MUSEUMS, POWER, KNOWLEDGE

SELECTED ESSAYS

TONY BENNETT

Museums, Power, Knowledge

Few perspectives have invigorated the development of critical museum studies as much as Foucault's account of the relations between knowledge and power, and their role in processes of governing. Within this literature, Tony Bennett's work stands out as having marked a series of strategic engagements with Foucault's work to offer a critical genealogy of the public museum, providing an account of its nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century development that has been constantly alert to the politics of museums in the present.

Museums, Power, Knowledge brings together new research with a set of essays initially published in diverse contexts, making available for the first time the full range of Bennett's critical museology. Ranging across natural history, anthropological, art, geological and history museums and their pre-cursors in earlier collecting institutions, it discusses museum practices in Britain, Australia, the USA, France and Japan. By doing so, the book offers a compelling account of the shifting political logics of museums over the modern period.

This collection will be of interest to researchers, teachers and students working in the fields of museum and heritage studies, cultural history, cultural studies and sociology, as well as to museum professionals and visitors.

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Preface

When I became interested in museums, some thirty years ago, the existing literature was quite sparse and, for the most part, had been written by people professionally involved with museums, usually as either directors or curators. This was particularly true of the historical literature. General accounts of the development of museums were hard to come by, and specific museum histories were often exclusively in-house products written to commemorate anniversaries of one kind or another. Serious engagements with museums and their relations to more general intellectual, cultural and social histories from within the academy were few and far between. The situation since has changed dramatically with a regular flow of titles reflecting different disciplinary engagements (historical, sociological, anthropological) with museum histories and practices and new journals augmenting the previous array of professional journals to provide a context for broader explorations of museum/society and museum/history relations. A number of publishers have developed museum studies lists, while analyses of museum practices have also provided occasions for more general theoretical excursions into critical social and cultural theory.

There had, of course, been earlier critical engagements with museums, particularly before the 1939–1945 war: Theodor Adorno's essays spring to mind as do the trenchant critiques of the Futurists. There was also, in the late 1960s and 1970s, a developing social critique of museums whose universalist credentials were roundly called into question. Caught, initially, in the pincers of sociological and feminist critiques, museums were shown to be key sites for the organisation of classed and gendered cultural hierarchies and, as such, to operate as sites of social exclusion. These critiques were rapidly followed by criticisms focused on the role of museums in the organisation of racialised cultural hierarchies and their relations to the histories of colonialism. These critiques have, of course, both prompted and been prompted by significant changes in museum practices, and they go far beyond the politics of what is put on display and how it is displayed to encompass new conceptions and relations of curatorial responsibility, new forms of custodianship, and more politically sensitive practices of conservation.

There are, however, other considerations that need to be factored into the equation to understand why museums have attracted such sustained attention. Foremost among these is the fact that museums have proved to be useful sites for engaging with a number of more general theoretical shifts that have taken place across the social and cultural disciplines over the last thirty to forty years. They found a place within the concerns of 'the cultural turn' in view of the emphasis this placed on the role of cultural practices – and the cultural institutions that organise them – as active forces in the make-up of social relations. And they have continued to find a place within the subsequent intellectual developments which have qualified and, ultimately, undermined the logic of the cultural turn to produce different vocabularies for, and conceptualisations of, the relations between cultural and social processes.

The work of Foucault has been important here. His concern with the relations between knowledge and power has brought a 'veridical twist' to questions of cultural analysis. Museums, as sites in which a number of distinctive truth effects have been produced by the deployment of a historically particular ensemble of knowledge practices, have provided an exemplary context for working through the implications of this perspective. The more recent 'material turn' that has been in evidence across the social sciences and humanities – from the concern with the agency of things in actor-network theory, the development of material culture studies, and the focus on the 'social life of things' that now characterises a good deal of anthropology – has had a certain elective affinity with museums in view not only of their evident concern with the exhibition and conservation of things but also their strong association with such materially-focused disciplines as archaeology.

These, then, are some of the intellectual developments that have informed my work on museums since – quite unexpectedly – I first became interested in them. I have since developed this interest in a number of different ways, sometimes on my own, and at other times in collaboration with others. I have not, however, worked in museum studies programmes. Nor have I ever worked in museums. Rather, as someone whose interests fall, broadly speaking, in the overlapping territories of cultural studies and cultural sociology, I have published a good deal of my work on museums in journals or book series addressed to readers in these disciplines. A large part of my purpose in this book has therefore been to bring together a collection of my essays on museums in a context addressed specifically to a museum studies readership at a time when that readership has itself been transformed by the critical histories with which most scholars and professionals working in the field now engage. The essays span a good range of museum history – from cabinets of curiosity through nineteenth-century public museums to contemporary national museums – and a diversity of museum types (art museums, museums of natural history, ethnography museums).

They also span the full period, from the 1980s to the present, in which I have addressed museum topics. All of the chapters in Parts 1 and 2, and the first two chapters in Part 3, have previously been published elsewhere. I identify the relevant sources for these in a note at the start of each of these chapters. The Introduction and chapters 10 and 11 are published here for the first time.

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Note on the text

I have, when using the general category of 'indigenous,' used lower-case throughout this study, reserving the use of capitals for reference to specific indigenous peoples: Indigenous Australians, Native Americans, Māori and so on.

I have for the most part given the name of the museums under discussion in full throughout except in chapters 8 and 9 where I use acronyms in referring to the museums and scientific institutions under discussion.

Where chapters have been published previously, I have retained the style conventions enjoined by the original publisher. This leads to some minor stylistic inconsistencies between chapters.

Introduction
Museums, power, knowledge

At the end of his interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino on the subject of truth and power, Michel Foucault puts forward a few propositions to clarify the political implications of all that he had said before in seeking to detach truth from the idealist freight that had been placed on it as the moment of revelation that accompanies liberation, to insist that it must be understood as 'a thing of this world' (Foucault, 1980: 131). Truth, he says, is to be understood as 'a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements' (133). As such, it 'is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it' (133). Since such 'régimes of truth' are not ideological superstructures but material practices, the political task they pose for intellectuals is not one of ideology critique but that 'of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth' (133). The problem, Foucault goes on to say, 'is not changing people's consciousness – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional régime of the production of truth' (133). Truth is not to be emancipated from power; rather, its detachment from the economic, social and cultural hegemonies within which it currently operates is to serve as a prelude to the production of new regimes of truth which will, in turn, produce their own distinctive power effects. Such is the task to which Foucault summons specific intellectuals, urging that they eschew the illusory embrace of a truth and politics beyond power that had beckoned the universal intellectual.

The sedulous labour that informs the arrangement of the relations between things and texts through which statements in museums are organised; the different regimes of truth – archaeological, anthropological, aesthetic, geological – that have informed these labours; the successive rearrangements of the orderings of things that these have produced to yield new truths; the ways in which these realignments of museum statements have been shaped by the reverberations of social movements outside the museum's walls; the reconfigurations of museum regimes of truth produced by the incursions of hitherto excluded subaltern knowledges: in all of these ways, museums – modernity's 'citadels of truth' – invite analysis in the terms proposed by Foucault's conception of the relations between knowledge and power. And

all the more so when account is taken of two further aspects of Foucault's work: his revision of the concerns of architectural theory to take account of how the organisation of the inner spaces of built forms carries the effects of power onto those who occupy those spaces, and the new conceptions of 'the politics of vision' emerging from the emphasis he placed on the architectural arrangement of lines of sight in the organisation of such power effects.

It is not surprising, then, that Foucault's work should have become a central point of reference for the debates which, while grouped together under the label of 'the new museology' in the 1980s, had been acquiring momentum since the late 1960s. Nor is it surprising that it has remained centrally implicated in the critical museum debates that have continued unabated into the present. This is not to suggest that its currency has been constant throughout this period. To the contrary, different aspects of Foucault's work have been highlighted in the light of the changing constellations of theoretical and political concerns in which museums have been embroiled as they have been brought into the fray of the incessantly mobile politics of the present.

For my part, I initially looked to Foucault in the context of the lively debates regarding the social role of museums that took place in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s when, in the lead-up to the bicentennial celebrations of 1988 and the parallel controversies informing the planning for the National Museum of Australia, the politics of the past were forcefully present. This was a multivalent politics in which many different, and often contradictory, imperatives were in play: the politics of the 'new nationalism' orientated to the production of an Australian past that would stand free of its colonial tutelage to Britain; a class politics that would shape an urban and industrial past in contrast to the pastoral heritage traditions fostered by Australia's squattocracy; feminist critiques of the male-centrism of the Australian War Memorial's presentation of Australia's military history; and multicultural critiques of White Australia. It was, however, the critiques of Indigenous Australians that raised the most fundamental questions, challenging not merely this or that particular aspect of museum practices but cutting deeply into the very history of the museum form as such, laying bare its constitutively racist and colonial histories.[1] Not just in Australia, of course. To the contrary, what indigenous critiques – in Canada (Phillips, 2011), New Zealand (McCarthy, 2007) and the United States (Lonetree and Cobb, 2008) just as much as in Australia – have forced onto today's critical agendas are the operations of a museum system which, from its origins, has been shaped by its articulations across the relations between metropolitan powers and colonial territories.

This is a museum system within which the politics of truth that I have been concerned with have focused principally on the relations between the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, geology, history and – overlapping in some respects, but distinct in others – art history and aesthetics, and the counter-knowledges these have generated. The nature of my engagement with these has, however, varied as the changing politics of the present have required that attention be paid to different aspects of their histories. The

politics of deep time that are now so central an aspect of Indigenous Australians' critical engagements with contemporary museum practices framed my concern, in the 1990s, with the longer-term functioning of anthropology, archaeology and geology as a related set of historical sciences whose interactions shaped the temporalities of the modern museum system (Bennett, 2004). Shifting theoretical agendas in the humanities and social sciences have also provided different vantage points from which to interpret and assess the implications of Foucault's approach to the relations between truth and power for the analysis of museums. My first contributions to museum studies were inflected by the tensions between Foucault's politics of truth and interpretations of museums as instruments of cultural hegemony informed by cultural studies readings of Gramsci;[2] my readings of the relations between aesthetics and art museums have been shaped by the perspectives on their roles in practices of distinction or those of social governance derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Foucault respectively;[3] and my more recent interest in the light that assemblage theory throws on museums derives a good deal of its impetus from the broader thrust of post-human studies and the 'material turn' in their concern with the agency of non-human actors.[4]

I have not, however, in arranging the essays that are brought together in this book, aimed for a strict chronological ordering. There is, to be sure, a chronological drift in the relations between the three parts of the book, with the first part focused chiefly on essays penned during my period at Griffith University in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Those gathered in the second part tilt mainly to a later period of work. Initiated when I was still at Griffith University, they were completed after I had returned to the UK's Open University – where I had worked in the 1970s and early 1980s – in 1998. Part 3 represents a reverse movement, comprising both work begun at the Open University in the early noughties but brought to conclusion when I came back to Australia in 2009 to join Western Sydney University and, in the case of the last two essays, work initiated in this period. That said, the logic I have aimed for in the arrangement of the book is that the materials included in each of its parts should speak to one another in illuminating how museums function as and at the junctions of knowledge/power relations that are signalled by the titles I have chosen for the different parts of the book. It is to these matters that I now turn in outlining what I mean by referring to museums as 'civic engines' and 'machineries of modernity,' and what is involved in focusing on their role in 'assembling and governing cultures.' The introductions to the different parts of the book will then indicate how the chapters that are brought together within them speak to these concerns.

Civic engines[5]

My title here draws on what was, in the second part of the nineteenth century, a widespread tendency to bring together the languages of engineering and civics in conceptualising the roles of public museums alongside those

of a range of new public cultural institutions (libraries, for example) developed over the same period. These were variously referred to as 'engines for operating on the poorer parts of the population' (Jevons, 1883: 32) or as 'educational engines' (Rudler, 1876: 4) whose power was to be brought to bear on the working classes congregated in Britain's newly industrialised towns and cities. In aiming to extend the reach of museums beyond the socially limited publics that had been encompassed by their earlier conception within the practices of civic humanism, these museums were also charged with the task of, so to speak, scrubbing the working classes up to make them fit to receive the improving lessons that their entry into museums would expose them to. While initiated in Britain, these conceptions of the function of museums and of their publics rapidly gained an international currency in the Anglophone world, radiating out through its colonies and serving as a point of reference for similar initiatives in the United States (Goode, 1895).

This moment in the development of the museum represented a step-change in the forms of its publicness. The seizure of the Louvre in the name of the people remains, insofar as there are such things, *the* founding moment of the modern public museum, and the extent of its influence is beyond dispute. Yet its innovations were, in some respects, quite limited. Its appropriation in the name of a democratic citizenry was, in practice, accompanied by little, if any, attempt to make the art on display democratically accessible (McClellan, 1994). While the Revolution had opened the Louvre to the public and celebrated its status as a venue for new forms of what I have called 'civic seeing' (Bennett, 2006) in which the virtues of a republican citizenry would be strengthened, the actual practices of the museum assumed a public that was much the same as that which had informed pre-revolutionary plans for both the Louvre and the Luxembourg Gallery. There was no attempt to instruct the museum's new publics on how to read and interpret the art displayed any more than the Louvre was opened to popular arts rooted in the everyday lives of the people. And nature was made to sing to an entirely different museological score: there was little connection between the republican ethos of the Louvre and that of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, where the reconstructions of nature's ruined orders served as a counterpoint to the disordering effects of revolutionary change (Brown, 1997).

The scripts of the Louvre, in short, remained largely those of sovereignty, with the citizen – and, later, the Emperor – occupying the place of the sovereign. The moment that was symbolically marked by the Great Exhibition of 1851 differed in a number of respects. First, it inaugurated what was to prove a significant (but by no means complete) reordering of museum scripts as, across a broad spectrum of museum disciplines, these effected an evolutionary ordering of things – of all things, and all peoples – that was connected to a clearly capitalist and industrial economic and social order. Second, while by no means departing from the scripts of sovereignty, British museums – particularly those in provincial towns and cities – were also

stitched into, and became places for the exercise of, new forms of governmental power through which the citizen was brought under the influence of the museum as one amongst many machineries of civic governance. Third and finally, metropolitan museums became truly global centres of gathering in contrast to the Louvre, which had operated as a more localised centre of gathering for the redistribution of cultural materials within Europe that was effected by the Napoleonic wars of conquest. Finally, toward the end of the century, museums were locked in with a whole battery of mechanisms for racialised forms of collecting and ordering that played a crucial role in the development of practices of colonial governance.

This was a period, in short, that witnessed the transformation of the museum from serving primarily as an instrument of sovereign power into a mechanism for the organisation and relay of the new forms of power that Foucault variously calls governmental and biopolitical (Foucault, 1991, 2008). This is a different argument from one that would see museums as instruments of disciplinary power. I stress this by way of disentangling two lines of criticism that have been levelled against the concept of 'the exhibitionary complex' through which I first sought to identify the specific politics of truth that shaped the nineteenth-century development of the public museum and related exhibition forms, notably those of national and international exhibitions. One line of criticism has taken me to task for relying too much on the ways in which the social role of the museum was envisaged in the dreams and schemes of reformers – from parliamentarians through to museum directors and curators – at the expense of considering how museums were interpreted and interacted with on the part of the newly extended publics they sought to reach. This is a fair criticism and one whose force has been admirably demonstrated in Lara Kriegel's (2007) discussion of the varied 'vulgarised' forms characterising the different kinds of practical service into which aesthetics was pressed in the mid- to late nineteenth-century debates accompanying the rush of museum development that followed the Great Exhibition (Dowling, 1996). While outlining the ways in which such conceptions were mobilised by cultural and intellectual authorities, Kriegel's attention is more absorbed by the ways in which these were engaged with, and transformed by, skilled sections of the working classes who negotiated their relations to official aesthetic culture through the distinctive optic provided by their artisanal skills.

A second line of criticism contends that I drew too close a parallel between the institutions and practices of the exhibitionary complex and those of Foucault's disciplinary archipelago.[6] I think this is mistaken. In considering the nineteenth-century development of the public museum alongside that of the penitentiary, I argued that these were similar inasmuch as their architectural forms sought to regulate the conduct of, respectively, their visitors and their inmates. They did so, however, in different ways and to different effect. The oligoptic arrangement of lines of sight within nineteenth-century museums and exhibitions complemented the disciplinary function of museum guards

by organising relations of self-watching. These had many parallels in other nineteenth-century public and commercial institutions (Otter, 2008), and differed significantly from the totalising gaze of the penitentiary – in which the prisoner is subjected to the unseen gaze of a distant power – in the freedom of movement they afford between the position of observer and observed, watcher and watched. The architectural spaces of new museum and exhibition forms thus certainly exercised a regulatory function, but in relation to publics who were free to come and go rather than to enclosed populations, providing a means of shaping conduct by so arranging the lines of sight that the museum's public, in being made visible to itself, would also be able to monitor itself. Their aspiration was to transform both the political crowd and the idlers who had earlier got up to all sorts of mischief in the dark and secluded corners of the British Museum or Westminster Abbey into well-regulated publics, members of a citizenry watching over and governing itself by bringing each visitor under the controlling gaze of other visitors. Like the prison, the asylum, and the factory in effecting a functional articulation of relations of space and vision, the museum was at the same time unlike these in the specific articulations of these relations that it instantiated.

Perhaps the more important point, however, concerns the respects in which the politics of truth engendered by the disciplines associated with the exhibitionary complex differed from those associated with the psy disciplines that held sway in the carceral archipelago. Far from adopting the individualising orientation of the psy disciplines, the exhibitionary disciplines that ruled the roost in museums and international exhibitions from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries aimed 'at the representation of a type and its insertion in a developmental sequence for display to a public' (Bennett, 1988: 88). By tracing the transition from the orders of classification that governed eighteenth-century natural history collections to the evolutionary ordering of the histories of the earth and of forms of life associated with mid- to late-nineteenth-century developments in geology and biology, I connected these to the parallel emergence of a developmental disposition in the disciplines of art history, history, archaeology and anthropology. Taken as a whole, I argued, these constructed a totalising order of things, forms of life and peoples, which presented bourgeois civilization as the heir to, and culmination of, the developmental dynamic that the exhibitionary disciplines inscribed in the entire course – natural, social, cultural, technological, scientific and economic – of preceding history.

The argument is a historical one concerning the relations between the institutions and knowledges that constituted the exhibitionary complex at a particular phase in its development rather than one proposing a necessary and enduring set of such connections. At the same time, the exhibitionary disciplines have exercised an influence that has reached beyond the period of their initial formation and into the present through the distinctive political rationality they have produced (Bennett, 1990). By generating the demand that the museum should – across the relations between its different types – aim

to offer a universally inclusive depiction of the history of Man as the culmination of the history of life on earth, they constructed a normative ideal which rendered particular museum exhibits liable to criticism on the grounds that the position of Man can always be shown to be occupied by historically exclusive examples: usually white, bourgeois, male, and European or North American. The intellectual disposition of the exhibitionary disciplines, in other words, opened up the museum to a distinctive politics of truth in generating a reforming discourse that has sought to correct the social, cultural and political partialities that have informed the particular ways in which museums have instantiated the position of Man. This has generated an incessant demand that this position be deconstructed and reconstructed so as to achieve a greater degree of representational adequacy in relation to the norms of universality that the exhibitionary disciplines construct by including, on equal terms, the various histories, groups, or cultures that have been excluded from this position: the histories of women, of indigenous peoples, of racial and ethnic minorities, of subordinate classes, of non-Western religions, and so on.

Where, as in the case of absolutist royal collections, exhibition served the purpose of making royal power manifest and where, accordingly, the pinnacle of representation governing the ordering of things was occupied by the prince or monarch, there could be no question of generating a principle of general inclusiveness from within such a representational regime. Nor did such collections generate political concerns focused on questions of public access and participation. The relations between museums and the general populace associated with royal collections concerned rather a particular politics of spectacle: their capacity, through the symbolism of their external architecture, to carry a message of power and magnificence to a population which remained entirely on their outsides as, like Kant's estimation of palaces, things 'merely to be gaped at' (Kant, 1987: 45). The requirements of public access and participation that have accompanied the development of the public museum have, however, been of two different, but never entirely separable, kinds. On the one hand, such requirements articulate a democratic demand for free and open access to museums in what has been a progressively expanding conception of their publics – beyond, initially, limitations of class and, subsequently, those of gender and race. This has been the source of a tension that has recurred throughout the history of the modern museum: between their claims to serve all those who count as members of a democratic public, and the socially restricted patterns of participation in them. Bourdieu's arguments concerning the tension between the obligation he places on the art museum to make the heritage of universal culture universally available to all and the actual patterns of its use as a means of enacting and publicly symbolising middle-class distinction from the working and other subordinate classes is the most influential analysis of this tension (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991). The other side to the access and participation coin, however, has been the significance that has

been accorded to getting new and expanded publics inside the museum in order that they might be brought under its reforming influence – combatting, as the case may be, poor sanitation practices or male drunkenness and domestic violence in the nineteenth century, or racially discriminatory attitudes and practices today.

These, then, are some of the respects in which the development of the public museum has been written over by multiple scripts of power. The relations between these are brought into useful focus by the distinction Foucault proposes between sovereign, governmental and disciplinary forms of power which, he insisted, have to be understood in accordance with a principle of historical accumulation rather than one of historical succession (Foucault, 1991). Sovereign power, that is, is not eclipsed by the later development of governmental and disciplinary forms of power but continues to operate alongside these albeit that its *modus operandi* is now radically transformed. The principle of sovereignty that was once restricted to royal collections subsequently migrated to the role played by museums in relation to the power of the people-nation. This was evident in the development of national museums which, in the public symbolism of their architectures just as much as in the thematic organization of their exhibits, embodied a new articulation of the principle of sovereignty in making the power of the people-nation publicly manifest to itself. That said, this transfer of sovereignty from its dynastic to its nationalist forms can be exaggerated. This is a question I turn to in the concluding chapter of Part 1 where I examine the continuing significance of earlier transnational forms of imagined community – dynastic, imperial, colonial and religious – for the practices of European museums throughout the greater part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In doing so, I also consider the relations between museums and religions from a second perspective: that provided by Michel Foucault's account of the relations – simultaneously ones of historical affiliation and ones of rupture and discontinuity – between pastoral and governmental forms of power. My concern here is to show how, for the greater part, the alignments between museums and religions forged in the course of Western modernity are ones that have subordinated pastoral to governmental forms of power by invoking religion as a form of moral supplement to secular practices of social governance.

We should, then, be wary of imputing a singular form to the public museum or to the disposition of the knowledge practices that have shaped its histories. The nineteenth-century forms of the exhibitionary complex never entirely supplanted earlier museum forms and practices. And they have themselves since been subject to multiple transformations, most notably perhaps, as Terry Smith (2012: chapter 2) has shown in his account of recent transformations of the exhibitionary complex, in the proliferation of new contexts for the exhibition of art.[7] I shall come back to these matters later. First, though, I look more closely at an issue which, although I have invoked it at a number of points in the foregoing discussion, I

have largely taken for granted: that is, the relations between museums and modernity.

Machineries of modernity

Properly speaking, of course, when referring to the relations between museums and modernity, 'modernity' should be placed in quotes given the force of Bruno Latour's (1993) contention that we have never been modern; never differentiated by a divide that separates us irrevocably from our forebears or, in discourses of colonialism, from those other peoples who are alleged to have remained stuck in the pasts from which we have laboriously detached ourselves. Nonetheless, while clearly a fabrication – a temporality which, as Latour once put it, is the product of the 'harsh disciplining' imposed on entities that would otherwise be dispersed across 'all sorts of times' (Latour, 1993: 72) – this does not detract from the real effects that discourses of modernity have exerted. Indeed, the ongoing work of dismantling these effects – through the challenges presented by varied forms of non-Western modernities, for example (Modest, 2012) – can only proceed on the basis of an acknowledgement of its historical reality as a set of discourses and institutions which, in the partitioning of peoples, territories and times that it has effected, has been only too consequential. But what does it mean to refer to these as 'machineries of modernity'? The phrase is one I take from John Law (1994) who, in his account of the processes of assembling, ordering and translation that go into organising modernity, stresses the significance of 'immutable mobiles' – that is, of things which retain their properties as they move through and make connections between different points in a network – to the socio-technical arrangements which constitute modernity as a set of durable, but always relational, effects. Writing, print, paper, money, postal systems and maps: these are among the examples he cites. He goes on to argue that these have always been considered in relation to the operations of various ordering centres which gather, represent, make calculations about, and act on the immutable mobiles that flow between centres and peripheries. Bureaucracy, double-entry book-keeping, cartographic offices and statistics are the instances he mentions.

Although not on Law's list, museums are strong candidates for inclusion among these machineries of modernity in view of their role as centres of calculation at which immutable mobiles are gathered from diverse points of collection and are conscripted, as material actors, into processes of ordering which act back on the sites from which they were collected as well as on the new relations that they are gathered into. Yet these processes are also ones in which, as a consequence of the orderings and re-orderings to which they are subjected, such immutable mobiles become, so to speak, 'mutable immobiles': that is, in the case of museum objects, things which take on new properties and become the sites of varied relational effects while staying (broadly) in the same place (Bennett, 2012). A similar conception informs

Latour's project of a *dingpolitik* focused on the roles played by things in the processes through which matters of fact are translated into matters of public concern (Latour, 2005). Latour's primary point of reference in developing this conception is to Heidegger's concept of the thing as the site of a gathering, albeit that, for Latour, this 'thingness' of the thing is always a relational property – a result of the capacities and affordances that are folded into it through the networks of its relations to other 'actants' – rather than a set of properties that are intrinsic to it.[8]

The issues to which these considerations point concern the processes through which things are gathered into museums; the properties they derive from being thus brought into relations of semiotic and material affiliation with one another; and the processes of presentation through which their arrangement within museum spaces is effected in order to achieve – or approximate to – certain kinds of effect on or among museum visitors. This challenges conceptions of museums as the sources of particular kinds of power in favour of a more mobile and fluid conception of the different kinds of power museums acquire from the constantly shifting forms of knowledge and expertise they deploy, their changing relations to governmental practices, and their relations to the socio-cultural dynamics of civic society. As such, it is a perspective that gels with Foucault's focus on the dispersal of power relations across capillary networks and flows lacking a controlling source. This is necessary if we are to engage adequately with the varied ways in which museums are able to act on society in view of the capability to produce and enact new realities that they acquire through the arrangement of what they collect and exhibit, the material environments in which they do so, and the other apparatuses to which they are connected.

Let me give an example. The processes through which earlier collections were transformed into public museums with a mandate for shaping their visitors into worthy citizens were protracted, hesitant, and often fragile in view of the resistance they encountered from earlier collections and exhibition practices. Jonah Siegel has interpreted these resistances in terms of an opposition between a regime based on the principles of wonder and curiosity and one based on the logic of signs, interpreting the latter as the logic of 'the *modern* museum' in its 'wish to establish a significance beyond the suspension of the understanding' that the ethos of wonder required (Siegel, 2008: 9). Stephanie Moser (2006) has offered a telling account of how long and how effectively the principles of wonder resisted attempts to transform the British Museum's Egyptian collections into signs – in the sense intended by Siegel – that would serve a more pedagogical purpose for an expanded public. In reviewing the different principles informing the British Museum's exhibition of Egyptian materials from its installation of Sir Hans Sloane's collection in 1759 through to the extension of its Smirke Galleries from 1854 to 1880, Moser also contrasts the careers of the Egyptian collections in these regards with those of the museum's Roman and, more particularly, Greek collections. The result is an account, as elegant as it is rigorous, of the

mobile intersections between a set of classificatory and evaluative regimes which held sway over the forms in which Egyptian collections were exhibited for more than a century. Old Testament assessments of Egyptian art and culture as idolatrous; Johan Joachim Winckelmann's influence on art history's interpretation of Egyptian art as less developed than Greek and Roman art; the lingering influence of the culture of curiosity in depriving Egyptian antiquities of any didactic qualities; the aestheticisation of Egyptian displays inherited from Rennaissance sculpture galleries; the overloading of collections gathered in the aftermath of Britain's defeat of France in 1801 with the symbolic freight of British military power: these are among the discursive restraints which kept the British Museum's Egyptian collections off the pedagogic hooks that were being fashioned for Egyptian materials in other contexts – the development of historical principles for the exhibition of Egyptian antiquities at Munich's Glyptothek museum, for example. Dissociated from both a didactic function and from the forms of self-shaping associated with emerging conceptions of the aesthetic, the Egyptian collections were instead – as both Moser (2006) and Jenkins (1992) show – presented as 'wondrous curiosities' intended to surprise and entertain and, in their gigantism, to impress. It was only later, with the extension of the British Museum's Smirke Galleries and the arrangement of its sculpture collection chronologically, that Egyptian antiquities were redefined as historical documents rather than as inferior works of art. Even then their presentation retained earlier associations of a mysterious ancient society obsessed with death and the afterlife which kept them in a separate compartment from the projects of *Bildung* into which the Museum's Greek collections were conscripted.

Moser's discussion stops at 1880. But not without flagging the significance of the institutionalisation and professionalization of Egyptology that was marked by the establishment of the Egypt Exploration Fund (later Society) in 1882, and the role its excavations played in producing materials for the British Museum and, later, the Petrie Museum at University College London. William Matthew Flinders Petrie played a key role in bringing Egyptology and, indeed, the field of classical archaeology more generally, into contact with the developing field of prehistoric archaeology and the principles – of evolution, and of systematic fieldwork – on which, in the wake of John Lubbock and Henry Pitt Rivers, it rested. Samuel Alberti offers a telling postscript to Moser's account in discussing the difficult adjustments that had to be made to the evolutionary principles governing the Manchester Museum's exhibitions when, in 1908, it was obliged, much against its wishes, to extend its disciplinary remit beyond the natural sciences in order to accommodate the Flinders Petrie Collection of Egyptian Antiquities donated by Jesse Haworth, a local cotton magnate who had sponsored Petrie's digs. As its first curator, William Boyd Dawkins – an evolutionary palaeontologist who had been appointed on Thomas Huxley's recommendation – had arranged the museum's exhibits in accordance with rigorous evolutionary principles, excluding cultural materials except

insofar as they could be reconciled with evolutionary orderings of natural history exhibits. Anthropological and archaeological materials were thus admitted only as a means of exhibiting the culmination of natural evolutionary sequences which, in their turn, were interpreted as following on from a 'bedrock' of geological sequences. Dawkins was also radically didactic, committed to transforming the miscellany of curiosities that was the bequest from the Manchester Natural History Society on which the museum was founded into a lean, mean pedagogic machine based exclusively on typological principles. When, in 1890, the Petrie materials were loaned to the Manchester Museum, they were kept strictly apart from the universal evolutionary sequences that Dawkins had so painstakingly constructed. Their donation – which, initially, the museum had refused but was eventually obliged to accept owing to their exceptional popularity with the public – required a more permanent solution. This led to their installation in a new building where they served as a bridge between nature and culture in being presented typologically, in terms that resonated with Dawkins' evolutionary schema, as the point of connection between prehistoric archaeology and (written) history proper (Alberti, 2009: 68–70).

The machinery of modernity that was produced by the intersections of these late nineteenth and early twentieth-century formations of geology, natural history, archaeology, anthropology and, at the points of its highly troubled intersections with anthropology, aesthetics,[9] was distinctive in its forms and effects. These derived from the historical disposition of these disciplines which, in their nineteenth-century forms, were governed by what I have called an 'archaeological gaze.' Combining the principles of eighteenth-century conjectural history with the commitment to scientific method that characterised their nineteenth-century development, these disciplines moved backwards and forwards between present and past, and past and present, by hypothesising a past set of conditions from which the present state of things was derived and then identifying the laws of causation that had governed the transition from that conjectural past to the present. In ways that applied equally to the relations between past and present forms of life, languages, customs, and social and political institutions, I argued:

> the present was read to identify the pasts that had been sedimented within it as the remnants of one historical period [were] carried over and compressed into the next one, preserving a record of time's passage in the sequential layering of its accumulations
>
> (Bennett, 2004: 37)

These historical sciences, as they were known at the time, were the key operators of a distinctive form of 'slow modernity' (Bennett, 2004: 187), a concept I proposed partly as a corrective to Latour's contention that the discourse of modernity institutes a temporal order that establishes a radical division between the past and the present in which 'nothing of the past

survives' (Latour, 1993: 68), and partly as a counter to those accounts which, in aligning the art museum with the time of modernity, assign natural history and ethnography museums to a temporal order that is modernity's antithesis (Bal, 1992, for example). There is, of course, a germ of truth in such contrasts between the time of the art museum and that of the museums associated with the historical sciences, particularly from the end of the nineteenth century when, as Pierre Bourdieu (2013) has argued, art museums acquired a new temporality marked by the sequence of ruptures with previous artistic styles produced by a succession of *avant-garde* movements.[10] It is, however, a mistake to equate the 'shock of the new' constituted by a succession of aesthetic modernisms for the time of modernity *tout court*. Far from being anti-modern, late nineteenth-century public museums of geology, anthropology, archaeology and natural history – particularly in the Anglophone world – orchestrated a distinctive modern temporality in which the relations between past and present were characterised by developmental continuities which, while making the past an active force in the present, also interpreted it as a force that needed to be surpassed, moved beyond, if the developmental dynamic that characterised evolutionary conceptions of progress was to be maintained. Contra Latour, the problem was that far too much of the past survived in the present; it had, therefore, constantly – slowly and painstakingly – to be expunged.

This, then, is the perspective informing my concerns in the opening chapters of Part 2, where I look at the ways in which evolutionary arrangements of geological, natural history and ethnographic materials coded the messages of evolution into the museum environment, transforming progress into a performative requirement of the visitor who was called on not just to absorb but to enact the lessons of evolution. Viewed from this perspective, I argue, such museums comprised a machinery of modernity that operated through the archaeological structure of personhood which they produced. If this was a form of personhood in which the inherited past and the developmental requirements of a progressive present were placed into a productive tension with one another, this was also a tension that informed and shaped the distinctive visual regimes of evolutionary museums. At the same time, however, such machineries of modernity worked through the divisions they established between their publics, whom they addressed as constantly in the process of becoming (more) modern, and those, more typically present in museums as exhibits rather than as visitors, who were depicted as pre-modern 'primitives.' While these were increasingly presented as destined to exit from history through extinction, they nonetheless represented the force of that primitive past which, still surviving in the present, comprised a regressive layer in the make-up of the modern person that modernity's subjects had to constantly peel themselves away from in order to keep themselves on modernity's progressive tracks. While this particular historical form of personhood has now, so to speak, fallen by the wayside, the final chapter in Part 2 considers how aesthetic conceptions of culture inform the ways in which

a range of contemporary museums continue to function as 'machineries of modernity' by prompting their visitors to update themselves by jettisoning outdated practices.

Assembling and governing cultures

Another way of describing my concerns in Part 2 would be to say that they trace the processes through which earlier museum collections were dis-assembled in order that their constituent elements might then be re-assembled, alongside the new materials that the historical sciences earmarked for collection, to produce those 'pasts beyond memories' and their evolutionary sequencing into the present that informed the operations of museums as 'machineries of modernity'. My interests in Part 3 focus on the processes through which these nineteenth-century museum orderings of the relations between things and peoples have, in their turn, been dis-assembled and then re-assembled in new configurations. This involves a more specific disciplinary focus centred on different moments in, and aspects of, the relations between museums and the more general political careers of anthropological concepts of culture. I pay some attention here to Edward Burnett Tylor's initial formulation of culture as a set of customs, habits and traits. However, this is chiefly as a backdrop against which to set the later, twentieth-century development of the 'culture concept' associated with the Boasian tradition of American anthropology, and the parallel relativisation of culture by Paul Rivet at the Musée de l'Homme. These played a significant role in (partly) dismantling evolutionary and hierarchical orderings of the relations between peoples to produce, in their (more) relativist understandings of culture, a new set of discursive coordinates for managing the relations between populations that (partly) displaced the role earlier played by race in this regard. The qualifications I have placed in parentheses are important. While frequently hailed as marking moments of epistemological rupture with earlier racialised hierarchies, both the Boasian culture concept and Rivet's more environmentalist conception of culture continued to be haunted by the racist categories they allegedly displaced.

However, the issues I address in Part 3 differ from those in Parts 1 and 2 not only in their more contemporary focus – mainly twentieth century but, in the final chapter, reaching into the present – and narrower disciplinary remit. They are also more centrally concerned with the role that museums have played, and continue to play, in relation to practices of governance in colonial contexts. Engaging with these questions has involved a shift in the focus of analytical attention from that associated with the concept of the exhibitionary complex. Since this accords a primary significance to the relations of truth and power that are exercised through the exhibition practices of museums, it pays little heed to the truth/power effects that arise from the deployment of museum knowledges in other contexts. Limiting attention to the ways of acting on conduct that museums are able to exercise

through their exhibition practices, whether directly on their visitors or indirectly on the wider publics they reach via the circulation of representations based on their collections, it neglects how museum practices are connected to processes of governance through their operations via other networks. Chris Otter illuminates the points at issue here in the contrast he draws between two different ways in which the Great Exhibition aimed at the improvement of the working classes. One tactic, comprising the housing and sanitary displays that the Exhibition directed toward its working-class visitors, aspired to educate these so that they would voluntarily mend their unhealthy domestic practices. At the same time, however, the Great Exhibition was also connected to other circuits for the distribution of knowledges which, premised on the working class's intellectual and sensory incapacity to respond to such programs, aimed to transform working-class milieus through sanitation programs which treated the population as an object to be acted on (Otter, 2008, 65–7).

Considerations of this kind are writ large in colonial contexts where indigenous peoples who may never have heard of or visited museums, or been part of the public spheres though which their activities circulate, have nonetheless been profoundly affected by their activities as a consequence of the influence that museum orderings of the relations between peoples have exercised on the classificatory grids through which programs of colonial administration have been organised and put into effect. Where this is so, the questions I broached in the previous section, concerning the ways in which museums operate on and work through specific 'architectures of personhood' in order to induct their publics into self-directed programmes of change, do not apply. But questions concerning how museums contribute to the management of bodies certainly do apply, and a different analytical optic is required to engage with these, one which places museums in a different institutional series from that suggested by the conception of the exhibitionary complex. Instead of considering museums alongside other exhibition practices – those of department stores, for example – it is the connections between museums and other means for collecting information from and about populations – censuses, for example – that need to be attended to in order to identify how the classificatory grids and frameworks to which those collections are subjected shape the varied forms of governmental action that are brought to bear back on those populations.

This requires methods that can engage adequately with the varied forms of action that museums acquire from the capacities – capacities to produce and enact new realities – that are folded into them through the arrangements of what they collect and exhibit, the material environments in which they do so, and the other apparatuses to which they are connected. This, certainly, is the perspective from which a large and growing literature now views museums: as places in which the things they exhibit and those which they do not exhibit derive particular capacities that are consequential for how museums act on and help to shape social worlds. These are not, though, capacities that

are intrinsic to the 'thingness' of the things that museums collect and exhibit. Nor do they derive from ideas or representations of things: from the thing as 'object' rather than from the self-sufficient thing, to invoke the terms of Heidegger's famous opposition (see the introduction to Daston, 2004). Rather, they are capacities which are brought into being via the varied routes through which things reach museums, and the manner in which they are classified and organised as they are processed by conservational, curatorial or educational staff, and the social and material networks to which, as a consequence, they are connected (Alberti, 2009). In all of these ways, museums are increasingly thought of as complex assemblages of distributed agency in which things and people derive their particular force and capacity from the mobile and plural networks into which they are provisionally 'stitched' (Gosden, Larson and Petch, 2007).

These ways of thinking about museums have varied provenances in different theoretical traditions: actor-network and assemblage theory, and the focus on the distribution of agency across the relations between human and non-human actors that typifies the 'material turn' in anthropology and archaeology.[11] The emphasis that science studies has placed on the processes through which scientific practices produce new entities in the field of knowledge also bears on how museum arrangements produce new aesthetic and epistemological realities which then enter into alliances with social and political agents to produce new ways of acting on and changing social worlds (Bennett, 2005). These, then, are some of the shifts of emphasis characterising the chapters collected in Part 3 where, in addition to the above, I draw on the 'social life of methods' tradition in sociology (Ruppert, Law and Savage, 2013), and the more general concern with the social and political consequences of the work of ordering effected by collections of various kind associated with the 'archival turn' (Stoler, 2009), to probe the role played by the relations between museums and anthropological discourses of culture in a range of governmental practices. In doing so I approach culture as an instance of what Foucault called 'transactional realities' (Foucault, 2008: 297) – a term he proposed when insisting that the relations between governing practices and governed populations are always mediated by, and take place through, intervening realities which, far from being naturally given, are the product of those governing practices and the knowledges informing them. Anthropological concepts of culture, in their varied forms – from Tylor through Boas and his followers to contemporary conceptions of the relations between cultures and communities – have operated precisely as such 'transactional realities' in providing the interfaces through which governing practices have been brought to bear on the governance of indigenous populations in colonial contexts and, indeed, on the governance of the relations between different sections of diverse societies more generally.

In examining how museums have contributed to the production of such transactional realities – or, as have called them, 'working surfaces on the social' (Bennett, 2013: 38–45) – I bring the concerns of assemblage theory

and the post-Foucaultian literature on governmentality into dialogue with one another. There is, of course, nothing strained about such a dialogue. The concept of assemblage, in its post-Deleuzean trajectories, is a development of Foucault's concept of the *dispositif* – or, as a loose translation (Bussolini, 2010), apparatus. In a much-quoted passage – it plays a central role in both Deleuze's (1992) and Giorgio Agamben's (2009) discussion of the concept – Foucault, in identifying the range of heterogeneous elements that go to make up an apparatus (discourses, institutions, architectures, statements, laws and regulations), defines the 'apparatus itself' as 'the system of relations that can be established between these elements' (Foucault, 1980: 194). This network, he goes on to argue, has to be understood as a strategic formation whose organization is a response to an urgency, an intervention into the existing relations of forces in order to develop, stabilize or block them. 'The apparatus,' he concludes, has thus to be understood as 'always inscribed in a play of power' and as also 'always linked to certain coordinates of knowledge which issue from it but, to an equal degree, condition it' (196). Bruce Braun, in highlighting this aspect of Foucault's definition, also usefully elaborates its implications in identifying the inherently reactive and essentially mobile properties of such apparatuses in responding tactically to changing circumstances. Given that the elements that are thus brought into association with one another within an apparatus 'have no more unity and no more necessity beyond the simple fact of being stitched together' in the context of a particular conjuncture, Braun argues that 'because a dispositif is a decentered totality that is *ad hoc* in its formation, it does not allow for any singular politics of "opposition"' (Braun, 2014: 52). Rather, he suggests, it calls for a range of different forms and styles of political engagement which aim at unstitching, and then re-stitching, the prevailing ordering of the relations between its elements. It is this perspective that underlies my discussion, in the final chapter, of the complex range of positions and negotiations that now characterize the relations between Indigenous knowledges and museological deployments of anthropology, archaeology, art history and aesthetics in contemporary Australia.

Notes

1 The force of this challenge was evident in the 'history wars' occasioned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curated presentations of violent encounters along Australia's colonial frontiers at the National Museum of Australia. Right-wing criticisms of these – notably by Keith Windschuttle (2001) – resulted in significant realignments of the museum's governance. For discussions of the 'history wars' both generally and with specific reference to the National Museum of Australia, see Attwood (2015); Casey (2006); MacIntyre and Clark (2003); and Manne (2003).

2 See, for example, the conclusion to 'The exhibitionary complex', chapter 1 in this volume.

3 While the analytical perspectives of Foucault and Bourdieu are significantly different in a number of ways, there are points of productive connection between them. See further, Bennett (2010).

 4 See, on these questions, the introduction to Bennett and Joyce (2010).
 5   I draw on Bennett (2012) in some parts of my discussion in this section and the next.
 6 For examples of these, and my response to them, see Bennett (2015).
 7 These are questions that I have also considered; see Bennett (2017).
 8 See Harman (2009) for a discussion of the relations between Latour and Heidegger on these questions.
 9 I refer here to the role that references to both the art works of indigenous peoples and their sensory capacities played in admitting some ability for aesthetic judgement while at the same time devaluing that ability as underdeveloped. See, for example, Haddon (1895) for a telling discussion of the inability of the art practices of primitive peoples to rise above the level of mere copying traditional models to achieve genuine formal innovation. For more general discussions, see Dias (2004) and Nakata (2007).
10 This is not to say that Bourdieu's account is without its problems. Indeed, it is arguably too closely tied up with aesthetic modernism's constructions of its own temporalities. How far his account can stretch beyond modernist practices to engage with the flatter temporalities of contemporary art is disputed. The work of Alexander Nagel (2012) also casts doubt on the historical logic informing modernist accounts of the emergence of art's autonomy.
11 Two recent collections exemplifying these approaches are Bennett and Healy (2011) and Harrison, Byrne and Clarke (eds.) (2013).

Part I

Civic engines

As I have already indicated, my title for this section takes its bearings from the widespread tendency, in mid- to late nineteenth-century Anglophone settings, for the culture of reform to draw on the vocabularies of engineering in articulating new conceptions of the role of museums as instruments for acting on and shaping the civic attributes of their newly extended publics. If the scripts of museums were thus increasingly fashioned to accord with those new forms of power that Foucault called governmental, this did not mean that the earlier scripts of sovereign power or, indeed, of pastoral power were entirely jettisoned. To the contrary, these have remained significant aspects of museum practice, albeit ones that are in some degree of tension with one another as the principles of sovereignty, shifted from the monarch to the people-nation, have vied with the transnational force of imperial, colonial and religious imaginaries. These, then, are the questions that the chapters in Part 1 engage with alongside a consideration of the relations between the early development of public museums and the institutions and practices of disciplinary power.

In what has proved to be an influential argument, 'The exhibitionary complex' examines the rise of the public museum alongside a parallel series of exhibition apparatuses, particularly international exhibitions. These jointly comprised a complex distinguished by a particular set of knowledge/power relations which provided a counterpoint to those informing the operations of Foucault's disciplinary archipelago. There are three main aspects to the discussion. First, the reformatory orientation of the exhibitionary complex is contrasted to that of the institutions of discipline as one which sought to induct free publics into voluntary programmes of self-reform. Second, the specific qualities of the knowledges involved in late nineteenth-century exhibition practices are explored via an examination of the transition from Enlightenment systems of classification to the evolutionary ordering of things and peoples, and their connections to classed, gendered and racial hierarchies, effected by the exhibitionary disciplines of geology, archaeology, biology and art history. Third, the architectural forms of public museums and international exhibitions are considered with regard to the principles

of self-watching they developed as a means of banishing the spectre of the crowd by transforming it into a self-monitoring and self-regulating public.

The second chapter, 'The multiplication of culture's utility,' takes its title from William Stanley Jevons, who sought to give the emerging discipline of economics a public inflection in urging the need for the development of public museums, alongside public libraries and public sanitation, as a means of multiplying the utility of what would otherwise remain under-used private collections of art and books. Tracing the connections between this conception and those of Sir Henry Cole's earlier advocacy of public art museums and the later programmes of such museum administrators as Thomas Greenwood and, in the USA, George Brown Goode and John Cotton Dana, it examines how the development of the public art museum worked with and transformed the legacy of the earlier tradition of civic humanism in re-programming art collections so that they might function – as Jevons put it – as engines for acting on the poorer part of the population. The discussion ranges across the foundation and development of the South Kensington Museum, the influence of Goode's 'new museum idea' in America, and Dana's Newark Gallery. It concludes with an assessment of the respects in which these instances of the 'bureaucratisation of art' provide a counter to those accounts of the art museum – instanced by aspects of Theodor Adorno's and Walter Benjamin's work – which interpret the placing of art in public collections as a fall from the meaning that was vouchsafed them so long as they remained in personal collections.

The final chapter in Part 1, 'Museums, nations, empires, religions,' takes its initial bearings from Benedict Anderson's conception of nations as imagined communities whose trajectories, in being presented as emerging from a distant past and being projected into a limitless future, encompass a territorially defined population into an essential unity, a people-nation. In contrasting such forms of imagining to those of both imperial and religious transnational communities, Anderson's work has provided an influential framework for narrating the relations between the rise of the modern museum and that of the nation-state. While there can be no doubting the closeness of the museum/nation connection, it is also one which, on further inspection, proves to be more fragile than many accounts suggest. This is especially true of the relations between museums and nations in Europe which, if it provided the initial incubation for the museum/nation relationship, has also seen that relationship either unpicked or over-determined by other relations: those of a succession of intra-European empires – Napoleonic, Tsarist, Austro-Hungarian, Soviet, Nazi – which have subordinated the national repertoires of museums to larger transnational imaginaries. At the same time, the national museums of a number of European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Britain) have attached national histories and imaginaries to global colonialisms. The relations between museums and nations have thus been subject to constant mutations in the light of the unstable relations between nations and transnational flows (of people and

things) and imaginaries. The same is true of the relations between museums and religions. At a time when increasing diasporic flows have lent an increasingly religious inflection to questions of cultural diversity, it is becoming clear that the imaginary community of the nation has never displaced the transnational imaginary communities of different religions, and that the museum has always been engaged in complex negotiations – varying from one country to another – between the civic and secular space of the national and the rival claims of religions, initially mainly Christian but now insistently multi-faith. In examining these questions, the chapter draws on Foucault's account of pastoral power to illuminate the respects in which contemporary museums are caught in the cross-fire between pastoral and governmental forms of power.

1   The exhibitionary complex*

In reviewing Foucault on the asylum, the clinic, and the prison as institutional articulations of power and knowledge relations, Douglas Crimp suggests that there 'is another such institution of confinement ripe for analysis in Foucault's terms – the museum – and another discipline – art history' (Crimp, 1985: 45). Crimp is no doubt right, although the terms of his proposal are misleadingly restrictive. For the emergence of the art museum was closely related to that of a wider range of institutions – history and natural science museums, dioramas and panoramas, national and, later, international exhibitions, arcades and department stores – which served as linked sites for the development and circulation of new disciplines (history, biology, art history, anthropology) and their discursive formations (the past, evolution, aesthetics, man) as well as for the development of new technologies of vision. Furthermore, while these comprised an intersecting set of institutional and disciplinary relations which might be productively analysed as particular articulations of power and knowledge, the suggestion that they should be construed as institutions of confinement is curious. It seems to imply that works of art had previously wandered through the streets of Europe like the Ships of Fools in Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation*; or that geological and natural history specimens had been displayed before the world, like the condemned on the scaffold, rather than being withheld from public gaze, secreted in the *studiolo* of princes, or made accessible only to the limited gaze of high society in the *cabinets des curieux* of the aristocracy (Figure 1.1). Museums may have enclosed objects within walls, but the nineteenth century saw their doors opened to the general public – witnesses whose presence was just as essential to a display of power as had been that of the people before the spectacle of punishment in the eighteenth century.

Institutions, then, not of confinement but of exhibition, forming a complex of disciplinary and power relations whose development might more fruitfully be juxtaposed to, rather than aligned with, the formation of Foucault's 'carceral archipelago'. For the movement Foucault traces in *Discipline and*

Figure 1.1 The cabinet of curiosities: the *Metallotheca* of Michele Mercati in the
        Vatican, 1719

Source: Impey and MacGregor (1985).

Punish is one in which objects and bodies – the scaffold and the body of
the condemned – which had previously formed a part of the public display
of power were withdrawn from the public gaze as punishment increasingly
took the form of incarceration. No longer inscribed within a public drama-
turgy of power, the body of the condemned comes to be caught up within an
inward-looking web of power relations. Subjected to omnipresent forms of
surveillance through which the message of power was carried directly to it
so as to render it docile, the body no longer served as the surface on which,
through the system of retaliatory marks inflicted on it in the name of the
sovereign, the lessons of power were written for others to read:

> The scaffold, where the body of the tortured criminal had been exposed
> to the ritually manifest force of the sovereign, the punitive theatre in
> which the representation of punishment was permanently available to the
> social body, was replaced by a great enclosed, complex and hierarchised
> structure that was integrated into the very body of the state apparatus.
>
> (Foucault, 1977: 115–16)

The institutions comprising 'the exhibitionary complex', by contrast, were involved in the transfer of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains in which they had previously been displayed (but to a restricted public) into progressively more open and public arenas where, through the representations to which they were subjected, they formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society.

Two different sets of institutions and their accompanying knowledge/power relations, then, whose histories, in these respects, run in opposing directions. Yet they are also parallel histories. The exhibitionary complex and the carceral archipelago develop over roughly the same period – the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century – and achieve developed articulations of the new principles they embodied within a decade or so of one another. Foucault regards the opening of the new prison at Mettray in 1840 as a key moment in the development of the carceral system. Why Mettray? Because, Foucault argues, 'it is the disciplinary form at its most extreme, the model in which are concentrated all the coercive technologies of behaviour previously found in the cloister, prison, school or regiment and which, in being brought together in one place, served as a guide for the future development of carceral institutions' (Foucault, 1977: 293). In Britain, the opening of Pentonville Model Prison in 1842 is often viewed in a similar light. Less than a decade later the Great Exhibition of 1851 (see Figure 1.2) brought together an ensemble of disciplines and techniques of display that had been developed within the previous histories of museums, panoramas, Mechanics' Institute exhibitions, art galleries, and arcades. In doing so, it translated these into exhibitionary forms which, in simultaneously ordering objects for public inspection and ordering the public that inspected, were to have a profound and lasting influence on the subsequent development of museums, art galleries, expositions, and department stores.

Nor are these entirely separate histories. At certain points they overlap, often with a transfer of meanings and effects between them. To understand their interrelations, however, it will be necessary, in borrowing from Foucault, to qualify the terms he proposes for investigating the development of power/knowledge relations during the formation of the modern period. For the set of such relations associated with the development of the exhibitionary complex serves as a check to the generalizing conclusions Foucault derives from his examination of the carceral system. In particular, it calls into question his suggestion that the penitentiary merely perfected the individualizing and normalizing technologies associated with a veritable swarming of forms of surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms which came to suffuse society with a new – and all pervasive – political economy of power. This is not to suggest that technologies of surveillance had no place in the exhibitionary complex but rather that their intrication with new forms of spectacle produced a more complex and nuanced set of relations through which power

Figure 1.2 The Great Exhibition, 1851: the Western, or British, Nave, looking East
Source: Plate by H. Owen and M. Ferrier.

was exercised and relayed to – and, in part, through and by – the populace
than the Foucaultian account allows.

Foucault's primary concern, of course, is with the problem of order. He
conceives the development of new forms of discipline and surveillance, as
Jeffrey Minson puts it, as an 'attempt to reduce an ungovernable *populace*
to a multiply differentiated *population*', parts of 'an historical movement
aimed at transforming highly disruptive economic conflicts and political
forms of disorder into quasi-technical or moral problems for social admin-
istration'. These mechanisms assumed, Minson continues, 'that the key to
the populace's social and political unruliness and also the means of combat-
ing it lies in the "opacity" of the populace to the forces of order' (Minson,
1985: 24). The exhibitionary complex was also a response to the problem of
order, but one which worked differently in seeking to transform that prob-
lem into one of culture – a question of winning hearts and minds as well as
the disciplining and training of bodies. As such, its constituent institutions

reversed the orientations of the disciplinary apparatuses in seeking to render the forces and principles of order visible to the populace – transformed, here, into a people, a citizenry – rather than vice versa. They sought not to map the social body in order to know the populace by rendering it visible to power. Instead, through the provision of object lessons in power – the power to command and arrange things and bodies for public display – they sought to allow the people, and *en masse* rather than individually, to know rather than be known, to become the subjects rather than the objects of knowledge. Yet, ideally, they sought also to allow the people to know and thence to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation.

It is, then, as a set of cultural technologies concerned to organize a voluntarily self-regulating citizenry that I propose to examine the formation of the exhibitionary complex. In doing so, I shall draw on the Gramscian perspective of the ethical and educative function of the modern state to account for the relations of this complex to the development of the bourgeois democratic polity. Yet, while wishing to resist a tendency in Foucault towards misplaced generalizations, it is to Foucault's work that I shall look to unravel the relations between knowledge and power effected by the technologies of vision embodied in the architectural forms of the exhibitionary complex.

Discipline, surveillance, spectacle

In discussing the proposals of late eighteenth-century penal reformers, Foucault remarks that punishment, while remaining a 'legible lesson' organized in relation to the body of the offended, was envisioned as 'a school rather than a festival; an ever-open book rather than a ceremony' (Foucault, 1977: 111). Hence, in schemes to use convict labour in public contexts, it was envisaged that the convict would repay society twice: once by the labour he provided, and a second time by the signs he produced, a focus of both profit and signification in serving as an ever-present reminder of the connection between crime and punishment:

> Children should be allowed to come to the places where the penalty is being carried out; there they will attend their classes in civics. And grown men will periodically relearn the laws. Let us conceive of places of punishment as a Garden of the Laws that families would visit on Sundays.
>
> (Foucault, 1977: 111)

In the event, punishment took a different path with the development of the carceral system. Under both the *ancien régime* and the projects of the late eighteenth-century reformers, punishment had formed part of a public

system of representation. Both regimes obeyed a logic according to which 'secret punishment is a punishment half-wasted' (Foucault, 1977: 111). With the development of the carceral system, by contrast, punishment was removed from the public gaze in being enacted behind the closed walls of the penitentiary, and had in view not the production of signs for society but the correction of the offender. No longer an art of public effects, punishment aimed at a calculated transformation in the behaviour of the convicted. The body of the offender, no longer a medium for the relay of signs of power, was zoned as the target for disciplinary technologies which sought to modify the behaviour through repetition.

> The body and the soul, as principles of behaviour, form the element that is now proposed for punitive intervention. Rather than on an art of representation, this punitive intervention must rest on a studied manipulation of the individual. . . . As for the instruments used, these are no longer complexes of representation, reinforced and circulated, but forms of coercion, schemata of restraint, applied and repeated. Exercises, not signs . . .
>
> (Foucault, 1977: 128)

It is not this account itself that is in question here but some of the more general claims Foucault elaborates on its basis. In his discussion of 'the swarming of disciplinary mechanisms', Foucault argues that the disciplinary technologies and forms of observation developed in the carceral system – and especially the principle of panopticism, rendering everything visible to the eye of power – display a tendency 'to become "de-institutionalised", to emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and to circulate in a "free" state' (Foucault, 1977: 211). These new systems of surveillance, mapping the social body so as to render it knowable and amenable to social regulation, mean, Foucault argues, that 'one can speak of the formation of a disciplinary society . . . that stretches from the enclosed disciplines, a sort of social "quarantine", to an indefinitely generalisable mechanism of "panopticism"' (216). A society, according to Foucault in his approving quotation of Julius, that 'is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance':

> Antiquity had been a civilisation of spectacle. 'To render accessible to a multitude of men the inspection of a small number of objects': this was the problem to which the architecture of temples, theatres and circuses responded. . . . In a society in which the principal elements are no longer the community and public life, but, on the one hand, private individuals and, on the other, the state, relations can be regulated only in a form that is the exact reverse of the spectacle. It was to the modern age, to the ever-growing influence of the state, to its ever more profound intervention in all the details and all the relations of social life, that was reserved the task of increasing and perfecting its guarantees, by using

and directing towards that great aim the building and distribution of buildings intended to observe a great multitude of men at the same time.

(Foucault, 1977: 216–17)

A disciplinary society: this general characterization of the modality of power in modern societies has proved one of the more influential aspects of Foucault's work. Yet it is an incautious generalization and one produced by a peculiar kind of misattention. For it by no means follows from the fact that punishment had ceased to be a spectacle that the function of displaying power – of making it visible for all to see – had itself fallen into abeyance.[1] Indeed, as Graeme Davison suggests, the Crystal Palace might serve as the emblem of an architectural series which could be ranged against that of the asylum, school, and prison in its continuing concern with the display of objects to a great multitude:

> The Crystal Palace reversed the panoptical principle by fixing the eyes of the multitude upon an assemblage of glamorous commodities. The Panopticon was designed so that everyone could be seen; the Crystal Palace was designed so that everyone could see.
>
> (Davison, 1982/3: 7)

This opposition is a little overstated in that one of the architectural innovations of the Crystal Palace consisted in the arrangement of relations between the public and exhibits so that, while everyone could see, there were also vantage points from which everyone could be seen, thus combining the functions of spectacle and surveillance. None the less, the shift of emphasis is worth preserving for the moment, particularly as its force is by no means limited to the Great Exhibition. Even a cursory glance through Richard Altick's *The Shows of London* convinces that the nineteenth century was quite unprecedented in the social effort it devoted to the organization of spectacles arranged for increasingly large and undifferentiated publics (Altick, 1978). Several aspects of these developments merit a preliminary consideration.

First, the tendency for society itself – in its constituent parts and as a whole – to be rendered as a spectacle. This was especially clear in attempts to render the city visible, and hence knowable, as a totality. While the depths of city life were penetrated by developing networks of surveillance, cities increasingly opened up their processes to public inspection, laying their secrets open not merely to the gaze of power but, in principle, to that of everyone; indeed, making the specular dominance of the eye of power available to all. By the turn of the century, Dean MacCannell notes, sightseers in Paris 'were given tours of the sewers, the morgue, a slaughterhouse, a tobacco factory, the government printing office, a tapestry works, the mint, the stock exchange and the supreme court in session' (MacCannell, 1976: 57). No doubt such tours conferred only an imaginary dominance over the

city, an illusory rather than substantive controlling vision, as Dana Brand suggests was the case with earlier panoramas (Brand, 1986). Yet the principle they embodied was real enough and, in seeking to render cities knowable in exhibiting the workings of their organizing institutions, they are without parallel in the spectacles of earlier regimes where the view of power was always 'from below'. This ambition towards a specular dominance over a totality was even more evident in the conception of international exhibitions which, in their heyday, sought to make the whole world, past and present, metonymically available in the assemblages of objects and peoples they brought together and, from their towers, to lay it before a controlling vision.

Second, the increasing involvement of the state in the provision of such spectacles. In the British case, and even more so the American, such involvement was typically indirect.[2] Nicholas Pearson notes that while the sphere of culture fell increasingly under governmental regulation in the second half of the nineteenth century, the preferred form of administration for museums, art galleries, and exhibitions was (and remains) via boards of trustees. Through these, the state could retain effective direction over policy by virtue of its control over appointments but without involving itself in the day-to-day conduct of affairs and so, seemingly, violating the Kantian imperative in subordinating culture to practical requirements (Pearson, 1982: 8–13, 46–7). Although the state was initially prodded only reluctantly into this sphere of activity, there should be no doubt of the importance it eventually assumed. Museums, galleries, and, more intermittently, exhibitions played a pivotal role in the formation of the modern state and are fundamental to its conception as, among other things, a set of educative and civilizing agencies. Since the late nineteenth century, they have been ranked highly in the funding priorities of all developed nation-states and have proved remarkably influential cultural technologies in the degree to which they have recruited the interest and participation of their citizenries.

Finally, the exhibitionary complex provided a context for the *permanent* display of power/knowledge. In his discussion of the display of power in the *ancien régime*, Foucault stresses its episodic quality. The spectacle of the scaffold formed part of a system of power which 'in the absence of continual supervision, sought a renewal of its effect in the spectacle of its individual manifestations; of a power that was recharged in the ritual display of its reality as "super-power"' (Foucault, 1977: 57). It is not that the nineteenth century dispensed entirely with the need for the periodic magnification of power through its excessive display, for the expositions played this role. They did so, however, in relation to a network of institutions which provided mechanisms for the permanent display of power. And for a power which was not reduced to periodic effects but which, to the contrary, manifested itself precisely in continually displaying its ability to command, order, and control objects and bodies, living or dead.

There is, then, another series from the one Foucault examines in tracing the shift from the ceremony of the scaffold to the disciplinary rigours of

the penitentiary. Yet it is a series which has its echo and, in some respects, model in another section of the socio-juridical apparatus: the trial. The scene of the trial and that of punishment traversed one another as they moved in opposite directions during the early modern period. As punishment was withdrawn from the public gaze and transferred to the enclosed space of the penitentiary, so the procedures of trial and sentencing – which, except for England, had hitherto been mostly conducted in secret, 'opaque not only to the public but also to the accused himself' (Foucault, 1977: 35) – were made public as part of a new system of judicial truth which, in order to function as truth, needed to be made known to all. If the asymmetry of these movements is compelling, it is no more so than the symmetry of the movement traced by the trial and the museum in the transition they make from closed and restricted to open and public contexts. And, as a part of a profound transformation in their social functioning, it was ultimately to these institutions – and not by witnessing punishment enacted in the streets nor, as Bentham had envisaged, by making the penitentiaries open to public inspection – that children, and their parents, were invited to attend their lessons in civics.

Moreover, such lessons consisted not in a display of power which, in seeking to terrorize, positioned the people on the other side of power as its potential recipients but sought rather to place the people – conceived as a nationalized citizenry – on this side of power, both its subject and its beneficiary. To identify with power, to see it as, if not directly theirs, then indirectly so, a force regulated and channelled by society's ruling groups but for the good of all: this was the rhetoric of power embodied in the exhibitionary complex – a power made manifest not in its ability to inflict pain but by its ability to organize and co-ordinate an order of things and to produce a place for the people in relation to that order. Detailed studies of nineteenth-century expositions thus consistently highlight the ideological economy of their organizing principles, transforming displays of machinery and industrial processes, of finished products and *objets d'art*, into material signifiers of progress – but of progress as a collective national achievement with capital as the great co-ordinator (Silverman, 1977; Rydell, 1984). This power thus subjugated by flattery, placing itself on the side of the people by affording them a place within its workings; a power which placed the people behind it, inveigled into complicity with it rather than cowed into submission before it. And this power marked out the distinction between the subjects and the objects of power not within the national body but, as organized by the many rhetorics of imperialism, between that body and other, 'non-civilized' peoples upon whose bodies the effects of power were unleashed with as much force and theatricality as had been manifest on the scaffold. This was, in other words, a power which aimed at a rhetorical effect through its representation of otherness rather than at any disciplinary effects.

Yet it is not merely in terms of its ideological economy that the exhibitionary complex must be assessed. While museums and expositions may have set out to win the hearts and minds of their visitors, these also brought their

bodies with them creating architectural problems as vexed as any posed by the development of the carceral archipelago. The birth of the latter, Foucault argues, required a new architectural problematic:

> that of an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control – to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them.
>
> (Foucault, 1977: 172)

As Davison notes, the development of the exhibitionary complex also posed a new demand: that everyone should see, and not just the ostentation of imposing façades but their contents too. This, too, created a series of architectural problems which were ultimately resolved only through a 'political economy of detail' similar to that applied to the regulation of the relations between bodies, space, and time within the penitentiary. In Britain, France, and Germany, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed a spate of state-sponsored architectural competitions for the design of museums in which the emphasis shifted progressively away from organizing spaces of display for the private pleasure of the prince or aristocrat and towards an organization of space and vision that would enable museums to function as organs of public instruction (Seling, 1967). Yet, as I have already suggested, it is misleading to view the architectural problematics of the exhibitionary complex as simply reversing the principles of panopticism. The effect of these principles, Foucault argues, was to abolish the crowd conceived as 'a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect' and to replace it with 'a collection of separated individualities' (Foucault, 1977: 201). However, as John MacArthur notes, the Panopticon is simply a technique, not itself a disciplinary regime or essentially a part of one, and, like all techniques, its potential effects are not exhausted by its deployment within any of the regimes in which it happens to be used (MacArthur, 1983: 192–3). The peculiarity of the exhibitionary complex is not to be found in its reversal of the principles of the Panopticon. Rather, it consists in its incorporation of aspects of those principles together with those of the panorama, forming a technology of vision which served not to atomize and disperse the crowd but to regulate it, and to do so by rendering it visible to itself, by making the crowd itself the ultimate spectacle.

An instruction from a 'Short Sermon to Sightseers' at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition enjoined: 'Please remember when you get inside the gates you are part of the show' (cited in Harris, 1975: 144). This was also

true of museums and department stores which, like many of the main exhibition halls of expositions, frequently contained galleries affording a superior vantage point from which the layout of the whole and the activities of other visitors could also be observed.[3] It was, however, the expositions which developed this characteristic furthest in constructing viewing positions from which they could be surveyed as totalities: the function of the Eiffel Tower at the 1889 Paris exposition, for example. To see and be seen, to survey yet always be under surveillance, the object of an unknown but controlling look: in these ways, as micro-worlds rendered constantly visible to themselves, expositions realized some of the ideals of panopticism in transforming the crowd into a constantly surveyed, self-watching, self-regulating, and, as the historical record suggests, consistently orderly public – a society watching over itself.

Within the hierarchically organized system of looks of the penitentiary in which each level of looking is monitored by a higher one, the inmate constitutes the point at which all these looks culminate but he is unable to return a look of his own or move to a higher level of vision. The exhibitionary complex, by contrast, perfected a self-monitoring system of looks in which the subject and object positions can be exchanged, in which the crowd comes to commune with and regulate itself through interiorizing the ideal and ordered view of itself as seen from the controlling vision of power – a site of sight accessible to all. It was in thus democratizing the eye of power that the expositions realized Bentham's aspiration for a system of looks within which the central position would be available to the public at all times, a model lesson in civics in which a society regulated itself through self-observation. But, of course, self-observation from a certain perspective. As Manfredo Tafuri puts it:

> The arcades and the department stores of Paris, like the great expositions, were certainly the places in which the crowd, itself become a spectacle, found the spatial and visual means for a self-education from the point of view of capital.
>
> (Tafuri, 1976: 83)

However, this was not an achievement of architecture alone. Account must also be taken of the forces which, in shaping the exhibitionary complex, formed both its publics and its rhetorics.

