***ICOM 21<sup>st</sup> General Conference / Museums and Universal Heritage***

**Heritage and the politics of nationalist discourse**

***by*** Susan Legêne

Tropenmuseum / University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Vienna, 19-8-2007

**Contents**

Introduction

1 Despite differences today

2 The past – identity or identification?

3 The future – nations and generations

4 Today's diversity

Susan Legêne

Royal Tropical Institute / Tropenmuseum

PO Box 95001

1090 HA  Amsterdam

s.legene@kit.nl

**Introduction**

Just a short while after I had been invited to this 21st General Conference on Museums and Universal Heritage, I read the book *Cosmopolitanism* by Kwame Anthony Appiah. I had proposed to talk, today, about heritage and the politics of nationalist discourse. The topic had interested me during the last few months, since I had become more and more involved in Dutch debates on a cultural history canon for primary schools. We had just had a remarkable parliamentary debate, in which politicians across the political spectrum, from left to right, had voiced their views on the essential meaning of historical knowledge for contemporary society. Their conclusion had been that the Netherlands was in dire need of a new national history museum to increase the public's understanding of contemporary society and to experience a common ground as Dutch citizens. Only the left-wing environmentalist party warned that 'history' does not necessarily unite a nation, but can also divide it.[1]

This political call to history, ladies and gentlemen, seems to fit into a general trend. Many national and supranational parliaments have recently been discussing their own and other country's national histories. It is in this context that we see references to the positive role of museums, as in the remark made by the Chair of the ICOM ethics Committee Geoffrey Lewis in 2004 about: 'the significance of museum collections in establishing national and cultural identity.' And at the same time there are also warnings *against* such a role, as in the rather ominous words of Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, who stated: 'One of the greatest threats to human dignity and freedom worldwide must surely be the reductive identity that governments and media everywhere seek to pin on diverse and complicated cultures and societies…'[2]

Appiah's central notion of *cosmopolitanism* struck me as a valuable counter notion to the national frame of thinking in such debates. His views in many ways relate to our present discussion on the interpretation of museum collections as universal heritage (although Appiah uses the word patrimony rather than heritage). In fact he discusses this very same issue in chapter 8, 'Whose Culture Is It, Anyway?' His argument about universalism, cultural property, and the imaginary connections between people, objects and histories, is embedded in a more general discussion of perceptions of self and other, of competing universalisms and the idea of a global ethics. *Ethics in a world of strangers* is the subtitle of his book.[3]

Colleagues, we gather here in Vienna as museum professionals from all over the world. While we may not know each other personally, we do share mutual professional expertise and cultural affinities regardless of and *beyond* national affiliations – therefore this meeting offers an excellent opportunity to reflect on this notion of cosmopolitanism and ethics in a world of strangers. Let us see how Appiah's concept of universal

imaginary connections makes sense in our professional life as collectors, curators and exhibition makers.

**1 Despite differences today**

I'll take a short-cut here and start with Appiah's reflections on current restitution discussions, which we find towards the end of his chapter on cultural property and cultural belonging ('Whose Culture Is It, Anyway?'). In the preceding sections he acknowledges that colonial collecting in the past has resulted in much great art being removed, in different ways, from the then colonies to colonial metropoles. And today, developing countries that lack sufficient financial resources and proper surveillance structures, again face problems in protecting their community-based heritage, their archaeological sites and even their museum collections against illegal excavations and theft. This problem implies a discourse about the responsibility of nations to keep, protect and claim movable cultural goods.

Appiah insists that we remain critical with regard to notions of cultural property. *Owning* cultural objects and *relating* to these objects is not the same thing. One should not regard cultural property as the property of its culture. National authorities today – regardless of where and how national collections were once collected – have to be aware that they only hold this art in trust; not exclusively for the subjects of their nation but in principle for everyone, for humanity. Appiah acknowledges that information about provenance has to be regarded as of utmost value and has to be available in full transparancy together with the objects. However, too narrow a concept of belonging and protection could easily lead to a partition, creating countless mine-and-thine distinctions. Provenance should, in his view, never provide an argument for generic claims or for the large-scale repartition of collections. Provenance and the current location of objects also testifies to historical relationships that are relevant today.

