

**Essays on representation: authors, audiences and
organisations**

Elizabeth Carnegie

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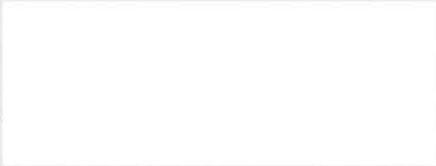
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Abstract

Declaration

I declare that I am the sole author of this document and associated single authored papers. I have permission from co-authors of other papers under consideration here to include such papers as part of this overall submission and to claim authorship of my contribution to theoretical debates, fieldwork and research outputs contained therein.

Signed. 

Date. 8/6/2009

213 words

Abstract

This critical review of submitted papers summarises their aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions to highlight my overall contribution to the fields of study. The papers cover the period from 1998-2008 and are concerned with the representation of individuals, communities and cultures and within representational spaces of museums, cultural sites and localities. My work is primarily influenced by ethnology and draws heavily on oral and social history and early papers reflect my time as a museum curator whilst more recent works have grown from my own reflective practice, self-questioning and review. They chart my journey from curator who is influenced by, and seeks to influence practice, to that of academic who builds on practice to develop theoretical debates and an academic voice. Papers are addressed within two clusters. Cluster one considers museums as spaces in which to explore the representation of cultures and communities. Cluster two is concerned with temporary, transient and often contested representational spaces such as festival sites and pilgrimage routes and how these shape and impact on the experiences of locals, participants and visitors. I conclude that I have contributed to, and developed debates on, the understanding of how 'cultural products' of individuals, communities and nations are represented and explored, even exposed, and the tensions inherent, in the creation of these representations. I evidence that I have contributed overall to the body of knowledge on representation within cultural institutions and representational spaces.

235 words

Chapter 1 Introduction

This critical review of submitted papers summarises their aims, objectives, methodology, results and conclusions to highlight my overall contribution to the fields of study. In order to achieve this, I take a chronological approach in the main, although works are also referred to thematically and according to the theoretical frameworks that underpin them. The papers cover the period from 1998-2008 although earlier pieces and current, as yet unpublished research outputs, are referred to on occasions. Some of the work relates to my own curatorial practice and development and other pieces reflect 'pure research' aims that have evolved from this time or been developed more recently. Ten pieces comprise this submission: six journal articles, one book, and three book chapters. These are as follows:

Paper 1 *Museos de Glasgow: Violencia Domestica, Verguenza y Silencio*

Written in 1998, before social inclusion issues were routinely discussed, it develops arguments radical to its time. It posits that museums had the potential to shape society and not just represent it, and that they should be able to tackle serious social issues as they reflect the lived experience of many people within society. Reflecting on Glasgow Museums exhibitions, it also showed other museum professionals what museums could achieve, and was picked up by this journal in the hope that it would influence social change within museums and society in South America and elsewhere.

Paper 2 '*She was Aye Workin*'

She was Aye Workin' is an innovative piece which brings together, and draws comparisons from, oral history material reflecting the lives of women in the tenements of both Edinburgh and Glasgow. This in itself is a contribution to knowledge as most texts cite difference and not similarities between the two cities. It brings to the public arena sensitive material concerning the consequences of social poverty in the words of the women and their families. It challenges social stigmas and promotes knowledge of intimate history.

Paper 3 *It wasn't all bad': Representations of working class cultures within social history museums and their impacts on audiences*

This is a confident and reflexive piece, challenging for curators and adds to the body of knowledge in a number of ways. It determines that social historians have embraced traditional curatorial values and that this is a consequence of the way that museums are structured, funded and managed. Radically, it accuses socially history curators of potentially 'othering' the working classes within representations and in so doing might expose them to 'the wrong audiences'. I go on to apply Goffman's theory of stigma management to show how local people participate or withhold their participation in the exhibition process in order to control how they and their communities are represented, thus minimising the shame that disclosure might bring.

Paper 4 *Free Nelson Mandela? The politics and Pricing of Culture within Society*

This chapter adds to the body to knowledge through its engagement with how representations of local concerns have global and intimate impacts, and these are approached from a largely realist perspective. It introduces the concept of curating 'intimate' history.

Paper 5 *Religion, Museums and the Modern World*

This paper builds on my knowledge of world religions and their representation within the St Mungo museum, and applies this to other museums of religion. The case study at the Museum of World Religions, Taiwan, adds to knowledge in that it interprets the museum from the perspective of the commoditisation of religion building on Miller (1998). It also introduces my own theory of whether the loss or lack of faith might leave a gap within individuals, and whether people might travel to fill this gap in either secular or religious terms through museum visiting or with the faith, or bits of faith, encountered during visits to museums that represent (showcase) world faiths. Empirical research adds to the knowledge of visitor motivations.

Paper 6 *Catalysts for Change? Museums of Religion in a Pluralist Society*

This paper builds on Paper 5 but adds to the body of knowledge in different ways. It argues that museum messages need to be managed and that sensitive and emotive representations require careful management. It uniquely brings together information regarding the different religious perspectives and aims of the three key museums of

religion within the world. The paper discusses how they manage the message and it develops arguments about the audience experience

Paper 7 Mobility, Diaspora and the Hybridisation of Festivity: The Case of The Edinburgh Mela, Scotland

This paper added to knowledge in that it applied to Melas, a body of literature that was previously applied to Carnival. The study of the Edinburgh Mela offers unique insights into the ways that Melas adapt to, or are adapted to, their host communities and how representations are formed and experienced by different audiences. It offers unique evidence of cultural change within Scottish South Asian Diasporic communities.

Paper 8 Pilgrimage: journeying beyond self

This paper develops new ways of looking at pilgrimage and charity treks that are carried out within liminal representational spaces. My arguments formulated in the previous paper concern the potential gap that a loss, lack of, or need to reaffirm or find might leave within an individual, are further developed in this paper. By applying theoretical frameworks that define the role and function of pilgrimage, I am contributing to knowledge by arguing that people undertake such journeys in the *manner* of pilgrims even when there is no religious motivation for such journeys. By doing this I argue that they are seeking self-development, which is sought within representational 'other' space rather than in the home environment.

Paper 9 Juxtaposing the Timeless and the Ephemeral: Staging Festivals and Events at World Heritage Sites

In this paper I add to the body of knowledge of how festivals impact on and shape their physical environment. The paper considers how Edinburgh, in particular, and potentially other city based World Heritage Sites such as Greenwich, struggle with the various tensions inherent in being a multiple-use representational space. It discusses how these multiple representations impact differently on people and place. There is very little research on the intangibles of WHS and this piece is timely as it covers the impacts of intangible on festive space which is an area of growing interest and concern.

Paper 10 *Re-enactment Events and Tourism: Meaning, Authenticity and Identity*

This paper adds to the body of knowledge in several ways. It brings together literature from several disciplines to argue that re-enactment is a growing ‘serious leisure’ pursuit, and this under researched area is worthy of fuller consideration as it shows that people are seeking to develop a sense of themselves within a different and representational space in which they allocate meaning. As with Paper 8, I discuss how this representational space is essentially ‘liminal’ and timeless and that for many, it becomes the preferred space in which to live out their lives, which some people strive to do. The paper offers arguments as to why people should seek to locate themselves within this representational space, and indeed why they should choose to represent different times and places. It concludes, as in Paper 8, that people are searching for a ‘felt authenticity’

1.2. Research clusters

All of the above papers are fully referenced in Appendix 1 and are otherwise referred to according to their allocated number as Papers 1-10. I analyse these works in two distinct clusters, although some overlap occurs throughout. Where I am not the sole author, I make clear the extent of my contribution within the methodology section (Chapter 3) and on occasions, I move from ‘I’ to ‘we’ depending on my contribution to each paper and the ownership of concepts contained therein. The overarching theme of papers addressed here is the representation of people(s) within cultural spaces and predominately within museums. These are addressed within two clusters outlined below:

- Museums as spaces in which to explore the representation of cultures and communities
- Temporary, transient and often contested representational spaces such as festival sites and pilgrimage routes and how these shape and impact on the experiences of locals, participants and visitors.

Each cluster will address the overarching theme through application to sub-themes specific to each. My approach has been, and remains, interdisciplinary, although key themes emerge, notably representation and how this impacts on and influences,

diasporas, and identity shaping. My work within representation is primarily influenced by ethnology and draws heavily on oral and social history. My work as a practitioner and academic is concerned with the representation of individuals, communities and cultures within museums and cultural spaces and reflects the dual influences of my undergraduate studies in ethnology within the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh (1989) and my post-graduate training in museums studies at the University of Leicester (1991) where I specialised in the interpretation of history museums. My period of study coincided with the growth and development of social history as a museum discipline and the conscious repositioning of local history museums into more politicised social history museums, whereby objects become a conduit for the human stories behind them. I became a curator of history at Glasgow Museums in 1991 immediately after its year as European City of Culture, a time of great change within the city, reflected in a period of rapid restructuring and redisplay within the museum service. As Clifford (1984) notes, ethnographic approaches began to be applied to social history and with it came a self-conscious sense of working from within. Upon reflection, I see this time of my life as 'self-making' as much as it is about the shaping of others within representational spaces, and also note that my gender and desire to reposition and profile the role of women has been central to much of my work (Hammersley, 2000).

While curator of history at Glasgow Museums (1991-8), I was fortunate to have been at the forefront of a number of major and innovative projects within a relatively short timeframe, as a member of the core team devising the philosophical and curatorial aims, initiation, development and success of the £6 million award-winning St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art (1993). I was also involved in building conversions, as in the Gallery of Modern Art, (1996) where I was on the interpretation panel, and major redisplays as in the People's Palace (1998). I developed subject and object specialisms in the 19th and 20th century social and industrial history of Glasgow, religion in society, developed an understanding of, and contributed to, the ways in which museums shape the community/ies that they represent, creating dialogues around cultural change. In 1998, I joined North East Lincolnshire Museums as Deputy Director. I undertook this position to gain senior management experience and experience of working with advisory and academic

committees. This was a time of change in terms of local authority positioning, staff and council expectations and these experiences have influenced my academic work allowing me to develop initially as 'critical museum visitor' and now established academic.

My work, whether located in museum 'texts' such as exhibitions or as academic pieces drawing on and shaping museological developments and ideologies of the time of writing, reflects my background as both curator and academic. Inevitably this has shaped my academic influences as much of the theory on museums and indeed representational space cited below was developed from practice by individuals who were initially themselves practice based. My work reflects the dual, potentially multiple, influences of practice creating theory that in turn influences practice, leading to a body of practice based and influenced theory which become the 'bedrock' for the subject specialisms. This impact is particularly pertinent when considering emerging areas such as social history curating which have developed in recent years from within museums and have evolved from other curatorial approaches; areas that draw on theory from outside the museums sector which is then applied and, only recently, subjected to academic review.

As many ex-curators and festival directors have shaped theory it is possible to feel that the curator/academic and academic who writes about or reflects on curation are working from the same value set. However there are key differences in approach which are discussed in some detail within this review. Curators, and indeed other professionals such as event organisers, rarely have time to reflect on their practice and their writings tend to focus on the processes undertaken. Academics are more aware of grounding methods with theory with the inevitable result that, as I have moved further away from curating, theoretical considerations become more important. I still aim to influence and learn from practice rather than simply create academic debate. However the primary focus, and therefore purpose of the work has changed as is not simply a subsidiary output from an exhibition or museum development. As museums and festival studies draws on a number of more established or related disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, and heritage studies, other influences are discernable within the papers under consideration here.

The papers considered have been subject to debate and critical peer review within the wider museum profession and within academia. In the women's history book *She was Aye Workin'* (Paper 2 in this review), I consider the potential for other outputs for research collected initially to inform exhibition research, bringing to the public arena material often considered too challenging for museum displays and difficult to address in standard history book formats. These papers consider the curatorial and managerial role of museums (and latterly festivals and events staff), in terms of how they engage with the challenges of representation.

Other papers consider debates around the curatorial selection process and exhibition content. More recently, I have been exploring the idea that the museum can be a place of secular pilgrimage, a cultural station (Burns, 2000) offering some reassurance and continuity to people in an uncertain and fast changing world (Bauman, 2001). This in turn led to my researching secular and religious forms of actual pilgrimage to get some understanding of the various ways people engage with religion or the loss or lack of religion within the modern world. Several papers explore this potential for the museum to act as a space in which to reflect on being human at an intimate and personal level even when the museum is reflecting 'dark' histories or contemporary issues of global concern. In several pieces I discuss the potential of, and limitations of, museum displays in depicting 'true' versions of the recent past, which are acceptable to those groups represented. As will be discussed more fully such representations reflect the meeting point of institutional and community values, merged with those of the curatorial staff, and as such, are subject to shaping to fit the organisational remit, positioning and biases of all parties (Hammersley, 2000).

Such representations are dependant on creating a sense of community cohesiveness which in this case is the creation of a culturally distinct body that we tend to label 'the working class' (Edensor, 2002); what Marcus terms 'pure inventions of a particular world historical system of political economy' (1984:178) are further explored in Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1992). In creating exhibitions as texts and writing papers which reflect such representations, I am mindful of the 'constructed, artificial nature of cultural accounts' (Clifford, 1984:2). Yet as the 'the working

classes' remain under-represented or become almost sub-cultures in the way they have been represented (or not) within traditional cultural institutions, I argue for the importance of such representations, flawed though they may be.

This review of my work acknowledges a growing self awareness and developing understanding of the challenges of representation. As my research moves forward in time, I turn my attention to festivals and events such as the Edinburgh Mela, the foci for representations of local, if often diasporic, communities. I aim to determine how, and whether, such representations are shaped to 'showcase' cultures rather than represent them, to and from within that culture, and are therefore a product of dominant cultural shaping as can also be argued about museum displays. Arguments carried through a number of papers in this review, about the ownership of the past and the representations of the past, and indeed present, are discussed here in the most recent article, Paper 10, which critically examines historic re-enactment events as 'serious leisure', allowing re-enactors to challenge the 'traditional' role of the museum as the appropriate custodian of the material evidence and location of historic 'truths'.

A central debate in my work asks how can those responsible for shaping exhibitions, events and historic texts, be they cultural custodians, curators, festival directors, planners, or authors, ensure those represented have the fullest involvement in the process and eventual 'product'? In short, in what ways can such professionals ensure that 'the represented' are not having visions and versions of their past 'thrust upon' them, being mindful of the fact that consumers of such exhibitions, events and books are often drawn from diverse and unrelated communities and cultures? The case studies addressed in this review highlight these processes of community consultation and engagement, their potential for empowerment and some of the ensuing problems, pitfalls and successes.

My papers are often reflective but never set out to offer a 'how to' manual or to simply outline process, but challenge and question and self-question all stages of development, interpretation and display and beyond in terms of evaluating visitor responses. Through consideration of my body of work, I highlight a contribution to

practice and knowledge of the representation and potential for empowerment of people represented within cultural institutions and spaces. Additionally, I suggest that representations of people in museums and within 'festive spaces' can impact negatively on communities, and that exposure to dominant cultures or tourist audiences can force or accelerate cultural change. This suggestion is particularly relevant to later papers that address issues within cultural tourism and festivals.

Before I begin addressing my submitted work, it is necessary to set a wider context for it. In the sections that follow I will consider key theoretical frameworks and methodologies common to most, if not all, pieces under review here. Thereafter, I will consider each specific piece in relation to the clusters outlined above. Finally, I will show how these clusters come together to create a coherent body of work with a clear progression and development detailing an overall contribution to the field(s) of study.

Chapter 2 Theoretical debates and influences

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline some of the key theoretical debates that underpin the papers under consideration in this review. Within the earlier papers I am concerned with how cultural spaces such as museums are ‘world making’ (Hollinshead, 2004:25) and identity shaping through containing and interpreting the material evidence of human activity. These are informed by museological debates, and in particular, those pertaining to the changing role of the museum within contemporary society. A number of papers, notably papers 1,3,4,5,6, and to some extent Paper 2, where collecting reflected exhibition themes, define and draw on specific museum categories and disciplines, notably social history museums and representations of religion within museums and draw on bodies of literature specific to these developing areas.

Papers 3,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 reflect a wider range of theories. These papers continue to apply museological and heritage studies theory but evidence a deeper understanding of the complexities of cultural change from the perspective of its impact on museums and festivals. I draw lightly on Robins (2003), Bauman (2001) and Hall & duGay (2003) and explore arguments that the fragmentation of identities and communities are a consequence of globalisation. This body of theory has crossovers into tourism literature (Urry, 1998; Picard and Robertson, 2006) which is concerned with tourism impacts and influences. I also explore theories of pilgrimage and real and symbolic journeys of ‘selfhood’, cultural tourism literature and multi-disciplinary approaches to festivity.

2.2 Museums and society

My work contends that ‘the shaping, appropriation and consumption of the material world is one of the key ways that we show ‘society’ who we are and indeed how ‘societies’ influence us’ (Morgan and Prichard, 2005). Influences include Hooper-Greenhill who argues that museums have ‘been active in shaping knowledge’ and ‘providing ways in which it has been possible to know the world’ (1992:8). Issues addressed throughout my work are: whose world is being interpreted, on behalf of whom, and what can we learn from each other so that society can be positively

changed? Reflecting on these influences, I understand more fully that I have not aimed for impartiality, or 'value neutrality' (Hammersley, 2000:17) but have been intent on influencing those who encounter my work in its various forms - fellow curators, academics, local and community participants, visitors. I have maintained a belief that society can be changed through engagement within the museum, and in that sense, it is a powerful medium for expressing arguments. I was also influenced to believe that museums were not fulfilling their potential, or as I thought, purpose as socially reflective institutions which will be discussed more fully later.

I draw on theories concerning the ownership of cultural property and the ways that museums become custodians of authorised versions of the past (Hetherington, 2000; Barr, 2005). Additionally, I am influenced by material culture and authenticity literature (Wright, 1985) concerning the heritagisation and commodification of the past. Latterly, I explore debates regarding the use of cultural spaces in which to locate representations of people and cultures (Pearce, 2005; Mason, 2005).

2.3 Religion and museums

Papers 5 and 6 are concerned with the representation(s) of faith within society. They emerge from my experience of working with religious communities developing the St. Mungo Museum of Life and Art, Glasgow (2003) and are underpinned by fundamental debates concerning the nature of belief systems and the role of material culture in society (I have more fully documented the process of developing this museum elsewhere in Carnegie 1995 and 2001). Objects within the St Mungo museum are interpreted in terms of their religious purpose; an innovative approach not shared by many museums. O'Neill, co-founder of the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, argues that the majority of religious objects 'are either anaesthetised as icons or treated by curators as evidence of the exotic beliefs of peoples remote in time, place or culture' (1996:189).

In Papers 5 and 6, I build on these arguments through consideration of how changing attitudes to religion in society have allowed or even forced museums to review the way their collections of artefacts which have religious relevance and resonance are displayed and interpreted. I am influenced by Pearce's arguments that material culture

provides the 'raw material' capable of being 'organised into the kind of cultural construct which we call human society' (1995:13). Collections of objects, then are an 'act of imagination' (Pearce 1995:17) intended to create meanings; a series of signs and symbols that can be readily understood by those who shaped their meaning in society. I am determining that religious artefacts are such collections but that as society changes so too will their meanings, message and their central importance to people's lives. I draw on the anthropology of religion including Geertz (1996) to determine the purpose of religion within society. He argues that religion helps individuals make sense of suffering within society, and other influences such as contemporary religious and cultural historians and critics (Derrida, 1998; Kong, 1990; Brown, 2001) determine how changes in society impact on contemporary religious observance. Derrida (1998) highlights how contemporary thinking allows for the existence of both belief and doubt eliminating the expectation or need for absolute truth. Kong (1990) and Brown (2001) debate ways in which patterns of religious observance are changing, for example church attendance, reflecting the changing relationship between church, state and cultural identity. Drawing again on Pearce, I argue within Papers 5 and 6 that 'each of us, lonely and fearful individuals, needs to feel there is an 'us', a broader grouping of souls with a shared culture' (1997:17) and that individuals may be seeking to source and belong to new communities. I argue that in a pluralist society there is the potential for that 'us' to be reflected in the belief systems of cultures though access to (and in some cases possessing) the material culture of the 'religious other'.

2.4 Religion in the museum

Although museums remain cultural temples intended as secular 'civilising influences' (O'Neill, 1996:191) they have increasingly taken on functions associated with the church. In Papers 5 and 6 I argue that museums change the meaning of objects once they are interpreted as museum objects. Urry, quoting MacCannell (1999), determines that visitors when viewing all cultural tourist sites 'undergo a process of sacralization rendering the secular cultural object sacred' (2002:10). Visits to museums and sacred sites are a likely and often expected part of the sight-seeing agendas of cultural tourists (Cohen, 1998; AFID, 2002) and the degree of religious engagement will depend on each individual's own religious viewpoint. According to Shackley 'some wish to worship, others to marvel or just to explore' (2001:XV111). Implicit in my

contribution to these papers then, is the belief that museums can both secularise the religious and sacralize/reliquarise the secular. These arguments suggest that visitors can respond in spiritual terms to secular sites and in religious terms to sights associated with their own chosen faith. It also implies they can have a spiritual or religious engagement with the religious sites of other faiths. Therefore, in Paper 6, which considers the management issues faced by cultural institutions that represent multifaith, I determine that there is a role for such museums as spaces representing multifaith from a 'multivocal' perspective (Clark, 2004) Within them individuals can reflect on their own secular and religious needs and beliefs whilst encountering the faiths of other cultures and denominations.

2.5 Social History in Museums

Museums have developed as a consequence of changes in society. From the 19th century onwards they were being developed and promoted to the increasingly urbanised working classes as a form of rational leisure (Bennett, 1995) with a strongly educative and morally edifying role. Museum knowledge, particularly when that museum is local or central government funded and managed, reflects society's contemporary values and political standpoints and traditionally have not overly challenged them. My chief museum discipline, social history, as I outline in Paper 3, is a relatively recent museum development, dating from the second half of last century, which has emphasised a shift in the nature of collection and subjects covered. In the case of social history displays within industrial and latterly, post-industrial cities, this means focusing on the processes of work, not just on the products created and on the lifestyle implications for the workforce and their families. As mentioned in the introduction this museum development also emerged at a time when ethnography was developing a self-reflexive viewpoint which would later become part of the post-history, post-modernists debates surrounding fieldwork and writing up practices as initially outlined in Clifford and Marcus' influential work *Writing Culture* (1984).

Social history practice resembles and draws on ethnographic fieldwork although it focuses on local communities from within and seeks to offer new representations of social and cultural development. This 'othering' from within (Clifford, 1984:23) where the interrogator (curator, oral historian, writer) become as 'natives' in

shepherds' clothing' (Rosaldo, 1984:97) has not ensured that social history displays are representative of the central truths, being subject to the powerplay within society or even within the museum. In many cases such displays are uncritical and largely symbolic in their treatment of the events of the recent past.

One of the key criticisms of social history displays from the late 1980s onwards, however, was a tendency to stray into 'we were poor but we were happy' territory reflecting a series of 'life landmarks' such as birth, marriage, christening etc. In this way, marriage for example, might be interpreted as an event, focusing on the material culture aspects of the wedding day rather than as a process lasting for all adult life. Part of the 'warts and all' approach to the interpretation of modern contemporary society means accepting that museums cannot be socially responsible or responsive institutions if they do not address inequality or oppression. As Silberman states, 'our material legacy is also found in the sometimes unpleasant sampling of the achievements – and failings – of our own civilization' (2004: 11) and I have endeavoured to achieve this balance within museum representations.

In researching for major displays, such as the total redisplay of the People's Palace in time for its one hundredth anniversary in 1998, and the development of the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, I was keen to reflect life experiences of the men and women of the city of Glasgow, good and bad. My work is equally concerned with interpreting the 'unpleasant' and taboo subjects of 'intimate' and personal domestic histories as it is with issues of global concern such as genocide.

My emerging role and that of my colleagues, as discussed in several papers here, has been closer to that of cultural intermediaries than object custodians. We have not been intent on 'shaping taste' (Nixon and De Guy, 2002) more ensuring that we have created visions and versions of the past that offered the primary narrative to the potentially disenfranchised with the overall hope of increasing their stake in the present (Carnegie, 1996). The museum-related papers under consideration here reflect on my practice and present and develop these debates within a museological and oral history framework. I now see, on reflection, that this has been simply another way of acting as 'shepherd', to paraphrase Rosaldo (1984:97). The museological and indeed ethnographic categories (work, hygiene, marriage), which I believed were unable to

represent the rupture of social and cultural change within society, have remained and indeed reflect our/my training. Yet I/we started to use them to tell very different stories.

2.6 Social history and the curatorial role

As a curator of history for Glasgow Museums based in the People's Palace, and working initially with Elspeth King, I was at the forefront of developing debates regarding this changing social role of the museum and the development of social history museums as a distinct discipline. My desire was to participate in the process of developing an approach to social history which interpreted the daily lives of working class people, and through consultation with local communities, bring their lives to the fore, and those 'hidden from history' (Rowbotham, 1976).

A key debate in the timeframe of this early research, (mid 1980s - mid 1990s), was the need for change to come from within the institution, and such change demanded a fuller understanding of the curatorial role. In an early chapter, *'Trying to be an Honest Woman'* (Carnegie 1996), written before the timeframe of this submission, I contend that museum professionals need to ask themselves at every stage of the process not just 'who am I doing this exhibition for and what is it about?' but also 'who am I? and what is my role in redefining and creating symbols and interpretations of objects which use that power, and have potential to promote the interests of all?' (Carnegie, 1996:54). In this, and in subsequent papers 1,3, 4, 6 and 10 I am arguing for a reflexive practice that forces some acknowledgement of partiality and power within all processes of selection and display, and at all levels of management within government funded and run institutions.

I had been heavily influenced by Kavanagh (1996), O'Neill (1996) my then colleague, and notable museum-related social historians such as Fleming (1996) who argued strongly that museums, and particularly social history museums, should be places for social discourse. I was motivated by the belief that museums, as prime city centre spaces, often funded by public money, were in the position to combat prejudice through the inclusion of socially sensitive material. Much of this work pre-dates what we would now term social inclusion issues (Sandell, 2002) and the

curatorial role in the early 1990's was still largely framed round object knowledge rather than access and accessibility. Museum academics such as Hooper Greenhill (1997) were engaged with debates at this point on the necessity of making the traditional museum more 'user friendly', and how to display material to attract, grow and maintain audiences. My work, although shaped by these debates, has always been primarily issue-led, concerned with *what* to display and the potential for museums to be responsive, more fully representative, challenging, and above all unafraid of tackling social issues within the museum. I saw writing up the processes and practices that developed from these debates as a way of influencing the profession and wider oral and social history fields and these aims are evident in the earlier papers under consideration here.

2.7 Gender and museum histories

As a woman working from a feminist perspective, much of my museum-focused research and interpretation has been concerned with the representation of women within museums. This partisan approach (Hammersley, 2000:6) creates tensions when also trying to empower 'the working classes' (Marcus, 1984:188), as indeed I was. This raises a further issue: Does one dress as the shepherd or the shepherdess within the male dominated work culture of museums? One of the areas of society in which women have been, and indeed remain, less well represented within museums is as senior staff - and museums clearly reflect the curatorial and collecting interests of prominent staff. Porter (1996), working from a feminist and post-structuralist perspective (cited in Carnegie,1996), was one of the first people to frame feminist arguments within history museum debates. She argues that the influence of this male hierarchy was one of the reasons women were represented in a particular way or excluded altogether. Where women are guaranteed to be represented is within domestic life displays and Gaby Porter's research into the representation of women in museums offered new possibilities for understanding how museums reflect and 'fix' gender identities, and she is a major influence on my work.

Williams argues that museums 'have typically supported temporal fixidity' (2008:102) in that exhibitions can be long-lasting and 'fix' ideas, attitudes and 'truths' into the moment of time they were created. Women, less visible within

certain aspects of society than men, are likely to remain less visible within displays and their achievements underplayed. I was both concerned and empowered by sentiments expressed in Porter that museums reflect 'assumptions about men and women (that were) interdependent and relational: they could not be anchored by any reference to 'real' men or women but were constructed, positional and constantly in the making' (1996 :108).

This was to affect my approach in terms of what, and whose, histories to interpret and shaped my practice in trying to understand what implications my approach would have on creating a different kind of museum-mediated histories. As Warren and Hackney outline:

'In our own society, sex is generally considered a biological status, whereas gender refers to the ways in which biological sex roles are culturally elaborated: the values beliefs, technologies and general fates to which we assign men and women' (2000:5).

I was keen to challenge the representational power of the museum by 'power sharing' with 'real' women (and men) so that they could influence and shape how and where they were portrayed. I reflect on this approach and outcomes of this work within papers considered here. Oral history is one of the key ways that social history museums power-share the interpretation with their publics as I will discuss below.

2.8 Oral history in museums

In recent years, oral history has developed as a popular interpretation method for museums seeking to represent the past through the voice of the people that lived it. According to the Oral History Society, oral history 'is the recording of people's memories. It is the living history of everyone's unique life experiences'. (Oral History Society Website). Initially, oral history was considered a way of empowering the disenfranchised that would otherwise be silenced by the dominant narratives of history-making. *The Oral History Reader*, a key text first published in 1998 states that 'through oral history interviews, working class men and women, indigenous peoples or members of cultural minorities, amongst others have inscribed their experiences on the historical record' (Perks and Thomson, 1998:1X). Oral history functions differently from book-based history in that the interview process is fluid,

relationship-led and subject to a much more personalised engagement with the past (or indeed present). Green cites the 1970's as the period when oral history moved away from 'the individual and towards the wider social and cultural contexts within which remembering takes place' (2004:35). Oral history seeks evidence of a shared past through the narratives of individuals, however as Clifford notes there is a tendency for researchers, and I argue (notably in papers 1, 3 and 4) for curators, to use the individual narrative to explore generic truths resulting in what he, referencing Barthes (1981) on 'the impossible science of the individual' terms 'an insistent tug towards the general' (1984: 105). Oral historians such as Thompson (2000) and Portelli (1998 and 2003) have reflected on the value of oral history as 'truth' and as reliable history by saying that such sources are credible and 'emotionally true' and that written history is also subject to partiality in its making and misreadings just as likely. Thompson (1996) points out that an individual's memories are structured and restructured to support their current identities and are influenced by the contexts of their remembering.

2.9 Oral History and Trauma

Much of my oral history collecting for museums and associated texts has dwelt on dark domestic histories and troubled pasts and as I discuss later, concerns of how and where and, crucially why, museums should represent and interpret such memories. Collecting oral histories of traumatic and painful memories is subject to much debate about false memory and the right to, or the need for, silence, and the value of expressing and remembering. Rose (2004), argues that 'the act of telling one's story, both through visual and narrative representation, is an important part of the process' of recovery. She quotes Herman's (1992:1) work with victims of sexual abuse: 'that people experience conflict between the will to deny horrible events and to proclaim them out loud' and that such accounts will be 'highly emotional contradictory and fragmented'. As Rickard puts it; 'oral history offers the possibility of both affirming and destabilising a personal narrative' (1998:35). She quotes Macey (1991) who argues that reflecting on contradictory responses within the interview process becomes:

'almost a natural extension of consciousness raising enabling women to understand and overcome their experiences of oppression by

examining contradictions in their lives past and present. This therapeutic dimension of oral history is in many cases considered to be more important than the accuracy of the "historical facts". (Macey, 1991: 42-48 in Rickard, 1998:34)

People selectively remember events, not just according to context as above in Thompson, but as a way of protecting individuals and communities from social shame and exposure. Field (2006) quoted in Paper 3 argues that oral history has a legitimate role in the healing process, allowing people to reflect on and have their say about events from their political or personal perspective. In so doing, it helps people to construct 'oppositional narratives that defy the taboo' of certain subjects and in the process individuals are 'recreating themselves' (Rose, 2004:164).

More than this as Rose contends; 'it is critical that that 'we' as individuals and as the body politic, examine our willingness to explore the sources and consequences of familial, institutional and cultural violence and our resistance in doing so' (2004:171). These arguments are particularly pertinent to my work on domestic lives and personal trauma. Rose goes on to argue that silences are unsurprising given that:

'social, institutional and cultural forces have often colluded to silence such stories which threaten the family harmony and community order...The irony off course is that not to reveal it, is to ensure the reproduction of violence and distortions' (2004:175).

As Rose states recovering from 'trauma is not just an individual act but a collective process' and museums can offer a forum for discussion, can share in the collective process – even, or especially when - that collective process involves challenging the very framework of society that museums might otherwise be expected to uphold and represent (2004:175).

2.10 Visitor motivations and journeys of selfhood

Social history approaches to representation may use oral history and other forms of community consultation to ensure people have some representation within displays. Recent museological and cultural tourism debates centre around visitor motivations to determine how visitors engage with such representations. However, Graburn (1989)

remains a key influence for all of my work as he argues (also quoted in Paper 6) that tourist journeys mirror pilgrimage in intent and that the museum contains a range of values common to tourism and the middle classes that is 'characteristic of modernity itself' (Graburn, 2007:128). Museum visiting reflects social aspirations and suggests that museums also represent the temples of modernity. Papers within both clusters build on these debates centred around how individuals might try to make sense of, or reappraise, their lives through undertaking journeys of selfhood. Paper 8 is underpinned by a developing body of theory concerning the growing interest in 'wellness' as people are increasingly concerned about their physical, social and psychological wellbeing in their everyday lives. A body of research has developed around understanding and interpreting journeys undertaken to promote wellness, which includes pilgrimage (Smith and Puczko, 2008).

Central to these debates in cluster two, is the potential value of pilgrimage, and journeys that mirror pilgrimage in intent, in promoting spiritual well being. There is also an underlying acceptance that personal wellness is an individual's responsibility, and therefore quest, within contemporary society. This may or may not reflect religions aims and aspirations as is discussed below. Papers also engage in debates about spirituality, (Von Balthasar, 1967) and whether this is distinct from religion or a term applied by the non-religious to define a certain 'state of being'. Papers 5 and 6 address whether people who are not religious may still seek to develop their spiritual selves.

Papers 7-10 draw more on tourism theory and in particular how that relates to ideas about authenticity (Urry, 1988; Cohen, 1998; Cohen-Hattab and Kerber, 2004) and the consumer experience. Tourism theory as is evidenced in Paper 10, has drawn on a number of other disciplines including anthropology, ethnography, geography, cultural studies and sociology; my own work has drawn on, and continues to develop, from this interdisciplinary perspective (Nissini, 1997).

One major strand of cultural tourism theory to develop in tandem with authenticity debates is the global growth of, and impact of, festivals and events on cultures and localities (Lippard, 1997; Shackley, 1998; Picard and Robinson, 2006). A key debate

addressed in papers on festivity is the extent to which such festive offerings can be deemed authentic. Theoretical debates have come to reflect on how individuals experience this as real and authentic for them (MacCannell, 1975; Selwyn, 1996; Wang, 1999). Tourism theory has developed such debates to the point that 'experiences can be seen as authentic and meaningful to participants and spectators even within the context of a largely commoditised and 'staged' experiential setting' (Paper 10, 2008: 5). Developing arguments address visitor motivations and engagement with localities, sites and cultures.

2.11 Festivity

Three works, Papers 7, 9 and 10, address festivity in some form and from various critical perspectives drawing on a diverse body of literature. Paper 7 draws on literature concerning hybridisations of cultures (Khan, 1976; Jermyn and Desai, 2000; Chaudhary, 2003), diaspora communities' relationship to their adopted country (Brah, 1996) and the role of festivals in showcasing local cultures (Carlson, 1996). Criticisms put forward by Mowitt (2001) challenge arguments about the reality of interculturalisation and ownership of the cultural products and there are accusations of 'othering' - being *about* the 'other' rather than *by* the 'other' (Clifford and Marcus, 1984; Lippard, 1990). As Fischer (1984) argues, ethnicity is also socially constructed and as my own work highlights can be thrust upon people, a forced given and fixed identity which is out of step with individuals' many influences as they adapt and shape themselves within society. Representations within museums and cultural organisations, as will be discussed more fully later, can equally be thrust upon people.

Lastly, there is some discussion within all papers of the management role and policy-making powers of local and national government, international organisations such as UNESCO and the European Mela Network and programmers and promoters such as English Heritage and Edinburgh Festivals.

2.12 Summary

In this chapter, I outline how my approach to curation was shaped by museological debates regarding the changing and potential role of museums. I argue that it is important to consider how material culture is constructed within society in order to understand the role of the museum. I note my influences, both in terms of bodies of

developing theory such as ethnology and social history, and in accepted curatorial practice. I argue that museums reflect society, but change over time as society evolves. I suggest that they are important spaces in which to reflect on being human and I then refer to contemporary tourism theory which, argues that museums are 'cultural stations' and as such can be sites of pilgrimage for secular and/or religious visitors. I suggest that museums can secularise the religious and or might sacrialize/reliquarise the secular. I apply these arguments initially to museums that interpret religious objects as religious objects. I determine that a pluralist society allows for, or requires, museums depicting religion to reflect the faith of more than one culture.

I then move on to consider how social history museums present visions and versions of the recent past that offer 'alternative' viewpoints to traditional historic forms of interpretation and display. I describe how my work was at times partisan and influenced by my desire to influence the representations of cultures to both empower and bring about cultural change. I note though that there are tensions in promoting representations of gender and working class cultures and that representations are shaped by the dominate culture through the medium of the museum.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines some of the key methodologies and research methods I draw on within the papers under consideration here. As evidenced in the previous chapter these include a number of linked bodies of literature and secondary texts. Other methods include participant observation, oral history as a methodology, and other forms of community consultation, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. I outline research methods as they are applied to each paper. As several of these papers are jointly authored, I address my specific contribution to these as appropriate.

3.2 Contribution to literature review of jointly authored papers

I contributed to the theoretical frameworks of all jointly authored papers. The oral history book '*She was Aye Workin*' (Paper 2) is co-authored but we were substantially responsible for our own sections. I selected, interpreted, and predominately collected, the Glasgow material and co-author Helen Clark provided the Edinburgh based interviews. We each initially reviewed the material from our respective cities, and then allocated chapters to each other according to interests, personality types and knowledge and swapped material relevant to each. I wrote six of the eleven chapters (no's 1,3,4,5,8,11), covering topics such as growing up and becoming a women, pregnancy and childbirth, domestic violence and poverty, growing old and death. I wrote most of the material pertaining to taboo subjects and the life cycle.

I am the first author and driving force for *Mobility, Diaspora and the Hybridisation of Festivity: The Case of The Edinburgh Mela, Scotland*' (Paper 7) and *Re-enactment Events and Tourism: Meaning, Authenticity and Identity* (Paper 10). These papers draw on secondary sources, covering a variety of disciplines as outlined above and including political reports that informed policy such as the Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain (2000) (known as the Parekh report).

Within *Juxtaposing the timeless and the ephemeral: staging festivals and events at World Heritage Sites* (Paper 9), I provided the Edinburgh festival and Edinburgh city case study with additional secondary source material. For *Mobility, Diaspora and the Hybridisation of Festivity: The Case of The Edinburgh Mela, Scotland* (Paper 7), I

contributed to the literature review including all texts referenced in the Edinburgh Case Study and much of the literature concerning uncertainty, cultural change and performance. For *Pilgrimage: Journeying Beyond Self*, (Paper 8) I provided the tourism, anthropological and religious studies theoretical material, which underpins and defines pilgrimage. I contributed debates round Turner and Turner's (1978) model of liminality and communities and applied them to secular forms of pilgrimage and contributed to the model. I researched all of the museum and material culture, heritage and heritage tourism, history and historic re-enactment material within, *Re-enactment Events and Tourism: Meaning, Authenticity and Identity* (Paper 10).

3.3 Participant observation

All of the papers in this review involve some form of participant observation. With over twenty years of experience and training in the interpretation of sensitive subjects, I work from the perspective of being an informed, 'critical museum visitor' (Lindauer, 2003:204). As an undergraduate, I worked in the Museum of Childhood as a summer receptionist (1985-8) and so I was intimately familiar with the museum and its collections and able to make informed comments within Paper 4.

I had no prior experience of the *actual* site of Robben Island but knew of it as a symbolic and mediated space and the visit was for me a personal and reflective journey. In this case I was a tourist, researcher and witness to events and as Adams notes, academics concerned with cultural heritage inadvertently become 'amplifiers of identity' in our writings 'challenging or reifying particular narratives' (2005:434) She queries, 'how do we situate ourselves in these frequently contentious sites? How does awareness of the potentially political nature of our academic writing inform what we do?' (2005: 434). I understood the need to be aware that my experience did not entrap me into ways of thinking that shaped the narratives to meet my expectations.

My experience of developing the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art informed participant observation fieldwork at the Museum of the History of Religions in St Petersburg, in December 2006. As I outline in Papers 5 and 6, I spent four days within the museum. On the first day of my visit I acted as an 'active participant' as I familiarised myself with the museum, drawing on English translations of leaflets to

determine its key themes. I also engaged with the guides/guards insofar as it was possible given the language restrictions. Thereafter, I took on a more passive observer or hidden observer role witnessing interactions between visitors and guides and determining visitor flows and guide routines (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Fieldwork carried out at the Museum of World Religions, Taiwan over six days in January 2006 followed a similar pattern of participant observation to familiarise myself with the museum and visitor flows. Paper 7 builds on fieldwork carried out during the two days of the 2004 Edinburgh Mela. I acted as a participant observer attending events, and also witnessed interactions between the local communities and the Mela. Interestingly, Warren and Hackney (2000) note that gender is an issue in participant observation and that as women are deemed less threatening they may be given increased access to backstage spaces and I would argue that was the case in this instance.

As much of my early work was with women who had or were experiencing abusive relationships with men, my gender has been all important in building trust. Interviewees have commented that, at just over 5 feet, I am not physically threatening which may be an additional advantage. I am regularly invited 'backstage' within museums and cultural events to meet curatorial, education and events staff and allowed access to women-centred spaces including women only community events and indeed into individuals' own homes. I am often offered hospitality by female staff which might not be possible were I male and these encounters offer a more intimate experience. It may equally be argued that my gender is problematic on occasions, for example within cultures where women have little or no front-stage presence, although this can lead to backstage encounters where it is suggested I make contact with family members.

3.4 Oral history as a methodology

Within early papers, I reflect on the use of oral history as a methodology for research, as an interpretive tool within museums' displays and other forms of public history representation, and as a way of giving a voice to individuals ensuring their influence in community engagement. Oral history is both a process and a product in this sense and as such is subject to much debate and criticism regarding its value as 'real' history. As much of the oral history material included in my papers discussed here

was collected when I was a local government officer, this poses a potential question regarding how to represent the unpleasant, problematic and potentially contradictory versions of events, which become official documents and are subject to political and institutional biases (Hammersley, 2000).

An oral history interview may mirror a conversation but its aims are very different and it serves a different purpose for interviewee and the interviewer (Thompson, 1998, Grele, 1998). Many of my own interviews have been framed in 'the language of rapport' (Warren and Hackney, 2000:39). As an interviewer I assumed a certain role but this was often ruptured and certainly changed or challenged by the interview encounter. Warren and Hackney maintain that the fieldworker is viewed as anything from 'spy to adoptive child or both as they change over time' (2000:14) and as a representative of a government run museum or institution such as a university the gender rapport I sought can be subsumed by assumptions made about the workings of institutions as I discuss in Paper 3. The individual interview, as discussed in Chapter 2, may be used to develop a collective narrative and this is clearly the way that most museums use oral history although the wider aims of the museum may well be to create a forum for counter narratives. Green believes that contemporary oral history is 'converging with collective memory studies, within which individual memory is in danger of being 'subsumed under 'collective memory' (2004:37) and questions whether 'individual memories challenge dominant narratives, such as those of the nation state for example?' (2004: 41). In my work I actively aimed for a multi-vocal representation whilst remaining aware of the organisational issues that shape public history.

Rickard maintains that when interviewing around trauma and taboo subjects the interviewer becomes 'implicated in the instability of such narrative constructions' evident in recollections of the disenfranchised and invariably, she argues, the 'less powerful' in society are subject to historical and dominant narratives. This process she likens to getting 'into the closet' with interviewees as 'together interviewer and interviewee bring into the open secrets which in a certain way are already known but ignored'. (2004: 41) Such interviews involve stepping out of the government role to 'enter the closet'. On reflection, I query whether it is ever possible to truly 'enter the closet' and fear that the institution shapes me as the wolf in 'shepherd's clothing'.

3.5 Oral history within museum orientated papers

Paper 1 is oral history led and draws on the testimonies of women (and some men) interviewed on behalf of Glasgow Museums. Professionals, such as representatives of women's aid, were also interviewed in an oral history style for this paper. Paper 2 draws on some of the material cited in Paper 1 and in it, co-author Helen Clark and I, argue that oral history has value in 'capturing aspects of life inaccessible to other forms of historical enquiry' rendering them accessible to others (Paper 2, 2003:20). Underpinned by social history research and practice it reflects the voices of 137 women and men drawn from life history interviews and reminiscence sessions. The majority of these interviews were collected on tape as museum documents and form the oral history archives of both Edinburgh City and Glasgow Museums and so the book also reflects over 30 years of museums-related oral history collecting.

The interviews I conducted were carried out for various exhibitions and projects including the People's Palace redisplay (1995-8) and 'From Here to Maternity' a celebration of pregnancy and childbirth within the West Coast of Scotland. The latter, my solo signature exhibition, toured the United Kingdom from 1993-6. Some of the material contained in this book was not collected initially for gender-related displays and so was revisited specifically to find women's narratives. Most of the 137 interviewees finally selected were women and most were white or from second or third generation immigrant communities. All of the accounts discuss heterosexual relationships and it can be argued this is a traditional oral history book, although as I discuss in Chapter 4, it does attempt to challenge taboos within the specific context of working class women's lives in the tenements of central Scotland during the first half of the 20th Century.

Participants included within Paper 2 were found through local organisations, nursing homes and through contacts with staff in the museums. Some had been involved in other projects and were already familiar with the museums and supported their work. I also conducted several group sessions in community centres adjacent to where the women lived. These were sociable occasions involving wine for the younger groups (something I baulk at now when considering the incidences of alcohol abuse in Glasgow) or tea and biscuits. These sessions generally elicited shorter responses

followed up by fuller interviews at a later date. My group sessions differed from Helen Clark's practice to hold such sessions within the museum but this approach suited my interviewees, many of whom lived far out of the city centre in the peripheral housing schemes. I had several categories I wished to cover but did not work from a fixed 'crib sheet' and I sought to elicit emotional responses rather than glean descriptive material. This is a key difference between Helen's approach and my own when writing Paper 2 and explains why I elected to write these chapters which had a high emotional content, for example, covering childbirth and death and dying.

Warren and Hackney maintain that women encounter 'more willingness from both females and males to be allowed access to the inner worlds of feeling and thought' (2000:42) and as a woman it was also easier to discuss sex, childbirth and puberty and certainly abuse as is outlined in Papers 1, 2 and 3. I preferred to interview on a one to one basis in a neutral space or the participant's own home (which is their key representational space) more often than not in Drumchapel and Castlemilk where many of the women interviewed had been re-housed in the post-war slum clearances. These women became in contemporary usage, a diasporic generation of Eastenders and Govanites and through oral history they could 'recover a sense of belonging to a historical community' (Basu, 2004:147) which equally united the women with their Edinburgh counterparts.

