

5 Museum canopies and affective cosmopolitanism

Cultivating cross-cultural landscapes for ethical embodied responses

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Museums as ‘cosmopolitan canopies’

The existence of the canopy allows such people, whose reference point often remains their own social class or ethnic group, a chance to encounter others and so work toward a more cosmopolitan appreciation of difference.

(Anderson, 2004, p. 28)

In his article ‘The cosmopolitan canopy’, Elijah Anderson (2004)¹ describes contemporary urban landscapes as those strongly affected by the forces of globalization, migration and industrialization. In Anderson’s terms, public spaces in the United States have inevitably become racially, ethnically and socially more diverse; at the same time, those markers of difference have simultaneously contributed to the division of cityscapes into ethnic neighbourhoods and the resultant separation of social groups. This line of thinking reflects Mike Featherstone’s (2002)² comments on the significance of the city in cosmopolitan dispositions, Ulrich Beck’s (2002) concept of cosmopolitanization as a kind of internalized globalization *within* the nation-state and Saskia Sassen’s (2000, p. 153) characterizations of the city as a contested space where wealthy elites and low-income others jostle for space, each transnational in character but embedded and competing in specific places. The existence of Anderson’s ‘cosmopolitan canopies’, however, enables people who are often confined to their ethnic group or social class to ‘*encounter others*’ and thus potentially develop a ‘*cosmopolitan appreciation of difference*’ (2004, p. 28; our emphasis). Anderson, (2004, p. 28) goes on to identify such settings or ‘canopies’ within the urban context of Philadelphia in the USA, including areas such as ‘the Reading Terminal, Rittenhouse Square, Thirtieth Street Station, the Whole Foods Market, and sporting events’; surprisingly, museums do not feature on his list.

In large part, this surprise comes about because museums have for quite some time been imagined as inherently cross-cultural landscapes that can potentially facilitate the development of a cosmopolitan ethics, a characteristic that is reflected in the wider literature (see Kreps, 2003, 2011; Schorch, 2013a, 2014a). Furthermore, it is important for scholars to approach ‘cosmopolitanism’ as a concrete lived experience rather than an abstract normative ideal, something our

research seeks to advance by focusing on specific urban settings and by considering cosmopolitanism through theories of atmospheres (Anderson, 2004), encounters (Delanty, 2011), performances (Woodward and Skrbis, 2012), practices (Kendall et al., 2009) and interpretive meanings (Schorch, 2014a). Again, museums are not explicitly noted in most of these theoretical discussions and empirical investigations, despite their frequent appearance as anchor points and hubs of activity in urban cultural quarters. At the same time, there have been only ‘limited incursions’ (Mason, 2013, p. 42) of cosmopolitan thinking into the fields of museum and heritage studies themselves, though among these there are a handful of useful instances in which it does make an appearance (Daugbjerg, 2009; Mason, 2013; Schorch, 2013a, 2014a; Staiff, 2014). In one example, Sharon Macdonald (2013) investigates the *Memorylands* of contemporary Europe and detects evolving forms of cosmopolitan heritage and memory which do not simply override other frames of reference and forms of attachment such as the nation (see also Daugbjerg and Fibiger, 2011). Macdonald (2013, p. 173) goes on to argue that ‘memorial forms in the cityscape’ such as museums ‘become important stimuli for bringing interlocutors together’ to engage in interactions across cultural boundaries. Likewise, Russell Staiff (2014) uses K.A. Appiah’s book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006) to unravel issues of universalism and cultural relativism in the sphere of heritage interpretation. He concludes that emphasizing ‘commonalities’ – things shared between cultural groups – while fraught with risks and the implications of unequal power relations, should at least facilitate conversations across cultural differences and boundaries, offering a way to negotiate the borders or limitations of interpretation at particular heritage sites (Staiff, 2014, p. 157).

Affective cosmopolitanism in the context of the museum

For the purposes of this chapter, we are keen to explore the extent to which aspects of this cosmopolitan debate resonate with affect and emotion as embodied performativities evoked in, and by, particular settings such as museums. The value of such an approach lies in the way it brings together theoretical insights with a ‘detailed attention to the political, economic and cultural geographies of specific “everyday practices” ...’ (Nash, 2000, p. 662). Accordingly, our understanding of these performativities commences with the capacity for affecting and being affected as developed in Spinozan–Deleuzian terms (Deleuze, 1988; Deleuze and Guattari, 1994), and in the sense adopted by non-representational theorists as pre-cognitive, pre-personal dimensions of experience. Mapped across the museum as a space of cross-cultural encounter, we might consider such experiences as profoundly affective in that they prompt and set in motion embodied engagements and acts of making meaning (Schorch, 2014b). What is of interest to us, however, is the way in which this is consonant with the social dynamics identified by Anderson within the cosmopolitan canopy, and how this translates into the potentialities for affecting the way people engage in and with museums. This brings an extended lens to the non-representational literature, which has a tendency to overlook situated accounts of cosmopolitan encounters (see Tolia-Kelly, 2006).

