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The travelling museum of Barberton : making dialogue work in a rural community museum.

Stone, Kristy

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Method

In 2009 I had the opportunity to setting up a museum in Emjindini (Barberton), Mpumalanga, South Africa[1]. The museum was to form one aspect the Emjindini Heritage and Healing Centre (EHHC), which would be complete with consulting sangomas (traditional healers), practising crafters and a heritage trail and museum. The Centre was to be established on the chief's land where he lived and held a weekly court[2]. Although it was hoped the Centre would attract tourists, the emphasis was on making it relevant to the community and not just a 'tribal village experience'.

My intention was always to be led by the community in developing this museum. I quickly found, however, that the community was divided and complex. I was faced with how to manage wanting to represent the community while at the same time resisting repeating cultural stereotypes of 'the Swazi'. For this reason I was attracted to the ideas of dialogue: was it possible for me (an outsider) to engage in a dialogical process in order to accommodate many people's ideas?

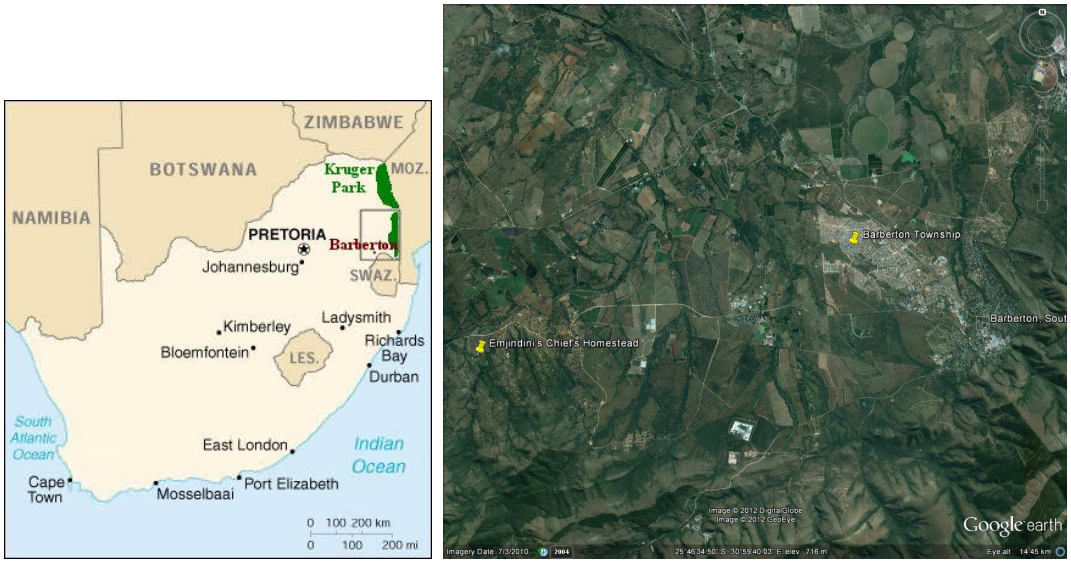


Figure 1 (left) : Map of South Africa showing Barberton. **Figure 2** (right) : Map showing Barberton, Barberton township and Emjindini Tribal Authority region

[1] The project was part of a larger programme run by Professor Robert Thornton, of the Anthropology Department, University of the Witwatersrand.
[2] Chief Kenneth Dlamini was selected to be chief of Emjindini, when the family's chieftaincy was restored in 2001 . The reinstating of the Tribal Authority (so called by government) coincided with a successful land claim for the farm area previously called Moodie's Concession, which became the rural village of Emjindini.




Figure 3 (left): Barberton town showing the jacaranda trees in bloom and the Makhonjwa Mountains in the background. **Figure 4** (right): A valley in the Makhonjwa Mountains which contain the evidence of the earliest life forms on the planet.

The development of the Travelling Museum:

In order to fulfil the intention of working with the larger community, I employed and trained of six people from Emjindini and Barberton township to work on all aspects of the project and to lead the research. This was more than an attempt to meet the funder's requirements of skills development for young people in a 'previously disadvantaged' area; it was important to me to ensure that the museum belonged to the diverse community it was intended for by becoming an *open forum*. I supported the ideas of Tomaselli and Ramgobin (in Coombes 2004, p.151) when they advised that monuments and museums in South Africa should represent the history and experiences of all communities, from their own perspective rather than only from the dominant, or previously dominant, perspective. How could I decide what was important, or meaningful, or attempt to speak on behalf of the community when I was undeniably an ethnic and geographic outsider?

Prior to beginning work on the Travelling Museum, I had been working in the Slough Museum in the UK, which used loan boxes as its main audience engagement. My role was that of Creative Learning Co-ordinator, and my position was funded by an education organisation called Creative Partnerships. Creative Partnerships worked in schools in disadvantaged areas and placed artists into those schools to encourage a new approach to learning. In this role, I worked with artists to develop creative ways of using the loan boxes for school learning. The mobile museum concept is not a new idea; museums have had travelling displays and handling boxes for many years. For example, Reading Museum (UK) has loan boxes that were developed in the early 1900s, and in the 1970's

Sweden created a museum train that would visit small towns along the railway route (Pollock & Zemans 2007).

Through the combination of loan boxes and the work of Creative Partnerships the loan objects were used a stimulus for a variety of drama, art, photography and storytelling sessions in schools. During this time I was also introduced to Philosophy for Children (P4C), which sparked my interest in using dialogue in museums. Many of the schools I worked with had taken new approaches to education such as using P4C, 'Mantle of the Expert' and storytelling as the informing structure of their curriculum. The museum was able to support the work that these schools were doing through supplying loan boxes and artist residencies. Through using the museum objects I gained a practical understanding of how the meanings of objects were not set and were dependent on their context (Coombes 2004; Nettleton et al 2004; Shannon 2009).

When I was asked[3] to develop a museum for the Emjindini Heritage and Healing Centre, I drew on my experience in the Slough Museum. I was interested in exploring how museums in South Africa could be reinvented in order to have meaning to, and purpose for, a wider audience. This thinking correlated with international trends in museums looking to engage wider audiences and to move out of the role of expert by developing active audiences (Korza & Schaffer Bacon 2005; Karp & Lavine 1991). To have simply created an additional museum in Barberton without taking into account the needs of the people and current museum theory would have resulted in the construction of another underused museum. It was for this reason I proposed the development of the Travelling Museum, which would go to people who would not normally use a museum. The museum's primary focus became the government schools because through them museum could reach the most people. In order to achieve this, I drew on much of what I had learnt in the UK. Similar models had been used in South Africa, for example Ronit Ben-Guri's temporary travelling exhibition (1994) designed to critically involve young people in the redesign of Museum Africa (Coombes 2004, p.176). However, while I understood why museums and schools needed to change, to become more creative and inclusive, I did not necessarily know the theoretical basis for these changes. Shortly after beginning the Travelling Museum I enrolled for a Masters, and through this, I have begun to understand the reasons for the shifts in thinking in museums.

[3] By Professor Thornoton, Anthropology Department, University of the Witwaterstand.



Figure 5: A Tribal Council meeting held at the Chief's homestead.

The Context and Motivation for a Community Museum:

Since the project was connected to the Tribal Authority (chief), it was assumed that the focus of the museum would be that of Swazi tradition and reflect the chief's attempts at re-traditionalisation in the area. As an urban outsider I was sceptical about this seemingly political agenda for the museum, and I was concerned that the larger projects alliance with the chief would be interpreted as associating with outmoded politics and essentialism. Tribal Authorities are a controversial topic in South Africa, since the apartheid state promoted concepts of tribalism for their own gain and chiefs were forced to implement its laws. As a result, chiefs were often seen as collaborators or dictators of the apartheid regime (Oomen 2000, p.73). However, since the larger Emjindini Heritage and Healing Centre (EHHC) was run in cooperation with the Chief, and the buildings were to be constructed on his land, the Travelling Museum's involvement with the Tribal Authority was unavoidable.

The EHHC was interested in presenting Swazi traditions, therefore the first buildings to be built at the chief's residence were 'traditional' kraals. One of the criticisms of the current 're-traditionalisation' promoted by Tribal Authorities is that it seems to base concepts of tribal identity and culture on colonial sources which raises the question: which period of time is chosen as the archetypal traditional identity (Oomen 2000)? In academic circles it is widely accepted that traditions and group identity are not static and have continuously changed and continue to change, therefore the 're-

traditionalisation' framing is not dissimilar to the 'frozen ethnic stereotypes' of cultural villages that Rassool (e.g. 2009, p.109) critiques. Often, individuals from wealthy industrialised countries relate to indigenous cultures as commodities that can be consumed through experiencing their, for example, cooking, music and dance (Camarena & Morales 2009, p324) (see fig. 6). It seems, however, that stereotypes appeal to tourists as much as they do to Tribal Authorities (Witz 2009, p.109).



Figure 6: The Shangaan River Club: A Feast of Culture. This flyer shows how tourists from wealthy countries 'consume' cultures through food, dance and music.

However, I was also aware of the need to assess why I felt an aversion to working with the Tribal Council and skepticism about the re-traditionalisation agenda. The question of identity is complex and it raises questions of power and authenticity. Clifford (2000, p.100) asserts that there seems to be almost no limit as to how much a culture (and tradition) can change and hybridise. He argues (2000, p.100) that the agenda for 'tribal' identity seems to be more about 'how can we convince ourselves and others?' than it is about 'is this the real tradition?' Kuper (2006, p.21) writes that granting special privileges – as in the case of land claims - to one group is not necessarily fair, as the groups who do not benefit may be as deserving (economically and politically). He warns that this approach can exacerbate ethnic tensions. Although he is writing about the plight of the San, the statement is useful in the context of the Tribal Authority's land claim and their quest for ethnic authenticity and political power.

In response to Kuper, Guenther (2006, p.17) questions the academic tendency of being 'a touch paternalistic' when it comes to understanding people's political and identity struggles. He writes: "who are we to say that their ideas are essentialist and colonial? Do

we lecture people on the error of their ways?... [saying] that it is an obsolete and discredited residue of western academic cultural theory?"

While static and stereotypical views are narrow definitions of identity, which deny "historical experiences of entanglement, border crossing and coexistence" (Clifford 2000, p.95), the reinvention of culture informs all identity formation, and accepting this enables us to realize "our own partial access to other historical experiences" (Clifford 2000, p.97). Perhaps, in the post-colonial and post-apartheid context, the search for identity and representation by previously misrepresented groups cannot simply be thought of as modernist essentialism. It is important to consider that difference is structured through relations of power and access, and policing identity can also be a means of maintaining a dominant discourse (Janks 2010, p.203). And as a result I realized that my own aversion to working within Swazi tradition needed careful consideration and recognition of complexity.

The representation of a community presented many unforeseen theoretical and ideological challenges. The definition of a community itself proved to be a minefield since the concept 'community' continues to be used to define racial and ethnic divisions created by the state. Even when applied geographically it has racialised connotations due to apartheid's dividing of land along racial categories (Rassool 2009, p. 289). In Emjindini, the community implied Swazi people, but who were they really, and what about the people in the township 'community'? However, as Camarena & Morales (2009, p.326) point out, "it may be possible to argue that as a tool for constructing a site of engagement and contestation, the idea of community has retained a great deal of significance and power."

The community museum can be the space where ideas and identities are contested and challenged. Importantly, community museums also offer a means for communities to "control their future by controlling their past" (Camera & Morales 2009, p. 327). This is a necessary concept in a town like Barberton where history is still possessed by an institution that largely excludes the majority of residents (discussed further in Chapter 2). The community museum could become a space of debate and interpretation and has the potential to "contribute to the revitalisation of a great variety of cultural traditions, including dance, music, and native languages. The museum rebuilds the community from within" (Camera & Morales 2009, p. 328).

When I began to scratch the surface I found that ideas of community and identity in the area were far more complex than I had originally imagined. The young people I was

working with and training were divided on their views of the Chief. The women especially found the antiquate 'tribal' attitudes to women offensive. There was also the feeling that the Tribal Authorities took care after certain families before others. Nevertheless, we continued to engage in dialogue with the Tribal Authority, asking for their input on performances and artefacts. While there was some resistance in the group to working with these 'elders', we also recognised that they were able to guide us in terms of traditions and customs and therefore contributed to the dialogical development of the museum.

Throughout its development the Travelling Museum sought various communities and interest groups ideas. In many cases, these advisory groups had very different ideas regarding the role of the museum and the message the museum should present. For example, schools wanted an emphasis on culture, tourism advisors were interested in entertainment and the Tribal Authority was interested in tradition. This engagement with diverse groups was messy at times it felt as if the museum was being pulled in several directions. However, engaging different groups ensured that what developed was richer and more dialogical than if it had simply followed as single vision. The process of development also raised questions of power and whose truth is valid, which became the focus of this Research Report. These questions will be explored in detail in the chapters that follow.

Research Method:

The research approach I employ is one of using critical incidents which draws on feminist and postmodern ideas of emotion and rejects Cartesian/modernist thinking. The use of emotions for thinking represents a deliberate shift from Cartesian binaries where emotion/reason, man/woman are considered to be opposing. The association of women with feelings and emotion has been used as a reason to dismiss women. As a result, the idea of unemotional rational thought has been questioned by feminist theorists who examine emotions as sites of social control that maintain a patriarchal status quo, but also as sites of possible resistance and transformation (Winograd 2003, p. 1644). Contemporary theories of knowledge (discussed in Chapters 4 & 5) challenge the ideas of rationality that advocate the controlling of emotion in the pursuit of a fixed truth. Emotions are, therefore, no longer seen as needing to be controlled but rather should be recognised as "complex judgments" (Murris 2011, p. 11). As Murris (2011

p.11) explains, “emotions are often intelligent responses to dynamic social relationships; they alert us to the moral dimension of our existence.”

