering control of the privileged over information and discourse – whether in museums and universities or via radio and television – the powerless articulate their views and assert their agency in myriad forms and thereby find each other.[1] Nonetheless, the modern museum exists to present to us concentrations of high-status aesthetics and dominant narratives; an effective method for exercising ideological power, and for maintaining the social divisions and privileges upon which that power depends.

Elsewhere, I have written about how museums in the imperial centers enact or contest the dominant ideologies of those centers (Coffee 2006). In this chapter, I would like to focus instead on moments through which museums upend or divert those dominant narratives.

Case in point: Two Adivasi museums in India

The Indian states of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are situated near the geographical center of the Republic of India. The two states include 77 governmentally-recognized tribal communities, which in aggregate make up 15% of Gujarat and 20% of Madhya Pradesh populations. These tribal communities have been historically disadvantaged, including throughout the colonial period, prior to Indian political independence from Britain in 1947, and during the time of successive kingdoms – Gupta, Rajput, Mughal, Maratha – prior to and during the incursion of the British East India Company into the region (1600–1847 CE). In the twenty-first century, however, the Indian government does not fully acknowledge Indigenous Adivasi communities' rights in international law (ILO 2009; IWGIA 2022).[2]

It is significant therefore that Madhya Pradesh (MP) Tribal Museum in Bhopal endeavors to present 'living aspects of tribal life, Indigenous knowledge systems, and aesthetics.' The tension inherent in that aim is the museum's interpretive dichotomy – between the 'scientific views' that it ascribes to

modern urban life and the 'mythical views' that it ascribes to Adivasi life. The museum characterizes its mission as

> a double-edged sword as on one hand its main aim is to understand and project all the aspects of tribal life and on the other hand present the same before a civil society, which has not only adopted an entirely different style of development and life, but also regards it as inevitable. This museum has found and prepared a platform where these diverse waves of society come face to face.
>
> (MPTM 2019, 8)

Physically, the MP Tribal Museum presents a vibrant and immersive environmental design that suggests context for the symbolic and material culture on view. The layout of the museum is also a departure from conventional museum architecture, and while there are a series of distinct galleries, those are arrayed along an arc which provides a more organic sense of connection between adjacent spaces and across the entire museum experience. This physical layout is intended to support 'build(ing) a new bridge of meaningful dialogue between various communities' (MPTM 2019, 7). The museum proposes that questions of aesthetics can support that bridging process, although the museum's counterposition of 'scientific' and 'mythical' complicates that process. The immersive environmental displays convey an overwhelming sense of the complex interactions that the depicted Adivasi lifeways have with the natural world, but also of their interactions with non-Adivasi communities. That rich ideological superstructure – characterized as 'mythical' worldviews – is mediated by the iconography and narratives of the art and material culture displayed in the museum.

Museologist Ina Ross has studied and written about the MP Tribal Museum at length. Between 2013 and 2015, Ross interviewed scores of visitors to the museum, studied hundreds of guest book comments, and was able to sort those informants and comments according to how they interpret their experience of the museum exhibitions and collections (Ross 2017; Ross 2018; Ross 2019). Ross described her informants, most of whom had not lived in an Adivasi village themselves, talking about their subjective and emotional understandings, either as 'nostalgists' who read the museum as stories about past moments, or 'experts' who read the museum as validating and valorizing their lived – non-Adivasi – experiences. Ross found that 'the museum functions for them as an agency which stabilizes their precarious status by corroborating the traditional Indian hierarchy' (Ross 2019, 18). Ross's informants engage the museum's environmental and object assemblages by drawing upon their own lived experience and social status but with specific attraction to the immersive narratives that the museum presents. As those two activities intersect, the museum affirms or contests visitor attitudes and understandings of their own place in the world in contradistinction to Adivasi communities. As this process demonstrates, and like much of the 'mythology' it presents, the MP Tribal

Figure 2.1 Bal Utsav being celebrated in the Vaacha Museum compound
Source: Photo by Dr. Madan Meena, Adivasi Academy, used with permission.

Museum not only presents Adivasi ideologies and lifeways for its visitors, it serves as a mediational bridge between worldviews.

Quite distinct from the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum, is Vaacha: The Museum of Voice, in Tajgadh, Gujarat. Anthropologist Alice Tilche has worked with curators of Vaacha in a collaborative project to better understand what she describes as relationships of memory, forgetting, and re-remembering particularly the Rathwa cultural traditions Vaacha seeks to present. In that project, Tilche has also described an array of social forces and external economic, political and ideological pressures that she finds weigh upon the Rathwa community and upon individuals living in their traditional homelands, including spontaneous urges to sublimate and forget traumatic episodes of dispossession and humiliation (Tilche 2015, 193–195). Tilche describes how oral histories are formed of 'memories (that) were relational and changed with the social, economic and political position of the listener' (Tilche 2015, 196). Tilche and others have also described how contemporary Rathwa and other Adivasi memories are shaped by contemporary politics, such as the Hindu nationalism particularly pronounced in Gujarat,[3] and the effect of that Hindutva on Adivasis communities, including its negative portrayals of Adivasi tradition (Tilche 2015, 190). Hindu nationalists pressure Adivasi to abandon Indigenous lifeways, 'become bhagat' (adopting Hinduism), and even adopt Hindutva xenophobia toward Islamists and others in India (Baviskar 2005, 5105; Lobo 2002, 4845–4847; Rashkow 2018, 155–160; Tilche 2015, 204–

206). Through all of this, we see that Vaacha mediates ideologies among Rathwa and for those visitors who are not Rathwa. The curatorial team are very conscious of their mediational role.

> As Vaacha itself means, it's a museum of voice, basically it is about the tribal identity, and it is more about – not like how museums see people, or how museum see communities from the outsider's view, it's not like that – it is how Adivasi want themselves to be projected through the museum … in this museum particularly. Narain Rathwa … and Vikesh Rathwa … have been the curators for this museum. They have collected things and they have curated the museum as they want actually, how they want to project themselves. It is more about voicing their own concerns, voicing their own identities, voicing the identities of the Adivasis. They are not from an anthropological background. They are not from any curatorial background. They come from the Adivasi culture, and they have not even been much exposed to (dominant Indian) culture.
>
> (Madan Meena, Narain Rathwa, and Vikesh Rathwa, interview with author, 17 May 2022)

> (The curatorial team) just started from scratch, actually. So, this is something that the museum – and you see it – looks very raw. It looks very natural, and within the museum … there is not too much tagging, or there is not too much labeling … (visitors) are not bulldozed with so much information, because, whenever a visitor comes to the museum, actually, (museum curators) demonstrate each and every thing. For example, if there's a musical instrument and if you go in the classical museum, people are not allowed to touch those objects, they are (told) 'do not touch', and (objects) are put in the glass cases (for) preservation. Over here, that preservation perspective has not been so strong … Here, if it is something like that you can pick up, you can use it. You can play it also. So, when you will come into Vaacha, museum curators are using, one of our curators is a musician himself, actually, so he'll pick up a drum and he'll play it for you. He'll pick up on flute. He'll play variety of flutes for you. So, it is more like a living museum rather than a dead museum.
>
> (Madan Meena, interview with author, 17 May 2022)

> There is a Pithora[4] painting (in) the museum, but at the same time our staff (includes) two painters who are practicing Pithora painting right now. It is not that they are disappointed that there are no more practicing Pithora, … if a Pithora is being practiced somewhere in the community village nearby, the same Pithora is there in the museum. Then, for example, we have some artifacts made of clay. Those artisans who are makers of those things are also in our vicinity also. We can connect things

> together. What you see in the museum - the same thing is being practiced outside the museum also.
>
> (Narain Rathwa, translated by Madan Meena, interview with author, 17 May 2022)

> This museum is … 80% an art collection and 20% all other articles, So when other Adavasi communities, for example, from Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, if they visit, then they relate in some context, the museum creates the context for them. What happens for them is there is a context, but those are the Adivasi visitors, there's some context, which is the music, for example, if there's a drum. Then they will later think 'Oh, we have this kind of a drum', you know, the context with which they can relate themselves. The connection is there in the museum. So that is one thing. But if suppose a visitor from outside, an outsider is coming with the person from another cultural background, not from the Adivasi cultural background, then they look at these things in an aesthetical manner. So, for them, they will … appreciate the beauty they will appreciate the design, they will appreciate the quality – all that they will appreciate, and they might like to acquire that also.
>
> (Narain Rathwa, translated by Madan Meena, interview with author, 17 May 2022)

The active mediation of threatened Adivasi cultural practices and traditions is contested, and not only recently, during the current regime of extreme Hindu nationalism.

> (The Indian) government never recognized the word Adivasi, though they accept Vanavaasi. Vanavaasi means people living in the forest … That is acceptable for them. but the Indian government has never accepted the fact that there are Indigenous people living in India. They've never recognized indigeneity in our country. So, this is very clear that government is not in favor (of) the policy, of the whole idea of Adivasi, because of this major identity issue.
>
> First of all, if they recognize that definitely the Indigenous communities have rights, then (government) cannot exploit their resources. And there's a huge exploitation of those resources that everyone knows about.
>
> (Madan Meena. Interview with author, 17 May 2022)

The Museum of Voice is deeply ideological, and as such has also encountered the infrastructures that underlie worldviews present in Indian society regarding Indigenous cultures and that threaten those cultures; Rathwa are, after all, one of the 744 Scheduled Tribes listed by the central government. Vaacha's efforts to preserve and reclaim Indigenous cultural history do not stand apart from political and economic contests waged throughout India as a whole, while the precarity lived by Indigenous communities in India is

something they share with colonized and formerly colonized Indigenous peoples the world over.[5]

Stratified privilege

Simply put, socio-political inequality is expressed as a comparatively few advantaged people dialectically opposed to the much larger population of disadvantaged people. Inequality is not inherent, it is produced. The advantaged minority have obtained their advantage by dispossessing others through various methods – from the deceit of the market to expeditionary warfare. Moreover, privileged groups construct categorical justifications for their privileges. Societies stratified according to socio-economic status have always enacted, and are inconceivable without, categorical ideologies that mirror those socio-economic distinctions and privileges. Nationalism and racism are blatant and frequent examples of that process, but not the only examples. Attitudes of male supremacy, gendered behavior, and the projection of regional or 'ethnic' stereotypes are also ideologic typologies that propose to legitimize expropriation and social inequality. Although idiosyncratic, those ideologies are not just abnormal psychology; they are socially constructed, normalized, and defended. At the root of such worldviews are the class prejudices and privileges accrued by the bourgeoisie and their junior affiliates who, through moderately-privileged lifeways, have internalized ruling narratives and concepts as justifications for that moderately-privileged social status. The following is therefore presented as a field survey of social forces that underlie ideological hegemony.

Class privilege

Capitalism accords special privileges to property and commodities as mediators of capital social relationships and processes of expropriation. The overall process of expropriation – capital itself – is the most valued social relationship, but that relationship is cloaked by physical forms such as real property, commodities, and money. Marx described the misperception of creative human labor as the fetishism of commodities, the misperception of relationships among people as relationships between things, with the corresponding assumption that those things are inherently valuable (Marx 1967, 76–87). This fetishism is a major influence within all bourgeois ideologies. It is especially manifest in the social status and privilege accorded to the biggest capitalists who have expropriated the largest aggregates of others' labor, as money and real property. We all must enter into those processes to eat, clothe, and shelter ourselves. Consequently, individuals often perceive that circulation of commodities as a universal metric of life. Commodity exchange has become the totalizing process of modern society. That all-encompassing force exerts a tremendous influence on how we think while cloaking the expropriation at its core. Attitudes of *quid pro quo* are taken for granted, without considering the inequalities and brutalities upon which they are grounded.

During periods of collective opposition, specific inequalities and brutalities are brought to the foreground and thereby prompt conceptual leaps that challenge the propriety of capital itself. This was evident amidst the anti-colonial and national liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the decades immediately following the second world war. Those examples inspired social uprisings in North America and Europe during the 1960s and early 1970s. The effects of Thatcher/Reagan/Clinton neo-liberal capitalism inspired transnational protest in the 1990s and into the 2010s, with protests against institutions of global capital, such as the World Bank, World Trade Organization, and all of Wall Street (Harvey 2005).

At other times, the outlook of *quid pro quo* is reproduced continually through everyday activities. Bourdieu examined this process with his theory of *habitus*, the 'structuring structures' of capitalist society (Bourdieu 1977, 72). In the most developed – which is to say, the most totalized and privileged – capitalist societies, all individuals are encouraged to measure themselves according to this process, and to assess themselves or each other according to quantitative levels of expropriation personified by wealthy and politically powerful expropriators. Turning this relationship on its head, capitalist apologists have, throughout the modern period, railed against 'dangerous classes' and 'under-classes' who are perceived as existential threats to wealth and power and thus as root causes of social dysfunction. Privatizing the commons as a mechanism for accumulation via novel forms of dispossession – 'entrepreneurship' – is the neo-liberal mantra and any other aspiration is suspect (Harvey 2007; Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Wacquant 1996).

It follows that this mentality effects everyone working in cultural resource management and in museums. It certainly influences interpretations and analyses of art, material culture, science, and the environment. It is also reproduced in museum practices and social interactions that prioritize the material culture of capitalism and colonialism. While most museum workers are not highly paid, we are afforded positions of minor social privilege and status, as keepers and conveyors of culture narratives. This underscores the need for self-awareness of our collective ability to influence others and change the world.

Racism and ethnocentrism

Eurocentric, white-supremacist, racism directed toward non-Europeans is endemic to modern capitalism. This has been noted and opposed by social activism repeatedly and for hundreds of years (Rodney 2018). From the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, a period of intense protest and rebellion by African Americans and other oppressed peoples against racism and racialized oppression, social critics increasingly drew attention to the relative privilege afforded by imperialism to workers of European ancestry. For example, Ignatin and Allen spotlighted the dual facts of the abnormal oppression of non-white society and the relative advantages accorded to even working-class

Euro-Americans as 'white skin privilege' (Ignatin and Allen 1976, 28–29). They and other activists of that time called special attention to the socio-ideological support that white supremacy provided for all social oppression. Critiques of exclusion, inaccessibility, and inequality have been made of museums, for many decades (Haupt et al 2022). However, racism and ethnocentrism are not simply mental states, both are economically and politically driven; enforced via state-sanctioned violence (Goeschel 2009; Williams 1994; Soss and Weaver 2017; Traverso 2003). It is a fact of life in the United States that 'police violence is a leading cause of death for young men, and young men of color face exceptionally high risk of being killed by police' (Edwards, Lee and Esposito 2019), and nearly 1,000 African Americans are shot and killed by police every year (*Washington Post* 2022). Despite successive waves of anti-racist social protest and movements in America and Europe, ideologies of white supremacy remain boldly vocal and dangerously active throughout Europe, North America, and various colonial settler regimes elsewhere. The genealogy database Ancestry.com claims more than three million subscribers and 15 million DNA samples available to those who buy into claims of genetic destiny (Ancestry.com 2019). The persistence of white supremacist ideologies accompanies the persistence of imperial economic control, geo-political influence, and expeditionary wars. As activist writer James Baldwin noted, 'white is a metaphor for power, and that is simply a way of describing Chase Manhattan Bank' (Baldwin and Peck 2016). Ideologies grounded in political and economic social relationships persist for as long as those relationship also exist.

Sexism

The longest-lived and most pernicious feature of stratified cultural tradition is the subordination of women to men (Benería and Sen 1981; Leacock 1981; Tilly 1981). That subordination is combined with various mythologies regarding anatomy, neurology, genetics, and reproduction, and is used to suppress women as persons and as a group and to otherwise enforce political and civil inequalities of many types. This subordination is projected throughout society and across generations via gender stereotypes, which are imprinted upon children at an early age. Not surprisingly, sexism and misogyny are major themes in the symbolic cultures of modern societies, but they have also been exported by colonialism wherever it has landed and enforced upon societies where egalitarian social relationships between women and men had previously predominated (Gero 1985; Leacock 1983; McGuire 1992, 81). Sexism is a major assumption within contemporary ideologies, crosscuts other social divisions, and is a source of tremendous brutality and violence. Sexist and gender stereotypes are also widely reproduced in the visual and performing arts, as iconography and as a narrative theme, and taken for granted in the social and natural sciences. Anthropologists have imprinted sexist and gendered interpretations over non-European and 'primitive' societies, archaeologists have transposed sexism onto built environments and material culture, and sexist

misconceptions litter contemporary psychology. It is unsurprising that sexism is prevalent in museum policies, practices, and in the ideologies that museums perpetuate in society.

Heteronormativity

Gender stereotyping intersects with implicit and explicit heteronormative biases; taken-for-granted assumptions that the archetypal human sexual relationship is an unequal heterosexual relationship between male- and female-sexed individuals. According to this worldview, non-heterosexual conforming persons are abnormal. In some modern societies, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer persons have been criminalized. Even in societies where LGBTQ relationships have legal status, heteronormative prejudices are represented in symbolic expression, material culture, and often produce real violence against LGBTQ persons, including internalized stresses such as anxiety and depression directed at oneself or at others (Ellemers 2018; Spivey et al 2018; Thomas and Blakemore 2013; Martin-Storey and August 2016).

Ablism / disablism

The World Health Organization describes disability as part of the human condition and estimates than more than one billion persons live with some form of disability (WHO 2011, 261). UNICEF further estimates that of those, 240 million are children (UNICEF 2021, 18). Disability intersects with socio-economic class, and detrimentally impacts conditions of life, well beyond the availability or cost of care (WHO 2011, 39–40). Physical barriers to participation have long been understood, although protection against exclusion is a relatively new concept in social obligation. Much like health care itself, our responsibility to mitigate those barriers for each other is obscured by market exchange. The ways in which museums have practiced disablism – discrimination and bias against persons – extends beyond physical or intellectual barriers to visitors or to staff, and includes how disablism surfaces in curation and interpretation. Jocelyn Dodd and colleagues have pointed out that 'the way in which an object is presented can empower or disempower the person connected with it' (Dodd, Sandell, Delin and Gay 2004, 20). Ideologically, disabled persons are not the only ones debilitated by disablist museums.

Xenophobia

Also unique to the modern era is the concept of nation-state, which corresponds with the development of coherent markets and of the solidarity of population groups acting autonomously of a feudal aristocracy. These 'national' population groups were cohered usually through force and arbitrarily as matrices of social practices-as-culture, including agriculture, language, artisanship, and symbolic expressions. Complex matrices eventually express

themselves in contradistinction to other 'national' cultures via elaborate processes of political and economic distinguishment. Those processes of aesthetics, history, and archaeology, assume tangible form in visual arts, buildings, documents, and other objects of daily life. Intangible forms are also very important forms of social coherence and continuity: foods, storytelling, religion, poetry, song, dance, and so on. The materiality of these practices is, of course, the physical content of libraries and museums.

Looking specifically at archaeology and material culture studies as modern disciplines, Trigger observed three distinctive phases over time consisting of nationalist, colonialist, and imperialist studies, and argued 'if archaeology is highly relevant to society, society has played an important role in shaping archaeology' (Trigger 1984, 357–358). We may use Trigger's lens to examine Eurocentric museums and museology as well. The earlier phase of museology centered on art and material culture demonstrations of cultural coherence. Thus, in the first period, museums were imagined as statements about their polities and that group's self-significance. The second phase, which gestated within the first, extended that imaginary to distinguish European 'core' locales from the vast 'periphery' of that Eurocentric perspective. Again, developing within the contours of the colonial phase, an imperialist museology emerged as so-called 'world' or 'universal' museums in Berlin, Brussels, Chicago, Paris, London, Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, etc.

Trigger acknowledged that his formulations 'capture only certain broad features of very complex situations' but not 'the varying intensity with which the characteristics of each type are realised in specific cases' (Trigger 1984, 358). Thus, tracing this arc in any specific example will no doubt expose episodic interruptions, regressions, and ideo-cultural detours, comparable to other moments in the societies in which specialists and museums operate. However, the central thesis – that there is a dialectical relationship between our study of the world and the society in which we live – is profoundly valid. Examples of this interaction are prominent in the Napoleonic conquests and the Louvre; the British army pillaging Benin; the Reichskulturkammer; Donald Trump's proposed 'national garden of American heroes'; the Olympic Games; etc. As citizens, we are so thoroughly immersed in cultures of national chauvinism that we risk taking for granted many of its insidious manifestations, including in museum collections and exhibitions.

Liberatory thinking

Questioning and contesting social privilege is concomitant with class divisions, but most emphatically derives its energy from below. Episodically, public intellectuals and cultural workers in the imperial centers come to understand their own potential for replicating inequality and privilege, and then to explicitly distance themselves from that privilege by aligning with the lives and aspirations of the oppressed. As the failures and tragedies of the extreme inequalities and injustices of colonial-capitalism are brought to light, we should

hope and expect that growing numbers of persons join in practices that are opposed to oppression and instead are liberatory. None the less, the processes of liberating ideology and social practices are complex and difficult, and require the engagement of millions. Every advance is met with heightened and abnormal resistance from those who benefit most from social oppression. Thus, liberation is protracted social practice; there are no individual or divine solutions, neither self-help nor 'thoughts and prayers' (Folles 2019). Only collective agency will overcome unequal and privileged social relationships.

Liberatory practices require liberatory thinking. There is no way to unreflectively construct a truly collaborative space much less an egalitarian society. If equality was a linear process, we would be living in that manner spontaneously. But neither is it a matter of thinking positive thoughts nor wishing it were so. Rather, it is a profoundly dialectical process, and so liberatory thinking requires liberatory practice. As Freire observed, 'functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire 2018, 51). The relationship between liberatory thinking and action is a dialectical process in which one enables the other in spirals of conceptual leaps, never retracing the same arc; 'each higher type of development begins where the preceding one finishes and serves as its continuation in a new direction' (Vygotsky and Luria, cited in Wertsch1985, 29). The direction of the process is created by the process itself – it is not teleological. Our perceptions are individual and organismic, but our discovery of patterns, intentions, and predictions is achieved through social activity (Childe 1956). Human history is an environment of contingent processes, social forces that weigh against us or propel us forward (Marx 1969). No one can ordain specific outcomes but we can anticipate and influence the arcs of the contradictions in which we are enmeshed, and enable ourselves to turn upon them. Liberation requires tenacity.

Instruments of ideology

The sharp debate within ICOM demonstrates the important role that museums play in shaping and reinforcing social order and how we think about it. This ideological action by museums is broadly global and deeply regional. Museums not only collect or display, they signify that which their governance deems exemplary and normative. Museums curate, preserve, and present objects and interpretations that serve as benchmarks of attitudes and understandings.

In European and Euro-influenced societies, museums are modern extensions of medieval ecclesiastical practices and reliquaries. Most European-styled museums actively promote and enforce behaviors of awe, reverence, the lowered voice, and contemplation, while discouraging gregarious interactions among visitors and with collections. Such behaviors are not arbitrary decorum, they intentionally actualize and reinforce ideological messages of veneration

and exclusion. Exhibitions are rarely presented without an authoritative interpretation of objects, iconography, and symbology. Even the boldest object – the sculpture of Ramesses the Great in the British Museum, for example – cannot 'speak for itself' to us or respond to our wonderment about why or how. The modern museum does not exist for the inexplicable, it intends a didactic purpose. That 'educational' purpose is contentious within ICOM precisely because it is germinal to every major and national museum in the colonizing world; contention over who directs interpretation and knowledge, and who makes and defines history.

The British Museum declares itself 'to hold for the benefit and education of humanity a collection representative of world cultures' (British Museum 2022); the Cleveland Museum of Art promises to 'create(s) transformative experiences through art, for the benefit of all the people forever' (Cleveland Museum of Art 2018); the Rijksmuseum 'tell(s) the story of 800 years of Dutch history, from 1200 to now' (Rijksmuseum n.d.); the National Museum of Mongolia promises to 'serve an educational and cultural role, providing (the) public with opportunities to experience first-hand how Mongolians lived in historical times' (National Museum of Mongolia 2018); the National Museum of Kenya intends to 'collect, preserve, study, document and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage … for the purposes of enhancing knowledge, appreciation, respect and sustainable utilization of these resources for the benefit of Kenya and the world, for now and posterity' (National Museum of Kenya n.d.); the Canadian Museum for Human Rights will 'enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others, and to encourage reflection and dialogue' (Canadian Museum for Human Rights 2021a). Each of these sweeping claims centers on purposeful messaging.

Authority is essential to museums. Many practitioners would agree that authenticity – the singular object, document, painting, sculpture, photograph, architectural detail, etc. – is fundamental to that authority. More problematic are two preceding questions: by whom and for whom is that authority exercised. How we consider those questions is of course grounded in our world view and lived experiences. I and others have examined how heritage is used to convey and reinforce specific ideologies, and how ideology is promulgated through museums and heritage sites (Coffee 2006; Smith 2020, 128–131; Ash 2022, 16–24). As Doris Ash writes,

> Ideologies are not just ideas; they eventuate in both even and uneven real-world distribution of goods and services (i.e., resources) and are the foundation for contradictions and dialectical relationships.
>
> (Ash 2022, 16)

I will attempt to further complicate our understanding of ideologies with some examples in museum work. First, however, we must briefly revisit some history of the modern world.

The material culture of human rights

Conceptualizations of inalienable human rights in Euro-American thought emerged alongside mercantile capitalism and the twinned compulsion of the bourgeoisie to break free of monarchist political control and establish their own republican forms. Those sentiments are clearly articulated in foundational statements, such as the 'Act of Abjuration' (Netherlands), 'Declaration of Independence' (United States), and the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen' (France). As we know, those conceptualizations did not extend liberty or equality to all citizens or even all men; they ratified the rights of those who owned property. John Locke specifically included the right to capital property in his definition, while the Anglo-American bourgeoisie claimed 'the pursuit of happiness' as its overarching goal (Locke 1824; Jefferson et al 1776). Thus, in our consideration of post-medieval, anti-feudal ideology, it should be understood that the 'happiness' described by Locke, Jefferson, et al, is accumulation, 'of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of African into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signal(ing) the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production' (Marx 1967, 703).

The post-feudal concept of universal human rights has been revisited at various conjunctural moments since those declarations, such as during the republican revolts of 1848 in Europe, during the United States' civil war of 1861–1865, in nineteenth-century independence movements in South America, in response to the atrocities of the inter-imperialist war of 1939–1945, and in the anti-colonial rebellions in Asia and Africa that characterize the twentieth century. After the second world war, the victorious powers formed the United Nations Organization, which further codified certain 'human rights' as international law. Through a legal process and tribunals in the city of Nuremberg, which included judicial prosecution of German government and military officials for genocidal atrocities, international law was expanded to include protections from 'crimes against peace' and 'crimes against humanity,' including murder, extermination, enslavement, and deportation of civilian populations, and the persecution of persons on political, racial or religious grounds (United Nations Organization 2005, 2).[6,7] These codes are referred to as the Nuremberg Principles.

After 1945, and amidst national liberation movements re-emerging in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, the established colonial powers engaged in a process of relinquishing direct political control, while maintaining asymmetrical economic and political power relationships. Clandestine warfare, waged by paramilitaries and mercenaries, supplemented expeditionary warfare to ensure the continued flow of resources from the so-called 'global south' to the centers of global finance. Despite the Nuremburg Principles and the UNO Charter, the decades since 1945 have been rife with expeditionary wars, armed

coup d'états against elected governments, mass murder of non-combatants, and paramilitary repression of oppositional social movements. Such 'regime change' more frequently upholds neo-colonial relationships than it does international human rights law. Form follows function.

Nonetheless, widespread sentiment for the protections of liberty and equality persists globally and, since 2001, the International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (CIPDH-UNESCO) has identified places of memory world-wide that are linked to serious violations of human rights in recent history. The *Memorias Situadas* project documents 'a sad repertoire of serious human rights violations committed in the form of massacres and genocides all around the world… ethnic groups, religious groups and political opponents found death in the form of subjection and extermination that in many cases find an undeniable and brutal antecedent in the colonial slave system' (CIPDH–UNESCO 2021a). Some CIPDH sites are commemorated with museum-like collections and interpretations, while other sites 'have fallen into oblivion or are only remembered by the communities directly affected by the impact of such pain, communities or small groups of survivors who often carry on their backs the hard work of remembrance in adverse contexts, facing the generalized indifference or the obstinate denial of what has happened' (ibid.). *Memorias Situadas* also exists as a dataset on the CIPDH–UNESCO website.[8]

A similar and intersecting effort is the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), which now includes more that 300 member organizations in 65 countries. ICSC is a non-profit corporation headquartered in the United States and begun in 1999 on the initiative of leaders of the Tenement Museum in New York city. The Coalition describes itself as an actor within an ideological contest – 'the need to remember often competes with the equally strong pressure to forget … erasing the past can prevent new generations from learning critical lessons and destroy opportunities to build a peaceful future' (ICSC 2021).

Coming at this from a different angle, Robert Janes has argued,

> Humankind is in dire need of a long-term perspective to counteract the short-term thinking which drives the marketplace – be it the focus on quarterly results, shareholder value, or the immediate gratification of consumerism. This is the time continuum at play, and it is the special realm of museums. The commitment to the long-term is an irreplaceable contribution that only museums can make.
>
> (Janes 2009, 103)

Museum practitioners cannot make that contribution without dispensing with the role of museums as venerators of privilege and as monuments to expropriated wealth.

Case in point: Canadian Museum of Human Rights

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg, a current member of the ICSC, opened in 2014 with the mandate 'to enhance the public's understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others, and to encourage reflection and dialogue' (CMHR 2021a). The museum aims to depict 'events that demonstrate Canada's commitment to human rights, as well as its failures' (CMHR 2021b).

As is well known, both Canada and the United States of America were created out of colonial expeditions by Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Spain, which violently dispossessed the Indigenous inhabitants of the Americas. The colonial powers subsequently engaged in several hundred years of global territorial warfare. As one such colonial project, Canada's history is a composite of abuses and crimes against the rights of Indigenous peoples as now defined by the UNO. It is therefore incumbent upon a national museum for human rights to acknowledge and repudiate those abuses and to interrogate the socio-economic and ideological forces – capitalism, colonialism, racism, sexism, etc. – that undergird or overlay those transgressions. It is fair to say, however, that the formative process of creating a national Canadian Museum

Figure 2.2 Exhibition in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg
Source: Photo by Milorad Dimic MD, used in accordance with Creative Commons license 4.0.

for Human Rights did not proceed from such an existential examination. Rather, the museum was initially conceived as a privately funded project to memorialize the genocide of European Jews during the 1930s and 1940s, and was specifically inspired by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. Through a sequence of events and discussions, some of which were apparently driven by practical, budgetary matters, that initiative morphed into the present-day national museum. A full history of that metamorphosis exceeds the scope of this survey, but it is nevertheless important to trace several salient political and ideological contours of that process for what they model in museum practices more generally.

The location of the CMHR in Winnipeg is attributed to its principal advocate, Israel Asper, owner of the Canwest broadcast media conglomerate. Asper was active in provincial parliamentary politics, including leading the Manitoba Liberal Party during the early 1970s. He incorporated a private philanthropy in 1983 to finance various cultural and educational projects, including several specifically organized to 'tell Israel's story to the world' (Asper Foundation 2018).[9] The global ideological intent for CMHR was further articulated by an advisor to the Asper Foundation who spoke of 'creating the Canadian brand for human rights leadership' (Robertson 2019, 152). The Asper Foundation remains active in directing the fundraising entity Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which in 2021 was chaired by Gail Asper, Israel Asper's daughter. In addition to its educational purpose, the Museum for Human Rights project was envisioned as an economic redevelopment project for Winnipeg and its riverfront. Asper and others imagined that building a large museum at the juncture of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers – 'The Forks' –would attract tourists and economically improve the city center.

First Nations and Métis people objected to building over the ancestrally and spiritually important Forks site which, prior to the incorporation of Winnipeg, has been inhabited for thousands of years by Nakoda, Cree, Ojibwe, and Dakota peoples. Indigenous people and Métis were displaced by colonial government in the 1800s and thereafter the site was taken first by the Hudson Bay Company and then by Northern Pacific / Canadian National Railway. The Forks was designated a National Historic Site by Parks Canada in 1974. Subsequent archaeological studies of the area have demonstrated abundant evidence of Indigenous habitation by First Nations and then Métis people (Priess et al 1986; Kroker and Goundry 1993). From that field work in 2008, consulting archaeologists concluded that The Forks, was 'pivotal in the seasonal existence of the people of this region for thousands of years' and that 'very few localities in this part of the world appear to have been so important to so many people' (Quaternary Consultants 2013, 688). Acknowledging that history, the museum project invited Indigenous elders from nearby Thunderbird House to consult at various points in the project. A three-pipe blessing ceremony was held at the archaeological excavation. Later, during construction, one of the elders made and placed medicine bundles at the bottom of each

caisson excavation as an expression of restitution to the earth (Quaternary Consultants 2013, ii; Rollason 2009).

Despite those and other land acknowledgements, anthropologist Madison Caroline Dillard has argued that by building over the culturally important Forks area of Winnipeg, CMHR is 'furthering strategic settler-colonial amnesia' (Dillard 2020, 23). Indeed, the museum's opening was a moment for protest from Shoal Lake #40 First Peoples and others who called out the CMHR for obscuring both historical and present-day dispossession and genocide (Shoal Lake 2014a, 2014b; CBC News 2014a, 2014b).[10] Shoal Lake First Peoples declared 'we don't want to have to take our kids to a museum to learn about human rights, we want them to experience it at home' (Robertson 2019, 173).

CMHR originally described itself as a place 'where human rights education and discussion could take place' (CMHR 2021b). That strategic goal – to promote respect and to enable reflection and dialogue – attracts both examination and expression of inequalities that underlie Canadian society. The fundamental premise of the museum is thereby essentially ideological, which museum leadership have acknowledged in various formal statements. Specifically, the museum's first annual report pledged it would 'not shy away from controversy; it will recognize and present the wide variety of legitimate perspectives on sensitive issues fairly and openly and will embrace constructive public debate' (CMHR 2009, 8). Indeed, any human right would be of little importance if it were *not* a contested subject. The materiality of social injustice – physical impacts upon persons and communities, in space and time – underlies the human rights concept and thereby counterposes conceptual rights to material inequity, as oppositional socio-political moments. These contradictions are foundational to modern society, and so 'forbid rich and poor alike to sleep upon the bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal their bread. This equality is one of the benefits of the Revolution' (France 1908, 95).

As a national museum of Canada, the CMHR ultimately reports to elected officials and their governmental subordinates who collectively presume to ensure the museum's mandated mission. Moreover, the CMHR is a *museum* and not a juridical agency; its practice is manifest in its collections, exhibitions, and public programs, rather than in law. This does not mean that CMHR should not or cannot implement inclusive and equitable social practices internally and programmatically, but rather that its fundamental and public-facing service is to encourage rather than require specific ideologies. The CMHR is a museum *for* something, and it presents – independent of individual curatorial intentions – narratives that are read as normative or definitive of that ideological something. This foundational quality – the public history that CMHR conveys – constitutes a contentious nexus embedded in Canadian society.

For example, very early on in the museum's creation, politically conservative Ukrainian nationalists were vocal in their opposition to the museum's intentions to draw special attention to the genocide of Indigenous peoples via

European incursion into the western hemisphere, and of the twentieth-century genocides of European Jews, Slavs, and others by fascist movements and governments of Germany and Italy during the 1930s and 1940s. One Ukrainian émigré organization was especially vocal in their insistence that the 1932–1933 famine in Ukraine was being overlooked or subordinated to the mass murders conducted by the German government between 1936 and 1945 (Ford 2012; CBC 2014; Hladyshevsky et al. 2014). An especially poignant statement within that ongoing public debate was reported by the *Canadian Jewish News,* 13 April 2011:

> the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association (UCCLA) has sent out a postcard to supporters that appears to depict Jewish backers of a prominent Holocaust gallery in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights as pigs. … The back of the postcard features a pig who whispers into the ear of a sheep in a conspiratorial manner, 'All galleries are equal but some galleries are more equal than others.'

Further contextualizing the incident, the article quoted a German historian that '[the trope of clandestine] Jewish Communists is a staple in Ukrainian nationalist rhetoric' (Spivak 2011), while the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 20 August 2011, noted the historic influence of post-second world war immigrations to Canada of veterans of the Ukrainian Galician Division of the Waffen SS (Basen 2011). At the time, the museum's president was quoted in response:

> we're not here to make people happy. We're here to be authentic historically and present it from a human-rights lens and those people who disagree with that are very welcome to have their opinions heard and we respect that. The power of dialogue is something we want to embrace.
>
> (Basen 2011)

Those protests and similar moments in the formative years could have prompted deeper discussion among all stakeholders regarding the museum's mission, its advocative intent, and its potential effect throughout society. In the eyes of many, however, that did not happen (Dillard 2020; Hankivsky and Dhamoon 2013; Lehrer 2015; Moses 2012).

The museum's internal functioning has also purportedly been at odds with ethics of human rights. For example, by 2020, several current and former museum staff were publicly criticizing the workplace and leaders of the Museum for Human Rights via Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #cmhrstoplying. Among their criticisms were accusations of explicit and implicit condoning by managers of sexual and gendered harassment, racial bias and explicit acts of racism, censorship of interpretive content, and other discriminatory practices. One could expect that an effective human rights museum would attract the ire of misogynists and white supremacists, but not

that such attitudes might be reproduced internally and ignored for several years by museum leaders (Harris 2020; CMHR 2020a; CMHR 2020b).

Underlying these external and internal contradictions is the top-down, business-centered governance model adopted for CMHR by the private philanthropies and government ministries that founded it. CMHR bylaws describe in detail a governing structure and strategic objectives focused on financial sustainability and fiscal accountability. Such objectives are fair enough for an organization that aspires to public trust. However, the ideo-cultural purpose of the museum is placed as a distant second to this corporate-structural approach. Within its original 29-page corporate plan, the communicative mission and values objectives do not appear until page 20, where plan authors list six key activities for FY2009, and two 'key' five-year commitments. First year planning objectives included that 'values are reflected in day-to-day decision making' and that performance management 'cascades from the corporate plan.' A longer-term objective was that 'human, material and financial resources will be aligned with Museum priorities,' which again are described essentially as administrative tasks (CMHR 2008, 20).

The genesis of CMHR is rooted in late twentieth-century neo-liberalism, the salvage capitalism that has scoured the planet in search of partially used but perhaps not fully expended resources of people, places, natural resources, physical plant, etc. This capital 'restructuring' uses speculative debt to invest in and skim dividends from whatever remains. Productive activity is 'outsourced' from once-industrial centers to new sites of human and natural exploitation. An important touchstone of this neo-liberal ethic is the so-called private-public partnership, whereby social resources and historic commons are privatized using the ideological justification that contracts and markets are more efficient than public agency and must be unfettered from social regulation (Harvey 2005, 19–31). Indeed, an essential explanation of CMHR's practical, political, and ideological disconnect from stakeholders and from its own staff is that the project did not arise from or engage with broadly popular demands or social forces. Subsequent disconnects 'cascaded,' as its forward plan suggested, from a central focus on business operations rather than advancing a liberatory public dialogue.

In that same vein, CMHR in Winnipeg was imagined as an economic development project that would repeat the success of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC, perhaps oblivious to distinctive facts, not least of which is USHMM's location amidst various Smithsonian Institution museums in a city with high numbers of tourists. USHMM understands and performs its explicitly ideological role for more than one million visitors annually, and especially by working 'closely with many key segments of society who will affect the future of our nation … professionals from the fields of law enforcement, the judiciary, and the military, as well as diplomacy, medicine, education, and religion' (USHMM 2021). Unlike the CMHR, the USHMM is focused on one specific narrative, although it has since adopted the programmatic practice of adjoining some

related narratives to that central one. USHMM makes no attempt to provide an 'uplifting' interpretation of the Holocaust, rather it presents a stark reminder of the terminal sociopathy of inequality. Other narratives added since its opening include several more recent episodes of 'ethnic cleansings' by state regimes in Africa, Asia, the Balkans, although nothing is presented about the European colonialism operable in any of those events, nor is anything presented about colonial genocides in the western hemisphere. As such, like CMHR, the USHMM stays well within the bounds prescribed by the government whose members comprises the majority of its governing board.[11]

Case in point: Memorial da Resistencia de São Paulo

The Memorial da Resistencia de São Paulo also uses exhibits and public programs to interpret the meaning and history of human rights, particularly in the *estado* of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and to explore themes of resistance, control and political repression. The Memorial is intended as 'a space for reflection and to promote actions that contribute to the exercise of citizenship, the improvement of democracy and the enhancement of a culture of human rights' (APAC 2021). The Memorial is listed with the Memorias Situadas CIPDH-UNESCO project and with the International Coalition of Sites of Science. It historicizes and memorializes the military dictatorship of 1964–1985, via the identification of sites of persecution and in the collection of oral testimony by survivors. It is located in the former headquarters of the State Department of Political and Social Order of São Paulo, which has been described as 'one of the most gruesome political police forces in the country during the military regime' (CIPDH 2021b; ICSC 2021). Memorial da Resistencia collaborates with other human rights organizations, including the Nucleo de Preservacao da Memoria Politica (Center for Preservation of Political Memory), with which it co-hosts the monthly discussions series Sábados Resistentes – Resistance Saturdays.

Memorial da Resistência was begun in 2009, during the period of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's social-democratic Workers Party government, which itself included a number of persons who had been persecuted by the military dictatorship during the 1970s and 1980s. The Memorial has thus far collected hundreds of oral testimonies of survivors of that dictatorship, including that of Dilma Rousseff, former president of Brazil (2011–2016), and one of the thousands arrested and tortured by officers of the Department of Political and Social Order and then imprisoned for nearly three years in the early 1970s (Memorial da Resistência 2021a). An important initiative of the Workers Party government was the creation in 2012 of a National Truth Commission, the purpose of which was to officially investigate and record the human rights abuses perpetrated by the military dictatorship that ruled from 1964 to 1985. Analyzing the Truth Commission process, historians Nina Schneider and Gisele Iecker de Almeida describe it as a social process, rather than a top-down administrative maneuver, that engaged a range of 'civil society actors' including dozens of parallel 'local commissions' supervised by 'officials with varying

and competing political views' including some who refused to cooperate (Schneider and de Almeida 2018, 637; see also Schneider 2011).

Elections in 2018 installed a government led by Jair Messias Bolsonaro who is an outspoken racist, sexist, and supporter of fascism (Brum 2018; Forest 2018). As a legislator, Bolsonaro voted against the Truth Commission and declared 'the dictatorship's mistake was to torture but not kill' (Schneider 2020, 2). Such revanchist ideology has some support within Brazilian society, which appears to be sharply, if unevenly, divided between those who identify with a privileged minority – and sees that privilege threatened by demands for social equity – and those who aspire to a more inclusive and equitable social order.

As with Canada and the United States, Brazil's history is enmeshed with European colonialism, African slavery, and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Contemporary social relationships in Brazilian society are situated within that historical continuum. Engaging with that heritage and its legacies, the general theme for the Sábados Resistentes in 2021 has been a 'focus on human rights' (Memorial da Resistência. 2021b), specifically responding to the political and ideological contentions within the cultural sectors, and advancing broad social concerns such as eliminating urban poverty, defending the rights of Indigenous peoples, and protecting natural ecologies and habitat. These themes connect with each other as concepts of social and environmental justice, and engage visitors with intersections as well as specificities. Using the comparative lens of life during the military dictatorship, this discussion series examined women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, racism and prejudice, rights of children and adolescents, the criminalization of immigrants and the urban poor, and 'Permanências da ditadura nas periferias de São Paulo' – the persistence of dictatorship in the impoverished suburbs of São Paulo (Memorial da Resistência 2022).

Resistance Saturday discussions have regularly attracted 200 to 300 participants to the auditorium of the museum, and during the COVID-19 epidemic metamorphosed into streaming and interactive YouTube and Facebook online events, which in turn have enabled the project to engage participants beyond São Paulo and Brazil, and particularly older adolescents and young adults (15–25 years of age). The intention of program organizers and presenters – many of whom are academics and consider themselves to be public intellectuals – has been to explore major contemporary themes of human rights and how those themes intersect with and complicate each other. For example, during the 27 March 2021 event, self-described 'militant professor' Aida Maria Monteiro[12] advocated for educational 'instruments of liberation and emancipation', while Paulo Vannuchi spoke about workers' rights and the Program Nacional de Direitos Humanos – an initiative of the Workers Party government – and warned against 'fascist' policies and practices of the Bolasario government (Memorial da Resistência 2021c).

The Memorial da Resistência quite clearly views itself as a museum of education and advocacy. It does not pretend to be detached. It has focused its

work on documenting and explicating its subject – political rights and equality – via oral histories and other records of deprivations of rights and equality in time and space. Its perceived audiences are wide cross sections of Brazilian society, and its goal is that by critically engaging these issues it will promote practices of equality and social justice in the present and for the future.

Structural influences

Ideology arises dialectically from social practices and mediates those same practices. The mediational objectives of control and enablement are distinct, but they also form a dialectical tension and act upon one another. Especially to the insiders of the dominant culture, ideologies lie hidden as the way things are 'supposed to be' in stratified society. Public museums have played a special role since the end of the eighteenth century in reinforcing this illusion and serving 'as keeper of the nation's spiritual life and guardian of the most evolved and civilized culture of which the human spirit is capable' (Duncan 2004, 255–256). But while museum bureaucracies provide the central direction of processes of ideological representation and assimilation, there are others forces that also shape museum work.

Case in point: Philanthropy and other 'soft' power

Every fetish is a mediational tool, but money is a special type of fetish within the rituals of commodity circulation[13] and in the formation of cultural capital. Thus, the capital formations engendered by nineteenth-century industrialization also bred the capitalist-philanthropist who redirected his expropriated social surplus to enforce his will in public policy. Many of the large American charitable foundations – Carnegie, Ford, Getty, MacArthur, Mellon, Rockefeller, etc.[14] – trace their origins to those accumulations and are now capital centers in their own right, with tens of billions of dollars in assets. These trusts use their financial leverage to exert political and ideological influence via the arts, humanities, and sciences, worldwide. Philanthropy provides specific direction, apparently 'at arms-length' rather than hands-on. That distinction is an illusion, specifically for projects dependent upon such funding and more generally as it promotes and stewards elite cultural capital.

The Rockefeller Foundation created in 1913 by fossil fuels magnate John D. Rockefeller Sr., reported its 2017 invested assets of $4,086,668,694, investment income of $286,659,727, and grants awarded of $157,700,400 (Rockefeller Foundation 2017). Many of its larger grants – above $100,000 – influence socio-economic and political policy-making in Congo (Kinshasa), Jordan, Kenya, India, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Africa, Seychelles, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, and Zambia. During 2017 and 2018, the Rockefeller Foundation also supported a few cultural organizations in the United States, including the Gilder Lehman Institute of American History ($2,910,369),

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts ($1,000,000), and the Apollo Theater ($1,000,000) (Rockefeller Foundation 2017; 2018).

The Mellon Foundation, created in 1969 by heirs of American financier Andrew Mellon, is heavily invested in Euro-American cultural capital markets. Its reported assets in 2018 were $6,855,615,466, its investment income was $475,086,391 and, of that, $316,920,270 was awarded in grants (Mellon Foundation 2018, 1). The Mellon Foundation reported grants in 2018 to 38 museum projects, nearly all of which were long-established organizations: American Association of Museums ($1,000,000), American Folk Art Museum ($410,000), American Museum of Natural History ($500,000), Cleveland Museum of Art ($1,500,000), Los Angeles County Museum of Art ($2,125,000), Metropolitan Museum of Art ($750,000), New-York Historical Society ($675,000), Rijksmuseum ($853,987), Stellenbosch Museum ($995,000), and so on (Mellon Foundation 2018, 981–1191).