Indeed, in order to consider the nature and scope of such cross-cultural encounters, and how museums might moderate or facilitate them, we need to go beyond the stripped-down pre-personal, autonomous notion of embodied affect that is apparent in some of the non-representational literature informed by Spinoza’s ethics and its Deleuzian readings. This is because of the difficulty we have with assuming that affect can somehow be separated from human meaning-making; indeed, we are more interested in a theory of affect that encompasses the subject and subjective responses expressed *inseparably* as emotion, cognition and the construction of meaning. It is thus worth reinforcing at this point that although we take a lead from non-representational theories of affect, we have not adopted the hard boundary definitions that distinguish affect and emotion that are apparent, for example, in Steve Pile’s (2010) interpretation of their significance in geography. Instead, we feel more comfortable with Liz Bondi and Joyce Davidson’s (2011) willingness to live with the inherent messiness of these concepts, and Deborah Thien’s (2005, p. 453) view that a focus on affect alone occludes the emotional landscapes and inter-subjective processes that constitute daily life and social and cultural experience (see also Harding and Pibram, 2002).

In drawing to mind what we might term an *affective cosmopolitanism*, our purpose in this chapter is to probe at the relationship between the affective and the subjective, emotional and cognitive (or non-representational and representational), particularly in relation to the kinds of engagement associated with the cosmopolitan canopy. Though she does not use precisely our terms and topics, we have been influenced by Leila Dawney’s (2013, p. 629) suggestion that ‘[t]here is a need to develop tools for thinking about the way in which the affective and subjective registers operate through each other and are constitutive of each other’ (see Dawney, 2013, pp. 629–31, for a summary of this debate). Purposefully problematizing the relationship between affect and the reflective subject is for us key to understanding the ways in which meanings are constructed and engaged across cultural differences. This does not mean that we have adopted the easy way out of conflating affect and emotion (which is, in any case, insupportable); rather, we are interested in the affective–subjective dynamic in forming an agenda for future research. In a more general context, Dawney describes this dynamic as an ‘oscillation’ between the two registers and, as such, a site for the ‘social production of experience’ (2013, p. 632). To return briefly to the question of theory, it is therefore the *more-than-representational* domain identified by Hayden Lorimer (2005) that locates our own thinking.

In terms of our agenda in this chapter, it seems obvious that the simple duality of ‘visitor’ and cultural ‘museum display’ is unavoidably and actively mediated by the agency of the museum, in much the same way that Gerard Delanty’s (2011) ‘third party’ facilitates many cultural encounters. As Delanty (2011, p. 644) goes on to argue, ‘[i]t is also increasingly the case that many cultural encounters are occurring against the wider context of world culture and democratization, which serve as forms of mediation’. It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that where the museum is acting as a third party to encounters between visitors or between visitors and cultural displays, it is doing so not just through its narrative and other

representational practices, but also through its design, spatial affordances and *the affective potentialities that are then created*, both deliberately on the part of the museum and in the nexus of what the visitor also brings to the engagement.

This engagement, and particularly the affective potentialities thereby afforded, is the basis of our claim that museums act as cosmopolitan canopies, that is, as settings which allow for actually existing cross-cultural encounters and a potentially cosmopolitan condition that can only emerge through the practice of meaning-making and the ‘act of interpretation’ (Schorch, 2013a). These are the interpretive practices across cultural differences through which a cosmopolitan encounter can be established, navigated and nurtured. Understanding how these practices take place paves the way to understanding how different cultural actors engage in the process of cultural and potentially cosmopolitan world-making (Schorch, 2014a). As such, we propose that such encounters provide a framework for investigating the ways in which cross-cultural experiences are modulated by affordances that begin with registers of affect. This broadly reflects Dawney’s (2013) concept of ‘interruption’, where a given situation – for example, a museum display or exhibition – might stimulate the body’s capacity to be affected in some way (see Tolia-Kelly, this volume). In a museum context, this could be any number of provocations, from a visceral reaction to an image or narrative that might, in turn, contagiously affect others and/or rise up into, or oscillate with, emotional responses and cognitive understandings (see Waterton and Dittmer, 2014). We might see expressions, for example, of joy or sadness, pleasure or discomfort, identification, empathy, alienation, hostility, boredom and so on and so forth, all of which can be represented to a certain degree through language in social milieus.

But let us not forget what a visitor brings in terms of an assemblage of personal and cultural subjectivities, such as their past experiences, schooling and cultural beliefs, all of which operate in tandem with our temperaments and dispositions. As Sara Ahmed (2010, p. 41) notes, ‘[the] moods we arrive with do affect what happens: which is not to say we always keep our moods’. The museum does not, therefore, etch its presence on a blank sheet. Antecedents of a style of thinking that engages with affective responses can be found in David Uzzell’s (1989, p. 46) ‘hot interpretation’, which is a term he used to foreground our humanness, arguing that heritage sites have at times the power to shock, move and be cathartic. The work of Gaynor Bagnall (2003) and her influential study at two heritage sites, the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester and Wigan Pier (both in the UK), similarly challenge the conventional view that museum-goers are passive and uncritical consumers of ‘heritage’, arguing that, to the contrary, what is evident are performances that demonstrate a ‘complexity and diversity’ in respect of the visitors’ engagements that is registered as much in emotion and imagination as it is in cognition (2003, p. 87). Such thinking has provided momentum to a growing field of study that, unlike conventional museum studies (see Kirchberg and Tröndle, 2012), acknowledges the agency of the visitor and the dynamics of interaction between the visitor and display as the core of visitor experiences (Latham, 2007; Schorch, 2015a, 2015b; Soren, 2009; Witcomb, 2013).