Interviews in care homes added another more formal layer to the relationship between interviewer and interviewee as the interviewee might be used to being interviewed and assessed by health professionals. In these cases I suspected I was being viewed as a representative of the museum, a (then) local government institution and not as 'fictive kin' (Warren and Hackney, 2000:14). The latter I found less successful as I worried about ethical considerations and upsetting my interviewees who then might lack personal support afterwards (see accounts in Papers 1, 2 and 3 of a woman who discussed her repeated rape at the hands of her husband). An initial encounter in a care home for the elderly with some dementia proved to be a serious error of judgment never to be repeated. I was informed by staff that people did not like to discuss children as they were often neglected by their now grown up children and tended to get very upset. I discovered that my gender did not necessarily mean I understood where the taboos lay as other factors, cultural dynamics and age

difference all served to create additional boundaries as discussed in Warren and Hackney (2000). In general one-to-one interviews lasted for an hour or more and were full life histories. All participants were invited to celebrate the metamorphosis of their memories at exhibition previews and the book launch. In Paper 3 I present a fuller discussion of how the interview changes shape and meaning through association with the museum and latterly any 'spin off product' from the museum.

As the extracts used within Paper 2 mostly come from transcribed sources there are inevitably differences in approach to the use of dialect. As we note at page 20: 'Transferring the vitality and colour of the spoken work to the page is always problematic. Some transcribers have used a spelling which reflects the sounds of dialect usage, others have more standard English. We have not attempted to standardise these spellings' (2003:20).

The decision to leave the 'g' off working in the title resulting in the use of the colloquial 'workin' was preceded by much discussion and the decision was taken late in the process.¹ Such language usage could be viewed as another attempt at forming the text (artificially?) from the point of view of working class women and as such could be construed as patronising, even insulting. However the book was structured to ensure the women's narratives were central. Most oral history books tend to give individual chapters to each informant or if they do weave testimonies thematically, might still favour the author's linking narrative and the testimonies provide the illustrative touches. We felt that in order to empower the women's narratives, they should predominate and flow freely into extended extracts, even at the expense of some sacrifice of editorial control. We were conscious of power structures and the way that most texts are constructions that favour the author even when the author is arguably intending to 'empower' the participants. Clifford notes that 'text making and rhetoric serves to highlight the constructed artificial nature of cultural accounts' (1984:2). We put our own text into italics so that it was not the dominate narrative and did not over edit the extracts so that they served our narrative. Whilst this may seem a small point, given that we still had the power of interview review and extract

¹ Since the work was published it has become accepted practice when representing Scots dialogue not to use an inverted comma to denote a missed letter on the basis that it is missing only from standard English but that it is acceptable Scots. So nowadays it would be written as workin.

selection and indeed the overview of the 'bigger picture', it was our way of offering respect to the participants and signalling inclusiveness. We also determined that although it was necessary to include some factual material relating to prices and wages during the period covered in the text this should take the form of an appendix so that it did not unduly interrupt the flow of memories.

Oral history provides the basis for consultation with staff as well as informants. I use oral history in these papers then to empower staff, cultural emissaries and community ambassadors. Lastly, museum papers draw on my own memories and reflexive practice as I move from being a member of a group (gender, working class affiliation, with personal experience of certain aspects of the vulnerability of women depicted in these papers) into member researcher roles (Warren and Hackney, 2000:4) within a realist framework. In short, I am a woman researching and representing the lives of women, and some men, from the perspective of belonging to my specific gender. Power issues still clearly impact on such representations (Clifford and Marcus, 1984; Rickard, 1998). There are ethical issues and indeed responsibilities that impact on such representations. At the time of writing this review I have been reading debates in *Research Ethics Review* (2008) where a reader voiced concern over men interviewing women within sensitive areas - in this case they were victims of rape.

All of the women in Papers 1 and 2 were interviewed by women for these reasons, although I have also interviewed men on sensitive areas and consider there to be other pressing cultural and class issues worthy of discussion in ethical terms. In Paper 3 I have reviewed my own and institutional practice as a museum oral historian and in writing this review I continue to have some reservations over what is informed consent, given the potential for a number of uses of the material. In Paper 2 all of the participants were named and all had at some point been interviewed on behalf of the museum. It was not deemed necessary to seek further clearance for the book as permission for other uses would have been obtained earlier, which does mean that the responsibility for protecting the participants from exposure, blame or shame, shaped how their memories were used within Paper 2. As discussed in Paper 3, incest was covered in Paper 2 as something that interviewees feared might happen as a consequence of overcrowding, but appears as an actuality only in 3rd person accounts

within a much older interview. In this case material was not censored as it had been cleared for use at the point of interview. Paper 2 is intended to be a community orientated book which allows women to share memories. There is of course an underlying assumption that this book reflects a particular period in time that we believe (possibly erroneously) does not impact on the present. Whilst not being safe history (in terms of lapsed time since interviews recorded), it may well represent safe *oral* history despite its sometimes bleak tone.

Audiences seem to feel that museum displays, and indeed websites, inhabit a more public space than books. An oral history project in Sheffield, entitled *Our Beighton*, <http://www.ourbeighton.org.uk/portalHomePage.aspx> had to deal with complaints that arose after personal criticisms about named locals were publicly posted on the website. Paper 2 succeeds because it is dealing with generic ‘truths’; that is, individual memories describe situations which participants and readers believe or accept to be common to particular communities. Censorship would have taken place had we deemed it necessary.

3.6 Oral history as a methodology for non-museum orientated papers

I used oral-history methods in interviews for other papers within this review. For Paper 7, I conducted full in-person life history interviews with Alan Tweedie, then Edinburgh Mela Director, and with Edinburgh City Council employees. These were taped and extracts quoted directly within the text. Material from these interviews also informed Paper 9 and Paper 4, one of the earliest papers under consideration here. I conducted life history interviews with charity trek participants and included extracts from these within the relevant case study in Paper 8.

3.7 Community consultation

Oral history, as discussed, is a way of engaging communities. Other forms of community consultation drawn on within these papers, though not necessarily developed for these papers, include formative and summative evaluation of potential and actual displays, engaging with focus groups and involving questionnaires, interviews and discussions. Oral history collecting by Clark for Paper 2 grew from focus group encounters with women organised in association with the Workers

Education Association. The material gained from these sessions tended to be less radical than that collected in one-to-one sessions.

As museums and festivals are becoming more accountable to funders, as well as becoming more audience aware, they are increasingly monitoring their success in shaping 'product' to meet community and other audience expectations, often drawing on techniques from services marketing, audience development, creativity/innovation research, branding, entrepreneurship, and symbolic consumption. Museum staff, aware of the responsibilities of representation, recognise that it is becoming impossible to create museum texts without some community consultation - usually in the form of audience encounters. In Paper 3, I discuss issues affecting community consultation within museums. These include its effectiveness, and the consequences of power sharing.

Such visitor research is costly and Reeves argues that visitor research within the cultural sector is often regarded as additional, rather than integral to arts activity, 'requiring disproportionate resources in the context of most arts organizations' limited budgets' (2002:34). However, the recent Sir Brian McMaster report *Supporting Excellence in the Arts – From Measurement to Judgement*, which post-dates my papers, notes 'that too many organisations are trying to second-guess what their audiences want and are therefore cheating them out of the deepest and most meaningful experiences' (January 2008). This is a growing area of debate and one largely beyond the remit of my papers to date.

3.8 Semi-structured interviews

Edinburgh City Council staff included in these papers were formally interviewed as part of my ongoing interest in representations of local and diasporic communities within the 'Festival City'. Interviews drew on insights into Edinburgh City Council's development plans, and organisational and personal attitudes, towards inclusion issues. The Chief Education Officer at Robben Island, Deidre Prins, was interviewed as part of my research visit to South Africa. Additionally, I informally interviewed guides and shop staff at Robben Island.

However, as my work becomes less practice based, my interviews have evolved from full life history oral history interviews to semi-structured interviews with relevant personnel. At the Museum of World Religions, Taiwan I conducted a short interview with a member of the senior management team who gave me permission to talk to any of the museum staff. I undertook short interviews with professional and curatorial staff that referred me to published texts in English. I conducted telephone interviews with English Heritage staff for Paper 10, and thereafter, I submitted a list of formal questions by email which resulted in a number of formal and informal responses. I also submitted a positioning statement for discussion through the Oral History Society network to determine attitudes to re-enactment amongst professional historians and academics, which elicited a heated discussion.

3.9 Questionnaires

Papers 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 draw on user questionnaires. Paper 3 includes a visitor survey developed with co-author Helen Clark and administered by a Napier University Masters Student. Using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative, open and closed questions, it aimed to gauge who the visitors were and how they engaged with the displays. I used a similar questionnaire at the Museum of World Religions, Taiwan which informs papers 5 and 6. Here volunteer guides and visitors were invited to fill in a self-guided questionnaire offered in Taiwanese, Chinese and English.

Paper 7 included the findings of a questionnaire administered to 150 visitors, which included nine questions in total. The questionnaire included a number of demographic and marketing orientated questions created in consultation with Mela staff to determine the nature of the audience. Additional questions determined how 'multivocal' and genuinely intercultural visitors felt the event to be, their thoughts on the venue, and how they rated events at the various stages covering both ticketed and free events.

Paper 10 is essentially a scoping paper bringing together bodies of literature and applying them interdisciplinarily to re-enactment events; however empirical research was conducted to canvas the opinions of re-enactor participants. I developed a thirteen-question survey aimed at determining in which ways and to what extent

participants engaged with a range of re-enactment activities. The survey was emailed to a number of key re-enactment organisations during August to October 2007. Forty one responses were received in total and these formed the basis of our understanding of re-enactment as ‘serious leisure’ (Hunt, 2004).

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, I outline the key research methods that inform my papers. I refer to the literature and theoretical influences in the previous chapter and outline my contribution to the literature of jointly authored papers. I argue that I conducted my research within museums as a knowledgeable and ‘critical museum visitor’, which informed participant observation at a number of sites and for a number of different purposes. I detail some of the challenges and responsibilities involved in representing communities through the various research methods applied and discuss how cultural difference and gender impacts on the interview relationship.

I define oral history as my key methodology and outline some of the challenges and advantages of using oral history. I then consider ways that oral history techniques are used within my papers. I focus on the collection approach for paper 2 and outline some of the issues that shape this and future work. I note that oral history is more evident in early papers, but its use is continued as an interview technique within the middle papers. I discuss how later papers include semi-structured interviews with staff and that I start to apply questionnaires to gauge visitor responses.

Chapter 4 Museums as spaces in which to explore the representation of cultures and communities

4.1 Introduction

In this section, I address Papers 1-6 within the overall theme of 'Museums as spaces in which to explore the representation of cultures and communities'. I review these within the following two sub-themes:

- The challenges faced by museum staff when shaping the representations of cultures and cultural debates within museums.
- The role of community consultation in developing and assessing representations of cultures and communities within museum displays

The six papers under consideration here comprise four journal articles, one book and one book chapter. Paper 1, the earliest piece under consideration in this review, appeared in an Argentinean journal *Historia Antropologia y Fuentes Orales* in 1998. Paper 2, a book published in 2003, is an oral history led text based on material collected for exhibitions within Glasgow and Edinburgh's social history museums some of which is discussed in Papers 1 and 3. The latter piece, Paper 3, being published more recently in *Museum and Society* in 2006, is more reflective and questioning of the role of the museum as representational space. The fourth piece being considered here, Paper 4 (2004), was requested by the editors to offer a counter argument to revenue management pricing approaches to leisure and cultural heritage activities. Paper 5 (2006) and Paper 6 (2008), are concerned with the representation of religious and cultural beliefs within museums and how these impact on, and reflect the various religious communities. Paper 6 is additionally concerned with the management issues that arise from such representations within a changing and increasingly pluralist society.

I initially analyze these works' contribution to museological debates, centring on the changing and potential role and responsibility of the museum in addressing social and cultural issues. Thereafter, in sub-theme 2, I give attention to the ways that communities participate in the representational process.

4.2 Theme 1 The challenges faced by museum staff when shaping the representations of cultures and cultural debates within museums

‘Through representations of political and global concerns we learn to understand the powers and processes of the world and through the personal we can have an understanding of ourselves, and feel empathy for others’ (Paper 4, 2004:78)

The above quote from Paper 4, encapsulates my central concerns. In the following section I reflect on museum representation and the symbolic spaces they inhabit, which have attempted to raise issues of global and national concern, often in an intimate and personal way within the public space of the museum. Five of the six papers in this cluster directly address this issue. Paper 2 (2003), although oral history based, was developed as a consequence of curatorial decision-making and is discussed under both themes.

Paper 1, as the earliest piece being reviewed here, is a logical place to start as it directly addresses a number of pertinent themes; I am aware when reading it that arguments developed in later works were initiated during this time. Written whilst I was a curator with Glasgow Museums, Paper 1 reflects on oral history collecting and research about domestic violence in Glasgow and its impacts on individuals, families and ultimately society. It was initially developed for presentation at the Xth International Oral History Conference, Rio de Janeiro, 1998, and I was invited to publish it in *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, because it was hoped that this article could suggest ways in which other institutions in South America could address these issues. As this paper is published in Spanish I have included a copy in English, which is as it appears in the conference proceedings. In reviewing this paper, I am aware of how passionately it argues that museums should become ‘monitors of the social and environmental conditions which affect people’s lives in the present’. (Paper 1, 1998). I go on to acknowledge that museums are traditionally conservative institutions, but that they do reflect ideas about cultural identity and as such can be catalysts for change (MacDonald, 2003).

The key aim of Paper 1 is to bring debates about the role of museums in society to wider audiences, and it draws on domestic violence research as an example of the kind of issues that museums must reflect upon if they are to be representative. It argues for the right of inclusion in museums of groups who are otherwise underrepresented within museum-mediated representations of family life. Being empirically based, it takes a realist perspective and is advocating that displays should reflect the realities of the lived experience of a large number of women (and some men) within Glasgow, where at the time of writing Scottish Women's Aid estimated that one in five women experienced some form of domestic abuse. For this reason, I was developing material on domestic violence to include in domestic life displays within the People's Palace and for my exhibition 'From here to Maternity'. Additional material comes from Alex Robertson, then curator of the Open Museum Glasgow's outreach service and working in partnership with abused women. This work was eventually included in the recently refurbished Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery.

I start the paper with an outline of the socio-cultural factors that defined Glasgow in the 1990's: poverty, poor housing, health issues (highest heart attack and stroke levels in Europe, obesity and alcohol abuse) and argue that it is impossible to take a historical perspective on such social issues without acknowledging that similar problems exist in the present. A realist approach, I argue, 'necessitates the inclusion of domestic violence in order to 'force' society to face up to the realities of domestic violence and to bring about change' (Paper 1, 1998).

My use of the word force within this extract suggests that my approach was a radical departure from traditional curating, and takes further any work on gender and representation in museums such as that mentioned by Porter (1996). What this paper ultimately argues is that to fail at marriage is to fail to fit into society. Museums tend to reflect society and traditional values, therefore women who fail to fit into society can expect there to be no place for them in museums. Therefore, society has to change, museums have to change, and staff have to develop and change in order to shape and reflect a society from a realist viewpoint, where these women and other disenfranchised members of society can feel they belong. The location of such

debates in museums, I argue, will help to take away the social stigma and shame which, for example, many victims of domestic violence might feel.

I take these arguments further in Paper 3, stating that we (curatorial staff at Glasgow Museums) sought to construct, 'challenge and reform ideas about social stigma (which are) based on class and lifestyles' (Paper 3, 2006:73). Stigma, which is according to Erving Goffman, an 'undesired differentness from what we had anticipated' (1969: 15) must be directly confronted from both sides (Byrne, 2000: 14). Domestic violence becomes only one such debate.

My approach to these debates, whilst influenced by developing social history curatorial practice and pioneers, attempted to challenge 'the definition of the family' or at least the way families have been portrayed (Paper 1, 1998). The women's history book, Paper 2 (2003), provided a way of bringing more of this material into the public arena. Its success (it was in the Scottish bestseller lists for some six months in 2003, and is in one in six homes in Scotland) suggests an audience for, and even a need for, this kind of social realism when it helps people towards a fuller understanding of events that shaped them. Comedian Elaine C. Smith, who wrote the book's foreword, states that 'if we know our past, we can build on it and flourish thereby' (Smith in Paper 2, 2003:12). Social history museums, as symbolic spaces, foster a shared sense of identity within the locality, which can prove to be divisive, promoting rivalries between peoples and places. A key aim of this book therefore was to challenge the stereotypes of both cities, and foster co-operation between the two cities and their collections. Essentially, I argue that it is also a role of the social history museum to combat social prejudices or to risk being guilty of reflecting them, and by extension reinforcing them.

Paper 3, is also concerned with the social, ethical and political role and responsibilities of local government funded social history museums and how this impacts on decision-making. It is primarily concerned with representations within social history museums and in particular, The People's Palace, Glasgow which I argue is subject to the processes of historical revisionism and changes in approaches to display over time. The other 'Peoples' museums discussed here are the People's

Story, Edinburgh and the People's History Museum, Manchester. Although some of the above museums are currently under trust status they reflect local government funding and political positioning and as such, I argue that they create publically sanctioned versions of the past (Paper 3, 2006:70). Further, that they all have 'people' in their titles as a reference to their distinct intended role as custodians of the ordinary people's history and hence 'the people', in so far as they can be defined, should have a say in both the process and the product. (Paper 3, 2006: 70).

This is a much more reflective piece of academic research, written after my move into academia and is more tempered in tone, and importantly, has been influenced by contemporary debates about the nature of 'truth' which are raised in various ways throughout this review. I begin to discuss museum displays as offering 'visions and versions' of the truth, and Paper 3 (2006:79) examines the 'complexities inherent in creating social history displays which honestly represent communities whilst at the same time remaining sensitive to participant's needs and fears of exposure' (2006:69). In this work, I argue that even assuming staff are able to radically change what and how to interpret, and are aiming to be inclusive and consultative, they are inevitably, 'still taking decisions on behalf of the institution, on behalf of the visiting public.... (and that) these decisions determine what is deemed appropriate to display, when and how' (2006: 73). In this way, I argue that displays continue to 'carry moral messages' although these may sometimes also 'challenge received wisdom about the nature of morality in society' (2006:73).

I suggest that one of the main tensions inherent in the curatorial role is just how risk-taking should we be able to be, and I argue that curatorial risk-taking can in fact expose the very communities they are intending to empower (as is discussed further in sub-theme 2 of this chapter). A radical approach reflects the personalities of the curators developing these specific exhibitions which create dilemmas for staff. This is the most challenging argument within Paper 3 - the suggestion that radical curatorial practices are not necessarily more empowering to communities and in some cases potentially less so. I reinforce that as curators 'remain the decision takers' then although decisions taken on what to display and how may have changed, curatorial practice has not necessarily moved forward.

Whilst this might seem to represent a u-turn, recanting on my previous years' work, it is not intended as such. Rather, I am arguing for self-reflection, within what is now a mature museum discipline. Equally, I am acknowledging that my own work and that of some of my colleagues was more radical than most and this makes self-reflection more important. I outline this dilemma when I state that:

'Museum staff (who are, of course, a voice of local government) may be keen to raise issues and to change things. Or, sometimes they may be inclined to challenge the role of government funded institutions, which they believe are well placed to act as agents for social change. Do staff acting as the voice of local government, overrule that of the community, for the common good'. (2006:77)

The key point here being 'should museum staff overrule a desire on the part of public opinion for a 'clean' history so that themes of inequality can be represented'? (Paper 2, 2006:75). If so, how can they justify these decisions and what might be the implications of such decisions? I draw on two case studies to stress this point. Both are examples from my own work, and as such, I am again highlighting the value of reflection, which I stress is a luxury for those involved in tight working schedules. Ultimately, I am not arguing that museums should not change. Indeed, I am saying that whilst there are strong arguments as outlined above as to why it is important to represent and reflect on taboo subjects within museums, curatorial staff need to understand the potential impacts of such displays on local people, diasporic communities and other visitors.

I argue that curatorial staff are influenced by, and largely subject to, the wider aims and ideological frameworks of, in this case, local government museums and other staffs. I conclude that:

'tensions also arise between curatorial staff and support staff (who are invariably drawn from local communities and the first point of contact for visitors); staff (who as representatives of institutions represent authority and for some power), and community advocates (who represent lived experience and can become guardians of community history and silences); and between the expectations of local and tourist audiences'. (Paper 3, 2006: 80)

Museums, as much of my work discusses, are changing as society changes (Hein, 2000). The key aim of Paper 4 is to discuss to what extent people have the right to access culture within museums and what we can learn from such encounters with representations of our own and other cultures.

This paper grew from a Carnegie Trust funded trip to Robben Island, and ongoing research conducted in the Scottish cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow concerning the social role of museums in general, and history museums in particular. Although less radical in intent than Papers 1 and 3, Paper 4 further develops arguments contained within them: that access to culture is not only a right but also a necessity if society is to develop. As a chapter, it sits almost defiantly in a book devoted to revenue management and pricing, and is the only chapter which appears to swim against the directives of revenue pricing strategies. It is an important chapter within this book and is aimed at cultural sector management students who might not otherwise engage with these debates, beyond the economic arguments they will draw on when budget planning and fund-raising in an increasingly economically driven cultural sector. In it, I argue that state funded museums, and other cultural institutions, must be subsidised, and ideally free of charge so that they can play a wider part in debates about cultural identity.

Paper 4 takes a case study approach as a way of leading into the debates. It draws on two seemingly diverse museums: Robbin Island, South Africa, the location of the prison that held Nelson Mandela and Edinburgh's Museum of Childhood. Both sites have the potential to represent the intimate and global in terms of subject matter, visitors and aims. Although seemingly very different, they reflect recurrent themes evident in all of my work concerned with representation within cultural institutions: social injustice, cultural change and the need to understand big and complex issues through engaging with them at an intimate and personal level. This chapter aims to convince by engaging readers at an emotional level with the themes of these museums.

The debates concerning the right to culture were developed to fit the remit of the book. The chapter also aims to convince readers of why we need access to culture: to understand the past in order to make sense of the present. This chapter contends that Robben Island is both local and global in its scope and aims. It is a 'symbol' for the representation of the success of the anti-apartheid movement and as such has global resonance, has an significant eco-system and has an educative role in helping local, national and international visitors understand the events of the recent political past.

I elected to use the Museum of Childhood as a case study because childhood is a universal theme, although this museum is more accurately a museum of toys since it does not reflect the social history of childhood. The object I focus on, a 19th century doll made out of an old shoe, seemed to represent both the intimate and global in its creation and execution. It reflects poverty; it was homemade, not bought. It highlights the creativity of its maker borne of necessity and finding a use for an object, which presumably could be spared as (I imagine) it was no longer fit for its original purpose. It suggests that play is a natural part of childhood, that adults understood this and, where possible, gave their support. It also highlights that play is gendered and a preparation for taking on a caring role for younger siblings, or the owner's own children. All of this I imagine because it is my favourite museum object and it moves me immeasurably. Hence its inclusion here, in a chapter with the key aim of emotionally engaging the reader so that they are prepared to consider the value of sites and objects as locations of memories, and by extension, cultural identity.

As I have used these four papers to argue, interpretation has a role in promoting access, and barriers to access themselves need to be challenged for museums to be relevant and interesting enough to attract and sustain audiences. One key point to come out of Paper 4 was raised by Halfpenny (2002) who articulated clear arguments as to why visitors, and evidently, those who elect not to visit, might be wary of art forms considered elitist. Museums, according to Halfpenny, are a culturally difficult medium because visitors feel they are unworthy critics who need to learn the vocabulary of the arts and fear making a fool of themselves through lack of knowledge and understanding. If this is the case, the problem will not be solved by outreach arguments regarding access barriers as put forward by Newman (2002), and Sandell (2002), but by creating exhibitions and displays that people feel comfortable

with and are happy and willing to engage fully with to the extent that they find their voice as critic.

Drawing on the right to culture, I make the claim for access to culture over cost but an interesting point is raised in this paper by Deidre Prin: that people might value culture more if they have to 'buy into it'. Robben Island is not free to visit, although the entrance costs also covers the ferry trip. Whilst this leads into debates about tax payers' right to access their own culture, evidence from museum visitor studies (Carnegie, 1996) shows that people who are interested in culture/museums will be prepared to pay to access it, those who are not will not be persuaded by free access alone.

* For many visitors a trip to the deeply symbolic site of Robben Island is as a pilgrimage to bear witness to Nelson Mandela and the struggle against apartheid. In Papers 5 and 6, I move from the representation of cultures within history museums to give consideration to how religious life and beliefs – also deeply felt and potentially contentious aspects of our culture - are represented within the small number of highly specialised museums of religion. Paper 6 grew from Paper 5 but differs in that it focuses more on the responsibilities of interpreting and managing such potentially 'charged' and problematic displays and goes into debates in greater detail.

In Paper 5, I define a museum of religion as:

... a collection of objects, ephemera, photographs and texts relating to more than one religion and representing the belief systems of more than one country but which also interprets the religious meaning of objects in displays' (Paper 5, 2006: 174).

I argue that there are only four known museums in the world, including the St Mungo Museum, which meet this criteria and Papers 5 and 6 draw on my experience there; they also contain case studies based on fieldwork at two of the other museums, as outlined in Chapter 3. In Paper 6, I discuss how such representations need to be sensitively managed to ensure the safety of participants, visitors and staff. I elaborate on the challenges encountered as part of the team developing the St. Mungo Museum, which is arguably the most radical of the three museums as it set out to tackle

prejudice from a secular, if multi-vocal perspective, and these 'messages' are carried through the displays representing aspects of world cultures. I further debate whether museum representations of religious objects detract from their religious value and meaning or whether a museum can at times function as a religious space given, as can be argued, that museums are increasingly taking on some of the roles traditionally held by the church (O'Neill, 2006).

4.3 Summary to Theme 1

In this section, I consider how the six papers set out to determine the challenges faced by museum staff, when shaping the representations of cultures and cultural debates within museums. In the earliest piece, Paper 1, I determine that I have taken a critical realist approach arguing that a key barrier to 'truthful' and 'warts and all' representation of domestic life is the willingness of the staff to act on the need to embrace, even force change. I determine that museums are conservative institutions reflecting society and I therefore contend that they need to tackle social issues if society is to change. Should society change, I argue that museums will change. In fact, as I discuss in Paper 3, social history museums are already a more radical form of museum and I argue that my own work, as evidenced in these papers, moves this radicalism from the politics and working class movements into the domestic arena. I notice that within Paper 3, I recognise that the reality is more complex than simply curatorial will. Here I contend, social history museum representations are subject to the combined influences of local government, curatorial aims, and visitor expectations. Although still advocating change, and potentially the need for radical change, I note that a radical approach might not be what local people or participants want. One of the key issues then becomes: how radical, how challenging can or should museums, or more accurately museum staff be, in order to meet their aims whilst risking alienating the very audiences s they are interested in including?

In Paper 4, I argue that access to culture is an right and that a key curatorial role is to ensure that people feel able to visit museums, and feel welcome in them. I recognise that this paper is arguing that some individuals and communities are not comfortable museum users for class and cultural reasons, a situation that is likely to deter visitors more than cost of entry or content, even when the museum subject matter is

‘difficult’. I contend, that museum professionals are aware that there are ‘threshold issues’ which cause visitors to feel that museums are not for them, regardless of subject matter and that there is a need for work to address these.

Drawing on this Paper, I also argue that museums must not compete with each other for ownership of concepts such as social poverty, and noted how Paper 2 was developed to provide a wider audience for material collected for both Edinburgh and Glasgow Museums. I go on to discuss the challenges inherent in creating representations of religion within museums devoted to this area and how the subject matter, and political and religious aims of each, determines the approach to representation and displays. I consider whether changes in ways that people worship have created a greater potential for museums to take on some of the roles associated with the church.

All 6 papers discuss and determine issues relating to the interpretation and representation of cultures and how personal and intimate representations of domestic, religious and cultural life can have global resonance, and that issues of global importance become personalised when interpreted in relation to the personal. I determine that museums, as ‘cultural stations’ can represent shared values of people in society. I will now consider ways in which these six papers develop debates about the potential for, and use of, individual and community memories, testimonies and the consultative and evaluation process.

4.4 Theme no 2 The role of community consultation in developing and assessing museum representations.

All six papers considered above draw on forms of community consultation in different ways and for different purposes, and these are now discussed in turn. In some cases, methods of community consultation also form one or more of the research methods of the papers themselves and I make these distinctions clear, although some overlap occurs since much of my research has also served a practical purpose and findings have been incorporated into contemporary approaches to working with audiences.

When writing Paper 1, I had yet to develop a strong academic voice and was using the words of interviewees as testimony (so that they carry the arguments), as I had done for many years within museums. I shaped Paper 1 around a series of representative themes such as shame, secrecy, areas of discord such as food and sex, and the interpretation of everyday objects whose meanings changed as they had developed into objects of fear, perhaps symbolic of triggers for violence or as weapons themselves. The paper argues for the right of these women to be heard, and it is appropriate to use their own words in this way, although of course the paper was developed within an oral history context and was subject to editorial influence and control.

Throughout this review, I argue that my work has enabled women and some men to challenge taboos, and all of the people quoted do exactly that. By talking about their own sexual and physical abuse they are showing that there can be unity and that they can develop a sense of community based on breaking their silence. This paper provides valuable and personal access to often intimate accounts of real women's lives. Equally, Paper 2, provides 'an untarnished view of tenement life as it was lived and remembered' (2003:13).

This approach also reflects my belief, discussed elsewhere and relevant throughout this review, that as researchers, cultural intermediaries or education officers we need to reflect on our own concerns and attitudes to see whether and how they fit the strategic aims of the organisation (Warren and Hackney, 2000; Marcus, 1984). In Paper 3, I go into this in greater detail when discussing the complexities inherent in the relationships between job purpose and organisational aims, and the individual's interpretation of this role. This situation is rendered more complex by the need to balance community and staff expectations with personal and organisational aims.

A key, and sometimes only, method used by museums to gain feedback is through visitors' comments. As Macdonald points out, visitor books 'differ from other kinds of research' in that they are produced by visitors and, it seems, for visitors, and are not compiled initially or solely for research purposes. However, increasingly, museums are referring to visitors' books as proof or otherwise of an exhibition's

success (2005:122). Visitors, then, are offering feedback to each other as well as to the museum staff. In Paper 3, I draw on two conflicting comments to represent potential differences in attitudes and expectations of local and non-local visitors to the People's Palace. In Paper 6, I note that visitors would leave comments for one other when they are not happy with the representations of their own or other faiths.

4.5 Community consultation approaches and findings

Individual memories can be used to create community narratives within the public history context. Yet, the reason for using oral histories is to highlight individuals' accounts in order to give emotional depth to the displays. Such individuals, I argue become 'conduits for a public view of intimate history' (Zeldin, 1996; DuBois, 2000). They become both exhibits and visitors and, as such, they are subject to the impacts of their own histories as their accounts pass from the original contexts of interviews to those of the museum (Paper 3, 2006:76).

This raises the questions: Is oral history an appropriate form of community consultation? What are the likely impacts on individuals and their families and the communities in which they live?

In, Paper 3, I am arguing that whilst society has to change for taboos to be challenged, those whose memories become exhibits run the danger of being exposed as individuals within their communities. In turn, their communities are exposed to wider society and to all museum visitors who, I maintain, reflect a museum 'becoming middle class'. I highlight that the visitor profile of social history museums is the same as for other elite institutions (Hargreaves, 1997). This I contend, means that they are potentially the *wrong kind of visitors* as despite the museum's aims to be about, and largely for, local audiences, or to reflect local lives to tourists, the typical visitor is not necessarily someone whose life in the present is being represented.

I note in Paper 3, that 'problems arise when communities do not seem to prioritize the same issues' as curatorial staff and I highlight examples of where this has clearly been the case since 'there is the need of local communities to preserve dignity and pride when such histories can create a sense of shame or even denial' (Paper 3, 2006:

70) . I further argue that museum staff need to be mindful that they are not exploiting potentially vulnerable people within society, who may be less able or likely to employ stigma management and the importance of informed consent. Qualitative researchers such as Suzie Fisher suggest that museum staff are fearful of the loss of power that consultation brings (Paper 3, 2006: 76); yet I also that when they do consult, this seeming empowerment can in fact prove to be exploitative and furthermore is no guarantee of 'truth'. As the 'displays have been designed to provoke emotional responses', curators, and I include myself in this group, clearly recognise how oral history material adds emotional content to displays, and they are equally clear about the way material is censored to render it 'acceptable' for 'family audiences'. I note that although material is deemed challenging for permanent museum displays it is still heavily censored. I also point out that the book (Paper 2) contained the fuller text. Depicted, in this and Papers 1 and 3, are community narratives that break taboos, but also support them. The need for silence changes over time; a story can only be told and accepted by contemporary communities because (or *when*) it is historical.

Rickard (1998) revisited earlier interviews that she had conducted with vulnerable people to discern the impact of these accounts and noted that her interviewees, whilst accepting their vulnerability and readily giving consent, expressed concern over the ethical behaviour of archive users who may come into contact with their interviews (Rickard, 1998:44). Museums have little control of the audience experience, nor authors of their readers, and organisations and publishers take oral history material into the public arena.

However, Paper 2 shows that there is 'evidence of stigma management' and fear of social censure within the women's narratives, in relation to 'codes of decency' impacting on health and hygiene practices and imposing sexual constraints. Paper 2 discusses adoption practices, for instance, advertising babies for adoption or fostering under 'Miscellaneous' small ads in local newspapers. A practice that may seem shocking to modern readers and has therefore slipped from memory - but was common knowledge at the time.

Perhaps the most challenging material in Paper 2, and worthy of discussion here, is the section on incest ie in the chapter 'Having Babies' (2003:94). This material,

sourced by myself for inclusion in the book, was not subject to any debate on its suitability as museum text, and I may not have chosen to include it had it been available. Paper 2 outlines how a Guild of Aid worker, contacted by a doctor acting on behalf of a Glasgow family, sought to find a home for a baby born of sibling incest; on page 94 she discusses her feelings about her involvement in placing the baby.

This section shows clear evidence of ‘stigma management’ and collusion with health professionals, in order to safeguard the future for this baby. The couple who adopted the baby were not given any information about its background, and so colluded by accepting the need for silence in order to be able to adopt the child.

Paper 2 is a book about women’s lives and although there are clearly class debates contained within it, it is also about professional women, such as midwives, doctors, health visitors, and school teachers, whose personal narratives humanise their role. Therefore, this book is also for and about those women; it weaves together their lives with the women of the tenements. In this way the narratives are constructed from a number of different points of view - including my own. (Fischer, 1984). Women’s communities are distinct from, but also a part of the wider community and this is apparent in Paper 1 when representatives of Women’s Aid with female professional curatorial staff, of which I was one, align themselves with the victims of domestic violence to support the interpretation. In Paper 3, I acknowledge that staff are not impartial conduits of history or cultures ‘and may seek to develop displays (and indeed conference papers and articles) that explore their personal life experiences or political commitments’ (Paper 3, 2006: 80). In papers 5 and 6, I make it clear that staff and museum aims shape the way that religions are represented and determine whether the museum sought to convert, promote inclusiveness or made assumptions about the audiences likely beliefs and biases.

4.6 Community engagement and silences

A lot of my work is concerned with how museums provide a forum for remembering. However, as I discuss in Paper 3, some people may not wish to remember, or feel unable to express their memories in words, and that silence is also a powerful form of

stigma management. As discussed, stigma management can mean communities censor or offer less problematic versions of the truth.

Local people working as guides or museum assistants gain direct access to the visiting public and can influence how they interpret museums displays. In Paper 4, I discuss how some 20% of guides at Robben Island are former prisoners 'having their say'. In Paper 3, I note how front of house and museum assistant roles tend to be held by local people who may elaborate on, be embarrassed by, or challenge museum truths.

An alternative strategy is to keep silent. Although silences can be used to protect they can also serve to collude with the potential oppressors, as I discussed earlier in terms of domestic violence. In such cases a combination of fear and social censure will necessitate silences. I draw on Field's work in truth and reconciliation within South Africa to show that the most disenfranchised people within society have the most to fear. In Paper 3, I state that 'clearly such displays involve or require memories of the 'discredited' or 'discreditable' stigmatized groups in an attempt to create dialogues, but will also be hindered or helped by individual and community 'strategies for containment' (Field 2006:39 quoted in Paper 3: 76).

I am arguing in these papers that museums, by providing a safe and supportive space, can take away the necessity to keep silent, but one of the key debates is whether museums harm or heal individuals and communities through memory-based representations within displays. Field maintains that 'if oral history cannot heal, it can at least help, through enabling interviewees to achieve or rekindle a sense of self-composure' (2006: 39 in Paper 3, 2006:75). Guides at Robben Island are able to use their role in a therapeutic way, 'telling and retelling their stories, in an attempt...to get the anger out' (Paper 4, 2004:72). This is not a comfortable experience for either guides or visitors but in this case silence oppresses and now such stories can be told.

However, I go on to argue in Paper 3 that 'contemporary attitudes and audiences.... allow for, or indeed can force, a reappraisal of silences'. Quoting Dubois, I note how this creates problems as 'silences are produced by highlighting the problems which the past poses for people in the present' (2000:75 in Paper 3, 2006:76). This is a very

difficult debate in which there is clearly no right answer. Reading through these papers, I can see that I am arguing against the need for silences, although I respect the need or desire of individuals to be silent. I am also clear on the role that institutions such as museums have in shaping representations and that silences make such representations problematic.

4.7 Visitor feedback as community consultation

Within these papers, I am concerned with whether and how individuals and communities can influence their representations within displays. Once these memories are shaped by the museum they change context and can cease to be owned by the individuals and communities whose memories they were. This, I argue in Paper 3, means that the 'People' no longer own their own past and the right to decide who has access to it. Whilst this 'signing away' of memories is (usually) readily understood at the point of collecting, presuming informed consent is possible, the lengthy time gap between interview and the subsequent exhibition opening potentially heralds a 'forgetting' as informants become distanced by the passing of time and by the processes of 'museumifying' the material. I challenge whether it is right for a museum to apply museum accession practices to people. Whilst overall good practice, such as that developed by Helen Clark, ensures informants have editorial input, I question the power assumptions inherent within the rights of the museum to own in perpetuity. I raise these issues in Paper 3 with regard to the image of a woman used in displays which she later asked to be taken down, but they have a general relevance to all community engagement.

'The question appears to be this: should this mean that permission is granted forever so that people do not have the right to have their history, past or present returned to them? Might we not, here, want to think of a right of return, of the right to return the public history to the private and hidden? In short, can the People not be allowed to change their minds?' (2006:72)

I grappled with these issues as a curator and I see, in rereading, that I do not offer a solution, rather I argue that: 'Museum collecting policies which govern matters of memory must respond to debates about whether memories can be collected in the same way as objects and can therefore be owned remains a subject for debate today'. (Paper, 2006: 72) These are radical statements and as I was also instrumental in developing the use of oral history of intimate histories within museums I am therefore

challenging myself. There is no doubt that leaving the curatorial world provided personal space in which to think through these debates and form questions.

This reflection leads me to make a series of challenging statements, where implicit in the text of Paper 3, is a suggestion that social historians are just as guilty of 'othering' and therefore 'outing' the 'working classes' as their traditionally disciplined colleagues might have interpreted and 'anthropologised' people of other lands (Clifford and Marcus, 1984). I go so far as to suggest that if the history of the middle classes were displayed in this way it might prove unpalatable or patronising to them. I state:

'Might a construction of the past and present of the higher socio-economic classes, which considered them victims of centuries of tragically, misguided capitalist views and visions be an acceptable reading for them...Is the social history museum in danger of replacing the monuments to the Empire through eroticizing and exoticising the working classes under the guise of empowerment? (Paper 3, 2006: 79)

This is strong language to use and of course I am not advocating that museums are unable to change in order to bring about change. More, I am arguing that they have to evolve a way of facing their own prejudices, influences and stereotypes so as to become listening organisations which are genuinely inclusive within the limitations of their organisational structure.

In paper 6, I note that the visitor experience at museums of religion is carefully constructed to combine safety and respect issues and I determine that the subject matter influences the way visitors experience the museum. In Papers 5 and 6, I question whether it is possible that 'cultural stations' such as museums could turn visitors into 'customers' whereby 'Entering the museum will be like entering a religious department store'. (Master Hsin Tao, Museum of World Religions, 2003 in Paper 5 2006). I surveyed visitors to the commercially funded, albeit Buddhist run, Museum of World Religions to determine if they were 'shopping for faith' or simply acting as museum visitors. The questionnaire established that the vast majority of people were not shopping around for faith, and only 1/3 professed to be religious although interestingly another 27% defined themselves as spiritual showing an understanding that religion and spirituality were not necessarily deemed

interchangeable terms. They viewed the objects as museum pieces rather than religious works, which suggests the museum, despite being a religious site, secularises rather than sacralizes the objects of faith. These last two points are worthy of further study and paper 5 must be viewed in that light - as it raises more questions than answers at this stage. Paper 6 also challenges the functioning of such museums in light of increasingly pluralism. These are unique questions being formulated within a museum setting and this fieldwork does add to debates.

4.8 Summary

As discussed, oral history is a methodological approach favoured by peoples' museums and I have drawn on heavily on it within my work as both curator and academic. Used as a form of community consultation, it ensures that the 'People' have a choice in *what* is represented and *how*. Paper 3 highlights how curatorial staff might overrule 'the community' in order to ensure that certain subjects are tackled. Therefore, within these papers, I determine instances where communities have pushed for challenging topics to be raised within museums, and also where they have actively sought to discourage certain representations but are overruled by staff. I discuss the potential of museums to break silences and the reasons why dominant groups in society, often reflected within museums, might elect to collude by promoting silences. I determine that silences are located within intimate and personal domestic histories as much as they are a part of the larger narratives of oppression and political change. As evidenced in these papers, I argue that individuals and community representatives have both the right to silence and the right to use the museum as a forum for exposing unacceptable behaviours in society. I determine that breaking silence can be a positive experience for individuals and for helping to heal communities. I note how museum representations are carefully constructed despite, or as a consequence of, cultural and community sensitivities, that museums are functioning as 'cultural stations' within the modern world, and can be religious or secular spaces or even overtly commercial market places. I note that regardless of the aims of the museum, visitors will bring with them a range of ideologies, prejudices and experiences which challenge museum representations as much as they may reflect them.

Chapter 5 Critical review of papers that explore representational space within festivals, pilgrimage routes and re-enactment sites and events

5.1 Introduction

In this second cluster, I examine Papers 7-10 within the context of 'Temporary, transient and often contested representational spaces such as festival sites and pilgrimage routes and how these shape and impact on the experiences of locals, participants and visitors'. This is explored through two sub themes:

- How historical, symbolic or spiritual spaces are appropriated and interpreted through various forms of festivity
- How festivals and events develop and support representations of people and communities.

Four papers are addressed in this section: two book chapters and two journal articles. The book chapters were both published in 2006 although the first of these, Paper 7, precedes the second work. Paper 9, also published in 2006, is located within a special edition on wellness tourism and as such, slants the arguments expressed within it to fit with ideas about journeys taken to promote emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing within pilgrimage space. The last piece under consideration here, Paper 10, is the most recent piece being published in 2008.

The four papers within this cluster share themes and theoretical content with the papers previously discussed. They are concerned with how cultural spaces come to represent ideas and issues about the nature of individuals, communities and cultures. They refer to how changes in society affect how cultures are represented, understood and sought out within the modern world. They reprise arguments contained in the previous cluster regarding authenticity, the role of material culture and the right to choose how to be represented, or to be involved in the process of representation. This cluster moves away from the museum, although this literature remains an influence. In these papers I am concerned with how historical and symbolic spaces are appropriated and interpreted through festivity and, thereafter, how festivals and events such as those conducted within spiritual spaces such as pilgrim routes, shape and

support representations of people, cultures and communities. I will now address these points individually with reference to all four papers.

5.2 Theme no 1 How historical, symbolic or spiritual spaces are appropriated and interpreted through various forms of festivity

All of the papers in this cluster are concerned with the role of historic, symbolic and festive spaces and how such spaces reflect tensions between community and locality and the placelessness of 'global' space. They also symbolise the spiritual/religious homelands of mobile and diasporic communities represented within these festive spaces (or indeed in the museums of the previous clusters). Paper 7, considers how Melas create a showcase for South East Asian cultures and focuses on the Edinburgh Mela as a case study. One of the key themes of this paper is the influence of, and representations of 'Indian' culture in Britain and the relationship of South East Asian communities within the located space that is the United Kingdom. Drawing on The UK report of the *Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (Parekh Report) 2000 we determine that 'hybridisation will increasingly be the norm where rapid change and globalisation have made all identities potentially unstable' (Parekh Report, 2000, p.27). Quoting Flusty we go on to stress that 'all cultures are hybrids of other cultures' influences and always have been' (Paper 7, 2004:112). We argue that the 'festival space' provides a forum for showcasing and representing cultures and that decisions have to be made by planners, organisers and communities as to which spaces become 'festival spaces' and for whom. We argue that these choices impact on cultural representations (the impacts of using festivals and events for showcasing cultures to cultures is discussed below in theme 2).

5.3 Edinburgh as festival space

Edinburgh as a 'festival space' is discussed in two of these papers. In Paper 7, Edinburgh, as the location of the other Edinburgh festivals, represents the physical space inhabited by the dominant and arguably elite culture. It is an international space in that it attracts visitors, performers, and cultural products from all over the world. I note though with the Edinburgh Mela case study, that former Festival Director Tweedie (2004) believes this is a particularly elitist and non-representational form of internationalism (Tweedie, 2004 in Paper 7, 2006). The Edinburgh Mela, developed

to address this perceived gap in provision, continued to inhabit a marginal space within the city. Much of Paper 7 is devoted to debates about the cultural ownership of shared spaces, how such ownership changes over time and reflects generational differences. One of the wider aims of the Edinburgh Mela is to address social inclusion within these communities and former Director Tweedie argued that the venue was selected as it was geographically close to where many of Edinburgh's South Asian population work and live, and they hoped to create a sense of ownership of the event.

I argue that people inhabit dual or multiple worlds within their life landscapes and in the subsequent Edinburgh paper, Paper 9, the city space occupies dual or multiple roles. There is 'festival' Edinburgh and the Edinburgh that exists around the festivals, and at other times of year. In this paper we translate this into the historic and tangible space and the festive space. Edinburgh, we note, is a space where people live and work; a backdrop to the Festivals. As a designated world heritage site, it is considered of global architectural and historic importance. We argue that World Heritage status has little real impact on the way the city is marketed and understood, and that Edinburgh is sold and packaged primarily as a festival city. Paper 9 discusses the impacts of the long-term 'burden of care' that WHS designation brings and suggests that there is little attempt to promote Edinburgh's tangible cultural and historic products. Edinburgh is an international space and has international value as a cultural space. We argue whether it has such values to local people or to non-festival visitors.

We conclude that more needs to be done to value, support and promote the historic landscape of the city. At the time of writing this review, Edinburgh's World Heritage status may be subject to review as a consequence of the multiple demands placed on the historic city which is at the same time striving to be a modern dynamic *living* city <http://news.scotsman.com/edinburgh/Heritage-status-probe-looms-over.3757952.jp>.

Within Paper 7 we debate how place shapes cultural identities. We suggest that 'it can be argued that Scottish Asians become acculturated into Scottish cultures and their dual identity develops as a Scottish Asian consciousness rather than Asian/British' (Mann, 1992 in Paper 7, 2006:265). The Edinburgh Mela has developed Scottish flavoured events, which represent the hybrid cultures of both worlds, drawing on the

symbols of a largely imagined Scotland or a definition of Scottishness, the impacts of which are discussed in theme 2 below.