Nevertheless Appiah concludes this relativistic discourse about whether it matters exactly *where* art is located today, with an acknowledgement and understanding of the fact that people may feel a strong desire to bring certain objects 'home'. That desire has to do with uniqueness, with singularity, and with what Walter Benjamin once called the "aura" of a work of art. The powerful effect of being near an original object, according to Appiah, is a kind of magic. '…it is the same kind of magic that nations feel towards their history.' And here he continues (quote): 'The connection people feel to cultural objects that are symbollically theirs, because they were produced from within a world of meaning created by their ancestors – the connection to art through identity – is powerful. It should be acknowledged.' But he wants us to think about this idea of attachment and belonging

from a cosmopolitan point of view and so he adds: 'The cosmopolitan, though, wants to remind us of other connections. One connection, – the one neglected in talk of patrimony – is the connection not *through* identity but *despite* difference.' And he continues: '…the connection through a local identity is as imaginary as the connection through humanity…'[4]

This idea appealed to me, the idea of imaginary connections between people not *through* a common culture, or, for that matter, a shared history or a common world view, but *despite* differences in these respects. It read like a sound policy approach for museums: let us acquire collections and create exhibitions that invite people to imagine and appreciate differences as a common bond. And this in turn made me realize that the concept of universal heritage as we discuss it today can not exist without a theory of difference – a theory of cultural difference.

However, the longer I thought about it, the more complex Appiah´s sweeping statement became. First of all: what is new about this emphasis on "difference"? Has the appreciation of difference not been a basic feature of collecting and exhibiting cultures for a long time? Was it not a driving force behind much of both local <u>historical</u> collecting – about *ourselves* in the past– and of <u>colonial </u>collecting – about *other people* elsewhere in the present? Was it not precisely this interest in difference which to a significant extent created the very same metropolitan collections that today are labeled 'universal heritage'? Appiah's use of the idea of "imaginary" connections also led to second thoughts. Why talk about imaginary, and not about real connections? Who determines that it is difference; and when does difference become conflict? What is the political meaning of the local and the universal in this respect?

**2 The past – identity or identification?**

Appiah links his use of the concept of imaginary connections to the notion of identity, ('The connection people feel to cultural objects that are symbollically theirs, because they were produced from within a world of meaning created by their ancestors – the connection to art through identity – is powerful') but in fact he refers to *identification*. Identity suggests a condition, something one has, whereas identification implies a process, something one does.[5]

Let's compare it with the museological tradition of object analysis. We know the solid Object ID criteria which we use to desribe items in a collection. Object ID (which in full means: object *identity* document) provides a description of the unique features of a single object as it appears. It reflects a condition and a history. Through this description we can recognize its uniqueness and also classify it according to its place amongst other

similar objects. For instance: starting from an Object ID file we can try and come up with connections by focusing on the crafts, belief systems and traditions that were involved in making the object, or on its function for instance, or its historical significance.[6]

At the other extreme of this classification spectrum we have our Red Lists. These map the many crossroads, the special features which one has to know about certain classes of objects in order to recognize and identify a single unknown, unprovenanced piece that may have been illegally acquired and brought onto the art market. In both kinds of object description, Object ID and Red List – call them inductive and deductive if you like – the object's identities depend on interpretation. Even the process of filling in databases with the most basic info for Object ID, in itself requires interpretation. Many of you will have experienced this when struggling with very down to earth decisions as to how to measure an object, how to choose the most appropriate terms in the thesaurus, how to best capture the object's physical appearance photographically.

No two professionals will describe an object in exactly the same way. So here we encounter the difference between identity and identification. Objects have no fixed identities. We recognize their appearance through our mutual understanding of how to describe what we see. Meanwhile their significance to society can be manifold, depending on their context and the kind of discourse that surrounds them. Now, when we think about ourselves, about communities, nations, ethnic or religious groups, this difference between identity and identification is even more relevant. The process of identification is both relational and categorial – people identify themselves, and are identified by others. It is a process with external categorizations as well.