More recently, Lisa Costello (2013) has extended this approach to those museums that serve a particular memorializing function, in her case the Jewish

Museum Berlin, which focusses on Jewish culture throughout European and German history and the Holocaust as central themes. In Costello’s work, set against the affordances of visceral affect and consequent emotional registers, there is a stark dissonance of cultural perspectives, about which moral judgements are invited that are consonant with contemporary attitudes towards tolerance, responsibility and the idea of a universal moral lesson. And yet, there are so many facets of experience and meaning made possible; interlocking, competing for attention and diverse in the way they engender engagement: ‘The design of the space allows audiences an array of responses that are both intellectual and physical, encouraging a negotiation of multiple narratives of collective memory with each visit’ (2013, pp. 5–6). The museum thus actively engages its visitors in the process of making meaning within its spaces, transforming them from bystanders into active witnesses by asking them to think (or rethink as is more often the case) about the events portrayed, and to link these thoughts, experiences and performances with the present (2013, p. 18).

In adopting a theory of *cosmopolitan affect*, therefore, it is possible to see visitors’ agency as operating in the co-production of meaning at a more-than-representational level: meaning is conceptualized as generated, explored and shared in all manner of ways, drawn as it is from memories and preconceptions, the narratives of overarching discourses and not least the somatic nature of engagement and the emotional. Staiff (2014, pp. 46–69) explores the somatic and embodied nature of heritage by employing a historicist and dialogical perspective on the work of writers and artists to provide insights into the way that the ‘bodily experience of a heritage place or object or landscape’ can be described, suggesting that ‘the body is the locus of experience: memories, referencing, emotions, imagination, knowledge, dreaming, temporal/spatial mobility and being are all bodily’ (2014, p. 47). His emphasis on the embodied experience of heritage is reflective of Waterton and Watson’s (2014) concern with an embodied semiotic of heritage engagement that goes beyond the visual and representational and into the sensory world of affect, where places and objects constitute semiotic landscapes that conjure intensities of experience in which the past is both immanent and yet fluid and contingent in its meaning. What this approach also suggests is that cosmopolitan affect may be afforded across, between and within cultural entities – in a cross-cultural landscape – so that what is intensely felt in one subject, group, community or polity may be less significant, or not significant at all, to another, but is yet susceptible to ethical interpretation and, therefore, a higher level of affordance in formalized heritage spaces such as museums.

Cross-cultural encounters in the museum: the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) and the Immigration Museum Melbourne (IMM)

Our aim in setting down an initial understanding of what we have termed an affective cosmopolitanism has been to prepare the ground for supposing that museums might constitute ‘cross-cultural landscapes’. As revealed in the previous

section, key to this theorization is the assumed potential of museums to engage their visitor-audiences through their embodied and sensory capacities, their emotions and the emotional–cognitive assemblages that they bring with them. These ‘terms of engagement’, it seems to us, provide a framework for the kinds of cross-cultural encounters that correspond with Anderson’s notion of the cosmopolitan canopy and all that implies in terms of a humanizing cosmopolitan ethics. We will consider the nature and content of this fusion of ideas in the context of two museums that have a clear purpose in representing cross-cultural relations: the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) and the Immigration Museum Melbourne (IMM). Drawing on empirical investigations of global visitors’ experiences in both museums, the following analysis aims to illustrate how each operates as a cosmopolitan canopy within the respective cityscapes of Wellington and Melbourne, by facilitating cross-cultural encounters and engagements that are entangled with travel practices, thus affording spaces that evoke embodied, affective and emotional responses. To think about them in Anderson’s (2004, p. 24) terms, both museums allow visitors to ‘encounter people who are strangers to them, not just as individuals but also as representatives of groups they “know” only in the abstract. The canopy can thus be a profoundly humanizing experience’. Based on the research findings, we argue that Te Papa and the IMM put into practice a form of museological intervention, an interruption, to use Dawney’s term, which, through the humanized, multi-sensory performativity of displays, provokes *at once* critical cosmopolitan and embodied responses *through* visitors’ interpretive engagements. Cosmopolitanism thus emerges as a critical faculty (Delanty, 2012) and, to borrow from Mica Nava (2006), ‘structures of feeling’ (following from Raymond Williams, 1977) that emerge *through* the ‘cosmohermeneutics’ of cross-cultural encounters, entangling self and other through visitors’ interpretive dialectics of reflexivity and empathy (Schorch, 2014a). At the same time, the research findings suggest that the biographies of visitors intertwine with interpretive engagements and with exhibitions (Schorch, 2015c). There is, then, no ‘cosmopolitan Te Papa’ or ‘cosmopolitan IMM’ in a totalizing sense; rather, there are particular cross-cultural negotiations, framed by affective and emotional registers, in specific contexts that might lead to intercultural literacy and ethical positions or ethnocentric misreadings and indifferent tolerance, among other potential responses.