The Bloomberg Family Foundation (Bloomberg), was created in 2006 by financial information services businessman Michael Bloomberg. In 2019, the Bloomberg Foundation reported assets of $8,651,356,138; net investment income of $447,689,766; and disbursed grants totaling $1,623,859,605 (Bloomberg Foundation 2019, 1). Among its other policy interests, the Bloomberg Foundation (2016; 2017; 2019) reported large grants to the Museum of Science, Boston ($63,245,000), Museum of Modern Art, New York ($4,045,000), Serpentine Galleries at Kensington Gardens ($2,014,831), Jewish Museum, New York ($3,050,000), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ($1,378,000), Guggenheim Foundation ($1,283,100), and to Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors 'to support art programs tied to economic development' ($10,000,000) (Bloomberg Foundation 2016, 66; 2017, 30; 2019, 18). Bloomberg has also made smaller grants, such as to the Du Sable Museum of African American History, Chicago ($175,000), Museum of African Diaspora, San Francisco ($125,000), and the Motown Historical Museum ($75,000) (Bloomberg Foundation 2016; 2017; 2019).

These charitable foundations are operated and governed by administrators and trustees many of whom are themselves bourgeois.[15] Grants finance projects that align closely with foundation goals and objectives. Program officers diligently ensure that cultural capital targets are met, but fulfillment is a given for the dominant culture museums and universities. Foundation support for smaller entities – a community heritage project or a non-profit exhibition space, for example – serves to draw smaller organization into the ideological orbit of the major cultural capital formations, exerting a gravitational pull that may be difficult to escape later. Indeed, for smaller museums, even modest philanthropic 'gifts' determine whether or not projects or activities will take place, and bind the museum to appeasing foundation officials. Beyond specific funding, these large foundations enable other private sector actors to exert pass-through direction of cultural capital and social policy. Thus, in the United States for example, federal government agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities fund state funding agencies, which in turn disperse

funds to specific museums and cultural non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Thus, recipients are expected to appease both the regional (state) administrators and the federal agency to which the regional entity is tethered.

Many modern states create public agencies and governmental departments to direct cultural and museum policy. In the United States, the Institute for Museum and Library Services and the National Endowment for the Humanities; in Britain, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS); the Ministry of Culture in France; and similar agencies in other countries each directs how culture is encouraged and interpreted. These agencies present 'arms-length' procedures to mask their interventions, but behind every peer review is a directorate ready to override that process in order to implement governmental objectives. Thus, when in 2020 the British National Trust published a study of the impact of African slavery on England's built environment, the report was denounced by the minster for DCMS along with 50 members of parliament and the Trust was threatened with defunding (Doward 2020; Adams 2021; Murray 2021). Hyojung Cho and others have described inverse exercises in which museums are made instrumental of ideological 'soft power' exercised through government actors such as the US Information Agency and the US State Department (Cho 2022; Ang, Isar, and Mar 2015). The US State Department explicitly tasks its museum partners to promote 'values embedded in our artistic and intellectual traditions (to) form a bulwark against the forces of darkness' (Ang, Isar and Mar 2015, 368). It is notable, then, that the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience receives more than 90% of its revenue from US government grants (ICSC 2017; 2018; 2019).

Case in point: Neoliberalism, tourisme, and the exotic Other

A hallmark of colonial extraction is a 'home country' petit-bourgeoisie – the true middle class – whose socio-economic status, while much less than the *haute bourgeoisie*, is measurably above that of the working classes. In America, these strata of professionals, shopkeepers, technical specialists, and managers are numerous and have access to personal lines of credit if not true discretionary income (BLS 2020). Accordingly, most bourgeois museums seek out leisure tourists and present themselves as sites for recreational engagement with collections and vicarious experiences of the rare and exotic object, rather than as sites of dialogic culture-sharing or culture-making. This mentality of *tourisme* is explicit in strategic plans which identify 'tourists' and their distinct interests. The closing decades of the twentieth century were a highpoint of this neoliberal ethic, and a global tourism sector was advanced as a route by which historically disadvantaged communities could engage a global marketplace. Tourism became, by the early 1990s, the fourth largest sector of the world economy, after armaments, petroleum, and motor vehicles (Sinclair 1998). In 2019, the tourism business sector accounted for more than US$8 trillion, or more than 10% of global GDP (WTTC 2020).[16]

In Madhya Pradesh, state government has placed a premium on creating a tourist economy, and envisions cultural tourism of Adivasi culture, in museums, and to villages (Dive and Dubey 2021; Gohil 2019). A similar model was advocated to Indigenous tribal nations in the United States, so that while the government steadily reduced their land rights and funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indigenous communities were advised to borrow heavily in order to build hotels and casinos, thereby substituting an emotional wasteland of vast halls filled with electronic wagering machines for the spiritual devastation of their ancestral lifeways (NATHPO 2005; USCCR 2003).[17]

Tourism is a form of exchange, and the 'right' to that experience is conferred to those with the funds, leisure time, and ability to travel to sites of cultural exchange (UNWTO 1999). Whatever the cultural benefit that global tourism might add to humanity's understanding of itself, it is structured so that shared cultural experience manifests as a distant glance and as an exchange relationship (Cater 2006; Hawkins and Mann 2007; Nash, Akeroyd et al 1981; Sreekumar and Parayil 2002).

Over time, neo-liberalism has elicited an opposing, anti-globalization response. The economic shocks of 2007–2009 and of subsequent austerity programs have delegitimized neo-liberal triumphalism in the minds of hundreds of millions, globally. Meanwhile, as the internal contradictions of wealthy capitalist societies grow, revanchism and xenophobia effloresce among elites and their middle-class supplicants hoping to benefit from restructured inequality, directing violence against a range of 'others' by all available means, up to and including expeditionary warfare (BBC 2021; Porter, Austen and Frenkel 2022; Reuters 2021).

Museum practitioners exercise individual and collective agency in tension with encompassing social forces. Administrators, curators, educators, and other staff personify social relationships and broader social practices. Thus, despite its underlying purpose of defining normativity, museum work is never simply a checklist of performative behaviors, museum practice is not monological, and the effect of that practice is not entirely predictive. As Ina Ross describes among visitors to the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum, and as the Shoal Lake Nation #40 members demonstrated at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, museum users also exercise agency in their physical engagement, perceptions, and reinterpretations of the museum. Structural tensions beyond the museum walls condition structural tensions within museums. We are active participants in and products of the development and the resolution of those processes.

Subjectivity and ideology

Worldviews are made through social practices. The capitalist individual was not born avaricious; the racist adult was not born misanthropic. Yet, within the conceptual frame of business management psychology, social and interpersonal confrontations are seen as manifestations of individual behaviors or

personality types. Conflicts are perceived as singularities and particularities within an otherwise functional and unified system, in which capital social relationships are unquestioned (Hofstede 1983; McSweeney 2002; Hofstede and McCrae 2004). Myers-Briggs and similar metrics freeze behaviors as typologies; intellectual conflict is characterized as differences in 'personality' traits (Adams and Rice-Lively 2009). Agency is confined to maneuvering within the duality of use and exchange. In the worldview of capital, all social relationships – including teaching and learning[18] – are transactional. A radical change in how we might interact with each other – in any way other than as the marketers of material, emotional, or intellectual commodities – is inconceivable.

The circumstances inherited from the past enable some forms of change even while they limit others (McGuire 1992, 122). As Childe observed, unlike other animals on our planet, 'change in [human] culture and tradition can be initiated, controlled, or delayed by the conscious and deliberate choice of their human authors and executors' (Childe 1981, 38). Likewise, an expanding constellation of museologists have shown that museums are neither value-free nor are they simply mirrors of their societies (Ash 2022; Bennet 2004; Janes 2009; Sandell 2002; Simpson 1996). Museum workers are actively shaping and are shaped by their internal and external users – dialectical relationships that we intentionally create or in which we are spontaneously emmeshed. There is no meaningful way to disentangle daily museum work from those webs of local and global processes that comprise human societies. The processes of colonialist extraction comprise a historical legacy of dispossession and enslavement and the practical foundation upon which modern society is built. The dominant narratives continually shout down oppositional and subaltern voices, while 'taken-for-granted' assumptions supporting societal inequality and privilege continually find expression and are habituated via museum collection and interpretive practices. We may make our futures, but we are never fully free of the constraints of existing social relationships and practices. Museums begun as monuments to eighteenth- or nineteenth-century social relationships are, in the twenty-first century, challenged by the tremendous societal changes that have reshaped humanity since those foundations were laid. Institutions organized as testaments to the tastes and privileges of a local or national *haute bourgeoisie* and their transnational and colonial orbits are, in the twenty-first century, challenged to represent multivocal and multicultural societies and aesthetics. Narratives are being rewritten, collections are being questioned and repatriated. Decolonize activists continue to graffiti the museum entrance.

Not a conclusion, but a transition

Although museums appear to us as libraries of precious objects, the functional purpose of museums is to disseminate symbolic elements as ideologies. Unlike museum objects, our world views are not encased in vitrines, they are formed through continual social processes. We may have difficulty concentrating or

collecting our thoughts but we are never unthinking, nor are we ever separated from social practice. As Vygotsky observed, 'learning is more than the acquisition of the ability to think; it is the acquisition of many specialized abilities for thinking about a variety of things' (Vygotsky 1978, 83), which is to say, about practices.

Ideologies are these practices internalized. As we become aware of that dialectical relationship, we move closer to exercising meaningful, effective agency. Museums are concurrently material representations of social practices and collective agents of interpretive processes. They can be either arenas for acquiescence or interrogation, for detachment or social responsibility. In that praxis resides the potential for subverting oppressive narratives and enabling the liberatory turn. It is to those mediational practices that I turn next.

Notes

1 The diverse range of Black Lives Matter actions in 2020 clearly demonstrated the decentralized and yet collective articulation of protest and affirmation.
2 The International Labour Organization (ILO) writes: 'The Government of India has contested the use of the term "Indigenous Peoples" for a particular group of people, saying that all citizens are Indigenous to India, and it has preferred to use the term "Scheduled Tribes"'(ILO 2009, 18).
3 At the time of this writing, and since 2014, the prime minister of India has been Narendra Modi, who is MP from Varanasi in Gujarat state. From 2001 until his selection as prime minister, Modi was chief minister of Gujarat. Modi is the principal leader of the extreme Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and of its Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) paramilitary organization, notorious for pogroms against Muslims and other non-Hindus, killing thousands. RSS also assassinated Mohandus K. Ghandi in 1948.
4 Tilche describes Pithora as 'a ritual painting and a deity among Rathavas as well as Nayak and Dhanak communities of Chhota Udaipur and neighboring districts in Gujarat and in Madhya Pradesh. It is painted on the internal walls of houses in the context of large ritual ceremonies (*panghu)* by a group of painters (*lakharas*) and through the mediation of a ritual specialist (*badva*)' (Tilche 2022, 123; emphasis in original).
5 The destruction or subsumption of Indigenous culture and history is enacted in all settler societies, especially the United States, Canada and Australia.
6 The choice of Nuremberg was of symbolic importance as the city where in 1936 the German government declared its race laws aimed at dispossessing and eliminating Jews, Slavs, and Roma throughout Europe.
7 The victor powers in that war have a multi-century history of enslaving, dispossessing, and murdering millions of persons in Africa, the Americas and Asia, and since 1945 they continued their pre-war domination using overt and convert warfare in Vietnam, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, Congo, Algeria, South Africa, Rhodesia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Philippines, Iran, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.
8 Accessed in June 2021 at https://www.cipdh.gob.ar/memorias-situadas/en/este-proyecto/.
9 Foundation projects include: the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy at IDC Herzliya, which 'focuses on the study and use of new media technologies in telling Israel's story to the world'; the Asper International Program on Israeli Law and Society (Mishpatim), which 'compares the Israeli and Canadian legal frameworks

and features numerous excursions across Jerusalem and Israel, including trips to the Supreme Court, the Israeli Parliament and more'; and the Menachem Begin Heritage Foundation, who the foundation describes as 'one of the key individuals who helped bring the state of Israel to reality.' See http://asperfoundation.com.

10 This selective amnesia extends to other human rights discourse. For example, museum exhibits about 'human rights violations' do not discuss the 1917 Balfour Declaration or the dispossession of native inhabitants in the 'British Mandate' of Palestine in order to create a European settler colony which in 1947 became the state of Israel. See https://humanrights.ca/exhibition/galleries (accessed 10 June 2021). See also https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/text-of-the-balfour-declaration (accessed 10 June 2021).

11 As of mid-2021, those additional stories presented by USHMM described events in Armenia, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Zimbabwe. With the exception of Armenia, these examples post-date 1975. The museum notes that these examples are 'not an exhaustive list' yet they are the only examples cited and the list excludes states well-known for human rights violations but closely aligned with the USA.

12 Aida Monteiro is professor of education at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) in Recife.

13 It is worth quoting Marx at length on this point. 'Money itself is a commodity, and external object, capable of becoming the private property of any individual. Thus, social power becomes the private power of private persons. … Modern society, which soon after its birth, pulled Plutus by the hair of his head from the bowels of the earth, greets gold as its Holy Grail, as the glittering incarnation of the very principal of its own life' (Marx 1967, 132–133).

14 Some of these capitalists have endowed multiple philanthropies. Thus, there are at least 11 registered charitable foundations endowed with inherited wealth by descendants of Rockefeller I.

15 The managing directors of the MacArthur Foundation and the presidents and the chief investment officers of the Rockefeller Foundation and of the Mellon Foundation are each compensated more than $1 million p.a. (Rockefeller Foundation 2017; MacArthur Foundation 2017; Mellon Foundation 2018). The Bloomberg Family Foundation director on the other hand is reportedly paid less than $300,000 (Bloomberg Foundation 2019).

16 Without a hint of irony, the World Travel & Tourism Council refers to its business model as 'sustainable'. See https://wttc.org/About/About-Us (accessed 20 June 2021).

17 For example, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation was reportedly still carrying $2.3 billion in debt on its casino complex seventeen years after it opened (Green 2009).

18 Research has determined that a majority of American (USA) MBA students cheat on their qualifying exams, but business school academics critique that deficiency not for what it reveals about capitalist ethics but because it highlights deficient instruction in the impact of statutory regulation: blatant cheaters may get caught and jeopardize the capitalist enterprise (Mangan 2006; McCabe 2009).

References

Abungu, George, Margaret Anderson, Jette Sandahl, W. Richard West Jr.. 2020. 'Reflections on Our Resignation from the ICOM MDPP2', 2 July, circulated online, http://icomdanmark.dk/wp-content/uploads/REFLECTIONS-ON-OUR-RESIGNATION-FROM-THE-ICOM-MDPP2.pdf (accessed 10 March 2022).

Adams, Geraldine Kendall. 2019. 'Rift emerges over Icom's proposed museum definition', *Museums Journal*, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2019/08/22082019-rift-over-icom-definition/ (accessed 2 March 2021).

Adams, Geraldine Kendall. 2021. 'National Trust slavery report did not breach charity law', *Museums Journal*, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2021/03…tm_source=Museums%20Association&dm_i=2VBX,14TYZ,54STW3,4DC2Y,1 (accessed 13 April 2021).

Adams, John, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman. 1776. 'The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America', Philadelphia Pennsylvania.

Adams, Suellen and Mary Lynn Rice-Lively. 2009. 'Personality and Research Styles: Why We Do the Things We Do', *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 50 (1): 50–58.

Ancestry.com. 2019. 'Ancestry continues to lead the industry with world's largest consumer DNA network', https://www.ancestry.com/corporate/newsroom/press-releases/ancestry-surpasses-15-million-members-its-dna-network-powering-unparalleled (accessed 25 March 2022).

Ang, Ian, Yudhishthir Raj Isar, Phillip Mar. 2015. 'Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest?' *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21 (4): 365–381.

APAC. 2021. 'Associação Pinacoteca Arte e Cultura - Memorial da Resistencia de São Paulo', Associação Pinacoteca Arte e Cultura, http://apacsp.org.br/ (accessed 10 June 2021).

Ash, Doris B. 2022. *Reculturing Museums*, New York: Routledge.

Asper Foundation. 2018. 'Ten Years of Partnering to Make the Case for Israel', Asper Foundation and Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, http://asperfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/idc-jun18-pressrelease.pdf (accessed 12 February 2022).

Baldwin, Jame and Raul Peck. 2016. I Am Not Your Negro (Velvet Film GmgH, 2017), motion picture.

Basen, Ira. 2011. 'Memory becomes a minefield at Canada's Museum for Human Rights', 22 August, *Toronto Globe and Mail*, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/memory-becomes-a-minefield-at-canadas-museum-for-human-rights/article2135961/ (accessed 15 September 2011).

Baviskar, Amita. 2005. 'Adivasi Encounters with Hindu Nationalism in MP', *Economic and Political Weekly* 40 (48): 5105–5113.

BBC. 2021. 'Far-right group Britain First registers as a political party', *BBC News*, 27 September, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-58713102 (accessed 19 February 2022).

Benería, Lourdes, and Gita Sen. 1981. 'Accumulation, Reproduction, and "Women's Role in Economic Development": Boserup Revisited', *Signs* 7 (2): 279–298.

Bennett, Tony. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Bennett, Tony. 2004. *Pasts Beyond Memory*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Bloomberg Foundation. 2016. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2016', Bloomberg Foundation, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

Bloomberg Foundation. 2017. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2017', Bloomberg Foundation, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

Bloomberg Foundation. 2019. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2019', Bloomberg Foundation, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

BLS. 2020. 'May 2020 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, United States, All Occupations', US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington DC, https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#00-0000 (accessed 20 February 2022).

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

British Museum. 2022. 'Privacy Policy, 1. About Us', British Museum, London, https://www.britishmuseum.org/privacy-policy (accessed 6 February 2022).

Brown-Nagin, Tomika, Christy Coleman, Makeda Best, Sven Beckert. 2021. 'The Intentional Museum', online event, Harvard Museums of Science & Culture, Cambridge MA. https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/intentional-museum (accessed 12 June 2021).

Brum, Eliane. 2018. 'How a homophobic, misogynist, racist "thing" could be Brazil's next president', 6 October, *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/ oct/06/homophobic-mismogynist-racist-brazil-jair-bolsonaro (accessed 13 June 2021).

Bunch, Lonnie and Tom Loughman. 2020. 'ICOM-US Statement: A Message from our Leadership', https://mailchi.mp/e2ac3fc7007c/icom-us-newsletter-4030577?e=[UNIQID] (accessed 25 June 2020).

Cater, Erlet. 2006. 'Ecotourism as a Western Construct', *Journal of Ecotourism*, 5 (1–2):23–39.

Cho, Hyojung. 2022. 'From representation to engagement: how have museums supported US cultural diplomacy?' *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 37(4): 383-400.

CMHR. 2008. 'Summary of Corporate Plan and Operating and Capital Budgets for 2009–2010 to 2014–2015', Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg.

CMHR. 2009. 'First Annual Report, 2008–2009', Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg.

CMHR. 2020a. 'Creating an equitable museum: A framework to create a safe, respectful and healthy workplace', Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg. https://humanrights.ca/creating-an-equitable-museum-a-framework-to-create-a-safe-respectful-and-healthy-workplace (accessed 31 May 2021).

CMHR. 2020b. 'A comprehensive approach to address systemic racism and discrimination', Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg. https://humanrights.ca/about/toward-greater-inclusion-and-equity#section-Reports-and-responses (accessed 31 May 2021).

CMHR. 2021a. 'Mandate', Canadian Museum for Human Rights, https://humanrights.ca/about/mandate (accessed 31 May 2021).

CMHR. 2021b. 'Our History', Canadian Museum for Human Rights, https://humanrights.ca/about/our-history (accessed 31 May 2021).

CBC News. 2014a. 'Canadian Museum for Human Rights opening marked by music, speeches and protests', *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, 19 September, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/canadian-museum-for-human-rights-opening-marked-by-music-speeches-and-protests-1.2771245 (accessed 1 June 2021).

CBC News. 2014b. 'Shoal Lake 40 'Human Rights Violations Museum' highlights water problems', *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, 17 September, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/shoal-lake-40-human-rights-violations-museum-highlights-water-problems-1.2769067 (accessed 13 June 2021).

CIDPH–UNESCO. 2021a. 'A Map for Memory', CIDPH-UNESCO, https://www.cipdh.gob.ar/memorias-situadas/en/este-proyecto/ (accessed 11 June 2021).

CIPDH–UNESCO. 2021b. 'Memorial of Resistance', CIDPH-UNESCO, https://www.cipdh.gob.ar/memorias-situadas/en/lugar-de-memoria/memorial-de-la-resistencia-de-san-pablo/ (accessed 10 June 2021).

Cleveland Museum of Art. 2018. 'Mission, Vision, Promise', Cleveland Museum of Art, https://www.clevelandart.org/about/history-and-mission/mission-statement (accessed 6 February 2022).

Coombes, Annie E. 2004. 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', in Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (eds) *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, 278–297. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Childe, V. Gordon. 1956, *Society and Knowledge*, New York: Harper and Brothers.

Childe, V. Gordon. 1981 [1956]. *Man Makes Himself*, Bradford-on-Avon: Moonraker Press.

Coffee, Kevin. 2006. 'Museums and the Agency of Ideology', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 49 (4): 435–448.

Dillard, Madison Caroline. 2020. 'Behind the Exhibit: Exploring the Processes of Indigenous Rights Representation at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights', digitally published Electronic Theses and Dissertations. https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1753 (accessed 23 June 2021).

Dive, Kavita and Archana Dubey 2021. 'A Study of Heritage Tourism in Madhya Pradesh', *Elementary Education Online* 20 (5): 5328–5332.

Dodd, Jocelyn, Richard Sandell, Annie Delin, and Jackie Gay. 2004. 'Buried in the Footnotes: The Representation of Disabled People in Museum and Gallery Collections', Research Center for Museums and Galleries, Leicester: University of Leicester.

Doward, Jamie. 2020. 'I've been unfairly targeted, says academic at heart of National Trust "woke" row', *The Guardian*, 20 December, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/20/ive-been-unfairly-targeted-says-academic-at-heart-of-national-trust-woke-row (accessed 10 March 2022).

Duncan, Carol. 2004. 'From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum', in Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (eds) *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, 250–278. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Edwards, Frank, Hedwig Lee, and Michael Espositio. 2019. 'Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race–ethnicity, and sex', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116 (34): 16793–16798.

Ellemers, Naomi. 2018. 'Gender stereotypes', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 69: 275–298.

Folles, Jonathan. 2019. 'Thoughts and Prayers', *Psychology Today*, 13 May, https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/the-thing-feathers/201905/thoughts-and-prayers (accessed 8 February 2022).

Ford, Jenny. 2012. 'Memo on Holodomor fails to quell concern', *Winnipeg Free Press*, 10 July, https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/memo-on-holodomor-fails-to-quell-concern-161888965.html (accessed 1 June 2021).

Forest, Adam. 2018. 'Jair Bolsonaro: the worst quotes from Brazil's far-right presidential frontrunner', 8 October, *The Independent*, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/ americas/jair-bolsonaro-who-is-quotes-brazil-president-election-run-off-latest-a8573901.html (accessed 13 June 2021).

France, Anatole. 1908. *The Red Lily*, London: John Lane.

Freire, Paulo. 2018. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Gero, Joan M. 1985. 'Socio-politics and the Woman-at-Home Ideology', *American Antiquity*, 50 (2), 342–350.

Goeschel, Christian. 2009. 'Before the Holocaust: Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany, 1933–9', *History Workshop Journal* 68 (1): 305–310.

Gohil, Neeraj. 2019. 'Potential and Planning for Tribal Tourism in India: A Case Study on Gond Tribes of Madhya Pradesh State, India', *International journal of Multidisciplinary & Allied Studies*, 6 (8): 72–81.

Green, Rick. 2009. 'Pequots find that easy money is hard to give up', *Hartford Courant*, 8 September, https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-2009-09-08-pequots-gambling-cash-0908-story.html (accessed 27 May 2022).

Hankivsky, Olena and Rita Kaur Dhamoon. 2013. 'Which Genocide Matters the Most? An Intersectionality Analysis of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 46 (4): 899–920.

Harris, Laurelle A.. 2020. 'Rebuilding the Foundation: External Review into Systemic Racism and Oppression at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights', Harris Law Solutions, Winnipeg.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, David. 2007. 'Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 610 (1): 21–44.

Haupt, Gretchen, Marjorie Bequette, Megan Goeke and Choua Her. 2022. '" … Yet, it is still very White:": structural and cultural impediments to DEAI change in science museums', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 37 (2): 196–213.

Hawkins, Donald E. and Shaun Mann. 2007. 'The world bank's role in tourism development', *Annals of Tourism Research* 34 (2): 348–363.

Hladyshevsky, Andrew, Olya Grod, Roman Zakaluzny, et al. 2014. 'An Open Letter from Concerned Canadians', 15 September, https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1301996-an-open-letter-to-cmhr-ceo-stuart-murray-15-sept (accessed 1 June 2021).

Hofstede, Geert. 1983. 'National Cultures Revisited', *Cross-Cultural Research* 18 (4): 285–305.

Hofstede, Geert and Robert R. McCrae. 2004. 'Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture', *Cross-Cultural Research* 38 (1): 52–88.

ICSC. 2021. 'Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo', International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Washington DC, https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/membership/memorial-da-resistencia-de-sao-paulo-brazil/ (accessed 10 June 2021).

ICSC. 2017. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2017', International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

ICSC. 2018. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2018', International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

ICSC. 2019. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2019', International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

Ignatin, Noel and Ted Allen. 1976 [1969]. 'White Blindspot & Can Whites Radicals be Radicalized?', Detroit: Radical Education Project.

ILO. 2009. 'Indigenous & Tribal Peoples' Rights in Practice, A Guide to ILO Convention No. 169', International Labor Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—ed_norm/—normes/documents/publication/wcms_106474.pdf (accessed 27 May 2022).

IWGIA. 2022. 'The Indigenous World 2022: India', 1 April, International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs, Copenhagen Denmark, https://www.iwgia.org/en/india/4650-iw-2022-india.html (accessed 27 May 2022).

Janes, Robert R. 2009. *Museums in a Troubled World*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
Jefferson, Thomas, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman. 1776. 'The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America', 4 July, manuscript, United States National Archives.
Kroker, Sid and Pam Goundry. 1993. 'A 3000 Year Old Native Campsite and Trade Centre at The Forks', Forks Renewal Corporation and Canadian Parks Service.
Leacock, Eleanor. 1981. 'History, Development, and the Division of Labor by Sex: Implications for Organization', *Signs* 7 (2): 474–491.
Leacock, Eleanor. 1983. 'Interpreting the Origins of Gender Inequality: Conceptual and Historical Problems', *Dialectical Anthropology* 7 (4): 263–284.
Lehrer, Erica. 2015. 'Thinking through the Canadian Museum for Human Rights', *American Quarterly* 67 (4): 1195–1216.
Lobo, Lancy. 2002. 'Adivasis, Hindutva and Post-Godhra Riots in Gujarat', *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (48): 4844–4849.
Locke, John. 1824. 'An Essay concerning Human Understanding', in *Works of John Locke in Nine Volumes*, Vol. 1, London: Rivington.
John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation. 2017. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2017', Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.
MPTM. 2019. 'Museum Brochure', Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum, Bhopal, India.
Mangan, Katherine. 2006. 'Survey Finds Widespread Cheating in M.B.A. Programs', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 19 September, https://www.chronicle.com/article/survey-finds-widespread-cheating-in-m-b-a-programs/ (accessed 19 September 2006).
Marshall, Alex. 2020. 'What is a museum? A dispute erupts over a new definition', *New York Times*, 6 August, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/06/arts/what-is-a-museum.html (accessed 11 May 2021).
Martin-Storey, Alexa and E. G. August. 2016. 'Harassment due to gender non-conformity mediates the association between sexual minority identity and depressive symptoms', *The Journal of Sex Research* 53 (1): 85–97.
Marx, Karl. 1967. *Capital*, Vol. 1, A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, New York: International Publishers.
Marx, Karl. 1969. 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in Marx and Engels *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, 394–487. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
Mathur, Saloni and Kavita Singh. 2015. 'Reincarnations of the Museum', in Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh (eds), *No touching, no spitting, no praying: The Museum in South Asia*, 203–218. Abingdon: Routledge.
McCabe, Donald. 2009. 'MBAs Cheat, But Why?', *Harvard Business Review*, 13 April, https://hbr.org/2009/04/mbas-cheat-but-why.html (accessed 16 February 2022).
McGuire, Randall. 1992. *A Marxist Archaeology*, San Diego CA: Academic Press.
McSweeney, Brenden. 2002. 'Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith – a failure of analysis', *Human Relations* 55 (1): 89–118.
Mellon Foundation. 2018. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2018', Andrew Mellon Foundation, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.
Memorial da Resistência. 2021a. 'Interview with Dilma Rousseff', Memorial da Resistência, São Paulo, http://memorialdaresistenciasp.org.br/entrevistas/dilma-rousseff/ (accessed 10 June 2021).

Memorial da Resistência. 2021b. 'Sábados Resistentes se voltam para os Direitos Humanos', Memorial da Resistência, São Paulo, http://memorialdaresistenciasp.org.br/sabados-resistentes-2021/ (accessed 13 June 2021).

Memorial da Resistência. 2021c. 'Sábados Resistentes de 2–22 abornam a construção de cidadania no Brasil', Memorial da Resistência, São Paulo, http://memorialdaresistenciasp.org.br/sabados-resistentes-2022/ (accessed 13 February 2022).

Memorial da Resistência. 2022. 'Notícias', Memorial da Resistência, São Paulo, http://memorialdaresistenciasp.org.br/?post_type=post (accessed 7 February 2022).

Moses, A. Dirk. 2012. 'The Canadian Museum for Human Rights: the "uniqueness of the Holocaust" and the question of genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research* 14 (2): 215–238.

Murray, Jessica. 2021. 'Politicians should not weaponize history, says colonialism researcher', *The Guardian*, 22 February, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2021/feb/22/politicians-should-not-weaponise-uk-history-says-colonialism-researcher (accessed 5 May 2021).

Nash, Dennison, Ann V. Akeroyd, et al. 1981. 'Tourism as an Anthropological Subject' [and Comments and Reply], *Current Anthropology* 22 (5): 461–481.

NATHPO. 2005. 'Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Indian Country', Washington DC: National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers.

National Museum of Kenya. n.d. 'About Us', National Museum of Kenya, https://www.museums.or.ke/about-us/ (accessed 6 February 2022).

National Museum of Mongolia. 2018. 'About', National Museum of Mongolia, http://en.nationalmuseum.mn/about (accessed 6 February 2022).

Noce, Vincent. 2019. 'What exactly is a museum? ICOM comes to blows over new definition', *The Art Newspaper*, 19 August, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/what-exactly-is-a-museum-icom-comes-to-blows-over-new-definition (acessed 11 May 2021).

Porter, Catherine, Ian Austen and Sheera Frenkel. 2022. "As Protest Paralyzes Canada's Capital, Far-Right Activists Abroad Embrace It', *New York Times*, 8 February, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/07/world/canada/canada-protesters-ottawa.html?searchResultPosition=2 (accessed 19 February 2022).

Priess, Peter J., Sheila E. Bradford, S. Biron Ebell and Peter W.G. Nieuwhof. 1986. 'Archaeology at the Forks: An Initial Assessment', Ottawa: Parks Canada. https://www.theforks.com/about/history/bibliography/195/Archaeology-at-The-Forks-An-Initial-Assessment (accessed 10 June 2021).

Quaternary Consultants Ltd. 2013. 'Archaeological Mitigation for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights at The Forks, Winnipeg, Manitoba', PCL Constructors Canada Inc., July.

Rashkow, Ezra. 2018. 'Dispossessing memory: Adivasi oral histories from the margins of Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve, Central India', in Ezra Rashkow, Sanjukta Ghosh and Upal Chakrabarti (eds), *Memory, Identity and the Colonial Encounter in India*, 151–176. Abington OX: Routledge.

Reuters. 2021. 'German police stop far-right vigilantes patrolling Polish border', *Reuters*24 October 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-police-stop-far-right-vigilantes-patrolling-polish-border-2021-10-24/ (accessed 19 February 2022).

Rijksmuseum. n.d. 'About Us', Rijksmuseum, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/about-us (accessed 6 February 2022).

Robertson, Kristy. 2019. *Tear Gas Epiphanies*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Rockefeller Foundation. 2017. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2017', Rockefeller Foundation, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

Rockefeller Foundation. 2018. 'Form 990-PF Return of Private Foundation, 2018', Rockefeller Foundation, Washington DC: US Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

Rodney, Walter. 2018. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Verso.

Rollason, Kevin. 2009. 'Bless museum's sacred ground', *Winnipeg Free Press*, 2 January, https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/bless-museums-sacred-ground-46706792.html (accessed 1 June 2021).

Ross, Ina. 2017. 'Uncharted territory: Visitor books of Indian museums. The Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum in Bhopal – a case study', *Museum & Society* 15 (1): 100–113.

Ross, Ina. 2018. 'The museum as a dating venue: Couples in the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum in Bhopal, India', *Museum & Society* 16 (1): 72–87.

Ross, Ina. 2019. 'Museum as a Space of Collective Nostalgia and Personal Memories-Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum, Bhopal', unpublished essay.

Sandell, Richard. 2002. *Museums, Society, Inequality*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Schneider, Nina and G. I de Almeida. 2018. 'The Brazilian National Truth Commission (2012–2014) as a State-Commissioned History Project', in B. Bevernage and N. Wouters (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of State-Sponsored History After 1945*, 637–652. Palgrave Macmillan: London.

Schneider, Nina. 2011. 'Breaking the "Silence" of the Military Regime: New Politics of Memory in Brazil', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 30 (2): 198–212.

Schneider, Nina. 2020. 'Bolsonaro in Power: Failed Memory Politics in Post-Authoritarian Brazil?', *Modern Languages Open*, 25 (1): 1–11.

Shoal Lake #40. 2014a. 'Use of Shoal Lake Water Makes Museum "A Shrine to Canadian Hypocrisy"', press release, 27 May, Shoal Lake #40 First Nation, Kejick, Ontario.

Shoal Lake #40. 2014b. 'Museum for Canadian Human Rights Violations', 14 September, Shoal Lake #40 Community Price of Water Group.

Simpson, Moira G. 1996. *Making Representations*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Sinclair, M. Thea. 1998. 'Tourism and economic development: A survey', *The Journal of Development Studies* 34 (5): 1–51.

Singh, Kavita. 2015. 'The Museum is National', in Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh (eds), *No touching, no spitting, no praying: The Museum in South Asia*, 107–131. Abingdon: Routledge.

Smith, Larajane. 2020. 'Industrial Heritage and the Remaking of Class Identity, Are We All Middle Class Now?' in Stefan Berger (ed) *Constructing Industrial Pasts*, 128–145. New York, Berghahn Books.

Soss, Joe and Vesla Weaver. 2017. 'Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race–Class Subjugated Communities', *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (1): 565–591.

Spivak, Rhonda. 2011. 'Postcard Suggests Jews as pigs, critics say', *Canadian Jewish News*, 13 April, https://www.cjnews.com/news/postcard-suggests-jews-pigs-critics-say (accessed 31 May 2021).

Spivey, Leigh A., David M. Huebner and Lisa M. Diamond. 2018. 'Parent responses to childhood gender nonconformity: Effects of parent and child characteristics', *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 5 (3): 360.

Sreekumar, T. T. and Govindan Parayil. 2002. 'Contentions and Contradictions of Tourism as Development Option: The Case of Kerala, India', *Third World Quarterly* 23 (3): 529–548.

Tilche, Alice. 2015. 'A forgotten Adivasi landscape: Museums and memory in western India', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 49 (2): 188–215.

Tilche, Alice. 2022. *Adivasi Art and Activism*, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Tilly, Louise A. 1981. 'Paths of Proletarianization: Organization of Production, Sexual Division of Labor, and Women's Collective Action', *Signs* 7 (2): 400–417.

Traverso, Enzo. 2003. 'Review: The Holocaust Industry. Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering', *Historical Materialism* 11 (2): 215–225.

Trigger, Bruce G. 1984. 'Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist', *Man* 19 (3): 355–370.

Thomas, Rachel N. and Judith E. Owen Blakemore. 2013. 'Adults' attitudes about gender nonconformity in childhood', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 42 (3): 399–412.

UNICEF. 2021. 'Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities', New York: United Nations Children's Fund.

USCCR. 2003. 'A Quiet Crisis, Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country', U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington DC, July.

USHMM. 2021. 'About the Museum', United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum (accessed 6 June 2021).

United Nations Organization. 2005 [1950]. 'Principles of International Law Recognized in the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal and in the Judgment of the Tribunal', New York: United Nations Organization, https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/draft_articles/7_1_1950.pdf (accessed 27 July 2022).

UNWTO. 1999. 'Global Code of Ethics for Tourism', Thirteenth WTO General Assembly, Santiago, Chile.

Vygotsky, L. S. 1978. *Mind in Society*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Wacquant, Loïc J. D. and William Julius Wilson. 1989. 'The Cost of Racial and Class Exclusion in the Inner City', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 501 (1): 8–25.

Wacquant, Loïc J. D. 1996. 'The Rise of Advanced Marginality: Notes on Its Nature and Implications', *Acta Sociologica* 39 (2): 121–139.

Washington Post. 2022. 'Fatal Force', *Washington Post*, 24 June, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/ (accessed 24 June 2022).

Wertsch, James V. 1985. *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Williams, Eric. 1994 [1944]. *Capitalism & Slavery*, Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press.

World Bank. 2021. 'Gross national income per capita 2019', World Development Indicators database, World Bank, 12 February.

WHO. 2011. 'World Reports on Disability', Geneva: World Health Organization.

WTTC. 2020. 'Travel & Tourism: Global Economic Impact & Trends 2020', London: World Travel & Tourism Council.

3 Museum knowing and learning

As we've seen, a great many museums cite public education as a key component of their mission. Likewise, many practitioners are drawn to museum work because they value public access to art, heritage, or science and wish to enable those interactions. For museum users, any museum's collections, programs, and exhibitions constitute its signal values. Therefore, we should examine and analyze those communicatory processes at length.

We can start with considering the value of objects as signs and symbols. Throughout our lives we are challenged by the differences between what we expect or intend and the practical results of various actions. We mediate that contradiction with signs and symbols, with images, tools, and words, but as Bakhtin (1986, 69) observed, no one is the first speaker to disturb the silence of the universe. Each of us enters into conversations that were ongoing before we arrived, sharing with and learning from our capable peers. Each of those discussions turns on our internalization of our past practice and of practices by others, including those of preceding generations. We categorize those rationalizations as the arts, architecture, history, science, and so on. Our thoughts, in any of these fields, are more than remembrances or the sum of our experiences. We develop our general mental models comparatively, from particular examples. Our cognitive process through which we are able to analyze and conceptualize those models is thereby also grounded in our social practices. Our cognitive abilities develop in the process of encountering and rationalizing new experiences. Being and thinking react dialectically, from experience to concept to new experience to enhanced conceptualization. Consequently, what we understand and how we think in the future is quite different from how we understood or thought about the world in the past, not simply because of added experiences but because of our ability to take conceptual leaps via those social practices.

Case in point: Vygotsky's infant

The psychologist L. S. Vygotsky and his colleagues theorized the relationship of cognition to socio-cultural activity by studying young children. In one example, Vygotsky describes object-oriented movement to 'movement aimed

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811-4

at another person, a means of establishing relations' (Vygotsky 1978, 56). Through that sequence, the infant's cognitive ability makes a leap, from grasping to gesturing to another person. Vygotsky summarized this process example as 'the internalization of socially rooted and historically developed activities is the distinguishing feature of human psychology, the basis of the qualitative leap from animal to human psychology' (Vygotsky 1978, 57).

Case in point: District Six Museum

The District Six Museum takes its name from and is located in an historic district of Cape Town, South Africa. From the time of the legislation of apartheid law in 1948 until the repeal of those laws in 1991, the district was declared a 'whites only' area of the city, to be redeveloped as such, and over the ensuing years all non-white residents – many who had lived in the district for decades – were forcibly removed. This process of street-by-street eviction continued steadily into the 1980s, when it intersected with a rising youth movement against the apartheid regime.

> There was a push, a defiance, that was unlike our predecessors, that was radicalized, a sense of urgency for destroying apartheid and everything else that oppressed people, and I think through that the museum started out of that culture of activism … It was at that political moment the museum was born.
>
> (Tina Smith, interview with author, 7 January 2022)

The District Six Museum project is thereby resultant of transformative practices by its organizers, and in turn has enabled further conceptual leaps for both organizers and visitors.

Object lessons

The New Museology (Vergo 1989) has effectively established that museum objects do not speak for themselves (Knell 2004, 1–46; Pearce 1994, 19–29), nor do exhibitions speak and act simply through objects collected and displayed. Museums curate and interpret, and thereby attempt to intentionally direct those who use the museum. But museums do more than simply display prescribed assessments of the world. Their purpose is to engage users to adopt that assessment and actualize it through their own behaviors. Thereby, museum practitioners intend to achieve an ideological effect – prompting new associative values, reinforcing existing beliefs, challenging worldviews, engendering catharsis, and so on. Peter Vergo and others have advised that a new museology should critically examine those purposes of museums, rather than methods of practice *per se* (Vergo 1989, 3–4). I further propose that a new museology must examine museum methods as strategic reproductions of internal policy interacting dialectically with external social forces.

This is not to deny or ignore museological knowledge or skills as specialties, but to acknowledge that the socio-ideological effect of museum exhibitions or programs is not reducible to simply objects or interpretations. An exhibit display is not a self-directed lesson plan for imparting concluding thoughts. There are multiple, concurrently operating dialectical relationships between curatorial intent – selected objects, interpretation, contextualization – and how a program or exhibition is internalized by users – in response to objects displayed, drawing on lived experience, and in conversation among users. Museum collections and displays are certainly media through which curators and interpreters prescribe conclusions. But the informal qualities of museum exhibitions, primarily of objects but also of intangible culture, are essential to interpreting those prescriptions. Like some religious ceremonies, museums are theatrical; they perform or extol. One finds in that enthusiasm and theatricality presumptions of ideological hegemony and specific 'taken-for-granted' assumptions about how one should understand objects and their context in the world.

This web of interaction may be orchestrated but its effect can only be approximately predicted. There are no immediately obvious ramifications of not adopting the curatorial perspective – no review questions to answer, no reward for demonstrating one's affinity for a specific collection or interpretive theme. Thus, J. Willard Whitson, executive director of Kidsenses Museum in North Carolina (USA), proposes that 'children's museums in fact are about learning and self-actualization, and by their very nature tend to be inclusive' (J. Willard Whitson, personal communication, 15 June 2022). Indeed, despite intensive curation, museum presentations remain open to a range of emotional and cognitive responses by users. Such open-endedness is a definitional quality of object or display attraction, and can guide our consideration of interpretational or presentational practice.

Toward the latter half of the twentieth century, in formulating new museology, a growing number of practitioners acknowledged museum experience as a web of interactions and began to recenter museums around visitors, to experiment with interpretive forms that enabled and even promoted multiple possible social interactions, within a larger reconsideration of the purpose of museums. Thus, from the 1950s onward, we saw the emergence of science and technology museums and of 'hands-on' discovery centers. These interactive presentations of science and engineering concepts invited visitors to observe and to manipulate physical phenomena, illustrating basic principles of physics, chemistry and biology. As a fourth grade student in the early 1960s, I was captivated by a field trip to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, and still recall our experience of the replica coal mine, the museum's expansive scale-model railroads and steelmaking furnaces, and by its live chicken hatchery.[1]

The effectiveness of those experiences was produced by the combination of physical experience, intellectual engagement, theatrical mediation, and social informality. One visits such a place with friends, family, classmates, or other

acquaintances for a social experience of open-ended verbal and mental dialogue. That dialogue may involve another person, the interpretive graphics encountered, the modalities of display, one's own prior experience, or any combination of these interactions. Importantly, we encounter and engage with these forms of dialogue more or less effortlessly, so that one may be reading a curatorial wall text and then turn to a companion to share a comment about an earlier moment in life that the statement conjured in your mind.

The Vygotskian dialogic

As an epistemology grounded in the social production of thought and language, dialectical materialism is particularly relevant to the study of psychology, cognition, and pedagogy. Since the 1970s, that relevance has been invigorated in the US and elsewhere by English language translations of papers by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and his close collaborators.[2] An important focus of Vygotsky's study was the cognitive development of children and infants. Observing the processes by which infants become aware of and interact with the world provides a model for understanding cognitive processes in older children and adults as socio-cultural interactions. In one passage, Vygotsky described how a social act prompted by unsuccessful grasping triggers cognitive development in infants:

> Initially, this gesture is nothing more than an unsuccessful attempt to grasp something, a movement aimed at a certain object which designates forthcoming activity. The child attempts to grasp an object placed beyond his reach; his hands, stretched toward the object, remain poised in the air. His fingers make grasping movements. At this initial stage, pointing is represented by the child's movement, which seems to be pointing to an object – that and nothing more.
>
> When the mother comes to the child's aid and realizes his movement indicates something, the situation changes fundamentally. Pointing becomes a gesture for others. The child's unsuccessful attempt engenders a reaction not from the object he seeks but *from another person*. Consequently, the primary meaning of that unsuccessful grasping movement is established by others. Only later, when the child can link his unsuccessful grasping movement to the objective situation as a whole, does he begin to understand this movement as pointing. At this juncture there occurs a change in that movement's function: from an object-oriented movement it becomes a movement aimed at another person, a means of establishing relations. *The grasping movement changes to the act of pointing.*
>
> (Vygotsky 1978, 56, emphasis in original)

In this example, we see how learning and cognitive development dialectically interact through social practice. The infant's initial curiosity to touch is transformed through interaction with their caregiver, which results not simply in a

specific tactile experience but with the cognitive leap to gesture, a primal semiotic act. The incremental and immediate tactile learning act concurrently prompts qualitative change in the infant's cognitive ability to sign and reference. Key among Vygotsky's insights, and those of others at the Institute of Psychology, was this transformative relationship between knowing through social practice and the production of higher mental functions in the individual, so that 'an interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one' (Vygotsky 1978, 57). Knowledge acquisition – learning – prompts cognitive development and ability via dynamic and changing social practices throughout our lives.

Our social practices are experientially diverse and our cognitive abilities are conceptually diverse. For example, our practices may include preparing food, eating it, singing, listening to others make music, shaping clay, marveling at natural geologic features, and so on. We may engage these practices routinely or only episodically and they may be repetitive or fully different, but regardless they comprise a matrix of the 'daily life' in which we are enmeshed. We also observe, focus attention, recall, reflect, assign priority, and deprecate our social experiences and their materiality, routinely and episodically. The experiential and the cognitive are fully distinct, one does not simply shadow the other, but they enable each other. Learning develops our ability to engage with a variety of experiences and materiality, either immediate or anticipated; we move from particular acts to general abilities.

As the above example of an infant's gesture suggests, Vygotsky identified semiotic practice as an essential manifestation of the processual relationship between practice and thought. He argued that 'thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them' (Vygotsky 1986, 218). This leads to the important and dialectical distinction between inner speech (thought) and oral speech (dialogue). Our inner speech may seem monologic and fragmentary; our dialogic speech – signs, symbols or other activity – is necessarily more fully formed. Vygotsky identified the dynamic relationship between as 'the key to the nature of human consciousness' (Vygotsky 1986, 249–256).

Cognitive abilities are thereby not *a priori* faculties or attributes. We are not born with them. We develop our sense of logic, for example, through repeated social experiences, in which activity is invalidated or confirmed in practices with peers. As in the examples above, those interactions are mediated by objects, signification, and symbols, particularly language. Our higher mental functions – reflection, prediction, anticipation, intention – derive from the internalization of practices. That process of internalization is itself the product of qualitative change in our cognitive ability. Internalization is not just *facilitated* by speech or sign, nor is it simply an incremental increase in task-knowledge via 'learning by doing.' Our cognitive abilities are socially produced and transformed with others dialogically, and thereby internalized as 'inner speech' (Wertsch and Tulviste 1992, 350).