Take the current discussions in the Netherlands on our national history. Crucial to this debate is the question of whether, and how, people perceive Dutch culture and are willing to relate to it as essentially a culture of an immigrant society. In this political process several categorizations of the current population of the Netherlands have emerged, leading to an overall dichotomy between autochthonous and allochthonous citizens; between those who are Dutch by origin – let us say the indigenous population, or the first nations – and those who came later from elsewhere, say the outsiders, or internal others.[7] Since the 1980s, this categorization has provided the labels for an emotional dichotomy which cuts deep into society and which is, for everyone, an identifier of self and other. This happens, although in practice the categories prove time and again to be fluid. The dichotomy was, and still is used by the state in the context of social, cultural and educational policies. However, it should not only be regarded as a one-way, top-down stigmatization. We also see that the interaction between self-representation and external categorization imposed upon people gives them a sense of collective selfhood within or beyond the physical borders of the nation state.[8] Such processes of self-identification and imposed categorization are part of the political

dynamics of our societies that also effect the museological 'landscape'. In this respect, Appiah's proposal to his readers to choose a cosmopolitan identity for themselves, to value imaginary connections despite the differences, offers the opportunity for a challenging political choice.

Let us return, then, to the universal heritage theme of today. How can museums play a positive role in such identification processes when it comes to the dynamics of cultural difference? Museums are not value-free institutions. The historical museum practice of collecting cultural artefacts – especially colonial collecting - has evoked convincing images about self and other which still may play a role in our societies today.

I once used this set of playing cards, (see illustration) portraying the people and cultures of the Netherlands East Indies, to illustrate the process of cultural fixation of differences in a colonial context.[9] Towards 1940 these cards were distributed by the Colonial Museum in Amsterdam in a large print run, as a handy educational tool for Dutch families, a way to teach them about the cultural and ethnic diversity of the colony. Each card references the ethnographic collections of photographs, objects and models belonging to the Colonial Museum (today's Tropenmuseum). On these cards, object identities are markers of the cultural differences between people.

The cards summarise colonial classification processes by presenting certain peoples with the objects that typically belong to them. By taking part in this card game, metropolitan children became the educated citizens of a colonial empire through a metaphorical feeling of control of the colonial canon of cultural knowledge.

As such the cards uphold the saying that 'aesthetics and science helped order an imperial world'.[10] They reflect two fundamental mechanisms that we have to analyse if we want to understand the concepts of difference that museum collections may once have embodied. These are: the racialization of difference and the essentialization of nationhood. The photographed portraits on the 'population set' of the playing cards illustrate this particularly well. The photographs were taken in the first decades of the twentieth century. On the cards, the sitters have been reduced to four a-temporal, blanked-out faces of ethnic types: two men and two women, two of what was then labeled as proto-Malay races of the Indonesian archipelago, and two of the so-called Deutero-Malay. By blanking out the individuals from their background, the cards obscure the actual interaction that took place in the specific situation of the photograph. They

thus turn people that were known to the photographer, into anonymous representatives of essential differences.



Four portraits, made between 1915 and 1937, and used for the playing cards in 1941. Collection tropenmuseum Amsterdam

Meanwhile, the exhibition practice in the Colonial Museum presented the 'real' picture of such playing cards, with lifesize waxed figures of ethnic types, as we still find today in museums all over the world. (see illustration) Photographs were used to create these too, and here again the image of the people was put into certain exhibition contexts; as here in the case of the Papuan man and boy, photographed during a geographical expedition in 1903, and who, in the 1920s, were made into an exhibit at the crossroads of physical and cultural anthropology (left: human remains and a display on evolutionary man; right: the artefacts that belong to hunter-gatherers, to the Papuan as a living Stone Age man).[11]



Display of human remains, plaster cast facial masks, and objects from Papuans as hunter/gatherers
The wax figure of father and son have been modelled after a photograph from the Wichman
expedition (1903).
Colonial Museum Amsterdam, 1920s

This example illustrates that the mechanism of the racialization and essentilaization of difference was embedded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century physical-anthropological discourses on race, as well as in colonialism's cultural policies on the excavation of archaeological local history and contemporary ethnicity. The researchers were looking for types and typologies, both of objects and peoples. After the Second World War scientists emphasised the unity of mankind and the non-existence of distinct races in Unesco's 1951 Statement on Race. This was important, but it didn't put a stop to racial ideas and political practices. Besides, the preceding colonial process of classification provided a connotation of difference for museum collections that is still relevant to the perception of these objects today.