Critical incidents are enquiries that begin with moments of “noticing” that catch our attention and alert us to the need to question. These feelings are often a result of contradictions or gaps in value and action (McNiff in Murris & Haynes 2011a, p. 300), and are often not recognised at the time they occur, but only on later reflection. These occurrences, however, are not meaningful in themselves, it is how they are translated and investigated that can make them moments of reflections and growth (Tripp in Murris & Haynes 2011a, p.300). The interpretation of these incidents can give us a better understanding of the implicit values, beliefs and ideas informing a situation and our reaction to it.

Chapter 2: The Barberton Museum

Inherited categories, inherited thinking:

In the 1990's museums in South Africa faced the genuine dilemma of how to transform in order to accommodate the new political paradigm. There was much uncertainty and debate as to how these changes should take place and many obstacles to change in museums, including financial and ideological constraints (see Kros 1992 and Oedendall 1995).

Apartheid myths of race, nationalism, hierarchies and development shared many similarities with modernist ideals. Modernist ideals such as progressive view of history, history being preordained, cultural advancement and racial stereotyping and essentialising were influences on Apartheid. In South Africa, while apartheid (Christian-nationalism) may have rejected the modernist principles of secular humanism and liberalism, it utilized modernist hierarchical and essentialist concepts of race, tribe and civilization in order to justify oppression (Dubow 1992, p.209-219). As Dubow (1992 p.210) explains, "in the case of apartheid, racist ideology both reflected and grew out of already existing notions of human difference. But, in helping to systematize and rationalize such assumptions, it also worked to entrench them legislatively and ideologically."

Modernism and Museums

Museums themselves are increasingly becoming the prime exhibit, since they cannot be separated from their own history. The history of museums reflects the history of the western world, colonization and an obsession with collecting and classification (Davison 2001, p.19). Museums developed out of modernist values that emphasized objective, scientific truth, progress and civilization. While museums may have been founded on modernist principles, they are under increasing pressure to reform and reflect current ideological thinking. The predicament of South African museums at the end of apartheid was, therefore, not completely dissimilar to that facing museums internationally. Internationally, museums were being critiqued as being political mouthpieces for dominant groups, as symbols of modernist thought, for exercising power and attempting to 'civilise' the other (Karp & Lavine 1991). As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2009, p.39) explains, "so deeply embedded was the old South Africa in every aspect of museum –

architecture, institutional structure, collections, exhibitions, narratives, staff and visitors – the revamping of them and the exhibitionary complex that guided them is important as a process in its own right." Museums today are turning to postmodern and postcolonial theory which encourages multivocality and the display of multiple truths and worldviews (see Karp & Lavine 1991, Karp, Kratz, et al 2007, Sleeper-Smith, 2009). This approach seemed to offer a solution to South African museums; however, the changes have not been easily applied since, in many cases, old ideologies of ethnic classification are naturalised, and as a result, still prevail (Janks 2010, p.65).

When museums tell the 'new truth' of South Africa and celebrate diversity and difference they often do this through inherited modernist and apartheid myths of race and nation (Coombes 2004 & Oomen 2000). Thus, people continue to be essentialised and stereotyped into ethnic groups and, as a result, apartheid's race categories continue to inform our identities (Erasmus, 2008). In many cases modernist understandings of history persist and influence *whose* history is told and how (Coombes 2004). Museums tend to want to show racial relations through the 'rainbow nation' message in which colours continue to be grouped. As a result, instead of posing the questions, they present a message of civic education to be followed (Coombes 2004).

When museums transform to accommodate 'all cultures' the change tends to be a superficial one, because what counts as culture or difference is still determined by past thinking. According to Burbules (1996, p.3), "the apparently more inclusive claim to "celebrate diversity" often just means the exoticization of difference, of the other, as something quaint, charming, or curious in a strange, fascinating way - but still viewed and evaluated from a dominant point of view." In other words, when previously mis/unrepresented people are included in museums, they are still done so in conformity with normative organizing categories. These normative categories are often presented as natural, necessary or universal and therefore legitimate social arrangements (Falzon 1998, p. 50). (This is discussed further in reference to the Barberton museum's display of 'The Swazi'.)

Even when museums try to reposition themselves in the democratic 'new' South Africa, old discourses, patterns of thinking continue to speak us (Janks 2010, p.69). In many cases, the museum displays may transform, but the informing modernist ideologies remain unchallenged, and the Barberton Museum is a case in point. This museum promotes a nostalgic narrative of a pioneer mining in 'pristine Africa'. It consists of a purpose built museum that contains the main exhibition and collection, three colonial

era houses, and a blockhouse from the Anglo-Boer (South African) War, all of which can be experienced as a heritage trail through the town. The museum has always held a Swazi[4] ethnographic display, which, at the end of apartheid, was expanded to cohere with a new political narrative. However, this display tells us more about the political power (past and present) and their narratives, than the complexity of the history and identity of the area.

Today, 'the Swazi' have a separate room dedicated to their representation – through artefacts with descriptive labels (figs. 7,8,9). Further modernist myths are reinforced by the organisation of history as a timeline, beginning with proto-human figures at the entrance to the main exhibition, leading into a display of San[5] hunter-gatherers, to the Swati and then to white settlement of the area. Timelines are problematic because they offer a linear, progressive or teleoscopic view of the past, thereby presenting history as preordained. The display implies that Swazi culture today either no longer exists, or that the version that exists today is not 'authentic' because people in the townships wear 'western' clothes and have square houses. The Barberton museum essentialises culture and history – displaying Swazi culture in this manner prohibits narratives that dispute identity, race and nation.

As a result, based on the museum displays, one could be forgiven for thinking that there were only white (English and Afrikaner) and Swazi people who live(d) in Barberton after the San (which are presented as prehistoric people who no longer exist). This display by no means correlates with what is happening in the town. There is currently a diverse population from all over the country and continent including a large Coloured[6] and Asian population, none of whose histories are told. It seems that the shift to accommodate Swazi culture, even though it draws on stereotypes, is an attempt to pay homage to the new political authority.

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[4] Swazi, is the isiZulu pronounciation of Swati.

[5] San or Bushmen are the indigenous First Peoples, whose hunting and gathering life way is effectively extinct South of the Kalahari as a result of persecution on the colonisation and internal African frontiers.

[6] Coloured people are people of mixed race, especially Malay and Khoe Khoe descent and creolised culture predominately in the South African Cape. The term has been reclaimed from apartheid classification and is now one of self-designation.





Figure 7, 8, 9: Objects from the Barberton Museum's 'Swazi' display. The objects are not shown as having belonged to individuals, instead they stand in as 'markers of culture' – summarising the Swazi into a series of 'traditional' objects. Many of the object are not labelled, they merely exist as 'cultural artefacts'.





Figure 10: Illustrates the idea of the 'progression of 'Man'' – the Barberton Museum display begins with proto-humans (pictured above) which leads into a display about San (early hunter gatherers) to Nguni farmers and ultimately ending with European occupation. This 'timeline' subtly suggests ideas of advancement and progressive which are offensive to most contemporary audiences.

But the question here is not only whose political interests are being served by recognizing the history of some (however problematically) but not of others, it is also a question of how to display history and culture in South African museums without resorting to apartheid's racial stereotypes. In other words, if Coloured people's history was to be included in the museum, would they too need to be classified into ethnic groups in separate display cases represented by unique cultural items? Or could the blurredness of cultural borders be embraced in order to find an alternative narrative to apartheid's race categories? Could the shared, mixed, debated and contested be displayed? While the museum's collecting policy may not have thought it necessary to archive apartheid, the display itself, unintentionally, continues to be a legacy of modernist, apartheid and post-apartheid discourse.

Should the past be censored?

Many museums contain items of a sensitive nature; items that may not have been controversial at the time they were collected, but today these same objects cause offence. Museums constantly update their displays to reflect current socio-political thinking and as a result 'sensitive' items are often kept in storage rather than put on display. In the late nineteenth century, when Europe was expanding and exporting the museum system to the colonies, museums were also justifying imperialism through the newly developed sciences of anthropology, archaeology, geology, biology and history (Bennett, 1995, p.96). Imperialism was justified through the presenting of Europeans as

physically more advanced and to a large extent this thinking still informs museum displays, such as the Barberton Museum display in figure 10 (above). Ethnographic museums displayed the supposed evolution of 'Man' by contrasting Western civilizations with 'primitive', other cultures (Bennett 1995 p. 77). There are many examples of museums from this era; particularly ethnographic museums, that hold contested objects such as human remains. The remains are usually those of people who were deemed less evolved, and the bodies would have been measured, dissected and displayed to 'prove' the biological superiority of Europeans.

Sarah Baartman has become an iconic figure of the degradation and humiliation inflicted on so-called 'primitive' people. After her death, her body was dissected and her genitals (likened to those of an orang-utan) were displayed as proof of the 'backwardness' of indigenous people (Bennett, 1995 p.77). Although Sarah Baartman's remains were eventually returned to and buried in South Africa, there are hundreds of human remains which continue to exist in storage in the Musée de l'Homme (Paris, France) and other. Ethnographic museums displayed 'primitive' people as being stuck in an early stage of human development – a stage from which westerners were believed to have long since evolved. Until recently, a natural history museum outside of Barcelona was still displaying a stuffed San person (Thompson 1998). In South Africa, the National Museum in Cape Town until recently contained a San diorama which was developed during apartheid, using casts which had been made in the 1920's. The display of these castes was problematic in that it denied the individual people who were used to make the caste and the terrible circumstances that led to the demise of the San. The removal of this diorama stirred a furious debate with many people feeling that there was nothing wrong with the display (Coombes, 2004 p.227). Similarly, the Hunterian Museum of Anatomy, University of the Witwatersrand, houses a collection of human specimens and casts of different 'tribes' that naturalises physical anthropology's classification of people. (http://www.wits.ac.za/academic/health/museums/10368/hunterianmuseum.html).

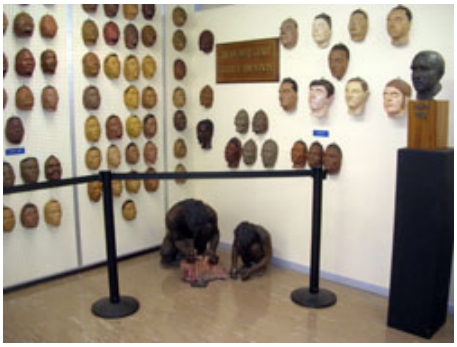




Figure 11, 12: The Hunterian Museum's collection of essentialised facial features of 'tribes'. Note in Figure 11 the 'early' humans making a fire on the floor contrasted with the 'great man' bust.

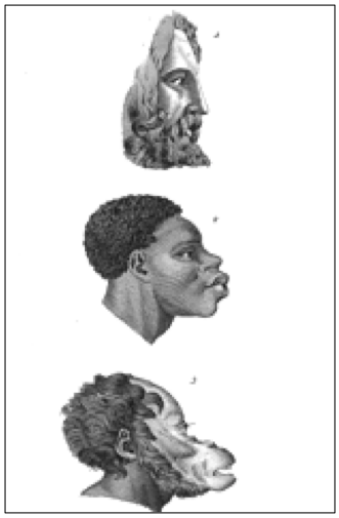


Figure 13: Ideas of 'race' are presented as hierarchical in the 19th Century.

Many museums, especially those in small towns, do not keep a record of their past displays. Museums that are aware of the sensitivity of objects are faced with the question of whether to continue to display these artefacts – in order to show their own history and past thinking – or whether to remove these items from display and place them in storage.

Displaying sensitive objects without reforming the display or education could mean that people continue to be 'ideal' readers (Janks 2010, p. 61). All texts (visual, verbal and written) position readers in a particular way and an ideal readers accept the authors version of the world - in the museum context the author is the curator. This is not to suggest, however, that audiences are passive and uncritical. For example, audiences

were shocked at the use of KhoeKhoe[7] and San casts and objects in the 'Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of Khoi and San History and Material Culture' (1996) exhibition. The artist Pippa Skotnes had intended for the use of these objects to be a critique of the harsh and degrading treatment, dispossession and near eradication these people had endured. However, the majority of the audience members did not appreciate the critique and found the work insulting (Coombes 2004, p.237). But this painful experience should not deter museums from engaging with their own practice and audiences critically.

Many museums are not self-reflecting and remain unaware of their own bias or normative categories. As a result, they continue to display sensitive objects in insensitive ways. For example, the Barberton Museum houses a large collection of photographs that provide an insight into a remarkably complex history, but many of these photographs (and their labels) would be considered racist and sexist by viewers today. As with a written text, visual text (photographs) can be read critically to reveal the social and political thinking of the time that they were taken. I suggest that the display of these images should not be censored, but that they should also not be used without comment and interrogation. Photographs are not a 'neutral' representation of the world, they are framed and influenced by the author – the photographer (Bradford, 2004). Photographs, therefore, should always be deconstructed.

In the Barberton Museum's 'Swazi' section I was shocked to find that blatantly voyeuristic Victorian photographs of Swazi women had been included in the cultural display (see fig. 14 below). In the nineteenth Century, white male photographers realized that provocative images of black women were a lucrative trade. As with Sarah Baartman, the image of the "Swazi girl" would have been a binary opposite of the Victorian (white) lady. Victorian English women were expected to be chaste and even showing an ankle was considered erotic (Bradford 2004, p.72). This idea was contrasted with the construction of black women as over-sexualized and obtainable. The inclusion of this photograph in the section on Swazi women's dress, without problematising the image, normalizes the male gaze and the 'erotic exotic'.

[7] KhoeKhoe were (although their descendants *are*) an indigenous nomadic pastoralist group who migrated down to the Cape over the last 2000 years. They are not Khoisan – the concept Khoisan is a linguistic category, not a culture group.