Relatedly, learning practices are not only cooperative; the shared experience provides for individual learners to gain insight and benefit from the cognitive

abilities of those around them, especially more capable peers. Thus, Vygotsky described a zone of proximal development (ZPD), by which he meant the difference between a child's mental maturity and a further level they might reach by solving problems with assistance (Vygotsky 1986, 187; 146–209). Vygotsky did not propose that this zone was either fixed or boundless, he specifically defined it in regard to cognitive ability – which, as already summarized, he concluded was socially produced and not innate. Importantly, in contradistinction to Thorndike's 'grandiose attempt to prove that mental development is a continuous process of quantitative growth' or Piaget's 'assum (ption) that development and instruction are entirely separate, incommensurate processes, that the function of instruction is merely to introduce adult ways of thinking' (Vygotsky 1986, 206), Vygotsky proposed 'the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions' (Vygotsky 1986, 188). Thus, a functional ZPD is neither fixed in time nor general across individual learners.

As I will explore further below, Vygotsky's dialogism is radically distinct from the Deweyian theory of knowing as quantitative experience and the Gardnerian concept of separate cognitive abilities. As distinct from pragmatists such as Dewey and Thorndike, Vygotsky recognized knowledge as 'socio-cultural' activity. Our internalized knowledge and cognitive abilities are co-created by us and affirmed as accurate – tested – with others, as social practice.

Idealist and pragmatist epistemologies

The classical Athenian, Plato, proposed that human perceptions of the world are imperfect readings of an ideal absolute, which we can only experience incompletely. In his *Republic*, for example, Plato asserts

> when a person starts on the discovery of the absolute by the light of reason only, and without any assistance of sense, and perseveres until by pure intelligence he arrives at the perception of the absolute good, he at last finds himself at the end of the intellectual world, as in the case of sight at the end of the visible.
>
> (Plato 360 BCE)

Platonic and similar assertions that intelligence is derived from innate processes have been used throughout history to defend all manner of social inequalities and excuse all manner of injustice, modern eugenics being one egregious example. Unequal, stratified societies thereby construct formal pedagogies that reinforce status and privilege and that penalize the lived experiences of subaltern majorities.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu wrote at length about processes of prestige conferral and the production and transfer of 'cultural capital' among elites, noting that

> the ideology of natural taste owes its plausibility and its efficacy to the fact that, like all ideological strategies generated in the everyday class struggle, it naturalizes real difference, converting differences in the mode of acquisition of culture into differences of nature.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984, 68)

This 'naturalization' is not simply a matter of individual prejudice, it manifests itself across a range of specifically harmful outcomes including but extending beyond pedagogy. The production of knowledge in a stratified society is intricately connected with production of inequitable social and political relationships.

Contrary to Platonism, a dialectical materialist theory of mind asserts that human knowledge is an interactive product of our social practices. Rather than emerging from either a supernatural or an innate source, our knowledge of the world is acquired through our living engagement with others in the natural world. As children, we quite obviously learn from parents and other elder familial cohorts. We later share knowledge with and learn from our peers, friends, co-workers, school mates, et al. At various times we share or test our knowledge with less experienced persons. This process is referred to as *materialist* because it is grounded in physical phenomenon and activities. We each constitute a part of each other's material reality, we interact with that reality, and through those interactions we change that external reality and ourselves. That change is described as *dialectical* because the interaction is transformative rather than simply repetitive, reciprocal, or quantitative, and neither component proceeds through the process unaffected. Human history is replete with examples of transformative acts – 'eureka!' moments of clarity, when a particular experience prompts a more general explication of phenomenon or process.

If, however, the thought process appears to us to be an internal product, perhaps formed of an especially active imagination, or that our thoughts are engendered by ourselves alone, that is partly explainable by the fact that memory of action is retained by our central nervous system. Our 'innermost thoughts' revisit our prior interactions. Thereby, one might understandably confuse the memory of life with life itself (Fernyhough 2004).

Most of us, not just museum practitioners, acknowledge the importance of learning through experience. Every experimental scientist understands that accurate theory derives from practical investigation. Humanity has not needed a sophisticated theory in order to actualize learning through doing. Indeed, some in modern society dismiss the utility of formal instruction, much less theory. One may well ask: is a dialogic theory of mind of real consequence? The compelling response is that the dialogic theory of mind complicates our understanding of museum mediation. It thereby prompts deeper analysis of practice, enabling the intentional activity that is a hallmark of human psychology, and explicating complex mental activities such as reflection and predictive behavior. Language is an example of cognitive ability arising from

social practices; of the iterative and recursive processes through which concepts and vocabularies are built. Experiential learning is widely accepted as an effective instructional method and not just by those who theorize consciousness as social practice.

This recognition returns us to my earlier observation regarding idealist theories of mind. It is possible to accept and indeed to engage with experiential learning in a partial manner. Philosophical pragmatism – which gained great traction during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – holds that truth or validity is only proven or shown to be meaningful in specific outcomes. Notably, this view of life aligned with the practical experimentation typical of the industrial revolution, and corresponding practical advances in technical knowledge. Chemistry, physics, mechanical engineering, and biology were all defined or redefined during the last 200 years. Parallel to those fields, the pragmatist philosophies of Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey became highly influential in education theory, particularly within American-influenced academia, throughout the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, constituting a distinct intellectual tradition.[3] Some biographical notes regarding those pragmatists will be helpful here.

Charles Sanders Peirce proposed that 'the essence of belief is the establishment of a habit, and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise' (Peirce 1877, 291). He further desired 'to point out how impossible it is that we should have an idea in our minds which relates to anything but conceived sensible effects of things. Our idea of anything is our idea of its sensible effects; and if we fancy that we have any other we deceive ourselves' (Peirce 1877, 295). Peirce's defense of practical, empirical knowledge was grounded in his own work in the physical sciences of geology and geography, and in semiotics. Much of his subsequent investigations were focused on signs and symbols, which obviously require inference of the intentions of others and of social networks. He was nonetheless persistent in his argument that one's conception of practical effects is the extent of one's possible conception of an object (Peirce 1905, 481). This line of reasoning led Peirce through various attempts at mathematical modeling of mental processes (Peirce 1892; Wible 2014). Peirce's philosophy is often described as foundational to pragmatist pedagogy.

William James considered 'the intellectual life of man' to be the 'substitution of a conceptual order for the perceptual order in which his experience originally comes.' This theorem is further described in what he called his Pragmatic Rule 'that the meaning of a concept may always be found, if not in some sensible particular which it directly designates, then in some particular difference in the course of human experience which its being true will make' (Kallen 1955, 77, 82). Moreover, James considered this process to be individually unique and argued a subordinate theory of 'leaders of history … whose genius was so adapted to the receptivities of the moment … that they became ferments, initiators of movement, setters of precedent' (Kallen 1955, 236). James cited Peirce's theory as the antecedent of his own pragmatist philosophy.

John Dewey likewise defined cognition as an immediate moment, so that 'joy and suffering, pain and pleasure, the agreeable and disagreeable, play their considerable role in deliberation. Not, however, by way of a calculated estimate of future delights and miseries, but by way of experiencing present ones' (Dewey 1957, 200). He further proposed that 'happiness, reasonableness, virtue, perfecting' are significant primarily in regard to present action (ibid. 265). Pragmatism doesn't deny social experience, but it centers its theory of knowledge as the aggregate sum of experiential data. Thus, Dewey cites Peirce, 'one man's experience is nothing, if it stands alone… . It is not "my" experience but 'our' experience that has to be thought of; and this 'us' has indefinite possibilities' (Dewey 1946, 94). This aggregation is also essentially transactional – among and between independent agents. Dewey applied this theory particularly to formal instruction and specifically to American, Chinese, and Indian pedagogy. He is thereby widely influential as a proponent of experiential learning over repetitive memorization and text-centered instruction (Leshnoff 2003; Rich 1985; Sherman 1977; Su 1995; Voparil 2008; White 2015). Moreover, for some, Dewey's pedagogy is seen as a totalizing approach to preparing youth as participants in liberal 'democratic' capitalist society (Voparil 2008; Leshnoff 2003).

During the period that Dewey was teaching and theorizing pedagogy, from the 1880s to the 1940s, formal education was far from universal in America, and university education was the exclusive pursuit for a small fraction of the population. Dewey wrote often about 'democratizing' formal education by engaging with the lived experience of students, but his own practice was mainly within the elite Laboratory School at the University of Chicago and in the lecture halls of Harvard University. The student experience he sought to engage was in part theorized from his own experience of relative social privilege. His democracy was a society in which each student would be educated 'for leadership as well as obedience' (Dewey 1897, 113); for practical roles within the dominant social hierarchy and division of labor. Nonetheless, Dewey did not consider himself an elitist. Indeed, Dewey the public intellectual is also known for his social activism and advocacy, and he certainly theorized childhood education as important to 'democratic society.' Dewey's promotion of pedagogy that is inquiry-centered and builds upon each student's lived experience resonates with museum and other informal learning practitioners, even if much museum mediation consists of pointing and explaining, rather than dialogically engaging visitors, objects, and intangible culture. Such implementations of Dewey's precepts display an important deficiency in pragmatist theories of distinctly personal and innate cognitive ability.

Pragmatist Pedagogies

If we accept that museum objects do not speak for themselves, but are mediated by curators and educators, we have also begun to describe a matrix of

social relationships involving artisans and artists, curators and collectors, teachers and learners, museums and their users. The 'visitor experience' of museum users may consist of many types of activity but of primary interest here are the cognitive and emotional experiences of an exhibition or public program.[4] As much as some practitioners may work to display key objects from their collections, a visitor's experience of that space is not a wholly personal perception of distinct objects created by uncommon artisans or curated by exceptional specialists. Certainly, a key objective of any object-centered museum display is interpreting the milieu in which an object was made or to which it refers. Through any subsequent exhibitions and public programs, including social activities, users arrive with attitudes and understandings that are also socially produced. Those internalized social practices are not reducible to a simple mix of discrete behaviors; they comprise a matrix of interactions that are extensive in time and space. Despite his assertion that thinking and practice were interactive, and that therefore lived experience is a key to learning, Dewey's theory grounds thought in a neurological process, rather than social-relational practice. For Dewey, experience is a sum of organismal sense-perceptions that either validate or refute prior organismal sense-perceptions, and knowledge consists of the additive retention of that perceptual information.

Dewey was considered by many of his academic contemporaries as an oracle of empiricist pedagogy. Many of his writings and lectures meander[5] through pedagogical conjectures framed by empirical idealism on the way to a totalizing philosophy in which consciousness is a progression of perceptual experiences. The individual acquires knowledge needed to achieve practical objectives.

In his 1897 pamphlet entitled *My Pedagogic Creed* Dewey provided a catechism of his theory:

> The educational process has two sides – one psychological and one sociaological [*sic*] … of these two sides, the psychological is the basis. The child's own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting point for all education.
>
> (Dewey 1897, 4)

> Education, therefore, must begin with the psychological insight into the child's capacities, interests, and habits. It must be controlled at every point by reference to these same considerations.
>
> (Dewey 1897, 6)

In his many other publications, he reiterates these themes of innate individual consciousness actualized for practical results.

> The main purpose or objective is to prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life, by means of acquisition of the

> organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skill, which comprehend the material of instruction.
>
> (Dewey 1938, 5)

> From the experimental point of view, the art of knowing demands skill in selecting appropriate sense-data on one side, and connecting principles, or conceptual theories, on the other. It requires a developed and constantly progressive technique to settle upon both the observational data and the idea that assist inquiry in reaching a conclusion in any particular case.
>
> (Dewey 1960, 172)

Many would agree that our practical experience of life is essential to how we shape our view of the world. The more complex consideration is that one's immediate experiences comprise a subset of events within *processes* that constitute the world beyond what we or our extended cohort may directly experience. There will always be a gulf between the immediately experienced world and the world as it fully is; diverse, dynamic, changing, transformative. Cognition and our cognitive ability to analyze and effectuate what we understand is not a purely additive sequence, it is characterized by qualitative, conceptual leaps by which the mentality of the knower is transformed by social practice. We see this in millions of learning events, ranging from a grasping infant to the latest scientific discovery.

Neo-Deweyian pedagogies

Dewey's empirical idealism has been championed by universities throughout the Euro-American world, so much so that it is often 'taken for granted' among educators. Two better-known Deweyians among late-twentieth-century theorists are Howard Gardner and George Hein; both of whom have influenced museum and other informal learning, especially in the Anglophone world.[6]

By his own account, Howard Gardner was inspired, while an undergraduate student in Harvard University, by Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget to pursue graduate studies in cognitive psychology. A comparison of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory with Dewey's *Psychology* (1886, especially 46–80) shows a direct theoretical connection to pragmatist philosophy as well.[7] Gardner's post-graduate studies focused on stroke patients in a military veterans' hospital as well as young children enrolled in Harvard University's Project Zero for teaching and learning. Those comparative studies are cited as bases for his MI theory (Gardner 1999, 30–31). In 1986, Gardner became a professor in the Harvard Graduate School of Education and, in 1992, published his theory of multiple intelligences (MI).

Gardner's MI theory posits that human intelligence is exhibited in one or more mental pathways which he has defined as linguistic, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, mathematical, and natural. Gardener

hypothesizes that each of these pathways is a distinct sensorial-cognitive process. Following Dewey, Gardner defines 'intelligence' as 'a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture' (Gardner 1999, 33–34). Further, Gardner posits 'intelligence' as both measurable and as biologically innate neural 'potentials' that will or will not be activated, depending upon the values of a particular culture, the opportunities available in that culture, and the personal decisions made by individuals and/or their families, schoolteachers, and others' (Gardner 1999, 34). Gardner has promoted his theory as having 'the greatest utility for the next millennium' (Gardner 1999, 25).

Gardner's theory of biopsychology seeks to explain how it is that one may find reading difficult but physical interaction cathartic. Such an analysis lures us away from interrogating social experience and instead directs us – as many theories of intelligence do – to conceptually compartmentalize behaviors as innately prompted by the physiology and anatomy of 'dedicated neural networks' (Gardner 1999, 94).[8] Presuming that a state or process of 'intelligence' aligns with a state or process of 'knowing,' we can trace a direct connection between MI theory and pedagogy. Consider, for example, the interpersonal relationships by which confidence is enabled or incapacitated in young learners, and then consider how those encouragements or discouragements are socio-culturally informed expectations or motivations. One may also see in any theory of cognitive potentials various parallels to eighteenth century concepts of a social division of labor explained as innate competencies grounded in class, race, sex, etc. (Smith 1937, 13–16).

The assumption of neurological potential posited by MI theory also leads fairly directly to and has engendered the parallel concept of 'learning styles.' In turn, the hypothesis of learning style has been studied and critiqued as demonstrably deficient in regard to teaching and learning (Husmann and O'Loughlin 2019; May 2018; Pashler et al 2008; Massa and Mayer 2006). While Gardner argues that there are multiple 'entry points' through which to arrive at understanding (Gardner 1999, 169–172), in his later writing he explicitly distances his MI theory from any concept of learning style. Nonetheless, his concept of multiple intelligences and concepts of learning styles interpenetrate and are often discussed as such by museum education practitioners (Dierking 1991; Elliston 2012; Maccario 2012; Schaller et al 2005). That, in turn, has prompted a growing number of specialists to critique these and other 'neuromyths (as) commonly held misconceptions about the brain believed by both the general public and educators' (Gini, Knowland, Thomas and Van Herwegen 2021; Rousseau 2021; see also Gardner 2020).

Meanwhile, museum education theorist George Hein has published widely on experiential learning, describing Dewey as 'America's greatest philosopher' who 'rejected all dualisms, such as those between thought and action, fine and applied arts, or stimulus and response' (Hein 2006a, 181; see also Hein 2004; 2006b; 2011). With that preface, we may confidently accept Hein as an advocate of pragmatist pedagogy and one who has sought to apply Dewey to

learning in museums (Hein 1998). Hein situates the origins of museum interpretation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hein's definition of museum education directly ties to formal classroom instruction (Hein 1998, 11), and thereby to inequalities grounded in class, race, sex, and other societal divisions that shape that instruction.[9]

Hein illustrates his concept of museum education diagrammatically, with 'pedagogy' operating orthogonally to 'epistemology' (Hein 1998, 25). Immediately apparent in this schema is that Hein considers learning theory (pedagogy) and theory of knowledge (epistemology) to intersect at one indistinct point. More might be said about Hein's theoretical framework, but instead let us consider those separate continuums. Firstly, the range of Hein's epistemological continuum is exclusively and completely within idealist philosophy. At one end of his continuum, he situates Platonic idealism (which he refers to as 'realism'), whereby subjects only perceive parts of an exterior ideal world. At the other end of the continuum, Hein places Berkeleyian subjective idealism, which equates individual mentality with reality.

In fact, rather than distant opposites, Plato and Berkeley represent related schools of idealist thinking. Secondly, Hein's continuum of pedagogy posits 'incremental learning' opposite of 'learner constructed knowledge'. As with his view of epistemology, Hein's model of learning theory juxtaposes two pedagogies that are not only not entirely distinct but are both embraced by Deweyian pedagogy: additive thinking and constructed thinking. This inexact hypothetical approach is the basis of Hein's analysis of learning in museums (Hein 1998, 14–40).

I recapitulate these definitional statements by Peirce, James, Dewey, Gardner, and Hein because of the continuing influence that pragmatist educational philosophy exerts on informal learning in museums. Pragmatism appears to restate in different words an important concept that I am arguing, namely that knowledge originates in practice. Indeed, Dewey wrote that 'the development of the intelligence and knowledge of mankind has been a cooperative matter, and culture, in its broadest sense, a collective creation' (Mayhew and Edwards 1936, 5). Upon closer examination, however, we see that understanding and perception for these pragmatists comprise an additive unity, with the former the sum of the latter. Pragmatism situates validity in immediacy, as Dewey argued, not in 'future delights' but in 'experiencing present ones' (Dewey 1957, 200). What pragmatists leave out of their formulations is that cognition is a transformative and synthetic process – we draw conclusions from experience and use that knowledge to anticipate and guide further practice, in the course of which we effect both objective and subjective change. The pragmatists discount or completely overlook the dialectical relationship of perception and cognition via social practice – that we comprehend the world through our interactions, effect change within it, and thereby also alter ourselves, especially *what* and *how* we know.

We may consider pragmatism as a phase in the history of cognitive theory. It is certainly rooted in eighteenth century Anglo-American utilitarian liberalism,

which equated 'truth' with 'utility', and advocated political and economic autonomy from the aristocratic state (Bentham 1841; Mill 1913). Pragmatists drew upon emergent economic and intellectual conditions of industrial capitalism to express the autonomy that came about through societal changes, especially major advances in empirical science and engineering (Cardwell 1972). Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, prominent European intellectuals such as Cavendish, Darwin, Priestly, and Spencer were measuring and describing a colonial world animated by extraction and trade. Nearly every new encounter prompted a new school of thought. Driving those encounters was accumulation of wealth obtained at the expense of those whose subjugation was also 'empirically' argued. The horizons of mercantile capital and utilitarianism were set by Crown mandates and trans-oceanic shipping obligations. The horizons of industrial capital and pragmatism are described by production processes, capital investments, and quarterly dividends. The immediacy valorized by pragmatism maps to those timescales; long-term, distant, or unintended outcomes are of lesser or no consideration.[10] Those same historical forces produced and defined the modern museum, as stores of empirical data extracted from the peripheries and to reinforce the dominant ideologies of European society.

The perceptual and cognitive subjectivity of empirical idealism also explains its relativist epistemology. The re-emergence of relativism in Euro-American pedagogy tacks closely to related academic trends, especially 'post-modern' and 'post-structural' currents in the 1980s and 1990s. The social upsurges that accompanied the rise of neo-liberal, salvage capitalism also challenged popular ideologies. Thus, while imperial politicians (Thatcher, Reagan, Clinton) championed national revanchism and societal reengineering, neo-liberalism echoed through academia (Derrida, Fish, Foucault) as historical relativism, theoretical deconstructions, and even veiled defenses of existing social relationships (Harvey 1990, 2005; Eagleton, 1996). Those same social forces underlay academic pragmatist revivals, including of C. S. Peirce in the opening decades of the twenty-first century (Ransdell 2007; Shepperson 2008; Shook 2011).

Pragmatism in practice

Pragmatist pedagogy ramifies through both formal and 'informal' learning environments, and the diffusion from one to the other is quite evident in museum education. The most salient example is the organized school group field trip, where the tightly structured, additive pedagogy of the classroom is often force-fit onto the deserialized immersion of a museum exhibition. Gkouskoul and Koliopoulos compared educational programs at three natural history museums in Paris, France, Athens and Patras, Greece, and found that most of those programs were structured, rather than open-ended, to conform to the expertise of museum staff (Gkouskoul and Koliopoulos 2021, 231). Faria and Chagas (2012) studied multiple organized student-teacher visits to a

science center in Lisbon, Portugal, and found that in the many instances where teachers were not active mediators, their students did not engage at all with exhibits. Interviews revealed that, although many teachers described the class visit as an opportunity to motivate student interest in science, few or none of the teachers planned for their own role in that event, even while acknowledging that such preparation was instructionally important. Whitesell's (2016) rigorous multi-year study of student visits to natural history and science centers in New York, USA, illustrates the difficulty of quantifying cognitive outcomes of a museum visit via standardized tests, but in its effort to do so, their study also illustrates how such pragmatic pedagogy can dismiss high-level conceptual learning experienced by students. Kisiel's study of teacher-led museum visits found that 'less than 70% of survey respondents were able to describe during-trip strategies to connect the visit with classroom instruction', so that even within the parameters of planned learning outcomes, teachers held limited expectations for student engagement and museum use (Kisiel 2006). Moreover, in the Los Angeles, USA, museum that Kisiel studied, visiting teachers were directed that organized visits 'must not interfere with classroom learning or standardized testing' (Kisiel 2005). Storksdieck studied excursions to a planetarium in Freiburg, Germany, and found that although teachers arrived at the planetarium with better knowledge and awareness of planetary science than their students, they frequently did not consider how they might utilize that awareness to mediate students' experience during the field trip (Storksdieck 2001).

The perfunctory school group visit highlights other problems of pragmatism in teaching and learning. Dialogical epistemology situates the development of mental processes and abilities as arising from socio-cultural practices, including in unstructured and informal environments. These are processes through which a student's prior knowledge and newly acquired perceptual information are compounded and synthesized with peers and through which the student and their peers co-create understanding of the world and develop their cognitive competencies. This process is redirected by pragmatist learning theories about 'meaning-making' or 'sense-making', which center knowing in individual psychology. As Matthews (2002; 1993; 1992) has compellingly argued, 'making sense' is not equivalent to either an accurate understanding or to developing an accurate understanding of reality. Human history is rife with erroneous and harmful understandings and beliefs that have been considered sensible: that the sun orbits the earth, that disadvantaged persons are intrinsically inferior to the privileged, and so on.

Constructivist education theory posits that 'any so-called reality is, in the most immediate and concrete sense, the mental construction of those who believe they have discovered and investigated it' (Saunders 1992, 136). To be fair, constructivists qualify their approach as being authentically learner-centered and thereby democratic, albeit with learners conceptualized as distinctly individual minds. As Saunders (1992) and others have noted (Nola 1997; Grandy 1997), by the early 1990s, constructivism was a dominant trend

in cognitive psychology and in pedagogy. Its relativistic epistemology rather predicably led to 'many forms of constructivism' in education and subsequent arguments about which might be the 'One True Way' (Geelan 1997, 16). Many academics have proposed fine-grained qualifications, and debates over interpretation unfold in various peer-reviewed journals about teaching and learning (Bickhard 1997; Matthews 1997a; 1997c). Parallel to the constructivist turn, some in the museum education field adopted the term 'meaning making' as shorthand for an individual-centered, and possibly unique, visitor experience (Hein 1998, 71–76; Hooper-Greenhill 1994, 10–15). Silverman advocated it as a 'promising direction for a new age of museums in which we actively support, facilitate, and enhance the many kinds of meaning possible in museums and explicitly incorporate human needs into exhibit goals and institutional missions' (Silverman 1995, 161). Hein argued that 'constructivism *is* meaning making' (Hein 1999, 15, emphasis added). For a time, the search for 'meaning making' followed its own dynamic as describing a range of visitor behaviors and social experiences in museums.

By centering meaning making in personal psychology, pragmatist educators actually distract the individual learner from engaging knowing as peer-informed inquiry and as experimentally tested social practice. The sociality of both an object's creation and its transfer into the museum are fundamental qualities of what the object symbolizes, what it means. That meaning is intended as a general, extensive quality. Even the most socially-aloof abstract expressionist painter, engrossed in the process of painting or disinterested in literal messages, creates in order to convey a general meaning about their work and in response to the environment in which they have made it. This is not to treat museum objects as dogma, with a singular, distilled interpretation, but rather to acknowledge that the multiplicity of visitor encounters with them collectively contribute to an authentic reading and are not mere cacophony.

Furthermore, as Matthews pointed out, 'things can make perfect sense without being true' (Matthews 1997a, 9). This is repeatedly demonstrated in contemporary society. Meaning is not intrinsic to the individual nor is it the simple sum of multiple perceptions, it is a quality that exists objectively or independently of us. This is true of the social as well as of the natural world. Our social relationships both include and are independent of us. Socio-economic and political power or inability produce real effects. That quality underscores the importance of collective, social practice as both creator and test of our individual and collective knowledge of the world.

Re-centering our concept of museum users

The visitor-centered orientation of the new museology acknowledges that museum users arrive with valid and valuable life experience with which they co-mediate their experience of collections, exhibitions, and programs. New museologists underscore the assertion that museums are social, rather than private, and have a public mission. Museology has thereby increasingly

included audience research and program evaluation as essential methods for understanding how visitors and museums interact with each other through a range of exhibitions, programs, and other practices, and amidst more profound societal forces outside the museum proper.

Qualitative and mixed-methods research projects are also dialogic engagements with informants. While not immune to reductionism, especially the quantification of qualitative information,[11] the search for measurable qualitative data provides insight about museum users' attitudes and understandings and enables practitioners to better understand how those are socio-culturally created. Similar insights may be gained from other social research.

For example, since 1979, the United States' National Science Board and the National Science Foundation, have conducted a longitudinal study of public understandings of science specifically within the United States. That project has used an exacting quantitative survey to assess respondents' definitions of technical terms, such as defining 'DNA' or 'stem cell' or describing what is meant by genetically modified organisms (Miller 2010, 48).[12] Survey indicators do not necessarily indicate conceptual knowledge, nor do they eliminate 'educated guessing'. However, these studies correlate informant prior experience with their provision of the 'correct' expected response to measure understanding. Within its wider analysis, the study has found that 'reading really is fundamental to almost all forms of communication', and that socio-economic factors, such as university education and high-speed Internet access, were indicators of 'civic scientific literacy.' Thereby, the study coincidentally shows that accumulated cultural and intellectual resources are conveyed as cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), a process in which museums are an active component part.[13] Another US government-sponsored population study, 'U.S. Patterns of Arts Participation' conducted for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), documented additional attitudes held by museum users. The NEA study found that of 'adults who attended an arts event in the past year, more than 80 percent did so to socialize with family or friends, while approximately two-thirds did so to see a specific performer or exhibit (66%) or to support a specific community organization or event (65%). Nearly 58% of adults attended an event to learn or experience something new' (NEA 2019, 28). These research findings, albeit in studies performed for other purposes, indicate that the socio-cultural, dialogic qualities of museums, rather than a monologic event centered in either the visitor or the curator alone, are key attractors for museum visitors.

The 'something new' that museum users seek is not simply an assemblage of factoids, rather it is a revelatory experience, perhaps producing a sense joy or catharsis in that discovery. These findings also correlate well with many museum audience research studies. For example, Doris Ash has observed that

> dialogic inquiry as instruction can take place at any particular exhibit as parents interact with their children, each other, and artifacts. Furthermore, we have observed that family groups (and others) split into dyads or triads

> at exhibits and then come together again later to share meaning. I take the view that multiple zpds [zones of proximal development] are constructed because of the grouping and regrouping of the social ensemble at artifact-rich exhibits.
>
> (Ash 2003, 139)

Furthermore, Ash has described how socially-construed knowledge is compounded among exhibition users:

> different family members remembered different things, and each offered information, one after the other. The information is relatively esoteric and is over 6 months old. Three different members had different parts of the knowledge—the father remembered that the animals lived on the rock, the daughter remembered that they grew layer upon layer, and the son remembered that the living part moves. This distributed knowledge occurred not only at the coral tank, but at other tanks and areas of understanding throughout the SZ [Splash Zone] exhibit.
>
> (Ash 2004b, 874)

Gilbert and Priest have observed that 'critical incidents' prompt dialogue and thereby conceptual leaps in understanding by 'focusing an activity onto a meaning which supported the experience being had, or recalling and sharing an established mental model' (Gilbert and Priest 1997, 759). They describe a specific example of this socio-cultural process in their study of students visiting the Science Museum in London.

Case in point: Food for Thought

A study by Gilbert and Priest (1997) examined the discourse among 8 and 9 year old students and between students and educators before, during, and after a class visit to the 'Food for Thought' exhibition at the Science Museum in London. In particular, they were studying the mental models students developed during group interactions. Class visits were organized into small groups of pupils accompanied by a mediating adult (teacher, education officer) who engaged the students in dialogue as necessary. The dialogic interactions of the students amongst themselves were the essential characteristic, but the educator performed as a more capable peer and facilitated a conceptual leap by some students, as the following transcript illustrates (P1, P2, P3, P4 = pupils; E = educator):

> P1: It's really hard work; you've got to do it fast.
> P2: It's like an exercise machine.
> P3: You have to use the wooden bit sticking up, a handle, really quickly – it's just like an exercise machine for your hands.
> E: Why do you use exercise machines?

P4: To build up muscles and make you fit.
E: What do you need to do that?
P4: Energy.
E: So, you need energy to turn it and make flour.
P4: Oh, I see …

The educator then moved away, leaving the pupils looking at the amount of flour produced at different speeds of mill rotation, and prompting student talk about energy investment in food production (Gilbert and Priest 1997, 755–756). As this example suggests, the role of more capable mediator may be subtle and yet importantly influential. What is also evident is how the entire cohort relied upon shared experience and dialogue amongst themselves – not monologic telling – to confirm observations and to enable higher-level understanding.

Case in point: Table of Contents

Inter-personal mediation does not require an immediate interlocutor, such as another visitor or a museum docent, as I described in my study of visitors to a photography exhibition. *Table of Contents* was staged in 2010 at the Witte Museum, a regional history museum in San Antonio USA, and presented oral histories and photographic portraits of several dozen food insecure persons, interviewed at social service offices across the American south. In that study, I found that 'comment writers invariably interpreted the portrait subject stories using their own ideological lenses, and from that perspective entered into discussions about major ethical narratives that involve society as a whole' (Coffee 2011, 23).

> What an awe-inspiring exhibit. It left me breathless & helpless at the same time. I too can empathize with these individuals and it is so hard to believe that even to this day there are hungry & homeless people – what is this world coming to when you can just walk by people in need and not care? What if that were your son, or daughter, or mother, or sister? Thank you for taking the time to share these stories & please thank the people who dropped their defenses and shields to share their stories with all of us! [Anonymous visitor, 31 March 2010].
>
> What a waste of space! Where are the beautiful paintings that used to be here, that are supposed to be here, that I came to see, that I remembered but came to refresh those memories? Two other major exhibit areas are shut down – closed – nothing. I expected to see more here, but […] Is the Witte going downhill? Have you nothing else to exhibit that is worthy of a 'museum'? These portraits and stories are pitiful […] Sad, sad, sad, in more ways than one! This exhibit may have a place – but the Witte is not that place' [Anonymous visitor, 21 February 2010].
>
> (Coffee 2011, 18–19)

Those ideological frames, no doubt shaped through lived experience – bounded by class, race, sex, and other distinctions – refract the artifacts and interpretation presented by the museum.

Thinking as social practice

Perhaps many would now agree – following several decades of advocacy and debate – that museum exhibitions and programs ought to be collaborative, dialogic, open-ended, object-centered inquiries. While we develop our knowledge of the world by practically engaging with it, how we know the world is not simply an incremental accumulation of experience. 'Reality' is both objective and subjective, neither fully internal nor fully external. In this Anthropocene – or Capitalocene, or Plantationcene (Haraway 2015) – era, human activity is continually changing the world in various ways and with adverse consequences. To economists, anything that is neither revenue nor a direct expenditure – deforestation, pollution, massive poverty – is an 'externality' not an accounted for in the immediate capital process. However, societies are not external to themselves. They *are* riven by the interests and intentions of power asymmetries between collectives whose conditions of life encourage them to think as well as act similarly. Moving from a perceptual materiality to an enduringly accurate understanding of those conditions of life requires more than sensation. The process of knowing is enmeshed in actual, living societal imbalances and contradictions; concepts and practices that are dialectically influential of each other.

Henry Giroux has written that, because of the late-twentieth century ideological influences

> of conservative leadership and authority in many industrialized countries, with its appeal to universality, its totalitarian view of history, its ethnocentric embrace of culture, and its celebration of greed and individualism, educators need to ask important questions on the counterhegemonic role that a discourse of curriculum might assume.
>
> (Giroux 1990, 366)

Thus, as Giroux argues, the real debate over learning theory is about *both* the specific ideological content of that debate and the social conditions from which those ideas arise and that give them power (Giroux 1990). This observation remains relevant in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, as those same hegemonic regimes impel socio-economic and ideological tensions.

The realization that our social practices engender our understanding of the world is at the center of dialectical materialist epistemology. 'Dialectics' thereby describes transformative interactivity and prediction comprised of oppositional processes – such as we see in dialogic inquiry. Those processes affect material reality and are therefore objective, even if simultaneously subjective to those who enact them. Dialectical materialism discovers 'the world'

as knowable through experimental activity, and acknowledges that in the course of that activity that world is changed. We learn by way of our social practices. We co-create, with our peers, our cognitive ability, and that process enables us to act in new ways – not simply or endlessly repeat learned behavior. We can also distinguish this dialectical materialist explanation of cognition from those of empirical idealism or pragmatism. Knowledge is not confined to quantitative, additive, or repetitive sense-perceptions. Cognition is not simply remembering about X by doing Y. It includes analytic and predictive competencies that we develop through learning and that enable us to conceptualize beyond an immediate act, and to anticipate a changed future.

As a theory of knowledge, European dialectical materialism derives from two distinct intellectual points of origin. One is the dialectical idealism formulated at the University of Jena (Germany) by J. G. Fichte, F. W. J. Schelling, and G. W. F. Hegel. Hegel, now regarded as the key author of modern dialectical theory, explored transformative contradiction – 'each immediately vanishes in its opposite' – at length in his *Science of Logic* (Hegel 2010, 60, 59–83). The other major modern influence came from a nearly opposite trend in German philosophy, that of materialism. A key proponent of that perspective was Ludwig Feuerbach whose *Essence of Christianity* argued that humans 'generate thought from the opposite of thought, from Matter, from existence, from the senses' (Feuerbach 1854, viii; see also 1–11).

The philosophies of Hegel and Feuerbach were haunting the anti-monarchist uprisings that swept Europe during the 1840s. That same social upsurge produced two political activists who famously argued that social history traced a path of dialectical development: 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle'[14] (Marx and Engels 1969, 108). Their manifesto has been widely influential in analyses of social transformation, but dialectical materialism has been influential within many other fields of practice and theory, from anthropology to zoology, and as a philosophy of transformative activity.[15] It is of central importance to Vygotsky's theories of human psychology and thereby of theoretical importance within cultural studies, education, language, and psychology. It is especially evident in Vygotsky's analyses of the mediating role of both tools and signs – doing as sharing, so to speak (Wertsch 1985, 146). As noted earlier, Vygotsky considered semiotic activity to be central to understanding human consciousness; that the artifact is also a sign or symbol that may prompt more profound dialogic activity.

Dialogic self-direction

The potential of the museum object includes triggering a dialectical sequence of intrapersonal and interpersonal processes, of structuring understandings, and of conceptual leaps in our ability to structure understanding (Vygotsky 1978, 56–57). The object is both sign and signal – a thing-in-itself and a thing-for-others – and in that signalization plays a mediational role. For example, Griffin and colleagues' study of student visits in Sydney and Melbourne, describe

discussions among students captured using portable tape recorders and lapel microphones. That analysis showed that 'when moving freely the students are conducting learning related conversations for over 80% of their time.' Much of that conversation took place as they walked between exhibits and took the forms of linking what the saw to prior experiences, and of drawing a friend's attention to things they were interested in or commenting on specific exhibits (Griffin 2004, S62). That visitor-centered experience engages a continuum of knowledge-sharing interactions along the lines described by Ash (2003, 2004), in which differently-experienced members of a cohort participate in scaffolding knowledge with each other. Such inter- and intra-personal activity is also indicated by many observational timing and tracking studies of exhibitions in museums. The dwell time and interpersonal activity observed at an exhibit correlate to self-directed and reflective engagement with the display and with others in the visitor cohort (Coffee 2009).

As I noted above, I have also observed both intra- and interpersonal dialogic museum activity in written visitor commentary (Coffee 2011, 2013). Comment books are simultaneously retrospective of visitors' experience and untethered from the direct mediation of museum texts or personnel. My analysis draws upon psychology, such as Wertsch (1985, 1991), working in the tradition of Vygotsky. I join that psychological analysis with linguistic analyses by Bakhtin, who noted that 'any speaker is himself a respondent' and that 'any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances' (Bakhtin 1986, 69). These analyses are congruent with Vygotsky's theory of cognition, and of signs and signals as fundamental to human consciousness. Of special importance to the dialogic quality of museum use is its 'quality of being directed to someone, its *addressivity*' (Bakhtin 1986, 95), particularly those utterances addressed to a universal ethic; to any and all who with whom the commentor is sharing their experience.

Similar dialogic activity is indicated by visitor comments elsewhere. Ina Ross has observed and analyzed visitor comments to the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum (MPTM) in Bhopal, India, which that museum has employed in its efforts to recenter itself around its visitors. The MPTM uses a generic guest book used to record names and contact information. Ross notes that since these books provide limited space for extended comment, visitor comments tend to be sober, serious and polite, rather than spurious or contentious. However, some writers apparently 'take a delight' in leaving longer comments that ignore the spatial organization of the pages. Very notably, many entries include detailed contact information, as if inviting a direct response (Ross 2017, 103–104). Ross finds that visitor comments, such as 'an awesome experience. Just fell in love with the place' also show 'how the institution of the museum, which is often marginalized and unpopular in India, can be appropriated by the public' (Ross 2017, 109–110).

Chaim Noy has examined modalities of visitor comment in relation to the authorial voice of the museum, and specifically the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, USA, and Ammunition Hill

National Memorial Site in East Jerusalem. Noy finds that the handwritten component of commentary conveys its authenticity to 'truly bear historical "voices"' (Noy 2019, 4–5), and that comment 'showing and telling bear(s) communicative consequences' (Noy 2019, 16). In the specific example of the Contemporary Issues Forum of the National Museum of American Jewish History, the museum poses questions to its visitors in the hope of eliciting responses and intra-comment discussion (Noy 2015, 2017).

In yet another museum environment, Sharon Macdonald observed visitor comment-making as an 'exit ritual' (Macdonald 2005, 125) performed to close an emotional visitor experience of the Documentation Centre in Nuremberg, Germany, site of Nazi party rallies in the 1930s and where the German government encoded race law that criminalized Jews and Slavs. Macdonald noted that

> the ritual of reading and perhaps also writing in the visitor book helps visitors to formulate their own position in relation to those of others. Some of the visitors that I interviewed referred spontaneously to the fact that they had already written in the book, making comments like "As I just wrote in the visitor book". Beyond this opportunity – or what some might even see as a kind of duty – to formulate a view, some visitors may experience writing as a need.
>
> (Macdonald 2005, 125)

Thus, again, dialogic activity emerges as a felt need.

While objects, interpretive copy, and the physical location of a comment book do direct its use, the invitation to comment does not prevent the opportunity to change the subject, so to speak. And even where commentary options are constrained, as Ross found in the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum, some visitors still delighted in writing beyond those prescribed boundaries. Further, the personally-reflective experience and comparative seclusion of comment writing enables anonymity and comments that disregard decorum. Of course, as with any parting speech intended to close rather than prolong engagement, comments may be terse declamation (i.e. 'great job!' or 'terrible!'). However, as both an interpersonal and intrapersonal process, these response vehicles enable visitors to extend, expand, or challenge a given narrative; to be co-authors of their exhibition experience, as I found in the following comment, responding to oral histories about food insecurity in the United States.

> My thoughts on this exhibit are that if we understand hunger then it may be easier for us to do more for those who are hungry. I find it amazing that people who have seen and felt so much pain can show people who in reality haven't so much beauty and reality. The perspective that these people show is liberating. It makes you feel good in a sense that you know that there can still be so much kindness in people who have every reason not to be [Anonymous visitor, 3 April 2010].
>
> (Coffee 2011, 21)

Cognition as inclusionary practice

The implications of dialogic theory are substantial for a close, critical evaluation of the immersive sociality of the museum experience. That immersive sociality is frequently at odds with curatorial direction of that experience. In the conventional modern museum, objects illustrate didactic and monologic interpretation, while in the modern 'experiential' science center it is often simulation of phenomenon that illustrates interpretation. Objects or phenomena are presented as empirical facts. Interpretive copy is a brief lecture or series of talking points. But neither the object nor the interpretive text limits the extent of a visitor's perceptual or dialogic experience.

Likewise, 'history' learning in museums is often reduced to a series of 'just so' stories, depicting individuals and events as isolated moments rather that dynamic social relationships. Leaving aside explicitly inaccurate statements – which abound in museums as either elided or deficient research – our understanding of socio-cultural history is diminished by such reductionist treatment, as is the potential for our cognitive development. Such are egregious descriptions of modern history which gloss over colonialism, racism, or socio-economic inequity while privileging individual capitalists. 'Great men' are described in detail while the histories of those they expropriated are redacted from the storyline. Thus, Horatio Nelson 'put a halt to Napoleon's scheme to invade England. But this amazing naval hero paid for his victory with his life' at Trafalgar (Royal Museums Greenwich 2022); Thomas Edison was 'America's greatest inventor (and) changed out world forever' in the R&D laboratory he directed in New Jersey (Thomas Edison NHP 2022). Every 'just so' story denatures history with simplistic notions of cause and effect. Similarly, the 'hands-on' model or demonstration can misinterpret and yet appear sufficiently 'sensible' to misdirect our understanding of the simulated phenomenon. One may consider the 'bad science' demonstrations sometimes staged in science and discovery centers: misrepresenting Bernoulli's principle of fluid dynamics; or the Coriolis force in planetary atmosphere; or electrostatic discharge; or conversion of potential to kinetic energy; or a tornadic vortex.[16] Despite inaccuracies, these or similar interpretations persist because they provide a demonstrable sequence – e.g. sunrise and sunset – and are thereby sensible. Meanwhile, the theatrical demonstration reinforces the distance between the authoritative demonstrator and the spectator visitor. Perception does not, however, necessarily lead to accurate conceptualization, and interpretive misdirection is detrimental to both knowledge and cognitive development.[17]

Intellectual distancing is a persistent problem in museum work – between museum organizations as cultural gatekeepers and museum visitors as the audiences of such culture. The relationship is one of guru and pupil, not of more or less capable peers. Lola Young proposed that museums

> connect with the disconnected and the alienated, but not in ways that say 'come be like us,' (but to) encourage people to ask the awkward

> questions, and to make self-determined critical interventions that enrich our understanding of the ways in which history is made and represented.
>
> (Young 2002, 211)

The related requirement is that museum practitioners engage those 'awkward questions' and enable 'critical interventions' by museum users, rather than on their behalf. In pursuing that participation, practitioners should not lose sight of the history of museums as collaborations of privileged and elite governance and donors. I will return to that thread in Chapter Five, but note here that in order to support dialogic inquiry, participation requires a collaboration of peers. For museum projects to be broadly participatory they must engage and follow the lead of otherwise unentitled stakeholders, including those who have been historically disadvantaged by museums or underrepresented among museum users. District Six Museum education manager Mandy Sanger described it this way:

> While we do work with lots of researchers and we see ourselves as researchers, we have to check ourselves in these processes in terms of the power dynamic between us and people who don't engage in formal research practices but whose stories are pivotal to our curatorial and political practice. And so, the process of involving former residents and activists in our space is not an event, it's not a one-off process. It's both planned – in other words, we do have long term views, in terms of where we want a particular process has to go – but it's also unplanned in the sense that we allow participants to shape where that goes.
>
> (Mandy Sanger, interview with author, 8 April 2022)

Pointing to this type of dialogic participatory practice, and drawing on her own and others' research, Doris Ash recommends that exhibitions should be intentionally designed to facilitate multiple 'entry points' to dialogically engage with the diverse prior understandings of visitors (Ash 2004a). Others have taken this concept further, employing dialogic engagement as the process by which the exhibition or program is composed in the first place. Thus, Robert Janes notes that such engagement 'depends fundamentally on who is doing the exhibition. For example, at Glenbow (Museum, where Janes was chief executive officer) the team for the Blackfoot Gallery consisted of 18 Blackfoot Elders - they did the research, design and storyline. Glenbow staff assisted. This was in 1997–2000. Colonialism was unmasked in this exhibition' (Robert Janes, personal communication 17 April 2022). The encouraging growth of digitally co-created projects online, such as the Museum of British Colonialism (described in Chapter 5), also exemplify this process (MBC 2018), utilizing hypermedia as it was perhaps originally intended (CERN 2022; WWWF 2022).[18] In their analysis of digitally co-created exhibitions, Smith and Iversen describe how 'messy back-stage curation and front-stage exhibition are fused into a dynamic design ecology scaffolded by genuine participation between multiple stakeholders' (Smith and Iversen 2014, 265).

Case in point: One City, Many Cultures

The community engagement by Lowell National Historical Park (LNHP) to develop the exhibition 'One City, Many Cultures' is another example of dialogic co-creation (Lowell NHP 2021). In 2018, LNHP began planning a long-term exhibition to replace a 30-year-old exhibition about immigrant communities in Lowell, Massachusetts. Without any sense of irony, the now-removed 'Immigrants' exhibition portrayed anyone not of English or Scottish descent as immigrants to the city, while Anglo- and Scots-Americans were depicted as long-resident 'Yankee' settlers. Fully excluded was the history of Indigenous communities whose villages and farms were violently expropriated by (mainly) British settlers. The 'Immigrants' exhibition had met with critical reproach soon after it opened. Initially, the new project considered replacing one interpretation of 'immigrants' with another similar exposition centered on 'cultural identity', in which a selection of population groups would be identified by their shared objects and practices. The project's initiation also demonstrated the strong currents within the National Park Service agency to conform to attitudes expressed by local and federal government leaders.[19] For others, using the phrase 'cultural identity' conformed to current academic jargon and avoided mentioning 'immigrants' at all.

Various alternate descriptors were considered by the park staff during this period, primarily to avoid contradicting government officials who were demonizing non-Euro-American peoples in the United States and elsewhere. For other LNHP staff, however, the guiding impetus for the project was to properly collect and present multiple and intersecting narratives that provide a people's history of the city, co-curated with current city residents. Importantly, the initial parameters of the project – an exhibition about a city of immigrants – and the effort to engage residents in co-creation were initiated by the national park, not actively sought by external stakeholders. The LNHP initiative is thereby both laudable and problematic in that the project limits and structure were still orchestrated by a government agency – even if well-intentioned by LNHP practitioners – rather than as a collaborative discovery with external stakeholders. Practically, the co-creation has taken place through a continuing series of discussions among a standing committee of external stakeholders, who have determined the main themes of the exhibition and curated many of the specific stories that convey those themes. The committee also reviewed and critiqued every step in the development and design of the physical exhibition. Admittedly, however, the process of co-creation was designed by LNHP staff including the author, employing their specific expertise. In this role, LNHP staff intentionally played the role of 'more capable peer' (Vygotsky 1978, 86).

