

ICME

International committee
of museums of ethnology

Museums and Xenophobia



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MUSÉES

MUSEUMS AND XENOPHOBIA

what museums can do to counter this phenomenon

Papers presented at ICME's 1994 conference held at the occasion of
the 125th anniversary of the ethnological museum in Leipzig

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PREFACE

Peter Bettenhaussen, Museon, Den Haag, The Netherlands

As usual after a successful ICME conference, like the one on "Xenophobia and museums" which was held in November 1994 in Leipzig, Germany, voices are heard asking whether it is possible to publish the papers that were presented. Due to a number of reasons of which the most important are lack of finances and lack of time, this seldom happens. Fortunately there are sometimes exceptions to this rule. Thanks to the help of a Dutch publishing firm and a donation by the Museon, it has been possible to realize this special ICME publication, which is completely devoted to the subject xenophobia and the role museums can play to counter it.

Although xenophobia may be a handy word to know for boardscript players, as it is one of the very few words that starts with an x, it unfortunately is also a word linked with hatred and misunderstanding. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary xenophobia is a "morbid dislike of foreigners", while the Collins Dictionary gives as its meaning "a fear for people of other countries, or a strong dislike of them".

These feelings of fear and dislike for others, for foreigners, usually combined with feelings of superiority of the own group, are universal and as old as mankind as for instance is demonstrated by many names used for indigenous and other peoples. "Kavdlunak", foreigners, was the name given to the Europeans by the people many of us call Eskimo's. But the word Eskimo itself is linked again with foreigners. It was a nickname, given by the Cree Indians of North-America to their strange northern neighbours. This nickname, meaning "eaters of raw meat", has afterwards been taken over by others. The Eskimo's themselves use quite another word to make clear who they are: Inuit, which, in their own language, means "people". People (Saami) is also the name the Lapps use for themselves, as do count-

less other people, from the Zuni and Lakota of Northern-America to the African Baluba.

"We" versus "they" feelings can be useful to some extent as they lead to proudness of own prestations and feelings of solidarity. However it becomes quite another matter if they give rise to forms of extreme ethnocentrism, leading to racism and even holocaust. Despite scientific and technological progress the differences in today's world are still increasing. In order to survive, we and our planet earth need more than ever, in the words of Edmund Leach "thinking and acting in coherence and solidarity to face poverty, hunger and the dangers of eco-destruction". Creating a world with less hatred and more mutual understanding and cooperation is one of the big challenges we are faced with.

Although the best way to counter xenophobia is - in my opinion - intermarriage on a world-wide-scale, ethnological museums too have promising contributions to make, as was made clear in Leipzig. As Espen Wæhle summarized for me: "The papers not only strongly urged ethnographic museums to engage in combatting xenophobia (Stein), or pointed out the problems when undertaking such unconventional forms of museumwork (Fromm, Hohlweck, Wæhle). Some also stressed the positive role of museums in lessening xenophobia and building national unity in countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe (Kibunja, Munjeri) while others again put trust in the potential of collections and objects in engaging the public in foreign cultures (Jones, Rodionov, Som). More critical remarks on the potential contribution from the museums were presented by Mey".

All these papers have been included in this publication, as well as a reaction by Garba Ashiwaju from Nigeria on Adam Jones' contribution. They have

been arranged according to the main themes of the conference, i.e. Introducing Xenophobia, Museums in danger, Museums in action against Xenophobia and The way ahead: new challenges.

For several reasons, editing has been kept to a minimum. One of them was lack of time. Another to avoid polishing away differences in style and the use of English (for most of the participants a "foreign" language) caused by different cultural backgrounds, to me one of the great charms of international meetings.

I would like to thank Corine Bliek from my department for all the work she has done to help realizing this publication, Dr. Lothar Stein, director of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Leipzig, for hosting the conference and last but not least all ICME members who contributed to its success.

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from this conference is that its subject should be high on ICME's program for the coming years. Fortunately the topics selected for ICOM's next general conference in Stavanger offer all the opportunities to continue the work that has been done so far. I am convinced that a lot of what has been said during the Leipzig conference is worthwhile for outsiders too: for people working in education or in the social field, for decision makers and for the public at large. After all, it is them, whether belonging to "we" or "they" peoples, what ethnological museums are all about.

*Peter Bettenhaussen
Secretary of ICME*

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM OF XENOPHOBIA - WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR ?

Lothar Stein, Museum für Völkerkunde, Leipzig, Germany

The reason why we are dealing in our ICME-Conference with the problem of Xenophobia does not need a lengthy explanation. Hostile acts against foreigners are occurring nearly every day. Some of them happen very near to us. To give one example: Last June when we had a group of women of Australian Aborigines as guests in our Museum who performed sacred dances, we learned that they had been forced to leave their hotel in Berlin because the manager did not find them 'civilized enough'. This was clearly an act of racial discrimination and caused considerable uproar, not only among the group but also in the press. All of us will remember the terrorist attacks during recent years committed by skinheads against foreigners in Hoyerswerda and Rostock-Lichtenhagen, in Solingen and Möln, which caused the death of innocent people and which were tolerated by a silent crowd.

Xenophobic acts not only occur in Germany but also in other European countries and in many other parts of the world: for instance the so called 'National Action' in Australia, where an 'Arian Army', their leader is in jail now, is persecuting Asians, Jews and Aborigines. Ethnic conflicts and tension between ethnic groups can be traced world wide: I need only mention the dreadful occurrences in Ruanda, Sri Lanka, Bosnia-Herzegowina, or the Caucasus. One of the reasons why we have organized this Conference on an international level is to compare our opinions and experiences in the field of countering Xenophobia, thereby realizing that the subject is a difficult and sensitive one.

Xenophobia as a social phenomenon has very old and deep roots. This already becomes clear if we remember the persecution of the Jews, Sinti and Roma, Armenians and other people. Besides, xenophobia can assume many different forms. Drawing attention

to this fact is one of the goals of our conference. To give an example: "In July, 1993, we find no less than 25 ethnic conflicts that involve the regular use of violence - mass killings, executions, terrorist bombings, assassinations, looting, rapes, forced expulsion, and other acts of violence - by one or both groups to achieve their aims." (Levinson, David: Ethnic conflict and refugees. In: REFUGEES, Nr. 93, October 1993, p. 4). It is generally agreed that Xenophobia should be combatted; the main responsibility in this field rests with the state and the politicians, but also the mass media, educational and cultural institutions have to play their specific role.

Especially museums of ethnography are in an good position to influence public opinion regarding Xenophobia, to reduce prejudices towards representatives of other cultures. Moreover museums could easily be meeting places for cultural exchange.

What has happened so far?

Perhaps this question becomes more clear when we ask: What has been done so far against Xenophobia by the museum workers themselves? I can only give a few examples from the information I have, and I would be grateful if you could add more details from your own experience. To start with, there have been and will come several international discussions on this subject. To mention a few:

- The conference of ICOM/ICME in Munich, October 1991, in connection with the Meeting of the German Anthropological Association which was partly devoted to Xenophobia. During this conference a resolution against Xenophobia was brought forward and accepted by the participants and published.
- The same happened at the ICOM conference in Quebec/Canada in September 1992.

- In 1993 a symposium was held in Paris dealing with aspects of Xenophobia in France.
- Our present ICME-Conference in Leipzig is raising the question "What Museums of Ethnography can do to counter Xenophobia".
- The next ICOM meeting in Stavanger /Norway in July 1995 also has relevant topics on its agenda: "Museum and Communities" is the main theme, while "Museums and cultural diversity: Indigenous and dominant cultures" will be one of the five subthemes.

In the museums themselves, countering Xenophobia takes place in the exhibitions and educational programmes (cf. Vossen 1993). For that reason, we as museum people should consciously avoid feeding Xenophobia unintentionally by our own exhibitions, and evaluate our existing exhibitions in this respect (cf. Quebec paper "Museums against Xenophobia"). Furthermore we should be aware of the fact that, unfortunately, we can reach and influence by our activities only a very small part of the public; sociological investigations have shown that only 10 % of a given population ever visits a museum.

In my opinion it is very important to start combatting Xenophobia very early through education. In this respect our Museum once played a leading role. After the first World War Karl Weule (the director of this museum from 1907 to 1926) succeeded in establishing ethnology as a teaching subject in the schools of Saxony. We are following this path: we founded an educational department in this museum in 1969 and have developed a whole system of teaching programmes ('Project-Unterricht') especially for the junior classes of schools. We are organizing regular multicultural events such as festivals for children and their parents which focus on ethnic and cultural groups (Indianerfest, Australienfest, Afrika-Tag, etc.). On the other hand we are aware of how important it is to influence also teenagers who - at a certain age - develop their own ideas which usually are quite the opposite to those of their educators (teachers or parents) for a number of psychological reasons.

Let me give a short list of activities which we use for the promotion of mutual understanding and

tolerances:

1. Special lectures and workshops which are given by representatives of other cultures.
2. Guided tours through our permanent exhibitions to explain the mutual influence of cultures (e.g. What Europe got from the Arabs, Africans, American Indians, etc.).
3. Music, filmshows and live performances of folklore in connection with exhibitions. It has already become a tradition in our work to start new exhibitions together with performances of folklore groups from the respective area and this is very well accepted by the public.
4. Participation in public campaigns like the 'Intercultural Week' which is held in autumn each year.
5. Interviews, articles and reports in the local press and broadcasting system on related topics.
6. Support of international organizations like UNICEF and of international campaigns such as the 'Year of Indigenous people' (1993), or the 'World Decade of Cultural Development' (1988-1997) which has been organized by UNESCO.

Other museums (e.g. Berlin, Bremen, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Hamburg, Köln and Stuttgart) follow a similar line. I would also like to mention the successful endeavors of so called 'Junior Museums' in Amsterdam, Berlin, London, Ottawa and other places. Our own endeavor to create a 'Kindermuseum' in Leipzig has not yet been successful, although we have invested much work in this project, because we had problems with finding space, equipment and funds for recruiting staff (cf. Dräger, A.: "Das Kindermuseumsprojekt des Grassi-Museums Leipzig", 1993, cf. Appendix A: Bibliography).

Even though a quick and lasting solution to the problem of Xenophobia is not in sight, we should carry on with these activities and appreciate even small results. We still have a long way to go, but it helps if we join hands and exchange experiences. I hope that this conference will be a success.

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THE ROLE OF ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS AMIDST DIVERSITY: THE KENYAN EXPERIENCE

Mzalendo Kibunjia, National Museums, Nairobi, Kenya

Introduction

Over the last few years the world has witnessed a resurgence of strong nationalistic feelings in Europe, Africa and to a lesser extent Asia. These feelings are manifested by bloody conflicts usually based on ethnic lines. Kenya like other countries in Africa, emerged as a result of arbitrary drawn colonial boundaries. This process led to a conglomerate of different cultures, ethnic groups and languages into one "Nation". In Kenya, for example, there are about 49 spoken languages, representing four of the five major language groups in Africa (Fig. 1). This diversity is rivaled by very few countries in the African continent. Xenophobia thus is a phenomena that has also raised its ugly head in Kenya. Drawing from our experiences amidst such diversity, this contribution explores how the National museum system in Kenya is complementing other national-unity institutions by establishing regional museums which exhibit material culture that has a cultural linkage to the Nation as a whole.

Xenophobia in Kenya

The other evil after ethnic conflicts, has been the brooding of intense patriotic feelings which in some instances have led to xenophobia or intense dislike for foreigners and strangers. Although Kenyan ethnic groups are not on each others throats in a genocidal way as some of her neighbors are, cases of Xenophobia exist. Manifestations of this include ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley region of Kenya where communities of pastoralists who in pre-colonial times inhabited the region, have been killing and burning houses of agriculturalists who over the years have moved there to take advantages of the rich volcanic soils. These clashes have been interpreted as politically engineered by the existing establishment to exclude agriculturalists from the fertile soils of the former 'White Highlands'. However, the tempo and the extent in which they have spread in the region does

indicate underlying xenophobic feelings for the agriculturalists who in most cases are and have been more successful than the pastoral communities with whom they share the region.

A clear example of xenophobia in Kenya is the hatred for refugees particularly of Somali origin and to a lesser extent of Ethiopian origin. Most of the complaints against them are of economic nature. Because of the influx of refugees in the big cities- Nairobi and Mombasa, accommodation is at a premium, rents have gone up and it is difficult to get decent housing within the means of middle income earning Kenyans especially under the economic structural adjustment program that the country is now implementing. Most of the rental houses are occupied by Somali, Rwanda, Sudanese and Ethiopian refugees who often will pay a whole years' rent in advance an expense which is beyond reach of the Kenyans. Often graffiti can be seen on walls in these cities saying "Somalis go home!". The areas most affected in the city of Nairobi include Koma Rock, Kayole and Nairobi South B and C estates.

The mandate for preserving and fostering understanding for Kenya's cultural diversity is entrusted to the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), a government organisation. Preservation and nurturing the understanding this cultural and natural heritage is a mandate that NMK takes very seriously as is reflected by its mission statement which is to "collect, document, preserve, study and present our past and present cultural and natural heritage, in order to enhance knowledge, appreciation, respect, management and use of these resources for the benefit of Kenya and the world". In addition to preserving our cultural and national heritage, NMK compliments other institutions that help in fostering national unity.

The National Museums of Kenya began in 1909 when a group of European explorers and naturalists formed the East African Natural History Society. The goal of the society was to explore, collect, document, analyze and present to the wider public the results of their research on the people, plants and animals of East Africa. From the tremendous amount of specimens, data and artifacts collected it became clear to the society members that a storage and a display facility was needed to show these specimens and artifacts to the interested public. Later in 1934, the Kenya Government established an official museum, donating land and money for the building. For this reason, as well as for the fact that this main museum is situated in a major metropolis, Nairobi, it has continued to display what can be referred to as universal exhibits, for example: the Natural History of the major parts of the country; political history of colonial and independent Kenya; contemporary art and a little bit of ethnographic material from a cross section of Kenyan communities. The Ethnographic collection, however comprising of about 45,000 specimens representing 42 ethnic groups in Kenya, does not form part of the permanent displays.

Diversity and the Museums system in Kenya

Cognizant of our diversity, the Board of Governors of the National Museums of Kenya has established six Regional Museums in the country which were designed to reflect the cultural mix of their respective regions.

In addition to exhibiting material culture of the own region, they also display exhibits emphasizing our common roots. Diversity in Kenya is not all a cacophony of cultures but can be grouped into material culture areas. For example, the regional museums of Fort Jesus and Lamu display exhibits emphasizing the Swahili and other Bantu cultures of the coast and that of the neighboring Cushitic communities to the north. The regional museum in Meru emphasizes exhibits that reflect the cultures and environment of the Mt. Kenya area which is characterized by Bantu language groups including the Meru, Gikuyu, Tharaka, Embu and Mbeere while the regional museum at Kisumu reflects the cultures of the Lake Victoria region includ-

ing the nilotic Luo, and the Bantu communities of Kisii and Kuria. The regional museum in Kitale displays exhibits that focus on the plain nilotes communities of the northern Rift Valley and Mt. Elgon areas, and the large Bantu community in the region, the Luhya. Thus unlike countries such as Zimbabwe and Mali to name just a few, where Regional Museums are thematic, our regional Museums may be considered more like ethnic museums. However, instead of concentrating on one ethnic group they display materials that characterize a wide range of communities in the region, forming a material culture area.