5.4 Cultural landscapes

Cultural landscapes, as representational spaces are living landscapes, conceived and constructed through interactions between communities and the environment. In Paper 8, we discuss religious sites and the journey taken to arrive at such representational spaces. We draw on Barber's definition of pilgrimage, which reflects on the life journey, and the specific aims of pilgrimage as 'the physical search for a spiritual goal' (1991:16 in Paper 8 2006) and apply Turner and Turner's (1978) model to show that being in the representational space of the pilgrimage route means that pilgrims re-enter society changed in some way (spiritually uplifted, refreshed, with a sense of achievement).

The paper contains two case studies and applies this model to each. The first of these details religious pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, and was provided by Devereux, a practising Christian and participating pilgrim. He argues that spiritual enlightenment is to be found within the journey and that the journey is the 'quest for the divine'. He notes that people are still expressing an interest in, and need for, faith and are prepared to undertake long and arduous journeys to experience this 'spark of the divine' (Davie, 1994 and 2002).

My counter argument is that people are equally willing to undertake long and arduous journeys within symbolic, but not necessarily religious representational space, for secular reasons and indeed this is an aspect of wellness tourism. The model we developed for this paper shows how pilgrimage and wellness tourism potentially interacts. I argue that charity treks have potentially the same outcomes as pilgrimage but these are experienced in a secular way. I also argue that participants undertaking secular journeys can feel religiously engaged and that the opposite might be true; that participants on religious pilgrimage might also be undertaking journeys of selfhood without religious motivation or engagement.

I argue that charity trekkers need to engage with this representational space in a spiritual way for pilgrimage to be a reality in charity treks. I am aware in reviewing

this paper that I have tempered some of my arguments about the secularisation of society and the loss of community in sensitivity to my co-author's faith. There is general agreement about the importance of the journey within such representational and 'liminal' space, allowing 'people to become reacquainted with themselves and their community at all levels, and with their own physical, spiritual and emotional needs' (Paper 8, 2006: 54). Ultimately I am arguing that contemporary leisure practices are sought that take people away from the constraints and uncertainty of everyday life within modern society.

In the last paper under discussion here, Paper 10, I turn my attention to heritage landscapes as representational spaces within modern society. This paper is concerned with the way such spaces become the inspiration for, and backdrop to, 'living history' events. We contend that such spaces have dominant narratives as a consequence of events that happened on them, and also because they are managed spaces. In this paper, we consider such landscapes as spaces in which events are staged for public consumption and we centre on some of the debates about why people might seek to locate and promote events, and why others participate in and attend such re-enactments. We consider this growing phenomenon to reflect dissatisfaction or unease with modern contemporary lifestyles. Clifford argues that 'felt inauthenticity' makes us search for the authentic (1984:114) and we argue that for some re-enactors the 'authentic' might be sought or found within re-created representational spaces.

We note how many re-enactors' growing involvement within their chosen representational spaces has led to major life changes. Some elect to 'live' within this space making their hobby their livelihood, whilst others have organised their working lives to leave time for attending events. We note that living history events happen on representational spaces which become transformed into festive and, as in pilgrimage, liminal spaces, for the duration of the event. I collected material for English Heritage's Annual Festival of History which shows that whilst there might be some degree of authenticity attempted within each event, events reflect different periods, even countries. In 2007 programmed events were separated by 2000 years.

All of the papers in this cluster are concerned with how 'real' landscapes become representational spaces with meanings attributed to them which may change

according to the specific context, culture and groups identifying with such spaces. Landscapes can be used to present staged, commodified experiences of the past and/or present cultures for public consumption. In the following section I consider how festivals and events present and represent cultures and the impacts of festivity on individuals, communities and cultures.

5.5 Summary to theme one

In this section I determine how physical landscapes become representational spaces for encountering and shaping personal, cultural and religious or community identity. I also consider how diasporic and mobile communities encounter challenges in 'owning' the spaces of their chosen locality and contend that symbolic and spiritual homelands are interpreted within the actual homeland, but located within festive space. I determine that Edinburgh is a multi-representational space. It functions as a historic landscape, homeland and festive space and there are tensions inherent in managing all those roles inclusively and for all peoples. I show that Edinburgh as a festive space is an international space, but that it can be excluding to particular social and cultural groupings and that the Edinburgh Mela was developed to provide a cultural festival for the city's South East Asian communities.

I note that this festival's venue was initially chosen because of its geographical location. I determine that festivals change the meaning of the located space for the duration of the event and that heritage spaces can be commoditized for entertainment purposes. Ultimately I contend that all located spaces are subject to identity shaping and that all are 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1992) influenced by tensions within the present day.

5.6 Theme 2 'How festivals develop and support representations of people and communities'.

As relayed above 'festivals are usually temporary, fleeting or elusive experiences that 'have become increasingly internationalized'(Paper 9, 2006:112). At the same time there is evidence to show that festivals and events are on the increase globally and are viewed as a way of attracting visitors to a locality or adding value to tourist visits. Indeed it can be argued that festivals have become a destination in their own right (Prentice and Andersen, 2003).

Festivals may differ from museums in the products that they create but they share a common purpose in presenting representations of cultures to audiences. As in Paper 3, discussed in Chapter 4, audiences might be drawn from different cultural groups to those represented. Paper 7, discusses how Melas were developed within Europe to reflect their original purpose as gatherings within South East Asia, noting that they developed into a showcase of South East Asian cultures to other cultures. Although this is viewed as having a positive impact on how local South East Asian communities are understood there are clear issues with the ways in which performance creates a particular kind of representation (Candida-Smith, 2002). We draw on the documented evidence of Notting Hill Carnival to show that white audiences, and in the case of Melas white creative directors, change the purpose and impact of such events even to the extent of appropriating them. By becoming part of the established Summer Festivals programming, the Edinburgh Mela inevitably attracts a mixed audience of international tourists, many of whom represent the very cultural groupings that comprise the audience for the 'elite' offerings of other events located in the heart of the historic old town. This affects the ownership of the event and creates tensions. I argue that changes in audiences are in danger of stereotyping the culture(s) represented.

It could be argued that white academics like myself are also guilty of such cultural appropriations when choosing to research in these areas. However, I would argue that I, in partnership with Smith, elect to examine and celebrate 'both sides of cultural difference' (Fischer, 1984: 217 clearly raising such appropriation issues within our texts.

5.7 Edinburgh Mela challenges and changes

The Edinburgh Mela takes a traditional culture approach and this includes creating hybrid and intercultural pieces that also reflect Scottish traditional cultural activities. My fieldwork determined clear generational differences and issues, that young people did not believe the festival reflected their lifestyles and aspirations. Fisher argues that 'ethnicity is something reinvented and interpreted in each generation by each individual' and is often beyond their control (1984:195). The Edinburgh representations of South East Asian culture are shaped by the imagined community of

pre-immigrant traditional culture which does not necessarily reflect the dynamics of modern hybrid cultures, where individuals are shaping themselves within their present lives. Just as Fischer notes that 'to be a Chinese American is not the same thing as being Chinese in America' (1984:196), being one of the 'New Scots' (Mann, 1997) means forging a new identity based only partly on what is known about their past. One key point made in Paper 7 is that younger generations of Scots might also find Scottish traditional culture and music alien and unrepresentative as the past becomes 'a foreign country' to them. Young Scots, we concluded, may have much in common with second or third generation young diasporic South East Asians.

Differences between diasporic communities' understanding of their culture and those of the South East Asian subcontinent are discerned. Increasing tensions exist within the Edinburgh Mela management team and trustees, with some wanting the festival to remain relevant to local people, situated within their community, and others who wish to become more international in outlook and programming. These tensions have led to a restructuring of the Mela since the time of writing Paper 7.

5.8 Events and the search for the 'real' with the representational space.

At the time of writing, the Edinburgh Mela has a new management team and has relocated to Ocean Terminal, a modern shopping and leisure complex situated in the revitalised Shore area of Leith. By so doing it seems to be moving away from the community event it was set up to be. The Mela is inevitably changed by its translation into a different locality, and arguments over what the Mela should contain are changing the product. Paper 7 concludes that Melas, by displaying cultures, may keep elements of those cultures alive but, just as there are impacts of culture on festivals, I argue that there are impacts of festivity on culture.

Events, I am arguing, can help diasporic groups reinforce their sense of belonging - or alienation. In Paper 8, I argue that events undertaken within the representational spaces of pilgrimage routes and sites are part of an individual's internal journey of selfhood and may reinforce or create a sense of belonging to a spiritual or shared interest religious group. Such events may be organised by religious communities or charities to reinforce this sense of community.

Equally, in Paper 10 we suggest that re-enactment groups, find and form communities that provide social and cultural relevance to their lives, creating new ways of belonging, within the present but played out in 'festive' or imagined representative spaces and periods of time. Re-enactors challenge the right of cultural institutions such as museums to be custodians of the material past. Paper 10 concludes that the growth of the supply of such events reflects the need of cultural and historic organisations to attract and sustain increasingly sophisticated and audiences. Event programmers seek to provide seemingly realistic and authentic feeling experiences, but events are tailored to meet assumed audience expectations and, as this can create tensions with re-enactors seeking to present, and themselves experience, 'hot authenticity' (Selwyn, 1996) that they create for themselves within representational spaces which they allocate meaning to.

5.9 Summary of Theme 2

Within this section I determine that there has been a global increase in festivals and events and discuss how a number of organisers now seek to promote exiting, and initially community orientated events, to international audiences. I discuss how the Edinburgh Mela, in common with other European Melas, was developed to create a forum for local South East Asian people to celebrate their traditional cultural products within the diaspora. I show how, in common with Carnival, Melas become a showcase of such cultures to the wider communities and this had political aims and impacts.

I note that The Edinburgh Mela has become more localised through the inclusion of Scottish traditional cultural forms whilst at the same time the audience for the Mela has become more general and increasingly white. I note that this changes the role and purpose of the event. I discuss how such festivals represent cultures through performance and moving on to re-enactment events, I discuss the tension between self representation and the engagement with representational space and the demands of the commercial and cultural sector in shaping product to meet educational, historic, political and cultural aims. I note how audiences at various times, and in various ways, challenge the process of creation and ownership of event product and elect to shape it, or else might distance themselves from it where they find it un-representational of their own chosen or given identities. In Paper 10, I show how re-

enactment societies challenge the power of museums, although I note that re-enactment groups have to shape their performance to satisfy the organisations that hire them and own the spaces they enact on. Lastly, I consider how individuals involved use representational space, whether it be festivals, pilgrimage routes and spaces or re-enactment battlefield sites, to shape themselves in the present through creating new communities in which to forge new identities, or foster a sense of belonging within an uncertain world.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and summary of my contribution to knowledge

Within this review I explore representation and representational space within ten pieces of published work. I discuss the role and responsibilities of museums in creating representations of particular groups within society and the issues that arise from, and impacts of, such representations on staff, communities, diasporic and other visitors. I discuss the problems and pitfalls of curating and creating representations and the impact of power structures and organisational expectations on such representations. I discuss how my own work was at times partisan, promoting women's narratives and radical versions of working class cultures within social history museums. I critically review this process and discuss the problems of creating such representations, drawing heavily on Clifford and Marcus (1984) and the impossibility of representing 'truth'. I review my work as an oral historian who has specialised in 'intimate histories' and the usage (and potential abuse) of people's memories within museum displays. I discuss how I, and museums in general, use oral history as an interpretive tool and as a way of 'peopling displays'. I determine how oral history is used as a method of community consultation and from this determine, analyse and question other methods that I have used to consult and work with audiences. I argue that cultures, religions, and even individuals, can be commoditized within museum displays and festivals, and people can become the subject of 'othering' through such representations. I consider these topics from the point of view of visitors, communities and the representatives of cultural organisations and festive spaces. Additionally, I consider other outputs for museum-mediated research and oral histories including the oral history book and consider how the medium influences the representation (Paper 2, 2003).

I determine that museums increasingly function as 'cultural stations' enabling audiences to make sense of uncertainty as a consequence of cultural change and note that other 'serious leisure' forms such as re-enactment, pilgrimage and charity treks are carried out in representational spaces which participants allocate meanings to, which suit their needs within an uncertain present and as they struggle to locate 'felt authenticity'.

Representation and the development and use of representational space are clear themes common to all papers and there is evidence of clear progression within and between the papers, as discussed in Chapter's 4 and 5. Papers chart my development over the ten-year period represented. Initial works are more applied with an emphasis on writing up and reflecting on practice-based work. Middle-period works show the influence of my curatorial background but are showing increasing confidence with theoretical perspectives. Later works, and in particular, Paper 10, the most recent piece under consideration here, are theoretically driven with some application to empirical research. All papers contribute to knowledge in different ways, as I shall now outline.

6.1 Overall contribution

Reviewing all papers together I conclude that I have contributed overall to the body of knowledge on representation within cultural institutions and representational spaces. I have contributed to, and developed debates on, the understanding of how 'cultural products' of individuals, communities and nations are represented and explored, even exposed, and the tensions inherent in the creation of these representations. My arguments highlight that even well meaning representations can create a false or imagined sense of unity within different cultural groups, and can expose these communities to the 'gaze' (Urry, 1998) of other and more dominate social groupings within society. All of which adds to the development of our understanding of social history as a maturing museum discipline. At the same time, I have added to the body of knowledge on understanding the role and value of consultation processes and practice in terms of understanding how audiences engage with representations of themselves and others.

In questioning approaches to representation, I have equally contributed to the understanding of how representational spaces in their many forms, temporarily create new worlds within existing spaces and offer new arguments as to why such 'liminal' and often patently unreal spaces offer some form of 'authentic' experience to participants.

Lastly, I have added to the body of knowledge about the way that local and diaspora audiences are represented and raised contemporary concerns and issues about the 'impoverishment' of such representations within a fast changing Scotland.

6.2 Reflecting on the reflective process

Recent works have grown from my own reflective practice, self-questioning and review. This document has further enabled reflection and critical review and indeed has itself become a representational space for my own work from which to learn and develop arguments and ideas. This has proved valuable and personally rewarding and enlightening. I have developed a greater awareness of, and understanding of, some of the issues that I have been grappling with although reflection has made solutions more elusive as my awareness of the nuances of representation grow. I have approached representation from different perspectives, applied different bodies of theory, and explored these themes within a number of case studies. As a consequence of this review I have a new clarity of the overall purpose of my own work, greater self knowledge and have determined opportunities for further exploration. Additionally, the process of writing this thesis and reviewing my work with the aim of achieving an academic standard and qualification has proved to be a rewarding and challenging experience from which I have undoubtedly grown and benefited from.

23,732 words

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Appendix 1 List of papers

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1. Museos de Glasgow: Violencia Domestica, Verguenza y Silencio. *Historia Antropologia y Fuentes Orales*, no 20 Traumas del siglo XX, 1 1998
2. 'She Was Aye Workin', Memories of Women's Lives in the Tenements, Co-authorship with Helen Clark, September, (2003) White Cockade: Oxford.
- 3 'It wasn't all bad': Representations of working class cultures within social history museums and their impacts on audiences, *Museum and Society*, (Vol. 4, no 2 August 2006)
- 4 Free Nelson Mandela? The politics and pricing of culture in society, in *Revenue Management and Pricing: Case Studies and Applications*, (eds.) Yeoman, I and McMahon-Beattie, U. (2004), London: Thomson
- 5 Religion, Museums and the Modern World, *MARTOR, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant Anthropology Review*, 11, 2006
- 6 Catalysts for Change? Museums of Religion in a Pluralist Society, Special Edition , *Journal of management, Spirituality and Religion*, Selwyn, T, N Grayburn and A. Ron (eds) 2008

Cluster 2

7 Mobility, Diaspora and the hybridisation of festivity: the case of the Edinburgh Mela, Scotland, with Melanie Smith, University of Greenwich in *Festivals Tourism and Social Change*, (eds.) Picard. D, M. Robinson (2006) London: Channel View

8. Pilgrimage: journeying beyond self⁷, with Dr Chris Devereux, Special Edition Wellness Tourism, *Tourism Recreation Research*, (Vol. 31, no1 2006)

9 Juxtaposing the Timeless and the Ephemeral: Staging Festivals and Events at World Heritage Sites, with Melanie Smith and Martin Robertson, in *World Heritage Sites*, Leask, A, and A. Fyle (2006), London: Elsevier

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Appendix 2 Copies of papers including translation for paper1

"I Never Told Anyone" - Domestic Violence, Shame and Silence

Elizabeth Carnegie, Scotland, UK*

Abstract

This paper considers how museums, traditionally conservative institutions, can respond to the issues and needs of society and focuses on two Glasgow Museums projects which deal with domestic violence. Many women do not discuss the abuse they have suffered/are suffering for shame or fear of reprisals. Scottish Women's Aid argues that one in five households are living with some abuse and that it is crucial that such topics are discussed if society is to evolve. Men have to learn that violence is not acceptable, that they do not have the right to control women. Women by joining together and discussing the incidents of emotional, sexual and physical abuse subjected on them and on their families (90% of incidents are witnessed by children) will force society to face up the realities of domestic violence and help to bring about change

'I had 47 years in fear. My family used to ask me why I stuck it. I stuck it for them. Nobody would take you in.' (MB born 1910s)

The above quote, drawn from an interview collected for the People's Palace domestic life displays, highlights the fact that for some women domestic violence was a fact of life to be tolerated where it could not be avoided. Often their personal circumstances varied little from neighbours and friends, where living in fear was an expected part of a loveless marriage. Yet women rarely speak of such matters for personal shame and fear of reprisals.

This paper looks at two Glasgow Museum projects where seven women, (and one man) break their silence: For Better or Worse, a section within The People's Palace, Glasgow's social history museum, and Violence Against Women, a contemporary community-led Open Museum project curated by Alex Robertson working in partnership with abused women who had sought help from Women's Aid. Before I consider these projects in depth I would like to set a context for the work that we do within Glasgow Museums. It is the largest municipal museum service in Britain, in what has now become one of the most popular tourist cities in the country. Yet, Glasgow moves towards the Millennium the poorest city in Britain, where 30% of people live below the bread-line. With the highest heart attack and stroke levels, one of the highest alcoholism rates in Europe and with some of the worst housing problems, it is impossible to highlight the social poverty of our past without

* St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow Museums.

acknowledging that similar social problems exist within the present rejuvenated 'culture' city.

This is not an easy role for museums, which can safely dwell in the past, to become monitors of the social and environmental conditions which affect people's lives in the present.

Within the People's Palace we aimed for a level of realism and oral history is crucial in shaping the displays and interpreting the objects.

In this way we have raised issues such as poverty, incest, infant mortality, drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence.

As a museum our role is to interpret objects. Violence Against Women has taken a darker view of seemingly innocent objects. Women interviewed for the project were asked to select objects which reflected their experiences. P. McG chose a bunch of keys, objects traditionally associated with liberty because, *'he threw a bunch of keys at me and they hit me on the bridge of the nose....one of the keys was a great big key. It had broken my nose and I ended up with two black eyes.'* Another chose a television remote control because it was the scene of so much conflict.

It is only through telling the stories which surround these objects that we can offer the fuller picture and the impetus to tell these stories came from the women themselves.

For the People's Palace project we did not actively seek any discussion on domestic violence. Interviewees were invited to discuss all aspects of domestic life including living conditions, having and raising children, wash-day and relationships with neighbours. However, for the women and one man featured here domestic life equated to domestic violence and once the subject was raised they were keen to talk about a life 'lived in fear' despite the fact that to do so would unlock their pain. All were glad to see an establishment organisation such as a museum treat domestic violence seriously.

For Martha of Scottish Women's Aid it is vital that *'we get this into to the open. We want society to evolve so that no-one feels the need to control or have power over anyone else.'*

Some men grow up thinking that violence is an acceptable response as is shown by James interviewed for Teenage Daze, also within the domestic life gallery. *'The way I see it you've got to take the lead. You've got to fight back....If anyone annoys you, you've got to batter them there and then.'*

For women involved in violent relationships it is important that they realise that their experiences are not unique which in turn lessens their sense of shame as in F.McW's comment, *'speaking to other women I realised that I was not the only one to experience these things.'*

Within both projects there are distinct themes which run through the oral testimony: expectations of the marriage, violence 'triggers' such as money and alcohol, abuse of children, and the eventual destruction of any sense of self, and the emotional re-birth experienced by those women who have survived/escaped violent relationships.

Martha is not surprised that there are similar patterns emerging in all the women's lives.

'Violence against women has not changed over time. We are taught in training that men use the same tactics against women that were employed in the Prisoner of War Camps: deprivation, isolation and occasional indulgences to confuse them.'

In 1997 Scottish Women's Aid helped 7,813 women in Glasgow but they estimate that one in five families are living with some form of abuse.

The opening quote raised the issue that some women put up with violent and destructive relationships because they feel they have no option especially where children are involved. There is a strong sense still that to fail at marriage is to fail to fit into society.

'You always wish that things could've been different and that you could have been what society classes as a normal couple, a normal family.' (FMcW)

Women then, are encouraged to view marriage as the *normal* state and for some, violence is part of their expectations of a *normal* marriage.

The quote here is from a woman who had been the victim of violence in more than one relationship.

'I would be about six years old and he would get very drunk and come in and shout and use his fists against my mother. I was so used to this atmosphere, I presumed that this was the normal way of life that everybody had in their homes. I wasn't really surprised when my first real boyfriend slapped me across the face because I took this as something that men did to women and women were supposed to accept it' (FMcW)

This was also true for a young man who married in the 1980's aged 22.

'She was a bad tempered woman. She hit me and used to throw things. She would take lumps out of me with her nails and things. I thought that's what relationships were because she was my first girlfriend.'

The people interviewed felt that they had had low expectations of relationships and that violence was learned behaviour.

'My Dad used to hit my mum about a bit and they had been married for 28 years but you were never allowed to say a bad word against my dad you know. My Granda was also violent towards my Gran. That was my Dad's father.' (MW)

In 90% of incidents of violence in the home, children are present or in the next room.

'My mother was murdered by the man she lived with. I have seen a lot of violence and have been subjected to a lot of violence and took it for the norm for many years.' (ER)

Children inevitably are damaged and confused by their parents violent relationships.

'She would look at him and she'd say, 'That's not my Daddy. I don't know who that man is. I would say 'I don't know who he's turned into either.... There were times I would stay away for hours on end...just to keep the youngest one out of the way but it would all be spoilt as soon as you got in the door. There were times that she wouldn't eat for days because of the pressure.' (JB)

Ironically most of the women stayed in the relationship for the sake of the children but in several situations it was abuse of children which forced the women to leave the marriage.

'We were brought up to believe you were married for life. I was married for two years before I had my son but then I did not want to leave because of him. I took it for so long and eventually I left because I came home one day and my son was locked in by himself. He was four' (MW)

Abuse tends to worsen as children get older and women become more independent of the home. In two cases it was older children who forced the split.

'It was my older daughter that said, "No". This is not going to go on anymore' (JB)

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P.McG's daughter had also been sexually abused. The woman's support project findings showed that in every case of sexual abuse there was also physical abuse.

'My daughter came in and saw the state of my face and went absolutely loopy and proceed to tell me that he had sexually abused her since she had been about three and a half years of age.' (P.McG)

The father was sentenced in 1997 to four and half years in prison for offences committed in the 1980's. P.McG believes that the emotional, physical and sexual abuse she was subjected to destroyed her ability to function and to be aware of her daughter's abuse.

'Because you are abused you are sort of mummified to everything that is going on around you.'

All women experienced an eventual total loss of self-esteem summarised in the following two quotes.

'It wasn't so much the hitting that disturbed me. It was the idea that someone who professed to love me could actually hit me also.....It went from violence to mental abuse as in how I looked, how I sounded, how I acted, my intelligence levels. 'Til it got so bad that I really believed that...I was totally worthless in any shape or form.' (F.McW)

I felt so,...so de-sexed. I didn't feel like a woman. I didn't feel anything. I just felt I might as well be dead. (J.B)

In some cases sex was also a weapon to control the woman. M.B. was repeatedly raped by her husband.

'If you had a headache it didn't make any difference to him. You still had to have intercourse. He wouldn't let you sleep. He kept bashing you on the back of the neck.' (MB)

Women living in fear tried to keep out of the way, *'I used to lie out in the stairs till he went to sleep before I got in the window'* (MB), to be invisible in the home, and to appear normal with friends and neighbours.

Inevitably neighbours were aware of what was happening but rarely commented.

'The neighbours must have known what was going on from all the noise but they never said two words to me about what was happening.'

"My downstairs neighbour used to say, 'Why do you put up with this? and we would all be embarrassed.'" (J.B.)

However JB tried to hide her marriage problems outwith the home environment.

'Its the old story of never judge a book by its cover. That was my marriage. People looking at us would say, 'Oh you look so happy. I would never have believed that you had that kind of problem.'

Children were forced to collude with the deception.

'I never told anybody about the violence. Nobody, and I had sworn my kids to secrecy as well. In the end it was, like, broken arms and heavy duty things which was really hard to disguise.'

All of the women helped by Women's Aid are living in poverty but Martha is quick to point out that wealthier women have other options and that violence is not a class issue. For women kept short of money and with no personal income they had little

choice but to stay in the relationship. They became adept at hiding money to ensure their families survival. This was particularly necessary for women whose partners had a drink problem.

I've actually put my keys in my bra. I've put all of the money from my purse in my bra. I've actually kept my benefit book down my tights because at times that benefit book kept us...He would go out with maybe fifty pence in pennies from the wee ones piggy bank. We had special places in the house where we would hide this money.' (JB)

Attacks were common after a night out or after the woman had been out with friends.

I was seven months pregnant and I came back from a night out and he was very drunk and he started punching and kicking me out in the road. I curled up because I was pregnant so he started kicking me in the spine. He also starved me. I was taken into hospital and fed with a tube....' (F.McW)

Food is an issue in most violent relationships. Money needed to buy food can be withheld. Traditionally an area of women's responsibility, food causes regular conflict if the man refuses to eat what is offered.

I always made him his meal and put a bit of tin foil over it and left it. Sometimes the walls sported what he didn't want.' (JB)

or

'Many's a time the food was thrown down the toilet (MB)

For women of MB's generation (she was in her eighties when interviewed in 1994) there was no Women's Aid. She had to wait until her husband died after 42 years of marriage to experience freedom and even then she was so conditioned to trying to please him that, *two years after he died I still hurried home at 5 o'clock to get his supper ready.'* (MB)

Women who do manage to leave their men for good often experience a period of financial hardship, homelessness or bad housing but are rewarded by independence and a growing self confidence.

'I was trying to get rid of this idea that I was worthless. I went to the hairdressers to get my hair done and got new clothes.' (FMcW)

or

'Now I've got my own home with my youngest daughter and everything is great. I've got no money worries. I've actually got savings. I feel a different person. I haven't got the fear of when the door opens or when he wakes up and as for my youngest one, she says, 'It's so good Mummy when we go somewhere and we have fun, when we come back, the fun feeling is still there.' (JB)

For women such as ED survival is the key. *'We have got no men to bother us. You just have to laugh because you have survived.'*

Museums can play a part in giving individuals a voice. Although the People's Palace was only able to touch on the issues raised here the displays challenged the definition of the family. In the future museums should be able to tackle other issues which are still taboo within society.

Violence Against Women will be on display in The Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove in the near future.

Food
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Childhood

MUSEOS DE GLASGOW: VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA, VERGÜENZA Y SILENCIO

Elizabeth Carnegie

*«Vivi cuarenta y siete años con miedo.
Mi familia me preguntaba que por qué lo soportaba.
Lo soportaba por ellos. Nadie te entendía».*
(M.B. nacida en la década de 1910)

Esta cita, extraída de una entrevista realizada para la exposición sobre la vida doméstica instalada en el People's Palace, pone de manifiesto el hecho de que para algunas mujeres la violencia doméstica era un elemento habitual de la vida cotidiana, que cuando no podía evitarse había que tolerar. Con frecuencia las circunstancias personales de estas mujeres eran muy similares a las de sus vecinas y amigas, para las que vivir con miedo era un elemento más de una vida conyugal que estaba exenta de amor. Y sin embargo, pese a esta coincidencia, las mujeres rara vez hablan de estos asuntos por vergüenza personal y por temor a las represalias.

Este artículo analiza dos proyectos de los Museos de Glasgow en los que siete mujeres (y un hombre) rompen su silencio: «En la dicha y en la adversidad», sección incluida en el People's Palace, el museo de Historia Social de Glasgow, y «Mujeres maltratadas», un proyecto del Museo Abierto sobre problemas de la sociedad contemporánea dirigido por Alex Robertson, que trabajó en estrecha colaboración con una serie de mujeres víctimas de la violencia física que acabaron pidiendo auxilio a Women's Aid, institución de ayuda para la mujer.

Antes de analizar en profundidad estos proyectos, quisiera esbozar el contexto de la labor que llevamos a cabo en los Museos de Glasgow. Se trata del conjunto museístico municipal más importante de Gran Bretaña y que se encuentra en una ciudad que por su importancia cultural se ha convertido en uno de los destinos turísticos más visitados del país. Sin embargo, Glasgow se aproxima al milenio transformada en la ciudad más pobre de Gran Bretaña, con un 30 % de la población que vive por debajo del umbral de la pobreza. Con el índice de infartos y apoplejías más elevados del país, una de las tasas de alcoholismo más elevadas de Europa y algunos de los más pavorosos problemas de vivienda, resulta imposible destacar la pobreza social de nuestro pasado sin reconocer que dentro de la remozada «ciudad de cultura» que es Glasgow en la actualidad siguen existiendo los mismos problemas sociales.

No es fácil para los museos, que pueden sin riesgo alguno limitarse a vivir en el pasado, asumir la responsabilidad de reflejar las condiciones sociales y medioambientales que afectan hoy a la vida cotidiana de los habitantes de la ciudad.

En el People's Palace nos propusimos alcanzar un determinado nivel de realismo, en el que la historia oral constituye un factor crucial a la hora de organizar e instalar las exposiciones e interpretar los objetos que las componen. De esta forma hemos tratado cuestiones tales como la pobreza, el incesto, la mortalidad infantil, la adicción a las drogas y el alcohol y la violencia doméstica.

En tanto que museo nuestro papel consiste en interpretar los objetos. La exposición titulada

«Mujeres maltratadas» ha puesto de manifiesto aspectos bastante sombríos de objetos aparentemente inocentes. A las mujeres entrevistadas para este proyecto se les pidió que seleccionasen algunos objetos que reflejasen sus experiencias. P.McG. eligió un llavero con un manojito de llaves —objetos tradicionalmente asociados con la idea de libertad— porque «[él] me arrojó el llavero y me fracturó la nariz... una de las llaves era muy grande. Me partió la nariz y acabé con los dos ojos morados.» Otra mujer eligió el mando a distancia del televisor porque había sido fuente de numerosos conflictos.

Sólo mediante el relato de las historias que rodean a estos objetos podemos presentar el cuadro completo de lo que representan, y es preciso decir que la decisión de narrar esos relatos procedió de las propias mujeres afectadas.

Para el proyecto del People's Palace no pretendimos organizar un debate sobre la violencia doméstica. A las entrevistadas se les invitó a hablar de todos los aspectos de su vida doméstica, esto es de las condiciones de vida, los hijos, la colada o las relaciones que mantenían con sus vecinas. No obstante, para todas las mujeres y para el único hombre que intervinieron en este proyecto la vida doméstica equivalía a violencia doméstica y una vez se planteó el tema todos los participantes quisieron hablar de esa vida «viviendo con miedo» sin tomar en consideración el hecho de que hablar de ello daría rienda suelta a su sufrimiento. A todos les alegró ver que un museo, es decir una institución establecida, se ocupaba con seriedad del tema de la violencia doméstica.

Para Martha, que trabaja en la delegación de Women's Aid en Escocia, es vital que «esto salga a la luz. Queremos que la sociedad evolucione de tal modo que nadie sienta la necesidad de ejercer dominio o poder sobre ninguna persona.»

Algunos hombres maduran pensando que la violencia es una reacción aceptable, como demuestra James, entrevistado para Teenage Daze, proyecto incluido dentro de la exposición de la vida doméstica: «Yo opino que tienes que mandar, que tienes que devolver los golpes... Si alguien te molesta, tienes que apalearle en ese mismo momento.»

Es de suma importancia que las mujeres afectadas por relaciones violentas sepan que sus experiencias no son en modo alguno únicas, cosa que a su vez mitiga su sensación de vergüenza; así lo demuestra este comentario de F.McW.: «Cuando hablé con otras mujeres caí en la cuenta de que no era la única que soportaba esas cosas.»

Dentro de ambos proyectos hay temas diferenciados que aparecen una y otra vez en el testimonio oral: las frustradas esperanzas puestas en el matrimonio, los elementos desencadenantes de la violencia, como el dinero y el alcohol, la destrucción final del sentido de la identidad y el renacimiento emocional experimentado por las mujeres que han logrado sobrevivir/escapar a una relación marcada por la violencia.

A Martha no le sorprende que de todos los relatos de esas mujeres se desprendan elementos similares: «La violencia contra la mujer no ha cambiado con el paso del tiempo. En los cursos que nos facultan para ejercer esta profesión nos enseñan que los hombres utilizan las mismas tácticas que se empleaban en los campos de prisioneros de guerra: la privación, el aislamiento y de vez en cuando alguna concesión, algún tipo de placer, para crear desconcierto y confusión.»

En 1997 la delegación en Escocia de Women's Aid atendió en Glasgow a 7.813 mujeres, pero sus responsables calculan que una de cada cinco familias vive sometida a algún tipo de malos tratos.

La cita inicial de este artículo plantea inequívocamente la cuestión de que algunas mujeres soportan relaciones destructivas y violentas porque les parece que su situación no tiene solución, sobre todo cuando hay niños en la familia. Está todavía fuertemente arraigada la noción de que fracasar en el matrimonio equivale a fracasar en el empeño de convertirse en miembro de pleno derecho de la sociedad. «Siempre piensas que ojalá las cosas hubieran sido distintas, que ojalá hubieras podido ser lo que la sociedad considera una pareja normal, una familia normal.» (F.McW.)

Luego a las mujeres se las alienta a que consideren el matrimonio como el estado *normal* y para algunas la violencia forma parte de lo que consideran un matrimonio *normal*.

La cita que ofrecemos a continuación procede de una mujer que fue víctima de la violencia no sólo en su relación conyugal: «Yo tendría entonces unos seis años y él llegaba a casa borracho perdido y entraba gritando y empezaba a darle puñetazos a mi madre. Estaba tan acostumbrada a este ambiente que estaba convencida que esto era la vida normal, lo que todo el mundo vivía en casa. Así que no me sorprendí nada el día que mi primer novio me dio un bofetón que me cruzó toda la cara, porque me figuraba que era algo que todos los hombres hacían con las mujeres y que a las mujeres no les quedaba más remedio que aceptarlo.» (F.McW.)

Lo mismo puede decirse de un joven que se casó a los 22 años en la década de 1980: «Era una mujer que tenía muy mal genio. Me pegaba y me tiraba lo primero que encontraba a la cabeza. Y me daba unos arañazos que me arrancaba la piel. Yo creía que todas las relaciones eran así porque no tuve más novia que ella.»

Todas las personas entrevistadas afirmaban esperar muy poca cosa de la relación matrimonial y manifestaban su convencimiento de que la violencia era un comportamiento adquirido: «Mi padre pegaba de vez en cuando a mi madre, pero aunque llevaban veintiocho años casados, contra mi padre no podías decir nada, ¿sabe? El abuelo también pegaba a la abuela; me refiero al padre de mi madre.» (M.W.)

En el 90 % de los casos de violencia doméstica los niños contemplan la escena o se hallan en la habitación de al lado. «Mi madre fue asesinada por el hombre con el que vivía. He visto mucha violencia y he sido víctima de mucha violencia y durante muchos años creí que era lo normal.» (E.R.)

Los niños quedan profundamente marcados por la relación violenta de los padres y experimentan una honda confusión: «La niña lo miraba y decía: 'Ése no es mi papá. No sé quién es ese hombre.' Yo le contestaba: 'Yo tampoco sé en quién se ha convertido...' A veces me pasaba horas y horas fuera de casa... sólo para que la pequeña no estuviera en medio de todo aquello... pero, nada, en cuanto entrabas por la puerta todo se estropeaba, no había servido para nada. Había veces en que la niña no comía durante días seguidos, de la angustia que tenía.» (J.B.)

Lo irónico del caso es que muchas mujeres soportaban este tipo de relación a causa de los hijos, pero en varios casos lo que obligó a las mujeres a abandonar al marido fue la violencia ejercida contra los niños. «A nosotras nos educaron para creer que el matrimonio era para toda la vida. A mi hijo lo tuve cuando ya llevaba dos años casada, y no quería irme de casa por causa del niño. Aguanté mucho tiempo pero al final me fui porque un día llegué a casa y me encontré con que él había encerrado con llave a mi hijo. Tenía cuatro años.» (M.W.)

Los abusos empeoran a medida que los niños crecen y las mujeres pueden independizarse un poco más del hogar. En dos casos los que forzaron la ruptura fueron los hijos: «Fue mi hija mayor la que dijo: 'Basta'. Esto tiene que acabarse.» (J.B.)

La hija de P.McG. sufrió abusos sexuales. Los resultados del proyecto de ayuda a las mujeres demuestran que en todos los casos de abuso sexual se da también violencia física. «Mi hija entró un día en casa y al ver cómo tenía yo la cara se puso como una fiera y entonces me contó que él había abusado sexualmente de ella desde que tenía unos tres años y medio» (P.McG.). El padre, en 1997, fue condenado a cuatro años y medio de cárcel por delitos cometidos en la década de 1980. P.McG. está convencida de que la violencia física, emocional y sexual a que estaba sometida destruyó su capacidad de discernir y darse cuenta de los abusos de que había sido víctima su hija. «Porque cuando te maltratan te quedas como momificada y no te enteras de lo que ocurre a tu alrededor.»

Todas las mujeres experimentaron al final una pérdida absoluta de su autoestima, como se desprende de las dos citas que ofrecemos a continuación: «Lo que me angustiaba no era tanto el que me pegase. Era la idea de que alguien que decía que me quería pudiera también llegar a pegarme... Pasaba de la violencia física a la crueldad mental; me reprochaba mi aspecto, todo lo que yo decía o hacía le parecía mal y se burlaba de mis niveles de inteligencia. Hasta que las cosas llegaron a tal punto que realmente me convencí de que... era totalmente indigna, que por mi aspecto o por mi manera de ser no valía para nada.» (F.McW.) «Me sentía completamente... desprovista de sexo. No me sentía para nada una mujer. No sentía nada. Lo único que sentía es que lo mismo daba

estar muerta.» (J.B.)

En algunos casos, también el sexo era un arma para dominar a la mujer. M.B. era repetidamente forzada por su marido. «*Si tenías dolor de cabeza, no le importaba en absoluto. Tenías que acostarte con él. No te dejaba dormir; no hacía más que darte golpes en el cogote hasta que te dabas la vuelta.*» (M.B.)

Las mujeres, que vivían con miedo, procuraban no molestar ni crear dificultades: «*Me tumbaba en la escalera hasta que él se hubiese dormido, y entonces entraba.*» (M.B.). Trataban de ser invisibles en el hogar y aparentar normalidad con los vecinos y las amistades. Los vecinos, inevitablemente, se percataban de lo que ocurría, pero rara vez lo comentaban: «*Seguro que los vecinos sabían lo que pasaba, con todo aquel escándalo, pero a mí nunca me dijeron ni media palabra.*» «*La vecina que vivía en el piso de abajo me decía: '¿Pero por qué lo aguantas?' y las dos nos sentíamos incomodísimas.*» (J.B.)

A pesar de todo, J.B. procuraba disimular sus problemas para no salieran del entorno de su hogar: «*Porque es lo de siempre, nunca hay que juzgar por las apariencias. Se trataba de mi matrimonio. La gente que nos conocía decía: 'Se os veía tan felices. Nunca hubiera imaginado que tenías este tipo de problemas.'*» A los niños se les obligaba a no revelar el engaño: «*Nunca hablé de la violencia con nadie. Con nadie. Y a mis hijos les hice prometer que también guardarían el secreto. Pero al final pues acabó siendo un brazo roto y cosas peores, que eran muy difíciles de disimular.*»

Si bien es cierto que todas las mujeres que recibieron ayuda de Women's Aid viven en la pobreza, Martha se apresura a señalar que aunque las mujeres acomodadas tengan más alternativas, la violencia no es una cuestión de clase social. Es lógico que a estas mujeres, que padecían escasez de medios económicos y carecían de ingresos personales, no les quedase más remedio que continuar soportando su relación. Se acostumbraron a esconder dinero para asegurar la supervivencia de sus hijos, cosa particularmente necesaria en el caso de aquellas mujeres cuyas parejas eran alcohólicas. «*Me he metido las llaves en el sujetador. Me he metido en el sujetador todo el dinero que llevaba en el billetero. He llegado a meterme la cartilla de la seguridad social dentro de los leotardos porque a veces esa cartilla era lo único que nos daba de comer... Él igual salía llevándose media libra en monedas de a penique que había cogido de la hucha de los críos. En casa teníamos unos sitios especiales donde guardábamos dinero.*» (J.B.)

Cuando el marido volvía del bar o cuando la esposa regresaba tras salir con unas amigas se prodigaban las agresiones. «*Estaba embarazada de siete meses y una noche, al volver de estar con unas amigas, me lo encontré borracho como una cuba y empezó a darme puñetazos y patadas ya en la calle. Yo me encogí, doblándome hacia adelante, porque estaba embarazada y él se puso a darme patadas en la columna vertebral. También me dejaba sin comer, hasta tal punto que tuvieron que llevarme al hospital y alimentarme con un tubo...*» (F.McW.)

En la mayoría de relaciones violentas aparece la cuestión de la comida: el dinero que se necesita para comprar alimentos puede negarse. La comida, esfera tradicionalmente confiada a la responsabilidad de la mujer, es causa habitual de conflictos, que en general aparecen cuando el hombre rechaza lo que le ha guisado su mujer. «*Siempre le preparaba la comida, la dejaba en el plato cubierta con un papel de aluminio y me iba. A veces las paredes mostraban lo que no le había gustado.*» (J.B.) O bien: «*Muchas veces la comida acababa en el retrete.*» (M.B.)

Para las mujeres de la generación de M.B. —en 1994, cuando la entrevistamos, tenía más de ochenta años— las instituciones de ayuda para la mujer del tipo Women's Aid no existían. Tuvo que esperar a que muriera su marido, tras 42 años de matrimonio, para saber lo que era la libertad, y aun entonces estaba tan sumamente acostumbrada a tener que complacerle que «*dos años después de que hubiera muerto todavía me iba corriendo a casa a las cinco de la tarde para tenerle a punto la cena.*» (M.B.)

Las mujeres que consiguen abandonar definitivamente al marido suelen padecer durante una época dificultades económicas, o problemas de vivienda o incluso falta de ella, pero se ven recompensadas por una gran sensación de independencia y una creciente seguridad en ellas mismas. «*Procuré por todos los medios librarme de aquella idea de que yo no valía nada. Iba a la peluquería a que me arreglasen el pelo y me*

compraba ropa nueva.» (F.McW.) O bien: «Ahora soy la dueña de mi casa y tengo conmigo a mi hija pequeña y todo funciona de maravilla. No tengo problemas de dinero, incluso tengo unos ahorritos. Me siento una persona completamente distinta. Ahora, cuando oigo que se abre la puerta, ya no tengo miedo ni pienso aterrada qué pasará cuando él se despierte. Y mi hijita siempre dice: 'Mamá, que bien nos lo pasamos cuando vamos a algún sitio a divertirnos, y cuando volvemos a casa también sigue dando gusto.'» (J.B.)

Para las mujeres como E.D. la clave de todo es haber sobrevivido: *«Por fin no hay ningún hombre que nos lo haga pasar mal. Cuando piensas que has sobrevivido, te pones tan contenta que te echas a reír.»*

A la hora de dar voz a un individuo, los museos pueden desempeñar un papel de suma importancia. Aunque el People's Palace tan sólo pudo ocuparse de los temas tratados en este artículo, las exposiciones sirvieron para cuestionar la definición tradicional de la familia. En el futuro los museos tendrán que ser capaces de abordar otras cuestiones que siguen siendo tabú dentro de nuestra sociedad.

«Mujeres maltratadas» se exhibirá próximamente en el Museo y Galería de Pintura de Kelvingrove.

Traducción de Montse Conill

'It wasn't all bad': representations of working class cultures within social history museums and their impacts on audiences

Elizabeth Carnegie*

Sheffield University

Abstract

This article examines the complexities inherent in creating social history displays which honestly represent communities whilst at the same time remaining sensitive to participant's needs and fears of exposure. It considers ways in which oral history collecting to inform displays is subject to self-censorship, community collusion in 'stigma management' and the curatorial decision making process of local government officers. Drawing on material collected for the People's Palace Glasgow and elsewhere it analyzes the ways in which individual responses are used to create notions of community identity, within the framework of the social history museum as voice of local government. Lastly it considers the impacts of such histories on local, tourist and diasporic visitors when the context for such memories (and indeed objects) has been changed by their relationship to the museum.

Key words: People's museums, curating dark memories, community identity, visitors/tourists

People are the real makers of what a city or place is. The first thing that a city must have is a museum for its people. Really touching and animating place. It takes care of all of the little voices that are difficult to listen to when you are taken by all the noise of the city... Thank you for this.

(Visitors Book Comment, non-local visitor, People's Palace, 2003)

Why, oh why does this museum make so much of Billy Connolly? He is vulgar (more than suggestive). More could surely be made of Stan Laurel – was he not a Glaswegian? On the top floor (I think) one of the small glass cases contained boxes of DUREX, TAMPAX & such things. Why? I saw no reason or explanation. Are they intended to arouse children's curiosity? Very odd! In haste-must get this posted. Ghastly picture on cover! Woman seems to have cat's whiskers.

(Comment Card, over 70 year old, local visitor, 2003)

Introduction

Within the public space of the museum, memories are triggered through people's real or assumed relationship with the objects, events and images they are witnessing (Attfield 2000). If museums are places at which to reflect on what it means to be human, memories unrelated to those being projected in museums will be released and explored within the 'dream space' (Kavanagh 2000) of the museum. As Kavanagh (2000) argues, museum products are dependant on access to memories, and therefore by definition, visitors.