A co-creative program or exhibition process is potentially dialogic in multiple dimensions, and especially if it intends to engage underserved and disadvantaged stakeholders. Not all stakeholders are prepared or able to undertake specialized museum work; they must learn by doing it. The 'best practices'

Figure 3.1 One City, Many Cultures exhibition roundtable meeting
Source: Photo by Emily Donovan, Lowell National Historical Park, used with permission.

assumed as normative by practitioners may not correspond with non-specialist understandings and, in some instances at least, non-specialists may advocate innovations that disrupt institutionalized or 'taken-for-granted' practices. These distinctions merit reflective attention by specialists, and should not be dismissed as simply naïve inexperience. In the LNHP example, an early group discussion considered how to focus the exhibition and articulated key themes. Those themes were distilled through an extended discussion of how differences of class, racialization, ancestry, and gender described qualities of and differences among the population of a post-industrial city.

This extended curatorial discussion, among a group of more than 30 persons and collaborating throughout three and a half years of conceptual development and design, identified a wide range of specific examples, collected objects and oral histories, and interconnected stories and materials in an exhibition that was truly a product of its subjects. Through their own work, the group built a shared understanding of the complexity and intersectional nature of its project. Exploring those intersections at length and in depth helped the group to identify and interpret several so-called 'difficult stories'[20] that should be given prominent positions throughout the exhibition. For example, stakeholders told of their personal experiences with racism and xenophobia, with displacement and dispossession, and of other adversities or achievements, as learning moments for the entire group and as compelling stories that the group pledged

to include. Very importantly, engaging and challenging visitor attitudes and understandings about socio-cultural inclusion and exclusion was widely embraced by the co-creators.

In the process of exploring the importance of inclusivity, LNHP staff learned from the stakeholder roundtable that the group better identified stories that might have otherwise been omitted, and it took practical steps to ensure inclusion. Likewise, consensus was reached that all interpretive copy should be displayed in multiple languages. This in turn prompted discussions about which languages to use, challenged understandings of effective visual communication, but also challenged those drafting interpretive copy to be concise and not engage in lengthy didactic tracts. This effort in turn reinforced an overarching intention that the self-directed exhibition prompt dialogical engagement and conversation rather than mere exposition.

The consensus about inclusion guided co-creators to seek out unrepresented or underrepresented stories and through that process they also broadened participation in the project. For example, in describing ideologies, the group connected with religious congregations, mosques, and temples, to include a broad – Buddhist, Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Judaic – presentation of such symbolic material culture. Outreach to social service organizations facilitated interviews with some of the most economically disadvantaged persons in the city, whose personal stories were then included in the exhibition.

One co-curator, a recent immigrant from Guatemala, compared the iterative, dialogical, and engaged exhibition project to his experience petitioning city government.

> There are 25 people, but everyone has different points of view and everyone has been listened to. When you see a City Council meeting you don't see Lowell. (In exhibition meetings) you see people from all parts of the city. It doesn't matter where you come from, you can form a community.
>
> (Diego Leonardo, *Lowell Sun*, 14 July 2021)

As this person observed, the project's collaborative process went beyond a simple, additive compilation of opinions – it produced active collaboration among peers who formed a community of knowledge based in shared practice.

In summary

Museums present themselves and are presumed by many users to be authoritative but monologic sites of instruction. Museums are also sites of informal dialogue and interpretation among users – social practices and cognitive processes that are engendered by and respond to socio-cultural contexts and social relationships external to the museum. The museum experience is not solely intellectual even though its intent is communicative. The affective, cathartic and epiphanic effects of museums enabled by its exhibitions, programs, and

even interior design, are the conditions in which that dialogue arises and often by which it is inspired and directed. User dialogue is more than a recapitulation of descriptive data and artifacts. User behaviors produce new knowledge in the forms of attitudes, and understandings, but also new ways of thinking, extending beyond the subject matter expertise of the specific exhibition. Co-creative projects extend that dialogical practice even further.

These processes of dialogism and inclusion do not arise spontaneously out of museums that are rooted in nineteenth-century ways of seeing and thinking, but even in organizations new to the twenty-first century, exclusionary and reductionist modes of perception and reflection persist by way of the stratified social relationships in which the museum exists. Among those nineteenth-century forms is pragmatist epistemology and its pragmatist pedagogy that reinforces a quantitative approach to knowing and constructs conformist ways of thinking. Socially responsive, dialogic practitioners are willing to learn, to share expertise, and to collaborate with 'outsiders' in the transformation of the museum as a learning experience. The social complexities of how museum organizations facilitate or restrict that work is the topic of the next chapter.

Notes

1 Only years later did I begin to recognize the MSI as a grand exposition of the major industrial capital concentrations located in Chicago – Peabody Coal, U.S. Steel, International Harvester, General Motors, and Sante Fe Railroad – much as the Science Museum in London presents British technological advances. The development of the science museum sub-sector in the U.S. corresponded with a government-led focus on the physical and biological sciences which was itself prompted by America's global contention with other capitalist states. That these separate activities were indeed separately organized – per capitalism – does not negate the fact that they were products of governmental support, or that public funds were being directed to both government and private business. The non-profit Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, for example, has always been directed by trustees who hold high-level positions in businesses whose technologies are featured in its exhibition halls (MSI 2021).
2 From 1924 until his death in 1934 (aged 37, from tuberculosis), Vygotsky was associated with Alexander Luria, Alexi Leontiev, Lidia Bozhovich, Alexander Zaporozhets, Natalia Morozova and others at the Moscow Institute of Psychology. For political reasons, much of their work was not published until the 1960s and 1970s.
3 By way of biography: William James (1842–1910) was a professor of psychology and philosophy at Harvard for most of his career. John Dewey (1859–1952) taught pedagogy at the University of Chicago and then at Columbia University, and co-founded the New School for Social Research in New York. C. S. Peirce (1839–1914) taught briefly at Johns Hopkins University, with Dewey as one of his students, but otherwise led a peripatetic intellectual life enabled by familial connections with Boston privilege (including with James). After Peirce's death, his papers were collected by Harvard University, enabling later academics to revitalize his pragmatic philosophy and semiotics.
4 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs illustrates how pragmatic psychology ranks behaviors in a prescribed sequence. Thus, for Maslow, feelings of accomplishment are distinct from, have a higher status than, and are at a distance from the 'basic needs' of food or sleep.

5 George Hein describes Dewey's discursive style as 'convoluted, even awkward' (Hein 2006a, 182).
6 When we think of 'decolonizing' the museum, we should consider both curatorial practices and interpretive practices, including how the ideologies of colonialism and imperialism have been projected as so-called 'soft power'. Thus, for example, Harvard sponsored Dewey to lecture in residence in China for two years following the May 4th Movement, his pedagogy was adopted by Chinese and Turkish academics, his writings were republished in India, etc. Likewise, the United States government (its Agency for International Development, USAID, for example) and several of the large private 'philanthropies' (Carnegie, Ford, Gates, etc.) exert significant influence on education and cultural sectors in many countries.
7 In *Psychology* Dewey describes at length various 'special senses' and 'kind of sensations' that align well with the 'multiple intelligences' identified by Gardner.
8 Gardner describes intelligence as 'processes that are carried out by dedicated neural networks' (Gardner 1999, 94), which suggests organismal structure and/or organ function. He explicitly omits considering 'spirituality' – and presumably an external 'spirit' impulse – as a type of intelligence (Gardner 1999, 53–66).
9 The United States Department of Education documents from 1850 forward the school enrollment of all youth, irrespective of socio-economic or other distinctions, aged five to 19 years. As of 1 April 1850, 47% of all eligible youth were counted as enrolled; in 1900 that percentage was 50.5%; in 1950 the percentage was 78%. Completion rates were substantially lower. See: NCES 1993, 14–17.
10 Hence the statement by industrialist Henry Ford, 'history is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's dam is the history we make today' (*Chicago Tribune*, 25 May 1916).
11 Marketing surveys ask for user validation of existing activities – most often using Likert scale like-dislike questions; usability studies test for applicability and efficacy according to the respondent's intentions and understandings with the objective of implementing project change.
12 From 1991 until 2000, Miller's International Center for the Advancement of Scientific Literacy was within the Chicago Academy of Sciences, where I also worked directing the Academy's new museum project (1997–2000).
13 Likewise, providing an interesting indicator of the relationship of learning with cognitive development, Miller et al also surveyed public acceptance of the concept of biological evolution in a cross-national study of the United States, European countries and Japan. The American respondents' acceptance of biological evolution ranked second-to-last, with a third of American respondents 'firmly rejecting' the concept (Miller et al 2006, 765).
14 The remainder of this passage is worth citing at length for its theory of social contradiction: 'in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes' (Marx and Engels 1969, 108–109).
15 Some scholars dismiss dialectical materialist analyses as inherently 'European' and thereby enmeshed with colonialism, however the widespread and creative development of dialectical materialism as both social theory and activist practice, throughout Asia, Africa, and South America, demonstrates otherwise.
16 The author observed purported but inaccurate explanations, including of Bernoulli and Corliolis effects at a museum in Illinois (1999); of static electricity at a science center in New Jersey (2002); of hydraulic energy at a museum in Massachusetts (2018); and of a tornado at science center in California (1996).
17 This is also demonstrated as a result of misinformation campaigns and Internet rumors.

18 Tim Berners-Lee, who wrote the original version of HyperText Transfer Protocol (http), which is the client-server software of the world-wide web, explained that his impetus was the 'in those days (late 1980s), there was different information on different computers, but you had to log on to different computers to get at it', he also noted that 'you can't propose that something be a universal space and at the same time keep control of it' (WWWF 2022).
19 The United States National Park Service is an agency within the federal Department of the Interior. The US government has long engaged ideologies of 'American exceptionalism' to justify its imperial policy, through a range of communicatory forms including trans-national expositions (Rydell 1984; 1993), mass media (Schiller 1989) and public history (Linenthal and Engelhardt 1996). This 'exceptionalism' is periodically amplified as Eurocentric 'white supremacy' and used to further confuse the precarious petit bourgeoise who comprise a sizable class within USA society.
20 The phrase 'difficult stories' is used by some American museum practitioners who consider the lived experiences of disadvantaged populations as external to their own. This phenomenon of exclusion is returned to later in this book. The 'difficulty' of the story refers directly to the discomfort felt by privileged insiders when they are challenged to acknowledge it.

References

Adams, Geraldine K. 2021. 'SMG under fire for "gagging clause" in Shell deal', *Museums Journal*, 30 July, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2021/07/smg-under-fire-for-gagging-clause-in-shell-sponsorship-deal/ (accessed 30 July 2021).

Ash, Doris. 2003. 'Dialogic inquiry in life science conversations of family groups in a museum', *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 40 (2): 138–162.

Ash, Doris. 2004a. 'How Families Use Questions at Dioramas: Ideas for Exhibit Design', *Curator*, 47 (1): 84–100.

Ash, Doris. 2004b. 'Reflective scientific sense-making dialogue in two languages: The science in the dialogue and the dialogue in the science', *Science Education*, 88 (6): 855–884.

Bakhtin, M. M. 1986. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, Austin TX: University of Texas Press.

Bentham, Jeremy. 1841. *Works of Jeremy Bentham, Part XVI*, Edinburgh: William Tait.

Bickhard, Mark H. 1997. 'Constructivisms and Relativisms: A Shopper's Guide', *Science & Education* 6 (1): 29–42.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction, a social critique of the judgement of taste*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Cardwell, D. S. L. 1972. *The Organisation of Science in England*, London: Heinemann.

Carnall, Mark, J. Ashby, and C. Ross. 2013. 'Natural history museums as provocateurs for dialogue and debate', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 28 (1): 55–71.

Census India. 1991. 'List of notified Scheduled Tribes, Annexure Ib', https://web.archive.org/web/20131107225208/http://censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/SCST/ST%20Lists.pdf (accessed 5 July 2021).

CERN. 2022. 'The birth of the Web', Conseil européen pour la recherche nucléaire, https://home.cern/science/computing/birth-web (accessed 3 April 2022).

Coffee, Kevin. 2009. 'Museum Exhibitions as Hypermedia', paper presented 6 April 2009 to the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums, Philadelphia PA, https://www.

academia.edu/12844887/Museum_Exhibitions_as_Hypermedia (accessed 28 April 2021).

Coffee, Kevin. 2011. 'Disturbing the eternal silence of the gallery: a site of dialogue about hunger in America', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 26 (1): 11–26.

Coffee, Kevin. 2013. 'Visitor Comments as Dialogue', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 56 (2): 163–167.

Crowley, Kevin, Maureen A. Callanan, Jennifer L. Jipson, Jody Galco, Karen Topping and Jeff Shrager. 2001. 'Shared scientific thinking in everyday parent-child activity', *Science Education* 85 (6): 712–732.

Dewey, John. 1886. *Psychology*, New York: Harper Brothers.

Dewey, John. 1897. *My Pedagogic Creed*, New York: E. L. Kellogg & Co.

Dewey, John. 1938. *Experience and Education*, New York: Macmillan Co.

Dewey, John. 1946. 'Peirce's Theory of Linguistic Signs, Thought, and Meaning', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 43 (4): 85–95.

Dewey, John. 1957 [1922]. *Human nature and conduct: an introduction to social psychology*, New York: Modern Library.

Dewey, John. 1960 [1929]. *The Quest for Certainty*, New York: Capricorn Books.

Dewey, John. 1965 [1929]. *Experience and Nature*, Calcutta: Oxford Book Company.

Dierking, Lynn. 1991. 'Learning Theory and Learning Styles: An Overview', *Journal of Museum Education*, 16 (1): 4–6.

Eagleton, Terry. 1996, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, Malden MA: Blackwell.

Elliston, Bill. 2012. 'Howard Gardner and Multiple Intelligence Theory: A Practical Application of Entry Points in Museum Programming,' in Jeffrey Hall, Lauren Appel, Kat Harris, Nicole Keller and David Vining (eds) *12 Museum Theorists at Play*, 71–80. New York: Bank Street College of Education.

Faria, Cláudia and Isabel Chagas. 2012. 'School-visit to a science centre: student interaction with exhibits and the relevance of teachers' behaviour', *Revista Electrónica de Enseñanza de las Ciencias*, 11 (3): 582–594.

Fernyhough, Charles. 1996. 'The dialogic mind: A dialogic approach to the higher mental functions', *New Ideas in Psychology*, 14 (1): 47–62.

Fernyhough, Charles. 2004. 'Alien voices and inner dialogue: towards a developmental account of auditory verbal hallucinations', *New Ideas in Psychology*, 22 (1): 49–68.

Fernyhough, Charles. 2008. 'Getting Vygotskian about theory of mind: Mediation, dialogue, and the development of social understanding', *Developmental Review*, 28 (2): 225–262.

Feuerbach, Ludwig A. 1854 [1843]. *The Essence of Christianity*, London: John Chapman.

Gardner, Howard. 1999. *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*, New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, Howard. 2020. '"Neuromyths": A Critical Consideration', *Mind, Brain and Education*, 14 (1): 2–4.

Geelan, David R. 1997. 'Epistemological Anarchy and the Many Forms of Constructivism', *Science & Education* 6 (1): 15–28.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.

Gibson, Stephanie. 2017. '"Let's talk about sex": visitor comments in Contraception: Uncovering the collection of Dame Margaret Sparrow', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 60 (1): 47–65.

Gilbert, John and Mary Priest. 1997. 'Models and discourse: A primary school science class visit to a museum', *Science Education* 81 (6): 749–762.

Gini, Silvia, Victoria Knowland, Michael S.C. Thomas, Jo Van Herwegen. 2021. 'Neuromyths About Neurodevelopmental Disorders: Misconceptions by Educators and the General Public', *Mind, Brain and Education* 15 (4): 289–298.

Giroux, Henry A. 1990. 'Curriculum Theory, Textual Authority, and the Role of Teachers as Public Intellectuals', *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 5 (4): 361–383.

Gkouskou, Eirini and Dimitrios Koliopoulos. 2021. 'Describing the Educational Role of Natural History Museums: an Analysis Tool for Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers', *European Journal of Education Studies*, 8 (1): 217–233.

Grandy, Richard E. 1997. 'Constructivisms and Objectivity: Disentangling Metaphysics from Pedagogy', *Science & Education*, 6 (1): 43–53.

Griffin, Janette. 2004. 'Research on students and museums: Looking more closely at the students in school groups', *Science Education*, 88 (S1): S59–S70.

Haraway, Donna. 2015. 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin', *Environmental Humanities* 6 (1): 159–165.

Harvey, David. 1990, *The Condition of Post-Modernity*, Malden MA: Blackwell.

Harvey, David. 2005, *A Brief History of Neo-liberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hegel, Georg Willhelm Freidrich. 2010 [1812–1816]. *The Science of Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hein, George E. 1998. *Learning in the Museum*, London: Routledge.

Hein, George E. 1999. 'Is Meaning Making Constructivism? Is Constructivism Meaning Making?' *Exhibitionist*, Fall.

Hein, George E. 2004. 'John Dewey and Museum Education', *Curator*, 47 (4): 413–427.

Hein, George E. 2006a. 'John Dewey's "Wholly Original Philosophy" and its Significance for Museums', *Curator* 49, (2): 181–203.

Hein, George E. 2006b. 'Museum Education', in Sharon MacDonald (ed.) *A Companion to Museum Studies*, 340–352. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hein, George E. 2011. 'Dewey's Debt to Barnes', *Curator*, 54 (2): 123–139.

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. 1994. 'Education, communication and interpretation: towards a critical pedagogy in museums', in Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (ed). *The Educational Role of the Museum*, 3–27. Abingdon: Routledge.

Husmann, Polly R. and V. D. O'Loughlin 2019. 'Another Nail in the Coffin for Learning Styles? Disparities among Undergraduate Anatomy Students' Study Strategies, Class Performance, and Reported VARK Learning Styles', *Anatomical Sciences Education*, 12 (1): 6–19.

Kallen, Horace M. 1955. *The philosophy of William James: selected from his chief works*, New York: Modern Library.

Kisiel, James. 2005. 'Understanding elementary teacher motivations for science fieldtrips', *Science Education*, 89 (6): 936–955.

Kisiel, James. 2006. 'An examination of fieldtrip strategies and their implementation within a natural history museum', *Science Education*, 90 (3): 434–452.

Knell, Simon J. 2004. 'Altered values: searching for a new collecting', in Simon J. Knell (ed.) *Museums and the Future of Collecting*, 1–46. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate.

Kozulin, Alex. 1995. 'The Learning Process: Vygotsky's Theory in the Mirror of its Interpretations', *School Psychology International*, 16 (2): 117–129.

Kozulin, Alex, Boris Gindis, Vladimir S. Ageyev, and Suzanne M. Miller (eds). 2003. *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lehr, Jane L., E. McCallie, S. R. Davies, B. R. Caron, B. Gammon, and S. Duensing. 2007. 'The Value of "Dialogue Events" as Sites of Learning: An exploration of

research and evaluation frameworks', *International Journal of Science Education*, 29 (12): 1467–1487.

Leshnoff, Susan K. 2003. 'Teaching Art, Moral Conduct, & John Dewey for Today', *Art Education*, 56 (6): 33–39.

Linenthal, Edward T. and Tom Engelhardt. 1996. *History Wars*, New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Lowell NHP. 2021. 'One City, Many Cultures Exhibit Project', 9 December, https://www.nps.gov/lowe/learn/cultural-exhibit-project.htm (accessed 3 April 2022).

Maccario, Nihal Kuruoglu. 2012. 'Stimulation of multiple intelligence by museum education at teachers' training', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 51: 807–811.

Macdonald, Sharon. 2005. 'Accessing audiences: visiting visitor books', *Museum and Society*, 3 (3): 119–136.

Marx, Karl and Frederich Engels. 1969 [1848]. 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', *Karl Marx & Frederick Engels Selected Works Vol. 1*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Massa, Laura J. and R. E. Mayer 2006. 'Testing the ATI hypothesis: Should multimedia instruction accommodate verbalizer-visualizer cognitive style?' *Learning and Individual Differences*, 16 (4): 321–335.

Matthews, Michael R. 1992. 'Constructivism and empiricism: An incomplete divorce', *Research in Science Education*, 22 (1): 299–307.

Matthews, Michael R. 1993. 'Constructivism and Science Education: Some Epistemological Problems', *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 2 (1): 359–370.

Matthews, Michael R. 1997a. 'Introductory Comments on Philosophy and Constructivism in Science Education', *Science & Education*, 6 (1): 5–14.

Matthews, Michael R. 1997b. 'A Bibliography for Philosophy and Constructivism in Science Education', *Science & Education*, 6 (1): 197–201.

Matthews. Michael R. 2002. 'Constructivism and Science Education: A Further Appraisal', *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 11 (2): 121–134.

May, Cindi. 2018. 'The Problem with "Learning Styles"', *Scientific American*, 29 May, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-problem-with-learning-styles/.

Mayhew, Katherine Camp and Anna Camp Edwards. 1936. *The Dewey School*, New York: Appleton-Century Company.

MBC. 2018. 'About Us', Museum of British Colonialism, https://www.museumofbritishcolonialism.org/themuseum (accessed 3 April 2022).

McLean, Bethany and Peter Elkind. 2003. *The Smartest Guys in the Room; the amazing rise and scandalous fall of Enron*, New York: Portfolio Trade.

Mill, John Stuart. 1913. *On Liberty*, London: Longmans, Green and Co.

Miller, Jon, Eugenie C. Scott, and Shinji Okamoto. 2006. 'Public Acceptance of Evolution', *Science*, 313: 765–766.

Miller, Jon. 2010. 'Civic Scientific Literacy: The Role of the Media in the Electronic Era', in Donald Kennedy and Geneva Overholser (eds) *Science and the Media*, 44–63. Cambridge MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

MSI. 2021. 'Museum of Science and Industry, Board of Trustees', https://www.msichicago.org/explore/about-us/leadership/board-of-trustees/. (accessed 10 June 2021).

NCES. 1993. '120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait', Washington DC: Department of Education.

NEA. 2019. 'U.S. Patterns of Arts Participation: A Full Report from the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts', Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

Nola, Robert. 1997. 'Constructivism in Science and Science Education: A Philosophical Critique', *Science & Education*, 6 (1): 55–83.

Noy, Chaim. 2015. 'Writing in Museums: Toward a Rhetoric of Participation', *Written Communication*, 32 (2): 195–219.

Noy, Chaim. 2017. 'Moral discourse and argumentation in the public sphere: Museums and their visitors', *Discourse, Context & Media*, 16: 39–47.

Noy, Chaim. 2019. 'Voices on display: Handwriting, paper, and authenticity, from museums to social network sites', *Convergence*, 26(5–6),1315–1332.

Pashler, Harold, Mark McDaniel, Doug Rohrer and Robert Bjork. 2008. 'Learning Styles: Concepts and Evidence', *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 9 (3): 105–119.

Pearce, Susan M. 1994. 'Objects as meaning; or narrating the past', in Susan M. Pearce (ed) *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, Abington, OX: Routledge, 1994: 19–29.

Peirce, Charles Sanders. 1878. 'Illustrations of the logic of science', *Popular Science Monthly*, New York: Appleton.

Peirce, Charles Sanders. 1892. 'The Law of Mind', *The Monist*, 2 (4): 533–559.

Peirce, Charles Sanders. 1905. 'Issues of Pragmatism', *The Monist*, 15 (4): 481–499.

Plato. 360 BCE. *The Republic, Book VII*. http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.8.vii.html. (accessed 27 June 2021).

Ransdell, Joseph. 2007. 'T. L. Short on Peirce's Semeiotic', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 43 (4): 654–662.

Rich, John M. 1985. 'John Dewey's Contribution to School Discipline', *The Clearing House* 59 (4): 155–157.

Ross, Ina. 2017. 'Uncharted territory: Visitor books of Indian museums. The Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum in Bhopal – a case study', *Museum & Society*, 15 (1): 100–113.

Rousseau, Luc. 2021. '"Neuromyths" and Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory: A Comment on Gardner, 2020', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12: 1–5.

Royal Museums Greenwich. 2022. 'Nelson's Trafalgar Coat', Royal Museums Greenwich, https://www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum/attractions/nelsons-trafalgar-coat (accessed 4 June 2022).

Rydell, Robert. 1984. *All the World's a Fair*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rydell, Robert. 1993. *World of Fairs*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sanger, Mary. 2022. Interview with author, 8 April.

Saunders, Walter L. 1992. 'The Constructivist Perspective: Implications and Teaching Strategies for Science', *School Science and Mathematics*, 92 (3): 136.

Schaller, David T., Steven Alison-Bunnell, and Minda Borun. 2005. 'Learning Styles and Online Interactives', Museums and the Web 2005 papers, https://www.archimuse.com/mw2005/papers/schaller/schaller.html (accessed 30 May 2022).

Schiller, Herbert I. 1989. *Culture Inc*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shepperson, Arnold. 2008. 'Realism, logic and social communication: C.S. Peirce's classification of science in communication studies and journalism', *Critical Arts* 22 (2): 242–294.

Sherman, Robert R. 1977. 'The Philosophy of John Dewey: Implications for Teaching Method in the Social Studies', *The High School Journal*, 60 (8): 371–378.

Shook, John R. 2011. 'Peirce's Pragmatic Theology and Stoic Religious Ethics', *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 39 (2): 344–363.

Silverman, Lois H. 1995. 'Visitor Meaning-Making in Museums for a New Age', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 38 (3): 161–170.

Smith, Adam. 1937. *The Wealth of Nations*, New York: Modern Library.

Smith, Rachel Charlotte and Ole Sejer Iversen. 2014. 'Participatory heritage innovation: designing dialogic sites of engagement', *Digital Creativity*, 25 (3): 255–268.

Smith, Tina. 2022. Interview with author, 7 January.
Storksdieck, Martin. 2001. 'Differences in teachers' and students' museum field-trip experiences', *Visitor Studies Today* 4 (1): 8–12.
Thomas Edison NHP. 2022. 'Where Modern America Was Invented', Thomas Edison National Historical Park, 29 April, https://www.nps.gov/edis/index.htm (accessed 4 June 2022).
Thatcher, Margaret and Douglas Keay. 1987. 'Interview', *Women's Own*, 23 September, at https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689 (accessed 24 July 2021).
Valdecasas, Antonio G., V. Correia and A. M. Correas. 2006. 'Museums at the crossroad: Contributing to dialogue, curiosity and wonder in natural history museums', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 21 (1): 32–43.
Vergo, Peter. 1989. 'Introduction', in Peter Vergo (ed.) *The New Museology*, 1–5. London: Reaktion Books.
Voparil, Christopher J. 2008. 'A New Name for Some Old Ways of Teaching: Dewey, Learning Differences, and Liberal Education', *Education and Culture*, 24 (1): 34–49.
Vygotsky, Lev S. 1978. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
Vygotsky, Lev S. 1986. *Thought and Language*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
Wertsch, James V. 1985. *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind*, Cambridge and London, Harvard University Press.
Wertsch, James V. and Peeter Tulviste. 1992. 'L. S. Vygotsky and Contemporary Developmental Psychology', *Developmental Psychology*, 28 (4): 548–557.
Whitesell, Emilyn R.. 2016. 'A date at the museum: The impact of field trips on middle school science achievement', *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 53 (7): 1036–1054.
White, Brian. 2015. 'John Dewey, the Common Core, and the Teaching of English', *English Education*, 48 (1): 11–40.
Wible, James R. 2014. 'Peirce's Economic Model in the First Harvard Lecture on Pragmatism', *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 50 (4): 548–580.
WWWF. 2022. 'History of the Web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee', World Wide Web Foundation, https://webfoundation.org/about/vision/history-of-the-web/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwheyUBhD-ARIsAHJNM-P_P3TkUAlt6o59x4rDxcXHnBh_-6PG_y9R2dyRmzNxvz8VANiW3OcaArykEALw_wcB (accessed 4 June 2022).
Young, Lola. 2002. 'Rethinking heritage: cultural policy and inclusion,' in Richard Sandell (ed.) *Museums, Society, Inequality*, 203–212. London: Routledge.
Zhixin Su. 1995. 'A Critical Evaluation of John Dewey's Influence on Chinese Education', *American Journal of Education*, 103 (3): 302–325.

4 Inclusion and exclusion

Tangible and intangible art, architecture, material culture, oral and written heritage, are all in turns revelatory and exhilarating. Displays of human creativity – visualizations, vocalizations, and performances of all types – can inspire as well as reassure us of our individual and collective potential. The range and depth of human symbolism is awe producing and helpfully complicates how we perceive and appreciate each other and reflect upon our joint creative history.

The modern museum, however, has too often been a site of simplification, objectification, and distancing. The symbolic value of the collected object relates, in part at least, to a perceived uniqueness or rarity. Museum objects are emblematic but also dislocated. They are decontextualized and then recontextualized using other referents: Expressionism, Classical Greece, Ming Dynasty, Mammalia, steam engines, and so on. The classifications within collections imply rank and privilege; genre painting and study specimen versus masterwork and type specimen. Collecting practice thereby reinforces hierarchical understandings of human cultural practices and of the natural world.

The modern museum has enacted these distancing processes via solicitation as well as dispossession, depending upon the hierarchy of social relationships. The bourgeois patron is often approached as an insider (Eakin and Kennedy 2005; Pogrebin 2021), Indigenous artists have been and are deceived and exploited by art dealers (Allam and Davidson 2019; Nixon 2020), and the looted cultural heritage of Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas continues to be acquired by museums such as the Louvre and Metropolitan Museum of Art from well-connected antiquities dealers (Velie 2022; see also Barker 2018; Campbell 2013; Mashberg 2021). This distancing process turns on the extraction and transfer of both material and symbolic knowledge, from the fields of collecting to the curatorial refinery of the museum, where all is processed and re-presented. These are the general parameters of museum exclusion and inclusion.

Beyond that materiality, recent examinations of inclusion have turned on specific practices of the museum organization: personnel and organizational structure; the presence or absence of specific interpretations and how those interpretations are framed; engagement with underserved or historically disadvantaged users; and the physical, sensorial, lingual, literal, and otherwise

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811-5

cognitive accessibility of the museum. Important threads within these more recent discussions consider how specific museum-audience interactions are facilitated, how a museum engages audiences via the narratives of its programming, and sometimes challenge the premise of a museum itself (Delin 2002; DTP 2021; Sandell 2002; Young 2002). For the most part, these threads interrogate specific institutions but beneath those surficial concerns lay questions about the core purpose of museums. As Françoise Vergès has noted, the vanquished and oppressed are rarely represented in objects, 'they bequeath words rather than palaces, hope rather than private property' (Vergès 2014, 28).

In response to public debate, some museums are urged by their more privileged stakeholders to avoid practices or policies that could be construed as socially engaged or advocating egalitarian practices that undermine that privileged social position (Amari 2006; Chew 2004; Shore 2005). The argument for avoiding 'difficult' engagement usually hides behind the premise that museums serve a range of audiences with contending interests and so, while their role is to collect, preserve and educate, as complex organizations representing specific internal and external interests, they should not challenge official or dominant political privileges or ideologies (Coffee 2006, 2019; Janes 2016; see also Becker et al 2005; Linenthal and Englehardt 1996).

Collecting and programming practices are certainly essential to promoting inclusion, but no museum constructs its collections or creates its programs apart from the society in which it operates. It is therefore essential to consider the intersections of strong social forces with museum organizations and to test museum policy and practice accordingly. This logic proposes that it is not possible to examine inclusion or exclusion apart from loci of privilege, social power, and hierarchy. No museum organization can achieve broad accessibility if it does not intend to confront, at least episodically, the social forces that underlie or overlay its existence.

Through the opening decades of the twenty-first century, global socioeconomic conditions continue to induce specific intro- and inter-urban migrations. More people than ever before, some willingly and many unwillingly, reside in urban areas and as a consequence many urban polities are now more culturally diverse than at any earlier time. However, these migrations also tend to increase the socioeconomic polarity in those urban areas and emphasize socio-cultural divisions between affluent cores and precarious peripheries. Many museums, with missions centered on mainstreaming specific civic and educational values and themes, are ideological bastions situated in these population centers where alternate socio-cultural affinities and economies coexist and contend. Consequently, discussions of social inclusion and exclusion unfold in the light or shadows of those coexistences and contentions.

Museum use and museum users

All museums document social relationships, actualized as speech, writing, music and song, agriculture, architecture, contests of skill, visual art, religions,

dramaturgy, pedagogy, scientific experiment, and many other socio-cultural practices that produce material and symbolic results that signal those relationships. As storehouses of ideologies and cultural practices, museums are one more of those social practices with a meta-practical purpose: containing collections of symbols that have been privileged as exemplary, as normative, and as mediational symbols. In large part, our perception and understanding of 'art' is shaped by what is exhibited in an 'art museum.'

It is readily apparent but worth noting that cultural practices mediate our interactions with each other, how we describe reality, and more generally how we transform ourselves and our environment. Accordingly, a key historical feature of museums has been the naming and sorting of those practices. Moreover, that sorting led the large Euro-American museums of the past two centuries to place nineteenth century French paintings in the 'art' museum while nineteenth century Mangbetu sculptures would more often be assigned to the 'ethnographic' museum. That sorting process demonstrates curatorial practices that are bound up with societal hierarchies and not simply assessments of iconography, materials or techniques. The specificities of culture practices pose a basic challenge, especially to those museums with an explicit public mission to act as forums for multicultural exchange, rather than as fortresses of the status quo. The world-culture-enveloping universal museums of the European metropoles are citadels of colonial transfer – from the colonized to the colonizers – thereby presenting both material and intellectual dispossession and the physical and mental harm to the colonized that accompanied that dispossession (Fanon 2004, 181–233).

Museum *use* is itself also a cultural practice. It is shaped by the social position and relationships of the user, as well as those of the museum, and defined by whom it includes and excludes; in-groups and outsiders, ranked by social privileges grounded in socio-economic class, including sex, gender, ancestry, language, and so on. The typical statistical profile of the majority of museum users in North America and Europe describes a minority of those populations as a whole: someone who is of Euro-American ancestry, who has above-average income, and who has a post-secondary school education. Further revealing the privileged status of museum use, the same surveys also find that, across all socio-economic strata, most American adults do not visit museums very often (Bradshaw and Nichols 2004). Subtly connected to the demographic of Euro-American museum users are the considerations by museum practitioners regarding why people use museums. One conventional view is that predominantly middle-class users choose museums from among a variety of entertainment or leisure activity options. This view has gained traction during the neo-liberal political regimes of the 1980s and has continued into the 2020s. Cultural organizations in North America and Europe were thereby steered toward privately controlled and retail sources of revenue, while 'public' government financial support was reduced or eliminated (Davies 2005; Jenkinson 1994; Sandell 1998). The subsequent 'earned income' market model has been described by Kotler (2001), critiqued by McPherson (2006), is

periodically expressed as a given in essays by museum leaders (Lusaka and Strand 1997; 1998; Skramstad and Skramstad 2005), and remains valued by certain museum governance bodies (Smith 2007). Tourism is itself a product of colonialist relationships, from the eighteenth century grand tours of the Mediterranean, to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century African safari, to the late twentieth-century middle-class family excursion to Disney World. During the depths of the 2008 global financial crisis, the head of the American Association of Museums worried that museums were challenged by 'a zillion other things [that] are competing for our leisure time' (Vogel 2008, H1). This model of cultural *tourisme* is centered around the striving petit-bourgeois with a credit card.

Another long-standing view – at least since the nineteenth century in Europe and in the United States – is that museums are valuable opportunities for teaching and learning (Falk 1998, 2004; Hein 1998; Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1998; Leinhardt and Knutson 2004; Moore 1982; Ripley 1977). This perspective highlights the value of museum collections and exhibitions in a multi-sensory, communicatory function and for the affective and cognitive effects of that activity. Central to that function is the effectiveness of aesthetic pleasure, catharsis, and contemplation in the service of ideological communication and reinforcement (O'Neill 2002; Sullivan and McCarthy 2009). The metrics for this overarching function are the quantitative and qualitative indications that an exhibition or collection encourages social cohesion by promoting regional and international political identity (Cho 2022; Duncan 1991, 1999), and by reinforcing social strata and class distinctions (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu and Nice 1980).

Signs and symbols

In each of these inclusionary/exclusionary functions, the act of using a museum is also a signifier. The information shared, the processes through which it is shared, the criteria for appreciating the specific aesthetics presented, the ritual events leading toward catharsis, as well as self-definitions of pleasure – each of these experiences has a corresponding and sometimes intersecting ideological premise. One's affinity for figurative painting or for reggae music may be centered in specific features of either, but does not necessarily indicate other shared affinities, such as for certain foods or styles of clothing. These different perceptual sympathies align with distinct attitudes and values that are dialectically related sets of social relationships. Moreover, through our lifetimes, each of us assembles a cultural repertoire that includes interests that we have set aside or only infrequently engage, such as clothing, popular music, or forms of personal adornment. This underscores the importance of examining the *social* formation of attitudes and beliefs (aka identity), and of in-group and out-group concepts of cultural affinity.

My theory of cultural repertoire draws on the Geertzian view that culture is a matrix of affinities and skills that we devise or acquire through the course of

our social practices (Geertz 1973). Culture is *process* – it is what we do and how we do it, collectively. Culture includes but is not reducible to artifacts, assemblages, ancestry, or morphology, even though those particularities are simultaneously individual and social practices. Our affinities for symbolizing practices emerge as part of an overarching search for shared experience and shared narratives. That search for narrative – centered in either every-day or esoteric 'sensibilities' or 'ways of thinking' – also prompts the highly social use of museums.

Symbolizing activity, including language, writing, art, architecture, and material culture – the things that fill museums – is both distinctly human and representative of our ability for *shared intentionality*. We recognize each other and collaborate as autonomous and intentional actors. This cognitive ability presents itself during early childhood and sets the stage for further cognitive development through social practices (Tomasello 2001; Tomasello and Rakoczy 2003; Tomasello et al. 2005a, 2005b). Language is our primary and essential system of symbols (Geertz 1973; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Vygotsky 1986; Wertsch 1985), and vocalization is typically among the earliest of our physical developments. Our capacity for language suggests a behavioral plasticity far more complex than that displayed by other social animals, as well as a capacity for recursive thinking that enables us to create and use open-ended symbolic systems (Hauser, Chomsky, and Fitch 2002). Importantly to the present discussion, language also plays a meaningful role in sensorial acuity (Kazanina, Phillips, and Idsardi 2006; Regier, Kay, and Khetarpal 2007; Winawer et al. 2007) and in forming in-group and out-group concepts (Kinzler, Dupoux, and Spelke 2007; Pinker, Nowak, and Lee 2008).

Vygotsky found that our 'active adaptation to the environment; (our) changing nature, cannot be based on *signalization* – the passive reflection of natural connections of various kinds of agents. It requires the active establishment of such connections that are impossible with a purely natural type of behavior … (we) *signify* behavior and with the help of signs create new connections in the brain that constitute external influence' (Vygotsky, cited in Wertsch 1985, 90–91, with emphasis added). As Vygotsky observed in his study of infants (Chapter Three), semiotic activity does not emerge spontaneously from within the individual – it is acquired and developed through social interactions. Investigators since Vygotsky have demonstrated this dialectical relationship between social practice and individual cognition by way of various inquiries regarding psychology, semiotics, and pedagogy (Fernyhough 1996; Tomasello 2001; Tomasello and Rakoczy 2003; Wertsch 1980, 1985, 1991; Rogoff 1995; Schmittau 2003), including in museums and similar settings (Ash 2003; Ash 2022; Ash et al 2007).

While much culture transference is conscious and intentional, there are also instances where mediation and transfer are unintentional or inadvertent, such as when specific objects or words are adopted to alternate uses that obscure their original symbolic intent (Griffin 2006). Consequently, our practices sometimes appear completely spontaneous or novel: a parent directing specific

behaviors of a child, friends sharing ear buds to listen to music, a spontaneously assembled game of basketball in a public park, or leisurely visit to an art gallery. Each of these cultural practices incorporates behaviors formed through wider social relationships, including concepts of in-group and out-group, or according to ideas about social status, ethnicity, gender, age, etc.

Case in point: Minnesota Historical Society

Centered in the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis on the Mississippi River in the upper Midwest region of the United States, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) is a regional collection of built and material culture through which the organization 'connects people with history in meaningful ways, for today and for tomorrow. Because history matters!' (MNHS n.d. a) MNHS conducts a range of collection, exhibition, program, publishing, and historic preservation activities with the intention of 'using the power of history to transform lives' (MNHS n.d. a) through selected narratives about regional history. The MNHS was established in 1849 with the express purpose of creating a settler-colonial narrative, and its principal founder actively solicited 'books, manuscripts, mineralogical specimens, Indian curiosities and anything else calculated to illustrate and perpetuate the history and settlement of our Territory' (Hauch 1999, 448). That settlement dispossessed Indigenous communities and replaced Indigenous history with a to-be-constructed history of Euro-American settlement. Seventeen decades later, the MNHS envisions itself 'serv(ing) all the people of Minnesota by creating powerful engagement with history to cultivate curiosity and foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society' (MNHS n.d. b). The initial mission of historical construction has been superseded with a mission of enculturation into a well-established order. In these two statements, we observe that the intentionality of practitioners is created by and reinforces their distinct milieux and objectives. These statements describe subject and object, participant and observer, insider and outsider.

Minneapolis is also known as the city where, on 25 May 2020, George Floyd was murdered by police. The heinousness of the crime could not be ignored, and Floyd's murder ignited a firestorm of protest, first in Minneapolis and then in cities across the United States and into Europe. Throughout that year and well into the next, public protests of police oppression of persons of non-European descent redirected discourse throughout American society. The diverse Black Lives Matter initiatives, the rabid responses of white supremacists, and the ongoing violence directed at persons of color, revealed inherent social contradictions that cannot be simply resolved and a social fabric that is rent beyond repair. Contemporaneously, the COVID-19 epidemic at this time was also spreading alarmingly around the world, killing millions and endangering hundreds of millions more. The conflicting public health responses prompted social dislocations and increased isolation as the nature of the virus remained obscure and as people were urged to refrain from close contact with each other to prevent further infections. The deficiency of public health in

modern societies, due to neo-liberal capitalism's refusal and obstruction of social resources, only exacerbated the effect of the virus and the epidemic's impact on concepts of shared responsibility.

In response to the social divisions widened by failing public health policy, the murder of Floyd and others by police, and the growing Black Lives Matter movement, particularly in Minneapolis, MNHS program developers used their public programming expertise to attempt to 'build connections in the absence of community' through the historical society's History Is Now initiative (MNHS n.d. c). As one of the project developers recalled:

> I felt like we were not, we didn't have the tools, or weren't being given the platform. (…) We weren't talking about it at work, really, we were just kind of filing papers and meeting our deadlines and going about our day. So, I remember this starting on Twitter actually just this acknowledgement (of) talking to each other, asking people how they're doing, and asking people like how they wanted to respond to it, so […] we were starting a conversation through Twitter […], just trying to get started and see what people felt compelled to do in that moment. It just felt like we weren't doing anything and [we] so badly wanted to do something. So that's how it got started.
>
> (Maggie Schmidt, interview with author, 19 January 2022)

In the same conversation, her colleague concurred:

> Yeah, it was just a feeling of, like, we can't we can't connect with people. We couldn't, we weren't going to be doing anything relevant. We had all these very long-standing projects at hand that didn't feel useful, like nobody's going to care about it because the only thing anybody cares about right now is COVID, and then through the process, when George Floyd was murdered, it was pretty clear that we needed to talk about both of those things, or rather *not* talk about it and leave space for other people to talk about it. So that's how it started for me, just a feeling that what we were doing was useless and irrelevant and wanting to battle to get to something more relevant.
>
> (Jeni O'Malley, interview with author, 19 January 2022)

A major result of their discussion, among themselves and with others, produced personal and collective expressions, written on thin wood plaques that were then tied into the chain-link fences that surrounded their museum and similar sites around Minneapolis. Thousands upon thousands of individual comments were made by those visiting these installations, referring to each other and to the shared experience of two epidemics: a novel corona virus and the ongoing violence by the state against people of color.

For these practitioners, personal attitudes regarding self-relevance and irrelevance were grounded in the contrast between their museum work and their

lives as reflexive actors within society at large. This exemplifies museum practice taking place simultaneously as discrete programmatic expressions and as a sub-process within larger systems of culture-making and sharing. In such a relationship, singularity often indicates generality. The response devised by the historical society program staff, to facilitate open-ended public comment about two major contemporary societal events, also demonstrates the primarily ideological function of museum work.

Accordingly, to understand why some people use a museum or exhibition, while others do not, we should consider the ways in which the specific symbols engaged through that use – expressed as art, material culture, intangible heritage – promote ideological systems with adherents and dissenters, and thus enact social inclusion or exclusion.

Case in Point: Museum relevance in East Harlem

As part of a larger survey of culturally specific use of museums in New York City, in May 2007, the author interviewed persons at the intersection of 110th Street and Fifth Avenue in the East Harlem neighborhood.[1] Respondents included both frequent and infrequent museum users who collectively provided a range of associative descriptions for the term 'museum'. Recent users (those who had visited within the prior 12 months) provided associations such as: 'art, history, different kinds of early events'; 'love it, great places, more people should visit'; 'old artifacts, to learn things'; 'I like learning a lot, different cultures'; 'large building, natural history'. Less frequent users (those whose last visit was between one and two years prior) provided very similar responses: 'beautiful, it teaches you how people lived in those days, their cultures'; 'a place where you can go, educate more'; 'learning, culture'; 'a place where you can see different things, portraits, history, learn about'. Those who said they very rarely or never visited museums offered only slightly less precise associations: 'Indians, (but) not since the 80s, the kids are grown'; '(an) event people go to, art museums and Indian history'; 'art, education'; 'art, older things, ancient artifacts'; 'I think about statues, skeletons'.

These respondent remarks are consistent with comments recorded in multiple other studies (Davies 2005; Hood 1983, 1993; Mason and McCarthy 2006; Prentice, Davies, and Beeho 1997), and of course illustrate associations made with the function of 'museum.' In particular, users and non-users share perceptions of that purpose being to hold, store, and present objects or information that is rare, old, or privileged. Frequent users appear to seek out an experience of rarity in their museum visit. Non-users acknowledge that purpose as societally important but do not find meaningful connection between that function and their own lives. In short, museum users identify with the symbolic logic presented by museums, while non-users do not. Such narrative affinity or alienation – objects and stories that seem relevant or distant from the lives of respondents – again illustrates the ideological agency of the museum.

Education and mass media

Of course, museums are only one mechanism for signaling relevance and performing enculturation. Formal educational systems and the mass media are each more extensive and formidable mechanisms. It has been well established by social research that school systems are efficient methods for reinforcing gender, class, ethnic and other socio-economic distinctions prevalent in the larger society. For example, American boys and girls are socialized according to divergent attitudes and behavioral patterns, such as academic stigmas, academic performance, physical appearance, or athletic abilities (Adler, Kless, and Adler 1992). Race, gender, and social class shape children's academic prospects and continue to weigh on children's development throughout their schooling (Alexander, Cook, and McDill 1978). Educational resources are allocated following the class and ethnic divisions of the society. Schools influence the cultural models children are exposed to, and they immerse children in a structure of rewards and sanctions regarding those models (Bowles and Gintis 2002; Yerrick, Roth and Tobin 2006). Seventy to seventy-five percent of first-grade students in the United States are sorted into skill-based groups for reading instruction according to socio-economic status, ethnicity, and family structure (Condron 2007). Students who were judged likely to have more difficulty learning were assigned to groups whose social contexts were much less conducive for learning (Eder 1981, 1985). Schools and teaching materials reinforce passivity and restricted ambition among young women students (Kessler et al. 1985; Lee, Marks, and Bird 1994). Social inequalities enacted via residential segregation are reinforced by local schools (Massey and Fischer 2006). Certainly, in America, school racial composition matters for both reading and mathematics, and attending a predominantly Black, segregated school continues to have a negative influence on achievement (Roscigno 1998). Moreover, so-called intelligence tests have long been critiqued as instruments for perpetuating systemic racism (Aptheker 1946). In these and other ways, American secondary schools in particular exhibit an underlying logic of the dominant culture as a whole (Ortner 2002). Any pedagogy organized according to theories of personal 'intelligence' measured against those dominant cultural privileges and divisions will necessarily perpetuate privilege and exclusion throughout its formal instruction. By employing such pedagogy, schools can actually stunt cognitive development and inhibit command of important cultural tools otherwise enabled through reading, writing, the arts, and the humanities. Teachers and students influenced by those reproductive structures of inequity bring those structures with them on their field trip to a museum.