Seeing things

It seems unlikely, come the revolution, that it will occur to anyone to storm the British Museum. Perhaps it always was. Yet, in the early days of its history, the fear that it might incite the vengeance of the mob was real enough. In 1780, in the midst of the Gordon Riots, troops were housed in the gardens and building and, in 1848, when the Chartists marched to present

the People's Charter to Parliament, the authorities prepared to defend the museum as vigilantly as if it had been a penitentiary. The museum staff were sworn in as special constables; fortifications were constructed around the perimeter; a garrison of museum staff, regular troops, and Chelsea pensioners, armed with muskets, pikes, and cutlasses, and with provisions for a three-day siege, occupied the buildings; stones were carried to the roof to be hurled down on the Chartists should they succeed in breaching the outer defences.[4]

This fear of the crowd haunted debates on the museum's policy for over a century. Acknowledged as one of the first public museums, its conception of the public was a limited one. Visitors were admitted only in groups of fifteen and were obliged to submit their credentials for inspection prior to admission which was granted only if they were found to be 'not exceptionable' (Wittlin, 1949: 113). When changes to this policy were proposed, they were resisted by both the museum's trustees and its curators, apprehensive that the unruliness of the mob would mar the ordered display of culture and knowledge. When, shortly after the museum's establishment, it was proposed that there be public days on which unrestricted access would be allowed, the proposal was scuttled on the grounds, as one trustee put it, that some of the visitors from the streets would inevitably be 'in liquor' and 'will never be kept in order'. And if public days should be allowed, Dr Ward continued:

> then it will be necessary for the Trustees to have a presence of a Committee of themselves attending, with at least two Justices of the Peace and the constables of the division of Bloomsbury . . . supported by a guard such as one as usually attends at the Play-House, and even after all this, Accidents must and will happen.
>
> (Cited in Miller, 1974: 62)

Similar objections were raised when, in 1835, a select committee was appointed to inquire into the management of the museum and suggested that it might be opened over Easter to facilitate attendance by the labouring classes. A few decades later, however, the issue had been finally resolved in favour of the reformers. The most significant shift in the state's attitude towards museums was marked by the opening of the South Kensington Museum in 1857 (Figure 1.3). Administered, eventually, under the auspices of the Board of Education, the museum was officially dedicated to the service of an extended and undifferentiated public with opening hours and an admissions policy designed to maximize its accessibility to the working classes. It proved remarkably successful, too, attracting over 15 million visits between 1857 and 1883, over 6.5 million of which were recorded in the evenings, the most popular time for working-class visitors who, it seems, remained largely sober. Henry Cole, the first director of the museum and an ardent advocate of the role museums should play in the formation of

Figure 1.3 The South Kensington Museum (later Victoria and Albert): interior of
       the South Court, eastern portion, from the south, 1876 (drawing by John
       Watkins)

Source: Physik (1982).

a rational public culture, pointedly rebutted the conceptions of the unruly
mob which had informed earlier objections to open admissions policies.
Informing a House of Commons committee in 1860 that only one person
had had to be excluded for not being able to walk steadily, he went on to
note that the sale of alcohol in the refreshment rooms had averaged out, as
Altick summarizes it, at 'two and a half drops of wine, fourteen-fifteenths
of a drop of brandy, and ten and a half drops of bottled ale per capita'
(Altick, 1978: 500). As the evidence of the orderliness of the newly extended
museum public mounted, even the British Museum relented and, in 1883,
embarked on a programme of electrification to permit evening opening.

   The South Kensington Museum thus marked a significant turning-point
in the development of British museum policy in clearly enunciating the
principles of the modern museum conceived as an instrument of public edu-
cation. It provided the axis around which London's museum complex was to

develop throughout the rest of the century and exerted a strong influence on the development of museums in the provincial cities and towns. These now rapidly took advantage of the Museum Bill of 1845 (hitherto used relatively sparingly) which empowered local authorities to establish museums and art galleries: the number of public museums in Britain increased from 50 in 1860 to 200 in 1900 (White, 1983). In its turn, however, the South Kensington Museum had derived its primary impetus from the Great Exhibition which, in developing a new pedagogic relation between state and people, had also subdued the spectre of the crowd. This spectre had been raised again in the debates set in motion by the proposal that admission to the exhibition should be free. It could only be expected, one correspondent to *The Times* argued, that both the rules of decorum and the rights of property would be violated if entry were made free to 'his majesty the mob'. These fears were exacerbated by the revolutionary upheavals of 1848, occasioning several European monarchs to petition that the public be banned from the opening ceremony (planned for May Day) for fear that this might spark off an insurrection which, in turn, might give rise to a general European conflagration (Shorter, 1966). And then there was the fear of social contagion should the labouring classes be allowed to rub shoulders with the upper classes.

In the event, the Great Exhibition proved a transitional form. While open to all, it also stratified its public in providing different days for different classes of visitors regulated by varying prices of admission. In spite of this limitation, the exhibition proved a major spur to the development of open-door policies. Attracting over 6 million visitors itself, it also vastly stimulated the attendance at London's main historic sites and museums: visits to the British Museum, for example, increased from 720,643 in 1850 to 2,230,242 in 1851 (Altick, 1978: 467). Perhaps more important, though, was the orderliness of the public which, in spite of the 1,000 extra constables and 10,000 troops kept on stand-by, proved duly appreciative, decorous in its bearing and entirely apolitical. More than that, the exhibition transformed the many-headed mob into an ordered crowd, a part of the spectacle and a sight of pleasure in itself. Victoria, in recording her impressions of the opening ceremony, dwelt particularly on her pleasure in seeing so large, so orderly, and so peaceable a crowd assembled in one place:

> The Green Park and Hyde Park were one mass of densely crowded human beings, in the highest good humour and most enthusiastic. I never saw Hyde Park look as it did, being filled with crowds as far as the eye could see.
>
> (Cited in Gibbs-Smith, 1981: 18)

Nor was this entirely unprepared for. The working-class public the exhibition attracted was one whose conduct had been regulated into appropriate forms in the earlier history of the Mechanics Institute exhibitions. Devoted largely to the display of industrial objects and processes, these exhibitions

pioneered policies of low admission prices and late opening hours to encourage working-class attendance long before these were adopted within the official museum complex. In doing so, moreover, they sought to tutor their visitors on the modes of deportment required if they were to be admitted. Instruction booklets advised working-class visitors how to present themselves, placing particular stress on the need to change out of their working clothes – partly so as not to soil the exhibits, but also so as not to detract from the pleasures of the overall spectacle; indeed, to become parts of it:

> Here is a visitor of another sort; the mechanic has resolved to treat himself with a few hours' holiday and recreation; he leaves the 'grimy shop', the dirty bench, and donning his Saturday night suit he appears before us – an honourable and worthy object.
>
> <div align="right">(Kusamitsu, 1980: 77)</div>

In brief, the Great Exhibition and subsequently the public museums developed in its wake found themselves heirs to a public which had already been formed by a set of pedagogic relations which, developed initially by voluntary organizations – in what Gramsci would call the realm of civil society – were henceforward to be more thoroughgoingly promoted within the social body in being subjected to the direction of the state.

Not, then, a history of confinement but one of the opening up of objects to more public contexts of inspection and visibility: this is the direction of movement embodied in the formation of the exhibitionary complex. A movement which simultaneously helped to form a new public and inscribe it in new relations of sight and vision. Of course, the precise trajectory of these developments in Britain was not followed elsewhere in Europe. None the less, the general direction of development was the same. While earlier collections (whether of scientific objects, curiosities, or works of art) had gone under a variety of names (*museums, studioli, cabinets des curieux, Wunderkammern, Kunstkammern*) and fulfilled a variety of functions (the storing and dissemination of knowledge, the display of princely and aristocratic power, the advancement of reputations and careers), they had mostly shared two principles: that of private ownership and that of restricted access.[5] The formation of the exhibitionary complex involved a break with both in effecting the transfer of significant quantities of cultural and scientific property from private into public ownership where they were housed within institutions administered by the state for the benefit of an extended general public.

The significance of the formation of the exhibitionary complex, viewed in this perspective, was that of providing new instruments for the moral and cultural regulation of the working classes. Museums and expositions, in drawing on the techniques and rhetorics of display and pedagogic relations developed in earlier nineteenth-century exhibitionary forms, provided a context in which the working- and middle-class publics could be brought

together and the former – having been tutored into forms of behaviour to suit them for the occasion – could be exposed to the improving influence of the latter. A history, then, of the formation of a new public and its inscription in new relations of power and knowledge. But a history accompanied by a parallel one aimed at the destruction of earlier traditions of popular exhibition and the publics they implied and produced. In Britain, this took the form, *inter alia*, of a concerted attack on popular fairs owing to their association with riot, carnival, and, in their side-shows, the display of monstrosities and curiosities which, no longer enjoying elite patronage, were now perceived as impediments to the rationalizing influence of the restructured exhibitionary complex.

Yet, by the end of the century, fairs were to be actively promoted as an aid rather than a threat to public order. This was partly because the mechanization of fairs meant that their entertainments were increasingly brought into line with the values of industrial civilization, a testimony to the virtues of progress.[6] But it was also a consequence of changes in the conduct of fairgoers. By the end of the century, Hugh Cunningham argues, 'fairgoing had become a relatively routine ingredient in the accepted world of leisure' as 'fairs became tolerated, safe, and in due course a subject of nostalgia and revival' (Cunningham, 1977: 163). The primary site for this transformation of fairs and the conduct of their publics – although never quite so complete as Cunningham suggests – was supplied by the fair zones of the late-nineteenth-century expositions. It was here that two cultures abutted on to one another, the fair zones forming a kind of buffer region between the official and the popular culture with the former seeking to reach into the latter and moderate it. Initially, these fair zones established themselves independently of the official expositions and their organizing committees. The product of the initiative of popular showmen and private traders eager to exploit the market the expositions supplied, they consisted largely of an *ad hoc* melange of both new (mechanical rides) and traditional popular entertainments (freak shows, etc.) which frequently mocked the pretensions of the expositions they adjoined. Burton Benedict summarizes the relations between expositions and their amusement zones in late nineteenth-century America as follows:

> Many of the display techniques used in the amusement zone seemed to parody those of the main fair. Gigantism became enormous toys or grotesque monsters. Impressive high structures became collapsing or whirling amusement 'rides'. The solemn female allegorical figures that symbolised nations (Miss Liberty, Britannia) were replaced by comic male figures (Uncle Sam, John Bull). At the Chicago fair of 1893 the gilded female statue of the Republic on the Court of Honour contrasted with a large mechanical Uncle Sam on the Midway that delivered forty thousand speeches on the virtues of Hub Gore shoe elastics. Serious propagandists for manufacturers and governments in the main fair gave

way to barkers and pitch men. The public no longer had to play the role
of impressed spectators. They were invited to become frivolous partici-
pants. Order was replaced by jumble, and instruction by entertainment.
(Benedict, 1983: 53–4)

As Benedict goes on to note, the resulting tension between unofficial fair and
official exposition led to 'exposition organisers frequently attempting to turn
the amusement zone into an educational enterprise or at least to regulate the
type of exhibit shown'. In this, they were never entirely successful. Into the
twentieth-century, the amusement zones remained sites of illicit pleasures –
of burlesque shows and prostitution – and of ones which the expositions
themselves aimed to render archaic. Altick's 'monster-mongers and retail-
ers of other strange sights' seem to have been as much in evidence at the
Panama Pacific Exhibition of 1915 as they had been, a century earlier, at
St Bartholomew's Fair, Wordsworth's Parliament of Monsters (McCullough,
1966: 76). None the less, what was evident was a significant restructuring in
the ideological economy of such amusement zones as a consequence of the
degree to which, in subjecting them to more stringent forms of control and
direction, exposition authorities were able to align their thematics to those
of the official expositions themselves and, thence, to those of the rest of the
exhibitionary complex. Museums, the evidence suggests, appealed largely
to the middle classes and the skilled and respectable working classes and it
seems likely that the same was true of expositions. The link between expo-
sitions and their adjoining fair zones, however, provided a route through
which the exhibitionary complex and the disciplines and knowledges which
shaped its rhetorics acquired a far wider and more extensive social influence.

The exhibitionary disciplines

The space of representation constituted by the exhibitionary complex was
shaped by the relations between an array of new disciplines: history, art
history, archaeology, geology, biology, and anthropology. Whereas the dis-
ciplines associated with the carceral archipelago were concerned to reduce
aggregates to individualities, rendering the latter visible to power and so
amenable to control, the orientation of these disciplines – as deployed in
the exhibitionary complex – might best be summarized as that of 'show and
tell'. They tended also to be generalizing in their focus. Each discipline, in
its museological deployment, aimed at the representation of a type and its
insertion in a developmental sequence for display to a public.

   Such principles of classification and display were alien to the eighteenth
century. Thus, in Sir John Soane's Museum, architectural styles are dis-
played in order to demonstrate their essential permanence rather than their
change and development (Davies, 1984: 54). The emergence of a historicized
framework for the display of human artefacts in early-nineteenth-century
museums was thus a significant innovation. But not an isolated one. As

Stephen Bann shows, the emergence of a 'historical frame' for the display of museum exhibits was concurrent with the development of an array of disciplinary and other practices which aimed at the life-like reproduction of an authenticated past and its representation as a series of stages leading to the present – the new practices of history writing associated with the historical novel and the development of history as an empirical discipline, for example (Bann, 1984). Between them, these constituted a new space of representation concerned to depict the development of peoples, states, and civilizations through time conceived as a progressive series of developmental stages.

The French Revolution, Germaine Bazin suggests, played a key role in opening up this space of representation by breaking the chain of dynastic succession that had previously vouchsafed a unity to the flow and organization of time (Bazin, 1967: 218). Certainly, it was in France that historicized principles of museum display were first developed. Bazin stresses the formative influence of the Musée des monuments français (opened to the public in 1795) in exhibiting works of art in galleries devoted to different periods, the visitor's route leading from earlier to later periods, with a view to demonstrating both the painterly conventions peculiar to each epoch and their historical development. He accords a similar significance to Alexandre du Sommerard's collection at the Hôtel de Cluny which, as Bann shows, aimed at 'an integrative construction of historical totalities', creating the impression of a historically authentic milieu by suggesting an essential and organic connection between artefacts displayed in rooms classified by period (Bann, 1984: 85).

Bann argues that these two principles – the *galleria progressiva* and the period room, sometimes employed singly, at others in combination – constitute the distinctive poetics of the modern historical museum. It is important to add, though, that this poetics displayed a marked tendency to be nationalized. If, as Bazin suggests, the museum became 'one of the fundamental institutions of the modern state' (Bazin, 1967: 169), that state was also increasingly a nation-state. The significance of this was manifested in the relations between two new historical times – national and universal – which resulted from an increase in the vertical depth of historical time as it was both pushed further and further back into the past and brought increasingly up to date. Under the impetus of the rivalry between France and Britain for dominion in the Middle East, museums, in close association with archaeological excavations of progressively deeper pasts, extended their time horizons beyond the medieval period and the classical antiquities of Greece and Rome to encompass the remnants of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations. At the same time, the recent past was historicized as the newly emerging nation-states sought to preserve and immemorialize their own formation as a part of that process of 'nationing' their populations that was essential to their further development. It was as a consequence of the first of these developments that the prospect of a universal history of civilization was opened up to thought and materialized in the archaeological collections

of the great nineteenth-century museums. The second development, how-ever, led to these universal histories being annexed to national histories as, within the rhetorics of each national museum complex, collections of national materials were represented as the outcome and culmination of the universal story of civilization's development.

Nor had displays of natural or geological specimens been organized historically in the various precursors of nineteenth-century public muse-ums (Figure 1.4). Throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century, principles of scientific classification testified to a mixture of theocratic, rationalist, and proto-evolutionist systems of thought. Translated into prin-ciples of museological display, the result was the table, not the series, with species being arranged in terms of culturally codified similarities/dissimilari-ties in their external appearances rather than being ordered into temporally organized relations of precession/succession. The crucial challenges to such conceptions came from developments within geology and biology, particu-larly where their researches overlapped in the stratigraphical study of fossil remains.[7] However, the details of these developments need not concern us here. So far as their implications for museums were concerned, their main significance was that of allowing for organic life to be conceived and rep-resented as a temporally ordered succession of different forms of life where the transitions between them were accounted for not as a result of external shocks (as had been the case in the eighteenth century) but as the conse-quence of an inner momentum inscribed within the concept of life itself.[8]

If developments within history and archaeology thus allowed for the emer-gence of new forms of classification and display through which the stories of nations could be told and related to the longer story of Western civiliza-tion's development, the discursive formations of nineteenth-century geology and biology allowed these cultural series to be inserted within the longer developmental series of geological and natural time. Museums of science and technology, heirs to the rhetorics of progress developed in national and international exhibitions, completed the evolutionary picture in representing the history of industry and manufacture as a series of progressive innova-tions leading up to the contemporary triumphs of industrial capitalism.

Yet, in the context of late-nineteenth-century imperialism, it was arguably the employment of anthropology within the exhibitionary complex which proved most central to its ideological functioning. For it played the crucial role of connecting the histories of Western nations and civilizations to those of other peoples, but only by separating the two in providing for an inter-rupted continuity in the order of peoples and races – one in which 'primitive peoples' dropped out of history altogether in order to occupy a twilight zone between nature and culture (Figure 1.5). This function had been fulfilled earlier in the century by the museological display of anatomical peculiari-ties which seemed to confirm polygenetic conceptions of mankind's origins. The most celebrated instance was that of Saartjie Baartman, the 'Hotten-tot Venus', whose protruding buttocks – interpreted as a sign of separate

development – occasioned a flurry of scientific speculation when she was displayed in Paris and London. On her death in 1815, an autopsy revealed alleged peculiarities in her genitalia which, likened to those of the orang-utan, were cited as proof positive of the claim that black peoples were the product of a separate – and, of course, inferior, more primitive, and bestial – line of descent. No less an authority than Cuvier lent his support to this conception in circulating a report of Baartman's autopsy and presenting her genital organs – 'prepared in a way so as to allow one to see the nature of the labia' (Cuvier, cited in Gilman, 1985a: 214–15) – to the French Academy which arranged for their display in the Musée d'Ethnographie de Paris (now the Musée de l'homme).

Darwin's rebuttal of theories of polygenesis entailed that different means be found for establishing and representing the fractured unity of the human species. By and large, this was achieved by the representation of 'primitive peoples' as instances of arrested development, as examples of an earlier stage of species development which Western civilizations had long ago surpassed. Indeed, such peoples were typically represented as the still-living examples of *the* earliest stage in human development, the point of transition between nature and culture, between ape and man, the missing link necessary to account for the transition between animal and human history. Denied any

Figure 1.4 The cabinet of curiosities: Ferrante Imperato's museum in Naples, 1599
Source: Impey and MacGregor (1985).

history of their own, it was the fate of 'primitive peoples' to be dropped out of the bottom of human history in order that they might serve, representationally, as its support – underlining the rhetoric of progress by serving as its counterpoints, representing the point at which human history emerges from nature but has not yet properly begun its course.

So far as the museological display of artefacts from such cultures was concerned, this resulted in their arrangement and display – as at the Pitt-Rivers Museum – in accordance with the genetic or typological system which grouped together all objects of a similar nature, irrespective of their ethnographic groupings, in an evolutionary series leading from the simple to the complex (van Keuren, 1989). However, it was with regard to the display of human remains that the consequences of these principles of classification were most dramatically manifested. In eighteenth-century museums, such displays had placed the accent on anatomical peculiarities, viewed primarily as a testimony to the rich diversity of the chain of universal being. By the late nineteenth century, however, human remains were most typically displayed as parts of evolutionary series with the remains of still extant peoples being allocated the earliest position within them. This was particularly true for the remains of Australian Aborigines. In the early years of Australian settlement, the colony's museums had displayed little or no interest in Aboriginal remains (Kohlstedt, 1983). The triumph of evolutionary theory transformed this situation, leading to a systematic rape of Aboriginal sacred sites – by the representatives of British, European, and American as well as Australian museums – for materials to provide a representational foundation for the story of evolution within, tellingly enough, natural history displays.[9]

The space of representation constituted in the relations between the disciplinary knowledges deployed within the exhibitionary complex thus permitted the construction of a temporally organized order of things and peoples. Moreover, that order was a totalizing one, metonymically encompassing all things and all peoples in their interactions through time. And an order which organized the implied public – the white citizenries of the imperialist powers – into a unity, representationally effacing divisions within the body politic in constructing a 'we' conceived as the realization, and therefore just beneficiaries, of the processes of evolution and identified as a unity in opposition to the primitive otherness of conquered peoples. This was not entirely new. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White note, the popular fairs of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had exoticized the grotesque imagery of the carnival tradition by projecting it on to the representatives of alien cultures. In thus providing a normalizing function via the construction of a radically different Other, the exhibition of other peoples served as a vehicle for 'the edification of a national public and the confirmation of its imperial superiority' (Stallybrass and White, 1986: 42). If, in its subsequent development, the exhibitionary complex latched on to this preexisting representational space, what it added to it was a historical dimension.
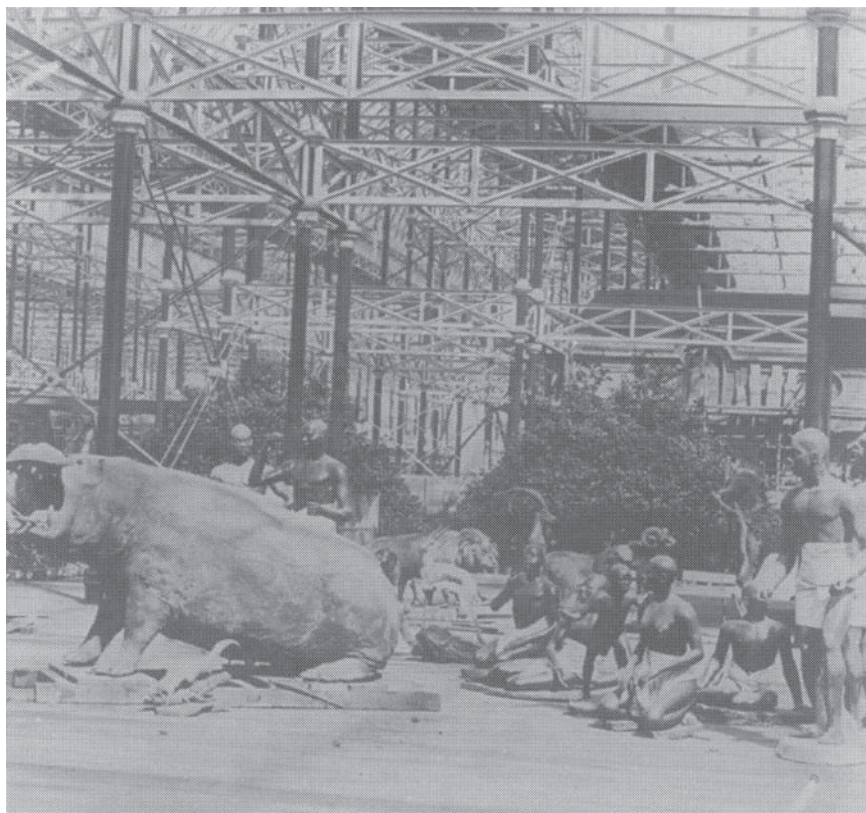
Figure 1.5 The Crystal Palace: stuffed animals and ethnographic figures
Source: Plate by Delamotte.

The exhibitionary apparatuses

The space of representation constituted by the exhibitionary disciplines, while conferring a degree of unity on the exhibitionary complex, was also somewhat differently occupied – and to different effect – by the institutions comprising that complex. If museums gave this space a solidity and permanence, this was achieved at the price of a lack of ideological flexibility. Public museums instituted an order of things that was meant to last. In doing so, they provided the modern state with a deep and continuous ideological backdrop but one which, if it was to play this role, could not be adjusted to respond to shorter-term ideological requirements. Exhibitions met this need, injecting new life into the exhibitionary complex and rendering its ideological configurations more pliable in bending them to serve the conjuncturally specific hegemonic strategies of different national bourgeoisies.

They made the order of things dynamic, mobilizing it strategically in relation to the more immediate ideological and political exigencies of the particular moment.

This was partly an effect of the secondary discourses which accompanied exhibitions. Ranging from the state pageantry of their opening and closing ceremonies through newspaper reports to the veritable swarming of pedagogic initiatives organized by religious, philanthropic and scientific associations to take advantage of the publics which exhibitions produced, these often forged very direct and specific connections between the exhibitionary rhetoric of progress and the claims to leadership of particular social and political forces. The distinctive influence of the exhibitions themselves, however, consisted in their articulation of the rhetoric of progress to the rhetorics of nationalism and imperialism and in producing, via their control over their adjoining popular fairs, an expanded cultural sphere for the deployment of the exhibitionary disciplines.

The basic signifying currency of the exhibitions, of course, consisted in their arrangement of displays of manufacturing processes and products. Prior to the Great Exhibition, the message of progress had been carried by the arrangement of exhibits in, as Davison puts it, 'a series of classes and subclasses ascending from raw products of nature, through various manufactured goods and mechanical devices, to the "highest" forms of applied and fine art' (Davison, 1982/3: 8). As such, the class articulations of this rhetoric were subject to some variation. Mechanics Institutes' exhibitions placed considerable stress on the centrality of labour's contributions to the processes of production which, at times, allowed a radical appropriation of their message. 'The machinery of wealth, here displayed,' the *Leeds Times* noted in reporting an 1839 exhibition, 'has been created by the men of hammers and papercaps; more honourable than all the sceptres and coronets in the world' (cited in Kusamitsu, 1980: 79). The Great Exhibition introduced two changes which decisively influenced the future development of the form.

First, the stress was shifted from the *processes* to the *products* of production, divested of the marks of their making and ushered forth as signs of the productive and co-ordinating power of capital and the state. After 1851, world fairs were to function less as vehicles for the technical education of the working classes than as instruments for their stupefaction before the reified products of their own labour, 'places of pilgrimage', as Benjamin put it, 'to the fetish Commodity' (Benjamin, 1973: 165).

Second, while not entirely abandoned, the earlier progressivist taxonomy based on stages of production was subordinated to the dominating influence of principles of classification based on nations and the supra-national constructs of empires and races. Embodied, at the Crystal Palace, in the form of national courts or display areas, this principle was subsequently developed into that of separate pavilions for each participating country. Moreover, following an innovation of the Centennial Exhibition held at Philadelphia in 1876, these pavilions were typically zoned into racial groups:

the Latin, Teutonic, Anglo-Saxon, American, and Oriental being the most favoured classifications, with black peoples and the aboriginal populations of conquered territories, denied any space of their own, being represented as subordinate adjuncts to the imperial displays of the major powers. The effect of these developments was to transfer the rhetoric of progress from the relations between stages of production to the relations between races and nations by superimposing the associations of the former on to the latter. In the context of imperial displays, subject peoples were thus represented as occupying the lowest levels of manufacturing civilization. Reduced to displays of 'primitive' handicrafts and the like, they were represented as cultures without momentum except for that benignly bestowed on them from without through the improving mission of the imperialist powers. Oriental civilizations were allotted an intermediate position in being represented either as having at one time been subject to development but subsequently degenerating into stasis or as embodying achievements of civilization which, while developed by their own lights, were judged inferior to the standards set by Europe (Harris, 1975). In brief, a progressivist taxonomy for the classification of goods and manufacturing processes was laminated on to a crudely racist teleological conception of the relations between peoples and races which culminated in the achievements of the metropolitan powers, invariably most impressively displayed in the pavilions of the host country.

Exhibitions thus located their preferred audiences at the very pinnacle of the exhibitionary order of things they constructed. They also installed them at the threshold of greater things to come. Here, too, the Great Exhibition led the way in sponsoring a display of architectural projects for the amelioration of working-class housing conditions. This principle was to be developed, in subsequent exhibitions, into displays of elaborate projects for the improvement of social conditions in the areas of health, sanitation, education, and welfare – promissory notes that the engines of progress would be harnessed for the general good. Indeed, exhibitions came to function as promissory notes in their totalities, embodying, if just for a season, utopian principles of social organization which, when the time came for the notes to be redeemed, would eventually be realized in perpetuity. As world fairs fell increasingly under the influence of modernism, the rhetoric of progress tended, as Rydell puts it, to be 'translated into a utopian statement about the future', promising the imminent dissipation of social tensions once progress had reached the point where its benefits might be generalized (Rydell, 1984: 4).

Iain Chambers has argued that working- and middle-class cultures became sharply distinct in late nineteenth-century Britain as an urban commercial popular culture developed beyond the reach of the moral economy of religion and respectability. As a consequence, he argues, 'official culture was publicly limited to the rhetoric of monuments in the centre of town: the university, the museum, the theatre, the concert hall; otherwise it was reserved for the "private" space of the Victorian residence' (Chambers, 1985: 9). While not disputing the general terms of this argument, it does omit any consideration

of the role of exhibitions in providing official culture with powerful bridge-heads into the newly developing popular culture. Most obviously, the official zones of exhibitions offered a context for the deployment of the exhibition-ary disciplines which reached a more extended public than that ordinarily reached by the public museum system. The exchange of both staff and exhib-its between museums and exhibitions was a regular and recurrent aspect of their relations, furnishing an institutional axis for the extended social deployment of a distinctively new ensemble of disciplines. Even within the official zones of exhibitions, the exhibitionary disciplines thus achieved an exposure to publics as large as any to which even the most commercialized forms of popular culture could lay claim: 32 million people attended the Paris Exposition of 1889; 27.5 million went to Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893 and nearly 49 million to Chicago's 1933/4 Century of Progress Exposi-tion; the Glasgow Empire Exhibition of 1938 attracted 12 million visitors, and over 27 million attended the Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924/5 (MacKenzie, 1984: 101). However, the ideological reach of exhibitions often extended significantly further as they established their influence over the popular entertainment zones which, while initially deplored by exhibition authorities, were subsequently to be managed as planned adjuncts to the official exhibition zones and, sometimes, incorporated into the latter. It was through this network of relations that the official public culture of museums reached into the developing urban popular culture, shaping and directing its development in subjecting the ideological thematics of popular entertain-ments to the rhetoric of progress.

The most critical development in this respect consisted in the extension of anthropology's disciplinary ambit into the entertainment zones, for it was here that the crucial work of transforming non-white peoples themselves – and not just their remains or artefacts – into object lessons of evolutionary theory was accomplished. Paris led the way here in the colonial city it con-structed as part of its 1889 Exposition. Populated by Asian and African peoples in simulated 'native' villages, the colonial city functioned as the showpiece of French anthropology and, through its influence on delegates to the tenth Congrès Internationale d'Anthropologie et d'Archéologie Préhis-torique held in association with the exposition, had a decisive bearing on the future modes of the discipline's social deployment. While this was true internationally, Rydell's study of American world fairs provides the most detailed demonstration of the active role played by museum anthropologists in transforming the Midways into living demonstrations of evolutionary theory by arranging non-white peoples into a 'sliding-scale of humanity', from the barbaric to the nearly civilized, thus underlining the exhibition-ary rhetoric of progress by serving as visible counterpoints to its triumphal achievements. It was here that relations of knowledge and power continued to be invested in the public display of bodies, colonizing the space of earlier freak and monstrosity shows in order to personify the truths of a new regime of representation.

In their interrelations, then, the expositions and their fair zones constituted an order of things and of peoples which, reaching back into the depths of prehistoric time as well as encompassing all corners of the globe, rendered the whole world metonymically present, subordinated to the dominating gaze of the white, bourgeois, and (although this is another story) male eye of the metropolitan powers. But an eye of power which, through the development of the technology of vision associated with exposition towers and the positions for seeing these produced in relation to the miniature ideal cities of the expositions themselves, was democratized in being made available to all. Earlier attempts to establish a specular dominance over the city had, of course, been legion – the camera obscura, the panorama – and often fantastic in their technological imaginings. Moreover, the ambition to render the whole world, as represented in assemblages of commodities, subordinate to the controlling vision of the spectator was present in world exhibitions from the outset. This was represented synecdochically at the Great Exhibition by Wylde's Great Globe, a brick rotunda which the visitor entered to see plaster casts of the world's continents and oceans. The principles embodied in the Eiffel Tower, built for the 1889 Paris Exposition and repeated in countless subsequent expositions, brought these two series together, rendering the project of specular dominance feasible in affording an elevated vantage point over a micro-world which claimed to be representative of a larger totality.

Barthes has aptly summarized the effects of the technology of vision embodied in the Eiffel Tower. Remarking that the tower overcomes 'the habitual divorce between *seeing* and *being seen*', Barthes argues that it acquires a distinctive power from its ability to circulate between these two functions of sight:

> An object when we look at it, it becomes a lookout in its turn when we visit it, and now constitutes as an object, simultaneously extended and collected beneath it, that Paris which just now was looking at it.
>
> (Barthes, 1979: 4)

A sight itself, it becomes the site for a sight; a place both to see and be seen from, which allows the individual to circulate between the object and subject positions of the dominating vision it affords over the city and its inhabitants (see Figure 1.6). In this, its distancing effect, Barthes argues, 'the Tower makes the city into a kind of nature; it constitutes the swarming of men into a landscape, it adds to the frequently grim urban myth a romantic dimension, a harmony, a mitigation', offering 'an immediate consumption of a humanity made natural by that glance which transforms it into space' (Barthes, 1979: 8). It is because of the dominating vision it affords, Barthes continues, that, for the visitor, 'the Tower is the first obligatory monument; it is a Gateway, it marks the transition to a knowledge' (14). And to the power associated with that knowledge: the power to order objects and persons into
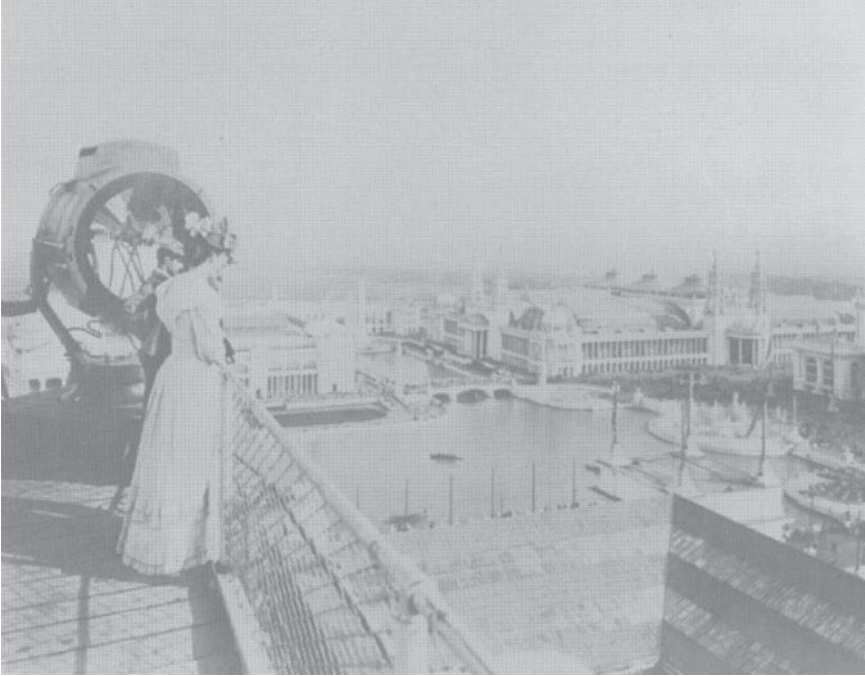
Figure 1.6 The Chicago Columbian Exposition, 1893: view from the roof of the
              Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building
Source: Reid (1979).

a world to be known and to lay it out before a vision capable of encompass-
ing it as a totality.

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth, seeking a vantage point from which to quell
the tumultuousness of the city, invites his reader to ascend with him 'Above
the press and danger of the crowd/Upon some showman's platform' at St
Bartholomew's Fair, likened to mobs, riotings, and executions as occasions
when the passions of the city's populace break forth into unbridled expres-
sion. The vantage point, however, affords no control:

> All moveables of wonder, from all parts,
> All here – Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
> The Horse of knowledge, and the learned Pig,
> The Stone-eater, the man that swallows fire,
> Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
> The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,
> The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft
> Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,

> All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
> All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts
> of man, his dullness, madness, and their feats
> All jumbled up together, to compose
> A Parliament of Monsters.

<div align="right">(VII, 684–5; 706–18)</div>

Stallybrass and White argue that this Wordsworthian perspective was typical of the early nineteenth-century tendency for the educated public, in withdrawing from participation in popular fairs, also to distance itself from, and seek some ideological control over, the fair by the literary production of elevated vantage points from which it might be observed. By the end of the century, the imaginary dominance over the city afforded by the showman's platform had been transformed into a cast-iron reality while the fair, no longer a symbol of chaos, had become the ultimate spectacle of an ordered totality. And the substitution of observation for participation was a possibility open to all. The principle of spectacle – that, as Foucault summarizes it, of rendering a small number of objects accessible to the inspection of a multitude of men – did not fall into abeyance in the nineteenth century: it was surpassed through the development of technologies of vision which rendered the multitude accessible to its own inspection.

Conclusion

I have sought, in this chapter, to tread a delicate line between Foucault's and Gramsci's perspectives on the state, but without attempting to efface their differences so as to forge a synthesis between them. Nor is there a compelling need for such a synthesis. The concept of the state is merely a convenient shorthand for an array of governmental agencies which – as Gramsci was among the first to argue in distinguishing between the coercive apparatuses of the state and those engaged in the organization of consent – need not be conceived as unitary with regard to either their functioning or the modalities of power they embody.

That said, however, my argument has been mainly with (but not against) Foucault. In the study already referred to, Pearson distinguishes between the 'hard' and the 'soft' approaches to the nineteenth-century state's role in the promotion of art and culture. The former consisted of 'a systematic body of knowledge and skills promulgated in a systematic way to specified audiences'. Its field was comprised by those institutions of schooling which exercised a forcible hold or some measure of constraint over their members and to which the technologies of self-monitoring developed in the carceral system undoubtedly migrated. The 'soft' approach, by contrast, worked 'by example rather than by pedagogy; by entertainment rather than by disciplined schooling; and by subtlety and encouragement' (Pearson, 1982: 35). Its field of application consisted of those institutions whose hold over their publics depended on their voluntary participation.

There seems no reason to deny the different sets of knowledge/power relations embodied in these contrasting approaches, or to seek their reconciliation in some common principle. For the needs to which they responded were different. The problem to which the 'swarming of disciplinary mechanisms' responded was that of making extended populations governable. However, the development of bourgeois democratic polities required not merely that the populace be governable but that it assent to its governance, thereby creating a need to enlist active popular support for the values and objectives enshrined in the state. Foucault knows well enough the symbolic power of the penitentiary:

> The high wall, no longer the wall that surrounds and protects, no longer the wall that stands for power and wealth, but the meticulously sealed wall, uncrossable in either direction, closed in upon the now mysterious work of punishment, will become, near at hand, sometimes even at the very centre of the cities of the nineteenth century, the monotonous figure, at once material and symbolic, of the power to punish.
>
> (Foucault, 1977: 116)

Museums were also typically located at the centre of cities where they stood as embodiments, both material and symbolic, of a power to 'show and tell' which, in being deployed in a newly constituted open and public space, sought rhetorically to incorporate the people within the processes of the state. If the museum and the penitentiary thus represented the Janus face of power, there was none the less – at least symbolically – an economy of effort between them. For those who failed to adopt the tutelary relation to the self promoted by popular schooling or whose hearts and minds failed to be won in the new pedagogic relations between state and people symbolized by the open doors of the museum, the closed walls of the penitentiary threatened a sterner instruction in the lessons of power. Where instruction and rhetoric failed, punishment began.

Notes

1 This point is well made by MacArthur who sees this aspect of Foucault's argument as inimical to the overall spirit of his work in suggesting a 'historical division which places theatre and spectacle as past' (MacArthur, 1983: 192).
2 For discussion of the role of the American state in relation to museums and expositions, see, respectively, Meyer (1979) and Reid (1979).
3 For details of the use of rotunda and galleries to this effect in department stores, see Ferry (1960).
4 For further details, see Miller (1974).
5 A comprehensive introduction to these earlier forms is offered by Impey and MacGregor (1985) and Bazin (1967).
6 I have touched on these matters elsewhere. See Bennett (1983) and (1986).
7 For details of these interactions, see Rudwick (1985).
8 I draw here on Foucault (1970).
9 For the most thorough account, see Mulvaney (1958: 30–1).

2   The multiplication of culture's utility*

In his *Principles of Museum Administration*, published in 1895, George Brown Goode, Director of the U.S. National Museum at the Smithsonian Institution, argued that the furtherance of what he referred to as 'the . . . Museum idea' would be inseparable from the museum's ongoing association 'with the continuance of modern civilisation, by means of which those sources of enjoyment which were formerly accessible to the rich only, are now, more and more, placed in the possession and ownership of all the people (an adaptation of what Jevons has called "the principle of the multiplication of utility"), with the result that objects which were formerly accessible only to the wealthy, and seen by a very small number of people each year, are now held in common ownership and enjoyed by hundreds of thousands' (Brown Goode, 1895: 72). In thus proposing a programmeme for the museum's future development, Goode also provided that programmeme with a philosophical anchorage in that tradition of radical social reform which had its roots in English utilitarianism.

He thus attributed the authorship of 'the . . . Museum idea' – in brief, the view that museums should serve as instruments of public instruction – to Sir Henry Cole. Closely associated with the Philosophical Radicals, and personally acquainted with John Stuart Mill, Cole was well-versed in the principles of Benthamism and, through his roles as architect of the Great Exhibition, founder of the South Kensington Museum, and the first effective head of the Department of Art and Science, he sought strenuously to put these principles into practical effect.[1] For Cole, the primary guiding principle of government policy in the spheres of art and education was to enhance the usefulness of culture by multiplying the circuits though which its objects and practices might be distributed and hence to increase – without limits or restrictions – the public benefit which might be derived from their extended circulation.

The Jevons to whom Goode referred is William Stanley Jevons, author of *The Theory of Political Economy*, who, in first propounding the theory of marginal utility, played a significant role in putting David Ricardo's theories to rest in favour of the emerging orthodoxies of neo-classical economics.[2]

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* First published in *Critical Inquiry*, 21 (4), 1995, 861–889.

However, if Jevons's theory of marginal utility provided a more precise and progressive way of making Bentham's hedonic calculus operational, his purview was not limited to the distributional arrangements which might result from the egoistical calculations of utility of individuals in the marketplace (White, 1992).[3] There might also be areas of social life where, for social, political or moral reasons, calculations of a public utility might be made and asserted in face of those arising from the play of market forces. The public ownership of cultural resources as a means of securing what he referred to as 'the vulgarisation of pleasures' was, for Jevons, a case in point. Here is the passage from the (1883) text *Methods of Social Reform* in which Jevons introduced the principle of the multiplication of utility to which Goode referred:

> The main *raison d'être* of Free Public Libraries, as indeed of public museums, art-galleries, parks, halls, public clocks, and many other kinds of public works, is the enormous increase of utility which is thereby acquired for the community at a trifling cost. If a beautiful picture be hung in the dining-room of a private house, it may perhaps be gazed at by a few guests a score or two of times in the year. Its real utility is too often that of ministering to the selfish pride of its owner. If it be hung in the National Gallery, it will be enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of persons, whose glances, it need hardly be said, do not tend to wear out the canvas. The same principle applies to books in common ownership. If a man possesses a library of a few thousand volumes, by far the greater part of them must lie for years untouched upon the shelves; he cannot possibly use more than a fraction of the whole in any one year. But a library of five or ten thousand volumes opened free to the population of a town may be used a thousand times as much. It is a striking case of what I propose to call *the principle of the multiplication of utility*.
>
> (Jevons, 1883: 28–9)

Goode's reference to 'the . . . Museum idea' establishes a link not merely to Cole and Jevons – both of whom he names – but also to Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, the prominent public servant whose work, in spanning diverse fields of nineteenth-century public administration, stood, as Mitchell Dean puts it, 'at the intersection of the "statistical" idea with the "educational" idea and the "sanitary" idea' (Dean, 1991: 204). That the term *the Museum idea* was understood as shorthand expression for the view that museums and other cultural institutions should serve as instruments of public instruction suggests that this view of museums and their function was seen as belonging to the same class as the educational, statistical and sanitary programmes associated with the work of Kay-Shuttleworth. Nor is this wholly surprising: the relations between museums and education are discernible readily enough. But what are we to make of an equation that places museums side by side with programmes of public sanitation?

Let me come at the question from a different tack by considering the institutional series in which, today, museums are typically placed. Ivan Karp draws on Gramsci's distinction between civil society and political society for this purpose. If for Gramsci, Karp writes, 'the institutions of political society exercise coercion and control, while civil society creates hegemony through the production of cultural and moral systems that legitimate the existing social order' (Karp, 1992: 4), then Karp is in no doubt that museums belong wholly within the field of civil society. Museums, he says, might be run by local, state or national governments, but 'they remain agents of civil society' and, as such, 'as places for defining who people are and how they should act and as places for challenging those definitions . . . [They] can be thought about separately from the agencies of government specifically charged with social control, such as the police and the courts' (4).

Well, so it might seem today. In the nineteenth century, however, the most ardent advocates of public museums, free libraries and the like typically spoke of them in connection with courts, prisons, poor-houses and, more mundanely, the provision of public sanitation and fresh-water. For Jevons, free libraries were merely one among many engines 'for operating upon the poorer portions of the population' and, as such, could be compared with the post-office savings bank as 'an engine for teaching thrift', as well as being 'classed with town-halls, police-courts, prisons, and poor-houses as necessary adjuncts of our stage of civilisation' (Jevons, 1883: 32, 28). Thomas Greenwood, writing in 1888, similarly placed public museums and free libraries alongside the provision of police forces and street cleansing arrangements as indices of the degree of self-reliance shown by the citizenry of Britain's main municipalities. Those municipalities in which 'the most has been done for the education of the people, either in the way of Board Schools, Museums, or Free Libraries,' he noted, are also those with 'the best street lighting and street cleansing arrangements' as well as being the ones in which 'the Police Force are under the most perfect control' (Greenwood, 1888: 18).

What are we to make of this? In what follows, I shall try to throw some light on this question by considering the concern to multiply culture's utility in the light of the endeavour to make populations self-regulating that was associated with the development of liberal forms of government. By 'liberal' here I do not have in mind the philosophical or political party meaning of the term. Rather, following Foucault, I refer to the development of new forms of social management and regulation which, predicated on the supposition that the citizen possesses a degree of freedom and autonomy (and thus is a citizen and not a subject), aim to 'govern at a distance' by creating frameworks in which individuals will voluntarily regulate their own behaviour to achieve specific social ends rather than needing to be subjected to forced direction. My purpose will be to uncover the grid of relations which made it intelligible to suppose that the development of new capillary systems for the distribution of culture would help cultivate a capacity for voluntary self-regulation in the general population.

Culture's civilising effect

Let me go back to Jevons again. For while he wanted the circuits through which culture was distributed to be significantly expanded, he was also concerned that institutions provided with a view to maximising culture's utility might be misused. Perhaps even more worrying, however, was the difficulty of establishing whether or not this was so:

> At the South Kensington Art Museum they make a great point of setting up turnstiles to record the precise numbers of visitors, and they can tell you to a unit the exact amount of civilising effect produced in any day, week, month, or year. But these turnstiles hardly take account of the fact that the neighbouring wealthy residents are in the habit, on a wet day, of packing their children off in a cab to the so-called Brompton Boilers, in order that they may have a good run through the galleries.
>
> (Jevons, 1883: 55–6)

Concerns of this kind regarding how these new engines of public instruction might be used or abused were endemic.[4] The most extended instance of such complaints I have come across came from Thomas Unwins, Keeper of the National Gallery, in the evidence which, somewhat incredulously, he gave to an 1850 parliamentary committee appointed to inquire into the Gallery's operations. Asked whether the crowds who were attracted into the Gallery in inclement weather might have been tempted indoors 'without reference to seeing pictures of high art', Unwins replied:

> Scarcely a day passes that I do not visit the Gallery myself, and I have observed a great many things which show that many persons who come, do not come really to see the pictures. On one occasion, I saw a school of boys, imagine 20, taking their satchels from their backs with their bread and cheese, sitting down and making themselves very comfortable, and eating their luncheon . . . On another occasion, I saw some people, who seemed to be country people, who had a basket of provisions, and who drew their chairs round and sat down, and seemed to make themselves very comfortable; they had meat and drink; and when I suggested to them the impropriety of such a proceeding in such a place, they were very good-humoured, and a lady offered me a glass of gin, and wished me to partake of what they provided; I represented to them that those things could not be tolerated . . . On another occasion, I witnessed what appeared to me to evidence anything but a desire to see the pictures; a man and a woman had got their child, teaching it its first steps; they were making it run from one place to another, backwards and forwards; on receiving it on one side, they made it run to the other side; it seemed to be just the place that was sought for such an amusement.
>
> (House of Commons Report, 1850a: minute 82)

These difficulties were regarded as being closely associated with the Gallery's city-centre location. This presented something of a dilemma, for while that location was ideal because it maximised the Gallery's public utility, it also increased the risk that the Gallery might be abused by the passing urban throng. When a commission was appointed in 1857 to consider whether the National Gallery should retain its Trafalgar Square site or be moved out to the suburbs at Kensington Gore, its deliberations were dominated by the attempt to discover a calculus which could weigh and reconcile the relative costs and benefits of these competing locations.[5]

Ruskin proposed one such calculus in suggesting that there should be two collections with different functions. When he was asked whether it was not advantageous for art, viewed in terms of the effect it might have on the public mind, to be located in central London in view of the ease and cheapness of access this would afford, Ruskin agreed but went on to note that, on the debit side, 'a central situation involves the crowding of the room with parties wholly uninterested in the matter'. The difficulty is that while art needs to reach the crowd in order to civilise it, that same crowd spoils the pleasure of art for 'the real student' for whom, Ruskin argued, 'a situation more retired will generally be serviceable enough' (House of Commons Report, 1857: para 2456). Posed in this way, the issue can be resolved by disaggregating the unity of art, splitting it into two kinds of collection in such a manner that the crowd's access to art comes to be differentiated from elite access and hierarchically organised. Ruskin thus suggested:

> But it would seem to me that all that is necessary for a noble Museum of the best art should be more or less removed, and that a collection, solely for the purpose of education, and for the purpose of interesting people who do not care much about art, should be provided in the very heart of the population, if possible, that pictures not of great value, but of sufficient value to interest the public, and of merit enough to form the basis of early education, and to give examples of all art, should be collected in the popular Gallery, but that all the precious things should be removed and put into the great Gallery, where they would be safest, irrespectively altogether of accessibility.
>
> (House of Commons Report, 1857: para 2458)

Ruskin, of course, was an opponent of reforms which aimed to make art more easily accessible, especially to the unwashed masses. The advice he offered in relation to an art gallery planned for Leicester was unequivocal:

> You must not make your Museum a refuge against either rain or ennui, nor let into perfectly well-furnished, and even, in the true sense, palatial, rooms, the utterly squalid and ill-bred portion of the people.
>
> (*cit.* Koven, 1994: 26)

Even so, his proposal for two separate galleries with separate functions shares a good deal of ground with the ideas of reformers like Cole and Jevons in testifying to Ruskin's preparedness to maximise the uses to which art might be put by breaking it down into its component parts and assigning each a different function within a pedagogic itinerary conceived as an ascent of art's hierarchical organisation. When quizzed as to whether it was desirable to establish a gallery that contained no first-rate works of art, Ruskin was thus quite equable at the prospect of using second- and even third-rate art for the early stages of art education provided only that nothing be admitted to the popular Gallery 'which was not good or true of its kind, but only inferior in value to the others' (House of Commons Report, 1857: para 2464).

That the commission was interested in Ruskin's proposal is clear from the number of times it resurfaced during the course of its deliberations. Yet there were many practical difficulties to be surmounted if the virtues of the proposal were to be properly assessed. For if art galleries were to be differentiated so as to serve different purposes for different publics, it was first necessary to know who used them so that some calculations might be made as to which sections of the population would be most likely to visit them if they were located in such and such a place or given such and such a character. Yet it was difficult to arrive at any definite conclusions about these matters given the rudimentary nature of the available statistics. Francis Place had anticipated these difficulties when, in the 1830s, he attempted to calculate how much 'civilising effect' might be attributed to art galleries. Noting that there had been a decline in public drunkenness and debauchery at fairs and gardens in and around London, he set out to establish how much this might be attributed to the influence of greater working-class participation in art galleries. Reproducing the numbers visiting the Adelaide Gallery over the Easter and Whitsuntide holidays in 1835 and 1836, and remarking the increase in visits from the one year to the next, Place based his conclusion that the Gallery was proving successful in spreading civilising pursuits to the popular classes less on the raw data available to him than on the ancillary evidence that it had been as 'carefully ascertained as it could be that three fourths of the visitors were working people, almost all of them young men with their wives and sweethearts or alone and apprentices' (Place, cit Thomas, 1978).

The 1857 commission was obliged to rely on evidence of a similar kind in its endeavours, in the wake of Ruskin's suggestion that the National Gallery should be split into two, to ascertain whether art might be divided into different classes and be deployed in different contexts in order that it might be rendered useful in different ways, and to different degrees, with different publics. These concerns were particularly to the fore in the evidence taken from James Fergusson, the general manager of the Crystal Palace. Having asserted that the substantial majority of the Palace's visitors were from the labouring classes, Fergusson justified this view by appealing to the same kinds of evidence that Place had cited. He thus advised the commission that

visitor numbers were largest on Mondays at about 10,000 and declined progressively through the week to a low of 2,000 on Saturdays. 'We go gradually down from the beginning of the week, which is the poor man's holiday, to the end of the week, which is appropriated almost exclusively to the more wealthy . . . ' (House of Commons Report, 1857: para 2692). That those who attended on Mondays were indeed working people was confirmed by observation: the labourers in attendance were identified through the fustian jackets they wore. However, although the number of visitors varied for each day of the week, Fergusson calculated that the educational benefit derived from the art on display was much the same. This conclusion involved a calculus for the measurement of culture's utility in which the low average amount of benefit derived from the mass of working-class visitors in the early parts of the week might be matched by the higher intensity of the benefit derived by the smaller numbers of better-class visitors later in the week. In Fergusson's words:

> . . . I should say there is about the same amount of information or education present on each of the days. Very much diluted in the earlier days, concentrated in the latter days of the week.
>
> (House of Commons Report, 1857: para 2692)

The remark was in the same vein as Fergusson's earlier reply to the commission's inquiries as it probed whether the experience of the Crystal Palace might provide a basis for bifurcating the collections of the National Gallery along the lines suggested by Ruskin. A question regarding the tastes exhibited by the labouring classes in the Picture Gallery, and the kinds of art that were provided to cater to those tastes, thus led to the following exchange:

> Their opinion of painting differs very much from mine. What I would admire as fine art that class of people would not admire. What you, or I, or anybody else would perhaps call vulgar painting, an imitation of life, a smuggler, a bull-fight, a grand battle, anything very illustrative, they understand and admire; but the purer class of art seems to be above them.
>   Is the effect such as you consider instructive to the minds of the multitude that go to observe these things, instructive in art education, in leading the taste of the people? – I have not the least doubt of it; I think that the people have hitherto had so little opportunity of observing pictures that they require to begin at the rudiments before they can appreciate the higher things, and I think that the collection of the Crystal Palace Gallery being not of the highest class has been a great step towards teaching them the rudiments, and so giving them an interest in the things before attempting to teach them to appreciate a higher class.
>
> (House of Commons Report, 1857: paras 2634–5)

As it happens, the commission, which interpreted Fergusson's testimony as favouring Ruskin's proposals, was later presented with contradictory evidence – and a different theory of working-class leisure interests – which suggested that moving the National Gallery outside London would serve only to make it more popular with the working classes. When Edgar Alfred Bowring was called before the commission, he advised that he had conducted statistical inquiries which showed, as indeed they did, that while attendance at collecting institutions located in central London (the British Museum, the National Gallery, and so on) had declined over the period 1851 to 1856, the Zoological Gardens, Hampton Court Palace and Kew Gardens – all located in the outer suburbs – had all experienced a dramatic increase in visitors. In attempting to explain this data, Bowring suggested that moving the National Gallery outside London would increase its popularity given his observations of the significance and cultural meaning that was attributed to visiting such institutions within the changing patterns of working-class leisure:

> Those classes do not visit places of this character without first making themselves clean, and probably taking half a day's holiday for the purpose, while they take their wives and families with them and, in short, attempt to make such an occasion a source of rational enjoyment and improvement. So far from their objecting to the National Gallery being removed to Kensington, the enjoyment of the half holiday taken by them for the purpose of visiting it with its accessories of ornamental gardens, fountains, &c., would be greatly increased by the walk across the green sward of the parks, where they breath a purer and more exhilarating air than they are accustomed to in their everyday life; whereas a visit to a National Gallery in the midst of the smoke of London does not afford them this desirable relief.
>
> (House of Commons Report, 1857: para 2848)

My interest, however, is not in the commission's final recommendations (as we know, the Gallery remained in Trafalgar Square) but rather in the new logic of culture that motivated its concerns, framing the direction of its inquiries and the kinds of answers it sought. In the commission's relentless exploration of the possibility – indeed desirability – of breaking the unity of culture down into its component parts; of distinguishing the first- from the second-rate and assigning them different spheres of distribution; and of determining just how much culture to make available to different publics in view of estimates of how much and what kinds of benefit they might derive from it: it is clear, in all of these ways, that culture is thought of as something that might be parcelled into different quantities, broken down into units of different value, in such a way that the utility, the civilising effect, to be derived from making available large amounts of relatively low-quality art to the masses might be weighed and balanced against the value to be derived from reserving the very best art for more exclusive forms of consumption by the educated classes.

The same logic is discernible in the debates accompanying the development of 'outreach' systems. From its foundation in the 1850s, the South Kensington Museum was conceived as a central repository from which specimen objects could be circulated to provincial museums in order to spread the improving influence of culture more evenly throughout the land. Its effectiveness in this regard was subject to periodic monitoring. In 1864, for example, the House of Commons established a Select Committee to inquire into the Schools of Art; its report included an assessment of the South Kensington Museum's system:

> There can be no doubt that the fine collection at South Kensington is calculated to raise the taste of the country, or, at all events, of those persons who are able to visit it; but it is equally certain that it is only a small proportion of the provincial public which has the opportunity of doing so, and it appears that the arrangements made for circulating portions of the collection to the provincial towns are as yet far from perfection. That the collection of works of Art, and the library attached to it, are not made as useful to the country schools as they might be, is due, perhaps, in part to the fact that the local committees are but imperfectly aware of the advantages which the Department offers them, but partly also to some defects in the arrangements of the Department itself. Mr Cole . . . throws out some valuable suggestions as to the formation of local museums, to be supported in great part by a system of circulating some of the works of Art belonging, not only to the South Kensington, but also to the National Gallery, and the British Museum. These suggestions are well worthy of consideration.
>
> (House of Commons Report, 1881: 780)

Reporting in 1881, a further committee established to look more thoroughly into this system of distribution recorded that 1346 examples of industrial art and 1286 paintings and drawings had been loaned to 7 museums in 1880. Noting how this had been an increase on earlier years, the report went on to identify ways in which the utility to be derived from this method of distribution might be still further increased.

The language of these reports is comfortingly familiar in its recognisable continuity with contemporary bureaucratic procedures in the field of cultural administration, so much so that it is easy to overlook and therefore worth underscoring their historical novelty. For the conception of the South Kensington Museum as a central repository from which art might be circulated, in a capillary fashion, throughout the nation was not without precedent. Indeed, in the establishment and progressive monitoring of this arrangement, reference was frequently made to the *envoi* system developed in Napoleonic France through which works of art from the national collections in Paris were loaned to provincial art museums. Yet that is about as far as the similarities go. In his detailed survey and assessment of the *envoi*

system, Daniel Sherman argues that, viewed in the light of the centralising ambitions of the Napoleonic period, the system's primary purpose was to embody and circulate an image of state power throughout the nation. It was for this reason, he contends, that less importance was attached to the pictures selected for this purpose than to the labels accompanying them which indicated that they were the gift of the Emperor or of the state (see Sherman, 1989: 14). The circulation of art, in other words, was undertaken in accordance with a logic that remained, at least in part, juridico-discursive.[6] In this logic, as Foucault defines it, art serves princely power by symbolising it and making it publicly manifest. The *envoi* system was thus continuous with those earlier forms which promoted the power of the sovereign by circulating his image throughout the nation – as imprinted on coinage and medals, for example (see Burke, 1992).

By contrast, when Cole and others schooled in the tradition of utilitarianism spoke of the benefits to be derived from art's distribution throughout the realm, they constantly stressed art's divisibility, its capacity to be broken down into different quantities from which different degrees and kinds of benefit might be derived. This interest in assessing art's utility through a graduated calculus was evident in the line of questioning of the committee appointed to report on the lessons of the Paris Exhibition of 1867. The committee asked:

> Instead of spending very large sums upon very costly objects, would it not be better to distribute that large sum upon a number of objects, which are cheap in production, and at the same time of good taste, which might produce a really beneficial effect upon our own manufacture?
>
> (Report, 1867: minute 173)

Some of the experts who testified refused to accept that there might be such a calculus. For J.C. Robinson, expenditure on second-rate art could not be justified because 'second-rate things do not instruct; they rather tend to lower and vitiate the public taste' (minute 656). However, the testimony of Richard Redgrave, the Inspector General for Art at the South Kensington Museum, displayed a clear commitment to a graduated calculus for assessing art's useful effects in his rejection of those forms of pure aestheticism which insisted – as did Ruskin – that only the original work of art will do.[7] While admitting a connection between utility and rarity in contending that art's usefulness is greater the more original and singular the object, Redgrave argued that a reproduction, while not so good, is better than nothing: '. . . there is no doubt that the objects themselves are much finer than the reproduction; but if you cannot give them one thing, you must give them another' (minute 64). Henry Cole's evidence tended in the same direction in his defence of 'democratic art' as 'art of the cheapest kind that circulates among the people'. Taken to task by the committee as to whether the

circulation of second-rate art might do more harm than good, Cole gave an extended reply – developed through a number of exchanges with the committee – which equivocated between two positions: an aesthetic relativism which would see all art as equally good (' . . . what is the object of art, but to please people? I do not know any other standard of art than that': para 848) and a position which accepts an aesthetic hierarchy while insisting that, although the effect of art might be most concentrated and intense at the peak of that hierarchy, its effect will be simultaneously of a lower intensity but more diffuse and capable of being spread more widely through the social body the lower down that hierarchy one goes.[8] The homilies through which he states his position indicate not only that art of inferior quality is better than nothing ('You cannot feed everybody with wheaten bread; rather than let them starve, I would give them rye bread': para 850) but also that such art may most usefully serve the purpose of introducing art to novitiates ('You must begin teaching a child with such books as primers and "Little Red Riding Hood" before you can get to the higher series', para 849).

In contrast to the *envoi* system, art was not, in this school of thought, envisaged as a means of representing or staging power; and the purpose of multiplying the circuits of its distribution was not to impress the populace by circulating art as a form of power-spectacle. Instead, its circulation was conceived in accordance with a governmental logic in which art, rather than representing power, *is* a power – a power susceptible to multiple subdivisions in a programme which has as its end not the exertion of a specular dominance over the populace but the development of its capacities. As such, no effort was to be spared in ensuring the removal of all blockages which might impede culture's capillary distribution. The new kinds of administrative attention this entailed were nicely summarised by Edward Edwards, one of the most influential mid-century advocates of public libraries, in his criticisms of earlier library provisions. The 1709 *Act for the Better Preservation of Parochial Libraries in that part of Great Britain called England* was thus assessed as ineffectual because it provided 'no means of increase' and made 'no provision, whatever, for parochial use or accessibility' (Edwards, 1869: 10). It was, Edwards argued, not until the 1840s, when legislation was passed enabling the establishment of municipal libraries, that any effective steps were taken 'towards the diffusion of books over the length and breadth of England' (*ibid*: 13).

Ensuring this capillary flow of culture, however, was not just an administrative or legislative matter. As James Fergusson noted, it was also an architectural question. Chastising architects for their failure to provide museums that were specifically designed for their new function of public instruction and for preferring, instead, replicas of Renaissance palaces, Fergusson viewed the resulting buildings as positive obstacles to the capillary flow of culture and knowledge:

> . . . the architectural question is the rock that now diverts the waters of knowledge from flowing where their fertilising instruments are so much

needed . . . We have thirsted for knowledge, and our architects have given us nothing but stones.

(Fergusson, 1849: 8)

It will therefore be worthwhile to spend a little time considering the care and attention which were given to providing a custom-built environment for art's display, one calculated to maximise the benefit which might be derived from it by the art-gallery or museum visitor.

The catalogue versus the tour: art and the self-regulating subject

In 1841, the House of Commons appointed a committee to inquire into the administration of London's national monuments and works of art. One of the primary concerns of the committee was to determine the best ways of maintaining order in institutions which admitted all-comers without any mechanisms for screening out desirable from undesirable visitors. The evidence considered included reference to institutions of three different types, each characterised by different forms of visitor surveillance and regulation. Churches and cathedrals were of substantial interest in view of the requirement that, at least during service hours, they admit all and sundry but whose architecture – often full of nooks and crannies – prohibited any effective form of overall surveillance except for the vigilance of their priests and vergers. Second, there were institutions like the Tower of London where conduct was regulated via the technology of the tour through which visitors were obliged to go round in groups under the direction of a guide. Third and finally, there were the new institutions which had, in some measure, been designed for public visiting – like the National Gallery – where the needs of visitor surveillance and regulation were provided for in a number of ways: the calculated partitioning of space in the National Gallery and the provision of two inspectors per room; the organisation of the visitor's itinerary in the form of a one-way route, allowing no return to rooms already visited; the organisation of open and clear spaces in which the public might exercise a permanent surveillance over itself.

The committee's clear preference was for the last of these regulative technologies. This was partly because the balance of the evidence presented suggested it was the most efficient as one witness after another testified to the value of allowing the public unrestricted entry so as to provide for a sufficient quantity of visitors to watch over and so, effectively, police one another. The guided tour was judged ineffective in comparison owing to its inability to provide for an adequate number of watchers. When asked about the arrangements prevailing in cathedrals, John Britton testified:

Do you mean that as the practice now exists of small parties going in under the direction of one guide, there is more opportunity if the parties are inclined to do mischief, than would arise if the public were generally

admitted? – I think so; for I have seen sad instances of it when I have
been in cathedrals for hours together, and when I have noticed various
parties come in, two in one party, five in another, and six in another, and
only one servant girl of the verger superintending the whole: in conse-
quence of which, they become scattered about the cathedral, and they
can with the greatest impunity break off fingers, toes or even heads, if
they are so inclined . . .

<div align="right">(House of Commons Report, 1841: para 2002)</div>

The committee's preferences in this matter, however, were not based solely
on calculations of efficiency. The more streamlined ways of managing the
visitors via organised routes and impersonalised forms of surveillance also
seemed preferable to the guided tour in view of their capacity to allow
the individual to go at his or her own speed and thus, in being able to
contemplate the cultural artefacts on display, be rendered more receptive
to their improving influence. To be herded round a collection to a set time
schedule, in a group with different interests and competences, and be sub-
jected to the set patter of the warden: all these aspects of the tour were
judged inimical to the civilising effect art and culture might have. Robert
Porrett, chief clerk to the principal storekeeper in the Tower armouries,
was fulsome in defence of the guided tour: ' . . . nothing can be more sat-
isfactory than it is now; I think persons seem to be exceedingly gratified;
they are entertained with the very curious and valuable collection for an
hour; they have the attendance of a person to answer every question that
may be put, and they are conducted all round . . . ' (para 2702). However,
the committee's attention was more engaged by William Buss, an artist,
who complained that the guided tours diminished the potential use and
educational value of the collection. Asked whether the existing system of
exhibiting the armouries was effective or might in any way be improved,
Buss replied:

> . . . at that time it appeared to me to be very defective; the people were
> hurried through in gangs of from 20 to 30, and there was no time allowed
> for the investigation of any thing whatever; in fact, they were obliged
> to attend to the warder, and if the people had catalogues they might as
> well have kept them in their pockets; when they wanted to read them in
> conjunction with the object they saw, of course, they lagged behind, and
> then the warder would say, ' You must not do that; the catalogues are
> to be read at home; you must follow me, or you will lose a great deal;'
> and I was particularly struck by that, for I thought it a very odd mode
> of exhibiting national property.

<div align="right">(House of Commons Report, 1841: para 2805)</div>

Buss went on to sing the virtues of the British Museum and the National
Gallery for safeguarding their treasures very effectively while also allowing

the visitor to develop a more individualised relation to them. He then proceeded to illustrate how the guided tour diminished the value that the visitor might obtain from the new forms of historical classification governing the armoury, especially if provided with an appropriate catalogue containing the requisite historical information:

> Is it your opinion, then, that a catalogue ought to be prepared under the public authority, with a view of being sold cheaper to visitors, and of giving more general information? – I should say it would be very desirable; but, then, if those catalogues were published, they would be useless under the present system; the warders must cease to go round with visitors, or the catalogues would be of no use.
>
> In point of fact, it is your opinion that much of the gratification that might be derived from the armouries is lost, from the hurried manner in which visitors are obliged to go through them, and by their being prevented from deliberately examining the different curiosities? – Certainly, it prevents a proper examination; if the knowledge expended by Sir Samuel Meyrick on the arrangement of the armoury was of any value, it is rendered unavailable; for you cannot trace the changes or varieties of the periods, owing to the hurried mode in which it is adopted . . .
>
> Your opinion is, that the arrangement is highly useful; but that the present mode of exhibition deprives the public of much of its advantage? – That is exactly my meaning.
>
> (House of Commons Report 1841: paras 2830–3)

The exhibitions that were organised for the poor of London's East End in the 1880s and 1890s were similarly accompanied by a battery of techniques – catalogues, trained attendants, appropriately descriptive labels – designed to ensure that the poor took the correct messages from the art on display (see Koven, 1994). Joy Kasson has likewise detailed the attention paid to such matters in mid nineteenth-century America, but with the useful qualification that the new technologies of visiting developed over this period were often aimed as much at the couple as at the individual. As a consequence, women's relations to art were often mediated through their husbands as – so the evidence of contemporary engravings suggests – it was men's role, assisted by the catalogue, to expound on the significance of the art displayed, and women's role to listen (Kasson, 1990).