In our discourse on universal heritage, we therefore need a better historical understanding of the interaction between the twin academic research disciplines of physical and cultural anthropology that once informed the significance of museum objects.[12] We also need a greater sensitivity to colonialism's culture of inequality and its effects - both then and in the aftermath of colonialism - to all those involved both in the colony and in the metropole.[13] After all we are still talking about our own lifetime, about ourselves, our parents and grandparents, going back to just a few generations before us; people of whom and about whom we have collected so many cultural artefacts, like the playing cards that reflect how these people actually related to each other.

**3 The future – nations and generations**

Ladies and gentlemen, I will not elaborate any longer on this *colonial* heritage of presenting difference through collections, important though it may be. MacGregor warned us, as I quoted earlier, against 'the reductive identity that governments and media everywhere seek to pin on diverse and complicated societies…' Well, the museum tradition of presenting people as ethnic types illustrates that we are not dealing with a new phenomenon of our time. Racializing difference and essentializing culture stands in a longer cultural/political tradition. Inevitably, the British Museum, like any other metropolitan museum, has played a role in such 'impingements'. We all have to relate to that past, as well as put more effort into research, in order to understand the complexities of the nation-bound cultural politics of the post-colonial and post-Cold War area. And that is exactly why we can not simply assign a central task to museums of strengthening national and cultural identities, as many governments are doing. But on the other hand, to suddenly declare that, from now, on, national collections should be perceived as a universal heritage, feels rather like a kind of *deus ex machina* trick.[14]

But this colonial cultural practice of racialisation and essentialization also makes clear that we have to be conscious of the political implications of Appiah's pleas for the appreciation of difference. Who exactly is it that *proclaims* the difference, and how? Ignoring this political dimension in contemporary identity politics, while choosing a universalist stance, would be naïve.

It would be particularly naïve, it seems to me, to ignore it in the light of current discourses about national histories, cultural heritage awareness and our common future. When Appiah referred to bringing objects 'home', he pointed to an awareness of the past as being a valuable mechanism for community development in contemporary society. The late Prince Claus of the Netherlands applied this same argument when he declared: 'An awareness of one's own cultural identity and past is a fundamental condition for sustainable autonomous development.'[15] This concept of sustainable autonomous development is also important in our debate on the local and the universal. For a cosmopolitan, the question of sustainable development is probably *the* issue of this time, one to which one is forced to relate. The sustainable development political discourse, with its current place in the UN Millenium Development Goals, requires us to imagine connections with others that result in concrete actions concerning our own way of life and standard of living.

Culture seems to be missing in the Millenium Development Goals. As a result, there have been many discussions about the role and place of culture'in the sustainable 'triangle' of environment, economy and social development. Is culture everywhere? In our relationship to nature for example, our economic practice and social relationships, in our attitudes and perceptions? Is culture the mechanism that causes the coordinated movement of the triangle in whatever direction for better or for worse? Or should this policy scheme be changed into a square, with culture and cultural politics representing a separate field of action with regards to the common goal of sustainability? In my view it is both. Sustainability is about education, about attitudes and feelings that have impact on the laws of nature and on economic principles. But sustainability's succes also needs a cultural sector *per se*, with all its connections to vital historical knowledge and to local and universal heritage.

The President of ICOM, Alissandra Cummins, rightly brings up exactly this combination of issues of sustainability and heritage in her editorial in this year's first *ICOM News,* where she writes: '…I know how museums are struggling to fulfill their role to promote responsible, sustainable development in impoverished regions and teach youth about the value of local heritage and the heritage of humanity as a whole.'[16] Today we co-exist with some 6 billion people on this planet, and within fifty years, when – we hope – the children we now teach in primary school will be grandparents, there will

probably be a global population of some 9 billion. The role of cultural institutions in the next few decades may well be to help communities stay connected to their local heritage and to provide them with imaginary connections with others elsewhere through raising awareness of the heritage of humanity as a whole. They may provide our children with a vital bridge between the past and *their* sustainable future. This intergenerational aspect was already highlighted in 1987 in the Brundtland Report, which defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The cultural needs of sustainability have been stressed in many other official texts since the publication of the Brundtland Report, as in the Unesco 1997 Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations, or the recommendations of the 2006 Cultural Emergency Response conference in The Hague.[17]