As the visitor comments cited above illustrate, the question of how people experience the past within this 'dream space' is determined by their relationship to that past (Kavanagh 2000). Local visitors claim ownership of that past and the right to shape it, whereas visitors to the city respond to perceived truths about that past. Both comments reveal the fluid nature of memories based as they are on understandings of the past. This means that memories are not chronological (Samuel 1981, 1996, Thompson 2000, Hodgkin and Radstone 2003) and, moreover, that the museum also needs to be understood as an expressive medium (Kavanagh 2000), where visitors respond according to how they see and shape themselves within the world (Thompson 2000). Indeed visitors fulfil the role of witness (Taubman and Carnegie 2003), whilst undertaking the social role of visitor.¹

In this article I wish to explore the nature of this 'dream space' or to put it another way I want to analyze how the ownership of memories affects both curatorial decisions and visitor responses to the expression of those memories. In order to do this I will consider the complex process of selecting and interpreting local histories. What makes this process so complex is the need for museums to arrive at versions of the past and present which are acceptable to mixed audiences of tourists and locals and which, at the same time, meet the political agendas of local government and staff. Central to this debate is the social, ethical and political role and responsibilities of local government funded social history museums. I will approach these issues through one key case-study the People's Palace in Glasgow with other examples drawn from the People's Story in Edinburgh and elsewhere.²

I will begin by exploring community, visitor and tourist responses, and then consider the role of the *imagined* tourist's response. I speak of imagined response for two reasons: (i) because curatorial decisions require that assumptions be made about audience expectations, and the visitor's ability to deal with dark domestic histories (Lennon and Foley 2000) and (ii) there is the need of local communities to preserve dignity and pride when such histories can create a sense of shame or even denial. However, these institutions need to interpret the everyday lives of ordinary people in such a way that displays contains central, recognisable, emotional and generic truths (Clark 2003, Radstone 2003) without offending and alienating local audiences.

The 'People's' story?

The People's Palace, the People's Story, Edinburgh and the People's History Museum Manchester all have 'people' in their names, a reference to their distinct intended role as custodians of the ordinary people's history. As local government institutions they create subjective publicly sanctioned versions of the past (Evans 1999), creating a disparate range of public representations (Radstone and Hodgkin 2003) which are interpreted for and on behalf of that public through personal stories, and where possible in people's own words. Individuals who participate in creating these histories whether as interviewees, as members of formal focus groups or through informal community consultation, often have mixed views about what stories are appropriate.

The People's Palace, in common with these other museums, seeks to highlight social issues within the displays, an approach that can offer an uncomfortable or even distressing visitor experience. The displays have been designed to provoke emotional responses. As individuals bring their own emotional responses to the displays, it is hard to predict how people will respond and indeed as reminiscence work has shown (Clark 2003, Crumley 2003), seemingly innocent objects and memories can provoke strong emotional responses in people for whom they act as memory triggers.

Shortly after the People's Palace opened new displays to commemorate its centenary year in 1998, a Museum Assistant informed us that a visitor was openly weeping on the gallery floor. When approached the visitor had admitted that he was moved to tears by the display *Mr and Missus*, and more specifically, by a passage quoted from a life history interview recorded with Mary, a battered wife. This quote, the man went on to say, could have been written by his mother.

I had 47 years in fear: I used to lie out in the stairs 'til he went to sleep before I

got in the window. My family used to ask why I stuck it, I stuck it for them. Nobody could take you in.

Mary, Life Review interview with E. (Carnegie, 1996).

The inclusion of this quotation within the displays had represented a compromise for staff and reflected some judicious pruning of the interview material to minimize the impact on visitors. The original and complete text, which was deemed suitable for publication in the woman's history book was developed from the material collected for displays (Clark and Carnegie 2003) was:

I had 47 years in fear. I used to lie out in the stairs 'til he went to sleep before I got in the window He wouldn't let you sleep. He used to come in at all hours in the morning and I always knew when he was coming in and I had to get his tea on and if he was drunk and you were dying to go back to sleep he wouldn't let you. He kept bashing you on the back of the head. If you had a headache it didn't make any difference to him. You still had to have intercourse. The only time that I had freedom from him was when he died in 1973 because I had to be in the house for him to get his dinner and you would have to have intercourse at odd times. ... I would bring his breakfast into his bedside and he would lift it up and throw it down the pan. My family used to ask why I stuck it, I stuck it for them. Nobody would take you in.

Mary, Life Review interview with E. Carnegie, 1996

During her interview Mary's hands played out the actions as she remembered her treatment by her husband in a loveless marriage. She said she had waited all this time to tell her story. It may well be that she had recounted her life story on previous occasions, but what she meant was that she had waited a long time for her story to be listened to by an official of local government, albeit a representative of that most respectable of organizations, a local government funded museum.

The priority for Mary, in providing the museum with a version of her history, was to focus on her dark memories which stretched back some 40 years.. Mary thought it was important that the dark histories of domestic strife be included within museum displays, and through her personal memories the museum was able to raise general issues about gender, power and the role of government institutions in challenging unacceptable behaviour in society.

We, as curators, were concerned that the inclusion of this material had triggered such a strong emotional response in the visitor, an expatriate Scot on a brief visit to the city. It can be argued that the museum, as a public space, is an inappropriate forum in which to release strong emotions. There is also the possible problem that people whose history and present existence is being reflected in displays might not be comfortable expressing their painful emotions about their lives in public. Despite these possible problems we were, however, pleased with visitor's reaction as he gave us an initial indication that the displays succeeded in emotionally engaging visitors and in creating a forum for them to personally explore their own responses and relationship to the material contained within the galleries.

What this display illustrates is that individuals like Mary, become conduits for a *public view of intimate* history (DuBois 2000). They become both exhibits and visitors and as such, they are subject to the impacts of their own histories as their accounts pass from the original contexts of interviews to those of the museum. This scenario can be illustrated using another example from the People's Palace.

On one occasion a woman and her thirteen-year-old daughter were walking round the museum, when they paused at one of the domestic life displays, *A Guid Night In*, which covered the subject of home-based leisure activities. Amongst the old draughts set and card games is a picture of an Ann Summers Party (selling sex toys and lingerie). The photograph featured a wife sporting a furry 'posing pouch' intended for her husband. Also appearing in the photograph as looking on, laughing and clapping was the woman who, as museum visitor, was now accompanied by her daughter. What was intended as an educational, and probably rare, family outing to a museum associated with the historic past, now threatened to undermine the moral authority of the mother in her relationship with her teenage daughter. She complained.

A year before this incident I had gone to 'collect' the party armed only with a camera and cheap wine. The party was held in a flat in Easterhouse, a post-war housing scheme in Glasgow, and was one of many being held in Glasgow in that period before such products were readily available in high street stores (Carnegie 1996). I left after an hour fearing that my presence would inhibit the scene. I was also an outsider and keen to keep my clothes on. This was not my first party. I had, however, left the camera behind for their use and, when the pictures were developed, we experienced our first ethical dilemma. Only the posing pouch image was useable in a 'family' museum but what should we do with the others and the negatives? How could we, as representatives of a government funded institution, ensure they could be kept safe from exposure, if indeed such items should be kept? In the end we sought and gained permission from all parties present to use the one image and we returned the other images and negatives to the party host.

In the meantime the mother visiting the museum with her daughter had experienced a 'forgetting' and had, it transpired, had a recent argument with the party host. Most crucially though, she felt the context for the image had changed, and the problem for her was its inappropriateness as an exhibit for *the* history museum in Glasgow, which was held in great affection by local audiences (including locals who were consciously non-users) to 'make a fool of people'.

Yet she had given her permission for the image to be used and as such the museum owned the image and had the right to use it as it saw fit. The question appears to be this: should this mean that permission is granted forever so that people do not have the right to have their history, past or present returned to them? Might we not, here, want to think of a right of return, of the right to return the public history to the private and hidden? In short, can the People not be allowed to change their minds? The image in question is still on display. Meanings, including our understandings of mediated memories, are dependent on their contexts. Museum collecting policies which govern matters of memory must respond to debates about whether memories can be collected in the same way as objects and can therefore be owned remains a subject for debate today.

At present the ways in which museums formally gain consent from informants gives rise to the danger that staff may expose people as individuals, or as is often feared, publicly sanction and reinforce cultural stereotypes. Thus, personal memories usually collected in the domestic context or in small focus groups are essentially intimate recollections which, when the context changes to the museum and display setting, are presented as public social documents. This can seem to be alarming for many participants in interviews.

There can also be issues with informed consent (Dyck 2000). Collecting memories from people at the margins of society may well seem to promote the aims of social inclusion but informants may not be fully aware of the consequence of their participation when the context is changed from the original interview situation. They may not even remember having given consent or remember what they said. A good empathetic interview is conducted like a conversation and the eventual output of the interview, the museum display, is not as yet a reality and people may say more than they intended or thought (Conroy-Baker 2000: 37). For example, a sex worker and drug user interviewed for the *2000 Glasgow Lives* readily gave her consent for her interview to be used. However, when she later came into the library that was hosting the display she was less happy to view her history which was now part of a computer interactive, available to everyone. She withdrew consent. In this case the museum withdrew her material. It is clearly easier to change a computer interactive than a fully developed display but this example also highlights how the curatorial decision making process will vary from person to person when and where there is no clear policy.³

Photographs, like memories are increasingly used to interpret displays and as such are also likely to be understood within the context in which they are being displayed. Such uses can, as with life-history material, also create ethical debates and dilemmas. In one case photographs selected randomly for the text panels of a touring exhibition, *From Here to Maternity* (a multi-cultural, interdisciplinary exhibition about pregnancy and childbirth) led to one image of a child being put on a panel dealing with child abuse though the ages. Her parents, who were devout Moslems, came to visit the exhibition, expecting to feel the pride of inclusion in Glasgow's present, and left feeling betrayed that their daughter had been associated with bad parenting

at a time and place which was not even a part of their history.

In that case the image was removed and another lesson learned. Contemporary images, like memories, change as the context changes and composite and created meanings can create unexpected tensions. The potential for incidents of this kind remain, when there is any attempt to construct displays, which aim to go beyond the image to suggest meanings, that will challenge, provoke and reflect and reject contemporary standards, attitudes and fashions. The case study examples outlined above deal with sex, violence and attitudes to race, subject areas, which require careful consideration and sensitive interpretation, and as such may always prove problematic. For some local audiences the admission of poverty or an acknowledgement of the existence of domestic violence or child abuse can also be hard for them to accept as a part of their public history.

Memories then within the museum context are used to 'create a unified story of who we are... not with one's current identity but (through) the generative process of sense making from which numerous possible life stories might arise' (Eisenberg cited in Arnould and Price 2000: 159). The People's stories are constructed to challenge and reform ideas about social stigma based on class and lifestyles. Stigma, which is according to Erving Goffman, an 'undesired differentness from what we had anticipated' (Goffman 1969: 15) must be directly confronted from both sides (Byrne 2000: 14). In relation to people's memories this suggests that individuals who know (or fear) themselves to be stigmatized by poverty, profession or abuse will be careful about how and what they say for fear of disclosure or exposure. Thus 'stigma management' has a direct impact on the memories which people consent to share and therefore on the shaping of displays.

The curator's story

Social history is a relatively new museum discipline, dating back to the later half of the twentieth century (Merriman 1996). Such museum displays do of course reflect the practices of the staff that create them. It may be noted that staff are also affected by the material they work with, and while they will have been trained in collections care and management, they are often ill-equipped to deal with the impacts of dark histories on their own lives when witnessing their effects on others. Equally, as Roper (2003) and Dyak (2000) argue, museum staff need to accept that their own perspectives, attitudes and subjectivities will determine the content of community consultation and this is particularly true of the interview process. Social history curators are keen to push boundaries and not just in terms of what kinds of objects are collected, and displayed. They are concerned with how things are interpreted so that they can allow for an emotional engagement with human stories behind the ownership, use and symbolic meaning of the objects.

Inevitably, this approach means that staff are still taking decisions on behalf of the institution, on behalf of the visiting public (Pearce 1997). These decisions determine what is deemed appropriate to display, when and how and thus impressionistic histories and present contexts are created and recreated sometimes to carry moral messages and sometimes to challenge received wisdom about the nature of morality in society. Giving 'power to the people' does not mean relinquishing responsibility (or power) but providing a knowledgeable framework from which to develop social history in partnership with communities. Problems arise however when communities do not seem to prioritize the same issues, themes or concerns as curators and when decisions need to be taken which will also meet institutional requirements.

Which people, whose memories?

For many museums oral history collecting is a key part of the community consultation process and allows participants to have a voice within displays rather than simply provide material to inform the development process. The People's Palace sought to collect memories reflecting the life experiences of ordinary men and woman but also elected to focus on certain individuals in the public eye whose lives had been formed and shaped by Glasgow. Local visitors are particularly concerned about which individual celebrities are chosen for inclusion in displays, as they seem to become ambassadors for the city. The opening quote which refers to the comedian

and actor Billy Connolly generates a mixed response from audiences. Likewise a display devoted to Glaswegian authors, which featured Jimmy Boyle, a convicted murderer who was successfully rehabilitated through Barlinnie Prison Special Unit evokes strong reactions. Local visitors to the display spat on the display case, and tore and eventually destroyed, the image and label. Gang warfare is an undeniable part of Glasgow's history, and indeed its notoriety, but locals felt that his inclusion as a writer and sculptor, rather than solely as a criminal in the *Crime and Punishment* displays, was to celebrate his past, rather than condemn it, and that was deemed an unacceptable way to represent a side of Glasgow to tourist audiences.

The inclusion of 'dark' memories or of those memories of individuals of whom the 'People' disapprove highlights the fact that even when censored, such displays inevitably carry the authoritative stamp of local, and in some cases national, government (Pearce 1997, Merriman 1991, O'Neill 2002). There is an added tension in the debate, in that the public face of local government organizations reflect the inner turmoil of large institutions in the throes of slow and painful change, facing not just changes in funding and increasing public accountability (Moore 1994), but changes in what is deemed to be the public role of museums (Sandell 2002). Curatorial staff adapting to new ways of working with the public might be struggling with feelings of powerlessness whilst at the same time being charged with the duty of empowering their communities (Gurian 1995).

Constructing the People's stories

Within the modern social history museum visitors might be forced to view, for example the dark side of urban life, where once it would have been hidden. Individual memories, like individuality itself, need to be constructed within a social framework (Attfield 2000). In so far as they become museum memories they are able to promote, define and create ideas about the nature of community. Authenticity often matters less than perceived truths. Often 'memory has more to do with the "creation of meanings" than with what exactly happened in the past (Allesadro Portelli cited in Field 2006: 34). Field goes on, 'the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that "wrong statements are still psychologically "true" (Field 2005:34). In this way he also acknowledges that 'life stories are not necessarily incomplete, the sense of self not whole, unless completed through myth' (Field 2005: 39). People's Museums memories create and recreate a sense of 'pastness' through drawing on the hero myths and mythologies of place which single out those post-industrialized cultures from elsewhere. Museum memories can be used to project ideas about culture and identity and through that citizenship, promoting for example, notions of responsible behaviour within society (Ison 2002).

No matter the hand that writes the label, museums are not innocent or ideology free (Pearce 1995, Hooper-Greenhill 1997, Sandell 2002) and the argument would appear to be whether on not such agendas are acknowledged when they are implicit in the framework of the organization. It is true that they are sometimes acknowledged. For example, Mark O'Neill, Head of Glasgow Museums defends the decision to include domestic violence material in the refurbished Kelvingrove, Glasgow's flagship museum because:

It will recognise the actual life experience of a substantial percentage of women who have experienced domestic violence. Also one of the reasons that people do not feel welcome in museums is that they can seem to be for people who belong in wider society. People who have been victims of abuse often feel ashamed and that they do not belong. Acknowledging their experience in the museum may enable them to feel they belong in the museum, and it is easier for them to feel the museum belongs to them. (O'Neill 2002: 23)

These arguments are not limited to the interpretation of urban life. For example, O'Seaghda considers the case of the Museum of Country Life in the Republic of Ireland and its inability to show that... 'folk did not live in the folk parks untouched by power, conflict and pain'. This, he goes on, '.... represents a failure of political and intellectual nerve as well as imagination' (O'Seaghda 2002:19).

Clearly such displays involve or require memories of the 'discredited' or 'discreditable' stigmatized groups in an attempt to create dialogues but will also be hindered or helped by individual and community 'strategies for containment' (Field 2006:39). 'Dark' memories of

genocide, the Holocaust, or of disenfranchisement and dispossession have often recorded to ensure they are not lost. However can they also be used to heal? Is this indeed a role for museum mediated memories? Field argues that if oral history cannot heal, it can at least help, through enabling interviewees to achieve or rekindle a sense of self-composure (Field 2006: 39).

Creating a sense of ownership or belonging or at least inspiring empathy in locals and visitors is intrinsic to the ethos of the social history museum, and to a "warts and all" view of life. However, for O'Neill the need to interpret the dark side of human nature requires that we

...represent a less schizoid view of human beings, where the creation of beauty and the carrying out of evil deeds are not separated. If one of the purposes of museums is to explore how people across the world are different, and how we are the same, representing human destructiveness as experienced by audiences is a crucial part of the picture. (O'Neill 2002:23)

This creates a dilemma. Should museum staff overrule a desire on the part of public opinion for a 'clean' history so that themes of inequality can be represented? If so, how can they justify these decisions and assess visitor responses? In the case of the People's Palace, these decisions can best be understood by considering its history. In policy terms the People's Palace was an established museum which was opened as a multi-purpose community centre whose target audience was always the ordinary working class people of the East End of Glasgow. It became radicalized over time as the loss of the industrial base forced Glasgow to reappraise its position as the workshop of the world. It can be argued that this radical view of history, which provided the palace's remit from the 1970s onwards, was a form of revisionism which created links with the milestones of the working class movement and repositioned Glasgow as a radical city (for example, the Calton Weavers Martyrs, working class suffrage, Red Clydeside, the Upper Clyde Shipworkers Strike, the rent strike and so on).

However, this view of working class history, which is shared by the People's Museum Manchester and is also reflected in the collections of Edinburgh and Liverpool Museums can also be exclusionary, denying a forum for the largely non-radical lifestyle of the ordinary working class. Equally important for our understanding of the role of these museums is that they often strive to instil community feeling through suggesting uniqueness, just as communities are based on individuals acknowledging a shared experience, past, beliefs or cultural background (Samuel 1996, Thompson 2000), often choosing to define themselves as much by what they are as what they are not. Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland's two major cities are just an hour's drive from each other, and are sometimes represented as, or have chosen to be represented as, cultural opposites. Yet in terms of their working class histories, they both share the same social history and are affected by the same social issues. Glasgow has long suffered from its hard man media image, a legacy of its heavily industrialized past, and is today the poorest city in Britain despite its 1990s cultural renaissance (Carnegie *et al.* 1996). Edinburgh, Scotland's capital is the home of the International Festival, and yet has huge social problems borne of bad housing, poverty and unemployment.

The People's Palace and the People's Story both elected to go beyond collecting the material culture of the radical left excluded from mainstream museums, to include displays which reflect the daily lives of ordinary people (King 1985). They therefore collect the memories and the material evidence of domestic or working lives in order to represent the experience of ordinary life. Marriage is treated as a life experience, whether good or bad, a rite of passage as opposed to a mere day. Installations include display panels and other materials which highlight accidents at work and working conditions as well as celebrating the products of labour.

In the case of the dark side of domestic life, these displays do not reflect contested pasts (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003) as is often the case in, for example, interpretations of war (Evans 1997, Portelli 2003). Instead they represent an acknowledged part of everyday life, which individuals, and therefore communities, tacitly accepted was not open for discussion in a public arena (DuBois 2000, Trouillot 1996). They represent the secret histories of communities. Contemporary attitudes and audiences however allow for, or indeed can force, a reappraisal of silences. Dubois argues that '[t]oo often silence is taken for forgetting.... silences are produced

by highlighting the problems which the past poses for people in the present' (Dubois 2000:75) This means that existing collections are required to be re-examined so that modern audiences may find ways to express those silences. For example a key object in the People's Palace collection is the Saracen Head Punch Bowl from the 1760s. It was taken from the decorative arts context of eighteenth-century displays and put into a section on alcohol, known locally as *the Bevy* and the bowl's meaning is now drawn from its, and Glasgow people's, relationship to alcohol. A ceramic asthma inhaler was interpreted not as a sign of Glasgow's industrial past, but was shown as reflecting the continued existence of asthma in a city where in the mid 1990s, one third of the children in my son's South Side play group carried inhalers.

Sometimes this means (re)interpreting what is not there. The Glassford Family Portrait (1800) features a young black slave covered over in the nineteenth century when the current Glassford family grew ashamed of their connection to slavery. Likewise a silver collar in the Burrell collection was labelled 'Slave/dog collar?' and the history of the object as a museum object needed to be explored to understand that object in the past and present. The display of these objects represent or reinforce the view that it is the role of the museum to reinterpret that past so that Glasgow is able to admit what that image reflects; that eighteenth-century merchants made much of their wealth on the back of the slave trade and a fast route to America.

This re-reading of objects or retelling of stories in the present does not ensure that silences are forever broken. As Field argues in regard to the District Six Museum in Cape Town

'All remembering and transmission of memories are selective which means that 'regeneration' will leave new silences and issues to be confronted in the future. There is neither healing nor redemption in regeneration, only possibilities for improved living' (Field 2006: 41)

As Field reminds us social history displays are also a product of their time and context and meanings are fixed only in the present moment although museum displays tend to be more fixed in time than other media as will be discussed below.

Consuming the People's stories

Museum displays differ from other mediums such as television, or newspapers in that they are rarely able to be time sensitive and are slow to respond to change. Static displays such as those in the People's Palace can last upwards of 15 years and may be viewed in that time by millions of visitors, many of them brought there by locals, and many of those visitors represent new generations of expatriate Scots seeking visual evidence of their own family history. Their memories will have been shaped by previous generations, other media such as television, family albums and their own imaginations (Crumley 2002). These memories may be good and bad, and accordingly, visitors will expect these memories to be reflected in displays.

If audiences, and especially local audiences, are to feel a sense of ownership of the cultural histories and ideologies contained within displays they need to agree that what they are experiencing is a reflection and version of events they feel is true for them. It is sometimes assumed that in determining the contents of displays museums curators and staff are fearful of the loss of power that consultation brings. Susie Fisher, spokesperson for the Association of Qualified research, maintains that:

Visitor research can stir real terrors amongst the powers that be: "Will I be forced to change?" "Will I be criticised in the eyes of my peers?" Visitor research has come to be associated with judgment - success or failure, praise or blame. Think of it like this: you want to communicate the stories that give your collections meaning. To do so successfully you will need to understand your visitor's agenda and what kind of ideas connect with them. You will want to respect that agenda. (Fisher 2002)

This approach to inclusiveness through consultation takes no account of O'Neill's conviction that we can only bring about changes in society when we are able to view ourselves as products of our cultural influences so that we are able to embrace the good and bad to understand the whole. Equally, whilst many museums are working to combat social inclusion through creating

exhibitions and events with for example, those groups most excluded from society, drug users, abusers, and the homeless (Sandell 2002; Newman 2003) these in the main remain outwith the mainstream for the reasons O'Neill outlined.

Community consultation in social/local history museums is inevitably concerned with gleaning individual group or 'folk' memories in order to build up a composite picture of how the past was experienced. Individuals who agree to be involved in the evaluation of potential themes on behalf of communities are quick to recognize their role as community ambassadors, and readily self-censure when acting on behalf of them. 'Oh, but it wasn't all bad' becomes the standard *individual* response to the fear of group whinging, as much as it reflects a central truth.

Where public opinion is more conservative than that of the curators, as we found with current displays in both the People's Story and the People's Palace, a compromise can be hard to reach. Museum staff (who are, of course, a voice of local government) may be keen to raise issues and to change things. Or, sometimes they may be inclined to challenge the role of government funded institutions, which they believe are well placed to act as agents for social change. Do staff acting as the voice of local government, overrule that of the community, for the common good (Clark 2003) and, if so, is community consultation and audience development only worth undertaking as Fisher (2002) implies, if the organization is going to genuinely listen and respond to audiences?

Some 200 oral history interviews formed the basis of the community consultation in Glasgow and the material on domestic violence, poverty, incest and health and hygiene informed the displays. Quotes from existing publications were used as a last resort to illustrate, for example, gay and lesbian histories where we failed to find any couples willing to be profiled. In this way many of the difficult subjects were introduced in the form of local people's own words although the texts were obviously subject to an editorial process.

At the People's Story Edinburgh, staff worked closely with reminiscence groups, the Workers' Education Authority and the Living Memory Association, to build up an archive of memories that would to humanize displays. Focus groups met once a week and objects were used as memory prompts and each week they discussed a different theme and the sessions were recorded. These sessions were then fully transcribed and given back to each individual for comment and approval (Clark 1991). Certain individuals were profiled and modelled for exhibit as three-dimensional representational figures. This 'living memory' approach ensured goodwill from a loyal group of individuals who then ceased to be critical about the displays content.

Consultation can be used to determine the themes that local would like to see, or would like visitors to see depicted in displays, although these will vary according to the age and gender of those people interviewed. The majority of people involved in the People's Story process were elderly women and inevitably, their memories reflected a view of life, and attitudes towards the domestic arena, which would not be shared by younger women.

Themes selected can be at odds with collections or the importance of such events in the history of the area. Potential visitors to the People's Palace all wanted to see displays about World War II, despite the fact that Glasgow had not experienced the extreme ravages of war, which had rocked Clydebanks. But the Second World War remained a key moment in living memory, (and one which allowed for a united and heightened sense of community) and as such could not be denied, and displays were developed accordingly. The 1999 visitor survey conducted at the Palace during the winter months found that the 25% considered that the war section contained their favourite displays. The most popular display and the one for which audiences voted to keep from the previous displays, mentioned by 39% of this sample, was the Single End, a reconstruction of a one-roomed flat, which uses a ten minute radio play and sounds and lights to create a form of object theatre. The play features an old man reflecting on his memories of growing up in a single end, a house that had been 'teeming with life', and charts key moments of his life through childhood, birth of siblings, unemployment, alcoholic neighbours and child death. Although too ornate and *empty* to be realistic, it was designed so that visitors might people it physically, as well as emotionally with their memories. As one visitor put it:

There are two memories I think about in the single end. The time when a neighbour's little girl died and they laid her out on the kitchen table, and

Hogmanay celebrations, when the boats all sounded their horns at midnight.

(Anne, Visitor to People's Palace, 2003)

Anne's two thoughts reflect one sad and one possibly bittersweet memory, as Hogmanay has a particular relevance and resonance for Scottish audiences. In fact, I consciously wrote the Hogmanay part in towards the end of the piece, as I realized we needed a 'but it wasn't a' bad moment. Inevitably there are tensions between curatorial desires and community consultation. Memories are being used to interpret displays, and in some cases to shape them, but curators are also concerned with creating displays which realistically depict history. In the cases outlined above we were able to respond to community wishes. However, the more elderly visitors who were consulted were less keen on seeing displays about alcohol which they felt would let 'Glasgow down'. Yet, we felt that alcohol abuse was seen as central to many of the social and health issues past and present and we went ahead with the displays on that basis. Few of the visitors surveyed in 1999 acknowledged a least favourite display, but of those who responded, 8% (highest figure) most disliked the alcohol abuse section.

It appears then, that in some cases the organization will be influenced by and respond to community feelings, whilst it also reserves the right to take decisions on behalf of those communities and is then dependent on a 'suck it and see principle'. How will the visitors respond? In the People's Palace, as the Jimmy Boyle case study illustrates, unhappy visitors sometimes spit on displays as they often did with a previous display of Catholic and Protestant material. Visitors also laugh out loud at the Glasgow Patter. Spitting, laughter and tears are considered legitimate responses, but their observation is dependant on watching the public in an almost voyeuristic way to determine individual responses, and in most cases the museum is reliant on comment cards to gauge visitor opinion. These museums, then, are the product of community consultation and political, managerial and curatorial decision making and the question remains: do they effectively raise social issues and if so do tourist audiences understand or seek these 'messages' from a museum visit? In 2002, Yi Yhang, working closely with Helen Clark, Keeper of Social History at the People's Story set out to evaluate visitor's responses in order to see whether the museum's approach worked.

The aim of the survey was to sample visitors to get some understanding of who those visitors were and why they visited the museum, and to examine their attitudes and emotional responses to the displays. Visitors were asked if they understood the social role of the museum and requested to rate their responses to the following statements.

- I want to know about how people really lived.
- I want to know about the lives of women in the past
- I want to see poverty
- I want to see homelessness
- I want to see unemployment
- I want to see accidents at work
- I want to see ill health
- I want to see poor housing conditions
- I want to see displays that make me unhappy or sad

The survey took place in late June, and the majority of visitors were tourists. The sample size of 147, with 54% female respondents and 46% male, reflects what is known about museum

audiences that they represent safe spaces for women to go alone or take children and so women make up a slight majority of visitors (Carnegie 1996). The 1999 People's Palace survey cited 55% female and 45% male.⁴

Although the small number sampled at the People's Story reflected a slow start to the season as a likely impact of recent global events, the sample included representatives from every continent. As was expected, the average age of group was over 35 with 96% of the group claiming they were very satisfied or satisfied, and 65% also saying they visited the museum to understand about the past, with 65% agreeing that the thing they liked best about the museum was the 'true story'.

The emotional response statements elicited a similar positive response although the older the visitor, the more comfortable they seemed to be viewing displays pertaining to accidents at work, or in the most general terms were prepared to view displays that made them feel unhappy or sad. The survey results were almost 'too good'. For Clark (2003) they represented proof, that on that day at least, visitors were seeking 'truth' regardless of whether that truth had the power to hurt or at least move them. They were not there to judge or to question whether this version of history was true for them, nor in this case, given the large percentage of non-locals, were they necessarily viewing their own history. Respondents seemed to believe that the museum told the 'true' story of the working class people of Edinburgh and, as such, offered a view of Edinburgh not readily available elsewhere.

The People's Palace versions of the truth and visions of the city of Glasgow offer a more brutal view, a consequence of the greater scale of Glasgow and the personalities of the staff and management producing displays, and it would be interesting to see whether a similar survey in Glasgow produced similar results. What the visitor comments seem to suggest is that sophisticated modern audiences are able to accept versions of the harsh realities of life within cultural institutions, either as revealed histories or present day attempts at exposing the excesses and inequities of modern life.

Such surveys, and indeed exit questionnaires, only reach those people who are already in the museum and this is acknowledged by the number of organizations actively targeting non users, or in the work of outreach services (Newman 2002, Sandell 2002) which take exhibitions out of the museum and into community and shopping centres or local libraries. However despite attempts by both these museums to be about, and largely for, local audiences, or to reflect local lives to tourists, the typical visitor is not necessarily someone whose life in the present is being represented. In terms of 'socio-economic groupings' The People's Palace survey found that 79% of visitors were ABC1s despite the museum's being situated in the East End a profile not dissimilar to that of the National Portrait Gallery (Hargreaves 1997).

Given the nature of displays and the intended audience, these are the *wrong kind of visitors*. But does the nature of the displays actually determine who visits, or is there a typical museum visitor? Visitors to both museums seem to suggest they are visited by the museum visiting classes, educated liberals responding to the history of the other. As the definition of dark tourism is limited to those events within living memory (Lennon and Foley 2000) such visitors may well be actively seeking out 'dark' experiences.

Might a construction of the past and present of the higher socio-economic classes, which considered them victims of centuries of tragically, misguided capitalist views and visions be an acceptable reading for them? If not, is it any wonder that communities seek to protect themselves through trying to influence displays through the use of selective memory, or by actively not visiting? Is the social history museum in danger of replacing the monuments to the Empire through eroticizing and exoticising the working classes under the guise of empowerment?

Conclusion: power to the People?

In conclusion, the 'dream space' of the museum reflects the social, cultural and political values of the institution, staff and community advocates, whilst aiming to either reflect the perceived needs of the imagined visitor or to reform their opinions. The impacts of the displays will depend on the relationship of the visitor to the issues being interpreted.

At best this is a compromise between ideologies, as museum displays, and specifically the current permanent displays in the People's Palace and the People's Story, reflect the

tensions that exist internally between staff and their relationship with the value-laden institution; and externally between staff and audiences. Tensions also arise between curatorial staff and support staff (who are invariably drawn from local communities and the first point of contact for visitors); staff (who as representatives of institutions represent authority and for some power), and community advocates (who represent lived experience and can become guardians of community history and silences); and between the expectations of local and tourist audiences.

As has been explored in this article, local audiences may actively seek to protect their communities through participating in the curatorial process, by withholding participation, or by offering censored and selective views of their history or present. Others may use the forum of the museum as a way of exposing or exploring personal pain or political ideals. Staff are not impartial conduits of history or cultures and curators of the People's Palace have sought to develop displays, (and indeed conference papers and articles), that explore their personal life experiences or political commitments. As I have outlined here, the urge to explore issues felt at a personal or political level can result in staff pushing against the boundaries of the institution, leaving certain audiences uneasy and exposed and alienating some potential audiences.

Local government museum collections will be reappraised or suppressed, and visions and versions of history highlighted, to meet the social, political and moral agendas of the times. The imagined visitor is fashioned to meet this political agenda and as such she/he becomes the benchmark for what is deemed appropriate to display. The visitor surveys outlined above suggest that the likely *actual* visitor is a tourist, and evidence of visitors surveys suggest that many are what I might deem 'class tourists', people who are either interested in the history of the other, or else have come from the background or similar background to that being interpreted, and who have left it behind, through for example education or emigration. Such a visitor is searching for proof of their own, their parents' or their grandparents' past in the form of historical truths. That truth is subjectively constructed serves only to further muddy the waters.

The complex structure of the social history museum with its relationship to the history and ideology of museums, and with local government policy, and the dictates of national government, confirms that power is also a construct and that staff reflect those values more than they shape them. Contemporary curatorial practice aims to include audiences in various ways and stages of the development, interpretation and often management of the displays, but as in the case study examples outlined above, whilst their opinions will be heard and their memories recorded, even within the people's museums, decisions will be taken which ultimately reflect the institution.

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Notes

- ¹ This article also presupposes that the term tourist is being applied to visitors who do not directly live within the community being interpreted but acknowledges that locals become tourist/visitors when re-visiting their own memories when they become part of the public history of displays.
- ² I was part of the curatorial team at the People's Palace from 1991-8.
- ³ At the time of writing The Oral History Society is working towards a new set of copyright and ethics guidelines to cover socially sensitive material which it is hoped will inform practise in museums and archives.
- ⁴ Interestingly the National Portrait Gallery, London visitor survey conducted by the National Audit Office 1993 (Hargreaves 1997) also found 54% of their visitors were female with 29% over 55 years old.

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Interviews

Extracts from Mary B (1996)

Helen Clark, then Keeper of Social History, Edinburgh City Museums (2003)

***Elizabeth Carnegie** lectures in arts and heritage management at the University of Sheffield. She was a curator of history with Glasgow Museums from 1991-98 participating in a number of high profile and award winning projects including setting up the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art (1993) and redisplaying the People's Palace in 1998. She is a committee member of the Oral History Society and research areas include museum audiences and public memory, community interpretation and cultural identity.

Address
Management School,
University of Sheffield,
9 Mappin Street,
Sheffield, S1 4DT, UK.

Tel: 01142631942
email. e.carnegie@sheffield.ac.uk

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Free Nelson Mandela? The Politics and Pricing of Culture Within Society

Elizabeth Carnegie

The winter sun is shining on a Sunday morning in Cape Town as the boat leaves for the half hour trip to Robben Island, and the prison that held Nelson Mandela for many years which is now a museum.

The audience is mixed. Many are South African from other states paying homage, some are African Americans bringing children, a smaller number are white European visitors. But all were going with a reason, a sense of purpose. Yet for all, the experience was not the same. Essentially, how we perceive, receive and understand the cultural messages and monuments that reflect the past and make sense of the present are determined by our relationship to that past. This case study aims to outline not just what and how culture is developed, determined and understood within society at local, national and international level, but also attempts to offer a rationale for why our cultural heritage and access to it cannot be measured simply in cash terms, hence the inclusion of this chapter in a book on pricing strategies. It argues that our cultural heritage and access to it in its many forms is fundamental to human development and community success and sets out to examine the role of culture within society, emphasizing and exploring the need to subsidize cultural activities, events and institutions in order to ensure that they are available to all regardless of their ability to pay. Through an examination of diverse institutions such as Robben Island and Edinburgh's Museum of Childhood, this case study aims to consider ways in which heritage institutions attempt to offer a shape to the past, to give meaning to a challenging present and uncertain future. It will argue that culture is something that cannot be easily financially evaluated and will consider the role of free and subsidized access to cultural institutions and the expectations of an increasingly sophisticated public when faced with cultural representations. Lastly, it will look at what true access means within the modern world.

Not all cultural activities or the monuments that symbolize them represent the best of human achievement, in many cases places such as Robben Island remain to remind us of the darker side of human activity from which we need to learn from the past to

develop as individuals, groups or nations. Therefore places like Robben Island can convey a message of hope as well as human suffering.

Whilst Robben Island is a monument to the success of the anti-apartheid movement, its mission, to reflect on the past but also to move forward, does not offer a comfortable experience. Some 20 per cent of the guides are ex-prisoners telling and retelling their stories in an attempt, as our guide put it, to 'get the anger out'. For some visitors that anger was still too strong to bear as one girl cried, 'there is no reconciliation' as her friend said, 'hush, now you are on Robben Island you are not supposed to feel that here'. Whilst Robben Island has become an established part of the tourist trail in Cape Town since it opened as a museum in 1987, becoming a World Heritage Site in 1999, and having recently celebrated their one millionth visitor, the site is first and foremost a monument, a place to remember as is voiced by Amdimda Toivo ya Toivo, former political prisoner and now the Namibian Minister of Labour.

Robben Island is a symbol, not only for South Africa and Namibia but also for Africa and the World. It was here that we learned that adversity could be overcome by commitment and vision. It was here that pains of individuals could be soothed by the unity of groups. It was here that we were reminded that freedom had a price. We must never forget what the Island represents. (Amdimda Toivo ya Toivo, Ilifalababu, 2002)

Those who undertake them – regardless of their race, background or country of origin – view visits to the Island as pilgrimages. The need to have a place to remember so that we never forget is indeed the key reason why Robben Island is a museum and why prison camps such as Westerbok in Holland, Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, have also been preserved as museums. As heritage becomes increasingly commodified we are in greater need of access to the real.

Thousands of miles away an elderly woman looks at a doll fashioned from an old shoe, a vestige of a working-class nineteenth-century childhood which has survived to be viewed within an Edinburgh museum and she smiles at her own memory of a clothes-peg doll. Then she recalls her mother and domestic toil. Then she feels sadness at the memory of loss, before moving forward as a small hand pulls her to the next case.

Thus memories are forged and felt through our relationship to places and things in the past, present and over time. Some memories, such as those deeply felt in pilgrimage to Robben Island, need to be healed. Others are more personal, a natural part of a life lived around people and things in a rapidly changing society.

Memories, then, some personal, others dealing with the magnitudinal events which shaped our lives, our countries and the world, are contained within the cultural institutions, the museums, the heritage centres, the simple objects and the prison walls. How are we to access that past to understand the present, face an uncertain future? Is culture, as Marx would argue, simply a commodity, part of the mechanics of a capitalist society or is access to culture vital, rendering the cultural institutions custodians of the material evidence of such human activity?

In the UK, as elsewhere in the world, most state-run cultural institutions, while they might wish to be free, charge for access in a number of ways: through taxes, entrance fees, school visits and merchandizing. A shrinking public purse coupled with the need to be competitive within a growing, if not overcrowded, market has long been an argument for the need to charge.

However, given Blair's Labour Administration's emphasis on education and the potential educational role of museums, extra funding was secured for at least the short term access to all national museums in Britain.

be viewed as having a distinct advantage over large municipal collections such as Glasgow Museums, which although still free to the public, are reliant on local authority funding. Where access is wholly free to the public, running costs are being met or subsidized by other organizations or individuals through grant awards and sponsorship. Equally important has been the role of volunteers within cultural attractions which heavily subsidized the running costs and indeed this is still the case with for example National Trust properties. However, changes in the pattern of volunteering, essentially a postwar movement, suggests that there will soon be a shortage of volunteers within the current and successive generations, which may well create running problems for some types of visitor attraction.

Free access however, has had a dramatic and immediate effect on visitor numbers as Anna Southall, Director, National Museums and Galleries of Wales commented in the *Museums Journal*, December 2001.

The return ... to free admission had been a stunningly successful policy ... With 90% increase on visitor numbers since its introduction, the success of the policy has far outstripped what we predicted and hoped for.

The figures for the National Museums for Scotland also show a significant increase, even allowing for the loss of visitors after the foot and mouth epidemic in Britain and the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States which severely affected UK tourism during 2001. However, increased numbers of visitors who are tourists, whilst important to the economy, do not provide sufficient argument for the existence of cultural institutions.

A large percentage of museum audiences to the local authority-run museums are visitors to the city. Derek Janes, Director of Edinburgh City Museums, acknowledged that the museums' proximity to the tourist high spots inevitably influence not just the content but the way they are received and understood by audiences

Inevitably the city museums of Edinburgh, because of their physical location, are traditionally aimed at the tourist market – there has been a change over the last fifteen to twenty years where there has been a more conscious decision to target local audiences – also museums have become clearer in their individual purposes. It started as a political agenda when the political control of the council changed in 1984 and there was then a political decision to create the People's Story museum – or Museum of Labour History as it was originally intended and the impetus towards creating that museum led to a social history ethos within a lot of the work of the museums service and that has had some influence on other parts of the service as well. (Janes, 2002)

A good museum or heritage attraction need not sacrifice authenticity in order to be a successful tourist attraction. To do so is to underestimate the needs and abilities of visitors, many of whom may in fact be expatriates seeking to find some sense of belonging.

People are also perfectly capable of and willing to visit institutions such as those associated with dark tourism in order to understand and learn from the devastating effects of war and social injustice. Almost two thirds of the visitors to Robben Island for example are not South African yet they make the journey for the reasons highlighted above. Of the 750 daily visitors to Robben Island just under a third are South African: 15 per cent are from the United Kingdom, 23 per cent from the rest of Europe,

8 per cent from the United States, almost 12 per cent from Asia and about 3.5 per cent are from Australia, New Zealand and the rest of Africa.

It is possible that some visitors visit more for curiosity than from any deeply felt sense of place or occasion but few fail to be moved by their visit. The trip to Robben Island including the ferry is not free but at 100 rand (c. £6.50 at the time of writing) is cheap to tourists but could represent a significant outlay for locals who also have to pay. As the South African Government wishes that all school children should visit Robben Island at least once this is no small commitment from a country that has devastating poverty and inequalities.

Deidre Prins, Chief Education Officer at Robben Island, believes that if people are asked to make a small contribution in the form of entrance fees they will value the product more. This is not a new argument. Glasgow Museums found that free workshops for children were often less well attended than those for which a nominal charge was made. In Scotland, which has a tradition of free entry to museums in the larger cities, many believe that whilst locals having already paid through taxes should be given unrestricted access it would be fair to put a levy on visitors.

However, local government's commitment to free access to the larger municipal collections, whilst not directly mandated, in the main is part of an ongoing commitment to culture. As cultural activities are the key tourist product of both Edinburgh and Glasgow such a move would almost certainly limit visitors and there would be a subsequent loss of goodwill. Also it can be argued that money not spent on entrance fees is freed up for other tourist spends in shops and cafes or at least the locality.

Given the nature of audiences, the people less likely to pay admission are those for whom museum and heritage attraction visiting is not part of their culture and government access initiatives are aimed at widening access within the community.

Audiences to traditional museums in the UK and indeed the western world, have been largely middle class, often women of a certain age (60 per cent of visitors to the now National Trust-run Pollock House in Glasgow were women of a pensionable age (Carnegie, 1996), so unsurprisingly there are large numbers of the public who are consciously non-users of museums. The question it seems is not whether people should have to pay for culture, but whether they want to access it at all. It seems that it is not enough for an institution to offer free or heavily subsidized access in order to attract visitors.

How then do organizations break down barriers to inclusion so that people can value a cultural experience that is readily available to them for free or for little financial outlay?

As the National Museums of Scotland audience grew, Edinburgh City Museums lost visitors as a consequence of the growth of alternative visitor attractions in the locality such as the science centre Our Dynamic Earth and the overpriced Edinburgh Dungeon which is of dubious historical integrity with fairground effects and yet it often has queues for admission when the City Art Centre across the road is half empty. This raises interesting arguments about what people want from culture which is inevitably tied in with ideas about class, leisure and consumption but also highlights the fact that a large percentage of people who attend Edinburgh attractions are visitors to the city. Is it that the majority of museums and visitor attractions have been planned with tourists in mind rather than prioritizing local people and that there are in fact only a certain number of potential visitors to go round? Derek Janes argued that Edinburgh City Museums have been targeting locals for a number of years but as Edinburgh is a tourist city tourists will make up a substantial part of the visitor figures particularly during the summer months.

We did do some work a number of years ago and in fact what that illustrated was the profile of visitors to the People's Story was no different from the profile of visitors for the Museum of Childhood. Makes the point that People's Story is a bit of a creature of its location. I think people do have concepts, because people who run museums are largely middle class, there is perhaps a romanticization of what people want. I suspect what they want is an interesting story about where they lived that they can quite enjoy and will give them happy memories – you know, cinemas, pubs, football. Things they do. Things that mean something to them and not horrible living conditions and dying and stuff. (Janes, 2002)

One of key challenges facing heritage professionals is how to break down the class and cultural barriers associated with museums and other 'high art' forms. For many people, crossing the threshold of institutions that reflect the state authority or, in the case of some museums, represent colonial rule, can take a lot of confidence and courage. World wide, city museums are often situated in prime city centre spaces and have imposing facades that can be threatening or off-putting.

Not only are there audiences we are not attracting but that there are audiences who even if they came would not really be quite confident enough to know what to do. There is still a problem with threshold. It is still there, we still haven't learned. It is very much class units. (Janes, 2002)

Nor are museums and heritage institutions unique in having clear non-cash based barriers to access. Lynne Halfpenny, Arts Outreach Development Officer for Edinburgh City Council who looks after the Council's £2.6 million budget that is dispersed across the cultural arts sector, acknowledges that theatres also have the reputation of being elitist.

People are perfectly comfortable to part with money and go to the cinema with friends or whatever. There is something to be learned about why this is a perfectly acceptable pastime and they are potentially absorbing culture and receiving feedback and an expanded view. There is something about how they are programmed and who you can go with and the fact that you are not expected to come out the end of it a critic. There appears to be very different rules about being a critic of certain art forms and a critic of others and the fear of the Emperor's New Clothes syndrome is still there very much with the arts. (Halfpenny, 2002)

Audience participation and consulting with advocacy groups is deemed a key way to encourage and widen participation amongst groups who have been traditionally non-museum-goers. To learn from their audiences Derek Janes and other senior museum staff from Edinburgh City Council Museums went on placements with various groups who do not make use of the department's facilities.

We had a very interesting exercise of senior staff going on placements with mainly advocacy groups and I went on an advocacy group for people with mental distress and that was interesting and they were a very disenfranchised group as far as museum visiting was concerned as a lot of them don't like crowds so that makes it very difficult for them to come to our big exhibitions. What became very clear and which is very interesting and what we all need to learn from is – they said it about museums and they said it about libraries – is that what do you do when you go to a museum, what do you

do when you go into a library – how do you see them? What do you do? How do you use them? (Janes, 2002)

If Halfpenny and Janes are right and people feel that they are not equipped with the necessary skills, education and knowledge to be comfortable users then surely the fault lies with institutions that play to their peers and by limiting access, limit knowledge. Huntly House in Edinburgh provided an interesting example of increasing access by simply changing the name of the museum.

We have recently changed the name of Huntley House museum which doesn't mean anything – it is not even a real name, it is a mistake – to the M of Edinburgh, that is a good clear name for a museum. Some of the consultation we did on that – people up in arms – no you can't change HH museum because it, it is HH. The very act of changing the name of the Museum has actually increased the visitor figures by 50 per cent since it happened, which is quite startling. Since the beginning of April 2001 visitor figures went up 50 per cent month by month just by changing the name. A bit of work inside but people don't know that when they come in. Now it has a clear name people go there. (Janes, 2002)

The message is clear. People are able to deal with threshold issues if they know what to expect from the museum or heritage attraction. It can be argued though that access should also mean more than simply being able to view those collections on display.