My point, then, is that the concern that was evident in the establishment of public museums, art galleries and libraries to make the resources of culture available to the whole population was accompanied by an equally meticulous attention to organising an environment in which the museum or gallery visitor, or the library user, might derive as much benefit as possible from the experience. But what kind of benefit? And what kind of benefit might be expected to accrue to the state in return for its efforts and expenditures in this area? Jevons provides a route into these questions in his suggestion

that the multiplication of culture's utility always brought with it an added value in the ancillary benefits to which the broadened distribution of cultural resources would give rise. Investment in libraries, museums and public concert halls would, Jevons suggested, secure a cash as well as a cultural and political return:

> Now, this small cost is not only repaid many times over by the multiplication of utility of the books, newspapers, and magazines on which it is expended, but it is likely, after the lapse of years, to come back fully in the reduction of poor-rates and Government expenditure on crime. We are fully warranted in looking upon Free Libraries as an engine for operating upon the poorer portions of the population.
>
> (Jevons, 1883: 32)

The civilising influence of culture, in other words, was expected to give rise to social benefits in view of the changed forms of behaviour that it was expected would result from exposure to it. But why should this have been so? What assumptions made this expectation – which, in hindsight, seems rather unlikely – an intelligible one? A part of the answer to these questions consists in the increasing influence of new conceptions of art associated with the rise of bourgeois, and especially Romantic aesthetics. Viewed throughout much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a form of aristocratic diversion, the sphere of art was not, in this period, regarded as a realm possessing any special moral or aesthetic qualities. Under the influence of the *philosophes*, Kant, Schiller and Romanticism more generally, however, the spheres of art and culture came to be regarded as a special realm providing a set of resources which, in allowing the conduct of various kinds of work on the self, would result in a harmonisation of the diverse aspects of the individual's personality (see Saisselin, 1970). The fusion of these ideas with the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century culture of sensibility led to the view that frequent contact with art would result in more refined codes of personal conduct. It would help knock the rough edges off an individual's behaviour, promoting a softness and gentleness of manners. We can see the entry of such conceptions into the governmental sphere in the tasks to which art was summonsed by George Godwin, the head of the committee responsible for the affairs of the Art Union of London:

> Not merely every Irishman, but every philanthropic spirit, who feels . . . that the cultivation of taste . . . softens men's manners and suffers them not to be brutal, must rejoice at this latter circumstance and be anxious to lend his utmost aid . . . The influence of the fine arts in humanising and refining, in purifying the thoughts and raising the sources of gratification in man, is so universally felt and admitted that it is hardly necessary now to urge it. By abstracting him from the gratification of the senses, teaching him to appreciate physical beauty and to find delight

in the contemplation of the admirable accordance of nature, the mind is carried forward to higher aims, and becomes insensibly opened to a conviction of the force of moral worth and the harmony of virtue.

(Cited in King, 1964: 109)

However, this is only half the answer. For these changing conceptions of art do not explain why it was thought that the social reach of art might usefully be extended beyond the middle classes to include the population as a whole. Indeed, these conceptions could well be, and were, combined with active opposition to such a proposition. The writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, while investing art with an exemplary status which allowed it to be thought of as a refining and civilising agent, simultaneously restricted its sphere of influence to elite social strata given Reynolds's conviction that the position of the poor was divinely ordained and not to be disturbed. The poor, for Reynolds, are inflicted with an unchanging sensuality; only the higher social ranks have the ability and, in their freedom from the exigencies of labour, the opportunity to use art as a means of facilitating their transition from a life of brute sensuality to one of civilised reason (see Borzello, 1980: 39). There can be no doubt of the continuing influence of these essentially pre-governmental conceptions of art in which art's social efficacy and function is regarded as being connected to limiting rather than expanding its social distribution. Frances Borzello cites the evidence of a witness before the 1835–6 select committee appointed to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of art among the people in which this view is perfectly encapsulated. Asked whether it was 'desirable to encourage a knowledge of the correct principles of design, perspective and proportion in the mind of the artisan in so far as they are artists', Charles Robert Cockerell replied:

I do not think such knowledge compatible with the occupations of artisans, and the encouragements to it would mislead them, and interfere with their proper callings, and right division of labour, in which excellence already requires all their ability.

(cited in Borzello, 1980: 11)

However, what we witness, in the various nineteenth-century parliamentary commissions and inquiries that concerned themselves with the spheres of art and culture, is the emerging ascendancy of the view that art and culture might be governmentally deployed as civilising agencies directed at the population as a whole. Yet this was not just because the assumptions of Romanticism somehow became more plausible. Rather, the crucial changes took place in another compartment of social existence altogether. For it was the emerging ascendency of new ways of thinking about the population which made it intelligible to expect that general benefits might result from culture's more extended distribution.

Culture, liberal government and the prudential subject

The account Mitchell Dean offers, in his *The Constitution of Poverty*, of the changing moral aims and precepts which accompanied the development of new forms for the administration of the poor provides some bearings from which to explore these issues. Dean's primary concern is to take issue with the view, exemplified by the work of E.P. Thompson, that eighteenth-century forms of pauper relief rested on a 'moral economy' – that is, a system of mutual obligations between rich and poor – whereas those instituted by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act reflected a purely economic set of concerns, a wholly market-driven and amoral utilitarianism. Instead, he proposes that such differences are best understood in terms of the contrasting practical reasonings of two forms of government, each of which had its moral dimension. Eighteenth-century forms of poor law administration thus rested on a conception of the population associated with the notion of police: that is, as a resource to be managed for the benefit of the national wealth. They accordingly sought to set the poor to work so that, in providing for their own sustenance, they might increase the wealth and strength of the nation. In dismantling many of the earlier forms of poor relief, however, the 1834 Act embodied a concern with making the poor responsible in accordance with the moral imperatives of Malthusianism in ways that reflected the newly emerging forms of liberal government.

The issues I want to focus on here concern less the contrasting ways in which the poor were materially provided for in these two systems of relief than the forms of moral regulation that accompanied them. The crucial distinction between the two, Dean suggests, is that whereas the former system exhorted and educated the poor to engage in an 'industrious course of life', it did not, as did the post-1834 system, aspire to have them *choose* such a course of life for themselves as a matter of personal responsibility or self-regulation. There are two main points here relevant to my present interests. The first concerns the fact that while eighteenth-century forms of poor relief had been accompanied by attacks on popular recreations, and especially against alehouses, these attacks sought simply to outlaw such recreations because of the fear that the taint of slothfulness and drunkenness would, when imported into the family via the male head of household, lead to a wastage of the national resource of population. Such campaigns, in other words, like the forms of poor relief they accompanied, aimed simply at transforming the idle poor into the industrious poor, but without such a transformation proceeding through or being dependent on any mechanism of inner or moral transformation. When Patrick Colquhoun discusses the role of ale-houses in destroying morals and breeding crime, his attention focuses on the systems of inspection available to magistrates for watching over publicans and thereby regulating public houses so as to secure 'the essential interests of the State, as regards the morals and health of the lower ranks, in checking their prevailing propensity to drunkenness, gaming and idleness' (Colquhoun, 1796: 38). Similarly, Bentham's famous contention

that 'Pushpin is morality in so far as it keeps out drunkenness' (cit. Bahmueller, 1981: 165) simply sees pushpin as a diversion which might keep the workingman away from drink. It does not produce an interior transformation that will make the workingman *not want* to drink.

By contrast, the influence of Malthus and the need for prudential restraint as a check to the threat of overpopulation leads, as one of the primary tactics of liberal government, to the need for precisely such an inner transformation to serve as the mechanism through which economic laws might be translated into an imperative of moral conduct. It is in this respect, Dean argues, that the Malthusian theory of population proved critical in specifying a new form of life for the poor:

> The Malthusian intervention must figure prominently in accounting for the additional virtues demanded of the poor in the nineteenth century. They were not only to be docile, industrious and sober, as in the previous century, but also to be frugal in domestic economy, avoid pauperism at all costs, practice proper restraint from unconsidered marriage and improvident breeding, join a friendly society, and make regular deposits in a savings bank.
>
> (Dean, 1991: 83–4)

It was, then, this new construction of the poor that made it intelligible to think of art and culture as resources that might be enlisted in the service of governing. If the eighteenth century poses the workhouse as a disciplinary alternative to the alehouse in a stark and unmediated opposition, the nineteenth century places the museum, the gallery and the library between the two and assigns them the task of producing the worker who will not only not frequent the public house but who will also no longer wish to do so and who will voluntarily practice moral restraint in his conjugal relationships.[9] It is thus a fairly constant trope in the literature of cultural reform, evident from the 1830s to the 1880s, to find the art gallery, the museum and the library ranged against the public-house as agents deemed capable of transforming the workingman into a new 'prudential subject'. The 1834 Select Committee of Inquiry into Drunkenness, for example, was advised that providing reading matter through libraries would help induce sobriety in the working classes by leading to better habits (Report, 1834, para 2858). In 1867, on the eve of the extension of the male suffrage to, as he put it, 'the residuum of the English people', Henry Cole urged that it was 'the positive duty of Parliament to try and get these people who are going to be voters, out of the public-house, and I know no better mode of doing it than to open museums freely to them' (Report, 1867: para 808). A few years later, in 1875, Cole conjured up the spectre of male drunkenness that culture was meant to banish:

> Then there appears to be a class of people that actually seem turned from human beings into no better than brutes: people that spend all their money

in drink, and leave their children to go to the workhouse or to die – who starve their wives, beat them, and after having drunk themselves into a state of insanity, habitually sleep without clothes, lying on the straw!

<div align="right">(Cole, 1884: 364)</div>

The answer – or, at least, a part of the answer – Cole suggested was to open museums on Sundays so that, rather than being left 'to find his recreation in bed first, and in the public-house afterwards' (*ibid*: 368), the working-man would be able to recreate himself together with his wife and children. And finally, to recall my point of departure, when, in 1883, William Stanley Jevons posed what he saw as some of the central cultural polarities of his day, he included that of 'the Free Library and the newsroom *versus* the Public-house' (Jevons, 1883: 7).

The 'prudential subject' in whose fashioning culture was thus to assist, however, is to be understood not as the subject of a set of beliefs who helps to perpetuate existing forms of power by consenting to them but rather as an agent who functions as an operator for power through his conduct in practicing a new form of life. For – and it is in this light that we can best understand why the provision of public museums and art galleries was so frequently placed in the same bracket as the provision of public sanitation and water supplies – taking culture to the workingman was only one of the means by which he was to be led to be both sober and prudent. This tactic was to be complemented by the distribution of purified water to houses, or via public drinking fountains, to provide an alternative to beer, just as public lavatories were envisaged as an alternative to the facilities which public houses offered as an inducement to their customers (see Harrison, 1971). Edward Edwards, referring to the Public Libraries Act of 1850, thus described it as a measure empowering local councils 'to build libraries, as well as build sewers; and to levy a local rate for bringing books into the sitting-room of the handicraftsman or the tradesman, as well as one for bringing water into his kitchen . . .' (Edwards, 1869: 16) because these were all envisaged as parts of new systems of capillary distribution which, in spreading art and culture, fresh water and public sanitation, all worked toward the same end: the reform of the workingman.

My stress, here, on the workingman is not accidental for, as will be clear from the foregoing, the 'prudential subject' these various initiatives aimed at producing was always envisaged as male. There are a number of reasons for this. The fact that married women's civic rights were held to be sub-sumed within those of their husbands meant that transactional relations between government and the family were usually routed via the male head of household. The moral schemas derived from Malthusianism were also important in this regard. Just as eighteenth-century forms of poor relief had aimed to save women and children from distress by providing work for the male head of household, so the moral schema of the post-1834 poor laws operated through the requirements of prudential restraint which

bore uniquely on the male head of household. For, it was argued, only the male head of household was able, from his position in the market, to experience and interpret the effects of nature's scarcity and the threat of starvation that would result from overpopulation so that he could translate nature's imperatives into a self-imposed morality. 'Morality,' as Dean puts it, 'becomes a matter for each individual, here understood as each adult male, confronted with an economic necessity inscribed in his relation to nature' (Dean, 1991: 154).

Culture's target is, accordingly, always male: the museum, the reading-room, the art gallery, the library – it is always changes in the behaviour of working-class men that are aimed for when the virtues of these institutions are extolled. Where the working-class woman appears, it is not in her own right but as the potential beneficiary of reformed male conduct. The situation in regard to the middle-class woman was different. The eighteenth-century 'culture of sensibility', which had attributed to women a natural delicacy and softness, an inherent gentleness of manners, sought also to deploy these virtues as ways of civilising elite male conduct through the construction of new heterosocial spaces of pleasure – spa baths and public promenades, for example – where the presence of women meant that the raucous excesses of male conduct had to be curbed (see Barker-Benfield, 1992). In the reforming strategies of the nineteenth century, the new public cultural spaces of the museum, the art gallery, and the library provided an enlarged, cross-class sphere of operation for this 'culture of sensibility' in the expectation that the presence of middle-class women would provide a model for working-class women to imitate while also enjoining on the working-class man more refined and gentle manners.[10]

The bureaucratisation of art

Let me draw together the various threads of my argument so far. I have suggested that the changed discursive coordinates governing nineteenth-century conceptions of the poor and the appropriate forms of their administration form a necessary aspect of any account concerned to trace the relations between the emerging forms of liberal government and the role accorded culture as a resource that might be used to induct the population into new, more prudential forms of conduct. By the same token, however, it is also clear that the sphere of culture, far from being regarded as tailor-made for this purpose, was seen as in need of a degree of refashioning if it was to fulfil the function it was thus called on to perform. That function, moreover, was inextricably caught up with a particular patterning of gender relations. Finally, this governmental utilisation of culture entailed a contradictory set of relations to aesthetic conceptions of culture. On the one hand, such conceptions were essential to governmental programmemes in so far as it was by virtue of its aesthetic properties that it was thought culture could serve as a civilising agent. At the same time, the mechanisms through which culture

was distributed entailed both its bureaucratisation and its subordination to a utilitarian calculus.

But what hinges on these arguments? What is their more general significance? A part of my concern has been to suggest how the history of culture might be written in ways that would see its modern constitution as inherently governmental, as a field of social management in which culture is deployed as a resource intended to help 'lift' the population by making it self-civilising. There are, of course, many moments in such a history: the French Revolution is one in the importance it accorded culture as an instrument for forming a civic morality. The mid nineteenth-century period of utilitarian cultural reform is another such moment, distinct from that of the French Revolution in that its concern was less to fashion a new civic morality or ethos of citizenship than to produce a new kind of self-reforming person. Two things had happened in between: first, the history of Romantic aesthetics had warrened out an interior within the subject and programmed the work of art in such a way as to make the transaction between the two a process of self-civilising. Second, the new conceptions of the poor associated with Malthusianism and the notion of the prudential subject provided a discursive construction of the poor, and of the field of the social more generally, which made it intelligible to think of using culture as an instrument of social management. As a consequence, the 'multiplication of culture's utility' extended the reach of culture's governmental deployment in two ways. First, it carried that reach beyond the public surface of civic conduct and into the interior of the person in the expectation that culture would serve to fashion new forms of self-reflexiveness and reformed codes of personal conduct. Second, it developed new capillary systems for the distribution of culture that were calculated to extend its reach throughout the social body without any impediment or restriction.

Moreover, the currency of this, as it was sometimes called, 'utilitarianisation' of culture was a broadly-based international one. It played a significant role in the establishment of Australia's major public cultural institutions over the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Central to the ethos of the major State museums and art galleries, and a major subject of concern in the affairs of literary and debating societies, it played just as important a role in the Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Art that blossomed in country towns throughout the length and breadth of Australia over the same period (see Candy and Laurent, 1994). Indeed, it was while Jevons was in Australia – where he worked, from 1854 to 1859 as the assayor for the mint in Sydney where he was also an active participant in the affairs of the Philosophical Society of New South Wales and the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts – that Jevons first became interested in the possibility of fusing economic theory and utilitarian philosophy that was to prove so crucial to his later work. And, as I indicated at the outset, the 'utilitarianisation' of culture was later to acquire, in the 1890s, the influential support of George Brown Goode in the United States.

By the turn of the century, then, a concern with the multiplication of culture's utility was thoroughly embedded within the vocabularies and operational routines of collecting institutions. It became the shared lexicon of a sphere of cultural administration which, in becoming increasingly professionalised, also witnessed the more rapid transfer and sharing of practices across national boundaries. When, in 1880, Archibald Livingstone visited Britain and Europe on behalf of the Australian Museum in Sydney to report on relations between museums and the development of new systems of instruction, he urged the Australian Museum follow the example of the South Kensington Museum in circulating specimen collections throughout the land by loaning them to local museums and galleries. In doing so, he estimated that, between 1855 and 1877, the system put into place by the South Kensington Museum had allowed 65,000 objects to be seen by 8,600,000 persons – clearly a fabulous multiplication of their utility (see Livingstone, 1880: xi). When, in 1913, the Australian Museum sent Charles Hedley to visit natural history museums in the United States he came back with a similarly vivid description of the respects in which the system for circulating specimen collections to New York secondary schools that had been introduced at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) had allowed that Museum to extend its 'sphere of usefulness . . . beyond the galleries to the lecture hall and beyond the lecture hall to the suburban school' (Hedley, 1913: 7). That he should have been so impressed by the AMNH's success in this matter is not surprising. Throughout the period of Henry Fairfield Osborn's Presidency, the public discourse of the AMNH was dominated by an 'avalanche of numbers' as, in one annual report after another and in various other official museum publications, the Museum's success in extending the usefulness of the collections through public lecture programmemes and the circulation of specimen collection boxes to schools was accorded pride of place. In a 1913 text, Osborn and George Sherwood, the curator of the AMNH's Department of Public Education, reported that the number of pupils reached by the Museum's circulating collections had increased from 375,000 in 1905 to 1,275,890 in 1912. They attributed to this increase a key role in extending the Museum's influence and usefulness both quantitatively and qualitatively to the degree that many of the children who benefited from those collections were of 'foreign parentage' (Osborn and Sherwood, 1913: 6).

In the course its international migrations, however, the principle of the multiplication of culture's utility was subject to different interpretations and, depending on the context, implemented in varying ways. Certainly, the specific combination of factors which, in the mid nineteenth-century British context, resulted in this principle being viewed as a possible panacea for a range of social problems did not travel well, either in space or time. By the turn of the century, William Henry Beveridge dismissed the view that the diffusion of culture might serve as a remedy for 'colossal evils', a tendency that was generally shared as reforming opinion moved toward social-welfarist

and away from cultural and philanthropic conceptions of social problems and their possible solutions (see Koven, 1994: 44).

In other contexts, the benefits expected to result from culture's expanded distribution were significantly different in kind from those envisaged by the likes of Cole and Edwards. The writings of John Cotton Dana, the Director of the Newark Museum in New Jersey, provide a telling instance of such a changing horizon of expectations. In a couple of pamphlets he wrote in the 1920s, Dana's language positively bristles with the vocabulary of utility. In *A Plan for a New Museum*, he stigmatises old-fashioned art museums as mere 'gazing museums' which had degenerated into little more than fashion centres for elite society. In their place, he proposes the establishment of 'institutes of visual instruction' which, through the use of social science surveys, will seek to achieve 'returns for their cost' that are 'in good degree positive, definite, visible, measurable' (Dana, 1920: 13). A good museum and a useful museum are, for Dana, one and the same thing, and its usefulness is to be measured by its success in 'moving its community toward greater skill in all the arts of living' (Dana, 1927: 2). By 'arts of living', Dana is at pains to stress, he means all the techniques of modern civilisation. The phrase, as he puts it, 'extends its meaning from clean streets to clean air, from knowing the alphabet to a feeling for high poetry' (2). But if the art museum is to fulfil its role within this scheme, if it is to serve a truly useful function as an 'institute of visual instruction' (Dana, 1920: 13) – or, in another formulation, if it is to be 'a new museum of the definitely useful, teaching type' (28) – then it must turn its back on its concern with art of 'approved excellence and unquestioned authenticity' (36), a concern which is now, Dana suggests, a limiting factor on the art museum's potential usefulness. Instead, in early advocacy of what would nowadays be classified as 'art and working life' programmes, Dana urges that the museum must seek to expand its usefulness by exhibiting and contributing to the artistic and economic activities of ordinary people in the community which surrounds it.

Here, then, is a conception of the art gallery's function that is quite different from, and even hostile to, that championed by Cole and the English utilitarian school of cultural reform. Yet there is still a common grammar underlying their different positions, and it is a grammar which has had significant long-term consequences for the positions of art and culture in modern societies.

Walter Benjamin, it may be recalled, argued that the development, over the nineteenth century, of techniques of mechanical reproduction deprived the work of art of the aura associated with the uniqueness and singularity of its authentic individual presence (Benjamin, 1968b). The truth is, however, that, side by side with the development of such techniques, art also came to be inscribed in new administrative processes through which its singularity and uniqueness was subjected to a far more thoroughgoing dismemberment as its unity was disaggregated in a manner that would allow artistic products to be deployed in varying and flexible ways as parts of governmental

programmes aimed at civilising the population. It was art's existence in an age of mass instruction that was primarily responsible for, not the loss of its aura, as if by accident, but the calculated detachment of art's power and effectiveness from any dependence on the auratic qualities of its singular presence. No longer serving power by representing it or embodying it, culture – as envisaged in the programmes of public museums and art galleries – emerges, instead, as an infinitely divisible and pliable resource to be harnessed, depending on the circumstances, to a variety of social purposes: self-improvement, community development, improving the standards of industrial art and design.

Yet if this is so, we shall have to review the terms in which the history of the public art gallery is most commonly understood. The account which has proved most influential here has been that offered by Theodor Adorno in his conception of art galleries as family sepulchres for works of art which, in abstracting art from real-life contexts and thereby nullifying its utility, convert its faded aura into a fetish which serves only to maintain its exchange value (Adorno, 1967). The critique is, in fact, a venerable one: it was first voiced by Quatremère de Quincy in criticism of the museum programmes developed in revolutionary France (see Sherman, 1994) and has its most eloquent modern-day representative in Douglas Crimp's writings on the museum's ruins (Crimp, 1993). The tradition of argument is, however, a complex and multi-faceted one whose different strands have been weighted and accented in different ways. For Adorno, as Llewellyn Negrin has convincingly argued, the view of museums as mausoleums which Adorno traces to Valéry is counterbalanced by his discussion of Proust's understanding of the respects in which the museum confers on the artwork a new afterlife which has to be attended to in its positivity. In typical Adorno fashion, Negrin suggests, neither one of these positions is carried over against the other: each is allowed to stand, and each is allowed to serve as the partial correction and revision of the other, in a negative dialectic which sees the truth of the museum emerging from the unresolved tension between these contrary perspectives (see Negrin, 1993).

Crimp's arguments tend in a different direction. Taking his cue from Benjamin's remarks on collecting, he sees the art museum one-sidedly, as the very antithesis of a living art whose meaning and use depend on its immersion in a set of social relations and processes outside the museum. For Benjamin, collecting, in releasing the object from its original function in order that it can stand in a close relationship to its equilavents, is the diametric opposite of use. The object's validity as a part of a collection, however, depends on that collection retaining a personal connection to an owner: 'the phenomenon of collecting,' Benjamin argues, 'loses its meaning as it loses its personal owner' (Benjamin, 1968a: 67). This leads him to suggest that public collections, precisely because of the usefulness to which they aspire, have to be assessed as a double failure, a double betrayal of the object: a betrayal of the meaning vouchsafed by its originating context from which it

has been abstracted and a betrayal of the meaning guaranteed by the owner of the private collection. 'Even though public collections may be less objectionable socially and more useful academically than private collections,' he says, 'the objects get their due only in the latter' (203). Crimp incorporates this accusation of a double-betrayal into his assessment of the museum. The objects in Benjamin's collection, he argues, are also 'wrested from history, but they are "given their due," re-collected in accordance with the political perception of the moment.' The museum, by contrast, 'constructs a cultural history by treating its objects independently both of the material conditions of their own epoch and of those of the present' (Crimp, 1993: 204).

Before advancing his critique of the public collection, Benjamin anticipates that his discussion of collecting may only have confirmed the reader's conviction that the collecting passion is behind the times as well as his or her distrust of the collector type. Yet nothing, he suggests, is further from his mind 'than to shake either your conviction or your distrust' (Benjamin, 1968a: 66–7). Nor should we let him. Philip Fisher has given us the best reasons for not doing so when he remarks, apropos of Benjamin, that the argument concerning art's loss of aura fails to consider the ways in which, when art is placed in new contexts, 'new characteristics come into existence by the same process that earlier features are effaced' (Fisher, 1991: 17). In place of the metaphysic of origin which characterises Benjamin's approach in which the work of art is always haunted by the fading aura of the originating conditions of its production, the meaning of aesthetic objects for Fisher is always a matter of the ways in which they are socially scripted via the routines and practices of the institutions which regulate their display. 'When we think of an object as having a fixed set of traits,' he argues, 'we leave out the fact that only within social scripts are those traits, and not others visible or even real' (*ibid*: 18). The placing of art in the museum is not, from this perspective, a loss of history – it is not a double betrayal of the history it once had and of another ideal and imagined history it might have had – but, rather, the acquisition of another history, and of the history it *has* had.

There is, then, as I have tried to show, another way of writing the history of the art gallery, a history in which art gains rather than loses something. Fisher suggests how we might best think of this addition when he says, in a happy phrase, that the accomplishment of the modern art museum has been to bureaucratise art. Emphasising this aspect of the art gallery's history, moreover, will have practical consequences. For in place of those avant-garde critiques which place the art gallery on one side of a divide and life on the other, and which seek to liberate art from the former for the latter, there is opened up the life of art's bureaucratisation as a distinctively modern, anti-auratic form of art's use and deployment which, since no amount of critique will conjure it away, needs to be assessed and engaged with on its own terms.

Notes

1 For details of Cole's intellectual roots and affiliations, see Alexander (1983).

2 I am indebted to Michael White of Monash University for making available to me his unpublished papers on Jevons; these have proved invaluable to me in developing my argument. For details of Jevons's role in promoting the critique of classical political economy, see the introduction to Black and Konekamp (1972).

3 Since Bentham's hedonic calculus was concerned with achieving the greatest total sum of happiness rather than the greatest happiness of the greatest number, it was consistent with restrictive distributive policies provided that those who monopolised pleasure-yielding resources enjoyed them very greatly indeed. Jevons's theory provided a progressive corrective to this in suggesting that the marginal utility derived from an added item of consumption decreased with higher levels of consumption, thereby opening up the possibility that a greater amount of aggregate social benefit might result from broadening the social bases of consumption. See Bahmueller (1981): 99–100.

4 The concerns I am interested in here are those voiced by reforming opinion. Conservatives had their own special demons to wrestle with. For Antonio Panizzi, the Principal Librarian of the British Museum, the prospect of opening libraries to the public conjured up unnamable horrors. When the 1850 Select Committee on Public Libraries asked him who used the French National Library, which, unlike the British Museum, allowed open access, Panzinni replied: 'Quite another sort of people: downright idlers, mostly, and persons influenced by political excitement, who go to read books which very few people read here; they read books on politics and on religion, and such topics; when I say, religion, I do not mean for religion, but against it.' (House of Commons Report, 1850: minute 747).

5 These debates were paralleled by equally heated and protracted debates regarding whether the British Museum's natural history collections should be (as they eventually were) removed to separate premises at South Kensington. Opposition to this proposal was most usually based on the consideration that, precisely because they had proved so popular with the working classes, a central-London location ought to be retained for the natural history collections. The benefits of maintaining ease of access in this case would, it was argued, be greater than those that would accrue from retaining a central location for the national art collections. For details of these debates, see chapter 1 of Rupke (1994).

6 It is important to add, however, that this was only one aspect of the system. Sherman also shows how the power of cultural patronage embodied in the *envoi* system was used as leverage to reform the administration of France's provincial museums.

7 For Ruskin, the use of copies at any level in art education was unthinkable. It was, he said, tantamount to 'coining bad money and circulating it, doing mischief' (House of Commons Report, 1857: para 2470).

8 I have discussed other aspects of this reply elsewhere. See Bennett (1992a).

9 A compromise solution was proposed by one Sydney Godolphin Osborn when he suggested the need for a 'moral beer-house' where the working man might mix improving games with a pint, a ploughman's lunch and a pipe. See Hole (1853).

10 I have discussed the gendered aspects of nineteenth-century discourses of culture more fully elsewhere. See Bennett (1992a).

3 Museums, nations, empires, religions*

My concern in this chapter is to explore the implications of two perspectives for our understanding of the relations between museums, nations, empires and religions as these have developed from the late eighteenth century to the present. I derive these perspectives from Kevin Hetherington's suggestion that museums are 'seeing-saying machines' that act as points of emergence 'in which some social relations are established and others are broken down' (Hetherington, 2011: 459). Hetherington puts forward this view in the course of discussing the implications of Foucault's account of power when interpreted through the lens of Deleuze's concept of the diagram. This, in rough summary, consists in the distinctive orderings of the relationships between the seen and the said that inform the operations of particular institutions: schools, factories, and, of course, museums too. Hetherington draws on this concept of diagram to highlight two aspects of the part museums play in the processes through which particular forms of power are shaped and exercised. The first consists in the transformative capacities of the truths – the models for new realities – that they produce and circulate. The second concerns the operation of these truths in the context of multiple, intersecting power relations rather than as vehicles for the transmission of a single principle of power holding sway over the entire social order.

I shall, in what follows, draw on these two perspectives in conducting a set of strategic probes that will provide different points of historical and theoretical entry into questions concerning the action of museums in the context of their enduringly significant, but always mutable, entanglements across the relations between nations, empires, and religions. I take the theoretical bearings for my first probe from Benedict Anderson's influential assessment of the role museums have played in shaping the imagined communities of nations into being (Anderson, 1991). I do so, however, with a view to qualifying and complicating Anderson's argument by reviewing the continuing significance of the transnational forms of imagined community – dynastic,

political and colonial empires, and world religions – for the practices of European (and some other) museums throughout the greater part of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My second probe considers the relations between museums and religions from a different perspective: that provided by Michel Foucault's account of the relations – simultaneously ones of historical affiliation and ones of rupture and discontinuity – between pastoral and governmental forms of power. My concern here will be to show how, for the greater part, the alignments between museums and religions forged in the course of Western modernity are ones that have subordinated pastoral to governmental power by invoking religion as a form of moral supplement to secular practices of social governance. My third probe will explore the place of museums in the context of contemporary practices of tolerance understood, as Wendy Brown proposes, as a new historical form of governmentality (Brown, 2006). This will involve a consideration of the respects in which earlier alignments between museums and religion have been unsettled by the new terms of engagement with religions that museums increasingly face in multi-faith polities.

National/transnational intersections

Let me come, then, to my first probe. Although not initially so,[1] museums came to occupy an important place in Anderson's conception of the nation as an imagined community, that is, as a territorially defined fusion of people and culture that derives its essential unity from the deep past in which it is imaginarily anchored and which is projected forward into a seemingly limitless future. While at first stressing the role of print-based media – particularly newspapers and novels – as his favoured cultural technologies of nationing, Anderson subsequently accorded equal significance to the role of museums, alongside maps and censuses, in organizing the spatio-temporal coordinates of people nations. The aspect of his account I want to stress most, however, concerns the respects in which such spatio-temporal coordinates had to be won against those comprised by the transnational imagined communities of dynastic empires and religions, principally Christianity and particularly Catholicism, but, in some contexts, Islam too. But these have, of course, remained significant political and cultural forces which, from the eighteenth century through to the 1939–1945 War and, indeed, into the present, have continued to inform the trajectories of European national museums. These trajectories have also been profoundly affected by the roles that such museums have played in relation to the national imperialisms that developed from the mid-nineteenth century and by the national-political empires of the twentieth century. Through their associations with the Hapsburg, Ottoman, Napoleonic, and Soviet empires and the Third Reich and with the transnational formations of the British, Belgian, French, Danish, Dutch and German overseas empires, Europe's national museums have been endlessly reconfigured as they have been placed, first, on one side, and then on another,

of the changing boundaries, within or beyond Europe, that the flux and flow of these empires have generated. The processes in which museums have thus been caught up are always specific to particular constellations of national, sub-national, becoming national, and supra-national imperial/colonial formations. Nonetheless, the reports of the European National Museums project (EuNaMus) (Aronsson and Elgenius, 2011) do help to distinguish some general patterns regarding the ways in which national museums have been constructed – and, in many cases, deconstructed and reconstructed – in the context of variably constituted national/transnational relations.

The role of royal collections in organizing transnational dynastic spatio-temporal coordinates, against which national museums would later pitch themselves as parts of nationalist independence movements, provides one and, initially, perhaps the most distinctive articulation of such relations. In such cases the museums at the centre of such dynastic formations are initially both imperial and proto-national. Denmark is a good example (Zipsane, 2011). At the time of the initial establishment of The Royal Chamber of Art – a collection of natural, art and cultural objects – Denmark was the centre of a transnational Scandinavian dynasty that included Norway, Greenland, Iceland, and the German-speaking provinces of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg. Questions concerning the role of museums in articulating a distinctive sense of Danishness that centred on a people-nation defined in terms of the territorial and historical coordinates of present-day Denmark came to the fore only with the loss of these dynastic possessions over the period from 1814, when Norway became independent, through the secession of the German-speaking provinces in 1864 to, much later, the independence of Iceland in 1944. The establishment of a distinction between the properties of the royal household and those of the Danish people-nation that followed the overthrow of absolutism and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848 constituted a key moment in the development of the political and legal conditions for a distinctively national cultural patrimony centred on an emerging suite of national museums: the National Museum, the National Gallery of Denmark, the Museum of Natural History, and the Danish Folk Museum. The other side of this process consisted in the role of museums as rallying points for nationalist independence movements and, later, as key cultural markers of national independence in the territories that had won independence from Danish rule. These processes in their turn had knock-on consequences for the relations between Danish museums and Danish identity, as cherished collections that had played a key role in defining a sense of Danish nationhood centred on its colonial possessions had to be reworked once those collections were reclaimed as symbols of national independence. The late nineteenth-century development of the Danish Folk Museum was one response to these developments, involving a shift away from a sense of nationhood defined in terms of transnational possessions and toward a discovery of a Danish folk culture for a new and more vernacular nationalism. The return to Iceland of the

Saga manuscripts at various points over the period between 1925 and 1979 occasioned similar twentieth-century adjustments.

There are many examples of these processes as, across the EuNaMus project's *longue durée* of 1750 to 2010, what now stand as independent national museums were initially shaped in the context of their struggles against transnational imperial formations of one kind or another: of Estonia and Finland, for example, against the Baltic empire of Tsarist Russia (Kuutma, 2011); of Bulgaria against the western reaches of the Ottoman empire (Kukov, 2011); and of Lithuania in relation to Poland and, later, Russia (Rindzevičiūte, 2011). And, of course, there are also cases in which museums have proved to be key material and symbolic operators in the processes through which nations have emerged as the centres of new empires, focused largely within Europe, through wars of conquest. The concentration of expropriated property in newly nationalized museums at imperial centres has been of enormous significance in this regard. The seizure of the Louvre disconnected it from the dynastic power of the French royal household, while its subsequent development as a central repository for cultural property expropriated from conquered territories transformed it into symbol of an imperium centred on the French people-nation. Its influence in this regard was far-reaching and multi-edged. On the one hand, these expropriations were resented, stimulating alternative national museum projects across the length and breadth of Europe. On the other hand, such projects also often sought to emulate the new relations between cultural property, museums and national patrimony represented by the French conception of such patrimony as the bequest of a democratic people-nation. The establishment in Belgium of the proto-national *Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* in 1801 is an example of these processes: following the French example, it hastened the process of secularizing religious works of art, and provided the basis for a national collection of paintings which, alongside the development of new museums following in the wake of Belgium's establishment as an independent constitutional monarchy in 1830, constituted the nucleus of a national cultural patrimony (Bodenstein, 2011). There was a third pattern too: that of ensuring that the relations between the principles of dynastic and national power remained intact at the expense of their association with a democratic conception of the people-nation – the position that informed, and inhibited, the development of the National Gallery in Britain in the early nineteenth century.

The roles of museums in the post-1944 Soviet empire raise a different set of questions. In the EuNaMus study, these questions mainly come into view through the strong connections that were forged between museums and national liberation movements that both helped to bring about, and were accelerated by, the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1989: in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Estonia and Lithuania, for example. The particularities of these cases are different with regard to the specific types of museum that were accorded pride of place within these independence struggles. There are, however, significant similarities between them in their shared rejection

of communism and its class-based terms of reference for museum practice as an alien, externally imposed ideology, and the search for – or rediscovery of – an ethnos that could (re)root the nation in authentic national-popular traditions. There is, however, another aspect to Russia's influence on European museum practices, one located between the imperium of Tsarist absolutism that was centred on the Hermitage and its post-war communist empire. I refer to the period from the 1920s to the early 1930s when, in the context of calls from the Office Internationale des Musées (OMI) for museums to be developed as instruments of popular democratic instruction, the museum practices of post-revolutionary Russia were widely looked to, alongside those of the United States, as models for Western European countries to follow.[2] They had a significant influence on the relations between museums and the politics of the Popular Front in 1930s France, in part due to George Henri Rivière, who, after a study tour, assessed them as peerless examples of the popular and democratic forms of public pedagogy that he and Paul Rivet aspired to at the Musée de l'Homme (Gorgus, 2003).

A further set of museum/transnational relations I want to highlight consists in the development of museums as the key cultural and material operators of overseas empires reaching beyond Europe. These arose, in some cases, in connection with eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century histories of colonial conquest and occupation. This was most conspicuously true of Britain in its relations to India, Australia, and New Zealand. In other cases, these developments came later: the role of museums in the relations between France and its territories in West Africa and Indo-China (L'Estoile, 2007); between Germany and Samoa, Qingdao and Southwest Africa (Penny, 2002; Zimmerman, 2001); and between Belgium and the Belgian Congo, with the establishment of the *Musée du Congo Belge in 1910*, are all cases in point. There are three aspects of these developments that merit particular emphasis. The first concerns the significance they accorded to prehistoric archaeology and anthropology, particularly physical anthropology, as relatively new disciplines which had a profound influence on museum practices throughout Europe. By introducing new kinds of material objects into museums, they significantly restructured the organization of the artefactual field. They also issued a significant challenge to the authority of more established disciplines – biblical hermeneutics and classical archaeology for example – and did so largely on the part of a new class fraction which based its claims to social authority on new forms of scientific expertise (Bennett, 2004). Third, and perhaps most important of all, however, they enormously increased the importance that attached to questions of race and racial hierarchies within the operations of museums. This was not, of course, entirely new: anatomically grounded conceptions of racial hierarchies are evident in European museums from the late eighteenth century. From the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the role of museums in the organization of metropolitan national identities comes to be inextricably tied up with the differentiation of European/Caucasian

races from other races, sometimes in accordance with polygenetic and sometimes in accordance with evolutionary conceptions of racial differences, and various complex combinations of these (Amundsen, 2011a).

This set of museum/transnational relations did not revolve simply around the relations between museums centred in Europe and their colonial territories; indeed, these relations were more typically operationalized through the connections that were established between metropolitan museums in Europe's capital cities and museums that were developed *in situ* in colonial contexts. Again, the time scales here varied: such connections were established quite early in the case of the relations between Richard Owen at the British Museum and the Australian Museum that was established in Sydney in 1827, albeit not named as such until 1834 (Rupke, 1994; MacKenzie, 2009), and much later in the case of the establishment of museums in France's overseas territories – the Musée de l'Homme that was established in Hanoi, in 1938, for example (Dias, 2012). These connections resulted in complex socio-material networks through which the flows of people (curators, 'natives' as 'live exhibits' and, sometimes, as visitors) and things (collections) between metropolis and colony were organised. These networks did not, however, operate as one-way instruments for imposing an imperial identity on the colonized.[3] They rather formed parts of complex systems of transnational exchange through which identities in the metropolis were shaped just as much as those in the colonies. Exhibitions of Indian material culture thus played a significant role in organizing late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century conceptions of Britishness, particularly through the role of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The fieldwork missions organised by the Musée de l'Homme in the 1930s, particularly the Dakar-Djibouti mission led by Marcel Griaule, played a similarly important role in helping to shape a new conception of French identity as a part of Greater France, reaching beyond the Hexagon to encompass French men and women and their colonial cousins as members of an imaginary transnational family (Bennett, 2013; Lebovics, 1992; Wilder, 2005).

There was also a good deal more than identities at stake, particularly in the case of the flows of natural history and ethnological collections that such networks organized. In these cases European museums often provided the centres of calculation through which the governance of both the new natures of colonial agricultural ecologies were managed and through which biopolitical programs of managing indigenous populations – frequently to extinction – were put into effect. Where this was the case, museums formed parts of transnational killing machines in which the ordering and classification of races that resulted from the analysis of the cultural materials and body parts of colonized populations that had been gathered together in places like the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford were complexly entangled in the processes that led to the enactment of policies of ethnocide along varied colonial frontiers (Bennett, 2010a). Their entanglement in the processes

through which populations were distributed across the biopolitical divide separating 'what must live from what must die' (Foucault, 2003: 254) had mortal consequences in Europe, too. The role played by ethnographic collections in Germany in assembling cultural materials and body parts from its Jewish and Romany populations alongside those brought back from Germany's overseas colonies contributed significantly to the development of the principles of racial science and hygiene that informed the practices of the Holocaust (Zimmerman, 2001).

In these and other ways, then, European national museums have been shaped by, and helped to shape, the fluctuating dynamics of varied sets of transnational relationships.[4] The social and cultural logics deriving from the intersections of these dynamics have significantly influenced the particular disciplines that have most informed the practices of museums in particular historical contexts. There is, across the EuNaMus reports, a remarkable degree of consistency with regard to the disciplinary knowledges that have been 'in play' in different national contexts: classical archaeology; ethnography; anthropology; folk culture studies; art history; natural history; the history of science and technology; art and design; musicology; and, of course, history. However, the strategic significance that attaches to these disciplines is often highly specific and variable, depending on the particular kinds of symbolic weight they carry in particular circumstances.

A number of national museums, for example, have shared a strong interest in classical archaeology, and especially in Greek archaeological collections (Gazi, 2011) However, depending on the context, this has been for very different reasons. In Greece itself, early nineteenth-century disputes challenging assumptions about biological continuities between ancient and modern Greeks made archaeological engagements with Greek antiquities central to the demonstration of the cultural and historical continuities that were needed to support Greek claims to statehood. The early twentieth century promotion of philhellenism on the part of Greek Cypriots and the stress this placed on classical archaeology formed part of a struggle against the parallel promotion of Islam on the part of Turkish Cypriots (Bounia and Stylianou-Lambert, 2011). The nineteenth-century appeal to Hellenic culture in German museums, while having many aspects, not least its associations with the aesthetic practices of *Bildung* (Marchand, 1996), also provided a nuanced national critique of the imperial associations of Napoleon's Roman collections.

The regularity of the appeal to the folkloric and ethnographic disciplines centred on the everyday cultures of the people where museums are connected to national independence movements – as in the Basque region today, for example – is also notable. So is their absence in other contexts – England, for example – where, in contrast to many other countries in Europe, the folk disciplines failed to gain any significant traction in national museums until the post-war period and, even then, their influence remained relatively

modest.[5] The specific historical circumstances relating to the role of amber as 'northern Lithuanian gold' (Rindzevičiūtė, 2012: 233) similarly account for the significance accorded to geology and archaeology in fashioning a mineral resource into a symbol of national identity at the Amber Museum that was opened in Palanga in 1963.

It is also, and finally, difficult not to be aware of just how much 'difficult heritage' (Macdonald, 2009) there is in Europe. The intersections of racial, national, imperial, religious, and ethnic fault lines within and across national borders within Europe have meant that there are now few places where there are *not* difficult pasts that have to be negotiated. Some of these are on a larger scale and more consequential than others, with Holocaust museums of various kinds being the most important. But the phenomenon is much more widespread: museums addressing the histories of persecution of Romany peoples, for example. And, of course, there are parallel forms of difficult heritage that are currently under negotiation across the fault-lines produced by histories that have traversed the relations between European nations and their colonies. In France, England, and Belgium the museum/nation/people nexus is currently in the process of being refashioned in the context of the difficult colonial legacies that still inform the collections and the exhibition practices of many European museums. These re-fashionings, far from being processes internal to the nations concerned, have been invariably prompted by organized transnational communities of action – religious, multicultural, indigenous – in calling for the reordering, reclassification, or repatriation of cultural materials that have been in transit across fluctuating national boundaries with, and within, Europe. The significance accorded museums by the Sámi – a transnational indigenous people living in Sápmi, a cross-national territory spread across parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia – is a particular telling case in point (Amundsen, 2011b). As a transnational community of action within Europe, it is also one that has drawn on the models and strategies developed by post-colonial struggles against Europe.

In summary, then, what most stands out from the panoramic overview that is, for the first time, made possible by the EuNaMus reports, is how *unstable* the relations between museums and nations have proved to be. Museums, we might say, are always caught up in processes of either becoming national or (so to speak) of un-becoming and re-becoming national depending on how, at any particular moment, they are placed in relation to the flux and flow of boundaries resulting from military and colonial conquests, decolonization struggles, and independence and secessionist movements. Of course, this is truer in some contexts than others: more true of territories in central and eastern Europe affected by the mobility of boundaries associated with the collapse of dynastic empires and histories of military occupation than of Britain, for example. Even there, though, the division of Ireland in 1922 and the independence of Eire, and the subsequent strength of the movement for Scottish independence, have resulted in centrifugal forces entailing

successive redefinitions of the forms of 'Britishness' that the British Museum is supposed to embody.

Museums and the relations between pastoral and governmental power

It is important, though, to come now to my second probe, to recall that the imagined community of the nation has had to be fashioned into being against not just the imagined communities of transnational dynastic and imperial formations. Such national imaginings, Anderson argues, have also had to be shaped – sometimes against, and sometimes in an articulated relationship with – the imagined communities of transnational religions. Questions concerning the relations between museums and religions are of enormous contemporary significance. They are, however, questions which have received relatively little focused attention and, where they have been considered, this has largely been from an anthropological perspective focused on the relations between the ritual aspects of museum visitation and practices of religious observance (see, for example, Bouquet and Porto, 2005, and Paine, 2000). There is a particularly notable shortage of inquiries into the respects in which historical transformations in the relations between museums and religions have been parts of wider changes in the organization of particular regimes of power and authority.

While this neglect cannot be adequately compensated for here, some pointers to the directions such inquiries might take are suggested by Michel Foucault's comments on the relations between pastoral and governmental forms of power. Foucault approaches pastoral power as a form of power specific to the Christian pastorate and, as such, distinct from the forms of power exercised by Hebraic and Islamist religious authorities. Tracing its development over the period from the second to the eighteenth century, he also argues that pastoral power is a mode 'from which we have still not freed ourselves' (Foucault, 2007: 148) and which, unlike the principles of feudal power, has not yet experienced a revolution 'that would have definitively expelled it from history' (150). Foucault defines pastoral power as 'an art of conducting, directing, leading, guiding, taking in hand, and manipulating men . . . collectively and individually throughout their life and at every moment of their existence' (165). Its innovation consists in its use of a technique for self-examination and the examination of others through which 'a certain inner truth of the hidden soul, becomes the element through which the pastor's power is exercised, by which obedience is practiced . . . and through which, precisely, the economy of merits and faults passes' (183). It is this economy of faults and merits – not, as with the Hebraic pastorate, a relationship to salvation, truth, or law – that comprises the distinctive *modus operandi* of Christian pastoral power.

Foucault sees the period from 1580 to 1648 – the end of the Holy Roman Empire and the establishment, via the Treaty of Westphalia, of the modern

state system – as characterized by two parallel processes leading toward the establishment of the distinctive forms and divisions of modern Western governmental power. These consisted in the diminishing power of the anthropocentric world of prodigies, marvels and signs interpreted as the manifest form of God's government of the world when faced with the emerging influence of the classical episteme. Although a more complicated story, this development is partly enacted in the history of curiosity as, in Krzystof Pomian's terms, a period of 'interim rule between those of theology and science' (Pomian, 1990: 64) in which the power of the clergy and of royal households to monopolize the public exhibition of semiophores – Pomian's term for objects which mediate the relations between the visible and the invisible worlds they construct – was challenged by the new social stratum of humanist intellectuals. The culture of curiosity, however, itself later gave way, in France, to the scientific authority of museums of natural history depicting the autonomous laws of nature as part of a rationalist didactics directed toward the instruction of the public. This 'de-governmentalisation of the cosmos' (Foucault, 2007: 236), which detached nature from any rationality but that of its own laws, was accompanied by the emergence of another form of rationality in which the power of the prince was no longer modelled on that of the pastor in relation to his flock. This was a rationality in which the principle of sovereignty – hitherto largely self-subsistent and self-sufficient – was supplemented by and subordinated to *raison d'État*: the governance of the *res publica* as the realm of the state. Whereas up until the start of the seventeenth century sovereignty had meant governing in accordance with the laws of the country, those of nature, those of God, and historical models of good behaviour, *raison d'État* involved the organization of a new knowledge/government nexus: a knowledge of the forces and resources that constitute the state; and a knowledge of the attributes of the population and of the forces and conditions – medical, sanitary, environmental – shaping those attributes. It also involved a new practice of the truth concerning the public whose members must be acted on no longer to impose beliefs of legitimacy 'but in such a way that their opinion is modified, of course, and along with their opinion, their way of doing things, their way of acting, their behaviour as economic subjects and as political subjects' (275).

It was in relation to these two aspects of *raison d'État* that the elements of governmental power were initially assembled. Foucault's contentions concerning the continuities between pastoral and governmental power are, however, quite general, often speculative, and have occasioned a good deal of disagreement. Mika Ojakangas (2012) convincingly argues that it is those aspects of governmentality which focus on the welfare of the poor that have their origins in the pastorate, while the biopolitical aspects of governmentality constitute a rejection of the Christian pastorate and a reversion to the classical models of population management of Greece and Rome. The literature exploring the relations between pastoral and governmental forms of power in colonial contexts enjoins a similar caution. The introduction of

biopolitical forms of governmentality in such contexts usually depended on the displacement of missionary deployments of pastoral power by the new forms of authority that accrued to fieldwork anthropology in providing a knowledge of how to manage colonized peoples through the manipulation of their relations to their environments (Blake, 1999).

The aspects of Foucault's argument that I want to focus on here, however, concern the respects in which pastoral power was translated into a range of techniques of self-governance associated with the various forms of counter-conduct that were raised against it (Petterson, 2012). Some of these arose out of the criticisms that Reformation clerics directed against the forms of priestly authority associated with Catholic versions of pastoral power, while others were generated by ascetic or mystical movements. The significance of these counter-conducts was that of displacing the power of the pastorate and the absolute forms of obedience this required and substituting technologies of governance that depended on varied forms of self-mastery and self-regulation, albeit that, as Foucault rightly notes, these were always exercised under the direction of some other authority that was pitted against that of the pastorate. There are numerous connections between the forms of self-regulation associated with these counter conducts and later forms of governmental power. The forms of self-inspection associated with the technology of the confessional, and thereby subordinated to pastoral direction, were, in the early history of English aesthetic thought, translated into techniques for surgically splitting the self that provided a mechanism for inner self direction, which played a key role in the development of early forms of liberal government directed against the authority of the pastorate (Bennett, 2013: Chapter 6). The same was true of the role that Pietism played in Germany in developing those practices of self-inspection that later informed the culture of *Bildung* as a cluster of techniques of free and independent self-regulation and self-cultivation which played a crucial role in the development of late nineteenth-century bourgeois culture (Koselleck, 2002). The routes through which pastoral forms of power were translated into a range of techniques of self-monitoring that were conducted under the guidance of the schoolmaster in nineteenth-century popular schooling have also been examined (Hunter, 1994).

The development, since the late eighteenth century, of the public museum form has been caught up within, both being shaped by and helping to shape, these complex historical negotiations of the relations between pastoral and governmental forms of power. It is, though, difficult to offer any general account of these matters. This is partly because the relations between museums and organized religions have varied in different national and imperial contexts. The late nineteenth-century development of national museums in both France and Italy (Trolio, 2011) formed a part of the organization of a secular polity that was pitted against the power of the Papacy, with museums playing a significant role in chiselling out a space in which the attributes of national citizenries might be shaped by detaching them from the influence of

transnational religious communities. This was much less true in Spain and Portugal (Guiral, 2011), where there was a less clear separation between the Catholic Church and museums, and where the significant presence of Islam was a further complicating factor. Nor can the relations between museums and religions be told as part of a general process of secularization. The transfer of meanings and practices across the relations between museums and churches, and between practices of religious observance and those of museum attendance, is well-trodden ground: the translation of religious ceremonial forms into museum-going as a civic ritual (Bennett, 2006; Duncan, 1995); the influence of religious architecture on museum design;[6] and the transitions – not altogether seamless – between museums and cathedrals on tourist itineraries (Arthur, 2000) are three cases in point. When, then, Sharon Macdonald interprets museums as 'culturally demarcated spaces of concentrated meaning involving a degree of culturally regularised collective performance' (Macdonald, 2005: 210), she is right to draw our attention to the elements of magic and enchantment that such rituals involve, and to query Enlightenment conceptions of a stadial progression from magic through religion to science that informed the development of the nineteenth-century public museum – 'the "established church",' as she puts it, 'of the museum world' (213).

Nonetheless, when all of these qualifications are entered, the emergence of the social as the object and target of government that is associated with the development of modern forms of governmentality constitutes a decisive historical transformation of the relations between states and religions. Accounts of the emergence of governmental forms of power are most usually contrasted with the principles of sovereignty which lacked that crucial interest in 'the state of society, its economy, or a precise enumeration of its inhabitants (Desrosières, 1998: 27) that later informed the development of statistics as a 'state science' orientated to providing a knowledge of society. Keith Baker helpfully stresses the respects in which this conception of the social as the determining ground of existence, constituting the forces and relations that governmental activity must act on in order to improve the health and wellbeing of population, displaced the force of religious imaginaries in a different way from that implied by Anderson's account of the shift from a transnational to national forms of imagined community. The shift is rather from an order of existence imagined as emanating in its entirety – human and natural, metaphysical and physical – from a divine source to one in which a population, usually defined in terms of national boundaries, is regarded as being conditioned by the milieus which shape the relations between its inhabitants.

There are significant connections here – recalling Anderson's comments on the relations between museums, maps and censuses – with the role played by museums in organizing the national geo-spatial coordinates of modern forms of governmentality (Hannah, 2000: 1–2). The process of shifting from a religious to a governmental conception of the forces ordering the conditions of existence for populations supplied the coordinates for a new form of state-society schematization. This is a schematization in which the social is

'assumed to possess its own regularities, autonomous life, and independent existence' (Baker, 1994: 197), and it is the forces shaping these that the state must come to know if it is to act on, regulate, improve – in short, govern – the population. The consequent development of new forms of expertise providing a knowledge of social laws to guide the conduct of the state, Baker argues, repositions the place that is accorded religion as, in varying ways and to different degrees, it is invoked as a moral force that can supplement the activities of state authorities in working to secure specific ends. The service that religion is thus called on to perform is one which enlists it as an adjunct to the governmental state and brings it to bear on a society which, separated from a divine cosmology, is presumed to exist independently on its own foundations.

These developments had profound consequences for the development of museums alongside those I have already traced in which the principle of sovereignty associated with royal collections is transferred to the people nation of democratic polities. These consisted in the development of museums as reformatory apparatuses in which pastoral techniques of self-inspection and self-shaping where redeployed under the direction of a new set of disciplines associated with the development of the modern 'exhibitionary complex' (Bennett, 1988). This transformed the pastoral economy of faults and merits into a civic economy of faults and merits in which it was customs, manners, beliefs, and everyday forms of conduct – of health and hygiene, for example – that were to be transformed with a view to achieving certain social ends. The *modus operandi* of museums within the space of this state-society schematization varied according to the type of museum. But we can see something of the logic that was at work in how nineteenth-century English cultural reformers viewed the relations between art galleries, places of religious worship and the tasks of social reform. Whereas the poor had previously had access to the fine arts – 'the handmaidens of religion and gentle culture' – through churches, abbeys and cathedrals, Henry Cole warned that it was no use looking to religion as a cure for drunkenness as the 'millions of this country have ceased to be attracted by our Protestant churches and chapels, and the law cannot compel them to attend' (Cole, 1884: 368). In urging the need for public investment in art galleries as a means of filling this gap Cole assessed religion as ineffectual from the point of view of the role he assigned it as a supplementary moral force to be applied in securing social objectives.

Another way of coming at these issues is suggested by Patrick Joyce's observation regarding the central role that the church had played in the relay of sovereign forms of power. He has in mind the public readings of royal proclamations that took place in parish churches – churches which were, after the establishment of the Church of England, arms of the state (Joyce, 2013: 59). If this role fell by the wayside in the course of the eighteenth century, this was, Joyce argues, because of the close set of connections that informed the subsequent development of the liberal state as a set of mechanisms for organizing

freedom – that is, for developing 'governmental techniques that allowed, and still allow, designated governed entities (persons, places, things) to operate ostensibly on their own, without outside interference' (3) – and its role, as a 'communications state', in fostering the development of transport and communications infrastructures through which people, knowledge and things could flow freely. For if we are to understand their operations correctly, the development of museums, as mechanisms for the development of self-civilizing subjects, has to be considered in terms of their relations to such infrastructures: the development of public libraries, of national and transnational transport systems (railways and shipping lines), of gas and – later – electric lighting and, as is Joyce's particular concern here, postal systems. For it was through these connections that museums came to be related to other mechanisms for the cultivation of liberal forms of subjectivity – the relations between public lighting and the visual self-regulation of society in the new sites in which its members assembled, for example (Otter, 2008) – in ways that stitched them into the regular mechanisms of the governmental state at the same time that religions were 'sidelined' into ancillary roles.

At the same time, though, these communications systems went beyond national boundaries, locking in place mechanisms for the transnational dissemination of these techniques for the production and management of liberal subjectivities. Alison Inglis (2011) has detailed the operation of these mechanisms in the relations that bound the fledgling art fields of late nineteenth-century Australia into significant relations with a wider imperial art field centred on Victorian London. The colonial art museum; an imperial system of art teaching; and international exhibitions – these, Inglis argues, allied with changing transport technologies (the change from sail to steamships), made possible a complex set of two-way transfers between Britain and the Australian colonies that folded both into a broader transnational field. The to and fro movement of artists, casts, catalogues, and copies; the circulation throughout the British empire of art teachers trained at the South Kensington Museum; the use of the circulation department at South Kensington to organize touring art exhibitions around imperial and not just national circuits; the backward and forward transit of examination papers and of art students; the networks between British and colonial societies for promoting a knowledge of art: in all of these ways, as well as in interlocking art markets (Caruana and Clark, 2011), communications networks inserted the national cultural fields within which museums operated within broader circuits of exchange and action.

Testing tolerances

I come, finally, to my third probe concerning the role of museums in the promotion of religious tolerance as a new historical form of governmentality. Hegel, it will be recalled, conceived the art gallery as a place which uprooted works of art from their originating contexts – including those of

Christian worship. By bringing such works together in ways that allowed new meanings to be produced and made visible by exhibiting them within the same space, the art gallery made possible a secular politics of culture.[7] This conception was condensed, Helen Rees Leahy (2012: 4) reminds us, in Hegel's observation that the museum visitor need no longer kneel in front of a Madonna. In asking when and how visitors learned not to do so, she raises important questions concerning the varied means that museums have developed to shape the bodily comportments of their visitors and the limits to which they have been successful in this regard. Hegel's separation of art from religion was – as Dominique Poulot (1994) has shown – a cleaner break in theory than it was in practice, especially for untutored visitors who, unaware of the new forms of veneration that were required of them by the art gallery, continued to bend their knees before religious paintings. This is also true, albeit in ways that raise different questions, of contemporary conceptions of the art gallery space as one of cross-cultural encounters. In her discussion of the 2001 *Buddha: Radiant Awakening* exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Ien Ang recounts the case of a Chinese woman who visited the exhibition every week to lay ceremonial crystals at the feet of a Buddha statue in memory of her recently deceased mother. If this converted an art exhibition into a sacred site, an art critic provided an alternative response in insisting that the purpose of the exhibition was, or ought to be, to promote 'the glories of Buddhist art, not Buddhism' if it were not to become 'a sacred service' (Ang, 2006: 149).[8] Ang's own position is that the art museum must be able to accommodate both responses if it is to serve the needs of a culturally diverse society.

This is a telling contrast which highlights the wider set of religious affiliations that have to be taken into account in considering the relationships between the state, culture and the social associated with contemporary forms of governmentality and the role accorded museums within these. In the British case, for example, the adjudication of civic entitlements between the members of different faiths centred mainly on relations within the confines of Christianity or, more generally, the Judaic-Christian tradition for the greater part of the modern period, with the members of other faiths largely occupying the place of excluded outsiders (Saunders, 2006). The increased international mobility of labour, the development of new citizenship agendas associated with the politics of recognition, and the growth of religious affiliation have transformed this situation significantly. Lamin Sanneh (2006) usefully places this last tendency in a global perspective: in 1970, with a total world population of 3.7 billion, the Muslim population was 549 million and the Christian population 1.2 billion. By 2006 these two religions had expanded significantly, both absolutely – Muslims to 1.3 billion and Christians to 2.15 billion – and as percentages of world population (from nearly 15% to close to 22% for the Muslim population, and from a little over 32% to nearly 36% for Christians). Most of the growth of Christianity was attributable to its Charismatic versions: in 1970, the worldwide

population of Pentecostal Christians was around 72 million, by 2005 it was nearly 590 million. The significance of religious affiliation is also closely connected to ethnic identifications. In the British case, religious affiliation is much more likely to translate into active religious participation for members of minority ethnic communities than it is for white Britons: in the last census, black Christians were about three times more likely to be regular church goers than were their white counterparts, while British Muslims were six times more likely to attend a place of worship weekly than were British Christians (Bradley, 2006: 33).

The challenge that is posed for state cultural institutions in a period when faith-based divisions have become more sharply drawn is a microcosm of the challenges facing liberal-democratic polities more generally. In asking whether 'the traditional separation of church from state so carefully crafted in the West' can 'survive the renewed onslaught from religious fundamentalisms,' Grahame Thompson suggests the need for a new settlement of the relations between state and religion:

> The question becomes: 'can there be a dialogue of the gods?' Under such circumstances, peace must be composed anew. Peace is an undertaking; it must be fabricated and constructed between the parties. And the gods must be taken into the peacemaking chamber.
>
> (Thompson, 2006: 20)

What does it mean to take the gods into the art gallery or the museum more generally? And what does it mean when those gods force their way into such institutions? Ang's contention that art museums now need to function as hybrid environments in which aesthetic and religious relationships to the same objects might coexist in the same space is one response to this question. Others heighten the tensions between the claims of art, in the Western art system, to freedom of expression and autonomy in relation to both political and religious interference and the counter claim that the state has a responsibility not to exhibit art which offends the religious sensibilities of the varied populations that are now its citizens – the controversies surrounding the exhibition of Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, for example. The claims that creationism should be exhibited alongside evolutionary theories in museums just as much as in schools – and the recent opening of Creation Museums in several US States – point in a similar direction, reigniting the controversies of the 1880s when evolutionary displays were first installed in institutions like the British Museum of Natural History and the American Museum of Natural History in New York (Conn, 2006). The dialogues between museums and 'the gods' have also occasioned significant re-evaluations of those ethnocentric conceptions of religion – often based on the text-based practices of Christianity – that have shaped the relations between Western and other cultures. And questions concerning appropriate ways of exhibiting objects expropriated in colonial histories are now legion, ranging across the

exhibition of ancient Egyptian funerary remains to the appropriate narrative and scopic regimes for the exhibition (if at all) of indigenous materials in new national museums (Erikson, 2008).

Issues of these kinds relating specifically to museums inescapably connect with broader tendencies concerning the relations between religions in the public sphere. When, in Britain, Jack Straw – the Home Secretary at the time – and Prime Minister Tony Blair said that they viewed the burka as a sign of separatism and isolation, they added to the difficulties faced by Muslim women in public contexts in ways that have perhaps had no parallels in Britain since, in the aftermath of the 1829 legislation emancipating Roman Catholics from a whole series of restrictions, the reappearance in public of nuns in full habit resulted in their being criticized – and sometimes stoned or attacked – for publicly exhibiting their religious difference (Toynbee, 2006: 33). And there are other ways in which questions of difference and the public sphere are now increasingly entangled with religion. The Archbishop of Canterbury entered the foray in late 2006, taking local councils to task for substituting 'winter festival holidays' for 'Christmas', arguing that it was appropriate that the public sphere should remain Christianized in such matters. And in Glastonbury, in the autumn of 2006, an organization representing young Catholics marched through the town to reclaim it as a Christian shrine by demanding that pagan signs and rituals be excluded from the town. In their turn, pagan prisoners have urged the Home Office to recognize the pagan new year as a day of special spiritual significance for them while pagan organizations, including the Council of British Druid Orders, are now active in campaigns urging that British museums should return the remains they have collected from pre-Christian burial sites for pagan reburial (Randerson, 2007: 3). They have, in doing so, drawn on the example of indigenous peoples in both their repatriation claims but also in obliging Western museums – in Europe as well as in settler-colonial contexts – to respect indigenous conceptions of sacredness in the ways in which they store, conserve, and exhibit sacred items or withhold these from public view.

There are, of course, significant differences between the social and political logics that these examples represent. They are all, though, examples of contemporary tendencies in which the central issue that is in question concerns how far issues of cultural difference can be managed within the subordination of religion to the state-society schematism that has characterised Western forms of governmentality. This schematization was, and remains, intact in those multicultural framings of questions of cultural difference in which, as Ghassan Hage puts it, 'the state recognises the individual and their sub-national cultural identity, and it asks them to commit themselves and become attached to their multicultural nation' (Hage, 2008: 498). Where such conceptions prevail, religious and secular authorities and institutions often work hand-in-glove with one another as representatives of different faiths are invited into the museum to assist it in what has now

become its primary governmental assignment: that of contributing to the management of cultural differences through the promotion of cross-cultural and multi-faith understanding and tolerance. This is the case, for example, with Glasgow's St Mungo Museum of Religious Life in its conception of itself as 'an intervention in society, a contribution toward creating greater tolerance and mutual respect among those of different faiths, and those of none' (cit. Arthur, 2000: 12). A similar conception informs David Goa's placing of 'religiously based cultural communities' alongside other cultural communities as ones whose beliefs and values museums should bring into dialogue in discharging their 'civic vocation in "the age of pluralism"' (Goa, 2000: 52). In such conceptions religious forms of authority are invoked as a supplementary moral force operating within state organized fields of action within which the relations between religious, cultural, and religious-cum-cultural differences are to be managed.

   The situation is different with regard to those Muslim migrants who, as Hage put it, 'take their religion seriously'. For what this means, he argues, is to live in a parallel space – simultaneously transnational and transcendental – that is 'ruled by divine law and that is constantly intertwined with and yet separate from the spaces of everyday life ruled by national law' (Hage, 2008: 505). This entails a reversal of the state-society schematism that has framed Western forms of multiculturalism in that it is 'the laws of God that are the all-encompassing ones and the national laws of the host nation that are the minor ones . . . the laws of nation merely regulate the order of things within the nation while the laws of God regulate the order of things *tout court*' (505). Steven Engler has reflected usefully on these questions in discussing Pierre Bourdieu's account of the relations between the state and religion in the consecration of different forms of capital. Engler reminds us that Weber's account of the relations between different forms of religious capital that are in play in the struggles between priests (or churches) and prophets (their heterodox challengers) over the 'routinisation of charisma' within the religious field provided the model for Bourdieu's account of the role of the state in valorizing and regulating the reproduction of the different forms of capital which are in play across the range of differentiated fields (economic, social, political, cultural) that characterize advanced modern societies. In doing so, he suggests that Bourdieu overestimated the degree to which the centrality of the state had displaced religious forms of capital accumulation and consecration. Far from being anachronistic, he argues, the growth of Pentecostalism and the renewed force of fundamentalisms suggest that religion remains a more important source of consecration than Bourdieu's formulations allowed, thus calling into question 'his hierarchical subsumption of all fields under the field of power as unified by the state' (Engler, 2003: 454). This is also to call into question the subordination of religious truths – and the authorities for those truths – to the state-society schema within which Christian forms of pastoral power came to be deployed within Western forms of governmentality.

Conclusion

I indicated at the outset of this chapter that I would approach museums from the perspective of the transformative capacities engendered by the regimes of truth they participate in; and that I would consider how these regimes of truth have operated in the context of different kinds of power relations. I have thus considered the roles that different museum disciplines have played in the processes through which museums have translated the principles of sovereignty from transnational dynastic and political formations to the constantly shifting people-nations of what have proved to be remarkably mobile inter-national boundaries. I have looked also at the ways in which museums have contributed – usually indirectly, but nonetheless consequentially – to the operation of racially organized forms of biopolitical power which, both within Europe, and in the relations between European nations and their colonies, have been directed toward the elimination of specific populations: Romany peoples, Jews, and Australian Aborigines, for example. I have further considered how museums have been caught up in the entanglements between pastoral and governmental forms of power; how these entanglements have informed more recent agendas of multiculturalism; but also how the subordination of religion to governmental conceptions of the social that these largely Euro-American histories have produced are currently challenged by the resurgence of transnational forms of religious belief and authority that have either broken out of, or were not originally a party to, such conceptions.

This last set of developments unsettles the social logics that have informed the development of museum practices over the last forty or so years. While museum practice has often been more innovative and more varied, the settings governing the general directions of museums in most European polities have been shaped by the confluence of multicultural and cultural diversity agendas. Whereas the former lay out the social in the form of a set of ethnically marked cultural differences whose interrelations have to be managed from a controlling centre which occupies the place of the nation, the latter treat the members of minority ethnic groups as equivalent to the members of other groups which – defined in terms of their gender, sexuality, or disability for example – are viewed as disadvantaged relative to general population norms. The intersections between these policy settings are, in their turn, often set within broader overarching objectives orientated toward achieving greater social cohesion or social inclusion. Most of these conceptual frameworks were developed in the 1980s and 1990s and took little account of what has, particularly since 9/11 and its various aftermaths, become the more troubling challenge presented by transnational religions whose adherents sometimes refuse the place assigned them within such governmental logics. There is, for example, no specific engagement with questions of religion in the agenda-setting report *Our Creative Diversity*, begun in 1993 and published in 1995, that was prepared for UNESCO by the World

Commission on Culture and Development. There has, since 9/11, been no shortage of museum exhibitions focused specifically on questions of religious conflict or, more specifically, on an engagement with Islam. These are, no doubt, virtuous enterprises. How far they will be able to engage with those whose beliefs refuse and contest the social logics on which such activities are predicated is, however, far from clear.