Mass media are also major enculturation mechanisms. Internet and broadcast communications mediate the lives of hundreds of millions, with expenditures (funded primarily via paid advertisements) well in excess of expenditures for public education. For example, in the United States, annual expenditures of information industries in 2010 were 210% of the amount spent on all public primary and secondary education; $1.41 trillion versus $650 billion (U.S.

Census Bureau 2012, Table 220, Table 1128). The content and form of these mass media exert a dominant influence among audiences whose access to other forms of expression is wholly or largely restricted by literacy, monetary cost, or by other implicit or explicit social proscriptions. Mass media facilitate the reproduction of social class, particularly among adolescents and young adults, by demonstrating styles of language, fashion, and other forms of self-expression (Gee, Allen, and Clinton 2001; Hebdige 1979; Larson, Kubey, and Colletti 1989). Popular culture forms are quite evidently arenas in which both creators and audiences struggle over social meanings and re-enact social relationships (Mahon 2000; Rodriquez 2006). While mass media may sometimes depict museums *per se*, they are more influential via their depiction of socio-cultural attitudes and practices as normative or valued, and thereby prescribing how one should understand and use symbolic and material culture, including the symbolic culture held by museums.

Stereotypes

In the museum sector, specialist discussions of multicultural inclusion often resolve into specific programming practices aimed at one or another broad social segment, such as 'elderly', 'children', 'African-Americans', 'Asians', etc., which are assumed to describe common interests or outlooks. Such broad generalizations are problematic to developing an accurate understanding of either cultural specificity or social inclusion. Whereas shared cultural practices emerge from and express ingenuity and diversity, cultural stereotypes are artificial containers imposed on population groups that reflect and reproduce unequal socio-economic relationships. A prominent example of stereotype theorizing is the concept of 'national culture', which first emerged in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and provided a guise for the theatre of economic relationships – markets, workforces, natural resources, money capital, etc.[2] Since capital tends to perform transnationally and is not limited to performing only within a specific geography, the owners of capital have operationalized sentiments of 'national identity' in order to secure a demographic base of support for global social inequality. These nationalist identities are transferred via a dominant religion (Burris, Branscombe, and Jackson 2000), via written history (Liu 1999; Liu and Hilton 2005; Liu et al. 2005); through the themes and collections of museums (Coombes 2004; Duncan 1999; Rydell 1984, 1993), and in a variety of other mass societal practices (Hobsbawm 1999). The efficacy of those means is quite evident in xenophobic and hyper-nationalist messaging that is now widespread in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, emanating from the highest levels of political power, and transferred through national and regional news media, motion pictures, Internet media, and various other conduits (Dawsey 2018).

Stereotyping 'others' is both contemporary and historic geo-political practice, with 'other' defined according to language, ancestry, skin tone, belief system, or geography, and against whom the homeland citizenry are

encouraged or compelled to contend as human capital, either via 'economic globalization' or open warfare. Socio-economic contention is an essential aspect of capitalism and an enduring ideological metaphor ('marketplace of ideas', 'the rat race'), masking the fact that 'otherness' is realized through social relationships that are highly unequal, exploitative and maintained through violence by police or other state actors (Baker, Olmos and Goldman 2021), or as implied or threatened via boundaries of social stratification (Phillips 2000; Wacquant 2005). The nineteenth and early twentieth century Euro-American imperial logics of 'manifest destiny', are transcended by late-twentieth- and early twenty-first-century 'national interest' and 'global security' expeditions. All along, non-Euro-American culture practices are repeatedly suppressed or distorted, including through the museum discipline of anthropology which developed interactively with that process. The persistence of that colonialist presence is evident in the ongoing critique of both colonialism and its museums as 'dead circuses' (Bennett 2004, 12), for its disintegration of the colonized (Bourdieu and Sayad 2004, 459), for its theft of material heritage (Brodie 2003), for its selective redaction of history (El-Haj 1998; Kohl 1998; Trigger 1984), and, throughout it all, for curating the salvage of its global destruction (Gruber 1970; Jenkins 1994).

The construction of a socio-cultural stereotype is theorized in 'cross-cultural research' by those anthropologists, sociologists, and social psychologists who would argue that 'entire national cultures' (McSweeney 2002a, 89) are described by shared behaviors such as 'hedonism', 'individualism' or 'benevolence' (Hofstede and McCrae 2004; McSweeney 2002a, 2000b). Invoked repeatedly, national culture stereotypes are then asserted to be globally conventional (Bond, Harris, Leung, et al. 2004; Leung et al. 2002), and to be regionally predictable (Coon and Kemmelmeier 2001; Johnson et al. 2005; but see also Matsumoto, Grissom, and Dinnel 2001). Ethnographic stereotyping serves economic and political purposes. For example, in the United States, the socio-cultural effects of severe, caste-like, geographic, social and economic segregation enforced upon the poor, African-Americans, and other non-Europeans have been extensively documented (Abu-Lughod 1997; Massey and Denton 1989; Massey and Fischer 2000; Ross and Turner 2005; Simkus 1978; Venkatesh 2008; Wacquant 1997). Social inequalities of 'race', gender, class, and ethnicity are enforced through persistent statutory and extra-legal violence designed – or tacitly condoned – to compel victim groups to remain subordinate. It is hardly news to African-Americans and other non-Europeans living inside imperial and colonial societies that they are frequently subjected to extraordinary police violence, unprovoked arrests, political disenfranchisement, and murder (Blee 2005; Collins 1998; Jeffries 2002; King 1999; Noakes 2003; Wacquant 2005). Social movements protesting state-sponsored violence, and asserting that subaltern and Black Lives Matter, spotlight the pervasiveness of that repressive violence.

Stereotyping and cultural silencing 'weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living' (Marx 1963, 15), constantly imagined in symbols, practices, beliefs,

and the language of racist derision and other misanthropic posturing. The lifeways of sub-altern populations are portrayed as 'concentrated unruliness, deviance, anomie and atomization, replete with behaviors said to offend common precepts of morality and propriety' (Wacquant 1997, 345). Within the mainstreams of public policy, the multiple effects of this segregation and discrimination are promoted through taken-for-granted racist, sexist, and ethnocentric ideologies, and the cultural practices, beliefs, and symbols of others are caricatured as naïve practices (Collins 2001; Giroux 2001; Rydell 1984), rather than according to their authentic complexity. All of this impacts how museums and users interact, as one of Marilyn Hood's informants confided: 'I don't want to see [the] security guard …coming after me [as if] I'm going to pick up that painting and walk out the door' (Hood 1993, 8).

Alienation and trust

Rational suspicion of museums is widespread and varied. Public protest is a regular occurrence at some of the largest museums in London and New York. The Decolonize This Place network in New York, for example, has repeatedly protested the collection and exhibition practices and specific governance individuals, from within the exhibition halls of the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Guggenheim Museum. Similarly, social activist networks in London, such as Art Not Oil, BP or Not BP?, Culture Unstained, Extinction Rebellion, Greenpeace, Survival International, UK Student Climate Network, and others have in recent years focused public protest on the governance and funding of the Science Museum, Tate Museum, British Museum, and Natural History Museum (BBC 2021; Mills 2022; Muñoz-Alonso 2015; Sulcas 2016; Survival International 2022).

Small, hyperlocal museums are not immune, even if dissent takes alternate forms. For example, while advising a community museum project in Cobalt, Ontario, Canada, Pamela Stern and Peter Hall found that this small, one-time silver mining town had four history museums, created at different times by different constituencies with differing visions of both local history and civic future. This reflected a 'tension between the need to produce historical narratives … and the desires of residents to record and conserve the stories that are relevant and meaningful to them' (Stern and Hall 2019, 29).

The colonial and neo-colonial extractive processes by which modern museums are known, either by way of the collections and displays of 'universal' institutions in the imperial metropoles or metaphorically in the portrayal of museum practice in popular literature and Hollywood movies, stand as barriers between the museum idea and the reality of the world. Speaking about the Museum of British Colonialism project, Chao Tayiana Maina observes that:

> We find a lot of the time when you are doing oral history, if you just show up as a stranger and say "Hi, I'm Chao, I'm doing this project", it is

> very hard for someone to let their guard down. But for example, A__, who is our community liaison, has built a relationship with the community and the people for years and so when he introduces us, people feel safe, they feel more secure, or they feel that we are people that he is vouching for.
>
> (Chao Tayiana Maina, interview with the author, 13 January 2022)

Describing her experiences working with and in Vaacha, Museum of Voice, in Gujarat, Alice Tilche recounts how Vaacha was established by its principal founder, Ganesh Devy, as a kind of anti-museum, with the intent of subverting the asymmetry of a conventional museum. Nonetheless, unequal relationships persisted in the museum's activities of exhibiting art and artists, material culture and cultural producers, with high-caste elites and funders on one side and Adivasi artisans, farmers and laborers on the other (Tilche 2022, 77).

Museum as class project

Indeed, in 'modern' societies, cultural production and cultural appreciation remain centered within relationships of class and social status (Bourdieu 1984). A fundamental intention of the modern universal museum is explicitly to define and reinforce those hierarchies via curation as preciosity, stakeholder selection, and programmatic attitudes toward visitors (Hood 1993; Phillipp 1999; Sandell 1998). Thus, these museums reiterate and justify the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

A curator of Vaacha, the Museum of Voice recalled to Alice Tilche that prior to the influence of modern colonialism 'everybody in Adivasi society used to be an artist' (Tilche 2022, 136). However, the persistence of ideological colonialism was now evident in attitudes that 'in India, art had never risen above the decorative; India had craft only but no art' and Indian artists lacked the understanding of European practitioners (Tilche 2022, 137). Conversely, within the colonial metropoles, the ideological impact of universal museums is explicit in their messages of exceptionality and archetypes of art, design, history, material culture, and 'taste.' Thus, French president Jacques Chirac proclaimed the Louvre to be '(a) place of symbolic consecration' (Amato 2006, 48). As described in Chapter Three and as scores of museum mission statements make clear, a central purpose of these organizations is to codify and ensure those narratives are adopted as normative. Through that activity, modern museums center or decenter individual examples and general typologies of cultural activity, and thereby produce attitudes and understanding of how and by whom cultural material should be accessed.

Bluntly, the European-model museum's premise is to mediate colonialist social alignments, both practical and ideological. The initial impulse emanated from the need to qualify post-feudal society using shared concepts of 'public energy', 'national character' and the emerging bourgeois narrative (Boylan 1996; David 1966, 6). The symbolic displays were expected to 'improve the

morals of the people, and render them both milder and more disposed to pay obedience to the laws' (Lenoir 1966, 275; see also Bennett 1995, 2004; Duncan 1999; Hobsbawm 1999; Rydell 1984). Pitt-Rivers, speaking in 1891, stressed the urgent communicatory role of museum collections to divert 'the ignorant masses' from 'agitators who strive to make them break with the past' (Coombes 2004, 285). This ideological function remains dominant, although contested, within the sector.

Case in point: American museums as 'soft power'

At the close of the second world war, the American president Truman proclaimed, 'the US will take the lead in running the world in the way that the world ought to be run', and proceeded to enact a network of state-supported culture projects focused on Europe and Asia (Guilbaut 1983, 105). In the 1950s and 1960s, amidst the anti-colonial social movements and rebellions erupting throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the geo-political importance of cultural hegemony was reemphasized within the US government to 'meet the challenge of the Communists' cultural ideas in the world, on which they are spending great amounts of money for their propagation and which represent the key aspect of their activities, which are designed to "bury" the Free World' (Zukin 1982, 441). The strategy effected by the governments of imperial countries following 1945, of using museums and cultural diplomacy as 'soft power' by which to globally project ideologies of capitalism and inequality as normative, continues into the present (Cho 2022).

In a retrospective survey of US art museum foundings, Blau describes a low annual increase of three organizations per year during the United States' formative imperial years – 1870 through 1910 – gradually increasing to seven per year by 1945. After the second world war, the rate rose to 17 per year by 1960 and continued to rise to 27 per year by 1980 (Blau 1991). A 1969 study of 'Business and the Arts' reported that

> David Rockefeller, Arnold Gingrich of Esquire, George Weissman of Phillip Morris and Dr Frank Stanton of CBS,[3] recognized and promulgated an important concept – that a so-called amenity, such as the arts, was in reality the very lifeblood needed to inject hope, purpose and beauty into a troubled society.
>
> (Zukin 1982, 444)

The global influence of American art, museums, and popular culture parallels the geo-political hegemony of American capital internationally (DiMaggio 1982, 2004; Guilbaut 1983; Zukin 1982). This is an ongoing project of the American ruling classes, with the US State Department spending $451 million on 'cultural exchanges' in 2006 alone, as described in reports from the Government Accountability Office (GAO):

> Public diplomacy is carried out through a wide range of programs that employ person-to-person contacts; print, broadcast, and electronic media; and other means. Traditionally, the State Department's efforts have focused on foreign elites—current and future overseas opinion leaders, agenda setters, and decision makers. However, the dramatic growth in global mass communications and other trends have forced a rethinking of this approach, and [the] State [Department] has begun to consider techniques for communicating with broader foreign audiences.
>
> (GAO 2007)

Most anthropologists and sociologists generally agree that the manipulation of ideology – didactically and via visual style and iconography – is essential to defining, reproducing, and contesting status and power relationships in class-divided societies (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Geertz 1973; Hegmon 1992; Weiner 1980). Museums are instrumental in that manipulation, representing national wealth and conveying triumphal messages (Duncan 1999; Duncan and Wallach 2004). Natural history museums provide technical arguments to support the social and global status quo (Allen et al. 2000; Haraway 1989; Rydell 1984). Ideology is explicit in exhibitions celebrating the leaders and triumphs of the ruling class as well as in suppressing critique (Coffee 2006). Indeed, ideological contention erupts when curators or directors present alternative narratives, such as when curators at the National Trust wrote a report that drew connections of listed heritage sites in Britain with African slavery and colonial empire (Huxtable, Fowler, Kefalas and Slocombe 2020; Adams 2020). Such critiques have drawn counter-attacks in myriad forms, ranging from denunciations to defunding to criminal prosecution.[4]

Nonetheless, activism demanding social inclusion continues to be directed at institutions that ignore or are perceived to ignore or minimize subaltern narratives. An expanding, global movement has emerged in recent decades, focusing on museums in Europe, America, Australia, and elsewhere, specifically demanding that museums 'decolonize' their collections, displays, and interpretation. These decolonize movements foreground the narratives of Indigenous peoples, of the descendants of enslaved persons, and of the past and current subjects of colonialism and imperialism, inside and outside the imperial centers. While some decolonize movements appeal to legislation to effect change, others pose direct action and civil disobedience as processes for societal change. As will be described in Chapter Five, protests of colonialist exhibitions in the American Museum of Natural History in New York have been episodic since the 1960s. The most recent anti-colonial and anti-racist social upsurge in Bristol, UK, prompted demonstrators there to physically pull down the statue of slave-trader Edward Colston and roll it in into Bristol harbor. Similar removals of colonialist monuments have taken place globally: Leopold II in Brussels, Belgium; Lord Nelson in Bridgetown, Barbados; Christopher Columbus in Boston, US; Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, US; James Cook

in Victoria, Australia; Victor Schoelcher and Christopher Columbus in Fort-de-France, Martinique; Cecil Rhodes in Cape Town, South Africa, and so on. These are not aesthetic critiques of sculpture, these are ideo-political critiques and public curation of the colonialist mentalities that created the monuments in the first place.

The inherent ethnocentrism and racism encoded in the collections of 'universal' and natural history museums has been called out for many decades (Chambers 2014; Colwell 2017; Schrire 1995; Thomas 2000; Vergès 2014). While incremental changes have been implemented, and even some substantial changes in regard to current collecting practice such as the 1970 UNESCO convention on the illicit transfer of cultural property and US Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, radical policy change is not widespread in the museum sector. Indeed, museum users and prospective users recognize the conservative – material and ideological – patterns of conduct in museum collection and public programming policies and practices, and those policies and practices in turn shape public understanding of museums.

Visitor expectations vs curatorial intentions

In her benchmark 1981 study of Toledo (USA) Art Museum users, Marilyn Hood proposed that museum visitation choices were based on how those users were 'socialized …toward certain types of activities' (Hood 1983, 52). Viewed through the neo-liberal lens, museums are an economic sector, visitors are consumers, and museum use is one of several equivalent purchasing behaviors (Prentice, Davies, and Beeho 1997). Marketing theoreticians such as Burton interpret 'ethnicity and identity (as) important marketing concepts' (Burton 2000, 853) in order to construct a supposed 'multicultural marketing theory' that employs cultural stereotypes as promotional strategies to target specific population groups (Burton 2000, 2001, 2002). Compartmentalizing user interests in museums according to their ancestry or socio-economic status, and conjuring further status categories based on relative political power, this analysis misconstrues or fully ignores potential users and the cultural services that may be provided via museum use. Instead, users and use are stereotyped as a purely transactional market exchange. This misconstruction is acutely evident in those analyses that theorize culture practices as either 'low brow' (popular, outsider, or subaltern) or 'highbrow' (Euro-American 'upper class' narrative) culture. Following that logic, museums actualize their use as cultural capital to be appropriated by an enduringly exclusive class (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004; DiMaggio and Useem 1978).[5]

A significant and growing body of social research, however, supports the conclusion that museum use is not a generic activity. Rather, users are selecting to engage specific narratives communicated by the museum and as a culturally expressive act (McCracken 2003a, 2003b; O'Neill 2007; Prince 1983, 1985, 1990). I have certainly found this in my own research. Consider these explanations by adult visitors to a science center in New York City:[6]

> We do it on a regular basis, we pick a museum and then we go on a weekend. The basic reason is we want our kids to learn, everything that we didn't learn (laughs).
> (Adult male with family cohort, interview with the author, January 2007)

> They're still a little young – four and six – to understand it all, but the fact that they can touch and feel, it just opens their eyes … it's probably meaningful, they'll learn something.
> (Adult female with family cohort, interview with the author, January 2007)

Research shows that user narrative frameworks are built contingently, synthesizing the current experiential moment by referencing prior life experiences. Interpretation is intentional for curators and for audiences, but it is not a singularity. Each respondent carries with them an attenuated ideological lens, through which they acquire a parallax perspective, to share with peers or other users. Quite clearly, the above-cited parents considered their visits to be inter-generational opportunities to 'learn something' from the narratives presented in the science center, but those 'somethings' were not likely identical.

Those parallax and multi-vocal interpretations are commonly expressed. For example, at the opening-day events for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), one attendee told a *Washington Post* reporter than the museum opening was 'the greatest thing to happen to Indian people in 500 years', while another noted 'this was our land, and they came and took it without asking', and a third observed the event as 'a healing, a coming together. We have survived a holocaust in the Americas, and the story has not been told. This is the beginning of telling that story' (Schwartzman 2004).

Similarly, many visitors to the *Stereotypes vs. Humantypes* exhibition, at the Schomburg Center for the Study of Black Culture in New York, left extended statements reflecting the different perspectives framing their experience.[7]

> The exhibits are very enlightening and our young people, our children, need to be brought to see the realities of the past. We must not forget where we came from, what we (our ancestors) had to endure, so we can appreciate their strength and resoluteness of character. In this way, we can appreciate where we are today.
> (Schomberg Center visitor comment book, 11 May 2007)

> The exhibit is very enlightening. It is interesting to see images of African-Americans. Unfortunately, some of the stereotypical images are being kept alive. I viewed the exhibit and took away the idea that I must be relentless in remaining positive and remember that there are people who only see African-Americans as negative images. I enjoyed looking at the photos of

> unidentified African-Americans, showing us as 'typical' and positive beings.
>
> (Schomberg Center visitor comment book, 18 May 2007)

> The exhibition is very interesting. I think it is very important to show the difference between stereotypes and reality. I felt very sad to see those pictures of stereotypes because I'm a Jew and those are the same kind of ugly things like the Nazis and their anti-Semitic supporters showed of us. I hope those things will totally disappear from our society. Great museum, continue to do this important job!
>
> (Schomberg Center visitor comment book, 23 May 2007)

This is not to say that multi-vocality does not also express exclusionary distinctions of class, ethnicity, gender, and other shared experiences of respondents. Indeed, the congruence of narrative affinity with socio-economic status – as cultural capital – comes into the light as visitors describe their museum experiences more generally. This feature is illustrated in the interview remarks by visitors to an exhibition at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution about *The American Presidency* (NMAH 2001).

> We came here to see 'American things,' saw the sign and I asked her if she wanted to see it, so we came here first.
>
> (homemaker, Michigan)

> I thought it was just spectacular and I would like the younger members of my family to see it, because it certainly brings to mind the different aspects of our country and the different Presidents and their terms of office.
>
> (elderly frequent visitor, California)

> I made a mistake when I was raising my kids, I didn't bring them to Philadelphia and Washington, DC. It's the kind of history that every junior high school kid ought to have, at least if that opportunity presented itself. We're losing our tradition in America, and it's something we shouldn't lose.
>
> (banker/rancher, Wyoming)

> We should be eternally grateful to the people who want to take that role [of US President]. When you look at it, it's hard to think that anyone wants that job. It's impossible to do and yet …because it is so complex and there are people who want to do it.
>
> (wife of retired financial analyst, New Mexico)

Is this a leisure class?

Sociological research has well-established that concepts of 'leisure' are predicated on socio-economic constraints – the ability to devote time and money to extra-subsistence activity using so-called discretionary income. This is true in the metropoles as well as in the rest of the world. For example, women in North American face leisure-decision constraints based on household and family obligations, lack of economic power, concerns about personal safety, and traditional views of 'femininity' (Shaw 1994, 2001). Racial segregation – geographic and institutional – is a key constraint on leisure decisions by African-American adults (Philipp 1998a, 1999, 2000; see also Shinew, Floyd, and Parry 2004), which are also gendered as acceptably 'male' from 'female' practices (Philipp 1998b).

For visitors, museum use is not perceived as an economic, transactional activity, even where an admission fee is required, but within those 'leisure' hours, individuals engage in practices that are important, multi-modal, cultural expressions, bearing complex significance, and that derive from and intersect with a range of other social relationships. The use of museums has been undertheorized as expressive culture in large part because of the framing of 'leisure' as unproductive or superfluous activity in Western societies, and because Euro-American anthropologists and sociologists have tended to look elsewhere in their studies of cultural distinctions (Chick 1998; Washington and Karen 2001). The terms 'leisure' and 'spare time' suggest a determination (by others) of what is essential in one's life and what is not, in a highly stratified society ranked according to gender, ancestry, cognitive development, and socio-economic status. In short, conceptualizing museum culture as leisure is *de facto* exclusionary.

Various economic and demographic data have been collected about museum use in the United States, Britain, the European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and in other countries. Some of these studies consider cultural heritage only in terms of economic inputs and outflows (DCMS 2017; UNESCO 2013; European Commission 2006). Other studies provide snapshots of museum use and users in economically privileged societies (European Commission 2019; ICOM Russia 2015; Farrell and Medvedeva 2010; Peterson, Hull, and Kern 2000; Schuster 2000). The U.S. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) surveys describe the large majority of respondents as college educated, with nearly half being college graduates (NEA 2019, 2004), but as the Smithsonian research office has found, those distinctions also describe the foreign tourists who visit Washington DC art museums (Smithsonian Institution 2001), and European research corroborates those same distinctions (European Commission 2019). Likewise, in one study, NEA found that more than 60% of its respondents reported an annual income above $50,000, and 40% had incomes above $75,000, well above USA per capita income (NEA 2004, 55). That socio-economic description is corroborated by museum audience research at major sites in Washington DC, New York City and the affluent

south San Francisco Bay Area of California (Doering, Bickford, and Pekarik 1997; Giusti, Greene, and Scott 2001; Korn 2000; Karns et al 2006). In her history of the origins of European museums, Carol Duncan concluded that the emergent institutions appealed to the 'bourgeois citizen' (Duncan 1999, 309). According to the findings of current research, it appears that bourgeois use is still an important frame for major museums, even as 'petit-bourgeois' might more accurately describe the majority of users. All of which indicates that socio-economic class relationships and practices define the boundaries between most current users and those who do not use museums.

Conclusion

This measurable difference between those who do and those who don't prioritize museum use in their lives points to a great hurdle for museum workers who wish to enact a socially responsible and engaged practice. Inclusivity and exclusivity are neither abstract nor absolute qualities; they are processes and can only be measured according to particular socio-cultural relationships. Key among those are the relationships exemplified by museum collections and interpretive programs, and thereby the specific narratives privileged by the museum and shared with specific population groups within a given society as a whole. The foundational social relationship is thus between a museum's curatorial presence and its visitors' interests, which exist temporally and externally within a matrix of practices which are continually in flux.

In addition to affirming inclusion as a general and strategic goal, practitioners need to understand the particularities of socio-cultural diversity, by investigating the potential for museum use alongside the broader range of social practices and cultural distinctions lived by the individuals and groups in the encompassing society. We must also come to grips with the possibility that not all organizations wish to be inclusive, much less extend inclusion to the realms of enabling policy, and that, as in other spheres of society, the necessary impetus pushing the museum to hear from, and respond to, excluded populations must come from without. Movements to divest colonial connections, 'decolonize' interpretations, repatriate objects, and to co-create with previously disadvantaged populations, are all examples of external initiative.

However, any museum that intends to fulfill an extensive public mission of collection, display, and programming, such as many modern museums currently profess, must consider how its practices support or suppress the subaltern narratives co-existing within the larger society. Museums are not socio-cultural cloisters. Rather they are important actors within the cultural matrices described above. Many museums are perceived by others of us as exclusionary institutions, and museums will spontaneously reproduce exclusionary relationships to subaltern narratives unless museum practitioners intend and act otherwise. The inclusive solution, as Lola Young notes, is not simply to extend an invitation to 'come be like us' (Young 2002, 211). Rather, the intention must be to seek out and embrace the ingenuities that continually arise in the

shadows or as subversions of the established narratives – including to upend traditional narratives of stratification, ethnicity, gender, race, and sex.

The modern era has been rife with examples of cultural subversion in the arts and literature, and the rate at which culture is produced has only increased over that time. New idioms of prose, poetry, music, visual art, and performing art, and many other expressive forms have emerged, conjoined to a content of resistance to, or rejection of, mainstream narratives. These sub-altern expressions, with their symbolizing depth and outsider breadth, contend with dominant culture practices and institutions. Knowingly or not, museums are completely enmeshed in this contention. They can either privilege or subvert exclusionary ideas and practices through their missions and policies; they will always reflect that tension within their organizations, as well as through their public programming. How any audience measures a museum will principally depend on what that museum does, not what it says about itself. Nevertheless, for any museum to affect how its narratives include or exclude individuals or groups, it must first critically examine how its strategies and plans align with the history of the traditional, dominant socio-cultural matrix.

The processes of social engagement and public participation take multiple forms, but essentially they are generated 'from below' rather than directed 'from above.' Looking more closely at contemporary examples of such social upsurge is where we turn next.

Notes

1 Interviews (n=58, response rate 52%) conducted on 13 and 27 May 2007, between Fifth and Lenox Aves. Respondents were asked a series of questions including 'what do you think of when you hear the word "museum"?' The larger study interviewed 360 informants at the Museum of the American Indian, New York Hall of Science, and Brooklyn Museum, between January and June of 2007.
2 'Nation' is distinguished from other polities by the replacement of hereditary social distinctions with the bourgeois concept of propertied 'citizens' and the so-called 'natural rights' of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'
3 Esquire magazine is an American monthly review of male bourgeois 'taste'; Phillip Morris was the processor to the Altria Group tobacco company; CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting System, is a large US radio and television network. Rockefeller was chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank (now JP Morgan Chase) and later chair of the board of trustees of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.
4 A few US and UK examples: in 2022, the Cincinnati (US) Fraternal Order of Police demanded the removal of a painting by Magnus Juliano that criticized police brutality from the *Black & Brown Faces* exhibition in the Cincinnati Art Museum (Drakes 2022); in 2020, British Conservative politicians threatened the National Trust for issuing a survey of colonialist influences in heritage sites (Adams 2020); in 2010, the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery bowed to homophobic politicians and removed art by David Wojnarowicz from its exhibition *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* (Logan 2010) in 1999, the Brooklyn Museum was threatened with eviction by then-mayor Rudolph Guliani for exhibiting contemporary art he deemed to be 'sick stuff' from the Saatchi Collection (Kaplan 2016); in 1990, the director of the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center was charged with obscenity and then fired for hosting a touring exhibition of

photographs by Robert Maplethorpe; in 1989, the Smithsonian Institution censored an exhibit of the USAF aircraft *Enola Gay* to remove references to civilian casualties caused by the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 (Linenthal 1996).

5 For example, Smithsonian Institution social researchers have found that 'visitors to the art museums were well educated. Over four-fifths of visitors over 25 have at least a Bachelor's degree and half hold an MA, Ph.D., or professional degree' but, interestingly, '[Museum of] African Art visitors were most likely to hold a Bachelor's degree, or a high school degree, or less' (Smithsonian Institution 2001, 3).

6 Interviews conducted 13, 14, 27 and 28 January 2007 by the author with visitors to the New York Hall of Science, Queens, NY.

7 *Stereotypes vs. Humantypes* was displayed 12 May through 28 October 2007. Approximately 1147 visitors (15%) shared their thoughts in the gallery comment book.

References

Abu-Lughod, Janet. 1997. 'The specificity of the Chicago ghetto: Comment on Wacquant's "three pernicious premises",. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21 (2): 357–362.

Adams, Geraldine Kendall. 2020. 'National Trust details links to slavery and colonialism at 93 properties', Museums Association, 23 September, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/09/national-trust-details-links-to-slavery-and-colonialism-at-93-properties/ (accessed 13 April 2021).

Adler, Patricia A., S. J. Kless, and P. Adler. 1992. 'Socialization to gender roles: Popularity among elementary school boys and girls', *Sociology of Education*, 65 (3): 169–187.

Alexander, Karl L., M. Cook, and E. L. McDill. 1978. 'Curriculum tracking and educational stratification: Some further evidence', *American Sociological Review*, 43 (1): 47–66.

Allam, Lorena and Helen Davidson. 2019. 'Exploitation of frail Indigenous artists "modern-day slavery"', *The Guardian*, 5 November. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/nov/06/exploitation-of-frail-indigenous-artists-modern-day-slavery (accessed 5 June 2022).

Allen, Garland, E. Carlson, P. Lombardo, D. Micklos, S. Selden and J. Witkowske. 2000. 'Eugenics popularization', http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/list2.pl (accessed 8 July 2007).

Amari, Anan. 2006. 'An American story: The Arab American National Museum', *Museum News*, 85 (6): 34–41.

Amato, Sarah. 2006. 'Quai Branly museum: Representing France after empire', *Race & Class*, 47 (4): 46–65.

Aptheker, Herbert. 1946. 'Literacy, the Negro and World War II', *Journal of Negro Education*, 15 (4): 595–602.

Ash, Doris. 2003. 'Dialogic inquiry in life science conversations of family groups in a museum', *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 40 (2): 138–162.

Ash, Doris. 2022. *Reculturing Museums*, London: Routledge.

Ash, Doris, Rhiannon Crain, Cori Brandt, Molly Loomis, Lele Wheaton and Christine Bennett. 2007. 'Talk, Tools, and Tensions: Observing biological talk over time', *International Journal of Science Education*, 29 (12): 1581–1602.

Baker, Mike, Sergio Olmos and Adam Goldman. 2021. 'The F.B.I. Deployed Surveillance Teams Inside Portland Protests', 22 December, *New York Times*.

Barker, Alex W. 2018. 'Looting, the Antiquities Trade, and Competing Valuations of the Past', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 47: 455.

BBC. 2021. 'Science Museum: Climate activists in overnight protest over fossil fuel sponsors', 27 October, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-59055942 (accessed 20 April 2022).

Becker, Gail, John F. Haught, Stephen Low and Dennis Wint. 2005. 'Creationism vs evolution, origins of a controversy', *Museum News*, 84 (4): 44–45.

Bennett, Tony. 1995. *The birth of the museum*, London: Routledge.

Bennett, Tony. 2004. *Pasts beyond memory: Evolution, museums, colonialism*, London: Routledge.

Blau, Judith R. 1991. 'The disjunctive history of US museums, 1869–1980', *Social Forces*, 70 (1), 87–105.

Blee, Kathleen M. 2005. 'Racial violence in the United States', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28 (4): 599–619.

Bond, Michael Harris, K. Leung and A. Au, et al. 2004. 'Culture-level dimensions of social axioms and their correlates across 41 Cultures', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 35 (5): 548–570.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1974. 'Les fractions de la classe dominante et les modes d'appropriation de l'oeuvre d'art', *Social Science Information*, 13 (3): 7–31.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. 'Cultural reproduction and social reproduction', in J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey (eds), *Power and ideology in education*, 487–511. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Richard Nice. 1980. 'The aristocracy of culture', *Media Culture Society*, 2 (3): 225–254.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Abdelmalek Sayad. 2004. 'Colonial rule and cultural sabir', *Ethnography*, 5 (4): 445–486.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loic D.Wacquant. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bowles, Samuel and Harold Gintis. 2002. 'Schooling in capitalist America revisited', *Sociology of Education*, 75 (1): 1–18.

Boylan, Patrick J. 1996. 'Revolutionary France and the foundation of modern museum management and curatorial practice: Part II: David and Vicq d'Azyr, 1792–94', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 15 (2): 117–131.

Bradshaw, Tom and Bonnie Nichols. 2004. *2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

Brodie, Neil. 2003. 'Stolen history: Looting and illicit trade', *Museum International*, 54 (3–4): 10–22.

Burris, Christopher T., N.R. Branscombe and L.M. Jackson. 2000. '"For God and country": Religion and the endorsement of national self-stereotypes', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 31 (4): 517–527.

Burton, Dawn. 2000. 'Ethnicity, identity and marketing: A critical review', *Journal of Marketing Management*, 16 (8): 853–877.

Burton, Dawn. 2001. 'Critical marketing theory: The blueprint?' *European Journal of Marketing*, 35 (5/6): 722–743.

Burton, Dawn. 2002. 'Towards a critical multicultural marketing theory', *Marketing Theory*, 2 (2): 207–236.

Campbell, Peter B. 2013. 'The Illicit Antiquities Trade as a Transnational Criminal Network: Characterizing and Anticipating Trafficking of Cultural Heritage', *International Journal of Cultural Property* 20 (2): 113–153.

Chambers, Iain. 2014. 'Afterword: After the Museum', in Iain Chambers, Allesandra De Angelis, Celeste Ianniciello, Mariangela Orabona & Michaela Quadraro (eds.), *The Postcolonial Museum: The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, 241–246. London: Routledge.

Chew, Ron. 2004. 'Taking action!' *Museum News*, 83 (2): 38–43.

Chick, Garry. 1998. 'Leisure and culture: Issues for anthropology of leisure', *Leisure Sciences*, 20 (2): 111.

Cho, Hyojung. 2022. 'From representation to engagement: how have museums supported US cultural diplomacy?', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 37 (4): 383–400.

Coffee, Kevin. 2006. 'Museums and the agency of ideology: Three recent examples', *Curator* 49 (4): 435–448.

Coffee, Kevin. 2019. 'Up Against It: Contending with power asymmetries in museum work', in Robert R. Janes and Richard Sandell (eds.) *Museum Activism*, 304–314. Abingdon: Routledge.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1998. 'The tie that binds: Race, gender and US violence', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21 (5): 917–938.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2001. 'Like one of the family: Race, ethnicity, and the paradox of US national identity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24 (1): 3–28.

Colwell, Chip. 2017. *Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Condron, Dennis. 2007. 'Stratification and educational sorting: Explaining ascriptive inequalities in early childhood reading group placement', *Social Problems*, 54 (1): 139–160.

Coombes, Annie E.. 2004. 'Museums and the formation of national and cultural identities', in D. Preziosi and C. Farago (eds), *Grasping the world: The idea of the museum*, 278–297. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Coon, Heather M. and Markus Kemmelmeier. 2001. 'Cultural orientations in the United States: (Re) examining differences among ethnic groups', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32 (3): 348–364.

Crowley, Kevin, M. A. Callanan, J. L. Jipson, J. Galco, K. Topping and J. Shrager. 2001. 'Shared scientific thinking in everyday parent-child activity', *Science Education*, 85 (6): 712–732.

David, Jacques-Louis. 1966. 'The painting of the Sabines', in Elizabeth G. Holt (ed.) *A documentary history of art*, Vol. 3, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Davies, Stuart. 2005. 'Still popular: Museums and their visitors 1994–2004', *Cultural Trends*, 14 (1): 67–105.

Dawsey, John. 2018. 'Trump derides protections for immigrants from "shithole" countries', *Washington Post*12 January, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-attacks-protections-for-immigrants-from-shithole-countries-in-oval-office-meeting/2018/01/11/bfc0725c-f711-11e7-91af-31ac729add94_story.html (accessed 18 April 2022).

DCMS. 2017. 'Strategic review of DCMS-sponsored museums', London: Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.

Delin, Annie. 2002. 'Buried in the footnotes: The absence of disabled people in the collective imagery of our past', in Richard Sandell (ed.) *Museums, society, inequality*, 84–97. London: Routledge.

DiMaggio, Paul. 1982. 'Cultural entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Boston: The creation of an organizational base for high culture in America', *Media Culture Society*, 4 (1): 33–50.

DiMaggio, Paul. 2004. 'Cultural entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Boston, Part II: The classification and framing of American Art', in Bettina Messias Carbonell, *Museum studies, an anthology of contexts*, 461–482. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell.

DiMaggio, Paul and Toqir Mukhtar. 2004. 'Arts participation as cultural capital in the United States, 1982–2002: Signs of decline?', *Poetics*, 32 (2): 169–194.

DiMaggio, Paul and Michael Useem. 1978. 'Social class and arts consumption: The origins and consequences of class differences in exposure to the arts in America', *Theory and Society*, 5 (2): 141–161.

Doering, Zahava D., A. Bickford, and A. J. Pekarik. 1997. 'Visitors to the Smithsonian Institution – A summary of studies', Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Doering, Zahava D., A. Dreibelbis, and A. J. Pekarik. 2001. 'Interviews with visitors to The American Presidency', Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Drakes, Car. 2022. 'The Winnie the Pooh Painting That Scandalized the Cincinnati Police', *Hyperallergic*, 2 June, https://hyperallergic.com/737542/the-winnie-the-pooh-painting-that-scandalized-the-cincinnati-police/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=D060322&utm_content=D060322+CID_9a43a4c891828654d813b553070d1a70&utm_source=hn&utm_term=police+called+for+the+removal+of+his+painting (accessed 12 June 2022).

DTO. 2021. 'Decolonize! Reclaim! Reimagine! Indigenous People's Day 2021', Decolonize This Place, AMNH Actions Zine, New York.

Duncan, Carol. 1991. 'Art museums and the ritual of citizenship', in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds) *Exhibiting Cultures*, 88–103. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Duncan, Carol. 1999. 'From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum,' in David Boswell and Jessica Evans (eds) *Representing the Nation*, 304–331. London: Routledge.

Duncan, Carol and A. Wallach. 2004. 'The museum of modern art as late capitalist ritual: An iconographic analysis', in Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (eds) *Grasping the world: The idea of the museum*, 483–500. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Eakin, Hugh and Randy Kennedy. 2005. 'Doubts on Donors' Collection Cloud Met Antiquities Project', *New York Times*, 10 December, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/10/arts/design/doubts-on-donorscollection- cloud-met-antiquities-project.html (accessed 2 February 2022).

Eder, Donna. 1981. 'Ability grouping as a self-fulfilling prophecy: A micro-analysis of teacher-student interaction', *Sociology of Education*, 54 (3): 151–162.

Eder, Donna. 1985. 'The cycle of popularity: Interpersonal relations among female adolescents', *Sociology of Education*, 58 (3): 154–165.

El-Haj, Nadia Abu. 1998. 'Translating truths: Nationalism, the practice of archaeology, and the remaking of past and present in contemporary Jerusalem', *American Ethnologist*, 25 (2): 166–188.

Erickson, Hannah Novillo, Jeni O'Malley, Maggie Schmidt, and Molly Jessup. 2022. Interview with author, 20 January.

European Commission. 2006. 'The Economy of Culture in Europe', Brussels: European Commission.

European Commission. 2019. 'Culture Statistics', Luxembourg: European Union.

Falk, John H.. 1998. 'Visitors: Who does, who doesn't and why', *Museum News*, 77 (2): 38–43.

Falk, John H. 2004. 'The director's cut: Toward an improved understanding of learning from museums', *Science Education*, 88 (S1): S83–S96.

Fanon, Franz. 2004. *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press.

Farrell, Betty and Maria Medvedeva. 2010. 'Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums', Washington DC: American Association of Museums.

Fernyhough, Charles. 1996. 'The dialogic mind: A dialogic approach to the higher mental functions', *New Ideas in Psychology*, 14 (1): 47–62.

GAO. 2007. 'U.S. Public Diplomacy Strategic Planning Efforts Have Improved, but Agencies Face Significant Implementation Challenges', GAO-07–795T, 26 April, Washington DC, Government Accountability Office.

Gee, James Paul, Anna-Ruth Allen and Katherine Clinton. 2001. 'Language, class, and identity: Teenagers fashioning themselves through language', *Linguistics and Education*, 12 (2): 175–194.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The interpretation of cultures*, New York: Basic Books.

Giroux, Henry A. 2001. *The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the end of innocence*, Lanham, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Giusti, Ellen, A. Greene, and Monique Scott. 2001. 'The genomic revolution: The visitor experience', New York: American Museum of Natural History. Unpublished manuscript.

Griffin, Roger. 2006. 'Ideology and culture', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11 (1): 77–99.

Gruber, Jacob W. 1970. 'Ethnographic salvage and the shaping of anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, 72 (6): 1289–1299.

Guilbaut, Serge. 1983. *How New York stole the idea of modern art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Haraway, Donna. 1989. *Primate visions: Gender, race, and nature in the world of modern science*, New York: Routledge.

Hauch, Valerie. 1999. 'The Founding of the Minnesota Historical Society', *Minnesota History*, Winter 1999–2000: 444–451.

Hauser, Marc D., Noam Chomsky, and W. Tecumseh Fitch. 2002. 'The faculty of language: What is it, who has it, and how did it evolve?' *Science*, 298 (5598): 1569–1579.

Hebdige, Dick. 1979. *Subculture: The meaning of style*, London, New York: Methuen.

Hegmon, Michelle. 1992. 'Archaeological research on style', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21: 517–536.

Hein, George. 1998. *Learning in the museum*, London, New York: Routledge.

Hobsbawm, Eric. 1999. 'Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870–1914', in David Boswell and Jessica Evans (eds) *Representing the Nation*, 61–86. London: Routledge.

Hofstede, Geert and Robert R. McCrae. 2004. 'Personality and culture revisited: Linking traits and dimensions of culture', *Cross-Cultural Research*, 38 (1): 52–88.

Hood, Marilyn G. 1983. 'Staying away: Why people choose not to visit museums', *Museum News*, 61 (4): 50–57.

Hood, Marilyn G. 1993. 'The African-American museum visitor: Who comes, who does not come, and why? The art museum visitor and non-visitor', *Visitor Behavior*, 8 (2): 5–10.

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. 1992. *Museums and the shaping of knowledge*, London: Routledge.

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. 1998. 'Education, communication and interpretation: Towards a critical pedagogy in museums', in Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (ed.) *The educational role of the museum*, 3–27. London: Routledge.

Huxtable, Sally-Anne, Corinne Fowler, Christo Kefalas, and Emma Slocombe. 2020. 'Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery', Swindon, Wiltshire, UK: National Trust.

ICOM Russia. 2015. 'Policy Brief: Social and Educational Role of Museums in Promoting the Principles of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions', Moscow: UNESCO.

Janes, Robert R. 2016. *Museums Without Borders*, London: Routledge.

Jeffries, Judson L. 2002. 'Black radicalism and political repression in Baltimore: The case of the Black Panther Party', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25 (1): 64–98.

Jenkins, David. 1994. 'Object lessons and ethnographic displays: Museum exhibitions and the making of American anthropology', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 36 (2): 242–270.

Jenkinson, Peter. 1994. 'Museum futures', in Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.) *Museum provision and professionalism*, 51–54. London, New York: Routledge.

Johnson, Timothy, Patrick Kulesa, Young Ik Cho, and Sharon Shavitt. 2005. 'The relation between culture and response styles: Evidence from 19 countries', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 36 (2): 264–277.

Kaplan, Isaac. 2016 'Censorship, "Sick Stuff," and Rudy Giuliani's Fight to Shut Down the Brooklyn Museum', *Artsy*, 23 December, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-censorship-sick-stuff-rudy-giuliani-fight-shut-down-brooklyn-museum (accessed 1 August 2022).

Karns, David, L. Costello, J. Smith, and I. Munteanu. 2006. 'Changing faces: Museum visitorship and demographics', in C.M.P. Neves (ed.) *White Paper*, 1–16. Washington, DC: Office of Policy & Analysis, Smithsonian Institution.

Kazanina, Nina, Colin Phillips, and William Idsardi. 2006. 'The influence of meaning on the perception of speech sounds', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 103 (30): 11381–11386.

Kessler, S., D. J. Ashenden, R.W. Connell and G.W. Dowsett. 1985. 'Gender relations in secondary schooling', *Sociology of Education*, 58 (1): 34–48.

King, Mary C. 1999. 'Keeping people in their place: An exploratory analysis of the role of violence in the maintenance of "property rights" in race and gender privileges in the United States', *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 31 (3): 1–11.

Kinzler, Katherine D., Emmanuel Dupoux and Elizabeth S.Spelke. 2007. 'The native language of social cognition', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104 (3): 12577–12580.

Kohl, Philip L. 1998. 'Nationalism and archaeology: On the constructions of nations and the reconstructions of the remote past', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 27: 223–246.

Korn, Randi. 2000. 'Whole museum experiences: Findings from exit interviews, surveys, and post-visit telephone interviews', San Jose, CA: Tech Museum of Innovation.

Kotler, Neil. 2001. 'New ways of experiencing culture: The role of museums and marketing implications', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 19 (4): 417–425.

Larson, Reed, Robert Kubey and Joseph Colletti. 1989. 'Changing channels: Early adolescent media choices and shifting investments in family and friends', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 18 (6): 583–600.

Lee, Valerie E., Helen M. Marks and Tina Bird. 1994. 'Sexism in single-sex and coeducational independent secondary school classrooms', *Sociology of Education*, 67 (2): 92–120.

Leinhardt, Gail and Karen Knutson. 2004. *Listening in on museum conversations*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Lenoir, Alexander. 1966. 'Museum of French Monuments', in Elizabeth G. Holt (ed.) *A documentary history of art*, Vol. 3, 275–282. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Leung, Kwok, Michael Harris Bond, Sharon Reimel de Carrasquel, Carlos Munoz, Marisela Hernández, Fumio Murakami, Susumu Yamaguchi, Günter Bierbrauer and Theodore M. Singelis. 2002. 'Social axioms: The search for universal dimensions of general beliefs about how the world functions', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33 (3): 286–302.

Linenthal, Edward T. 1996. 'Anatomy of a Controversy', in Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Englehardt (eds) *History Wars*, 9–62. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Linenthal, Edward T. and Tom Englehardt. 1996. *History Wars*, New York: Metropolitan Books.

Liu, James H. 1999. 'Social representations of history: preliminary notes on content and consequences around the Pacific rim', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23 (2): 215–236.

Liu, James H., Rebekah Goldstein-Hawes, Denis Hilton, Li-Li Huang, Cecelia Gastardo-Conaco, et al. 2005. 'Social representations of events and people in world history across 12 cultures', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 36 (2): 171–191.

Liu, James H. and Denis J. Hilton. 2005. 'How the past weighs on the present: Social representations of history and their role in identity politics', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 44 (4): 537–556.