However, colleagues, it is at this junction of imagining a sustainable future for all, and ideas about the role of cultural heritage in local community development, that we have to further reflect on Appiahs notion about difference. Sustainable development has to deal with growth scenarios that are not restricted to national boundaries. These include population growth. What is deeply worrying in the current debates on population growth, is the recurring emphasis on the relative growth of some population groups, and the stagnation, or even decline, of others. In calculations and visualizations of such demographic trends, we see that the distinctions that are being made between people are based on a variety of external classifiers. And some of these classifiers have a connotation of cultural threat. Autochthonous and allochthonous are two such classifiers, religion is another, and the most general distinction is: different civilizations, after Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations'.[18] If this classification system is what MacGregor wanted to counter with his plea for universalism, then I fully agree: this discourse on clashing civilizations presented as an inevitable outcome of demographic trends, is, in a literal sense, a life-threatening discourse. And it is based on a kind of mapping of people around the globe which is fundamentally essentialist.

We cannot discuss local and universal heritage awareness and the role of museums in sustainable development without reflecting on this political problem, this powerful mechanism of stereotyping and essentializing peoples. It is a mechanism which, as I indicated here before, is in itself not fully alien to museum tradition. Pinning people to a cultural essence is part of the dominant discourse of adversaries who actually harm each other in current centres of conflict in many many places in the world. We hear less violent versions of the same thing in welfare states like the Netherlands, this time in relationship to population changes through immigration. Some even publicly call upon so-called autochthonous couples to have more children in order to preserve Dutch culture *in*

our future generations. And I assure you, the Dutch culture to which these advocates of selective population growth refer, has nothing to do with wooden shoes and windmills. It is never explicitly stated, but it sounds like a racialized reversal of the common argument that we have to preserve our national cultural heritage and cultural affinities for future generations.[19]

The 'clash of civilizations' world view incorporates future generations in an image of a threatening, imbalanced population growth. It suggests that immigrants stay immigrants for as long as we can see into the future, and that 'civilizations' have an identity. It leaves aside the earlier colonialism, that in some parts of the world did more than just turn indigenous populations into minority groups; it actually fought and suppressed people to near or total extinction. I do not wish to reconcile such exclusive majority views with that other intergenerational discourse on sustainable development which holds that we have to know the problems of the past as a fundamental condition to imagine a *common* future for next generations.

## 4     Today's diversity

My way out of this dilemma is two-fold. A first line of thought gives a twist to Neil MacGregor's argument that the British Museum Collection should not be seen as a national collection, but as a universal heritage. I propose that national museums throughout the world look for ways to historicize the very notion of their *own* nation state and their concepts of citizenship. We should do so both in public programmes and in our institutional historical research. No nation is an isolated territory; nations and national cultures exist in relationship to each other.[20] Since time immemorial these nations have known migrants both settling in and leaving the territory. We should take into consideration that since World War II more than 100 *new* nation states have been called into existence, whereas it has only been since the 1960s that the nation state has become the principle unit of organization worldwide. This was due to the emergence of the newly independent countries. But former colonial empires too, such as the Netherlands, England and France – even Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union – only rather recently had to define notions of citizenship and belonging in a *single* territory for the first time.[21] This process of re-imagining the community is, in many respects, unsettled; in particular for those in refugee camps, for those *sans papiers*, or for those who, through their own conviction or against their will are being confronted with national dynamics that turn ethnicity into nationality.

Museums can contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics both of real separation and of imaginary inclusion and exclusion which have so far accompanied this post-colonial and post-Cold War nation building process. It has led to war, migration and resettlement, loss of connections, and sudden – sometimes violent – changes of national

canons…[22] National museums also have to reflect on this process, in order to recognize their own institutional connections with the cultural affinities and estrangement to which this recent process of nation building has given rise within society. Remember the photograph of the two Papuan peoples, sculpted in wax, which was displayed in the colonial museum in the 1920s? We now feel at a tremendous distance from the world views that lie behind such exhibits. Instead, we can convincingly declare as world heritage the beautiful carvings of Papuan bisjpoles in our collections. But does this imply that we know and relate to what happened since the statues of the people were removed from display and after these poles were collected? Can the visitors of in this case the Tropenmuseum make imaginary connections between the cultural-anthropological and art-historical knowledge stored in what we now label as 'universal heritage collections' and the complex process of nation building of, again in this case, the Papuans? Are we all connected?