Many more institutions are aiming to be 'museums without walls'. Some recent examples of this are the Open Museum at Glasgow who work closely with local groups creating exhibitions and events held off site in community or shopping centres. Glasgow Museums and the National Museums of Scotland are planning to allow public access to their brownfield stores. Robben Island also ensures that the message of the site is carried into the schoolroom and overseas and is keen to forge links with other groups and currently they are in partnership with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and an educational establishment in Devon, England.

Elsewhere access is only allowed to that which it is deemed suitable for the public to see. All museums hold collections that are considered not readily accessible to the public for a variety of reasons; for example, sexual or political material or human remains that also raise ethical issues about the right to hold such material in a museum in the first place.

Museums that are in the main state funded institutions reflect the cultural values of the people they represent. Victorian museums obsessed with discovery and the culture of the 'other' will inevitably be faced with the problems of how to reconcile their past policies, politics and collections with a present which has revaluated their involvement in such countries. It is for this reason that recent years have seen debates centred round the ownership and ultimately repatriation of the material, cultural and human remains of other cultures.

As the public become more knowledgeable, attitudes by professional bodies have to change in step with this, thus forcing a more open approach. This is particularly true of the medical profession and the appropriation and subsequent storage of human remains. Hence, the repatriation in 2002 of Tasmanian Aboriginal remains by the Royal College of Surgeons of England. In 1998 Glasgow City Council approved the return of what was believed to be a Sioux warrior shirt from the 1890 Wounded Knee battle. The shirt had been in Glasgow Museums collections since 1891 when it arrived

as part of a collection donated from Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, and was the subject of repatriation campaign that began in 1991.

Glaswegians were canvassed on what they thought should happen to the shirt and the majority were in favour of repatriation. Museums rarely encourage the kind of open debate witnessed in case of the Ghost Shirt and the larger, more auspicious British Museum is very circumspect when considering any repatriation claims. A case in point being the Benin bronzes taken by the British after the punitive strike of 1897, many of which are the British Museum and other institutions in the UK and Europe.

A willingness to enter into public debate shows a commitment to access to collections in line with the Museums Association strategy for future development within the sector. As is an acknowledgement that cultural institutions need to reflect all visitors at a local level and in particular to create a focus for an expression and celebration of multiculturalism. The Edinburgh City Council Policy Document, 2002, sets out priorities identified by the council and recognizes the need to:

Promote locally, nationally and internationally the expression of Edinburgh's diverse cultural identity, and to recognise the reciprocal benefits of widening cultural experience through international contacts.

Support and develop those cultural activities which enrich and extend personal and community development.

This is both an expression of multiculturalism at home and an acknowledgement that Edinburgh as the Festival City has strong international links. Edinburgh City Museums in common with other cultural agencies within the city have been working towards creating a forum for multi-ethnic and indeed socially excluded groups within the city.

Museums, heritage attractions, even visitor centres, can and indeed should be accessible to all groups within society and no one should be or feel excluded on the grounds of race, class or poverty. Price is clearly an issue and the benefits of access must surely be balanced against the economic issues. The Museums Association Ethics Committee maintains that:

All members of society have a right to visit and use them (museums) ... What does it mean to be accessible? There are two elements: the physical and the philosophical. Museums are coming to terms with the first. ... As important are the philosophical assumptions. Why and how are objects acquired? What criteria are used in documentation and display? What values drive publicity campaigns? How do we select the language of our labels and publications? The health and vitality of museums can best be judged by the quality of their relationships with people. The stronger a museum's commitment to improved access, the better those relationships will become.
(www.museumsassociation.com)

In conclusion then, this chapter has argued that everybody should have the right of access to culture and that the public should have the right to decide not just what and how cultures are represented but also the right to participate in the debates which will decide the future of collections and representations in the United Kingdom and all over the world.

Emotional, cultural access is only possible if there is an easy path to physical access that is about more than simply being able or prepared to pay for entrance. If museums and other heritage and cultural institutions are to attract wider audiences which truly

reflect society both locally and internationally then their ethos, messages and rationale must be more about the need to share and learn from the past through collections, buildings, memories and each other rather than simply exist to attract tourist gold.

Through representations of political and global concerns we learn to understand the powers and processes of the world and through the personal we can have an understanding of ourselves and feel empathy for others.

The 'apple boxes', which held the meagre possessions that each prisoner of Robben Island left with, highlight the power and yet humility of possessions, yet are nothing without the human stories behind them. These boxes illustrate the point that objects are the result of human activity, sites and monuments the glorious achievements of humankind, the prisons and camps the physical representations of the dark side of human behaviour.

How can we put a price on culture, a price on learning from the past? Cultural activities should be priced not according to market forces but as a crucial, important aspect of our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Should access to culture in its many forms be related to ability to pay and if not should such activities be subsidized by the public purse? Consider the implications for the withdrawal of public money.
2. Without a sense of the past and an understanding of where we came from people would have no sense of community. Discuss with reference to how your community emphasizes and interprets its unique cultural traits.
3. The material evidence of human activity is contained within cultural institutions. Sometimes our cultural identity is mixed up with the misfortunes of others and objects contained within state-run museums may be the cultural property of other countries and cultures. Consider the arguments for repatriation of such objects. Is it possible to honestly determine the issues of ownership?

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Free Nelson Mandela? The Politics and Pricing of Culture Within Society

Elizabeth Carnegie

The winter sun is shining on a Sunday morning in Cape Town as the boat leaves for the half hour trip to Robben Island, and the prison that held Nelson Mandela for many years which is now a museum.

The audience is mixed. Many are South African from other states paying homage, some are African Americans bringing children, a smaller number are white European visitors. But all were going with a reason, a sense of purpose. Yet for all, the experience was not the same. Essentially, how we perceive, receive and understand the cultural messages and monuments that reflect the past and make sense of the present are determined by our relationship to that past. This case study aims to outline not just what and how culture is developed, determined and understood within society at local, national and international level, but also attempts to offer a rationale for why our cultural heritage and access to it cannot be measured simply in cash terms, hence the inclusion of this chapter in a book on pricing strategies. It argues that our cultural heritage and access to it in its many forms is fundamental to human development and community success and sets out to examine the role of culture within society, emphasizing and exploring the need to subsidize cultural activities, events and institutions in order to ensure that they are available to all regardless of their ability to pay. Through an examination of diverse institutions such as Robben Island and Edinburgh's Museum of Childhood, this case study aims to consider ways in which heritage institutions attempt to offer a shape to the past, to give meaning to a challenging present and uncertain future. It will argue that culture is something that cannot be easily financially evaluated and will consider the role of free and subsidized access to cultural institutions and the expectations of an increasingly sophisticated public when faced with cultural representations. Lastly, it will look at what true access means within the modern world.

Not all cultural activities or the monuments that symbolize them represent the best of human achievement, in many cases places such as Robben Island remain to remind us of the darker side of human activity from which we need to learn from the past to

develop as individuals, groups or nations. Therefore places like Robben Island can convey a message of hope as well as human suffering.

Whilst Robben Island is a monument to the success of the anti-apartheid movement, its mission, to reflect on the past but also to move forward, does not offer a comfortable experience. Some 20 per cent of the guides are ex-prisoners telling and retelling their stories in an attempt, as our guide put it, to 'get the anger out'. For some visitors that anger was still too strong to bear as one girl cried, 'there is no reconciliation' as her friend said, 'hush, now you are on Robben Island you are not supposed to feel that here'. Whilst Robben Island has become an established part of the tourist trail in Cape Town since it opened as a museum in 1987, becoming a World Heritage Site in 1999, and having recently celebrated their one millionth visitor, the site is first and foremost a monument, a place to remember as is voiced by Amdimda Toivo ya Toivo, former political prisoner and now the Namibian Minister of Labour.

Robben Island is a symbol, not only for South Africa and Namibia but also for Africa and the World. It was here that we learned that adversity could be overcome by commitment and vision. It was here that pains of individuals could be soothed by the unity of groups. It was here that we were reminded that freedom had a price. We must never forget what the Island represents. (Amdimda Toivo ya Toivo, Ilifalababtu, 2002)

Those who undertake them – regardless of their race, background or country of origin – view visits to the Island as pilgrimages. The need to have a place to remember so that we never forget is indeed the key reason why Robben Island is a museum and why prison camps such as Westerbok in Holland, Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, have also been preserved as museums. As heritage becomes increasingly commodified we are in greater need of access to the real.

Thousands of miles away an elderly woman looks at a doll fashioned from an old shoe, a vestige of a working-class nineteenth-century childhood which has survived to be viewed within an Edinburgh museum and she smiles at her own memory of a clothes-peg doll. Then she recalls her mother and domestic toil. Then she feels sadness at the memory of loss, before moving forward as a small hand pulls her to the next case.

Thus memories are forged and felt through our relationship to places and things in the past, present and over time. Some memories, such as those deeply felt in pilgrimage to Robben Island, need to be healed. Others are more personal, a natural part of a life lived around people and things in a rapidly changing society.

Memories, then, some personal, others dealing with the magnitudinal events which shaped our lives, our countries and the world, are contained within the cultural institutions, the museums, the heritage centres, the simple objects and the prison walls. How are we to access that past to understand the present, face an uncertain future? Is culture, as Marx would argue, simply a commodity, part of the mechanics of a capitalist society or is access to culture vital, rendering the cultural institutions custodians of the material evidence of such human activity?

In the UK, as elsewhere in the world, most state-run cultural institutions, while they might wish to be free, charge for access in a number of ways: through taxes, entrance fees, school visits and merchandizing. A shrinking public purse coupled with the need to be competitive within a growing, if not overcrowded, market has long been an argument for the need to charge.

However, given Blair's Labour Administration's emphasis on education and the potential educational role of museums, extra funding was secured for at least the short term to ensure access to all national museums in Britain.

be viewed as having a distinct advantage over large municipal concerns such as Glasgow Museums, which although still free to the public, are reliant on local authority funding. Where access is wholly free to the public, running costs are being met or subsidized by other organizations or individuals through grant awards and sponsorship. Equally important has been the role of volunteers within cultural attractions which heavily subsidized the running costs and indeed this is still the case with for example National Trust properties. However, changes in the pattern of volunteering, essentially a postwar movement, suggests that there will soon be a shortage of volunteers within the current and successive generations, which may well create running problems for some types of visitor attraction.

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Elsewhere access is only allowed to that which it is deemed suitable for the public to see. All museums hold collections that are considered not readily accessible to the public for a variety of reasons; for example, sexual or political material or human remains that also raise ethical issues about the right to hold such material in a museum in the first place.

Museums that are in the main state funded institutions reflect the cultural values of the people they represent. Victorian museums obsessed with discovery and the culture of the 'other' will inevitably be faced with the problems of how to reconcile their past policies, politics and collections with a present which has revaluated their involvement in such countries. It is for this reason that recent years have seen debates centred round the ownership and ultimately repatriation of the material, cultural and human remains of other cultures.

As the public become more knowledgeable, attitudes by professional bodies have to change in step with this, thus forcing a more open approach. This is particularly true of the medical profession and the appropriation and subsequent storage of human remains. Hence, the repatriation in 2002 of Tasmanian Aboriginal remains by the Royal College of Surgeons of England. In 1998 Glasgow City Council approved the return of what was believed to be a Sioux warrior shirt from the 1890 Wounded Knee battle. The shirt had been in Glasgow Museums' collections since 1891 when it arrived

as part of a collection donated from Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, and was the subject of repatriation campaign that began in 1991.

Glaswegians were canvassed on what they thought should happen to the shirt and the majority were in favour of repatriation. Museums rarely encourage the kind of open debate witnessed in case of the Ghost Shirt and the larger, more auspicious British Museum is very circumspect when considering any repatriation claims. A case in point being the Benin bronzes taken by the British after the punitive strike of 1897, many of which are the British Museum and other institutions in the UK and Europe.

A willingness to enter into public debate shows a commitment to access to collections in line with the Museums Association strategy for future development within the sector. As is an acknowledgement that cultural institutions need to reflect all visitors at a local level and in particular to create a focus for an expression and celebration of multiculturalism. The Edinburgh City Council Policy Document, 2002, sets out priorities identified by the council and recognizes the need to:

Promote locally, nationally and internationally the expression of Edinburgh's diverse cultural identity, and to recognise the reciprocal benefits of widening cultural experience through international contacts.

Support and develop those cultural activities which enrich and extend personal and community development.

This is both an expression of multiculturalism at home and an acknowledgement that Edinburgh as the Festival City has strong international links. Edinburgh City Museums in common with other cultural agencies within the city have been working towards creating a forum for multi-ethnic and indeed socially excluded groups within the city.

Museums, heritage attractions, even visitor centres, can and indeed should be accessible to all groups within society and no one should be or feel excluded on the grounds of race, class or poverty. Price is clearly an issue and the benefits of access must surely be balanced against the economic issues. The Museums Association Ethics Committee maintains that:

All members of society have a right to visit and use them (museums) ... What does it mean to be accessible? There are two elements: the physical and the philosophical. Museums are coming to terms with the first. ... As important are the philosophical assumptions. Why and how are objects acquired? What criteria are used in documentation and display? What values drive publicity campaigns? How do we select the language of our labels and publications? The health and vitality of museums can best be judged by the quality of their relationships with people. The stronger a museum's commitment to improved access, the better those relationships will become.
(www.museumsassociation.com)

In conclusion then, this chapter has argued that everybody should have the right of access to culture and that the public should have the right to decide not just what and how cultures are represented but also the right to participate in the debates which will decide the future of collections and representations in the United Kingdom and all over the world.

Emotional, cultural access is only possible if there is an easy path to physical access that is about more than simply being able or prepared to pay for entrance. If museums and other heritage and cultural institutions are to attract wider audiences which truly

reflect society both locally and internationally then their ethos, messages and rationale must be more about the need to share and learn from the past through collections, buildings, memories and each other rather than simply exist to attract tourist gold.

Through representations of political and global concerns we learn to understand the powers and processes of the world and through the personal we can have an understanding of ourselves and feel empathy for others.

The 'apple boxes', which held the meagre possessions that each prisoner of Robben Island left with, highlight the power and yet humility of possessions, yet are nothing without the human stories behind them. These boxes illustrate the point that objects are the result of human activity, sites and monuments the glorious achievements of humankind, the prisons and camps the physical representations of the dark side of human behaviour.

How can we put a price on culture, a price on learning from the past? Cultural activities should be priced not according to market forces but as a crucial, important aspect of our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Should access to culture in its many forms be related to ability to pay and if not should such activities be subsidized by the public purse? Consider the implications for the withdrawal of public money.
2. Without a sense of the past and an understanding of where we came from people would have no sense of community. Discuss with reference to how your community emphasizes and interprets its unique cultural traits.
3. The material evidence of human activity is contained within cultural institutions. Sometimes our cultural identity is mixed up with the misfortunes of others and objects contained within state-run museums may be the cultural property of other countries and cultures. Consider the arguments for repatriation of such objects. Is it possible to honestly determine the issues of ownership?

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Religion, Museums and the Modern World

Elizabeth Carnegie

Lecturer in Arts and Heritage Management,
Sheffield University

“In contemporary pluralist societies, museums mark the crossroads of many cultural worlds; and appear as ambivalent centres both of cultural refuge and new modes of cultural existence. The museum stands for other worlds, which are assembled ...within them.” (Sullivan, 2006:53)

Introduction

The above comment suggests that museums are places in which cultures come together equally to interpret, promote or reinforce ideas about societies. In terms of religious museums (or museums which also include some religious artefacts) this implies a paradigm shift in the ways religion is interpreted or permitted to be interpreted within the modern world. This paper will first consider relevant literature highlighting changing attitudes to religion and how this potentially impacts on museums. It will then offer arguments as to why there are very few museums of world faith with the St. Mungo Museum, Glasgow, The State Museum of the History of Religion (MHR), St. Petersburg and the Museum of World Religions (MWR), Taiwan being the key sites considered here. It will then look at the origins of these museums, how they present faiths and will focus on the key case study of the Museum of World Religions (MWR), Taiwan. Lastly

the potential future of the museum as religious site or places in which to discover religion will be explored.

Religion and society

All societies are structured round belief systems and shared ideas and values. Whilst the relationship of religion to state will vary, societies that are based on religious principles off necessity reflect a world view that is shaped and imposed by the requirements of that faith creating ‘powerful, persuasive and long lasting moods and motivations’ in individuals (Geertz, 1966:63). Until the 1920’s it was assumed that religion was influenced by environment but did not shape it but Weber argued the need to look at religion’s influence on society (Kong, 1990). As this relationship between church and state has broken down in many societies and/or the role of religion superseded by political and social values, individuals are often free to select (or de-select) religion or to construct (or deconstruct) a faith that suits their lifestyles. When societies belief systems reflected accepted ‘truths’ there was no expectation that the individual would seek to challenge such truths. Religions were usually based on a unique set of long held historical beliefs (Hampson, 2002). In late modernity ideas about objective truths and indeed the role of his-

tory have been challenged and the essential uniqueness of faith which made all others idolatrous has given way in many cases to an acceptance that all faiths offer values, aims and ideals which can be adapted to the individuals needs rather than societies will. Despite a growing secularisation worldwide it has been argued that there is a resurgence of fundamentalist faiths and a re-embracing of faith in certain sectors of society either in a direct relationship with the state as in Islam or as a consequence of the removal of state interference in the right to worship as in the U.S.S.R (Kong, 1990:355) An example of this is the Christian Apologetics Research and Evangelism (CARE) Ministries in Winnipeg, Canada, who are considering opening a museum 'explaining the course of human history - from a creationist perspective' (<http://atheism.about.com/b/a/005951.htm>) arguing against the scientific acceptance of Darwinism taught in most schools.

Religion, which in some cases may be determined as a sense of spirituality, provides a framework from which to derive comfort from societies ails and personal hardship. It helps individuals to make sense of suffering, 'how to make of physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat or the helpless contemplation of other's agony something bearable' (Geertz, 1966:71).

There is a decline of formal religion as a way of shaping our identity. In for example Christian Britain this is also evidenced as a decline of the culture that 'formally conferred Christian identity on the British people' (Brown 2001:193) to the extent that 'Britain is showing the world how religion as we have known it can die' (Brown, 2001:198) A key question is whether the absence of formal (or forced) faith results in a 'gap' in people's sense of themselves as spiritual beings and whether this gap means that people might be less well emotionally equipped to make sense of the senseless in this world - violence, poverty and pain. If so what are the ways that people seek to address this? For some theorists the answer lies in the need or right of the indi-

vidual to create and recreate for him/herself a way of being in a fragmented world where we are less likely to hold a fixed viewpoint based on religious beliefs yet still need to have a sense of identity (Brown, 2001). Nor does the decline of formal or fixed faith necessarily mean that people have lost their belief in god or a higher power. In the culture of the individual people are having to self-reflect and ask 'Who am I? Where am I from? What will become of me?....as postmodernism casts doubt on the value of the meta-narrative.....leading to the question of identity: who am I?' (Smith, 2000:1)

Indeed it is suggested by Smart that the loss of identity is due to changes in society, which is in itself in part due to loss of religion, may be a reason people seek out a new religion. In late modernity where belief and doubt can co-exist (Derrida 1998), and the commitment to one faith is not a necessary requirement of society, then people may voluntarily return to religion in a 'post-religious' or 'quasi-religious' way and 'outside of formal structures secularity and spirituality will, in future begin to coexist more easily as boundaries become increasingly blurred' (Devereux and Carnegie, 2006:48). Religion in a pluralist society may be viewed as an expression of personal growth. This religious observance may even lead to people having their own faith with only one member. (Smart 2002). People may well favour those elements of faith that allow for a stronger sense of individuality and self expression although individuality still needs to be constructed in a social framework (Attfield, 2000) suggesting individuals still feel the need to belong in society.

Another argument might be that as people become more exposed to the faith(s) of the other there is the potential to break down cultural and race barriers leading to a universal religion. Religion is one of the ways that we define people in society even in a largely post-religious culture. For example people are asked for their religion when they go into hospital; apply for job, and on many other forms in the public arena. In some

cases this can lead to racism and dissent. Loy and Watts (1998) argue that the loss of a fixed point of faith which forced a rejection of other religions breaks down racism. However pluralist societies are still likely to have social and political divides and a dominant culture (Kong, 1990). People are open to different experiences learning about and indeed visiting more than just the monotheistic religious sites but also the sites of the 'other' and 'new age' spaces (Shackley, 2001). The ways in which individuals seek to source ideas about faith or faiths may also change as information is available on web sites and in alternative religious spaces or in museums as secular containers of religious knowledge.

Religion in the museum

There are many museums which are devoted to the material culture of one faith. These are likely to be attached to religious buildings although often they make little attempt to interpret the tenets of that faith and often fail to attract audiences who are not already committed to that faith. One such development within Bradford Cathedral, England was developed with over one million pounds worth of Millennium funding. It is clear though that the museum's remit was to reach a multi-faith audience from within a Christian space and perspective and this simply did not work. In the words of the head of the steering group:

"We reasoned that if we could attract more visitors to the Cathedral, we would be advancing our mission as a place of pilgrimage, and helping people discover their own spiritual realities..... presenting Jesus in and to a city where cultures collide, diverse faiths are practised and poverty in all its manifestations is to be seen etched deeply into people's faces" (Smith, 2000:1).

The museum did highlight other faiths but from the perspective of the 'dominant culture' as discussed earlier and people were not pre-

pared to pay to visit and it closed within months having failed to attract many visitors.

Despite the fact that religion has been one of the key defining factors of cultures there are very few museums which actually interpret multi faith in the way that the opening quote implies. It is not simply that most do not give equal consideration to different faiths but also that in very many cases museums do not interpret objects in a way that allows their religious meaning or value to be understood as the following quote highlights.

"There are... millions of religious objects in museums, as most fine art anthropology, archaeology, historical and general museums have a high percentage of objects which had a significant religious meaning to their owners and creators' (yet)... 'the majority of objects are either anaesthetised as art icons or treated by curators as evidence of the exotic beliefs of people's remote in time, place or culture....'" (O'Neill, 1996:189)

In part this is a consequence of increased secularisation and it can be reasoned that this secularisation led to religious objects from contemporary society being interpreted for their aesthetic or folk values. This suggests that they have been rendered powerless by the museum at the expense of the deep meanings that they have or had within societies – or indeed the emotions that they inspired. Work on the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art confirmed that there were real concerns that such a museum would be unpalatable or even dangerous for a number of reasons. Central of those being that individuals require that their religion should offer a unique experience that would not necessarily render all other faiths idolatrous and therefore they could not be compared. Comparative religion as an academic mode of study had little support within the religions themselves. Although galleries have traditionally been freer to challenge religious values and attitudes through art this is clearly a sensitive time globally and the Tate Britain, London removed a controversial work 'God is Great' composed of religious texts

representing Christianity, Judaism and Islam immediately after the July 2005 London bombings as they feared it would cause offence. This was done against the artist John Latham's wishes (*Observer*, 2005)

It can be argued then that museums, whilst not ideologically or politically impartial, reflect society rather than lead it. Changing attitudes to religion in the world have allowed for, or even forced museums to review the way their collections of artefacts which have religious relevance and resonance are displayed and interpreted.

A museum of religion in this paper then is one which can be defined as a collection of objects, ephemera, photographs and texts relating to more than one religion and representing the belief systems of more than one country but which also interprets the religious meaning of objects in displays. All of the museums of world faith being considered here offer an interpretation of faiths across the world although from different perspectives. One of the key questions to be debated is whether the inclusion of religious objects as religious objects creates a religious space out of a museum space. Sullivan, director of the Harvard University Centre for the Study of World Religions challenges '*How do religious concerns act as catalysts for change in considering the ownership, exhibition and care of religiously charged material?*' (Sullivan, 2001:550). The museum then becomes a centre for 'social discourse' rather than passive viewing. In order to address this question some consideration needs to be given to the museums of religion that exist within the world. What is their role and purpose in society? Before considering the Museum of World Religions in Taiwan some attention will now be to the aims and origins of two other contrasting museums of world faith.

The Museum of History of Religion, St Petersburg

One of the first museums of world religion, the State Museum of the History of Religion

which is 75 years old in 2007, was initially housed in the cathedral in St Petersburg. Its existence was due to the changing relationship of church to state and therefore was intended for the dissemination of anti-religious propaganda (Koutchinsky, 2006:156). As attitudes and political ideologies changed so also did its title being known firstly as the Museum of Atheism, then the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism and latterly the 'and Atheism' part of the title has been removed. From the onset though it set out to collect religious artefacts from across the world not just to create an anti-religious museum based on Orthodox faith but with the key aim of developing '*a historical and religious establishment*' for the study of '*religious typology, of religion as a cultural phenomenon, and of religion as a part of ideology*'. (Koutchinsky, 2006:156). Collections were augmented over time by material that came out of closed churches and which often formed the basis of other museums of anti-religion. The Museum of the History of Religion survived and indeed has flourished as a centre of scholarship and recently moved to new purpose built premises in St Petersburg and currently has some 30 plus curatorial staff looking after some 180,000 objects. This is wholly secular museum although visitors can bring their own sense of religiosity to the displays.

The St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow

Unlike the MHR, which is based on a scholastic interpretation of objects the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art took the premise that many of the world's most beautiful, awe inspiring or emotionally moving and powerful objects were created in the name of god or gods and as an expression of faith. Such objected reflected human creativity at its best and occasionally human destructiveness at its worst. The museum opened in 1993 and aimed to be a space where people of 'all faiths and none' could ex-

plore a snapshot of religion in the world today. It was formed in response to the Friends of the Cathedral asking Glasgow's local government for support to finish a visitor centre adjacent to the protestant cathedral. The council took over the development of the building and determined that a museum devoted only to one faith and a protestant version of that faith was too narrow a remit for contemporary and multi-faith society. At the same time Glasgow Museums acknowledged that many of their objects had a religious meaning that had been lost or under-interpreted in displays. Many such objects were languishing in stores. The museum devotes most of its space to what are acknowledged to be the six main world faiths: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism. Other faiths and belief systems are included for example Australian Dreamtime or ancestral worship within small scale societies. The museum is very much object led and some faiths have proved difficult to reach or to interpret and staff actively seek to source objects from faiths who wish to be represented. It succeeds in creating a safe, welcoming and calm space in which individuals can explore their own responses to the displays. Glasgow as a post-industrial city has long been troubled by sectarianism with tensions between Catholics and Protestants and the museum provides the opportunity to explore ways of changing attitudes. Like the MHR, The St Mungo Museum reflects the political will of, in this case local government, but also the religious legacy and indeed contemporary influence of the dominant local faith, Protestantism. This is a secular space where religious activities can take place. Within months of opening it celebrated its millionth visitor.

Museum of World Religions Taiwan

"Establishing a World Religions Museum is a practical requirement for this era... from which to choose one's religion'. Entering the museum will be like entering a religious department

store. This establishment is not age or gender-specific, but aims to meet the requirements of every category of person on the basis of individual needs and experiences." (Master Hsin Tao, Museum of World Religions, 2003)

The Museum of World Religions in Taiwan was influenced in part by the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow in terms of the way it approaches displays however it has a very different religious cultural influence being Buddhist run. The MWR is based in a department store in Taipei and brings together the elements of shopping and seeking faith with museum attending and actively aims to create a supermarket of faith with something for everyone. It opened in 2003 and projects a vision of 'respect, tolerance and love' to promote the religious ideal of 'love and peace' to an international society. The scale of building does inspire awe and as the visitor walks down through the introductory section they are confronted with a series of questions projected onto pillars in Chinese and English. These include: 'What was I before I was born?', 'What is consciousness?', 'Why are we afraid of dying?' These are not questions easily answered and indeed not really here. Rather they reflect the questioning nature of the human spirit and imply that accepting and embracing religion can help the individual to grapple with what cannot be explained or readily understood in this life.

It is a sensual space with floors and walls and textures used to create relationships with the elements and with the physical self. Water in purification section runs down the wall and leaves a permanent puddle on the floor, you can leave your handprint on the wall, and there are sounds and images although little in the way of smell. Signs of the zodiac, hero myths are given the same credence as doctrine as culture and religion merge and ebb and flow. Although the museum also highlights the main world faiths in a series of alter like displays there is more emphasis on Eastern faiths such as Shinto. Ancient

Egypt becomes a belief system as much as a historical account of the way people lived. Oral testimony is used to highlight religious awakenings and video clips show famous faces talking about their faith and encouraging others to make a leap of faith *'In the scientific world and the world of technology you have to see before you believe. In our world you have to believe before you see.'* (Participant, MWR, 2003).

Love is an abiding theme and in a way that is also promoting self love (though not self-interest), learning to accept and meditate. The message is clear: it does not really matter which faith you chose as long as you chose one and without faith (or indeed self love) an individual cannot achieve their full potential as is clear in the following quote. *'Every human being, I think, has a spark of the divine ...what it means is there is a deep conscious within us. We can ignore it, suppress it, repress it but it shall always be there. It takes something drastic to bring about the change.'* (Participant, Museum of World Religions, 2003)

This is at once a museum which reflects the culture that shaped it and a very contemporary and progressive museum which reflects on what it is to be human with or without faith. The museum maintains that with faith is better. In many ways the museum takes a very positivist stance and atrocity, war, and other dark deeds often committed in the name of faith(s) is largely absent although videos do occasionally show dark images of violence and discord these are not interpreted in the main. The museum does however promote the idea of the 'global village' promoting 'mind reformation' and 'life education' which 'enables religions to be developed in a free and open environment, and outreached to different classes' (Master Hsin Tao, Museum of World Religions, 2003). This then is a *religious* museum of religion and more so than any of the others. Buddhist services are held in the café space and Buddhist nuns fulfil many of the administrative and organisational tasks.

Methodology for field work at the Museum of World Religion

Field work at the museum in January 2006 involved observation, interviews with staff and visitors were invited to fill in a questionnaire. The questionnaire had a mixture of open and closed questions to determine where visitors came from, their faith if any, why they attended the museum that day and also importantly sought to ascertain visitors emotional engagement with displays. Ultimately this meant trying to determine whether they were shopping for faith or simply acting as museum visitors. As the research trip was held in January and just before the Chinese New Year there were arguably fewer people visiting the museum from the locality. In fact the small sample size of 30 persons reflected almost all of the adult visitors to the museum during that period and so the findings must be taken in that light.

Findings and visitor engagement with displays

The Museum of World Religions currently attracts 20,000 visitors a year with 70% of those being school children. Museum staff are aiming for 50,000 visitors per annum and there is a significant web presence (+278000 hits) with chat groups, poems, shop, and even the chance to give a donation. Of those surveyed 91% set out to visit museum, 85% had never been before and 66% said they were Buddhists. Some 18% were tourists and only 1/3 were religious although 27% considered themselves spiritual. Only 27% were interested in learning about religions and 6% professed themselves to be atheist although one of those also said he was of the Shinto faith. Some 54% were male.

In response to a question about their feelings when in the museum 42% said that they felt peaceful, 27% spiritual inside although 24% admitted that they only felt as if they were in a museum. Only 9% felt they were in a department store of religions where they could chose their

faith whilst 6% likened the museum to a temple or place of worship. No one felt angry or bored. All of which confirms that the majority of visitors were locals, on their first visit to the museums and who set out intending to go there. 67% felt either spiritual or peaceful inside which suggests that the museum succeeds in creating a calm venue in which to explore faiths (or that they felt in a museum going mood that day). 33% visited because they are interested in museums with only 21% seeking to discover what faith could do for them. Interestingly only 3% admitted an interest in shopping around for faith with only 3% (surprising given the number of Buddhists in the sample) implying that the museum offered them something more because they were Buddhist. Two young American tourists added that The Museum of World Religions 'seemed a cool place to visit...having read about it in Lonely Planet'.

All of the above seems to suggest that the museum functions as a museum rather than a place of worship with visitors expectations being met. People are emotionally engaging with the building and displays in a limited and not life changing way. Whilst all of those surveyed enjoyed the visit no-one expressed a scholarly interest in religion or viewed the museum as a Buddhist reading of world faiths. It seems then that there is a distinction to be made between the desired impact the museum has on people and the way they perceive it. Although the St Mungo Museum does not try to influence visitor responses to the displays or to convert them it does offer visions and versions of religions as understood and believed by followers of those faiths which clearly has a different purpose than the MHR, St Petersburg. People are free to emotionally or spiritually engage with any faith within the museum.

Interestingly at the Museum of the History of Religion is adamant that is it not partisan or preaching. Museum director Koutchinsky argues that "The Museum is not taking an apologist stand towards any ideological system. That is why our public comprise people who are inter-

ested in history, people of different beliefs and atheists." (Koutchinsky, 2006:156) However it is possible that visitors also bring their own sense of religion or spiritual need to the museum. It must also be borne in mind that it is actual visitors that are being referred to throughout and not non-users and it is debatable as to whether non users would rather visit a religious building than a museum!

Conclusion

It seems that in an increasingly fragmented and global society individuals can develop religious as well as cultural aspirations. These may grow from their exposure to the faiths of the 'other' but are not necessarily reflecting faith of their own culture or family. For some people in the West this may mean looking towards Eastern faiths, influenced by meditation and yoga, for those in the East it can mean choosing to return to faith with renewed vigour. People can make decisions on how, what and where to worship and many chose not to but may continue to believe in or at least not totally disregard the notion that there is a god or a spiritual path worth treading as Brown (2001) suggests. Robbins argues that whilst globalisation does have a fragmenting affect on cultures and individuals sense of self and place, and the growth in fundamentalism can be attributed to the fear of, it does not necessarily lead to homogenised culture. What "globalisation actually brings into existence is a new basis for thinking about the relation between cultural convergence and cultural difference" (Robbins, 2003:42). Religious museums offer exactly that: a space to experience the convergence of cultures in a generally positive way. As Raymond a volunteer guide at the Museum of World Religions stated, "I was in the USA when Sep 11 happened and I know what that feels like. This place helps towards an understanding of world peace..." (Raymond, 2006).

Museums of religion function as 'cultural stations' (Burns, 2000:95) rather than religious

ones and that there may be similar benefits to visitors in experiencing culturally significant sites in terms of what Durkheim categorises as the importance of religion in developing social cohesion. For many tourist visitors this appreciation of other cultures as interpreted in museums is part of the process of having learned not just how to gaze but *where*. Urry shows how this gaze is developed though examining MacCannell's argument that "there is normally a process of sacralization that renders a particular natural and cultural object as a sacred object of the tourist ritual" (Urry, 10:2002) One potential conclusion may be that for those without faith there will be a lack of religiosity brought to the gaze when consuming religious objects in the museum. For those with faith the secular nature of the museum changes the way that these objects are viewed.

For the religious or irreligious alike the act of visiting museums is a way of engaging with the notion of what it is to be human when faced with the cultural objects which reflect human activity. What is clear is that all museum visits regardless of exhibit themes reflect the global nature of the consumer society and museums are actively courting consumers of culture. For many that means taking the opportunity to develop a personal faith or sense of spirituality based on consumer choice or they can choose only to 'window shop' taking interest in and pleasure from the selection of religious options on display within the department store of faith that is the museum of religion. Indeed as Miller argues individuality can be shaped through shopping (Miller, 1998). It seems likely though than only the already converted will seek to buy.

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Catalysts for Change? Museums of Religion in a Pluralist Society

Elizabeth Carnegie
University of Sheffield - UK

Abstract

Changing attitudes to religion in society have allowed museums to review the way their collections of artefacts, which have religious relevance and resonance, are displayed and interpreted. Yet, despite the fact that religion has been one of the key defining factors of cultures, there are very few museums, which actually interpret multi-faith. This paper argues that museums have the potential to create a forum for visitors to explore the role of faith in their own lives and to develop a fuller understanding of social and cultural change as it affects religious identities in the modern world. It focuses on three key contrasting museums of religion, which have developed because of cultural and religious change. They are The St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow; the Museum of World Religions (MWR), Taiwan; and the State Museum of the History of Religion, St. Petersburg. Their intended role and purpose is determined to establish how or if they succeed in delivering a multi-faith museum experience whilst being subject to the social/cultural and religious biases inherent in their organisational structure. Lastly, some consideration is given to whether they act as museums or religious spaces. The paper concludes that they function as secular and therefore cultural spaces in which visitors may seek to explore their own religious or spiritual feelings.

Key words: religion, multi-faith, museums, visitors/tourists

Introduction

'How do religious concerns act as catalysts for change in considering the ownership, exhibition and care of religiously charged material? (Sullivan, 2001: 550)

Religion is one of the key defining factors of cultures, and many of the world's most beautiful objects have been created to reflect religious ideologies and beliefs or to aid worship. People seeking to understand religions are likely to start not from the holy texts but from the objects created in the name of that faith (O'Neill, 1996; Smart, 1995). Hooper-Greenhill argues that exhibitions were essentially a material form of

writing (1992: 126). Changing attitudes to religion in many parts of the world have allowed for, or even forced, cultures to at least tolerate the presence of other faiths within their society. Yet religion is rarely reflected in social and cultural spaces such as museums in terms of its central importance in people's lives past, present and future.

This paper analyses the intended role of the existing museums of religion and considers some of the management challenges they face. I begin by considering the material culture of religion(s). Thereafter, I analyse museums of religion focusing on three contrasting case studies. The first is a secular space depicting religious objects to promote mutual understanding of all faiths; the second, a museum in Russia which has undergone changes in how it depicts religion from ancient cultures and 'folk' belief to reflecting a re-embracing of Orthodoxy; and, the third, a Buddhist run museum which can be viewed as a religious museum of multi-faith. They are respectively the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow (1993) (where I was on the development and curatorial team from 1991 to 1998); the Museum of World Religions (MWR), Taiwan and the State Museum of the History of Religion, St Petersburg. Each of these museums is a product of the culture under which they were developed and continue to develop as will be evidenced later. Lastly, I will give some consideration to how they are perceived by visitors: as religious spaces or 'cultural stations' (Burns, 2000).

Museums of religion

A museum of religion is a public and permanent collection of material relating to more than one religion and representing the belief systems of more than one country which also interprets the religious meaning of objects in displays. There are few museum of multi-faith in the world and one reason might well be the difficulty of making 'religion exhibitable' (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 95). In attempting to define the rituals of religious expression there is the danger of exposing seemingly bizarre customs and actions which can not be readily understood by adherents of other faiths. Such 'normalised' acts as for example, transmogrification, animal sacrifice, ancestor worship or the use of body parts can have the opposite effect than the intended attempt to encourage mutual respect and understanding between people of all faiths and cultures. Equally, as religion is often cited as a cause of, or

contributing to, war, genocide, persecution and oppression, it can be difficult to reconcile the tenets and expressions of a faith with such acts which might be done in the name of religion.

Putting the objects of faiths together in a museum when those faiths might be in conflict with one another within society can seem risky, even foolhardy. Comparative religion as an academic mode of study had little support within the religions themselves. It might be argued that it is safe to do so only in a post-religious culture but the three museums of religion considered here are sited in very different cultures and countries and have very different religious roots. What they have in common is they all interpret the objects of more than one faith.

Religion in the museum

'In contemporary pluralist societies, museums mark the crossroads of many cultural worlds; and appear as ambivalent centres both of cultural refuge and new modes of cultural existence. The museum stands for other worlds, which are assembled ...within them.' (Sullivan, 2001: 53)

As attitudes to religion change (or appear to change) so also has the social role of the museum as museums aim to be more relevant to society (Ison, 2002). Museums are cultural temples intended as secular 'civilising influences' (O'Neill, 1996: 191) and have increasingly taken on functions associated with the church. Museums then reflect society rather than lead it and museums in the modern world can provide a focus for understanding cultural change and reflecting changing values.

There are many museums devoted to one religion, often attached to religious buildings. They have a direct purpose in terms of displays and visitor expectations. Temporary exhibitions of religion have been developed at various times across the world including Canada and Hull, England, and Chicago (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 94). In recent years there has been a growth of interest in the potential of developing tourism at religious sites with debates about whether such visitors should share the religious values of these attractions (Carnegie, 2006a; Devereux and Carnegie, 2006; McGettigan, 2003; Raj and Morpeth, 2007; Shackley, 2001;). Some

fear that overt commercialisation will devalue the central importance of faith in their interpretation. Museums have tended to secularise religious objects which challenges the central message of many religious sites. I am arguing here that the three museums considered in this paper reclaim and reclassify the religious significance of objects, which allows them to be understood beyond their period and medium. This reclaiming of the material past is not limited to the religious objects but reflects *'Attempts by museums to make histories of religion reflect a wider attempt to redefine their role in society. ...They are struggling to deal with the realities of human life, the universal mysteries of birth and death, love and tragedy, individual freedom and belonging.'* (O'Neill, 1996: 198)

Religious objects have not become easy to interpret or their meanings readily accessible because of these changes in society. Objects created in the name of religion, whilst powerful and awe inspiring, can also be provoking, even dangerous, volatile and inciting a possible explanation for the fact that there are so few museums devoted to the exploration of world faith.

One recent venture within Bradford Cathedral, England, developed with over one million pounds worth of Millennium funding set out reach a multi-faith audience from within a Christian space and perspective and this simply did not work. In the words of the head of the steering group:

"We reasoned that if we could attract more visitors to the Cathedral, we would be advancing our mission as a place of pilgrimage, and helping people discover their own spiritual realities..... presenting Jesus in and to a city where cultures collide, diverse faiths are practised and poverty in all its manifestations is to be seen etched deeply into people's faces" (Smith, 2000: 1).

The museum inevitably, given this perspective, highlighted other faiths from the perspective of the 'dominant culture' and it closed within months having failed to attract many visitors. Pluralist societies are still likely to have social and political divides and a dominant culture (Clark, 2004; Kong, 1990) which needs to be addressed if minority communities are to feel included.

How then can diverse cultures and religions be represented in ways, which allow them all to be viewed equally? - if indeed this is desirable or possible. What are the management challenges which museums of religion face in representation and in ensuring that such museums remain safe spaces for objects, staff and visitors? The museums under consideration here approach these challenges differently, according to their key aims and management styles as will be discussed below.

Methodology for case studies

The material and data is drawn from a mixture of primary and secondary research at the three sites. The first, and fullest, case study is based on my own empirical research for, and contribution to, the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art from its inception in 1991 until 1998, five years after the museum opened. I visited the other two museums to determine how they construct representations of multifaith from their own religious and socio/political perspectives. With over twenty years of experience and training in the interpretation of sensitive subjects (see Carnegie, 2006b), I was working from the perspective of being an informed, 'critical museum visitor' (Lindauer, 2006: 204) My experience of developing the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art informed participant observation fieldwork at the MHR in St Petersburg, in December 2006. I spent four days within the museum. On the first day of my visit I acted as an 'active participant' as I familiarised myself with the museum, drawing on English translations of leaflets to determine its key themes. I also engaged with the guides/guards insofar as it was possible given the language restrictions. Thereafter, I took on a more passive observer or hidden observer role witnessing interactions between visitors and guides and determining visitor flows and guide routines (Denzin & Lincoln's 2005 model for participant observation). I also drew on secondary source material relating to the history of the museum including museum leaflets and catalogues as well as academic texts. I did not on this occasion gain access to curatorial or management staff of the museum.

Fieldwork carried out at the Museum of World Religions, Taiwan over six days in January 2006 followed a similar pattern of participant observation to familiarise myself with the museum and visitor flows. I was granted a short interview with a member of the senior management team who gave me permission to talk to any of the museum staff. I undertook short interviews with professional and curatorial staff that

referred me to published texts in English. Volunteer guides and visitors were invited to fill in a self-guided questionnaire offered in Taiwanese Chinese and English. The questionnaire had a mixture of open and closed questions, and was designed to determine respondent's emotional engagement with displays. Thirty questionnaires were fully completed. These were mostly in English but translations were obtained of comments on forms written in Taiwanese Chinese.

The St Mungo museum forms the key case study and I then draw on my knowledge and experience of its aims, ethos and management challenges to analyse and interpret the other two museums. I will now discuss each museum in turn.

Case Study: The St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art

The St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, a local Government and publicly funded venture opened in Glasgow in 1993, more in the spirit of hope than certainty that it would be received well by the public. Despite being adjacent to Glasgow Cathedral (it was initially intended to be a visitor centre for the Cathedral), it is a secular space which attempts to make sense of the central role and importance of religion in people's lives through the interpretation and display of religious objects. Glasgow, in the West of Scotland, has a history of sectarianism and religious tensions between Protestants and Catholics born of patterns of migration in the 19th century when large numbers of Irish Catholics came to the then largely protestant Scotland (Devine, 1991). Whilst being outward looking in terms of its religious and geographical spread, the museum also sets out to challenge prejudice at the local level (Sandell, 2006). It focuses on the six main faiths: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism but the displays also include objects relating to other religions such as ancient world beliefs and ancestor worship in small scale societies. The museum opened with a temporary exhibition of Dreamtime works, including a large piece especially created for the collection.

Managing the 'message'

We had very little to draw on in the way of precedent. As the existing museum of religion in St Petersburg was at this point a museum of atheism with material displayed to highlight that religion was part of the past, even folk belief, we were unable to seek guidance in terms of how to tackle issues such as sectarianism,

religious divides and acts carried out in the name of religion. We had to meet the strategic aims of local government and central government initiatives and targets linked to education and citizenship. Our broad aims were to create a space to foster mutual respect and understanding between people of all faiths and none (We decided not to include the word tolerance in the mission statement as it was felt that the term essentially meant 'to condone' and we agreed that not everything done in the name of religion should be condonable).

We were concerned from the onset that the choice of name for the museum might alienate potential visitors and sectors of the local community as St Mungo, although the patron saint of Glasgow, is more strongly associated with Catholicism within the city. The name proved nonnegotiable with the ruling council at the time. The museum's proximity to the city cathedral meant it carried a strong Christian message by association which might deter some potential visitors (as proved to be the case with the Bradford Museum). It was imperative that local people felt fairly represented within the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art and that visitors emotionally engaged with displays. In this regard we sought to '*communicate the meaning of the objects as part of the 'felt life' of both the visitors and the members of the object's cultures*' (O'Neill, 1996: 198). The core curatorial team was composed of three social historians and a community-orientated anthropologist. We were all committed to the idea that the museum should reflect faith communities rather than be aimed at them, resulting in a 'multivocal' (Clark, 2004) and intercultural merging of beliefs. The time scale was tight for such an ambitious venture, allowing us only two years from concept to opening and much of that time was spent in consultation with religious advisors such as the late Ninian Smart, then Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, and senior officials from within the religious communities. We also undertook an extensive oral history project with local men and women to inform and humanise displays.

Representation and community consultation

The objects were drawn from Glasgow Museums' rich collections including the Burrell and Kelvingrove collections, thus proving our claim at the time that museums were full of religious objects that were simply not interpreted as such. We determined that there needed to be parity in the quality of objects to ensure parity of esteem was

visibly given to each of the main faiths - a challenge given the non iconic nature of some faiths (Protestantism, Islam) and the sensual appreciation of the material that was prevalent in other faiths (Hinduism, Catholicism). This meant that we had to borrow objects from other museums and make the occasional purchase. The museum takes a 'comparative religion' approach within its three themed galleries and temporary exhibition and education spaces and this approach is not without its risks or critics as comparative religion as an academic mode of study has little support within the religions themselves. The first of these the Art Gallery, depicts religious paintings and sculptures of world-class quality and equates these works in artistic terms as art which other museums might designate folk craft. Adjacent to this is the Life Gallery, which takes a comparative approach, highlighting how the different faiths approach life landmarks such as birth and death and attitudes to the afterlife. Within this gallery, there is also a series of shrine like displays devoted to the six main faiths, in alphabetical order as listed above to ensure there was no obvious claim of favouritism. Lastly, the Scottish Gallery focuses on faith in Scotland from a historical perspective to the present day.