Logan, Brian. 2010. 'Hide/Seek: Too shocking for America', *Guardian*, 5 December, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/dec/05/hide-seek-gay-art-smithsonian (accessed 12 June 2022).

Lusaka, Jane and John Strand. 1997. 'Great expectations', *Museum News*, 76 (6): 34–37.

Lusaka, Jane and John Strand. 1998. 'The boom – and what to do about it', *Museum News*, 77 (6): 54–60.

Mahon, Maureen. 2000. 'The visible evidence of cultural producers', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29: 467–492.

Maina, Chao Tayiana and Beth Rebisz. 2022. Interview with author, 13 January.

Marx, Karl. 1963. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Boneparte*, New York: International.

Mashberg, Tom. 2021. 'A Trover of Artifacts Officials Call "Stolen" are Returned to Italy', *New York Times*, 15 December.

Mason, David D. and Conal McCarthy. 2006. '"The feeling of exclusion": Young peoples' perceptions of art galleries', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 21 (1): 20–31.

Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1989. 'Hypersegregation in US metropolitan areas: Black and Hispanic segregation along five dimensions', *Demography*, 26 (3): 373–391.

Massey, Douglas S. and Mary J. Fischer. 2000. 'How segregation concentrates poverty', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23 (4): 670–691.

Massey, Douglas S. and Mary J. Fischer. 2006. 'The effect of childhood segregation on minority academic performance at selective colleges', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29 (1): 1–26.

Matsumoto, David, Robert J. Grissom and Dale L. Dinnel. 2001. 'Do between-culture differences really mean that people are different?: A look at some measures of cultural effect size', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32 (4): 478–490.

McCracken, Grant. 2003a. 'CULTURE and culture at the Royal Ontario Museum: Anthropology meets marketing', *Curator*, 46 (2): 136–157.

McCracken, Grant. 2003b. 'CULTURE and culture at the Royal Ontario Museum: Anthropology meets marketing, Part 2', *Curator* 46 (4): 421–432.

McPherson, Gayle. 2006. 'Public memories and private tastes: The shifting definitions of museums and their visitors in the UK', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 21 (1): 44–57.

McSweeney, Brenden. 2002a. 'Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith-a failure of analysis', *Human Relations*, 55 (1): 89–118.

McSweeney, Brenden. 2002b. 'The essentials of scholarship: A reply to Geert Hofstede', *Human Relations*, 55 (11): 1363–1372.

Mills, Eleanor. 2022. 'Activists continue calls for British Museum to ditch BP', *Museums Journal*, 19 April, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2022/04/activists-continue-calls-for-british-museum-to-ditch-bp/?utm_campaign=2131278_19042022&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Museums%20Association&dm_i=2VBX,19OI6,54STW3,4XUPS,1 (accessed 21 April 2022).

MMA. 2000. 'Mission statement', Metropolitan Museum of Art. http://www.metmuseum.org/visitor/faq_hist.htm#mission (accessed 18 June 2008).

MNHS. n.d. a. 'Who We Are', https://www.mnhs.org/about (accessed 17 April 2022).

MNHS. n.d. b. 'Mission, Vision, Values & Strategic Priorities', https://www.mnhs.org/about/mission (accessed 17 April 2022).

MNHS. n.d. c. 'History Is Now', https://www.mnhs.org/historyisnow/history-at-heart (accessed 17 April 2022).

Muñoz-Alonso, Lorena. 2015. 'Art Not Oil Activists Stage Protests Across Four Major London Museums', *Artnet News*, 14 September, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/art-industry-news-october-22-2018-1376632 (accessed 20 April 2022).

Moore, Donald. 1982. 'Thirty years of museum education: Some reflections', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 1 (3): 213–230.

NMAH. 2001. 'Studies of Visitors at The American Presidency', August, Office of Policy & Analysis, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History.

NMAI. 2004. 'National Museum of the American Indian now open at the Smithsonian', Washington, DC: National Museum of the American Indian.

NMAI. 2005. 'Exhibitions at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian', Washington, DC: National Museum of the American Indian.

NEA. 2004. 'Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, Research Division Report #45', Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

NEA. 2019. 'U.S. Patterns of Arts Participation: A Full Report from the 2017 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts', Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

N-YHS. 2005. 'Slavery in New York' website, New-York Historical Society. https://www.nyhistory.org/web/default.php?section=exhibits_collections&page=exhibit_detail&id=3392343 (accessed 18 April 18 2008).

Nixon, Lindsay. 2020. 'A Culture of Exploitation: "Reconciliation" and the Institutions of Canadian Art', Yellowhead Institute, August.

Noakes, John. 2003. 'Racializing subversion: The FBI and the depiction of race in early Cold War movies', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26 (4): 728–749.

O'Neill, Mark. 2002. 'The good enough visitor', in Richard Sandell (ed.) *Museum, society, inequality*, 24–40. London, New York: Routledge.

O'Neill, Mark. 2007. 'Kelvingrove: Telling stories in a treasured old/new museum', *Curator*, 50 (4): 379–400.

Ortner, Sherry B. 2002. '"Burned like a tattoo": High school social categories and "American culture"', *Ethnography*, 3 (2): 115–148.

Peterson, Richard A., P.C. Hull and R.M. Kern. 2000. *Age and arts participation: 1982–1997*, Santa Ana, CA: National Endowment for the Arts.

Philipp, Steven F. 1998a. 'African-American perceptions of leisure, racial discrimination, and life satisfaction', *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 87 (3): 1418.

Philipp, Steven F. 1998b. 'Race and gender differences in adolescent peer group', *Journal of Leisure Research*, 30 (2): 214–232.

Philipp, Steven F. 1999. 'Are we welcome? African American racial acceptance in leisure activities and the importance', *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31 (4): 385–403.

Philipp, Steven F. 2000. 'Race and the pursuit of happiness', *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32 (1): 121–124.

Phillips, Lawrence. 2000. 'British slavery after abolition: the Pacific trade', *Race & Class*, 41 (3): 13–27.

Pinker, Steven, Martin A. Nowak and James J. Lee. 2008. 'The logic of indirect speech', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105 (3): 833–838.

Pogrebin, Robin. 2021. 'With $125 Million Gift, Met Museum Jump-Starts New Modern Wing', *New York Times*, 30 November.

Prentice, Richard, Andrea Davies, and Alison Beeho. 1997. 'Seeking generic motivations for visiting and not visiting museums and like cultural attractions', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 16 (1): 45–70.

Prince, David R. 1983. 'Behavioural consistency and visitor attraction', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 2 (3): 235–247.

Prince, David R. 1985. 'The museum as dreamland', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 4 (3): 243–250.

Prince, David R. 1990. 'Factors influencing museum visits: An empirical evaluation of audience selection', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 9 (2): 149–168.

Regier, Terry, Paul Kay and Naveen Khetarpal. 2007. 'Color naming reflects optimal partitions of color space', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104 (4): 1436–1441.

Ripley, S. Dillon. 1977. 'Education's Dilemma Today', *NASSP Bulletin*, 61 (413): 84–88.

Rodriquez, Jason. 2006. 'Color-blind ideology and the cultural appropriation of hip-hop', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35 (6): 645–668.

Rogoff, Barbara. 1995. 'Observing sociocultural activity on three planes: Participatory appropriation, guided participation, and apprenticeship', in James V. Wertsch, Pablo Del Rio, and Amelia Alvarez (eds) *Sociocultural studies of mind*, 139–164. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Roscigno, Vincent J. 1998. 'Race and the reproduction of educational disadvantage', *Social Forces*, 76 (3): 1033–1061.

Ross, Stephen L. and Margery Austin Turner. 2005. 'Housing discrimination in Metropolitan America: Explaining changes between 1989 and 2000', *Social Problems*, 52 (2): 152–180.

Rydell, Robert W. 1984. *All the world's a fair*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rydell, Robert W. 1993. *World of fairs: The century of progress expositions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sandell, Richard. 1998. 'Museums as agents of social inclusion', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 17 (4): 401–418.

Sandell, Richard. 2002. 'Museums and the combating of social inequality: Roles, responsibilities, resistance', in Richard Sandell (ed.) *Museums, society, inequality*, 3–23. London: Routledge.

Schieffelin, Barbie B. and E. Ochs. 1986. 'Language socialization', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 15: 163–191.

Schmittau, Jean. 2003. 'Cultural-Historical Theory and Mathematical Education', in Alex Kozulin, Boris Gindis, Vladimir S. Ageyev and Suzanne M. Miller (eds) *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schomberg Center. 2007. Unpublished visitor comments about the exhibition Humantypes vs. Stereotypes, 12 May through 28 October 2007. Schomberg Center for the Study of Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York.

Schrire, Carmen. 1995. *Digging Through Darkness*, Charlottesville VA: University Press of Virginia.

Schuster, J. Mark. 2000. 'The geography of participation in the arts and culture', Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

Schwartzman, Paul. 2004. 'Tribes welcome "long overdue" tribute', *Washington Post*, 22 September, A1.

Shaw, Susan M. 1994. 'Gender, leisure, and constraint: Towards a framework for the analysis of women's leisure', *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26 (1): 8–22.

Shaw, Susan M. 2001. 'Conceptualizing resistance: Women's leisure as political practice', *Journal of Leisure Research*, 33 (2): 186–201.

Shinew, Kimberly J., Myron F. Floyd and Diana Parry. 2004. 'Understanding the relationship between race and leisure activities and constraints: Exploring an alternative framework', *Leisure Sciences*, 26 (2): 181–199.

Shore, Bill. 2005. 'The power to bear witness', *Museum News*, 84 (3): 52–58.

Simkus, Albert A. 1978. 'Residential segregation by occupation and race in ten urbanized areas, 1950–1970', *American Sociological Review*, 43 (1): 81–93.

Skramstad, Harold and Susan Skramstad. 2005. 'Dreaming the museum', *Museum News*, 84 (2): 52–55.

Smith, James. 2007. 'Museum visitation as a leisure time choice: A background report to the Smithsonian Board of Regents', 1–28. Washington, DC: Office of Policy & Analysis, Smithsonian Institution.

Smithsonian Institution. 2001. 'A Study of Visitors to Smithsonian Institution International Art Museums', November, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

Stern, Pamela and Peter V. Hall. 2019. '"I don't want my town turned into a spectacle": Community Museums as Tactics', *Museum Anthropology*, 42 (1), 28–41.

Sulcas, Roslyn. 2016. 'Greenpeace Protest of BP Forces British Museum to Close', *New York Times*, 19 May, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/20/arts/design/greenpeace-protest-of-bp-forces-british-museum-to-close.html (accessed 20 April 2022).

Sullivan, Paul and John McCarthy. 2009. 'An experiential account of the psychology of art', *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 3 (3): 181–187.

Survival International. 2022. 'Protest at London's Science Museum as Indigenous peoples slam Adani sponsorship deal', Survival International, 25 January, https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/12710 (accessed 20 April 2022).

Thomas, David Hurst. 2000. *Skull wars: Kennewick man, archaeology and the battle for Native American identity*, New York: Basic Books.

Tilche, Alice. 2022. *Adivasi Art and Activism*, Seattle WA: University of Washington Press.

Tomasello, Michael. 2001. 'Cultural transmission: A view from chimpanzees and human infants', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32 (2): 135–146.

Tomasello, Michael, Malinda Carpenter, Joseph Call, Tanya Behne and Henrike Moll. 2005a. 'Understanding and sharing intentions: The origins of cultural cognition', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 28 (5): 675–691.

Tomasello, Michael, Malinda Carpenter, Joseph Call, Tanya Behne and Henrike Moll. 2005b. 'In search of the uniquely human', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 28 (5): 721–727.

Tomasello, Michael and Hannes Rakoczy. 2003. 'What makes human cognition unique? From individual to shared collective intentionality', *Mind & Language*, 18 (2): 121–147.

Trigger, Bruce G. 1984. 'Alternative archaeologies: Nationalist, colonialist, imperialist', *Man*, 19 (3): 355–370.

UNESCO. 2013. 'Investments and culture: the more diverse, the better', Paris: UNESCO.

U. S. Census Bureau. 2012. 'Statistical abstract of the United States: 2012', 131st ed. Washington, DC: Department of Commerce.

Velie, Elaine. 2022. 'NY District Attorney's Office Seizes Allegedly Looted Antiquities from the Met', *Hyperallergic*, 1 June, https://hyperallergic.com/737317/district-attorneys-office-seizes-allegedly-looted-antiquities-from-the-met/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=W060422&utm_content=W060422+CID_7e0ebd899da7b27c193f69b24b0f2ce5&utm_source=hn&utm_term=seized+five+allegedly+looted+antiquities (accessed 12 June 2022).

Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. *Gang Leader for a Day*, New York, Penguin Press.

Vergès, Françoise. 2014. 'A Museum Without Objects', in Iain Chambers, Allesandra De Angelis, Celeste Ianniciello, Mariangela Orabona & Michaela Quadraro (eds.), *The Postcolonial Museum: The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, London: Routledge, 25–38.

Vogel, Carol. 2008. 'Museums refine the art of listening', *New York Times*, 12 March.

Vygotsky, Lev S. 1986. *Thought and language*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wacquant, Loic. 1997. 'Three pernicious premises in the study of the American Ghetto', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21 (2): 341–353.

Wacquant, Loic. 2005. 'Race as civic felony', *International Social Science Journal*, 57 (183): 127–142.

Weiner, Annette B. 1980. 'Reproduction: A replacement for reciprocity', *American Ethnologist*, 7 (1): 71–85.

Wertsch, James V. 1980. 'The significance of dialogue in Vygotsky's account of social, egocentric, and inner speech', *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 5 (2): 150–162.

Wertsch, James V. 1985. *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, James V. 1991. *Voices of the mind*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Winawer, Jonathan. Nathan Witthoft, Michael C. Frank, Lisa Wu, Alex R. Wade and Lera Boroditsky. 2007. 'Russian blues reveal effects of language on color discrimination', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104 (19): 7780–7785.

Yerrick, Randy, Wolff-Michael Roth and Kenneth Tobin. 2006. 'Forum: The cultures of schooling and the reproduction of inequity', *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, 1 (2): 253–272.

Young, Lola. 2002. 'Rethinking heritage: Cultural policy and inclusion', in Richard Sandell (ed.) *Museums, Society, Inequality*, 203–212. London, New York: Routledge.

Zukin, Sharon. 1982. 'Art in the arms of power: Market relations and collective patronage in the capitalist state', *Theory and Society*, 11 (4): 423–451.

5 Praxis is action

The function of museums in guiding how we think about ourselves and our society, and indeed, who we consider to be included in 'our' society, has been a topic of debate and discussion since the modern museum formula was first articulated. More than that, however, it is enacted world-wide by tens of thousands of specific museums, in the millions of exhibitions and public programs those museums have conducted, and through their collective engagement with hundreds of millions of visitors. Museums exert a relatively quiet presence as ideological champions, and largely because of that quietude, their influence is significant. One salient example of that influence is the oft-repeated finding by the American Alliance of Museums that American museums are highly trusted by the American public as reliable stewards of information (AAM 2021). Leaving aside the question of confirmation bias in those studies, the preponderance of AAM survey responses indicates that a general message of 'trustworthiness' is being effectively conveyed. Thereby, we see a measure of museums' active shaping of personal beliefs and social practices.

Similarly, this activity is explicit in the UK Museums Association's 'Museums Change Lives' initiative, launched in 2013, which it envisions as 'a radical step forward for the sector' (Museums Association 2021a). Since that launch it has disseminated its manifesto internationally. Through the Museums Change Lives initiative, the MA proposes that museums consider their social impact and 'foster rich and meaningful relationships between staff, volunteers and participants, enhancing the lives of everyone involved' (Museums Association 2021b). As discussed earlier, the modern museum has always sought to effect and influence its society. The Museum Association (MA) initiative is therefore refocusing processes that were already underway. What the MA campaign offers to those processes is a legitimizing framework for social engagement. As it is, the MA organization has identified project objectives of 'creating better places to live or work; enhancing health and wellbeing; and inspiring engagement, debate and reflection' (Museums Associations 2018, 5). Each of these objectives is sufficiently general and sweeping to allow many types of social engagement without prescribing any. For example, what constitutes a 'better place to live or work'? Does this require social equality? Does this exclude forces of social inequality? How do we define either of those qualities?

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811-6

Likewise, does enhanced health and wellbeing include the economic basis for or political infrastructure affecting that wellbeing? How should museums promote wellbeing among the millions of displaced persons in the world today, including those in the UK, or among the two billion persons who even the World Bank acknowledges subsist at or below the equivalent of US$2 per day? Indeed, none of the MA objectives explicitly address questions of 'for whom' and 'with whom' should we engage?

One product of the many movements for social equality that have affected so many societies in the first decades of the twenty-first century is the reopening of public debate about the sources and manifestations of inequality, such as employment, income disparity, sexism, racism, and xenophobia. The MA campaign stops short of declaring itself *for the elimination* of socio-economic and political inequality or declaring itself *for an egalitarian socio-economic order*. The activity envisioned by the MA campaign similarly leaves the matter of definition to individuals and organizations.

In that omission we see some similarity to the effort within the International Council of Museums (ICOM) to redefine the concept of 'museum' – acknowledging that museums are active social participants but stopping short of describing the types of social relationships that museums ought to promote. The political quality of museum work is however acknowledged in the report 'Museum Watch Governance Management Project' prepared by ICOM (2022), the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CiMAM), and the International Council for Museum Management (INTERCOM). Specifically, the project sought to examine 'reported practices from several European countries about the increasing interference of politics in museum management' (ICOM 2022, i) in southeast and central Europe. The authors of the report identify conflict between political leaders and museum governance as the main focus of their examination, suggesting 'ideally, when museum leadership and politics share the same values, there is a reduced chance for conflict' (ICOM 2022, ii). Absent shared values, the report continues, political conflict between the state and museums constitutes an 'increasing volatile and risky environment, including incongruous interference that challenges museums' neutrality in their knowledge-sharing role' (ICOM 2022, 2). In other words, explicit challenges to or by dominant narratives and their political advocates lay bare the ideological purposes of museums and thereby threaten the public-facing fiction of their impartiality. The authors acknowledge that 'it would be naïve to suggest that museums should be above politics – it is clear, that some parties see the potential of museums as significant influencers' (ICOM 2022, 42). Rather, what this ICOM document warns against is that established museum managers may be losing control of that potential.

But, again, museums are not neutral and autonomous collectives, existing apart from or outside society. Quite the opposite, museums produce incremental effects in how we view our world and perceive of our and our peers' social practices. Periodically, such incremental changes give way to

widespread, sweeping change. The murder of one African American person by racist police catalyzed a transnational movement against police brutality and systemic racism. To be clear, state-sanctioned violence against Africans and persons of African heritage has been a staple of Euro-American regimes for more than 500 years. Still, few predicted that a massive anti-racist social movement would re-emerge from a murder in Minneapolis in 2020, or that it would take the many forms it has since. Thus, one may rightly observe that any incremental difference contains the potential for qualitative change, even as one also critiques incrementalism as a strategy for engagement.

Doing 'something' and incremental change

To explore this from a somewhat different angle, consider that prioritizing incremental and quantitative change as a strategy for practice is more likely to result in standing back or apart from efforts that enable sweeping, life-changing effects. In their study of five informal science centers in the United States that were ostensibly recommitting to practices that support social diversity, equity, access, and inclusion (DEAI), Haupt, Bequette, Goeke and Her found all five sites centered their DEAI work on informational training alone, which one participant counterposed to deeper examination and change of practices constituting 'how work is done' (Haupt, Bequette, Goeke and Her 2022, 9). Haupt et al draw a picture of social inclusion being approached as a fixed objective rather than as engagement with systemic processes and social practices. The reductionist treatment of social inclusion as a task to be accomplished may actually reinforce misunderstanding social asymmetries as isolated instances and not systemic social relationships. Likewise, in a review of the effects of new museology on museums in the UK, McCall and Gray concluded that 'museum workers utilize the discourses in relation to their own values and activities, rather than to anything outward-facing' (McCall and Gray 2014). Haupt and colleagues' science center study found 'training-based change' to be 'less likely to generate dramatic response from staff/donors/current audience and/or do not require cooperation or buy-in from multiple levels within the organization' (Haupt et al 2022, 10). In both of these studies, we see that an introverted mantra of 'at least something' inhibits imagining the sweeping changes that are possible or necessary to substantially redress social exclusion and inequality. This is not because the economic and cultural expropriation that underlies civil and political inequality is not enacted hourly in thousands of discrete instances and actions, or that specific acts of harm are not worthy of attention. Rather, it is because specific ills and associated ways of thinking are interwoven as a global matrix of practices that must be challenged and effectively changed.

Consider the mass enslavement of African people brought to the Americas and worked to death producing sugar, cotton, tobacco, and other cash crops. In the US south, enslaved persons fled the plantations and sought freedom in the northern states and in Canada. The network of all those who aided escaped

slaves was described as an underground railroad to freedom. Few would challenge the valor or practical results of conspiring with the enslaved to be free. As important as it was practically and as a political symbol of resistance, that underground railroad by itself did not abolish plantation slavery and the trade in human chattel. That abolition required the participation of millions in systemic transformation, including in the United States by civil warfare.

Consider the present global danger of climate change. Many specialists agree that climate change threatens all life on our planet, and that it is primarily the result of human activity, such as natural resource extraction, energy production, transport, agriculture, and water use. These practices are historically and contemporaneously enmeshed in capitalist industrialization and its related economic relationships. While many may be oblivious to or negligent regarding the climate impact of the petrochemical economy, of industrial agriculture, of the massive daily loss of habitat due to reckless resource taking, those activities are broadly social, performed directly by millions of persons (in production, commerce, finance), and engage billions more persons in both production and consumption of petroleum-based products, manufactured foodstuffs, and other natural resources. Eliminating the markets for environmentally-harmful products seems like a logical response. However, attempting to address environmental harms incrementally or apart from the social relationships of industrial capitalism is not likely to arrive at the systemic change required to halt the adverse human impact on global environment. That does not mean that individuals should do nothing. But rather than limit or prescribe our activity to incremental fixes or personal lifestyle changes – waste reduction, vegetarianism, electric transport, etc. – we need to envision and enact systemic alterations of our collective material culture and creative activity, of how we live and how our societies function. Eliminating petroleum as a power source will certainly reduce atmospheric pollutants and greenhouse gases, but will not in itself solve climate change, especially if all of the other uses of petrochemicals are left alone. Reducing industrial production of cows, chickens, or pigs as protein foodstuff may be helpful, but that will not fully offset other damage caused by neo-colonial global economics, such as clearing vast tracts of rainforest for plantation production of palm oil or bamboo wood. Systemic change is needed.

Changing lives by changing social relationships

Returning to the earlier observation that modern museums have been attempting to affect and influence their societies all along, we can step back again and ask if that is sufficient and for whom. For example, when activists rightly turn their attention to denouncing systemic racism and systemic sexism they are simultaneously acknowledging that those ills are operable not simply in the realm of thought but also that they are produced and reinforced by social practices, by collective actions. The concept of 'race' is a product of economic systems that were dependent upon commodifying Africans or other

non-Europeans (initially, non-English or non-Spanish) as chattel laborers, whose bodies should be the laboring property of colonists. Such racism was enacted in gruesome and persistent physical violence against individuals, but those enslaved were the objects of terroristic violence specifically because of their value as labor. Furthermore, slavery has never been ended on the initiative of enslavers. History is full of examples of rebellion against enslavers, by any means necessary and in subtle as well as violent collective forms. That history demonstrates that we cannot eliminate systemic racism and sexism if we only attend to personal behavior or a state of being anti-racists or anti-sexists. We need to extract the root causes – the political economy of those behaviors which provide their everyday, taken-for-granted groundings. To change ourselves we must change the social relationships through which we are co-created and live. Understanding that dialectical relationship of being and knowing enables us to consider how museological practice is produced by and can change how we interact with each other, by re-presenting material expressions of our social relationships and by asking penetrating interpretive questions about those relationships.

Case in Point: Museo del Estallido Social, Santiago

El Museo del Estallido Social – the Museum of the Social Uprising – was created by artists and other cultural workers engaged in the protests and street demonstrations that broke out against the Chilean government in October 2019. Those mass protests were initially concentrated in Santiago but the movement spread to other population centers, in broad outpouring of opposition to the neo-liberalist regime that had dominated Chile since the coup d'état of 11 September 1973. The activist artists and others at the core of Museo del Estallido Social describe it as a 'museum of the people and for the people.' They further explain that

> the rhizomatic nature of social rebellion translates into the absence of leaderships and opinion leaders. The outburst is considered organic, without any planning. This makes it a process that contains a lot of legitimacy, first of all because of the high adherence it has and, on the other hand, because of the breadth of demands that it covers and that respond to an unsustainable discontent around the political and economic model that has prevailed since the Dictatorship and that it is protected by a spurious Constitution.
>
> (Museo del Estallido Social 2021)

Unlike a conventional museum, Museo del Estallido Social operates through a collective of persons who repudiate the hierarchical organizational structures of most museum projects. This lack of privileged insiders is intended to ensure that exhibitions and programs are curated by consensus and, as importantly, represent a direct connection between 'museum' and 'audience', effectively

removing internal divisions that might exist in other organizational types. This process has been described by one of the artist-curators:

> Museum of the Social Outbreak is a totally self-managed project that seeks to document testimonies, records and publications that have arisen in the context of the social demands in Chile that began on October 18, 2019 and that are still latent.
>
> The museological project focuses on a 100% implicative dynamic of the different communities and territories that through different expressions have raised their voices for dignity and social justice in Chile.
>
> Based on the relational museology model, the management model is co-curatorial and co-creative with the communities, thus the exhibitions and elements that nourish the collection come from the same groups of protesters who are horizontally linked with the organization. In this way, the nineteenth century paradigm of museums as institutions where discourse is presented vertically is broken.
>
> (Marcel Solá, personal communication with the author, 11 April 2021)

Museo del Estallido Social came into existence as a cooperative experiment conducted by artist-participants in social protest. Those participants are concurrently art practitioners and interpreters. In the objects and exhibitions we see the creative products of artists, artisans, youth, students, and other communities, within a city of more than six million, whose joint project is simultaneously critical and celebratory. That rebellious combination is certainly not in line with conventional museum models of preserving, collecting and educating, but it does align with more recent museological models of a socially responsive, collaborative process. The Museo is both a product of and contributor to socially-situated public art, responding to and pushing against a global regime of enforced socio-economic and political inequality, and especially resisting the effects of that regime on Chilean society.

Case in point: West Virginia Mine Wars Museum

The West Virginia Mine Wars Museum describes itself as an independent 'people's museum' that 'preserves and uplifts the voices of the people who lived these stories of sacrifice, violence, and triumph' (Mine Wars Museum 2021a). It is located in the small town (population ~500) of Matewan, West Virginia, United States. The museum was founded in 2015 and moved into its current space, provided to it by Local 1440 of the United Mine Workers of America labor union, in 2020. That it is truly a 'people's museum' is well-demonstrated by its history, collections, exhibitions, and programs, as explained by its executive director.

> In 2013, a ragtag group of Appalachians came together and shared a table at the UMWA Local 1440 hall in Matewan, WV. Some had participated

> in the 2011 protest march against mountaintop removal on Blair.[1] Despite having no museum experience, they were determined to make sure this history would be hushed no more, but instead be celebrated, remembered, and shared for generations to come. This was the first board meeting of the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, which opened two years later and is dedicated to telling the stories of miners and their families.
>
> (Mackenzie New-Walker, interview with author, 16 September 2021)

The mine wars referenced in the museum's name encompass a decades-long struggle by coal miners and their families. The residents of the surrounding Mingo County share, with many others throughout Appalachian coal country, the heritage of coal mining life in an expansive and rolling countryside, and social contention with mine owners and government. The town center of Matewan is designated a National Historical Landmark because it is 'exceptionally significant in the history of labor organization in America. It was the scene of the "Matewan Battle" of 19 May 1920 … by striking coal miners who demanded the company recognize the legitimacy of the United Mine Workers of America' and 'was a pivotal event in the eventual end of coal company control in West Virginia' (NPS 1997, 9). The struggle for union recognition and improved living conditions, through direct actions such as work stoppages and even armed battles, between coal miners and their families on one side and the private militias enlisted by coal mine owners on the other,

Figure 5.1 Walking tour of Matewan as part of the Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial Event series, West Virginia Mine Wars Museum
Source: Photo by Rafael Barker, used with permission.

is a key heritage narrative throughout the coal-producing region of the United States. The Battle of Blair Mountain waged from 26 August to 3 September 1921, holds special significance within that continuum of struggle and has been described by historians as 'largest armed insurrection since the (U.S.) Civil War' (NPS 1997, 23), ultimately involving thousands of armed miners and their supporters confronting heavily armed sheriff's deputies, state police, mercenaries, and the federal army, and 'rising up against decades of injustice' (Mine Wars Museum 2021b).

> In 2014, a community open house was hosted in Matewan, where they asked: "we're going to build this museum, what should that narrative look like?" From the onset, there was this idea like the community needs to be in the driving seat of the stories we want to tell. The museum officially opened in 2015, and it was great. Over 500 people came to the grand opening of the museum in downtown Matewan, which is huge for a town that has fewer than 500 residents. I think it was a really special moment that the Museum was built to last, and the community rallied behind it.
>
> (Mackenzie New-Walker, interview with author 16 September 2021)

The grassroots effort to interpret and preserve mine workers' heritage has been actively opposed and subverted by mining corporations, who want to strip mine Blair Mountain, and, tellingly, by some regional and federal government historic preservation officials (Pringle 2010). The site itself has been listed, delisted, and relisted on the federal registry of historic places in an intellectual battle that echoes the events that sparked the armed confrontations of 1921. The fossil fuel sector in the United States continues to dominate the region, politically and economically, despite the environmental devastation such mining produces. All of that underscores the current significance and the potential of the Mine Wars Museum as 'people in charge of (their) own history' (Mine Wars Museum 2021a). Much of the material culture displayed in museum exhibits has been collected by a local avocational archaeologist, Kenneth King, who has been surveying Blair Mountain since the early 1990s. The museum board is made up of local residents, active and retired miners, school teachers, and historians. Mackenzie New-Walker, the museum's first salaried but part-time director, has described the shared sensibility that the museum's historical themes are stories that were too important to forget. The depth of that engagement was also demonstrated in the Battle of Blair Mountain centennial commemorative events held in September 2021, co-organized with dozens of organizations and individuals throughout the Appalachian region, from North Carolina to Pennsylvania.

> That was really a shining example of what can happen when you empower the community to tell their own stories in their own way. And the Blair Centennial blossomed beyond our wildest dreams. When you

> look at the schedule of events, we had events, programs, and exhibits, in several different counties, mostly in the southern part of the state, but we had events happening up north too, and I think it's testimony to the museum's community organizing skills that we were able to flex that muscle this past weekend.
>
> (Mackenzie New-Walker, interview with author, 16 September 2021)

The popular participation in the Mine Wars Museum is reflective of the extensive social networks that are engendered through the joint struggles of mine workers – including to save Blair Mountain and their shared heritage of collective agency.

Case in point: Museum of British Colonialism

The construction and operation of intracontinental and transoceanic digital telecommunication infrastructure enabled many museums around the world to develop an Internet presence. In every instance, either server or client access to that Internet technology reveals regional and global socio-economic rifts – the so-called digital socio-economic divide. Some resource-rich organizations have recreated virtual representations of exhibitions and provide online access to digital catalogues of large collections for their remote users. The COVID-19 coronavirus epidemic prompted new and additional uses of Internet multi-casting, which in turn produced new efforts in live online public programming. For smaller museums, online efforts remain focused on reiterating information online that was previously only available on-site, such as in guidebooks and program schedules.

An important exception to replicant types of online programming is the Museum of British Colonialism (MBC), which has been an online project from its inception, as a virtual museum of oral histories and interpretive content. The MBC describes itself as 'a network and platform for facilitating global conversations about British colonialism and its legacies,' explicitly engaged in 'elevating underrepresented voices in order to challenge damaging myths,' and as a 'transnational, anti-racist and anti-colonial organisation' (MBC 2021a). The curatorial team comprises a dozen or more volunteers, who collect oral histories and create digital content, leveraging the collaborative and transnational possibilities of the world-wide web to conserve memories and confront the 'colonial aphasia' (Stoler 2011) that masks the violent dispossession and human destruction at the core of colonialist capitalism.

> I think largely the 'who is the museum for' question is also answered by looking at where we are, in terms of which spaces we are in and which spaces we are active in so for the kind of work we have been doing here in Kenya, the field work, the awareness, the foreign histories, the platforms that we have been promoting it, mostly are Kenyan social media spaces … largely targeting that generation of Kenyans who are removed

Figure 5.2 Former torture room at Mweru Works Camp, Kenya
Source: Photo by Museum of British Colonialism, used with permission.

from the history, just by virtue of their age, but still have contact with it in school or family or home, and have not had access to the archives or the narrative or the spaces. So, there's a question of the platforms that we're in and also the kind of access that I did not even have when I was going to school; public school systems did not give me access to this particular history.

(Chao Tayiana Maina, interview with author, 13 January 2022)

The MBC is making use of hypermedia and the Internet, connecting with kindred initiatives such as 'A History of Everyone Else,' and 'Paper Trails,' and with emerging public historians outside of the Global North, who are interrogating and contesting the received depictions of the British colonial past (MBC 2021b). They have interviewed Kenyan elders and recorded those experiences of colonialist oppression and of militant resistance to colonialism. Those oral histories also guide a participatory historical archaeology of the Mau Mau anti-colonial struggle, through which the MBC activists have joined fieldwork with digital 3-D modeling to document and illustrate the structures and landscapes of that struggle. Their project is evolving as they engage with it.

> Our primary focus at the moment, for the past three years at least, has been documenting all the detention sites, and we've only done, I'd say, maybe three, four percent of the work, so there is the actual reality that the work ahead is still quite significant and quite jarring in terms of what we need to actually get it done. So there is that, in terms of what we are still looking to do, but at the same time, one of the things that we have talked about is MBC in itself being more of a repository than something that we only curate ourselves, so envisioning perhaps a space or platform where people can come and deposit their data.
>
> One of the things we would love to do and we hope to get some funding this year is develop toolkits to guide people about how to do the documentation and how to gather data, how to deposit the data, how to check to see that the data is of good quality, or standard quality, and so having frameworks or toolkits for the more technical 'how to do this work' is something that we definitely — we started and then stopped and then hopefully we'll start again … we are all volunteers, working nine-to-five jobs, so we haven't been as consistent, but we've been consistent in that we've been doing this for three years and we give what we have, when we have it.
>
> (Chao Tayiana Maina, interview with author, 13 January 2022)

Thus, the museum is a co-created and fully participatory project. Its decolonizing effort is profoundly important to preserving the memories, songs, poems, and texts by and through which the formerly colonized describe their past and reclaim their history. The MBC project excavates histories that many colonizer museums have deemed too 'difficult' or 'dark' to interpret, or about which an imperial museum typically exhibits 'colonial aphasia' (Stoler 2011, 126–127). It challenges users in the metropoles to not look away but to confront the atrocities committed in their name; the violence that masquerades as 'different sensitivities and values, reflective of that earlier era' (Declaration on Universal Museums 2003).

Case in Point: An exhibition at Lowell National Historical Park

In 2018, Lowell National Historical Park began a multi-year project to develop a new long-term exhibition for its Cultural Center, to replace a 30-year-old exhibition about immigrant communities in northeast Massachusetts, USA. Almost from its inception, that immigrant exhibition had been criticized for its disjointed presentation. Conversely, it was defended by those local residents with direct connections to its selective and concise stories. One reviewer described it as an exhibition in which 'some artifacts are not identified, explanatory texts are often cryptic or absent altogether, and a few contradict themes that emerge from the videos and artifacts' (Laurie 1989, 877). Initially, the park imagined replacing the existing exhibits about 'immigrants' with interpretations of contemporary expressions of local 'cultural identity' practices. Some in the park also expressed a desire to avoid contending with xenophobic attitudes toward 'immigrants' increasingly expressed by regional and federal government leaders. The term 'cultural identity' enabled the submersion of 'immigrants' within a wider array of stereotypes. Other park staff, however, imagined the project as an opportunity to engage with the cultural practices and narratives enacted by local populations over the prior two centuries and that make up the tangible and intangible heritage of city residents.

Notably, the conceptual framing of Lowell as a city of immigrants was determined by government personnel who mainly experience the city as a worksite, rather than by referencing the perceptions of resident stakeholders. Overlaid onto that dynamic is the fact that most city residents do not regularly interact with the historical park resources or personnel, despite the decades-long designation of the city center as an historic site. The initiative by the national park to create an exhibition that depicted the cultural dynamism of local history was thereby simultaneously laudable and problematic. The new exhibition did not arise from collaborative discovery with external stakeholders, rather it was justified as a necessary replacement of a built resource that the National Park Service – parent agency of Lowell National Historical Park – deemed out-dated and in disrepair. However, park personnel also recognized that developing a replacement would engage widely with the narratives of the local population and so they invited a group of city residents to co-shape the project. The initial solicitation of discussants was focused on personal or professional relationships that already existed between the national park and schools administrators, academics, small business owners, and social services administrators. Thus, the history of a predominantly working-class city was proposed to be co-written by its literate, generally petit-bourgeois, residents. Park staff who were skilled using informal learning methods convened and led those group discussions. From those discussions, the entire group produced consensus that the project should describe local cultural practices in ways that highlighted the value and importance of Lowell as a multicultural city – including social contradictions of class, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, and beliefs – and that would prompt exhibition visitors to 'see themselves' and to better understand others via the specific stories that the exhibition presented.

The project team convened an ongoing series of monthly roundtable discussions, through which external stakeholders worked with park staff to define and specify the exhibition themes, specific stories, objects, and media. Those roundtable discussions identified the key themes of the exhibition; identified specific historical and contemporary stories that exemplified those themes and their intersections; and identified the objects, images, and interpretive media that illustrated those stories. The roundtable groups discussed topics and themes for more than one year before moving the project into its actual design phase, and continued to meet throughout that phase to inform and review the emerging specific content and design of the exhibition. While the process and extent of co-creation were primarily defined by national park staff, those extents were challenged at several junctures and redefined co-creatively with stakeholders. Those challenges prompted park staff to change their own understanding of the project and to follow new directions in regard to narratives, objects, and media. From its genesis as an invitational discussion, the roundtable transformed into a consultative group that explicitly shaped the project, which they named 'One City, Many Cultures'. One of the roundtable participants, a younger and relatively recent immigrant from Guatemala, attested to this.

> It really opened up my eyes to a realization that we don't really understand (many other) people's ideas or people's cultures because we haven't seated them at the table. We haven't given them a space to be open and wide, and explain what is like to be, in my case Latinx, and what it's like to be an immigrant, what it's like to be a person of color, and all those experiences that amount themselves into a point. When I realized that I was being part of this history-telling process, I also thought that there were so many other voices that we are leaving behind because there's not representation, but at least I am going to make an effort to bring light to the ones that I know.
>
> (Diego Leonardo, interview with author, 3 May 2022)

This project thereby served as a model – to some extent within the government agency but more so in presentations before various professional societies and museum associations (New England Historical Association, New England Museum Association, American Alliance of Museums) – of inclusive and equitable practice engaging historically disadvantaged populations and previously marginalized stakeholders. Importantly, it demonstrated that so-called 'best practices' assumed by specialists do not necessarily align with what non-specialists consider important, or how they understand the purpose of a museum or an exhibition. In some instances, non-specialist stakeholders challenged or proposed innovations that disrupted long-held, institutional 'taken-for-granted' practices. The cooperative quality of the collaboration is often at odds with conventional practices of collecting and curation. While some park managers were hesitant to examine issues that invoke heated public debate or

controversy, many external stakeholders were keen on interpreting specific examples of social conflict and cultural hybridity as defining societal features and therefore important pathways for understanding. That dialogic addressivity was felt by many roundtable participants to be a key objective for the project.

> I think about a young kid coming with their grandma. That's what I think about, that's exactly what I (thought) - it just always comes to my mind, and I don't know if it's because we are really getting cross-cultural references, or there's a lot of ages that are involved in (the roundtable) … what's being represented here is grandma telling me that story. And I can also tell my story, from my own perspective.
>
> (Diego Leonardo, interview with author, 3 May 2022)

Some difference of expectations can be attributed to perceptions of how simple or complex the process of summarizing heritage and history might be. In American society, for example, history is widely perceived as a linear series of events or individuals, disconnected from the present day, rather than as intersectional narratives of complex populations and environments.

Social complexity is also counterposed to bureaucratic planning processes typical of government in the United States. But complexity was especially revealed in the range of conceptual questions discussed by the roundtable in considering how to address issues pertaining to class, race, sex, and gender, and to focus topics and concepts for the project, such as racist or sexist speech and related violence in the city. These complexities are encountered spontaneously, daily, and throughout contemporary society, but often the loudest voices in those encounters are those with political and economic power. Such power asymmetries intentionally frame public discourse. Exploring those questions at length led the Lowell roundtable group to identify so-called 'difficult stories'[2] that should be made visible. Stakeholders described personal experiences of misanthropy, xenophobia, and other socio-political asymmetry – physical assaults as well as hateful speech – that the group pledged to include, and that helped the group reframe its perspective about enabling public dialogue among exhibition audiences.

> You have this idea of American dream. Whenever you think about the American dream, and the streets paved of gold, and the house made of crystal, but then it just slaps you in your face –whenever you are facing the reality of the country, when people make you feel that you're unwelcome in certain spaces. I feel that is well-captured in a sense, because we all think about this idea that everything is colorful, magical, but then when it comes to - in terms that you are facing the reality - it just becomes really hard thing that you can only overcome if you really set yourself (to overcoming it).
>
> (Diego Leonardo, interview with author, 3 May 2022)

> The audiences that I think we haven't really tackled are […] the immigrants or the working class, per se, because they are usually the ones that do not go to the museum. They go because it's part of school project, but as themselves, just to see themselves reflected, I don't think a museum has been able to do that yet, and I felt this (project) will be able to do it.
>
> (Diego Leonardo, interview with author, 3 May 2022)

The roundtable discussions often returned to the question of who the exhibition should be for, and the importance of engaging and perhaps challenging visitor attitudes and understandings of inclusion and exclusion was frequently discussed and shaped curatorial decisions. For example, consensus was reached early on that all interpretive copy should be presented in multiple languages. This was a particularly important in a city in which scores of languages are spoken at home, but where some local government officials and local news media editorialize that all residents should 'learn English' (*Lowell Sun*, 5 December 2020). All exhibit text is presented in English and Spanish; descriptive audio includes Khmer, which is spoken by a large local population. Displays about beliefs include objects and local stories about art, music, personal adornment, popular culture, spirituality, and other lifeways were all enabled by the roundtable's efforts to expand its ranks and to seek out additional co-creators, stories, objects, and images for the exhibition. A special effort was also made to include socio-economically disadvantaged persons in the city, including oral histories of those who are homeless and impoverished. Those stories are not usually presented as heritage and history in America, and they complicate the dominant narrative myths about 'successful' American society. Lowell is a case in point, where most city residents live at or below income levels that are officially defined as poverty. Improvised encampments exist throughout the city in out-of-the-way sites, and many housing-insecure persons sleep on the sidewalks of central Lowell. Telling those stories is no less important than any other story, but carries with it the danger of reiterating the victim-blaming and social stigma projected upon the impoverished in a capitalist society, as one of the stories collected for the exhibition addresses directly:

> (Some) people automatically think that, because somebody's homeless, that they have to be an addict, or that they have to have mental health issues, you know, that's not even the case most of the time. […] Eventually they [may] get into drugs because they're around them, but that's usually not how it starts, it usually starts – they can't pay the rent, you know what I mean?.
>
> (Tatiana Rivera, interview with the author, 14 June 2021)

Co-creation of this project was iterative, dialogical, and engaged many formerly-unengaged city residents in active collaboration. Through that process,

collaboration evolved, not as an additive collection of opinions or talents, but as transformative dialogue among peers and grounded in mutual respect.

Case in point: District Six Museum

The District Six Museum in Cape Town is a project born of the anti-apartheid and socio-political liberation struggles of the 1970s and 1980s in South Africa. It exists as an ongoing oral history project, an ongoing material culture project, and an active creative space for visual and narrative expression. Visitors entering the exhibition space of the museum – formerly a Methodist church – are surrounded and confronted by installations that communicate those three functions.

The introduction text to that exhibition space reads, in part:

> In remembering we do not want to recreate District Six but to work with its memory: of hurts inflicted and received, of loss, achievements and of shames. We wish to remember so that we can all, together and by ourselves, rebuild a city which belongs to all of us, in which all of us can live, not as races but as people.
>
> (District Six Museum 2021)

Figure 5.3 District Six Museum main exhibition
Source: Photo by Jim Henderson, used in accordance with Creative Commons license 4.0.

The floor of the two-story space features a large, hand painted street map of District Six, on which visitors walk and onto which they have inscribed details of the streets: houses, shops, names, and other memories. Many of those locations no longer exist because the apartheid regime physically destroyed and attempted to erase them from memory. A floor-to-ceiling display of street signs, collected clandestinely as District Six was demolished, signal again the destruction of neighborhoods and the persistence of individual and collective memory. Another floor-to-ceiling display is a 300 meter-long memory cloth, on which visitors have written personal reflections on the themes of the museum. These exhibits stand as material and symbolic testaments to the power of individual resilience and collective resistance. The engagement of the museum with external stakeholders is thereby intensive as well as extensive, and that process was described by the District Six Museum education manager.

> What we've done is privilege the participation of former residents and, when possible, young people who experience injustice in the present. We've demarcated a lot of our spaces for them to come into and define with us. And so, the museum has become a home. So that's the first thing.
>
> The second thing is that we've regularized programs for young people who are activists, artists and photographers, or those curious about, you know, being involved in curating or production. We have designed a series of Learning Journeys programs for which we recruit youth from community based partners, then we have the Junior Club for primary school learners to learn about the past through film, expressive arts and exploration – the facilitators are the older youth. For many working class youth, curatorial practice, interpretation of objects, stories, culture, intangible heritage, have always been part of the constructed 'white' world in South Africa. Involving young people in multiple production processes – events, displays, site walks, sound installations, short films, murals – is about introducing them to the curatorial world – increasing the possibility for youth on the margins to be actively and meaningfully involved in progressive memorialization projects – in leading these rather than just being the 'curios.' And we've regularized membership programs for former residents, , the elders, and not just for those who come from District Six because displacement and forced removals affected far more communities. And so, people tend to, when it's regularized, bring their friends along and to take ownership of that space. So, the programming becomes one we, as leaders in the District Six Museum, contribute, but we allow space for former residents to also suggest and shape programs.
>
> But, most importantly, in those spaces where former residents share their stories and we document and record it, the professional staff in the museum are able to extricate some of the main elements that then make up significant parts of our curatorial practice. We work very hard to ensure that this is not an extractive process, it's more of a collaborative

interpretation process that has shaped our curatorial practice and museum aesthetics. And this is an ongoing process so we are always adding more layers to our curatorial practice.

It comes from the people who actually experience it, but it's not an easy relationship. Often, these relationships are ones of conflict, because the memory we're dealing with is contested. So, people come into the space with varied perspectives. Also, memory, working with memory, is a very fragile thing, so people don't remember as clearly as they may have experienced living through apartheid, or any life event or historical moment. And so often these spaces are spaces of pain.

(Mandy Sanger, interview with author, 8 April 2022)

While we do work with lots of researchers, and we see ourselves as researchers, we have to check ourselves in terms of the power dynamic between us and people who don't engage in formal research practices but whose stories are pivotal to our curatorial and political practice. And so, the process of involving former residents and activists in our space is not an event, it's not a one-off process. It's both planned, in other words, we do have long term views, in terms of where we want particular processes to go, but it's also unplanned in the sense that we allow participants to shape where that process goes.