Exhibits in these Regional Museums have been designed as mirrors of the community's diversity in the region. These exhibits include reconstruction of traditional building styles, and in some regional museums, demonstrations of crafts such as weaving, mat making, sculpting, canoe-carving and other activities performed all over the region. These exhibits also show their collective problems as well as the inter linkages of the different cultures. Visitors to a Regional Museum therefore are able to see and experience activities reflecting cultures other than their own and in particular that of their neighbors. They are also able to see how similar problems encountered by their neighbours are successfully solved using different approaches. This we believe creates appreciation of each other's cultures and differences. It exploits their differences into opportunities.

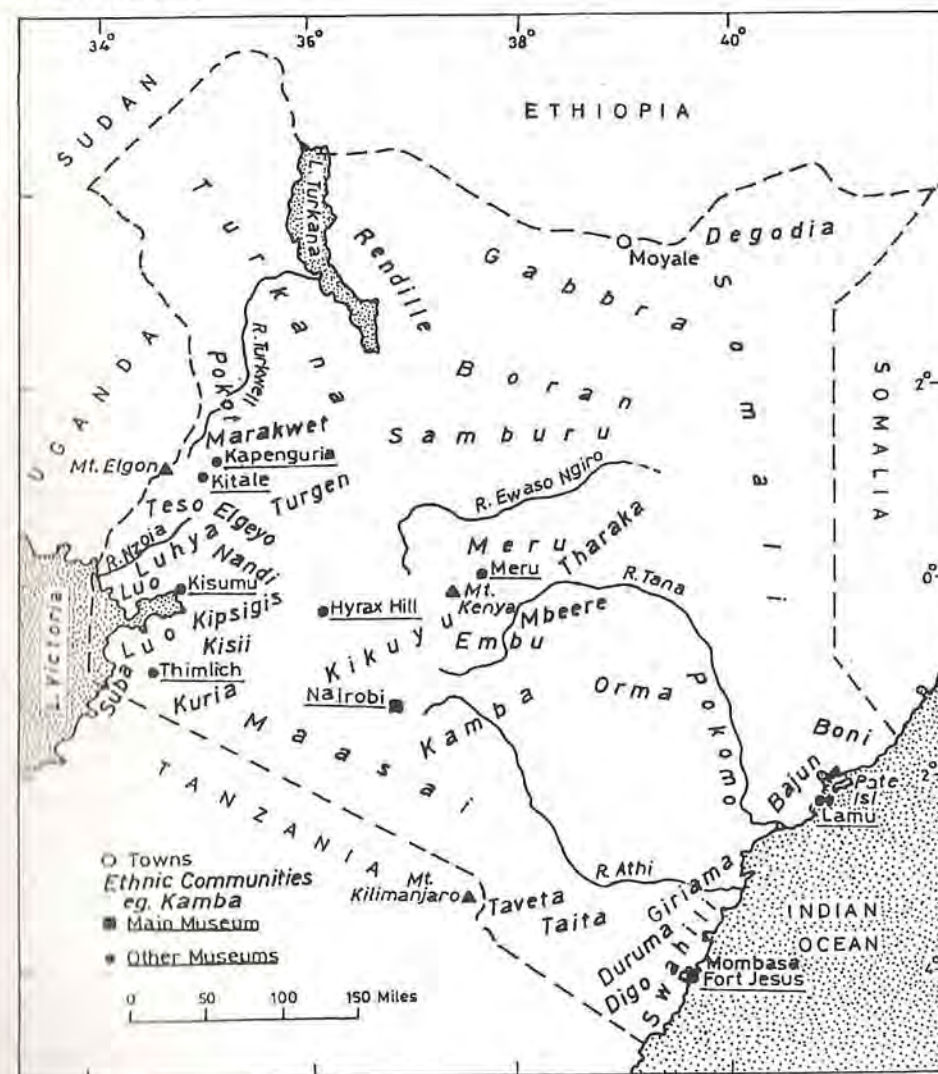
This attempt to create unity is enhanced further by displaying other exhibits that are emphasize our common origins. This includes the story line of human evolution and the cultural development of humankind. There has been criticism that displaying human origins exhibits in every museum is an unnecessary duplication, but we believe that this tends to make visitors aware that our destiny is intertwined and thus helps to reduce xenophobia. The story of human evolution exhibits is very effective in fostering understanding of our common origins which is reinforced by the fact that Kenya has been a major source of specimens which have made it possible to tell the story of human evolution during the last four million years. One of the effects of this has been that although the Government has decentralized development planning and its

implementation to the district level there has not been a chorus for establishing district museums unlike other government departments. That is how the National Museums of Kenya is striving to minimise Xenophobia in Kenya.

Acknowledgements

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KENYA'S MUSEUMS



LAYERS OF XENOPHOBIA IN A NATIVE AMERICAN MUSEUM

Annette B. Fromm, The Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, USA

Perceptions are all important in the presentation of culture. There continues to exist a number of instances when cultural institutions are not directly administered by indigenous communities. In return, those communities are expressing concern about how their history and culture are interpreted to the larger community and more importantly to their own communities. They are demanding a role in the interpretative process as well as in ownership.

From this perspective, the Creek Council House Museum in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, is in an awkward situation. This museum is located in the historic Council House of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. It was built in 1878 and served as the Nation's seat of government until 1906. At that time, with the dissolution of indigenous governments and the creation of the state of Oklahoma, the building was taken from the Muscogee (Creek) people by the United States of America. By 1917, the building was purchased by the City of Okmulgee. Over many years the Council House was used as offices for a variety of civic organization. It came to be the visual symbol of the City whose town square it graces.

In 1923, the Creek Indian Memorial Association (CIMA), a non-profit public interest group, was created by Judge Orlando Swain. Its original mission was to collect and interpret the history and culture of the American Indians in general. The CIMA maintained rooms filled with antiquarian displays in the Council House. Exhibits included collections of Mississippian culture excavated in the area, ethnographic collections representing a wide variety of Native Americans as well as the Five Civilized Tribes and the Creek, and a Pioneer Room, which showed the life of Euro-American settlers in Okmulgee County. Other tenants continued to use other rooms. In 1972, the CIMA leased the entire building from the City with the

intent of operating a Museum, as they do today. Therefore, the Creek Council House Museum is not affiliated with the Muscogee Creek Nation whose seat remained in Okmulgee.

The Creek Council House Museum, since its inception in 1923 as an extension of the CIMA, has been perceived as a white institution by all citizens of Okmulgee - Native American, European American and African American. Although the majority of the exhibits explored Indian topics, Creek community members did not see it as their museum. Their perceptions of the tribe's past treatment, in general, was a xenophobic response to the telling of their history. The general public, furthermore, has not been aware that native people, not only Creek, have served on the board and have been employed as staff. How these perceptions were addressed over the past year and a half when I was consultant to the City of Okmulgee with the stated goals of reorganizing the Museum and creating new permanent exhibits are the subject of this paper.

I came to the Museum late in 1992 to fill a void. In the midst of a one million dollar restoration project, the curator went on disability leave. After a year, she resigned from her position. I was brought in not only to direct the completion of the restoration, but also to assess the institution as a whole in order to establish systems and create a running order. My presence was an outright attempt to bring in an impartial, knowledgeable outsider who could break up some administrative logjams.

Adding to these tasks was the situation of perceptions. Several layers of xenophobia were built up at the Council House, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and the City of Okmulgee long before I arrived. A long history of distrust between the individuals representing these two entities needed to be calmed. I was also empow-

ered to bring about a reconciliation between the Nation and the City; to reestablish the smooth operations of the museum. Enter an outsider specifically contracted to serve as a mediator.

What was the situation when I came on the scene? One of the reasons for bringing in an outsider and for professionalizing the association was to placate the Nation. In response to the former curator's reaction to recent federal repatriation legislation, the leadership of the association feared for the disposition of the collection and the building. In fact, at the 1992 annual members meeting, the Principal Chief was not recognized and all Muscogee members of the association loudly walked out of the meeting. What they would do in 1993 preyed on the minds of some Board members. After all, they had poured not insignificant funds into the building's total restoration. Their extreme fears were that through nominations from the floor at the annual meeting, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation would take over "the Museum," dissolve the association, and disperse the collections. Moreover, they anticipated that the Nation would demand the return of the building as cultural patrimony. To the relief of the association and the City of Okmulgee, no such actions took place at the 1993 annual meeting.

So, the outsider entered. More ground for the presence of xenophobia. In studying to be an anthropologist, one is faced with the dichotomy of opinions regarding outsiders working within a community. One point of view is that the outsider can enter with few biases and only academic knowledge. This perspective is the one which I brought with me to Okmulgee. As an anthropologist, one of my areas of knowledge was museum organization. I had little or no background about Native Americans, much less the Muscogee (Creek). I thought that the main hurdle I would have to leap would be to prove my objectivity to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the City administration. Interestingly, at the close of my contract, I was told that the former obstacle had been cleared. The City, however, had its own agenda with the Museum. I believe my attempts to be inclusive brought to the fore their underlying xenophobic attitudes which can only be called groundless.

Once I got settled into the community, and they had an inkling of who I was, what other perceptions were we up against in the reorganization of the Museum? How were they resolved in a way to satisfy the many parties concerned? I already mentioned that the Museum was perceived as a museum for all of Okmulgee, when actually the stated purpose of the governing organization was that it be an American Indian museum. Furthermore, I was often told that Creek people felt out of place in the Museum. This was primarily because of one of the more popular exhibits in the building before the two-year renovation, the pioneer room. Here, turn of the century white Okmulgee life was presented. Finer household artifacts were displayed in a recreation of an early house interior.

Through many months of deliberation, the former curator and the Board of Trustees of the CIMA decided not to recreate the pioneer room when the Museum reopened. After it was decided to deaccession many of the artifacts from that exhibition, large amounts of time were spent in contacting donors and their heirs to return the objects. A great hullabaloo followed in the town as former donors were outraged that their predecessor's "stuff" was no longer to be memorialized in their museum. Careful sensitivity was necessary in explaining the decision and in the final auction of materials which could not be returned.

Actually, some of the materials that lacked provenance but had been displayed in the Pioneer Room were eventually retained. They could serve as examples of artifacts which were also found in Muscogee Creek homes of the period. A large walking-type spinning wheel is an example of this decision. Furthermore, because a county historical society does not exist, none of the European American photographs were deaccessioned.

How did we then codify this decision so that non-Native American materials would not be collected by a future curator? Part of the reorganization of the Museum included an analysis and revision of the 1923 by-laws of the Association. This process was initially solely placed in the hands of a young attorney on the Board of the Association. I felt I could add some perspective to the content; I also firmly felt that others

needed to be a part of the process. Thus, parts of the by-laws and, more to the point of the discussion here, the mission statement of the CIMA were given to the long-range planning committee which we created. The make-up of this committee was crucial to the planning process and to perceptions. It included selected members of the Association's Board, members of the City appointed Board, local businessmen, and a representative of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, among others. The decision to make this committee all-inclusive was important to the integrity of all other work to follow at the Museum.

In fact, the progression of events from the drafting of the mission statement to its final form in the amended by-laws is quite interesting. After the long-range planning committee finalized the statement, it was presented as part of the by-laws for approval to the entire membership of the Association. As I already mentioned, the largest ever number of Muscogee people attended the CIMA's 1993 annual meeting because they were concerned about several issues of the Association. Through the actions of several individuals in the general membership (Creek voices to be specific), the mission statement was further refined. It reads:

"The purpose of the CREEK INDIAN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION is to collect, preserve and interpret the culture of the Native American peoples with emphasis on the cultures represented by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation ... and to promote the integrity of the Creek Council House Building" (By-Laws, CIMA).

Why was the phrase "represented by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation" as strongly suggested by those individual members so important? The so-called Creek people in fact comprise over fifty individual small tribes, referred to as tribal towns. At the time of European explorations, these were autonomous peoples. The British in their own way, grouped them together under the umbrella term, Creek, itself a misunderstanding. Some of the existing tribal towns while represented in the governmental body known as Muscogee (Creek) Nation, do not consider them-

selves as Creek. They also don't recognize Muscogee (Creek) Nation as representing their interests. Furthermore, some are petitioning the U.S. government for recognition as sovereign states. Through this statement, the non-Muscogee Native American collections held by the Association retain their integrity. Board members still speak with feelings of regret of a former curator who sold valuable prehistoric lithics and Plain materials because they were not Creek. Those items with no Native American connection do not fit the criteria and can be legitimately deaccessioned.

This change of focus in the mission statement was not the only change pertinent to our discussion made in the association's by-laws. The composition of the Board of Trustees was amended. An annual appointee by the Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation would provide a direct voice between the two entities. If some activity or program was proposed which was inappropriate from the point of view of Creek Nation, the Board would receive guidance from this person. In other words, for the first time since its inception, the Creek Nation had an official voice on the Board of the CIMA. Remember, this is the organization which runs the Museum about the Creek people.

There is, of course, a drawback to decisions based upon cultural sensitivity and appropriateness. The Museum sponsors an annual arts fair each fall. In the past, a pow wow closed the event on Saturday evening. While Southeastern peoples participate in pow wows today, this form of social interaction is not part of their tradition. At the 1994 Oklahoma Indian Art Market, the first in two years, no pow wow was held. This choice was made for three reasons. A pow wow calls for a lot of volunteer help which is often difficult to muster. It is often not a money-making event, money is usually lost. Finally, in sensitivity to Muscogee (Creek) traditions, it was not held. The loudest voices complaining about the absence were, Creek people!

This brings us then to the interpretation of culture at the Creek Council House. Among my responsibilities was to recreate the permanent exhibits. As any researcher in a new scholarly field, I immersed myself into secondary and primary source materials. I also

came to intimately know the artifacts, photographs, ephemera and artwork in the collection deciding how to best tell the story of the Muscogee (Creek) people in the setting of museum exhibitions. Grant proposals were written to the state humanities foundation, a source of matching public funds. A concern of this agency is not only the inclusion of humanities scholars, but also community members. In following the precedent set with amendments to the by-laws, the newly hired cultural specialist at Creek Nation served on the committee planning permanent exhibits. Even more importantly, two respected individuals with whom the curator had worked continued to serve as consultants in this planning process. These so-called community scholars offered insights into cultural ambivalences. Each of these individuals continued to assist in choosing the important topics to talk about and guide us away from those which are private.

It is hoped that through these small, yet significant, efforts both strongly recommended by and carried out by an outsider, perceptions and barriers created over eighty years in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, would be broken down. It seems as if actively involving officials from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and community scholars, at least temporarily, laid to rest many complaints and fears from their side. Paranoia and xenophobia on the white side continues to fester below the surface. An issue in the restoration of the Creek Council House and in the recreation of the permanent exhibits was the makeup of the audience. For a large part it consists of travelers interested in anything and everything Native American. It is also a variety of com-

munity members - Euro-American, African American and Native American - school children and adult members of each of these communities. Given the paucity of information taught about Native American culture and history in local schools, the Council House saw a niche they would fill in presenting the story of the Muscogee (Creek) people in a sensitive manner.

The responsibility of museums in many instances is to educate non-Indians on the realities of Native American history and culture. In many cases, they must also educate the Indian people themselves. "Indians are at a disadvantage when it comes to preserving and controlling their heritage, because they generally lack a solid institutional base that can provide the continuity from the past to the future" (Thompson 1991:38). An unaffiliated museum or cultural center can accomplish that goal, but only with cooperation between staff and community representatives and members. In the past, however, according to Thompson (1991) Indian people looking to museums as a way to restore their culture have been treated with suspicion and hostility. The Creek Council House Museum was hoping to develop a working relationship whereby it could serve the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and its members because it is located in the heart of the Nation.