Figure 14: This blatantly voyeuristic image was used in the display which illustrates Swazi women's dress in the Barberton Museum. The image is used without comment or intervention.

Another image which struck me as absurd to use without intervention is the photograph of the two Victorian children (fig. 15, below). It is an intriguing picture because the child in the pram is a white girl who seems to be being pushed by a black boy of an equivalent age. The photograph is unusual, and one wonders why these two children were posed in this way. However, the museum offers no explanation for this captivating image, it is merely printed onto a screen and displayed.



Figure 15: An intriguing image that is included in the Barberton Museum display with no caption or explanation.

After looking through the museum's archives (and display) I found many more pictures of young black boys in photographs with 'white' parties. In these photographs, many of the young boys are holding white babies. A first thought was that these boys were not noticeable, they seemed to fade into the background and I got the distinct feeling that they are included in the photographs by accident of being there (fig. 16, 17 below). These photographs represent an important aspect of social history, one that is about dates and timelines, but tells of changing, oppressive and enmeshed social relations. They talk about the push and pull of contact – of mixing, changing and in some cases rebelling (Clifford 1997, p.192).

It was in the book *Mpumalanga: an illustrated history* (Delius & Hay 2009) that I was able to find some explanation for the profusion of these young boys in early Barberton family photographs. The most likely explanation is that the boys were *inboekelinge,* which directly translated means booked-in or indentured, but it really meant slave. The practice of taking young boys (and girls) was justified by Boers (and British) as rescuing children who were orphaned by raids and wars. However, Delius and Hay (2009, p.57) argue that records of sales of *ingeboekelinge* suggest less philanthropic motives. The children were usually captured and sold as cheap labour. Between the 1850s and 1860s approximately 1000 children were traded each year, many supplied by Swazis "determined to cement a relationship with the Boers"[8] (Delius & Hay 2009 p.57). *Ingeboekelinge* were, however, not always or only victims. Many, having been trained by their colonial masters as sharp shooters, decided to join the Pedi resistance to Boers (Delius 1983). This aspect of many of the lives of *ingeboekelinge* disrupts a temptingly neat understanding of oppressor and oppressed. As does a careful consideration of the photographs, figures 16 & 17. It is clear that the young black boys are included in the photograph deliberately. They would have had relationships (perhaps not equal) with all the family members.

The photograph of the two children (fig.15, above) is in itself interesting and thought provoking and one is immediately drawn into questioning their relationship. It is hard to imagine that the children in figure 15 did not have a friendship of some kind. However, as with many images of *ingeboekelinge* (fig. 16,17, below), unless encouraged by the display to read visual imagery critically, the viewer could unintentionally be the

[8] Delius and Hays (2009, p.57) suggest that it was through pressure from the British that the Boers ceased in the trade of *ingeboekelinge*. However, based on the photographs I saw in the Barberton museum, perhaps colonial British families made use of *ingeboekelinge* more frequently than the authors present.

'ideal reader' who sees the photograph from the perspective of the person who took it. In other words, the *ingeboekelinge* could remain unseen.



Figure 16: Photograph of a picnic party, showing an *ingeboekeling* in the foreground holding a baby. Barberton.



Figure 17: Photograph showing servants and possible *ingeboekeling* on a picnic. Barberton.

If these photographs are viewed without critique, the concern is that they will normalize ideas of race and racism. Similarly, as I write these paragraphs I am also aware of how difficult it is to speak about a history of racism without using racial categories. How does a museum discuss the history of the town without resorting to ethnic stereotypes when race determined who lived how and where?

Faced with these questions it may be tempting to recommend that museums remove all sensitive artefacts and imagery in order to present a new politically correct message. However, although removing controversial items or displays may seem advisable, it does raise another set of questions about the power relations between the museum and its public. The ideas of Haynes and Murris (2011b) on censorship in education can be applied to the museum's paternalistic censoring of contentious subject matter. When museums avoid controversy to 'protect' people, they may also "limit the opportunities for thinking" (Haynes & Murris 2011b, p.23). Censoring implies that the public cannot think critically, that they are unable to handle uncertain truths (Haynes & Murris 2011b, p.34) and that the museum knows what is best for the public. This approach results in some museums continuing to present moral social messages for people to memorise and practice, instead of presenting knowledge as contested, uncertain and at times disturbing (Haynes & Murris 2011b, p.23). Therefore, while displaying controversial objects without intervention could allow racist thinking to persist, on the other hand, removing these items would not allow people to question and explore their own beliefs and thinking.

Perhaps the question is not whether or not to display, but rather *how* to display in a way that removes the museum's authority as provider of 'facts' and moves towards encouraging questioning, debate and criticism. For Haynes and Murris (2011b, p. 24) the use of 'sensitive' material in education is to create controversy, but to encourage enquiry into beliefs, emotions and moral standpoints. Through this process of questioning and dissent, participatory democracy is practiced (Sheppard et al 2011, p.70). Participatory democracy relies on the active, critical social engagement, unlike representative democracy where the focus is on voting for a legislative body to act on one's behalf – such as a government who sponsors a museum. Controversy is central to the development of a participatory democracy which is messy, uncertain and "chock full of diverse individual views and concerns of various interest groups" (Sheppard et al 2011, p.70). Museums such as the Barberton Museum tend to reflect representative democracy by showing 'agreement on facts' or following a "prescription for harmonious living"(Sheppard et al 2011, p.70). The Barberton museum receives its funding from the government through the provincial Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR). As a government institution the Barberton museum presents a government sanctioned message.

To conclude I would like to link these theoretical ideas with practical application. While it is easy to criticize the Barberton Museum's use of problematic images, I found that in the development of the Travelling Museum many similar controversial subjects arouse through our research.

The photograph of the 'Swazi Girl' was selected by one of the trainees for the use in our loan boxes. When I asked the group what they thought of this image, the men agreed that this was an attractive woman. I felt really frustrated, but also saw this as an opportunity to engage in a dialogue about whom they think took the picture and who the intended audience might be. Personally the dialogue highlighted how critical visual literacy needs to form part of museum/school education, and that a museum curator can never assume that its audience is going to read an object in the way they intended. This incident highlighted how all objects have multiple meanings and it is only through open discussion (not by the museum remaining neutral) that we can begin to challenge our perceptions. Controversial objects and images cannot simply be displayed in the hope that people will question them, rather, they need to be used as a stimulus for dialogue.

Chapter 3: The Development of the Travelling Museum

This chapter provides a background to museums and their link with citizenship. I discuss the theoretical basis for the shifts from modernism proposed in the Travelling Museum. As many contemporary museums move from modernist temples to open forums through changing who is in power – whose discourses are given credibility? In constructing the Travelling Museum it was important that I did not dictate what the museum would value. This is in itself, however, presented challenges and questions.

Museums, Power and Democracy

My research has led me to the understanding that are issues of power at the heart of museums politics which have led to exclusion and misrepresentation of social or economic groups. Scholars such as Bennett (1995) have analysed questions of power and access in museums through using Foucauldian theory, and these ideas have emerged as key to the postmodern[9] and postcolonial transformations that museums are called on to make. Today it is almost impossible to view museums as natural or neutral, rather they appear as social constructs that produce "regimes of truth" (Foucault in Hooper-Greenhill 1989). "Regimes of truth" are generated and sustained by power structures such as schools, disciplines and laws. Museums too, are power structures that uphold, construct and regulate 'truth'. For this reason, the 'truth' of museums cannot be separated from their informing social and political history (Coombes 2004; Rassool 2006).

Many scholars argue that museums have their roots in Renaissance Cabinets of Curiosities (Arnold 2006, p.323; Hooper-Greenhill 1994; Bennett 1995) and royal menageries (Anderson 1995, p. 276). Today these collections may seem haphazard and disordered because the organising rationality was informed by Rennaissance epistemology, which is different to our "regime of truth". According to Hooper-Greenhill (1989), the social and political upheaval of French Revolution and the introduction of democracy produced a "new regime of truth". During this time, what had been elite collections were rearticulated as democratic instruments for public education – earlier Rennaissance meanings were rewritten. "Collections themselves were torn out of their spaces and groupings and were rearranged in other contexts as statements that

[9] I use Falzon's (1998) spelling of postmodern.

proclaimed at once the tyranny of the old and the democracy of the new (Hooper-Greenhill 1989 p.5).

Everything belonging to the king, aristocracy and the church were claimed for the new Republic (Hooper-Greenhill 1989). While this reformation may have begun in France[10], it soon spread to the rest of Europe. In the 19th century curiosity displays and menageries were transformed into natural history museums and zoological gardens that were open to the public. This change came about through the political transformations towards democracy and industrialisation, but it was also brought about through Enlightenment thinking which set separated the church and state. Secular knowledge was considered to be rational, 'objective', testable, whereas religion was belief, a personal choice (Duncan 1995, p. 8). Secular truth became the authoritative truth, and museums held society's 'truest' knowledge and official cultural memories (Duncan, 1995, p.8).

It is, however, with care that I submit this overview of the museum's history. Presenting the history of museums as a progression through Renaissance, Enlightenment and Modernist thinking reinforces Western ideological conceptions of time. A further critique of this historical account is offered by Bennett (1995, p.93) who cautions against viewing the museum's 'progression' as linear because this does account for the primary function of the museum – the display and exercising of power. Bennett applies Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979) to argue that previously the state displayed power through public punishment, but in the 18th Century this was replaced by cultural institutions such as museums that aimed to discipline through "self-improvement" and "inner transformation"(Bennett 1995, p.24). By the nineteenth century prisons had become places where punishment happened behind high walls rather than publicly. Conversely, the museum transformed from being a place of exclusion to a public institution. In order to curb working class 'anti-social' behaviour such as riots and drinking, museums were built to teach working class people refinement and public manners. Museums were part of a political programme which aimed to get people out of public houses and into newly established free civic facilities such as parks and libraries. By offering 'unrestricted' entry to all citizens, museums aimed to utilise high culture as a social reformer. Through equal access it was hoped that "the rough and raucous might learn to civilise themselves by modelling their

[10] This is not to suggest that France began democracy. There are many societies who practiced democracies before.

conduct on the middle-class codes of behaviour to which museum attendance would expose them" (Bennett 1995, p.28).

As a result, while professing to be democratic and for the people, museums became instruments of control and power. This was the birth of the modernist museum – open to all, but authorative, hierarchical and absolute. Through an analysis of power, access and the "politics of truth" (Foucault in Bennett 1995, p. 91) contemporary museums are consciously making changes to make their practice more inclusive. My proposal for a Travelling Museum was influenced by the changes I saw in museums and education that advocated inclusion and representation of a wider audience. The Travelling Museum would challenge the following canons of modernism:

1) Architecture

Architecture and lighting influences our movement, as does how objects are arranged and spaces sequenced which provide a script. Many museums provide a map for navigation, and the script is usually a structured narrative, like that of a medieval cathedral, where pilgrims followed a "narrative route" and would stop at fixed points to contemplate and pray (Duncan 1995, p.12). Duncan submits that since museums are temples of secular knowledge, when visiting a museum we are enacting the ritual of citizenship (Duncan 1995, p.12). While these rituals may be disguised, museums present cultural beliefs about the world – past and present and the individual's place in it (Duncan, 1995, p.8). For Bennett (Bennett 1995, p. 102) museums were opened to the public in order to expose working class people to "the improving mental influence of middle-class culture". They became places to be seen and to see the public – "an exercise in civics".

Since museums precursors – princely collections – were originally designed for the enjoyment exclusive groups, they had many small rooms packed with objects. This made surveillance almost impossible. When museums were first opened to the public, it was feared that it would result in damage and disorder. Influenced by the nineteenth century exhibitionary institutions, such as shopping arcades, railway stations, market places and particularly the design of the London's Crystal Palace, museum architecture was able to appropriate architectural innovations for 'crowd control'. Bennett (1995, p.20), using Foucault's concepts of order and discipline, argues that it is the elevated viewing platforms that allowed the crowd to be viewed by itself, in this way breaking up the crowd into individuals that both observe and are observed. Relying on its architecture,

the museum began to use culture to encourage inner transformation and self-regulating behaviour.

Museums were deliberately imported to the colonies in order to educate subjects on how to be good citizens of the Empire. Through these displays South Africans were taught their place in the hierarchy of nations (Coombes 1995). However, it was only white people who were the imagined audience and benefactors of the civilising museum rituals, black people may have been 'tribal subjects' but they were not considered worthy of museum education. This exclusion was exacerbated by apartheid's exclusion of 'non-white' people. As a result the design of many museums in South Africa, still suggests the intimidation of the old regime. For example, the majority of people in Barberton township and Emjindini felt intimidated by the Barberton Museum and did not feel it was a place for them (project notes, 2009).

Several of the gallery educators at *Documenta 12* (2007) became interested in how gallery space affects our behaviour. As Stoger (in Neuman 2009, p.162) notes, "we behave differently in spaces we know, usually more naturally and confidently, than in those we don't, which we must first appropriate for ourselves". The museum educators created interventions in the gallery spaces in order to encourage people to think about spaced influence how they view art works and how they behave. The exhibition organisers realised that the museum visitors would probably be expecting to follow particular routes through the exhibition, but they decided to disrupt this to encourage people to "discover" the museum for themselves by laying out arbitrary routes around the museum (Neumann 2009, p.162).

The use of the travelling exhibition format served to move the museum away from imposing and expensive architecture, and towards a model that is accessible to a wider audience. Importantly, the Travelling Museum would also offer a new concept of citizenship, which challenged the still-lingering apartheid ideas of a solely white audience.