Notes

1 The first edition of Anderson's book did not include the chapter on museums, maps and censuses. Initially published independently, this was subsequently added to later editions.
2 The OMI, established in 1926 under the auspices of the League of Nations International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation, was a precursor to the International Council on Museums established in 1946. See Gorgus (2003) for further details.
3 For reasons that Chris Gosden (2004) has discussed, such networks always operate both ways.
4 Eglé Rindzevičiūte (2012) usefully identifies other transnational forces in her discussion of the influence of the post-war transnational regional Baltic space on the development of museums in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. She also pertinently stresses the respects in which European museums have, from their Enlightenment histories onwards, been shaped by their positions within international scientific networks. The role of international actors like ICOM and the Council of Europe should also be mentioned. The EuNaMus reports show clearly the important role played by such actors in prompting museums in Bosnia, Herznogovenia, Slovenia and Italy to engage with questions of cultural and ethnic diversity.
5 I draw here on Chris Wingfield (2011) who argues that the global ambitions of museums in Britain at the height of empire precluded the focus on material closer to home that came only with the post-war loss of empire.
6 The cross-over between them is evident in the architectural designs of many nineteenth-century collecting institutions: the frequent use of Gothic and, particularly via Ruskin, its associations with a secularised form of medieval Christianity, for example, as well as Richard Owen's conception of the British Museum of Natural History as a 'cathedral of science' in which the Platonic archetypes of divine creation might be exhibited (Owen, 1862).
7 I draw particularly on Didier Maleuvre's (1999) discussion of Hegel here.
8 Chris Arthur (2000: 13) provides a nice counterpoint to this in noting a sign at Cologne Cathedral which warned: 'THIS IS NOT A MUSEUM'.

Part II
Machineries of modernity

My concerns here have a tighter focus, narrowing down to a more limited range of museums than those considered in Part 1: chiefly those informed by the historical sciences of geology, archaeology, the post-Darwinian life sciences and anthropology over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In examining these as 'machineries of modernity,' my purpose is to shift the ground from more familiar analyses of the relations between museums and ideologies of progress to examine how, under the influence of evolutionary thought, museums informed by these disciplines worked to organise, and to place their publics within, new coordinates of time management.

This shift of focus is effected in chapter 4, 'Museums and progress: narrative, ideology, performance,' by considering how museums engage with their visitors as embodied beings. This is done by examining how evolutionary narratives informed the organisation of museum routes and itineraries that engaged their visitors at the level of performative practice. A detailed case-study of the debates occasioned by Henry Pitt Rivers' typological method thus considers how post-Darwinian conceptions of progress were translated into forms of 'organised walking' through which the lessons of evolution were to be absorbed and enacted at the level of bodily practice. The chapter then goes on to consider the respects in which the anatomisations of sexual difference in evolutionary museums divided their publics along both racial and gendered lines. The tensions this produced are explored in detail with reference to the position of Euro-American women who were anatomised by museum scripts in such a way that they were unable to fully perform the narratives of progress in which their bodies stood for an atavistic past that their male brethren had already surpassed.

The 'pasts beyond memories' of the next chapter refer to those relatively new pasts – the term 'prehistory,' like 'the dinosaur,' made its first appearance in the 1840s – produced by the labours of geology, palaeontology, natural history, archaeology and anthropology. Through the techniques that they had developed for reading rock formations, fossilised remains, ruins, tools, technologies and ornaments as the remnants of long-past epochs, these disciplines broke the connection that had previously limited the known past

to the remembered past that had been transmitted to the present through the storage systems of writing or oral tradition. Limitless vistas of pasts going back beyond human existence, let alone memory, rapidly came into view through the once mute but, now that they had been coaxed to yield their secrets, eloquent traces they had left behind. The questions I pursue here concern the role that these pasts played in reformulating the aims and strategies of liberal government in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain in terms of both the new forms of self-governance they aimed to foster and the categories of person that such strategies encompassed. I approach these questions by considering the role played by the evolutionary museum in translating these 'pasts beyond memories' into a distinctive memory machine, an 'evolutionary accumulator' that functioned as a means for acting developmentally on the social. The nub of these matters consists in the mutation in the conception of the person – or, at least, that of the white, adult, male person – that was produced when the newly excavated deep pasts of prehistory were viewed in the light of theories of evolutionary inheritance. For these 'pasts beyond memories' were regarded as being active and effective within the present through their functioning as a layer in the formation of the modern person whose make-up was increasingly visualised archaeologically as so many strata superimposed one on top of the other.

Chapter 6, 'Pedagogic objects, clean eyes and popular instruction: on sensory regimes and museum didactics,' examines how museums operated as machineries of modernity at the level of their optical arrangements. The dominance previously accorded to the eye in the sensory regimes of the museum has been called into question in contemporary museum practices: from hands-on exhibits that promote tactile involvement through museums in which sound is dominant to avant-garde experiments in which sound and vision are misaligned with one another. My purpose in this chapter is to place these concerns in a historical perspective by looking at the processes through which the sensory regimes of museums came to differ from those of earlier cabinets of curiosity in privileging seeing as the primary form of knowing. The relations of vision and pedagogy considered are those of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century public museums in which 'speaking to the eye' was regarded as the best way of reaching the working classes: so that 'those who run may read' was how the matter was often put. Formulations of this kind were routinely repeated in the professional museum literature, especially in debates concerning the relations between labels and exhibits which, I argue, rested on a different logic in the temporal structures of evolutionary museums from those characterising the relations between words and things in the classical episteme underlying the Enlightenment museum. I also discuss how the effort that went into the organisation of a new genre of pedagogic objects was paralleled by measures taken to cleanse the eyes of the public to make them properly receptive to the lessons of the evolutionary showmen.

   The fourth and final chapter in Part 2, 'Exhibition, difference and the logic of culture,' broadens questions concerning the ways in which museums have operated as machineries of modernity by posing them in relation to a more contemporary set of museum practices. There are two main empirical foci for the discussion. The first comprises a discussion of the Edo-Tokyo Museum – Japan's first museum of urban history – and of the ways in which it seeks to displace popular customs and traditions standing in the way of modernisation by transforming them into historical representations of themselves. Functioning, in this regard, as a 'people mover' – seeking to detach the Japanese population from a past so as to move its members on to a beckoning future of modernisation – the Edo-Tokyo Museum exemplifies what I call the 'logic of culture' understood as a historically specific set of practices for shaping and transforming people through their own self activity. Aesthetic culture, in its modern Western interpretation, inscribes our identities in the tension it produces between inherited and shared customs and traditions on the one hand, and the restless striving for new forms of individual and collective self-cultivation on the other. The second empirical focus for the chapter concerns the respects in which this logic of culture informs what has been the most significant transformation of museum practices at the end of the twentieth century and the commencement of the twenty-first: the endeavour to transform museums into 'differencing machines' committed to the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, particularly across divisions that have been racialised.

4   Museums and progress
Narrative, ideology, performance*

In his account of the methods of Voltaire's Zadig, who astounded his listeners by his ability to visualize an animal from the tracks it had left behind, Thomas Huxley likened Zadig's conclusions to 'retrospective prophecies' (Huxley, 1882: 132). Anticipating the objection that this might seem a contradiction in terms, Huxley argued that prophetic reasoning rests on the same procedures whether they be applied retrospectively or prospectively. For 'the essence of the prophetic operation', as he put it, 'does not lie in its backward or forward relation to the course of time, but in the fact that it is the apprehension of that which lies out of the sphere of immediate knowledge; the seeing of that which to the natural sense of the seer is invisible' (132). Between the two cases, then, the process remains the same; it is only the relation to time that is altered.

Yet, from the point of view of the various historical sciences in which, over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this method was applied, the relation to time was crucial. In history, geology, archaeology, and palaeontology, Carlo Ginzburg argues, 'Zadig's method' – 'that is, the making of retrospective predictions' – predominated. Where causes cannot be repeated, as Ginzburg puts it, 'there is no alternative but to infer them from their effects' (Ginzburg, 1980: 23). However, in translating 'Zadig's method' into the 'conjectural paradigm' which he argues governs the procedures of the historical sciences, Ginzburg loses something of the stress which Huxley had placed on the visualizing capacities of those sciences. 'Any scene from deep time,' as Martin Rudwick puts it, 'embodies a fundamental problem: it must make visible what is really invisible. It must give us the illusion that we are witnesses to a scene that we cannot really see; more precisely, it must make us "virtual witnesses" to a scene that vanished long before there were any human beings to see it' (Rudwick, 1992: 1).

Rudwick's concern here is with the formation of the modern disciplines of prehistory, perhaps the most crucial of which was palaeontology in view of its role in connecting geology and natural history and so mediating those

narratives concerned with the history of the earth and those telling of the history of life on earth. It is, accordingly, to Cuvier's work that he looks for a model of the new procedures which came to characterize these disciplines. In permitting the reconstruction of extinct forms of life on the basis of their anatomical remains, Cuvier had made it possible for a whole new set of objects to be drawn into the sphere of visibility. 'The establishment of the reality of extinction, notably by Cuvier,' Rudwick argues, 'provided for the first time the raw material for composing illustrations that would depict scenes significantly, and interestingly, different from scenes of even the most exotic parts of the present world' (Rudwick, 1992: 56).

In describing Zadig's method, Huxley proposes a neologism – 'would that there were such a word as "backteller!"' – as the best way of describing the procedures of 'the retrospective prophet' who 'affirms that so many hours or years ago, such and such things were to be seen' (Huxley, 1882: 133). By the time Huxley published his essay in *Science and Culture*, perhaps the most influential 'backteller' of all – Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes – was in the process of establishing his reputation in the pages of *The Strand* magazine. As a narrative form constructed around the provision of a trail of clues and their delayed decipherment, the methods of detective fiction are – as Ginzburg has argued – similar to those of the sciences governed by the conjectural paradigm. In a good deal of the discussion of the genre, the emphasis has fallen on the similarities between Holmes's methods and those of the medical sciences (see Sebeok and Umiker-Sebeok, 1983). But its relations to the historical sciences are also clear. Like the palaeontologist, the detective must reconstruct a past event – the crime – on the basis of its remnants; and, just as for the palaeontologist, bones may well be 'all that remains' for this purpose. 'A detective policeman', as Huxley put the point, 'discovers a burglar from the marks made by his shoe, by a mental process identical with that by which Cuvier restored the extinct animals of Montmartre from fragments of their bones' (Huxley, 1895: 45–6).

Yet if the detective is a 'backteller' and if, as Boris Eichenbaum argued, the detective story is governed by the art of backward construction, the effect of this on the reader is, ideally, to propel him or her through the narrative with as much expedition as possible, driven by an epistemophelia that is unquenchable until the reader knows 'whodunit' (see Eichenbaum, 1971). The narrative machinery of detective fiction may be constantly backward-glancing as it infers causes from their effects and makes visible the crime and its perpetrator from the traces he or she has left behind, but it constantly moves the reader forward.

The museum was another 'backteller', a narrative machinery, with similar properties. In the newly fashioned deep-times of geology, archaeology and palaeontology, new objects of knowledge were ushered forth into the sphere of scientific visibility. The museum conferred a public visibility on these objects of knowledge. Of course, it was not alone in doing so: by the 1830s, imaginative pictorial reconstructions of prehistoric forms and scenes

of life were widely available. But it was in the museum and its sibling, the exhibition, that these new pasts were made visible in the form of reconstructions based on their artefactual or osteological remains.[1] It was also in the museum that these new pasts were organized into a narrative machinery through which, by means of the techniques of backward construction, they linked together in sequences leading from the beginnings of time to the present.

But what are we to make of this? The answer easiest to hand suggests that, as the influence of evolutionary thought increased, museums came increasingly to embody or instantiate ideologies of progress which, in enlisting their visitors as 'progressive subjects' in the sense of assigning them a place and an identity in relation to the processes of progress's ongoing advancement, also occluded a true understanding of their relations to the conditions of their social existence. This would be to construe the arrangements of objects within museums as the effect of a mental structure which achieves its influence on the individual through the unconscious effects of recognition and misrecognition to which it gives rise. This view devalues the effects of the museum's own specific materiality and the organization of its practices. It sees the artefactual field the museum constructs as merely one among many possible means or occasions through which a particular mental structure impinges on the field of subjectivity, implying that the effects of that structure are the same whatever the means used to realize it. A better way of looking at the matter, I want to suggest, is to view the narrative machinery of the museum as providing a context for a performance that was simultaneously bodily and mental (and in ways which question the terms of such a duality) inasmuch as the evolutionary narratives it instantiated were realized spatially in the form of routes that the visitor was expected – and often obliged – to complete.

While, empirically, the difference between these two perspectives might seem slight, the theoretical issues at stake are considerable. Does culture work to secure its influence over forms of thought and behaviour through the operation of mental (representational) structures whose constitution is viewed as invariant across the different fields of their application? Or is culture better viewed as an assemblage of technologies which shape forms of thought and behaviour in ways that are dependent on the apparatus-like qualities of their mechanisms? Behind these differences, of course, are different views of the individual: as the invariant substratum of all thought and experience, that is, the individual as subject, or the individual as the artefact of historically differentiated techniques of person formation.

Organised walking as evolutionary practice

Viewed as a 'backteller', I have argued, the museum bestows a socially coded visibility on the various pasts it organizes. It materially instantiates 'the retrospective prophecies' of the various sciences of history and prehistory,

embodying them in linked chains of events – natural and human – which press ever-forward to the present point of civilization which is both their culmination and the point from which these connected sequences are made retrospectively intelligible. The degree to which this narrative machinery was observable in the design and layout of particular museums was variable. This is partly because few nineteenth-century museum collections were constructed *ab novo* and many, accordingly, still bore the traces of earlier systems of classification. Equally important, the specialization of museum types meant that individual museums usually focused on a particular sequence within the museum's overall narrative machinery, albeit that the intelligibility of that sequence depended on its being viewed in the light of the sequences associated with other museum types. The relations between the times represented by these sequences, that is to say, were ones of mutual implication.

This is clear from the manner in which, towards the end of the century, George Brown Goode envisaged the relations between natural history museums, anthropology museums, history museums and museums of art. Here is what he has to say about the natural history museum:

> The Museum of Natural History is the depository for objects which illustrate the forces and phenomena of nature – the named units included within the three kingdoms, animal, vegetable and mineral, – and whatever illustrates their origin in time (or phylogeny), their individual origin, development, growth, function, structure, and geographical distribution, past and present: also their relation to each other, and their influence upon the structure of the earth and the phenomena observed upon it!
>
> (Goode, 1896: 156)

The narratives of natural history connect with those of human history in view of the fact that 'Museums of Natural History and Anthropology meet on common ground in Man', the former usually treating 'of man in his relations to other animals, the latter of man in his relations to other men' (Goode, 1896: 156). The museum of anthropology, Goode then argues, 'includes such objects as illustrate the natural history of Man, his classification in races and tribes, his geographical distribution, past and present, and the origin, history and methods of his arts, industries, customs and opinions, particularly among primitive and semi-civilised peoples' (155). The narratives of archaeology are called on to bridge the gap between the fields of anthropology and history with the museum of anthropology extending its concerns to include prehistoric archaeology while the history museum extends its concerns backwards to include those of historic archaeology. As for the museum of history proper, its purpose is to preserve 'those material objects which are associated with events in the history of individuals, nations

or races, or which illustrate their condition at different periods in their national life' (155). The museum of art, finally, is like the history museum but with a specialist orientation. For 'the greater art collections illustrate, in a manner peculiarly their own, not only the successive phases in the intellectual progress of the civilised races of man, their sentiments, passions and morals, but also their habits and customs, their dress, implements and the minor accessories of their culture often not otherwise recorded' (154).

Each museum type, then, is like a chapter within a longer story, pressing towards an end point which is simultaneously the point at which the next chapter commences. Like the reader in a detective novel, it is towards this end point that the visitor's activity is directed. This is not simply a matter of representation. To the contrary, for the visitor, reaching the point at which the museum's narrative culminates is a matter of doing as much as of seeing. The narrative machinery of the museum's 'backtelling' took the form of an itinerary whose completion was experienced as a task requiring urgency and expedition. Alfred Wallace thus complained that casual visitors at natural history museums often learned less than they might because, he observed, they seemed to find it almost impossible 'to avoid the desire of continually going on to see what comes next' (Wallace, 1869: 250).

This aspect of the museum's narrative machinery was rarely wholly visible in any particular institution. Just as their collections were frequently assembled from earlier ones, so many of the buildings in which the new public museums were housed were not built specifically for that purpose. Marcin Fabianski's survey of the history of museum architecture suggests that it was not until the late eighteenth century that the museum came to be regarded as a specific cultural institution in need of a distinctive architecture of its own (see Fabianski, 1990). Prior to this period, valued collections had typically been housed in buildings which were designed for a variety of learned, scientific or artistic pursuits and derived their main architectural principles from the traditional forms associated with those pursuits. Even where buildings were designed specifically with a museum function in view, this often involved a combination of functional and traditional elements. Schinkel's Altes Museum, Anthony Vidler thus notes, rested on a combination of two principles which simultaneously historicized art and eternalized it: 'the sequence of rooms en suite characteristic of the palace turned museum and responding to the chronological exhibition of the objects; and the temple of memory or Pantheon, emblem of Rome but also of the absolute suprahistorical nature of aesthetic quality, a reminder of the nature of "art" in the historical work of art' (Vidler, 1992: 92).

Where museums were custom built, however, the commitment to provide the visitor with a linear route within which an evolutionary itinerary might be accomplished was a strong one. Its continuing influence in the twentieth century is evident in the plan Parr proposed for a natural history museum that would, among other things, offer the 'open progression of a straight

line representative of the historical derivation of the form and properties of the individual objects':

> The visitor would enter the museum at the narrow end of a long hall dedicated to a quasi-historical presentation of the organisation of nature. Some attempt would be made to illustrate the structure of matter and the behaviour of its elementary components. A selected exhibit of naturally pure elements and of the isolated pure compounds of such elements, which we call minerals, would follow, with an exposition of their manner of formation and transformation. From mineralogy, we would proceed to the formation, composition, and metamorphosis of rocks. . . . Having surveyed the materials of the earth, one would turn to a consideration of the geo-physical forces acting with and upon these substances, the mechanisms by which they operate, and the results which they produce. . . . Our next step would carry us to the simplest and most primitive manifestations of life, and, continuing down to the end of the hall, we would finally come to man's place at the end of the sequence.
>
> (Parr, 1959: 15)

In her study of Walter Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk*, Susan Buck-Morss quotes a passage from Dolf Sternberger's *Panorama* in which a pictorial popularization of Darwin's theory of evolution comprising a series of sequentially ordered facial types depicting the 'natural progression' from ape to man, was said to function as a 'panorama of evolution' which organized the relations between prehuman and human history and, within the latter, the relations between different races in such a way that 'the eye and the mind's eye can slide unhindered, up and down, back and forth, across the pictures as they themselves "evolve"' (Buck-Morss, 1990: 67). In a similar way, the natural history museum envisaged by Parr constructed a path that the visitor can retrace in following the stages through which the exhibits evolve from inanimate matter to simple and, later, higher forms of life.

Similar principles and concerns were evident in the proposal Henry Pitt Rivers put to the British Association in 1888 for an anthropological rotunda as a form particularly suited to evolutionary arrangements of anthropological exhibits. Modelled, in part, on William Flower's proposals for natural history displays and advanced as an alternative to geographical display principles,[2] the anthropological rotunda was to give a spatial realization to the relationship between progress and differentiation:

> The concentric circles of a circular building adapt themselves, by their size and position, for the exhibition of the expanding varieties of an evolutionary arrangement. In the innermost circle I would place the implements and other relics of the Palaeolithic period, leaving a spot in the actual centre for the relics of tertiary man, when he is discovered. The simple forms of the Palaeolithic period would require no larger

space than the smallest circle would be capable of affording. Next in order would come the Neolithic Age, the increased varieties of which would fill a larger circle. In the Bronze Age a still larger circle would be required. In the early Iron Age, the increased number of forms would require an increased area; mediaeval antiquities would follow, and so on, until the outer circle of all would contain specimens of such modern arts as could be placed in continuity with those of antiquity.

(Pitt Rivers, 1891: 117)

Pitt Rivers was attracted to this arrangement by the prospect it offered of making the visitor more self-reliant by equipping him (or – but only as an afterthought – her) with the means of becoming more auto-didactic. The meaning of every object – which, for Pitt Rivers, meant its place within a sequence – was both readily visible and capable of being learned simply by following its tracks:

By such an arrangement, the most uninstructed student would have no occasion to ask the history of any object he might be studying: he would simply have to observe its distance from the centre of the building, and to trace like forms continuously to their origin.

(Pitt Rivers, 1891: 117)[3]

How important it was to these conceptions that a museum's message should be capable of being realized or recapitulated in and through the physical activity of the visitor is evident from F.W. Rudler's proposal for making the gradualism of human evolution more perfectly performable. The minutes of the discussion following the presentation of Pitt Rivers's paper at the British Association record Rudler's perceptions of the performative limitations of the anthropological rotunda and of the means by which they might be overcome:

Looking at the central circle representing the palaeolithic period, it occurred to him that in walking round it, being a closed circle, one would never make any progress. You passed by a jump to the next circle, representing the neolithic, and though no doubt a great gap appeared between the two periods, that only arose from our ignorance. It seemed to him that a continuous spiral would, in some degree, be a better arrangement than a series of circles.

(Pitt Rivers, 1891: 122)

Patrick Geddes proposed a similar conception as a part of his proposals for redesigning the urban space of Dunfermline in accordance with evolutionary principles. He suggested that the city should include a series of linked historical sites depicting its history from the medieval to the modern period and, at each stage, connecting that history to broader tendencies of evolutionary development. As the last of these sites, a building devoted to Dunfermline's

nineteenth-century history was to culminate in a Stair of Spiral Evolution giving access to a Tower of Outlook 'from which we may look back to the old historic city and forward into its future' (Geddes, 1904: 161).

A couple of contrasts will help make the point I'm after here. The first is offered by the way in which the present arrangement of the Musée Carnavalet in Paris organizes the visitor's route in the form of a ruptured narrative which contrasts tellingly with the smooth and continuous evolutionary narratives that Pitt Rivers judged to be essential to the museum's pedagogic mission. Portraying a history of Paris and its people, the Musée Carnavalet consists of a range of different types of artefacts. Most conspicuously, the city's history is evoked through paintings which are contemporaneous with the events they depict. Since they belong to the period to which they refer and are portrayed as active historical forces within that period, these paintings serve both as a part of history and as its representations.[4] The paintings are accompanied by a range of artefacts whose historicality exhibits similar hybrid qualities. In some cases, the objects displayed have been selected because of their association with particular historical events: the keys to the Bastille, for example. In other cases, the function of the objects is to display the marks of history; they bear its impress as a script – in the form of inspirational revolutionary messages on a card-table, for example – through which the past is made decipherable.

Within each room, then, an assembly of paintings and other historical artefacts accompany the elaborate accounts which summarize the main events of the period concerned and explain their relations to one another as well as their connections to those of earlier or later periods. In this way, the museum functions as an ensemble of narrative elements which the visitor – following the arrows which point out how to proceed through the rooms in their proper sequence – is able to rehearse. Since this rehearsal takes place amidst the artefactual trappings of the real, it validates the familiar narratives of French nationhood. These typically contain a moment of interruption – the revolution – which is given a performative dimension. In moving from the prerevolutionary period to that of the revolution, the visitor must pass from one building (the Hôtel Carnavalet) to another (the Hôtel Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau) via a gallery which, while connecting these two times, serves also to separate them and so also to introduce an element of discontinuity into the visitor's itinerary.

My second example is derived from Lee Rust Brown's discussion of the ways in which, in the 1830s, the layout of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris provided a pedestrian complement to, and realization of, the system of classification governing the arrangement of exhibits in the Muséum d'histoire naturelle. Within the museum itself, Brown argues, specimens were displayed in a manner calculated to make visible the system of classes which governed their arrangement:

> Through the techniques of its various exhibition media, invisible forms of classification attained democratic visibility. Wall cases, display tables,

plant beds, groups of zoo cages, the very books in the library – these devices framed particular collocations of specimens, and so worked like transparent windows through which the visitor could 'see' families, orders, and classes.

(Brown, 1992: 64)

This was especially true of the gallery of comparative anatomy which, under Cuvier's direction, had, since its opening in 1806, exploded nature so as to reveal the inner principles of its organization. The arrangement of skeletons in classes was accompanied by preserved specimens, their bodies splayed open to reveal the organs and systems which provided the hidden basis for their external resemblances and so also the key to their taxonomic groupings. 'Cuvier's galleries', as Dorinda Outram usefully puts it 'were full of objects to be looked not at, but *into*', their portrayal of 'the unspoiled beauties and intricate organisation of nature' allowing the museum to function as an 'accessible utopia', a visualization of nature's order and plenitude that could serve as a refuge from the turmoils of revolution (Outram, 1984: 176, 184).

Similarly, the layout of the walkways in the botanical gardens were, Brown argues, 'technical devices of particular importance' in prescribing a route through which visitors would, in passing from plant to plant in the orders of their resemblances to one another, both see and perform the principles of classification underlying pre-evolutionary natural history. Strolling through the walkways and passing from one flower-bed to the next, the visitor could both move and read from 'family to family, order to order, class to class' in a form of exercising that was, constitutively, both mental and physical. 'These were media', Brown says of the walkways, 'for both physical and intellectual transit: they themselves were "clear," empty of visible forms; by means of them one walked through the plant kingdom just as one would "think through the steps" of a classificatory arrangement of information' (Brown, 1992: 70).

Here, then, is an exhibitionary environment that is simultaneously a performative one; an environment that makes the principles governing it clear by and through the itinerary it organizes. It was an environment, however, which, while not lacking a temporal dimension, did not organize time in the form of irreversible succession. 'The "history" in natural history', as Brown puts it, 'described nature as it presently was – and doing so, measured nature's fall and recovery (or, more precisely, nature's disintegration and reintegration) by reference to the ideal of a total structure, an ideal that found provisional representation in catalogues, cabinets, and gardens' (Brown, 1992: 77). Moreover, while this narrative organized and framed the overall visiting experience, it did not inform the visitor's itinerary where the synchronic structures of nature's present organization held sway.

In the later decades of the nineteenth century, by contrast, the visitor's pathway through most museums came to be governed by the irreversible succession of evolutionary series. Where this was not so, museums were

urged to rearrange themselves so as to achieve this effect.[5] If the essential methodological innovations in nineteenth-century geology, biology and anthropology consisted in their temporalisation of spatial differences, the museum's accomplishment was to convert this temporalisation into a spatial arrangement. William Whewell appreciated this aspect of the museum's functioning when he remarked, apropos the Great Exhibition, that it had allowed 'the infancy of nations, their youth, their middle age, and their maturity' to be presented simultaneously, adding that, thereby, 'by annihilating the space which separates different nations, we produce a spectacle in which is also annihilated the time which separates one stage of a nation's progress from another' (Whewell, cited in Stocking, 1987: 5–6). In fact, the museum, rather than annihilating time, compresses it so as make it both visible and performable. The museum, as 'backteller', was characterized by its capacity to bring together, within the same space, a number of different times and to arrange them in the form of a path whose direction might be traversed in the course of an afternoon. The museum visit thus functioned and was experienced as a form of organized walking through evolutionary time.

Progress and its performances

To summarize, the superimposition of the 'backtelling' structure of evolutionary narratives on to the spatial arrangements of the museum allowed the museum – in its canonical late-nineteenth-century form – to move the visitor forward through an artefactual environment in which the objects displayed and the order of their relations to one another allowed them to serve as props for a performance in which a progressive, civilizing relationship to the self might be formed and worked upon. However, the museum was neither the only cultural space in which evolutionary narratives of progress might be performed, nor was it the only way in which such performances might be conducted.

The relaxed art of urban strolling associated with the figure of the *flâneur*, and the incorporation of spaces in which this practice might flourish in the midway zones of international exhibitions, provides a convenient point of contrast. The new urban spaces in which this art had initially developed and flourished – principally the arcade through its provision of a covered walkway removed from the disturbance of traffic – were developed over roughly the same period as the museum and made use of related architectural principles (see Geist, 1983). The arcade, however, encouraged the distracted gaze of a detached stroller proceeding at his or her own pace with a freedom to change direction at will. The museum, by contrast, enjoined the visitor to comply with a programme of organized walking which transformed any tendency to gaze into a highly directed and sequentialized practice of looking. The differences between these two practices, Meg Armstrong has suggested, were noticeably foregrounded in the contrast between the official exhibition areas of nineteenth-century American exhibitions and the midways which

accompanied them (Armstrong, 1992–3). For while both areas were governed by rhetorics of progress, these rhetorics often differed significantly, especially so far as their dispositions towards the visitors were concerned.

Focusing particularly on the displays of 'primitive peoples', Armstrong argues that, while these were usually arranged in accordance with evolutionary principles of classification within the official exhibition areas, the effect aimed for on the midways was often much less 'scientific'. Here, rather, the display of 'other peoples' was orientated to achieving the effect of 'a jumble of foreignness' in which such peoples represented a generalized form of backwardness in relation to the metropolitan powers rather than a stage in an evolutionary sequence. This was, no doubt, mainly attributable to the fact that, throughout the nineteenth century and, indeed, into our own, popular forms of showmanship have continued to draw on the principles of the cabinet of curiosities either in preference to or in combination with those of the museum. It is also true that this evocation of an undifferentiated form of backwardness in the form of an exoticized other was a way of making progress visible and performable. Compared with the linear direction of the museum's evolutionary sequences, this was more in tune with the arts of urban strolling which typically predominated in the midways. For the 'eyes of the Midway', as Curtis Hinsley puts it, 'are those of the *flâneur*, the stroller through the street arcade of human differences, whose experience is not the holistic, integrated ideal of the anthropologist but the segmented, seriatim fleetingness of the modern tourist "just passing through"' (Hinsley, 1991: 356).

Steven Mullaney also suggests a useful light in which the colonial villages that were often constructed in association with international exhibitions might be viewed. Etymologically, Mullaney argues, the term 'exhibition' once referred 'to the unveiling of a sacrificial offering – to the exposure of a victim, placed on public view for a time preliminary to the final rites that would, after a full and even indulgent display, remove the victim from that view' (Mullaney, 1983: 53). Applying this perspective to what he variously calls the 'consummate performance' or 'rehearsal' of other cultures that was frequently associated with public dramaturgies of power in the late Renaissance period, Mullaney views such events as a symbolic complement to the processes through which non-European peoples and territories were colonized. The occasion on which he dwells most is that of Henry II's royal entry into Rouen in 1550. Two Brazilian villages, which had been reconstructed on the outskirts of the town and partially populated with Tabbagerres and Toupinaboux Indians, were ceremoniously destroyed through mock battles which saw both villages burned to ashes. What was most conspicuously expended here, Mullaney argues, was not the financial resources required to reconstruct and then spectacularly destroy the Brazilian villages – although, clearly this formed part of the politics of ostentatious display through which royal power was symbolized – so much as 'an alien culture itself' (Mullaney, 1983: 48). The same was true of the colonial villages which, in the later

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, became a more or less staple feature of international exhibitions. Constructed with just as much loving attention to detail and expensive care for verisimilitude as had been the case at Rouen, these temporary structures allowed the visitor to take part in a performance – in this case, street theatre – in which detailed reconstructions and re-enactments of other cultures served as a complement to their being consumed – and so, also used up and annihilated – within and by the culture that staged them. In the colonial village, the peoples on display were sacrificial offerings to the processes of colonization and modernization which, it was envisaged, would eventually remove them entirely from view. Their exhibition was a preliminary to the final rites that would see their erasure from the stage of world history.

My concern here, however, is less with the variety of ways in which the rhetorics or narratives of progress provided the scripts for a range of social performances than with the attention that has to be paid to the necessarily embodied nature of the visitor's activity once the performative aspects of exhibitionary institutions are accorded due recognition. This concern has both theoretical and political aspects. Ian Hunter addresses the theoretical issues in his elaboration of the significance of Marcel Mauss's concern with 'techniques of the body' and the ways in which these need to be seen as interacting with 'techniques of the self' in which 'bodily' and 'mental' practices interact as the *recto* and *verso* of specific forms of life (see Hunter, 1993). The implication of this argument is that there cannot be any general form of the mind-body relation of the kind that modern Western philosophy posits and then seeks to find. Rather, persons are seen as being formed through particular assemblages of mind and body techniques – particular ways of working on and shaping bodily and mental capacities – which are made available to them via the array of cultural institutions, or technologies, characterizing the societies in which they live.

Viewed in this light, conceptions of the mind and body as separated entities emerge not as a foundational reality for and of all experience but as a historical product of particular ways of dividing up the sphere of the person so as to render it amenable to variable practices of self-formation. The various cultural technologies comprising 'the exhibitionary complex' have, according to Timothy Mitchell, played a crucial role in the formation and dissemination of precisely such a conception of the person (see Mitchell, 1988). Drawing on Foucault's arguments concerning the role which systems of truth play in the organization and dissemination of relations of power, Mitchell sees in nineteenth-century exhibitionary institutions a particular 'machinery of truth' whose principal characteristic is the division between the world and its representations which such institutions establish and which is, in turn, a condition of their intelligibility. This introduction of a rift into the relations between the world of socio-material relations and their conceptual plan – that is, their representation in the form of a museum or exhibition – allowed such plans to function as parts of regulative

technologies aimed at refashioning the world of socio-material relations in their own image. A part of the surface on which such technologies operated consisted in the parallel 'division of the political subject into an external body and a mental interior' (Mitchell, 1988: 176). This conception of the person as 'a thing of two parts' (100) allowed the development of regulative strategies aimed at both body and mind where regulating the environments in which bodies were located was envisioned as a means of promoting inner-directed practices of self-interrogation and self-shaping.

The installation of evolutionary narratives within museums resulted in precisely such a mind-body technology, furnishing an environment in which both body and soul might be constituted as the targets of practices of self-improvement aimed at modernizing the individual, bringing (and I use the term advisedly) him more into line with the high point of civilization's advance. But this demand or possibility was one that only visitors with the right type of bodies could respond to appropriately. Carole Pateman has shown how the assumption, within social contract theory, that the individual should be regarded as a disembodied subject with equal rights served to mask the mandatory requirement that only those with male bodies could be party to those imaginary contracts whereby the social order was founded and perpetuated (see Pateman, 1989). An appreciation of the necessarily embodied nature of the visitor's experience is important for much the same sorts of reasons. For the degree to which visitors could comply with or respond positively to the museum's performative regimen depended very much on both the colour and gender of their bodies.

Selective affinities

About halfway through the Biological Anthropological Gallery at the Musée de l'homme in Paris, a display depicts the evolution of the crania of *homo sapiens* over the past 100,000 years. As one approaches the end of the series, the crania give way to, first, in the penultimate spot, a photograph of René Descartes and, at the end, in the space where the customary narrative of such displays lead the visitor to expect a cranium representing the most evolved type of the species, a television monitor. As the visitor looks closer he or she finds that the monitor contains a picture of an exhibition plinth on which his or her own image now rests as the crowning glory of the evolutionary sequence that has just been reviewed.

The display nicely plays with and parodies the historicized narcissism to which such evolutionary displays give rise. At the same time it makes an important political statement in organizing the terminal position of human evolution so that it can be occupied by everyone, and on an equal footing, irrespective of their race, gender or nationality. In the nineteenth century, by contrast, the occupancy of such positions was typically reserved for preferred social types – notably, the European male – whilst other types of humans, barred from this position, were assigned to an earlier stage in the

evolutionary process. In the cranial displays emerging out of the evolutionary assumptions of late-nineteenth-century craniology, women were assigned a place a few steps behind men, and colonized black peoples a place several leagues behind white Europeans, intermediate stages within evolutionary narratives which they were not yet – and, in some formulations, perhaps never would – be able to complete.

Gillian Beer has suggested that the significance of Darwin's work in the history of scientific thought was that of dethroning man-centred narratives of history. Darwin had shown, she argues, 'that it was possible to have plot without man – both plot previous to man and plot even now regardless of him' (Beer,1983: 21). Georges Canguilhem makes a similar point when he says that Darwin obliged man 'to take his place as a subject in a kingdom, the animal kingdom, of which he had previously posed as monarch by divine right' (Canguilhem, 1988: 104). Yet if this was so, Beer argues, the subject-less plot of natural selection prompted a compensatory narrative of 'growth, ascent, and development towards complexity . . . a new form of quest myth, promising continuing exploration and creating the future as a prize'. In place of man's fall from an originary state of perfection in the Garden of Eden, human perfection was relocated into the future as something to be striven for and achieved in ascending stages where, as Beer puts it, ascent 'was also flight – a flight from the primitive and the barbaric which could never quite be left behind' (Beer, 1983: 127–8).

Evolutionary theory prompted a veritable swarming of narratives, and not all of them new ones. Whatever their fate within the scientific community, the teleological and intentional narratives deriving from Lamarckian evolutionary conceptions retained their influence throughout the century. Similarly, especially in Britain, an effective currency allowing for an exchange between evolutionary thought and Christianity was established in which 'savages' were to be both saved and civilized. Many narratives which could not be reconciled with Darwinism continued to be effectively deployed in a wide range of social ideologies. Polygenetic conceptions, in which black and white peoples are held to have developed from separate origins and are destined to continue along separate evolutionary paths, remained influential. This was especially true of the United States where, in the South, the message that 'the Negro' could never expect to jump the gap between the black and white paths of evolution proved a palatable solace in the face of black emancipation. Robert Rydell (1984) has traced the influence of such conceptions on the exhibitions held in the southern states of America in the late nineteenth century while, in the museum world, they governed the initial arrangement of the collections at the Museum of Comparative Anatomy which Louis Agassiz – the most significant intellectual advocate of polygenetic conceptions – established at Harvard (see Gould, 1981; Lurie, 1960).

In short, Darwinian thought articulated with contemporary social and political philosophies in complex and varied ways. It was not, and in the nineteenth century never became, the only source of evolutionary narratives.

There were other narratives, some of which insisted that the story of human evolution could only be satisfactorily narrated if it were divided into (at least) two stories. The point is worth making if only because the degree of success with which Darwinism was articulated to conservative variants of social evolutionist and proto-eugenicist thought in the late nineteenth century can often eclipse the respects in which it could be and, initially was, connected to progressive currents of social reform. Many of those who were most influential in translating Darwinian thought into an applied social philosophy – Huxley and Spencer, for example – were from a middle-class, dissenting background. In organizational terms, Darwin's work played a crucial role in the affairs of the Ethnological Society. By the 1860s, this Society had recruited the support of most liberal and reforming intellectuals and developed its programme in specific critique of the rabidly racist and virulently sexist conceptions which, under the leadership of James Hunt, characterized the rival Anthropological Society.[6]

Georges Canguilhem gives an inkling as to why this should have been so when he remarks that, before Darwin, 'living things were thought to be confined to their preordained ecological niche on pain of death' (Canguilhem, 1988: 104). Clearly, Canguilhem has Cuvier's doctrine of the fixity of species and the impossibility of transformism – that is, of one form of life gradually evolving into another – in mind here. The implications of such conceptions when carried into the social realm, however, were equally clear. Cuvier, arguing that there were 'certain intrinsic causes which seem to arrest the progress of certain races, even in the most favourable circumstances' (cited in Stocking, 1968b: 35), viewed black races as never having progressed beyond barbarism and – more important to my present concerns – as never likely to do so. If, in Cuvier's system, all living things were confined to their ecological niche, then so also, when it came to divisions within human life, the place that different peoples occupied within racial hierarchies seemed preordained and unchangeable. It is not surprising, therefore, that Cuvier's work remained important in providing a scientific basis for polygenetic conceptions. Such conceptions, when translated into social programmes, proved explicitly anti-reformist. As Stephen Jay Gould notes of Louis Agassiz, who had been a student and disciple of Cuvier's, his polygenetic conceptions, when translated into social policy, aimed to train different races so that they might stay in the separate niches they already occupied: 'train blacks in hand work, whites in mind work' (Gould, 1981: 47).

For the liberal and reforming currents in nineteenth-century thought, then, the attraction of Darwin's thought was that, in loosening up the fixity of species by allowing that one form of life might evolve into a higher one, it made the boundaries between them more permeable. Darwinism, in one appropriation, provided a way of thinking of nature which, when applied to the social body, allowed the structure of social relations to be mapped in ways conducive to reforming programmes intended to improve and civilize populations, to lift them through the ranks. At the same time,

however, in supplying the process of evolution with a conservative mechanism (natural selection) Darwin's thought allowed evolutionary theory to be detached from the radical associations it had enjoyed in the 1830s and 1840s when the influence of Lamarck's and Geoffroy's evolutionary conceptions – which provided for no such restraining mechanism – had been paramount (see Desmond, 1989). This difference was crucial in allowing evolutionary thought to be disconnected from radical programmes aimed at dismantling existing social hierarchies and to be adapted to gradualist schemas of social reform.

Zygmunt Bauman helps clarify the connections I have in mind here. In his *Intimations of Postmodernity* (1992), Bauman discusses the respects in which evolutionary thought allowed a revival of Enlightenment conceptions of human perfectibility. Precisely because of their secular nature – because they reflected an order that was to be made rather than one divinely pre-given – such conceptions allowed social life to be thought of as an object of techniques oriented to the progressive perfectibility of forms of thought, conduct and social interrelation. Viewed in this light, Bauman argues, there is an important connection between the reformist project of culture, in its nineteenth-century sense, and evolutionary narratives of progress. Earlier hierarchical rankings of forms of human life had not given rise to the possibility that populations might be inducted into forms of self-improvement that would help them to move up and through such hierarchies. The only possibility was that individuals might achieve the standards appropriate to their given place in such hierarchies. By contrast, the revised forms of ranking human life made possible by evolutionary theory gave rise to the possibility that, in principle, all populations might be inscribed within a programme of progressive self-improvement. Stocking's comments point in a similar direction when he identifies the similarities between Edward Burnett Tylor's view of culture and Arnold's conception of culture as a norm of perfection which, disseminated through the population, might help inculcate practices of self-improvement. For Tylor, the point of arranging human and cultural evolutionary series in parallel with, or emerging out of, natural ones was not to keep populations within the places they occupied within such series but, where possible (a caveat that excluded 'primitives'), to move them through them so that they might draw more closely towards an ever-moving and evolving norm of human development. 'The science of culture', as Tylor put it, 'is essentially a reformer's science' (cited in Stocking, 1968b: 82). The tenets of evolutionary theory, in their Darwinian formulation, could lend themselves to liberal and reformist currents of social thought and policy in providing a grid through which the field of social relations could be so laid out so that cultural strategies might be developed which aimed at equipping the whole population with means of self-improvement through which they might ascend through the ranks, thus carrying the whole of society forwards and upwards – but only slowly and gradually, step by step. Any other way of proceeding – and this was the delicate political balancing act that Darwin allowed reforming opinion to perform – by attempting to push

progress forward in a radical or revolutionary rush, would be to fly in the face of nature.

Although not the only social philosophy to articulate evolutionary thought to its purposes, this reformist articulation of evolutionary theory influenced the ways in which late-nineteenth-century public museums were viewed as potential instruments for cultural reform. It also shaped the operation of the 'backtelling' structure of the museum's narrative machinery such that its address privileged men over women and white Europeans over black and colonized peoples. The devices which rendered human progress into a performable narrative within the museum entailed that only some humans and not others could recognize themselves as fully addressed by that narrative and thus be able to carry out its performative routines.

The developments within the human sciences which made it possible for colonized peoples to be assigned to earlier stages of evolution, and thus to serve as the means whereby the past from which civilized man had emerged might be rendered visible, are many and complex. The crucial ones concern, first, the establishment of a historical time of human antiquity which, in shattering the constraints of biblical time, showed, as Donald Grayson puts it, that human beings 'had coexisted with extinct mammals at a time that was ancient in terms of absolute years, and at a time when the earth was not yet modern in form' (Grayson, 1983: 190). The production of such a time took place over an extended period, initially prompted by developments within geology but eventually being most successfully organized by the discipline (prehistoric archaeology) that would claim that time as its own. Its definitive establishment, however, took place in 1859 – the same year in which *The Origin of the Species* was published – when Lyell conceded that the excavations at Brixham Cave had demonstrated an extended antiquity for mankind.

This production of an extended past for human life was, in its turn, to play a crucial role in allowing ethnological artefacts to be categorized as 'early' or 'primitive' as distinct from 'exotic' or 'distant'. Again, the developments here were protracted. Within medieval thought, according to Friedman, conceptions of non-European peoples were governed by the classical teratology of Pliny in which such peoples were regarded as exhibiting forms of wildness and incivility which reflected their distance from the world's centre (the Mediterranean). If this system of representation was governed by a spatial logic, its historical aspects were directly contrary to those which subsequently characterized evolutionary thought. In accordance with the requirements of medieval Christian thought, medieval narratives of the monstrous races were governed by the notion of degeneration: those peoples who lived in conditions of monstrousness or wildness at the world's edges were the degenerate offspring of the wandering tribes of Cain, a fall from the originary perfection of Adam and Eve. As Friedman summarizes the point:

> As for alien forms of social organisation, Western feudal society could not view these as representing earlier stages of development; in Christian his-

tory all men had their start at the same time, from the same parents. Cul-
tural evolution from primitive to complex was simply not part of the con-
ceptual vocabulary of the period. To the medieval mind it was more natural
to explain social differences as the result of degeneration or decadence.

(Friedman, 1981: 90)

The conversion of this spatialized teratology into a historicized system of
classification in which 'other peoples' were moved from the world's extremi-
ties to the initial stages of human history was closely associated with the
history of colonialism. According to Margaret Hodgen, Montaigne was the
first, in his reflections on the Americas, to propose the procedure, which
Fabian (1983) views as constitutive of modern anthropology, whereby the
culture of a presently existing people is interpreted as 'a present and acces-
sible reflection of the past of some very early and otherwise undocumented
cultural condition' (Hodgen, 1964: 297). However, thinkers associated with
the French Enlightenment were to prove most influential in providing a
conceptual basis for what was later known as the 'comparative method'.
Stocking attributes considerable importance to Baron Turgot's view, devel-
oped in a programme of lectures at the Sorbonne during the winter of
1750–1, that 'the present state of the world . . . spreads out at one and the
same time all the gradations from barbarism to refinement, thereby revealing
to us at a single glance . . . all the steps taken by the human mind, a reflec-
tion of all the stages through which it has passed' (Turgot, cited in Stocking,
1987: 14). Stocking and Fabian are also agreed in attributing a crucial sig-
nificance to the text prepared by Citizen Degerando in 1800 for the Société
des Observateurs – the most significant institutional base for early French
anthropology – to advise on the methods travellers should follow in their
observations of 'savage peoples'. By this time the reciprocal spatialization
of time and temporalization of space that the comparative method relies
on had become explicit. 'The *voyageur-philosophe* who sails toward the
extremities of the earth,' Degerando wrote, 'traverses in effect the sequence
of the ages; he travels in the past; each step he takes is a century over which
he leaps' (Degerando, cited in Stocking, 1968b: 26–7).

Significant though they were, these developments did not, of themselves,
suggest the means whereby ethnological artefacts might be rearranged as parts
of developmental sequences. The crucial developments here were located in
the interface between archaeology and evolutionary thought. The extension
of time associated with the discovery of human antiquity sketched above
proved significant in allowing stone tools and implements – which had been
distinguished from minerals and fossils since the sixteenth century but were
still regarded as being of relatively recent production – to serve as a means of
rendering human antiquity visible. One of the first museological productions
of such an extended human time, arranging artefacts in a complex develop-
mental sequence, consisted in the use of the three-age system of classification
(stone, iron, bronze) in a mid-century display at the National Museum of

Copenhagen. From this, it was a small but decisive step to place the artefacts of still-existing peoples within such series and, usually, as their origins – the ground from which progress sets off. However, it is no accident that one of the first to take this step was Henry Pitt Rivers who, although now most famous for his ethnological collections, was, by training, an archaeologist.

I shall look more closely at Pitt Rivers's translation of these archaeological principles into museum displays in the next section, principally to make clear how he viewed the museum as a machinery that might simultaneously stimulate and regulate progress. My concern thus far, however, has been to identify the respects in which museums might be viewed as having aimed to keep progress on the go by offering their visitors a performative regime organized in the form of a progressive itinerary. But, by the same token, the museum's selective affinities meant that it might address itself in this way to, at best, only a half of a half of the world's population, a limitation that was inscribed in the very heart of its conception as a 'progressive' cultural technology.

Evolutionary automata

The museum has had few more effective or self-conscious advocates of 'Zadig's method' than Henry Pitt Rivers whose typological arrangements of ethnological collections were more or less self-conscious realizations of the principles of 'backtelling'. Nor is this wholly surprising. Huxley and Pitt Rivers were personally acquainted; both were members of the Ethnological Society; and it is likely that Huxley's arrangements at the Museum of Practical Geology, where a concern to educate the public was prominent, influenced Pitt Rivers's own conceptions of the purposes for which museum displays should be arranged and the means by which such ends might best be accomplished (see Chapman, 1985: 29).

Most telling of all, however, was the dependency of typological arrangements on the concept of survivals. As Margaret Hodgen argued almost sixty years ago, this was crucial to those temporal manoeuvres through which, by converting presently existing cultures into the prehistories of European civilization, anthropology has created its object. The doctrine of survivals, as Tyler summarized it in his *Primitive Culture* (1871), referred to those archaic 'processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried by force of habit into a new society . . . and . . . thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has evolved' (cited in Hodgen, 1936: 37). The relationship between this manoeuvre and the organizing principles of typological displays, in which artefacts such as tools and weapons or domestic utensils were severed from any connection with their originating cultural or regional milieu to be placed in a universal developmental sequence leading from the simple to the complex, was made clear by Pitt Rivers in his explication of what he had sought to achieve in the ethnological exhibition he arranged at the Bethnal Green Museum in 1874. 'Following the orthodox scientific principle of reasoning from the known

to the unknown,' he argued, 'I have commenced my descriptive catalogue with the specimens of the arts of existing savages, and have employed them, as far as possible, to illustrate the relics of primeval man, none of which, except those constructed of the more imperishable materials, such as flint and stone, have survived to our time' (Lane-Fox, 1875: 295).

This is 'backtelling' with a vengeance. The artefacts of presently existing peoples can be read back into the past where they can serve to back-fill the present by being appointed to different stages in an evolutionary sequence because they are construed as traces of earlier stages of human development. The survival, however, is a peculiar kind of trace. On the supposition that the societies in which it is found have stood still, the survival is both the trace of earlier events and their repetition. Survivals are footprints in the sands of time whose imprint is unusually strong and clear to the degree that later generations are supposed to have gone round in circles, treading in the steps of their forebears. 'Each link', as Pitt Rivers puts it a little later in his discussion, 'has left its representatives, which, with certain modifications, have survived to the present time; and it is by means of these *survivals*, and not by the links themselves, that we are able to trace out the sequence that has been spoken of' (Lane-Fox, 1875: 302).

Although Pitt Rivers was clearly responsible for codifying the so-called 'typological method', its principles were not unheralded. William Chapman, Pitt Rivers's biographer, points to the influence of a number of earlier collections in which similar elements were in evidence, and it is clear from other contemporaneous proposals that such ideas were very much 'in the air' at the time. The principles Alfred Wallace enunciated for the Ethnological Gallery of his ideal educational museum in 1869 were thus virtually identical to those which Pitt Rivers was subsequently to put into effect in the arrangement of his collections:

> The chief well-marked races of man should be illustrated either by life-size models, casts, coloured figures, or by photographs. A corresponding series of their crania should also be shown; and such portions of the skeleton as should exhibit the differences that exist between certain races, as well as those between the lower races and those animals which most nearly approach them. Casts of the best authenticated remains of prehistoric man should also be obtained, and compared with the corresponding parts of existing races. The arts of mankind should be illustrated by a series, commencing with the rudest flint implements, and passing through those of polished stone, bronze, and iron – showing in every case, along with the works of prehistoric man, those corresponding to them formed by existing savage races.
>
> (Wallace, 1869: 248)

Pitt Rivers's originality, then, lay elsewhere: in his conception of ethnological exhibitions as devices for teaching the need for progress to advance

slowly – step by step – in a manner that was intended to serve the purposes of an automated pedagogy.

   While his political views comprised a complex amalgam of different currents of late-nineteenth-century thought, they can perhaps best be summarized as a form of political conservatism which sought to embrace the progressive implications of evolutionary thought while insisting that the rate of progress was more or less naturally ordained. Change for Pitt Rivers was, as David Van Keuren puts it, 'something to be directed and limited, not striven against' (van Keuren, 1989: 285). The progressive development of social life was to be welcomed but not hastened. It would come, but – and his target here was clearly socialist thought – in its own time through mechanisms which would depend on the accumulation of a multitude of tiny measures which would gradually become habitual rather than on any sudden or ruptural political action. History, in other words, could not be made to go at a jump: this was the central message Pitt Rivers sought to communicate through his ethnological arrangements. Progress was made visible and performable in the form of a succession of small steps linked to one another in an irreversible and unbridgeable sequence. One had to go through one stage to get to the next. In extolling the virtues of his proposal for an anthropological rotunda as being especially suited to the educational needs of the working classes, Pitt Rivers argued:

> Anything which tends to impress the mind with the slow growth and stability of human institutions and industries, and their dependence upon antiquity, must, I think, contribute to check revolutionary ideas, and the tendency which now exists, and which is encouraged by some who should know better, to break directly with the past, and must help to inculcate conservative principles, which are needed at the present time, if the civilisation that we enjoy is to be maintained and to be permitted to develop itself.
>
> (Cited in Chapman, 1981: 515)

This helps explain why the doctrine of survivals played such an important political role in Pitt Rivers's museological practice. For it allowed the past to be visualized from the tracks that had allegedly been left behind by our ancestors in the early stages of human evolution. This was common to all ethnological displays. More distinctively, then, the doctrine of survivals provided Pitt Rivers with the means through which the past, in back-filling the present, could also be literally filled up so that, while the gap between the first object in a series (an anthropological throwing stick) and the last (a medieval musket) might be large, the space between them would be densely thicketed with objects representing intervening stages in the evolution of weaponry which could be neither bypassed nor jumped over. As Pitt Rivers explained in a letter to Tyler:

> If I were going to lecture about my collections, I should draw attention to the value of the arrangement, not so much on account of the interest

which attaches to the development of the tools, weapons in themselves, but because they best seem to illustrate the development that has taken place in the branches of human culture which cannot be so arranged in sequence because the links are lost and the successive ideas through which progress has been effected have never been embodied in material forms, on which account the Institutions of Mankind often appear to have developed by greater jumps than has really been the case. But in the material arts, the links are preserved and by due search and arrangement can be placed in their proper sequence.

(Cited in Chapman, 1981: 480)

The museological context of the 1870s and 1880s in which Pitt Rivers arranged for his ethnological collections to be exhibited to the public – first, in 1874, in a special exhibition at Bethnal Green and, subsequently, at the South Kensington Museum – was governed by a revival of 'the museum idea' in which a renewed stress was placed on the importance of museums as instruments of public instruction. Two things had changed since this idea had been first promulgated by Henry Cole in the 1840s and 1850s. First, museums were envisaged less as a moral antidote to the tavern than as a political antidote to socialism (see Coombes, 1988). Second, there was a growing tendency within museums to dispense with those forms of instruction that were dependent on visitors being accompanied by guides towards a conception of the museum as an environment in which the visitor would become, in a more or less automated fashion, self-teaching. Over the period from the 1840s to the 1860s, the weaponry exhibits in the armoury at the Tower of London were rearranged in a chronological fashion to dispense with the need for attendants. Edward Forbes made similar adjustments to the Museum of Practical Geology so that it might function as an automated space of self-instruction.

Pitt Rivers had himself displayed a similar commitment during his early days as a collector when his interests centred on weaponry and firearms, a collection which he developed, initially, as a resource for his work as a rifle instructor in the army. In a lecture he delivered in 1858 on the history of the rifle, Pitt Rivers suggested that any instructor would find it useful to complement his practical lessons with lectures, preferably accompanied by exhibits, in the history of small arms using forms of instruction that were designed to be 'proportional to the rank and intelligence of his auditors' (cited in Chapman, 1981: 26). Chapman, in glossing Pitt Rivers's concerns in this area, argues that his collections and instruction manuals were meant to produce an interface between two kinds of progress:

At one level there was the self-evident advance represented by the rifle, each improvement of which in turn represented the successive triumphs of individual thinkers and inventors. At a second level there was the

individual triumph of each soldier placed in his charge, the slow devel-
opment of ideas which his manual was meant to promote.

<div align="right">(Chapman, 1981: 26)</div>

The purpose of exhibiting progress was to provide a prop through which the
infantryman might be helped to progress through a set of ranked skills in a
regulated and gradual manner.

When Pitt Rivers exhibited his ethnological collections at Bethnal Green
Museum, his conception of the purpose of exhibitions and of the means
by which such a purpose might be accomplished – and especially the com-
mitment to the use of means of instruction 'proportional to the rank and
intelligence of his auditors' – was not substantially changed, merely adapted
to new circumstances. While this exhibition did not deploy the principles
of the 'anthropological rotunda' which Pitt Rivers later advocated, it was
directed towards the same end – to make the step-by-step, slow, sequential
toil of progress visible and performable. The exhibits were arranged into
a number of different series each of which, by means of the 'typological
method', depicted a particular developmental sequence. A series of skeletons
and crania depicted the evolution from primate to human life and, then,
from primitive to civilized races, while a series of weaponry exemplified the
functional evolution of human technology with 'painted arrows providing
the proper sequence for the visitors' (Chapman, 1981: 374).

What was distinctive, however, was the conception of the audience this
exhibition was meant to reach and of the means by which it was to achieve
its intended effect *with that audience*. The Bethnal Green Museum was the
South Kensington Museum's outpost in East London. It was selected as the
site for Pitt Rivers's exhibition specifically as a public test-case of the 'educa-
tive potential' of evolutionary anthropology in an area that was both radically
pauperized and a centre for working-class radicalism. As Chapman tellingly
notes, it was the first such test for anthropology in London. The only previous
exhibitions of ethnological collections in East London had been organized by
the London Missionary Society and these, reflecting earlier exhibition prac-
tices, had been arranged to tell a different story of savagery – a narrative
of degeneration and decline, of a fall from grace, rather than one of failed
advancement.[7] How, then, did Pitt Rivers think that anthropology's chief
political message – 'the law that Nature makes no jumps' (Pitt Rivers, 1891:
116) – might be most effectively communicated to working-class visitors? In
brief: by employing methods adjusted to their level of mental development.

The assumptions of evolutionary theory informed not just the contents and
arrangement of the exhibition: they were central to its pedagogics. When,
in 1874, Pitt Rivers addressed the Anthropological Institute on the subject
of the Bethnal Green exhibition, he took advantage of the opportunity to
outline a distinction between what he called the 'intellectual mind, capable
of reasoning on unfamiliar occurrences', and 'an automaton mind capable of

acting intuitively in certain matters without effort of the will or consciousness' (Lane-Fox, 1875: 296). Having elaborated this distinction, Pitt Rivers posited the existence of a historical dialectic between these two different kinds of mind. Pitt Rivers's views regarding the manner in which this historical dialectic unfolds is crucial to his understanding of the mechanisms of progress and the traces that these have deposited in the distribution of mental attributes between different peoples and cultures. For the automaton mind, he argued, is comprised of actions which, while they may have initially required the use of the intellectual mind, have since become habituated through repetition so that no conscious attention is required for their performance. As such, these capacities of the automaton mind become quasi-physical. They are corporeally ingested so as to become a transmissible mental stock that is passed on – not via social trainings, but by an unspecified hereditary mechanism – from one generation to the next. The ratio of the automaton mind to the intellectual mind can then serve, Pitt Rivers argues, as an index of a population's placement on the ladder of progress. The automaton mind will account for a higher proportion of the total mind the lower the stage of development of a population. Pitt Rivers's reasoning here suggests that such a mental inheritance derives from the situation of backward peoples who, since their societies have remained static, have been able to cope with their circumstances through the simple reflex application of the automaton mind for longer periods than more developed peoples who (to have become more developed) must have had to give more time to exercising the intellectual mind.

The scope of Pitt Rivers's arguments on this matter was clearly a broad one. But they also informed his approach to questions of museum pedagogics. If, he argued, in a later address, 'the law that Nature makes no jumps, can be taught by the history of mechanical contrivances, in such a way as at least to make men cautious how they listen to scatterbrained revolutionary suggestions', this can only be so if such collections are 'arranged in such a manner that those who run may read'. By 'those who run', Pitt Rivers meant the working classes:

> The working classes have but little time for study; their leisure hours are, and always must be, comparatively brief. Time and clearness are elements of the very first importance in the matter under consideration. The more intelligent portion of the working classes, though they have but little book learning, are extremely quick in appreciating all mechanical matters, more so even than highly educated men, because they are trained up to them; and this is another reason why the importance of the object lessons that museums are capable of teaching should be well considered.
> (Pitt Rivers, 1891: 116)

If the museum is to teach the working man that progress will come, but only slowly, if he is to advance, but only at a regulated rate, then the museum must address him in forms which he has been 'trained up to'. Since these

lessons must be absorbed in the brief snatches which interrupt a life of necessary labour, they must require only the application of the automaton mind.

That the same methods may not work well with educated men is made explicit. But what of women? Pitt Rivers does not address the question directly. However, when discussing the museum he established in Farnham in the 1880s, he does make specific reference to women visitors. Describing a display of crates which women were expected to carry in 'primitive' tribal cultures, he states that he had collected them 'expressly to show the women of my district how little they resemble the beasts of burden they might have been had they been bred elsewhere' (Pitt Rivers, 1891: 119). The working man, even though being urged to slow down, was addressed as a potential agent of progress while women were envisaged as only the passive beneficiaries of an evolutionary process whose driving forces were the man-made technologies of war and production. Read in the context of the conjunction between evolutionary theory and the prevailing conceptions of sex differentiation, such a display can only have been calculated to reconcile women to their ordained position as always at least one step behind men in the process of evolution's advancement.

One sex at a time

At the Musée de l'homme the visitor's route through the Biological Anthropological Gallery is organized in the form of a journey from the body's surfaces through to its underlying structures. In the process, as layer after layer is stripped away, so the physical substratum of our common humanity is progressively laid bare. While it is shown that there are many respects in which individuals may differ from one another so far as their bodily appearances are concerned – differences of hair-type, height, pigmentation and genitalia – such differences disappear once the anatomical gaze, ceasing to be merely skin-deep, slices into the body's interior. Here, in the body's musculature, in its organs, bones and, finally, the codes of DNA, the world revealed to view is one in which the visitor finds everywhere an identity of form and function, the essential sameness of the bodies of members of the species *homo sapiens*. The only interior differences that are allowed any significance are those affecting the form and function of the reproductive organs of men and women. Even here, the accompanying text makes it clear that these differences relating to the sex of bodies do not have any general consequences. In all respects except for their organs of generation, the bodies of men and women are portrayed as fundamentally the same with regard to their underlying structures. The point is underlined in a display of two human skeletons – one female, the other male – as structurally identical in all significant respects in spite of their obvious differences in height and girth.

No less than their forebears in earlier anatomical displays, these are moralized skeletons. Carrying a message of human sameness, they function as part of a conscious didactic intended to detach the museum's displays of

ethnological artefacts and remains from the assumptions of nineteenth-century evolutionary thought. This intention is foregrounded by the inclusion within the Gallery of a historical display outlining the racist principles which governed nineteenth-century exhibitions of the relations between European and 'savage' peoples. The point of this historical exhibit is most graphically made by a brief item relating to Saartje Baartman, the so-called 'Hottentot Venus', who, the visitor is advised, was frequently shown in early-nineteenth-century London as an example of arrested primitivism. Yet curiously, and in what must count as an act of institutional disavowal, no reference is made to the fact that Saartje was frequently shown in Paris. More to the point, after her death her genitalia, whose peculiarities, carefully dissected and interpreted by Cuvier as a sign of backwardness, were displayed at the Musée de l'homme itself. Stephen Jay Gould has recalled how, when he was being shown round the storage areas of the museum some time in the 1970s, he was startled to stumble across Saartje's preserved genitalia side by side with the dissected genitalia of two other Third World women. These were stored, he notes, just above the brain of Paul Broca, the most influential exponent of nineteenth-century craniology who had bequeathed his brain to the museum for the light it might throw on the brain structure of an advanced European. The juxtaposition, Gould argues, provided a 'chilling insight into the nineteenth-century *mentalité* and the history of racism' (Gould, 1982: 20). But he is not slow to note the double register in which such exhibitions played. For if it mattered that Broca was white and European whilst Saartje was black and African, it mattered just as much that he was a man and she a woman. As he goes on to note: 'I found no brains of women, and neither Broca's penis nor any male genitalia grace the collections' (ibid.: 20).

The issue to which Gould alludes here was more fully developed in a later study by Sander Gilman. Noting the extensive interests of nineteenth-century science in comparative anatomy as a means of establishing either the essential difference or the backwardness of black peoples, Gilman observes that this interest rarely extended to the genital organs except in the case of black women whose genitalia 'attracted much greater interest in part because they were seen as evidence of an anomalous sexuality not only in black women but in all women' (Gilman, 1985b: 89). This, in turn, reflected the assumption that a woman's generative organs might define her essence in ways that were not true for men.

Nor did the matter rest there. By the mid-nineteenth century, women's bodies – down to their very bones – were regarded as incommensurably different from men's. This resulted in anatomical displays in which, as the radical antithesis of those at the Musée de l'homme today, the purpose was to exhibit and demonstrate unbridgeable sexual differences rooted in the structures of male and female skeletons. This was done in ways which reflected the differential distribution of the anatomical gaze to which both Gould and Broca draw attention. If, where European male skeletons were concerned, the stress fell on the size and shape of the cranium as a sign of the

more highly evolved brain of European man, constructions of the skeletons of European woman emphasized her enlarged pelvis. This effected an anatomical reduction of woman to her 'essential function' – no more, in Claudia Honniger's telling phrase, than 'a womb on legs' (cited in Duden, 1991: 24). It served also to secure her subordination to the male in the further argument, as Londa Schiebinger summarizes it, 'that the European female pelvis must necessarily be large in order to accommodate in the birth canal the cranium of the European male' (Schiebinger, 1989: 209).

The processes through which these incommensurably differentiated sexed bodies were produced was connected to changes in the functions and contexts of anatomical displays. In the Renaissance, deceased human bodies were most typically displayed in the context of public dissections. Since these were usually performed on the corpses of felons, they formed a part of the dramaturgy of royal power, a public demonstration of the king's ability to exercise power over the body even beyond death. They were also associated with the practices of carnival in varying and complex ways.[8] It was, indeed, this latter association which, in Ferrari's estimation, helped prompt the eighteenth-century development of anatomical collections distinct from those of the anatomical theatres at places like Leiden and Bologna in order to provide a means for teaching anatomy in spaces removed from the public sphere and its occasionally turbulent excesses (see Ferrari, 1987).

This development had the further consequence that access to anatomical collections tended to become segregated along gender lines. Collections of the type developed by William and John Hunter over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and subsequently donated to the Royal College of Surgeons were largely reserved for the exclusively male gaze of trainee or practising doctors and surgeons. The same was true of more popular anatomical exhibitions. Richard Altick notes that men and women were initially admitted together to Benjamin Rackstrow's Museum of Anatomy and Curiosities, a popular London show, first opened in the 1750s. Altick describes this as 'a combination of Don Saltero's knicknackatory and the reproductive-organ department of Dr. John Hunter's museum' in view of its combination of anatomical peculiarities with obsessively detailed wax models and reproductions of the womb plus one specimen of 'the real thing' accompanied by a penis 'injected to the state of erection' (Altick, 1978: 55). By the end of the century, however, handbills advised that 'a Gentlewoman attends the Ladies separately' (ibid.: 56) – a practice of sex segregation that was to be continued by Rackstrow's nineteenth-century successors, such as Dr Kahn's Museum of Pathological Anatomy whose main focus was an embryological exhibit showing the growth of the ovum from impregnation to birth, and Reimler's Anatomical and Ethnological Museum.

A further change, finally, consisted in a transformation of the function of anatomical exhibits. Within Renaissance practices of public dissection, a good deal was invested in the singularity of the body: it served an exemplary function because of the specific status (criminal) of the person whose body

it was. The body, here, is moralized but not pathologized. While aspects of earlier practices survived in the popular anatomical displays described above, as indeed they did in the medical collections of John Hunter, the nineteenth-century tendency was for anatomical displays to fulfill a normalizing rather than a moralizing function. As parts of a new symbolic economy of the human body, such collections served to construct a set of anatomical norms and then to reinforce those norms through the exhibition of pathologized departures from them. Those norms, moreover, were increasingly conceived in evolutionary terms resulting in a set of hierarchically graded norms appropriate for different populations. When, in 1902, Lombroso established his Museum of Criminal Anthropology at Turin, the mortal remains of criminals had been finally detached from their earlier moralizing function to serve, now, in being pathologized in evolutionary terms as atavistic types, as props for normalizing practices – by this time eugenicist in their conception – directed at the population as a whole (see Pick, 1986).

These, then, are the main changes affecting the exhibitionary contexts in which, from the second half of the eighteenth century, anatomical remains or reconstructions – themselves becoming increasingly and implacably differentiated in sexual terms – were typically displayed. Thomas Laqueur's compelling discussion of the formation of the two-sex model of humanity underlines the significance of this production of sexed anatomies. Prior to the early modern period, Laqueur argues, there was 'only one canonical body and that body was male' (Laqueur, 1990: 63). Tracing the more or less continuous influence of the ideas of the Roman physician Galen of Pergamum on European medical thought through to and beyond the Renaissance, Laqueur shows how the female body was typically viewed as an inferior version of the male body. This hierarchized construction of the relations between the male and female bodies was genitally centred in that it depended on the belief that the female organs of generation were an inverted, and for that reason inferior, version of the male organs of generation.[9] While this necessarily entailed that woman was measured as lesser, as imperfect, in relation to norms of anatomical perfection that were unambiguously and explicitly male, it equally entailed that men and women were not viewed as radically distinct from one another, as incommensurably separate. To the contrary, the commonality in the structure of their genital organs and the related fact that these were viewed as functioning in virtually the same fashion in the process of generation, made the notion of two sexes differentiated from one another in terms of characteristics attributed to foundational differences in their genitalia literally unthinkable. Viewed as, genitally, a lesser man, the consequence, as Laqueur puts it, was that '*man* is the measure of all things, and woman does not exist as an ontologically distinct category' (Laqueur, 1990: 62).