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THE BENIN COLLECTION OF HANS MEYER: AN ENDANGERED PART OF LEIPZIG'S HERITAGE

Adam Jones, Institut für Afrikanistik, Universität Leipzig, Germany

Most of the topics of this conference are dealing with the role Ethnographic Museums could and should play in combatting xenophobia. It should not be forgotten, however, that in order to do this, museums must continue to function properly as ethnographic museums. Hence the title of this session, "Museums in Danger". Xenophobia represents a particular form of intercultural misunderstanding. One of the most tragic cases of such misunderstanding recorded in African history concerns the confrontation that took place in 1897 between representatives of the British Crown and of the Oba of Benin, in what is now southern Nigeria. The story has been told many times, hence I only need to summarise it. The Acting Consul-General of the Royal Niger Company Protectorate was ambushed and killed on his way to Benin City. Many Benin dignitaries believed that he intended to conquer Benin by force, yet his party was unarmed. The British responded with what they termed a "punitive expedition", convinced that it would encounter little resistance because the people of Benin "would be glad to get rid of their king". But in the event the resistance was considerable, and in a desperate effort to ward off catastrophe the Benin monarchy resorted to its ultimate religious sanction, human sacrifice - thereby unintentionally reinforcing British preconceptions about the perversity of Benin culture. Finally, having captured the city, the British misinterpreted the Oba's failure to attend a meeting - the result, probably, of fear and different concepts of time - and deposed him, thus abolishing a kingdom that had lasted for nearly half a millennium. The whole sequence of events reflected not so much xenophobia as a total failure of two proud cultures to appreciate what the other was saying.

The bronzes which the British plundered from the Oba's palace on this occasion had played a key role in the political and sacral life of the Benin kingdom for at least 300 years and probably longer. As far as our

topic today is concerned, they are of particular interest in their depiction of "the Other" - be it the Portuguese in the sixteenth century or the prisoners-of-war taken from other African communities and made recognisable by their facial marks. No xenophobia here: if anything, it might be argued that the manner of portraying foreigners in these two examples from the collection in Leipzig reflects self-confidence and respect for cultural otherness.

Today the overwhelming majority of the bronzes and ivories are to be found in northern Europe and North America. Their impact on Europe was almost sensational. Some of those seized were given to the British Museum; the rest were sold and began to find their way on to the world market. The marketing process was accompanied by a discussion among scholars of their origin and artistic merit. Here again the scope for intercultural misunderstanding was great. Being mostly representational, they were in accordance with the European taste of the late Victorian period, and the skill involved in making them was self-evident. But many commentators considered that such masterpieces - or at any rate the creativity behind them - could only have come from outside sub-Saharan Africa. The Near East and Mediterranean were cited as possible places of origin.

Yet now that the power struggle had been resolved in Europe's favour, other commentators were ready to acknowledge for the first time that they were African artefacts that had a history and actually constituted art. Thus the Benin bronzes and ivories played a key role in the reevaluation of African culture at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Both points of view have survived to the present day. On the one hand many well-educated Europeans are still reluctant to acknowledge Benin's court art as evi-

dence of sub-Saharan Africa's cultural achievements. The personnel of ethnographic museums is obliged to listen patiently to questions such as "But tell me honestly, do you really think Negroes made these things themselves?" On the other hand, within Africanist circles the Benin bronzes, especially the more naturalistic ones, have assumed a symbolic role that other African cultures can only envy. In the past decade alone, for instance, at least a dozen books extolling Africa's past have had the photo of a Benin artefact on the cover.

Here in Leipzig, as many of you will see tomorrow, we are lucky enough to have a Benin collection which, though not as large as those of London or Berlin, is certainly one of the finest in the world. Most of it resulted from the spare-time efforts of a remarkable man, Hans Meyer, who through collaboration with the museum's director Karl Weule managed to assemble a truly representative collection of 53 objects in the first three decades of the twentieth century. This achievement may be compared with that of Vienna, where the Museum of Natural History acquired an even larger collection mainly through the generosity of the industrialist Georg Haas, or with that of New York, whose Metropolitan Museum of Art was recently bequeathed 163 Benin objects acquired by the Perlis family since the 1930s.

For us in Leipzig the Hans Meyer collection is indispensable for two reasons. First, as I have indicated, the collection provides irrefutable testimony to the artistic and technological capability of Africans. At the present time this is particularly important: partly as a result of recent trends in German political life and partly because of Africa's own political and economic plight, old stereotypes such as "Africans didn't even invent the wheel" are once again gaining credence. We can only counteract such nonsense if we can point to things that will impress people with no prior knowledge of African art. Secondly, as a university town with a growing African Studies programme we value the Meyer collection as a set of historical documents. Given the sparsity of written material on Africa before the nineteenth century and the enormous difficulties of interpretation raised by oral traditions and archaeology, we know very little indeed about the cultural histo-

ry of most early African civilizations. In the case of Benin, however, we can at least catch a tantalising glimpse of some aspects of court life in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The objects constitute an ideal means of stimulating students to discuss African culture.

What about the future? Most of you are no doubt familiar with the demands faced by European museums concerning the return of cultural treasures to their place of origin. As far as I am aware, no such demand has been made directly to the Leipzig Museum, partly because many Nigerians recognise the usefulness of having their culture displayed overseas.

As a result of the political changes in Germany since 1989, Leipzig now faces a different demand: namely, to give the objects to Hans Meyer's heirs and thereby run the risk that they end up in somebody's drawing room, removed from public view. (Since the objects were acquired, of course, their commercial value on the European and North American art market has risen enormously.) Although I am not familiar with the legal details, my personal view (and I assure you I am not being bribed to stay this!) is that such a development would be almost as tragic as the original removal of the objects from the Oba's palace nearly a century ago. We at the University of Leipzig would very much like to see the collection remain visible to the public, since it has a lasting role to play in educating people in Germany about Africa, in the same way as, say, the splendour of Great Zimbabwe has done for thousands of tourists. Moreover, it is vital that it should remain accessible to scholars - not just a few selected items, but the whole collection, since once separated from one another the objects will lose significance. As Jeanne Cannizzo showed five years ago in her controversial exhibition, "Into the Heart of Africa", museum collections may be conceived as cultural "texts" which have their own life history and require "decoding". Although much has been written about Benin art, we are only just beginning to understand it. Indeed, only last year the chronological framework upon which all recent studies have been based was seriously challenged by a young German scholar; and two weeks ago I listened to a panel of art historians in Toronto under the title "Do All Roads Lead to Benin?"

(a question they were still able to answer only partially). No doubt the centenary of the 1897 expedition in three years' time will give added stimulus to the academic discussion of Benin's history.

Much, then, remains to be done, and I cannot help thinking that Hans Meyer, himself a scholar, would have wished it to be done in Leipzig. Through him the

objects have become part of this city's multicultural heritage. Just as the presence of African scholars and students can enrich the social environment of a university town, so the presence of Meyer's Benin collection enhances the cultural and academic setting in which we live and work. We would be considerably poorer without it.

THE STUDY OF GERMANY'S BENIN ART COLLECTION

Garba Ashiwaju, Ibadan, Nigeria

Benin art and German scholars have been interacting since the beginning of this century. It is common knowledge among Africanists that the Benin art collections of the Berlin museums were one of the world's largest until they were either lost or destroyed during the second world war. These collections were acquired as a result of the genuine German desire to understand the cultures of Africa, in a period in which these art works were still sold out of ignorance of their artistic or cultural values. Unlike the gold works taken from Ghana ten years before Benin was ransacked, the British were easily fooled because the brass objects they took from Benin were of course not as valuable as gold. The Germans however had at that time already identified the cultural artistic and even economic importance of the works for understanding the cultures that produced them. After all, 'Völkerkunde' was fast catching on, not only as a field for enthusiasts but especially as an academic field. Hence German understanding of anthropology was undoubtedly at a more developed stage. As a result Germany has become a leader in African studies, also in terms of publications. One must not lose sight of Germany's leading role in the area of African linguistics as well. Scholars like Klingenberg, Lukas, Westerman and Köhler have excelled in the field of African linguistics. In the field of art history and culture, Frobenius, von Luschan, Struck and others, have also shown exceptional perception and empathy in their approach to African material culture. The result is

that from a very early stage in the development of (Völkerkunde) Africa as a field of interest, the Germans had begun to gather and acquire useful and relevant material. And this accounts for the large collection of African and indeed Benin arts in the German museums.

Interestingly, Benin art is truly unique in many aspects. As a matter of fact, Benin history relates with Western art. But of course, this is not meant in terms of form and content. Rather, Benin's early interaction with the Western world - information from European travellers goes back to the 14th century - has made its history easier to elucidate. The periodisation of extant Benin materials has proved incontrovertibly true according to information resulting from the European interaction with Benin. In addition, it is true that in terms of themes, materials and numbers Benin arts surpasses other ancient Nigerian arts. For these reasons Benin art has been exposed and well studied, especially by Westerners. This is not only because of the exposure the punitive expedition of 1897 provided, but even because the Benin court in several instances exchanged Benin art as gifts. As a result many of the works have been in Europe since long ago. Besides, European visitors, traders and missionaries alike also commissioned works of art which reflected other ideas and which they took back with them to Europe. This category constitutes the Afro Portuguese ivories which are quite well-known around the world today.

Efforts by local scholars to study and understand Benin art have been constrained by several factors. The number of Benin works available to them is scant. The larger majority of the works are in foreign museums all over the world. Besides, most books available on the subject have been produced by Westerners. German literature on Benin art, which is for example quite extended and influential, poses problems of translation. Recent initiatives have centred around cataloguing the works. In addition to this new information about the objects is becoming available to elucidate the research work. The city from where important art works were removed is extant and in fact fast developing into a modern city. The inherent problems here include constraints to archaeological investigation. The town is being built up very fast and poor technology and even the lack of government legislation on building sites makes scientific investigation difficult. The art tradition is now decadent. In addition, with the passage of time, primary sources are now more difficult to find, even authenticate. The result is that it is only the objects themselves as well as information on their provenance and history since they left Africa, that remains for obtaining information. Therefore collabo-

rative multi-disciplinary approaches appear to be the best to study these works in order to expose many of the otherwise unknown arts.

The opening up of East Germany will undoubtedly bring about the exposition of otherwise unknown or perhaps concealed Benin art works. The museums from the East should make known these objects and should be interested in opening up their collections for research students.

Armed with the appropriate methodological tools to handle African and indeed Benin art, I am interested in collaborating with German scholars to elucidate and document Benin art works in German and European collections. I have for some time now been keenly interested in tracing the movement of Benin arts in Europe post 1897. I believe that German archival materials as well as museum records will provide many interesting answers. Then the relationship between contemporary Benin court costumes and its arts have also caught my attention. These aspects as well as others which may arise are at the basis of my interest in Benin art in German collections.

HIGH STAKES: THE CASE OF ENDANGERED AFRICAN COLLECTIONS

Tawson Munjeri, National Museums and Monuments, Harare, Zimbabwe

Introduction

While xenophobia is often associated with human physical suffering like for instance in Rwanda and Bosnia, this paper addresses the issue of the silent and often forms or none exquisite forms of xenophobia. I am convinced that in order to fight xenophobia, museums should be well-equipped to do so. The essence of that equipment is found by the right museum collections. If these are pillaged then the museums become ill armed to meet the challenge. It is my submission that the collections of African museums are suffering or are threatened by xenophobia practices emanating from outside Africa.

Recently I came across a cartoon from the Daily Express (October 26th, 1994) showing a customer sitting at a table of a completely deserted restaurant. A waiter comes in and shouts: "Who ordered the steak?". Conveniently for me, the title written above the cartoon was "Xenophobia!". To me the customer in the picture represented an emancipated ex-convict, probably afflicted by one of the deadly diseases. His arrival struck fear to the law-abiding citizenry who take to their heels leaving the afflicted soul alone. The temptation is to put museums in the same context and ask the same question that was asked by Duncan

Cameron thirty years ago, Museums are they temples for the initiated or are they playgrounds for all and sundry? That approach would have been the easy way out for me.

A few years ago Professor Peter Ucko actually observed that in Zimbabwe, centralisation of museum collections had had disastrous effects. "The dictates of the natural sciences and a Xenophobia about indigenous cultures led to the eradication in one fell swoop, of research on ethnographic and anthropological topics" in many of the country's museums (1). Nevertheless, it is not my intention to dwell on this type of Xenophobia because I have dealt with it in other forums.

Therefore, back to the cartoon, as my point of emphasis is on 'who ordered the steak?', or even better, 'who is ordering the steak?' Two months ago I was privileged to attend the Fifth symposium on Legal Aspect of International Trade in Art, held in Vienna, Austria. Luckily again for me 'phobism' was introduced by one speaker who quoted Peter Marks, a renowned art dealer, as saying, "I for one do not want to live in a xenophobic gray world — I want continually to look at new and beautiful objects that delight the senses and excite the mind." (2). The Conference had been called to consider the case for LICIT as opposed to ILICIT traffic in cultural objects. The cited remarks of Peter Marks were intended to show that the demand for cultural items was insatiable and that what was considered licit was invariably linked with what was illicit. Again it is not my intention to re-open what was a very heated and inconclusive debate.

Suffice to say that archaeologists and anthropologists were termed the proponents of the object/context image and were thus lumped together with 'source nations' and duly and roundly condemned. These source nations (the greater number being in the Third World) were portrayed as 'nationalists'. They were accused of employing such 'unpalatable' terms like 'national cultural heritage' or 'national cultural patrimony', as if culture was a preserve of a nation etc. Their call was to open up and trade because culture was 'international'. In addition to that, "source nations needed foreign currency because they had small gross domestic products and fragile economies". Very nauseating to many here present, I presume. The real-

ity is that until then, it never occurred to me that cultural heritage would ever be viewed in the context of supply and demand, that is, in purely capitalist commercial terms. But wait you haven't heard nothing yet: The President of the International Cultural Property Society and a Professor at Stanford Law School, bluntly, said, "the object/context concerns have dominated the views of museum personnel" and regretably "those views had consolidated professional and public opinion in USA and elsewhere — this position supports retention and allies these professionals with the nationalists."

The learned Professor then laid his cards on the table, "Both supply and demand for cultural objects is increasing at a rapid rate" and these must be met. But to him Alas! "Why do source nations display so little interest in promoting the international traffic in cultural objects?" I am here making the dangerous assumption that the foreigner I am addressing today belongs to a different mould. That assumption is made on the basis of my exposure to ICME over the past eight years. Well, views change fast in the developed world. The African stance has not changed. While the developed world was holding Conferences on 'Licit' traffic of cultural property, Africa was holding workshops on Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property, the last such conference was in Arusha in September 1993 and I will present its appeal, "The Arusha Appeal" which reads:

"The participants in the workshop on the fight against illicit traffic have reviewed the preoccupying situation of the African heritage:

- The museum artefacts are stolen and illicitly exported.
- The archaeological sites are illegally excavated: The national heritage from the local communities has been stolen/or sold to unscrupulous traffickers.
- The consequences are immense and will have adverse effects on the future of African nations by depriving them of the knowledge of their past, by removing from the communities the symbols of their identity." (3)

It is pertinent to indicate that this workshop brought together all the countries of the Southern and Eastern Africa Region, together with representatives of INTERPOL, UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Back to our cartoon. Who is ordering the steak? The cited learned professors of course. Who is running away from infected renegade? Africa's voice is here loud and clear. Africa through its cultural institutions rightly fears for its survival as a cultural entity. If one wants to hear it from the African *gurus* then one needs only to listen to none other than Alphonse Oumar Konare, the immediate past President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and now the President of the Republic of Mali. In a wide ranging interview conducted in 1992, in Canada, Konare did not mince his words, "There is indeed pillage of archaeological sites and museums in the South".