We could not claim to be representative or even logical in our approach for example there is more than one branch of Christianity interpreted but no attempt to discuss variations in Hinduism or Islam. As stated early this was in part a reflection of the Christian culture of Scotland and the need to tackle sectarianism for local audiences. Both of the other museums discussed here are more focused more towards the dominant faith(s) or branch of that faith. As the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art was object-led, we found it difficult to interpret faiths such as Zoroastrianism although the museum staff are always keen to enter into consultation with faith group members to source potential objects.

We sought to ensure that the objects were interpreted not just from the point of view of doctrine, but were depicted as part of the lived experience of ordinary men and women. Over one hundred people were interviewed for the museum. These interviews took the form of life histories. A slight majority of those interviewed were women. Whilst visible in shaping religious devotion in the home they are often absent at senior levels within the faith. As women are the mainstay of many faiths, charged with the duty of teaching religious duties within the home we were keen to reflect

their views within the museum. Inevitably, this meant that those involved became community ambassadors for their faith. By consulting the various communities in terms of what to display and how, we were building an audience for the museum and their potential goodwill. We were also bringing together groups of people who might otherwise never meet or communicate because of faith differences. Participants were encouraged to continue to have a relationship with the museum, attending events and forming informal focus groups. By gaining local trust and support, we hoped to create a safe and secular space for religious discourse.

Managing safety

The museum is unique in that it also determined the need to tackle prejudice and to address contemporary issues such as war, genocide, and the role of women. It was felt that in order to understand what it is to be human it was necessary to acknowledge that people were also capable of committing deeds in the name of god which *'inevitably involves acknowledging that the 'dark places are at the centre' and not unfortunate or peripheral phenomenon an essential step if museums wish to contribute to the 'serious discussion of human potential'* (O'Neill, 1996: 198). The challenge was how to raise such issues in a palatable form without losing the support and trust of the local religious communities who had worked with the museum over the two year development period. Indeed, it was also hoped that the museum would be a forum for promoting peace through religion. In order to achieve these aims we felt the need to create a calm and controlled space which is reflected in the design.

Although the treatment of the subject matter might be viewed as radical, the approach to interpretation relies on the traditional display technique of objects separated from the public behind glass cases with museum assistants acting as both security guards and a source of information. Staffs were selected on the basis of their ability and willingness to work with people of all faiths (and none) and all underwent racial awareness and religious knowledge training so that they could answer basic questions about the faiths represented (The museum Assistants Training Scheme was also linked to salary grades, a further incentive for participation). Staff were encouraged to face their own potential prejudices or long held beliefs and one staff member had to wear long sleeved shirts to disguise the tattoo on his arm of Protestant

emblem King William of Orange astride a rearing horse which he admitted to having had done when he was, in his own words, 'a daft laddie'.

Large objects, notably a life-sized 19th century representation of Shiva, were on open display. Within weeks of opening it had been maliciously damaged by a Christian believer who, with a bible in one hand, called the museum idolatrous and kicked it over damaging a forearm.

A photograph pertaining to female circumcision in the 'Coming of Age' case caused offence to many, and we were picketed by a local feminist group. The picture is still on display but with a slightly longer explanatory text. Photographs of women in Muslim displays caused offence and after discussions with Moslem elders it was agreed to remove all images of both men and women. Our emphasis on celebrating and exploring the 'felt' experience of community and oral history participants, led to occasional disputes with formal representatives of a faith and accusations that individuals lived experience meant essentially *getting their faith wrong*. That is to say that people do not necessarily fully understand the tenets of their own faith, or they interpret them in particular ways. Second or third generation immigrant communities had, on occasions, adapted new faith practices deemed necessary to fit into the dominant community. An example of this potential strife between community and formal representatives occurred when we had negotiated the loan of a painting of a Sikh family. The father had cut his hair on arrival in the Scotland to fit in at work and thus the picture did not represent the Sikh faith in an ideal way. Furthermore, the Sikh community were trying to discourage their younger members from cutting their hair and therefore they could not condone the painting. As decision-takers we were torn. The painting highlighted emblems from two worlds, their homeland and Scotland, and showed how the two met and merged. It carried a positive message in other ways too, but we could not oppose the Sikh community's right to be represented as they chose. We did not show the painting.

Some negotiations proved unsolvable as, for example, we could not agree to put the Sikh holy book to bed every night, and there were debates about which holy book should be the highest - in practice none of them- or possibly all of them. Whilst we were clear in the museum's aims to be a secular space, believers - whether they were

locals, tourists or staff - view the museum as a religious space or at least make a distinction between the objects of their faith which they venerate, and secularise the others.

Managing the visitor experience

As mentioned, the museum is situated adjacent to Glasgow Cathedral and therefore coach parties of tourists who visit the Cathedral might also visit the museum which is free to all visitors. The museum is a valuable resource for Sharing of Faiths groups and has a full programme of educational and outreach activities including anti-sectarian workshops. Despite this the majority of visitors are tourists. Within months of opening, the museum had received its first millionth visitor and a few lessons had been learned. Whilst on the whole the museum was well received, needed to provide was some way that visitors could raise any issues they might have, in an immediate and peaceful manner. We installed comments boards so that visitors could share their comments with the staff and other museum visitors. These are policed regularly for potentially inciting, racist or sectarian comments and curatorial staffs respond in writing on occasions if requested.

The fear that visitors would be put off entering a museum about religious beliefs has proved unfounded and visitor responses show an appreciation of what the museum is trying to achieve. The museum continues to combat prejudice and, in 2007, successfully held a temporary exhibition of James Edward Bates' contemporary photographic images of the Ku Klux Klan. It is unlikely that the museum does influence religious choices but comments show they do sometimes lead to greater understanding. A poll of staff carried out after the museum opened showed that their religious beliefs had not been influenced or changed through working on the museum although some, myself included, admitted a greater sense of optimism in humanity (Carnegie, 1995).

Case Study: State Museum of the History of Religion, St Petersburg

The St Petersburg Museum of the History of Religion, initially housed in Kazan Cathedral was 75 years old in 2007, and significantly predates the St Mungo Museum. What is most interesting about it is how the museum's history parallels and reflects that of the political, social and religious climate under which it developed. Its

existence was due to the changing relationship of church to state and therefore was intended for the dissemination of anti-religious propaganda (Koutchinsky, 2005: 156). As attitudes and political ideologies changed so also did its title being known firstly as the Museum of Atheism, then the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism and latterly the 'and Atheism' part of the title has been removed. It is still owned and managed by the state.

Unlike the St Mungo museum which reclaimed the religious nature of existing objects within the city's holdings, this museum set out to actively collect religious artefacts from across the world not just to create an anti-religious museum based on Orthodox faith, but with the key aim of developing '*a historical and religious establishment*' for the study of '*religious typology, of religion as a cultural phenomenon, and of religion as a part of ideology*'. (Koutchinsky, 2005: 156). Holdings do cover the Ancient world of Egypt, Greece and Rome, and at the time of viewing in December 2006 the museum was hosting a temporary exhibition on Buddhism. However, it is by no means representative of the main world faiths. There is equally no sense of a cultural or religious hierarchy being imposed on these other faiths. The vast majority of objects on display relate to the history of Russian Orthodoxy with collections being augmented over time by material that came out of other closed churches and which had often formed the basis of other museums of anti-religion.

Managing safety: Managing the message

When the collections were displayed in the Kazan Cathedral there were a number of confused messages being given to the public. These were religious objects being displayed in a religious building but at the same time the Cathedral has ceased to function (or been allowed to function) as a religious space and therefore had become a secular space – a museum. The House of Terror Museum, Budapest, which opened in 2002, maintained that 'both the Nazis and communists replaced God with their own leaders' (Terror Haza 2003: 48). Despite this it seems likely that the objects were still strongly associated with worship as Millar notes 'religion is a collectively produced commodity' and presumably therefore needs to be collectively rejected by choice. (Millar, 2005: 53). Kazan Cathedral is once again used for active worship and the collections, now in a secular space, have curiously been reinstated as religious objects with relevance to current and future lifestyle choices offer a sense of history

to a new generation of Russians. As in St Mungo's, the objects are behind glass cases - the exception being some pertaining to ancient world faiths or else contemporary Buddhist objects.

Managing the visitor experience

During my visit, I observed that the many staff acted more as guides than guards. They were mainly middle-aged women, and zealous to the point of bullying, in their attempts to get visitors to follow a linear thread through the history and present of Russian Orthodoxy. Museum director Koutchinsky argues that '*The Museum is not taking an apologist stand towards any ideological system. That is why our public comprise people who are interested in history, people of different beliefs and atheists.*' (Koutchinsky, 2005: 156) The Museum of the History of Religion currently has some 30 plus curatorial staff looking after some 180,000 objects. Although, a secular space, visitors and staff can and clearly do bring their own sense of religiosity to it. The majority of visitors, possibly explainable by the time of year, were locals and school children (there were workshops for children attached to the Buddhist exhibition). I also witnessed a small number of American and Central European tourists whose paths crossed mine at other venues across the city including the Hermitage and at other churches.

Overall, there was a sense that the museum was providing local people, and predominantly schoolchildren, with evidence of their religious heritage. It does not function as a multi-faith museum in the way that St Mungo's does with faiths other than orthodoxy being displayed separately with no attempt to link them in belief or cultural terms. Visitors experience the history of orthodoxy in terms of its continuity to faith in present day St. Petersburg.

Case study: The Museum of World Religions (MWR) Taiwan

The Museum of World Religions in Taiwan opened in 1993 and is based in a department store in Taipei, although this in itself is not remarkable in the Far East as galleries are often located within shopping complexes. It consciously brings together the elements of shopping and seeking faith with museum attending and actively aims to create a supermarket of faith with something for everyone. It was directly influenced by the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow and

Glasgow Museums' staff were consultants on the project. This is evident in terms of their approach to displays as the museum also highlights the main world faiths in a serious of altar-like cases although there is more emphasis on Eastern faiths such as Shinto. As in the two cases studies, which precede this, the religious culture and funding bodies determine the approach. The Museum of World Religions is Buddhist run and management.

The museum is on floors six and seven of the department store and the scale of building inspires awe, reminiscent of a temple or church whilst being emphatically a secular, even overtly commercial, space as there are a number of sponsorship options or shopping opportunities throughout. This museum more than the others engages the senses and acknowledges the role of the physical (body) in relationship to achieving spiritual enlightenment another indication of the religious and cultural influences that shape it. On entering the building, visitors are confronted with a series of questions projected onto pillars in Taiwanese Chinese and English. These include: 'What was I before I was born?', 'What is consciousness?', and 'Why are we afraid of dying?' These are not questions easily answered and indeed not really here. Rather they reflect the questioning nature of the human spirit and imply that accepting and embracing religion can help the individual to grapple with things, which cannot be explained or readily understood in this life. Signs of the zodiac and hero myths are given the same credence as doctrine as culture and religion merge.

Managing safety/ Managing the experience

This museum also uses traditional glass cases to protect the objects and a variety of visual methods including film, photography and computers. It takes a very positivist stance, and atrocity, war, and other dark deeds often committed in the name of faith(s) are largely absent. Although videos do occasionally show dark images of violence and discord, these are not interpreted and would be easy to miss.

Filmed testimonies of various celebrities offer persuasive arguments about the positive role of religions in their lives. Clips show famous faces such as Yusef Islam (Cat Stevens) talking about their faith and encouraging others to make a leap of faith '*In the scientific world and the world of technology you have to see before you believe. In our world you have to believe before you see.*' (Participant, MWR, 2003)

The St Mungo Museum is secular in intent - that is to say it does not seek to covert as this museum clearly does suggesting that individuals cannot achieve their full potential without faith as is clear in the following quote. *'Every human being, I think, has a spark of the divine ...what it means is there is a deep conscious within us. We can ignore it, suppress it, repress it but it shall always be there.* (Participant, Museum of World Religions, 2003)

The Buddhist staff act as welcoming guides rather than guards and the museum maintains a peaceful atmosphere helped by the scale of the building. When it opened people seemed overawed within the Great Hall and tended to stay close to the walls. A number of scale models of religious buildings initially intended as a temporary exhibition became permanent when it was noted that people were more confident in the fuller space. This is intended as a religious museum of religion and promotes the idea of the 'global village', 'mind reformation' and 'life education' which 'enables religions to be developed in a free and open environment, and outreached to different classes' (Master Hsin Tao, Museum of World Religions, 2003). Some consideration will now be given to visitor responses to my questionnaire to see if the museum aims are effective in persuading people to actively embrace the museum's values.

Visitor experience and findings

The museum attracts 20,000 visitors per year, although management are aiming for 50,000 and these are mostly schoolchildren. Fieldwork was conducted in January 2006 during the week preceding the Chinese New Year, and it was argued by staff that fewer local people visit the museum during this time. Only adults were surveyed and the small sample size of thirty persons being considered here reflected almost all of the adult visitors to the museum during that period and so the findings must be taken in that light.

The questionnaire had a mixture of open and closed questions to determine where visitors came from, their faith if any, why they attended the museum that day and also sought to ascertain their emotional engagement with displays. Ultimately, this meant trying to determine whether they were shopping for faith, acting as religious tourists or museum visitors. A further question asked visitors to consider whether they felt that religion was more, less or of the same importance to society as it was 50 years

ago. They were given the option of suggesting that individuals were more concerned with their sense of spirituality than religion to test whether people were associating personal development with spiritual development. Lastly, they were asked whether visiting the museum made them feel more respectful of other faiths. There was a deliberate emphasis on emotional terms such as 'feel' as in the question 'what did you feel when you were in the museum? Of those surveyed only 18% were tourists although 85% were first time visitors. Some 66% said they were Buddhists but only 1/3 were religious although 27% considered themselves spiritual. Only 27% were interested in learning about religions and 6% professed to be atheist although one of those also said he was of the Shinto faith highlighting the fact that religion might be part of our cultural identity rather than felt or acted on.

All of which confirms that the majority of visitors were locals, on their first visit to the museum and who set out intending to go there. The majority, (67%) felt either spiritual or peaceful inside, which suggests that the museum succeeds in creating a calm venue in which to explore faiths or that they felt in a museum-going mood that day. A third of those surveyed visited because they are interested in museums with only 21% seeking to discover what faith could do for them. Interestingly only 3% admitted an interest in shopping around for faith with only 3% (surprising given the number of Buddhists in the sample) implying that the museum offered them something more because they were Buddhist. Two young American tourists added that The Museum of World Religions 'seemed a cool place to visit ... having read about it in Lonely Planet'.

The findings are positive in the sense that people seemed to enjoy the visiting experience. The visitor figures suggest the museum has a strong educative role, but, given that Buddhism is the dominant faith in Taiwan, it is not attracting visitors in the numbers witnessed at the local temples or with the same engagement that local people have with their personal shrines. It may well be that people do not readily view a museum as a religious space or even that the museum is not widely known within Taiwan and further study would need to be undertaken to determine if that is the case. As mentioned earlier, this museum takes a largely positivist stance and it would be interesting to compare the findings with a similar survey carried out at the St Mungo Museum which is a more challenging visitor experience. It would also be interesting

to ask the same emotional engagement questions to people in an art gallery or other museum space to see whether museums allow people to reflect and feel peaceful regardless of topic.

Conclusion

All three of the museums discussed above have different aims and expectations of their audience. They are all required to manage the visitor experience taking curatorial decisions on behalf of visiting public in order to deliver their 'message' and meet the wider aims of funding bodies whilst at the same time providing a stimulating and enriching experience. All have to manage their buildings and collections to ensure the safety of staff and visitors. The St Mungo museum seeks to promote respect and combat prejudice amongst people of all faiths and none; the St Petersburg Museum, as its current title suggests, is concerned with the history of religions and more importantly Russian Orthodoxy. This historical approach is providing continuity for local people to reflect on their past to shape the future as they re-embrace Orthodoxy or more openly worship again. The other faiths represented in the museum seem less important although they are interpreted as having religious values within other cultures. The temporary exhibition space shows the museum attempts to be a centre for cultural discourse. This museum, as an interpreter of folk-beliefs (or dead space) has a role for the new generation, which is acknowledging the value of religion in other societies as well as their own. Both the Glasgow and St. Petersburg museums are state funded and as such reflect the wider political aims of local and national government. The Museum of World Religions Taiwan, although itself the new generation in museum terms, being high tech, high spec and in the 'cathedral of modernity', the shopping mall, is arguably the least effective of the three museums in that it really challenges very little and is little challenged by visitors. Being privately funded it has an obvious need for commercial interests and is less influenced by political aims, and strives to promote religious ones. It is the most overtly religious of the three spaces and that might be important in trying to understand what its role is or might be in Taiwan and internationally. The St. Mungo Museum draws on the beliefs and experiences of local people, and from a Western Perspective, to raise themes of global importance. The Museum of World Religion's Taiwan provides a global experience from its own historic and religious perspective and the St. Petersburg museum is local in intent and impact within a largely domestic tourism context.

The visitor profiles are different for each site but the majority of visitors encountered, other than schoolchildren, were domestic tourists. All offer visitors the potential to reflect on the role or potential of religion in their lives. The museums depicted here offer faith as a consumer experience. The degree of religiosity brought to the museum by visitors determines whether the space is religious, secular or both. Embracing religious pluralism remains at the potential stage. As with the man above, who describes himself as Atheist/part Shinto, people may be selecting and deselecting aspects of their faith or cultural identity to suit their lifestyles. This suggests that part of their engagement might be religious and part based on the notion offered above that museum objects are sacralised because of the role society gives to the museum as a container of 'pastness' and present values.

Accepting elements of other faiths is a potential way for individuals to shape themselves in a religious (or secular) society in which to find that sense of 'us'. Accepting religious pluralism must surely mean challenging how we behave with others on an individual, cultural or international level. These museums, although cultural stations rather than religious spaces, by encouraging self-reflection have the potential to promote mutual understanding of, and respect for, and between, people of all faiths and none. The St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art takes this a step further by actively challenging bigotry and prejudice.

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Chapter xxx

MOBILITY, DIASPORA AND THE HYBRIDISATION OF FESTIVITY: THE CASE OF THE EDINBURGH MELA, SCOTLAND

Elizabeth Carnegie and Melanie Smith

INTRODUCTION

Along with the contemporary idea of globalisation as a liberating process, characterised by increasingly mobile flows of people, the term also tends to subsume the more historically rooted notion of diaspora; ethnic populations which have become dispersed for a variety of 'push' and 'pull' factors. The ideas of both globalisation and diaspora hence problematise traditional notions and boundaries of state and nationality. Indeed mobile populations usually function outside of the containers of the nation-state thus constantly struggling with the opportunities and challenges of dislocation, identity and the meanings of being at 'home' but also away from home. Not surprisingly, the relationships between diasporic communities and their adopted nation states are complex and emerging and are heavily weighted around the idea of 'culture', which becomes an arena to explore and test such relationships. Old cultural reference points battle against new ones as diasporic communities search for internal and external definition, recognition and their identities as something that is both part of something past, and something future.

Over a number of years, in the UK and in many other so-called developed nations, we can observe a growing number of festivals and events that have mobilised and recomposed, to varying extents, aspects of culture of diasporic populations. Thus, occasions such as the Notting Hill Carnival are scripted as highly visible expressions of the culture and history of Trinidad designed to celebrate the Trinidadian and wider Caribbean culture and community identity. But diasporic festivals increasingly have audiences which extend beyond their immediate cultural constituency, acting as, if not literally being, tourists. The presence of these 'other' audiences largely reading such festivals outside of the contexts in which they were originally composed raises a range of issues relating to both their production and consumption and generates a set of dynamics which reaches into tourism practice, social and cultural policy, and wider themes of shifting social identities and hybridity.

In this chapter we explore such issues through the particular case of the 'Mela'; a festival traditionally serving to celebrate ethnic community and folk cultures and identities in India but increasingly becoming a showcase for global and hybridised cultural forms referred to Indianness. The term 'Mela' is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning 'gathering', and is used in a generic sense to describe a range of community events in the South Asian sub-continent. The cultural activities included in Mela are many and varied, incorporating (amongst others) music, dance, fashion, food, and more recently, film. In recent years, Mela has become an increasingly prominent feature within the cultural calendar of many Western European countries, particularly in the United Kingdom, and has gradually developed from small-scale community-based events to become a focal point for 'national' celebrations of diasporic cultures. As with Caribbean Carnivals, Melas have come to symbolise all that is 'colourful' about diaspora, transforming ethnicity into a cultural showcase for growing numbers of non-Indian participants and tourist audiences. Whilst this is perhaps an ineluctable consequence of globalisation, transnational mobility and the

creation of hybridised social spaces, it does raise questions about the appropriation of such cultural forms by emigrant communities, non-Indian audiences and public cultural policy in the UK, and the power relationships inherent within their development. British government agendas for instance, claim to promote cultural diversity. But what does this mean in terms of discourse and action? Can it be seen as a 'genuine' attempt to further social integration? Cultural purists might well balk at the apparent hybridisation of cultural and artistic expression and performance within the context of Mela. The preservation of artistic integrity is arguably paramount in the conceptualisation of Mela, but how far is the changing composition and demands of audiences, together with the integration of Mela festivals in wider tourism development agendas, dictate the nature of programming and performance? Is the melange of cultural forms that constitute Mela representative of the multifarious nature of diasporic cultures and identities? This chapter explores such questions and draws upon the case study of Mela in the City of Edinburgh in Scotland.

GLOBALISATION AND BOLLYWOOD DREAMS

That Indian culture, or rather 'Asian' culture, should be represented in Britain in various forms is, of course, not surprising, given the relationship between the two nations in both the historical colonial sense and in postcolonial times. Though the growth of the Indian diaspora in the UK over the years is both complex and varied, it is expressed through an assortment of points of popular cultural connection experienced and negotiated by the population as a whole in everyday ways. Indian cuisine, in both 'pure' and hybridised forms, has, over the past forty years or so evolved to become a highly successful and influential feature of the British 'national' menu.

Further significant South Asian influences within contemporary British culture relate to the performing and visual arts. In the 1960s Indian music began to feed into the popular music scene when the Beatles worked with classical sitar player Ravi Shankar. More recently the folk music of rural India has pervaded mainstream popular music in a form known as Bhangra. Indeed, Bhangra music appears to have become the cultural form which many young South Asians have adopted to express a sense of roots and identity (Baumann, 1996). For older generations however, the hybridisation that Bhangra represents the dilution of a traditional art form (Chaudhary, 2003). In the realm of the popular visual arts, the Indian cinema has reached out from its own highly successful, Mumbai based, 'Bollywood' film industry, to infuse British life whether it be in the form of local Bollywood dance classes to theatre and television productions. Cinema has also allowed the exploration of the attractions and complexities of the Indian diaspora challenging both British attitudes and those of modern day or second generation Indians.

Ferguson (1998) notes how the globalisation of the media has led to the fragmentation of cultural representation, which is then reconstituted and usually referred to as cultural hybridity. The UK report of the 'Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain' (known as the Parekh Report) published in 2000 suggested that "the process of mixing and hybridisation will increasingly be the norm where rapid change and globalisation have made all identities potentially unstable" (Parekh Report, 2000, p.27). But, as Flusty (2004, p.112) argues, "all cultures are hybrids of other cultures' influences and always have been. Thus hybridity is neither new nor distinct, but an omnipresent underpinning of cultural formation".

The Parekh Report (2000) highlights the difficulties of referring to Asians as a single homogenous group in counterpoint to the realities of clear distinctions along the lines of nation, race, religion, caste, language, culture etc. While not always recognised, there is obvious variation between Bangladeshis, Gujaratis, Pakistanis and Punjabis; as well as between South Asians, East African Asians and Chinese; and between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs etc. The Parekh Report (2000) also notes the tensions within South Asian communities between generations, with parents and children often in disagreement about the processes and outcomes of integration with regard to loss of tradition and identity. Baumann (1996) describes how cultural distinctiveness within Asian communities is often defined by parents in terms of their own pre-emigration traditions and heritages. Within this context the Parekh Report (2000) suggests that there is too much emphasis on separating 'ethnic' traditions from the 'western' canon, and on conserving the past rather than promoting new creativity in the present.

Such debates between generations are normal within the context of the processes and problems of adjusting to diasporic living where questions of identity and belonging come to the fore. In the ferment of change, the loss of cultural reference points, and the social, economic and political challenges which diasporic communities face, new reference points are born. As Weeks (2000, p.240) points out, threatened communities "construct out of this a community of identity which provides a strong sense of resistance and empowerment."

Brah (1996, p.181) suggests that it is no longer appropriate to discuss diaspora in Britain along a 'majority / minority' axis, rather: "Diaspora space as a conceptual category is 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous." Thus the children of first generation immigrants have become indigenised, and are often searching for a new 'identity' within the context of multi-cultural Britain. Bauman (2000) questions whether individuals, and in particular those deemed weak and powerless within wider society, have the freedom to change their identity or at least the spatial, political and economic reference points which feed notions of identity. Arguably, in a vacuum of social integration, economic equity, and political access, diasporic populations have reached for cultural symbols that can have a cohesive affect, whether they are 'new' or involve the re-working of tradition, akin to the way that the African Caribbean population have drawn on reggae music both as a progressive musical form and as symbolic of a 'roots' feeling. Baumann (1996) suggests that many Asian teenagers wish to see the emergence of an 'Asian culture' in symbolic terms, which can transcend differences of religion, caste and regional affiliation.

It is against this wider canvas of emergent popular cultural expressions and practices which challenge the idea of 'tradition' amongst diasporic and host communities, and which generate new hybridised cultural forms (traditions), that we need to consider the festival format of Mela. The original concept of Mela was based predominantly on 'traditional' and folk cultures, rather than any sense of the 'popular'. However, as an 'imported' model of festivity, questions are raised with regard to the Mela's re-configuration relating to its new social role and cultural standing, its form and its audiences.

MELAS AND THE SHOWCASING OF ETHNIC 'CULTURES'

Outside of its original 'home', the Mela effectively acts as a means of profiling one or more 'cultures' to 'other' cultures. The constituencies of Mela audiences become de facto, wider,

and this shapes their form and social, economic and political role. Festivals certainly have the power to challenge political and social norms and create important economic opportunities for marginal communities utilising, as they do, various artistic forms. Morley (2000), for instance, suggests that World Music Festivals have helped to undermine the cultural hegemony of white 'Britpop' and allowed commercial marketing opportunities for non-white, non-Western music.

Khan's (1976) work on ethnic minority arts suggested that ethnic contributions enhanced the UK's cultural provision considerably. By showcasing and performing elements they associate with 'their' culture, minority groups were able to assert their identity. Carlson (1996) has similarly suggested that cultural performance can allow traditionally marginalised groups to explore relationships between self and society, as well as issues relating to objectification, exclusion and identity. Likewise, Candida-Smith's (2002) work also sees performance as a memory trigger, which is linked to memories of traditional ways of life. This is an important point to note in the case of diasporic cultures, where there is often a strong sense of both 'over here' and 'over there' (i.e. 'back home') (Kaur & Hutnyk, 1999). Jermyn and Desai (2000) optimistically state that barriers to ethnic participation in the arts are gradually being removed. However, Mowitt (2001, p.8) is more cynical, suggesting that there is a great deal of tokenism in Government support for ethnic minorities: 'In a global white world, a little local colour goes a long way'. In the same vein Lippard (1990) outlines the key problem with discourse in ethnic art, in that it tends to be *about* the 'other', rather than *by* the 'other'. Appropriation of ethnic cultural forms is not uncommon in the programming, interpretation and representation of art. In addition, audience development for ethnic and minority events can be contentious, with claims, for instance, that Caribbean Carnivals and similar events are becoming 'whitewashed' or over-promoted for tourist audience (Errol, 1986).

In our work we noted that many directors interviewed were keen to drop the term 'Asian' from Mela in order to suggest that it is an inclusive celebration. In some instances, the programme of Melas are designed to emphasise this point such as the case of the Rochdale Mega-Mela held in the North West of England where African drumming is included as one of the activities. In comparison to African Caribbean carnivals, it could be argued that Melas are less overtly political in their origins. Whereas carnivals were generally born out of the oppressive context of imperialism, colonisation and slavery (Alleyne-Dettmers, 1996), Melas appear to be predominantly celebrations of community cultures. However, it would be naive in the extreme to suggest that Melas are de-politicised events. There are concerns about appropriation, especially in areas where local authorities have been keen to commandeer Melas in order to add local colour to their tourist promotional efforts. Moreover, in some areas of the UK where racial tensions run high, Melas become highly political events and some Mela directors fear for the future of their festival. Other pointers of apparent appropriation that we found during the course of our work were that the majority of Mela directors were white rather than Asian; however, from discussions with these directors, it is clear that they were often invited to take the position, especially in cases where there were internal political tensions.

Audience development is a problematic issue for Melas with many directors struggling to attract young Asians to their events as they are perceived to be overly traditional. The desire appears to be to retain an Asian focus, but within a world context, therefore hybridisation which reflects national and global influences predominates. The Mela of the future will no doubt celebrate the rich traditions of Asia whilst reflecting the dynamic

nature of British Asian culture. There are clearly some concerns about non-target audiences (i.e. white tourists). At present, white people constitute approximately 50% of audiences. However, the general consensus of directors is that Melas should be more widely promoted. This clearly makes more commercial sense; however, care must be taken not to alienate core Asian audiences in the process.

THE EDINBURGH MELA

The Edinburgh Mela celebrated its 10th year in 2004. In 2003 it extended to three days (Friday, Saturday and Sunday), and received a record 40,000 visitors. This was an increase of 10,000 on 2002 figures. Professionally staffed and funded from the onset, it has a full time Chief Executive and half-post Administration Manager, a part time Marketing Manager and a number of short term staff including production manager, administration and site staff. It also hosts creative residencies. Professionalism is recognised as being the key to developing the reputation of the Edinburgh Mela, and crucial in attracting necessary sponsorship. In 2003 Edinburgh Mela was sponsored by a leading mobile telephone company and supported by the European Mela Network, and organisation which helps to raise the profile of Melas in general.

The Board of the Edinburgh Mela comprises twelve people comprising the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and a senior academic of a local University College. Nine members are from South Asia representing local communities and businesses. The Chief Executive, was described as being 'heavily persuaded' by some of the leaders of the community to chair the Board from the onset as they had witnessed other potential ventures fail as a consequence of internal politics. Additionally, there are three consultative forums held throughout the year with invited audiences from 120 local organisations resulting in some 28 representatives from other communities within the City.

According to Tweedie (2004), the Edinburgh version of the Mela has "rejected the concept of multi-culturalisation in favour of inter-culturalisation", in a bid to create a genuinely and generally inclusive event intended to become an established part of Edinburgh's festival portfolio. Positioned within the summer festival season, and over the last weekend of the International Festival, the Mela inevitably draws a mixed audience of locals and tourists. The decision to cite the Mela within the festival season was taken for a number of reasons. First, the Edinburgh Mela was modelled on the longstanding successful Mela held in Bradford in Yorkshire which itself was part a wider festival and was viewed by the organising committee in Edinburgh to be a model which worked well in attracting audiences. Second, from the onset the Edinburgh Mela has received local government funding, but it was argued that the later in the year an event is held, the more chance it has of obtaining money from other grant award bodies. Third, in a UK context, a key concern to an event which traditionally happens out of doors, is the weather. Tracking of the weather favoured that particular weekend minimising the risk of cancellation. Fourth, it was also suggested by Tweedie (2004) that as the tourist season is coming to a close towards the end of August, people who are tied up with working in the hospitality industries are able to free up time to participate in the Mela. It also seems likely that weather and funding considerations apart, the decision to position it during the main Edinburgh Festival would both ensure an audience for events and give some sense of parity of esteem to the Mela as it would happen in tandem with prestigious festival activities. It would also benefit from the Edinburgh Festivals publicity machine.

AIMS OF THE EDINBURGH MELA

The decision to create a Mela in Edinburgh, which has now grown to Scotland's largest Mela, outpacing the Glasgow equivalent, grew from the organisers belief that despite there being 15 key festivals in Edinburgh, with 40 smaller ones throughout the year, little was being done within the City to celebrate and reflect the arts and culture of the world. Tweedie (2004) argues that Edinburgh's cultural activities, and in particular those of the official International Festival are '...heavily dependant on the much more developed world, especially Europe and North America.... at that time what was termed the third world was largely excluded because of the vision of the people that controlled the International festival'. Although international groups visit the city to participate in festival events, these are not necessarily attended by local audiences and rarely create a forum for multi-ethnic groups throughout the year. Accusations of elitism about the cultural product that is the Edinburgh International Festival are not new and similar arguments reflect class issues within the City (Halfpenny, 2002).

The Edinburgh Mela sought to redress this imbalance through producing a programme of events which have the following aims (Edinburgh Mela Artistic Policy Document, 2003). First, that the Mela would seek to enhance the self respect of all people in minority communities and especially young people. This recognised the potential for Melas as creating a time and space for allowing all generations to celebrate together. It also pointed to the fact the within an increasingly culturally diverse Scotland, new approaches were required to bring about recognition and celebration of that diversity. Second, the aim was for the Mela to be recognised as a major festival in its own right and to become a significant player at local, regional, national and international level. Thirdly, the aim was to construct a method of organisation and operation which stressed networking, partnership and collaboration, and that built in opportunities for members of the community to achieve both group and individual development.

These aims span the realms of both aspiration and generality but point to the fact that the Mela, outside of its 'original' space and cultural context, is far more of a sensitive event socially and politically. As a festival that has, in effect, 'travelled', the aims of Mela are driven to an extent by wider agendas of social inclusion and the involvement of the associated diasporic communities. A large percentage of the visitors to the Edinburgh Mela are white, although Tweedie (2004) argues that some international audiences, for example Brazilians, would have more in common with the Mela than some local Moslem audiences, as Brazil has a long tradition of carnival and local Moslems may not come from such a culture of openness in terms of display. He acknowledges twin concerns about audiences and indeed Mela participants and sums up the dilemma of this form of transposed festivity: "If the majority of attendees are white then it is no longer a Mela,...(yet) a Mela which represents some monoculture wouldn't be a Mela." (Tweedie, 2004).

SCOTLAND IN THE MELA, OR THE MELA IN SCOTLAND?

The Edinburgh Mela is held within the cultural landscape of Pilrig Park, an inner city green space in a working class suburb of Edinburgh. Partly recalling Mowitt's (2001) observation that a little local colour goes a long way, the area is 'dressed' for the event to add colour and to create a sense of the (relative) exoticism of Mela. Indian Melas, as Tweedie (2004) notes: "...don't need to concern themselves with production, as there is so

much wealth around them. But here if we want to have a creative environment which involves cultural diasporas we have to be creative about how we do it."

The decision to hold the Mela in a fixed venue, geographically close to where many of Edinburgh's South Asian population work and live was deemed to be an important part to create a sense of ownership of the space, and continuity from one year to the next. This is by no means a belief held uniformly by the Board and a small minority would like the Mela to move away from its community roots and to develop a more populace approach which reflects the growing interest in popular and hybridised culture. It is worth noting that when a similar suggestion was made to move the Notting Hill Carnival in London to Hyde Park instead, it created something of a furore from local residents. The connections to a geographical sense of place, heritage, identity and ownership were clearly overwhelmingly strong. In the case of the Edinburgh Mela, this has created a split in the Board who believe that the Mela should remain a showcase for traditional culture rather than popular culture and who wish to use the Mela as a forum for renewing interest in, or indeed gaining the interest of, second generation South Asians and in this way ensuring traditions are not lost as a consequence of a different way of life.

Recent programmes of the Edinburgh Mela have generally reflected a balance between traditional and folk performances and more recent artists designed to attract the younger festival goers. The 2005 event included performers 'Legacy' fronted by Tariq Khan one of the most successful singers in the British Asian music industry, 'Alaap', pioneers of the Bhangra music scene since 1977, as well as more traditional musical acts playing Classical & popular songs in Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Punjabi and other South Asian languages. There was also a Mela multi-cultural fashion show. Recent sponsors of the event also reflect a span between tradition and the contemporary. Apart from support from Edinburgh City Council sponsors of recent events have included Cobra Beer, the Scottish Arts Council, the Government of Maharashtra, and the Royal Bank of Scotland. There are signs of a trend away from tradition toward a more populist programme and 'feel' to the Mela, though ideas of this being a festival which celebrates tradition foremost would still appear to dominate.

Interestingly, the Edinburgh Mela is also concerned with Scottish traditional culture and music and Mela 2002 featured major fusion events involving upwards of fifty musicians and singers from Scotland, China and Pakistan proving a tribute to poet Hamish Henderson with his poem 'Roses Come to Bloom' also incorporating a fusion version of 'Freedom Cam A'Ye'. This concert was funded by a UK trade union, the Performing Rights Foundation and the Arts Council. This raises several points worthy of consideration. Is the inclusion of Scottish traditional music in Mela part of the process of acculturation, a reflection that Scottishness is part of the dual identity of Scotland's Asian diaspora? Or, does it in fact highlight the minority nature of such music within Scotland, where popular culture or high cultural art forms as exemplified by the International Festivals, hold sway? Is this fusing of Scottish and traditional Asian music a way of fusing identities or is it in fact keeping Scottish traditions (or a version of what is deemed to be Scottish traditions) alive in an increasingly changing society? If so this would reprise the point made earlier about identities becoming increasingly unstable in a fast changing society.

Bauman's (2001, p.100) view that ".....recasting quite real individual frailties and infirmities into the (imagined) potency of community, results in conservative ideology and exclusive pragmatics", may well be relevant to the emphasis still placed within the Edinburgh Mela on 'traditional' South Asian *and* Scottish cultures, with the added desire to create continuity, if not actively resist changing patterns of cultural and leisure activities.

However dual (or multiple) identities can create the potential for a deeper understanding of self (Said, in Moustafa: 2000) rather as Diaches (1957) understood his relationship to being Scottish and Jewish, both identities forged within or between two worlds allowing for a subjective and changing reappraisal of self which is prompted by the signifiers of each. In his words:

"I found the sound of the bagpipes extremely moving. It awakened my sense of Scottish history with its violence and its pageantry and its fatal predilection for the lost cause...Scotland came for me more an emotion than a country." (p.59)

This perception of Scotland as a country which is both colonised and coloniser, creates an interesting tension, sometimes quoted as a form of 'melancholy' (Watson, 2003), or a culture of inferiority (Beveridge and Turnbull, 1989). Such terms are often positioned against the ruling neighbour, England, and indeed Scotland has created an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1992). It is in this spirit of Diaches' definition of Scotland as an 'emotion more than a country' that the Edinburgh Mela has developed Scottish flavoured events which represent hybrid cultures of both worlds, drawing on the symbols of a largely imagined Scotland or a definition of Scottishness to create a way for Scotland and its various communities to be defined and self-define creatively. It can be argued that Scottish Asians become acculturated into Scottish cultures and their dual identity develops as a Scottish Asian consciousness rather than Asian/British (Mann, 1992). The Edinburgh Mela is actively seeking to develop relationships within the diaspora to ensure that Scottish Asians retain contact with the cultural expressions of South Asia and that Mela events represent these relationships through the creation of new performance pieces. As a consequence of these partnerships Edinburgh Mela trained personnel are, at the time of writing, going to Bangladesh to develop artworks with traditional artists and musicians which they will then bring back to appear at the Edinburgh and other Melas within the UK.

FUTURE OF THE EDINBURGH MELA

In common with other Melas, the Edinburgh Mela is concerned with ensuring that it continues to celebrate the Asian diaspora inclusively, and with integrity and with what it terms 'magic' (Edinburgh Mela Artistic Policy Document, 2003). But also it aims to promote the Scottish connection and to grow and develop creative links and participation within the diaspora that will benefit both communities. Participation in the organisation and programming of the Mela festival by both the Asian communities and the Scots is an integral part of mobilising the event to deal with the overlaying and re-working of identity issues with their inherent tensions between the traditional and the popular and between the generations. Asians who participate in the festival often do so to please their parents rather than from any belief that the Mela is expressing ideas about their own current or future sense of identity and values. Indeed, television coverage ahead of the 2003 event concentrated on the role of the Mela in teaching young girls how to wear the sari and to experience the cultural and musical traditions of their mother's generation.

The Edinburgh Mela Youth Forum, working through the Edinburgh Festivals Youth Development Fund, holds events throughout the year to establish community involvement and to widen participation. It would seem that key tensions remain linked to generational differences as much as anything else. As Tweedie (2004) pointed out: "...We've been told in the Youth Forum by one young guy aged 18 or 19 ...'These folk would nae been seen fuckin' de'd at a Mela, because they think it is nothing to do with them. They are modern

Scots'. So called 'modern' Scots might well display similar attitudes toward 'traditional' Scottish activities.

In terms of audiences for the Mela, it would seem clear that the fusion between an Asian programme, with its balance between traditional and popular performances, and 'traditional' Scottish inputs, will continue to generate an equally mixed and by and large, a 'balanced' audience profile between Asians and non Asians. However, through the normative processes of social and generational change, it would seem that there is an increasing drive to popularise the programme to build and maintain audiences. Indeed, Mela directors interviewed suggested that many young people would not attend Mela if it simply reflected 'traditional' cultures. This may mean continuing concerns (social, moral and aesthetic concerns) amongst the older generations of Asians, but such concerns are part of the wider and on-going negotiations of identity and belonging that face diasporic communities in the UK.

From a tourism perspective, the prospect of showcasing Asian culture and 'Scottishness' within one programme would seem to be an attractive one. As with many festivals within an increasingly transnational context, the Mela provides an opportunity in time and space for direct cross-cultural encounters. Asian culture, or rather selected expressions of it, becomes, albeit temporarily, part of the wider tourist landscape with a capacity (not always fully realised) to attract the attention of domestic (and to a lesser extent) international tourists. The attraction of the Edinburgh Mela in touristic terms would seem to link directly with its hybrid nature, both in terms of its attempts to position South Asian cultures within the Scottish/Scots context and in terms of the mixture of old and modern South Asian traditions built into the programme.

CONCLUSION

The Edinburgh Mela, despite differences of opinion on the Board, appears to be determinedly avoiding the potential pitfalls of adopting a purely popular culture approach, which would move the Mela from the community grounds it currently occupies into a mainstream space. It is now an established part of the wider Edinburgh summer festivals programme, and organisers remain aspirational in their desire to see it grow in numbers and reputation. The Mela, effectively a festival which has itself travelled and which provides a particular model for social gathering and festivity, reflects hybrid cultures, and to some extent creates a forum to explore ideas about Scottish cultural identity (both to and by Scots), and within the South Asian diaspora, and being South Asian in Scotland. Tweedie, acknowledges that it is easier to grow tourist audiences, and this inevitably means grow a white middle class audience, than it is to sustain and develop links with certain local audiences including South Asian Scots and local Scots who live within the geographical area where the Mela is currently cited, and crucially with young audiences. There is some irony that the more established and professional the Edinburgh Mela becomes, the more tourists it attracts, the less likely it is to remain at the community level. This is already apparent in recent activities which whilst they genuinely reflect they reflect the wider Asian diaspora, they are in many cases ticketed events rather than free to all visitors. The future of the Mela in this form is only ensured if the organisers succeed in developing year round activities, which can reinforce the sense of community ownership of, and participation in, the festival across the generations.

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Pilgrimage: Journeying Beyond Self

CHRIS DEVEREUX and ELIZABETH CARNEGIE

This paper explores how the experience of pilgrimage can contribute towards the subsequent sustained transformation of individual and community well-being. In so doing it examines four areas. The first is to draw a conceptual map that emphasizes the linkages between pilgrimage and wellness tourism and explores the larger meaning of the words 'wellness' and 'spirituality'. The intention is to form a working definition and context in which to examine the well-being aspects of pilgrimage and the experiences it provides. The second area focuses briefly on what spirituality and pilgrimage mean. In so doing, it goes beyond the idea of pilgrimage as a journey to a sacred place, and concentrates more on the journeying itself, the importance of community and the space the journey affords for reflection on its physical, emotional and spiritual aspects. The third area considers two case studies from the pilgrimage experience. The first of these draws on the experiences of those who have travelled overland to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, while the second considers the experiences of people who have undertaken various charity treks as another form of pilgrimage. The individual experiences, drawn from those with religious affiliations and those with none, indicate how a challenging physical and emotional journey often - but not always - results in not only an enhanced physical well-being, but also a better understanding of self and others, a chance for renewal, and a learning experience that can be carried forward into daily life. The fourth area discusses how wellness tourism might react to those seeking more meaning to their lives through the journeying experience rather than the arrival.

Keywords: pilgrimage, wellness, spirituality, journey, community, grounded theory.

Introduction

The process of pilgrimage, and journeys such as charity treks, can offer experiences that extend the individuals beyond the norms of their daily lives. These experiences can be seen to offer opportunities for individuals to develop personally in ways that promote sustained wellness.

Such journeys can be viewed as part of a developing body of alternative tourism determined by Wearing 'as forms of tourism that set out to be consistent with natural, social and community values which allows both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interactions and experiences' (Wearing 2001: 32). He goes on to argue that increased urbanization has led to a growth in the use of rural landscapes as 'a means of escape from the pressures of modern living' and cites Welton (1978) who contends that, 'The only way to counteract the unnaturalness of urban life is to periodically renew oneself in the wilderness' (Wearing 2001: 90). This paper argues that as more and more people feel isolated within an increasingly urbanized and secularized society, there is a growing need for leisure activities, which reinforce their sense of self and community. Indeed Bauman (2001) argues that it is the decline of community within urbanized environments that has led to insecurity and feelings of loss. Where communities have to be voluntarily formed and shaped, '.... all homogeneity must

be 'hand-picked' from a tangled mass of variety through selection, separation and exclusion; all unity needs to be made...' (Bauman: 2001: 14)

In considering pilgrimage and wellness this paper examines how pilgrimage, in two different contexts, has increasing relevance in a postmodern and fragmented world where people are seeking meaning and sense within their own lives. To understand this claim, and before offering a theory of how pilgrimage and wellness tourism interact, it is worth considering briefly how recent changes in postmodernism impact on these two areas.

Postmodernity exists traditionally as a generalized body of thinking that is concerned with the 'now', where the past is included with the present. And this 'presentness' is found in its approach to culture and capitalism, science and technology, wherein it challenges the classical notions of identity, objectivity, truth, and explanation. Connor (2004) identified four phases to postmodernism, namely: - accumulation, synthesis, autonomy and dissipation.