My suggestion to pay more attention to recent nation building processes fits into the approach as advocated by ICOM, to develop more international museum partnerships. I propose that in such partnerships we not focus exclusively on artefacts. If the museums promote historical knowledge about nation building as an interdependent and contingent process it will be beneficial for all those involved in such partnerships. This is not just about knowledge repatriation, it is about an international dialogue and learning to appreciate the various perspectives that exist on universal heritage.

This is in line with Kwame Anthony Appiah's arguments. My second line of thought follows his appealing recommendation to try and seduce museum visitors to experience imaginary connections despite difference, both in local and global contexts. This idea should, in my view, not so much focus on the nature of the selected *objects* which are put on display, but focus as well on the *visitors* who meet each other virtually or live *around* those museum objects. It should not perhaps be the museum that explains cultural differences, but the visitors themselves who could make a cultural diversity happen. This approach acknowledges that differences exist in how people perceive objects. Difference exists in the memories and connections of the visitors, in their education and religious convictions, in their willingess to experience something new because it is different. My ideal museum would be a comfortable place for everyone 'in a world of strangers'; a place where objects are made unique and where people listen to each other out of interest in the range of attachments that exist towards the heritage at stake.

This focus on visitors has an intergenerational aspect: museums as places where different age groups share and exchange views. It also asks for an approach of multiple citizenship at a national level, an approach that connects local heritage to international and transnational cultural identification processes in society.[23]

Just a final remark. These conclusions are not new. I do not propose a fundamental shift in museum policies. My story merely confirmed the ongoing changing role of museums. If we regard our institutions as solid estate where the *visitors* make the dynamics, we can also make more active use of these institutions to intensify our universal heritage as movable cultural goods. It requires a professional de-attachment, to bring objects to those places where the most vital connection can be made between tangible and intangible heritage and the most relevant discussion can take place *among* the visitors. Modern digital techniques help us in this respect. Internet users from all over the world can, in principle, have virtual access to all public collections in museum depots. Developing more interactive techniques for recording the new object identifications through this virtual dialogue should accompany an enhanced exchange of the 'real' objects: not only those of the past, but also the creative output of our lifetime. Together with historical understanding, this exchange of contemporary culture will provide important stepping stones to a sustainable future.

**Endnotes**

[1] See: www.entoen.nu about the Dutch cultural history canon, with explanations in English as well. For those who can read Dutch, see the Parliamentary debate on 27-6-2007 *Handelingen Tweede Kamer* Museum Nederlandse geschiedenis. TK 95, 27-6-2006.

[2] Both Geoffrey Lewis and Neil MacGregor in: *ICOM News* 2004:1 pp. 3 and 7; Universal Museums Issue.

[3] Kwame Antony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism. Ethics in a world of strangers* New York and London (WW. Norton & Company) 2006.

[4] Appiah 2006:134-135.

[5] For an elaboration of this argument, see: Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London (University of California Press) 2005; Chaper 3 'Identity' (pp. 59-90), written with Rogers Brubaker.

[6] Museum anthropologists even say that each object could be regarded as a node, a kind of a landmark in an actor-network, an intersection of connections to other objects and cultural histories. See Relational Museum project, Pitt Rivers Museum' Oxford. Also: Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles, 'People, Objects and Colonial Relations', in: *Collecting Colonialism. Material Culture and Colonial Change.* Oxford and New York (Berg) 2001, pp. 1-25; and Daan van Dartel, *Collectors Collected. Exploring Dutch colonial culture through the study of batik.* Amsterdam (Kit Publishers) 2005 (Bulletin 369 Royal Tropical Institute). A Pdf-file of this Bulletin can be downloaded from website www.kit.nl.

[7] The anthropologist Peter Geschiere is working on a book that discusses the use of autochthony in current political discourses around the world. Peter Geschiere, *The Pitfalls of Belonging - Autochthony, Citizenship and Exclusion in Africa and Europe.* (forthcoming 2008) See also, about internal others, Laura Tabili, 'A homogeneous society? Britain's internal "others", 1800-present.' in: Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rise (eds.), *At Home with the Empire. Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World.* Cambridge (Cambridge University Press), 2006, pp. 53-76.