Closer to home (Zimbabwe, that is) the opening up of the country, after fifteen years of isolation imposed following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 1965, seems to have now brought the possibilities of pillage. In the few cases that have surfaced recently, the danger seems not to have come from the obvious *sources* (night riders) with metal detectors etc. The threat does seem to emanate from some 'reputable' foreign researchers and institutions. That these may be only a front makes the spine freeze.

Assume for one moment you were head of a museum and you accidentally came across a letter written to one of your Curators. (I am going to quote part of but for obvious reasons will not mention the institution or individuals concerned.) The letter reads, "Dear — At long last I am acknowledging receipt of 47 skeletons and 49 specimens you sent in May (1994). We received items in June —, we have paid US\$500 to your account to defray expenses". You follow this up and indeed you find that material was deaccessioned from the permanent register and given to Museum X in the USA. Furthermore you find from an audit that in fact two cabinets of specimens are also missing. What would your reaction be?

The point to underscore is that xenophobia in museums in Africa is not based on emotion and unfounded

fears but on the real situation on the ground. Unfortunately apologists expect us to turn a blind eye to all this because in their view there is too much material culture being churned out, anyway. The learned Professors argue, 'anything made by people is a potential source of information about the human past and is therefore a cultural object'. What a syllogistic utterance!! Arising from this postulation is the conclusion made by these learned Professors that source nations have 'a marketable surplus of archaeological objects'. As such these 'source nations that already hold significant supplies of redundant objects in storage should begin to release them to the market'. There is only one way to describe such a dogmatic assertion. The pronouncement is so comical that one can only borrow words from a cartoon film series, *Ninja Turtles* (those sewage folks) where you find the expression "Absolutely boudacious!!". A more decent and apt reaction comes from James Boon who sees source nations as "Pillage, pillaged and sure to be pillaged again". (4)

With the assistance of the University of Iowa School of Art and Art History (USA), National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe undertook an intensive six-week collection mission in the Eastern half of Zimbabwe. The aim was to identify and or collect ethnographic objects for our museum collections. At the end of the exercise only five genuine artefacts were identified and collected. The rest was contemporary 'airport style' material.

This is not an isolated instance. A year ago the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale of Belgium undertook a similar exercise. The collection was needed for the forthcoming Zimbabwe Exhibition scheduled for Brussels in 1996. Of the four hundred cultural objects collected only twenty per cent were genuinely ethnographic. The picture was the same in 1990 when the National Museums and Monuments held an exhibition *10 Jahre Zimbabwe* in Germany. In both instances, the largest collection and the best ethnographic material was sourced from Museums in Germany and in the United Kingdom and other developed countries. Need one say more? There are no abundant cultural objects in Africa. That is the clear statement. Since this paper is presented in Germany, it is perhaps pertinent to repeat the famous saying of Otto Von Bismarck. At the

height of the 'scramble for the partition of Africa' he is reputed to have said, "my map of Africa is in Europe" or possibly vice versa. In the same context one is tempted to say, "the material culture of Africa is in Europe". The foregoing all underlines our fears and suspicions and I am sure you agree with us that they are real. Those fears are exacerbated by the fact that our local communities, customs officials and law enforcement agencies are not always versed with the value and importance of cultural property. This problem is compounded by inadequate security in museums. One finds little comfort when developed countries have the audacity to say, "Museums are powerless to stop thieves stealing objects even if the security arrangements are first rate". (5) What more is the Third World? Leading from all this is the question of how to address this melodrama? Put simply the answer lies in the causes of the problem. Stop the drive by dealers and support the stern crusades of the UNESCO, ICOM, etc. Singly as museums we are not in a position to stop the formidable forces behind the onslaught. The efforts of UNIDROIT to come to a resolution must be given all the necessary backup. In essence this is an international problem to be resolved at that level, in the first instance. We do have one positive steel arma-

ment on our side - a clear conscience and a mission to save an international cultural heritage. The opponents are currently attempting to put up a strong fight but they do admit as already indicated, that world opinion is not on their side. The resolution and recommendations of the Arusha Workshop on illicit traffic of cultural property sum it up. "This workshop invites authorities, with the support of the relevant regional and international organisations, such as SADCAMM, ICOM as well, ICOMOS and UNESCO to take immediate steps to ensure close co-operation between them and the countries of destination of stolen and illegally exported cultural objects. such co-operation should involve museums, heritage management institutions, police, customs and other relevant departments" (6).

Who is better poised to lead the onslaught or defence of the pavilion than ICME? I have witnessed your fights and concerns with issues like the Glenbow Exhibition issue of the 1980's. Surely what confronts ICME now is a more exciting if only bigger a challenge. Take it up.

In 1989 at the ICME session held in the Hague, I did say the system was IMMUNE. In 1994 I say the disease is TERMINAL unless we combine efforts to combat the disease.

Notes

- 1) P.J. Ucko, A proposal to initiate culture houses in Zimbabwe. Southampton, University of Southampton. 1981: 8
- 2) C.C. Coggins, citing Marks, Peter, Other points of View, Auction VI (5) 1971: 34
- 3) ICOM, Proceedings of the Workshop on illicit Traffic of cultural Property held in Arusha 24-29 September 1993. (Traffic LTJT.17) Paris 1994

4) J.A. Boon, Why Museums make me sad, ed. I. Karp and S.D. Lavine, Exhibiting cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display. Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press. 1991: 225

5) R. Mason, Burglaries are unavoidable say curators. Museum Journal, June 1994 94 (6): 12

6) ICOM, Workshop on Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property

MUSEUM'S CRISIS - SEEN FROM ST. PETERSBURG

Mikhail Rodionov, St. Petersburg, Russia

First of all let me express my deep gratitude to the organizers of this Conference. I regard the possibility to speak here as an honour, and I would like to wish the Leipzig Museum für Völkerkunde many happy returns of the day.

Introduction to the situation

Xenophobia as a social, or even mental, disease tends to be spreading all over the world. In Russia, it is taking shape not only in racial or religious hatred but in irrational fear of strangers and of unusual events. Something is done to counter this phenomenon in a traditional way. Thus, The Vth Conference of Ethnic Communities' Associations and Civil Rights Defence Organizations was held in St. Petersburg (April, 1994). As a result of this meeting, the 24th of April is to be commemorated as a Day of Ethnic Minorities' Rights, and the St. Petersburg City Government will have an Expert Consulting Committee on Human Rights and Ethnic Minorities.

The idea to convoke an Anti-Fascist Congress on the 24th of April 1995 has been discussed recently by the representatives of the cultural élite and the President of Russia. Among the Expert Consulting Committee's members are ethnologists from The Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (PG MAE). But it is their personal outdoor occupation. The question is: what can be done by an ethnographic museum as a cultural institute to fight the phenomenon? What ways, traditional and/or new, may be introduced now, when ethnographic museums are in crisis? Trying to find an answer to this vexing question I would like to outline the background and effects of the museum crisis, taking the PG MAE as an example obtained from my 25 years-long personal experience.

The Museum from Peter I to Mikhail the Last

The PG MAE is the first public museum in Russia,

founded in 1714, i.e. 165 years earlier than the Grassi Museum in Leipzig, as a Chamber of Curiosities (Kunstkammer) and reorganised in 1879, i.e. 10 years later than the Grassi Museum, into the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography. The round-the-world voyages of Russian sailors brought the museum rich collections from Oceania, Polynesia, North and South America. L. Schrenk, the head of the Museum in 1879-1894, collected material from the Far East. I. Voznesensky acquired ethnographical items from North America and Kamchatka. L. Zagoskin explored the unknown areas of Alaska. N. Miklukho-Maklay opened the world of New Guinea; W. Junk that of Central Africa; V. Vassiliev brought collections from China. To be named too are the Orientalist V. Radlov, the Iranist M. Andreev, the Turcologist A. Samoylovich, the Indologist B. Oldenburg and the specialists in Siberian ethnography L. Sternberg and V. Bogoraz.

The undergraduates of the St. Petersburg University (G. Manizer, I. Strelnikov, etc.) explored the Paraguay Chaco and Brazil. G. and L. Mervart's were sent to South India and Sri Lanka. The Museum also acquired the L. Frobenius collections on East Africa; some collections were obtained through exchange with museums abroad. The Russian poet and traveller N. Gumilev presented to the Museum his Ethiopian acquisitions (he was the first eminent poet exterminated by the revolutionary power).

After the Bolshevik coup d'état, the Museum, as many other museums of the Russian Empire, had gathered together underprivileged and underpaid enthusiasts. They had been doing their best to save the material evidence of the lost epoch, to preserve and, if possible, to develop scientific and cultural traditions. But their forces and that of the totalitarian state were unequal. In the thirties and forties the museums of the

USSR had been transformed into a mere extension of the State (which meant the Party) educational and propaganda system.

Under the international slogans, peoples and tribes of the world were divided into 'clean' and 'unclean', but the latter were not allowed into the Ark. Up to the late eighties it was strictly prohibited to set up exhibitions concerning the deported peoples (the Crimean Tatar, the Volga Germans, the Meskhetian Turks, the Greeks, the Koreans) as well as the Jews, the Albanians, etc. The reason for ostracizing was just political. Thus, during 'the great friendship' with China the Chinese exhibition in the PG MAE had been enlarged; later on, during 'the great rupture' it was recommended by the Party ideologists to curtail the exhibition, but the staff of the Museum never did this. Racial, religious, and cultural effects of this policy had become inevitable. The Museum depots had been turned into GULAG camps. Undesirable exhibits were arrested, damaged or even deliberately exterminated. Another category of 'unclean' items were the WWII prisoners. E.g., in the PG MAE stores, there had been locked, in complete secrecy, African, American, the Near and the Far East ethnographic collections from the Berliner Völkerkunde Museum. They were returned only in the late seventies (the guest of our Conference, Vera Vologdina, is one of the Museum workers who helped to bring these prisoners of war back to Germany).

New Challenges and New Ways

Since 1991 the PG MAE has become an independent museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences (before that it was only the local branch of the Moscow Institute). It was officially recognized as one of the most important objects of Russian cultural heritage. Formally we are independent, respected and free of old dogmas. But in practice we face new challenges. For instance poor financing by the Government and the Academy undermines our meagre capability to store, conserve and exhibit our objects of ethnographic value. The 18th Century building of the PG MAE has been delapidating since the previous epoch, and the Museum acquisitions outside Russia have been

sharply reduced at the time. So, the present crisis is deeply rooted into the past. It is the crisis of the concept. The lack of material sources hinders the effectiveness of our work. Nevertheless, a client-centred marketing philosophy (first waged by Peter I himself, who offered a glass of vodka or a cup of coffee with 'zuckerbrot' to the visitors of the Kunstskammer to stimulate the attendance) appeared to be hardly popular and psychologically acceptable among the museum professionals. Some of them are longing for a new concept, for a step-by-step detailed charter of what to do. Others hate the idea because it may restore an atmosphere of forced and false unanimity.

Nowadays common visitors of the PG MAE are likely not to divide peoples of the world into clean and unclean, or brothers and aliens, but into holders of hard currency and beggars. But I hope that knowledge ousts fear. To make strangers less strange we, in the PG MAE, organize temporary exhibitions and have started a new periodical entitled "Kunstskammer, The Ethnographic Papers", in which we discuss, among other subjects, xenophobia as well. Since our work needs broader coordination, we are interested in closer international contacts: e.g. to revive the exhibition "The people of the Near East", and to organize a new exhibition "The Jews of the Diaspora".

As for the new ways to change the old attitude, we may use the shape of museum events, as it is understood by Jan Sas from the Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam. The idea is to let children and teenagers learn about and dress up like people of other cultures (e.g. Jews, Turks, Afroamericans, Gypsies, American Indians). For one cannot hate the people you represent yourself. Human beings like to change masks. And if the popular fashion will bring into vogue clothes, behaviour customs, and even physical appearance of different kins, faiths and races, xenophobia could be seriously weakened. In that case, one may speak about the end of ethnography. Who knows, perhaps we shall learn to love the most remote of our neighbours, and thus, with the words of Hans Magnus Enzensberger, will stop to hate ourselves.

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUMS - BETWEEN XENOPHOBIA AND MULTICULTURALISM

Espen Wæhle, Ethnographic Museum, University of Oslo, Norway

This article deals with ethnographic museums in a time of a declared crisis of representation as well as a time in which the museums are confronted with challenges and pressures from the surrounding society.

We live in a world of increased xenophobia and related phenomena such as intolerance, ethno-centrism and racism. Could ethnographic museums possibly play a role to combat this development? Some will assert that this is hardly a task for a scientific institution (I will not discuss that argument here). Others who insist that ethnographic museums should play a role, will say that an institution like an ethnographic museum is neither suited nor competent in this field. A stronger criticism holds that ethnographic museums are too compromised, they are sort of trapped in unsuitable concepts and a damaging history. Severe criticism regarding the current status and possible futures for ethnographic museums has emerged from two corners: from within the ethnographic/anthropological profession and from vocal minorities or representatives of those we exhibit and present.

Ethnographic museums seems then to be in a 'between'-position: between xenophobia, a crisis of representation and authority, the multiculturalism debate and forceful media representation of the Other. The question I address is whether ethnographic museums are able to break out of its 'current imprisonment' and if so: can these museums play a role to combat xenophobia? My focus will be on ethnographic exhibitions and accompanying publications and educational activities, not on related museum tasks such as collecting, preservation and research. Although of much relevance to my discussion, I will not be able to include here the recent debate on the role of cultural festivals (Karp & Lavine 1991) or on the relative strength of exhibitions versus popular culture in changing attitudes and conveying insights in other cultures (Røigild 1985).

Xenophobia etc

As we experience a world of increasing xenophobia and racism, Norway is no exception. Yet, it is probably correct to argue that Norway has experienced less violent racism than central Europe or even neighbouring Sweden. If this can last or how long it may last is an open question. A recent study demonstrates a shift in the direction of increased scepticism towards 'immediate foreigners' (immigrants, refugees and those seeking political asylum). Covering the years from 1988 to 1993 the study also shows that Norwegians today base their scepticism and xenophobia relatively more on cultural than on economic factors (Hernes & Knudsen 1994; see also Giraud's discussion below).

In his foreword to "The view from afar", Levi Strauss (1985) seems to imply the following gradient: from racism, via ethnocentrism to xenophobia. This gradient ranges from racism being scientifically unfounded and politically and morally inadmissible to ethnocentrism — or at least xenophobia — being unfortunate but inevitable social facts. Xenophobia thus appears as socially and morally more acceptable. Levi Strauss explains this by the fact that xenophobia and ethnocentrism are universal phenomena and as such both inevitable and legitimate. A similar view appears in a background document to a Swedish whitepaper on discrimination (Hannerz 1982). Such views are attacked by Michel Giraud (1988) on the basis of the example of the French extreme right. This movement uses similar arguments, drawing on cultural legitimacy. The extreme right movement is opposed to immigrants in order to defend French cultural traditions. According to Giraud, ethnocentrism and xenophobia are social and historical products and thus not necessary and not even inevitable. Giraud agrees with Levi Strauss that there may be analytical differences between xenophobia, ethnocentrism and racism. In practice, however, Giraud maintains that xenophobia

and ethnocentrism act negatively by leading to suppression, segregation and discrimination.