In this light, Londa Schiebinger (1989) argues, it is significant that illustrations of the human skeleton designed for teaching purposes were neuter until the early nineteenth century and that, when the female skeleton did make its

first appearance, it was in the form of an imperfect realization of the male skeleton rather than as an osteological structure of a radically distinct type. In the mid-to-later decades of the century, however, the female anatomy was subjected to an increasingly reductive gaze. As Ludmilla Jordanova has shown in her discussion of William Hunter's anatomical drawings and anatomical models fashioned in wax, women's genitalia, which had been modestly veiled in earlier medical teaching aids and illustrations, were gazed at and through in unrelenting detail (see Jordanova, 1980). This process, Jordanova argues, in subjecting the bodies of women to the increasingly penetrative vision of a male science, served to 'unclothe' an essentially feminine nature rooted in a now radically differentiated reproductive system. Although disagreeing that women's bodies were any more subjected to such a dissecting gaze than men's, Laqueur's conclusions point in the same direction: the organization of an anatomical field in which male and female bodies no longer confronted one another as 'hierarchically, vertically, ordered versions of one sex' but as 'horizontally ordered opposites, as incommensurable' (Laqueur, 1990: 10).

These developments have been attributed to a variety of factors: to the struggle of male medicine to wrest control over women's reproductive functions from midwives; to the assertion of political control over women's bodies in the context of the powerfully anti-feminist strain of the French Revolution which sought to repulse women from the public sphere;[10] and to the emergence of the domestic sphere as one to which women were 'naturally' suited by their biologically distinct bodies and the different temperaments to which such foundational biological structures were held to give rise. Laqueur is careful to insist, however, that the ascendancy of the view that the two sexes were incommensurable opposites did not entail the complete displacement of the single-sex model which, he suggests, resurfaced in particular regions of sexual representation. Evolutionary theory was a case in point as it could be 'interpreted to support the notion of an infinitely graded scale, reminiscent of the one-sex model, on which women were lower than men' (Laqueur, 1990: 293). Schiebinger (1989) is more emphatic: where males and females were now considered each to be perfect in their differences, such differences were arranged hierarchically – man, while no longer more perfect than woman, emerged as simply more evolved.

In short, the move from a one-sex to two-sex anatomical order was simultaneously a shift from an ordering of sexed bodies that was atemporal – woman's place within the hierarchy of being as an imperfect man was destined to be permanent within the one-sex model – to one that was historicized. Over the second half of the nineteenth century, when the view of the incommensurability of men's and women's bodies encountered the developing body of evolutionary social thought, the result was to place woman not below man but behind him. This was thematized in various ways depending on the points of comparison chosen for calibrating the degree of woman's underdevelopment: children, 'savages', the higher primates, criminals – all

of these, within one strain or another of evolutionary thought, served as the benchmarks to establish woman's place on the evolutionary ladder.[11] Theoretically, of course, the premises of evolutionary theory allowed that the gap between men and women might be closed through time; indeed, this was precisely the ground taken by many feminists in their early and difficult confrontations with Darwinian theory.[12] In one way or another, this progressive potential of evolutionary thought was closed down within the more influential applications of evolutionary theory to the field of sexual differences.

Developments in craniology were particularly important here. For these discredited the earlier practices of phrenology, which had allowed that the forms of self-knowledge acquired through this technique might lead to forms of self-improvement through which mental capacities, including those of women, might be increased. In their place they substituted a conception in which woman's lower mental capacity was regarded as the inescapable limitation of her inherently inferior skull size (see Russett, 1989; Fee, 1976, 1979). Worse still, in what was clearly a virulent anti-feminist campaign, the last quarter of the century saw the use of Spencerian arguments to suggest that women could only expect to fall further behind men on the ladder of evolutionary development. Since men's and women's bodies differed more sharply in 'more advanced' civilizations than they did among 'savages', and since it seemed that this must be the result of more sharply segregated sex roles in societies where the division of labour was more advanced, the conclusion drawn was that, from the point of view of the species as a whole, it was crucial that women should remain in the domestic sphere for which their anatomies had prepared them even if this meant that the evolutionary gap between the sexes could only increase (see Duffin, 1978; Sayers, 1982).

Of course, these were not the only ways in which the premises of evolutionary thought got translated into social narratives of sex and gender. And they were opposed. Flavia Alaya notes how Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill made a special point of congratulating a feminist conference for sticking out against the tide of debate in choosing *not* to debate questions concerning men's and women's natural aptitudes (Alaya, 1977: 263). However, the tendencies I have focused on were the prevailing ones, especially where sexed anatomies were exhibited. How, precisely, these assumptions were reflected in the details of museum displays is sometimes difficult to determine as this is not an especially well-developed area of museum research. We know that, in museums of natural history and ethnological museums, the skeletons and crania of women were arranged in relation to those of men to demonstrate their lower stage of development. They were also arranged in relation to those of 'savages' to suggest a finely calibrated scale of human evolution leading from the evolutionary base of primitive women through primitive men to European women and, finally, European men. We know also that the conventions of taxidermy favoured male-centred displays in their reconstructions of the animal kingdom. At the American Museum of Natural History, where animal life was portrayed in an evolutionary sequence of

dioramas depicting habitat groupings, each display was governed by a clear sexual hierarchy with the male being privileged in being accorded the role of representing the most perfect and fully developed form of each species (see Haraway, 1992).

It is, then, plausible to assume that, for women, the opportunity the museum offered to conduct a performative realization of evolutionary narratives was of a different kind than that available to men. Within the museum's 'backtelling' structure, European woman encountered herself as both advanced and backward, ahead of her 'savage' brothers and sisters but behind the European male. She was anatomized in such a way that she was unable to participate fully in the progressive performance for which her body served as a prop. The museum's narrative was one that she could never complete. To visit ethnological or natural collections, I have suggested, provided an opportunity for checking out how one measured up in relation to progress's advance. If so, it was an opportunity which, for women, meant that they could never fully measure up to the highest levels of human development.

And sometimes literally so. Francis Galton, whose theory and practice of anthropometric measurement was to prove one of the most influential techniques for producing the body as a zone of almost infinitely graded and hierarchized sexual and racial differences, set up an anthropometric laboratory at the International Health Exhibition held at South Kensington in 1884. There, for a charge of threepence, men and women were offered the opportunity of having a series of anatomical measurements taken that would enable them to assess where they fitted on the evolutionary scale of things. Initially, the requirements of social tact prevented the measurement of women's skulls as this would have required the removal of their bonnets and the disturbance of their hair styles (see Forrest, 1974: 181). However, this precautionary gallantry was dispensed with when, in 1885, the laboratory was transferred to the South Kensington Museum. For eight years, the Museum's visitors, men and women, continued to have their anatomical and cranial measurements taken and recorded as part of Galton's accumulating record of the evolutionary differentiation of the sexes. In so doing, they helped perpetuate the narrative machinery which regulated their performances.

Notes

1 The first life-size reconstructions of dinosaurs placed on public display were those designed for the gardens accompanying the Crystal Palace when, after 1851, it was removed to Sydenham. Their design and installation was superintended by Richard Owen whose depiction of the dinosaurs (a term he coined in 1841) was designed to refute the existence of the mechanism of transformism on which Lamarckian evolutionary theory depended. For details, see Desmond (1982), Rudwick (1992) and Stocking (1987).
2 For details of the relations between Pitt Rivers and Flower and their respective proposals for the arrangement of museum exhibits, see Chapman (1981).

3 This is not to say that Pitt Rivers's expectations proved to be validated by experi-
   ence. In a spirited defence of the principles of geo-ethnic displays, W.H. Holmes,
   the head curator in the Department of Anthropology at the United States
   National Museum, took issue with the kind of concentric arrangement proposed
   by Pitt Rivers as likely to 'be highly perplexing to any but the trained student,
   and wholly beyond the grasp of the ordinary visitor' (Holmes, 1902: 360).

4 In other rooms, however, paintings are accorded quite different functions. There
   are thus a number of connecting galleries in which the paintings are displayed
   because of their place in the history of art rather than as parts of more general
   social or political histories. This inconsistency, however, is a productive one in
   the tension it establishes with more conventional forms of art exhibition. The
   Musée Carnavalet has been similarly innovative in its special exhibitions: see
   Mitchell (1978).

5 Henry Balfour, President of the Museums Association, founded in 1888, was
   thus active in urging museums to adopt the evolutionary principles of display
   exemplified by the Pitt Rivers Museum. See Skinner (1986: 392–3).

6 There is not space here for a detailed discussion of the relations between these
   two Societies. For informative, if also somewhat contrasting accounts, see Stock-
   ing (1987: 245–63), Rainger (1978) and Burrow (1963).

7 For an example of this degenerationist discourse in an early nineteenth-century
   religious tract written to guide parents in ways of using museum visiting as an
   aid to biblical instruction for their children, see Elizabeth (1837).

8 This is obviously an oversimplified version of a complex history. For further
   details, see Ferrari (1987), Richardson (1988) and Wilson (1987).

9 The reasons for viewing the female genitalia as inferior to the male derive from
   Galen's views regarding the flow and distribution of heat within the body. The
   male organs were viewed as more perfect in view of their capacity to generate
   their own heat and so be able to function outside the body. The uterus, viewed
   as an inverted penis, lacked this capacity for self reliance and so was tucked up
   within the body as a source of warmth.

10 For an especially interesting discussion of the politics of the representation of
    women's bodies in the French Revolution, see Hunt (1991).

11 The literature on this subject is vast. Apart from the relevant sources I have cited
    for other purposes, I have drawn on the following discussions in elaborating
    my arguments: Haller and Haller (1974), Easlea (1981), Mosedale (1978), Fee
    (1979) and Richards (1983).

12 Sayers (1982) and Love (1983) discuss the difficulties that Darwinism created for
    feminist thought, while Gamble (1894) exemplifies an early feminist rebuttal of
    the view that woman was merely a less-evolved man.

5 Pasts beyond memories

The evolutionary museum, liberal government and the politics of prehistory*

Perhaps one of the most influential literary evocations of the scene of savagery is the moment in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* when, as he nears his journey's end, Marlow, surprised by the whirl of black limbs on the river bank, asks:

> The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us – who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand, because we were too far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memories.
>
> (Conrad, 1969: 59)

All of the aspects of what Johannes Fabian has characterised as the 'denial of coevalness' (Fabian, 1983: 31) that characterised the colonial structure of anthropological discourse are present here: the placing of the Other in a different time from that of the observer, and the equation of distance from Europe with travelling backwards in time. 'Going up that river,' Marlow notes, 'was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings' (Conrad, 1969: 55). In this way, the scene of prehistoric savagery is connected to – emerges out of – the deeper pasts of primeval time, the untold ages of geological and natural history.

These ages, these 'pasts beyond memories', were still, by the time *Heart of Darkness* was published in 1910, relatively new pasts – the term 'prehistory', like 'the dinosaur', made its first appearance in the 1840s[1] – that had been produced by the labours of geology, palaeontology, natural history, archaeology and anthropology. Through the techniques that they had developed for reading rock formations, fossilised remains, ruins, tools, technologies and ornaments as the remnants of long past epochs, these disciplines had broken the connection that had previously limited the known past to the

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remembered past that had been transmitted to the present through the storage systems of writing or oral tradition. Limitless vistas of pasts going back beyond human existence, let alone memory, rapidly came into view through the once mute – but, now that they had been coaxed to yield their secrets – eloquent traces they had left behind.

The questions I want to pose here concern the role that these pasts played in reformulating the aims and strategies of liberal government in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain in terms of both the new forms of self governance they aimed to foster and the categories of person that such strategies encompassed (as well as those whom they excluded). I shall, however, broach these questions from a particular perspective by considering the role that was played by the evolutionary museum in translating these 'pasts beyond memories' into a distinctive memory machine, an 'evolutionary accumulator', that functioned as a means for acting developmentally on the social.[2]

The nub of these matters consists in the mutation in the conception of the person – or, at least, that of the white, adult, male person – that was produced when the newly excavated deep pasts of prehistory were viewed in the light of theories of evolutionary inheritance.[3] For these 'pasts beyond memories' were regarded as being active and effective within the present through their functioning as a layer in the formation of the modern person whose make-up was increasingly visualised archaeologically as so many strata superimposed one on top of the other. This is clear in *Physics and Politics* in which Walter Bagehot, more widely known for his work as a legal and constitutional theorist, set out to explore the implications of Darwin's work, and of evolutionary thought more generally, for the manner in which the tasks of government should be conducted and the ends toward which it should be directed. An archaeological conception of the person is evident from the opening pages:

> If we wanted to describe one of the most marked results, perhaps the most marked result, of late thought, we should say that by it everything is made 'an antiquity'. When, in former times, our ancestors thought of an antiquarian, they described him as occupied with coins, and medals, and Druids' stones; these were then the characteristic records of the decipherable past, and it was with these that decipherers busied themselves. But now there are other relics; indeed, all matter is become such. Science tries to find in each bit of earth the record of the causes which made it precisely what it is; those forces have left their trace, she knows, as much as the tact and hand of the artist left their mark on a classical gem. . . . But what here concerns me is that man himself has, to the eye of science, become 'an antiquity.' She tries to read, is beginning to read, knows she ought to read, in the frame of each man the result of a whole history of all his life, of what he is and what makes him so, – of all his forefathers, of what they were and of what made them so.
>
> (Bagehot, 1873: 2–3)

What role did this conception of the person play in the transition from the classical liberalism of the mid-century period, with its parsimonious assessment of the good that government could do, to the more active moral and educative role that was proposed for government in the formulations of *fin de siècle* 'new liberalism'?[4] If, as I hope to, I am to answer this question, it will be necessary, first, to place this conception of the person in a broader perspective and, in doing so, to specify more precisely the archaeological principles governing its organisation.

The archaeological gaze of the historical sciences

This is all the more necessary given the scope for confusion regarding my use of the term 'archaeological' in view of the influence of Michel Foucault's argument that an 'archaeology of knowledge' should concern itself with the intrinsic description of the regularities and irregularities governing the organisation of statements within a given region of discourse. For the sense I have in mind – which is closer to conventional usage – is the different from that intended by Foucault who acknowledged the novelty of his own use of the term in recalling that there was once 'a time when archaeology, as a discipline devoted to silent monuments, inert traces, objects without context, and things left by the past, aspired to the condition of history, and attained meaning only through the restitution of a historical discourse' (Foucault, 1972: 7). It is, then, this sense of archaeology that I have in mind, while also wishing to broaden it, in suggesting that a common set of rules governed the formation of objects in nineteenth-century palaeontology, geology, natural history, anthropology, and, of course, archaeology and that these gave rise to a shared way of visualising the relations between past and present. My aim, then, is to offer a glimpse of what an archaeological analysis (in Foucault's sense) of this 'archaeological gaze' might look like.

I have, as a second note of explanation, grouped these different disciplines together under the collective heading of 'the historical sciences' in view of the respects in which, in their nineteenth-century formation, their procedures were derived from those of 'conjectural history'. This term was coined by Dugald Stewart in 1790 to describe the procedures of speculative accounts of the transition from rude to civilised society which, in contrast to the empirical procedures that had been developed for the physical sciences, could not, as Mary Poovey puts it, 'rely on written records, eyewitness testimony, or any kind of evidence that met the strictest definition of "experience"' (Poovey, 1998: 221). The distinctive character of such histories thus consisted in their retrospective deduction of the probable forms of the past based on the fragmentary evidence of their still-existing remnants. By the 1830s, this procedure of conjectural reasoning had been shaped into a distinctive epistemological paradigm which – in applying to the procedures of geology, palaeontology, and natural history just as much as to those of archaeology and

anthropology – bridged the gap between natural and human history. William Whewell, the philosopher who first coined the term 'science', summarised this conception in his description of what he called the pala-etiological sciences by way of differentiating their concerns with 'pasts beyond memories' from those of recorded history:

> Such speculations are not confined to the world of inert matter; we have examples of them in inquiries concerning the monuments of the art and labour of distant ages; in examinations into the origin and early progress of states and cities, customs and languages; as well as in researches concerning the causes and formations of mountains and rocks, the imbedding of fossils in strata, and their elevation from the bottom of the ocean. All these speculations are connected by this bond, – that they endeavour to ascend to a past of things, by the aid of the evidence of the present. In asserting, with Cuvier, that 'The geologist is an antiquary of a new order,' we do not mark a fanciful and superficial resemblance of employment merely, but a real and philosophical connexion of the principles of investigation. The organic fossils which occur in the rock, and the medals which we find in the ruins of ancient cities, are to be studied in a similar spirit and for a similar purpose.
>
> (Whewell, 1837: 482)

Whewell goes on to provide a telling example of what I have in mind here in suggesting that an archaeological gaze governs how the relations between past and present were visualised in these sciences when he outlines how the present can be read to identify the pasts that have been sedimented within it as a consequence of the remnants of each historical period being carried over and compressed into the next one, thus preserving a record of time's passage in the sequential layering of its accumulations. 'The relics and ruins of the earlier states,' as he puts it, 'are preserved, mutilated and dead, in the products of later times' so that it is 'more than a mere fanciful description, to say that in languages, customs, forms of society, political institutions, we see a number of formations superimposed upon one another, each of which is, for the most part, an assemblage of fragments and results of the preceding condition' (Whewell, 1837: 484).

   We can see this archaeological gaze at work some thirty years later in the lecture 'On a piece of chalk' which Thomas Huxley gave to the workingmen of Norwich in 1868. Huxley's promise to his audience was that, by considering carefully the evidence of a tiny, seemingly insignificant piece of chalk of the kind 'which every carpenter carries about in his breeches pocket', they will be able to read, with their own eyes, 'the history of the globe' (Huxley, 1868: 4). Here is how, a little later in his lecture, an archaeological gaze is manifested as Huxley metaphorically places his imaginary bit of chalk under a microscope to reveal the history that has been stored up within it:

Thus there is a writing upon the wall of cliffs at Cromer, and whoso runs may read it. It tells us, with an authority which cannot be impeached, that the ancient sea-bed of the chalk sea was raised up, and remained dry land, until it was covered with forest, stocked with the great game the spoils of which have rejoiced your geologists. How long it remained in that condition cannot be said; but "the whirligig of time brought its revenges" in those days as in these. That dry land, with the bones and teeth of generations of long-lived elephants, hidden away among the gnarled roots and dry leaves of its ancient trees, sank gradually to the bottom of the icy sea, which covered it with huge masses of drift and boulder clay. Sea-beasts, such as the walrus, now restricted to the extreme north, paddled about where birds had twittered among the top-most twigs of the fir trees. How long this state of things endured we know not, but at length it came to an end. The upheaved glacial mud hardened into the soil of modern Norfolk. Forests grew once more, the wolf and the beaver replaced the reindeer and the elephant; and at length what we call the history of England dawned.

(Huxley, 1868: 27)

That it was possible to visualise the relations between past and the present in these terms was due, in the main, to the combined effects of two closely related developments. The first consisted in the conceptual re-orientations and technical developments that allowed dug-up things – bones and fossils as well as artefacts – to be historicised and assigned a place within an increasingly finely calibrated and sequentialised past consisting of so many layers accumulated one on top of the other. The second consisted in the development of techniques for reading these pasts which freed the historical sciences from their tutelage to philology and other textualised methods of interpretation. Alain Schnapp argues that the work of seventeenth-century antiquaries was crucial with regard to this second development in developing the method of what he calls an 'archaeological "autopsy"' (Schnapp, 1996: 181). This was a new way of reading which, relying more on the senses of sight and touch than on the principles of philological analysis, helped to form a new language of history, one whose signs comprised the visible marks on buried remains – human, natural and geological – that provided the material evidence for 'pasts beyond memories'.

It was through this method of 'archaeological "autopsy"', Schnapp argues, that 'archaeology won its independence – by delivering a text of another nature than that of the literary tradition' (Schnapp, 1996: 181), thus freeing it from its tutelage to the Renaissance *episteme* by yielding a vision of the earth as 'a repository of interpretable traces' (213) inscribed directly on the surfaces of things as sets of physical marks.[5] The development of a grammar that would allow the relations between these pasts to be deciphered took a little longer. Schnapp sees the crucial development here as being in the development of the typological or comparative method – 'the

ancestor,' as he describes it, 'of all archaeological reasoning' (241) – in view of the ways in which it enabled the field of pre-recorded history to be both spatialised and temporalised. It did the former by proposing ways of reading the design traits common to objects found within a particular territory which established a distinctive provenance for them within that territory while simultaneously excluding as foreign objects not exhibiting those traits. While this allowed cultures to be territorialised on the basis of their artefactual remains, their historicisation followed from the development of techniques designed to detect the change of design traits through time within the same territorial culture.

This aspect of archaeology's temporal grammar, however, depended on the principles of stratigraphical analysis which, imported from geology, allowed for the development of excavation techniques which provided for a layered approach to the management of archaeological sites which, in its turn, allowed the past to emerge into view as a series of layers superimposed, in an irreversible sequence, one on top of the other. If Georges Cuvier's use of stratigraphical techniques in his palaeontological excavations had provided the basis for a systematic chronology, rooted in geological time, the key developments that enabled connections to be made between the history of the earth, natural history and human prehistory are attributable to the work of Christian Jurgen Thomsen, the leading figure in early-nineteenth-century Scandinavian archaeology. Thomsen's main innovation was to produce a universal and generalisable method for reading the human past in suggesting that similar technologies might be read as evidence of comparable levels of cultural development. Translated into the basis of the three-age model (the stone, iron and bronze ages) he developed for his museum displays, Thomsen's method provided a means for organising increasingly large clusters of objects into their respective stages within a chronological system that was both universalisable and empirically verifiable.[6] Rendering the artefactual domain readable in new ways, this allowed human prehistory to be made publicly manifest in the form of a narrative which, in the now readable testimony of the past's artefactual remnants, connected human pasts to the deeper times of geology and natural history, and to the present, in a common and irreversible sequence. 'Every object and every monument,' as Schnapp puts it, was now 'destined to find its place in a general process of stratification which is linked to the history of the planet' (Schnapp, 1996: 321).

Here, then, is a broader discursive context for the archaeological construction of the person as consisting of so many layers of inheritance, laminated one on top of the other, that is evident in Walter Bagehot's conception that 'man himself has, to the eye of science, become "an antiquity"'. There were, of course, other, more ruptural ways of thinking about the relations between past and present than those of a unilinear and continuing evolution, and, in some contexts, these remained influential into the 1880s. Their force in Britain, however, was relatively muted after the demise of catastrophism in the 1840s and, by the 1860s, had given way almost entirely to a

conception of the relations between past and present as being governed by principles of regular and even evolutionary succession in which each stage of development – be it that of a species, of human life, or of a civilisation – built on, and retained within itself, the accumulated results of previous stages.[7] The question I now want to ask is: how and why did this new conception of the person give rise to new ways of thinking about the nature, conduct and purpose of government?

The archaeological construction of character and 'new liberalism'

Stefan Collini's work on the mutation in character associated with the transition from classical *laissez-faire* liberalism to the 'new liberalism' of the late nineteenth century provides some useful initial bearings from which to approach this question. In the earlier period of *laissez-faire* liberalism, when the aim of government was to produce self-reliant individuals who would not be a burden on the state or a drag on the economy, government was regarded as an activity that was best performed when least performed (Collini, 1991). By contrast, the new conception of man as an archaeological entity who had been shaped by the cumulative weight of the past and who – just as importantly – stood in need of continuing development if society itself were to progress, became a reason for urging state action in the cultural and moral sphere. This was because of the obstacles that it was believed impeded the development of the personal capacities that were judged to be so important for the continuing development of society. At the same time, however, this orientation was consistent with earlier liberal strategies of rule to the degree that it pitted itself against the over-extension of the state's remit that it imputed to the contemporary formulations of eugenics.[8]

The manner in which these obstacles were perceived had its roots in a distinctive set of anxieties concerning the role of habit in the development of character. In being accorded a distinctive role in mediating between consciousness and unconsciousness, between desire and compunction, habit – understood as a socially-enforced form of learning via repetition – constituted what Mariana Valverde characterises as a 'despotic mechanism' at the heart of liberal programmes of ethical governance (Valverde, 1996: 361). It served, she suggests, as a form of self-despotism that reconciled two otherwise contradictory features of liberal governance – the stress on individual autonomy on the one hand, and, on the other, the denial of the capacity for autonomous self-government to particular classes of persons, including the working man. Habit, in such cases, provided a bridging mechanism, a form of socially-enforced learning that would eventually lead to the acquisition of a built-in and autonomous capacity for self-improvement.

If this was a general characteristic of mid-century liberalism, the concerns associated with the role of habit in the development of character later assumed a more specific form owing to their association with what Collini calls the 'century's distinctive preoccupation with the shaping power of time,

with the slow, sedimentary processes of development, be it of geological layers or of linguistic forms or of legal customs' (Collini, 1991: 97–8). These generated the fear that what Walter Bagehot had called 'the cake of custom' (Bagehot, 1873: 53) would become so thick that any spur to innovation – and therefore any progressive social momentum – would be lost. The circuit breaker in this politics of character between, on the one hand, the fear of stagnation and, on the other, the need for a 'striving, self-reliant, adaptable behaviour endorsed by the imperatives of character' (Collini, 1991: 109) was, as Collini puts it, a 'muscular liberalism'. This consisted in the contention that state-aided reformations of character giving rise to a more progressive disposition of the self – organised in relations of tension between its archaic, customary components (or habit) and an open-ended commitment to self-development through time – would act instinctively on future generations through a pseudo-Lamarckian mechanism of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

A closer look at Bagehot's arguments will repay our attention here in view of their influence on the social and political thought of Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley and Henry Pitt Rivers.[9] The lynchpin of Bagehot's understanding of the relations between 'physics and politics' – that is, of the implications of evolutionary thought for the practice of government – consists in his concept of 'stored virtue'. This allowed him to construe social development as a specific process, governed by its own distinctive laws, in which moral and cultural forces combine with natural ones to provide a progressive mechanism – but a contingent and fragile one – through which the accomplishments of one generation could be transmitted to the next. This mechanism was, in its essentials, an adaptation – via Herbert Spencer – of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's use-based account of the transmission of acquired characteristics to the acquisition and transmission of distinctive human or social skills. Just as, for Lamarck 'the more frequent and steady use of any given organ gradually strengthens this organ, develops it, increases its size, and gives it a power proportional to the duration of this use' (cit. Barthelemy-Maudaule, 1982: 75), so, for Bagehot, it is the frequent and steady use of skills acquired via the social mechanism of drill – the model, in Bagehot's account, for all forms of human learning – that allows those skills to become sedimented in the person. 'The body of the accomplished man,' as Bagehot puts it, 'has thus become by training different from what it once was, and different from that of the rude man; it is charged with stored virtue and acquired faculty which come away from it unconsciously' (Bagehot, 1873: 6).

It is, however, the next step Bagehot takes that is crucial in conjuring up an entirely speculative mechanism by hypothesising – as a moral complement to Herbert Spencer's notion that the effects of mental exercise could be inherited[10] – that the skills acquired by means of drill are deposited in the nervous system through a kind of muscular mnemonics and are thence transmitted innately to the next generation as a set of acquired characteristics. It is thus, he argues, that 'the descendants of cultivated parents will

have, by born nervous organisation, a greater aptitude for cultivation than the descendants of such as are not cultivated; and that this tendency augments, in some enhanced ratio, for many generations' (Bagehot, 1873: 8). It is this 'transmitted nerve element' that comprises '"the connective tissue" of civilisation', providing 'a physical cause of improvement from generation to generation' which serves as a 'continuous force which binds age to age, which enables each to begin with some improvement on the last' (8).

It is in this way, then, that 'pasts beyond memories' come to be integrated into a memory system that is organic in the sense, as Laura Otis (1994) describes it, that it inscribes the past in the body.[11] The person, in this construction, emerges as a thoroughly archaeologised entity – a way-station in a process of continuing advancement – in which the effects of time are stored up and accumulated for transmission from one generation to the next. Yet if progress thus depends on the progressive accumulation of the effects of habit, custom – the social form in which habit manifests itself – can also become a barrier to progress if its effects are not offset by other tendencies. Societies that were once in motion either fossilise: Bagehot interprets modern savages as the frozen remnants of pre-historic ways of life, having no more connection with the real civilisation of the present than do 'fossils in the surrounding strata' (Bagehot, 1873: 113). Or they may be driven into odd, dreary and uncomfortable courses through the repetition of curious habits that have proved to be historical *cul-de-sacs*. The task of maintaining 'the connective tissue of civilisation' and augmenting its progressive momentum thus required that the 'stored virtue' that had been deposited in the nervous-cum-historical constitution of modern man be distinguished from the regressive bad habits that had also been inherited from the past. This detritus of the past had to be scaled away within an internal dialectic of reform that would detach a modernising and progressive relation to the self from the prospectively degenerative momentum of a legacy that received its most potent symbol in the doctrine of survivals according to which the savage, as a remnant of the prehistoric past within the present, also functioned as an archaic component in the make-up of the modern person. 'The civilised mind,' as Tylor put it, 'still bears vestiges neither few nor slight, of a past condition from which savages represent the least and civilised man the greatest advance' (Tylor, 1871: 68–9).

Conrad offers a vivid illustration of this conception in *Heart of Darkness* where the scene of savagery discussed earlier is also depicted as a prehistoric layer that survives intact in the historical make-up of modern man when Marlow is forced to acknowledge his kinship with the 'wild and passionate uproar' of the savagery he encountered:

> Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of the first

ages – could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of
anything – because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future.

(Conrad, 1995: 63)

But it is only modern man whose constitution is archaeologically stratified
in this way. The savages themselves were outside of time. As he says of the
native members of his crew:

> . . . I don't think a single one of them had any clear idea of time, as we
> at the end of countless ages have. They still belonged to the beginnings
> of time – had no inherited experience to teach them, as it were.'

(69)

The distinction is crucial: the denial of an archaeological constitution
to the savage is essential to the role it plays in the archaeological layering
of the modern self by providing, in the form of an interiorised Other, a
set of co-ordinates through which that self is able to act on itself so as to
mobilise itself, developmentally, in progressive relations of time.[12] It will
be instructive to look more closely at the organisation of this modern self
before returning to its relationship to late nineteenth-century liberalism.

The architecture of the modern self

Gilles Deleuze's discussion of the functioning of 'the fold' in Foucault's
account of the structure of the self will help make my point here. Deleuze's
concern is with the role played by doubling – for Foucault, a process through
which an outside is interiorised in the constitution of the person – and the
structure it gives rise to of 'an inside which is merely the fold of the outside'
(Deleuze, 1999: 97). As a result of this folding operation, the self is formed
through its relation to a non-self or Other that has been folded into the
self as an immanent presence. This outside that is immanent within the self
creates an interior space within which the self can act on itself. 'It is as if,'
Deleuze says, 'the relations of the outside folded back to create a doubling,
allow a relation to oneself to emerge, and constitute an inside which is hol-
lowed out and develops its own unique dimension . . . ' (100). The resulting
formation is '*an affect of self on self*' (101) through which relations of power
are translated into a principle of internal regulation in which the mastery of
others is doubled – echoed and rehearsed – in a mastery of the self.

   The text Deleuze has in mind here is Foucault's discussion, in *The Use of
Pleasure*, of 'the "virile" character of moderation' in the sexual ethics of the
freeman of classical Greece:

> In this ethics of men made for men, the development of the self as an
> ethical subject consisted in setting up a structure of virility that related
> oneself to oneself. It was by being a man with respect to oneself that one

would be able to control and master the manly activity that one directed toward others in sexual practice. What one must aim for in the agonistic contest with oneself and in the struggle to control the desires was the point where the relationship with oneself would become isomorphic with the relationship of domination, hierarchy, and authority that one expected, as a man, to establish over his inferiors. . . .

<div style="text-align: right">(Foucault, 1985: 83)</div>

If, as Foucault concluded, 'moderation was man's virtue' (83), this did not mean that women could not be, or were not expected to be, moderate. Rather, it meant that this was a condition which they could realise only imperfectly and through subordination to their husbands. Only men could initiate *enkrateia*, and only men could fully achieve it. If the structure of this practice was essentially masculine, this entailed, Foucault argued, that its opposite – immoderation – represented a form of passivity that was viewed as essentially feminine, a self lacking the fold of an internally doubled exterior that could make the self the site of an unremitting work on the self.

We can see here readily enough the scope for analogy in understanding the role played by representations of the savage as an archaic layer within the archaeological make-up of modern man. Clearly colonial in its structure in providing for the mastery of a level within the self of the coloniser that was connected to the exercise of mastery over the colonised, it is equally clear that, for this to be so, the colonised must function as the essential antithesis of this structure. The colonised, that is, must embody the lack of an archaeologically layered architecture of the self, and so also be depicted as lacking any inherent capacity for self development, in order to serve as the interiorised Other through which the historicised fold that constitutes the inner temporal structure of modern man is organised.

However, the structure of this fold and its operation can only be fully understood if account is taken of the ways in which it functions simultaneously across relations of race, gender and class. Ann Stoler's criticisms of Foucault are helpful here. In reviewing Foucault's account of the formation of a bourgeois class body based on the principles of health, hygiene, descent, and race, Stoler takes issue with his tendency to see the discourses of sexuality implicated in the formation of bourgeois practices of the self playing this role independently of relations of race. 'Did any of these figures,' she asks of the masturbating child, the "hysterical woman", the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult, 'exist as objects of knowledge and discourse in the nineteenth century without a racially erotic counterpoint, without reference to the libidinal energies of the savage, the primitive, the colonised – reference points of difference, critique, and desire?' (Stoler, 1995: 6–7). In concluding that they did not, she urges the need to take a 'circuitous imperial route' (7) in tracing the emergence of the bourgeois body and self in order to understand how, in both colonial and metropolitan contexts, 'bourgeois bodies

were constituted as racially and relationally coded from the outset' (53). The metaphorical transposition of the languages of race and class – in comparisons of the denizens of 'darkest England' with those of 'darkest Africa' which allowed the working classes to be viewed as 'a race apart' – played a crucial connecting role here. 'It captured in one sustained image,' Stoler says, 'internal threats to the health and well-being of a social body where those deemed a threat lacked an ethics of "how to live" and thus the ability to govern themselves' (127). This incapacity is accounted for by denying the working classes, just as much as savages and – to anticipate a point to be considered more fully shortly – women, that archaeological organisation of the self that allowed it to be viewed as part of a cumulative, trans-generational developmental project.

The forms of mastery of the self produced by the archaeological constitution of modern man thus depended on, and supplied the conditions for, a mastery over a set of interconnected classed, raced and gendered others. This, in turn, provided the conditions for an archaeological construction of the social whose depths, Stoler suggests, were polyvalent:

> . . . the sexual model of the promiscuous working-class woman in nineteenth-century, industrialising England construed her as a 'primitive relic of an earlier evolutionary period,' . . . who stood in contrast to 'the moral model of . . . middle-class sexual restraint and civility.'
>
> (128)[13]

Bagehot's conception of the political community rests on similar principles. It, too, is archaeologically stratified. In reflecting, in his 1867 text *The English Constitution*, on the unequal development of the human race, Bagehot – contrasting the imagined life of the savage past with that of civilised Europe – suggests that the gulf between the two seems unbridgeable. It is, however, an opposition that he proceeds to mediate by noting how such pasts survive within the body politic as a series of archaic layers:

> Great communities are like great mountains – they have in them the primary, secondary and tertiary strata of human progress; the characteristics of the lower regions resemble the life of old times rather than the present life of the higher regions.
>
> (Bagehot, 1963: 63)

His own period was no exception:

> We have in a great community like England crowds of people scarcely more civilised than the majority of two thousand years ago; we have others, even more numerous, such as the best people were a thousand years ago.
>
> (62–3)

This archaeological stratification of the political community informed Bagehot's understanding of democracy. The fact that the vast majority of the population were backward and so still governed by the 'cake of custom' entailed a limited suffrage: the conduct of government, Bagehot argued, should be limited to the 'educated ten thousand' who had reached the level of the 'age of discussion'. This is in truth, then, less a concept of democracy than an attempt to redraw the boundary lines that the tradition of civic humanism had earlier drawn in its definition of the political community. These distinguished, on the one hand, those whose station in life and economic independence qualified them to participate in public discussion of matters of civic importance because they could do so disinterestedly from, on the other hand, those who, by dint of the menial nature of their occupation and their inability to rise above the level of self interest and the immediacy of their daily lives, were excluded from such discussions.[14] The important difference, however, is that, in Bagehot's construction, the boundary line is drawn not in terms of a distinction of occupation but in terms of the different relations of different social strata to the sedimented remains of the past that had been deposited in the present. The 'connective tissue of civilisation' was, in effect, a split one severed along the fault-line separating those still frozen in fossilised ways of life and the representatives of progress and innovation in the present

The modern self, culture and society

Yet such conservative conclusions did not necessarily follow from the archaeological conceptions Bagehot deployed. To the contrary, for a broad spectrum of liberal opinion, a central issue was how far to extend the reach of the architecture of the modern self and who to include within it by dispersing the ability to form and develop a self that was poised in a restless tension between its archaic and progressive components. It was in the context of these concerns that the 'new liberalism' advocated limited forms of state intervention in the cultural sphere in order to avoid the alternative solution – that of forcibly detaching the present from the archaeological remnants of past stages of evolution – that was represented by statist programmes of eugenics. This, in turn, provided the discursive co-ordinates for a conception of the museum as a storage vehicle – a memory machine – which, in some formulations, displaced, and, in others, complemented the muscular mechanism of habit in providing a cultural means of accumulating the lessons of the past and, in bringing those lessons to bear on the present, acting developmentally on the social.

It will be instructive here to look briefly at another account of the relations between evolution and character in view of its role in paving the way for an acknowledgement of the role of cultural forces in the dynamics of social evolution. The account I have in mind is that offered by Thomas Huxley in his discussion, in *Evolution and Ethics*, of the relations between government

and self-government. His discussion proceeds through the use of gardening as a metaphor for government. Evoking an imagery which aptly captures the essence of Foucault's account of liberal government, Huxley argues that this metaphor is correctly interpreted only when government aims to enlist men as gardeners of themselves in a project of ethical self-cultivation that is superintended by the state rather than seeking to intervene directly in their growth and cultivation through state-directed programmes of eugenic management:

> In the modern world, the gardening of men by themselves is practically restricted to the performance, not of selection, but of that other function of the gardener, the creation of conditions more favourable than those of the state of nature; to the end of facilitating the free expansion of the innate faculties of the citizen, so far as it is consistent with the general good.
>
> (Huxley, 1893: 101)

It is the development of conscience – which Huxley derives naturalistically from the human capacity for sympathy – that establishes a space, a fold, within the constitution of the person within which this activity of self-government can be installed. This space is organised in terms of a contrast between two different layers of the person, albeit that, in Huxley's formulations, this archaeological structure takes a distinctive form which transfers its accumulative aspects from the individual to society. The reasons for this have to do with Huxley's rejection of the concept of use inheritance as this ruled out the possibility that the person might be composed of so many progressive layers of accumulated experience, sedimented one on top of the other. Instead, the internal architecture of the Huxleyan self is governed by a vertiginous division between two layers, defined in a simple bipolar relationship to one another in which 'the innate aggressive impulses of the ancestor' are moderated by 'the acquired social restraint of the cultured being' (Paradis, 1989: 20). The deep time of the prehistoric past thus survives in the inner constitution of the modern person, but it survives directly, the product of 'millions of years of severe training' (Huxley, 1893: 143), and in direct confrontation with the socially-produced 'man within' (Huxley, 1989 [1894]: 88).

For Huxley, the savagery of primitive man, a savagery forged in the struggle for existence, reappears, in full brutish propensity, as a component in the make up of each individual and each generation. There is no natural storage mechanism, as there was for Bagehot, for accumulating the virtue acquired in one generation and carrying it forward to the next: self-assertion and self-restraint are pitted against one another, always and forever, in unmediated antagonism. It is precisely because this is so, however, that Huxley, in transferring this storage mechanism from the inner constitution of each individual to the social environment, provides for a distinctive dialectic of culture and society in which it is the trans-generational accumulation of

means on acting on, curbing and regulating natural instincts that provides for the 'progressive modification of civilisation' rather than an endless repetition of the same inner drama. Every 'child born into the world will still bring with him the instinct of unlimited self-assertion,' but the circumstances in which the lessons of self-restraint and renunciation have to be mastered mean that 'man, as a "political animal," is susceptible of a vast amount of improvement, by education, by instruction, and by the application of his intelligence to the adaptation of the conditions of life to his higher needs' (Huxley, 1989 [1894]: 102). The consequences of this relocation of the storage mechanism though which acquired virtue is transmitted through time is nicely summarised by Lloyd Morgan, formerly a close associate of Huxley's, in his 1896 text *Habit and Instinct*:

> There must be increment somewhere, otherwise evolution is impossible. In social evolution on this view, the increment is by storage in the social environment to which each new generation adapts itself, with no increased native power of adaptation. In the written record, in social traditions, in the manifold inventions which makes scientific and industrial progress possible, in the products of art, and the recorded examples of noble lives, we have an environment which is at the same time the product of mental evolution, and affords the conditions of the development of each individual mind to-day.
>
> (Morgan, 1896: 340)

Huxley's accomplishment in this regard was, in essence, to imbue civilisation with an independent developmental mechanism through which past advances, accumulated and stored in a variety of institutional and technological forms, provided the means, essentially cultural, for acting on the social so as to contribute to its ongoing cumulative development and to curb the disturbing effects of atavistic tendencies wherever these might manifest themselves.

The museum as evolutionary accumulator

It is not difficult to see why, as the cultural storage mechanism *par excellence*, the museum should have figured so prominently in Huxley's own educational strategies and those of 'new liberalism' more generally – not to mention the considerable effort Huxley and his allies devoted to ensuring that their followers were appointed to key positions in the new museums of ethnology and natural history that flourished in the last quarter of the century.[15] For by making 'pasts beyond memories' a part of the social environment, the evolutionary museum – speaking, ideally,[16] in the language of things – transformed those pasts into a form of social mnemonics. By accumulating all past times within itself and thus providing a summation of previous development (natural, cultural, scientific and technological), pointing a way forward and providing a pedagogic programme that would

contribute to the realisation of this dynamic, the evolutionary museum func-
tioned as a cultural technology for operating on the present.

   This was clear enough in the programme Henry Pitt Rivers proposed for
the ethnological museum which, to recall our discussion in the last chapter,
he envisaged as an evolutionary accumulator, storing – by means of their
survivals – a record of each painstaking step in the processes of cultural and
technological revolution that provided a template for future social develop-
ment as an equally painstaking and gradual process. This conception of
the museum's function depend on Pitt Rivers's adaptation of the Thomsen's
typological method to construct, by means of the display of technologies,
what were purportedly universal developmental sequences leading from the
simple to the complex (from the Aboriginal throwing stick to the medieval
musket, for example, in his displays of weaponry). By packing in as many
illustrations of stages of development intervening between the beginnings
and the conclusions of such evolutionary sequences, Pitt Rivers's purpose
was to communicate the lesson that society, like nature, makes no jumps.
This contention had – by the late nineteenth century – a long and disputed
history in which it had been variably connected to conservative, radical and
reformist political tendencies in its application to both the natural and social
orders, and to the relations between them.[17] In the period from the 1850s,
however, this 'law' – when put through the Darwinian mill of natural selec-
tion – had emerged as the coda for Darwinian liberalism in the implication
that natural law dictated that social progress could only be, and must there-
fore aspire to be, slow and cumulative. The attraction of this view – aptly
summarised in Darwin's pithy 'evolution baffles revolution' (cit. Desmond
and Moore, 1992: 294) – is self evident, and especially in the social agitation
of the 1880s and 1890s. It gave an embattled liberalism a means of engaging
with the increasing influence of socialist ideologies – and with evident success
in view of the more or less total commitment of British schools of socialist
thought to this premise of evolutionary thought from the 1890s well into the
twentieth century. It also provided a means of rebutting the socially static
and conservative implications of Owen's theory of archetypes according to
which the development of each species followed the separate path of a fore-
ordained divine plan thus ruling out the possibilities of their being connected
in a sequential but – because directionless – contingent evolutionary order.[18]

   It is true that, in some interpretations, it is only the conservative, restrain-
ing effects of the law that 'nature makes no jumps' that are stressed, leading
to the assessment that the post-Darwinian synthesis of the historical sci-
ences functioned solely as a conservative bulwark against the rising tide of
socialism.[19] This is, however, a misleadingly one-sided reading of this law
which, in its late nineteenth-century interpretation, has always to be read
in conjunction with the unstated, but implied, rider: 'but it does progress'.
The justification for extending state action in the cultural sphere can only be
understood in the light of this dual orientation which, just as it required that
the workingman be weaned from the influence of ideologists who fuelled

the expectation that his lot might be suddenly and dramatically improved through a ruptural political event, also required that progress be stimulated.

If the restraining and conservative aspect of this orientation predominated in Pitt Rivers's museum designs, the balance is struck differently in the connections that Patrick Geddes proposed between the historical sciences, museums, education and civics. Throughout his work – an unusually fertile, albeit incoherent, mix of social evolutionary conceptions, eugenics, new liberalism, statistics, sociology, urban planning and civics – he retained a strong interest in museums as both a site and metaphor for his activities.[20] He thus took an active part in the programme of public lectures offered by the Horniman Museum when it was brought under the administration of London County Council. In 1905, for example, he offered a course of ten lectures on *Great Cities: Their Place in Geography, and their Relation to Human Development* which, in its form, replicated the archaeological structure of the Museum's exhibits in – for each period of urban life studied – identifying the 'persistence and continued expansion of (the) preceding elements and influences in modern cities' (Geddes, 1905: 3).

But it is in his conception of the Outlook Tower that his understanding of the museum's role as a storage device capable of accumulating a succession of pasts, synthesising their directions, and mapping out a future – and thereby, in being applied to the tasks of civic education, serving as a means of acting developmentally on the social – is most fully articulated. Developed in the 1890s, the Outlook Tower was shaped, in part, by the early debates of the Museums Association in which Geddes participated. A totalising device based on a combination of geographical and historical principles, the Tower – in both its physical form in Edinburgh as well as in the broader role it played in Geddes's writings as one of his 'thinking machines' – was intended as a means of focusing the visitor's attention on localised tasks of civic development by placing these in both a world and a historical setting. The visitor's itinerary was to lead from the camera obscura (see Fig. 5.1), providing a view of the city and its regions, and then downwards through a succession floors which placed that urban and civic vista in successively broader contexts, each providing a summary of historical evolution, present conditions and future prospects. The logic at work here is made clear in another of Geddes's 'thinking machines' (see Fig. 5.2) which, in constructing the relations between the ancient, recent and contemporary phases of development and the future in the form of a sequence whose direction has yet to be deciphered, provided a template for applying the accumulation of the past's lessons to the task of future civic development.

In the slipstream of progress

My argument so far has been that the evolutionary museum is productively viewed as a progressive cultural technology whose operation is best understood in terms of the kinds of work on the self it makes possible and
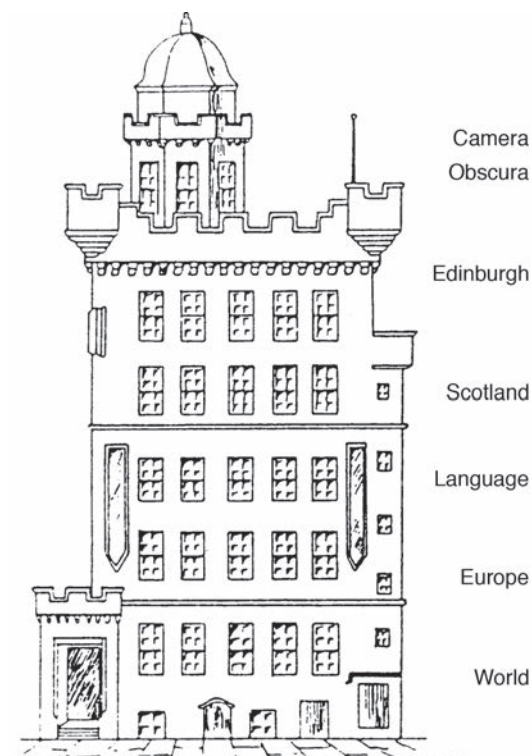
Figure 5.1 Diagrammic Elevation of the Outlook Tower, Edinburgh. From Patrick Geddes (1915) *Cities in Evolution*, London: Williams and Norgate, 324

HISTORY IN EVOLUTION

Phase of historical development in tabular form:

ANCIENT			RECENT		
Primitive	Matriarchal	Patriarchal	Greek & Roman	Medieval	Renaissance
CONTEMPORARY			INCIPIENT		
Revolution	Empire	Finance	?	?	?

Figure 5.2 History in Evolution. Patrick Geddes (1906) 'Cities: an applied sociology' in V. Bradford (ed) *Sociological Papers*, London: Macmillan, 108

organises.[21] The manner in which the inner space of the self was conceptualised as a series of archaeological strata organised a set of vectors within the self in which the repressive effects of archaic formations could be peeled back by the more recent and progressive layers of the self. This would result, ideally, in a dialectic between the archaic and contemporary layers of the self, yielding a restless tension between the two whose resolution would give the self a forward momentum.

Yet this could only be true for some types of person and not others owing to the ways in which this architecture of the self was constructed. The major wager of post-Darwinian liberalism was that evolutionary museums would, alongside other instruments of public instruction, extend the reach of this architecture of the self to reach the workingman. Yet – and we have only to read Pitt Rivers's musings on the relations between the 'automaton mind' and the 'intellectual mind' (see Lane-Fox, 1875: 296) to see this – educated opinion remained acutely divided as to whether the working classes yet possessed, or could easily acquire, the kind of double-layered self that was required for the person so see himself as both the product of the past and yet free to modify its force in breaking with habit to forge the future. It was, as a consequence, necessary that the evolutionary museum should hammer its lessons home in a way that would imprint them on the workingman's mind in a more-or-less mechanical fashion which could then be learned by rote, making progress a matter of habit rather than of understanding.[22]

Yet, in so far as he was white and male, an archaeologically structured self was something which – with help and encouragement – the workingman might come to acquire. The position of women and of the colonised was quite different owing to the respects in which both, in recalling the ancestry of the race, represented an archaic component in the make-up of the modern person whose constitution was thus inherently white and male. Bernard McGrane has written helpfully on the colonial aspects of this formation in noting the degree to which Edward Tylor's social anthropology was concerned less to explain the customs and practices of savage societies than it was, by means of what it said about these, to explain the present through its endless rehearsal of the distance between modern man and his savage ancestors. As a consequence, he argues, anthropology was a discourse which entirely excluded its object from its modes of address. 'Nineteenth-century anthropological discourse,' as he puts it, 'secures, identifies, and institutionalises itself by systematically excluding the possibility that a person it considers to be "savage" (i.e., one of "them") might read (and collaborate with) this statement and "misclassify" himself as an "us"' (McGrane, 1989: 96). This was especially true of evolutionary museums which admitted the colonised as objects of display and research, but never as a party to the discourse about savagery that evolutionary displays embodied. Tom Griffiths gives us a sense of the long historical influence of these conceptions in recording that when, in the 1960s, an Australian museum realised that

Aborigines might count as members of its public, it felt obliged 'to warn potential Aboriginal visitors that they might find exhibits disturbing should they enter the building' (Griffiths, 1996: 95).

The position of women was different again to the degree that their demotion to representing archaic layers of the self involved an assault on the influence they had earlier enjoyed as the domestic mediators of an altogether more benign and provident nature. The reasons for assigning women an ativistic status that confined them to the archaic level of the self varied across the different schools of evolutionary thought that defined the late-nineteenth-century intellectual landscape. In the case of Darwin, the mechanisms of use inheritance combined with those of sexual selection worked to retain women in a state of acquiescent passivity which, in ill preparing them for the struggle for existence and obliging their dependency on the naturally more aggressive male, also deprived their psychological make-up of that dynamic tension arising out of the more complexly layered self that men had developed through the ages. In Huxley's case, a melange of arguments led him to view women as 'naturally timid, inclined to dependence, born conservative' (cit. Richards, 1983: 92) and as, accordingly, for the greater part, destined to 'stop in the doll stage of evolution, to be the stronghold of parsondom, the drag on civilisation, the degradation of every important pursuit with which they mix themselves' (cit. Richards, 1989: 256).

Yet women occupied an important place in the strategic calculations of post-Darwinian liberalism in view of their role in educating the next generation. Huxley thus grudgingly recognised that social progress would be assisted if women, too, could be helped to lessen the impact of their own archaic presence within the body politic through educational programmes of self improvement, while their educational influence over children meant that – if not for their own sakes – women were important in view of their 'relay' function within the ethical process. Darwin had made this point many years earlier in his notebooks when he had observed 'improve the women. (double influence) and mankind must improve' (cit. Desmond and Moore, 1992: 252). When assessing the responsibility of government for the education of women, it was this second part of their 'double influence' – that is, their role as mothers – that carried the most weight with both Huxley and Darwin. While this might justify women being educated to the degree necessary to perform their domestic roles in the earlier phases of child-rearing, they could see little justification for state expenditure on women in the higher levels of education that might equip them for public, professional or scientific roles. State expenditure here would simply be wasteful to the degree that women's backwardness was determined by ancient biological causes that were still operative in the present. 'What was decided among the prehistoric Protozoa,' Geddes and Thompson argued in *The Evolution of Sex*, 'cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament' (cit. Richards, 1983: 93). Huxley, in his 1865 essay 'Education – black and white', was equally adamant that no amount of education would oblige nature

to make even the tiniest of jumps in its iron-like ordering of the relations between the sexes:

> Nature's old salique law will not be repealed, and no change of dynasty will be effected. The big chests, the massive brains, the vigorous muscles and stout frames of the best men will carry the day, whenever it is worth their while to contest the prizes of life with the best women.
>
> <div align="right">(cit. Richards, 1983: 92–3)</div>

The significance of these developments becomes clearer if they are placed in a longer perspective. Ann Shteir (1996) has shown how, in the earlier mid-century period, attacks on both Paleyean natural theology and the legacy of Linnaeus's binomial system – whose simplicity, Lisbet Koerner (1996) suggests, had helped democratise natural history, making it especially popular with women – formed part of a campaign to defeminise science by establishing a masculine culture of experts (Shteir, 1996).[23] This is not to say that women passively accepted these developments any more than, in the later period, they simply rolled over and played out the 'doll's house' roles to which their stern masters of evolutionary necessity would confine them. Arabella Buckley's revision of the benign narratives of earlier schools of natural history to take account of evolution, yet lend its support to the need for social evolution to aspire to ever higher forms of social mutuality (Gates, 1997), and the more broadly based feminist campaigns against vivi-section, fuelled by a sympathy for animal life that stemmed from women's classification and treatment as themselves scarcely more evolved than domestic animals (Richards, 1997): in these ways, and others, the lessons of evolution were subject to a complex history of acceptance, revision, rebuttal, and derision in the writings of late nineteenth century feminists. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the programme of the evolutionary museum – allied to the development of natural history teaching in the newly-emerging public schooling system – was part of an active campaign to bring nature under the jurisdiction of an essentially male science during a crucially formative period in the development of state education and a mass public culture. Nor is there any doubt that this assault on the influence that women had previously enjoyed in the domestic sphere as the privileged interpreters of nature's scripts served to re-affirm women's subordination to the sovereign power of the male head of household while, at the same time, redefining the terms in which this was organised by denying women the archaeologically layered self that was judged necessary for persons to be fully and autonomously self-governing within the new horizons of deep time that governed late nineteenth-century consciousness.

Notes

1 The term 'prehistoric' was first used in the title of Daniel Wilson's *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (see Putnam, 1899: 227) while the term 'dinosaur' was coined by Richard Owen as a collective noun for fossil reptiles. The dinosaur made its

first public appearance in the reconstructions of fossil reptiles that Waterhouse Hawkins – following Owen's ideas – prepared for the 1854 Crystal Palace exhibition (see Mitchell, 1998: 95–7, 124–6).

2 It is important to be clear that the argument developed here is not intended to apply to the evolutionary museums that were developed in other countries over the same period. These were usually the result of distinctive intellectual and political dynamics which need to be understood on their own terms.

3 I draw here, in the concept of a 'mutation in personhood', on Carolos Novas's and Nikolas Rose's discussion of the changes in the conception of personhood associated with recent advances in the life sciences. See Novas and Rose (2000).

4 I place the term in parenthesis to acknowledge an ambiguity in the literature: sometimes reserved, in its capitalised form, for the social reform orientation that was codified as New Liberalism by L.T. Hobhouse around 1910, the lower case usage is more elastic in being extended to the closing two to three decades of the nineteenth century to identify the breach with classical liberalism that was marked, philosophically, in the writings of T.H. Green and, practically, in liberal advocacy of an important role for the state in the cultural and moral sphere. It is, then, this tendency – essentially a bridge between classical liberalism and New Liberalism – that I shall refer to as the 'new liberalism'.

5 I draw here on Foucault's characterisation of the Renaissance system of classification as one in which signs were a part of things themselves, with the consequence that writing the history of a plant or animal was as much a matter of describing everything that had been said about it in literature, myths, medicine, etc., as of describing its organs (Foucault, 1970: 129).

6 Thomsen was the first curator of the National Museum in Copenhagen. He began to arrange the Museum's collections in accordance with the three-age system in 1816, but it was not until 1836 that he published a definitive statement of the system and its underlying principles in an issue of the Museum's guide. See Freeland (1983).

7 The most important exception here is Louis Agassiz whose continuing support for catastrophist accounts of the earth's development remained influential – especially in the United States – until the 1880s and 1890s. See Lurie (1960).

8 My approach to liberalism here as a strategy of rule which seeks to limit the activity of government, but always in contextually specific ways depending on the alternatives it defines itself against, derives from the literature developed in the wake of Foucault's writing on governmentality. See Dean (1999) for a commanding survey of this tradition of work.

9 Darwin draws explicitly on Bagehot in his own account, in *The Descent of Man*, of the role of the moral faculties in social development (see Darwin, 1981: 162). The value it placed on the benefits to be derived from the principle of variability played a considerable role in Darwin's criticisms of the eugenic conceptions of Fancis Galton (see Greene, 1981: 104–11 and Jones, 1980, 21–4). Bagehot's influence on Huxley is discussed by Paradis and Williams (1989: 16–24). His influence on Pitt Rivers's account of the difference between the 'intellectual mind' and the 'automaton mind' is readily discernible, although not explicitly acknowledged (see Lane-Fox, 1875).

10 See Greene (1981: 101–2) for a discussion of the influence of this aspect of Spencer's thought on the general intellectual climate of late nineteenth-century debate, including Darwin's own views.

11 Otis's discussion surveys a much broader discursive field that the one I am concerned with, encompassing Ernst Haeckel's contention that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny and, of course, Freud's layered architecture of the psyche.

12 There are clear links with Freudian accounts here. However, rather than treating these as providing a means of understanding colonial discourse as the product

of a psychoanalytically grounded process of splitting (see Bhabha, 1994), the approach taken here would account for the structure of the Freudian psyche as a product of the deployment of techniques of self examination within the context of the archaeological topologies derived from the historical sciences.

13 The quoted passages here are from Tiffany and Adams (1985). For a telling discussion of these intersections, see Marriott (1999).

14 See Barrell (1986) for the classic account of the discourse of civic humanism.

15 David van Keuren has estimated that, of the 71 new museum collections opened in Britain in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s, 28 were natural history collections and 5 ethnological collections as compared with a joint total of 3 collections of both types in the whole of the preceding part of the century (van Keuren, 1982: 155). Huxley's involvements with museums, from his first position as a natural history lecturer at the School of Mines to his later role as a major museum power broker, are admirably detailed in Adrian Desmond's two-volume biography of Huxley (Desmond, 1994, 1997).

16 I say 'ideally' as, although the evolutionary showmen imagined they had vanquished the philologist to let the unvarnished truth of things shine forth, the evolutionary museum was in fact characterised by a complex set of relations between words and things. I have discussed this elsewhere (see Bennett, 1998b).

17 See Bynum (1974) for an extended discussion of the chequered political career of this concept from its interpretation in the context of late eighteenth-century variants of the great chain of being, through the anthropologies of Johann Blumenbach and Thomas Jerrold, both of whom allowed, as Bynum puts it, that with 'man, at least, nature made a jump' (57) to its reinstatement in the context of post-Darwinian evolutionary thought.

18 See Desmond (1982) for the best discussion of the contrasting political implications of Owen's and Darwin's conceptions of evolution.

19 This is the view that informs Anne Coombes's assessment of the role of museums in this period: see Coombes (1988).

20 Beginning his career in Huxley's laboratory (Abrams, 1968: 96), Geddes was later closely associated with L.T. Hobhouse in the Sociological Society before becoming closely involved with the Chicago school of urban sociology (see Mercer, 1997).

21 My approach here derives from the approach that Foucault proposes to the relations between technologies of sign systems, technologies of power and technologies of the self. See Foucault (1988: 18).

22 See, for fuller discussions of these issues, Bennett (1995) and Bennett (1998a).

23 David Allen's arguments concerning the declining involvement of women in the organisation of natural history societies in the mid-century period tend in the same direction (see Allen, 1994: 143–53).

6 Pedagogic objects, clean eyes, and popular instruction

On sensory regimes and museum didactics*

In opening his essay 'Museums as contact zones,' James Clifford transports his readers to the basement of the Portland Museum of Art to eavesdrop on a meeting that had been arranged between Tlingit elders, the museum's curators, and himself to discuss the future of the museum's Rasmussen Collection of Northwest Coast Indian artifacts. The curators, Clifford tells us, had shared his own expectation that the elders would want to focus their attention on, and to organize the discussion around, the objects in the collection – but this proved not to be so. Although the artifacts were referred to from time to time 'as *aides-mémoires*, occasions for the telling of stories and the singing of songs' (Clifford, 1997: 189), it was the stories and songs that took center stage. The objects were left to keep pretty much to themselves, lying undisturbed 'on the museum tables or in storage boxes' (Clifford, 1997: 189), for the most part unheeded and, indeed, unseen, their role eclipsed by the cross-cultural exchanges – in stories, songs, and conversation – that they had occasioned. In Clifford's telling, the museum thus emerges as primarily a scene of conversation rather than one of exhibition.

The imagery is a fitting one for Clifford's argument that museums should now be understood as 'contact zones' that aim to facilitate a greater degree of cross-cultural communication between the different communities that are brought into contact with one another within the museum space. This entails that curators should conceive their roles in new ways. In place of the curator as the possessor of an authoritative knowledge that results in museum artifacts being arranged as the vehicles for a one-way transmission of messages, Clifford suggests that curators should rethink their relationships to the objects entrusted to their care and see these as artifactual mediators in, and of, complex histories of cultural exchange. It is equally clear, however, that the program Clifford proposes for the museum entails a shift in the ratio of the senses that are to be brought into play in the artifactual environment that the museum constructs. If, for the past two hundred years and more, the curator's role has been to arrange an authoritative message for the

museum's public, this has been done by exhibiting collections in a manner calculated to render that message visible. This centering of the eye within a conception of the museum as an institution of the visible is now to be displaced in a conception of the museum's function that – in the stress placed on dialogue across cultures caught in reciprocal, although unequally structured, exchanges – views objects as vehicles for promoting complex kinds of cross-cultural talk and listening, rather than simply as collections that are to be displayed to be looked at. This becomes clear as Clifford outlines the difference between what the Portland Museum's curators had looked forward to obtaining from their meeting with the Tlingit elders – that is, another context for the display of the collection, one rooted in and authenticated by an authoritative indigenous cultural perspective – and what they actually got:

> As evoked in the museum's basement, Tlingit history did not primarily illuminate or contextualize the objects of the Rasmussen Collection. Rather, the objects provoked (called forth, brought to voice) ongoing stories of struggle. From the position of the collecting museum and the consulting curator, this was a disruptive history which could not be confined to providing past tribal context for the objects. The museum . . . was urged to act on behalf of Tlingit communities, not simply to represent the history of tribal objects completely or accurately.
>
> (Clifford, 1997: 193)

Clifford is not alone in suggesting the need for a change in the sensory regime of the museum. Indeed, the dominance of the eye has been put in question for some time now across a range of museum practices – from hands-on exhibits that promote tactile involvement in the museum environment, through museums in which the sonic element predominates over the visual, to avant-garde experiments in which sound and vision are gratingly misaligned with one another. My purpose here is to place these concerns in a historical perspective by looking at the processes through which the sensory regime of the museum came to privilege sight, and, in doing so, to organize distinctive relations of vision and pedagogy, with a view to considering what light these might throw on contemporary attempts to lessen the dominance of the visual by reordering its relations to the other senses. The relations of vision and pedagogy with which I shall be most concerned are those comprising the didactics of the late-nineteenth-century public museum, whose ocular-centrism was succinctly expressed by Frederick McCoy, the first director of the National Museum of Victoria, when he suggested that museums were best thought of as 'affording "eye-knowledge" to a class of persons who have neither time nor opportunity for lengthened study of books' (McCoy, 1857: 14). As we shall see, formulations of this kind were routinely repeated in the professional museum literature of the period, especially in the context of debates about the relations between labels and exhibits and their role – as a subset of the relations between words and things – in directing vision. As

such, their intelligibility rested on the confluence of a number of historical processes that, in transforming the museum artifact into a pedagogic object, sought also to cleanse the eyes of the public so that, in absorbing the lessons of those objects, they might be effectively instructed in the meaning of history. If we are to place the sensory regimes that governed museum didactics in this period in a proper historical perspective, however, it will be necessary to appreciate how they were indebted to, while also differing from, the relations of sight and vision that governed the program of the Enlightenment museum. It is accordingly to these matters that I turn first, by tracing how the museum was transformed from a place for civic conversability, in which relations of speaking, hearing, and seeing were more or less equally balanced, into a place for looking and learning in which the eye – directed by reason – was, at least theoretically, to reign supreme.

From civic conversations to directed vision

The Italian Renaissance played a crucial role in the early development of the museum as a distinctively secular and civic institution. This was especially true of the new functions that were accorded natural history collections as these were refashioned to form nodal points in a new network of institutions dedicated to cultivating new forms and relations of urban sociability. For this involved, and for the first time, a clear conception of the museum as a secular and civic space that was detached, physically and conceptually, from the monastic forms and relations of scholarship with which it had earlier been associated. Paula Findlen, in describing this transformation, construes it mainly in terms of a transition from one socio-sonic regime to another, a shift from a world of silence and solitude into one of sound and civic sociability:

> The quietude of the monastic *studium* and eremitic retreat from society gave way in the late Renaissance to the visual and verbal cacophony of the museum, marking the transition from study to collecting. Humanists from Petrarch to Machiavelli had valued the dialectic between silence and eloquence. For them, the study was a space of contemplation. Situated between the bedroom and private chapel, it belonged to the inner recesses of the domicile. Dark, often windowless, the visual monotony relieved only by a table, a desk, a chair, and a niche for books or a chest to contain them, the earliest museums (in the original sense of the word) were spaces bereft of the signs of sociability that we have come to associate with the museum.
>
> (Findlen, 1994: 101)

With the development of the practice of collecting and the redefinition of the museum as the repository for a collection, the museum, in shifting its function from *studio* to *galleria* – from a space of 'containment and privacy' to

one of 'openness and sociability' (Findlen, 1994: 109) – made a journey from the inner spaces of the house to more public and accessible locations that was simultaneously a journey from silence into sound. As a consequence, the museum was refashioned into a 'conversable space,' a place where the exhibition of nature's curiosities served as 'a prelude to conversing about natural history' (100) in a manner – heavily ritualized – that was calculated to forge and strengthen bonds of civic solidarity.

This is not to say that the eye was uninvolved in the Renaissance cabinet of curiosities. On the contrary, in moving from the inner recesses of the household to more accessible spaces, collections also became more publicly visible and, as well as involving their visitors in conversations, addressed them as spectators. The forms of looking that this involved, however, supposed a wandering rather than a disciplined eye, and an eye that, rather than functioning in isolation from the other senses or being distanced from the collection, was pulled into it to be caught in a system of side-way glances between objects whose organization was dialogical.[1] For Barbara Stafford, this system of relations functioned to involve sight in, and subordinate it to, a universe whose governing logic was conversational, in which the roles of viewing, speaking, and listening mingled complexly with one another. The manifest incompleteness and deliberately perplexing organization of cabinets of curiosities precluded their 'incorporation into a seamless narrative and controlling taxonomy' (Stafford, 1994: 238). Instead, Stafford suggests, such collections functioned anamorphically to the degree that their puzzling contents 'awaited resolution in the delectating vision of the beholder' (238). This practice of vision, however, was to be brought into play in a world whose disorder resembled that of speech, just as the solutions it worked to effect depended on mechanisms in which relations of sight were modeled on, and inscribed within, relations of spoken language: 'Crammed shelves and drawers, with their capricious jumps in logic and disconcerting omissions, resembled the apparent disorganization of talk' in which a miscellany of objects '"chatted" among themselves and with the spectator' (238). Bereft of labels, detached from any fixing context, curiosities 'resembled rumours,' 'garbled messages,' or 'snatches of muttered speech'; as such, they comprised 'unreadable details' belonging to 'a totality forever evading the spectator,' who nonetheless became involved in an attempt to construct totality by filling in the bits, the spaces, between objects (251). However, since the relations between objects were not subtended by any classificatory logic, they could be cohered into an order only provisionally through a dialogic social practice whose operational logic was much like that which enables speakers to fill in the missing pieces of each others' speech in order to sustain their conversation. This, then, was a totality to be made and held, fragilely, in and through conversations in which the side-glancing words of collector and visitor colluded with side-glancing objects to sustain a temporary order – rather than, as in the museum's Enlightenment conception, a given totality resting on an authoritative knowledge that was 'invisible to the untrained beholder' (251).