But it happens through argument, through contestation, sometimes we are adversarial. So, it's not a liberal kind of shame – to involve, you know, people who are never involved in museums – it's not that kind of approach. We'd like to think of it as a far more authentic approach of really inviting people to their own processes. It's something that we all have to put the work in for. They have to become researchers, they have to study, they have to read. If they are not able to read, for whatever reason, we have to collectively engage in learning processes to demystify what is called 'difficult knowledge'. Expert knowledge is often codified in ways that render it 'difficult' or only for certain 'elite communities'. Traditional museum knowledge is often presented as 'too difficult for ordinary folk'. We purposefully try to break these barriers in knowledge acquisition, not always successfully.

And so, it's not a liberal process of just accommodating people. It's a very intense process of knowledge making with and in community, rather than us as museum practitioners, mining the knowledge, and then crystallizing and shaping it to our benefit. We shape and interpret it with the people who share knowledge with us.

(Mandy Sanger, interview with author, 8 April 2022)

Like the Museum of British Colonialism, but unlike many other museums, District Six Museum staff regularly acknowledge that the museum exists because of and in response to dispossession, because of and in response to social inequalities that remain and continue to be resisted. Thereby, District

Six Museum staff do not limit their role to documenting or conserving the material culture of that dispossession and inequality. Social activism, confrontation, and contestation are concurrently important subject matter themes and practices of District Six Museum curation and programming. Programs and exhibits are co-created interventions in the present as well as symbolic, mnemonic indications of the past.

Case in point: 'Minneapolis Is' at the Mill City Museum

Practitioners working at the Minnesota Historical Society, Minneapolis, USA, reconsidered public engagement and co-creation as a much-needed response to specific contemporary moments, and especially the societal asymmetries that were brought into sharp focus by the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police. That engagement activity also contradicted the usual business of the museum.

> The museum where I work – Mill City Museum – is in what was once the largest flour mill in the United States. We tell the history of that industry, and we tell the history of the river, and why that industry grouped here, but we also introduce visitors to what the City of Minneapolis is like. There are some things that give you an overview of that, because we have a very large tourist audience.
>
> Throughout 2020, we did not reopen, so we had lots of time to think about and reimagine even what our own purpose is, and the difference between the way that [broadcast] media or the outside world might be seeing Minneapolis versus the way that people who live here see it. There's sort of a disconnect in some of the nuances and power structures and things like that. So then, when it was coming around to 2021, we launched an initiative that we called 'What Makes Minneapolis Minneapolis?' We didn't want to tell everyone – the audience – what our city is, we wanted the people who live here to answer that question, themselves, and share their perspective on the place where they live because identity of the city was being greatly discussed. It was something where, there were so many different perspectives and it was a moment of reckoning for the city of what it has been in the past and what it wants to be in the future, and even challenging the image that the city often wants to present – which all put us off – and wants to present a very progressive image. So we created this umbrella of programming to look at the historical identity of the city, the contemporary understanding of the city, and then what we might want it to be in the future. Outside on our chain link fence where 'History at Heart' had been the previous year, we put 'Minneapolis is', and we just let people fill in that sentence. And that was the largest kind of grassroots public participation in the project.

> We also decided to make some videos that were originally going to be for social media and we interviewed five different people who have some knowledge of the City of Minneapolis from living here, working here, studying, [or] running community organizations. And we just asked them some questions about Minneapolis, past, current, and what they hope for the future. And when we watched the videos, we [found them to be] very thoughtful, very nuanced and that the conversation – the best opportunity for conversation would actually be in a gallery and lend itself well to social media discourse.
>
> (Molly Jessup, interview with author, 7 February 2022)

The modalities of this project – on one hand, a chain-link fence along the riverfront to which were attached hundreds of hand-written statements, and Internet-distributed video commentaries on the other – also illustrate ways in which to include a wider range of voices than might be the case if the project were limited to visitors to a physical museum site. Through this form and process, practitioners engaged many who reside in the region but who might otherwise consider themselves unengaged with the museum.

Figure 5.4 'Minneapolis Is' comment fence at Mill City Museum
Source: Photo by Molly Jessup, used with permission.

Turning curation upside down

The word 'curation' is derived from the Latin word meaning 'to care.' That classical meaning has metamorphosed via modern museum practice to describe decisions about collections, exhibitions, and public programs. Fewer practitioners speak of curating organizations or strategic missions – indeed, the term 'mission' has entered the museum sector via the vernacular of European colonialism.[3] The jargon of museums is thus rooted in histories of social hierarchy and inequality, and in ideologies that arose from and defend those hierarchies.

Within this wider historical frame, demands that museums decolonize their practices and respond to historically disadvantaged communities are also demands to invert concepts of curation and mission. Marx noted that we make our own history under circumstances 'given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living' (Marx 1969, 398). So it is that overturning oppressive traditions is not a unidirectional but a multidimensional process, and engages how we think as well as what we do. As Fanon observed, 'decolonization is the encounter between two congenitally antagonistic forces that in fact owe their singularity to the kind of reification secreted and nurtured by the colonial situation' (Fanon 2021, 2). Curation thereby exercises more influence than merely collecting objects or assigning definitions to them. It acts to either reinforce or to challenge specific circumstances transmitted from the past and that weigh heavily upon our world views. It is noteworthy that at least some who object to monument removal and statue-toppling then counter-propose relocating that colonizer statuary to museums, confirming the ideological weight of the dislocated statue.

Demands that museums decolonize their collections and public programs are simultaneously demands that museums respond to and abide by external, currently, or formerly subordinated, stakeholders. This is not to say that decolonize demands are always or everywhere also demands that museums revolutionize themselves; that goal requires a much deeper critique and widespread intentionality that emerges from an extensive process of societal change. But the many and varied demands to decolonize museums are not only protests of past activity; they simultaneously demand inclusive public participation and a radical transformation of collecting and interpretive practice, immediately and into the future.

There should be no doubt that demands to decolonize public spaces are driven by social forces more extensive than the actions of any one museum. Neither colonialism nor racism is conceivable without the underlying framework of global capitalism, and contemporary movements will sooner or later encounter that framework. Moreover, the history of colonialism and racism is concurrently a history of resistance and rebellion against colonialist practice and thought. Within that continuum are the protests of racism and colonialism that target its most prominent symbols – statues memorializing key agents – of which there are many, in cities throughout the world.

Case in point: Rhodes must fall!

Cecil Rhodes, the notorious emissary of High Victorian British imperialism in Africa, is memorialized and commemorated in both Britain and South Africa. Rhodes directed a brutally extractive colonial regime, primarily in southern Africa, by which he accumulated a vast fortune. A small bit of that plunder was endowed to his alma mater Oxford University, to entice would-be imperialists, such as future US president Bill Clinton, to study in his name. The façade of the Rhodes Building in Oriel College displays a 2.5m tall statue of Rhodes, standing a full storey above two British monarchs. Tellingly, the statue is fronted by a protective mesh.

Conversely, the statue of Rhodes that once sat on the grounds of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, is no longer present. It was removed in 2015 as a result of massive protests by students and others, who demanded that 'Rhodes must fall!' That movement was of course more than 'curation' in either its classical or modern sense, and yet it was a bright example of public curation of the public space. Meanwhile, protests continue to contest the presence of Cecil Rhodes on the grounds of the University of Oxford, and they are not placated by interpretive texts that gloss over colonialism as bygone exploitation performed by individuals and at a distance. The anodyne plaque explains that 'some of his activities led to great loss of life and attracted criticism in his day and ever since' has been criticized by many as 'woefully inadequate' even as some others object that it 'lacks balance' for not claiming that Rhodes brought 'benefits to Africa' (Gershon 2021).

This statute toppling turn, albeit not ruinous to the status quo, does call to mind dethronements of an earlier era. In the early twenty-first century, statue-toppling practices traverse the planet, with targets including Cecil Rhodes, Christopher Columbus, James Cook, Robert E. Lee, and many other relicts of colonial regimes.[4]

Case in point: Caribbean removals

The islands surrounding the Caribbean Sea were the first Western Hemispheric territories invaded by European colonizers. They were then converted into vast plantations of enslaved labor, to cultivate sugar, tobacco, cotton, and other cash crops for European markets. The modern history of these islands comprises some told and many untold narratives of brutal enslavement and murder of Indigenous and African populations, widespread environmental destruction, and heroic rebellion against colonial rule. Although most of these island states are now independent of their former British, French, Dutch, United States, and Spanish overlords, that colonial past persists in forms of government, languages, disrupted ecosystems, socio-economic inequalities, and the other built heritage of colonialism.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, colonial elites have erected monuments to their European colonialist forebears. Statues of the

militant enslavers Christopher Columbus and Horatio Nelson stand out as egregious examples of colonializing mentalities and have for decades been foci for protest. In recent years, the cities of Bridgetown, Barbados; Nassau, Bahamas; Port of Spain, Trinidad; and Barranquilla, Columbia; have all been sites of the mass participatory curation of such monuments. Nelson's statue in Bridgetown was removed during an orderly observance of the International Day of Tolerance, amidst a longer program of performances and a speech by the prime minister, livestreamed via Facebook. Columbus's statue in Barranquilla was pulled down with ropes in a popular protest of colonialism, amidst chants and cheers by the hundreds who participated. Destroying monuments to colonialism and slavery should certainly not be dismissed as merely street theatre or as vandalism. These public curatorial actions are not only cathartic, they are profoundly meaningful decisions 'from below' about symbolic culture and the mediation of public space. The objects being removed from public display have been thoroughly critiqued – in many cases, over the course of decades – and that critique duly interpreted in speeches, chants, placards, and aerosol paint. The attention to access and inclusion is palpable in the collective efforts that surround the removal of public monuments.

A potent example of deep critique was video-recorded during the public-participatory destruction of two statues – Victor Schœlcher and of Pierre Belain d'Esnambuc – by anti-colonialists in Fort-de-France, Martinique on 22 May 2020 (Brault 2020: Sanson 2021). In that video-recording, two of those involved in this public curation described the collective rationale.

> What is a statue? It is stating 'this is someone we admire for the impact he or she has had in the course of our history.' To be clear, these statues insult us. The statues of Schœlcher and d'Esnambuc, for example, just to name a few – Schœlcher was in favor of the compensation of the plantation owners, there are many transcripts proving that claim. If he had not been in favor of this compensation, maybe it would have been different when it comes to the economic domination of béké [direct descendants of the plantation owners and slave masters]. The same goes for d'Esnambuc. For years we have been told that those who had done graffiti on his statue were wrong, but d'Esnambuc is the man who made Martinique a colony!
>
> (interview attributed to Alejandra Mendez, broadcast on YouTube, 30 May 2020)

In Martinique, 22 May is the anniversary date of the abolition of slavery on that island in 1848 by the French government. Schœlcher has assumed a place in official French history as an abolitionist, but the critical examination of his statue, presented online – rather than displayed on the walls of a museum gallery – posits that by compensating slave owners instead of the formerly enslaved, the 1848 abolition of chattel slavery also ensured the perpetuation of inequality on the island. That critique of historical

interpretation predicated the critique by sledge hammers. Although the French president Macron denounced the action as vandalism, such public curation traces back through French political history. Recall that in 1870, Gustave Courbet, well-known in his day as *avant-garde* realist painter, petitioned the French government to remove the Vendome Column that commemorated Napoleon's imperial conquests as 'a monument devoid of all artistic value, tending to perpetuate the ideas of war and conquest of the past imperial dynasty, which are reproved by a republican nation's sentiment' (Courbet 1870). In 1871, the Paris monument's actual demolition was enacted by the republican citizens of the Commune. Courbet presaged the critique 150 years later of colonial statues in Martinique.

Thus, the removals in Fort-de-France join with previous and contemporary anti-imperial critiques elsewhere, well-summarized by art historian Ana Lucia Araujo, who observed that 'toppling monuments is a global movement, and it works' (Araujo 2020).

Case in point: Theodore Roosevelt and manifest destiny in New York

Theodore Roosevelt Jr.'s forebears reaped fortunes from the trans-Atlantic trade, owned enslaved Africans, and were among the old-line Dutch colonists who controlled New York City throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Theodore Jr. (1858–1919) however was a more modern imperialist, whose adult life paralleled the end of chattel slavery in the United States, the dramatic growth of industrial and finance capitalism, escalated dispossession of and wars against Indigenous peoples, and the emergence of the US capital as a global imperial power. Roosevelt exercised a succession of ruling duties including as governor of New York state and as president of the United States. Roosevelt's militant imperialism included an earlier appointment as assistant secretary of the US navy and capitalized his very brief but well-publicized role in a volunteer cavalry unit during the Spanish-American War. He thereby became an outspoken proponent of expeditionary warfare and gunboat diplomacy to project US imperialism into Asia, Central and South America, and Africa.

Roosevelt's father was an active trustee of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York, and the junior Roosevelt took part in various hunting expeditions into Africa and the western United States, collecting animal specimens – particularly 'big game' – many of which he gifted to the AMNH in New York and to the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History in Washington DC (*Evening Star* 1909). Thus, New York high society found it entirely appropriate to construct a massive, neo-classical memorial to Roosevelt as an addition to AMNH, facing onto Central Park.[5] The ground floor of the Roosevelt Memorial contains dioramas that depict a colonizer's history of New Amsterdam and the Hudson River valley, trophy memorabilia from various phases of Roosevelt's life. The cavernous, vaulted entry hall

features large mural paintings romanticizing Roosevelt's work as an executive imperialist. Installed at the base of the grand staircase leading up to the museum entrance was an equestrian statue of Roosevelt flanked by bare-chested depictions of an African man and a Native American man, 'representing his gun bearers and suggestive of Roosevelt's interest in the original peoples of these widely separated countries [*sic*]' (Theodore Roosevelt Memorial 1936, 11).

That statue of Roosevelt was a focus of public protest for decades. In 1971, six activists with the American Indian Movement were jailed for splashing it with red paint. It was defaced with graffiti on multiple occasions during the 1980s and 1990s, and in the opening decades of the twenty-first century was the focus of protests demanding the decolonization of that museum. In January 2018, a mayoral advisory commission on 'city art, monuments, and markers' – co-chaired by the city's cultural commissioner and the president of the Ford Foundation, and composed of academics, architects, and artists – reviewed the statue but could not agree on whether to recommend relocation of the statue or to recommend 'additional historical research' (Mayoral Advisory Commission 2018, 26). Thereby, city government elected to do nothing.

Those protesting Roosevelt's presence have also protested other exhibits in the AMNH and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[6] Both museums have extensive collections taken from Indigenous and formerly colonized peoples, and both have been visited by 'anti-Columbus Day' protests for their collections and interpretations (Bishara 2019). The social upsurge that responded to the murder of George Floyd tremendously amplified that critique. That upsurge in turn prompted a change of heart on the part of the recidivist AMNH president, who suddenly noticed and told the *New York Times*, that 'the attention of the world and the country has increasingly turned to statues as powerful and hurtful symbols of systemic racism,' acknowledging that the Roosevelt statue was indefensible and perhaps also fearing that it was susceptible to tipping. However, this mediational change by the museum applied only to the statue and not to the rest of the memorial exhibits. Furthermore, the museum doubled down, announcing that Roosevelt's name would be added to the title of the museum's major exhibition about biodiversity (Jacobs 2020; Pogrebin 2020). Revealing the hollowness of the museum president's about-face, the statue remained in place for another two years before it was removed to storage. But not before, in the week before Indigenous Peoples' Day (11 October) 2021, activists once again splashed red paint across the statue (Bishara 2021).

Case in Point: Edward Colston in the harbor

A globally electrifying moment in the decolonize movement occurred in Bristol, UK, on 7 June 2020, when people protesting racism and murders by police pulled down a statue of the mercantile capitalist Edward Colston. Not only did protestors pull the statue off its pedestal, they then toppled it into

Bristol harbor. Images of the statue being upended into the water, or later being hoisted upside-down from the water, provided inspirational international news. The act itself was important, but even more so was the subsequent public debate, as defenders of colonizer memorials more strenuously objected that such memorialized persons were merely men of their times. However, while Colston presided over African trade, at least some others of his time observed that 'not a brick in the city but what is cemented with the blood of a slave … the produce of the wealth made from the sufferings and groans of the slaves bought and sold by the Bristol merchants' (Nicholls and Taylor 1882, 165). Several months after the public deinstallation, Bristol city council determined that it would not repair and replace the statue but rather acknowledge the legitimacy of the protest by convening the We Are Bristol History Commission to propose to city council what might happen next (Gayle 2021). The graffiti covered statue was then displayed in a supine position as an artifact of social protest by the M Shed museum on Prince's Warf, not far from where Colston's monument formerly stood. Public comment was solicited as part of that display and the exhibition itself became an ideo-political contest, with some reactionaries even mounting a concerted effort to prevent others from viewing it (Adams 2021).

The impact of Colston's dismounting in Bristol refreshed and amplified long-standing demands elsewhere to remove similar commemorative tributes to European colonialists and enslavers. In one example, the Museum of London Docklands promptly removed the statue of Robert Milligan – 'a prominent London-based slave-master who traded in enslaved people' – from in front of its museum (Museum of London Docklands 2020). Throughout 2020, dozens of other memorials to the political and military agents of colonialism and slavery were defaced in public protests or pre-emptively removed, throughout Britain, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States (Artforum 2020; BBC 2020; Duffield 2020; McCreesh 2020; McLaughlin 2020; Rosenwald 2020). Protests and removals proceeded at such a rapid pace in the United States that its president announced via Twitter an executive order criminalizing 'anyone who vandalizes or destroys any monument, statue or other such Federal property in the US with up to 10 years in prison' (Rosenwald 2020).

The political challenge to Bristol city government, raised by the act of its citizenry, was further complicated by the panel of academic experts convened to consider the future of the Colston statue and 'help Bristol better understand its history' (We Are Bristol History Commission 2021).[7] The monumental ideological challenge to the British ruling class generally was acknowledged in the vivid declaration by Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, that 'when it comes to protecting our heritage … what has stood for generations should be considered thoughtfully, not removed on a whim or at the behest of a baying mob' (Jenrick 2021). Jenrick neatly, if inadvertently, contrasted the unruliness of statue removal by the many with the orderly process of colonialist rule that placed Colston,

Figure 5.5 Edward Colston pedestal at Bristol harbor
Source: Photo by Caitlin Hobbs, used in accordance with Creative Commons license 3.0.

Milligan, Nelson and similar memorials in the late nineteenth century, when civic decisions were safely in the hands of imperial elites like himself. Donald Trump, meanwhile, repeatedly indicated that the heritage of political repression is an important façade for the authoritarian state.

Alienation and contestation

One major and insidious effect of colonialism is the cultural alienation suffered by those directly subjected to colonizer hegemony. The material alienation produced by dispossession of place, destruction of art and material culture, destruction of written and oral traditions, engenders and enforces cognitive distance between survivors and their forebears. The tremendous destruction by European colonialism of Indigenous persons, histories, and built heritage is staggering and only incompletely understood because of the devastating scale of that destruction. In the western hemisphere, mass murder and the communicable diseases imported by Europeans killed 90% of the Indigenous population (Dobyns 1991; Dunnell 1991). Similar devastations were visited upon Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands by European colonizers. Dan Hicks has emphatically shown how the physical and ideological destruction were paired in the European looting of African art, such as from Benin at the end of the nineteenth century (Hicks 2020). Where lethal epidemics and wanton physical destruction did not reach, Indigenous cultural heritage was subject to colonial misinterpretation and redaction. Thus, for centuries after Columbus's landing, the scope, knowledge, and social structures of civilizations in the Americas prior to 1491 were denied despite all evidence to the contrary (Doolittle 1992; Maxwell 1910; Perttula 2008; Scarry and Scarry 2005; Stinchcomb et al. 2011). In Africa, the abduction of millions of persons into New World slavey (Inkori 1976, 1981; Lovejoy 1982), the imposition of plantation cash cropping (Johnson 1974; Beckert 2014, 312–339), the massive extraction of mineral resources (Teale 1945; Miners 2001), have each decimated civilizations on that continent with lasting effects (Meuni wa Muiu 2008; Rodney 1972; Wolf 1982; Bertocchi and Dimico 2020; Blakey 2001; Hirsch and Lopes 2020). The distortion imposed by colonial regimes includes the alienation of ideo-cultural life, 'to hammer into the heads of the Indigenous population that if the colonist were to leave they would regress into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality' (Fanon 2021, 149). This world-cultural loss is inestimable.

Indigenous communities that have been herded out of an area are doubly dispossessed – of site-specific ancestral built and material culture and of the lifeways that built culture reflects. This process of ideo-cultural alienation was accompanied politically by colonial (and neo-colonial) superstructures. As Chirkure and colleagues have shown, 'archaeological heritage management and conservation in colonial Africa was the preserve of colonial elites, who took a keen interest in the heritage of the colonised (and who) legislated for the exclusion of local communities while guaranteeing access to the colonisers' (Chirkure, Manyanga, et al 2010). Thus, for example, some European

archaeologists who studied the remnants of Great Zimbabwe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries interpreted the site as originally Egyptian, Phoenician, or Arabian, rather than ancestral of the Shona civilization. This conceptual alienation was produced as a component of physical alienation and expropriation; the extraction of natural resources by colonialism was accompanied by the extraction of ideo-cultural resources produced by the colonized. Colonial dispossession continues to affect how culture and heritage are perceived, preserved, and interpreted, by former colonizers and by the formerly colonized.[8]

Community participation is thereby also a form of resistance by the historically disadvantaged people to such cultural alienation. Engaging communities of stakeholders of a site now surrounded by legacy colonial development and populations is, at best, a complex process. Thus, Shadreck Chirikure, Gilbert Pwiti (2008) and their colleagues (Chirikure, Manyanga et al 2010) describe multiple obstacles to community participation in southern Africa: colonialist practices and policies that value tangible property over intangible heritage; changed community priorities regarding heritage sites and practices; the commodification of heritage as commercial tourism; problems of equitable co-curation of projects that involve multiple communities; territorial dispossession of native communities; and the need for archaeologists and historians to cede authority as subject matter specialists. As with District Six in Cape Town, during the apartheid era, the forced removal in the 1930s of native Africans living in the vicinity of Khami resulted in no one with ancestral connections living in vicinity of the site; their once-ancestral land having been expropriated by large commercial farms (Chirikure, Manyanga et al 2010).

Elizabeth Rankin has observed, 'since the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has faced the challenge of creating new cultural capital to replace old racist paradigms' (Rankin 2013, 72). Indeed, demands for 'balance' familiar to protesters in New York, Oxford, or Bristol, echo Nelson Mandela's overly-conciliatory statement that 'some of their heroes may be villains to us. And some of our heroes may be villains to them' (Rankin 2013, 73). Meanwhile, the national heritage site of Robbins Island, an International Site of Conscience, charges a resident admission fee of R400 for adults – about a quarter of weekly per capita income in South Africa.

Colonizer-colonized relationships are based upon distorted economic relationships, even more so than the baseline commodification of human activity that is capitalism. Such distortion impoverishes billions of people globally. The World Bank estimates that per capita income in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia and other 'lower middle income' countries in Africa is approximately US$3 per day (World Bank 2020), which further complicates residents' ability to steward their own heritage. In the neo-colonial, neo-liberal mind, heritage is a commodity to be traded. The neo-colonial place for the Indigenous is as makers and sellers of 'native' art and material culture, specifically for the tourist trade. In any event, the reduction of the experience of heritage to a transactional commodity relationship is neither free nor equitable (Booyens and

Rogerson 2019; Nisbett 2017; Sinclair-Maragh and Gursoy 2015; Castañeda 2012; Hawkins and Mann 2006; van Beek 2003; Sreekumar and Parayil 2002).

This systemic contradiction complicates museum work that intends to engage Indigenous communities in the collection and preservation of Indigenous heritage. Indeed, it complicates concepts of 'local' and 'heritage.' Efforts to decolonize heritage collections and sites require astute consideration of intersecting and multivocal lifeways, but also awareness of the persistent neo-colonial relationships that often underlay the more prominent sites and museums. Importantly, as Chirikure, Manyanga, Ndoro, and Pwiti argue, 'success should be judged not only according to the positives but also through issues such as contestations which, though unpleasant, ensure that people are always engaged with the heritage' (Chirikure, Manyanga et al 2010, 41).

In summary

These examples demonstrate that enacting liberatory and participatory curatorial practice and stewardship requires moving beyond specific instances of interpretation and display, and beyond specific egregious examples of exclusion or defamation. The symbols of defamation – as described by the activists in Fort-de-France, for example – are only symbols *because* of an ongoing process. The persistence of the symbolic presence of a Roosevelt, Nelson, Colston, or Milligan, Columbus, Lee, or Cook is not derived solely from their portraits. The symbolic potencies demonstrate that the processes of colonialism and inequality persist in our time; that oppressive ideological power is energized by real, existing oppressive politics and economics. The singularity of the statue, the particularity of memorializing colonizers, and the generality of privileging a minority over the majority are inextricably and dialectically connected.

What is required is not a 'balance' of material and exhibiting symbols. Liberation is not achieved by 'giving everyone a chance' to participate in injustice. The liberatory process is not algebraic, it is qualitative. The voices we hear in Cape Town and Matewan, Nairobi and Santiago, Minneapolis and Sao Paulo, Gujarat and Lowell, are polyphonic. Those voices propose conceptual leaps and transformative change.

As I and others have argued, the task for those who work to remake museums as liberatory forums of inclusion is not just that specialist practitioners change our ways – although such change is needed – but that we give way, share authority, facilitate and enable, and that our advocacy proceeds from a strategic understanding of liberatory intent, derived from outside the museum and the academy. Such transformation is not, cannot be, neat and orderly, following a step-by-step task list. It is not like writing an interpretive brochure or hosting an opening reception. It is a 'a very intense process of knowledge-making with and in community' (Mandy Sanger, interview with author, 8 April 2022). The social transformation of museums is messy and chaotic, and can only be accomplished, as Sanger points out, 'through contestation, sometimes adversarial' (Mandy Sanger, interview with author, 8 April 2022). To

understand transformation, one has to engage the disorder. Change must be sweeping.

Notes

1 Mountain top removal is a large-scale strip mining operation that results, as the name suggests, in the removal and redeposition of thousands of hectares of landscape to extract sub-surface coal deposits.
2 The phrase 'difficult stories' is sometimes used as code for the narratives of disadvantaged populations, which contradict – make 'difficult' – the mythic narratives promoted by the politically powerful. Exclusion is specifically examined in Chapter Four.
3 The Latin word 'mission' means 'to send' and referred to the ideo-political Jesuit vanguards sent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Spanish Crown to incorporate New World peoples into the empire. The Spanish colonial mission sites in the southwestern and western United States are archaeological evidence of that activity.
4 Statues of Captain James Cook, who navigated the Pacific on behalf of British imperialism, have been targeted and removed from public spaces in Australia, Canada, Hawaii, and New Zealand.
5 The original site proposed in the 1920 by the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association was Washington DC, but that concept was unsuccessful (Havig 1978). The ultra-nationalism of the NYC Roosevelt Memorial stands as a stark contrast to growing anti-capitalist, anti-patriotic sentiments rising in the United States in the 1930s. At the dedication ceremony in 1936, Herbert Lehman, governor of New York state, lauded the memorialization of 'undertakings which resounded to the glory and profit of our nation' (Theodore Roosevelt Memorial 1936, 29). Others were not so sanguine, as in the *New Yorker*, Lewis Mumford described the partly-built project: 'this Classic monument, so painfully, so grotesquely inappropriate, so defiantly out of the picture of the Museum itself, will never look better than it does now. Today one can swallow it as sheer ghastly fantasy, but when it is completed it will be only pompous bad taste' (Mumford 1932).
6 The American Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art were co-conceptualized along with the Central Park to advance the prestige of the New York bourgeoisie as peers to co-capitalists in London, Paris and other major cities of Europe. The lists of founding trustees illustrate this, as do civic records of plans for developing upper Manhattan (e.g. Scoby 2002, 242–246; Burrows and Wallace1999, 963–965)
7 At its inception in 2021, the History Commission comprised: Dr Tim Cole, Professor of Social History, University of Bristol (Chair); Dr Madge Dresser, Honorary Professor of History, University of Bristol; Dr Shawn Sobers, Associate Professor of Cultural Interdisciplinary Practice, University of West of England; Dr Joanna Burch-Brown, Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Bristol; Professor David Olusoga, Professor of Public History, University of Manchester; Councillor Helen Godwin, Cabinet Member for Women, Families and Homes, Bristol City Council; Councillor Estella Tincknell, Associate Professor in Film and Culture, University of West of England; Dr Edson Burton, Writer and Historian; Nigel Costley, Regional Secretary, Trades Union Congress. David Olusoga told the press that he 'fought enormously against the urge to jump on my bike and cycle down there – my home is only 10 minutes away' (*Guardian*, 1 September 2020).
8 Consider recent examples of alienation in public health. The 1 December 2021 *New York Times* reported 'deep distrust of governments and medical authorities, especially among rural and marginalized communities, may already be stalling out vaccination

drives. The legacy of Western exploitation and medical abuses during and after colonialism is weighing heavily' (Chutel and Fisher 2021). In regard the colonial dynamic in medical culture, see also: Birn 2014.

References

AAM. 2021. 'Museums and Trust, Spring 2021', Wilkening Consulting and American Alliance of Museums, Washington DC.

Adams, Geraldine Kendall. 2021. 'Changes made after Colston exhibition hit by block-booking protests', *Museums Journal*, 8 June 2021, https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2021/06/changes-made-after-colston-exhibition-hit-by-blockbooking-protests/ (accessed 9 June 2021).

Araujo, Ana Lucia. 2020. 'Toppling monuments is a global movement. And it works', 23 June, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/23/toppling-monuments-is-global-movement-it-works/ (accessed 3 December 2021).

Artforum. 2020. 'Statues of Colonial Figures Come Down in UK and Belgium', *Artforum*, 10 June, https://www.artforum.com/news/statues-of-colonial-figures-come-down-in-uk-and-belgium-83212 (accessed 13 October 2021).

BBC. 2020. 'Confederate and Columbus statues toppled by US protesters', BBC News 11 June, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53005243 (accessed 13 October 2021).

Beckert, Sven. 2014. *Empire of Cotton*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Bertocchi, Graziella and Arcangelo Dimico. 2020. 'Bitter Sugar: Slavery and the Black Family', IZA Discussion Papers, No. 13312, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Bonn.

Birn, A. E. 2014. 'Backstage: the relationship between the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Health Organization, Part I: 1940s–1960s', *Public Health*, 128 (2): 129–140.

Bishara, Hakim. 2019. 'Hundreds March from American Museum of Natural History to Metropolitan Museum for Ant-Columbus Day Tour', *Hyperallergic*, 14 October, https://hyperallergic.com/522454/anti-columbus-day-tour-2019/ (accessed 10 October 2021).

Bishara, Hakim. 2021. 'Controversial Roosevelt Monument Doused in Red Paint at American Museum of Natural History', *Hyperallergic*, 6 October, https://hyperallergic.com/682520/roosevelt-monument-doused-in-red-paint-at-american-museum-of-natural-history/ (accessed 10 October 2021).

Blakey, Michael L. 2001. 'Bioarchaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas: Its Origins and Scope', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30: 387–422.

Booyens, Irma and Christian M. Rogerson. 2019. 'Re-creating slum tourism: Perspectives from South Africa', *Urbani Izziv*, 30: 52–63.

Brault, Brigitte. 2020. 'Deux statues de Victor Schoelcher détruites le 22 mai, jour de la commémoration de l'abolition de l'esclavage en Martinique', *France TV*, 22 May, https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/martinique/deux-statues-victor-schoelcher-detruite-22-mai-jour-commemoration-abolition-esclavage-martinique-835352.html (accessed 4 December 2021).

Burrows, Edwin G. and Mike Wallace. 1999. *Gotham, a history of New York City to 1898*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Castañeda, Quetzil. 2012. 'The Neoliberal Imperative of Tourism: Rights and Legitimization in the UUNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism', *Practicing Anthropology*, 34 (3): 47–51.

Chirikure, Shadreck and Gilbert Pwiti. 2008. 'An Assessment from Case Studies in Southern Africa and Elsewhere: Community Involvement in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Management', *Current Anthropology*, 49 (3): 467–485.

Chirikure, Shadreck, Munyaradzi Manyanga, Webber Ndoro, and Gilbert Pwiti. 2010. 'Unfulfilled promises? Heritage management and community participation at some of Africa's cultural heritage sites', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16 (1–2): 30–44.

Chutel, Lynsey and Max Fisher. 2021. 'Why Only 36 Percent of South African Adults Are Vaccinated', 1 December, *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/01/world/africa/coranavirus-vaccine-hesitancy-africa.html (accessed 1 December 2021).

Courbet, Gustave. 1870. 'Bulletin officiel de la municipalité de Paris', 4 September.

Declaration on Universal Museums. 2003. 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums', signed by directors of eighteen European and American museums, https://ia601608.us.archive.org/11/items/cmapr4492/20030000%20Information%20Declaration%20on%20the%20Importance%20and%20Value%20of%20Universal%20Museums.pdf (accessed 30 December 2021).

District Six Museum. 2021. 'About District Six Museum', District Six Museum, https://www.districtsix.co.za/about-the-district-six-museum/ (accessed 23 November 2021).

Dobyns, Henry F. 1991. 'New Native World: Links Between Demographic and Cultural Changes', in David H. Thomas (ed.) *Columbian Consequences*, Vol. 3, 541–560. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Doolittle, William E. 1992. 'Agriculture in North America on the Eve of Contact: A Reassessment', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82 (3): 386–401.

Duffield, Charlie. 2020. 'The UK statues removed, pulled down or vandalised over claims they are racist, from Winston Churchill to Edward Colston', *iNews*12 June, https://inews.co.uk/news/uk-statues-removed-pulled-down-protests-racist-slave-traders-edward-colston-winston-churchill-442772 (accessed 13 October 2021).

Dunnell, Robert C. 1991. 'Methodological Impacts of Catastrophic Depopulation on American Archaeology and Ethnology', in David H. Thomas (ed.) *Columbian Consequences*, Vol. 3, 561–580. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Erickson, Hannah Novillo, Jeni O'Malley, Maggie Schmidt, and Molly Jessup. 2022. Interview with author. 20 January.

Evening Star. 1909. 'They are here – Roosevelt pelts galore', 24 August, *The Evening Star*, Washington DC, p. 2.

Fanon, Frantz. 2021 [1961]. *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press.

Gayle, Damien. 2021. 'Toppled Edward Colston statue goes on display in Bristol', *Guardian* 4 June, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/04/toppled-edward-colston-statue-display-bristol-blm-protests-exhibition (accessed 11 October 2021).

Gershon, Livia. 2021. 'Why a New Plaque Next to Oxford's Cecil Rhodes Status Is So Controversial', *Smithsonian Magazine*, 13 October, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/controversial-plaque-installed-near-cecil-rhodes-statue-180978865/ (accessed 4 May 2022).

Haupt, Gretchen, Marjorie Bequette, Megan Goeke and Choua Her. 2022. '"… Yet, it is still very White": structural and cultural impediments to DEAI change in science museums', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 37 (2): 196–213.

Hawkins, Donald E. and Shaun Mann 2007. 'The world bank's role in tourism development', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34 (2): 348–363.

Havig, Alan. 1978. 'Presidential Images, History, and Homage: Memorializing Theodore Roosevelt, 1919–1967', *American Quarterly*, 30 (4): 514–532.

Hicks, Dan. 2020. *The Brutish Museum*, London: Pluto Press.

Hirsch, Alan and Carlos Lopes. 2020. 'Post-colonial African Economic Development in Historical Perspective', *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement*, 45 (1): 31–46.

ICOM. 2022. 'Museum Watch Governance Management Project', International Council of Museums, Paris, France.

Inikori, Joseph E. 1976. 'Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade: An Assessment of Curtin and Anstey', *The Journal of African History*, 17 (2): 197–223.

Inikori, Joseph E. 1981. 'Market Structure and the Profits of the British African Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of Economic History*, 41 (4): 745–776.

Jacobs, Emily. 2020. 'Trump slams Museum of Natural History for removal of Teddy Roosevelt statue', *New York Post* 22 June, https://nypost.com/2020/06/22/trump-slams-natural-history-museum-for-removing-roosevelt-statue/ (accessed 15 May 2021).

Jenrick, Robert. 2021 'We will save Britain's statues from the woke militants who want to censor our past', *The Telegraph*, 16 January, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/01/16/will-save-britains-statues-woke-militants-want-censor-past/ (accessed 12 October 2021).

Jessup, Molly. 2022. Interview with the author, 7 February.

Johnson, Marion. 1974. 'Cotton Imperialism in West Africa', *African Affairs*, 73 (291): 178–187.

Laurie, Bruce. 1989. 'Reviewed Work(s): "The Working People" by Michael Wurm, Andrew Chamberlain and Jeff Kennedy Associates', *Journal of American History* 76 (3): 874–879.

Leonardo, Diego. 2022. Interview with the author, 3 May.

Lovejoy, Paul E. 1982. 'The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis', *The Journal of African History*, 23 (4): 473–501.

Lowell Sun. 2020. 'New arrivals, your job is to learn English', *Lowell Sun* editorial, 5 December.

Maina, Chao Tayiana and Beth Rebisz. 2022. Interview with author, 13 January.

Marx, Karl. 1969. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Selected Works v. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 394–487.

Maxwell, Hu. 1910. 'The Use and Abuse of Forests by the Virginia Indians', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 19 (2): 73–103.

Mayoral Advisory Commission. 2018. 'Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers, Report to the City of New York, January 2018', City of New York.

MBC. 2021a. 'About Us', Museum of British Colonialism, https://www.museumofbritishcolonialism.org/themuseum (accessed 7 October 2021).

MBC. 2021b. 'Projects', https://www.museumofbritishcolonialism.org (accessed 7 October 2021).

McCall, Vikki and Clive Gray. 2014. 'Museums and the "new museology": theory, practice and organisational change', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29 (1): 19–35.

McCreesh, Shawn. 2020. 'As Slaveholder Statues Come Down, America's Birthday Party Gets Weird', *Rolling Stone*, 6 July, https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/july-forth-founding-fathers-slaveholder-statue-confederate-holiday-1024710/ (accessed 13 October 2021).

McLaughlin, Eliott C. 2020. 'Honoring the unforgivable', CNN, 17 June, https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/16/us/racist-statues-controversial-monuments-in-america-robert-lee-columbus/index.html (accessed 13 October 2021).

Meena, Madan, Narain Rathwa, and Vikesh Rathwa. 2022. Interview with the author, 17 May.

Mendez, Alejandra. 2020. 'Schoelcher statues – Martinique', YouTube, 30 May, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBkiSH7HU4k (accessed 3 December 2020).

Metcalf, Barbara D. and Thomas R. Metcalf. 2002. *A Concise History of India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miners, Norman. 2001. 'Industrial Development in the Colonial Empire and the Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa 1932', *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 41: 1–24.

Mine Wars Museum. 2021a. 'About – Mission', West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, https://wvminewars.org/about (accessed 20 September 2021).

Mine Wars Museum. 2021b. 'The Battle of Blair Mountain Centennial', West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZaGwGXAMRo&t=1s (accessed 20 September 2021).

Meuni wa Muiu. 2008. '"Civilization" on Trial: The Colonial and Postcolonial State in Africa', *Journal of Third World Studies*, 25 (1): 73–93.

Mumford, Lewis. 1932. 'The Sky Line, Unconscious Architecture', *New Yorker*, 13 February, p. 46.

El Museo del Estallido Social. 2021. 'Museum', El Museo del Estallido Social, https://museodelestallidosocial.org/museo/ (accessed 4 September 2021).

Museums Association. 2018. 'Measuring Socially Engaged Practice: A Toolkit for Museums', Museums Association, https://ma-production.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/app/uploads/2020/06/18145449/19032018-measuring-socially-engaged-practice-19.pdf (accessed 22 August 2021).

Museums Association. 2021a. 'Our Story', Museums Association, https://www.museumsassociation.org/about/our-story/ (accessed 22 August 2021).

Museums Association. 2021b. 'Museums Change Lives', Museums Association, https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/museums-change-lives/ (accessed 22 August 2021).

Museum of London Docklands. 2020. 'Why was the Robert Milligan statue removed?', Museum of the Docklands, https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/application/files/2915/9827/8333/lr-misc-docks-milligan-statue.pdf (accessed 13 October 2021).

NPS. 1997. 'Matewan Historic District', National Historic Landmark Nomination, 18 February, Washington, DC: Department of the Interior/National Park Service.

New-Walker, Mackenzie. 2021. Interview with the author, 14 September.

Nicholls, J. F. and J. Taylor. 1882. *Bristol Past and Present*, v. III. Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith.

Nisbett, Melissa. 2017. 'Empowering the empowered? Slum tourism and the depoliticization of poverty', *Geoforum*, 85: 37–45.

Perttula, Timothy K. 2008. 'Caddo Agriculture on the Western Frontier of the Eastern Woodlands', *Plains Anthropologist*, 53 (205): 79–105.

Pogrebin, Robin. 2020. 'Roosevelt Statue to Be Removed From Museum of Natural History', *New York Times*, 21 June, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/arts/design/roosevelt-statue-to-be-removed-from-museum-of-natural-history.html (accessed 10 October 2021).

Pringle, Heather. 2010. 'Coal Firms to Strip-mine Historic Battlefield?', *National Geographic Magazine*, 4 June, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/100520-science-environment-blair-mountain-coal-massey-energy-nation (accessed 18 October 2021).

Rankin, Elizabeth. 2013. 'Creating/Curating Cultural Capital: Monuments and Museums for Post-Apartheid South Africa', *Humanities* 2 (2): 72–98.

Rivera, Tatiana. 2021. Interview with the author, 14 June.

Rodney, Walter. 1972. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London and Dar-es-Salaam: Bogle-L'Ouverture and Tanzania Publishing.

Rosenwald, Michael S. 2020. 'Slave-owning presidents become targets of protesters', *Washington Post*, 23 June, https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/06/23/slave-owning-presidents-become-targets-protesters/ (accessed 13 October 2021).

Sanger, Mandy. 2022. Interview with the author, 8 April.
Sanson, Anna. 2021. '"Proud to be colonized?": statue of French politician torn down in Martinique', *The Art Newspaper*, 10 March, https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/03/10/proud-to-be-colonised-statue-of-french-politician-torn-down-in-martinique (accessed 4 December 2021).
Scarry, C. Margaret and J. F. Scarry. 2005. 'Native American "Garden Agriculture" in Southeastern North America', *World Archaeology*, 37 (2): 259–274.
Scoby, David M. 2002. *Empire City*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Schildkrout, Enid and Curtis Keim (eds) 1998. *The Scramble for Art in Central Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sinclair-Maragh, Gaunette and Dogan Gursoy. 2015. 'Imperialism and tourism: The case of developing island countries', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 50: 143–158.
Smith, Tina. 2022. Interview with the author, 7 January.
Solá, Marcel. 2021. Personal communication, 11 April.
Sreekumar, T. T. and Govindan Parayil. 2002. 'Contentions and Contradictions of Tourism as Development Option: The Case of Kerala, India', *Third World Quarterly*, 23 (3): 529–548.
Stinchcomb, G. E., T. C. Messner, S. G. Driese, L. C. Nordt and R. M. Stewart. 2011. 'Pre-colonial (A.D. 1100–1600) sedimentation related to prehistoric maize agriculture and climate change in eastern North America', *Geology*, 39 (4): 363–366.
Stoler, Ann Laura. 2011. 'Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France', *Public Culture* 23 (1): 121–156.
Talbot, Ian and Gurharpal Singh. 2009. *The Partition of India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Teale, Edmund. 1945. 'The Contribution of Colonial Geological Survey to the Development of the Mineral and Other Resources of East and West Africa', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 93 (4689): 245–256.
Theodore Roosevelt Memorial. 1936. 'The New York State Theodore Roosevelt Memorial', New York: Roosevelt Memorial Commission.
UNHCR. 2000. 'The State of The World's Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action', United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1 January.
van Beek, Walter E. A. 2003. 'African Tourist Encounters: Effects of Tourism on Two West African Societies', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 73 (2): 251–289.
VWM. 2001a. 'About', Vietnamese Women's Museum, https://baotangphunu.org.vn/en/about/ (accessed 28 October 2001).
VWM. 2001b. 'The Museum's Modest Beginnings', Vietnamese Women's Museum, https://baotangphunu.org.vn/en/the-museums-modest-beginnings/ (accessed 28 October 2001).
VWM. 2001c. 'Objects Stories', Vietnamese Women's Museum, https://baotangphunu.org.vn/en/objects-stories/ (accessed 28 October 2001).
VWU. 2001. 'VWU In Brief', Vietnam Women's Union, http://vwu.vn/vwu-in-brief (accessed 28 October 2001).
We are Bristol History Commission. 2021. 'We are Bristol History Commission', https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/we-are-bristol-history-commission (accessed 11 October 2021).
Wolf, Eric R. 1982. *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley CA: University of California Press.
World Bank. 2020. 'The world by income', World Bank Group, https://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/the-world-by-income-and-region.html (accessed 2 December 2021).

6 How should we act?

In professional conferences and during less formal discussions about decolonizing museums, about repatriating looted objects, about public programming that engages historically disadvantaged communities, and in discussions about the inequalities of internal museum structures, sooner or later the question is raised: are modern museums hopelessly bound by the colonialist-capitalist social relationships through which they were created? Can museums be liberated, or are they an outdated, nineteenth-century technology, like the internal combustion engine, hazardous to humanity and the planet?

I have documented in the preceding pages many examples that demonstrate methods and forms that are engaging broad and historically disadvantaged audiences with what many would consider to be essential topics in human history and natural science. But there are also abundant examples of the inverse effort, of museum practices that continue to dominate the ideo-cultural activity of societies with collections and exhibitions that explicitly or latently reinforce social inequality and unjust socio-cultural relationships. Our individual enthusiasm for mounting a liberatory response, our collective resistance to those oppressive practices, and the considerable transformative ability of collective agency, all operate in opposition to several hundred years of that subjugatory practice and the significant conceptual weight of tradition.

Strategic objectives

Within an overarching goal of societal liberation – and the work of museums resides within that larger necessity – we can articulate several specific objectives. These objectives operate dialectically as part of the larger goal and are, like the goal itself, processes rather than endpoints. Their values as measures are both in their specificity as practices and in their generality as conditions that are definitional of that liberatory goal. First is the objective of making museums inclusive of and centered in the socio-cultural activity of the breadth of society, of non-elites, of the historically disadvantaged, and of themes and narratives that advance their social creativity. Second is the objective of enacting dialogic engagement as the guiding methodology of all museum work, especially public programming of all kinds. Third is ensuring active

DOI: 10.4324/9781003222811-7

participation in museum policy and operation of those who have been socio-culturally elided from museum representation and politically excluded by museum governance. Fourth, and foundational to the other objectives, our practice must be sweepingly anti-colonialist and reject all of its residual attitudes and understandings – of race class, sex, ancestry, gender, expropriation, extraction, and subjugation.

None of these objectives can be engaged without confronting the political and economic inequalities of society, or the global inequalities that we inherit from colonial capitalism. As much as enacting change in museums is the object of this overall strategy, it should be approached so that museums can be or become powerful instruments for actualizing a fully reflexive and creative humankind.

Cultures of the oppressed

The histories of the disadvantaged and oppressed trace the intangible, the unexpected, the sorrowful and the hopeful. Theirs is 'heritage embodied in people rather than stones' (Vergès 2017, 28–29). The liberatory museum should afford pride of place to that heritage, and to the songs and stories that evoke their past and foretell their future. In order to achieve this objective, practitioners need to re-center their work of collecting, interpreting, and exhibiting.

We know, thanks to extensive social research, that many and perhaps most museums are avoided or at least under-used by most people. Even in supposedly resource rich, imperial centers, museum use is restricted by the perceived boundaries of class, ethnic and other social divisions. Thereby the imperial museum's cultural capital is primarily transferred to and is intended to be used by those who already possess economic and political power. The curatorial and interpretive practices of elitist museums – the overall tone of scholarly condescension, the choice of themes and objects, the admission fees – are each intended as barriers to the subaltern. The intentionality of this exclusion is almost beside the point if the alternative is an inclusion that means disdaining popular priorities in favor of esoteric entitlement. The vicarious experience of elitism produces a cognitive dissonance, a revulsion that leads away from elation and toward feelings of subservience and inferiority. Elitist cultural practices enshrine privileges based in inequality, and demean or delegitimize alternatives to that authority of privilege.