While Levi Strauss seems to understand xenophobia as fear of what is foreign, Webster's dictionary lists xenophobia as fear and hatred versus foreigners. If the latter definition reflects this phenomenon, Giraud has an important argument. This paper will not explore the finer analytical and practical distinctions between concepts like racism, ethnic discrimination, ethnocentrism and xenophobia (see for example Brox 1991, Long 1992, Todal Jenssen 1994), but rather relate these phenomena to the recent anthropological debate on representation and multiculturalism. The Ethnographic Museum, University of Oslo, does not have any explicit programme to combat racism and xenophobia, but as I will try to demonstrate in this paper, since the fifties the museum has had a series of efforts intended to extend knowledge and understanding for foreign cultures, and thus — at least indirectly — tried to contribute to less racism and xenophobia in the surrounding society.

Representation and Authority

Recent controversies over ethnographic representation and authority have made it clear why ethnographic museums do have inherent problems when it comes to combatting xenophobia, or conveying cultural differences and even cultural knowledge in general. There has both been a criticism of the history and inherited traditions, concepts and way of thinking in the museums and similarly a critique of the society that we were/are a part of.

Ethnographic museums are said to be the product of colonialism and imperialism, as such today still hegemonistic devices. They are part of repressive discourses, and are in their activities, such as exhibitions, manipulators with the bad habit of essentializing and reifying culture. Further, ethnographic museums are said to be outdated as they have an authenticity addiction: they are not responsive to current cultural developments towards the global village, but give privilege to pre-contact objects (Kasfir 1992). Museums are also seen as shaken by the debates on the epistemological status of concepts such as Art, Text and Culture. In short ethnographic museums are not seen

as living up to current challenges and do not longer have a legitimate position. As I will soon come back to, they have also been accused of denying access and voice to representatives of other cultures (Ames 1991, 1992, Bordieu 1984, Clifford 1988, 1991, Clifford & Marcus 1986, Danto et al 1988, Durrans 1988, 1992, Freed 1991, Marcus & Fischer 1986, Hiller 1991, Jones 1993, Karp & Lavine 1991, Price 1989, Vogel 1986, 1991).

Several of these debates have also entered the museum scene in Norway, but it has been restricted to some museums and academic circles. Yet, we have not had the demonstrations, public debate, aggressive criticism and cultural debate (in a series of conferences as well as in journals and magazines) that has been reported from England, USA and Canada surrounding several exhibitions (Ames 1991, Karp & Lavine 1991).

A conclusion from the recent debate is that we have come to realize that ethnographic museums no longer have indisputable claims for a privileged neutrality and universality. "Representation is a political act. Sponsorship is a political act. Working in a museum is a political act" (Ames 1992:13). Museums are about cannibals and glass boxes according to Ames (op. cit.). Cannibalism because we absorb Others' lives into Ours, by appropriating other peoples objects for our research, interpretation and exhibitions and, there is a glass box for everybody. In short: museums are about ideological production.

Societies are thus not neutral, objects are not innocent, they weave a web of dominance and exploitation (Pearce 1991). As we exhibit cultures, we write or construct cultures, we do not depict cultures (Hastrup 1992). Any exhibition builds on certain assumptions, any exhibition is a social and cultural construction. Some aspects are focused, other subdued, some things are asserted while other things are ignored (Freed 1991, Karp & Lavine 1991). What we convey is cultural difference and this creates an inherent anthropological problem as we inevitably create a gulf between Us and Them. And thus, in spite of itself, this activity may be implicitly racist (Martinez 1992, Preloran 1975).

The Multiculturalist Challenges to Museums

A discussion closely related to the crisis of representation and authority, emerges from what some see as a paradox. During the last 150 years ethnographic museums have collected and conserved threatened cultures, or at least their objects. Those who formerly were nothing but dominated and oppressed as well as on the verge of extinction, are now emerging as a sharply politicized and well organized force in the global community. These groups now demand an independent voice, also in museums.

In England, the USA and Canada there has been a lively debate challenging ethnographic hegemony, no longer solely from the profession itself, but from the groups we are exhibiting. These groups are now trying to establish and maintain a feeling of community and claiming social, political, economic and cultural rights in a larger world. This tendency is what many now refer to as multiculturalism.

Who owns history? What constitutes knowledge, and particularly ethnographic knowledge? There are claims for opening up museums, as well as establishing independent museums for groups in opposition to dominant society. Such claims come from both immigrant communities as well as representatives of indigenous peoples or minorities overseas. What we have seen, is an attack on ethnocentric concepts and ethnocentric ways of structuring exhibitions and other projects communicating knowledge and understanding about other cultures (AFN/CMA 1992, Ames 1991, 1992, Freed 1991, Karp & Lavine 1991, Karp, Mullen Kraemer & Lavine 1992).

The Media War

If we accept that the attitudes of Norwegians towards foreigners, (as well as other Westerners' attitudes) are, at least partly, established through the information they receive through the media coverage on other cultures, the message received is an extremely negative one. I want to focus on this aspect for a short while, as ethnographic museums are by no means alone in the field of conveying information on the Others.

In my grandmothers time (her brothers were sailors who contributed portraits of a chimpanzee and a fellow black sailor to the family album) the Others were wild, but also free, or at least untamed. At that time attitudes were dominated by an oscillation between fascination and aversion to the foreign parts of the world. Today the Other is no longer wild or free, the Other of our time is hungry and dependent. People in the Third World are now depicted, or to be more correctly constructed, as short of (i.e. lacking) almost anything a human may ever need or desire. Sadness and disaster, corruption and mismanagement, ecological crisis and lack of abilities is the order of the day. The Other is weak and defeated. Judging from a Norwegian bulletin board on developing countries (*Landstavl*, issued weekly), Norwegian NGOs, solidarity organisations and research institutions confirm the picture presented by the media. A number of them also profit from disaster and thus frame their presentation as to encourage sympathy and welfare contributions.

Some Norwegian photographers have been criticised by the NGO community because they have tried to redress the balance: conveying the fact that in spite of distress and disaster, you are in fact able to find smiling people in happy moments. After all and any developing country presents a range of photographic objects conveying different messages than starved children. As one of these photographers has maintained, also the poor herding boy has a right to a beautiful sunrise (Frøshaug 1992).

Peoples and cultures of the Third World are mostly represented in a heavily biased way. I will argue that this also assists in building up negative attitudes and probably encourages xenophobia and ethnocentrism. Is there any hope for ethnographic museums to find a legitimate role and possibly to directly or indirectly support the fight against racism and xenophobia? Are we prisoners of repressive and ideological discourses or are we able to somehow break out?

Historic Glimpses from the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo

The Ethnographic Museum at the University of Oslo provides some interesting examples pertaining to the discussion presented in this paper (for an in-depth

Danish parallel, see Sjørølev 1991).

The birth of museums, and particularly ethnographic museums, is these days linked to and explained in relation to the colonial epoch and the race for resources, markets and colonies. A most explicit link is to be found in a guide in Le Musée Congo Belge where Baron Alphonse de Haulville wrote: "Le Musée du Congo Belge a encore une autre mission: il doit être un instrument de propagande des idées coloniales. Présentées suivant des données scientifiques, les collections parlant à la raison, en même temps que par l'exposé, séduisant bien que subjectif, des résultats acquis grâce au génie et à l'énergie de notre race, elles émeuvent le cœur en suscitant les nobles sympathies et les saines émotions" (1910: 7).

Available sources do not suggest a Swedish background for the creation and the legitimization of the museum in Oslo (Nielsen 1981, Høygaard 1986, 1989, Gjessing & Kjekshus-Johannessen 1987). When the museum was founded in 1892, we were in a forced union with Sweden (Norway became independent in 1905) and the Swedish and not to that for almost 400 years a colony under Denmark (until 1814). Norway was thus not a colonial power as many other Western countries in the latter part of the last century. This fact does not, however, imply that Norway was a country devoid of colonial aspirations or colonial attitudes towards people of non-European cultures.

The Norwegian merchant fleet served colonialism and increasing international trade on many oceans. Young Norwegian men found work in colonial administrations in all parts of the world. Further we definitely had inter-racial relations in Norway. In the northern and central parts of the country towards the indigenous people of Fennoscandia — the Saami (formerly referred to as Lapps, Gjessing 1973) — and in more southern and central parts of the country as well as along the coast towards Gypsies and various groups of Travellers (Schlüter 1993). And lastly, when we were still a young nation we lost in the international court in the Hague to our former colonial power Denmark, the battle for colonizing the Inuit of Greenland.

What is important here, is that aggressive colonial attitudes were not necessarily as dominant in Norway as

in other European countries or in the Americas. Adding to this is the fact that outsiders saw Norwegians and Norway as an exotic and underdeveloped part of the world. We were simply not regarded worthy of membership in the finer and elevated circles of the colonial world (Røed 1993). During the first 50 years of existence the staff of the Ethnographic museum in Oslo also regarded our rural cultural traditions and objects to be similar standing as non-European traditions and objects. In 1906 however, our Norwegian collection was handed over to the new Norwegian Folk Museum (Gjessing & Kjekshus-Johannessen 1987).

When, during the first decades of its history, the purpose of an ethnographic museum in Oslo is explicitly stated, it is said that it was meant to serve; that is to please and educate the public. There was an emerging interest in the peoples and cultures of other corners of the world. Even if many ethnographic museums were hoped to serve the interest of colonialism, many of them left the colonialists disappointed.

It is interesting to note that the Ethnographic museum in Oslo has hardly been under attack in recent years from our indigenous population or from immigrant communities. In Norway, the question of the position of the Saami people and their representation in museums started already some decades ago. At the end of the forties some Saami representatives felt that the fact that Saami culture was exhibited in an ethnographic museum, implied that they were not regarded as equal to other Norwegians. The Norwegian Folk Museum has since 100 years been the major museum for ethnological and ethnographic exhibitions on Norwegian culture. Already in 1949, Saami representatives, the Folk Museum and the Ethnographic Museum started negotiations on the transfer of our sizeable Saami collection, one of the major collections in Scandinavia at that time. In 1951 the transfer was approved by the University of Oslo, and the actual transfer took place from 1953 to 1956 (Gjessing & Kjekshus-Johannessen op.cit.). In a Norwegian political climate of hardline assimilation policies and a history and continuing oppression of the Saami in many respects, this was a bold political initiative on the part of Professor Gjessing at the Ethnographic Museum. A research position and a department within the Folk

Museum followed the transfer of the collection. Later developments in the museum world in Norway, foremost after the eighties, has led to a number of Saami scholars taking up positions in museums and the Saami have become the major participants in representing and presenting their own culture in existing museums as well as in their own museums and regional cultural centers.

As most other European countries Norway has since the sixties experienced an increased immigration from both Third World as well as Western countries¹. By mere coincidence the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo does not have substantial collections or major exhibitions from the countries or cultures represented in the larger groups of non-European immigrants. This implies that non-European immigrants visiting our museum, will largely find what are also foreign cultures to them. This may explain why we hardly have been approached by these minority groups in Norway (see later presentation of IKM).

In Oslo, there has been an exhibition tradition since 1972 of linking ethnographic exhibitions and current affairs, political issues and social relevance. Since 1972, 22 out of 45 temporary exhibitions have covered such issues, and about half of the permanent exhibitions have had sections doing the same. Contrary to the characterization of Hans Jörg Fürst, exhibition styles that feature the contemporary state of indigenous peoples including economic aspects and human rights have been quite prominent in our museum (Fürst 1991). The majority of the 22 current affairs exhibitions have been focused on indigenous peoples.

We have borrowed a small part of the Saami collection transferred to the National Folk Museum and include the Saami as a part of our exhibition on Arctic and Sub-Arctic peoples. Already in 1972 we made a travelling exhibition on the status of the reindeer herding Saami in the larger Norwegian society. 1979 was a year of intense conflict between the Saami and the Norwegian government, revolving around the proposal to dam the Alta river for hydropower production (Paine 1982). In our permanent exhibition on Arctic cultures a political style wall paper was devoted to the

Alta case, and a similar case in Sweden (Skattfjällsmaalet, the Tax Mountain Case). In the same year the Saami artist Hans Ragnar Mathisen was invited to show his exhibition on portraits from the Fourth World: an artist's representation of the oppression of indigenous peoples worldwide as seen through the portraits of individual persons from indigenous cultures. The exhibition was accompanied by text panels on the current situation of indigenous peoples as well as catalogues and art reproductions.

Exhibitions on indigenous peoples have become a recurring feature of our museum. The case of indigenous land rights and energy development was followed up in 1988 with an exhibition on the Yanomami in Brazil and in 1991 on the Navajo in USA. Exhibitions covering other aspects and objects from the indigenous world appeared in 1982 on the Skolte Saami, in 1988 on cultural change among Canadian Prairie Indians and drawings and reflections from young Aguaruna Indians in Peru. In 1989 on the so-called Columbus Year and in 1993 the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, we mounted an exhibition on peoples of the rain forests (presented later). This was followed up in 1994 with an exhibition on the Maya of Central America, on the Pano (an indigenous people of Arem, India) as well as two exhibitions on the Netsilik Inuit of Canada from the early contact with the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen in 1904 to the negotiations in 1993 leading to establishment of self-determination through Home Rule.

The Ethnographic Museum in Oslo is part of the University, an institution with a tradition of struggling to maintain academic freedom. For the museum this has implied that we have not been unduly influenced by the need for diplomatic tact. We recently opened an exhibition on Bhutan which challenges the myth of Shangri La (Wikan 1994), including criticism of aspects of Buddhism, the state religion in Bhutan. We are still shielded from market pressures which has forced many other museums in the direction of what Ames calls infotainment (1993). We have rather felt a pressure on our budgets from the growing number of students in Norwegian universities and regional colleges. We have to fight for the museum in the larger competition for scarce resources. As we are part of an

institute including research, teaching and the museum, we have taken our profile from the fact that anthropologists in Norway since 1945 have taken little interest in research on material culture and objects. The institutes research and teaching profile in social anthropology has meant a partial neglect of the collection, but possibly paved way for the exhibitions on current affairs and political issues. Such an exhibition profile is probably part of a necessary fundament to gain credibility and find a role in combatting xenophobia, but as I will come back to later: certainly is not sufficient for an ethnographic museum.

One should not forget here that ethnographic museums are rather small if seen on a national scale. As most are situated in the capital or larger regional cities, they hardly reach the total population of the country. In Norway there is one full ethnographic museum supplemented by the Ethnographic department at the Historic Museum, University of Bergen. In such a setting ethnographic museums risk becoming marginal in the national context. In Oslo we have tried to counteract this by establishing ourselves as a part of wider national networks².

What I have mentioned so far on the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo may not necessarily create a different structural position (see Wolfgang Mey's contribution), but it may entail a position different from some other ethnographic museums. Ethnographic museums face new challenges for change and a redirection of exhibition developments and much of this comes together in the multiculturalist debate.

Some Methodological Considerations

There are hardly reasons to argue that the current debate on representation and multiculturalism is totally ungrounded or unfair. But as Freed (1991) has pointed out in an article called "Somebody is blowing on our vitines", a fair amount of fog has been produced in the process. Although there are many valuable arguments for change, there have been some inherent obstacles and dangers:

As anthropologists we tend to argue that other cultures must be understood and to a certain extent

judged on their own premises. There are good reasons for doing the same when scrutinizing ethnographic museums. I agree that there are some structural problems pertaining to all of our museums, and yet I will argue that we are obliged to consider the particular position and history of each and every museum in order to evaluate how it is positioned in the discussions we confront here. There have been too many sweeping characterizations claiming validity for all ethnographic museums in the western world. I maintain that such new monolithic approaches are not in our interests.