2) The role of objects

Since the museum's conception objects have always played a significant role in how museums produce truth. In the nineteenth century the birth of the museum was simultaneous with the development of the new academic disciplines of biology, geology, archaeology, anthropology, history and art history which were used to organise

museum objects to tell the story of 'Man's' evolution, with the West being the pinnacle of progress. Objects were accorded a position in this 'flow of time' and therefore, on an evolutionary scale (Bennett 1995, p.96). By isolating objects, certain differences were made apparent, and objects were classified through hierarchies of evolution and displayed according to these constructed differences (Hooper-Greenhill 1989). In this process, a norm of "white, bourgeois male" was created, and all variations from this were considered deviations. For example, the crania of Aborigines were displayed at the Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford, UK) as underdeveloped and therefore lower on the evolutionary scale (Bennett 1995, p.102).

The display of isolated objects on an evolutionary scale ensured that alternative meanings of the objects were suppressed as irrelevant (Duncan 1995, p.17). The meanings of objects are, therefore, created through the "ruling-class rhetoric" in which curators are trained and museums are managed. As a result, museums to tell us more about the agendas of the powerful class than about the objects displayed (Bennett 1995, p.127).

In order to move museums out of the role of 'civiliser' and authority, museums have shifted the role of objects in their displays. Objects no longer represent classification systems and hierarchies and their innate multi-meanings are embraced. The Travelling Museum objects were to be for handling and use in performance, therefore, the objects could not be irreplaceable or sentimental donations. The objective of the museum, therefore, would not be the conservation of objects, but rather to encourage active participation, present living culture, and thus the meanings of the objects would be open to change.

Providing information in the form of English written texts would prohibit participation since literacy levels are low in rural areas. Therefore, by creating a performance based museum we hoped to engage a wider audience. The use of storytelling would also draw on educational methodologies that encourage using different perspectives and incorporate oral traditions.

In this way, the Travelling Museum moves from modernist conceptions of knowledge and learning. The museum can, therefore, employ a self-reflexive stance and resist presenting truth as a fixed body of knowledge assumed to be independent of those who created it. When truth is presented as 'fixed', the museum visitor is rendered passive, and is expected to absorb and memorise facts from the expert (the museum) (Hooper-

Greenhill, 1989). However, as theories of knowledge shift towards recognising truth as subjective, so too does the role of museums transform to an *open forum* – where knowledge is negotiated, contested and shown to be historically and culturally located (Cameron in Karp & Lavine 1991, p.3).

4) Language

Ensuring that the museum was able to 'speak' in SiSwati and English was necessary since it was to work in both the rural area of Emjindini, the township[11] and the Barberton town[12]. The use of English as *lingua franca* in South Africa means that many, especially rural people who do not speak English, do not have access to information. As Janks (2010, p.142) explains, "proficiency in English has become implicated in the structuring of social inequalities in countries where it determines access to information and material advantage". The prioritising of English contributes to social inequalities, and the devaluing of 'other' ways of being (Janks 2010, p.142).

Language describes a way of being in the world, it is tied to our "discourse community" and sense of self (Janks 2010, p. 145). When presenting the Travelling Museum performance to the Barberton Education Circuit Manager, she complained that one of the trainees was not speaking 'pure' Swati, and that this would lower the standards in the schools. Just as cultures are not static, and are continuously hybridising and shifting, so is language. As with all languages, English consists of fine distinctions, such as accent, pronunciation, body language and politeness, all of which can mark outsiders and restrict access (Bourdieu in Janks 2010, p.147). Instead of diversity of language being embraced, it is often used as a marker of social hierarchy and considered a corruption a 'pure' language. However, the diversification of language is a powerful means of subverting and challenging dominant 'superior' discourses (Janks 2010, p. 147). The performances of the Travelling Museum were done in a mix of English and SiSwati, to promote the importance of multilingualism.

When performing for a group of American and South African students for Wits University, a few American students complained that they could not understand the English spoken by the Travelling Museum. I found it perturbing, that instead of feeling

[11] Township or location refers to formal and informal settlement areas which during apartheid were designated for 'non-whites'. They are usually at the perimeters of towns, and often lack infrastructure.

[12] English and SiSwati are the largest spoken and understood languages in the area, however, they are by no means the only languages. Afrikaans, Shangaan and SeSotho are also widely spoken, and many people can speak more than one language.

the need to 'tune' their ears into a new way of speaking English, it was immediately assumed that American English was superior and, therefore, desirable.

The attitude of the some of the American students[13] also seemed to indicate the belief that they were the intended audience for this performance – that they were the centre. It was interesting to note, how, on this day, it was the South African students who were knowledgeable about Swazi culture and they knew the objects and the songs. In this way, the South African students became the 'centre'. After the evening's storytelling performance, the South African students and the members of the Travelling Museum sang 'traditional' songs, drummed and danced. This shift in audience made me aware of how culture, while a problematic concept, can also be used to make 'the other' a new centre.

5) Led by local people

As soon as the project began, I employed six young 'Swazi' people as trainees (fig. 18) and to lead the research. The only model of a museum they had experienced was the dated Barberton museum (I later discovered most had never been). I certainly did not want to dictate what the museum should be, yet I was also aware that people and history are not 'pristine', waiting for representation in the museum, and that apartheid's myths still lingered. South Africa faces the dilemma of how to acknowledge cultural diversity and non-Western ways of being and knowing, without repeating the apartheid strategies of 'separate development' and ethnic classifications (Coombes 2004, p.155). Generations of oppressive rule – colonial and apartheid – have strategically devalued, denied or reinvented South African history to justify their regimes, therefore, we are faced with the task of deciding which truths should be valued by museums and how museums should represent difference without resorting to identity policing and stereotyping.

As a group we discussed questions of identity and culture, and whether tradition had any place in peoples lives today. Suffice to say that everyone in the group, although being able to speak Swati, all had a different idea of what being Swati meant and what made one a Swati or not. Furthermore, two members of the group spoke about being classified racially into one group, but identifying culturally with another. This was interesting to me, since it seemed to unravel meta-narratives of nation, and spoke about individuals' life experiences and understandings. Furthermore, these narratives spoke of

[13] Of course the 'Americans' are themselves are not a homogenous group.

a democratic processes developing through the contesting of 'frozen ethnic stereotypes' which seem to inform the political agendas of Tribal Authorities.

It is not a question of inclusion, but a need for change (Fricker 2000, p.147):

The changes mentioned above are largely reforms in museums which aim to include those who were previously not given a voice in museums – to incorporate indigenous meanings of objects, to show meaning as contested and changeable, to abandon controlling architecture and to work with local people to develop the museum. Museums seek to order the world by telling the story of 'Man', however, due to its nature it will always be hijacked by political and social ideologies and will always be incomplete and inadequate (Bennett 1995, p. 97). According to Bennett (1995 p.97), "the museum rests on a principle of general human universality which renders it inherently volatile, opening it up to a constant discourse of reform as hitherto excluded constituencies seek inclusion – and inclusion on equal terms – within that space." In other words, the museum by its nature will always exclude and misrepresent, it can never show all truths. In order for change to take place, the museum needs to decentre, it needs to change its audience and accept more than one 'regime of truth'. Therefore, unless the power structure of the museum is altered, any steps taken towards inclusion will remain superficial.

In 1998 when the Lubicon Cree First Nation protested at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, it was one of the turning points in the museum's interaction with its communities. Museums in Canada had been working in consultation with First Nation communities from the 1980s; however, it was not until the Lubicon staged protests and called for the boycott of the *Spirit Songs: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* that the question of equal collaboration was addressed. It was not the content of exhibition that the Lubicon were challenging; rather it was the slow negotiations with the Canadian government and the sponsor, Shell Ltd, who were drilling for oil in the Lubicon's claimed land. Boycotting the exhibition allowed the Lubicon to draw the public's attention to unfair treatment. As a result, museums could no longer present First People without acknowledging their political and social plights. The power had shifted, and First Peoples were demanding to be represented on their terms – no longer just consulted as 'informants' (Conaty & Carter 2005, p.43).



Figure 18: The members of the Travelling Museum (top left – right): Sakhile Nkosi, Nelisiwe 'Nellie' Mhlanga, Bongane 'Bussie' Mokaone, Leon Samuels, Njabulo Nkosi & Mpendulo Mathebula.

The focus, therefore, should not be to represent all cultures effectively, since this is an unachievable goal, rather, the museum's organisers should concentrate their efforts on transforming its relationship with its communnities (Bennett 1995, p.103). As Clifford reminds us, it is one thing to have a 'native informant', but quite another thing to work with a co-curator (1997, p.210). This is a difficult step to make, and it is the question I continue to explore – was I really sharing power in the development of the Travelling Museum, or was I maintaining a role of expert and mediating the statements made in the museum?

It is uncomfortable to give up power. Acknowledging the other can be disrupting and disturbing because it forces us to see that our way of being is not absolute, and that there is an outside (Falzon 1998, p.34). But this interaction also allows us to revitalise and transform. Through the other we are able to learn new ways of being – adding discourses. While we may not be able to completely step out of our discourses, we are able to get a critical perspective on our self through dialogue with others.

In conclusion, all of these changes are changes in the museum's power relations with its public, influenced how the Travelling Museum was conceived and developed. While the museum was eventually to be housed at the Heritage and Healing Centre, the underlying

concept was that it was mobile and therefore not reliant on architecture. Therefore, it was the museum that was constantly moving to new and unfamiliar places, rather than the public.. The aim of the museum was to stimulate debate by using objects as stimulus and from the beginning it was clear that the dialogue would differ according to the interests of the audience and their interpretation of the objects. Using Swati and English was not only a political gesture, but one of necessity too. Since many people in the communities we would be performing for did not speak English, it was necessary for the museum to 'speak' in Swati in order to engage a wider audience. Similarly the museum needed to be developed by local people and in consultation with various community groups. This became one of the biggest challenges for me as it led to questions of whether it was really possible to share power, and if so how could this dialogue be possible without the museum pandering to each group's or individual's opinion? Added to this there was the question of what form should this dialogue take?

Chapter 4: The Community of Enquiry Approach to Dialogue

This chapter discusses why many contemporary museums are turning to dialogue as a new educational aim and as a means of abandoning modernist, authoritarian relationships with their audiences. It also proposes a specific approach to dialogue – the Community of Enquiry, which I believe allows the museum to practice democratically. This chapter also places the Community of Enquiry in postmodern dialogue theory.

Dialogue as the Museum's Educational Aim:

For the past two hundred years the Cartesian (modernist) understanding of knowledge dominated Western theories of learning. In this view, knowledge existed as a body of information, a set of facts which mirrored the world, independent of who created it, and those attempting to learn it. At the core of this, was the dualism of student and teacher, where the students' minds were viewed as passive, 'empty vessels' to be filled by the absolute knowledge of the teacher (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, p. 67-72). The teacher's responsibility was to impart true beliefs, moving students along the path of knowledge, by providing both the questions and the answers (Murris 2011, p.4). The acquisition of knowledge, in this view, is individualistic, and the ideal learning relationship is dyadic – a singular student to a singular teacher (Benjamin & Echeverria 1992, p.64).

Dialogue blurs the dichotomies of the dyadic expert-learner model, and creates a space where learning happens "in the space between people" (Murris 2011, p. 19). This approach draws on the contemporary theories that argue that knowledge is a product of social practice – and truth – is socially justified (Benjamin & Echeverria 1992, p.68). Constructivist epistemology argues that knowledge is constructed through the subjective interpretation of individual experience. The truth that individuals develop is then tested and redefined through our interactions with others (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, p.68) – through, for example, dialogue. Student's prior knowledge informs their understanding and allows them to make connections with what they already know – "meaning-making processes their own prejudices and socially, culturally and historically situated understandings" (Murris 2011, p.11). Knowledge in this understanding no longer exists as an external, objective truth, but is created socially and individually - people situated in time and space *and* in bodies (Murris 2011, p.11). The purpose of education, therefore, is no longer to master the imagination and emotions in order to memorise 'facts', but to learn together, using our senses in a democratic, open forum.

The manifestation of the open forum is considered to be dialogue, the call for which resounds throughout new museum practice (Bennett 1995; Clifford 1997; Graham & Yasin 2007; Casey 2001; Witcomb 2007). However, there are many interpretations of dialogue, with conflicting definitions and goals. Dialogue can be broadly defined as referring to the negotiation of meaning, active audiences, and curators working as co-curators with 'communities'.

There are, however, myriad interpretations of dialogue, because, as Burbules (2000, p. 252) explains, "for many 'dialogue' has become the foundation of last resort in an antifoundational world." Burbules (2000, p.252) goes on to argue that dialogue symbolises:

> [A] way of reconciling differences; a means of promoting empathy and understanding for others; a mode of collaborative inquiry; a method of critically comparing and testing alternative hypotheses; a form of constructivist teaching and learning; a forum for deliberation and negotiation about public policy differences; a therapeutic engagement of self- and other-exploration; and a basis for shaping uncoerced social and political consensus.

According to Burbules (2000, p.252) there are six dominant approaches to dialogue, all of which have their own particular aims and methods of education. There is: 1) the Liberal approach of John Dewey and Benjamin Barber, 2) the Feminist approach of Mary Belenky, Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings, 3) the Platonic approach which includes Socratic thinking, 4) the Hermeneutic approach, 5) the Critical educators approach of Paulo Freire and 6) the Post-liberal view of Jurgen Habermas. I would like to add a seventh approach, the postmodern approach to dialogue represented by the authors: Christopher Falzon (1998), Mary-Louise Pratt (2004) and James Clifford (1997). I discuss the postmodern approach to dialogue in more detail later in this Chapter.

While I may largely follow the theories of the postmodern approach, I do, however, also draw from a number of the other listed approaches, especially in terms of the Community of Enquiry method of dialogue.