The tension between, on the one hand, 'an Enlightenment classifying culture,' and, on the other, 'a waning baroque oral-visual polymathy' (218) in which nature was a 'browsing field of pleasing fragments to gather, discuss, and gape at' (225) was worked out in favor of the former as the cabinet of curiosities was transformed into the museum of natural history and, in the process, was charged with the task of public instruction. Stafford singles out two key figures here: Louis-Jean-Marie Daubenton, appointed by Buffon in 1745 as the chief curator at the *cabinet d'histoire naturelle* at the Jardin du Roi, and Joseph-Adrien Le Large de Lignac, Daubenton's more severe and exacting rationalist critic.[2] Daubenton's chief innovation consisted in a system of labeling that aimed to give each object its own label so that it should be clearly and distinctly recognizable, and to arrange the relationships between labeled objects in a manner that would make the order underlying nature intelligible to the ordinary visitor. As Daubenton put it in his 1749 description of an ideal cabinet:

> Everything in effect will be instructive; at each glance not only will one gain knowledge of the objects themselves, one will also discover relationships between given objects and those that surround them. Resemblances will define the genus, differences will mark the species; those marks of similarity and difference, taken and compared together, will present to the mind and engrave in the memory the image of nature.
>
> (Daubenton, cit. McClellan, 1994: 80)

In this radical systematization, the object, no longer a vehicle for civic conversations, functioned as part of a system of directed vision in which words, losing their side-glancing dialogism, were to relay an authoritative knowledge from the curator to the visitor. For Daubenton, however, there were allowable exceptions: specimens that were regarded as inherently agreeable to the eye were to be sprinkled through the museum in a random fashion in order to provide some visual respite from the rigors of taxonomy and, in thus adding to the overall appeal of the spectacle, to increase the museum's popularity.

It was this concession to aesthetic principles of display that Lignac seized on in elaborating an uncompromising visual didactics in which sight was to be entirely subordinated to the regulation of an ordering mind, just as things were to be placed beneath, and to become accessible only through, the grid of words. It is this, of course, that Michel Foucault has in mind when, in his account of the principles of classification governing the classical *episteme*, he refers to natural history as 'nothing more than the nomination of the visible' (Foucault, 1970: 132), a system in which words and things are so laminated upon one another that seeing and naming are one and the same activity: to see is to name correctly, to name correctly is to see. Stripped of the commentary and cultural detritus that had been attached to them in Renaissance natural history, forms of

life are now arranged in systems of visible differences and resemblances in which they are 'the bearers of nothing but their own individual name' (131). While this presents things to the eye in a manner that makes it seem that 'it is the thing itself that appears,' the relations between thing and eye are ordered by the purified discourse of classification in which the thing is located within a 'reality that has been patterned from the very outset' (130) by the name it bears and the relations this establishes with other things.

The items displayed in the museum, then, were to be arranged so as to make visible the structure that governed the order of things. To the degree that this structure was discernible through the intellect rather than by means of unmediated sense perception, the eye, if it were to see that structure, had to be appropriately directed. Arranged by experts – by '"eyes that know how to see"' (Stafford, 1994: 9) – rationally ordered collections were to instruct untutored eyes in what was to be seen within the realm of the visible by placing a filter of words between sight and its objects: a rationalizing nomenclature in the form of a system of labels that, since their purpose was simply to nominate the visible that they made transparent, attached themselves to objects like cling-wrap. If the eye here is still centered in comparison with the other senses, it is an eye that has been subjected to reason and one that, no longer able to range freely within the side-glancing relations of words and things that had characterized the Renaissance cabinet, has been disciplined by being allowed access to things only via the mediation of a rationally ordered language.

Stafford's account of these changes in the relationships between the epistemic and sensory regimes of the Renaissance cabinet and the Enlightenment museum (the latter, of course, never entirely freed itself from the influence of earlier practices of curiosity) forms part of a broader discussion of the processes through which an oral-visual mode of learning – mainly southern and Catholic in its provenance, but transmitted throughout Europe during the Renaissance – was called to heel by the requirements of a literate-visual mode of learning based on a mainly Protestant and print-based ocularity that aimed to convert 'ignorant listeners and gullible onlookers' into 'silent and solitary readers' (Stafford, 1994: 1). Viewed in this light, the natural history collections of the Italian Renaissance were part of a wider communications network in which conversation functioned as the key operator in knitting together gestures and the display of objects as parts of an art of public casuistry in which truth was demonstrated via an appeal to both the eyes and ears of listeners and seers, who were addressed as participants in that demonstration rather than as detached observers. From the perspective of a literate and Protestant visuality, however, this world of conversations and accompanying visual performances was full of "gulling words and duping icons" (Stafford, 1994: 5) likely to deceive the ear and wrench the eye from its proper position – as figured in the camera obscura – of detached and intellectually controlled observation.[3]

The tension between these two different articulations of the senses, truth, and reason was evident as epistemic and sensory regimes wrestled with one another through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the early seventeenth century, a tradition of baroque mathematical recreations designed for the household converted the forms of public witnessing that had been developed to establish the truth-claims of the experimental sciences into a form of diverting entertainment.[4] By the end of the century, however, the emerging tradition of rational recreations proposed a different form of visual pedagogy for the home, one that, in place of the undemanding spectacle of baroque recreations, required the intellectual labor of visual persuasion to be made manifest as a way of guaranteeing that the sense of sight could be trusted, that the exhibited truth was based on reason rather than being the unreliable effect of a flashy illusionistic trick. In the eighteenth – and, indeed, well into the nineteenth – century, the clash between these two different principles of visuality came to be connected to the discordant claims of different forms of expertise, which, in their turn, were related to the emerging class divisions of capitalist society. As rational instructors ordered the world of things in a manner calculated to help visualize an order of reason, thus demoting the realm of the visible by casting it as merely a mediator for the transmission of reason from mind to mind, so this new class of experts also waged war on the popular entertainments of mechanics, artisans, showmen, and prestidigitators by chastising as illusionistic their manipulation of the realm of appearances in order to conjure up a world of the fantastic and grotesque, of popular wonders and oddities. This involved a contrast between the "invisible quality of mind" that informed the rational instruction of, say, the museum, and the 'visible agility of hand' (Stafford, 1994: 134) – the mere mechanical trickery – of the fairground entertainer.

The program of the Enlightenment museum of natural history, then, depended on an interacting set of processes through which a pedagogic arrangement of objects was placed in front of a set of eyes that had been cleansed of the clouding and illusory influence of the oral-visual culture that had sustained the civic conversations of the Renaissance cabinet of curiosities. It is therefore not surprising that, in concluding her account of the Renaissance cabinet by offering us a brief glimpse of the Enlightenment museum, Paula Findlen transports us into a different sensory universe, one in which the museum visitor is no longer to be engaged in conversation but is rather envisaged as an eye that is both detached from and placed before nature, as a reader before a text. She thus quotes the constitution of the University Museum of Turin to the effect that 'a well-organized Museum is like a universal Natural History' in being meant to 'be seen at a glance . . . as one great and well accomplished open book' (Findlen, 1994: 402). The historical struggle of the Enlightenment museum against its predecessors, however, was complemented by its ongoing struggle to distance itself from

the visual culture of contemporary forms of popular culture in which elements of earlier scopic regimes persisted alongside the illusionistic effects of new mechanical contrivances.

On the face of it, if we look forward a hundred years to the end of the nineteenth century, little had changed. Frederick McCoy's conception of the museum as a place for 'eye-knowledge' in fact rested on a conception of classification that remained essentially Cuvierian and whose rationalism, as David Goodman (1990: 18–34) has shown, McCoy explicitly opposed to the gulling words of Melbourne's popular showmen. Nowhere was his undisturbed confidence in the system of relationships between words and things that this entailed more evident than in his assertion that a botanical garden in which the classes, families, and genera are clearly labeled 'will teach the principles of botanical classification, even if but poorly furnished with plants' (McCoy, 1857: 8). McCoy, however, was the exception rather than the rule. This was comprised by the different role that was accorded to ocularcentric conceptions within the program for the museum that was proposed by the advocates of evolutionary thought. We shall understand the didactics that these conceptions gave rise to, however, only if we bear in mind Jonathan Crary's warning that vision 'can be privileged at different historical moments in ways that simply are not continuous with one another' (Crary, 1996: 57). For the relations between words and things were, in fact, significantly altered by virtue of their location within a distinctively new scopic regime in which the eye, which had now to absorb the lessons of an evolutionary rather than a taxonomic ordering of things, was subjected to new forms of regulation and regimentation.

Governing the eye

Martin Jay suggests that the 1860s witnessed the onset of the critical questioning of the atemporal, decorporealized, and transcendentally 'unmoving gaze from afar' that the Enlightenment had identified with 'dispassionate cognition' (Jay, 1994: 146) – a questioning that, in the 1890s, was to develop into Henri Bergson's insistence on 'the equiprimordiality of the senses in the apprehension of the world' (205). While this was doubtlessly so, these developments had little impact on the practices of museums in the English-speaking world. On the contrary, from the 1860s through to the end of the century and beyond, the lines the Enlightenment had sought to draw between the museum and the cabinet of curiosities were drawn once again, and with a peculiar tenacity and insistence, as museums, which were falling increasingly under state control and direction, came to be linked more closely to formal education systems and were called on to function as instruments of popular instruction. For F. W. Rudler, professor of natural science at the University of Wales and an important voice in the movement for the reform and professionalization of museums that had resulted

in the establishment of the Museums Association in 1889, museums were 'educational engines' (Rudler cit, Lewis, 1989: 3). As such, their efficient functioning required them to eschew 'pretty and attractive things, such as are to be found in some museums, heaped together in bower-birdish fashion, where they gratify the senses without nourishing the intellect' and to focus, instead, on 'a limited number of typical specimens' that, precisely because of their sparsity, would not confuse or bewilder the visitor. (Rudler cit Lewis, 1989: 4). Similarly, when, in 1883, Oxford University was considering whether to accept the Pitt Rivers collection, it was assured in the report prepared to guide its deliberations on this matter that the collection was no 'miscellaneous jumble of curiosities, but an orderly illustration of human history; and its contents have not been picked up haphazard from dealers' shops, but carefully selected at first hand with rare industry and judgement.'[5]

It is clear throughout this revivified Enlightenment discourse, moreover, that the role of a carefully coordinated ocularity in which the thing is subordinated to the word, and thereby sight to the direction of a controlling intellect (the curator's), remains pivotal to the museum's conception as an instrument for popular instruction.

In the annual proceedings of the Museums Association in the 1890s, for example, we constantly find the museum's task referred to in ways that stress its ocular-centrism. One contributor to these debates saw the museum as 'an important and valuable instrument of instruction – instruction which is directed to and assimilated by the eye' (Weiss, 1892: 25); for another, nature displays were to do their work among the crowded districts of the lower parts of Liverpool through their ability to 'effectually open the eyes, and through them the ears and hearts of boys and girls' (Chard, 1890: 63). Regulated vision, moreover, was to play a role in organizing the visitor's behavior by ensuring that a museum visit did not degenerate into an occasion for aimless wandering. 'How hopeless,' Jonathan Hutchinson argued, 'is the vacant gaze of the uninstracted as they wander through galleries in which on every side are accumulated objects which would enchain their interest if only they could understand them' (Hutchinson, 1893: 49).

We need, however, to recognize the class-specificity of these conceptions. Reverend H. H. Higgins warned that the stress on an unrelieved visual didacticism would tend to drive away the better class of visitors, who, he believed, were attracted to museums by 'a wish to lay by a store of topics for conversation and subsequent intercourse with sympathising friends . . . something to talk about' (Higgins, 1892: 40). Where the working-class visitor was concerned, however, the stress, in British debates, was constantly on the need to arrange exhibits so that they might 'speak to the eyes,' allowing their meaning to be taken in 'at a glance' by those whose conditions of life did not give them time either for book learning or for leisurely conversations. The museum's message, insofar as it was a message for everyone, was

to be presented in a manner that would allow it to be impressed on the passing and harried eye of the hard-pressed worker, mechanic, or miner who, as one Australian curator put it, 'want science to be put before them in a popular light, which speaking to their eyes, spares their time, and remains deeply impressed on their memory.'[6]

   This concern was frequently expressed – we find it in Thomas Huxley's educational writings as well as in Henry Pitt Rivers's descriptions of his typological method – in terms that stressed the need to so arrange exhibits that their meaning would be perfectly clear to everyone, so that even 'those who run may read': a phrase that has its roots in Habakkuk when the Lord, in appearing before a prophet in a vision, commanded him to 'write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it' (or, in the new revised standard version, 'Write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it'). The intention of writing clearly for ease and speed of dissemination is plain. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, 'those who run' had come to function as polite shorthand for the working classes – that is, for those whose occupations offered them little scope for independent knowledge or book learning. This was due, in the main, to the legacy of the late-eighteenth-century culture of civic humanism, most influentially represented by Sir Joshua Reynolds, in which the term had functioned to describe those who, like mechanics and artisans, were regarded as disqualified from citizenship owing to the fact that their occupations, in being 'concerned with things,' prevented them from 'exercising a generalizing rationality' of the kind necessary to distinguish the interests of civil society as a whole from the egoism of private interests (Barrell, 1986: 8). The economic subservience of those in menial occupations also meant that they lacked that capacity for independent thought, unconstrained by the will of others, that was viewed as necessary for the exercise of civic virtue. It was through this route that the relations between civility and science that had characterized seventeenth-century thought, in which economic independence – and the lack of subjection to others that this entailed – functioned as a significant measure of the reliability of a person's statements, were carried over into eighteenth-century aesthetic debates. For, as Stephen Shapin makes clear, the connections that these criteria established between civility and credibility entailed, as their correlate, the disqualification of other categories of persons whose conditions of life – whether because they involved subordination to the will of others or because they dulled the senses, destroying their harmony and balance – meant that they could no more be relied on to either speak the truth or understand it, even when presented to them plainly, than they could be expected to appreciate beauty properly. Unreliable as witnesses and gullible in their susceptibility to the tales circulated within a predominantly oral popular culture, 'children, common people, women and the sick' were, as one contemporary put it, 'most subject to being led by the ears' (Shapin, 1994: 90).

While the term retained these aspects of its earlier usage, the references to 'those who run' in the educational programs of late-nineteenth-century British liberal reformers like Pitt Rivers and Huxley also acknowledged the implications of the extension of male suffrage in recognizing the need to develop forms of popular instruction that, in overcoming the sensory and intellectual limitations of the workingman's occupation, would qualify him – led by experts – to exercise his judgment in a manner consistent with his new civic responsibilities. This challenge was allied to the related one of a shift in the nature of what it was that the workingman had to be led to see and to understand.[7] For, in comparison with the fixed positioning of the observer before the table that had characterized the world of classification, post-Darwinian evolutionary thought introduced a degree of mobility into the positioning of the museum visitor – which, in turn, generated distinctive problems for the ordering of vision within museum didactics, of a kind that had not been present in the Enlightenment program for the museum. This was evident in the new forms of emphasis that were placed on the spatial aspects of museum arrangements, and their implications for the positioning of the visitor in relation to the orders of time that evolutionary displays constructed.[8] The more it became committed to the exhibition of an evolutionary order of things, the more the museum, in its ordering of series, aimed to embody its message in spatial arrangements that the visitor was to enact as much as to see. For Professor Boyd Dawkins, the curator of the Manchester Museum and one of the most influential museum reformers of the period, the primary task of museum displays was to articulate the relationships between different times – archaeological, ethnological, and geological – in a manner that would allow their interconnections to be readily perceived. The museum, as he put it, must aim for a form of 'time arrangement' in which the interconnectedness of human, natural, and geological time would be 'placed plainly before the eye' (Dawkins, 1890: 42) in a manner that also allowed this 'eye knowledge' to be physically confirmed and recapitulated in the visitor's itinerary: 'It is a practical advantage for the Zoological and Botanical student to walk from the cases where he is studying any living group, to those Geological cases which mark its position in the history of the world, and thus to understand its place *in time*' (Dawkins, 1890: 3).

Foucault argues that it was Cuvier who, 'by substituting anatomy for classification, organism for structure, internal subordination for visible character, the series for tabulation, was to make possible the precipitation into the old flat world of animals and plants, engraved in black on white, a whole profound mass of time to which men were willing to give the renewed name of *history*' (Foucault, 1970: 138). This was also, Foucault stresses, a mutation in the earlier understanding of history in which '*historical* knowledge of the visible' had been opposed to '*philosophical* knowledge of the invisible, of what is hidden and of causes' (138). In the subsequent

development of evolutionary thought, the substitution of the series for the table forms part of a significant shift in the functioning of the visible. If, in the classical *episteme*, naming and seeing were the same within a system of visibility in which the *ratio* of things was attached to their surface, the intelligibility of the evolutionary series consisted in a history of cause, effect, and succession that could not itself be seen but was simply evoked by the temporally ordered arrangement of objects. This also involved a problem concerning the relationship of the observer to those series. This was resolved in the projection of a vantage point – Man – which, emerging from the series as their summation, provided a position from which their development might be observed.

   Yet, however much this disturbed the relationships between words and things that had characterized the Enlightenment museum, there can be no doubting that words retained their priority over things within the visual economy of the evolutionary museum display, where they functioned as parts of a system of directed vision that aimed to govern the eye of the visitor by subjecting it to the influence of new forms of expertise. There are contexts, it is true, where this seemed not to be so.[9] Henry Fairfield Osborn, during his terms as director of the American Museum of Natural History, frequently extolled the virtues of learning directly from nature rather than from books. When elaborating his arguments in detail, however, it was clear that, when arranged in the museum, the things of nature needed the verbal supplement of the scientific expert if they were to speak to the eyes at all clearly:

> In a Library the young reader may find books which will either make or unmake him as a citizen. The French and the Russian anarchies were bred in books and in oratory in defiance of every law of Nature. In the Exhibition Halls of the American Museum we are scrupulously careful not to present theories or hypotheses, but to present facts with only a sufficient amount of opinion to make them intelligible to the visitor. In the *Hall of the Age of Man*, for example, are brought together reproductions – as nearly as can be – facsimiles of the actual facts which have been discovered bearing on the pre-history of man in various parts of the world. These facts are put together conscientiously by experts who have been trained to clearly distinguish between fact and opinion, between truth and hypothesis or theory. The exhibits in this hall have been criticized only by those who speak without knowledge. They all tend to demonstrate the slow upward ascent and struggle of man from the lower to the higher stages, physically, morally, intellectually, and spiritually. Reverently and carefully examined, they point man upward towards a higher and better future and away from the purely animal stage of life.
>
> (Osborn, 1922/3: 2)

Osborn's belief (albeit belied by his practice) that objects impressed their lessons directly on the senses owed a good deal to the Pestalozzian system of education that, in the earlier history of American museums, had formed part of a culture of sensory democracy according to which museum objects provided all observers with a means of judging the truth for themselves rather than relying on the judgment of experts.[10] A similar object-centeredness had characterized the European development of archaeology and geology, in which literary and philological techniques of reading from the artifactual domain were displaced by them in developing techniques for interpreting the material evidence of things themselves, independently of their textual mediation.[11] No matter how much things were said to be able to speak for themselves, however, there was, in museums, an incessant effort to provide a written supplement that would help anchor their meaning.

The role of labeling in imposing the priority of words over things, and, in so doing, subjecting the visitor's experience to the authority of new forms of expertise, was especially significant in this respect. This is made graphically clear in the correspondence between Henry Balfour, during the period when he was responsible for arranging the Pitt Rivers collection at the Oxford Museum, and Alfred Robinson, a member of the Hebdomadal Council to which the Museum was responsible. Because Balfour had refused an earlier request to produce a definite number of labels per year, Robinson urged that he should instead commit himself to finish labeling the collection within a definite number of years, and advised that he would inform the Council that 'unless we can capture on the way some expert such as Tylor or yourself we shall derive little pleasure and no instruction from our visit to the larger part of the collection, in its present unlabelled and uncatalogued form.'[12] While Balfour replied with a defense of the rate of labeling he had achieved so far, he agreed that there 'is no Museum in the world, that I know of, in which it is not desirable to secure the company of an expert as showman, and this Museum can hardly be expected to be an exception.[13]

A similar stress on the importance of labeling as a means of ensuring that the eye did, indeed, absorb the museum's object lessons correctly recurs throughout the museum literature of the period. Its advocacy, moreover, was most urgently and insistently pressed by museum administrators committed to the challenge of reorganizing the museum environment in order to allow it to function as a means for popular instruction in the lessons of evolution. For Sir William Henry Flower of the British Museum (Natural History), labeling went hand in hand with a battery of other measures designed to ensure that things were placed before the eye clearly and distinctly, in a manner that would leave the visitor with no doubt as to what was what or why it was there:

> The number of the specimens must be strictly limited, according to the nature of the subject to be illustrated, and the space available. None must be placed either too high or too low for ready examination. There must be no crowding of specimens one behind the other, every one being

perfectly and distinctly seen, and with a clear space around it. If an object is worth putting into a gallery at all, it is worth such a position as will enable it to be seen . . . Above all, the purpose for which each specimen is exhibited, and the main lesson to be derived from it, must be distinctly indicated by the labels affixed, both as headings of the various divisions of the series and to the individual specimens.

(Flower, 1893: 4)

George Brown Goode of the Smithsonian Institution was of a similar persuasion. In urging that the 'museum of the future in this democratic land should be adapted to the needs of the mechanic, the factory operator, the day labourer, the salesman, and the clerk' (Goode (1888) in Kohlstedt, 1991: 307), he pinned his hopes on a visual economy that would reduce the visitor's work to a matter of looking and seeing, of reading and understanding:

The specimens must be prepared in the most careful and artistic manner, and arranged attractively in well-designed cases and behind the clearest of glass. Each object must bear a label giving its name and history so fully that all the probable questions of the visitor are answered in advance. Books of reference must be kept in convenient places. Colors of walls, cases, and labels must be restful and quiet, and comfortable seats must be everywhere accessible, for the task of the museum visitor is a weary one at best.

(308)

Indeed, it was Goode who best summarized the priority accorded to words over things in late-nineteenth-century museum didactics when he suggested that an 'efficient educational museum' was best regarded as 'a collection of instructive labels, each illustrated by a well-selected specimen' (306).

There can be no doubting, then, the continuing emphasis that was placed on the role of expertise in arranging the relations between words and things to ensure that the visitor's eye was properly governed. In part – and Balfour's phrase 'the expert as showman' captures this aspect exactly – this was the result of a continuing struggle with the illusionistic tricks of popular showmen, represented, in the late-nineteenth-century context, by fairground entertainers, the popular shows of the midway zones of the international exhibitions, and the fakes of popular museum managers like P. T. Barnum.[14] There was also a renewed urgency attached to these matters in the *fin de siècle* context owing to the apprehension that the new forms of urban life, and the taste for sensationalist forms of entertainment that accompanied them, had occasioned a disorientating perceptual dislocation in which vision was constantly distracted, led from one object to the next in a relay of illusionistic thrill-seeking without ever being able to settle, to take in the meaning of things (see Singer, 1995). But the expertise of the evolutionary showman did not go unchallenged: John Ruskin, in his insistence on the autonomy of the individual object

and his critique of detached observation, doubted that insistent labeling did much to make museums either appealing or intelligible to those 'whose minds are languid with labour (Ruskin, cit White, 1893: 89).

There was, however, a competing articulation of the relations between things and vision that impinged more directly on the didactic terrain of the evolutionary museum. I refer to the burgeoning practice of popular natural history and the countless domestic collections – richly evoked by Asa Briggs (1990) – to which this practice gave rise. Lynn Merrill's account of Victorian natural history makes clear how radically different its organizing principles were from those of the evolutionary biology that, from the 1870s, began to acquire an increasing influence over the arrangement of displays within state-funded natural history museums. Within the latter, a sparsity of objects was the ideal, each object being placed in relation to other objects and described in accompanying labels in a way that would make its function of representing a stage in a developmental sequence clear. The hallmarks of popular natural history, on the other hand, as Merrill summarizes them, were 'curiosity, wonder and close vision' (Merrill, 1989: 5). While the discourses of natural history also centered the eye, the object within the domestic cabinet did not have a representative status of the kind that, within the representational economy of evolutionary displays, allowed one object to represent the many; rather, it was 'the apotheosis of singularity' (51) of the 'unique (that is, noteworthy for being so unlike anything else) and extraordinary (that is, exciting because so peculiar)' (60). This was, in other words, a universe in which baroque principles still reigned, in marked contrast to the forms of visuality aspired to by the deployment of new forms of expertise within the museum:

> Or, to put it another way, the discourse of science endeavours to be transparent, a clear glass through which the reader can see the idea behind it. The discourse of natural history, however, is highly coloured, meant to be beautiful and pleasing in itself, a gaudy mosaic.
>
> (93)

The popularity of the microscope was linked to this 'gaudy mosaic,' its role, like that of the domestic collection, being connected to Romantic notions of the sublime in aspiring to offer a close-up vision of the 'minute infinite . . . a secret world in small compass, which astonishes and awes the eye' (218). It is, then, not surprising that, as we saw in the previous chapter, when Huxley, in his 1868 lecture 'On a piece of chalk," places chalk beneath a microscope, it is in order to make visible a quite different reality, a series of invisible past worlds that evolve into the present through a number of successive and orderly stages:

> Thus there is a writing upon the wall of cliffs at Cromer, and whoso runs may read it. It tells us, with an authority which cannot be

impeached, that the ancient sea-bed of the chalk sea was raised up, and remained dry land, until it was covered with forest, stocked with the great game the spoils of which have rejoiced your geologists. How long it remained in that condition cannot be said; but "the whirligig of time brought its revenges" in those days as in these. That dry land, with the bones and teeth of generations of long-lived elephants, hidden away among the gnarled roots and dry leaves of its ancient trees, sank gradually to the bottom of the icy sea, which covered it with huge masses of drift and boulder clay. Sea-beasts, such as the walrus, now restricted to the extreme north, paddled about where birds had twittered among the topmost twigs of the fir trees. How long this state of things endured we know not, but at length it came to an end. The upheaved glacial mud hardened into the soil of modern Norfolk. Forests grew once more, the wolf and the beaver replaced the reindeer and the elephant; and at length what we call the history of England dawned.

(Huxley, 1896: 69)

The long, slow mechanisms of change operating through *la longue durée* of evolutionary time: these were what the evolutionary showman wanted to show the visitor – while, at the same time, being perfectly clear that this was not a message that could be carried on the surface of things. The labels that he had to prepare if the visitor were to see what he wanted to show therefore functioned differently from their Enlightenment counterparts: their role was not to cling to things, so much as to fill up the gaps between them. With appropriate labels, the linear arrangements of objects within series might indeed be read as both the manifestation and the sign of a set of processual, developmental realities whose value, viewed from the perspective of a reforming liberalism, was as a means of teaching that evolution (in society as in nature) was inherently and unavoidably gradualist.[15] For Baldwin Spencer, Frederick McCoy's successor at the National Museum of Victoria, this was the purpose he had in view in his exhibition of Aboriginal boomerangs (see Fig. 6.1).

   In itself meaningless, the accompanying label tells the visitor how to read the exhibit as a sign of the evolutionary processes through which differentiation and complexity arise out of an undifferentiated and simple origin:

   The different series exhibited are intended to illustrate the various forms and also the possible development from a straight stick of (1) the ordinary, curved, flat fighting boomerang; (2) the return boomerang; (3) the large double-handed sword; and (4) the club-headed structure called a "lil-lil." The possible relationship of these various forms of missiles may be illustrated by the following diagram, the actual specimens illustrating which are shown in Case 4, Series L, and Case 5, Series A:-

Double-handed   Curved club-like missile
  "sword."   (Lil-lil)

            Return Boomerang.

Boomerang with one end   Boomerang with one end
modified for holding   slightly enlarged.

                    Ordinary Boomerang,
        with one face flat, the other often slightly convex.

    Curved Throwing Stick, more flattened from side to side.

        Curved Throwing Stick, elliptical in section.

        Curved Throwing Stick, circular in section.

        Straight Throwing Stick, circular in section.

                                          (Spencer, 1901: 23–34)

Figure 6.1 National Museum of Victoria, Evolution of the Boomerang. From:
Sir Baldwin Spencer, *Guide to the Australian Ethnological Collection
Exhibited in the National Museum of Victoria* (Melbourne: Government
Printer, 1901), Plate 3, p. 24

In contrast to the cabinet of curiosities, in which the eye was left to meander in the spaces between things, here, through the web of words that is cast over them, the eye is directed as to how to read the relations between things.

Roving eyes, glancing words

It is noticeable that, in the passage quoted above, Spencer, reflecting the influence of Goode's formulations, regards the function of the actual specimens as that of illustrating the developmental logic displayed in the diagram. Labels, that is, provided the grid of intelligibility through which things were to be looked at. 'By means of descriptive labels,' as Spencer put it when writing to Edward Tylor to explain the purpose of his ethnographical collection, 'I have tried to make it a kind of record of the Aborigines which the ordinary public can understand and take an interest in. It is quite refreshing to see visitors reading the labels and examining the specimens.'[16] This is precisely the kind of relay structure of vision – from words to things – that Bernard Smith had in mind when he complained, in connection with the modern art museum, that 'we only see what we read we are seeing' (Smith, cit. Beilharz, 1997: 15–16). This is not to say that nothing has changed over the intervening period. The history I have sought to trace – one in which the eye, in being disconnected from the relations of words to things that had characterized Enlightenment didactics, was placed once again on the leash of the written word in the programs of evolutionary museums – has focused mainly on the late nineteenth century. That similar conceptions have played a continuing role in subsequent museum practices is, however, clear enough. We find their echo in the 1920 aspiration of John Cotton Dana, the director of the Newark Museum in New Jersey, to make rigorous use of descriptive labels in order to transform art museums from mere 'gazing museums' into 'institutes for visual instruction' (Dana, 1920: 13). This was about the same time that, according to Martin Jay, the 'ancien scopic regime' of Cartesian perspectivalism and the subsequent ocularcentric Enlightenment project of 'illuminating reason' was called into question – initially in the work of Bataille and the surrealists, and then in the ensuing history of vision's philosophical denigration, from the work of Husserl, through Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, and on to Lacan, Althusser, and Foucault (Jay, 1994: 149, 212).

It is too early to say yet what impact, if any, these developments have had on the relations of knowledge and vision governing the pedagogic practices of museums, for this – together with related issues concerning the relations of museums to the new visual technologies of cinema and, later, television – is a topic on which research is still in its infancy.[17] The overall impression, though, is that, from the early twentieth century through to the 1960s, the didactics that were developed in the late nineteenth century remained pretty much as undisturbed as did the evolutionary knowledges that continued to organize museum displays in the form of authoritative curatorial messages prepared for the visitor's passive reception. Certainly,

we can see the legacy of this earlier history in the formulation chosen by Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, in their 1969 text *The Love of Art*, to describe the role of labels and museum guides as that of aiming to 'give "the eye" to those who do not see' (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991: 53) – a formulation that remains central to the intellectual underpinnings of contemporary access policies.

Yet the assumptions underlying such practices have been called into question in what W. J. T. Mitchell has characterized as 'the pictorial turn' – that is, as he defines it, 'the realization that *spectator-ship* (the look, the gaze, the glance, the practices of observation, surveillance, and visual pleasure) may be as deep a problem as various forms of *reading* (decipherment, decoding, interpretation, etc.) and that visual experience or "visual literacy" might not be fully explicable on the model of textuality' (Mitchell, 1994: 16). Indeed, it is from a perspective of this kind that Barbara Stafford objects to the dualism that still often pits 'an "aesthetic" display, whereby purposeless objects are left to speak for themselves, against the demands of an overwhelming *textual* documentation' that 'too often means that artifacts of little intrinsic merit are put in the service of a theoretical distribution as tokens of an immaterial age, culture, or social system' (Stafford, 1994: 264). In place of such conceptions, Stafford recommends that the eye should be let off the leash of the written word and be allowed to rove more freely in a new audiovisual environment – and she sees a possible (but limited) model for museum practices here in 'the chatty cyberspace of the "virtual gallery"' – that would revive 'the eighteenth-century notion of an instructive, cross-disciplinary, and entertaining spectacle, based on a conversational give and take' (279). This echoes, albeit from a different perspective, James Clifford's view of the museum as a 'contact zone' in which objects become the props or occasions for forms of cross-cultural talk in which the role of words and their relation to sight is changed. No longer descriptive labels for things, the bearers of an authoritative knowledge from the curator to the visitor, words – like things – function, in Clifford's museum, as side-glancing entities, to be constantly defined and adjusted in their relations to one another in performing their roles as dialogic bridges between different cultural worlds.

It is fair to say that in the debates that have been under way since the 1960s to adapt the museum to new purposes, attention has been mostly focused on the inadequacies of the frameworks of knowledge bequeathed by the nineteenth-century museum when these are viewed from the perspectives of the various constituencies that they have marginalized, excluded, or exoticised. The most insistent demand has consequently been that exhibits should be arranged in accordance with the requirements of the alternative knowledges – indigenous, feminist, postcolonial – that have supplied the primary vehicles of museum critique. The merit of Stafford's and Clifford's perspectives (different though they are from one another) is that of reminding us that a politics of knowledge in relation to the museum does not concern merely the *content* of knowledge. How the *social relations* of knowledge are

organized in terms of the distribution of roles between different participants in the museum scene – curators, members of communities, visitors – is an equally important question that involves, among other issues, the relations between the senses that are produced by different articulations of the relations between words (written and spoken), other sounds, smells, things, and persons within the museum environment. This is not to suggest that there is any simple or singular organization of the senses that ought to be aimed for here. Museums – and Clifford recognizes this clearly enough – are involved in multiple relationships of exchange that, depending on the constituencies concerned, may be governed by different principles. To arrange materials from 'other cultures' in a manner calculated to produce relations of discursive equality and reciprocity between the cultures of societies caught in contact histories may – and Clifford cites the exhibit *Paradise: Continuity and Change in the New, Guinea Highlands* at London's Museum of Mankind as a case in point – generate new divisions within the museum's public between those who are 'let in' on the significance of what such experiments represent and those who are not.[18]

There can be no shying away from these difficulties, however. It will be only by experimentally tinkering with these aspects of museum display that the days of the 'expert as showman' can give way to new forms of expertise that, in facilitating a less hierarchical exchange of perspectives, may allow a renovation of the museum's earlier conception as a conversable civic space that – going beyond the social confines of its Renaissance predecessor – functions across the relations between different cultures. This it must do if it is to be of any value at all.

Notes

1 In describing this system of glances as dialogical, I am drawing on the work of Bakhtin (1981). I should make it clear, however, that this is a gloss that I place on Stafford's discussion, rather than an interpretation she herself offers.

2 Daubenton was something of a go-between in the debates and struggles between Buffon's approach to natural history as still centrally concerning the story of life on earth, and Condorcet's campaign to reform natural history displays in accordance with the principles of a tabular rationalism. See Pietro Corsi (1988).

3 Jonathan Crary (1996) makes clear how, in this period, the importance accorded to the camera obscura was connected to a technology of vision in which the observer was decoporealized – an isolated and autonomous individual, detached from the world in an enclosed space within which vision was to be directed by the understanding.

4 For discussions of the importance of public witnessing to the truth-protocols of the experimental sciences, see Eamon (1985) and Shapin and Schaffer (1985).

5 Pitt Rivers Museum Archive, *Foundations and Early History,* ff. 3–4.

6 Australian Museum Archives, Series 24: Curators Reports to the Trustees, box 1: 1881–1887, p. 5, Australian Museum, Sydney, Australia. The comment is taken from an anonymous review of the Museum's geology collections and exhibitions.

7 I have discussed elsewhere why these concerns, with their focus on the workingman, were gender-specific: see Bennett, 1998a, chap. 6.

8 These issues were perhaps most extensively canvassed in the 1870s debates regarding the appropriateness of the rotunda as a spatial form for the exhibition of evolutionary anthropology displays; I discuss these questions in chapter 4.

9 I should make it clear that my remarks here are limited to museums in the English-speaking world. Nélia Dias's work on anthropology museums in late-nineteenth-century France makes it clear that a different economy of the visible was organized through the use of display techniques that, in aiming to ward off the tendency toward relativism that was associated with the *fin de siècle* subjectivization of vision, relied increasingly on statistics, charts, and tables rather than words to regulate the visitor's vision; see Dias (1997). As Dias notes, however, this was related to the strongly biological focus of French anthropology. In the English-speaking world, anthropology, ethnology, archaeology, and natural history tended to form parts of a single, interacting, interpretive and textual system from the 1870s through to the 1890s.

10 For an account of Osborn's familiarity with the Pestalozzian system of education, see Rainger (1991). The role of this pedagogic system in earlier American museum history is discussed in Orosz (1990).

11 For the best synoptic account of these developments, see Schnapp (1996).

12 Pitt Rivers Museum Archive, *Foundations and Early History,* f. 152.

13 Pitt Rivers Museum Archive, *Foundations and Early History*, f. 153.

14 Barnum's fakes and hoaxes, however, also made a calculated appeal to the sensory democracy of American traditions, in urging visitors to trust to the truth of things as evidenced by their senses rather than rely on the judgments of experts: see Harris (1973).

15 I have discussed this point in greater detail elsewhere: see Bennett (1997).

16 Baldwin Spencer to Edward Tylor, September 1, 1900, Tylor Papers, box 13A, folio S16, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, England.

17 For a very suggestive introduction to these questions, however, see Sandberg (1995).

18 This discussion is contained in Clifford (1997, chapter 6). For a related discussion of the same exhibition, see Lidchi (1997).

7   Exhibition, difference and the logic of culture*

A good deal of contemporary museum theory and practice has concerned itself with the ways in which museum environments – and the social and symbolic exchanges that take place within them – might be refashioned so as to transform museums into 'differencing machines' committed to the promotion of cross cultural understanding, especially across divisions that have been racialised. The question I want to pose here is whether this aspiration involves a series of collateral changes which, taken together, add up to a more general change in how museums operate and their situation within the cultural field. Or, to put the point more rhetorically: does the conception of the museum as a 'differencing machine' aspire to new forms of dialogism that place earlier notions of exhibition into question? In doing so, I want also to review, and qualify, the concept of the exhibitionary complex by arguing the need to view the operations of this complex in the broader perspective of what, for the purposes of my argument here, I shall call the logic of culture.

Before I come to either of these questions, however, I want to worry away a little at what is involved in pursuing these concerns in a context defined by a conjunction of 'public cultures' and 'global transformations' and the ways in which, even while distancing themselves from them, these evoke the concepts of globalisation and the public sphere, or spheres. For the consequences for how we engage with the changing role of museums can vary significantly depending on how each of these terms is interpreted and how the relations between them are viewed. And each has the potential to significantly misdirect inquiry.

Museums, globalisation and public spheres

Take the concept of globalisation: while this need not imply the notion of a shift of a qualitative kind from one historical situation to another, it all too often does, functioning side-by-side with accounts (of the network society,

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for example) which suggest that societies are now different, in qualitative ways, from what they once were. As a shorthand description, of course, the term usefully highlights relations between what are, by any standards, important contemporary phenomena: changing patterns in the international flows of capital, people, ideas and information on the one hand, and the changing spheres of influence of national governments and transnational economic, social, political and cultural actors on the other. It's just that, when looked at closely, these changes are usually not so new, not so closely interrelated, and not so general and comprehensive as theories of globalisation often suggest. Capital flows remain largely locked up in regionally defined trading blocs (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). An emerging international digital divide effectively stems the international flow of ideas and information. Some parts of the world are affected by significantly increased rates of immigration, some are not (Held et al., 1999). And the relations between national sovereignty and new regional forms of government are typically more consequential in contemporary political negotiations than a generalised polarisation between, on the one hand, the role of national governments, and, on the other, that of transnational corporations would suggest.

The same is true if we look at the relations between museums and globalisation. In some respects, museums now seem self-evidently to be parts of more globalised flows of information, peoples and ideas. They reach out beyond not only their own walls but beyond national boundaries through new practices of web curation, and their audiences, at least in the case of major metropolitan institutions, tend to be increasingly cosmopolitan reflecting the growth of cultural tourism. It remains the case, however, that public museums are largely, and probably entirely, the administrative creations of national, municipal or local governments or private organisations. In so far as globalisation concerns questions of governance, its implications for museums have so far been relatively muted: international protocols remain little more than that, with their interpretation and implementation remaining largely the preserve of national jurisdictions – witness the British Museum's continuing determination to hold on to the Elgin Marbles. More to the point, perhaps, there are a number of ways in which museums are now arguably less globalised than their nineteenth-century counterparts. The representational ambit of contemporary museums, for example, is characterised by a postmodern modesty when compared with the totalising frameworks of representation characterising nineteenth-century museums in their aspiration to render metonymically present the global histories of all things and peoples. And if we consider nineteenth-century museums in their relations to international exhibitions, it is clear that there are few contemporary exhibition phenomena that can match the size and international mix of the audiences those exhibitions recruited in their heyday (Greenhalgh, 1988). It is also true that the networks that existed for the international traffic in people as exhibits – in 'living ethnography' displays as well as the traffic in dead 'primitives' – no longer operate.

It is, then, not true to hold that it is only recently that museums have become parts of global networks organising flows of things, people and expertise. This has been an important aspect of their constitution and functioning from the second half of the nineteenth century. Recognising this does, however, involve a significant qualification of the suggestion I made in 1988 that the formation of the modern public museum should be considered as part of the development of a broader 'exhibitionary complex' – a somewhat clumsy neologism for a network of institutions in which earlier practices of exhibition were significantly overhauled in being adapted to the development of new forms of civic self-fashioning on the part of newly enfranchised democratic citizenries. For while taking account of the totalising exhibitionary frameworks that resulted from the increasing influence of evolutionary thought over the practices of museums and exhibitions, resulting in a regime of representation that aimed to encompass 'all things and all peoples in their interactions through time' (Bennett, 1988: 92), this argument did not adequately recognise the respects in which museums and exhibitions were themselves actively implicated in the organisation of new international networks, promoting new transnational forms of cultural exchange and perception. Carol Breckenridge's formulations are more incisive here. Museums and international exhibitions functioned to create what Breckenridge calls a Victorian ecumene – that is, a transnational imagined community encompassing 'Great Britain, the United States, and India (along with other places) in a discursive space that was global, while nurturing nation-states that were culturally highly specific' (Breckenridge, 1989: 196). But this specificity of the nation-culture relationship, Breckenridge argues, derived its logic from the transnational cultural flows characterising the Victorian ecumene, particularly in their othering of the colonised, just as those flows led to 'the creation of a global class united by their relation to newly invented rituals, newly constructed metropoles, newly naturalised objects' (214). Peter Hoffenberg's analysis of the role that international exhibitions played in forging connections between metropolitan and colonial elites in Britain, India and Australia, thereby organising 'both national and imperial public cultures', points in the same direction (Hoffenberg, 2001: 63).

A longer historical perspective, then, should invite a sceptical response to the proposition that museums are now parts of global networks of information and cultural flows in ways that have no precedents. This is not so. To understand what is new about the ways in which museums organise and operate within global networks, means looking at quite specific matters concerning, for example, the technical means of organising those networks (the internet contrasted with earlier networks centred on rail and navigation, telegraphy and telecommunications), the forms of expertise they interconnect, and the new styles of cosmopolitanism they effect, rather than any generalised pre-globalisation/post-globalisation contrast.

The concept of the public sphere needs to be approached with equal caution. This is not because of any general difficulties with the concept, or

because I doubt that globalised (or, at least, significantly international) public spheres exist: the Open Democracy web site (www.opendemocracy.net) is a good example, fulfilling, in an international arena, a function analagous to that which Habermas (1989) ascribed to the bourgeois literary public sphere. It is rather the relations of museums to such public spheres that I have in mind here. For while few difficulties are occasioned by defining museums as a part of public culture, conveying the sense that museums are public both in the sense of being outside the private sphere of the home and – usually – that of their dependence (whether directly or indirectly) on public funding, this is, if the theoretical lineage of the concept is to be respected, quite different from defining museums as public spheres. This is not to deny that museums may connect to such public spheres, join in their debates and – as they most certainly are – be affected by those debates. They are not, however, themselves public spheres in the sense defined by Habermas as a set of institutions within which, through reasoned debate, a set of opinions is formed and brought to bear critically on the exercise of state authority. It is true, of course, that in Europe, where in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries museums often formed adjuncts to local literary, philosophical and scientific societies, museums *were* significant components of the bourgeois public sphere, articulating principles of reasoning and forms of public discourse and social relations that stood in opposition to absolutist regimes as well as to aristocratic or courtly patronage (Pomian, 1990; Golinski, 1992). And some aspects of the subsequent European development of museums might just, at a stretch, be illuminated by drawing on Habermas's account of the structural transformation of the public sphere as a process through which the institutions of the public sphere lost their oppositional aspect as they were either commercialised or integrated into the state. But if this is to stretch a point,[1] it also neglects the more important consideration that the network of public museums developed in the course of the nineteenth century more typically consisted of institutions moving in a quite different direction: that is, of collections which, having earlier symbolically buttressed royal or aristocratic power, were translated into public institutions with a newly defined civic mandate.

This is, I think, why the case of the Louvre remains so significantly emblematic in defining a new space and form of publicness that was, above all else, governmental and civic (Duncan and Wallach, 1980; McClellan, 1994). It was, that is to say, a space in which the collections which had been assembled through the varied histories of earlier collecting practices were fashioned for new purposes in being called on to help shape the civic attributes (of belief, identity, comportment, and civility) needed by the members of democratic polities This was a new form of publicness, providing a *rendez-vous* for institutions moving in different directions, a space where both collections that had earlier formed a part of the bourgeois public sphere and royal collections that had represented the forms of publicness of the absolutist state, magnifying the person and power of the monarch,

were brought together in new networks. As such, it was a space that rede-
fined the social articulations of its constituent parts as these new public
museums – whatever their origins or earlier histories – were put to work
as civic technologies directed toward the population at large. Viewed from
a broader, less Euro-centric perspective, moreover, it is clear that many of
the contexts to which museums were 'exported' in the history of colonial-
ism were ones in which neither absolutist nor public sphere conceptions of
publicness – or the co-ordinates supplied by the relations between state and
civil society which made these intelligible – had much relevance (Prakash,
1999; Prosler, 1996).

So far as the history of their formation is concerned, then, it makes little
sense to refer to museums as parts of public spheres if, by this term, we mean
a set of institutions standing outside the state and functioning as a means
of criticising it. To the contrary, their publicness, since the mid-nineteenth
century, has been largely a civic and governmental one. This is not to say
that museums have not been shaped by their relations with public spheres:
to the contrary, this is a significant aspect of their recent refashioning in
response, for example, to feminist and indigenous critiques. However, the
nature and significance of such relations are more likely to come clearly into
view if museums are distinguished from, rather than equated with, such
public spheres. For such transactions comprise only one aspect of museums'
publicness as this has been, and continues to be, shaped by their interac-
tions with other civic and governmental institutions whose development
has been coeval with their own – libraries, adult education and, above all,
mass schooling – and shaped by broader governmental articulations of the
relations of culture and citizenship. If this intermediary role of museums in
public culture is to be properly understood, however, then some attention
needs to be given to what it means to define their activities as cultural.

The logic of culture: museums as 'people movers'

Let me broach this question by means of a concrete example – evoked by
two contrastive scenes – to highlight the key point I want to get at here
which concerns the *transformational capacity* of museums. Scene one con-
cerns the exhibition of *bakemono* (monsters) in the *misemono* (sideshows)
at Ryōgoku Bridge in Edo, circa 1865, three years before the Meiji Restora-
tion. Gerald Figal evokes this scene as follows:

> A whale washed ashore and advertised as a monster sunfish, a hid-
> eously ugly 'demon girl,' a scale-covered reptile child, the fur-covered
> "Bear Boy," the hermaphroditic 'testicle girl,' giants, dwarfs, strong men
> (and women), the famous 'mist-descending flower-blossoming man'
> who gulped air and expelled it in 'modulated flatulent arias,' and the
> teenager who could pop out his eyeballs and hang weights from his
> optic nerve, all attest to a libidinal economy in which a fascination with

the strange and supernatural conditioned and sustained the production, consumption, and circulation of sundry monsters as commodities in 'the evening glow of Edo'.

(Figal, 1999: 22)

Scene two focuses on the same area, but today when, under the impact of successive waves of modernisation, the *misemono* and *bakemono* have all but disappeared, their place taken, at first, by western forms of popular entertainment – variety theatre and, later, the cinema – and, now, nearby, at the Edo-Tokyo Museum where the *bakemono* and *misemono* survive, but only as history in the Museum's various exhibits of the popular festivals and book trade of the late Edo period. It is a scene in which both *bakemono* and *misemono* give way to the Museum and the claims it makes for itself as 'an instrument of civilisation' and 'a conduit for transmitting knowledge' – a thoroughly modern museum which, breaking with earlier traditions of museums as 'mere treasure repositories', aims to 'evoke an emotional response' in visitors, to 'inspire them to develop their own ideas' and so to involve them in a process of 'cultural development' (Tadao et al., 1995: 165).

In these respects, both the claims and the practice of the Edo-Tokyo Museum – Japan's first museum of urban history – perfectly embody the logic of the western history museum in so far as this has operated as a means of displacing popular customs and traditions standing in the way of modernisation by transforming them into historical representations of themselves. This partly reflects the influence on Japanese practices of collection and exhibition of those knowledges – history, art, history, archaeology, geology – whose development, as what Jan Golinksi (1992) tellingly calls 'visible knowledges', has been caught up with that of the exhibitionary complex as, from the start, shaped by complex international networks of exchange and interaction. The ways of exhibiting history in evidence at the Edo-Tokyo Museum are thus the outcomes of a much longer process of cultural interaction through which the notion of a past clearly distinct from the present was introduced into Japanese thought (Tanaka, 1993), and through which it became possible to read the urban past of a city like Tokyo as symptomatic of a national past which, in its turn, is accorded its place within the longer 'universal' histories of 'progress' or 'civilisation' and, indeed, those of natural and geological history. For if the Museum's main story is that of a tale of two cities – Edo and Tokyo – connected and yet separated by the rift of modernisation initiated in the Meiji period, it is also concerned to place both cities in the longer and shared histories of the region's archaeological record and its distinctive geological characteristics.

There is, however, a more general mechanism at work were, one which, subtending the specific uses to which a range of visual knowledges are put within the Edo-Tokyo Museum, draws on the broader logic of culture understood as a historically distinctive, and complexly articulated, set of means for shaping and transforming persons through their own self activity.

William Ray helps to identify the distinctive characteristics of this, as he calls it, 'logic of culture' when he notes that the same term, 'culture', is used, on the one hand, to designate 'the shared traditions, values, and relationships, the *unconscious* cognitive and social reflexes which members of a community share and collectively embody', and, on the other hand, to refer to the 'the *self-conscious* intellectual and artistic efforts of individuals to express, enrich and distinguish themselves, as well as the works such efforts produce and the institutions that foster them' (Ray, 2001: 3). The key to understanding culture as a mechanism of person formation, Ray argues, lies not in opting for either the one or the other of these seemingly opposing uses but in attending to the movement – the processes of working on and transforming the self – that arises from the tension between them. Culture, in simultaneously articulating a sense of sameness and difference, inscribes our identities in the tension it produces between inherited and shared customs and traditions on the one hand, and, on the other, the restless striving for new and distinguishing forms of individuality: 'it tells us to think of ourselves as being who we are because of what we have in common with all the other members of our society or community, but it also says we develop a distinctive particular identity by virtue of our efforts to know and fashion ourselves as individuals' (3).

Culture is thus, on this view, a mechanism which, at its heart, takes issue with habit: tradition, custom, habitual usage, superstition (the role assigned to *bakemono* in Japanese programmes of modernisation) – these are the 'adversary to be overcome before we can realise our full humanity' (16).[2] It thus initiates a process of critique through which the individual extricates him or herself from unthinking immersion in inherited traditions in order to initiate a process of self-development that will result in new codes of behaviour, but ones which – in being freely chosen rather than externally imposed, and in meeting the requirements both of reason and of individual autonomy and expression – distinguish those who have thus culturally re-formed themselves from those who remain unthinkingly under the sway of habit. As such, this logic of culture has played a significant role in the organisation of western exhibition practices from the nineteenth century through to the present. For the question of habit has always been, in one way or another, at issue in the museum.

This is most evident in the art museum which – throughout the history of modernism and into that of postmodernism – has persistently pitched itself against the numbing of attention associated with habitual forms of perception. Jonathan Crary underlines the significance of the issues at stake here in noting the apprehensions that were generated, in the late nineteenth century, around the new forms of distracted and automatic forms of attention associated with industrial production and the development of new forms of popular visual entertainment. The fear was that, owing to the association of the habitual with instinctual rather than rational procedures, modes of perception that had become routinised 'no longer related to an *interiorisation*

of the subject, to an intensification of a sense of selfhood' (Crary, 2001: 79). They were therefore inimical to the production of those forms of tension and division within the self that are required for the machinery of culture to take a hold and be put to work within a dialectic of self development in which individuals renovate and distinguish themselves from the common mass by disentangling their selves from the weight of unconscious inherited reflex and traditional forms of thought, perception and behaviour. It is, then, not surprising that, as an instrument of culture, the modern art museum has been committed to a programme of perpetual perceptual innovation, seeking to disconnect vision from falling, so to speak, into 'bad habit' by critiquing not only the distraction of attention associated with popular visual entertainments – with, today, the television and computer screens being the prime targets in this respect – but also the flagging forms of perception associated with earlier artistic movements which, while once innovative and able to provoke new forms of perceptual self-reflexiveness, have since atrophied into routine conventions. The modern art museum, looked at in this light, as an instrument for 'perpetual perceptual revolution', thus functions to keep the senses in the state of chastened attentiveness that the logic of culture requires to produce a dynamic of self-formation that is sustained by a dynamics of sensory life.

Yet it is also clear that neither the ability nor the inclination to keep up with this 'perpetual perceptual revolution' is evenly distributed throughout all classes. To the contrary, this is true mainly for those members of the middle and professional classes who have acquired a sufficient degree of what Pierre Bourdieu calls 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984) – that is, a knowledge of the rules of art and the workings of art institutions – and the ability to translate that capital into the distinctive forms of perceptual athleticism that the programme of the art museum requires. In this respect too, however, the art museum embodies the logic of culture. For in serving as a mechanism of self-development, Ray argues, culture has simultaneously served as a social sorting mechanism through which, by virtue of the cultural activities they choose and the degree to which these enable them to break with habit and thus to become self-reforming, individuals '*sort themselves* into groups' (91). There is, however, a deceptive aspect to this mechanism to the degree that the groups into which individuals seem to sort themselves are usually those to which they already belong by virtue of their class and educational backgrounds and the social trajectories to which these give rise.

However, if the exhibition practices of western art museums have functioned as mechanisms of social triage – that is, of sorting people into different groups and arranging these hierarchically – they have also always operated along racialised as well as class lines. This is evident in the chequered history of the evaluation of 'primitive art' which, prior to its integration into the dynamics of western modernism as a source of aesthetic innovation, stood as art's antithesis – as traditional, collective, and formulaic; that is, alongside the tools, weapons, decorations, and culinary implements of 'primitive

peoples' as evidence of societies that had never broken with the force of inherited custom to initiate the restless dynamics of self-formation characterising the logic of western culture.[3] The place accorded 'Asian' art and material culture within colonial frameworks of interpretation was a more intermediate one. Interpreted as evidence of once innovative and dynamic civilisations which had allegedly subsequently ossified under the weight of 'Asian despotisms' of one kind or another, they were seen as nurturing slavish habits and custom-bound behaviour as the price of an obedient population (Pagani, 1998; Prakash, 2002). The effect, however, was broadly similar. Whether it was a question of the static civilisation of 'the primitive' or the 'arrested development' of Asian societies, museums invoked and exhibited others – and their art and artefacts – as signs of societies where the 'logic of culture', and the independent, critical and individualising orientation it required, had either failed to operate or had gone into decline.

They did so, moreover, precisely as a means of putting the logic of culture into effect by and for western publics by producing, in the representation of a series of custom-bound Others, the counterfoils against which processes of self-differentiation and self-development might be developed. Viewed in class terms, the division between the custom-bound self and the individualising and innovative self, which the logic of culture generates as the site of its own operations, has served largely to organise a distinction between the middle and working classes. This has mainly been the work of the art museum. There has also been a gendered aspect to these processes. If, as I am suggesting, the art museum can be understood as a 'people mover', then this has been true more of its relations to men than to women. Indeed, the art museum's ability to mobilise male identities has often depended on its simultaneously fixing women in unchanging positions. I refer here to the complex history of the relations between the art museum and aesthetic modernism (Pollock, 1999). For, if the linear time of modernism was a racialised time which organised different peoples and civilisations into different stages along the so-called unidirectional and forward-moving time of modernity, it was also – and still is – a gendered time in which the linear, largely male, and public time of modernity is contrasted to the private, cyclical, repetitive, and habitual time of everyday life which has classically been represented by women (Felski, 1999/2000).

Yet, at the same time, in other kinds of museum – archaeological and anthropological, for example – the logic of culture has operated across racialised divisions, producing a western or white self which, when looked at closely, might splinter into differentiated class capacities, but which, when viewed in the aggregate, was defined in terms of a capacity for an inner dynamic of self-development that was identified as such only by being distinguished from the flat, fixed or frozen personas which the primitive and 'Asiatic types' represented. Much the same purpose was served by the development of folk museums which, while romanticising the inherited customs and folkways of the parents and grandparents of modern urban populations,

simultaneously transformed those customs and folkways into immobilised remnants of redundant pasts which served as a counterfoil to the forward thrust of the modern. Mark Sandberg quotes the account of a journalist who, recounting a visit to the Copenhagen Folk Museum in 1885, conveys this effect precisely as his glance moves between the museum displays and the railway yard outside:

> And if during your wandering past all of the old treasures, stopping in front of this or that rare showpiece – a tooled mug, a majestic four-post bed, or a precious, nicely-inlaid wardrobe – if you have for a moment been envious of the people back then who enjoyed and lived surrounded by such magnificence, then just look out the window in front of you. Over under the train station's open hall a train is about to depart. The bell rings, the locomotive whistles, the steam billows up beneath the ceiling's iron beams and flushes out the pigeons nesting up there. In great arcs they circle around in the sunlight that gilds their wings. But the train is already far away, the last wagon is now passing the last telegraph pole you can see. Reconsider and tell me then, if you want to trade. I didn't.
>
> (cit. Sandberg, 2004: 103)

However, the balance that is struck here between custom and innovation, between the old and the new, is less sharp than that which is produced by the cutting edge of new artistic practices in the art museum. The same is true, typically, of history museums: the relations these organise between past and present are, with the exception of ruptural moments (the French Revolution, the Meiji Restoration), more likely to be smooth and continuous, splitting the self between past and present in a manner calculated to generate a regular tempo of self-modernisation as opposed to the more staccato-like pattern of self-modernisation associated with the modernist art museum. The Edo-Tokyo Museum is a good example of the tempo of the history museum in this regard, installing a qualitative division between the time of the Edo period and that of the post-Meiji period, the former as a realm of superseded (but still valued) custom and tradition – including the *bakemono* and *misemono* – and the latter, once the break of 1868 has been passed, as a realm of constant change and innovation in which the Japanese citizen is depicted as, and thereby enjoined to become, incessantly self-modernising. And it is, of course, in relation to this realm that the Museum locates and defines itself as an 'instrument of civilisation'. The Museum, if you like, tells the story it needs to about the past in order to place itself as both an outcome of, and a means of continuing, the ongoing dynamics of self-transformation that the 'logic of culture' promotes.

All of this is to say that museums are best understood as distinctive cultural machineries which, through the tensions that they generate within the self, have operated as a means for balancing the tensions of modernity. They

generate and regulate both how, and how far, we are detached from the past and pointed toward the future. But, depending on the type of museum concerned, they do this in different ways, producing different tempos of change. These differences of tempo are important, and are often related to the different publics that different types of museum address. History museums, for example, have functioned more effectively as mass 'people movers' than have art museums which, in tune with the socially restricted publics they have attracted, have functioned more effectively in installing new dynamics of self-development amongst those professional and managerial elites which have usually been implicated most quickly in processes of economic modernisation. In either case, though, museums have proven themselves to be highly productive machineries in their capacity to transform modes of thought, perception and behaviour; in short, ways of life.

The question I now want to put, to return to my starting point, concerns the directions in which these significant engines of social transformation are now pointed, or should point, in their contemporary conception as 'differencing machines' operating in the midst of societies marked by new and increasingly salient forms of cultural diversity. And, as a corollary of this, the further question arises as to what, if any, consequences these developments have had for the organisation and functioning of the exhibitionary complex. I shall, in exploring these questions, develop three arguments. The first will be to suggest that it is the modes of thought, behaviour and perception shaped by the associations between museums and modernity sketched above that now constitute the field of inherited custom and tradition – or bad habits, if you will – which museum practice must engage with if it is still to act in conformity with the transformative logic of culture. The second will outline the respects in which the development of such an orientation for contemporary museum practices has involved a commitment to dialogic and multi-sensory forms of visitor engagement which have challenged the authoritarian and ocular-centric forms of didacticism which characterised the earlier organisation of the exhibitionary complex (Bennett, 1998a). And my third contention will be that many of the contradictions which currently beset museums as they wrestle to define their place in public cultures that are in the midst of global transformations arise from the different 'twists' they give, and sometime are obliged to give, to the 'logic of culture' in the context of social divisions that are, always, simultaneously racialised, classed and gendered.

Transforming the exhibitionary complex: museums, culture and difference

It will be helpful, as a first footing, to cast doubt on a further aspect of the thesis of globalisation. For if, as I have suggested, it is a mistake to see globalisation (in the qualified sense I have proposed) as an entirely new phenomena, so it would also be a mistake to see it as an uninterrupted process

that has characterised the development of capitalism from the voyages of discovery to the present. This is especially important in relation to museums owing to the degree to which their relatively short history has coincided with one of the most extended periods of downturn in the internationalisation of the flows of goods, people, capital and culture. I refer to the 1914–1918 and 1939–1945 wars, and the years between them. These witnessed significant, and often drastic, declines in the rates of international population migration, trade, culture and capital flows. And this entailed a parallel, and considerable, decline in the international networks within which museums operated. The 1914–18 war brought about both a significant reduction in the international activities of European museums while also splintering the professional networks that had begun to form, in the Anglophone world, around the Museums Association and its various offshoots.[4] The international traffic in artefacts and exhibits declined; museums, especially in Germany, became much more strongly ethnicised in their concerns, often breaking with earlier transnational principles of classification and display as a consequence;[5] and international exhibitions often became more markedly national or colonial events – giving way in their influence in Britain, for example, to specifically imperial exhibitions.

If, turning now to the post-1945 period, we ask how this has most evidently differed from the relations between museums and global processes that characterised the pre-1914 period, three issues are worth noting. The first is not just that patterns of international population mobility have reached and exceeded their pre-1914 levels, but that they have done so in different conditions in the sense that movements of people have taken place within a historical context of decolonisation as opposed to the period of colonial expansion that characterised the late nineteenth century. Second, this has also meant that these movements of people have taken place in the context of, and have given rise to, campaigns for the recognition of equal political, civic and cultural rights for those who move between countries. And third, these campaigns have been accompanied by a pluralisation of public spheres – indigenous and diasporic – with, in some cases, the identification and assertion of differentiated rights rather than, as in earlier conceptions of the public sphere, solely universal ones.[6] And fourth, the international networks that museums now form a part of a much more pluri-centric, in part because of the emergence of North America as a rival hub to Europe, and in part because the dynamics of post-colonisation have resulted in broader networks with more clearly independent national museum systems.

The most significant consequence effect of these changes from the perspective of my concerns here is that which, in Anthony Shelton's elegant summary, sees museums, particularly those with an ethnographic focus, now being subject to radical interrogation 'by members of the disjunctive populations they once tried to represent' as their audiences are 'increasingly made up of peoples they once considered as part of their object' (Shelton, 2001: 222). This is the basis of what is now the most evident challenge to

the ways in which, in the earlier formation of the exhibitionary complex, museums translated the logic of culture into a hierarchical organisations of the relations between peoples, cultures and knowledges in functioning as 'people movers' within the temporal dynamics of modernity. Difference was, of course, always on show within the evolutionary frameworks governing late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century museums and exhibitions. But this was difference within a highly normative framework in which a whole series of others – cast in the role of representing outmoded, or denegerate, habits, customs and traditions – defined that from which modern man (who is always not-quite-fully modern) must distinguish himself to remain at the forefront of modernity's advance. The challenge now is to re-invent the museum as an institution that can orchestrate new relations and perceptions of difference which both break free from the hierarchically organised forms of stigmatic othering which characterised the exhibitionary complex and provide more socially invigorating and, from a civic perspective, more beneficial interfaces between different cultures. There are, however, sharp differences of opinion about how this challenge might best be met. It will prove productive, in considering these, to do so less with a view to seeing how they might be resolved in favour of one view against others than for the light they throw on the current predicament of museums as they seek to negotiate the tensions arising from their contradictory relations between international public spheres on the one hand and, on the other, their position within what remain nationally or locally defined arenas of civic governance.

One strategy, and it is the predominant one, consists in the conception of museums as the kind of 'differencing machine' proposed by official policies of multiculturalism. The emphasis here is on developing the museum as a facilitator of cross-cultural exchange with a view to taking the sting out of the politics of difference within the wider society. According respect and recognition to previously marginalised or repressed histories and cultures; opening up the museum space to the representatives of different communities by providing them with opportunities for authoring their own stories; connecting exhibitions to programmes of inter-cultural performance; repatriating objects collected through earlier colonial histories where the retention of those objects in museums generates ongoing cultural offence: these are now significant aspects of contemporary museum practice. That said, their legacy is perhaps most publicly evident – and most publicly debated – where new national museums have been formed in so-called 'settler societies' with strongly developed official commitments to multiculturalism or, in the case of New Zealand, biculturalism: the Canadian Museum of Civilisation, Te Papa, and the new National Museum of Australia are good examples (McIntyre and Wehner, 2001). For these provide compelling evidence of the respects in which museums articulate the logic of culture to nationalist frameworks, seeking to move the imagined community of the nation from outmoded forms of identification and perception to new ones and, in the process, articulating relations of similarity and difference in new ways.

Take the National Museum of Australia: opened in 2001 to mark the first centenary of Australia's establishment as a Federation, its governing themes are those of Land, Nation and People. The way the relations between these are articulated relates to the Museum's commitment to act as a 'people mover' on a number of fronts simultaneously: articulating a post-colonial agenda by placing the story of British colonisation in the context of longer and ongoing histories of movement and settlement; questioning narratives of settlement by according equal – if not greater – weight to Aboriginal perspectives of the process of colonisation as one of invasion and conquest through a frontier history characterised by ongoing racist massacres; lending credence to Aboriginal claims to prior Aboriginal ownership of the land by foregrounding the role of scientific archaeology in establishing the antiquity of Aboriginal culture and civilisation; and challenging the centrality of Anglo-Celtic contributions to the Australian story by emphasising the contributions made by successive periods of non-Anglo migrants. These, in brief summary,[7] are some of the more obvious ways in which the Museum spoke to and into some of the major Australian public political debates of the period (those over the report on the stolen generation of Aborigines who had been forcibly removed from their families, and the developing crisis over refugees, being the most significant) in ways which often stood in marked contrast to the position of the Howard government. This provoked a good deal of controversy. The Museum's depictions of the colonial frontier were alleged by the conservative historian Keith Windschuttle to credit accounts of the numbers massacred passed down within Aboriginal oral tradition, even when these might lack documentary confirmation.[8] This, in turn, occasioned a significant public debate regarding the position and responsibilities of museums in mediating the relations between the authority of memory and that of documented history. Indeed, this debate formed a part of the background against which, very shortly after it opened, the Howard government set up a panel to review the exhibition and public programs of the National Museum of Australia. Although largely right of centre in its composition, the report produced by this panel in July 2003 exonerated the Museum of any systematic bias while at the same time criticising it for a lack of balance in certain areas (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003). These included its exhibition of the colonial frontier, a matter on which the report echoed the tenor if not the detail of Windschuttle's criticisms that these paid insufficient attention to the need for both documentary evidence and the exhibition of objects with a clearly authenticated relation to the events in question.

Political reactions of this kind make it clear that museums which seek to implement official diversity policies can be perceived as going 'too far' or rapidly become out of step with changing policy agendas. Both aspects were true of the National Museum of Australia. While a good deal of the Museum's philosophy was developed during the period of the Hawke/Keating Labor governments, when official support for the agendas of multiculturalism and for a reconciliation of the relations between white and Aboriginal

Australia were high, the realisation of this philosophy occurred under the Howard administration noted for its hostility to both of these principles: so much so that multiculturalism came to be know as the 'm' word owing to Howard's evident reluctance to ever actually say it. Out of step with its political masters, the National Museum was also, some of its critics have argued, out of step with public opinion in failing to register how many Anglo-Celtic Australians felt challenged by Australia's cultural pluralisation. Nor is it only conservatives who had taken this position. Intellectuals on the left have also suggested that, by failing to take sufficient account of the deep cultural purchase of many of the traditional nationalist sentiments that, in its reforming zeal, it took issue with, the Museum, while attempting to shift identities and perceptions in one direction, may, for some, have had the opposite effect of congealing habitual identifications and perceptions. The essence of the charge here is that the Museum had misjudged its task, as a 'people mover' auspiced by the state, of how to strike the right balance in putting the logic of culture to work in managing a transition to a new articulation of relations of similarity and difference within the framework of a national imaginery. It is thus notable that perhaps the most significant refrain in the report of the panel appointed to review the Museum was the need for a strong and coherent narrative governed by the themes of discovery, exploration and development to replace the stress it had initially placed on 'interpretative pluralism'.