Background: Te Papa and the IMM

Te Papa

Te Papa, which opened in 1998, considers itself a bicultural organization based on the principle of partnership enshrined in the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 between the British Crown and Māori. The Treaty is widely regarded as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, and after decades of negligence it has gained constitution-like status in recent years. Today, concrete policies and practices such as Mana Taonga (living spiritual and cultural links between material treasures and

people) and Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) ensure Māori participation and involvement in the museum (Hakiwai, 2006; McCarthy, 2007, 2011; Schorch and Hakiwai, 2014; Schorch *et al.*, 2016; H. Smith, 2006). Importantly, Māori input into exhibition developments is not confined to Māori galleries, but adds a Māori and thus bicultural dimension to social and natural history as well as art galleries within the museum. The Treaty of Waitangi thereby assumes the central position within Te Papa’s spatial layout and thematic composition by forming the main part of the *Signs of a Nation/Ngā Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition and standing in a wedge-shaped space underneath a high cathedral-like ceiling (see Figure 5.1).

This space divides the museum into two sides: one devoted to Māori themes and the other to British settlers and other more recent immigrants from Asia and the Pacific region. Equally, though, there is an intention to draw these poles and their often conflicting histories together towards a common future. Te Papa thus houses a variety of cultural differences in their material, discursive and spatial manifestations under a common ‘canopy’. The visitor study upon which this chapter is based involved interviews with visitors from Canada, the USA and Australia, and aimed at eliciting how tourists from other Anglo settler nations with similar but different postcolonial realities and Indigenous populations responded to Te Papa’s explicit bicultural approach (for detailed research design see Schorch, 2015c).

The IMM

The IMM was also founded in 1998 and was Australia’s second migration museum, after the South Australian Migration and Settlement Museum in Adelaide, established in 1986. Born out of an initiative by the state of Victoria and specifically devoted to the topic of immigration, the IMM has assumed a specific political position by constructing immigration as an integral part of Australia’s history, as is obvious in the words of the museum’s patron, the governor of Victoria at the time, who stresses that ‘the story of immigration is essentially the story of all non-Indigenous Australians’ (IMM, 1998, p. iv). This inclusive founding principle has been translated into museum practices and collection policies, and is reflected in the interrelated permanent galleries and temporary exhibitions. While the latter



Figure 5.1 *Signs of a Nation/Ngā Tohu Kotahitanga* exhibition within Te Papa.

Source: Te Papa.

are dedicated to particular communities, the former present critical approaches that place individual experiences within the socio-political and historical contexts of migration, thus providing an analysis of the host society as much as a history of migrants themselves (Witcomb, 2009). Thus, these galleries deal with the history of immigration policies and their impacts on those affected by them, the reasons for migration, and the experiences of migrants in Australia (see Figure 5.2).

The IMM, then, in ways similar to Te Papa, attempts to offer a spatial ‘canopy’ under which different cultural perspectives can interact across a common sphere. Furthermore, the IMM has strengthened its critical edge by tackling contemporary issues such as racism in the latest exhibition, *Identity: Yours, Mine, Ours* (Schorch, 2015a; Schorch et al., 2015; Witcomb, 2013). In the case of the IMM, the visitor study, which incorporated interviews with Australian individuals and pairs of adults, set out to examine how visitors experience or engage with the representation of migration at the museum (for detailed research design see Schorch, 2014a).

Cross-cultural encounters and cosmopolitan engagements

Recent approaches to museum visitor studies have generated a nuanced understanding of what exhibitions might achieve by using qualitative methods to investigate visitor experiences through an analytical lens of ‘encounter’ and ‘engagement’ (Macdonald, 2002; Sandell, 2007; Smith, 2011; Schorch, 2014a, 2015c). In the



Figure

cosmopolitan studies literature, a related focus on ‘encounter’ (Delanty, 2011) has emerged and can be drawn on to analyse the empirical realities of cross-cultural encounters and potentially cosmopolitan engagements in specific settings, such as museums (Schorch, 2014a). Moreover, museums and their practices of collecting and displaying the ‘other’ might offer a range of ‘opportunities for encounters beyond the self’ (Mason, 2013, pp. 44–5), especially in museums devoted to biculturalism (Te Papa) and migration (IMM) and the associated movement between cultural worlds of meaning. In short, we are interested in the ways in which a cross-cultural encounter can *become* a cosmopolitan engagement *through* the ‘act of interpretation’ (Schorch, 2013a, 2014a) and associated ‘self-transformation in light of the encounter with the other’ (Delanty, 2011, p. 642). Based on the two visitor studies at Te Papa and the IMM, we show how such museum encounters and interpretive engagements proceed through the cosmopolitan power of individual objects, the cosmopolitan agency of photographs and the cosmopolitan faces and stories of tour guides.

The cosmopolitan power of objects

Recent scholarship has expanded on the ‘material turn’ in the humanities and social sciences and the position of ‘museums in the material world’ (Knell, 2007) by emphasizing the material nature of museum experiences (Witcomb, 2010) and associated constructions of meanings (Schorch, 2014b). While taonga or Māori treasures, for example, have been turned into ‘objects of ethnography’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991), it is vital that, rather than seeing them merely as the products of social relations and knowledge, one considers their active mediation of those relations and knowledge through their own material and social agency (Gell, 1998; Henare et al., 2007; Latour, 2005). Thus, objects do not only reflect or embody external realities but also exert their own influence and *enact* relationships. Following Alfred Gell (1998, p. 6), the analytical lens should thus be geared towards the ‘practical mediatory role’ of objects ‘in the social process’ by zooming in on what materialities *do* rather than what they represent (see also Chua and Elliott, 2013). Such awareness should not, however, be reduced to an object-centred focus. Rather, meaning arises out of the interpretive space *in-between* objects and people, and vice versa (Schorch, 2015c).