It is this last stage, that of dissipation - emerging throughout the 90s which has begun to challenge 'old' postmodernism, one associated with an ephemeral western societal culture which is 'ungrounded, diverse, unstable...and sceptical about...the objectivity of truth,

CHRIS DEVEREUX, WA Consultants, Cheam, Surrey, UK. e-mail: chrisdev@atlas.co.uk

ELIZABETH CARNEGIE is Lecturer in Arts and Heritage, Leisure Management Division, University of Sheffield, 9 Mappin Street, Sheffield S1 4DT, UK. e-mail: carnegie@sheffield.ac.uk

history and norms' (Eagleton 1996: vii). It is now being replaced by one in which ethics, religion and justice are tempering an absolutist view. As Philippa Berry suggests, 'the putative cultural triumph of secular reason is haunted or shadowed by its presumed opposite' (Berry 2004: 170). So as we move towards what we might call 'hypermodernity', we find that key postmodernists such as Derrida have outlined the futility of trying to sustain absolute distinctions between such aspects as belief and doubt (Derrida 1998). Derrida refers to the return of religions, and the joining together of materialism and 'spirit', but these religions are not the traditional ones, nor are they new fundamentalist ones. Rather, he sees them as signs of spirituality that are 'post-religious' or 'quasi-religious' and are outside formal structures. Berry quotes Levinas (1979) in defining this new area (to postmodernism) as being one in which the individual 'is required to 'open oneself as space' - or, put another way, 'to create a space for some direct or indirect form of communication.' (Berry 2004: 175).

These important developments seem to suggest that in the context of today's hypermodern world, secularity and spirituality will, in future, begin to coexist more easily as boundaries become increasingly blurred. This means that in exploring the idea of pilgrimage and its relationship to wellness tourism, one's thinking needs to operate at a meta-level, which holds simultaneously the secular and the spiritual, the 'belief and doubt' of Derrida, and the acceptance that pilgrimage - in the context of this paper - is not about visiting a sacred site, but about what happens on the physical spiritual journey.

Methodology: Grounded Theory in the Study of Pilgrimage and Wellness Tourism

Figure 1 is a conceptual map of the dimensions of pilgrimage, in relation to wellness and tourism. It is developed from grounded theory, which is considered to be the most appropriate way of researching interrelated complexities. Data for case study one was drawn from the narratives of seven individuals who either cycled or walked to Santiago de Compostela during the summer of 2002. Case study two took a similar narrative approach with 6 individuals who took part in charity treks in 1999-2002. In a field where one is attempting to derive meaning from the narratives of individuals - based on their own understanding of their journey - traditional methodologies are inappropriate.

Grounded theory does not begin with a preconceived theory in mind. 'Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data.' (Strauss and Corbin 1998) Just as Lave and Wenger (1991) argue the necessity of understanding the personal and social

world of the learner before designing teaching interventions, so grounded theory needs to gain overarching themes which emerge from individual narratives which, in turn, inform ways of approaching pilgrimage and its meaning in relation to wellness. In bringing together the often intimate narratives of pilgrims and some of the existing data on wellness, the object was to categorize the generic themes in the varied data to build a picture of what research on pilgrimage and wellness might use as a working conceptual model.

As a result, categories were identified through the process of open coding, which consists of 'the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data.' (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 101). This requires going 'beyond static analysis to multiple layers of meaning' (Gray 2004: 330). These multiple layers are depicted in Figure 1 in relation to pilgrimage. On the right side of the diagram there are the three main concepts of Community, Journey, and Spirituality which emerged from the data. On the left the literature on wellness, and tourism are disaggregated and rejoined again as Wellness Tourism.

The figure as a whole is intended to represent the dimensions of the data that need to be borne in mind when representing the nature of pilgrimage as revealed by the voices of pilgrims. So the suggestion that pilgrimage is more to do with journey than arrival is one borne out by their own narratives. The potential conflict between route-based tourism and pilgrimage is recognized by Murray and Graham (1997) whilst other authors, for example, Gonzales and Medina (2003) and Santos (2002) centre on the importance of particular arrival sites in pilgrimage which are sometimes at odds with the ideas presented here.

The concepts emerging from grounded theory attempt to map the minds of both pilgrims and writers. This was facilitated by initially the six concepts identified through open coding. However, a form of axial coding helps to recognize relationships between certain categories, for example, 4.4 Kindness of Strangers, 6.2 Fulfilment through others and 1.3 Friendships all have an affinity, whilst Community itself is recognized in 4 and in 6.2, 1.4, 2.3 and 3.1. Although Strauss and Corbin (1998) remain the classic authors on grounded theory, other aspects of qualitative research which bear on the way data have been used in this paper can be found in Gray (2004), Charmaz (1995) Sandelowski (1995), Clough (2002) and Phillimore and Goodson (2004) amongst others.

There is also a considerable literature on the nature of wellness which informs this paper. Shah and Marks (2004), in their study, relate to well-being,

'spiritualitas', an abstract word, related to the Greek word 'pneuma' meaning breath, the essence of life. It has been used since very early times to emphasize the difference, but not necessarily the opposition, between the material and the inner or immanent self. Von Balthasar (1967) finds three different dimensions to the word spirituality, namely:

- Seeking truth and meaning of existence by glimpsing it through real lived experience;
- Using these experiences to express and fulfil oneself in the world and influence and enable others as well; and
- Recognizing some higher power beyond oneself to guide one's thoughts and actions.

The use of the word 'higher power' may not necessarily be a God in the religious sense. In the case of Marxism, it is society itself, or in another context it could be seen as Gaia. The point about spirituality is that it is a holistic discipline and does not limit itself to the 'explorations of the explicitly religious' but considers all aspects of the spiritual experience, namely, 'the psychological, bodily, historical, political, aesthetic, intellectual and other dimensions of the human subject of spiritual experience' (Schneiders 1989: 693).

Consequently, in tackling the experience of pilgrimage, an understanding of the spiritual (in its widest sense) as well as the temporal needs of the pilgrim are crucial. Davie (who contributed to the European Values Study of 1981 (Barker *et al.* 1992), defines the growth in interest in the spiritual as 'believing without belonging' (Davie 1994). Brown (2001) argues that: 'What emerges (*in contemporary society*) is a story not merely of church decline but of the end

Christianity as a means by which, men and women as individuals, construct their identities and their sense of self' (Brown 2001: 2). However, Davie argues that although the marked decline of participation in church attendance is widespread throughout Europe, belief persists but becomes 'increasingly personal, detached and heterogeneous particularly among young people' (Davie 2002: 8).

What is Pilgrimage?

Pilgrimage is a physical journey, which symbolizes and reflects the life journey of the individual: 'the need to set in physical search for a spiritual goal is one common to all mankind' (Barber 1991: 6). Pilgrimage is generally seen as a journey to a sacred place or shrine, which is the ultimate reason for the journey. In the two examples which follow, the journey to Santiago de Compostela and the journeying involved in charity treks - both are considered pilgrimages in Barber's sense of the word - it is the journey itself which is the sacred space.

Carrasco (1996) finds it useful to think of pilgrimage in three developmental stages. The first is a separation, both physical and mental, from the normal spatial and psychological status quo. The second is the journey through a threshold, a spatial, social and spiritual threshold, a marginal or liminal space in which bonding with others generates a profound sense of community. The third is the stage of social and spiritual renewal on returning to the daily world.

In his description of the great pilgrimages of the world, Davies sees pilgrimage as a process in which all 'are engaged in a search for meaning and for spiritual advancement and their pilgrimage dramatizes their quest for the divine' (Davies 1998: 1).

In selecting the journey to Santiago as the first case-study and charity treks as the second, the intention is to see pilgrimage as a journey in which the liminal space of that journey and not the arrival is of crucial importance. The physical and emotional and spiritual challenges the individual encounters whilst on the journey offer time for reflection and renewal, and recognition of both the immanent and the transcendent in the course of the journey. Post (1996: 4-6) dwells heavily on the past and its tradition in pilgrimage as providing an anchor in an ever-changing restless world. However, the assumption in the present paper is to acknowledge the past, but also to look to the future, whilst still in the 'presentness' of the journey. This process could be called a 'remembered future', namely, one in which the past is not looked back on with nostalgia as some form of escapism, but is a reflection of one's own life experience to date and gives insights into what one might yet be.

Case Study 1: Santiago de Compostela

Recent years have shown a rapid increase in those who choose to walk, or ride by cycle or horse to Santiago de Compostela, a medieval pilgrimage route from central France to the northwest tip of Spain.

In 1987, 2,905 pilgrims walked, cycled or travelled by horse to Compostela. In 1997, this number had risen to 25,179. In 2003, this had nearly tripled to 74,614. Of this number 36.4 per cent were between 16 and 30 years of age. 69.9 per cent of all pilgrims saw the main motivation for their journey as being a spiritual one. (Registro de la Oficina de Acogida de Peregrinos 2004). These data support the findings of Davie and the European Values Study (Davie 1994, 2002; Barker *et al.* 1992) outlined earlier, namely, that in spite of increased secularism, young people especially feel a need to seek a spiritual well-being in ways that do not reside in orthodox religions.

'as more than just happiness. As well as feeling satisfied and happy, well-being means developing as a person, being fulfilled, and making a contribution to the community' (Shah and Marks 2004: 2), all of which are found in pilgrimage.

The authors draw from a wide range of research literature in both the economic, health, social, psychological and leisure fields. The Wellness category in Figure 1 summarizes their views as well as those of others in the field of well-being at work and leisure, e.g., Keyes (1998), Csikszentmihalyi (1997), Gardner (1993), Diener and Seligman (2002), and Sarafino (2002). The overview suggests that well being, though initially dependent on genes and upbringing, is also positively influenced by community involvement, sports and hobbies and a positive attitude towards life. It is the intentional activities that people undertake which bring happiness and once basic needs have been met, money makes no difference to well-being. In fact, 'people who are materialistic are less happy than those who value other things.' (Shah and Marks 2004: 6, quoting Kasser 2002).

Category 4, the Community branch of Figure 1, considers the community aspect of pilgrimage, incorporating

the themes of common goals, motivation and reciprocal generosity. This was the original meaning of the Latin and Greek for 'community'. The way Community is represented in the conceptual map presented here has parallels with Turner's ideas. Victor Turner's concept of liminality and *communitas* built on the work of Arnold van Gennep who described the 'liminal phase of rites of passage' as a three-phase process of, 'separation, margin (or *Limen*, signifying threshold in Latin) and aggregation'. (Turner 2002: 359), Pilgrimages, he argues, 'exhibit in their social relations the act of *communitas*; and this quality of *communitas* in long-established pilgrimages becomes articulated in some measure with the enviroing social structure through their social organisation'. (Turner 1974: 167). The social organization of pilgrimage requires a relinquishing of the usual social mores, structures and values of everyday life and new communities are formed based on shared goals, mutual needs and the reliance on strangers for support.

What is Spirituality?

Spirituality is used in this paper in a number of ways, embracing both the secular and multi-faith ideas of how people experience it as a sense of individual well-being within society. The word 'spirituality' comes from the Latin

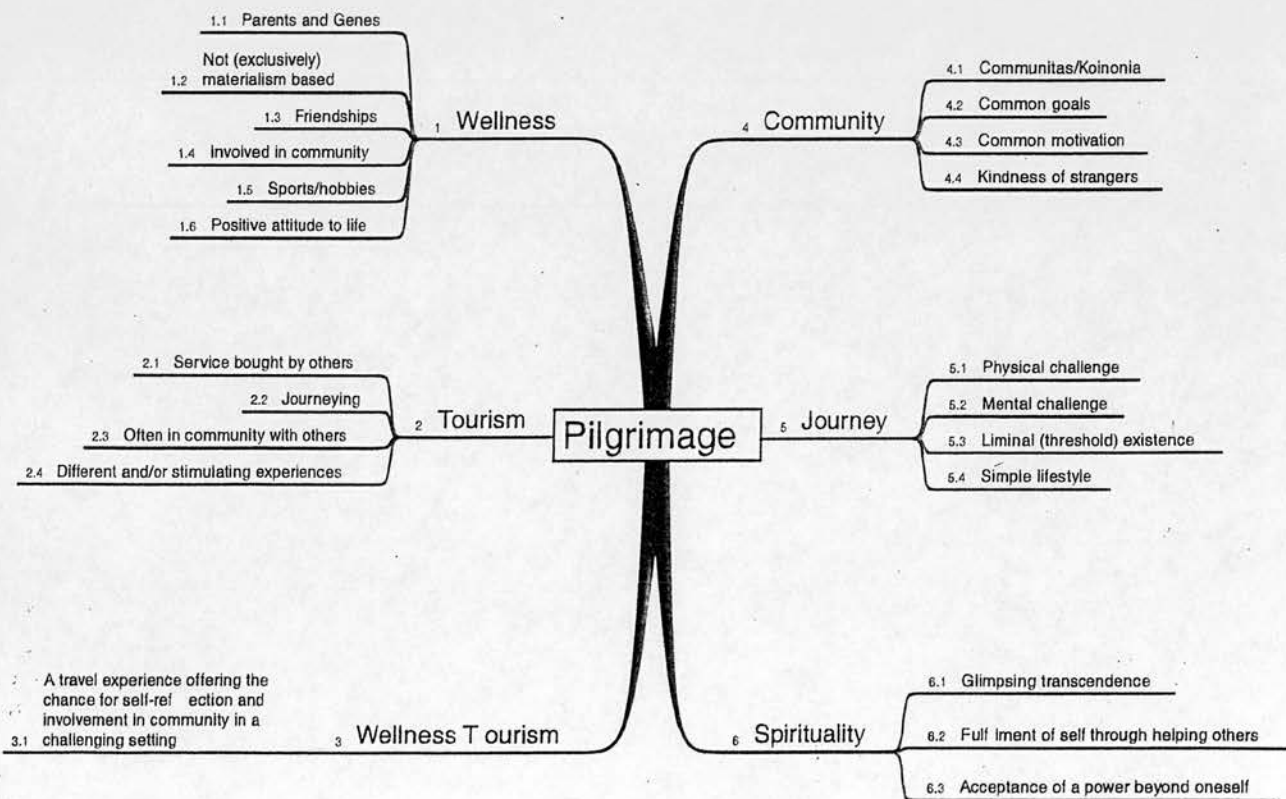


Figure 1. Dimensions of Pilgrimage

The journey to Santiago de Compostela, is generally called the Camino de Santiago (or the Chemin de St Jacques in France) and many pilgrims who walk and cycle the route keep their own diaries or recordings and there are also a number of published accounts including Internet sites. Post (1996), examined a number of pilgrim accounts of their journey to Santiago de Compostela and classifies them into three clusters, namely:

ritual, the journey, the essence of being a pilgrim
meeting and relations
the past (Post 1996: 4)

The themes of the Journey, the Community and Spirituality outlined in Figure 1 are expanded in relation to Santiago in the form of:

the daily route itself and simple living
the community of the Camino and its effects
arrival and the return to daily life

The Journey

The road to Santiago is not an easy one. From Le Puy-Velay to Santiago de Compostela is just over 1000 miles. Walkers who start from St Jean de Pied de Port on the French side of the Pyrenees still have 500 miles to walk before they reach Santiago. Many accounts talk of the worry and the excitement of a physical challenge and the preparation for it. As the following quotes drawn from the narratives of pilgrims, people feared the thought of the journey and its hardships.

'I couldn't believe the steepness of the hill from Le Puy. I thought, 'How am I going to make it if this first hill is so bad?'

'I worried about how bad my blisters would get.'

Early on most pilgrims experienced times when they thought the journey would defeat them. But very soon, many individuals ceased to be concerned with strict schedules and began to come to terms with what they had taken on.

'After a few days I realized that every door would open. There would be a place to sleep, somewhere to buy food, and my bicycle would eventually get me there. I ceased to worry.'

'I slowed down after two days. I was missing things that I had come to see. Mentally, I was still at work trying to meet deadlines. When I slowed down, time somehow expanded so that I still got to roughly the place I intended and I spoke to far more people. I began to relax and let the road carry me rather than me trying to fight it.'

This sense of relaxing into the journey and becoming separated from the spatial and psychological status quo to which Carrasco (1996) refers, brings with it a heightened experience of the present.

'You don't have to worry about anything. All you have to do effectively is walk and eat and sleep. It puts into context what you worry about normally, and how unnecessary much of it is.'

This sense of the present within the rural, or even wilderness setting where there is a freedom, albeit temporarily, from urban spaces and urban values also bears out Wearing's (2001) earlier arguments.

'I had this sense of living in the present, the present moment, aware of how my blisters hurt right now, of not knowing, or minding, what would happen next. We never booked anything, or thought about distance travelled. After a time I noticed the towns we passed through were very straining and made me feel tired.'

'I decided to avoid Pamplona and took a different route over the mountains to Estella. I couldn't face the noise and stress of a big city.'

Community

New communities become formed on the route both with other pilgrims and with people who live on the route or offer support or hospitality. The community exists within liminal space as pilgrims become suspended in a paradoxical timeless present whilst moving onwards, (the word 'Ultraia!' meaning 'Onwards!' is the greeting pilgrims give to one another).

It is this closely bonded community, all with the same goal of reaching Santiago, all experiencing physical and emotional challenges and all separated in a timeless present that makes the Camino so special. It goes beyond just physical well-being, towards an inner well-being engendered by being part of a pilgrim community with common goals and common motivation. In pilgrim accounts and in interviews, the daily small acts of kindness given and received, and the ability of total strangers to be more open with each other than they would normally be, appears to be one of the key 'presents' - as one pilgrim put it - that one receives from the journey.

'People are more open than in normal life. We had substantial conversations with all sorts.'

'The level of hospitality was amazing. You walked in, used the facilities people offered, and then moved on. It was as if you were part of their family. And these people did this to thousands of pilgrims each year and were still smiling. 'That's why we're here.' they said. How could I not appreciate it?'

'I knocked at a nearby door to see if I could get my pilgrim record stamped, but she said the office next door was closed and they wouldn't be back till tomorrow. As I was going she said; 'It is mystical, seeing the constant flow of people like you, passing day after day. It is an example to us all. One day I want to make the journey. Please remember me when you get to Santiago'. I was touched by her words and I did remember her when I got to Santiago.'

Pilgrims report that the simplicity of life on the Camino and the constant meeting and re-meeting of others on the road engenders a relationship in which those acts of kindness from total strangers are generously given and gratefully received. The expensive walking poles donated to someone with a bad leg, the sharing of food and drink, the cyclist taking a message from one walker to another, some way ahead, are the daily lived experiences that take people out of themselves for brief moments and give meaning to the practical nature of a lived spirituality. They are looking beyond self both in their acts of kindness to others and also in the generosity shown to them. Many report events that transcend normal explanation and understanding. One such is the account of a couple meeting with a man living under polythene sheets in the woods in Galicia. He asked them to read aloud the cards people had sent him, as he himself could not read. He, in turn, recognized that the companion of the reader was limping. Declaring he was a healer, he manipulated the knee and the pain and the limp went away.

'I couldn't explain it really. Perhaps he was an ace physiotherapist, one who couldn't read, and lived under a few polythene sheets? But it did the trick. I just don't know.'

Arrival and Return

The highs and lows of the journeying and the experience of weeks or months on the road, ill prepares pilgrims for the noise and bustle of what might be called the religious tourism of Santiago. There is the feeling of coming down from a high to renew one's relations with consumerism. 'All the emphasis is on the pilgrimage, the journey itself. In some cases the arrival is something of an anticlimax. "Is that all...?" (Post 1996: 3). Immediate comments are:

'After an hour in Santiago I wanted to be back on the road again'

or

'It's a nice medieval town, but I felt a bit empty and lost in Santiago.'

But the overall pilgrimage experience often builds an inner confidence and understanding of self, which becomes more apparent *after* the pilgrimage.

'I learnt the meaning of forgiveness'

'It reinforced the stuff I already believed'

'The Camino is not a path, it is a way of life'

Common to all is a sense of achievement and purpose. For example:

'I can live from a bag that weighs 9 kilos for over a month'

or

'my own Camino back here now begins,'

confirms the confidence in self that often accompanies the return from Santiago.

In some cases, the effect of the pilgrimage brings about real life changes. One pilgrim told how he gave up his job as a commercial photographer and became a teacher. Another walked into a job he had always wanted after having been unemployed for a lengthy period. This is not to say that participants would not have done these things in any case, but the effect of pilgrimage does lead them, from their own point of view, to take more control over their lives and experience a sense of emotional and physical well-being.

Returning to Figure 1, it can be seen that the journey and community aspects coalesce to enhance wellness, but also contribute towards the fulfilment of self by attending to others. (see branch 6.2 in Figure 1).

Case Study 2: Charity Treks

Charity treks are adventure holidays or expeditions in which people earn the right to participate by raising a sum of money over and above the real cost of the trip so that a donation can be made to a charity concerned. This is the crucial way that charity trips vary from similar or identical trips, which are sold directly to the consumer as a holiday. Although many charities still choose to operate their own treks utilizing the services of a tour operator, Charity Challenge is the main organizing body, which provides a 'one stop shop' for people who generally chose their trip first and then decide on the charity they wish to support. Charity Challenge supports 100 challenges each year for around 2,000 participants, resulting in £15 million being raised for over 550 charities (<http://www.charitychallenge.com/about.php>). Numbers for each event tend to be small, generally between 15 and 30 participants, although numbers can be greater (up to 70) for bike rides. Charity Challenge actively promotes responsible tourism as members of the Centre for Environmentally Responsible Tourism.

The trips included in this case study are (a) a ten day bike trip through the Grand Canyon organized on behalf of the charity *Scope* in 1999; and (b) a shorter weekend trip to

limb Mulhacen, Spain's highest mountain in 2002 undertaken on behalf of Barnardo's. Quotes used in this case study are drawn from a pilot project involving unstructured life history interviews with participants and carried out after the individuals had returned from their trips.

The Journey

Charity treks, embody many of the qualities of pilgrimage in that they have the common themes of physical and mental challenge and the sense, like Santiago, of traveling through a liminal space, as outlined in Figure 1. But more than that, the true charity trekker brings to their journey that sense of 'doing things for others' which can be missing from those who go on charity treks as independent travellers with little or no interest in the charity they are 'supporting'.

For an idea of the difference between the two profiles, the conceptual map of Figure 1 shows that the three interlocking themes of Community, Journey and Spirituality are necessary for pilgrimage and in particular, branch 6.2 (fulfillment of self through helping others) is an essential part of the pilgrimage.

Whether they are cycle rides in America or Africa, whitewater rafting in Nepal, treks to Jordan or Peru, dog sledding in Lapland, or horse riding in Mongolia, these adventures mirror that of pilgrims, in that although they are journeys of self-discovery, they are within a community. As with pilgrimage, treks are all challenging and test emotional and physical stamina and require to some degree, a simple lifestyle, involving basic subsistence level camping and equipment. Participant Gil, who undertook the cycle trip through Grand Canyon in 1999, emphasized that the fund raising was the main goal that led her to undertake the trip.

Those who hold religious beliefs told of occasions when they linked their experiences with their faith community back home. One woman who climbed Spain's Mount Mulhacen experienced the trip as both arduous and spiritual.

'I am a Christian and I do have a strong faith and one of the things that really brings it home is when you are climbing and you can really see the beauty of the world... It was about the same time when our church would be on so I was thinking, Oh put up a prayer for me, just on that last bit. I thought I can't do this.'

But all such experiences need to look outward as well as inward. Charity treks act as pilgrimage when they give insights into self, but do so through daily lived experience, which involves interaction with others in a way those others can appreciate. The pursuit of happiness and well-being is likely to be chimerical if it does not involve others. Just as spirituality and community involve generosity to others, so

does well-being. Shah and Marks note that evidence shows that happy people are, amongst other things, more:

- Altruistic
- Generous
- Tolerant and
- Sociable.

(Shah and Marks 2004: 5).

In short, for pilgrimage to be a reality in charity treks, it also needs to involve spiritual and community elements.

Community

The trek conforms to the idea of the journey suspended continually in a threshold or liminal space where people divest themselves of worldly goods and symbols of rank and status and form new communities, which have common goals and common motivation. The tour organizers provide everything; food, shelter, bikes, ponies or any equipment needed for subsistence living and is usually utilitarian, at odds with what people might have used in training at home. Participants are encouraged to bring only the minimum requirements. In this way, the threshold existence and the simple lifestyle is similar to pilgrims on their way to Santiago.

Within these new communities different hierarchies can develop, and in the case of the bike ride, fitness determined the groupings. Although pilgrims may or may not train for their ordeal, trekkers are encouraged to undergo a programme of fitness over some months to ensure they are able to undertake the trip. Trips are also graded according to how arduous they are.

'There were some really fit people from Aberdeen who wanted to go ahead 'cos everybody was too slow for them and keeping them back. We actually came in last to the whole bike ride but we were all just concerned with keeping together.'

The difference between the charity trekker and the holidaymaker is one of motivation and of something outside the immediate experience. The charity trekker has in mind those for whom they are really doing the trek for (i.e. not themselves). The distinction is that the true charity trekker joins a community that has a goal beyond the immediate task of reaching a destination, namely, to help others less fortunate than themselves. In so doing they commit to a task that is beyond the immediate activity in a way that a holidaymaker does not. This quote from an interviewee sums up the tension between the willingness of the charity trekker and the expectations of the holidaymaker.

'If you'd paid for this you would say I'm not doing this. You wouldn't tolerate the terrible conditions, the lack of sleep,

the really bad kind of organization and the fact that it rained. You would look on it in a different way. You put up with the gruelling-ness of it because it is for charity.

Charity trekkers will accept some hardships. Holidaymakers require order, structure and service in the form of local guides who support the trip and carry bags, food and bedding from camp to camp. In terms of the community aspect of the journey, Shah and Marks' (2004) observations that altruism, generosity and tolerance are characteristics of well-being seem to suitably describe the necessary attributes for the charity trekker community.

Arrival and Return

As in the previous case study, on arrival, participants interviewed experienced a sense of anti-climax or did not want the trip to end despite the hardships.

'My lowest moment was the end. I remember thinking about two days before that I didn't want it to end, as hard as it was, because we were all going to part. I expected the gala dinner to be like a graduation ball. Off course it was nothing like that. It was like some sort of roadside café/restaurant in America. We all dressed up for it.'

In real terms the benefits of increased physical fitness or having 'time out' from the stresses of everyday life can promote wellness; - witness branches 1.5 Sports/hobbies and 5.1 Glimpsing transcendence, 5.3 Threshold existence and 5.4 Simple lifestyle in the conceptual map. It could even be argued that physical fitness creates a 'new spirituality' facilitated through leaving the urban setting to commune with self, nature and others through experiencing a contrived level of physical hardship. For this to be true, and link charity trips to pilgrimage and wellness, there needs to be something that looks *beyond* self rather than just *into* self and elements of spirituality need to be seen as an integral part of the role of charity trekkers.

Conclusion

The search for something beyond self, something more than consumerism, is recognized in the latest stages of postmodernism and in work such as the European Values Study (Barker *et al.* 1992). Pilgrimage to Santiago and the generosity required by the charity trek gives some idea of how people are prepared to look beyond the immediate in their lives and explore ideas and possibilities in community with others.

How can wellness tourism respond to the needs of such pilgrims? The conceptual map of Figure 1 attempts to define wellness tourism as:

'A travel experience offering the chance of self-reflection and involvement in community in a challenging setting.'

This definition incorporates the community and the sports/hobbies aspect of wellness, links this with the journeying aspect of tourism/pilgrimage, and places it in a setting in which the chance for self-reflection is offered to those who wish to take it. So wellness tourism – in relation to pilgrimage – needs to allow individuals to become reacquainted with themselves and their community at all levels, and with their own physical, spiritual and emotional needs.

In this context, wellness tourism needs to go beyond a service 'offer' to pilgrims or trekkers and instead work towards a more collaborative approach in which things are done 'with' pilgrims rather than 'to' them in ways they themselves appreciate. Schneiders' (1989) view is that it is the practical, day-to-day lived experience and the context in which it is perceived that is important. And each individual is different.

Wellness tourism has several important aspects to offer to those searching for meaning in their lives. Two particular aspects are offered here. They are:

- 'Flow' and the nature of challenges
- The building of social well-being

Flow

The journeying aspect of pilgrimage entails physical and mental challenges. The process of experiencing challenging activities and having the abilities to meet those challenges Csikszentmihalyi (1997) has termed as 'flow'. 'Flow' occurs when we are completely absorbed in an activity, whether work or play, and though difficult it, does not provoke excessive stress.

Wellness tourism can extend this concept of 'flow', by concentrating more on the journey aspect of pilgrimage and on different types of pilgrims, such as those who may not wish to walk or cycle, but still want to engage in the three themes of pilgrimage set out in Figure 1. Such people may not have the ability to walk extensively, or may have limited time. The skill needed by wellness-tourism providers is to find ways on the journey, however long or short it may be, to challenge people of different abilities, but not excessively so. Everyone needs to gain 'flow'.

Social well-being

Social well-being is defined by Keyes as 'the appraisal of one's circumstance and functioning in society' (Keyes 1998: 122) and is similar to Wearing's 'social value', which is 'the mutual process of learning and personal growth'

Wearing 2001: 172). Both of these are based on perceptions of how people feel about their own sense of belonging in society and how much they contribute. Social well-being differs from the more ubiquitous social capital in that the latter is more to do with systems approaches to norms, network structures and ways of connecting in society.

Wellness tourism can make significant contributions to fostering individual and community well-being in the way they adopt approaches that interpret and influence the journeying aspect as a vehicle for developing the wellness of not just individuals but the community they travel in. In short, it is the 'scaffolding' that wellness tourism providers

build around the process that will enable individuals and groups to learn more, not just about themselves, but also about the communities they engage with.

Pilgrimage is complex because it is about developing the self and one's place within the community. To tackle this area with any success wellness tourism is in for the long haul. Crucial to its success in the medium term is an understanding not only of the psychology of wellness and of 'flow', but also the ritual and logistics of journeying. It also requires an enabling sensitivity towards those trying to give meaning to their lives that lies somewhere beyond themselves.

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CHAPTER 8

Juxtaposing the
timeless and the
ephemeral: staging
festivals and events at
World Heritage Sites

Melanie Smith, Elizabeth Carnegie
and Martin Robertson

Aims

The aims of this chapter are to:

- Provide an overview of the conflicts inherent in organizing temporary events in heritage spaces and conservation areas
- Explore the relationship between global heritage, international tourism and local cultural provision in the context of World Heritage Sites
- Assess the degree of local engagement with festivals and events that have a national or international remit
- Provide analyses of two case studies of Edinburgh and Greenwich as a means of contextualizing some of the aforementioned issues.

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the complex relationship between World Heritage Sites (WHS) and temporary festivals and events, analysing some of the impacts and implications of staging 'ephemeral' arts projects in the context of 'timeless' heritage environments. While the physical impacts of visitation to both World Heritage Sites and festivals have been well documented in recent years, this chapter also seeks to consider some of the more intangible and symbolic aspects of management. Many of these relate to the often-dissonant juxtaposition of global status symbols (e.g. WHS), international tourism attractions (e.g. festivals and events), and local cultural provision. Cultural providers within urban environments are becoming more adept at programming a range of arts events for local communities, however, these are frequently delivered in isolation from heritage or tourism developments. In the contexts that have been chosen for analysis in this chapter (Edinburgh and Greenwich), the entire historic centres are designated WHS, and both were busy tourist attractions, even before designation. Thus, any analysis of cultural and arts developments – in this case, multi-venue festivals spanning several days – cannot be considered in isolation from heritage and tourism. It is the intersection of these elements that provide the key challenges for these and many other WHS: in short, how to conserve physical structures, while promoting tourism, at the same time as fostering local cultural engagement and understanding.

WHS management and cultural space

With the production of the compulsory WHS management plan, WHS are now obliged to set themselves the ambitious task of being all things to all people: beacons of conservation and sustainability; international tourist attractions; educational institutions encouraging local engagement; and catalysts for regeneration and business development. The reconciliation of all of these often conflicting elements is by no means easy. Most notably, restrictions on physical access for reasons of conservation are coupled with demands for greater symbolic engagement and access. The tools most frequently used to engender this are education, interpretation and marketing. Increasingly, attempts are being made to integrate the educational, experiential and symbolic to this end. Many agencies responsible for WHS (e.g. heritage steering groups, tourism offices and cultural organizations) are trying to animate the spaces and create greater local and visitor engagement. While conservation imperatives still tend to dominate in the majority of cases, this does not exclude more creative approaches to WHS management, including, for example, the hosting of festivals.

Nevertheless, in contrast to this, one could cite Shackley's (1998:1) plea that 'visiting a World Heritage Site should be a major intellectual experience, on a different scale from visiting some theme park'. Accordingly, as festivals tend towards being experiential or jubilant performance rather than educational occurrence, questions may be raised as to their appropriateness for a WHS setting. Do they, for example, serve merely as an attractive backdrop and/or magnet for visitors? Moreover, where they provide the animation necessary to attract local people to sites that otherwise they would not visit, is the engagement of the audience at anything other than a superficial level? Is any depth in communication about the site and its history facilitated by the performance? So, while they offer a conscious and strategic platform for enlivening otherwise dead spaces or creating cultural access, festivals do not always sit comfortably with the conservation and education remit of WHS.

WHS that are whole cities or historic centres need to be viewed differently from individual monuments or sites. They are not only sites, they are also living places for communities, where the complexities of history, culture difference, local and national identity and the whole pulse of coexistence is necessarily served by pragmatic management. In Greenwich (inscribed in 1997) a number of historical buildings have been linked to create Maritime Greenwich. In Edinburgh the World Heritage Site (inscribed in 1995) embraces the entire historic city centre. Both WHS are vibrant, working areas as well as busy tourist destinations and cultural venues. Lippard (1997) suggests that place is a result of the union between space and lived

culture, and that a sense of place is based on a combination of heritage and contemporary lifestyles. This is particularly relevant to WHS that are essentially whole towns or historic centres, and which are likely to have a multi-functional contemporary usage. Local populations may feel more affinity with contemporary cultural developments than they do with a history or heritage from which they feel alienated (e.g. imperial legacies or symbols of past oppression). Their tendency to visit attractions within the WHS may be limited as a result. As is the case of Greenwich, residents from the wider Borough tend to visit the historic centre rather infrequently. Tourists, on the other hand, may be drawn to the uniqueness of place that is offered by the existence of a site of universal value, i.e. a WHS.

The implications of this are that resident communities may be more drawn to experiential events such as festivals. Indeed, this may be the main way of encouraging visitation to the WHS if that is the specified aim of the WHS agencies in any particular locale. The staging of a culturally diverse festival in the same location may encourage attendance because local people feel that their cultures are somehow represented. Thus it may be the *animation* of space in the context of WHS that transforms it into a place where local people feel culturally connected, albeit for a short time. Longer-term engagement is more challenging, and may be achieved through both formal and informal educational channels, outreach programmes and interpretation.

WHS and festival venues

The bestowing of the World Heritage Site accolade can be seen as primarily of symbolic significance. It serves as a reminder that the site or area in question is of outstanding universal value. Of course, questions can (and should) be raised about who makes such value judgements and who are the main beneficiaries. World Heritage Status reflects the value of architectural space in terms 'of the important interchange of human values, over a span of time' but the evidence suggests that the inscription on the list, which creates a forum for the 'better protection and safeguarding of the site' (Edinburgh World Heritage Conservation Manifesto, www.edinburgh.gov.uk, 2005) is viewed as having planning implications rather than cultural ones. In addition, it should be remembered that, in many cases, the WHS inscription was awarded many years after the first tourist arrivals and the original programming of cultural events. Indeed the first Edinburgh Festival took place in 1947 while WHS inscription did not arrive until 1995.

World Heritage Site status is often perceived to offer advantages over other, non-inscribed, cities for the combined functions of destination

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marketing, promotion and branding and, ultimately, boosting tourist visitor numbers. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that tourists are usually non-expert audiences and may fail to spot or recognize a (WHS) logo. Even in cases where they do, it may not have any resonance for them unless they are knowledgeable about the true meaning of status (and on which there is no consensus anyway). More importantly, it could be argued that traditional heritage tourism has had its heyday and that there needs to be diversification of products in historic towns in order to meet changing consumer demands. The work of Pine and Gilmore (1999) implies that there has been a shift in leisure consumption towards more experiential activities, and Richards and Wilson (2005) suggest that, subsequently, cities need to take more creative approaches in order to compete in the international marketplace.

Clearly, the commercialization of heritage of universal value and its reduction to a form of entertainment is not advocated here. However, the observation is made that creativity can take many forms, moving even beyond the ubiquitous heritage trail to more innovative and inclusive engagement strategies. Some of these may involve festivals or special events. One of the problems for heritage is its static location and the need to encourage local engagement through geographical displacement. While heritage can be seen to be inanimate and impersonal, festivals are by contrast full of animation, vibrancy and spontaneity. They are to be found in multiple locations and can be taken to the people wherever they may reside. In addition, festivals can be more socially inclusive than other forms of culture and are often viewed by festival directors and residents alike as expressions of cultural diversity and identity.

Yet there are some problems with the favouring of festivals over heritage or the way in which – it is opined here – heritage may act as distant backdrop to the event itself. Unlike the permanent fabric of tangible heritage, festivals are usually temporary, fleeting or elusive experiences. They can fail to sustain or support cultural continuity if they are not repeated. Furthermore, as public events become increasingly internationalized, festivals may endanger their very own roots and connections to specific localities in the desire to have globally recognizable appeal factors. Small community festivals are often described as offering more for the local people than large mega-events. Nevertheless, without extensive public funding their long-term success is less sure and long-term funding more often than not requires evidence of commercial viability. Viability often means attracting more non-local, often international, visitors.

More significantly, stakeholder relationships in the context of WHS and festival management tend either to be rather complex or no more than embryonic. In the UK, there is no real tradition of local government departments working together, even if they are all

somehow connected to the provision of culture elements. It is not uncommon for whatever WHS agencies exist (e.g. specifically appointed Committees, Steering Groups) to work entirely independently from cultural offices, which generally take responsibility for festivals, events and community arts projects. This complicates not only management and conservation but also the allocation of funding and issues of responsibility and security. In addition, these organizations are not necessarily adept at marketing and promotion (and almost certainly will not have the resources). Even where they do have appropriate resources promotion may be largely or entirely local (e.g. in the case of community-based festivals and events). Therefore the role of tourism offices and tourist information centres (TICs) may be crucial to the wider dissemination of information about both WHS and local festivals. This is not to say that there will be harmonious and symbiotic relationships between tourism, heritage and arts organizations. The philosophies governing the respective sectors are still rather different in orientation (as a historical generalization, heritage tends to be more conservation-orientated, tourism more commercial/economic, and the arts more socially/community focused). However, in some cases (e.g. the Millennium Year in Greenwich) strong synergies and complementarities can be explored and often retained. Since WHS management plans were made mandatory, this has also had positive impacts on the integration of different areas of function and operation.

What have been explored in less detail are the symbolic aspects of WHS status. Of course, these are intangible and difficult to measure. The creation of animation, engagement and a sense of place are all being cited as crucial to retaining the character of historic towns (e.g. English Historic Towns Forum, 2005). However, there is still very little guidance on how this should be achieved. The role of festivals may be pivotal to this process given that programming is fluid and flexible and can be adapted to the local environment, its communities and their cultures. The incorporation of aspects of the location's heritage is also imperative where a WHS is being used as a venue. This may be the tangible fabric of the built environment as well as the intangible narratives that are constructed around it. In some cases, festivals may be able to address issues of dissonance that frequently plague WHS of an imperial or politically sensitive nature. Whereas the physical structure of heritage buildings cannot be altered, associations, perceptions and interpretations can easily be explored through the arts, especially where local people are actively involved in modes of expression and representation. This can help to challenge historical patterns and emphasize the contemporary relevance of heritage. Although something similar can be achieved through exhibitions or interpretation panels, often there is less scope for interaction, animation and the use of multi-perspectives.

Case Study: Edinburgh and Greenwich – WHS, festivals, culture, community and market forces

Using research based evidence the following case studies of Edinburgh and Greenwich attempt to exemplify and put in context some of the issues raised so far in this chapter.

The first Edinburgh festival took place in 1947 in Edinburgh, in large part a conscious and active move to regenerate the city after the Second World War. WHS status was not achieved until 1995, some 48 years later. World Heritage status can therefore be said to have had little relationship with the history of festival audiences in Edinburgh. The World Heritage Site that is Edinburgh's Old and New Towns – distinct and clear elements of the city – are essentially functioning and pragmatic lived in spaces. They are also focus for concentrated bursts of cultural activity throughout the year, especially in August when 'this essentially historic resource is transformed' (Prentice and Anderson, 2003: 9). Indeed, 80 per cent of visitors most recently surveyed for the city organizers stated that visiting the festival was either their sole reason for coming to Edinburgh or an important part of their decision-making (The Audience Business, www.eif.co.uk). While Prentice and Anderson (2003) argue that in 1996/1997, 51 per cent and 42 per cent of visitors to the city cited the WHS status as a reason for their visit, it should be remembered that these figures cover the period immediately after Edinburgh's inscription and as such can be viewed as a direct response of the immediate publicity machine rather than a deep rooted knowledge indicative of all subsequent visitors. Moreover, analysis of publicity materials (1999–2003) for the International Festival and Festival Fringe indicated that there has been very little advice or information offered to prospective festival visitors to the city as regards the WHS status. The same is true of the official Edinburgh tourism website (over the one year period it was studied). Correspondingly, it is unlikely that there would be knowledge of the status, at any level, at such a prevailing high rate as that in 1996/7.

In the case of Greenwich, the first Greenwich and Docklands International Festival did not take place until 1998, one year after WHS inscription. It could, however, still be argued that the two were largely independent of each other until relatively recently. Initially, WHS status created greater political and financial support, followed by measures to improve conservation and tourism development (Smith, 2002). Despite this, the issue of local engagement with heritage and culture has more recently become a key issue for the WHS Steering Groups. Questionnaire interviews with 158 local people in 2003 revealed that 74 per cent of people claimed to know that Greenwich was a WHS, but when probed further in a focus group, it transpired that they did not actually know what WHS status meant and seemed to view the status as merely being a label that was used to attract more tourists.

The WHS Steering Groups for Marketing and Education in Greenwich are working hard to promote the WHS brand – that is, the collective sites that form the WHS. This is starting to include more intangible and experiential aspects of the site (e.g. shopping opportunities, evening entertainment, and festivals and cultural events). As advocated in a branding review by MOR (2002),^[**8.1] the brand image is increasingly marked by attempts to be 'trendy'. Although this review showed that visitors viewed Greenwich as one of the most beautiful sites in London because of the impressive architecture, the negative implication of this perception was that the buildings were seen as imposing and Greenwich was deemed to lack animation and vibrancy. The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) manager also stated in an interview in 2002 that Greenwich needed more animation in the streets, ideally through festivals. Research with local people showed clearly that, although they liked the WHS for its beauty and attractions, they also found it imposing and inanimate. Royal and military/naval connections were deemed interesting but of little local consequence. What is more, they were seen to represent the history and legacy of white aristocracy, rather than the 'true' heritage of local dockworkers, ship builders and sailors, not to mention the dissonant heritage of slavery.

In recent years, Edinburgh's festivals have grown beyond the WHS boundaries, and indeed have been encouraged to do so. This is part of local government agendas for regeneration of peripheral areas. A key example of this is the Edinburgh Mela, which is held in Pilrig Park in Leith, an area (once separate from the city) that suffered the highs and lows of life revolving round a once active vital port. The Mela has retained its significance to the local audience (who in 2004 were 79 per cent of the audience/participants), and has never functioned as a mainstream international festival, despite being by its very nature a multicultural event (Carnegie and Smith, 2005).

The Greenwich and Docklands International Festival (GDIF) is sited in multi-locations, that is, it uses different venues and spaces for artistic performance such as music, dance and other spectacles. The WHS spaces are only used for some of the events. This means that the impacts of GDIF on the physical structure of the WHS are relatively limited and contained, but then so too are the economic benefits (e.g. contribution to local businesses). Nevertheless, restrictions are still placed on the Festival organizers by the estate owners regarding the use of the WHS as a venue, mainly for reasons of conservation. However, residents questioned in a focus group made it clear that they would only venture out locally for such events, especially at night. They would not cross the River Thames, despite its proximity, for example. Tourists may have even more restricted geographical definitions than the residents, as tourism tends to be concentrated in

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the historic centre of Greenwich, thus restricting them to see only those events that were in public spaces within the WHS. The WHS is therefore an ideally located venue for attracting audiences of both locals and tourists alike, despite the necessary restrictions imposed by conservationists.

A survey conducted on behalf of the Edinburgh Festival in 2002 highlighted that while 43 per cent of audiences were from Edinburgh and the Lothians (42 per cent in 2004, EIF Annual Review, 2004)[*8.2], 65 per cent of those surveyed were shown to be socioeconomic group A or B with a further 28 per cent being C1s. This overall figure of 93 per cent being ABC1 is higher than other cultural activities including art gallery and museum attendance (Hargreaves, 1997; Carnegie, 2003). All of which seems to suggest that cultural programming through festivals is geared more towards its economic value than its capacity for social regeneration.

Greenwich's heritage sites and museums tend to attract local visitors (as well as tourists) because of the dynamic nature of their outreach and the educational programmes that support and accompany them. Nonetheless, focus group participants made it clear that they were most fond of spectacles (e.g. arts events); 49 per cent of the 158 questionnaire respondents were also very positive about festivals and events compared to the 33 per cent who enthused about heritage. A content analysis of 90 copies of the local newspaper, *Greenwich Time*, over four years showed that arts and events featured most prominently, with 73 articles compared to 24 on heritage and only eight on tourism. Although many of these were promotional, it demonstrated clearly the Local Council's commitment to an ongoing local festival and event programme (as part of their social regeneration agenda).

A focus group in Greenwich – consisting of twenty local women – demonstrated that they were most interested in festivals and events that fostered an understanding of different cultures, claiming that the mixing of cultures was 'lovely' and 'the best thing'. The programming of GDIF is rich and varied, combining global arts spectacles with local ethnic cultural performances (e.g. school children performing Bollywood dancing). Links are frequently made to Greenwich's heritage too, e.g. Elizabeth I was the focus of the 2003 Festival as it was the celebration of the 400th anniversary of her death (she was born at Greenwich Palace in 1533).

However, during a local discussion group in Greenwich entitled 'Who cares about Culture?', a comment was made that festivals and events were sometimes seen to be sucking resources away from ongoing cultural provision. In parallel, many of the criticisms directed against the local area were linked to the environment and conservation, with clear suggestion that its significance should not be neglected at the expense of cultural programming. Thus the original aims of WHS management plans were brought to the fore.

GDIF continues to attract large numbers of local people despite growing in size. So, although it is branded as international, this label appears to refer to the quality of the programming and performance rather than audience numbers or profiles. The Festival Director states that it is a priority to bring cutting edge professional performances to people who would otherwise not have the opportunity to see them, and thus break down some of the psychological and physical barriers to the arts. However, a series of in-depth interviews with festival directors (Smith and Forrest, 2003) suggested that few tourists will visit Greenwich specifically for cultural events and festivals, including GDIF, and are therefore not always economically viable. Many tourists attend incidentally, if they happen to be in the area. This is perhaps not surprising given the significantly lower profile of GDIF compared to the Edinburgh Festival. It can also be seen as a result of limitations in any attempts in marketing strategically. Similarly, economic impact research is limited. The latter undoubtedly due to lack of funding, and both actions affected by the fact that many of the events are either free or allow special access. As a result exact implications for tourism have been historically difficult to measure.