A large part of the criticism and deconstruction of ethnographic museums has included methodological weaknesses. Further we have seen a number of studies that are deconstructing in order to find a hidden political agenda by guessing and creating a context for i.e. exhibitions. When data on historical developments are lacking, authors have found no problems in framing the anthropologists as crooks in stead of, by regular research standards, to establish the relevant context for the museum or the exhibition one is discussing (Freed 1991, Karp & Lavine 1991). We have seen a fair amount of retrospective moral condemnation of the actions of museum staff in earlier days, judging actions of earlier times by today's standards (Gould 1989, cited in Freed 1991).

A number of studies analyze exhibition practices for their communicative effect on the public (mostly a negative one: continuing hegemonistic and cultural imperialist attitudes) without studying the audience at all. The reaction of the audience has been imagined by researchers, or he or she has taken for granted that the anthropological reading parallels the reaction of the public. The effect on the public has too seldom been established through regular research (Durrans 1988). Another way of phrasing this is that many studies have seen the Text (i.e. the exhibition) as the fundamental source of meaning and have overlooked the role of the Reader (i.e. the audience). For an interesting discussion on these issues in ethnographic film, see Crawford 1992, Hastrup 1992, Martinez 1992, Preloran 1975.

Multiculturalism and Ethnocriticism

Lately, minorities, indigenous peoples and immigrants

have been invited to present independent exhibitions in ethnographic museums and other museums and galleries. Examples include what I described earlier on the Saami artist Hans Ragnar Mathisen at the Ethnographic Museum of Oslo, more international examples are presented in Ames (1992) and Karp & Lavine (1991).

Another redirection of exhibition practices is when outside groups are invited to participate in the production of museum exhibitions. Our museum recently opened an exhibition along these lines. The exhibition was curated in cooperation with the Oslo City Museum (and exhibited in their halls) and the International Cultural Centre and Museum (IKM) a meeting point for immigrants and immigrant artists. The exhibition dealt with initiation in five different groups: Protestants, Humanists and Jews from Norway, the Ibo of Nigeria and Buddhists from Sri Lanka. Resident immigrants participated in of the preparation of the exhibition and the catalogue. An Ibo couple and a mother and daughter from Sri Lanka presented the whole exhibition to school classes (in the beginning with the assistance of a musical group from the Gambia). The exhibition will probably be rearranged for touring parts of the country.

Some time ago the Ethnographic museum in Oslo housed an exhibition on Travellers in Norway, this project included close cooperation from the fieldwork phase, via writing and analysis to the final exhibition (Schlüter 1993). Examples of a larger scale include how the Horniman Museum in London cooperated with the resident Nigerian community on a major exhibition on Nigeria³. Other examples are to be found in Ames (1992) and Karp & Lavine (1991).

Terence Turner (1993) has suggested some useful distinctions on multiculturalism that should be followed up in the debate on ethnographic museums: the crisis of representation, claims for room for new voices in the museum and our debate here on xenophobia. Turner suggests that we should be aware of two forms of multiculturalism, the first one being of a type that ethnographic museums are likely to be sceptical of, and rightly so I think. "Difference multiculturalism" entails essentializing, romanticizing the idea of culture

as the property of one ethnic group or race. This form of multiculturalism runs the risk of reifying cultures as separate units through focusing too much on delimitation and mutual distinctness, thereby certifying cultural and ethnic separatism. Another trend here is too much focus on internal cultural homogeneity. The stereotyped version of this is being criticized as 'political correctness'. Turner contrasts this with what he calls 'critical multiculturalism' (see below) which rather seeks to be politically conscious than politically correct.

The representation debate in anthropology has borrowed a lot from literary criticism. Although there are dangers in textualizing culture, a recent book by Arnold Krupat (1992) on North American Indian literature has some valuable arguments to offer in this debate. Discussing difference multiculturalism, which he labels ethnocriticism, Krupat draws on a citation from Todorov (1986): "...the content of thought should not depend... upon the colour of the thinkers skin" or as Krupat adds on sex, class or ethnicity (Krupat op. cit.: 25). I am not referring to Todorov in order to reject the type initiatives I referred to above, which I believe to be a necessary step in the development of ethnographic museums. But including the Other as producer or co-producer of exhibitions does by no means solve all the problems presented in this paper.

New Directions for Ethnographic Museums?

Krupat (1993) is interested in multiculturalism in a sense that equals one of the aims formulated for the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo. In the seventies, when our museum was going through a face of radical restructuring of the house and the exhibitions, Fredrik Barth, the Professor of the museum at that time formulated the task of the museum as "to create in the public's mind a sense of cultural diversity and the multiplicity of the human condition as to contribute to an understanding of our times" (cited in Mugaas 1989).

Our interest in multiculturalism should be established in a sense that it shall form the relation to the Other and cultural differences so as to provoke an investigation of, and a challenge to, what we take for granted as Our own. This is a clear parallel to Turner's critical

multiculturalism. The idea is, and this can clearly be adapted in exhibitions, to use cultural diversity and cultural differences as a basis for challenging, revising and relativizing basic ideas in both the dominant as well as minority cultures (Krupat 1992, emphasis added). In exhibitions, as well as at other cultural crossroads, the intention is to create a more open, vital and democratic joint culture. The overall point, is a claim for a stronger focus on Ourselves as we strive to construct and convey exhibitions on the Other. Krupat suggests a strategy for redirecting the focus away from the contents of cultures, also away from boundaries and to look at the terrain between cultural groups, as well as the constant commuting which is taking place in this world over and between boundaries (the Global Village).

Karp & Lavine draw on a much cited article by Cameron (1972) when they pose a choice to museums today. The old choice of being a temple, a universal objective model based on timelessness is hardly relevant anymore, they argue. The time is now for being a forum where confrontations, experimentation and debates are taking place. I will now conclude with a discussion of what type of critical developments may lay ahead in our exhibition making.

We have seen the dangers involved in that the ethnographers used to build monolithic and hegemonistic truths about the Other. As I have already indicated, there are similar pitfalls ahead if exhibitions are made to be an intellectual niche which only can be filled by the dominated or discriminated group — the substitution of Western high culture with new monolithic versions from the dominated (Turner 1993). Earlier exhibitions often tended to praise the glory of colonialism and cultural evolution. If substituted by exhibitions made by the Other, we may run the risk of once again framing the exhibitions in an uncritical and positive tone. We are neither in need of exhibitions that cannot criticize "Primitive harmony" or "the Noble Savage" (for example discussing inequalities linked to power, hierarchy, gender or more extreme phenomena such as infanticide and female circumcision, see Edgerton 1992) nor exhibitions that are not able to break down contradictions. We must look for ways of deconstructing dichotomies such as Us/Them,

West/Rest etc. An analysis of current Indian writing in North America brings out a further argument. We need to get rid of the culprit mechanism that includes a creation of purity of the in-group by projecting all kinds of corruption and pollution on the out-group. History certainly warrants a picture of the White Crook and the Red Hero, but we are all aware that this is not the whole story (LaCapra, in Krupat 1993). After the post-modernist debate in anthropology there are reasons to ask if there is "really no middle ground between worshipping dogmas as immutable truths — and abandoning the idea of truth itself" (Todorov 1986, in Krupat 1992:22).

Both We and They have come to love and live by certain metaphors — in writing and exhibiting on America for example, Mother Earth and the Circle have been prominent. The circle for example is contrasted with a declared linear view of the West. Krupat suggests that it is not so important if such metaphors are correct or not (for quite some North American Indian groups the circle has little relevance and if so, merely on a metalevel). Such metaphors tend to become new types of monolithic inclinations that obscure the complex relation between Western discourse and analytical models in science and the non-Western models of cosmology and understanding.

In a recent conference of university museums of Norway, the Saami history professor Einar Niemi⁴ urged both Saami and Norwegians to produce new types of exhibitions. While there have been good reasons to focus the former exhibitions on ethnic identity and stability and accompanying self-exaltation, we now see that this has led to much rootedness and essentializing of cultures. As Krupat, Niemi wants exhibitions rather to focus on the real world of identity fluctuations and strive to surprise the public; probably a better strategy to convey insights in what ethnic groups and nations are: imagined communities (Andersson 1983). Museums should not be there to confirm and consolidate, but serve as institutions of emancipation (Niemi op. cit. citing Heidegger).

The arguments presented above not only pose challenges to exhibitions, but also to the collection policies of ethnographic museums (Mörck 1991). The

Ethnographic Museum of Oslo has not revised its collection policy since the seventies when we were concentrating on urgent anthropology in documenting traditions and objects of vanishing cultures. Other museums have, to a much larger extent, started to collect from the interfaces of the Global Villages (Mörck op cit).

In practical terms, the arguments presented above basically do not raise the question about who is making the exhibition: We or the Others. The question is whether exhibitions (whoever makes them) can go beyond ethnocentric concepts and ethnocentric ways of structuring exhibitions. Once we try we are easily drawn to the textual side.

The Ethnographic Museum of Oslo made in the Year of Columbus and in the Year of the Indigenous Peoples (1992-1993) an exhibition on rainforest peoples. The idea was to surprise the visitor. The introduction confirmed the idea that indigenous groups of the rainforest (in the exhibition Chewong of Malaysia, the Efe or so-called Mbuti Pygmies of Zaïre and the Arawaté Indians of Brazil) are now part of a strong indigenous movement for selfdetermination and cultural rights. For this purpose we exposed indigenous poetry with a political sting, a few photographs and a wall of T-shirts from all corners of the indigenous world. We had to disappoint many visitors though, as there was very little information on ecology, deforestation or other environmental issues, as most visitors expected. In stead the exhibition tried to use indigenous concepts, conveyed to the audience as cosmology, to explain how the inhabitants of the rainforest look at such issues from their own perspective. The problem remained that this message was mainly received through guided tours, text panels and the exhibition catalogue (Howell & Wæhle 1992).

The message was there, but as Screver has pointed out, museum learning is self-paced, self-directed, non-linear and visually oriented (cited in Heuman Gurian 1991). This demonstrates that, even if we tried to structure the exhibition according to non-European concepts, this message did not necessarily come across in an immediate way. A major exhibition of art from India to be shown in France and the USA offers a

better example of a more immediate strategy. The exhibition itself was structured according to the Indian concept of *rasas* or sentiments. This structuring was then reflected in painting the exhibition rooms in colours corresponding to these sentiments.

Another example from Norway is the award-winning museum in Alta in northern Norway (European Museum of the Year, 1993), famous for the rock carvings in the surroundings of the museum. As you enter the museum building, you will meet a selection of replicas of the rock carvings and texts interpreting the mythical character of the carved symbols. The next section is the most interesting for the discussion presented here. You enter a room introducing a selected part of the culture of the indigenous Saami of Norway, where the structuring idea is the shaman's drum (in Saami *meavrrigákti*, in Norwegian *runebomme*). They have eleven in a shaman's drum with three distinctive sections (they also come divided in five): representing everyday life, the underworld and the world above, and this has been used for designing the room itself. The shaman's drum has decorations depicting mythical figures, these are then shown and explained in the hall, according to the words they are associated with. Both the rock carvings and the symbols of the shaman's drum are given a mythological explanation, but whether the rock carvings were made by the ancestors of the Saami or the Norwegians is not commented upon. At the other end of this room is a replica of a small gorge, a Saami sacrificial site and with the help of modern technology the visitor may press a button and listen to a yolk (in Saami *luhtti*, in Norwegian *joik*, Saami vocal music or type of chant) by Ingor Ante Ailu Gaup, specially composed for this museum hall. Other rooms in the museum include presentations of a revivalist Protestant community (Norwegian: *læstadianisme*) which is central to religious life among many Saami today, trade and markets and other mundane phenomena⁵. In 1996 Mary Bouquet will curate an exhibition on the complex history and development of academic and museum anthropology at the University of Oslo. We are not only looking forward to an outsider's view on us, but also to the irony that anthropologists and the museum are going to replace the Other as the focal point in an ethnographic exhibition!

If ethnographic museums must be forums for confrontation, experimentation, surprise and debate in order to tackle the range of challenges confronting them, we can not look for "The solution". I have pointed to some possibilities for the museum to find a role in combatting xenophobia and redressing other types of imbalances (cfr. among others the example presented on the media and the Third World) relating to how the Others are represented and constructed in our part of the world. As I have argued, ethnographic exhibitions in a timeless style, depicting non-changing and untouched tribal worlds have rightly been challenged for some time now. Further, ethnographic museums no longer claim privileged neutrality and universality. This does not imply that a political contextualization of an exhibition is enough. I support Trankell's observation (1982) that direct campaigning against xenophobia and racism, the warning finger of ethnographers and others, seems to serve to create an inferiority complex. Campaigning outsiders tell those having negative attitudes towards foreigners that they are evil. As such anti-racist campaigns may risk cementing existing attitudes rather than encouraging a change of attitudes. Adding to this is the observation that evaluation of ethnographic exhibitions in Denmark suggest that the capacity of the exhibition medium to profoundly change conceptions about other cultures is very limited (Sjørølev 1991). Museums may have less a potential for being attitude changers than many museum professionals hope, wish and work for. However, this does not necessarily imply that the combat is lost.

I have argued that the crisis of representation is somewhat overstated, much of the critique is relevant and needed, but it has not made the ethnographic museums obsolete. There are examples of new initiatives

and museums and exhibitions moving in new directions. Besides, what we now perceive as traditional ethnographic museums are, in spite of everything, far from the museum concept at the turn of the century. One hundred years ago many ethnographic museums presented material that was directly or indirectly racist, today extremely few (if any) ethnographic museums do so.

When asking if the ethnographic museum can play a role in combatting xenophobia, I think we are in danger if we only discuss our potential as educators and attitude changers. It may be that our ambition should be more in the direction of creating curiosity and encouraging interest. Visitors who start wondering about their own and other societies are likely to start posing a range of questions to themselves, which may lead to the question why xenophobia?

I will conclude with some lines from Ames (1992): "In seeking understanding, there will always be the alternation between engagement and distance/disengagement, a non-accomplished project which is not followed up to a full extent. There are inherent contradictions in the projects we are involved in, and some of them are certainly demoralizing. As such, despair is often the shadow of ambition in the museum world, like devils persecuting us in the night (but then: who would be without that tickling sensation along the spine?!!!)." **Acknowledgements**

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Notes

- 1: The major immigrant groups are, defined after magnitude and country of origin and counting groups including more than 5000 persons by January 1st 1993: Denmark, Pakistan, Sweden, Great Britain, Vietnam, USA, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Germany, Iran, Sri Lanka, Chile and Poland — Source: Statistical material from the Directorate of Immigration, 1994.
- 2: We have started working with other museums and cultural institutions, cooperated with the nationwide Movement for the United Nations, solidarity organisations, development organisations and sometimes relevant parts of the Government)

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- 3: David Boston, personal communication.
- 4: Prof. Einar Niemi, talk under the title "The role of the museum as a conveyor" (Museenes formidlingsrolle) given at the National Conference for University Museums, Tromsø, Norway, October 5-7 1994 arranged by the National Council for University Museums.
- 5: Harald Gaski, personal communication. This part of the exhibition in the Alta museum is conceived by Harald Gaski (a Saami assistant professor of Saami literature, University of Tromsø), Nils Jernsletten (a Saami professor of Saami language, University of Tromsø) and Mariia Grimse (a Saami artist and exhibition designer).