A clear sense of this sort of mutual constitution throughout the processes of meaning-making was articulated by one participant, Bruce, from the USA, in the interview after his visit to Te Papa. Through his observations we can gain insight into how his museum experience arose out of a multi-sensory, embodied ‘object-subject interaction’ (Dudley, 2009), a process of active and mutual engagement between self and the physical world. This has similarities with arguments recently developed by Rosalyn Diprose (2011), who has explored the role of buildings, as non-human agents, in gathering affect. For Diprose (2011, p. 6), a ‘building’ is of course an ordinary thing; nonetheless, it carries a capacity to assemble and arrange ‘atmosphere, wind, light, wood, stone, vegetation, as well as the flesh and sensibilities of its occupants and of those living beings that it leaves outside’.

The reflections Bruce offers on *Te Hau ki Turanga*, a communal Māori meeting house, echo these sentiments. He encountered this whare (building) in the *Mana Whenua* exhibition (see Figure 5.3), which explores and celebrates Māori as *tan-gata whenua* (original people) of Aotearoa New Zealand, and remarked:

We took off our shoes and walked into the little house and kind of looked at all that. It always amazes me how cultures retain information. I mean writing is a cool thing but it takes a lot of being able to stay in one place and have a fairly complex society for it so it pops up ... the sort of non-character ways of retaining information that the hut embodies ... that the pylons are the ancestors and by looking at them you can recall your history, I mean it's an interesting memory device. I suppose in computer terms it's a very lossy way of doing things losing information over time, but it keeps at least the highlights for you and it keeps them really present. I guess one of the things that came up while I was looking at those structures was that these are very connected societies that have a very close connection to predecessors and to the community.

Through this exchange it becomes apparent that *Te Hau ki Turanga* exercises a form of agency that opens up an imaginative world, enabling Bruce to develop

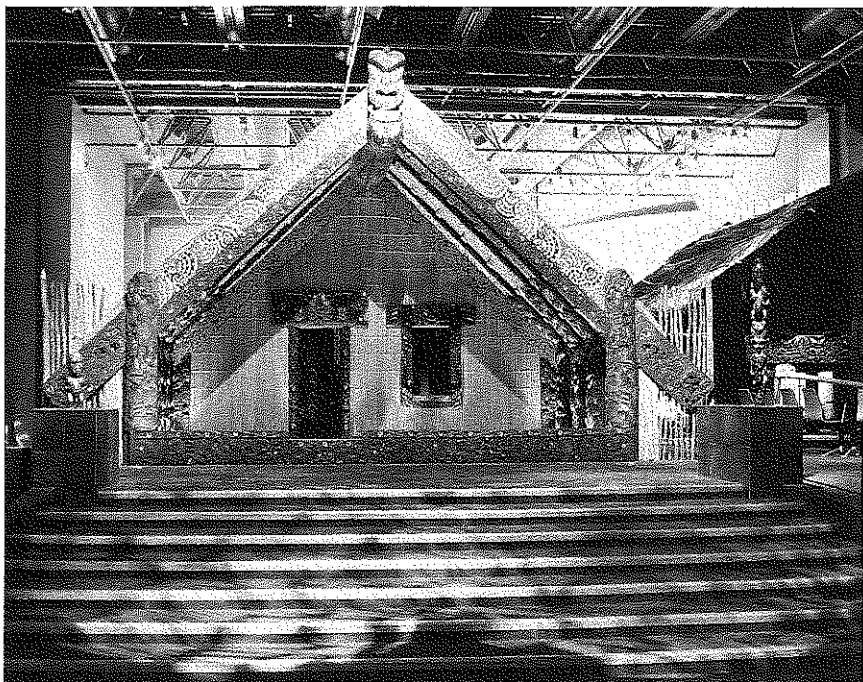


Figure 5.3 *Te Hau ki Turanga* in the *Mana Whenua* exhibition.

Source: Te Papa.

an insight into the expressions of community and genealogy that are materialized in the object. This demonstrates the mobility of affect and its flows between human and non-human entities. These insights into the cultural other, however, are always mediated through the interpretive community of the self (Schorch, 2013a), in this case exemplified through the functioning of a computer. For Susan, also from the USA, a multi-sensory, embodied engagement with a canoe in the same exhibition framed her encounter with cultural differences and provoked the interpretive construction of cross-cultural meanings (Schorch, 2014b):

And then looking at the canoe and seeing how small of a canoe that is, how wide it is and trying to imagine a six-foot man sitting in that cross-legged or even hunched down, being able to feel that and like 'that's crazy'. You know, I wouldn't be able to experience that if it was set up behind glass and like looking at it. I wouldn't actually be able to tell the depth I feel. And that not just me personally, but you just, you can almost feel yourself stepping into the canoe when it's set up in the middle of the floor like that and when you are able to walk into the building...