The Community of Enquiry Approach to Dialogue

Although there is much written on the need to introduce dialogue into museums, dialogue is rarely defined in terms of a practical method. It was my intention to apply

the Community of Enquiry theory of dialogue, which I believed might offer a solution. The Community of Enquiry (C of E) model of dialogue originated from 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) by Matthew Lipman in the early 1970's. This method draws on Socratic philosophy, which argues that everyone has the potential to be a philosopher, and the work of John Dewey who pioneered the practice of democracy in schools (Tiffany 2009, p.8). The emphasis is on learning *as* a group, rather than *in* a group and all participants are seen to be able to contribute to the learning of others. This is informed by the argument that everyone, at every stage of their life possesses knowledge and experience which can contribute to the learning of others (Tiffany 2009). In the Community of Enquiry (C of E), a group of people work together over extended periods of time, discussing, questioning and debating 'truths'.

The Community of Enquiry operates in the following format: The group works in a circle, and using a stimulus each person writes an open question that is meaningful to them and that they would like to discuss. The stimulus can take a variety of forms, for example it could be an object, a picture, a drama, a poem or an experience. Once each person in the group has written a question, they each get a chance to explain their ideas, and then the group votes for the question they would most like to discuss. There are variations on this process and the voting and question forming. However, the main underlying principle is that the question for discussion is an open ended philosophical question generated by the group and not by a provided by facilitator (Tiffany 2009, p. 9). The generating of questions from within the group, allows for the research process to be group lead. This is a major shift away from dictating which enquiries (and knowledge) are valuable which are not. Individuals participate in the process of knowledge making led by their own curiosity. They become active researchers and experience the rigorous process scholars go through when interpreting sources, rather than being presented with the end product – 'facts' to memorise (McRainey & Russik 2010 p.95).

In the Community of Enquiry approach, the facilitator's role, therefore, is not to guide the group to the 'Truth', but rather to help the group drive the discussion to deeper explorations of truth and understanding by encouraging 'thinking about thinking' (Tiffany 2009, p.9). Thinking with others enables the individual to benefit from the 'corrective potential of a collaborative enquiry' that comes from shared ideas (Splitter & Sharp 1995 p.15). The practice of C of E involves a willingness to discuss and deliberate with others, since it is only through vocalising our ideas that we can test them, take responsibility for them, and can allow our thinking to be challenged. This understanding of the subjectivity of knowledge means that the community is not searching for

consensus and, as a result, can begin to tolerate "complexity and ambiguity" (Benjamin & Echeverria 1992 p. 72). The aim is to develop well-reasoned, socially justified truths that can then be tested through the same process (Benjamin & Echeverria 1992 p. 72).

In practising the Community of Enquiry approach certain uncomfortable questions began to arise, many of which I did not know how to answer. A central motivation for my using the Community of Enquiry method in the creation of the Travelling Museum, was that I was interested in the idea of developing 'well reasoned, socially justified truths'. However, while using this method, I found that I kept asking how we arrive at these truths? Who compromised their beliefs in order to reach this 'truth'? On whose terms was the dialogue constructed? While I supported the idea of a dialogue as a democratic process, I was concerned that the C of E approach was normative and perhaps prescriptive. This aspect of the approach seemed not to lend itself to situations that were culturally specific. It appeared to uphold Western, liberal values of the individual (even if this individual is participating in the community). Related to this, I felt it was difficult to accept that although the C of E approach claimed not to guide participants towards an acceptable outcome, surely if used as an educational tool, the facilitator would steer away from group's agreeing on for example, racist, or sexist thinking. Further, I was concerned about judging the other and whether this was really ethical to expect the other to justify their position. But even this seemed problematic: who is the other? What deviants are created through this process of dialogue?

In exploring these questions I feel I was able to push my own understanding of dialogue, and develop an approach that has helped me make sense of uncertainties. This understanding has not replaced the C of E method; rather, it has allowed me to practice in a more informed way. I have drawn on the work of several theorists, including Nicholas Burbules (1995, 1996, 2000 and Burbules and Rice 1991), Mary-Louise Pratt (2004), James Clifford (1997) and Christopher Falzon (1998), all of whom approach dialogue an inescapable part of life and not restricted to a formal enquiry. However, it is the formal enquiry, the Community of Enquiry, which I am concerned with. The most relevant to my research was Falzon's, *Foucault on Social Dialogue* (1998). Falzon's theories of dialogue can be applied to the Community of Enquiry; however, it need not be restricted to that situation. In order to define what Falzon refers to as *postmodern dialogue*, I discuss this work in the following section.

A postmodern approach to dialogue

Viewing our way of being, and even our most deeply held beliefs as subject to historical change and resistance by the other represents a departure from humanist thought which excludes, silences and subordinates the other in order to present an all embracing standpoint (Falzon 1998, p.19). Modernism, humanism and religious fundamentalism are examples of confined systems that offer a false sense of security in which everything is known and accounted for (Falzon 1998, p.19). Thought that is ruled by its own totalising, self-contained categories provides no alternative or outside view, "because it can only comprehend the world in terms of its own categories, it can only ever comprehend itself" (Falzon 1998, p.19). As a result, closed thinking is dogmatic and unquestioning – "thinking which no longer thinks" (Falzon 1998 p.19).

Although closed systems may seek to suppress or negate otherness and dialogue, this is never completely successful, since humans do not simply replicate discourses, they also resist and renew them. However, the discourses in which we are situated are difficult to identify because they appear often appear natural. Falzon (1998) does argue that it is possible to use dialogue to assist us in recognising the discourses in which we are situated, through creating a space for the other. When we interact with the other we are able to see that our ways of being are not natural – we are able to see ourselves from the outside (Janks 2010 p.57). Through this interaction we can begin to recognise our own subjectivity, and to denaturalise our *selves* (Hall 2004 p.128).

Through the other are able to learn new ways of being, revitalising, creating and renewing our categories. A dialogical standpoint can be defined as adopting an openness to the other, to different perspectives and ways of being. In employing openness we assist resistance and the challenging of prevailing forms of life (Falzon 1998 p.6). However, this understanding of dialogue is not prescriptive, and while an openness to the other may promote dialogue, it is also not necessary to ensure dialogue because dialogue is inevitable – all forms of social order are destined to be challenged and transformed (Falzon 1998, p.6). It is through dialogue with the other that we are able to recognise the limits of our discourses, to perceive an outside, something beyond us, which can renew us. Although postmodern dialogue is inevitable, I argue that it is also possible to use the techniques of the Community of Enquiry to allow for intentional postmodern dialogue. Of course this raises questions of power, and whose terms the dialogue is on. However, while questions of power are worth pursuing, they should not immobilise us.

Foucuault (1980 in Janks 2010 p.51) argues that power reaches every aspect of an individual and affects every feature of their lives including, their bodies, discourses, attitudes and actions. Although power may be all pervasive, it is not top-down, nor is it negative, absolute or totalising (Falzon 1998 p.47) - "discourse is the power to be seized" (Foucault in Janks 2010, p.50). Power is always confined by history and time, but it is also always available for appropriation (Hall 2004, p.93). For Foucault, "there will always be resistance, revolt, struggle against socially imposed constraints, renewed dialogue and the transformation of social forms" (Falzon 1998, p.52). Importantly, it is through making a space for the other that we are able recognise that there is no single legitimate way of being and that our way of being is finite. This ability to change and renew is the basis of human freedom (Falzon 1998, pp.11, 52) and through this we are able to 'refuse who we are' (Falzon 1998, p.67).

This understanding of dialogue helped me to envisage a new way of working within the Travelling Museum. I realised that it was not my responsibility to control the dialogue in order to lead it to a specific conclusion. Instead of directing the dialogue, I begin to see the importance of being open to the other – that which challenges. I approached this position with the understanding that by confronting what I find unbearable, I could see myself with new eyes and understand the limits of my own tolerance for difference. However, being open to other ways of being and understanding also raised an uncomfortable question – did being open imply that all truths are valid and that one can't pass judgement on people's views?

Chapter 5: Critical Incident 1 – *Postmodernism does not equate to relativism*

In the early stages of developing the Travelling Museum an incident stuck in my mind, and created feelings of unease and led me to question my beliefs and practice. Through the analysis of the situation, I have been able to recognise my own difficulties in interrogating theory through practice.



Figure 19: René Magritte, *The Treachery of Images.* 1928-1929

(Translation: *This is not a pipe*)

This is not an 'authentic' pipe

Swaziland is considered to be the home of '*authentic*' Swazi-ness and all the trainees agreed that if we wanted to buy the *real* cultural artefacts and interview people who were knowledgeable about old ways, we should go there. And so we headed off to find storytellers to record and objects to purchase for our museum. The trip had many meanings for each person in the group, we were 'going to find the source', we were 'going on a research trip', we were 'on a business trip', we were 'crossing the border for the first time' and we were 'going home'.

Before going to the Manzini market we had discussed more or less the types of objects each person was looking to purchase. We had already decided to focus our research into three themes, each of which would develop into a loan box that would contain all the objects, information and activities related to the theme. These boxes would then travel with the members of the group who would 'perform' them. The themes for the loan boxes were:

1. Swazi traditional dance and dress,

2. Local memories
3. Sangomas (traditional healers).



Figure 20: The Swazi Traditional Dance and Dress box being performed at the Barberton Swimming Pool for a school group.



Figure 21: Objects from the Local Memories Box



Figure 22: Objects from the Sangoma Loan Box



Figure 23: Performing the Sangoma Loan Box at the Ummemmo (annual Swazi Cultural Festival held at the chief's residence).

The topics were informed by the Emjindini Heritage and Healing Centre's goals, but it was more important to me that the ideas were relevant to and meaningful for the group of trainees. This approach was challenged, however, when at the market, one of the trainees purchased an 'old' wooden pipe that she said was typical of the pipes Swazi men used in the past. The lady selling the pipe validated this statement; she insisted that it was indeed very old and authentically Swazi. Having seen hundreds of pipes identical to this in Malawi, I recognised it as one produced for a tourist market in that central African country. Of course, I could have read the situation simply and realised that had this trainee also been to Malawi she would recognise the pipe, also that old Swazi men often did smoke pipes, so there was some truth to her statement. As Freud is believed to have said, when questioned on his pipe smoking during a lecture on oral fixation – "sometimes a pipe is just a pipe". But, this incident was uncomfortable because I was faced with a challenging dilemma of whether or not to include this pipe – both actions would have consequences. What was my role in this situation?

At this time I began doubting my 'open' approach: had I been wrong to allow the group to author their own truths? Should I have been more involved in checking the 'facts' of our statements? I had been aware that the work produced was not strictly academic[14], but I wanted it to be relevant to the people who made it and hopefully to people from the larger community to which they belonged. I had consciously chosen not to put myself in the role of the 'expert' and I wanted knowledge to be negotiated. However, I felt at this point, perhaps meaning was becoming relativist and that I would have a hard time explaining our choice of objects to historians and art historians. I was beginning to wonder if, perhaps in this case, there was one truth and the pipe was not authentically Swazi, it was not old, and it was not stylistically accurate.

Since the museum's conception, objects have always played a significant role in how museums produce truth. Up until very recently cultural objects were decontextualised and they stood in as a stereotype of the 'other' in order to tell the story of (perceived) Western advancement (Rassool 2009, p.108). Interpretations of objects from 'other' cultures were limited to scientific or anthropological readings, with a focus on what they were made from, where they came from, the date and ethnicity of production. However, they were never treated as objects made by an 'inspired' individual. In order to demonstrate how museums display and produce knowledge, the 'Creations Journey' (1994) exhibition at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) showed the same object in different display contexts, i.e. as an object of: archaeology, natural history and anthropology. By showing how each display produces a different truth, the museum also brought attention to the missing Native American voice(s), and the meaning of the objects in those contexts (Shannon 2009, p.226).

But in this case it was a Swazi who I thought was getting it wrong! The idea of the 'Native' voice is brought into question by Clifford (1997, p.208) who asks who is the cultural authority? To utilize his questions in the context of the Travelling Museum, one could ask whether it is the Tribal Authority's romanticised version of a Swazi past? A white anthropologist or historian who has spent years studying the Swazi? The young people who live in the township? And which one of these people is chosen to speak on behalf each group?

While the framing of the Native American as expert may be problematic, what the *Creations Journey* (Shannon 2009, p.224) exhibition does highlight is that the meaning of

objects depends on how they are framed, where they are placed and who is viewing them. Therefore, the exhibit illustrates how meaning continues to shift and change. The life of objects does not stop when they become part of museum collections; many objects take on new meanings just through being in a collection. For example the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum have become a symbol of appropriation and imperialism to some, but also of the importance of preservation to others.

My concern was not, however, whether the pipe was a truly 'authentic' object, rather that I had been alerted to a contradiction in my own practice. On one hand, I was claiming that the museum was to be an open forum and that objects could have many meanings, but in reality I still wanted to mediate and frame the statements (Bennett 1995, p. 104), I had not let go of the need for certainty and a single truth. Or put another way, that there was one Truth (centre) and 'cultural' variations (periphery).

However, even when I realised this contradiction, I was still not sure of the right course of action. It is one thing to accept that objects have many meanings and that, for example, although a pen may be made in China, when it is used in South Africa, is it South African[15]. However, this over-simplified approach becomes problematic when 'openness' has ethical and political consequences. By extension of this open reasoning then, we should accept tacitly racist claims, such as the Zimbabwe Ruins were built by Phoenicians (see Gayre 1972 and Murdock 1959), or that Iron Age Bantu cattle kraals (Huffman 2007) were made by Dravidians (see Hromnik 1981; Heine & Tallinger 2008) because certain 'groups' believe these ideas to be true.