Bourdieu observed that every established order – which is to say, every ruling class – 'naturalizes' its own arbitrariness. Of all the mechanisms by which that naturalization is achieved, the most important is the enforcement and reinforcement of a 'sense of limits' and the misrecognition of the arbitrariness on which power relationships – class, sex, ethnicity, etc. – are based (Bourdieu 1977, 164). In this way, the ruled acquiesce to oppression by their superiors in political matters, accept a status quo that appears immutable and eternal, and is, therefore, unchallengeable. This is a function that modern

museums were intended to perform. This, therefore, is a function that must be persistently disrupted and completely overturned by new museology.

Thus, more is required of practitioners than adjusting or modifying collecting or exhibiting policy; more is required than lowering various physical or economic barriers to access; more is needed than reordering priorities within an existing structural framework of museum work. A new and liberatory museology is not a 'liberal process' of accommodation, as Mandy Sanger points out, but rather the 'authentic approach of really inviting people to their own processes' of culture making and culture sharing (Mandy Sanger, interview with author, 2022). Genuine co-creation is dialogic, fully collaborative, and foundational to producing any liberatory outcomes. The purpose of inclusive processes is not for the sake of process, of course, but to produce entirely new sets of outcomes in and through collections, interpretations, and governance practices and guiding strategies. Those new practices and strategies may then continue to guide the museum project forward. Such transformation will not proceed along an uninterrupted or direct path. New strategies will be opposed and their operation will undoubtedly encounter detours and switchbacks, as evidence of the dialectical transformations involved. Importantly, any period of equilibrium can only be a temporary interruption, a point within an overall arc of motion that is either proceeding in a liberatory direction or is retreating from that goal. The logic of museums has never been and can never be neutral.

Consider encountering a brass plaque[1] depicting the Oba of Benin in the British Museum, one of the 'universal' European museums. The museum catalogue describes the Kingdom of Benin as 'famous for its brass castings. The finest dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' (Caygill 1999, 54). Reflecting upon the creative activity of generations of artisans and a vibrant world view taking sculptural form, we ask ourselves 'how did this come to be in London?' The realization perhaps dawns on us that in addition to its aesthetic fineness, this plaque simultaneously depicts the massively brutal, state-sponsored terrorism by which it was acquired. To the extent that these complications intersect, the moment of our encounter opens into a deeper and broader consideration of what we are actually seeing and how it is interpreted by the museum.

Consider an elder woman, speaking directly to the camera, describing her childhood experience of the intercommunal violence that swept her village when imperial Britain partitioned India and Pakistan. Her matter-of-fact narrative is interlaced with poignant self-awareness that the child survived to convey these vivid memories seven decades later, and to present an object from that experience to the museum (Amritsar Partition Museum 2021a; 2021b).

> We were on the run for two days without any food. We would hide out on rooftops during the day … On the road we found several of our acquaintances lying dead … It was raining, their bodies stank, lying wet in the rain. There was so much stink in the air, I cannot tell you how bad it

> was … There was a burnt house in front of us, and we children decided to play there and see what was inside. Children are immature like that … Everything was strewn about – everyone started picking up things. I found two *pataris*, one big and one small, and one *sandooki* which had fallen on the floor, open … These are things that I stole from the house at that time. I used to keep my dolls in this until I was in 8th class. Then, when I got married, I brought it with me. My sisters each took one *patari* from me as gifts, but I kept this one safely for myself.
>
> (Sudershana Kumari, interview, Amristar Petition Museum, ca 2021)

Consider the frank admission of two young women in Fort-de-France who participated in toppling the statue of a notorious colonizer,

> We, the young people of Martinique, are sick and tired of being surrounded by symbols that insult us. We were not the first to attack these symbols. Those before us have tried in vain to get rid of them, and today we have succeeded. We are not the only ones who are sick and tired of being surrounded by symbols that insult us. For years many organizations and individuals have gone to their local mayors, have done all they can to make it known that we must get rid of those statues. What is a statue? It is stating that this is someone who we admire for the impact he or she has had in the course of our history. To be clear, these statues insult us … so today we say to the mayors that we have had enough.
>
> (recording attributed to Alejandra Mendez, YouTube, May 2020)

Consider the recounting of one man's recollections about work in a textile factory in Lowell, Massachusetts in the 1930s.

> In 1938, at the age of nineteen. I was working in the dye house at the Merrimack Manufacturing Company. The dye house is what is commonly known as the color room where the cloth is dyed after it is woven and finished upstairs. I had a partner working next to me and we used to start work at seven in the morning. From seven till nine in the morning, you couldn't see one or two feet beyond you because of the steam that was generated as you started to work. That steam would sort of fade away around nine or ten o'clock.
>
> One morning as the steam evaporated, I looked for my partner, and he was lying on the floor from a heart attack. The man had seven children and was sixty five years old…. I went to his assistance, and my boss immediately came forward and instructed me to get back to my machine. He would not let me administer aid to a man who was at that moment dying. It was at least a half hour before the nurse came down with the doctor who then declared the man dead. From that moment on, I'd made

> up my mind that the only way we workers could elevate our standard of living was to organize collectively into a union.
>
> (James Ellis, interview with Lowell National Historical Park, Blewett 1990)

Consider the recollection by an elder man of his role in the anti-colonial struggle in Kenya in the 1950s.

> You are only coming to remind us when you come to interview. We are happy, we are happy, particularly, we people, we want to give you that information, because the information you have is wrong. There is nowhere you can pick information other than from a Mau Mau freedom fighter. Others are stories that do not, at any point, meet what we did or what we believed in. No. Sometimes people write our stories in the universities, and sometimes we look at what he has said, and we think 'he is a professor. What did he learn in his university? Foolishness, or something?' Because he says something – nothing about our struggle. He does not seek information, he just thinks, and says 'Mau Mau ran in the forest.' Ran in the forest. No, we did not run in the forest. We were strategizing our actions. You see? So that we can come out with a victory. And that is what has happened, even in Europe. Everywhere people have fought for their freedom. That is the thing they always do.
>
> (Gitu wa Kehengeri, interview with Olivia Windham Stewart and Susan Kibaara, Museum of British Colonialism, August 2018)

Consider this letter from an American woman, sent to the postmaster of Da Nang, Viet Nam, on the occasion of War Invalids and Martyrs Day in 1994, and now displayed in the Vietnamese Women's Museum:

> Dear Sirs, after the Viet Nam War, a young service man brought home to the United States these earrings as a gift for his mother. I am now returning them and asking forgiveness, as I believe they were made from wedding rings of dead Vietnamese soldiers. So sad! I'm so sorry! I also believe they brought grief – pain & bad luck – to the young service man, as he has had a terrible life – all these years. Perhaps – if you will bury them for me in your soil – he will make amends and bring peace to all, in the name of god our father. Thanking you, I am – the service man's from the U.S. Navy – mother. Cecilia M. Goto, Chicago, IL.
>
> (Bảo tàng Phụ nữ Việt Nam 2020)

These are ordinary but also exceptional stories, among the millions of other narratives, that are only rarely encountered as cultural heritage or in history museums. As Verges observed, the narratives of the oppressed are 'bequeathed in words rather than palaces … in words, texts and music rather than monuments' (Vergès 2014, 28). This is especially so regarding the agency of the

Figure 6.1 Bảo tàng Phụ nữ Việt Nam, Vietnamese Women's Museum, Hanoi
Source: Photo by Aumusee, used in accordance with Creative Commons license 3.0.

subaltern and their heritage of resistance to oppression. Foregrounding that marginalized heritage in museum collections and exhibitions is very much a liberatory act.

Cognitive instrumentality

Museums *do* perform an instrumental socio-cultural role. The essential question is: *for whom?* The forward direction for liberatory practice should be to divert or repurpose the service of that instrument.

Symbolic culture signs both our past and our future, our experience and our expectation. Art and artifacts are also specific acts and thoughts, and thereby depict specific as well as the general potentials of humanity. We experience awe, inspiration, and catharsis from our interaction with documents, objects, writing, speech, images, smells, textures, and sounds. Our emotional reaction is intricately tied to remembrance, and our social engagement within an exhibition reminds us of shared or distinguishing affinities – who 'we' actually are or are not. Conventional museum theory describes affective and cognitive outcomes of a 'visitor experience' by distinguishing an emotional/perceptual from a presumed rational response. A dialogical museum theory considers the two responses – perceptual and conceptual – as dialectically connected. Our internalized social experiences underlie 'gut feelings' as well as our more reflexive responses. Our 'spontaneous' attitudes and 'first impressions' draw upon and form new internalized bases for rationalization and contemplation.

Considered in that way, the importance of the physical experience of art, architecture, material culture, and scientific experiment in a museum is purposely definitional. Indeed, popular literature is peppered with narratives recounting memorable museum experiences: a paleontologist's childhood memory of an articulated skeleton, a novelist's conjuring of metaphors gleaned from an ethnographic display, an artist's inspirational encounter with the art of another civilization.[2] At their most effective, museum exhibitions convey logics in symbols that reinforce or challenge our understanding and prompt us to take conceptual leaps. Museums are highly social. Our experience of them is social. Dialogic visits can be *germinal* of new ways of understanding and not simply additive to what we think we already know.

Museums are instrumental not only in sharing understandings of supposed cultural facts; they are not only an experience of one's first or epiphanic encounter with a work of art, a biological specimen, or a survey of world culture. A museum experience can plant and germinate repressive and fundamentally unjust understandings. It can constrain perception and cognition in a recurrent circle that recaps dominant ideologies.

That potential underscores the strategic importance of enabling truly dialogic activity that enables liberatory leaps in how we perceive and rationalize what we may perceive in the future. The lever for those leaps is most effectively situated at the intersection between dialogic interpretive process and social participation. The determination of knowledge from social practice also challenges the authority of museums as specialized bastions of genius. The concept of dialogic cognition simultaneously centers human intention and creativity in our collaborations and collectivity, and subverts exclusionary concepts of innate ability or ineptitude. It challenges the assumption that knowledge is or should be cultural capital or intellectual private property.

Bakhtin observed that 'every utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances' (Bakhtin 1986, 69). Likewise, museums are constructors and performers of interpretive moments within continuums produced by and accomplished as dialogue. Those who use museums – who experience exhibitions or public programs – bring with them their own histories, aspirations, and narrative continuums – complex but organized chains of dialogue – originating outside the museum. Those discussions and interpretations are theatres of conformity and conflict, consensus and debate. They arise as discursive contradictions, reflecting the quite real, lived contradictions by which material culture is produced, owned, aggregated, and displayed. Objects – art, artifacts, material culture, specimens – have social histories; they are not simply things-in-themselves. Museums are a nexus of practices and ideologies as encoded in art and material culture; they are created by and for social relationships.

Socially-engaged instrumentality

Dialogic engagement is thereby more than an interpretive methodology or an epistemology in the academic sense of the term. Dialogic processes describe

how a liberatory project is created with and by 'ordinary' people, requiring their engagement not simply as 'audience' or 'visitor' but as the central authors of the project. That authority extends back in time through histories and material culture and extends forward in practice that elevates subaltern and other disadvantaged histories, symbolisms, and material cultures, as the examples of the society that the museum intends to feature. Liberatory projects solicit and enact the guiding critiques made by those subaltern individuals and groups.

This is seen in projects that are centered in the oral histories of everyday events and of those disadvantaged by societal inequalities, in the material culture of everyday life, in projects that invite and incorporate comment from museum outsiders, and in projects that are co-created with those who are not museum specialists. Projects that feature oral histories, for example, tend to follow those narratives inductively to center the informant and their life rather than deductively prove a curatorial thesis. Projects that depend upon direct visitor comment quite obviously cannot predict the content of that commentary and so further test the inclusiveness of that co-curation.

Many of the museum projects described earlier, such as District Six Museum, Vaacha, West Virgina Mine Wars Museum, Museo del Estallido Social, and Museum of British Colonialism, demonstrate some or many aspects of such broad social engagement. They are projects aligned with social forces and movements that challenge museum orthodoxies. Forms of inclusive engagement are often less orderly than those that follow a procedural check list. Non-specialists are not often aware of 'best practices' that academically trained insiders assume to be normative, and sometimes challenge those practices in fundamental ways. Given the exclusionary genesis of museology, it seems reasonable to expect that some conventional practices are not in fact 'best' fitted to liberatory work, or even useful at all. Moreover, what specialists assume to be important or procedurally valuable is also socio-culturally formed, including by the history of colonialism.

The more participatory the process, the less orderly and deferential to insiders it may become. But authentic engagement is a process of discovery for practitioners and users alike. The essential features of equity and inclusion require us to test our assumptions via candid reflection, self-awareness, discussion, and debate.

Case in point: British Petroleum and the British Museum

In 2012, activist artists joined together to protest the artwashing of the British Petroleum corporation via their sponsorships of arts and cultural organizations in London. The theatrical protest group took the name 'BP or Not BP?' as a Shakespearean pun aimed at the Royal Shakespeare Company, but then expanded their activities as part of the Art Not Oil coalition to include the British Museum, the Science Museum, and other museums. Their forays into public museum spaces are performative, and intended 'to erode the power of

Figure 6.2 BP or Not BP? activist interpreting colonialism in the British Museum
Source: Photo by Ron Fassbender, used with permission.

fossil fuel companies (whose) sponsorship of institutions like the British Museum is a core part of preserving their social license to operate' (A History of BP in 10 Objects 2022). The group has brought its theatrical protest into museums, engaging with visitors and museum staff, in a form of curation and interpretation from without (BP or Not BP? 2022). Some of these activists have described their protests as the 'ethical exercise in solidarity' (Serifini and Gerrard 2019, 78), but it has also become a critical analysis of museums as contested sites.

> The fact that we were standing there, challenging BP, in a space where BP was trying to present a different vision of itself in this space that BP has essentially tried to purchase for its own kind of PR, publicity, for us to take a stand against that, and say, 'no, we are not allowing you to use this overwhelmingly publicly funded space to put out your kind of misleading corporate messaging, we're going to take it back, and we're going to use it as a space to instead tell the truth about BP,' that got a lot of attention.
>
> It got a lot of interest, and also we were rapidly learning a few other really important things that then made us focus on the British Museum. One was just how much BP was using the Museum more than just a space for (private events) but also as a space where it was actively building soft power, getting access to elites and actually having some kind of influence over curatorial decisions, in some respects, in order to align itself with exhibitions that would further BP's geopolitical interests.

Some clear examples of that, that we've learned about over that period (are) in 2015 BP sponsored an exhibition of Indigenous artifacts from Australia, just at a moment when it was facing, when the company was facing major backlash in Australia for its plans to drill off-shore. It was facing major opposition, particularly from Indigenous groups who were challenging it. BP was planning to drill in the great Australian bight, in a whale nursery, in waters that were sacred to the local Indigenous people. It was facing major push back to that. And so, sponsoring an exhibition of Indigenous Australian arts was a real opportunity for BP to say 'look, we're great supporters of Indigenous culture and art' and present that different face, at that moment when that was very politically valuable to do. (…) Whenever BP sponsors one of these big exhibitions, it throws a big launch party where it gets to invite, in this case the Australian ambassador and various officials from the country, and do all this schmoozing.

And then an even more egregious example was later in 2015, when BP sponsored a two-day Days of the Dead event at the British Museum in partnership with the Mexican government, again at a moment when BP was actively bidding for new offshore drilling licenses in Mexico. So, this was at the very moment that BP really wanted opportunities to schmooze with Mexican officials. It got to co-fund this exhibition of Mexican culture, and also at the very moment when the Mexican government at that time was under huge international scrutiny for its human rights record, the Mexican government was also allowed to present a positive face in this grand cultural setting. And again, it was this really egregious example of BP using this space as so much more than just a logo on a wall, but an active space in which BP can pursue and push forward it's political interests and get access to more oil and gas.

We challenged all those things, and we challenged them by working together, in the first case with Indigenous Australian activists, including those who had objects in the exhibition. And this is where, again we were beginning to join some of these dots, because these were objects that had been both stolen through colonialism and that those Indigenous communities wanted back, that were then put in an exhibition that had a BP logo on it, again without permission or the knowledge of those communities.

We were working actively together with activists, including Rodney Kelly who is the direct descendant of the original owner of the Gweagal Shield, which is one of the most contested items in the British Museum, that was violently taken by James Cook at the point of first contact. And then, for the Mexican Days of the Dead, we worked together with Mexican activists and made that action both about BP sponsorship and also about Mexican government corruption and the disappearance of those who have spoken out about the Mexican government, and we created a performance event in partnership with Mexican activists.

This is, as I say, one reason why the British Museum became such a big focus for us, because of the way BP was using this space so cynically, and

> it seemed to be such an important space for BP to be building soft power and getting access. But also, because we were rapidly learning so much more about these incredible interconnections between the kind of British colonialism that put all those objects in the Museum in the first place, the way those objects are presented in the Museum today, and the modern day colonialism of BP and its activities. How deeply intertwined these things were! And us coming into the museum and standing in that space, you know we were coming in with critical eyes to begin with, that was the reason for coming, but then to also come and be taught so much by working together in partnership with those activists from countries that were most impacted by European colonialism, and to see the museum through their eyes, to hear their stories, and to build an understanding of what those objects, in those displays, with that language, actually means, even before you then stick a BP logo on it, made us rapidly realize that the British Museum is a space where we needed to be very active, to join these dots and challenge all these things.
>
> (Danny Chivers, interview with the author, 8 June 2022)

These experiences illustrate several points at which social forces intersect in museum practice, and most dramatically via public critique and re-curation as active interventions. These interventions have been dialectically transformative, challenging the thinking and practices of other museum visitors and museum staff, and challenging the BP or Not BP? activists to reconsider how an ethic of environmental justice fits within the larger matrix of colonialist social relationships that are symbolically expressed in a museum.

Foundational challenges

In the imperial museums, objects are possessions, signifiers of prestige and privilege, loot, obtained through violent dispossession, forcibly taken, illicitly obtained. As Hicks (2020, 1–17) points out, that violence and cultural expropriation is recapitulated every day that the imperial museum opens its doors. To paraphrase the iconoclasts of Fort-de-France, Martinique, the symbols and monuments of imperialism insult – are injurious to – our understandings of liberation and equality.

A liberatory museum is therefore actively engaged in its opposition to material and ideological dispossession and insult; it is partisan. In a liberatory practice, objects are simultaneously unique symbolisms and collective reminders of human experiences, potentials, and expectations. This presupposes not only that objects are not collected illicitly or under false pretenses, but that they are collected and displayed via a process of socially responsive and collaborative decision making. Moreover, it means that the museum becomes a forum for sharing the logic of symbols, for reinforcing or challenging world views, for the advocacy of inclusive social practice. The dialogic museum will thereby promote societal liberation and the elimination of societal inequalities.

The liberatory museum necessarily positions itself in opposition to the colonialist museum. It cannot avoid that tension. It cannot ignore that oppositional struggle. The two social forces cannot exist in perpetual equilibrium; the future is either one or the other.

BP or Not BP? activists have both shown and learned that it is not just energy technologies that threaten the global environment, and that a connecting thread runs through natural resource extraction, colonial capitalism, and the dispossession of indigenous civilizations throughout Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific. How activists in London understand their own agency is complicated by the social relationships that comprise an imperial city, but activists are disrupting those relationships by acting upon some the core forms of neo-colonialist power. Their claim to the museum space is thereby trebly mediational: reinterpreting objects and exhibitions, reinterpreting the social relationships manifested in governance and sponsorship, and explicitly engaging the ideologies built around those relationships. Protests-as-mediation dialogically engage visitors and a wider public discussion regarding the functions of the British Museum and possibly all museums.

The compartmentalized order

As Fanon observed, 'the colonial world is a compartmentalized world' (Fanon 1961, 3), and nowhere is that compartmentalization more explicitly displayed than in museums. Most Euro-American museums founded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are manifestations of property ownership – individual, joint-stock, governmental – and of staking material claims to world heritage. In the example of the British Museum, it quite clearly implies through the logic of its exhibition galleries that the modern United Kingdom is rooted in classical Greece and Rome. Much of its Greek and Roman collections have been obtained as a by-product of British imperial influence in the Mediterranean and Asia. The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art also assigns pride of place to its exhibits of Greek, Roman, and other antiquities, many of which are undocumented, of disputed provenance, and perhaps looted (Eakin and Kennedy 2005; Mashberg 2021; Velie 2022). For the founders and current governance of those museums, the scholarly processes of anthropology, archaeology, aesthetics, history, biology and geology, were and are still about taxonomies; identifying and sorting rare and emblematic treasures. The processes of accumulation, through direct or indirect dispossession by colonial and neo-colonial capitalism, are considered external to those naming processes. The object identified is considered to be the type specimen, the thing-in-itself, decontextualized or recontextualized by connoisseurs and experts. Those museums are patrimonial vaults, constructed upon and to be secure amidst societal inequalities. When Napoleon's armies marched through Europe, their ranks included specialists directed to seek out antiquities and art for removal to Paris and the Musée du Louvre. During the Bourbon restoration, a congress of European monarchies proceeded to redivide that same material heritage

amongst themselves (MacGregor and Hill 2022; Quynn 1945). Indeed, material heritage expropriation to the metropoles was widespread throughout the period of territorial colonialism and it continues in the contemporary period of financial and industrial neo-colonialism.

The grafting of modern northern European civilization onto millennia-old Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian art, architecture, beliefs, and material culture is special pleading for a respectable ancestry that traces back through the Italian Renaissance. That same objective is evident in the subject matter of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century academic painting and sculpture, and in the classical forms adopted for museum architecture itself. The major and national European and American museums are thereby kept closely under the direction of carefully selected insiders, who are wealthy themselves,[3] who define the physical and metaphorical boundaries around objects, and who interpret assemblages for the public as the material of European civilization. The ideological conclusion strategically serves the political and the economic status quo.

Universal museums are also cultural tribute, paid to the elites of London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, and so on. Claims to universality only surfaced defensively in the later twentieth century, as a post-modern justification of those imperial expropriations – grandiosely pretending to have rescued or salvaged world material culture and only coincidentally furthering the global dominance of colonial-capitalism. That defense is expressed in the 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums,' issued in 2003 by 18 of those organizations, which argued that 'objects and monumental works that were installed decades and even centuries ago in museums throughout Europe and America were acquired under conditions that are not comparable with current ones' (Cleveland Museum of Art 2003).[4] The signatories conceived their statement as a joint pledge against repatriating collections, but it reads as an appeal by the accused that the statute of limitations has expired on the crimes for which they are accused.

Instead of these 'universal' museums, Dan Hicks has eloquently argued, 'the world needs anthropology museums where nothing has been stolen' (Hicks 2020, 239). Quite evidently, that will not come about by using the master's tools (Lorde 2020). For example, in the wake of anti-colonial and national liberation movements of the mid-twentieth century, a major international treaty – UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property – was written to protect antiquities and national heritage. It has been ratified or accepted by 127 member states, but not without various amendments exempting colonialist and colonial-settler states signatories (UNESCO 1970). The resulting effectiveness of that treaty is evident in the ongoing illicit market in cultural property, estimated at US$10 billion annually, and which continues to pose an existential threat to cultural heritage in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (UNESCO 2020).

As shown by some of the activist interventions described in this book, anti-colonialism also has a history of practice within the former colonies and within the imperial countries, inspired by popular movements of the oppressed and outraged by the destruction of world heritage. In both the imperial centers and at the loci of neo-colonial extractions, the more effective the intervention, the more sharply it is contested. Earlier I described the efforts to decolonize collections and exhibitions in New York and London, primarily from without. But museum practitioners are also part of this resistance, enabling inclusive and co-creative exhibitions and programs, facilitating repatriation, advocating policy changes, and in other ways. The movement to disentangle London museums from the fossil fuels industrial sector, and the repatriation demands voiced from outside and within prominent museums in Europe and America tie directly back to the oppositional work of insiders as well as to the social forces surrounding those institutions. Museum practitioners are dialectically interactive with those broader social forces. The period of the 1960s and 1970s was a time of widespread activism against colonialism and social inequality throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas – and the emergence of a wave of 'new museology.' Further mass movements opposing global economic and political inequality emerged in the later 1990s, and re-emerged in the opening decades of the twenty-first century – also manifesting among museum practitioners. All of these political and ideological currents have influenced museum work.

For much of the last two centuries, vocal and sometimes militant oppositions to social inequalities have emerged within and among intellectuals, urban workers, rural agriculturalists, and others dispossessed by global capital. Although sometimes united in their activities, those oppositions are multivocal and ideologically diverse. Thus, oppositional actors also sometimes contend with and contradict each other. Indeed, capital has long learned to leverage contradictions internal to its opponents in order to divert or diffuse their effective action. Within the sectors devoted to heritage and museum work, important contradictions exist between the specialists who direct and enact that work and the more numerous users or societal inheritors of that art and material culture. Museum specialists, like other academics and intellectual professionals, are often quite isolated from the lived experiences of the 'ordinary' people of their societies. Each of us is also, mainly for reasons of geography and language, separated from the lived experiences of the vast majority of humanity. These contradictions have a profound effect in how we think and work and how we interpret the thinking and activities of others in our societies. The destruction of or alienation of art and material culture is harm done to living persons and entire societies, but the disasters of capital are not simply cases of elite mendacity and gross indifference toward those whose labor they exploit and lives they destroy. A frequent and spontaneous reaction of the engaged museum practitioner to specific harms is empathic, but those emotional responses do not always go to root causes. However necessary and well-intentioned, empathy is not enough.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, 500 years since the first enslaved Africans were landed in North America, we have seen a rebirth of anti-racist activism and public debate in the United States, Britain, and other European neo-colonial centers. This upsurge of righteous protest very rapidly challenged and redefined public discourse in those societies, in very positive and also unanticipated ways. But it would be a profound mistake to consider the racism prevalent in those societies to be a repairable defect separate from the other features of colonial capital regimes. The Afro-Caribbean historian Eric Williams argued that slavery under capitalism was not born of racism, but rather that racism is the consequence of unfree labor, particularly in the western hemisphere (Williams 1944, 7). Unfree labor has historically been a necessary component of global capitalism. To eliminate racism as an ideology, society must reshape itself to eliminate the underlying economic and political structures for which racism has been presented as justification. Empathy in itself is not sufficiently oppositional to those structures. The legacies of racist ideology are persistent and have taken on lives of their own. They manifest daily in discussions of societies divided into populations of 'white' and non-'white' persons, which reduces cultural diversity to skin tone and perpetuates an ideological concept created by European colonialism. Seven centuries of ethnocentric rapacity and the physical oppression of the human objects of that rapacity have produced a range of mental frameworks that attempt to justify it. Those ideological frames do indeed promote 'alternate facts.'[5] Self-identified 'white supremacists' not only think of themselves as superior to all 'others,' they act upon that thinking with murderous results. As much as one might try to reconcile historically oppositional social forces and the persons who comprise those forces, the reality is that those contradictions are foundational to and reproduced by class-divided and particularly capitalist societies. This presents us with a conundrum: can exclusionary ideas and actions be overcome from within a capitalist society? And if not, are we relegated to coexist within such a society, or are there alternatives?

Valorization of inequality

As described earlier, universal museums have often valorized rapacity by displaying objects looted during specific extractive events, or that were collected under duress, or acquired with the proceeds of exploitative activity. As we also see, there is a figurative line representing policy and practice which universal museums adamantly refuse to cross. Thus, an essential contradiction exists.

Social movements to decolonize museum collections by repatriating objects obtained illicitly or by force are thereby oppositional social forces moving to resolve that essential contradiction. Likewise, so are social movements to interpret or reinterpret so that dispossessed and subaltern voices are accurately and fully present in museums. The demand that Black Lives Matter carries with it an analysis of why and how Black lives have historically not mattered in so-called public discourse, in social relationships, and in terms of political

power. Those analyses are important in themselves and in terms of how they change the terms of public discourse. Disrupting heretofore normative discourse brings with it possibilities for changing the social relations upon which that discourse is predicated, precisely because of the dialectical relationship between how we act and how we think. This is a key area of agency for museum practitioners.

> I don't know what BP or not BP? as a group may do (going forward), and whether that work would continue at the British Museum, but I'm sure that many of the people involved would want to continue that work, because it's become increasingly clear just how important the stories that our culture institutions tell – about our country, and our history, and our world – are to our understanding of the past and of the decisions we make now. And seeing the British role in the world, how we see that and what we think should be, is incredibly important. And how you engage with that question depends a lot on what you think Britain's role in the world has been up until this point.
>
> (Danny Chivers, interview with the author, 8 June 2022)

The ideologies promulgated by museums have consequences. Proof of that assertion is given in the counter-discourses that pose 'reasonable' alternatives to liberatory practice. Just as liberatory social practices engender liberatory practitioners, colonialist social practices engender colonialist practitioners. As we've seen repeatedly and in recent years, colonialism is defended most by those whose self-interests align with its processes of expropriation and dispossession. Thus, movements to decolonize museums have typically been met with 'reasoned' objections, followed by explicit refusal, and then attacked using the juridical tools of political control. Objections to removing a monument to white supremacy at the American Museum of Natural History or to the British Museum's theft of the Parthenon marbles are cases in point. The American Museum of Natural History employed every means at its disposal to defend that statue of Roosevelt, and even after conceding its removal, doubled down in defense of Roosevelt the imperialist. The British Museum has repeatedly refused to entertain any notion of repatriation to source communities, citing its own imperial cosmopolitanism as its defense. These and other symbols of colonialism carry foundational interpretive messages that reproduce privilege and are thereby essential to it. And as noted by those protesting British Petroleum's presence in British cultural organizations, each interpretive instance touches many other compartmentalized narratives.

Colonialism has persisted over hundreds of years, and scores of generations, in an extensive process of dispossession, extraction, and erasure. The decolonizing activism required of museum practitioners can only ultimately succeed if it becomes sustained opposition. It is that ongoing oppositional critique and practice, which is co-created and shared across time and space, that Fanon set against 'aesthetic forms of respect for the status quo (which) instill in the exploited a mood of submission and inhibition' (Fanon 1961, 3–4). Fanon's

critique builds on Gramsci's earlier examination of the ideological hegemony of capitalism appearing as the '"spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population' (Gramsci 1971, 12) to the ruling capitalists, and contributes to Bourdieu's later theory of *habitus* as 'systems of durable transposable dispositions' that are internalized as taken-for-granted or 'second nature' acts and assumptions (Bourdieu 1977, 72).

Following the path of this theoretical arc, we can locate the repatriation of expropriated art and material culture as well as see that repatriation by itself is not the end point of the decolonizing process. Fanon proposed that the colonized must replace the colonizers, but also observed that many of his contemporaries – Fanon lived and was active in the anti-French colonial, national liberation struggle in Algeria – had only succeeded in replacing direct colonial rule with an indirect form administered by a 'national bourgeoisie' who then continued to exploit the indigenous peasants and workers whose struggle had, in the first place, expelled the colonists (Fanon 1961, 98–103). In a similar vein, Gramsci's critique of the intelligentsia of early twentieth-century Europe examined how they performed as mediators but were also '"mediated" by the whole fabric of society and by the complex superstructures of which the intellectuals are, precisely, the "functionaries"' whose key function was – and is – to mediate mass consent so that it appeared spontaneous and natural (Gramsci 1971, 12–13). Using these lenses, the supporting role of museums is pulled into focus – not as conveyors of 'universal' truths about aesthetics, history, or science, but as facilitators for an ideological status quo. Even if all the stolen loot is repatriated and the remaining objects are obtained consensually, those collections and exhibitions will continue to serve the process of manufacturing consent for the unequal status quo unless that process is disrupted.

Our cultural projects build upon the materiality at hand and by joining with existing practices. We confront the colonial past not simply as history, but as the precursor of our present; inequality and injustice continue, all around us, in life-taking materiality. Those legacies of colonialism, those taken-for-granteds, must be disrupted to allow for new liberatory means and methods. We cannot simply take hold of the existing social structures and somehow compel them to produce different results. We need to make a complete break, a rupture with oppressive and unequal social relationships and their respective ways of thinking.

Cultural repertoires

In the course of achieving their objectives, liberatory projects complicate our understanding of the social and natural worlds. Counteracting the 'just so stories' that depict the status quo as the best of all possible worlds, critical examinations pull back the ideological shrouds and dispel the foggy appeals to class, sex, and ethnic privilege that are the bases of elitist and imperial narratives. This complicating process does more than speak truth or appeal to power.

Rather, the objective is to facilitate the collective agency of those whose creative energy has long been expropriated, whose life experiences have been debased or ignored, and whose participation now moves from background to foreground. In the course of that facilitation – as illustrated in many of the examples given earlier – dialogic public engagement does more than foreground the creative many. It provides foundations for conceptual breaks and cognitive leaps – and thereby the qualitative transformation of our knowledge and our ability to act upon it.

Through these processes of resistance, subversion, and transformation, practitioners also change themselves. We make leaps in our conceptualizations of the possible. We internalize those leaps. The reality of our present was nearly always once an unimaginable future.

For many decades, activists and practitioners in the imperial centers have risen to challenge specific museums to change organizational behaviors that had been fundamental practices. Such challenges have included disengaging the organization from odious corporate stakeholders (Blackwater/Xe/Academi, British Petroleum, Philip Morris, Safariland), enacting social change via interpretive strategies of social justice, promoting sub-altern narratives, repatriating illicitly acquired objects, including and representing women, including and representing non-European cultural histories, and engaging historically disadvantaged users. Specific instances of this activism are important to share and have received thoughtful attention in recent years (Janes and Sandell 2019; Message 2014; Robertson 2019).

The new museology discussions of museums as agents of societal forces, rather than neutral repositories or libraries of objects, have engendered a range of practical and theoretical responses that merit attention. Practical responses range from conferences and workshops that prescribe methods for correcting long-standing deficiencies to raucous and dramatic protests demanding immediate change to specific policies and programs. With important exceptions, the theoretical response in the imperial centers has been largely circumspect, despite but perhaps also owing to, their position within the fundamental economic and political asymmetries of those societies. Outside the imperial centers, more radical theoretical discussions sooner or later call into question not only specific policies and practices, but the viability of the museum concept itself.

The Anglophone museum sectors are especially prone to defining 'best practices' by which existing deficiencies are mitigated through procedures and standards acceptable to those in authority. Such best practices are dutifully communicated throughout the museum sector, from one manager to the next. Sociologists Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, writing at the dawn of neoliberal socio-economics, described this structural phenomenon as 'institutional isomorphism,' the duplicative 'processes that make organizations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient' (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 147). That phenomenon corresponds well with Bourdieu's theory of 'structuring structures' (Bourdieu 1977, 72), and with Weber's concept of social

superstructures (Weber 1952). DiMaggio and Powell's 'institutional isomorphism' succinctly describes many of the responses by Euro-American museums to demands for social justice, equity, inclusion, and access. Consultants are hired, committees are formed, studies are written, and forward plans are issued. Some internal and external stakeholders are enthused by the prospect of change, however incremental. 'Change' becomes a check-list, 'reasonable' objectives are defined, and activity is directed to remain safely within those bounds. Governance congratulates itself for its successful response and then declares any further demand for change as unreasonable.

We have seen similar normalizations within the museum sector. For example, decades after the enactment of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the United States, major museums still hold many thousands of sets of human remains and related grave goods in their collections (Redman 2016). During the months that this book was written, several large museums – Glasgow Museums, Smithsonian Museum of African Art, New York Metropolitan Museum of Art – and the governments of France, Germany, and the Netherlands, have returned or pledged to return artifacts looted from Benin or taken in other colonial thefts, but hardly all of it (Liu 2022). The Smithsonian Institution's 'Shared Stewardship and Ethical Returns Policy' delegates repatriation to its individual museums, which 'may' deaccession or enter into 'shared stewardship agreements' with source communities, but reiterates that it has 'legal custody of collections it holds in trust for the benefit of the public' (Smithsonian Institution 2022). Likewise, while activists have succeeded in dissuading some cultural organizations from collaborating with specific actors in the fossil fuel industry, the engagement by museums with the global climate emergency is at best uneven because of the participation of energy corporations, especially in the most prestigious organizations (Durrant 2022).

This points to the need for a multi-dimensional strategy for liberatory practice, that includes external and internal participants, that questions existing practices and is co-creative of new practices. Liberatory practice needs to challenge, subvert, and rupture with traditional museum practice and museology.

The master's house

What does this mean for museums? Those masters' houses were built to privilege an extractive, Eurocentric narrative, and to mediate that privilege and inequality, to convey to the wider society – indeed the global community – the understanding of colonial capitalism as a shared and normative ideological and socio-cultural goal. The various specialties and specialist roles within museums have been established to implement those original objectives. Those processes are not only well-entrenched in the major museums – that is, museums that are perceived as organs of dominant cultural models – but are dutifully taught as the 'best practices' to everyone studying a university course,

or participating in the continuing education sessions conducted by museums and by professional societies. The system is designed to reproduce itself *ad infinitum*, albeit attenuated by the perturbations of social conflict, so that its view of itself is also perceived as normative and predictive of who may seek museum work or take a university credential.

Museum practitioners of the future are germinating within the structures of existing practice. We have seen how some new processes emerge, within and surrounded by systems of domination and oppression. My argument here is not that we retreat to a sanctuary in which to gather strength or articulate new methodologies. We cannot conjure processes or technologies that are completely free of those traditional systems, and the immediate objectives of abolishing this or that form or this or that practice should not be misinterpreted as the goal. Our challenge is to engage with and imagine new social relationships and processes that do not simply attenuate existing relationships but are transformational, so that oppressive relationships are so widely deprecated they can never reassert themselves. To accomplish that, we need to go to the roots – which is, after all, the meaning of 'radical' – and weed out those legacies, which will otherwise choke out everything that challenges their domination.

Simply put, the liberatory museum must be cognizant of itself as a social force, and it will not come about, much less endure, apart from the wider and deeper social movements that are its *raison d'être*, its motivation. Liberatory museum practice is therefore a self-aware and socially engaged practice. The traditional specialisms must be broken down. The historically disadvantaged must be empowered as guiding participants. The suppressed narratives must be conveyed. The specimens and artifacts must be reassessed, recontextualized, and ideologically or materially repatriated. The era of 'universal' colonialist collections curated by a select few must be closed out, but the 'participatory museum' must be something more than a place where outsiders can become insiders.

Is that possible?

There is necessarily a dialectical relationship between what we can imagine and what we are able to achieve; what is possible and what is necessary. The sociocultural activities that produce what we often describe as 'results' are not a series of finite tasks – those are the moments we recognize in time – but rather are phases within ongoing, transformative processes. Societies are continually metamorphosing. Human cognition is not a fixed state. We transform ourselves, each other, and our knowledge of the world as we interact. We can transform museum practice only by engaging with it as it is, but we must challenge each other to imagine what it can be, and to make liberatory practice happen.

Liberation is more than the negation of oppression. A liberatory museum must be more than a space devoid of looted objects or other blatant evidence

of social inequality. It should be an active, collective agent for equality and social justice, for the narratives of the 'ordinary' and historically disadvantaged, for a future society that is not cleaved by class, race, sex, gender, ability, ancestry, but one in which everyone may fully participate. This is one direction that many have been striving for, in fits and starts, through experiment and failure, for much of the modern period. It is a path that has been blocked by the old order, in all of its myriad forms, including its museums, but not always or everywhere successfully. The liberatory urge is tenacious.

It is not possible to predict every step required to get to liberation, but liberation is also not possible without taking those steps. The projects described in the preceding chapters are not the only instances of liberatory museum work happening right now. They do illustrate that societal inequality, cultural dispossession, and the violence that enforces both, also elicit resistance. And in that resistance is the hope for a better world and the will to create it.

Notes

1 Specifically: Brass plaque depicting an Oba. Benin, Nigeria. 16th century AD. ETH 1898.1–15.44 [XIV.4]. h. 40cm (15¾ in).
2 The invertebrate paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould often recounted childhood visits to a natural history museum; the American author J. D. Salinger referenced Indigenous ethnographic displays in his fiction; the Spanish painter Pablo Picasso was admittedly influenced by bronze sculptures from Benin; etc.
3 The directors of major US museums – such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Museum of Natural History, Art Institute of Chicago, Getty Museum, Guggenheim Museum, etc. – are recruited from positions of privilege and rewarded with large salaries. According to IRS-990 statements for FY 2019, presidents of these five museums each received at least $1,000,000 in salary and benefits.
4 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums', signed by the Directors of: The Art Institute of Chicago; Bavarian State Museum, Munich (Alte Pinakothek, Neue Pinakothek); State Museums, Berlin; Cleveland Museum of Art; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Louvre Museum, Paris; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Prado Museum, Madrid; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
5 Notoriously, after a white supremacist mob rampaged through Charlottesville (USA) on 11 August 2017, US president Donald Trump declared that there were 'good people' on 'both sides', equating racists who murdered one and injured 19 others at that event with the anti-racists who demonstrated against them (Shear and Haberman 2017).

References

AAA. 1998. 'AAA Statement on Race', American Anthropological Association, 17 May, https://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583 accessed 24 November 2021).

A History of BP in 10 Objects. 2022. 'About', http://www.historyofbp.org/about/ (accessed 2 August 2023).

Amritsar Partition Museum. 2021a. 'Oral Histories, Sudershana Kumari', Amritsar Partition Museum, https://www.partitionmuseum.org/oral-history/ (accessed 27 October 2021).

Amritsar Partition Museum. 2021b. 'Refugee Artifacts', Amritsar Partition Museum, https://www.partitionmuseum.org/museum/refugee-artefacts/ (accessed 27 October 2021).

Bakhtin, M. M. 1986. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, Austin TX: University of Texas Press.

Bảo tàng Phụ nữ Việt Nam. 2020. 'Apology to Vietnam from an American mother', Vietnamese Women's Museum, 6 June, https://baotangphunu.org.vn/en/apology-to-vietnam-from-an-american-mother/ (accessed 14 May 2022).

Blewett, Mary H. 1990. *The Last generation: work and life in the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1910–1960*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BP or Not BP. 2022. 'Hundreds set to join our mass creative action to "Make BP History"', BP or Not BP?, 23 April, https://bp-or-not-bp.org/2022/04/23/hundreds-join-our-mass-creative-action-to-make-bp-history/ (accessed 20 May 2022).

Caygill, Marjorie. 1999. *The British Museum A-Z Companion*, London: British Museum Press.

Chivers, Danny. 2022. Interview with the author, 8 June.

Cleveland Museum of Art. 2003. 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums', https://archive.org/details/cmapr4492 (accessed 30 December 2021).

de Montebello, Philippe. 2003. 'The Oxus Treasure', *The Times* 26 December, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-oxus-treasure-vkxzqwfwmlp (accessed 11 November 2021).

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1983. 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields', *American Sociological Review*, 48 (2): 147–160.

Durrant, Nancy. 2022. 'Greening the gallery: How London's arts institutions are responding to the climate emergency', 17 January, CiMAM, International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art, https://cimam.org/news-archive/greening-the-gallery-how-londons-arts-institutions-are-responding-to-the-climate-emergency/ (accessed 19 June 2022).

Eakin, Hugh and Randy Kennedy. 2005. 'Doubts on Donors' Collection Cloud Met Antiquities Project', *New York Times*, 10 December, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/10/arts/design/doubts-on-donorscollection-cloud-met-antiquities-project.html (accessed 2 February 2022).

Ellis, James. 1990. 'Unions Were Few and Far Between', interview in Mary H. Blewett (ed.) *The Last Generation: Work and Life in the Textile Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, 1910–1960*, Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Fahim, Jareem. 2003. 'The Whistle-Blower at the Art Party', *Village Voice*, 6–12 August.

Fanon, Frantz. 1961. *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press.

Gitu wa Kehengeri. 2018. Interview conducted by Olivia Windham Stewart and Susan Kibaara. Nairobi: Museum of British Colonialism, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/591175bf1b10e32648746640/t/5f3fd7c2ce7dc23e92bc3c70/1598019523600/Gitu+transcript.pdf (accessed 29 June 2022).

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, New York: International Publishers.

Hicks, Dan. 2020. *The Brutish Museum*, London: Pluto Press.
Janes, Robert R. and Richard Sandell (eds) 2019. *Museum Activism*, Abingdon: Routledge.
Liu, Jasmine. 2022. 'Glasgow Museums Will Repatriate 17 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria', *Hyperallergic*, 20 April, https://hyperallergic.com/726081/glasgow-museums-will-repatriate-17-benin-bronzes-to-nigeria/ (accessed 19 June 2022).
Lorde, Audre. 2020. *The Selected Works of Audre Lorde*, New York: W. W. Norton.
MacGregor, Neil and Rosemary Hill. 2022. 'Romantic History: Waterloo to the British Museum', *London Review of Books*, 27 April, https://www.lrb.co.uk/podcasts-and-videos/podcasts/close-readings/romantic-history-waterloo-to-the-british-museum?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20220426podcast&utm_content=20220426podcast+CID_92e0a54a86572e6e7ccd966bcf17b213&utm_source=LRB%20email&utm_term=Read%20more (accessed 8 May 2022).
Mashberg, Tom. 2021. 'Cambodia Says the Met Museum Has Dozens of Its Looted Antiquities', *New York Times*, 24 October, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/24/arts/cambodia-met-museum-looted-antiquities.html (accessed 24 October 2021).
Message, Kylie. 2014. *Museums and Social Activism*, Abingdon: Routledge.
Quynn, Dorothy Mackay. 1945. 'The Art Confiscations of the Napoleonic Wars', *American Historical Review*, 50 (3): 437–460.
Redman, Samuel. 2016. 'When Museums Rushed to Fill Their Rooms With Bones', *Smithsonian Magazine*, 15 March, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-museums-rushed-fill-their-rooms-bones-180958424/ (accessed 19 June 2022).
Robertson, Kirsty. 2019. *Tear Gas Epiphanies*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
Sanger, Mandy. 2022. Interview with author, 8 April.
Serifini, Paula and Chris Garrard. 2019. 'Fossil Fuel Sponsorship and the Contested Museum', in Robert R. Janes and Richard Sandell (eds) *Museum Activism*, 69–79. Abingdon: Routledge.
Shear, Michael D. and Maggie Haberman. 2017. 'Trump Defends Initial Remarks on Charlottesville; Again Blames "Both Sides"', 15 August, *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/us/politics/trump-press-conference-charlottesville.html (accessed 24 November 2021).
Smithsonian Institution. 2022. 'Shared Stewardship and Ethical Returns Policy', Smithsonian Ethical Returns Working Group, 29 April, Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution.
Sudershna, Kumari. 2018. Interview with Partition Museum, posted to YouTube 14 March, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNNQ9FRYgkY (accessed 29 June 2022).
UNESCO. 1970. 'Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970', UNESCO, (accessed 11 November 2021).
UNESCO. 2020. 'The Real Price of art: International UNESCO campaign reveals the hidden face of art trafficking', https://en.unesco.org/news/real-price-art-international-unesco-campaign-reveals-hidden-face-art-trafficking (accessed 1 November 2021).
Velie, Elaine. 2022. 'NY District Attorney's Office Seizes Allegedly Looted Antiquities', *Hyperallergic*, 1 June, https://hyperallergic.com/737317/district-attorneys-office-seizes-all…f2ce5&utm_source=hn&utm_term=seized+five+allegedly+looted+antiquities (accessed 12 June 2022).

Vergès, Françoise. 2014. 'A Museum Without Objects', in Iain Chambers, Allesandra De Angelis, Celeste Ianniciello, Mariangela Orabona & Michaela Quadraro (eds.) *The Postcolonial Museum: The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, 25–38. London: Routledge.

Weber, Max. 1952. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York: Scribner.

Williams, Eric. 1944. *Capitalism & Slavery*, New York: Russell & Russell.

Index

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com