As Bruce and Susan's narrations indicate, those encounters between themselves and objects – and thus between self and other – began with an embodied engagement and *became* a cosmopolitan engagement through the interpretive transactions taking place between both poles and their ultimate entanglement. That is, the encounter facilitated a process of engagement from the affective to the cognitive that traces a variety of affordances, from the design of the space and the exhibition within it through to an emotional and cognitively framed interpretive engagement expressed in the interpretive performances of reflexivity and imagination. It is this crucial point of engagement that hermeneutically produces an entanglement of self and other and thus a cosmopolitan moment across differences and commonalities (Schorch, 2014a). For Bruce and Susan, particular taonga or Māori treasures *became* a 'medium of intimacy', as Classen and Howes (2006, p. 200, 202) would argue, and facilitated a 'corporal encounter' which allowed them to connect to both 'sensory as well as social biographies' of a carved object. For Māori people, taonga possess a life-force or *mauri* (Hakiwai and Diamond, 2015). They *are* ancestors and therefore *are* people and instantiate relations (Henare, 2007), which collapses the common dichotomy between subject and object. At the heart of this simultaneous, mutual constitution of human and non-human actors lies interpretive practice. Importantly, then, the biography of an object should not be equated with, or reduced to, its socio-cultural life trajectory, but should rather be understood through the biographies of relationships *enacted* as through taonga, in this case including Bruce and Susan. It is therefore more precise to speak of webs of biographies that *emerge* through the inextricable entanglements of human life and the material world (Schorch, forthcoming).

Susan's follow-up interview, which was conducted via phone six months after her visit to Te Papa, offers evidence of the long-term impact of this multidimensional interplay, which lives on in her memory as a 'felt presence':

The displays and exhibits that I really remember were the Māori displays and the, I don't remember what it was called, not like a temple but a meeting room where they perform their meetings?! And you were able to take off your shoes and enter in and just kind of sit there and soak it all in. You feel the presence and everything and like all the beautiful carvings and it's nice being able to touch everything and just look at the different, the very beautiful intricate details on the carvings.

For Susan, a 'felt presence' seems to imprint on her memory more profoundly than factual information such as the name of the 'Māori displays'. This 'felt presence', or 'eerie sense', as another visitor from Australia put it in his follow-up interview, is a clearly embodied engagement or act of meaning-making that is performed across cultural boundaries, which, throughout a process that moves from and between the affective to the cognitive, shapes a cosmopolitan entanglement of self and other, through the interpretive movements of reflexivity and imagination. This means that there is no cosmopolitan object or subject *per se*, but instead there emerge potentially cosmopolitan moments which erupt from processes that begin with affective-subjective engagements and proceed through the simultaneous, mutual constitution of objects and subjects across cultural differences.

The cosmopolitan agency of photographs

There is a growing body of literature within and beyond heritage studies which calls our attention to dimensions such as 'senses', 'feelings', 'emotions', 'affect' and 'embodiment' to gain a more nuanced view of the human experience (Crouch, 2015; Dudley, 2009; Edwards *et al.*, 2006; Gregg and Seigworth, 2010; Gregory and Witcomb, 2007; L. Smith, 2006; Thrift, 2008; Waterton, 2014; Witcomb, 2010). However, while these perspectives importantly allude to the so-called 'non-representational' dimensions of experiences, they often do so at the expense of power, situatedness and biography (Thrift, 2008) and language (DeLanda, 2006) (see detailed discussions in Schorch, 2013b, 2014b). As a specific consequence of these debates, 'there is a tendency for images to be treated as visual or non-verbal, which creates a false contrast with language' (Hughes-Freeland, 2004, p. 209; though see detailed discussions in Waterton and Watson, 2014 against this line of thinking). The visitor study at the Immigration Museum Melbourne included the *Leaving Dublin* temporary exhibition (see Figure 5.4), which photographically captures the current generation of Irish migrants to Australia, exposing this 'contrast' as 'false' through an empirical interrogation of interpretive processes.

Turning to an interview with Paul, who migrated to Australia from Hungary after World War II, we can observe the agency of *Leaving Dublin* in facilitating an encounter between viewer and exhibition through engagement with faces and stories: 'I like the exhibition. The photographs were fantastic, very evocative and artistically ... I mean I'm no photographer, but I was struck by just how wonderful the photographs were and just related some of this to my own experience.' The exhibit provides at once a window to the other and a mirror to the self. That is,

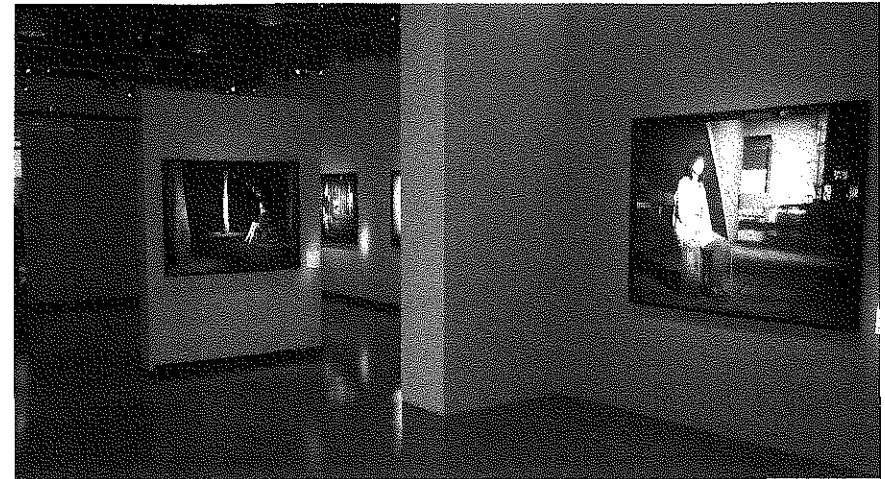


Figure 5.4 *Leaving Dublin: Photographs by David Monahan* touring exhibition 2012–13, Immigration Museum, Melbourne.