The notion that all truths are valid and that we are 'all entitled to our beliefs' is a common misinterpretation of postmodernist thought. While all knowledge is situated in 'time and space' and there is no completely objective view, it does not follow that all views are valid (Murris 2011, p.12). Suggesting all truths are valid is a way of glossing over difference and it means that it is almost impossible to make judgements, therefore, it does not give people the opportunity to explore and confront "deep difficulties or controversies" that are a product of difference (Sheppard et al. 2011, p.77). This form of groundless tolerance and acceptance of plurality does not resist totalitarianism or a dominant view (Falzon 1998, p.92) and tends to "obscure power imbalances" (Sheppard et al. 2011, p. 77). In order to be objective, therefore, we need to realise our views are

[15] This example was offered by Professor Anitra Nettleton (History of Art, Wits University) when I presented this dilemma at a conference recently.

always subjective, influenced by and naturalised by cultural blinds spots, bias and privilege (Burbules 1995, p.88).

Being open to difference and recognising our own privilege does not mean that we are not able to disagree and question, surely that is what is meant by 'negotiated' or 'contested'? According to Falzon's (1998) interpretation of Foucault, this exaggerated respect for the other is in fact a return to 'metaphysical' or humanist thinking in that it sees the other as having its own essential nature which cannot be understood on 'our' terms without violence and falsification.

Falzon (1998, pp. 1,3-4, 16,42, 93, 94) argues that it is often wrongly supposed that the opposite of 'metaphysical' thinking is fragmentation and relativism. Metaphyisical thinking can be broadly defined the desire to find ultimate foundations in order to categorise and organise all things. In pre-modern thinking these fundamental underpinnings were to be found in God, while in the modern period (beginning with Descartes) it was the concept of a universal 'Man' whose supposed essential being provided categories around which everything could be organised. This period where "human nature is seen to provide the ultimate grounds for knowledge and action" is often referred to as 'humanism' (Falzon 1998, p.2). Humanism in its attempt to find a universal, overarching and unifying perspective has been criticised for being historically specific, white, male and Western.

As a result, today any attempts to impose universals is considered to involve a suppression of that which is other. Postmodernism calls for the recognition that our way of being is finite, historically specific and therefore there cannot be an absolute standpoint. In so doing, a space for the otherness is created (Falzon 1998, p.2). This does not, however, automatically result in moral and intellectual chaos, where 'all truths are valid' (Falzon 1998; Burbules 1995, p.83; Pratt 2004,p. 27).

> "To view standards as merely specific and relative to a particular culture or time in this way is to deny ourselves the capacity to evaluate or criticise forms of life, to choose between them, or to give coherence to our cultural practices. And this account is not only theoretically inadequate but also politically dangerous. If rational thought and critical judgement withdraw from the scene, the field will be left open for all kinds of irrationalism and fanaticism. In the end, forces other than reason will

> determine which views hold sway and how society is organised" (Falzon 1998, p.3).

With these words in mind, it is crucial to explore what is meant by 'reason' and how it can be used in a postmodern approach to dialogue. The work of Burbules (1995) on reason is useful in explaining how the opposite of rationalism is not necessarily irrationalism, but rather various ways of reasoning. I proceed to explain: according to Burbules, reason is an example of a modernist ideal that should be maintained in *post* modernism, but reconstructed along more flexible, imperfect lines that allow us to resist relativism and judge manners of thinking (Burbules 1995, p.98). In this way, dialogue can be developed that is based on *post*modern ideas and not *anti*modern relativism. It is important to note that Burbules (1995) draws a distinction between rationalism and reason.

Rationality developed out of Cartesian thinking as a universal, logical ideal for arriving at the same solution through scientific deductions. But scientific research is not objective and is significantly led or affected by an individual's "personal crises, passions and impulses" (Brenner et al. 2011, p.23). When scientists are faced with "the deepest questions" where there is no clear answer as to which theory should be applied, and competing theories exist, they need to make judgements. As Kuhn (Benjamin & Echeverria 1992, p.66) explains, "there is not neutral algorithm for theory-choice, no systematic decision procedure which, properly applied, must lead each individual in the group to the same decision". The judgement scientists' use falls between reason and personal preference (Benjamin & Echeverria 1992, p.67).

As a result, rationality has been criticised for not accounting for moral and political dimensions of decision making (Burbules 1995, p.83). Burbules (1995, p.83) claims that beliefs can only be considered reasonable if subjected to actual conversational enquiries with the other. It is this communicative aspect of reason; a person's willingness to enquire, disagree and adjudicate with others that makes reason more than purely a cognitive or scientific pursuit (Burbules 1995, p. 90). The reliability of the conclusions can then be judged according to the thoroughness and care of the reasoning process (Burbules 1995, p.88). He explains that "[t]his understanding of reason is based on social critique and an awareness of power and ideology" (Burbules 1995, p. 89). Reason is not an essential, universal guide for thought and action; it is useful for certain kinds of problems, and therefore its claims are more modest than those of rationality. Reason can be "regarded as a practice growing out of communicative interactions in which the

full play of human thought, feeling, and motivation operate" (Burbules 1995, p. 85). This is a remarkable departure from the rational community where we are 'interchangeable' – the individual is removed. The communicative style of the rational community ensures that we speak as representatives of the discourse. Therefore, it doesn't matter *who* is speaking as long as *what* they are saying "makes sense" (Biesta 2006, p.56).

In the case of the pipe, the individual who had selected it as an authentic object was Swazi, but did not necessarily know about 'her' history and culture. Under apartheid people did learn about 'their' past but it was deliberately skewed to present difference as 'irreconcilable'. The Bantu education system pushed the apartheid agenda of separate development by stereotyping and generalising people's history and culture and by labelling it as backward (see Kros 2010). Forced removals separated families and led to a breakdown in oral histories and traditions. This legacy continues to inform the South African education system today and therefore people's thinking of 'their' own cultures. The study of 'tribes' became an academic pursuit of mostly white people, who were outsider experts. Ironically, it is these collections and archives that remain the authorative texts on traditions, culture and history. However, recognising these inequalities does not imply that I should not have questioned the inclusion of the pipe.

Postmodern dialogue is not just leaving the other alone and accepting that we are different, because this denies the real social situation in which we live – we are always in dialogue – interacting, challenging, changing (Falzon 1998, p.3). Falzon (1998, p.18) emphasises the need to recognise that the other is not a "little universe" which is constant and self-contained. For Falzon (1998, p.91), the belief that the other is a pure unity beyond criticism is not postmodern thought, but fragmentation, which he argues harks back to modernist ideas of an essential other. Falzon (1998) argues that philosophers, such as Habermas, mistakenly assume that postmodern fragmentation (a multiplicity of local unities) where all truth is relative is the opposite of an all-embracing unity (Falzon 1998, p.91). According to Falzon (1998, p.4), humans can be described as "form giving beings", who strive to impose order on the world. However, it is not possible to wholly capture and organise the world (Falzon 1998, p.4). While we may attempt to define the other by imposing categories, the other will always resist and elude these. As we try to shape the other, so we are affected and change through an open-ended dialogical process (Falzon 1998, p.94).

Dialogical postmodernism emphasises that no way of being is finite and that we are always influencing and being influenced by the other. Conceiving ways of being as

existing in constant flux is unlike postmodern fragmentation which conceives of the other as a self-contained entity. Understanding our way of being as interrelated, therefore, also contrasts with the postmodern fragmentation view of unique entities that cannot be criticised without an imposition of one's own standards and values. Dialogical postmodernism argues that influence is not a falsification of an essential nature or pristine culture. The other is made up of individuals and these individuals are themselves situated in discourses. Discourses are our taken-for-granted ways of being in and seeing the world (Gee in Janks 2010, p.22), but we can inhabit more than one discourse, learn new discourses and as a result our "formation is ongoing" (Janks 2010, p.99). Although we may be acculturated into discourses, we also affect and renew culture, we are embodied and therefore we do not merely repeat the past. Simply, we are not mindless automatons without agency (capacity to act in the world) (Hall 2004, p.128).

On reflection I think the reason the pipe incident bothered me is because it threatened my idea of valuable knowledge and seemed to mean that our museum standards were 'low'. It is one thing to become familiar with different cultures and ways of being, but it is more difficult to recognise one's viewing habits and position of privilege (Wienand 2009, p.124, Bourdieu 1986). Through this incident I was able to consider the privileges the discourses I operate in to afford me and therefore, begin to recognise my own normalised position. This is an important step towards understanding that even when we claim objects have many meanings or that meaning is negotiated, that unless we are willing to challenge a dominant point of view, we continue to uphold one Truth and many deviation truths (Falzon 1998, p. 92).

I have been educated (mostly through university) to read objects in a particular way – a way that claims to be open, but still maintains a dominant point of view where there is a central Truth and other truths. What this incident highlighted, therefore, was that I was able to read the codes, classify the object according to a system of knowledge - a discourse of 'authenticity'. The trainee on the other hand, had not had the opportunity to travel to Malawi and as a direct result of politics and economics, had only been granted partial access to the rational discourse of authenticity, she lacked the same tools for analysing and classifying the object according to standards valued by museums.

In other words, I had rejected this pipe as a ' non-authentic' object based on the way I have been taught to read it, that is based on the dominant viewpoint. This is not to say a dominant view in invalid, but rather that it is naturalised. According to Bourdieu (in

Ballath 2009, p.205), when we assess art or artefacts, we use codes and classifications that are linked to particular types of knowledge. Each system of knowledge produces its own set of truths. As a result, 'experts' have the tools for decoding an object and are predisposed to accepting the reading of their own system. In this way, knowledge functions as a system of exclusion and those deemed outside the discourse are only granted partial credibility.

All societies and communities produce their own strangers – those considered to be 'outside' (Biesta 2006, p.58). Gate keeping and regulating access to discourses maintains hierarchies of knowledge (Janks 2010, p.133) and as a result, what is seen as valuable knowledge is therefore bound to power and dominant discourses. For Foucault (in Ballath 2009, p.206) truth and falsehood are arbitrary distinctions since they depend on the knowledge system or discourse that produces them. Therefore, the concern should not be whether an artefact is interesting (or authentic) but rather "how interest of any kind is created [since] all interest is vested" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1991, p.434). In the case of the pipe, I was beginning to wonder whose interests were being served through the questioning its 'true' history and why I became defensive at the suggestion that it was historically accurate. It is also important to note that people can be excluded from discourses by allowing them to hold on to the 'wrong' idea too, therefore, was it my ethical duty to confront these questions with the group through dialogue?

Using the theories of dialogue, I argue, that all meanings are not automatically valid, but that what is more important, is *how* meaning is negotiated – how we disagree and reason. In order to create true "contact zones" or "border crossing opportunities" individuals need to be committed to more than just winning an argument. Many authors (see Burbules & Rice 1991; Sheppard et al. 2011; Falzon 1998) maintain that in order to pursue reasonableness in communicative interactions, individuals need to foster certain virtues. The term virtue is used instead of dispositions because it refers to flexible aspects of character that are valued by the self and by communities. We express virtues by choice and in relation to actions of others around us. Virtues cannot be applied as rules or habits, since each context is different and requires judgements and choices to be made (Burbules 1995, p.86). According to Burbules (1995, p.82), the virtues necessary for the development of reason are: falibalism, objectivity, pragmatism and judiciousness. These virtues are not connected to rationality, they are embodied and situated – reliant on individual's emotions and situations. Therefore, the four above-mentioned virtues relate to a "discourse more concerned with personal character, practical contexts, and

communicative relations" (Burbules 1995, p.89). These virtues then become a practical tool for analysing the pipe incident.

1)Fallabalism

My own desire to be 'right' or at least get the 'facts right' prevented me from listening to the trainee's argument – I rushed into a judgement. In my quest to be 'right' perhaps I had also missed a truth – Swazi men did traditionally smoke pipes, even if it was not exactly like this one. Although I did not push the argument, and I did allow the pipe to be part of the exhibition, I never admitted to the group the mistake in my approach. I missed an opportunity to critically engage with the group on the issue of the pipe and to move learning from an individual to group process. This incident would have provided an opportunity to discuss many points of view, and in retrospect I think I should have slowed down and spent time discussing this incident with the group. As a result of not doing this, I also did not challenge my own authority.

2) Objectivity

Later, through reflecting on this incident I was, however, able to recognise and denaturalise my own position – situated in dominant viewpoint and search for truth. The incident had threatened the security of my beliefs and through it I was able to interrogate why I found it intolerable. It allowed me to move from facts about the pipe to negotiation of its truths.

3) Pragmatism

One of the hardest aspects of this incident has been to accept the uncertainty of the truth and allowing the pipe to have many meanings.

4) Judiciousness

If I had used the opportunity for a deeper group discussion through the Community of Enquiry, we could have discussed the reasoning process of our arguments. This process is part of caring for the truth.

To sum up, I submit that the museum by its very nature, while professing to be democratic and for everyone, can never represent all people adequately. It will always stereotype, generalise or misrepresent 'groups' and as a result, there will always be calls for reform (Bennett 1995, p. 91). But adopting a relativist approach that objects have many meanings and all truths are valid, does not necessarily bring reform to museums. Perhaps the role of museums then is not necessarily to validate all truths, but to encourage visitors to examine their own preconceptions? Through dialogue in the

museum we can begin to reflect on our own thinking. This dialogue needs to take a specific form. Participants need to learn and apply the virtues of fallibalism, pragmatism, objectivity and judiciousness to avoid the dialogue becoming an argument to be won.

In this case the meaning of the object was not restricted to what it looked like, rather, it became an invitation to contemplate how we make meaning (Gogan 2005b, p.1). In this way, objects in museum collections will never just 'rest' but, through dialogue, they will constantly be (re)invented (Gogan 2005b, p.2). Working with an artefact in dialogue therefore provides the opportunity for making sense of the world (or at least recognising our world view) (Gogan 2005b, p.2). Through dialogue the inherent multi-meanings of objects could be used to enable us to recognise that our way of seeing is embedded in power structures (Wienand 2009, p.276).