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INTERACTIVE EXPOSITION OF XENOPHOBIA: A PRELUDE TO MUSEUM'S ROLE

Sujit Som, National Museum of Man, Bhopal, India

In this article, Sujit Som focuses on some of the theoretical concepts underlying the effort of the National Museum of Man in Bhopal, India, to put the cultural achievements of different people from all over the world in a for the visitor comprehensible relation. This has been done by an exposition of the historical succession of world cultures, from Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, the Mediterranean countries, North China, Central America until Peru. The regional spread of these eight 'culture areas' and their characteristics is shown with ethnographical means and a video. The exhibition further deals with the continuation of certain traditions as shown in the material culture.

In recent years, museums around the world have changed significantly, not only in their approaches but also in their functional attributes. The dichotomous activities - social care and interactive education within the ambit of changing values paved the way for a new museology. The role of museums as a repository vis-a-vis the very archival basis of civilisation is now being tuned with a number of diversified activities to meet the need of society. Focussing on a specific theme like Xenophobia therefore corresponds with widening the scope of museum activities as well as interactive exposition by museums in view of evaluation of museums participation in the socio-cultural perspective. As an interlude to Xenophobia and its exposition, there is an urgent need to outline the historical perspective of civilisation.

Civilisation as a concept is generally contrasted to the concepts of primitive and folk to identify the occurrence of a Civilisation. The term Civilisation which most of us use at different forums, often refers either to justifying a position in historical perspective or taking a stock of certain cultural eventualities for general understanding. Civilisation is also marked by the development of institutions which take over the functions previously

handled by extended kinship ties - viz redistribution of foodstuffs in times of need. The need to organize tends to codify and regularise the value system of the culture involved. It is therefore a most popular term so far as histo-cultural reconstruction is concerned, mostly focusing on several need based criterias viz. presence of large scale food production; institutions (economic, political, socio-cultural, religious); presence of ruling class to look after production, and a functional network of exchange through specialists. Freed from prolonged manual turmoil, they have been responsible for the development of several distinct disciplines with a general touch in time, aesthetic awareness and well organised stylistic representation which are recognizable from one to another. It is also accepted that the development of civilisation is a break with the past. Such a break is again determined by two major universal factors - an increase in population density and changes in subsistence, depending upon availability of domestic plants, animals and other related resources. These factors led to the more or less independent rise of the following distinct civilisations of the world:

1. The Mesopotamian or Near East Region (c 8000-4000 BC)
2. Egypt (c 5000-3000 BC)
3. India or Indus Valley (c 2600-1800 BC)
4. Crete (c 2600-1700 BC)
5. North China (c 3000-2000 BC)
6. Mesoamerica (c 3000-500 BC)
7. Peruvian (c 2500-500 BC)

Though the above mentioned civilisations flourished in different regions of the world, spreading over the vast area of the globe at different time spans, collectively they form the backbone of the civilisations of today's world. A common platform for all, irrespective of different identities, which forms a part of human

ness. So far there has been little emphasis on this holistic appraisal by means of documentation and expositions. However, making clear the constituting wings of the world civilisations, in time and space, combined with an entailed account on the ethnographical present, can help us contributing to the goals of this conference, i.e. the elimination of boundaries of culture limits and the appraisal of the significance of mutual cross-cultural understanding.

As a result of this rise of early civilisations we now find a conglomeration of certain specific culture areas in the world:

1. Middle-Eastern culture area, running from the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas (with a loop to the east to exclude Cyprus) through the Bosphorus and along the Southern shores of the Black and Caspian Seas. It continues east of the Caspian to include the extremity of South West Asia almost to the Indus River, i.e. the areas of the South West Asia, North Africa, North Sahara and East Horn.
2. European culture area, situated at the north of the Middle East and the Caspian Sea, excluding the western edge of the Eurasian steppes and running north along the Western slopes of Ural Mountains i.e. areas of Europe (South, North/West, East and Caucasia).
3. African culture area, comprising the area south of the mid desert boundary with the Middle East i.e., areas of Sudan, Guinea Coast, Congo, East High lands, South Plateau and South West.
4. North-Asian culture area, comprising part of the Scandinavian peninsula north of the Arctic Circle, runs east to the Urals, then South, taking in the vast Eurasian Steppes i.e., area of the Paleosiberia, Siberia, Eurasian steppe/Mongolian Plateau.
5. South-Asian culture area, which includes the remaining part of North-Asia together with Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia and including Madagascar off the coast of Africa i.e., covering areas of South Central, North China, Korea -

Japan, South China and Indonesia.

6. Oceanian culture area, comprising Australia and Newzealand on the south, Easter Island in the eastern South pacific, and Hawaii and the Marianas to the north covering area of Australia, Malanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.
7. North-American culture area, comprising the entire continent north to the isthmus of Panama. The Aleutians to the west and Greenland to the east are the longitudinal limits, and the Arctic archipelago in the Arctic Ocean is its northern limit i.e., the areas of Arctic, Subarctic Northwest coast, Plateu / Basin / California, Southwest, Plains, Eastern and Mesoamerica.
8. South-American culture area, including the Islands of the Caribbean, the Continent of South America, and the Fuegian Islands south to Cape Horn. i.e., Carib, areas of Chibcha, Inca, Amazon/Brazilian Highlands, Chaco, Araucan, Poatagonia and Fuegian.

All these culture area's are the result of the accumulated reflections of systematic acquisition of individual culture and world culture. All have come with different answers and solutions to the basic needs, along with a number of interrelated aspects shown in table 1, enabling us to asses the dimension of respective values which ultimately form the basis of existing traditions within the domain of given ecological traditions.

In addition to the above mentioned basic qualities in man there are some inborn habits which not only derive from basic human needs but also interact as per the instrumental, symbolic and integrative needs. As man is eager to know the unknown i.e., man is curious by nature, this curiosity in association with aestheticity paved the way for man to be possessive.

This interlinked nature of man, in time and space, at different centres of civilisation in the world with some variation in values acts as catalytic force. Moreover, an instinct for aesthetic presentation of the curious basically lies with all human beings. Collective accumulation on a systematic level of all such basic

qualities in man has ushered a new era of understanding which ultimately crystalised in the genesis of Museum. As a result it spread all over the world. Its phase wise development and its ultimate institutionalisation are indications of its social significance as well as of its role as thread bearer of sustainable utility. Museums have become institutions where activities are aiming at social care under the broad functional frame of collecting, documentation, interactive education, conservation, research, exhibiting etc.,

not only with the content analysis of other's or outsider's materials but also of the own. We may conclude that no culture at any point of time is irrelevant when human panorama is in focus. Interactive exposition of culture areas of the world need can be an appropriate aid in correlating cultural relatedness, ultimately helping in the development towards a better communication of the underlying matrices of multicultural mosaic of our changing world.

Table: I - HUMAN NEEDS AND ITS PROFILE

S.No	Basic Needs	Direct Responses	Instrumental Needs (social structure)	Response to Instrumental Needs	Symbolic & Integrative Needs	Responses to Symbolic & Integrative Needs
1.	Nutrition	Commissariat	Renewal of cultural Apparatus	Economics	-	Knowledge
2.	Reproduction	Marriage and Family	-	-	-	-
3.	Bodily Comforts	Domicile and Dress	Character of behaviour and other sanctions	Social Control	-	Magie, Religion
4.	Safety	Protection and Defence	-	-	-	-
5.	Relaxation	System of Play and Response	Renewal of personnel	Education	-	-
6.	Movement	Activities and system of communication	Organisation of force and competition	Political organisation	-	Arts, Sports, Games
7.	Growth	Training and Apprenticeship	-	-	-	-

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CHILD-ORIENTATED ACTIONS AGAINST XENOPHOBIA Antiracist Work of Educational Services at Museums of Ethnology in Germany

Andrea Hohlweck, Universität Freiburg i.Br., Germany

Subject of my research is the antiracist work of educational services at museums of ethnology in the German speaking area^{1,2}. Museum-educational care in this country is carried out either by departments which are intern or by external services, which normally work together with all local museums³.

The recent situation of educational services: insufficient conditions

To talk about recent situations of educational service is to tell that nearly all questioned museum-educators describe the personnel, financial, organizational and spatial conditions as insufficient⁴.

Most museum-educators are overloaded with administrative and organisational tasks in such a way that they have to delegate the real educational work to volunteers of 6 up to 25 persons. This also implicates that there isn't enough time for study or theorizing.

Badly equipped with material and staff means that museum-educators lack the time to get familiar with new works on antiracism, published by sociologists and psychologists. Yet, since the so called crisis of museums in the late sixties and beginning seventies, the reduction of racist attitudes and prejudice is proclaimed as one of the most important educational aims of German museum-ethnology (Ganslmayr 1975; Vossen 1973; Horst Pfeil 1978:170ff.; Stötzel 1981:42ff.).

As a consequence it's also a priority of educational services at museums of ethnology. In reality however, in reference to the generally antiracist character of ethnological work, it looks like this work is being neglected.

Ethnological work, which refers to the decrease of ethnical prejudice has to work interdisciplinary-orientated, if it does not want to be confronted with the reproach of unscientific. In contrast to ethnology,

which is principally engaged with foreign cultures, sociology and psychology study their own society. For this, they have developed a specialized system of methods to record and analyze social and psychological facts in order to give practical advice.

A personal, interactive cooperation based on the division of labor would be desirable and more effective for most of the overloaded museum-educators. But those inadequate conditions described make these wishes of cooperation based on fixed employment or work-contracts appear illusionary. Therefore the ethnological museum-educators are forced back to their own engagement and qualifications.

The necessary reference to the crisis of prejudice-discipline in the late seventies, which critics link with lack of methodology, insufficient representativeness of results and unexact interpretations and analyses as well as the imbalance between theory and practical work (Hog 1981:41ff.; Schäfer/Six 1978:259), leads to questions about reflection and evaluation of museum work⁵.

Still empirical and evaluational work on target groups, especially focussing on previous knowledge, ethnical convictions and ethnological interests, is carried out only in a small number of institutes of the whole museum spectrum of Germany⁶. Relevant literature is as well deficient. The few results available are scarcely translated into actual work (Grad/Treinen 1983:119). But especially in the field of antiracist work the knowledge of ways and instances of transfer and kinds of receptions of the visitor is important⁷.

Prejudice-science: advice for antiracist work does exist

Programs that decrease prejudice have to be orientated on the cognitive level of their recipients, to say, the specific target- and age groups (Wagner 1982).

Referring to this, it is worked out by the socio-psychological prejudice-science, that independent, self-reliant thematical considerations lead to differentiated concepts of life and counteracts a passive acceptance of cognitive contents of exterior authorities or instances (e.g. Wagner 1982:204; Markefka 1990:72ff., 100ff.; Heckmann 1992:155ff.).

This corresponds to the demands of the US-american children museum-concept, which sets an example for European educational services in museums. It claims participation, learning-by-doing, self-experience, sensorial understanding (titled with the slogan "hands-on"). To summarize: it means active, independent dealing and creative acquisition for children in a museum (Kolb 1983:16ff., 79-87).

Possibilities for haptic experience and independent achievement of knowledge are generally reduced in German museum of ethnology. Only the Junior-museum of the Museum of ethnology in Berlin has got the possibility to conceptualize child-orientated special exhibitions, but even here children aren't involved in the conception of exhibitions⁸.

A basic problem of antiracist work in a museum is the fact, that racists hardly find their way into ethnological museums. The main clients of educational services are anyhow children in the clamp of formular education, which enter the museum without being asked (Hohlweck 1993:59-62).

Interethnic contacts are regarded as most effective by recent prejudice research (FOCUS 1992:43; Schäfer/Six 1978: 277ff.; Markefka 1990:106ff.). For this, quality, not quantity of contact is decisive. Most promising is cooperative contact on the basis of joint aims: like in sparetime situations of equality⁹. There has to be a noncompetitional relation between both groups, like for instance in games, which are based on the principle that aims can only be attained by cooperation (FOCUS 1992:43; Schäfer/Six 1978:285ff.; Wagner 1982: 201 in reference to research by Fulcher&Perry 1973)¹⁰.

Several experiments showed that information about foreign ethnic groups, which was additionally deepened by roleplays, evoked significant changes in attitudes toward strangers (Schäfer/Six 1978:268ff.; Wagner 1982: 206)¹¹. Only the Junimuseum of

Berlin uses roleplay as a fixed part of their guided tours¹². In antiracist work projects should last over a relatively long period (Schäfer/Six 1978: 279; Markefka 1990:06ff.)¹³, and should also be orientated at cooperation and actions (FOCUS 1992:43; Schäfer/Six 1978:294; Heckmann 1992: 159). Staff and groups are supposed to be culturally mixed.

In the ethnological museum of Basel the concept is to integrate members of the referred culture as experts and workshopleaders within the workshops and in guided tours. In the museum of Vienna the staff has to include museum-educational colleagues from foreign cultures. However, nowhere programs exist for long-lasting interethnic cooperative contacts (Hohlweck 1993:38f,133ff.).

To connect positive feelings with ethnic outgroups, it is proposed to initiate programs of contact- and acquaintance, as well as to seize up interethnic or foreign cultural themes with more effort (Heckmann 1992:157). Many museums have already gone this way in their public relation work. Finally, there are the demands of engaged ethnologists and of prejudice-science that museums of ethnology should stand up even on a political level for their own speciality-convictions and education-aims in an active^{14,15}.

What has happened so far?

Now it's time to ask, which activities actually have been taken up already? The time of taking up activities depends on the general conceptional adjustment of museums: less historical orientated institutions have integrated problems of migrants and foreign workers already in their new conceptions in terms of museums-crisis.

Obviously, there has been an increase of activities since racism became more visible at the beginning of the nineties. Again the imminent antiracist educational task of museums of ethnology is being emphasized as basis for that work. Nevertheless, discussions on theories and results of prejudice-science have nowhere been given an appropriate place.

An exception forms the team of ethnologists at the museum of Frankfurt, which prepares the special exhibition "Foreigners: the challenge of the 90s" (beginning in May 1994).

In the field of museum-educational engagement, theoretical training is similar incomplete. In only one case a literature-reader has been produced by the office of the external educational service department while in another case museum-educator-work includes interdisciplinary studies. At some instances, there are attempts to counter this lack by private studies after work or by study groups.

There has been no institutionalized discussion on the subject and its essential consequences for the everyday-work at museums of ethnology. Joint actions by all sections within the respective German museums of ethnology are orientated outwards, inside there have taken place only a few, mostly informal discussions on racism.

There has been a development of discussion events, lectures, petitions, posters and postcards for the public, often shoulder to shoulder with local museums and institutions of cultural work. In half of the cases educational service sections have given the impulse for this engagement. Afterwards, there has been cooperation with most of the curators.

The external service for all museums of Cologne established in 1991 a program for intercultural meetings. It is mainly related to museums of art and local history. The museum of ethnology is only eight times per year involved with international games for children of all nationalities. In general, there is but little response.

After the murders of Mölln, a town close to Hamburg, the museum-educational section in the Hamburgian museum of ethnology presented eight new themes for guided tours with content-topics like "European images of foreigners", "Problems of migrants", "Racism". They fit in the demands of modern prejudice-science after discussion concerning the contents. There's also the possibility to lent a serie of slides, titled "About cannibals, noble savages and TV-heroes: The stereotypical image of Indians in the times of colonialism and today".

Only one institution, the Juniormuseum in Berlin conceived a special exhibition for children, titled "Strange-who is that?" as a part of a systematical thematical unit. This kind of program fits in the standard method of this institution to combine a special exhibition with written materials for teachers and pupils, as well as with a program of films and workshops.