Source: Museum Victoria. Photographer: Benjamin Healley.

by engaging with the 'evocative ... photographs' depicting other migrants, Paul was able to relate 'some of this' to his 'own experience' of having been a 'refugee' and 'migrant', which he elaborated on during his interview when shifting his reflections from the photos to the 'stories':

The individual stories were quite touching, bringing up all these things of fear and loss and leaving a community and realizing that to have a decent life, this was again a theme in the exhibition, people need to somehow take roots in a new community which may be quite strange and forbidden even.

Mirror and window, or self and other, become entangled through the interplay of embodied narratives and narrative embodiment. That is, Paul's 'own experience' is embodied in the 'photographs' of fellow migrants' faces, while 'the individual stories' embody the 'fear and loss and leaving'. 'These are the thoughts that come to me', Paul concludes, 'by looking at a picture or photographs and hearing particular stories'. The simultaneous presence of embodied narratives through faces and narrative embodiment through stories humanizes the museum encounter and entangles the 'experiences' of self and other (Schorch, 2014a). It becomes apparent that 'evocative ... pictures' of bodies and their 'touching ... stories' are irretrievably intertwined dimensions of Paul's interpretive engagement, thus pointing to the mutual constitution of affective registers and interpretive strategies such as stories and their subjective consequences arising through the performed practices of a lived experience (Schorch, 2014b).

The interpretive interplay between ‘picture’ and ‘story’, or embodied narrative and narrative embodiment, assists in opening the encounter between exhibition and viewer to empathetic and reflexive engagements. For Julia, who was born and raised in Australia, ‘the photographs’ of ‘them’, the faces of the protagonists, embody a ‘kind of symbol’ that hints at a potentially happy end to their stories:

What I liked about the photographs was the darkness, but in most of them there was light shining through at some point. Something was illuminated and quite bright gold light, which I guess relieved that sense of sadness and, you know, the pain of saying goodbye with this kind of symbol of something new, maybe in the distance but that was going to come to them. I hope it did for them.

Lisa, who recently emigrated with her boyfriend Kyle from Ireland to Australia, shares Julia’s empathetic identification with the experiences of the other and in the process reflects upon the self:

Parts of the exhibition were related to Dublin, Ireland, which I found particularly enjoyable. It was good to hear the stories of fellow immigrants and see that we are not alone ... young people coming over for work and to start a family just because it’s difficult to do at home in Ireland at the moment, and that would be part of why we came over, with a view to starting a new life for ourselves. And just to see that people had done that before and it’s the same emotions and missing family and the same kind of struggles.

Lisa’s encounter with the exhibition becomes an interpretive engagement that is both reflexive and empathetic, the latter of which, as Andrea Witcomb (2009, p. 64) argues, is a ‘prerequisite for dialogue, for the recognition of commonalities’. Indeed, empathy requires a shared symbolic terrain or ‘common sphere’ (Dilthey, 1976), so that the hermeneutic negotiations of cultural differences can lead to understandings (Schorch, 2013a). The interpretive dialectics of empathy and reflexivity, then, create commonalities across differences, thus entangling self and other through the ‘cosmohermeneutics’ (Schorch, 2014a) of cross-cultural museum encounters. These actual experiences and their narrative expression allude to the *material-in-the-verbal* through the bodies and flesh of narrative characters. Importantly, then, ‘language’ should be seen evocatively rather than through a structural or representational lens. Claims like ‘language is not life; it gives life orders’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 84) derive from such a limiting structural and almost mechanical view on linguistics which does not capture the infinite and fluid world of interpretive and imaginative engagements (see detailed discussion in Schorch, 2013b). Rather, we should recognize that ‘images, like words, evoke worlds’ (Hughes-Freeland, 2004, p. 209). That is, images, language and words, like objects, never only *represent* external realities, but *become* meaningful through their performative effect and embodied affect on readers and viewers.

Humanizing cosmopolitanism

A culture cannot speak or engage in encounter and dialogue; it depends on the face and story of a cultural actor. It follows that there cannot evolve a cross-cultural dialogue between totalized collective entities, but only an interpersonal dialogue among cultural human beings (Schorch, 2013a, 2014a). A practice of affective cosmopolitanism, then, requires the humanizing of cross-cultural encounters as the basis of interpretive engagements so that a potentially cosmopolitan ‘self-transformation in light of the encounter with the other’ (Delanty, 2011, p. 642) can occur. Returning to the interview with Bruce, we can observe that a tour guide at Te Papa lends a face with a story to a cultural group:

One of the cool things was that, according to the tour guide, it was basically presented by the Māori not by, you know, a bunch of white guys saying what we present of the Māori, which made a lot more tellable and believable and didn’t have this sort of stench of imperialism on it. So it made it a lot easier to sort of, because if somebody is telling about themselves rather than somebody telling about somebody else, we call that hearsay in the law.