Chapter 6: Critical Incident 2 – *The other and Framing Difference in Postmodern Dialogue*

The second Critical Incident I would like to explore in order to gain a deeper insight into my experience is from a workshop I recently ran at a conference. The preparation, participation and a comment made during the discussion are the points that challenged and concerned me, but through reflecting on these emotions I have been able to assess my work and gain a clearer understanding of my practice.

The incident took place at the 2009 'Drama for Life' Conference at Wits University. It was important to me to present the Travelling Museum with the trainees and the Project Co-ordinator, Nikki Pingo, a Wits Drama graduate who had begun work on the project in May that year. I had deliberately chosen to present *with* the members of the Travelling Museum so that tensions and uneven power relations would be somewhat balanced out. I did not want to create the impression of an equal power balance and affable project. However, I also had an overwhelming urge to protect what I felt were two groups from one another. I wanted to defend the members of the Travelling Museum from the harsh criticisms and the occasionally opaque language of academia. On the other hand, I felt the need to guard academics from the Travelling Museum members, because they were not educated to the same level and their command of English (as a second or third language) was more basic. Moreover, although we were using the C of E format, the participants would not be familiar with its guiding philosophy, and I was conscious that the Travelling Museum trainees may feel excluded or silenced since they had not yet learnt the hidden rules of academic engagement.

The guiding protective feeling of wanting to look after the members of the Travelling Museum is worth exploring, as it was possibly unnecessarily and paternalistic. I now wonder if it was it my own guilt at the opportunities and education that I had received that made me want to 'educate' and 'protect' members of the group. Did the members of the Travelling Museum really need someone to 'guard' them? Perhaps it was my academic snobbery, and not the other conference participants, which found their level of English and grasp of academic concepts to be a problem. But I did not want to admit this. Instead, I convinced myself that it was the academic environment that was unwelcoming

to the 'other'. In retrospect, however, this feeling of wanting to defend and nurture the individuals in the Travelling Museum group influenced my way of working and how I implemented the project from beginning to end.

At the conference I used a photograph (fig. 23, below) to stimulate a very lively discussion on culture and identity, with the discussion centring on identity as performance. At the end of the workshop, one of the participants commented on the 'power structure' of our group by asking me why I – a white woman – was facilitating the discussion, while the Travelling Museum trainees – black people – did the performance. She felt that the members of the Travelling Museum should run all aspects of the workshop, and that my working in this way was problematic.

I agreed that they should be running all aspects of the project, but reminded her that they were still in training. The dialogue they had just participated in was to demonstrate the process we as a group were going through in order to establish the museum. The comment, however, did not take me completely by surprise; the construct of race and power seems to permeate much thinking in South Africa and I was expecting to have to justify my position.



Figure 23: Leon Samuels (centre) at Schools Heritage Day Celebrations, flanked by overseas volunteers who had been working in the schools in Barberton.

At this moment, Burbules' (1996) observation that acknowledging difference can sometimes be a way of ending a dialogue, rather than beginning it, rang true. But the comment was not unfounded, nor was it completely unfair. There was a power imbalance, and I had hoped that by presenting with the Travelling Museum I would

show it without it needing to be interrogated further. However, it seems it still needed discussion and exploration. Although I missed the opportunity to use the question for a philosophical enquiry at the conference, it did lead me to a personal enquiry on understandings of race and difference in South Africa.

It is not my intention, and it would be absurd, to downplay the direct result of apartheid in the creation of vastly uneven socio-economic conditions which continue today. Just as it would be to naïve to argue that the power relations in our group were equal. However, what did become clear is that is was the underlying assumptions of this remark that needed unpacking, especially since the race/power divide was perhaps far more complex than this comment suggests. For example, one of the most qualified and powerful people in the room was a black professor who was chairing the workshop.

Apartheid may have ended two decades ago but much of the old regime's thinking still permeates life in South Africa. The categorisation of race is one such paradigm that seems resilient to change, and it remains a naturalised way of understanding difference. Race continues to inform much thinking in South Africa this is evident through ideas of redress and Black Economic Empowerment. According to Clifford (1997, p. 204), "a contact perspective recognises that 'natural' social distances and segregations are historical/political products: apartheid was a relationship." To the extent that museums understand themselves to be interacting with specific communities across such borders, rather than simply educating or edifying a public, they begin to operate – consciously and times self-critically – in contact histories. Crucially then, the inherited logic of apartheid needs to be destabilised in order to challenge the apartheid's race myth, and for people to begin to see that their reading of the past (and present) need not be anchored to race (McKinney 2004, pp.109-13). Continuing to use racial classification fixes apartheid's objectives of racial separation and the discourse continues to 'speak us' (Janks 2010, p. 60).

Although the criticism may have provided an analysis of power – an awareness which is essential for developing self-reflexive practice, it does not, however, provide positive alternatives and suggestions for how to make situations freer, more inclusive and equal (Burbules & Rice 1991, p.398). Similarly, Janks (2010, p.8) stresses that the deconstruction of power and dominance is an essential starting point, however, that is only through ethical redesign that we can bring about social change. Jonathan Jansen (2009) argues that critical theory tends to homogenise people and their beliefs. This oversimplification does not recognise the complexities of individuals and stereotypes

into binary groups, for example, black/white, oppressed/oppressor, advantaged/disadvantaged (Jansen 2009, p.257; McKinney 2004, p.101). Through this process of objectification we become groups rather than individuals, it becomes 'us' and 'them' which was an apartheid strategy. When our identities are policed in this way, we are prohibited from identifying with 'others', we are forced to take sides (Jansen 2009, p. 257). Complicating apartheid race categories by recognising that we can no longer classify someone by their physical features enables us to resist our identities and consciousness being generalised into binary opposites, for example black and white or woman and man (Hall 2004, p.114).

Ideas of multicovality and diversity that advocate the 'respecting of difference' often have the effect of "exoticising difference" as interesting artefacts of cultural variety (Burbules 2000, p.257). This 'multicultural' approach to difference tends to conceive of difference largely based on "categorical diversity", however, differences change over time, they are enacted and vary according to contexts (Burbules 2000, p.259). Pratt (2004, p.20), however, cautions against "voluntary de-racialisation" or the re-neutralising of gender, arguing that these are hard won spaces where previously unrepresented now have a voice.

The writer and academic Andile Mngxitama (2011) draws on the work of Steve Biko to criticise the ANC for what he terms neo-apartheid through capitalism. He attacks what he refers to as "invisible whiteness" which protects whiteness from being "raced" and allows it to function as a norm. He accuses the ANC of supporting and benefiting from maintaining an apartheid status quo. The crux of Mngxitama's argument is that 'white' (or black people who have become 'white') people should return the land and resources they have stolen. He questions how it is possible to live ethically in Sandton while thousands of people neighbouring this suburb (in Alexandra) are living in abject poverty. Many of Mngxitama criticisms of invisible whiteness and privilege are valid, however, the stereotype of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' appears to draw on the very apartheid principles he aims to criticise.

While I agree, the neutralising of race and gender is concerning if it means a merge into dominant or most powerful culture (which in South Africa may still be 'whiteness'), however, the alternative of re-trabilisation – a return to modernist essentialism and stereotype is equally as troubling (Biesta 2006, p.61). In an attempt to address inequalities, while still challenging 'race', Zimitri Erasmus (forthcoming) advocates the use of a critical-race-standpoint, which differs from the commonly used approaches of

colour blindness (discussed above, Burbules), class reductionism, and race attachment (see above, Mngxitama). The critical-race-standpoint aims to find new markers in order to determine "what lives behind race" and through this "disrupt underlying structures of privilege" (Erasmus, forthcoming). This approach ensures that identity is understood to be more complex than binary opposites, but still locates it in the political (Erasmus, forthcoming). This ensures that we are not encapsulated or spoken for and the mixing, merging and shifting that is part of our daily existence is taken into consideration.

Viewing identity as fluid, is not to say that we should not respect people's identity investments (Janks 2010, p. 99), but rather that we do not passively just replicate our discourses – we constantly reinterpret, challenge and transform them (Falzon 1998, p. 52). This process of change is dialogue, and it is something we will do throughout our lives. This understanding of identity encourages us to view people as more complex and less stable than stereotypes of groups allow. In other words, it is possible that those who would be classified as being alike according to a certain category, could have the least in common. For example, I have often met 'white', South African women, from a similar social and education background, who I feel are more foreign and different to me than someone who would typically be classified as my other.

However, while this train of thought may deal with concepts of race, it does not address the power imbalances within the Travelling Museum, nor does it explore my paternalistic feelings for the group members. While I may have intended our relationship to be equal, my speaking on behalf of the group illustrated my position of authority within the group and, to some extent 'knowing what is best'. Since I am writing about this incident, I also have a platform from which to be heard. As Bourdieu (in Janks 2011, p.133) observes: "The competence that we have to produce sentences that are likely to be understood might be quite inadequate to produce sentences that are likely to be *listened to*…Speakers lacking the legitimate competence are *de facto* excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required."

My role in the Travelling Museum presented me with so much confusion. In many ways I seemed to be contradicting myself – which is possibly why the comment at the conference 'hit a nerve'. On one hand I was working for the empowerment of the group – offering them training and opportunities they had previously not been afforded, but on the other hand, it also suited me to have a 'worthy cause' to fight for. There was no denying that we were from different racial, social and economic groups and as a result we belonged to different communities. However, through the theory of postmodern

dialogue I began to realise that these perceived differences could be addressed - we could make a new community. Through dialogue within the Travelling Museum I believe we did just this, we created a Community of Enquiry in which our differences still have existed but began to see our similarities as individuals.

Chapter 7: The 'Museum as Artist' Approach to Postmodern Dialogue

Art is "the criticism of life" (Arnold in DeBotton 2004, p.135), it can provide a new way of looking at and appreciating one's world, it can challenge our conceptions of what is normal and important (DeBotton, 2004 p.145). The artist is able to subvert notions of what is beautiful, valuable and our understandings of happiness (DeBotton 2004, p.148). Art can provide a new way of seeing, and "may help us to correct a range of snobbish conceptions of what there is to esteem and honour in the world" (DeBotton 2005, p.153). When the museum is artist, it is the role of museums to encourage people to actively investigate their prior knowledge – the knowledge or worldview they came to the gallery with (Felton & Kuhn 2011, p. 102). Appreciating art (or artefacts) is no longer merely contemplating the surface of the art work (Greenberg 1961, p.6), but questioning why we value certain works and what our museums and galleries tell us about our society. By questioning what gets shown in museums – how and why – we can begin to explore the 'truths' that museums and governments want to promote. (Also see Bourdieu (1986) for the relationship between taste and social distinctions).

Therefore, when the museum acts as artist, exhibitions do not teach the 'the right way to think', but rather to provide an opportunities for thinking – for questioning social beliefs and norms (Stone 2011). This discussion needs to involve a diverse community through open dialogue. The dialogue that would ensue would not necessarily bring about understanding or coherence, but would challenge people to ask the question "how do I know?" (Felton & Kuhn 2011, p. 102). Therefore, even if the concern was a perceived shortcoming of the museum, such as a tendency to culturally stereotype or the lack of 'authentic' artefacts, these could present a positive opportunity to dialogue as a group and to explore the complex underlying questions and values.

The museum then begins to learn with its audience – it takes on the role of a "learner or explorer" (Greene in Gogan 2005a, p.60) rather than expert. When the role of the museum moves from one of authority, to co-learner, the museum can and admit mistakes, thereby, practicing the reasonable virtue of fallibalism (Burbules 1995). As discussed previously (Chapter 5) fallibalism is a virtue of objectivity and reasonableness. Reasonableness can, therefore, be expressed in the museum's (museum staff's) willingness to take risks, to be 'exposed', and to be changed by challenging situations. Diversity in museum audience provides alternative approaches to dominant

discourses and cultural collisions denaturalise our taken-for-granted ways of being, and allow us to "re-mediate", "re-present" and redesign our society (Kostogriz in Janks 2010, p.25). Through dialogue we can become aware that our ideas of how a museum should operate is located in the political, historical and the discourses to which we belong (Wadham-Smith 2004, p.8). In other words, the reasonable virtues of fallibalism and objectivity allow meaning to be multi-layered and variable; changing according to the concerns of the audience and changing as the museum staff alter their ideas. It is the interactions that that happen between staff, public and objects which now determines meaning.

By engaging with a museum differently perhaps we allow the museum the space to make mistakes. In a recent public survey it was reported that 90 percent of Americans believe the museum is a trustworthy source of information, with 38 percent of people interviewed trusting museums over and above a wide range of other information sources. This trust in museums tended to transcend demographics of age, sex, ethnicity, education and income level (Fox 2005, p.16). However, Fox (2005 p.18) argues that, "rather than accepting the gift of unquestioned trust, museums might do well to inculcate, in the public imagination." In order to do this, Fox (2005 p.26) suggests that curators should be open about the limits of their knowledge and ability to educate the public. In short, they should present themselves as research scientists who constantly experiment with and revise ideas. In other words, the museum has "the right to be wrong" (Fox 2005).

Writing on the use the role of museum as artists and dialogue in museums, Gogan (2005a, p.27) suggests that the museum should no longer aspire to be neutral or constant, instead, it should aim to highlight its practice and sympathise with many points of view – becoming "multipartial" (Gogan 2005a, p.60) but not relativist. In other words, valuing community collaboration does not mean that the museum can no longer have an opinion or that it now simply needs to do what a community wants. This requires the museum to get over the fear of interrogating beliefs and opinions (Gogan 2005b, p.23). The museum moves, through postmodern dialogue, from existing as a place of Truth, and takes on a new role: that of artist.

In encouraging cross border interaction, museums can allow new communities to form, where we can begin to ask, "how do we know what we know" (Felton & Kuhn 2011, p. 102). When museums work as artist, the process can be slow, frustrating and messy but it also has the potential to be engaging, rich and rewarding (Gogan 2005b, p.13).