[8] Cooper 2005:85. Three Dutch research institutes, Meertens Institute of ethnology, Royal Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies KITLV, and International Institute of Social History IISG, are currently working on a research project on post-colonial identity politics in the Netherlands. Results to be expected in 2008/9.

[9] Susan Legêne, 'Photographic Playing Cards. Teaching the Dutch Colonialism.' In: E. Edwards and J.Hart (eds.), *Photographs Objects Histories. On the Materiality of Images.* London/ New York (Routledge) 2004:96-112.

[10] Cooper 2005:15.

[11] This argument has been elaboated in: Susan Legêne, 'Enlightenment, empathy, retreat. The cultural heritage of the Ethische Politiek.' In: Pieter ter Keurs (ed.), *Colonial Collections Revisited.* Leiden (National Museum of Ethnology) 2007.

[12] On physical anthropology and colonial collecting: David van Duuren *et al.*, *Physical Anthropology Reconsidered. Human Remains at the Tropenmuseum.* Amsterdam 2007 (Bulletin 375 Royal Tropical Institute). A Pdf-file of this Bulletin can be downloaded from website www.kit.nl.

[13] See for instance: Bernhard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge.* Princeton (Princeton UP) 1996; Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture. Anthropology, Travel and Government.* Oxford (Polity Press) 1994.

[14] 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums' – December 2002

[15] Quote from His Royal Highness Prince Claus' inaugural speech, Honorary Fellowship Award Ceremony at the ISS, the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, 1 June 1988. Published in: *Cultuur en Ontwikkeling. Toespraken en opstellen over cultuur en ontwikkeling van Z.K.H. Prins Claus der Nederlanden.* Den Haag (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken) 1996, p. 63. Although a Dutch title, the volume has lectures both in English and in Dutch.
Relevant in this respect is also Jan Pronk's opening speech at the Cultural Emergency Response congress, organized by the Prince Claus Fund, 25-26 September 2006, see note 17.

[16] Editorial, *ICOM News* vol. 60, 2007:1, p2.

[17] The 'Brundtland report', *Our Common Future,* by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), chiared by Gro Harlem Brundtland.
On 25 September 2006, in his opening address of the Conference Cultural Emergency Response, Jan Pronk concluded: 'What should be our response, our Cultural Emergency Response? First: preserve and protect the future: the landscape, the water wells, the habitat, the natural environment, the earth and people's livelihoods, the basic educational and health care structures. Protect and strengthen the social fabric of the communities, as diversified as they are, their conflict solving capacities, their inherited basic values. Protect the modern cultural

heritage embodied in international law. Reap the opportunities to further enhance our culture, again as diversified as possible, in a relationship of multi-cultural co-existence and mutual enrichment. Second: preserve and protect the past. Save and conserve the libraries and the books. They contain the wisdom we so desperately need in the future. Protect and restore the statues: they show us the meaning not only of glory, but also of devotion. Save and restore the museums: they show us the achievements of our ancestors and teach us modesty.' Published in Prince Claus Fund, *Culture is a Basic Need: Responding to Cultural Emergencies.* The conference report is available at: www.princeclausfund.org.

[18] Samuel P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* New York (Touchstone) 1996.

[19] For those who can read Dutch, see the web dossier on this debate in the Dutch newspaper *NRC-Handelsblad* which started with an article on … 2007. NOOT AFMAKEN

[20] See also Hall and Rose 200626, on 'The imagined boundedness of the metroplotitan "home" (…) based on a common-sense geographical history of an island nation mostly untroubled by its imperial project…'

[21] Cooper 2005: 22, 156, 236.

[22] For a discussion of the change of a Dutch colonial canon into a Dutch national history canon, see: Berteke Waaldijk and Susan Legêne, 'Mission interrupted. Gender, history and the colonial canon.' In: Maria Grever and Siep Stuurman, *Beyond the Canon. History for the 21th Century.* Hamshire (Palgrave MacMillan) Forthcoming (2007).

[23] The Tropenmuseum tried to do so, for instance, in the 2003 exhibition *Urban Islam. Muslims in five cities.* This exhibition, adapted to a Swiss public, was also on show in Basel, Switzerland. www.urbanislam.nl.