Unlike Greenwich, which aims to animate the global through the local, Edinburgh aims to be as international as possible, both in terms of its cultural products but also in terms of the audience attracted to it. The current aims of the International Festival include displaying arts of the highest possible standard to the widest possible audience, and thereby reflecting international culture to Scottish audiences and Scottish culture to international audiences (EIF Annual Review, 2004)[**8.2]. Much is made of the number of repeat visits to the various festivals, with the 2002 survey showing that 50 per cent of the audience surveyed had attended at least nine previous festivals (www.eif.co.uk/about). Prentice and Anderson's research also suggests that there is a 'core of repeaters whose imagery of Scotland (is) as an arts rather than a historical destination...' (Prentice and Anderson, 2003: 11). As such it can be argued that to a festival audience events are the core expression of culture and not the historic fabric of the city. This has clear implications for the perceived role of Edinburgh's World Heritage Status. The city is clearly enlivened and animated as a cultural space by the addition of festivals, but the actual contribution to WHS status in real terms can be questioned.

Case Study: Edinburgh and Greenwich – paths towards reconciliation of WHS and festivals

Robertson and Wardrop (2003: 124–5)[**8.3] hypothesize that Edinburgh's recognition has as its satellites 'Edinburgh the festival city; Edinburgh the world heritage city, and Edinburgh the contemporary

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city'. They suggest that any profound assimilation of festivals with the values of being a world heritage city are compromised by the strategic function of the city's festivals to 'have a community – host resident – responsibility' (125) maintained through repeated public sector subsidy as well as commercial partnership. Interviews with key players in the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), with direct responsibility for the festivals (2004–5), reflect clear awareness of the WHS status and great show is made, privately, of explaining how festivals are not impinging on this. However, no mention is ever made in the documentation relating to the city's festivals of how one can aid or support the other. In fact no public reference to the WHS status is present in the strategic documents for Edinburgh's festivals. This includes the two main strategic plan documents: *Events in Edinburgh* (2002)[**8.4] and *The Edinburgh Festival Strategy* (2001). Similarly, the City of Edinburgh Council's more recent evaluation of the impacts of Edinburgh's summer festivals (2005)[**8.5], undertaken by respected Edinburgh based consultants and thus, one would imagine, conversant with Edinburgh's WHS status, give no reference to the city's special status despite looking at many events within the boundaries set in that special area. The research by Prentice and Andersen (2003) and, more recently, in the first phase of its study, *Interbrand* (2004) – the consultancy appointed by the Edinburgh City Region Brand Project (a public and private sector partnership steering group) to develop the identity of city – conclude that in the mind of visitors and prospective visitors the city does create a sense of being a cultural place but not a history-specific one.

While its festivals appear to have little synergy with the built and cultural history in Edinburgh, the strategic purpose that holds it together can nonetheless be positive. It does have potential benefits for the community and can bring together, as Derret (2003; 2004) suggests, a sense of community and place within the overlapping desires to market the destination, attract visitors, and create a differentiated cultural tourism product (Figure 8.1). The fact that World Heritage site status has not, as yet, been seen as an important aspect of this does not necessarily mean it will not become so in the future. Conversely, in Greenwich, World Heritage status is stated as being something on which tourism and hospitality visitor and business interest can be further developed (Greenwich Council, 2002) as well as support the more clearly associated aims of economic regeneration, conservation and pride.

Edinburgh World Heritage (the trust set up in 1999 to manage Edinburgh's status) acknowledge that Edinburgh's festivals are significant, vital and rewarding to the city, but it also warns that 'the pressure on the physical capacity of the Site at Festival times is immense' and states that the challenge is to 'maintain harmonious balance between the needs of the city's Festivals and other communities' (2005: 60). Accordingly, it sets policy 55 and 56, respectively, to seek the



Figure 8.1 Overlapping outcomes for resident, festival visitor and place.
Source: adapted from Derret 2003, 2004.

maintenance of the Festivals within the city centre, and support policies aimed at stimulating festival activities in less used areas outside the world heritage area. These suggest that the strategic managers of Edinburgh's festivals, principally the City of Edinburgh Council, may have myopic views towards culture as capital. However, diverting their gaze from the historic significance of the city and the value of being a WH designated area, the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust similarly indicate in their most recent management plan a complicit agreement not to intervene with the festival and its operation.

This illustrates some of the major conflicts and dilemmas for all WHS that host festivals. What should be the relationship between the festival organizers and the WHS Committees, if any? How can local and tourist audiences be reached simultaneously? Should there be a one-brand image or is segmentation required for different products (i.e. pure heritage versus heritage as a backdrop for cultural events?). Conservation dilemmas also abound, especially where visitation is heavily concentrated (e.g. in the case of seasonal festivals). One obvious question is who should foot the bill for increased wear and tear?

Conclusions

It is the conjecture of the authors that the existence of WHS status for any town or city that hosts a festival or festivals is significant but that it is often under-stated. As backdrops to the performance of festivals, the built heritage is seen as pleasing, but its significance as moderator of that pleasure is most often nominal. That is to say that its aesthetic

appeal is generally valued above its intrinsic historic importance. Although attempts are sometimes made to highlight the historical relevance of location in festival themes or performances, this could be seen as tokenistic. Only where more intangible aspects of heritage interpretation are explored (e.g. local perceptions, associations and narratives) could the role of festivals be said to be truly transformational.

Some of the research in Edinburgh suggests that the city wishes to be a world phenomenon – for visitors, business and its residents. It is competing with many cities sharing similar aspirations. A precise historical backdrop, rightly or wrongly, does not seem to catch people's imagination as much as other forms of entertainment. The same could not necessarily be said of Greenwich as its scale is so different, often being perceived as an appendage to London rather than a cultural destination in its own right. However, marketing efforts there are also shifting away from 'traditional' heritage marketing towards the promotion of more contemporary and experiential activities. The role of WHS clearly cannot be extrapolated from market forces. In the case of Edinburgh this appears on one hand to threaten it and on another to ensure that the festival is not dependent on it (a result no doubt of its much longer history as a visitor destination).

What makes the events in Greenwich stand out from those of Edinburgh is that the events are consciously set within, and in relation to, the identified WHS. While the knowledge of the festival interviewees in Greenwich suggest that there is only a limited knowledge of what WHS means, this is still in contrast to those in Edinburgh where festival revellers partake in the Festival with no knowledge of either WHS status or, indeed, that it has significance to Edinburgh as a festival performance area at all.

World Heritage status arguably has a symbiotic function for the festivals of both Greenwich and Edinburgh. In the former it announces a more organic role than in the latter. In neither can it be said that the status is central to the festival performance offered. In Greenwich the WH status offers an additional spotlight. For Edinburgh, it may be a barely noticed backdrop. The real performance – the magic and the vitality – are the events themselves. Despite this, it is the view of the authors that noticed or not, the spell of the festivals would never be so effective were it not for the fantasy that the heritage-scape allows.

To close, a number of lessons are forthcoming from this study for WHS in general. Ostensibly these are related to potential for the singularity of the spectacle and activities of a festival or festivals to encroach on the needs of the WHS in which they are being held. Accordingly, while the festivals in Greenwich and Edinburgh have different relationships with their respective audiences – the first more localized and the second more international – the retention, preservation and understanding of the significance of WHS appears

to be obscured by the function of the event itself. It is concluded that the needs would be better served if they were composite to the enjoyment and respect of the festival and its location. The history and allocation of control and power in those (people and organizations) with influence over heritage, conservation, the arts, tourism, and the local community, is the dynamic. Change may be conducted through alternative or complementary promotion, and greater understanding by festival-goers and incidental WHS visitors may arise.

Put simply, the WHS risks becoming an appendage to the market forces and social functions of any given number of festivals if the WHS management plan fails to address all elements of its responsibility in a clear and measurable way. However, with exacting management, the overlapping benefits of a festival could in fact ensure that the WHS is both a core part and a specific beneficiary of its activities. It is to this end that the authors ascribe their hope.

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Re-enactment Events and Tourism: Meaning, Authenticity and Identity

Elizabeth Carnegie

Arts and Heritage Management, University of Sheffield, UK

Scott McCabe

*Christel DeHaan Tourism and Travel Research Institute,
Nottingham University, UK*

Re-enactment events have begun to play a significant role in the calendars of individual attractions, regions or even nations to generate media exposure, develop inbound tourism activity and raise the cultural heritage profile of a locality for community development and/or regeneration purposes. The (re-)presentation of cultural heritage in these forms creates a unique set of interactions between landscapes, local communities, tourists and heritage organisations. In the recent past however, re-enactment events have been subjected to increased debate and criticism as to their educational value and meaning and for their contribution to understandings of cultural heritage in post-modern consumer societies. This paper presents an interdisciplinary review of these debates and draws on small scale research findings to reassess the value of re-enactment events as a means of presenting heritage to audiences. The paper argues that re-enacted historical events achieve a range of purposes and provides examples of evidence from a range of differing perspectives including: public policy and event organisers; re-enactors and academics in the field. It argues that the professional heritage industry, tourists, and re-enactors all contribute to making such events meaningful and as such they represent unique frames through which to understand issues of authenticity and identity in the production and consumption of post-modern cultural heritage attractions.

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Introduction

There has been a recent increase in the number of festivals and events taking place globally alongside a developing academic interest in the purposes, meanings and consequences of these activities (*cf.* Long & Robinson, 2004). It is often now expected that whatever the aims for organisers of staging and presenting festivals and events for local audiences, a significant component in decision making is to attract external visitors. The consequences of host–visitor interactions and the impact of these on the meanings and value of festivals is one facet of the debate (De Bres & Davis, 2001). One interesting type of festival does not fall into the category of local festival is the re-enacted historical event. These types of event are also increasing, with an estimated 550–600 established groups worldwide (the historical re-enactment society lists 556 groups and associated traders on a global searchable database <http://www>.

histrenact.co.uk/source/search.php) and yet they have different characteristics in that they are often: organised by the management of visitor attractions or special interest societies; involve commissioned groups often not based within the locality; are staged with an educational aim to some degree; overtly seek to appeal to a tourist audience. As such these characteristics make re-enactment events an interesting case study through which to explore the roles of authenticity, meaning and identity.

This paper takes an interdisciplinary perspective since there has been debate and criticism of the role of re-enactment events in the construction and presentation of cultural heritage from a range of disciplinary perspectives. One aim of this paper is to review these debates. The paper takes a critical view on post-modernism theorising on matters of authenticity of visitor experiences to draw out contested issues of identity and meaning in relation to these forms of consumption. The paper argues that there are many modes of identification and politics at play in these contexts as a basis to develop further research propositions concerning the nature of tourist experience as well as the nature of cultural production in tourism destinations. The paper provides evidence using an eclectic research approach to the issues. Research was undertaken through academic research groups, a web-based survey of re-enactors together with examples drawn from heritage re-enactment societies' printed and published materials and a case study of the UK's Festival of History. The main thrust of the paper argues that the use of re-enactment events as a means of developing 'identification' for a community *and* a viable tourist attraction utilises a management strategy for tourism which throws into question many previous theorisations of the role of authenticity in tourism experience. This can contribute to debates on social identification and the meaning of tourist experiences.

We aim to define re-enactment events in the context of debates in authenticity and post-structuralism leisure consumption touching on anthropological, sociological and heritage/material culture perspectives as well as the museums and education literature and how these debates have been adapted to make sense of re-enactment events as touristic spectacles. We then go on to discuss the various protagonist roles in the staging, performance and consumption of such events, to discuss the relationship between roles and identity structures drawing on small scale research findings. We argue for greater research in this area. These types of events are often staged for the benefits of multiple audiences with a diverse range of expectations including as a part of tourism development strategies. We argue that it is important to understand how these events can link to modes of identification in the context of festivals, events, performance and regional and organisational income development goals which calls for much greater knowledge of stakeholder engagement. We consider how some of these arguments work in practise by the inclusion of a case study on English Heritage's annual event the Festival of History.

Study Approach

This paper approaches the subject of re-enacted events from an interdisciplinary perspective. Although interdisciplinary as a concept has been beset with definitional problems, Nissani (1997) argues that it is best understood as bringing together components of two or more disciplines. This, she argues can occur in four realms: knowledge, research, education and theory. Generally, the aim

of interdisciplinary approaches is to merge together components of different disciplines in the search for or creation of new knowledge. In the context of education, Nissani argues that the purpose is to merge the components into a single programme of study. In the field of tourism, leisure and events studies, an interdisciplinary approach to issues is often assumed although in practice, research is often undertaken within a disciplinary parenthesis be it geography, management studies or sociology and the problems of this have been documented elsewhere (in the context of doctoral studies programmes see Jamal & Kim, 2005). In this paper the concept of interdisciplinarity is applied through the different disciplinary backgrounds of the authors which enables us to draw on a wide range of literature.

In terms of empirical research we have undertaken an eclectic research programme over three years for which there are a number of reasons. We are aware that re-enactors could be sensitive to criticism and we were also constrained by time and funds in terms of large scale empirical research with tourists. We undertook the following research: a small survey with re-enactors; an analysis of printed and web-based material of re-enactment groups and societies; solicited discussion through academic fora and have undertaken a case study of the UK annual Festival of History, including an interview with the main organiser for English Heritage through which we hope to bear a fresh and novel analysis. The web-based survey contained 13 questions aimed at uncovering the level, and direction of people's involvement in re-enacting, the factors that led to them being involved and aimed to uncover something of the motivations for participation. The survey employed a snowball sampling technique and was distributed across a number of internet re-enactor group sites during August to October 2007. Although the return rate was quite small at 41, and disappointingly skewed towards men in the middle class, middle age category, respondents were encouraged to add qualitative detail and this elicited some useful data although a number of the respondents had a professional as well as hobbyist involvement (in that they had identified self-employment opportunities based on their group, or that they worked in a professional museums or education department). This material, together with other data gathered represents more rich detail on the issues of authenticity and identity as well as the political issues underpinning re-enactment events. The survey research was also useful in that it provided an international perspective to the research. Although the majority of the respondents were based in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, we also gained a good spread of responses from Australia, New Zealand, USA as well as France and Italy.

This problem-based approach, taking a qualitative and ethnographic perspective accords with what Tribe called 'new' tourism research (Tribe, 2005), moving beyond traditional management driven approaches to develop more critical and integrative understandings. We do not seek to present an analysis driven by empirical data but to interleave contingent, exploratory data analysis alongside our interdisciplinary theoretical analysis of the issues identified. To this task we now turn.

Defining Re-enactment Events

Re-enactment events can be defined as forms of heritage festivals. We refer to re-enacted events as broadly within the wider class of 'cultural heritage events'

since the main purpose is to present an aspect of a (located) culture's past to an audience over a specified period as an event. Often these events are being performed (and organised) within the auspices of a historical or event society. There is a differentiation to make between the permanent living history displays which are located within a museum context, and the focus on annual or specific celebrations of a culture's heritage within a particular physical space. Such museum contexts of living history displays are also important, as are the non-heritage events or meetings of enactor societies such as the Star Trek conventions, which can share similar contextual or theoretical issues. The focus here, however, is on heritage events, in heritage landscapes which are specifically aimed towards a mixed (i.e. visitor and tourist) audience to explore the relationships between authenticity and identities within tourist-ed festivals and events. Festivals and events involving re-enactment are essentially themselves recreated events intended to draw visitor/tourist audiences, although sometimes, but not always they may have a real claim on the historic or symbolic spaces they inhabit.

Importance of Such Festivals and Events to Localities and Culture

It has been claimed that festivals can be developed for a variety of reasons including; celebration, enhancement of community pride, and maintaining cultural identities (Roche, 2000). Festivals and events in the modern era are derived from and enmeshed within a rich tradition in terms of notions of 'festivity' in which acts of community celebration and/or ritualistic affirmation of community identity are bounded: 'A festival was traditionally a time of celebration, relaxation and recuperation which often followed a period of hard physical labour, sowing or harvesting of crops, for example. The essential feature of these festivals was the celebration of reaffirmation of community or culture' (Policy Studies Institute cited in Bowdin *et al.*, 2001: 3). It is clear that re-enactment events performed by societies and groups do share some of these characteristics in that they most often aim to celebrate and reaffirm some aspect of a culture's (local, regional or national) history and sense of place in the world.

We propose that re-enactment events include elements of both affirmation of community/culture *and* celebration for its own sake, to provide a means of escape from the modern through dramaturgical performance which *requires* the participation of many to achieve these ends. It is this convergence of people, places and performance which provides a unique consumption experience although there needs to be some genuine, even if playful, identification with the event if it is not to '... reduce the festival space to a binomial event, with "inauthentic", "artificial" or "de-contextualised" on-stage spectacles performed for touristic audiences. . .' which contrast with the 'real' things happening back-stage. Such events involve 'complex layering of social reality' (Bowdin *et al.*, 2001: 3) in 'heterogenic and dynamic political, economic and social webs' (Picard & Robinson, 2006: 21).

Presenting History for Public (Tourist) Consumption

The staging of cultural heritage re-enactment events within destinations for tourist consumption forms an important component of the cultural tourism

resource within tourism destinations (Rolfe, 1992; Smith, 2003). In terms of the literature on the participant experience of festivals and cultural events, most recent literature has been produced within a management context (Shone & Parry, 2004). Research has concentrated on for example, the staging of events and festivals as a means to promote tourism to an area or location, and therefore be understood within a public policy dimension (Hall & Rusher, 2004; Getz, 1997). Yet there is little empirical basis on which to develop our discussion on identity work in relation to re-enactment events (with the exception perhaps of Hannam & Halewood, 2006).

The study of generic 'performed events' has been much debated within tourism from a variety of perspectives including: semiotics of tourism; marketing; sociology and anthropology (Picard & Robinson, 2006 provide a useful overview). However there are few studies which deal directly and specifically with re-enacted heritage events although Crang (1996) and Magelsson (2004) more recently are notable exceptions. Within the social anthropology of tourism, touristically-oriented performed events of culture, or cultural heritage have formed a means through which theories have developed on the staged arrangements of tourist space. These have served as a means to theorise on the nature of touristic consumption (MacCannell, 1973, 1992) and the discursive and performed relationships between the production of cultural heritage and consumption experiences (Bruner & Kirschblatt-Gimblett, 1994; Bruner, 1994). Most often, the focal point of these debates has centred on the unequal relationships between the performed culture and those of the spectators in terms of economic or political power and the ability of the former to determine matters of how, who, when, where and what aspects of the cultures heritage is appropriate to perform (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). There is a larger literature dealing with matters of authenticity and education and meaningful construction of historical scenes and events within the context of education and museums studies (*cf.* Hart, 2007), but this paper will discuss this literature in a later section.

Nature and Meaning of Festivals in Sociological and Anthropological 'Readings' of the Consumption Experience

The importance of the authenticity of tourist experience and the commoditised construction of cultural life, cultural heritage and landscapes has raged around sociological discussions on the production and consumption of tourism for decades (see Cohen, 1988; McCabe, 2000; MacCannell, 1976 (1999); Selwyn, 1996; Urry, 1990). Wang (1999) argues that MacCannell's notion of 'authenticity' in relation to tourist experiences conflates the authentic experience of a 'real' world-out-there, with the concept of a 'real' self, what Selwyn (1996) defines as the difference between 'cool' and 'hot' authenticity. However, Wang develops his critique further into an exploration of the subjective components of the tourist experience in his discussion of the meaningfulness of the encounter to the tourist as an existential authenticity (Wang, 1999: 351–352). So, in the field of tourism, the issues of authenticity and post-modern experience has been advanced to the point where such experiences can be seen as authentic and meaningful to participants and spectators even within the context of a largely commoditised and 'staged' experiential setting.

Urry (1988) powerfully argues that post-modern touristic encounters with the heritage industry necessarily leads to the consumption of signs or images, and that identities are constructed through the exchange of sign values. Although attempts are made to dominate through the assignation of single, unequivocal meaning to signifiers, the images are taken in the spirit of the spectacle, and that; 'This world of spectacle is one in which there is nothing which is original, no real meaning, everything is a copy, or text upon a text. It is a depthless world of networks of information and communication in which information has no end purpose in meaning' (Urry, 1988: 39). In this view such encounters with the heritage/museum industry are reduced to a passive, unchallenging consumerist experience, where perhaps the expectations of authenticity of the performance are quite low either for the producers or the consumers.

There is a long tradition of literature in anthropology on the nature and meaning of indigenous festivals, rituals and celebrations which continues to resonate powerfully on the meanings and interpretations of enactments of cultural identity through the festival (e.g. van Gennep, 1960). Caillouis (2001[1959]) argues that the festival has the same meaning in all levels of societies; '... a large conglomeration of moving and boisterous people' (Callois, 2001: 97). The meanings of the festival (or the acts of celebration) within primitive societies is powerful and that vestiges of the 'collective euphoria' exhibited in such acts can be witnessed in modern celebrations despite the 'exalted status' and abandonment being largely hidden under the blanket of 'the monotony of contemporary existence'. Callois (2001: 97) argues that: 'There is no festival, even on a sad occasion, that does not imply at least a tendency towards excess and good cheer.' Perhaps these interpretations of the meanings of a festival also engage with the ideals and meanings attached to the participation in (as protagonist or spectator) a re-enactment event, which invariably include aspects of performance, play, and role-play, and often entail suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience in for example re-enacted battles.

Theorising about re-enactment events can thus draw upon a rich sociological and anthropological history of the role of festivals and celebrations initially within indigenous (or pre-modern) village societies and comparisons between these and contemporary societies have provided a fundamental ethnographic framework for analysis of touristic engagements within the traditional or indigenous populations of the lesser developed world (cf. Smith & Brent, 2001). A large body of this literature is predicated on the idea that cultures and their material and non-material artefacts and practices become commoditised through the interaction of or between tourists and local customs (e.g. Burns, 1999). Although the general literature on authenticity in the productive and consumptive, realms of tourist experience has also become more complex in recent theorising and has benefited from a recognition of individual agency (e.g. Wang, 1999). Re-enactment events have become susceptible to negative *stereo-typing* by the museums and heritage academe in particular which has downplayed attempts to recognise positive engagement and more experiential dimensions of such activities. Hart (2007: 106) refers to the work of Handler and Saxton (1988) who explicitly draw parallels between the 'deluded' desire to produce an authoritative re-enactment of the civil war

to MacCannell's analysis of tourist's search for authenticity. We want to argue again for the importance of all protagonists; tourists; re-enactors and places (and their corresponding management bodies) in creating an authentic and embodied performed experience of cultural heritage alongside the analysis of more sympathetic analyses of living history events (such as Bruner, 1994). As Hart argues:

Rejecting the postmodern take on Civil War re-enactment permits a more meaningful understanding of the subject because Civil War re-enacting is not only a 'good way to learn about the past' in the sense that a re-enactment digests the power of the original Civil War event by approximating it, and then conveying something of this power to the audience by way of representation. (Hart, 2007: 121)

Heritage and Re-enactment Events

Recent years have witnessed a shift in emphasis to reflect the growth of interest in the theoretical and political importance of cultural heritage events to communities and their impact in effecting social transformations in the globalised world (Long & Robinson, 2004). Social transformations associated with globalisation have affected the cultural capital and development of many societies (Appadurai, 1996) and although the relative benefits or negative impacts associated with such transformations remains contested (e.g. Tomlinson, 1999), it is now recognised that cultural heritage events can lead to community benefits including a strengthening of community identity and be used as part of tourism and economic regeneration strategies within many destinations (Smith & Forest, 2006). This is particularly so in the case of events which are staged to re-enact some aspects of a culture's heritage or a specific historically significant episode in a locality's history. Indeed there appears to be a plethora of cultural heritage re-enactment events which seem to now play a significant role in the calendars of individual attractions, regions or nations alongside professionalised media exposure and policies and strategies to develop inbound tourism activity. Such events also serve to raise the cultural heritage profile of a locality for business and/or community development purposes. The (re-)presentation of cultural heritage in these formats creates a unique set of interactions between landscapes, local communities, tourists and heritage organisations (De Bres & Davis, 2001).

Much of the literature in relation to the development of the heritage industry has been critical of the ways in which history is presented to publics for consumption (Hewison, 1987). Some authors have contended that the focus of attention and funding has largely been directed towards the preservation of grand historic buildings of the wealthy aristocracy, particularly in the UK (see Crang, 1996). Coupled with the debate about the skewed historical focus of the heritage industry is the debate concerning the accuracy or authenticity in terms of the historical legitimacy of the information presented (Harvey, 1991). In this view, 'snippets' of information are taken largely out of context and displayed for the purposes of 'edutainment' (Hewison, 1987). Such interpretations are not aimed at presenting historical 'facts' but the surface-value of history, a sign or image of what places and cultures were like (Baumann, 1991).

Cohen (1988) and Cohen-Hattab and Kerber (2004) argue that academics are more concerned with authenticity than tourists are for whom the experience is key. Therefore a variety of divergent aims and objectives exist, each associated with different types of experience although it would be hard to imagine that there is no commercial imperative attached to either type of setting or event, so in some sense the commercialisation argument against authenticity becomes defunct.

For whilst it is easy to see how academics can conclude that such events are meaningless and commercially grounded, recent economic policy has centred on that very role of providing entertainment cultural festivals and events can play in creating sustainable economically viable communities through attraction of tourists (Smith & Forest, 2006: 136). Yet it is interesting to note that the response above alludes to the 'entertainment' function of the Roman gladiatorial displays in his case. Similar comments could not be made in the context of many battle or war-based re-enactments however, and the interplay between authentic portrayal and entertainment is very much driven by specificities of context.

The regeneration imperative which often drives current cultural policy is more readily linked to tourism development policy within regions, and culture and cultural heritage are not static but dynamic and evolving (Smith & Forest, 2006: 136). Van den Berghe (1994) and Getz (1997) refer to the need to take account of 'emergent authenticity' where more traditional forms of festivals and events survive alongside 'invented', modern forms to create a cultural calendar.

But also, we argue that the interaction between the place, performers and visitors allows for dynamic construction and interpretation of the way in which to interpret the event in terms of its authenticity and agree with Bruner (1994: 411) that living history 'can be a good way to learn about the past'. This view is shared by Goodacre and Baldwin who determine that authenticity need not be a barrier to the appreciation of 'central truths' about the past. They argue that:

...`contact with the living past is impossible and those living history interpretations in museums or at historic sites are as much illusions as any other form of peopling of historic space. Their chief benefit is that they allow us to explore our relationship with the past through human contact'.
(Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002: 59)

For Urry (1994) and Featherstone (1991), the post-tourist playfully engages with these contrived and patently 'unreal' experiences which are made meaningful or frivolous through different forms of engagement. Mythmaking remains an important part of community identity shaping and therefore celebration in any case (Carnegie, 2006; Field, 2006). However, it is possible that for the enactors, the participants in the performance, the meanings are played out at a deeper level. In the context of findings of the research with re-enactors it is interesting that from their perspective respondents believed that their group 'provided real and authentic historical displays' or 'pays close attention to "get it right"'. However, there were differing views on the issue of authenticity within the responses, as the following respondents demonstrate:

Depends what you mean by authentic. Essentially authenticity is a process, not an absolute because it can not be achieved. We are in the entertaining and education business so creating a role but coming out of it is essential

if you want to communicate to the public whose experience, knowledge and expectations vary.

And:

The attention to detail and the authenticity need to be there to warrant appearing at legitimate historical sites and museums, and this drives the experimental archaeological sections of the group – crafts obviously, but also how material culture is used or even misused. Walk a mile as they say...

And also:

Most historical re-enactment groups will operate in the red – its expensive, it's seasonal for many and it is prone to fashion. So it behoves the re-enactor to deliver what the customer wants, even if not ultimately accurate. Sad fact is that being 100% accurate and explaining this bores high a large proportion of audiences today who have the 3 minute 'YouTube' attention span.

Despite such economic drivers being seen to clearly influence re-enactors who wish to work with museums and heritage attractions these very organisations are often themselves highly critical of re-enactment in general despite acknowledging their added value to the visitor experience. We will now turn our discussion to some consideration of arguments surrounding the material culture of re-enactment and how this impacts on debates about authenticity.

Authenticity and material culture

Re-enactment events often take place in historic settings, or heritage landscapes. The heritage landscape space becomes transformed from a carefully conserved environment (in the case of a castle or stately home) or agricultural landscape (in the case of many battlefield sites) into a living landscape at that point in time and in the presence of these activities and people and how they represent the past through objects, weaponry and 'period' detail. Our understanding of the past is very much dependant on the material and documented evidence of human activity over time. Whilst academics generally agree that there can be no 'true' representation of the past (Pearce, 1995), arguments vary about the need to understand the present (and future) through an appraisal of the material evidence of the past. However, we argue that objects have no meaning in isolation from human activity, that they are dependent on interpretation and human beings, the object's creators, need objects to define human activity.

Mason (2005: 18) contends that heritage products provide; 'identities with precedent and legitimacy through the invocation of "tradition" and, in the case of established cultural institutions like museums or heritage sites, by lending those identity-claims the authority which public institutions command'. People perceive the past differently and the past is mediated in other ways outside of a museums/heritage context and yet 'museums remain spaces of the object first and of the subject second ... It is this privileging of the object that has done most to reinforce the idea of the museum as a space of seeing' rather than interacting within (Hetherington, 2000: 451). Although the position of the subject (the visitor) within museums has changed in recent years as museums have had to

compete with other, mostly popular, cultural forms of spectatorial display 'the status of the object' has changed much more slowly. Museums are still primarily 'places of conservation' (Hetherington, 2000: 45).

In times of great change however, as is evidenced in post-industrial societies, the present cannot comfortably be linked to the past through continuity of lifestyle, profession or aspirations. Indeed academics argue that it is too imposing to determine what is authentic within increasingly fragmented communities where such reference points are lost or changed (Cohen-Hattab & Kerber, 2004) and this inevitably impacts on the way that people identify with material culture. This means that people are able to create new communities in the present creating or building on shared ideas about the past and drawing on material culture in ways that suits their present needs/interests. We argue that this is one way in which to frame active participation in re-enactment societies and cultural heritage clubs.

Re-enactment events often recreate objects but also seek to interpret them in ways that attribute social purpose, cultural attitudes and moralities to the individuals and groups involved. In the responses to the survey, it was noticeable that re-enactors invested a huge amount of time, research, money and skills and enjoyment into developing a collection of material objects associated with authenticating the detail of their chosen period. The following quotes illustrate some of the material ways in which culture is reproduced by these groups:

'Bought fabric and leather and made it ... Every stitch in every layer is hand sewn.'

'Hand sewing all clothes.'

'"ground up" made several projects, including hand-making grindstones, leather, dyeing etc.'

'Oil lamp, dice, wool and have made various belts and "braids", etc., needles, card weaving, wax writing tablet and stylus, scissors, linen – and have made various bags, leather and have made various bags, chatalain set, large basket for equipment, pottery cups, wooden bowls, spoons.'

'A wide range of living history equipment, particularly medical, textiles, bookbinding, merchant.'

In this way re-enactment events 're-present the past in a form as near as possible to what is known – or even to perceive it as "better" than it was' (Goodacre & Baldwin, 2002: 7). Indeed many of the critics of living history fear the commercialisation and commoditisation of history for entertainment purposes where it seems to offer added value to the visitor experience but detracts from an appreciation and engagement with the *real* as the prevailing attitude towards the preservation and presentation of material culture tends to be driven by criteria such as rareness, beauty and symbolic value – and above all authenticity.

Yet there is little agreement about the inter-relationships between people and material heritage. Historians and museologists Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) fear that if the 'real' becomes devalued or unnecessary it will result in the loss of the cultural value of material goods, as the 'real' evidence of human endeavour,

and all its associated elements of loss and change is the point of existence for museums, historic buildings and landmarks. And yet, Horne in Wright (1985: 70) argues there is a 'senseless reverence given to objects merely because of their authenticity ... as objects without social process ...', he makes compelling arguments that authenticity can sometimes best be represented by admitting that stories cannot be told or understood through objects.

Attfield (2000) considers that living history is intended to transform the everyday object in a way that evokes a *sense* of history, and therefore empathy. She makes a clear difference between the interpretation of objects through the dramatisation of their use and the 'construction of history' required to create re-enactment events, quite literally when considering the attention given to recreating the material in terms of clothing, weapons and utensils (Attfield, 2000: 227). Barr (2005: 103) determines that 'what a museum presents can confirm the habitus of the visitor and can play a role in the construction and social reproduction of identity within specific social strata'. However, re-enactors by drawing on aspects of material culture to shape ideas about individuality and community in contemporary society will inevitably challenge ideas about who are the history makers or 'keepers' of sanctioned views of history through the appropriation of material 'evidence' for contemporary leisure purposes. Arguments such as Wright's (1985) about whether the past is 'recoverable' seems in many ways less important than who is trying to recover it and whether they can be entrusted to 'keep it real', assuming one interpretation of history can be deemed more worthy than another. Re-enactors may also act as both the curator and/or witness to the material evidence and are creating and forming communities that reflect mutually agreed ideas of *past-ness*. In this way they can challenge and change the limits of *present-ness* through the creation of an affiliation to a particular era or place which is not dependant on the materially real or authentic.

Having argued that museums are the approved containers of 'real' objects, and as such control access to them we are now contending that re-enactment communities are democratising the process of ownership and location of knowledge through their creation, and crucially, use of such objects in the present. In this sense we can frame re-enactors as champions of the 'real' in that they often seek to portray ordinary conditions of life (and often death – in the case of battles) in ordinary mortal verisimilitude

Authenticity, 'real' heritage and play

Rather, the question for re-enactors is whether recreated objects are 'real enough' for their purposes and importantly are accessible to people outside of the formal containers of the real – the museum. According to Gapps (1995) who is himself a re-enactor, weapons need to be authentic in style without being potentially lethal; 'swords are not sharpened ... and combatants are not allowed to hit either too hard or hit in any dangerous region such as the neck'. Clearly, although real injuries are unavoidable on occasions, re-enactors do not (or are not intended to) die, yet when given what is deemed a lethal blow they are expected to play dead. In all cases re-enactment includes some element of spectacle or performance and this is at least as important as attention to detail

given to costume, weapons or material goods and Hannam and Halewood in their work on Viking Festivals determined that they are a:

unique combination of two meaningful cultural themes: heritage and festival. Heritage, in terms of foregrounding a sedimented past, a historical and archaeological significance, and festival in terms of foregrounding a present embodied site of popular culture. (Hannam & Halewood, 2006: 29)

To this must be added the extra dimension of being free to re-enact events across space and time. It is this 'playing out with time' but with strong references to assumed historical 'truths' that defines re-enactment activities in post modernist societies. But many organisations, even (or especially) those who do not perform in public adhere strictly to their rules and codes of behaviour. Therefore it is not a contention of this paper to argue that such societies provide anarchic forms of leisure or release from modern tensions and stresses, but rather they must be understood as structured, organised and value-laden organisations regardless of their relationship to historic sites. In order to more fully understand the underlying dimensions of the protagonists in re-enactment societies, we must attempt to unpack the various roles people play in the staging of such events.

Re-enactment and sociality: Festivity and fantasy

Investigations reveal a wealth of activity and diversity. It was clear in the responses to the survey that the variety of groups in existence globally is very wide, ranging from the broad and well established such as: the English Civil War Society (ECWS) and La Columna, to the specific, including the London Militia within the ECWS for example, or the marginal, the Varangian Vikings for example.

These include events commemorating the recent past or living memory, or recreated elements of past times based on known elements of history. Often these take place in contested spaces which, it can be argued have some relationship to the real (i.e. battle sites) spaces fought over or in or can be used to inspire (and therefore become physical symbols of) partisan or nationalistic feelings (i.e. Bannockburn, Scotland or Blore Heath site of English Civil War battles). In some cases as in the battle of Trafalgar celebrations, ex-patriot communities can use reenactment to reinforce their sense of belonging but some groups actively chose to align themselves to events, times and peoples where there is no obvious connection to their present lives, for example there are Viking and Dark Ages groups in Australia, Polish groups re-enacting the Vietnam War from the American perspective and English Civil War groups in the United States. Although the most potent events being re-enacted involve real or symbolic death (i.e. battles or forced loss of cultural values or land), many seek to create not just battles but crafts, products and involving whole families to mimic settlements.

Participants range from professional re-enactors who might be historians or trained actors or interpreters although such individuals tend to work on a small scale within educational or historic establishments. A few are able to make a living from an activity which might have started as a hobby.

Professional re-enactors, or actor's, motives may be easily understood yet it is much more complex to unearth the interactions, activities and identities of a

diverse group coming together with a shared passion, which takes them into another world or era of history than the present. However a great emphasis appears to be placed on the social benefits of being involved in a re-enactment group or society.

In the responses to the survey it was clear that although most people were motivated to join their group through an interest in the specific period in history, an almost important factor was that friends were members. Also in response to a question on the impact of their involvement in the group or society, almost all respondents identified that they had met new friends. Furthermore, the group or society tended to act as a focus for social networks, according to one respondent 'it's the camaraderie that keeps most of us involved'. Twenty-five percent of the respondents identified that their partner did not share their interests, often commenting that they had split up. Equal numbers however also pointed out that they had met their current partner through their interest in re-enactment.

Many re-enactment events commemorate or celebrate war and this seems more sinister when the war being re-staged may still hold potent and painful memories for participants and communities. It may well be that as in the case of the Polish Vietnam Re-enactment Society, the involvement in other people's wars allows participants to make a safe 'defection' in their leisure activities and that the serious business of playing at war does not necessitate any 'serious' identity affiliation. However, even when the event commemorates real battles or strife this necessitates some embellishment and the need for performance as was discussed earlier.

I was a by-stander in a re-enactment of the Warsaw uprising, accompanied by a 73-year-old friend who was a boy scout at the time keeping watch on German troop movements. What struck me was the way in which the event was being presented for 21st century audiences in ways which not only sanitised the event, but which dramatised it unrealistically. I don't imagine, for example, that the Polish resisters actually stood on the top of the barricade declaiming, though this is what we saw. (Bornat, personal statement, 28 August 2004)

The question remains why should people 'choose' an affiliation with the losing side (e.g. the English in the annual re-enactment of Bannockburn 17/09). Eisenburg (1998: 99 quoted in Arnould & Price, 2000) states such events or (authenticating acts) 'lead us to identity not with our present story but with the storyteller: not with one's current identity but with the generative process of sense making'. One of the respondents was a member of the Napoleonic society because her husband was half French. At the heart of these decisions is always a process of identification. It can be argued that localised events help to reaffirm and re-establish community identity and to remind us of the role of history in shaping the present and creating the who that we are, referring back to the sense of the real self (Crang, 1996) as part of a process of identity making 'successfully inserting a band of stability into the present by re-inventing tradition' (Arnould & Price, 2000: 152). The tension is that this is achieved through re-creating the instability of war, although as has been discussed elsewhere the outcomes are known and the process is clearly shaped. We will

now consider some of these elements come together in English Heritage's week-end long celebration the Festival of History.

Case Study: English Heritage, Festival of History

English Heritage host an Annual Festival of History held over a weekend in August which in 2007 attracted 18 000 visitors and over 1000 participants (Burns, *per comm*). The programme may include events that happened up to 2000 years apart, united solely by the fact they are all being re-enacted with varying degree of authenticity within the same weekend. In August 2006, these included, 'Antarctic adventurers fresh from challenging the elements during their "Race for the Pole" (1901–1917), a Basque refugee camp in Southampton, awaiting 4000 children evacuated on the SS Habana from the Spanish Civil War (1937), the Trafalgar Gun Deck, where you can step aboard an exact recreation of HMS Victory's quarterdeck and hear the cannon being fired alongside Battle of Britain First World War recreated aircraft battle and mediaeval jousting' (<http://www.englishheritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.9619>).

Emily Burns, Head of Events for English Heritage argues that programming different historical periods and types of activities appeals to the family market and pragmatically helps to meet their overall education agenda and as the event had evolved over the 20-year period since they began with the single male-orientated History in Action, so also have their audiences. In recent years they have included a children's area to help attract families. Burns stresses that they need to be both educational and entertaining to succeed in meeting audience needs.

It must be entertaining as it is a day out for all the family to enjoy. But we also have to satisfy ourselves that we are producing something that has true educational value that parents... find something that is relevant to all levels of the national curriculum. One of the most popular timetabled activity is always the grand parade at the end, where you get a massive historical march past of all groups in chronological order – people always find that fascinating (Burns, *per comm*)

English Heritage invite groups which they believe share their own commitment to quality and authenticity suggesting that they believe their events do reflect central truths about the periods they are representing. In turn re-enactors have developed their 'product' to meet changes in the market and the seeming contradictions of televisual truths which they feel they need to match in their displays, as is clear from this respondent's comment:

In the past 5–7 years there has been a ground shift in how the public view these events, and how they are marketed by the organisers, whether they be event managers or museums staff. There has been a real demand for the arena to become a show ground, and that is where the poetic licence sometimes can come into play – if a demonstration raises a like for like response from the crowd then you are getting close to why the ancients attended events like the arena sports – even if you are making things more entertaining than strictly historical. It's partly driven by how TV documents history, in itself driven by the use of re-enactors, the public audience wants that visceral experience, often not realising the cheating that goes into most TV production.

English Heritage, in common with other historic organisations are under pressure to programme for increasingly sophisticated and knowledgeable audiences who do not just have to but crucially, *want* to, suspend disbelief for the duration of the event. They have a developed data base of 450 groups and individuals covering every period 'from Roman times to World War II' and although most are based in the UK overseas groups are invited or commissioned as programming allows. In 2006 they hosted groups from all over the world as part of the Battle of Hastings events. They attempt to programme topical events around symbolic dates for example, events in 2009 will focus on the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's coronation. In 2007 they commissioned a performer to write a theatrical piece called *Breaking the Chains* that was performed at five sites during the summer, including the FOH to mark the anniversary of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. They also invited to the 2007 FOH weekend, a music group called Boka Halat to explore the intercultural blend of UK music highlighting the need to programme some events which are more celebratory. Plans for the 2008 event seem likely to include a Victorian seaside scene as there is a need to introduce new elements annually to encourage repeat visits whilst retaining the most popular and successful items.

Overall the event is viewed as a prime occasion for highlighting the work of English heritage and as a recruitment drive to encourage membership which is discounted to FOH visitors. English Heritage's own visitor survey from 2007 suggests that three quarters of all those surveyed voted the festival as eight out of 10 overall with half claiming they would attend another FOH event. Motivations varied but the most popular ones were 'a general interest in heritage/history' and 'a special interest in re-enactments' with a 'fun day out, an educational day out, something different and the Air Show /Knights Tournament also proving influential' (Burns, *per comm*). Visitors clearly trust English heritage's knowledge of history to produce a historically accurate (enough!) event which would appear to prove Magelsson's (2004) argument that 'because living history's museum staffs, public relations, and literature emphasis their historical accuracy and commitment to detail, the three-dimensional, historical environments provided for the visitors are not just an appearance of the real – a mirror image representation – but *real* history ... by convention of the museum and by audience agreement not by ontological essence' (Magelsson, 2004: 61). The Festival of History is growing in popularity as it diversifies to meet the seeming audience expectations of being both entertained and educated.

Conclusions

This paper has aimed to stimulate debate on the nature and possibilities in relation to re-enactments and the recreated past as commoditised heritage events. It discussed the interdisciplinary theoretical terrain to elaborate and critique contemporary debates on the nature of authenticity and meaning in the context of re-enactment events. The paper argued that research in the area is disparate and much of the research and theorising is negative although there are some examples of more balanced and objective assessments. This paper represents a position paper, we hope to have begun a process of mapping out the theoretical positions and research agendas relating to heritage landscapes, re-enacted events and tourism and cultural festivals, and proposed a research agenda. We argue that

more research is needed to be able to capture some of the richness of the experiences for all concerned with such events and understand the activities engaged within and feel that such research would make an important contribution to our understanding of people's engagement with cultural heritage landscapes.

In summary, this paper has argued that re-enactment events form a unique set of characteristics within the generic field of events studies and the study of tourism consumption. We argued that these types of events were predicated on both an affirmation of cultural identity and provided a celebratory experiential context for a range of consumers including locals, tourists and re-enactors. We further argued that the co-presence of all these groups of audiences and performers allowed us to challenge and develop theorising on the nature of identity and authenticity in the production and consumption of touristic experiences. However, we identified that re-enactment events had been subjected to negative 'stereotyping' by the museums and heritage literature within the context of debates on the objectification of cultural heritage and the authentic representation of history. In contrast, the tourism literature has developed relatively sophisticated theorising on the role of agency in tourist consumption in relation to the importance of authenticity in the production of cultural heritage. We argued that in the case of re-enactment events all the protagonists are required to ensure the event presents an authentic and meaningful experience and that the specific role of tourists was to make the interpretation relevant and that tourists can make meaningful interpretations of the authenticity or playfulness of the event.

There has been a surprising lack of academic focus on such events as phenomena and in this paper we have synthesised relevant literature across the events, festivals and tourism field alongside the literature in museums and heritage and the anthropology of festivals (see Crang, 1996; Picard & Robinson, 2006). Crang's work centred on the dynamics of being a participant observer as much as on the processes and practices as experienced by the other participants (or the spectators) and the issues surrounding the representation of peoples and places in historical situations. On the one hand, it appears that such events can be conceived as providing a platform through which museums and heritage visitor sites can engage more interactively and tangibly with the public's imagination of a site or a historical scene. In this sense, 'living history' has become an important educational tool, and also an important part of contemporary leisure life for participants and spectators as well as educators and historians. However, on the other hand, such festivals and events have been conceived as pandering to the spurious and commercial nature of post-modern appetites and which deliver little creative or valuable experience or knowledge of historical events. We argued that these debates dismissed the dynamic and multifarious nature of re-enactment event audiences and their agency in determining and constructing meanings of their experiences. And whilst there is a palpable disinterest in this activity from academics for the reasons expressed above, such events appear to provide to us a rich seam of research possibilities outside of a focus on the historical accuracy of enactments. Crang noted that his research garnered the opprobrium of colleagues. We argue however that there is a need to evaluate the range of activities that can be considered under the umbrella of re-enactment events before we can dismiss all such events as meaningless. Such events occupy an interstitial position where people with different identities,

social backgrounds, and motives collide within a transformative space for a limited and possibly liminal, time and all seem to engage in the suspension of disbelief that is required in any dramaturgical production. Hunt (2004) found that the main reasons people became involved in re-enactment societies he studied were not – as may be expected – educational, but more often as a form of ‘serious’ leisure. Hunt proposes that such engagements act as a means for people to enhance their lifestyle interests through ‘camaraderie’, involvement and authenticity. Our study appears to confirm this although the social elements are clearly important to all participants including the ability to meet new and like-minded people. The crucial question when it comes to understanding peoples involvement is to try to get at whether enactors actually feel they are accurately ‘representing’ someone/sometime else, or feel as though they are ‘being’ someone/time else. Our sample suggests that both happen depending on the occasion but this requires further study.

We propose a series of questions in relation to future research, including: what are the relationships between re-enactment societies, events management and local or regional cultural heritage and tourism policies? What are the crucial dimensions of ‘roles’ adopted by stakeholders both within such events/societies themselves and in the context of the organisation and presentation of events to public audiences? How are the contradictory discourses of ‘authenticity’ played out through the creation and representation of the events, including an analysis of how these events are interpreted by the audiences? What are the politics (identity, nationalism, political persuasion) involved within and out-with event societies, and how do political and historical events become enmeshed in the events/societies which stage the events? How do such events become conduits for the development of communities or a sense of *communitas*? We have argued that these types of re-enactment events, the societies which produce them and the heritage landscapes in which they are performed provides an interesting and diverse set of issues – both theoretical and management oriented – to develop a fruitful new area of research into the contemporary discourse on the role of heritage in post-modern societies, how such heritages are best presented and for whom. We hope to have furthered these debates and highlighted the need for greater interdisciplinary dialogue and research.

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Interviews

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