If the museum is artist, what sort of artist should it be? The 'museum as artist' approach draws on a postmodern understanding of artist, not the Modernist ideal of the artistic genius – a gifted individual (Gogan 2005a, p.60). Instead it draws on postmodern conceptions of artist, art and art museum in which elitist ideas and universals of good or bad art are questioned and interrogated and viewers are encouraged to see that taste and aesthetics are culturally, historically, geographically and socially situated. Batchelor (1996, p.134) argues that "[o]bjects do not have innate meanings on their own, they are ascribed value and meaning by the viewer…It is important to try not to confuse our sense of the rights and wrongs with the artist's."

Postmodern art (supposedly) no longer strives to be an expression of individual genius and recognises the cultural bias and exclusion that 'intellectual' art categories enforce. Postmodern artists' claims of invention are more modest, "the new comes from the old, but that's why it is new" (Brecht in Batchelor, 1996, p.136). The goal of postmodern art is not to split from the past, but to prompt "the need for re-evaluation of both past and present from a new vantage point" (Barber 1996, p.166). As an artist, the museum can act as social commentator, provocateur and catalyst for change (Gogan 2005a, p.60) but always with an emphasis on art through collaboration and dialogue.

Postmodern art has rejected essentialised meaning, it aims to highlight the cultural aspects of meaning-making in order to abandon modernist ideas of 'primitiveness' and 'progress' and 'advancement' (Barber 1996). Similarly, postmodern dialogue does not educate for an ideal – towards an existing notion of knowledge, but aims to draw on people's existing knowledges in order to make reasonable judgements. These judgements are not fixed, they may change over time and as new information becomes available. Therefore, postmodern dialogical education is no longer about education toward an ideal or a product, but is rather about working with the here and now – the bodies in the room.

Education theory has shifted from having "consumed with the socialising and reproductive function of education as 'formation' – shaping of children for the future" (Todd in Murris 2011, p. 20). Children (and adults) are no longer viewed as empty vessels needing to be filled, but rather as having existing knowledge and experiences which can be drawn on. In this way the dichotomy between teacher/institution and learner has become blurred. Teacher/learner dualism makes way for relational exchanges with students/audiences who are viewed as "competent, resourceful, creative Others who enrich the educational experience" (Murris 2011, p.20). Educators

(and education institutions) are, therefore, no longer the 'masters', and they can no longer educate towards their desired outcome or future, but are merely part of the dialogue[16].

This understanding of the role of the curator and museum moves it away from cultural authority, to a space where knowledge is created, generated, challenged and constantly transformed – as it is in the Community of Enquiry. Therefore there is no one truth for people to memorise. And as a result, the function of the museum has moved from expecting people to memorise 'facts' in order to be able to regurgitate them. If learning is now recognised to be a social activity, then museums need to reflect this – learning in museums needs to be social and in so doing museums can become thriving civic spaces (Karp & Lavine 1991; Casey 2001; Korza & Schaffer Bacon 2005).

But wherever this negotiation does take place, we need to be careful that in these border crossing interactions it is not just a case of the strongest voices dictating the truth – they need to allow for many truths – but resist relativism. This balance can be achieved through learning how to negotiate – how to disagree. When people disagree they have to construct strong relevant reasons to justify their beliefs. We can disagree and challenge but need to learn how to reason constructively by learning certain virtues of Community of Enquiry. These virtues include accepting the challenging of ideas and exposing hidden assumptions, in order to learn as a group and develop reasoned arguments. However, reasoning needs to be learnt, as John Thomas (in Splitter and Sharp 1995, p.7) explains, reasonableness is "a matter of character" which "must begin by developing the habits of reasoning, the respect for reasoning, and the value of reasoning in the youngest child". In order for these virtues to be learnt and practiced museums need to work in long-term partnership with schools and other educational institutions. Museums cannot expect their audiences to just know how to dialogue through Community of Enquiry, or which virtues should be implemented when. Added to this, museum need to become safe spaces where people feel confident to express their ideas and opinions.

When museums are able to orchestrate cross border interactions, these moments may be uncomfortable, but they also have the ability to transform our thinking. In order for these interactions to be recognised as significant we need to acknowledge awkward

[16] It is worth noting, however, that while this may be progressive educational theory, it does not mean that the majority of educational institutions (such as schools and museums) are practicing these ideas. The majority of South African schools are still oppressed by the fundamental pedagogic legacy.

moments as points of learning and growth through self-reflection. The museum can play the role of artist and social commentator by mediating this process.

This is not to suggest that museums need to 'throw the baby out with the bath water'. While I argue that museums need to encourage civic dialogue and negotiation of truths, this is not to suggest that that is *all* they should do. Many people enjoy going to museums for quiet contemplation and this opportunity should not necessarily be removed. Museums can still incorporate solitary viewing and space for introspective debate and questioning. However, added to this museums can also create spaces where private reflection is made public and shared. An example of making private reflections made public can be found in the practice of the *Without Sanctuary Project* (2001-2002) held at Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh, USA). Audience members were asked to write postcards to themselves with ideas, memories or pledges based on their feelings about the controversial exhibition of slave hangings. The postcards were then displayed in the exhibition, and posted to the authors as a reminder of their thoughts at the end of the exhibition (Gogan 2005a, p. 64).

In conclusion, when the museum takes on the role of artist it no longer presents a single vision or message to be learnt by its public. Rather, the museum works in collaboration with its public to ensure that meaning is constantly negotiated. This process is difficult and challenging for museums and it requires the constant "weaving together of different strands of knowledge, as opposed to being the holder of knowledge" (Gogan 2005b, p.12). Working in collaboration with various communities does not however imply that the museum is neutral nor that meaning becomes arbitrary or relative. Instead, it requires the museum to enter into dialogue with various communities and individuals, creating a safe space for people to negotiate truth. In this way the museum is constantly learning and developing with its audience. In order for the museum to develop this kind of relationship with its public it needs to engage people on many levels and in many arenas, including building strong ties with schools in order to encourage the learning of dialogue from a young age.

Chapter 8: Reflection on Research Process and Conclusion

Reflection on the Research Process:

The greatest limitation of my research was the amount of time I had to put theory into practice. The set-up of the Travelling Museum took much longer than I had originally anticipated and while I was able to use the Community of Enquiry approach during its growth, there was limited opportunity for this to be practiced in the museum's public interactions. I had originally hoped that within a year the trainees would be able to lead enquiries. Yet although, after a year of training, they were able to mediate debates I felt that they needed further support to develop their facilitation techniques.

Although by the time the funding was exhausted we had extensively engaged schools and tourists, we would have benefitted from more engagement to create the community museum we had envisioned and for the museum to become self-sustaining. The original idea was that the museum would charge schools for performances, however this proved difficult since most of the schools simply did not have the funds and parents could not afford luxuries. As a result the Travelling Museum did not perform as often as we would have liked and when it did perform it was frequently for free. Working on the Travelling Museum gave me the opportunity to use dialogue in a museum situation, this is the beginning of ongoing research in my own work.

Conclusion

When faced with the task of developing the Travelling Museum my first concern was the re-traditionalisation premise of the larger Emjindini Heritage and Healing Centre. The Centre was to be built on the Chief's grounds and in association with the Tribal Authority. Creating a museum about Swazi-ness filled me with unease since I was reluctant to associate with outmoded, modernist political concepts of chiefs and tribes (Oomen 2000). However, I was attracted to the idea of developing a community museum. A community museum has the potential to "contribute to the revitalisation of a great variety of cultural traditions, including dance, music, and native languages. The museum rebuilds the community from within" (Camera & Morales 2009, p. 328). This concept of a community museum seemed to offer an alternative to the traditional museum whose role has been questioned since the end of apartheid.

At the end of apartheid museums were faced with the dilemma of how to transform in order to represent the new democratic South Africa (see Kros 1992 and Oedendall 1995). Many of the changes that were needed were in line with international museums who were also being called on to become better representative of minority groups and less authoritarian (see Karp & Lavine 1991, Karp, Kratz, et al 2007, Sleeper-Smith, 2009). Many of these shifts in museum practice were reflected in the development of the Travelling Museum, where I had (sometimes unknowingly) responded to current trends. The following changes that are being called for in contemporary museum and education literature are relevant to the Travelling Museum:

- As discussed in Chapter 3 mant museums are moving away from dominating architecture that controls the movements of audiences. The Travelling Museum moved to different environments and was therefore not reliant of architecture.
- Embracing the multiple meanings of objects has been recognised as significant in resisting authoritarian, single voice displays (see Chapter 3). In the development of the Travelling Museum I was specifically interested in Clifford's (1997) account of contact zones where objects have many different interpretations.
- In Chapter 2 I discuss how museums today are beginning to recognise the educational role of controversial objects. When museums move out of the role of authority, they do not need to protect people, and what is seen as controversial can be used as an opportunity for thinking. In the Travelling Museum we came across many objects – for example the pipe (Chapter 5) and the 'Swazi Girl' (Chapter 2) photograph that presented opportunities to challenge our thinking.
- As museums move from modernist categories and classification, so too do they begin to challenge ideas of race. In South Africa there are many examples of museums that have attempted to represent the 'rainbow nation' by including objects from 'all' groups. While this may address previous inequalities to some degree, it does not challenge concepts of race, which remain entrenched as seen in Chapter 2. Through dialogue in the Travelling Museum we began to challenge these instilled discourses which continue to 'speak us'.
- Many museums today recognise the need to be 'led by the people' rather than attempting to lead the people into thinking in particular ways. In order for museums to be relevant to their communities, they need to include their voices. These changes are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 where I argue that initially when these changes began in museums community members were consulted on

the display and meanings of objects, however, they were not given equal power to co-curate. Since then uneven power relationships have been challenged and minority groups are demanding more than mere inclusion or representation – they want a shift towards sharing active power. In the development of the Travelling Museum I was interested in working with the local community and sharing power and responsibility for the museum. One of the ways this was done was through an awareness of the language we used and encouraging the group to perform in Swati as well as English, however this was a more superficial change than the sharing of power in the structure of the museum. Shifting from boss/employee relationships proved to be difficult, but these difficulties provided incidents for self-reflection and growth.

- The move towards dialogue in museums is a significant shift which encompasses all the above mentioned changes which are all changes toward a more democratic form of museum. Museums are transforming from cathedrals where knowledge was presented by experts to be memorised to open forums where truth is contested and debated. In Chapter 4 I illustrate how the manifestation of the open forum is considered to be dialogue, the call for which resounds throughout new museum practice (Bennett 1995; Clifford 1997; Graham & Yasin 2007; Casey 2001; Witcomb 2007).

While dialogue seemed to be the lynchpin of the changes toward democratic museum practice, it was not clear what was meant by dialogue, nor how dialogue could be used but relativism resisted. And it was these questions that led my research.

It was my intention to use the Community of Enquiry (C of E) approach to dialogue. Developed as an educational approach by Matthew Lipman, C of E believes that everyone can contribute to the learning of others through dialogue. The idea that education is no longer about memorising facts imparted by a 'teacher' is fundamental to the theories of dialogue in education. Dialogue blurs the dichotomies of the dyadic expert-learner model, and creates a space where learning happens in the space between people. This approach draws on the contemporary theories that argue that knowledge is a product of social practice – and truth – is socially justified.

While I was able to accept that truth is socially justified and that there are many truths, it was not until the pipe incident (Chapter 5) that I really had to question what that meant for the museum. How could I on one hand be saying that everyone's truth is valid, but on the other hand reject an object a trainee has selected because I thought it was

'inauthentic'? It was the question of whose truth is valid that led me to locate the C of E theories within postmodern dialogue. Through exploring the incident of the pipe, I was able to think about how meaning could be multiple but not relativist.

Understanding the other as a 'little universe' which is constant and self-contained is not postmodern dialogue, in fact this is what Falzon (1998) refers to as fragmentation or modernism. In postmodern dialogue our way of being is considered to be finite and constantly changing as we interact with the other. We are influenced, challenged and changed through our dialogue with others. Therefore, criticising the other is not a falsification of their essential nature, nor is it necessarily always an imposition of one's own standards and values. The idea that we cannot comment on the other creates moral and political chaos (Falzon 1998, p.47). As Falzon argues:

> "To view standards as merely specific and relative to a particular culture or time in this way is to deny ourselves the capacity to evaluate or criticise forms of life, to choose between them, or to give coherence to our cultural practices… In the end, forces other than reason will determine which views hold sway and how society is organised" (Falzon 1998, p.3).

It is important to note that reason is not the same as rationality. Reasonableness according to Burbules (1995, p.98) is a postmodern concept which consists of the virtues of falliballism, objectivity, pragmatism and judiciousness. Although all of these virtues are important to practice in dialogue, it is the virtue of objectivity which is most relevant to postmodern dialogue practice.

Dialogical postmodernism argues that influence of the other is not a falsification of an essential nature or pristine culture. It is through the other, through that which challenges that we begin to recognise the discourses in which we are situated, thereby becoming more objective. The other is made up of individuals and these individuals are themselves situated in discourses. However, while we may all be situated in discourses, we also affect and renew culture through being open to the other – that which is unfamiliar. It is through the other, through facing and adapting to that which changes us that we are able to enact our agency (Falzon 1998).

Using the theories of dialogue, I argue, that all meanings are not automatically valid, but that what is more important, is *how* meaning is negotiated – how we disagree and reason. In order to create true "contact zones" or "border crossing opportunities"

individuals need to be committed to more than just winning an argument. This then becomes the new educational role of the museum. In this role the museum is not neutral or impartial, rather it highlights its practice thereby becoming "multipartial". The museum is able to use controversy to encourage questioning and debate and the examination of social norms. As with art, the museum can pose questions about what is considered normal and natural. In this way, the museum becomes an artist in the community – a catalyst for change.

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