From a second perspective, however, the very participation of museums in attempts to manage relations of cultural diversity in these ways is a problem in and of itself owing to the ethnocentric assumptions and forms of control that it entails. Ghassan Hage's concept of 'zoological multiculturalism' is a useful summary of this line of argument. For Hage, the multicultural museum is too often 'a *collection* of otherness' in which diversity is displayed as a national possession (Hage, 1998: 158). Its roots, he argues, lie within the earlier history of the colonial ethnographic showcase in view of the relationship of possession and control that this established in constituting other cultures as the objects of an organising and controlling ethnographic gaze. The main change, as he sees it, is one of context:

> For, if the exhibition of the 'exotic natives' was the product of the power relation between the coloniser and the colonised *in the colonies* as it came to exist in the colonial era, the multicultural exhibition is the product of the power relation between the post-colonial powers and the post-colonised as it developed *in the metropolis* following the migratory processes that characterised the post-colonial era.'
>
> (160–1)

The issues to which these objections point concern the disposition of the semiotic frames within which relations of difference are organised and depicted. The principal shortcoming of 'zoological multiculturalism' in this

respect is that it echoes what Hage sees as the chief weakness of multiculturalism as social and cultural policy. Just as the latter constructs and organises cultural diversity from a position of whiteness which remains the assumed governing centre from which diversity has to be managed, so 'zoological multiculturalism' results in museum displays which are governed from and by a position of whiteness which constructs diversity as a national possession, a sign of its own tolerance and virtue. Hage again:

> . . . while White multiculturalism requires a number of cultures, White culture is not merely one among those cultures – it is precisely the culture which provides the collection with the spirit that moves it and gives it coherence: 'peaceful coexistence'.
>
> Here again, however, for exhibitionary purposes this time, left to themselves 'ethnic' cultures are imagined as unable to coexist. It is only the White effort to inject 'peaceful co-existence' into them which allows them to do so. Like all elements of a collection, 'ethnics' have to forget those 'unexhibitable' parts of their history and become living fetishes deriving their significance from the White organising principle that controls and positions them within the Australian social space.
>
> (161)

It is in response to difficulties of this kind, and the need to go beyond diversity as a possession to its conception as an ongoing process of intercultural dialogue, that Anthony Shelton, drawing on his experience, while its Director, of re-arranging the exhibitions at London's Horniman Museum, advocates the virtues of hybridity and dialogism as regulative principles for museum practices. The advantage of these principles, Shelton contends, consists in the means they offer for engaging with difference without either reifying it into separate ethnicised enclaves (with all of the dangers this entails) or orchestrating the relations between cultures-in-difference from a governing discursive position which, in spite of its open-minded tolerance, thereby remains resolutely monological. Far from anchoring objects in a fixed relation to specific cultures, the perspective of hybridity focuses on their role in mediating the relations between different cultures, belonging to none exclusively, but operating always in motion in the context of complex histories of transactional exchange. Similarly, viewed in its Bakhtian lineage (Bakhtin, 1981), the perspective of dialogism stresses the need to dismantle the position of a controlling centre of and for discourse, paying attention, instead, to the multi-accentuality of meaning that arises out of the dialogic to and fro, the discursive give and take, that characterises processes of cross-cultural exchange.

The implications of these principles, when translated into exhibition practices, favour the production of de-centred displays in which – rather than being 'spoken' from a clearly enunciated controlling position – objects and texts are assembled so as to speak to one another, and to the spectator, in

ways which allow a range of inferences to be drawn. The resulting principle of 'cacaphony', as Dias describes it (Dias, 1994: 173), involves a number of breaks with earlier museum practices: it questions the virtue and validity of the traditional ethnographic practices of observation and description by denying the availability of a position of discursive neutrality on which such practices depended; it stresses flux, fluidity, and indeterminacy – the restlessness and permanent impermanence of things, meanings and people in movement; and it stresses the dialogic virtues of speaking and hearing in relations of discursive reciprocity over the more fixed organisation of attention associated with the museum's traditional form of directed ocular-centrism. It is in the light of this last consideration that we can appreciate the major revival of interest in the museum's various precursors – cabinets of curiosities, *Kunstkammern*, *Wunderkammern*, etc. – for the evidence they provide of a different, and less disciplinary, ordering of vision in which the eye, rather then being fixed before the scene of the exhibition in order to register its (singular) lessons, was, in seeking to decipher the puzzling relations such collections posed, to be pulled into the polyphonic forms of 'chattering' that characterised the relations between their objects (Bredekamp, 1995; Daston and Park, 1998; Durrans, 2001; Pomian, 1990; Stafford, 1994).

Here, then, are new practices which, precisely in their reinvention of older ones, constitute a departure from the privileging and regimentation of vision associated with the exhibitionary complex. It would be wrong, though, to see this is as entirely new. There is, Dias reminds us, a longer history connecting attempts to detach museums from hierarchical arrangements of the arrangements between different cultures to reorganising practices of looking. The case she has in mind is Franz Boas's introduction of the human life group into the American Museum of Natural History and its role, by no means unproblematic,[9] in promoting the view that different cultures should be exhibited and represented on their own terms rather than – as had been the implication of the typological method, which Boas aimed to supplant – being ranked in evolutionary sequence from the perspective of a single, Eurocentric set of values and optical vantage point. This shift, related to the emerging influence of habitat displays for illustrating the variability of species and their relations to their environments, was part of a more general development leading from a morphological to an ecological conception of the basic grammar of natural history and ethnological museum displays. It also reflected new ways of framing the scene of exhibition that were more closely aligned with the scopic pleasures of cinema and, perhaps more importantly, new ways of involving the viewer in that scene. Dias, contrasting the life group with the more directed and distanced forms of seeing associated with typological displays, argued that the life group both invited and promoted a more participative look – she likens its mechanisms to those of the *coup d'oeil* – which involved the viewer in an associative practice of knowledge and memory, constructing an image of a culture through the associations she or he establishes between its component parts:

> . . . whilst the typological arrays allowed the viewer to recognise what he or she already knew before (in this case, linear evolution), life groups . . . facilitated the viewer's process of cognition, and enabled the viewer to establish his or her own correlations. In a certain way in the life group, the viewer was invited to occupy the anthropologist's place, in order to see what he or she had seen in the field.
>
> (Dias, 1994: 173)

Of course, this still privileges a particular point of view, an ethnographic gaze which constructs other cultures as their objects. Be this as it may, it makes the point that I want it to here in underlining the respects in which those transformations of the exhibitionary complex that have aimed at developing a relativising and pluralising civic task for museums have usually entailed the development of new forms of vision and perception.

Museums, culture, and contradiction

The arguments briefly reviewed above stand out as among the most innovative aspects of contemporary museum theory and practice. And, in theory, the case seems a compelling one: these are the kinds of exhibition practices that are needed to break with the discursive and sensory ordering of the exhibitionary complex in order to open up new possibilities for negotiating relations of cultures-in-difference. One can also see the ways in which they meet arguments coming from the literature on 'contact zones' which has stressed the role of museums as mediators in complex histories of cultural exchange (Clifford, 1997; Thomas, 1991). But (there is always a 'but') they are also in some respects worrying ones when the role museums play, when viewed in the light of the logic of culture, is considered in terms of their relations to the dynamics of social class. I want to draw on Ghassan Hage again here for the light he throws on the respects in which a commitment to the value of cultural diversity can function as part of a cosmopolitan formation which, aided considerably by museums and art galleries, binds together international intellectual and cultural elites in shared practices and values, but often at the expense of widening divisions between those elites and other classes within national polities. In Hage's words:

> The cosmopolite is an essentially 'mega-urban' figure: one detached from strong affiliations and roots and consequently open to all forms of otherness. . . . Just as important as his or her urban nature, the cosmopolite is a *class* figure *and* a White person, capable of appreciating and consuming 'high-quality' commodities and cultures, including 'ethnic' culture.
>
> (Hage, 1998: 201)

Hage's point here is that the forms of cultural capital that are required if one is to become an adept in the practices of 'cosmo-multiculturalism' are, far from being evenly distributed throughout the social body, restricted to educated elites. If this is so in relation to those forms of multiculturalism which retain a central, implicitly white, co-ordinating discursive position, the same is true – only considerably more so – of the kinds of cultural capital that are called for in order to engage with dialogic and hybrid representations of cultures-in-difference. For it is, I think, clear that the influence of such conceptions owes a good deal to their currency within the practices of modern art museums and art spaces where they function as parts of strategies for the renovation of perception though the defamiliarisation of habituated modes of seeing. Yet the publics for such institutions are, notoriously, more socially restricted than for another kind of museum.

There is, then, to the extent that these tendencies constitute an aestheticisation of museum practices more generally, a risk that, in the very process of fostering greater and more open cross-cultural dialogue among cosmopolitan elites, museums may do little to address those racialised forms of social conflict arising from the relations between those sections of the white working and lower-middle classes, whose only experience of globalisation is de-industrialisation and unemployment, and the migrant communities who live in close proximity, usually in contexts where the housing stock, social services and public amenities are under tremendous pressure. The more museums prioritise their role in relation to what might, from one perspective, be viewed as global public spheres, or, from another, as international tourist networks, the greater the risk that they might forget their civic obligations in relation to the spheres of local and national governance.

That these are not idle concerns is evident from recent events. The support for Le Pen in France; the rise of Hansonism in Australia and, more recently, the refugee crisis there; the race riots in the north of England in the summer of 2001 – these are all symptoms of a deep malaise in the body politic of contemporary societies. It is also arguable that this malaise is worsened by a deepening sense, on the part of white working-class constituencies, of being less a party to, than an object of critique within, those discourses – evident in the official languages of law and administration as well as in the major institutions of public culture (schools, colleges and universities, public service broadcasting, libraries and museums) – which promote an acceptance of cultures-in-difference. Where this results in a discursive environment that mobilises and legitimises ongoing hostility toward racialised minorities, the risk is equally real that the latter will also opt for ways of maintaining and developing their own specific cultures and values that rest more on separatist than dialogic values. Nor is it difficult to see here how, against its better history, the community museum movement might, in providing hard-pressed cultures with minimal sustenance, serve to reinforce the divisions between differentiated communities as rigidly distinct enclaves

It is, Pierre Bourdieu argues, an effect of the 'scholastic illusion' that intellectuals, scarred by a separation from the world that is the other side of their relative freedom and autonomy, believe that changes in behaviour come about as a result of prior changes in consciousness wrought by the critical work of intellectuals. In its contemporary form, Bourdieu contends, this illusion, which is rooted most strongly in the abstraction of the humanities academy from the 'realities of the social world', produces a tendency toward an 'unrealistic radicality' (Bourdieu, 2000: 41). I draw on Bourdieu here because there is, finally, another perspective from which we might look at the relations between museums, public cultures and global processes: that concerning the much greater traffic that takes place between museums and the humanities disciplines in what is now a more extensively internationalised university sector. There is little doubt that this has been productive and invigorating, generating the effervescence of the 'new museology' that has been so crucial to the critical re-examination of earlier legacies that has been required for the development of new museum practices. At the same time, however, there is the risk that an 'unrealistic radicality' might also be translated into the practices of museums at the price of a decline in their ability to connect with the ways in which socially majoritan behaviours and values are routinely re-shaped and transformed. No programme of social change, Bourdieu argues, can neglect 'the extraordinary inertia which results from the inscription of social structures in bodies', meaning that behaviour can be changed not simply at the level of a change or raising of consciousness but involves 'a thoroughgoing process of countertraining, involving repeated exercises' (Bourdieu, 2000: 172).

Transforming the exhibitionary complex similarly entails a recognition that museums function as civic technologies in which the virtues of citizenship are acquired, and changed, in the context of civic rituals in which habitual modes of thought and perception are transformed not through sudden acts of intellectual conversion but, precisely, by acquiring new habits through repeated exercises. If they are to provide such exercises in a new civics, museums need to take account of the different ways in which they can intelligibly relate to sharply diverging constituencies and publics in the context of complex intersections of class, gendered and racialised social divisions. And this means, among other things, taking account of the complex and contradictory ways in which their capacity to act as 'people movers' is shaped by the ways in which they activate the 'logic of culture' in the context of such intersecting social divisions.

Notes

1 I have argued elsewhere why I think it is difficult to sustain this view: see Bennett (1999).
2 I should stress, though, that I do not press this interpretation of culture as one that must displace all others – the term is far too much of a semantic shifter for such

prescription to be intelligible. The aspect of Ray's discussion that I most value is that, in contradistinction to many other uses, it sets up a tension between, on the one hand, culture as a historically specific mechanism for the shaping of identities and, on the other, everyday customs, values and traditions which, in other definitions, are often view as a part of the extended definition of culture but which, here, comprise the ground on which culture works. If this gap is closed down analysis is unable to engage with the operations of this mechanism. That said, Ray's account of the ways in which this mechanism works are a little too abstractly and generally stated. The result is an over-unified account of culture as always working through the same operations rather than, more convincingly, a more ad hoc assembly of different machineries for the shaping of identities and conducts.

3 This is an effect of the operation of what James Clifford calls the art-culture system (Clifford, 1988: 224).

4 Lewis (1989) provides the best account of the early history of the Museums Association which, from its establishment in the 1880s, was the only international Anglophone museum network prior to the establishment, from the 1890s on, of separate ones in the USA, Australia, and Canada. Kavanagh (1994) gives some sense of the declining influence of international networks on the activities of museums in the 1914–45 period.

5 This was most evident in the implications of Nazi *Kunstpolitik* for the practices of German art museums: see Petropoulos (2000).

6 The work of Will Kymlicka (2001) has been especially important in distinguishing the principles on which indigenous and multicultural claims to difference rest.

7 I draw here on the BBC television programme – *The Museum of Conflicted Histories* – which, with Claire Lasko of Diverse Productions, I made for the Open University course *Sociology and Society*. The programme includes interviews with the Museum's Director, Dawn Casey, and three curators – including Mike Smith, who was responsible for the exhibits relating to the environment, and Margo Neale, who was responsible for the Gallery of Aboriginal Australia. There are also interviews with Keith Windschuttle, with Australian academics Bain Attwood, Ghassan Hage and Tim Rowse, and with members of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra.

8 Windschuttle's criticisms of the National Museum of Australia are informed by his more general criticisms of what he sees as widespread historical fabrication by those historians who have interpreted the colonial frontier as one characterised by widespread racial massacres. See Windschuttle (2002).

9 George Stocking Jr notes how Boas's critic John Wesley Powell, representing evolutionary anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution, was able to accuse Boas of essentialising differences by ignoring the interchanges between different tribal units: see Stocking (1999: 171–2).

Part III

Assembling and governing cultures

My concerns in this final part of the book span the period from the 1890s to 2016 and range across examples drawn from Australia, the United States and France. What brings them together, therefore, is neither a particular historical period nor a specific national setting but a shared focus on the role, in the main, of anthropology in organising the 'transactional realities' through which the role of museums in more general practices of governance has proceeded. This is combined with an examination of how practices of anthropological fieldwork have shaped the processes of collecting through which museums have acquired their collections, and of the ways in which the orderings to which such collections have been subjected – in the field, in transit between field and museum, and in the museum – have fashioned distinctive ways of connecting with and acting on the conduct of varied populations. These include not just museum visitors but also, particularly in colonial contexts, indigenous populations subjected to different kinds of colonial rule.

The first two chapters speak to one another in addressing these questions in relation to two contexts which foreground the differences between museums in settler colonial contexts from their role in metropolitan centres of colonial empires based on the principles of direct rule. They also foreground how different traditions of anthropology and their associated conceptions of anthropological fieldwork, and of the relations between field and museum, have been shaped by different colonial dynamics. In chapter 8, 'The "shuffle of things" and the distribution of agency,' these centre on the moment of Australia's development of a relatively autonomous national governmental domain through the 1901 Act of Federation which brought its various states together in a relationship of quasi-legal independence from Britain. This was also the moment when Australia's Aboriginal peoples were brought within the compass of this domain on what was expected to be a temporary basis given the anticipation of their eventual extinction. By contrast, the following chapter, 'Collecting, instructing, governing: fields, publics, milieus,' focuses on the relations between field and museum articulated across the relations between France's African and Indo-Chinese colonies and Paris's Musée de l'Homme during an expansive period of French colonialism when the very

boundaries of the nation were, in the rhetorics and practices of 'Greater France,' imaginarily extended beyond mainland France. My theoretical concerns across these two chapters are with the ways in which the materials that were brought together from varied sites of collection were, through the forms of ordering to which they were subjected in museums, mobilised as parts of both civic and biopolitical programs and across the relations between the two. In exploring the new social and material entanglements that these processes of collecting gave rise to, I chart the distribution of new forms of agency across the relations between museum and field, metropolis and colony, coloniser and colonised, scientist and subjects, collector and collected, and governors and governed that these entanglements made possible.

While juxtaposing the Australian and French cases in both chapters, the emphasis of the first of these chapters is with the relations between the fieldwork practices of Baldwin Spencer and Francis Gillen, Spencer's role at the National Museum of Victoria, and his role in relation to the development of new forms of colonial administration in post-Federation Australia. In looking in some detail at Spencer and Gillen's fieldwork practices, I draw on Michel Callon's work to propose, in the concept of 'fieldwork agencements,' a means for identifying the ways in which fieldwork practices enact specific kinds of power and agency by virtue of the distinctive articulations of the relations between a range of human and non-human actors that they effect. The chapter then examines the different networks through which the ethnographic materials collected by Spencer and Gillen acquired different forms of agency as, in being brought together with other collections, they were connected to the institutions of the public sphere, to Australia's developing university system, and to new forms of colonial administration operating through the sequestration of Aborigines to special reserves.

The Musée de l'Homme was developed in the 1930s under the leadership of Paul Rivet as a key site for the translation of post-Durkheimian and post-Maussian anthropology into a governmental science with a multiplicity of roles to play. My concerns in chapter 9 focus on the division the museum established between its public exhibition functions and the scientific-administrative functions associated with its 'laboratory.' In further elaborating my discussion in the previous chapter of the distinction Foucault makes between the public and the milieu as two different transactional realities through which governmental practices connect with populations to regulate their conduct, I argue that the Musée de l'Homme operated simultaneously in both of these registers. Committed as part of a new set of civic institutions to educating the French public to accept new, non-hierarchical understandings of racial differences, it also formed part of a scientific-administrative complex that subjected the populations of colonial French West Africa to hierarchical forms of colonial administration via adjustments to their milieus. In this respect, the Musée de l'Homme instantiated a contradiction that has typified the practices of liberal government by seeking, on the one hand, to transform the French citizenry via voluntary mechanisms of

self-reform mediated via the public sphere while, on the other hand, relating to the colonised via a coercive manipulation of the conditions of their existence. I also show how a similar set of tensions, albeit not so starkly posed, characterised the programs of regional governance promoted by the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires.

My attention in the last two chapters shifts to a different set of relations focused on different aspects of, and moments in, the political career of the culture concept developed, in the early twentieth century, in the Boasian tradition of American anthropology. However, my concerns in these two chapters go beyond anthropology to consider its relations to aesthetics and, in the final chapter, to archaeology too. What connects the two chapters is the shifting role played by the culture concept in relation to practices of governance in the context of, first, its various adaptations and uses in inter-war America, and, second, the ways in which, on being translated into Australia in the post-war period, it has operated as a new interface between the governing institutions of mainstream Australia and Indigenous Australians.

I enter into these questions in chapter 10, 'Aesthetics, culture and the ordering of race: Boas and the Boasians,' by considering the place that Franz Boas has been accorded as, in effect, the key figure around whom the history of twentieth-century anthropology has been held to turn. Substituting cultural conceptions of difference for biological conceptions of race, he displaced hierarchical conceptions of culture in favour of cultural relativism, while also democratising such conceptions in severing their connections to an elitist conception of aesthetic culture. It's not that there is no truth to these conventional assessments of the significance of Boas's work. But it's not the whole truth either. Indeed, the first two of these claims can be, and have been, shown to be hedged around with qualifications and reservations in relation to the role that the culture concept has played in relation to both African Americans and Native Americans. However, it is the third claim that I take as my point of entry into these questions in showing how, in both Boas's work and that of his successors, the culture concept – the concept of culture as a distinctively patterned way of life – was shaped by emerging modernist conceptions of aesthetic practice. This then informs the next step in my argument, which identifies how it was precisely by virtue of its aesthetic properties that the culture concept came to play a key role in the development of American assimilationist polices from the 1930s. This was, however, a governmental deployment of the culture concept that derived its rationality from being applied solely to the relations between white nativist Americans and new generations of European immigrants while placing African and Native Americans on an entirely different governmental terrain.

The culture concept entered into Australia initially in the 1930s in the context of research projects involving both American and Australian anthropologists. Its influence gathered apace in the post-war period, particularly through the influence that the related concept of culture area – the site of a temporary fusion of cultural traits from diverse locations – played in a range

of mapping projects through which Aboriginal cultures and languages were differentiated from one another and assigned to distinct territorial locations. The effects of these mapping projects have been complex and varied. They have, for example, been of critical importance in validating long-standing connections to country that have been important in establishing claims to Native title that have proved to be of both symbolic and economic significance for Indigenous Australians. My concerns in the final chapter, 'Re-collecting ourselves: indigenous time, culture, community and the museum,' are with the role that such mapping projects and the culture concept which underlies them have played in reorganising the relations between anthropology and museums away from pre-war evolutionary conceptions and toward a conception of museums as contact zones which operate at the interfaces between different cultures. I place these concerns alongside two other developments that have played an important role in the relations between museums and Indigenous Australia since the 1960s: the recognition, within archaeology, of Aborigines' long-standing and mobile adaptations to changing environments that has produced a new set of relations between an Aboriginal deep time and the time of the nation; and the valorisation of the aesthetic worth of Aboriginal art practices associated with their reappraisal within the disciplines of both art history and anthropology. In this final chapter, I trace the contradictory pulls exerted by these various developments by examining a range of museum practices – of local, regional and national museums – and the different orientations to both Aboriginal deep time and contemporary Indigenous culture that these produce.

8 The 'shuffle of things' and the distribution of agency*

Introduction

I take the first part of my title from Francis Bacon's reference to cabinets of curiosity as places where 'whatsoever singularity and the shuffle of things hath produced . . . shall be sorted and included' (cit. Henare, 2005: 60). I do so in order to establish a connection with Bruno Latour's discussion of the similarities between bureau of statistics, the storerooms for the maps produced by the Comte de La Perouse's Pacific voyages, and the collections of natural history museums. These are all places whose occupants can 'combine, shuffle around, superimpose and recalculate' the relations between the statistics, texts and things they gather together to end up with, respectively, 'a "gross national product" . . . "Sakhalin island", or the "the taxonomy of mammals"' (Latour, 1987: 227). Latour makes the point by way of stressing the importance for those engaged in scientific expeditions of producing 'immutable and combinable mobiles': that is, objects and texts which, no matter how old they are or how far distant from the sites at which they were collected, are 'conveniently at hand and combinable at will' (Latour, 1987: 227). It is through their pliable 'combinability' that such texts and objects can be assembled into new networks which, although produced at a distance – spatial and temporal – from their points of origin, may nonetheless make possible varied forms of action back on those points of origin, and elsewhere.

I want, in what follows, to apply this perspective to the networks through which the materials that were assembled in museums during the early fieldwork phase of anthropology were brought together from varied sites of collection and mobilized as parts of both civic and biopolitical programs.[1] I do so in order to explore the new entanglements that these processes of collecting gave rise to and the new forms of 'combinability' they permitted. These were, in the main, entanglements between materials coded as 'ethnographic', museums

and museum personnel, the institutions and practices of the public sphere, and the apparatuses of colonial administration. My concern will be with the distribution of new forms of agency across the relations between museum and field, metropolis and colony, colonizer and colonized, scientist and subjects, and collector and collected that these entanglements made possible.[2]

I shall, though, approach these questions via a detour suggested by the similarities Latour notes between nineteenth-century natural history museums and statistical bureau as centres of calculation: that is, places where objects and data collected from diverse sites of collection are subjected to new forms of classification and ordering made possible by their being gathered together in one place.[3] Evelyn Ruppert draws on this perspective in her discussion of the 1911 Canadian Census, the first to attempt a 'scientific' enumeration of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Canada's Far North. There are three aspects of Ruppert's discussion I want to highlight here. The first concerns her use of the concept of *agencement*, derived from Michel Callon (2005), to interpret census-taking as a practice performed through the interactions between heterogeneous actors whose agency arises from, and is distributed across, the socio-technical arrangements that bring them together. The particular value of this concept consists in the light it throws on the processes though which such actors come to be endowed with specific, and different, agential powers and capacities. The actors she identifies as components of the 'census *agencement*' include 'human actors (e.g., the mounted police, interpreters, the Aboriginal people), technological actors (e.g., "special" population schedules, steamships, trading posts) and natural actants (e.g. ice, snow, seals)' (Ruppert, 2009: 13). Ruppert's reasons for including mounted police, trading posts and seals, to come to my second point, concern their roles as occasions for bringing together the census enumerators and gatherings of Aboriginal people as the to-be-enumerated. Each of these, in constituting temporary gatherings of nomadic groups – around police patrols, visits to trading posts, and seasonal seal hunts – provided contact points for the practice of enumeration. Third, however, Ruppert notes the inability of the 'census *agencement*' to transform Canada's Aboriginal inhabitants into 'census subjects': that is, subjects able to place themselves, and to be placed within, the census categories. Such identifications were not possible because the Aboriginal respondents could not be 'fixed' into place in terms of either their age or place of abode. In view of this, she argues, 'census taking could not produce or construct a population in the Far North but only a record of a census "other" – an indeterminate multitude that could not identify and could not be identified as part of the population' (2009: 14–15).

There was a census in Australia in 1911 too, and one again in 1921 when, although the 1901 Commonwealth Constitution had excluded Aborigines from being counted in the census (Povinelli, 2002: 22), Aborigines were included albeit listed as a separate category, apart from the Australian population. Perhaps the most distinctive and consequential forms of collecting and enumerating in which Aborigines were gathered and collected

during this period, however, were those associated with the new relations between anthropological fieldwork and museums. Although initiated in the 1890s (Morton and Mulvaney, 1996), the involvement of museums in organizing anthropological fieldwork expeditions into the more geographically remote parts of Australia – Central Australia, the Northern Territory, Western Australia, northern Queensland – increased significantly in the early decades of the twentieth century.[4] This was also when Australia's major State museums installed their first permanent exhibitions of Aboriginal culture (Jones, 2007: 228). It is no accident that these were also the formative decades of Australian state formation with the development, after the Federation of 1901, of programs and agencies organizing what had hitherto been separate States into a national governmental domain (Rowse, 1998). The new nexus of relationships between museums and anthropological fieldwork that was developed in this period was connected to new arrangements for the management of Aborigines within the emerging space of an Australian nation state. As such, it was a nexus which enumerated and collected Aborigines as a race apart, as constitutively different – racially and culturally – from the Australian population and, therefore, needing to be governed differently.

While it is important to register these differences, the methodological perspective Ruppert outlines is nonetheless helpful in considering the relationships between anthropology, fieldwork and the practices of colonial governance that were developed in this period. Her perspective of a 'census *agencement*' finds a ready parallel in the concept of a 'fieldwork *agencement*' comprised of an equivalent range of different kinds of actors, and the distribution across these of different agential powers and capacities. These included, in the Australian case, the role of the stations on the overland telegraph, newly opened between Adelaide and Darwin, and of railways and government ration depots, in providing points where Aborigines periodically congregated and where, therefore, they might be brought into the orbit of fieldwork investigations (Jones, 1987; Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch, 1997). These provided points of contact that situated fieldworkers and their subjects in a new governmental domain – a regularized set of arrangements between government authorities and Aboriginal populations – which (partially) displaced the role that missionary stations had earlier played in these regards. There were the guides and, sometimes, Aboriginal trackers on whom the fieldworkers relied to find their way around often hostile terrain, and the horses and camels that were the main sources of transport for the anthropologists, their equipment, and the food supplies and gifts that proved crucial material mediators of the anthropological encounter. There were tents and camping equipment which marked differential spatial relationships between anthropologists and their subjects: close to the field but not entirely immersed within it as the tents provided the anthropologists with places of retreat into their own culture, but also with places for writing up their observations and with makeshift dark rooms for film development (Schumaker, 1996).

Most important of all, perhaps, was the range of measuring and recording devices that mediated the relations between anthropologists and their subjects. These were of two distinct types. First, there were those related most closely the developing field of social anthropology's concerns focused on the customs, beliefs and behaviors of indigenous populations. Film cameras and sound recording equipment were the two key new technological mediators here. Photography was important in this context too. However, the camera also remained caught up in another set of technological mediators associated with the concerns of physical anthropology which, although gradually ceding ground to social anthropology, remained important throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. Sliding calipers, radiometers, anthropometers, standard weighing machines, steel tapes: these are the items of equipment Roy Burston (1913) records using, at the request of Baldwin Spencer, for a series of measurement he took of 102 Aborigines from different parts of northern Australia. This was not a fieldwork study: Burston records his debt to the Keeper of Darwin Gaol for being able to include its Aboriginal inmates in his study. However, it was indicative of the range of measuring devices that continued to inform Australian anthropological fieldwork through into the 1930s. Indeed, there were often more: devices for assessing a range of sensory capacities; for measuring body pigmentation; for taking blood samples and finger prints, and so on (Jones, 1987). Spencer collected across the range: photographs, films, sound recordings, artifacts, anthropometric measurements, skin colour tests (Batty, Allen and Morton, 2005; Spencer and Gillen, 1899; Spencer, 1921).

One of the merits of James Clifford's elaboration of the concept of 'contact zone' consists in the attention it has drawn to the different modes of indigenous agency that have been exercised in relation to the varied contexts in which Western knowledge practices and indigenous populations have become entangled with one another (Clifford, 1997). This is true even where such encounters have been mediated by the most extreme forms of objectification. Jones (1987) records the responses of the Aborigines to the procedures they were subjected to in studies organized by the South Australian Board for Anthropological Research. These ranged from bemusement through toleration of the physical manipulations they were subjected to because of a belief in the benefits these might bring to instances of non-compliance: Linda Crombie's refusal to be photographed without her shirt on, for example.[5] The use of film also depended on collective indigenous agency through, first, the preparations required to stage rituals expressly for the purpose of being filmed and, second, the negotiations that were entered into in granting permission to film such ceremonies. There was also creative economic exploitation of the possibilities opened up by the new forms of collecting associated with the relations between museums and fieldwork: the 'invention' of the toas – believed to be symbolically significant way-markers and location finders – is a case in point.[6] Increasingly, too, anthropologists felt an obligation, in recognition of the principles of (uneven) reciprocity of

the forms of exchange on which their work depended, to send or take back to their 'subjects' the results of their work – sometimes in book form, sometimes in slide lantern presentations, sometimes in film showings.[7]

A significant limitation of the concept of contact zone, however, is its tendency to focus on the forms of agency that are evident in more immediate and direct forms of encounter. This neglects the broader networks which, although not directly present or perceptible in such encounters, nonetheless significantly affect what takes place within them.[8] There are three such networks I want to focus on here. The first comprises the increasingly formalized international networks which affected the forms of interaction that took place within fieldwork encounters. Burston, for instance, records that the measurements he took were those recommended by the British Association Anthropometric Committee in 1909; and Jones notes that the work of the South Australian Board for Anthropological Research was initially modeled on the 1912 Geneva International Agreement for observations on living subjects. The second concerns the different networks through which the varied objects, texts, and images that were gathered from fieldwork sites of collection were circulated on the anthropologists' return to the centres of collection whence they came. These concerned, first, the networks of the public sphere; second, the increasingly close connections between museums and universities as, progressively, the balance of influence moved from the former to the latter;[9] and third, increasingly formalized networks of colonial administration. These were closely overlapping networks. The circulation of anthropological fieldwork through the institutions of the public sphere played a considerable role in building up the 'cultural capital' of the anthropologist as a new kind of scientific actor in the public field. The stronger connections between museums, anthropology and universities lent a new quasi-scientific aspect to anthropology in its concern to model itself on the field practices of the natural sciences, particularly in mimicking the relations between fieldwork site and laboratory. The new forms of public and scientific prestige accruing to the figure of the anthropologist and the development of new, albeit often insecure and contested, connections between anthropology and the training of colonial administrators, similarly helped to produce the anthropologist as a new kind of actor in both colonial and administrative fields. Taking account of these circuits and the forms of distributed agency they involve means taking an equivalently dispersed approach to questions of indigenous agency.

Spaces for, and forms of, agency

The Māori population played a variety of active roles in the development of New Zealand's colonial museums: as visitors, as exhibitors, and as donors in a complex set of gift and symbolic exchanges enacted across the shifting boundaries of the colonial frontier. However, as Conal McCarthy (2007) shows, the forms this agency took oscillated in the context of changing relations between Māori and Pakeha just as it was affected by changing practices

of collection and exhibition. In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, Māori were more actively engaged with commercial exhibitions and world's fairs than with New Zealand's emerging public museums. This was partly because the former presented a less restricted context for cross-cultural engagement, and partly because of a greater 'elective affinity' between their more spectacular exhibition practices and Māori conceptions of exhibition as a way of demonstrating power or *mana*. By contrast, following the restrictions placed on the export of Māori cultural materials by the 1901 Māori Antiquities Act, the early decades of the twentieth century saw active Māori support for the inclusion of Māori material culture in the development of a national patrimony that was shaped by both Pakeha motivations to preserve Māori culture as part of a salvage operation and Māori aspirations to be included within a project of modern nation formation.

Peter Hoffenberg's discussion of Aboriginal participation in the colonial and international exhibitions that were held in Australia's State capitals in the 1880s and 1890s similarly testifies to a range of different types of indigenous engagement. On the one hand, many Aborigines from Mission Stations were keen to visit such exhibitions as an extension of the civilizing dynamic governing their daily lives on the Stations. This was often combined with public performances which testified to the fruits of, and a capacity for, civilization via concerts, public readings, and the exhibition of craft products. However, this usually came at the price of also being called on to perform and exhibit savagery: through the exhibition of corroborees, mock reenactments of frontier combats, and the exhibition of traditional Aboriginal skills – boomerang-throwing exhibitions, for example (Hoffenberg, 2001: 222–9). This tension was worked out, in the public culture of Melbourne, in the history of the Coranderrk Station. Established in the 1860s, a good deal of Aboriginal cultural and intellectual leadership was invested in this station – originally by Simon Wonga of the Wurundjeri people – as countering the widespread belief that the Aboriginal race was doomed to die out by testifying to Aborigines' ability to become thoroughly self civilizing in collaboration with sympathetic white management.[10] This involved careful and calculated strategies regarding the role that Coranderrk's inhabitants should play in the public performance of Aboriginality – via film and photography, participation in exhibitions, and their modes of self-presentation to weekend day-trippers from Melbourne. These strategies sought to negotiate the complex and fraught terrain between, on the one hand, Aboriginal aspirations to self determination and, on the other, conformity to European conventions regarding the appropriate markers and signifiers of civilization. By the early decades of the twentieth century, by contrast, waning government support for such civilizing strategies undermined the authority of Coranderrk's Aboriginal leadership. As a result its main function became that of serving as a tourist destination where Aboriginal performances of similarity and difference, of domesticity (raffia making) and strangeness (boomerang throwing), provided 'stereotypical souvenirs of Aboriginality

that could be subsumed into larger narratives of nation and progress' (Lydon, 2005: 213).

The ways of exhibiting Aboriginal culture developed through the relations between museums and anthropological fieldwork over the course of 1910s and 1920s rested on a different logic. These excluded Aborigines from post-Federation narratives of nation and progress by interpreting their 'backwardness' as a consequence of the new evolutionary terms in which they were racialized as ineradicably and absolutely other. Perhaps the chief defining characteristic of this disciplinary ensemble was its preoccupation with the (impossible) retrieval of pre-colonial Aboriginal forms of sociality and culture at the price of a more-or-less complete blindness to both the conditions of Aborigines living in or close to the white centres of population and the history of the interactions between colonizer and colonized. In common with the tendency that characterized the early phase of anthropological fieldwork internationally, the 'authentic native' was only to be found in the remote parts of Australia – in the desert regions of South and Central Australia, in the Northern Territory, northern Queensland, and Western Australia. This entailed, Geoffrey Gray has argued, a focus on 'a "double" reconstruction – the "pristine" (before contact) culture and the "ideal frontier" (at the point of contact)' – through which the authentic Aborigine, the remnant of a lost past, constituted the '"idealized space"' of an '"alternative now"' (Gray, 2007: 24). It was this manoeuvre that supported the interpretation of Aborigines as, in Baldwin Spencer's terms, 'the most backward race extant' revealing 'the conditions under which the early ancestors of the present human races existed' (Spencer, 1914: 33).

Spencer, together with his co-researcher, Frank Gillen, was the most influential representative of anthropological fieldwork in Australia and, indeed, a significant international innovator in this respect (Morphy, 1996). His combined roles as museum administrator, university professor of biology and pioneer ethnographer were significant aspects of the new relations within which the public representations of Aborigines and Aboriginal culture at the National Museum of Victoria (NMV) were set. At a time when, as in New Zealand, export restrictions were placed on Aboriginal cultural materials, Spencer contributed considerably to Australia's accumulating stock of such materials by donating the artifacts, photographs, films and sound recordings that resulted from his and Gillen's fieldwork trips to Central Australia to the NMV.[11] As simultaneously the curator of the NMA's ethnological galleries, Spencer – combining the authority of direct witness, of 'having been there'(Wolfe, 1999), of the anthropological fieldworker with that of the natural scientist – mobilized the materials he brought back with him in a variety of contexts: the ethnological galleries of the NMV; the illustrated public lectures he gave on 'the howling savages' of the Australian interior; his scientific publications; and in presentations at scientific associations. Studies of Spencer's photographic practices have shown how much his work 'in the field' depended on the active participation of his 'subjects' and

the enactment of reciprocal forms of obligation (Batty, Allen and Morton, 2005). But these forms of agency and reciprocity did not stretch from the field back to the colonial museum. What Spencer took back from the field were the objects, visual and sonic records, and anatomical measurements. None of the Aborigines themselves were ever 'taken back' to Melbourne either to be exhibited or to be consulted regarded the arrangement of their cultural materials in the ethnological galleries. Nor did they ever visit those galleries. Museum and field were, in this sense, radically distinct zones. In contrast to the situation McCarthy describes for New Zealand and to the calculated forms of engagement Coranderrk's inhabitants had shown in controlling the images of themselves that circulated in Melbourne's public sphere, this radical separation meant that the NMV's depictions of Aboriginal culture rested exclusively on the 'authority of science', uninterrupted by any input from, or the live presence of, the distant peoples they drew upon.

Views differ regarding Spencer's estimates of the 'improvability' of Aborigines. In Henrika Kuklick's estimation, Spencer represented the liberal end of the spectrum of opinion in attributing to Aborigines a capacity for conscious innovation and gradual improvement, thus rebutting white settler views of Aborigines as a people without a history (Kuklick, 2006: 562–5). While there is some truth in this, it fails to take account of Spencer's relations to the different wings of the divided legacy of liberalism that he inherited.[12] If demonstrating a capacity for conscious innovation satisfied the requirement of will and volition that John Stuart Mill had required for the demonstration of progressive forms of human agency, the historicisation of character developed across the human and natural sciences in the wake of Darwin's work made it possible to both recognize this and yet still place Aborigines on the other side of a historical divide from the white settler.[13] In contemporary formulations produced in orbit around Edward Burnett Tylor's doctrine of survivals, formulations that found their echo in Spencer's work, the problem was not that the Aborigine was innately incapable of either self-improvement or of being improved, but that he had *become* so.[14] Although the result of a particular set of circumstances (the absence of competition), this incapacity was nonetheless interpreted as racially constitutive, inscribed within a separate bloodline which meant that the capacity for innovation and volition that Aborigines had once shown could not vouchsafe the race a future. Spencer's evolutionary museum displays, his public lectures (widely reported in the contemporary press), and scientific texts depicted Aborigines as radically other – a remnant of prehistory within the present – and as an outside to Australia's national and civilizing rhetorics. They stood only for a past that had to be left behind.

In his account of the relations between ethnography and the colonial state, George Steinmetz argues that the core business of the colonial state – understood, in Bourdieusian terms, as an autonomous state form that is relatively independent of its metropolitan overseer – is to identify, produce and reinforce 'the alterity that is required by the rule of hierarchical

difference' (Steinmetz, 2007: 41). This entailed the production of forms of otherness that would put back into place the sense of an unbridgeable divide between colonizer and colonized to counter the effects of colonial mimicry. 'Native policy,' as he puts it, 'was an attempt to identify a uniform cultural essence beneath the shimmering surface of indigenous practice and to restrict the colonized to this unitary identity'(2007: 43). The early twentieth-century development of permanent museum exhibitions of Aboriginal culture played precisely this role by casting Aborigines in the role of a racially defined other whose primitivism constituted the basis for their exclusion from the dynamics of Australian national development. This had profound consequences for the new systems of colonial administration that were developed in the second and third decades of the twentieth century.

Civic-public and biopolitical assemblages

A key aspect of my argument so far concerning the relationship between the 'shuffle of things' and the distribution of agency concerns the place that museums occupy as 'switch points' in overlapping networks through which flows – of texts, objects, measurements and people – are circulated. The NMV constituted just such a switch point. It was the place to which the artifacts, films and sound recordings that Spencer and Gillen brought back from their fieldwork expeditions were sent to be classified, ordered, and exhibited. And it was the place from which exhibitions of, and discourses about, Aboriginal culture and Aboriginality were disseminated through the broader public spheres of Melbourne, the State of Victoria, and Australia more generally. It also provided a storehouse of material warrants for Spencer's and Gillen's scientific publications.[15] These were circulated via international scientific networks that were still dominated by Eurocentric forms of authority in which *savants* based in London and Paris – notably James Frazer and Emile Durkheim – provided the key intellectual syntheses of the findings that were reported from diverse colonial points of collection.[16]

The organization of the flows and networks in which museums participate have definite consequences for the distribution of agency, determining the positions at which agency can be exercised and the distribution of different kinds of agents across those positions. The networks organizing the flows of people and things between the centres and sites of collection associated with the early phases of anthropological fieldwork in Australia afforded little opportunity for indigenous agency beyond the fieldwork site itself. There is no doubting the importance of the forms of indigenous agency that were enacted at these sites. Noting that the Arrernte (or the Arunta in Spencer's orthography) had experienced contact with white settlers from the 1860s, Elizabeth Povinelli interprets the varied performances they staged for Spencer and Gillen as active attempts to communicate across semiotic and political boundaries at a time when they were 'in the midst of being physically exterminated, having their ritual objects stolen, lost, or destroyed, and watching their lands be appropriated and, with

them, their life-sustaining material and spiritual resources' (Povinelli, 2002: 93). Yet the routes along which the measurements, artifacts, films, photographs and recordings that were collected from the Arrernte travelled did not include the Arrernte themselves. Not even their names: Spencer's and Gillen's photographs and texts rarely specified identity beyond age, gender and tribe – elderly Warumungo woman, and so on.[17] This stood in contrast to, and helped to undermine, the forms of agency that had been developed by Aborigines living closer to Australia's main centers population who, aware of the significance that attached to the public circulation of images of Aboriginality, sought to limit and to direct the form that such images took. Indigenous agency (like any other) differed in its aims and effects depending on the points in different cross-cutting networks at which it was exercised.

The modes of collecting and interpreting the materials acquired from Spencer and Gillen's fieldwork expeditions were also connected to the emerging forms of colonial administration in early Federation Australia. This was partly due to the positions that Spencer occupied in the administration of Aboriginal affairs,[18] and partly due to the authority that his racialized production of Aboriginality enjoyed in view of its validation by Europe's leading *savants*.[19] Before considering these matters, however, I want to look briefly at the different set of relations that was developed between museum, field, metropolitan public sphere and colony during the formative years of the development of the Musée de l'Homme under Paul Rivet's direction (1928–1939).[20] Although this anticipates some issues I address in more detail in the next chapter, it will prove helpful in identifying the terms of analysis I want to use when returning to Spencer. I shall limit myself to three aspects of these differences considered in terms of their implications for the distribution of agency. The first concerns the role played by the Musée de l'Homme in the development of the 'anthropological humanism' that became the main signature of French anthropology during the inter-war years. This was partly a matter of the progressive replacement of the earlier paradigms of physical anthropology with those of social anthropology. This displaced the focus on collecting anatomical remains and measurements that had been the primary focus of the earlier tradition represented by Paul Broca and Paul Topinard (Dias, 2004) in favor of the collection of artifacts and texts as evidence of the distinctive ways of life of colonized populations. It also involved – as a major point of difference between Rivet and Spencer – a break with the principles of evolutionism in favor of diffusionist perspectives to account for the specificity of the practices congregated together in distinct cultural areas. In truth neither of these shifts was every carried through to the point of a complete break with earlier forms of racial science in either Rivet's work or the practices of the 'Musée de l'Homme more generally (Conklin, 2008). It did, however, entail a significant shift in museum practice from the earlier exhibition, at the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, of anatomically grounded racial hierarchies toward a concern with artifactual and textual markers of territorially distinctive ways of life.

I want, though, as my second point, to distinguish two ways in which this concern was manifested at the Musée de l'Homme' in view of its operations

at the intersections of two different institutional networks. These can be usefully identified with respect to the Musée de l'Homme's express conception as a vehicle for realizing the two-pronged program that Marcel Mauss had proposed for the development of French ethnology and which, through the Institut d'Ethnologie, established in 1925 as the intellectual hub of the ensemble of anthropological institutions that Rivet coordinated around the Musée de l'Homme, recruited general support from within the discipline. The first prong of this program took its lead from Mauss's complaint that the 'general public know nothing of our research. Scientists must do publicity, since a science can become popular only though vulgarisation' (Mauss, cit. Fournier, 2006: 214). The Musée de l'Homme was in this regard, and quite unusually, established as a museum that was explicitly committed to a program of public pedagogy that aimed to transform public attitudes toward questions of race and the colonized. The second prong took its lead from Mauss's conception of the role that ethnology should play in support of a new phase of colonial policy governed by humanist conceptions:

> Colonial policy may be the area in which the adage 'knowledge is power' is best confirmed. By respecting and using beliefs and customs, modifying the economic and technological system only with caution, not opposing anything directly, and using everything, [administrators] could arrive at human, easy, and productive colonial practices.
>
> (Mauss, cit. Fournier, 2006: 166)

These two different conceptions of the Musée de l'Homme's function were performed through two different networks. They also entailed different mechanisms of effect. Michel Foucault's comments on the differences between governing strategies that operate through the mechanisms of the public and those of the milieu bear on the distinction I have in mind here (Foucault, 2008: 3, 19–21, 297). In the case of the former, governing relates to the population through its beliefs, opinions, and customs, seeking to get a hold on these through public and educational programs and campaigns. Here government relates to the members of a population as subjects of voluntary actions whose conduct is to be changed by persuasive means orientated to recruiting their assent to the aims and objectives of governing authorities. Where government relates to population via the mechanism of the milieu, however, it does so via the application of specific forms of expertise to modifying the material conditions affecting that population conceived not as subjects, but as an aggregate whose conduct is shaped by its relations to its milieu.

Shaped by international initiatives, after the 1914–1918 War, to develop museums as instruments of democratic education, and by the Greater France rhetorics and policies of the inter-war years, the Musée de l'Homme formed part of a network of public and civic institutions which sought to transform French attitudes toward the populations of France's colonies in West Africa and Indo-China. This involved a revision of earlier hierarchically organized

conceptions of racial divisions grounded in anatomical differences in favor of a humanistic conception of all races as being 'equal but different', separated by different cultural histories and traditions overlaid on a shared substratum of a common humanity. It also involved a revision of attitudes toward the inhabitants of France's colonies as parts of the rich cultural diversity of Greater France, united with Frenchmen (and women) as parts of a transnational family.[21] While thus saluted as subjects of the Greater France, however, this made little practical difference to France's colonial populations since this recognition of a certain kind of cultural kinship was not accompanied by any conferral of citizenship rights.

The Musée de l'Homme' participated in this new 'civic-public assemblage' via its exhibition galleries. After an early period marked by distinctive aesthetic forms for valorizing otherness associated with the principles of 'ethnographic surrealism', these were organized in accordance with the principles of the *museographie claire*. Developed by Georges Henri Rivière, these aimed to give material expression to the organizing principles of the new ethnography: the exhibition of the relations between the elements comprising the distinctive fabric of different territorially defined cultures considered in their relations to their environments (Gorgus, 2003: 56–60). These exhibition galleries, and the special exhibitions of the materials the Musée de l'Homme' collected through its fieldwork expeditions, constituted, under Rivet's leadership, the most significant 'material culture' contribution to the anti-racist programs of the Popular Front. They were also significant points of engagement for the cultural project of Negritude developed by French-trained African intellectual elites who travelled to Paris precisely in order to engage in a politics that was denied them *in situ*: a politics of culture and identity worked through via the mechanisms of the public and civic spheres.[22]

That this was so, Gary Wilder argues, was because of a contradiction at the heart of the governmental rationality of colonial humanism, a contradiction in which the Musée de l'Homme participated in view of its contribution – particularly through its relations with the Institut d'Ethnologie – to the training of colonial administrators. Established with the support of, and funding from, France's key colonial and overseas ministries, and committed from the start to providing the legislature with, as Mauss had proposed, 'a systematic knowledge of the customs, beliefs, and techniques of the populations it is called upon to direct' (Rivière and Rivet, 1931), the connection between the differentiating particularism of post-Maussian ethnology and colonial humanism was a double-edged one. On the one hand, in the stress it placed on the distinctive qualities of different cultures, it served as a resource for anti-racist programs of public education within France. As a scientific adjunct to the task of colonial administration, however, the Musée de l'Homme conceived and addressed the inhabitants of France's West African colonies as the objects of a form of colonial rule that was to be brought to bear on them from without through the use of ethnology as a means for the scientific manipulation of the milieus governing the conditions of life of the colonized. This division of

functions within the Musée de l'Homme' was expressed by the provision of a laboratory, set aside from the exhibition galleries, that was reserved for the scientific study of the materials brought to the museum from its fieldwork exhibitions and for consultation, *inter alia*, by colonial officials and trainees.

Although not an exact parallel, it is worth recalling that, for Latour, the laboratory plays a significant role, in the field sciences, in the relations between sites of collection and centres of calculation by providing a context in which materials gathered from the former can be brought into new relations with one another. The relations between specimens collected from the field, he argues, can be reconfigured as 'the researcher can shift the position of specimens and substitute one for another as if they are shuffling cards' (Latour, 1999: 38). Latour also stresses the respects in which such laboratory rearrangements provide templates which, once relayed back to the original site of fieldwork investigation, serve to organize various forms of scientific-administrative action on that site. In this respect, the role of the Musée de l'Homme in effecting a new 'shuffle of things' which (partially) dismantled anatomically grounded racial hierarchies in favor of the differentiating particularism of colonial humanism, also provided a template for new forms of action on the colonial social. These sought, as Wilder puts it, to combine a humanistic universalism with a respect for African cultural specificities and a residual but still potent evolutionism that would subject African societies to a program of guided social development to help overcome their backwardness. Here, the expert knowledge of indigenous customs, traditions, and economic and technological systems that Mauss called for provided the resources for programs of social development which failed to address indigenous populations as either subjects or citizens or to cultivate the institutions of colonial civil society needed for this purpose.

While providing a point of engagement for the cultural politics of deracinated colonial intellectuals in Paris, the Musée de l'Homme was simultaneously an integral component of a scientific-administrative complex that had significant consequences for the governance of colonial populations who had little, if any, inkling of its existence. The same was true of the relations between Baldwin Spencer's fieldwork, his museum practice, and the forms of Aboriginal administration that prevailed during the inter-war years. I have already noted that Aborigines were not counted among the publics of Australia's museums. If their presence in museums was envisaged at all, it was as specimens rather than as a public. It was still possible, as late as 1932, for the University of Adelaide Board of Anthropological Research to apply (unsuccessfully) to the Anthropology Committee of the Australian National Research Council for funding to bring Aborigines from the River Murray area into the South Australia Museum where, in return for a few shillings a week, they might be studied exhaustively (Gray, 2007: 55–61). Nonetheless, although not addressed via its public programs, Aborigines were significantly affected by the 'shuffle of things' produced by Spencer's arrangement of the ethnological collections at the NMV. These functioned as the 'material bank and guarantor' for the representations of Aboriginality

that were put in broader public and scientific circulation by Spencer and Gillen, and for the part these played in furnishing new templates for the administration of Australia's indigenous inhabitants.

The logic of these arrangements, however, was quite different from differentiating particularism of French colonial humanism. This is not to suggest that Spencer denied the existences of differences – in appearance, beliefs, and rituals – between different Aboriginal tribes. However, while recognizing these, and as a counter to diffusionist accounts,[23] he interpreted them as the result of adaptations to varied environmental conditions as a result of the dispersion of a single racial group through the continent. This diversity was thus retrieved into an essential unity in the respect that Spencer interpreted all Aboriginal customs, beliefs, artifacts, etc., as the expressions of a primitive level of social development that was rooted ineradicably in a shared bloodline. This ruled out the prospect of any future development, whether from within, as a consequence of an in-built propensity for development, or from without, through religious or secular civilizing programs. The logical consequence of such conceptions consisted in the development of administrative arrangements, initiated in 1914 and lasting through the inter-war years, which combined a program of 'passive genocide' with one of civilization via the bloodline. This was to be achieved by separating 'half-caste' Aborigines from their 'full-blood' relatives and promoting inter-marrying between them so that, via the dilution of their Aboriginal bloodline, they might, by becoming progressively white, also acquire the ability to be civilized. Meanwhile, 'full-blood' Aborigines were to be left to follow the road to extinction that the laws of competition prescribed.

It might be tempting to attribute the contrasting consequences of the differentiating particularism of French colonial ethnology and the racially homogenizing orientations of Australia anthropology to differences in the ethical persona of the key personnel involved – a matter of Rivet's tolerant pluralism versus Spencer's evolutionism. Tempting but misleading. For these differences were themselves shaped by the different colonial logics bearing on the relations between fieldwork, anthropological practice, museums and colonial administration according to whether these formed a part of settler colonialism (the Australian case) or of the administration of overseas colonies (the French case). Where the latter related to the colonized as an economic resource to be developed, the former related to them as rival occupants of the land and, as such, to be eliminated.

Time and the reshuffling of things

I want, in concluding, to go back to my starting point by comparing the processes of collecting indigenous cultures that museums have been a party to with those statistical gatherings of indigenous populations effected by turn-of-the century censuses in Canada and Australia. These, it will be recalled, failed to produce the indigenous in the form of what Ruppert calls 'census

subjects', registering them rather as 'census "others"'. While not dissenting from this assessment, Tim Rowse usefully highlights the use that indigenous Australians and Māori have made of census data in political processes of identity formation by translating their representations as census objects into 'an ontological politics of "closing the gaps"' (Rowse, 2009). This politics consists in the use of census data revealing the respects in which Indigenous Australians fall short of average population norms (in terms of health, level of education, employment rates, etc.) to urge the need for policies to reduce or eliminate such gaps. This is, Rowse argues, a politics that also functions as a political process of identity formation in lodging claims to distinctive forms of people-hood.

The indigenous cultural materials that were collected in museums during the fieldwork phase of anthropology have subsequently played a similar role in political processes of identity formation. In her discussion of the distinctive role that museum collections play in the development of particular forms of sociality, Amiria Henare argues that the restricted mobility across space that results from the enclosure of objects in museums serves to enhance '*their ability to move through time*' (Henare, 2005: 9). They can thus, among other things, function as significant components in systems of distributed personhood that are spread across time as museum collections have proved crucial to identity formation in view of their ability to enact what Henare calls 'heritable communities of people and things' (Henare, 2005: 8).[24] While it goes beyond my concerns to engage with these matters in any detail here, the Aboriginal materials that were gathered in Australian museums in the early phase of anthropological fieldwork have since become profoundly politicized objects as museums and, indeed, Western exhibition forms more generally, have become sites of significant contention for indigenous Australians. The forms of indigenous agency that have been involved in these struggles have varied in form, in the political stances they have enunciated, and in the points at which they have been applied in the now more complex networks that mediate the relations between indigenous communities, collecting institutions, government bodies, schools, publics, tourists, and, post-Mabo, the legal system considered in its relations to the politics of land claims.[25]

Yet, as one aspect of these expanded networks for indigenous practice and intervention, there remains a legacy from the period I have discussed here. Povinelli identifies this in noting how, for Spencer and Gillen as, indeed, for earlier Australian anthropological traditions, the 'real Aborigine' had always to be sought elsewhere, a constantly elusive object beyond the contaminations of white contact. This is now, she argues, coded into the complex relations between Indigenous Australians, anthropologists, the collections of indigenous materials in museums, and the law in enacting the 'heritable communities of people and things' that are the conditions for recognition on which, post-Mabo and post-Wik, the confirmation of Aboriginal claims to land ownership depends. For this requires the demonstration of an effective continuity of

tradition and practice that stretches back beyond the settler state, a capacity to somehow still be connected to and embody the lost ancient customs defining the position that Indigenous Australians must be able to occupy within the time-space coordinates of the nation state if they are to benefit from its new dispensations. To illustrate her point, Povinelli cites an exchange between a lawyer and an indigenous witness in the Kenbi Land Claim:

LAWYER: What was it like before the white man?

TOM BARRADJAP: I don't know mate I never been there.

(Povinelli, 2002: 61)

The lawyer's question was, of course, Spencer's question also, and its continuing force shows how far the historically formative orchestration of the relations between the past, 'Aboriginality',[26] and the nation that his work established remain points to be negotiated in engagement with such relations today. Barradjap's response points to a politics that troubles these terms.

Notes

1 Marking a starting point for the fieldwork tradition in anthropology is notoriously difficult, partly because there is no clear dividing line between the forms of travel and reporting that such expeditions involved and earlier travel literatures (Debaene, 2010; Defert, 1982; Fabian, 2000) and partly because, wherever the line is drawn, earlier exceptions can be invoked. That said, anthropological fieldwork is conventionally described as beginning with the Torres Strait Island expeditions led by Alfred Cort Haddon (1888, 1898), Baldwin Spencer's and Frank Gillen's fieldwork trips to Central Australia (beginning in 1896/7) and Franz Boas's participation in the American Museum of Natural History's Jesup North Pacific Expedition (1897–1902). As Alison Petch (2007) and others have noted, the *Notes and Queries* which had played a key role in organizing earlier, more 'amateur' forms of travelling among and collecting the Other, assumed, by the 1912 edition, anthropologically trained fieldworkers as their primary addressee. Henrika Kuklick (2011) also advances a number of reasons for regarding this period as a distinctive moment in the development of anthropological fieldwork practice in view of (i) its adoption of the scientific models for fieldwork developed in the natural sciences, and (ii) its dependence on the transport infrastructures of rail and telegraph, and on the pacification of colonial frontiers. However, I stretch this conventional definition to include the fieldwork expeditions organized by the Musée de l'Homme in the 1930s as the first effective period of fieldwork of French ethnology (Dias, 1991; L'Estoile, 2007).
2 I draw here and elsewhere on earlier engagements with these questions: see Bennett (2004, 2009, 2010).
3 Latour's assumption that centres of calculation were found only in European and North American metropolitan locations has been criticised for neglecting more localised centres of calculation operating in colonial contexts (Gascoigne, 1996). My approach responds to these criticisms by considering the operations of museums as centres of calculation in both metropolitan (Paris) and colonial (Melbourne) settings.

4 The establishment of a Chair in Anthropology at the University of Sydney in 1925 and its central position in the organization of anthropological research funded by the Rockefeller Foundation marked a shift away from the strong links between museums and anthropology in Australia (Gray, 2007: 55–61).

5 The symbolic significance of such refusals given the association of nakedness with savagery is discussed by Jane Lydon (2005).

6 The more-or-less sudden appearance of toas in the early twentieth century suggests that were produced in a calculated appeal to the interest in the exotic exhibited by the collectors of the South Australian Museum rather then being 'genuinely' ethnographic (Jones, 2007: chapter 6).

7 See Herle and Rouse (1998) and Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch (1997) for accounts of this in relation to the Haddon and Spencer and Gillen fieldwork expeditions.

8 I have discussed this weakness of the concept elsewhere: see Bennett (1998a: 203–6, 210–13).

9 It is important to stress the museum/university interactions during this period to counter a tendency to read back into it the more radical separation between the two that is attributed to the phase of 'fieldwork proper', conventionally marked by Malinowski's work in New Guinea. This is often connected to two other divisions: between the armchair phase of anthropology and that of the scientific investigator in the field; and between the collection of artifacts and the collection of textual evidence relating to the social and cultural ways of life of the peoples under study. However, a strong connection between museums and fieldwork expeditions is evident in the case of the Haddon, Jesup, Spencer and Gillen expeditions and those of the Musée de l'Homme. All of these retained a significant concern with the collection of objects, and strong connections between museums and universities were evident in all these cases.

10 The continuing significance of Coranderrk as a key site of Aboriginal intellectual and cultural leadership is testified to by the prominence accorded it in the third program – 'Freedom for Our Lifetime' – in the television series *First Australians: The Untold Story of Australia,* first broadcast by SBS in 2008.

11 The NMV's ethnographic collections increased from 1200 to over 36000 items during Spencer's period as director: see Mulvaney and Calaby (1985: 252).

12 John Mulvaney and Howard Morphy have tended to oscillate between praise for Spencer's (and Gillen's) liberal deeds and views on certain matters and condemnation of their subscription to manifestly racist conceptions of Aborigines as evolutionary throwbacks. Their equivocations fail to take adequate account of the respects in which Spencer's views drew on the divided currency of liberal thought – partly on the classical formulations of Mill, but also on the revisions of classical liberalism effected by the post-Darwinian development of the historical sciences.

13 I discuss these relations between the historical sciences and the historicization of character in providing a new template for governmental action on the social in greater detail in Bennett (2004).

14 See, for a fuller development of this point, Bennett (2011).

15 Spencer (1922: 8) made a point of stressing how closely his and Gillen's books were based on the material evidence gathered from their expeditions and then stored in the NMV.

16 However, as Kuklick (2006) notes, Spencer did protest at some of the interpretations placed on his findings by such *savants*.

17 I draw here on Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch (1997).

18 He was Special Commissioner and Chief Protector of Aborigines of the Northern Territory in 1912 and prepared a number of influential reports on the administration of Aboriginal affairs.

19 These played a crucial role in Spencer's and Gillen's accumulation of, in Steinmetz's terms, 'ethnographic capital'. Spencer had become a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George by 1904. Gillen was made a Corresponding Fellow of the Anthropological Institute in London and, in 1900, was the President of the Ethnology and Anthropology section of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science (see Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch, 1997).

20 I draw on the following sources in my discussion of these developments: Conklin (2002a, 2002b, 2008); Laurière (2008); L'Estoile (2007); Sherman (2004); and Siebeud (2004; 2007). Although the institutions established in this period were described as ethnographic or ethnological, with important divisions of theoretical orientation between them, I use the more general Anglophone term of anthropology here to encompass all these institutional and intellectual tendencies, qualifying it as social anthropology to refer to the Durkheim-Mauss lineage which rapidly became ascendant.

21 See also Peer (1998) on the conception of the Greater France and its consequences within France, and Lebovic (2004) for an assessment of its longer-term legacies.

22 The discussion of these questions in the second part of Wilder (2005) provides a useful guide to the general issues involved, while Clifford's famous essay on 'ethnographic surrealism' (Clifford, 1988) offers some indicators of their relations to the Musee de l'Homme.

23 Spencer expressed this opposition in his criticisms of a paper presented by W.H. Rivers to the 1914 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Melbourne in which Rivers argued that Australia's Aboriginal population has descended from a number of migrant streams from different origins (Kuklick, 2006: 565–7).

24 I draw here, in my reference to systems of distributed personhood, on the work of Marilyn Strathern (1999).

25 For some useful engagement with these questions, see Healy and Witcomb (2006) and Healy (2008).

26 I use the term 'Aboriginality' here as the historical pertinent one, but in quotes in recognition of the criticisms of this concept that have been advanced in the preference for either more local (Koori) or more general (indigenous) designations.

9   Collecting, instructing, governing
Fields, publics, milieus*

In his biography of Marcel Mauss, Marcel Fournier (2006) draws attention to two texts in which Mauss lamented France's lack of adequately developed institutions for the pursuit of ethnographic research and the dissemination of its findings. In the first, Mauss (1969 [1913]) compares French ethnography unfavourably with British, American, Dutch and German anthropology. He particularly regrets its lack of a developed fieldwork tradition and, as his explanation for this, a failure on the part of French ethnographers to connect their work to the tasks of colonial administration. If it were to close this gap, French ethnography needed 'first, field studies, second museums and archives, and third, education', the latter directed towards the training of ethnographers. These steps were necessary, he concluded, if France were to fulfil its responsibilities to its colonial subjects, whom he characterised as hitherto 'the human groups it was trying to govern without even knowing them' (Mauss, cited in Fournier, 2006: 167). In the second text (Mauss, 1920) it is the relationship between ethnography and the French public that exercises Mauss' attention. Regretting that there was still 'no museum of ethnography in France worthy of the name' and 'no laboratories dedicated specifically to the study of indigenous peoples', he also complains that the 'general public know nothing of our research' and – as I noted in the previous chapter – urges the need for ethnographers to 'do publicity, since a science can become popular only though vulgarisation' (Mauss, cited in Fournier, 2006: 215).

Mauss was one amongst many of the intellectuals whose political lobbying, public proselytising and organisational work across a range of scientific associations eventually led to the establishment of the Musée de l'Homme (MH). This was a process that played simultaneously in a number of registers. It was, first, an important site for what amounted to a significant reorganisation of the French scientific field. Mediating the relations between Durkheimian conceptions of sociology and ethnography on the one hand, and earlier ethnological traditions rooted in comparative anatomy and the natural sciences on the other, it played a key role in fusing these into a new synthesis for which

ethnology became the preferred term.[1] It also comprised, second, a significant component in a long-term historical transformation of the relations between French ethnology and colonialism as the orientation of the latter shifted, in Alice Conklin's terms, from a stress on France's *mission civilisatrice* to a stress on the *mise en valeur* of the colonies. This was a shift that displaced the earlier concern to civilise the colonised with measures designed to 'alter the social milieu in which individuals functioned – rather than to act upon the individuals themselves' (Conklin, 1997: 8). The MH's role in organising fieldwork expeditions to varied colonial contexts – French West Africa and Indo-China, and Greenland (a Dutch colony) – was crucially important in this respect. Taken together, the fieldwork – museum – laboratory relations produced by these developments established new networks for the flow of texts, persons, things and technologies to and fro between metropolis and colony as parts of new programmes of colonial administration.

The MH also constituted a beacon for the mobilisation of ethnology as part of a distinctive public pedagogy allied to the politics of the Popular Front at a time of a significant increase in migration to France from its colonies. Its central city location in the Palais de Chaillot, close to libraries and institutions of instruction rather than to churches or temples, was, as Jean Jamin (1998) has noted, important in this respect. So were its connections to the institutions of broadcasting and, through its complicated relations to surrealism, to the world of art. It also developed distinctive connections to the worlds of sport, particularly boxing, and commercial entertainment as a means of publicising its work among the popular classes. It was in these respects a significant rallying point for social-democratic and socialist opinion at a time of heightened racial tensions. It played a significant role in marshalling the anti-fascist alliances of the Popular Front whose support proved politically important, particularly after the election of the Leon Blum government in 1936, in securing the funding for the museum's establishment. The MH also, finally, played a significant role in the historical reconfiguration of the relations between Paris, regional France and France's colonies with regard to their positions in the governmental rationalities of Greater France. However, it performed this role only symbiotically in its relations to what Fabrice Grognet (2010: 431) calls its 'siamese twin': that is, the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires (ATP). This sibling institution was incubated, alongside the MH, in the Musée d'Ethnographee du Trocadéro (MET) in a process of reciprocal differentiation that occupied the greater part of the 1930s. Redefining the concerns of national folklore studies in the light of the more scientific developments in the field of colonial ethnology, the eventual emergence of the ATP as a separate institution from the MH differentiated (albeit not entirely) the objects of ethnology represented by French rural popular classes and traditions from those constituted by the ritual practices of colonial indigenes.

It is against the backdrop of these concerns that I shall examine the development of the MH and, to a lesser extent, that of the ATP over the late

1920s and 1930s. The processes that this involved lend particular force to the concept of the relational museum proposed by Chris Gosden, Frances Larson and Alison Petch (2007). Their conception of museums as parts of extended networks of texts, things, instructions, technologies and transport infrastructures requires that the roles of directors and curators be de-centred, seen as merely parts of such networks rather than as sources of controlling visions. Invoking this conception of museums in relation to the MH and ATP might, though, seem somewhat paradoxical given that both museums were established by charismatic directors – Paul Rivet and Georges Henri Rivière respectively – who imbued them with their own unusually strong sense of social purpose and commitment (Laurière, 2008: 413). Both were undoubtedly significant figures who operated adroitly across the relations – between metropolis and colony, ethnology and folk studies, ministries of education and of colonial administration, field and laboratory – that informed the development of the MH and ATP. It is, however, these relations and the more anonymous social and political forces driving their transformation that will occupy the centre of my attention. While these need to be tracked from the 1890s through to the 1930s to be placed in an adequate historical perspective, I shall zero in on the period from 1928 – when Rivet was appointed director of the MET followed, shortly thereafter, by the appointment of Rivière as his deputy – through to 1937, when the ATP assumed a life of its own,[2] shortly before the MH itself was officially opened in January 1938. In doing so, I note a second paradox. It is this decade that has attracted by far and away the most attention from museum and cultural historians, enjoying a paradigmatic status for the analysis of these two institutions in spite of their considerably longer histories.[3] It was, however, a decade in which neither of them yet existed. What existed, rather, were their programmes and the processes through which these were progressively shaped into being via the reformation – in terms of conception, function, design and layout – of the MET. It is, accordingly, the processes responsible for this reshaping that will be the hero of my tale here. Some of these were close to the MH: those concerning the reorganisation of the relations between scientific associations, the University of Paris and the arrangements for the administration of French museums that accompanied the establishment of the MH. Others concerned the changing governmental rationalities informing the relationships between France and its colonies, and between Paris and provincial France, in the context of the governmental rationalities of Greater France. I begin with the latter.