Through the medium of a live Māori presence embodied in the tour guide, Bruce engages with another cultural world at Te Papa after initial reluctance fuelled by his ‘experience with native culture in the United States’. Through this humanized, interpretive mediation, Bruce recognizes the self-representation of Māori in the wider exhibition spaces, which seems to offer some remedy for the ‘stench of imperialism’ which he associates with many ‘presentations of non-dominant cultures’. The tour intervention and the associated humanization of culture through the face and story of the tour guide, then, open up the potentialities of the museum encounter, readying it for a mutually negotiated cross-cultural dialogue and facilitating embodied, cross-cultural forms of emotion- and meaning-making (Schorch, 2013a, 2015a, 2015b). Strikingly, Bruce departs from the specificity of the situation to assume a wider moral stance. He talks about ‘non-present cultures’ in general and links their alien representation to the ‘hearsay’ concept ‘in the law’, his own professional field. Bruce’s interview thus attests to the interpretive process through which visitors narrate their biographies into the museum experience, and the museum experience into their biographies (Schorch, 2015a, 2015b), as well as to the moral quality of this interpretive dialectics.

The study at the IMM that includes the *Getting In* gallery, which tracks changes in Australia’s immigration policies through history, also illustrates this point. Part of this gallery is an interview booth, an interactive touch screen that embodies the viewer in the position of both an immigration officer and a visa applicant. The display thus requires the viewer to physically and imaginatively assume the roles and perspectives of various others. For Angela, who was born and raised in Australia, such an affective–subjective framing of an empathetic identification evolved into an emotionally modulated reflexive and critical examination of socio-political contexts through the experiences of ‘someone from Iraq’ and her

own life. Being confronted with a face and 'story behind' a 'poor policy' is, according to her, 'absolutely appalling' but 'doesn't surprise' her, since she is 'working with people who do those interviews' in immigration detention health services in Western Australia. The interview booth at the IMM and her professional life, full of 'direct experience working with immigrants and asylum seekers', enable Angela to understand the concrete 'story' of 'someone' behind an abstract 'policy'. This humanization of migration shapes an interpersonal rather than an abstract encounter, and renders possible a moral and emotional relationship between self and other, thus shaping a discursive cosmopolitan space. That is, the 'reflexive condition' of cosmopolitanism as a 'mode of critique' (Delanty, 2012) can only emerge through the practice of meaning-making and the 'act of interpretation' (Schorch, 2013a, 2014a). A cosmopolitan 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, quoted in Ricoeur, 1991), through which the perspective of the other is being incorporated into the broadened horizon of the self (Delanty, 2012; Held, 2002), can only be hermeneutically achieved through the concrete interpretive performances by individuals rather than the abstract merging of collective entities. In other words, a culture cannot reflect, critique or transform itself. Instead, it requires the embodied and affective potential, and the reflexive, critical and transformative faculty, of cultural actors (Schorch, 2014a). The development of a 'cosmopolitan appreciation of difference', then, depends on the 'profoundly humanizing experience' (Anderson, 2004) afforded by a process that begins with embodied encounters and is resolved in moments of meaning-making and change, the very essence of which can be captured by an affective cosmopolitanism provoked in and through the cross-cultural museum canopies of Te Papa and the IMM.

Conclusions

Drawing on two studies conducted with global visitors to Te Papa and Australian visitors to the IMM, this chapter has offered an interpretive exploration of museum experiences as embodied, interpretive engagements with cultural differences, something we have described as *cosmopolitan affect*. We have argued that Te Papa and the IMM to varying degrees put into practice a form of museological intervention that is both affective and cosmopolitan. We suggested three features through which both museums facilitate particular forms of cross-cultural encounters and thus provoke affective, cosmopolitan engagements: the cosmopolitan power of individual objects, the cosmopolitan agency of photographs and the cosmopolitan faces and stories of tour guides. By deploying humanized cultural perspectives and multi-sensory performative displays, each museum *enacts* rather than represents or teaches cultural difference. Moreover, both museums not only enact cultural plurality but also build bridges across these pluralities. The required conversation across cultural differences occurs through the performativity rather than representational function of displays on the one hand and visitors' interpretive dialectics of reflexivity and empathy on the other; both sides become entangled through the interpretive space that is 'in-between' viewer and display or between self and other, thus creating a shared sphere of affordances within the

'canopy' of the museum. To capture this, we have proposed what we have termed an *affective cosmopolitanism*, which we have illustrated as being enacted in and through the cross-cultural museum canopies of Te Papa and the IMM. This is *at once* an empirical and a normative concept; an embodied, social practice *and* a philosophical ideal that not only cultivates cross-cultural landscapes for intercultural literacy and ethical responses, but also complicates ethnocentric misreadings and the indifferent tolerance of others. As an exploration of the working of affect in heritage, we have explicitly situated ourselves – with certain qualifications – in the non-representational or rather more-than-representational domain of theory as we feel that this provides a more accurate understanding of the interplay of the structured sequences of museum engagements, the role of interpretation, the dissonant or uncontrolled affordances of the museum as a landscape for cross-cultural encounters and the capacity of visitors to be affected by them. Based on our empirical enquiry and theoretical reasoning, we have offered affective cosmopolitanism as an analytical category and lens which captures and illuminates the affective–subjective dynamic of museum and other cross-cultural experiences as embodied encounters in structured spaces that are essentially non- or more-than-representational, but imbued with an ethical quality that emerges in the spaces *between* objects, people and others.

Notes

- 1 The arguments advanced in this article have been further developed and published in the book *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life* (Anderson, 2011).
- 2 See the introductory essay in a special issue on cosmopolitanism in *Theory, Culture and Society* (2002) 19 (1–2).

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