A real special position in the field of antiracist work is taken by the Pestalozzianum in Zürich. It's a pedagogic institution divided into several different sections of which one, the section 'school and museum', also takes care of the local museum of ethnology. It is the only institution that confronts itself with the subject by organizing an interdisciplinary committee which includes educational institutions and organisations of different areas and cooperates with the university, as well as with tv-stations. In spring 1992, in cooperation with the "Stiftung gegen Rassismus" (Foundation against racism), the work for a multimedial program started. It includes a specialized book for pedagogues, a didactical guide, a volume of document-and source-material for pupils and several audio-visual materials for introduction. It will be available in summer 1995. The book deals with the following themes: definition of racism, theories on racism of scientific disciplines, pedagogical remarks on the subject, kinds of appearances of xenophobia and racism in Switzerland and Europe. Here, the interdisciplinary network is ideal, but it's necessary to remark the differences to German conditions, because the Swiss financial possibilities are quite better and the conceptional orientation is a different one¹⁶.

Conclusion

Due to bad conditions in museum-education, as well as the reluctant attitude of the museums, their reaction on racism is only superficial and insufficient. Even though the reductional effect of the general transfer of ethnological facts and knowledge can't be denied, it's obviously that an optimization or increase of this effect could only be reached by a new conceptional orientation.

All questioned museum-educators realized that there have to be changes regarding multicultural, self-experience and child-orientation. There's good will, but the conditions are bad. Hence, none of the questioned departments mentioned a planned or yet actualized renewed conception. A reason might be that the range of museum-educational tasks drawn up by the employer is too narrow.

The insufficient work on antixenophobic targets leads to the realization that in the recent situation the overload of work excludes theoretical work.

To solve this, it is necessary to give a central position to museum-education services in museums. Museum-education departments themselves should include different sections, such as one for the

conceptional work on exhibitions, another for systematical-theoretical research, one for technical and organisational questions and one for educational practice itself (Köster 1983).

Notes

¹ In the following, I will refer to the antiracist work of museum-educators in 10 medium and large museums of ethnology in German speaking areas, which I have explored for my examination of the situation of child-orientated museum-educational services at museums of ethnology in 1992 and 1993 by means of interviews and questionnaires.

I refer mainly to those institutions in the so called old German federal states. To represent the conditions in Austria and Switzerland, respectively one and two museums were chosen. Vienna for Austria, Basel and Zürich for Switzerland. To record the process and perhaps progress of activities in a diachronical way, I sent a new questionnaire in the summer of 1994, now specified on antiracist work, to the referred museum-educators.

² Questions about the activities inside the museum: Who gave the impulse? Have there been cooperation-partners? When have activities been started? Which programs have been organised: for the public? Internal? The same questions about the activities of the museum-educational service. In the field of theory: Does there exist a thematical discussion of prejudices? In which way? Has there been a discussion of interdisciplinary results? Is museum-education able to reduce prejudices? How should it be attained? What are the chances in reality?

³ The range of programs can roughly be divided in personal, written and action-orientated services, mostly for formal groups in the educational system and less often for informal visitors: guided museum-tours, arranged as a dialogical conversation - in half of the cases with a practical part or role-play - birthday parties for children, museum rallies, workshops, holiday programs, written materials with either playful or learning orientation, museum guidebooks or museum magazines for children, courses and didactical materials for pedagogues.

⁴ The annual budgets of museum-educational services in German museums of ethnology are considerably under the level of the Swiss-sections. Germany: a spread of 5.000 to 50.000 Marks. From that amount the fees of the collaborators have to be paid. Switzerland: over 100.000 Swiss Francs (Hohlweck 1993:40f).

⁵ Nearly all engaged scientists criticize the deficiency of theory and the lack of methods (Nuissl 1987:75; Graf&Treinen 1983:119; Landwehr 1983:6f.; Hausmann&Das Gupta 1980:27-35).

⁶ Mainly research by the sociologists Hans-Joachim Klein (Karlsruhe) and Heiner Treinen (Bochum), as well as a few dissertations. A summary can be found in Nuissl 1987:54.

⁷ Instances which transfer prejudices in the macrosocial surroundings are: families, educational institutions and peer groups. Instances which transport prejudices and eurocentric

trical contents in the macrosocial surroundings are: documentary films, features, news magazines, newspapers, TV advertisements, novels, children's and youth-literature, school books, comics, song-textes, jokes, caricatures, proverbs, phrases and so on. For thematical introduction: Larbeer/Wild 1991; Markelka 1990; Theye 1985; Stiftung Pils Jeunesse 1982; Deltgen 1977; Nauck 1974; Becker 1972/73, 1976; Markelka/Nauck 1972.

⁸ Special exhibitions of educational services (Hohlweck 1993:51-57):

- Basel:

* within the permanent exhibition about Melanesia: a slide-show with very low leveled information for children.

* every special exhibition of the museum includes an educational unit in the so called class room, which is designed by the museum-educator.

- Vienna:

* 1986/87: an educational exhibition for children, titled: "Children in Africa - Africa for children": special layout of texts, special coloured guiding system, many possibilities for activities and games. It was allowed to touch the objects.

- Hamburg/Lübeck

* special exhibition: "Was geht uns ihre Armut an?" ("Is their poverty our concern?"). Orientation on visual effect, didactical cabinet designed as a Bolivian classroom, political theme integrated: dependence between poverty in the third world and wealth in the first world. Approachhiding showed typical German tourist prejudices (Klein/Hausmann 1988).

⁹ FOKUS (1992:43) in reference to: Altpost/Stram: 1987; Foreman 1955; Hofmann/Zak 1980.

¹⁰ 1991 only five percent of the Germans had contacts with foreigners in their spare time, for instance in sportsclubs. (FOKUS 1992:43).

¹¹ The empirical exploration by Behrll (1988) showed that there are positive results in changes of ethnic consciousness of kindergarten-children attained by religious. Hausmann&Schäfer/Six (1978:20ff.) and Wagner (1988:108f.) mention: R.: 1979. Kinder und Ausländer. Einmaligkeitsstudie zum Umgang mit Fremden. Eine empirische Untersuchung (Braunschweig).

¹² There has been an action-orientated offer for children in the museum of Hamburg. Here, students have made a connection with all difficulties that occur in a museum. It is a role-play. This role-play (which, among other things, was happening but more if necessary, occurred in the museum 1983).

¹³ Results of studies of Treinen (1984), Hausmann & Klein (1988) and Ashmore (1980) suggest that such a connection can only lead to a decrease of existing prejudices. (Graf & Markelka 1990:199f.)

- ¹⁴ Fight against prejudice, development of active and liable relations to people in the so called 'third world'. Demanded by: Hog 1981:32-42; Harms 1976; Ganslmayr/Vossen/Heintze/Lohse/Rammow 1976; Ganslmayr 1975:25; Stötzel 1981; and many others.
- ¹⁵ There has to be a discussion with supporters of ethnical ide-

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- ologies in a public but objective way in the fields of science, press, national politics. Museums of ethnology have to correspond to their own demands of tolerance and solidarity.
- ¹⁶ The Pestalozzianum is an office of the school- and education-board of the canton Zürich. It can be described as a service institution for formal education (Furrer 1992:18-25).

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CEREALS, ZEBRAS AND SHOWCASES

About Objects and Objectivity in Museums of Ethnography

Wolfgang Mey, Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, Germany

The main question of this meeting is: What can ethnographic museums do to counter xenophobia? In my opinion they are not able to do anything because western ethnographic museums (as others, but this is not the topic here and now) employ generally ethnocentric concepts for exhibitions on other cultures and peoples. The structure of these concepts is a special expression of a general development of occidental history of thought. Here I will only deal with our own, with the occidental history of thought which categorises the world into dichotomies. (Other concepts also categorise but this is, as I said, another story). Our dualistic view of the world excludes notions which are not part of our own origin, history, and structure. Thus, if ethnographic museums exhibit the cultural heritage of other peoples with our ethnocentric concepts, they are, I conclude, unable to counter xenophobia.

On classification

A "certain Chinese encyclopedia" arranges animals according to the following order:

"There are animals that:

- a) belong to the emperor,
 - b) that are embalmed,
 - c) that are tamed,
 - d) there are milk-pigs,
 - e) sirens,
 - f) fabulous beasts,
 - g) dogs without masters,
 - h) those that belong into this category,
 - i) that act madly,
 - k) that are painted with brushes of very thin camel-hairs,
 - l) et cetera,
 - m) that have broken the jar,
 - n) that look like flies when seen from far away."
- (Foucault 1971:17).

This taxonomy leads us right away into "the exotic magic of another kind of thinking", and eventually to the border of "our thinking" (ibid.:17). Still, these categories are not meaningless, they provide objective frames: there are fabulous beasts, there are real animals, there are those that reside in imaginary realms, etc. How real these categories are shows the announcement by the Chinese news agency Xinhua of the establishment of a Committee for the Search of Rare and Strange Creatures" (AFP, October 10th 1994, Frankfurter Rundschau, 28.10. 1994).

Michel Foucault admits that this taxonomy as it was related by Jorge Luis Borges (1966) kept him laughing uneasily for a long time. Eventually, he was so irritated by his uneasiness that he decided to write a book on "order". "Les mots et les choses" was the result.

We can group wheat into the category of cereals, of foodstuff or perishable goods. Newspapers could also be put into the category of perishable goods. Zebras could likewise be identified as temporarily running animals or as prey for wild beasts or as four legged animals. Some chairs and some tables have also four legs. Newspapers and wheat can be grouped into one category as could be zebras, chairs, and tables. In terms of a meaningful classification, we are evidently facing problems of the objectivity of "order".

About showcases

If our certain Chinese biologist with his taxonomy would arrange an exhibition on animals employing the above quoted taxonomy, critics from the West would definitely argue that such an approach would be ethnocentric and would not reflect the objective order of animals. Once upon a time there were no problems of objectivity. Once upon a time it seemed as if the world could be ordered objectively.

The exhibition of weapons and other utensils in the Pitt-Rivers-Museum was the first exhibition I can think of that was arranged according to a theory, then the theory of evolution. Weapons from a large number of cultures were ordered according to their increasing complexity and sophistication.

Other exhibitions followed. The structure of their argument was always identical. Be it the concept of functionalism that was applied in the exhibition on Inuit in Göttingen some 20 years ago, be it the structural method that was used in the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires in Paris, be it geographical or functional concepts in the museum of ethnography in Berlin, be it the twisted historical approach that was used in the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where the origin and evolution of species is shown from the earliest known date right up to the life of the indigenous peoples of North America. The "coming of civilisation", e.g. the white conquest of North America was shown in a separate museum, without the "Red Indians", of course... each and every time it is a Western concept that has provided the frame and puts objects of other peoples in a strange and alien context.

There were and are collectors who collect masks, spears and drums, boats and ploughs and whatever utensils according to their own and the expected taste, aspirations and gusto of the public. There were and are the pressures of public administrations and sponsors that "direct" the acquisition of ethnographic objects into the perspective of "Art" which is to my opinion, the most stupid approach to the cultures of other peoples.

Professional collectors, ethnographers, public administrators, ministries and sponsors and last but not least the taste of the public, all had and have a direct or indirect saying in the way other peoples and cultures are represented in ethnographic exhibitions. The selection of the "best" objects that go into the exhibitions distorts the presentation finally. Everyday life, the original context of these objects, has eventually gone, but the quality of the "pieces" and of the display is excellent.

Since Malinowski's famous but wrong remark,

anthropologists hasten to confirm time and again that they are the interpreters of other peoples. Likewise their exhibitions "represent" these other cultures. But this was no remark of Malinowski.

No matter what theory, if any, was applied in the display of ethnographic objects, each and every time the "other" reality was supposed to be displayed with the highest degree of authenticity or objectivity. Objects could not be unobjective, couldn't they. And objects, ethnographic objects, which were acquired at tremendous costs from all over the world could not present a wrong picture, couldn't they. Many curators even went as far saying that objects would speak objectively for themselves. Many curators still do so.

I must conclude, then, that these kinds of concepts do definitely not represent the realms and meanings of other peoples' objects and cultures. They are neither objective nor do they interpret other cultures. They do something else, however. They relocate indigenous cultures into our realms, they make them compatible through CONCEPTS, they take away and negate their separatedness, their strangeness and their incompatibilities. Exhibitions on indigenous cultures express only more or less aptly our view of their worlds. Exhibition techniques are very refined today, and very aesthetic. Even though, all the ethnographic exhibitions I have seen so far employed ethnocentric concepts.

Is this really all museological anthropology has achieved in about a hundred years of collecting, inventarisation, ordering and exhibiting?

Were there any ethnographic museums that have invited representatives from indigenous peoples of the Americas to display their view of 500 years white rule in 1992? Were there any ethnographic museums in 1992, the UNO-proclaimed Year of Indigenous Peoples that invited their representatives to tell us to listen and to see to their messages?

Then what are ethnographic exhibitions good for?

Oh yes, of course, there are theme-oriented exhibitions, for instance on the endangered tropical rain forests, on culture change among the Inuit or Afghans about their varied forms of resistance and aspirations.

useful ones indeed, they explain a lot and give insights, no doubt. Yes, they do educate people and invite them to learn, to understand, to reflect on the past and the present and the future.

Then where is the problem?

"Tribal society is of such nature that one must experience it from the inside. It is holistic, and logical analysis will only return you to your starting premise none the wiser for the trip" (Deloria 1970:13). Then, anthropological systematisation will not lead us very far. The author goes on saying: "The revolutionary nature of our world can scarcely be conceived. Western civilisation has always depended on the ability to symbolize, categorize, specialize, and divide according to function" (Deloria 1970:19) and "Western man, particularly Western American man, is committed to an either/or logic when neither alternative is real. The very tools of thinking and expressing ourselves have been negated" (Deloria 1970:23).

Then what can ethnographic museums do to counter Xenophobia?

Nothing. Anthropological research claims to be able to perceive and describe indigenous notions in their own perspective. However, it is evident that museological anthropology has never moved out of its narrow borders of systematisation and symbolisation. Ethnographic museums employ ethnocentric concepts. These concepts have no space for indigenous notions. They cannot integrate indigenous views of the world and transform them into exhibitions. The application of ethnocentric concepts cannot, by the simple reason of definition, integrate structurally different concepts of other peoples. They are bound to distort them, they are bound to degrade the dignity of those who are said to be so well represented by us.

So, what to do?

"The best method of communicating Indian values is to find points at which issues appear to be related. Because tribal society is integrated toward a center and non-Indian society is oriented towards linear

development, the process might be compared to describing a circle surrounded with tangent lines. The points at which the lines touch the circumference of the circle are the issues and ideas that can be shared by Indians and other groups. There are a great many points at which tangents occur, and they may be considered as windows through which Indians and non-Indians can glimpse at each other. Once this structural device is used and understood, non-Indians, using tribal points of view, can better understand themselves and their relationships to Indian peoples" (Deloria 1970:13).

When it comes to exhibitions on other peoples' cultures, why not using this "structural device", these "windows", rather than ethnocentric "concepts"? As long as persons from other cultures are not given seat and vote in the making of ethnographic exhibitions, as long as their notions do not become the basis of exhibition concepts meant to interpret the "other" culture, our exhibitions will continue stereotyping other cultures or, subsuming these other cultures under our educational or whatever humanistic goal we have. Such exhibitions may not openly create xenophobia, but they do withhold and distort the substantive dimensions of other cultures. They would, at the same time, facilitate and emphasise the ethnocentric view that all other cultures can be interpreted and understood in our terms of reference.

Finally, I regret that I cannot discuss the concepts of the new exhibitions of the George Gustav Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian. The information available to me would not suffice for an evaluation. I am glad, however, that with these exhibitions my critique has been answered, and I hope that many more examples of this kind will follow.

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