Colonial humanism and greater France: colonial and regional governmentalities

I note first, by way of building on the connections between this chapter and the previous one, the influence that Spencer and Gillen's fieldwork had on Durkheim's account of the elementary forms of religious life. That influence extended also to Mauss (Durkheim's nephew). Both uncle and nephew had

reviewed *Native Tribes of Central Australia* separately in the 1902 issue of *Année Sociologique*, and the book figures prominently in a joint review article on primitive classification they published in the following year. Mauss also had a detailed knowledge of the English school of anthropology from which Spencer took many of his intellectual bearings, and he developed personal connections with Tylor and Frazer during a visit to Oxford in 1898. In spite of these indirect affiliations, however, the political and colonial contexts in which Australian and French anthropology developed in the early twentieth century were significantly different. The work of Spencer, as we have seen, was located at a moment of Australia's (relative) separation from the imperial domain of Great Britain through the establishment, after Federation, of a relatively autonomous national governmental domain. Australian anthropology was also shaped chiefly by its relations to the governmental rationalities of the internal forms of colonialism between a white, chiefly Anglo-Celtic, settler population and the Aboriginal population.[4] French colonialism, beginning in the 1880s, but especially after the 1914–18 war, was shaped by a different dynamic, particularly in Africa. It was, first, a colonialism based on overseas possessions, and one that, moving beyond the phase of wars of conquest, sought, in various ways, to make the colonies places to be populated (by the French) and whose indigenous populations were, in their turn, to become parts of an enlarged conception of France. Extending the conception of France beyond the limits of the Hexagon, or mainland France, the conception of Greater France sought to effect a union of peoples, cultures and territories by enfolding the populations of France's colonies into an extended conception of nationhood. At the same time, however, this enjoined the task of differentiating those populations. However much they were to be welcomed into the family of Greater France, the colonial populations were not – on the whole – regarded as suitable candidates for citizenship rights.[5] This was so, moreover, whether they remained in the colonies or whether, as they did in increasing numbers, particularly in the 1930s, they migrated to France. With regard to the former, the emphasis was increasingly placed on the *mise en valeur* of the colonised as a resource to be exploited for the furtherance of the economic and military prowess of Greater France. With regard to the latter, it meant differentiating immigrants from different parts of France's overseas empire in terms of their civic statuses and suitability for different kinds of employment (Blanchard and Deroo, 2008).

How, then, to manage a new set of relations between an expanded conception of France to effect, simultaneously, a unity of territory and population – an extended people-nation, a Greater France – alongside a division between citizens and non-citizens: this was the governmental problem to which the MH responded and by which its practices were shaped. It was, however, by no means the only such response. To the contrary, it was merely one *dispositif* among many (the cinema, radio, travel literature) promoting a new culture of colonialism as a central aspect of French identity

while simultaneously negotiating a subordinate position for the colonised as exceptions to the postrevolutionary traditions of French universalism.[6] The position of the MH among these *dispositifs*, however, was distinctive owing to the respects in which its management of the cultural flows from colony to metropolis, and its role in the administrative flows going in the opposite direction, placed it at the intersections of the processes through which the work of 'making culture' and 'changing society' was articulated across metropolitan and colonial contexts.

Patrick Wolfe's account of the general changes in anthropology's epistemological frames of reference that were brought about by the end of the frontier or conquest phase of colonialism as, in varied ways, the colonised were relocated within the governmental orbit of the colonial state is helpful here. 'From the wholesale triumphalism of the expanding frontier', he argues, 'colonialism shifted to a diffident posture, offering indirect rule and fostering local autonomy' (Wolfe, 1999: 43). The virtue of this epistemological shift, fully discernible only in the inter-war years, was its plasticity. By removing the colonised from the frameworks of universal narratives of impending improvement (or extinction), and by stressing their self-generating qualities as synchronous totalities, colonial populations could be governed more circumstantially in ways that could be more easily adapted to different histories and forms of colonial rule. The premium that this placed on the acquisition of a detailed knowledge of the Other – dispersed now into territorially differentiated cultures rather than distributed as stages along a continuum of evolutionary time – led to a realignment of the relations between museums, as centres of collection and calculation, and colonies, as sites of collection (Boëtsch, 2008). This realignment was principally brought about by the role that was accorded fieldwork of regulating the flow of expertise and instruments of collection from museum to colony; of texts, objects and anatomical remains back from colony to museum; and of the personnel and practices of colonial administration from the metropolis back to the colony.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the fieldwork phase of anthropology involved a new set of agents operating as parts of emerging scientific – administrative assemblages that linked museums to colonial locations as sites of collection that were also developing as governmental domains. But the modes of its application differed significantly depending on the rationalities brought to bear on those domains. While partly representing the differentiating focus that Wolfe attributes to the later phases in the development of the fieldwork paradigm, Baldwin Spencer's racialised version of evolutionary theory operated on the race as such, placing the Aborigine on the wrong side of the biopolitical dividing line between 'make live' and 'let die'. The logic of *mise en valeur*, by contrast, meant that, in the French case, the colonised were regarded as a valuable resource whose labour was necessary to transform the raw materials of colonial territories into economically exploitable forms. It thus fell on the positive side of biopower, as a resource

that was to be made to live through varied forms of action (medical, sanitary) brought to bear on its relations with its milieus at the same time that it was subjected to coercive and punitive forms of labour control.[7]

Both Benoît de L'Estoile and Gary Wilder argue that the concern with the distinguishing properties of indigenous cultures that typified the new tendencies in French anthropological practice constituted a form of 'colonial humanism'. They are both clear, however, that this is not to be understood as simply a new humanistic ethic indexing the development of benevolent forms of administration. They see it rather as, in Wilder's terms, an 'administrative-scientific complex' (Wilder, 2005: 61) – one in which the MH played a pivotal role – which, drawing on the resources of both Durkheimian sociology and Maussian ethnography to develop an understanding of indigenous society as a distinct totality, aimed to secure economic development via the provision of social welfare while maintaining political order. This resulted in a number of instabilities and contradictions. Perhaps the most significant of these concerned the role of anthropology in the study of village life. This was identified as a set of customs and practices that needed to be known if African cultures and societies were to be preserved as the locus of traditional economic skills and organisational forms, and thus serve as a key resource for economic development. At the same time, village life was seen as a barrier to economic modernisation and thus as needing to be transformed. Wilder summarises the effects of this dual orientation as follows:

> The administration sought to transcribe native customs in order to allow colonial subjects to live within their own indigenous communities. Yet the very practices of ethnographic documentation worked to change those native customs in order to promote social transformations.
> (Wilder, 2003: 237)

The ways in which such transformations were to be effected accentuated the differences between metropolis and colony. The development of social welfarism in inter-war France, Wilder argues, increased the significance of governmental practices that operated through the management of milieus relative to, but without displacing, those operating via the mechanism of the public to bring about transformations of individual behaviour. When translated to the colonies, however, the lack of civic institutions or of anything approaching a public sphere, and the absence of institutions of democratic governance meant that the necessary transformations of customary ways of life was to be effected through the scientific – administrative application of ethnology to the management of colonial milieus.

Both of these contradictions were subtended by the division at the heart of Greater France between citizens, a status reserved mainly for the French, and France's colonial populations. The reasons that were advanced to justify the denial of citizenship to the latter testified to the continuing influence of earlier evolutionary conceptions on the projects of 'colonial humanism'.

Political and civic equality was denied the colonised not because their culture was inherently inferior but because – in a late echo of Tylor's notion of survivals – it had not yet entirely shed the legacy of its primitivism. As Wilder puts it:

> Like Mauss's ethnology, colonial humanism's antiracism depended on an implicit evolutionary logic in which cultural difference was seen as a matter of time. African society was not defined as inferior; it was simply late. Natives had a capacity for citizenship but were presently too different, insufficiently evolved to exercise it.
>
> (Wilder, 2005: 125)

Similar contradictions applied to contemporary conceptions of the distant regions within the Hexagon albeit with important differences. How much weight should be accorded to these differences, and how they should be conceptualised, are matters of some controversy. Opinions differ particularly with regard to how the relations between the MH and the ATP, and the significance of their eventual separation, should be viewed in the light of the longer history of the affiliations between anthropology, museums and France's colonial and regional populations. Shortly after its establishment in 1879 the MET became a significant institutional locus for the mediation of the relations between these two different populations, their cultures and their places relative to the Third Republic's programmes of industrial modernisation and nation building. On the initiative of Armand Landrin, one of its curators, the MET, originally focused solely on non-Western societies, opened two new exhibition galleries in 1884 devoted, respectively, to the ethnography of Europe and France. This had the consequence, Jamin (1988) contends, that regional popular cultures within France came to be presented as belonging to the same time as the primitive: as survivals of outmoded ways of life destined to be eliminated by republican assimilationist projects committed, at that time, to converting both peasants and colonial subjects into Frenchmen (see Dias, 2006: 176).

For Jamin, Rivet's closure of the MET's Salle de France shortly after he was appointed its director and the subsequent separation of the MH and the ATP signal the unclasping of this museological approximation of the rural popular to the primitive. Grognet, in developing Jamin's argument, interprets this separation as having both an epistemological and a governmental significance. Epistemologically, it separated the domain of the French rural popular from that of natural history and comparative anatomy, which, in his estimation as well as Conklin's, remained a significant force at the MH where a continuing commitment to the exhibition of anatomical and cranial alongside the exhibition of differentiated cultures provided a racialised set of underpinnings for the latter. The location of the two museums in separate wings of the Palais de Chaillot severed the connections that had earlier been implied between French rural populations and racially primitive

ones. It nationalised and sociologised the former as parts of 'le peuple fran-
çais' (Grognet, 2010: 431) who, although they were to be transformed,
were nonetheless to endure in their (transformed) specificity rather than to
(eventually) disappear through programmes of colonial assimilation. This
museological differentiation of these populations – of rural France from the
global primitive – was, Grognet argues, further complicated by the parallel
establishment of museums focused exclusively on France's overseas colo-
nies.[8] These developments reflected a governmental concern to manage the
populations of Greater France by differentiating the claims and entitlements
of colonial subjects from those of Frenchmen at a time when significantly
increased immigration to France coincided with rising unemployment and
increased social tensions between the French and their (would-be) fellow
citizens.

   While by no means taking issue with all aspects of the Jamin-Grognet the-
sis, Daniel Sherman disputes the contention that the institutional separation
of the MH and the ATP resulted in so clear a separation of either their epis-
temological or governmental orientations. He takes a different cut into these
questions, focusing less on the continuing influence of comparative anatomy
and natural history at the MH than on the significance of its conception
of ethnology as a science modelled on the fieldwork disciplines that took
issue with the antiquarian orientations and amateurism of French folklore
studies. Viewed from this perspective, he argues, the separation of the two
museums and their differential relations to comparative anatomy should not
obscure the 'durability of the museums' constitutive ties' (Sherman, 2004:
677) with regard to their common endeavour to establish ethnology as a
science. Rivière and Marcel Maget, a curator and the head of research at
the ATP, both paid lip service to folklore studies while drawing on Rivet's
conception of ethnology to wage war on the folklore tradition from within
in order to establish its organisations and procedures on a more scientific
basis. They particularly stressed the means by which the MH had responded
to Mauss' urging that ethnography should vulgarise itself as a means of pub-
lic instruction while simultaneously piggy-backing on the increased standing
that ethnology had acquired in the French scientific field through the new
set of institutional affiliations it entered into that connected it to the univer-
sity. Rivière and Maget also followed the example of the MH by including,
alongside its exhibition galleries, a laboratory function within the ATP as a
means of connecting it to the tasks of provincial government.[9] The ambition
of the ATP in this respect, Sherman concludes, was not dissimilar from that
of colonial administrators and was characterised by a similar tension: 'to
bring advanced technology and social organisation to rural agriculture while
preserving traditional crafts and promoting tourist development' (674).

   There is, then, compared to the situation in Australia at the point of
Federation, a more varied set of relations between museum practices,
anthropological fieldwork, the public and the administration of colonial
milieus that needs to be unravelled in the cases of the MH and ATP. This

is mainly owing to the wider range of differentiations (between metropolis and province, metropolis and colony, between one colony and another) that had to be taken into account in managing the relations between different populations and cultures within the shifting frameworks of Greater France. To unravel these relations further, however, requires that we now look more closely at the processes bearing more immediately on the emergence of these two museums out of the MET.

Museum – field – public

I look first at the development of the MH in the light of the broader transformations in the relations between ethnography and physical anthropology that took place in early-twentieth-century France.[10] The latter, represented initially by the Société ethnologique (established in 1839) and later by Paul Broca and the Société d'anthropologie de Paris (established in 1859), was the dominant tendency throughout the nineteenth century. Committed to the 'scientific' study of human races and militantly secular, it was conducted largely outside the University and was sustained chiefly through networks of private scientific societies and associations, most of them eventually acquiring state recognition. While a rival Société d'ethnographie de Paris was also established in 1859, and also received state recognition, its opposition to the biological reductionism of physical anthropology was largely ineffective, partly because its credentials were largely spiritualist rather than resting on a conception of ethnography as a distinct fieldwork discipline. The MET, whose establishment had been prompted by the Exposition universelle held in Paris in 1878, was committed to a project of salvage ethnography that would document primitive cultures before they disappeared. It was, however, largely ineffective: it was shackled by a budget that made it impossible for it to conduct any fieldwork or to arrange any training in the discipline (Dias, 1991).

   However, the tide began to run in the other direction in the early twentieth century. This partly reflected the influence of Durkheim's sociology, which was translated by Marcel Mauss and Arnold van Gennep into the concerns of a reformed Société d'anthropologie that was open to ethnography as well as to physical anthropology; and it partly reflected the influence of a number of new journals (the *Revue des études ethnographiques et sociologiques,)* and societies (the Institut ethnographique international de Paris [1910], the Institut francaise d'anthropologie [1911], a resurrected Société d'ethnographie [1913, the earlier one had closed in 1903] and the Société des amis du musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro). However, the key event was undoubtedly the establishment of the Institut d'ethnologie as a part of the University of Paris in 1925. Established with the support of the Ministry of Colonies and under the joint direction of Mauss, Rivet and Lucien Lévy Bruhl, this was a key moment in the reorganisation of the French intellectual field. It brought together sociology, anthropology and philosophy in the persons of its three

leading *savants* and, through them, the institutional power of the Sorbonne, the École Practique des Hautes Études and the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, which was responsible for the administration of the MH and where, in fact, Rivet's office as Director of the MH was located.[11] Its primary purpose was to train a new generation of ethnographers and colonial administrators who, schooled in the new humanism of Maussian ethnography and deriving a knowledge of their subjects-to-be from the rigours of fieldwork, would nourish the development of a 'colonialism of the left'. To this end, it was to bring its resources to bear against the excesses, or inadequacies, of earlier civil, missionary and military colonial administrators while similarly acting as an intellectual and organisational alliance that would counter the influence of Louis Marin[12] and the École d'anthropologie, whose conservative conception of anthropology's role was a potent political force from the 1890s through to the 1930s. Rivet's activities in the political field in standing as a Popular Front candidate in the metropolitan elections were important in this regard. This helped in forging connections between the scientific and political fields that proved a significant counterweight to Marin's role as representative of the Front de la Liberté in the Chamber.[13]

These, then, were the changing institutional, political and intellectual coordinates that brought fieldwork into the centre of debates in the social and human sciences in France, and which made the MH a focal point for those debates. It was a nodal point in a network of institutions – 'a sort of scientific Grand Central' (Conklin, 2008: 260) – that was to prove just as crucial in training the next generation of French anthropologists and colonial administrators in the Durkheim – Mauss tradition as it was central to the task of instructing the public in its cultural and political implications. However, this did not entirely displace the position of physical anthropology, which, although no longer resting on the same anthropometric base that Broca had placed it on, remained central to the practices of the MET throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, Rivet's own practice (he had trained as a doctor and was schooled in Broca's anthropometric methods [Conklin, 2002: 33]) retained a strong anatomical focus and, under his direction, the MET and, later, the MH continued the tradition of Broca's Laboratoire anthropologique in collecting and exhibiting a range of anatomical parts (see Hecht, 2003).[14] In Alice Conklin's interpretation, the result was a constitutive tension between humanistic displays committed to celebrating 'the fundamental unity of humankind and the equal value of all cultures' and, side-by-side with this, the seemingly anomalous display of skulls and other anatomical remains reflecting the continuing influence of the assumption that cultural differences could be attributed to measurable differences in skull and body types. While this tension ran throughout the MH, the balance between these different orientations varied across its different galleries. Biological racialisation was most prominent in the introductory Anthropological Gallery where the visitor 'discovered the origins of humanity and the distinctive morphological, physiological and anatomical traits

of modern humans and then proceeded to a display of the principal races through skeletons and skulls' (Conklin, 2008: 263). These concerns were carried over, but as a subordinate theme, into a series of territorially defined galleries (the Black African Hall, the White African Gallery, the European Gallery, the Asia Hall, the Arctic and the Americas, and Oceania) via the display of racially differentiated skulls and skeletons alongside ethnographic collections arranged to display, as the primary message of these galleries, the distinctive qualities of different tribal or regional cultures. There was a variable balance between these elements within specific vitrines with, Conklin suggests, skulls being more likely to accompany arrangements of cultural artefacts in the Black African Hall, reflecting the conventional placing of African peoples on the lowest rungs of evolutionary hierarchies (Conklin, 2008: 267–8).

In these respects the MH brought together materials that belonged to two different but overlapping disciplinary and institutional formations: those of physical anthropology and ethnography with, as we have already noted, the latter as the dominant element in the reinterpretation of ethnology that Mauss and Rivet promoted in the Institut d'ethnologie. These materials had, in turn, formed parts of different anthropological assemblages, the one placing a premium on osteological and craniological comparisons of skulls and skeletons for evidence of (as the case may be) underlying human unity and continuity, racial difference or evolutionary sequence, and the second on textual (in the form of photographic, film or sound recordings of ritual practices) and artefactual evidence of cultural differences. The ambition to overcome this division was particularly clear in a paper that Rivet co-authored with Paul Lester and Rivière in which, outlining the case for moving the Laboratoire d'anthropologie from the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle to the MH, great stress was placed on the role this would play in realising the underlying unity of French anthropology by bringing together its osteological and ethnographic collections (Rivet, Lester and Rivière, 1935).[15] This integrative function was, indeed, central to Rivet's conception of the MH as an assemblage of all of the materials that had previously been kept apart in separate collections. It should aim, he argued, to 'assemble together for a common task all the organisations, all the libraries, all the dispersed collections, which concern the races and human civilisations'.[16] He was just as concerned that it should aim to be an assemblage of different types of collection including a *bibliothèque*, a *phototèque* and a *phonotèque* alongside its material culture and anatomical collections.[17] This was central to its purpose of presenting both the unity of man – a unity underlying differentiated types – and the plurality of cultures and civilisations.

The importance assigned to these collections was closely related to their role as repositories for the materials gathered from colonial sites of collection. In contrast to the earlier history of the MET, the MH, in collaboration with the French ministries responsible for the administration of colonial affairs, organised a number of fieldwork missions in the 1930s, the most

influential – albeit by no means typical – being the 1931–3 Dakar-Djibouti mission.[18] There were, however, profound differences between the missions that proceeded from the MH and the expeditions that Baldwin Spencer conducted from the National Museum of Victoria with regard to their field-work *agencements:* that is, the range of agents (human and non-human) involved in fieldwork expeditions – the forms of recording technologies used, the gifts used to elicit the cooperation of the fieldworker's subjects, the fieldworker's tent, in lieu, famously, of the missionary's verandah[19] – and the different kinds of agential capacities these derived from their relations to one another (Bennett, 2013). Some of these differences concern the different epistemological orientations of French anthropology from the Anglo-Australian formation represented by Spencer, while others have to do with the more developed set of connections between field, museum and public that informed the conception and organisation of the MH's fieldwork expeditions. I amplify these points more fully later but limit myself here to three aspects of the relations between the MH and its missions.

   The first point to note, and it is a significant contrast with Spencer, is that the roles of museum director and anthropological fieldworker were not combined in the same person. The role of the director/curator – for this applied with equal force to Rivet at the MH and to Rivière at the ATP – was less to conduct fieldwork than to orchestrate it by coordinating the arrangements between varied agents. The French model aimed not to overcome the division between theoretician and field worker by combining these in the same person, but to improve the division of labour between these two roles, taking the nineteenth-century model beyond the artisan stage in which each *savant* had dealt with his own personal network of colonial correspondents to a more scientific and institutionalised division of labour (L'Estoile, 2007: 103–16). When Rivet visited sites of collection, he did so primarily as an intellectual-administrator whose aim was to develop an infrastructure – by assisting the development of museums in Dakar and Hanoi, for example – that would produce a more efficient division of labour between museum and colony by establishing the MH as the coordinating centre of an institutional network of museums operating in different sites of collection (L'Estoile, 2007: 118–30). The relations between Rivet and Mauss are also important here in shaping a conception of the MH as the headquarters from which expeditions would receive their instructions on what to collect. Mauss' earlier proposal for the establishment of a bureau d'ethnographie had a formative influence on Rivet in this regard (Conklin, 2002; Sibeud, 2007). The instructions for the expeditions focused on the need to collect, whether in object form or via recording devices, everyday and typical things and practices rather than the beautiful or curious. The Dakar–Djibouti mission, Rivet and Rivière (1933) pointedly reported, returned 3,500 objects, 6,000 photographic negatives, 200 sound recordings, notations of 30 separate languages or dialects, 300 Ethiopian manuscripts for the Bibliothèque Nationale, a collection

of paintings and church murals, a zoological collection for the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, and 1,500 *fiches d'observation*. Replication of its accomplishments in these regards by other missions would result in an accumulating, but territorially and culturally differentiated, archive of man made available by the MH for scientific analysis.[20]

Unlike the earlier phase of armchair anthropology, however, this work was to be undertaken not by the individual *savant* but by a corps of experts in a specially segregated scientific setting. This led to a second significant difference: the break, particularly in the fieldwork practice of Marcel Griaule, the leader of the Dakar–Djibouti mission, with an individualised conception of fieldwork practice in favour of a division of labour between different specialists with a view to bringing a multi-perspectival orientation to the constitution and pursuit of their object of knowledge. In his methodological introduction to the 1933 issue of *Minotaure*, in which the findings of the Dakar–Djibouti mission were first put into broader public circulation, Griaule contrasts what he calls the extensive approach to fieldwork with the intensive immersive paradigm first introduced, he argued, by Frank Hamilton Cushing.[21] While by no means dismissing the immersive paradigm – although, as we shall see, this had a quite specific meaning and function for Griaule and many of his contemporaries – Griaule, invoking the urgency of the salvage paradigm, argued the need for a mode of study (and of collection) that would be 'sure and rapid' (Griaule, 1933: 8). He accordingly dismissed the model of the ethnographer who does everything – 'l'ethnographe-á-tout-faire' – as out of date. If ethnographic phenomena were to be captured in their rounded entirety in order to understand a culture as whole, then – given the impossibility of the same person taking notes or making drawings while filming or taking photographs, or being able to observe ritual performances from different points of view (those of its male and female participants, for example) at the same time – the need for a coordinated division of labour among multiple specialists was paramount.

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the MH's missions, however, consisted in the ways in which these were planned, managed and executed – from their conception through the moment of their departure from Paris to their arrival at their destination(s) and subsequent return to Paris – with a view to the different kinds of contributions that their collections would make to both the MH's public and civic functions and its scientific and administrative ones. As I have focused mainly on the latter to this point, let me say a little more about the factors that shaped the former. These included significant changes in international museological practice and debate. The Office internationale des musées (OIM) played an important role here. Set up in Paris in 1926 under the auspices of the Society of Nations' Commission internationale de cooperation intellectuelle, it played a significant role in prompting European museums of art, ethnography and archaeology to transform themselves – on an American model – into instruments of popular and democratic education (Gorgus, 2003: 72–82). In Rivet's case,

this, allied with his strong commitment to the Popular Front, resulted in a conception of the MH as an instrument for reshaping French attitudes towards its colonial subjects by detaching the latter from evolutionary and hierarchical conceptions of difference and installing them in the space of a new humanistic universalism in which a common biological and anatomical substratum was overlaid by differentiated, but ostensibly equal, racial types and cultures. These developments formed part of a broader reshaping of the civic function of museums with all collecting institutions coming under increasing pressure to dedicate their exhibition functions to pedagogic programmes directed at the popular classes in ways that ran directly counter to the predominant tendency of nineteenth-century French museum practices (Poulot, 2005: 143–6).

The ways in which texts and artefacts were assembled in new exhibition formats was a significant aspect of these processes. Rivière's role was crucial here in drawing together a number of contemporary exhibition practices – particularly those of the Scandinavian open-air museums, the development of the museum as an instrument of revolutionary instruction in communist Russia and American conceptions of museums as agents of popular democracy (Gorgus, 2003: 21–31, 83–98) – to develop principles of display designed to give a clear, accessible and holistic picture of the interaction between the elements making up the whole way of life of different territorially defined cultures. Exhibitions in the MET had mainly been organised in accordance with decorative principles: as trophy collections in which the Other was depicted as a colonial possession, simultaneously exotic and primitive. Metal rather than wooden vitrines for greater transparency; the organisation of clear lines of sight for all objects; the provision of documentary and photographic information to relate objects to their regional milieus; the installation of vitrines in a modernist architectural space: in these ways, by contrast, the MH aimed to embody the principles of a *muséographie claire* that would exhibit ethnographic objects as the ordinary and typical indices of a culture in order that they might serve as the instruments of a new public pedagogy (Gorgus, 2003: 56–60).[22]

This conception of the object's destination informed all aspects of the MH's fieldwork missions. These were organised explicitly with a view to the materials they collected being put on show for the edification of the French public. This intended destination was extensively rehearsed in the publicity through which the MH marked the departure of its missions; in the periodic newspaper reports that were based on the press releases summarising the reports that the ethnographers in the field sent back to the MH;[23] and in the publicity campaigns accompanying the return of the missions and the special exhibitions prepared on the basis of their collections.[24] Jean Jamin nicely captures the circuit that bound field and museum together in his discussion of the tournament featuring the American boxer Al Brown, at that time the bantamweight world champion, which the MH arranged in 1931 as both a publicity and fundraising event for the Dakar–Djibouti mission.

Noting that uniformed museum guards were posted at each of the four corners of the boxing ring, Jamin argues that this exhibition of Brown under the surveillance of the museum anticipated the eventual destination of the 'objets nègres' the mission was to collect and return to the MH for exhibition under the watchful eye of its guards (Jamin, 1982: 78). The point, however, is a more general one with two main aspects. The first concerns the respects in which the missions were significant public events, closely connected through the MH to the public sphere. The second concerns the high modernist ethos with which the MH's fieldwork missions were imbued. In reporting the MH's sponsorship of the tournament featuring the Al Brown match, *Paris-Midi* drew on Brown's association with America to tell its readers to think again if they still thought of the MET as an old, dust-ridden collection.[25] The MH's famous association with Josephine Baker operated similarly: the modern, as evoked by a leading representative of progressive American black culture, had arrived at the Trocadéro (Archer-Straw, 2000). And it was as a representative of modernity that the MH set out to collect the cultures that it would later exhibit. The Dakar-Djibouti mission is again emblematic in this respect in the stress the public discourse of the MH placed on the up-to-date technologies of transport and collecting with which the mission was equipped.[26] Its specially designed lorries and custom-built demountable boat, its cameras, film and sound recording equipment: these were all 'of the moment' if not, indeed, stretching beyond it. Each mission would, on its return, be similarly linked to modernity through the regular series of radio broadcasts that Rivière established featuring talks by the leaders or members of the MH's missions: Marcel Griaule and Michel Leiris, for example.

  This modernising ethos also informed the links between the MH's missions, its laboratories and their relations to its scientific–administrative objectives. It was through the connections that were thus established between field, museum and other components of the scientific–administrative assemblage of colonial humanism that the MH connected with the inhabitants of France's colonial territories not as publics to be transformed by educative measures but as populations whose behaviour was to be changed by conscripting scientific expertise to the task of engineering the milieus in which they lived. The establishment of the MH's 'laboratory' function was thus linked to the conception of the MH as an adjunct to the Institut d'ethnologie. As such, its purpose was to give the legislature 'a systematic knowledge of the customs, beliefs, and techniques of the populations it is called upon to direct' (Rivière and Rivet, 1931).[27] This conception of its role is reproduced by representatives of all the key agencies involved: colonial and education ministries that provided its funding, the press, the curatorial staff of the MH and its fieldworkers.[28] The inclusion of a 'laboratory' function within the museum was not entirely new. Conklin (2008: 257–8) notes that it was a requirement that every institution operating under the jurisdiction of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle should have its own

laboratory and research collection, and this had been true of the MET before Rivet's directorship. What was new, however, was how this laboratory function was expressed in the architectural distinction between the library and the *salles de travail* of different departments where selected collections were available to be worked with, all on the upper floors, and the location of the exhibition galleries on the ground floor.

Evoking the imagery of the laboratory in relation to these aspects of the MH's work was, in truth, more a matter of seeking a certain kind of scientific authority and validation rather than strictly emulating the procedures of the laboratory sciences. Such analogies usually need to be treated with caution. Primarily textual, the materials that were brought together in this way – the photographs, films and *fiches d'observation* – mainly took the form of a set of files that could be assimilated to and coordinated with the files developed by France's colonial and overseas ministries. Through the research collections and the varied contexts that were supplied for working on these – by the Institut's students, academic and museum ethnographers/ethnologists, by the staffs of French ministries with colonial responsibilities, and by colonial administrators and military personnel – the MH formed a part of the developing complex of what Garry Wilder calls 'colonial ethnology' in which 'government policies were informed and produced by ethnographic knowledge just as ethnological science was informed and produced by administrative categories' (Wilder, 2003: 221).

Governmental objects

There is, though, another aspect to the conception of the MH's laboratory function within the museum. This concerns its role in securing a status for the ethnographic object appropriate to the instructional tasks it was called on to perform in relation to the MH's role as an institution of popular cultural pedagogy. To address this, however, requires that we take account of a set of issues that, to this point, I have kept under wraps: those concerning the relations between anthropology and aesthetics within the ethos and practices of the MH, particularly those involved in its associations with surrealism. The terms of debate over these questions have, by and large, been set by James Clifford's account of the MH as the key institutional site for a distinctive intellectual fusion of ethnography and surrealism – 'ethnographic surrealism' – that shaped the direction of the cultural disciplines in 1930s Paris. The formations of 'ethnographic surrealism' were, Clifford argues, symptomatic of a more general 'modern cultural situation' consisting in 'a continuous play of the familiar and the strange, of which ethnography and surrealism are two elements' (Clifford, 1988: 121). If ethnography, as represented by the 'ethnographic humanism' (135) of the MH, strove to make unfamiliar cultural worlds comprehensible, the aesthetic disposition of surrealism sought – in its combative relation to the taken-for-granted assumptions of Western culture – to bestrange the familiar.

These were not, Clifford stresses, mutually exclusive opposites. They rather defined the antinomies that structured and organised the crossovers between them as different practices combined elements of both, but in different permutations. Clifford singles out a number of such crossovers while arguing that the balance between 'ethnographic humanism' and the defamiliarising orientation of surrealism tilted in favour of the latter as, from the mid-1930s onward, the project of the MH began to be more clearly differentiated from that of the MET in which it was incubated. The inclusion of Michal Leiris, a leading literary light of French surrealism, in the Dakar–Djibouti mission alongside Michel Griaule; the sponsorship of that mission by arts organisations as well as by colonial ministries and scientific associations; the publication of the first reports from the mission on its return to Paris in the second issue of *Minotaure*, a surrealist publication established by André Breton and Pierre Mabille in 1933: these are among the various fusions of ethnography and surrealism that Clifford identifies. Rivière's involvements in Paris's jazz and *avant-garde* music scenes; the highly aestheticised principles of display he deployed in the exhibition of pre-Columbian culture at the MET before he was hired as Rivet's deputy; his participation in the contemporary enthusiasm for *l'art nègre:* these are also frequently cited to the same effect, as are the MH's connections, through Leiris, to the surrealist Collège de Sociologie (Arppe, 2009).

These assessments have been called into question in more recent accounts. It is, however, less the empirical connections that Clifford traces between ethnography and surrealism than the methodological procedures underlying the interpretation he places on them that are at issue.[29] By interpreting the ethnography/surrealism conjunctions through the conceptual grid of his more general account of the art/culture system, Jamin argues, Clifford establishes a set of polyphonic connections between these different knowledge practices at the price of neglecting the specific conditions of their production. Drawing instead on a field analytic perspective, Jamin (1986) places greater emphasis on the differences between ethnography and surrealism, particularly with respect to their relations to the scientific and political fields. Ethnography, through the relations that were orchestrated around the Institut d'ethnologie and the MH, sought legitimacy in the scientific field as a form of university- and state-sanctioned knowledge of exactly the kind that surrealism parodied and rebutted. Equally, while both projects were anti-racial, they took up different positions in relation to colonialism: implacable opposition to all its forms and a demand for its immediate end in the case of surrealism;[30] a reformed colonialism, with the Institut and the MH as the key agent of its transformation, in the case of ethnography.

Jamin does not, though, deny the pertinence of a more limited set of connections between ethnography and surrealism. These took two forms: an initial set of contingent alignments, dependent on short-term personal contacts rather than on enduring institutional ties, through which the MH acquired a certain standing with Paris's artistic *avant-garde;* and a more

lasting set of affiliations arising from the similarities between the French traditions of fieldwork that were developed in the inter-war period and the earlier, nineteenth-century voyage literature. The latter was a hybrid genre, installed ambiguously between the field of *belles lettres* and the developing field of ethnography, which narrated the journey into another culture as a form of self-discovery and transformation arising from the encounter with the Other. If the fieldwork tradition constituted a break with this tradition, it was an incomplete break to the extent that the missions authorised by the MH gave rise to narratives in which the ethnographer deployed this literary device to account for the kinds of transformative practices of the self they were led to perform as a consequence of their prolonged experience in the field. Here, the immersive paradigm of ethnographic fieldwork served less as a means for acquiring an objective knowledge of the Other than as an occasion for undoing and re-forming the self prompted by an experience of alterity. As such, it gave rise to a melancholic questioning of the values of Western civilisation and of the colonial rationalities that constitute the social and political underpinnings of the ethnographer's practice.

Vincent Debaene develops a similar argument in his account of the 'two books of ethnography' – that is, the formal scientific reports of the field-work missions in which the culture of the population under investigation is reported in a documentary fashion and a later, usually more extended text, which aims for a more literary and existentially fuller evocation of the 'atmosphere' of the culture in question.[31] Michel Leiris's *L'Afrique fantôme* (Leiris, 1996 [1934]), Griaule's *Les flambeurs d'hommes* (Griaule, 1991 [1934]) and Alfred Métraux's *L'île de Pâques* (Métraux, 1941) as accounts, respectively, of the Dakar–Djibouti mission, Griaule's earlier mission to Ethiopia and Métraux's mission to Easter Island are among the chief cases he has in mind. As Debaene puts it:

> The ethnologists were constantly caught between two conceptions of their work: on the one hand, in the name of objectivity and as a counter to the picturesque, they demanded that their labours be conducted in a strictly documentary manner, never forgetting to refer them back to a monographic inventory and to the museum collections; on the other, they never ceased to deplore the insufficiency of the document and its incapacity to reconstruct the 'atmosphere' of the society under investigation.
>
> (Debaene, 2010: 121)

It is, however, Debaene's insistence on a clear separation between this aspect of the ethnographer's practice and the inscription of the texts and artefacts collected by such expeditions within the institutional practices of the MH that is of most concern to me here. Here, he argues, the imperative to establish the scientific credentials of ethnography entailed as clear as possible a separation of the manner in which such collections were processed and

institutionally mobilised from the *belle lettrist* associations of voyage literature. The key problem this came to revolve around consisted in securing the epistemological status of the ethnographic object as a scientifically validated document of the culture to which it referred. This was achieved by the fusion of 'the thing itself (taken from its place and presented without alteration) and the lesson of things (explanatory labels accompanying the exhibits for instructing the public)' (52) that the MH's practice produced. The educative task of the museum required that the ethnographic object should be disconnected from the 'voyage narrative which isolated spectacular facts from their context' in order to present them instead as parts of 'coordinated ensembles, reinscribing curious practices in a coherent system' (55). This required that the object's progress from field to exhibit be carefully managed along each step of the way. This was the role of the MH's 1931 *Instructions sommaires pour les collecteurs d'objets ethnographiques*, which emphasised the value of collecting ordinary and the typical objects that would serve as documentary indices of their uses in everyday life rather than exotic or extraordinary ones; of the guidelines for photographic practice designed to secure the documentary status of the evidence of ritual practices collected in this way;[32] of the laboratory work of scientific validation and classification, which secured the documentary status of the MH's collections, thus rendering them interpretable as evidence of the distinctive totalities constituted by a regionally specific culture and society; and of the exhibition galleries where the work of labelling and the layout of exhibits in accordance with the principles of the *muséographie claire* would guide the visitor to a correct relativising and humanist understanding of the cultures on display.

  These relations between field, laboratory and exhibition gallery worked to secure a particular set of capacities for the MH's ethnographic objects as objects of knowledge of a distinctive kind. Their scientific validation distinguished them both from curiosities and from aesthetic collections of fine-arts objects by investing them with the distinctive epistemological value of the document.[33] Their value as document simultaneously imbued them with a distinctive moral force and authority as governmental objects of a particular kind. This force, as Christine Laurière interprets it, derived from the evidence of 'added value' that was coded into the ethnographic object. This 'added value', especially in objects that were the outcomes of particular techniques of production – of ceramics, metallurgy, arts and crafts, for example – consisted less in their documentation of the particular use values accruing to objects within particular cultures than in a universally shared capacity to creatively transform the material world through the coordinated deployment of intellectual, manual, technical and artistic skills. It was (as she calls it) this 'environmentalist conception of the object' (Laurière, 2008: 416) in which the object bears the imprint of the socio-cultural environment that shapes it while also testifying to the capacity of human practice to reshape such environments that conferred on the MH's ethnographic objects a certain degree of strategic plasticity. While such objects were able to serve

as a source of knowledge for the administration of colonial milieus, they could also serve as useful platforms for the MH's pedagogic engagement with the popular classes given the positive value placed on technical forms of creativity in artisanal cultures.

* * * *

Although shorn of its Popular Front associations – particularly during the 1939–45 war when the MH was pressed into a different kind of state service during the German occupation[34] – the documentary status of the ethnographic object that was fashioned during the inter-war years was to have a long historical reach. But it enjoyed perhaps its greatest public prominence during the moment of its demise: the rearguard action mounted by its curatorial staff and leading French anthropologists in protest at what was, in effect, the dismantling of the MH and its pedagogical project as its collections were dissolved, packed up and shipped across the Seine to provide the Musée Quai Branly with many of its key marker objects.[35] This too was a state project, initiated by Jacques Chirac in the final years of his presidency, committed to a public pedagogy that would confirm and celebrate the equal value of all cultures. It was, however, a state project conducted under the sign of the aesthetic as the objects the Musée Quai Branly acquired from the MH and other ethnographic collections were selected and curated to stress their unique and exceptional qualities – their beauty – as testimony to a universally shared capacity for a more exceptional form of artistic creativity. They were, as a consequence, largely shorn of their documentary status as the typical indices of specific cultures. In moving from the MH to Quai Branly, the ethnographic object was reshaped to serve a different set of purposes as it passed from the jurisdiction of one form of cultural expertise (the ethnographic) to another (the aesthetic).[36]

Notes

 1   The history of the relations between the terms 'ethnography' and 'ethnology' in France is a complex one. While often overlapping in their meaning and uses, ethnology was originally associated with physical anthropology and was strongly secular and materialist in orientation while ethnography also had affiliations to spiritualism. It acquired strong connections with folklore studies in the opening decades of the twentieth century. In the 1920s and 1930s, particularly after the establishment of the Institut d'ethnologie in 1925, the term 'ethnology' came to encompass both a more scientific conception of ethnography, largely in the Maussian tradition, and a continuation of the earlier physical anthropological conceptions of the term. Rivet played a crucial role in brokering and maintaining this synthesis in his positions at both the Institut and the MH.
 2 The ATP did not, however, open in its own premises until 1972; see Segalen (2005).
 3 This is especially true of the MH, which, at the time of writing this essay, still lacked a comprehensive account of its history from its early formation through to the present of the kind that Segalen (2005) provides for the ATP.
 4 New Guinea was the chief exception here. Previously a German colony, New Guinea was established as a mandate territory under Australian administration

under the terms of the partitioning of Germany's colonies that was undertaken by the League of Nations after the 1914–18 war. See Sibeud (2007) for details.

 5 This is an oversimplification of a complex history in which colonial populations were themselves differentiated in terms of their access to civic rights – differentiated both across different colonial contexts and, in some cases, within the same colony on a mixture of racial and status grounds. I refer the reader to Conklin (1997) and Wilder (2005) for more detailed discussions of these questions.

 6 This is the general, and well-documented, line of argument developed by the editors and contributors to Blanchard and Deroo (2008).

 7 The relations between these two orientations are discussed by Conklin (1997) as they are also, albeit from a somewhat different theoretical perspective, by Dias (2010).

 8 Initially, in 1931, the Musée permanent des colonies and, from 1935, the Musée de la France d'outre-mer.

 9 Initially the Laboratoire d'Ethnographie Française, directed by Maget, this subsequently became the ATP's Centre d'Ethnologie Française.

10 I draw, in the following discussion, mainly on Blanckaert (1988); Fabre (1997); Sherman (2004) and Sibeud (2007).

11 Grognet (2010) attributes considerable importance to Rivet's location in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in ensuring that the work of the MH complied with significant aspects of the Muséum's long-term intellectual and organisational agendas. Rivière, Maget and all the other MH curatorial staff worked *in situ* at the Palais de Chaillot.

12 Not to be confused with the later cultural historian perhaps best known to English-speaking readers as the author of *Portrait of the King* (Marin, 1988).

13 Lebovics (1992) is particularly helpful in dissecting the terms in which these rival left- and right-wing versions of anthropology vied with one another in their endeavours to influence the frameworks in which the identities of the different populations of Greater France would be defined and governed. Marin had proved influential in the Chamber in delaying the financial support needed to put Rivet's reform programme at the MET into effect.

14 For fuller discussions of the earlier French tradition of physical anthropology and its relations to museums practices, see Dias (2004) and Dias (1991), respectively.

15 This conception of the MH's function distinguished Rivet's conception of ethnology from Mauss' conception of ethnography as the basis for a science of man in society that was to provide a universal account of the development of human societies from mechanical to organic forms of solidarity. For Rivet, by contrast, ethnology proposed a different kind of synthesis in aiming to unite somatic anthropology with ethnography and linguistics to establish a science of the human species, its branches, origins and differentiations. It was in this respect, Grognet argues, that Rivet's controlling vision for the MH derived from, and asserted the continuing influence of, the comparative anatomy orientation of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (see Grognet 2010: 280–4, 430–4). At the same time, however, as Jamin (1998) stresses, Rivet's project was for a synthesis of the natural and social sciences of man, in the Enlightenment tradition of the Société des Observateurs, rather than for the subordination of the latter to the former.

16 See 'Un rapport signe par Paul Rivet sur une demande de subvention a l'outillage national qui presente un projet de restructuration de Musée', 21 April 1934, Archives of the Musée de l'Homme, 2 AM 1 G3b: *Musée d'Ethnographie: notes et raports, activité* (1934).

17 See 'Notes relating to the activity of the Museum of Ethnography in the French colonial domain', Archives of the MH, 2 AM 1 G3b: *Musée d'Ethnographie: notes et raports, activité* (1934).

18 It is, indeed, doubtful whether any of the missions organised by the MH could be described as typical. Grognet's discussion of the most important missions in the annexes to his thesis reveals a remarkable diversity in the ethos, orientations, purposes and practical arrangements of these missions, sufficiently so to suggest that expediency often trumped the MH's aspiration to develop a clear overriding scientific rationale for its fieldwork activities.

19 Malinowski invoked the image of the anthropologist stepping outside the 'closed study of the theorist' and down from 'the verandah of the missionary compound' into the 'open air of the anthropological field' (cited in Stocking 1983: 112).

20 Bondas (2011), in a recent useful reminder of the MH's connections through Rivet to the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, draws our attention to fact that the Dakar–Djibouti expedition was also mandated to collect natural specimens, both living and dead, and to the respects in which many of its activities – including those geared towards the collecting of ethnological materials – were imbued with the culture of the hunt.

21 The American anthropologist credited as one of the forerunners of anthropological fieldwork for his work among the Zuni in the 1890s.

22 For an early and formative summary of these principles, see the document prepared by Anatole Lewitsky 'Quelques consideration sur l'exposition des objects ethnographiques', Archives of the Musée de l'Homme, 2AM 1 G3d, *Notes and Reports, 1935–7.*

23 For examples of this correspondence, see the MH Archives 2 AM 1 M2c *Mission Dakar-Djibouti, 1931–33 Correspondence.*

24 Éric Jolly (2001) offers a good account in this respect of the relations between the Dakar–Djibouti mission and the 1931 International Colonial Exhibition. The departure of the mission followed closely on the opening of the Exhibition, and its activities were widely reported throughout its duration as contributing to the Exhibition's celebration of colonial possessions as a part of its promotion of the identifications of Greater France.

25 See *Paris-Midi,* 20 November 1930. Copy held in the MH Archives, file 2 AM 1 B9, *Mission Dakar-Djibouti.*

26 I am indebted here and in other aspects of my discussion of this mission to Clifford (1983).

27 The MH was partly funded by the ministries responsible for France's colonial and overseas territories, and its opening was fan fared by colonial troops.

28 Rivière's formulations, which pretty much echoed those of Mauss, were, in their turn, echoed by M. Roustan, the Minister of Public Instruction (Archives of the MH, 2 AM 1 B9, *Mission Dakar-Djibouti)* and by Griaule when interviewed by *Le Jour* in connection with his later (1935) Sudan expedition (Archives of the MH, 2 AM 1 B8 MET/MDH, *Missions Ethnographique*).

29 That said, there have been objections on these grounds too. Jamin (1986), for example, argues that *Minotaure* only became a surrealist publication after the issue in which the Dakar–Djibouti mission was reported.

30 The surrealists mounted significant critiques of the Colonial Exhibition of 1931, timed to celebrate the centenary of French rule in Algeria. They ran public campaigns against visiting the exhibition and took issue not only with the history of French colonial massacres and exploitation but also with the concept of Greater France, which they judged an 'intellectual swindle' designed to delude the citizens of the metropole into believing themselves imperial proprietors by adding to French landscapes 'a vision of minarets and pagodas' (cited in Lebovics, 1992: 56). They also organised their own Anti-Imperial Exhibition, which critiqued the status accorded ethnographic collections in Western collecting institutions.

31 While I am deeply indebted to Debaene's study for the arguments I make here, I have some doubts about the more general aspects of his argument. I have given my reasons for these in Bennett (2017a).

32 See on this Pierre (2001/2).

33 It would take me too far away from my concerns to pursue the point in detail, but it should be noted that Clifford's conception of 'ethnographic surrealism' depends a good deal on his interpretation of *Documents* as a key site of convergence between ethnography and surrealism in the 1920s, particularly with regard to the 'shock value' he attributes to both. Denis Hollier and Leisl Ollman (1991) suggest this is misplaced to the degree that ethnography and surrealism attributed quite sharply different meanings to the concept of the document derived from different disciplinary histories of use and interpretation.

34 I argued at the beginning of this chapter that the distinctiveness of both the MH and the ATP belongs largely to their formative years. This was largely because, soon after their official establishment, each was faced with the difficulty of finding some accommodation with, respectively, the racial and regional politics of the Nazi occupation. These issues were worked through differently by the two institutions. It would be a mistake, however, to read off the different accommodations they offered from the fates of their two directors: Rivet, going into exile in 1941 and retaining an untarnished reputation as a leading figure of the Resistance in which many MH staff were active while Rivière, remaining in post throughout the war, was subsequently accused of collaboration with the Vichy government. There is a large literature on this question. The most persuasive analyses are those that de-personalise the issue to focus on field dynamics – that is, on the respects in which the relations between the French and German scientific fields in the domains of ethnology and folk studies had different consequences for the positions that Rivet and Rivière were able to adopt within these – rather than on questions of individual political ethics. See, for example, Fabre (1997); Lebovics (1992) and Weber (2000).

35 This dismantling – the MH was closed in 2003 for (at the time of writing) a still-ongoing process of reorganisation – was followed two years later by the closure of the ATP, which, from 1972, had its premises in the Bois de Bouloigne.

36 Again, there is a large literature on these questions: see, for example, Clifford (2007); Desvallées (2007) and Price (2007).

10 Aesthetics, culture and the ordering of race

Boas and the Boasians

In his classic essay 'What is an author?' Michel Foucault argues that 'the author's name, unlike other proper names, does not pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it' but rather 'manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture' (Foucault, 1998b: 206). This is not, though, true of all discourses: only 'a certain number of discourses' are 'endowed with the "author function" while others are deprived of it' (206). Foucault's main concern is with the functioning of the author's name in the field of literary discourse. He does, though, at the end of the essay, remark more speculatively on the functioning of the author in the fields of science and knowledge practices more generally. The questions I want to pose here, drawing on these remarks, concern the functioning of an author's name in the field of anthropological discourse. What role does this play in the circulation of anthropological texts within anthropology, across the boundaries between anthropology and adjacent disciplines, and in the broader public sphere? The anthropologist in relation to whom I put these questions is Franz Boas, undoubtedly a key author figure – indeed, perhaps *the* author – of twentieth-century anthropology.

This is especially so in terms of the role accorded Boas as the author of the culture concept which has served as a key lynch-pin around which the history of anthropology has been made to swivel. This is so in three main respects. The first consists in the significance conventionally accorded the culture concept in displacing accounts of difference based on biological conceptions of race. Boas, as Robert Wald Sussman puts it, provided 'an alternative explanation for why people from different areas or living under certain conditions behaved differently from one another': they 'have culture' (Sussman, 2014: 3). The second concerns the role accorded Boas's formulation of the culture concept in displacing hierarchical conceptions of culture with culturally relativist ones. Philippe Descola articulates this dimension of the concept most clearly in differentiating Boas's interpretation of the culture concept from that of Edward B. Tylor. For Tylor, culture – 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (Tylor,

1871: 1) – was a human universal that operated both a distinction between human and animal life and, within the former, a means of ranking societies in terms of 'the degree of development of their cultural institutions' as 'more or less elaborated expressions of a universal human tendency to overcome natural constraints and instinctive forces' (Descola, 2013: 74). For Boas, by contrast, the emphasis is placed not on the possession or absence of specific traits but on their formal organization, the culture of a people comprising a

> unique and coherent configuration of material and intellectual features sanctioned by tradition, that tradition being typical of a certain mode of life, rooted in the specific categories of a language and responsible for the specificity of the individual and collective behavior of its members.
> (Descola, 2013: 75)

In contrast to Tylor's conception, the Boasian culture concept is distinguished by its plural form – the stress it places on the different cultures of different peoples – rather than signifying a singular difference of humans from nature, and by its substitution of 'a synchronic table in which all cultures are equally valid' (75) for the grading of peoples according to the degree of their development. The third attribute typically attributed to the culture concept is that of announcing a break with the elitist associations of aesthetic conceptions of culture. For Virginia Dominguez, Boas's concept of culture was 'deliberately antithetical to the old elite German notion of *Kultur*; "culture" was strategically invoked to wrest it from the elite and make it the property of the masses' (Dominguez, cit. Phillips, 2011: 103).

In truth, none of these contentions holds water if interpreted as views that might consistently be attributed to Boas as the author of a specific corpus of texts. As many commentators (including Descola) have shown, extended discussions of the culture concept are rare in Boas's texts; it was rather his students who gave the concept its fullest – albeit varied – definitions, and who generated and managed its political career in early to mid-century America. For all that he qualified and problematised biological conceptions of racial difference, he never completely abandoned them; nor, in spite of appearances to the contrary, did he entirely jettison hierarchical orderings of racial difference. As for challenging the influence of aesthetic conceptions of culture – an interpretation of the culture concept that has played a key role in the trajectories of cultural studies – Boas, to the contrary, extended their reach in the post-Kantian gloss which he placed on the definition of cultures by stressing the significance of the formal configuration of the relations between the different elements comprising distinctive ways of life as the proper focus for analysis. These aesthetic aspects of the culture concept also played a crucial role in the concept's political history. This consisted initially in the role it played in mediating the relations between America's white nativists, new generations of immigrants, and African Americans within the emerging dynamics of American multiculturalism and, as part of

a distinctive stage in the development of US settler colonialism, the separation of Native Americans from these dynamics.

However, before I come to these, my main concerns in this chapter, I want to look a little more closely at another aspect of the author function performed by the figure of Boas. For the significance that the name 'Boas' enunciates within the discourses of anthropology is not only that of the author of the culture concept. It has also served as the marker of a number of other 'swivel points' in the histories of anthropology and museums, and the relations between them: as a key architect of the life group as the preferred vehicle for the exhibition of different ways of life, for example, and the lead figure in shifting the institutional basis of early twentieth-century anthropology from the museum to the university. The aspect of the Boas author function I want to consider here, however, is the role accorded him as the chief American pioneer of the paradigm of immersive fieldwork in which materials gathered from the field are said to acquire their true meaning from the evidence that is solicited from the members of the culture under investigation. It's less the case that can be made for earlier figures being the true pioneers of immersive fieldwork that concerns me here (see Evans, 2005) than the ways in which conventional interpretations of his role in this regard obscure the more complex and ambivalent set of relations and processes in which Boas's work was actually implicated.

Assembling and ordering: cultures, bodies, populations

In assessing the significance of Boas's work, Ruth Benedict sees this as consisting in his insistence on the need for the 'detailed study of cultural patterns *in situ*.' Earlier travellers' and missionaries' accounts were not systematic investigations of the subjective world of the tribe under investigation. And the same was true of earlier anthropologists. 'Even Tylor,' as Benedict put it, quoting Boas, 'thought that scraps of data from here, there, and everywhere were enough for ethnology.'[1] In his 1907 essay 'Some principles of museum administration' written shortly after his departure from the American Museum of Natural History, Boas, in further elaborating the principles that informed his earlier critique of Otis Mason's deployment of the typological method, similarly stresses the 'trifling importance of the specimens' in anthropology collections, attributing this 'to the fact that all the specimens are primarily incidental expressions of complex mental processes that are themselves the subject of anthropological inquiry' (Boas, 1907: 928). It is for this reason, he continues, that anthropological collections should be disconnected from natural history collections and, instead, 'be treated like collections of artistic industry and art collections' (929).

Boas addresses these concerns in the context of his broader interest in distinguishing how different kinds of museums should be administered in the light of the different constituencies they should serve: the general public, visitors with higher levels of education, or the scientific community. His

purpose, in relation to each of these constituencies, is, so far as anthropological museums are concerned, to diminish the significance of their collections of material specimens. So far as the general public is concerned, it is not a well-ordered collection of specimens that matters but the exhibition of 'striking objects' which, in attracting the attention of the general visitor who wonders distractedly through the museum, serve as a vital antidote to the lure of popular entertainments. While valuing them in this regard, Boas nonetheless warns of the limits of life groups. Too many of these, he argues, will merely diminish their ability to command the visitor's attention while, in any case, the authority they can claim is limited – little less than that of picture books he argues in a revealing devaluation of the visual relative to the textual. For the better-educated visitors, Boas extols the virtues of 'the beauty and compact idea brought out by small specialist exhibits' (925). For both of these groups, but for different reasons – a limited number of striking objects for the general visitor, the appeal of aesthetic singularity of the special exhibit for the educated visitor – the large museum has, Boas argues, little to recommend it. If undesirable from the point of view of the museum's educational functions, however, the large museum is vital for its scientific function, serving as a centre of collection 'in bringing together and . . . preserving intact large series of material which for all time to come must form the basis of scientific inductions' (930). Except for anthropology museums where – since 'the material objects are insignificant as compared with the actual scientific questions involved' (931) – the collection and preservation of specimens is of much less value.

   In advancing this argument, Boas urges the need for a new model of fieldwork which, no longer hampered by the need to acquire material specimens, would instead focus on the harvesting of meanings to be translated into textual forms whose preservation would be based more on an archival than a museum model. 'Although texts only achieved a tangibly permanent character as a result of the ethnographer's intervening augmentation of an otherwise unwritten language,' Ira Jacknis argues,

> Boas regarded them as enduring expressions of the native mind, objects analogous to those preserved in the libraries and other institutional loci of the European humanist tradition . . . constituting, for the vanishing primitive, a permanent archive which could serve as 'the foundation of all future researches.'
>
> (Jacknis, 1996: 198)

In making these points, Jacknis also notes the limits of Boas's experience 'in the field,' which was limited largely to the early stages of his career, peaking with his leading role in the American Museum of Natural History's 1897–1902 Jesup North Pacific Expedition. He later more routinely practiced what is perhaps best characterised as 'epistolary fieldwork' which focused on the collection of myths and stories and, so far as objects were concerned,

gathering oral testimony as to their meanings and uses. Conducted by means of correspondence, particularly with his Kwakiutel informant George Hunt, Boas would also make periodic visits to Fort Rupert where, as Douglas Cole notes, he would be more of an 'observer' than a 'participant' and only rarely living among his subjects (Cole, 1999: 219).

Taking their cue from Jacknis, Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman (1999) question the scientific value and validity of the archival assemblage Boas accumulated in this way by examining what they call the metadiscursive processes through which the texts comprising it were produced. How were texts converted from one form (oral) into another (written)? How were they translated from one context (the field) to another (the archival assemblage) in being gathered together in book form and library archives? In exploring these questions, Briggs and Bauman highlight the unevenness in the relations of power and authority that were evident in the exchanges between Boas and Hunt to manipulate both the kinds of oral testimony Hunt collected and the ways in which he converted that testimony into written form in favour of narratives focused on the past, tradition, and the authentically native versus contemporary practices forged in the context of indigenous adjustments to an invasive settler state.[2] The result, they argue, was a textual corpus that effected a modernist production of the Other as anterior to and outside of the modern at a crucial period of US state formation so far as the governance of Native Americans was concerned. In a related line of argument, David Jenkins (1994) pinpoints the respects in which the priority that Boas accorded to the textualisation of museum displays – to the need for labels and texts based on scientific reports to accompany artefacts to elucidate their true meaning – ran directly counter to his insistence that artefacts 'receive their significance only through the thoughts that cluster around them' and from their varied 'uses and meanings, which can be understood only when viewed from the standpoint of the social and religious life of the people' (Boas, 1907: 928). However, while arranging 'objects to demonstrate the putative completeness of another culture,' the very procedures Boas deployed – 'attaching an explanatory text when the object was removed from the context in which it originated' – depended on procedures of metonymic substitution and classification which 'substituted part for whole at the same time that they substituted the position of an object in a classificatory scheme for its context of origin' (Jenkins, 1994: 268).

A few years before his 1907 essay on the principles of museum administration, and while still at the American Museum of Natural History, Boas had floated a proposal for an 'Astor Expedition' to follow the success of its earlier Jesup Expedition. Writing to Morris Jesup, the museum's president, he proposed the collection of both meanings and bodies as a means of commemorating the accomplishments of America's pioneer families:

> With the influx of a large population, the courageous spirit of the men who laid the foundation of the new country is only too readily forgotten,

and it would seem a worthy ambition to establish for all time to come the connection of the family with the early history of the great Northwest through a commemorative work describing the country as first found. Such a work would be principally a description of the inhabitants of the country and of their resources, and would require a thorough investigation of the natives and of their remains.[3]

Boas projected that the materials that were to be collected in this way would provide the basis for a series of about twelve volumes on the tribes of the Northwest which would find their place in every important library in the country. It is difficult to imagine a stronger articulation of a settler colonial logic for a fieldwork expedition conceived as a means of textualising a culture which, having supposedly stood still since it was 'first found,' is to be gathered into libraries as an archival tribute to the settler culture which finally preserves it before eliminating it entirely. This needs to be viewed alongside Boas's parallel interest in anthropometric forms of collecting. He expressed this in ways that acknowledged, and sought to effect an alliance between, museums and censuses as instruments for collecting information on indigenous populations. Writing in 1897, again to Jesup, he proposed an alliance between the museum and the US Census, extolling the input that anthropology might make in refining the scientific value of the statistical data on the Indian population collected by the Census while anticipating that the benefit of the collaboration to anthropology would be 'the collection of vital statistics of the Indians . . . in a more thorough manner than has been done heretofore in anthropometric studies'. He outlined the division of the data obtained by means of such a collaboration as follows:

> Studies of this character will yield material of a permanent value to museums so far as photographs, casts of faces and of bodies, crania, and other objects, may be collected. I believe it may be quite feasible to make an arrangement with the Census Bureau, so that the statistical data, for which the material that has been collected must be used, will form the report of the Census Bureau, while the objects would stay in this Museum.[4]

This remained a continuing preoccupation of Boas's, as was evident in his various surveys – using both anthropometric and census data – to explore a set of issues located at the interfaces of anthropometry, eugenics and public policy concerns focused on questions of race. In his 1912 essay on changes in bodily form experienced by varied groups of second-generation European immigrants in America, he attributes changes in head size to changing environmental conditions, leading him to stress the 'plasticity (as opposed to permanence)' (Boas, 1912: 71) of such attributes in contrast to essentialist racial conceptions of them as inherent and immutable. He makes the same point a decade later, stressing 'the instability of the body under varying

environmental conditions as one of the most fundamental subjects to be considered in an anthropometric study of our population' (Boas, 1922: 59). While invoking, in both essays, a mix of cultural and environmental factors to account for the plasticity of racial types, it is nonetheless racialised bodies – not holistic cultures – that form the subject of these inquiries (Baker, 2010). However much the stress on the autonomous role of cultural factors in shaping the distinctive social attributes of different groups increased as Boas's career progressed, he never abandoned the conception of biologically distinct races as operative principles of human division. Marc Anderson, in his telling discussion of the problematic and changing intersections between the languages of race and culture at different moments in Boas's career, notes how, in his entry on 'Race' in the 1934 *Encylopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Boas stresses the existence of 'fundamentally distinct races, like Europeans and Negroes,' rejecting loose uses of the term race 'to indicate groups of men differing in appearance, language or culture' to insist that it applies solely to the biological groupings of human types' (Boas, cit. Anderson, 2013: 404). The Negro, Mongoloid and European were the types he identified:

> The special forms developed in the various races do not show that one can be considered as more advanced from the prehuman type than another. The divergences are rather in different directions. Thus the Negro is most divergent in the increased length of legs and in the strong development of lips; the Mongoloid in the loss of hairiness; the European in depigmentation, reduction in the size of the face, elevation of the nose and increased size of the brain.
>
> (Boas, cit. Anderson, 2013: 404)

The categories of race and culture, then, need to be understood in their relations to one another in Boas's work and, indeed, to the trajectories of Boasian anthropology more generally. The category of culture was not, contrary to Michel-Rolph Trouillot's suggestion, 'race repellent' (Trouillot, 2003: 100): both categories remain operative as aspects of what Tracy Teslow calls 'tandem discourses with distinct institutional and methodological histories' (Teslow, 2014: 11) connected to different rationales for collecting and ordering data from different populations, whose differences are defined in either racial or cultural terms as the occasion required. Those occasions were related to the different problems posed by the relations between America's white nativist, immigrant, African American and Native American populations. To understand how culture and race were differently invoked to provide a means of acting on the relations between these different populations, I look next at the formal properties of the culture concept. In their classic discussion of this concept, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952) were at pains to stress that culture is to be understood as an abstraction: not as the sum total of a particular set of beliefs and customs

or behaviours, but as the system of relations which patterns the interactions between them. They were equally at pains to distinguish the American version of the culture concept, which they regarded as being founded on scientific principles, from the aesthetic and humanist register associated with its earlier European formulations. The ordering properties of culture, they thus suggested, were to be understood on the model of linguistics. This was, however, a later construction of the tradition and one which overlooked the role that aesthetics had played in providing the template upon which the ordering capacities of culture were conceived, fashioned and politically mobilised in the inter-war years.

The aesthetic ordering and differentiation of cultures[5]

From its inception in the work of Edward Burnett Tylor, the culture concept has been shaped by the relations between the practices of collecting materials from subordinate cultures, and ordering the relations between these and dominant cultures, in ways that have informed practices of governing. This is often missed in the case of Tylor, whose definition of culture, Adam Kuper argues, amounted to no more than 'a list of traits' – of customs, habits, beliefs and so on – 'with the consequence that culture might be inventoried but never analysed' (Kuper, 2000: 57). A quite different assessment is called for, however, when Tylor's culture concept is viewed in relation to his conception of survivals. The relations between these constituted a distinctive governmental rationality that shaped a political program which, in identifying those traits which represented what Georges Didi-Huberman (2002) characterises as a 'spectral time' – the legacy of a past which is disconnected from the present that has superseded it – also identified those aspects of 'primitive cultures' that were to be surgically removed by colonial governance. Tylor was perfectly clear about this implication of his doctrine of survivals which was not, he argued, to be understood as a 'mere abstract truth, barren of all practical importance' but as a means of identifying those 'streams of folly' which, persisting from the past, have to be eliminated in order to integrate 'the savage' into the culture of the higher races (Tylor, 1867: 93).

Although Boas cut his anthropological teeth in fieldwork projects directed at a distance by Tylor, the problem space that he went on to develop was, George Stocking (1968) contends, a quite different one in which the interpretation of fieldwork evidence made the specific patterns produced by the intermixing of the traits comprising any specific culture a particular historical problem that was not susceptible to any general laws of an evolutionary kind. In place of a commitment to the collection of objects that could be put on display for all to see as evidence of a universal narrative of humanity, the Boasian paradigm substituted the more abstract object of 'cultures' which required special methods of collection alert to the interrelations between objects, myths, rituals, language, etc., within a specific way of life accessible

only to the trained eye of the anthropologist immersed in the culture in question (Hegeman, 1999). Each culture, as Boas put it,

> can be understood only as an historical growth determined by the social and geographical environment in which each people is placed and by the way in which it develops the cultural material that comes into its possession from the outside or through its own creativeness.
>
> (Boas, 2010: 4)

Ruth Benedict registered the shift that this involved in chastising the earlier generation of armchair anthropologists for the undue emphasis they had placed on the collection of material culture:

> Strictly speaking, material culture is not really culture at all. . . . Behind every artefact are the patterns of culture that give form to the idea for the artefact and the techniques of shaping and using it. . . . The use and meaning of any object depends almost wholly on non-material behaviour patterns, and the objects derive their true significance from such patterns.[6]

Although, as we have seen, the nature of – and the factors shaping – Boas's fieldwork practice were more complicated than these accounts suggest, it is the stress on the formal qualities of the Boasian conceptions of culture that I want to emphasise here. This form-giving capacity was subject to different formulations at different moments in the development of the culture concept. Richard Handler has argued that Boas tended, in his relatively meagre discussions of the concept, to oscillate between seeing culture in Tylorian terms as 'an accidental accretion of individual elements' or as the result of an organising spirit or genius that assimilated these elements into a 'spiritual totality' that needed to be understood as a 'unique, historical whole' (Handler, 2005: 49). Boas drew, in these latter formulations, on the Germanic aesthetic tradition in imputing the creativity of a people to their unique genius, a capacity which he sometimes interpreted in terms of Johann Gottfried Herder's categories, sometimes in terms of those provided by Wilhelm von Humboldt, and sometimes in Kantian terms (Bunzl, 1996; Stocking, 1968). As subsequently developed by his various students, however, the distinctive shape of a culture was re-interpreted in more explicitly modernist terms (Hegeman, 1999) as the result of a form-giving activity modelled on the work of art which, whether performed by individual or collective social agents, broke through inherited patterns of thought and behaviour to crystallise new social tendencies. This is evident, for example, in Benedict's concept of the pattern of culture which, drawing on Wilhelm Worringer's conception of abstract form (Worringer, 1997), she interprets as 'the result of a unique arrangement and interrelation of the parts that has brought about a new entity,' a process which she compares to that 'by which a style in art comes into being and persists' (Benedict, 2005: 47). It was, however, Edward Sapir who gave the culture concept its most systematically

modernist inflection in his essay 'Culture, genuine and spurious' (Sapir, 1924). This, as Handler summarises it, contended, among other things, that 'culture is a patterning of values that gives significance to the lives of those who hold them' and that, in the case of genuine cultures, 'the patterning of values is aesthetically harmonious,' expressing 'a richly varied and yet somehow unified and consistent attitude toward life' (Handler, 2005: 68).

It was, then, this conception of a configurational order arising out of the form-giving principles that expressed the inner necessities of group life – of culture as 'an integrated spiritual totality which somehow conditioned the form of its elements' (Stocking, 1968: 21) – that distinguished the Boasian culture concept. And the anthropologist's attention was redirected accordingly. 'The anthropologist,' as Margaret Mead put it, 'is trained to see form where other people see concrete details' (Mead, 1942: 4–5). At the same time that it was advanced as a general theory of culture, however, the culture concept also distinguished between cultures – and it did so along lines derived from the principles of aesthetic modernism in ways which significantly qualified the cultural relativism that has come to be attributed to the concept. This was clear in Boas's *Primitive Art*, his most extended treatment of the subject and one in which he explicitly disputed the various grounds on which earlier generations of anthropologists had either denied colonised peoples any capacity for aesthetic creativity or acknowledged it only in a diminished form. The conception of a universally valid sequence for the development of art forms; the contention that the mental capacities of 'primitives' are inferior to those of 'civilised' peoples; the denial of any capacity for aesthetic innovation to 'primitive people' as a consequence of the force of habit in inhibiting the development of originality: all of these are given short shrift. And, like their modern counterparts, Boas argues that 'primitives' differed from one another in the degree to which their aesthetic capacities are developed: 'intense among a few, slight among the mass' (Boas, 2010: 356).[7] There are, however, still differences between moderns and primitives – relative rather than absolute, and accounted for in sociological rather than biological terms – but differences nonetheless:

> What distinguishes modern aesthetic feeling from that of primitive people is the manifold character of its manifestations. We are not so much bound by a fixed style. The complexity of our social structure and our more varied interests allow us to see beauties that are closed to the senses of people living in a narrower culture. It is the quality of their experience, not a difference in mental make-up that determines the difference between modern and primitive art production and art appreciation.
>
> (Boas, 2010: 356)

The aesthetic shaping of a culture, moreover, was presented as a temporary fusion of disparate elements rather than as an essentialist and permanent form. For the Boasians, culture was always both territorially grounded and

subject to disruption from the trans-territorial flows of cultural traits carried by the histories of peoples in movement. Although Boas's early work contained echoes of Herder's conception of culture as the expression of a geographically delimited people, he later rejected any sense that regional environments might be regarded as having a determining influence on cultures. 'It is sufficient,' he wrote in 1932, 'to see the fundamental differences of culture that thrive one after the other in the same environment, to make us understand the limitations of environmental influence' (Boas, 1932: 256). The key questions here bear on Boasian conceptions of the relations between processes of cultural diffusion and the organisation of cultural areas. These questions have been revisited in a substantial body of recent work which argues that the Boasian construction of these relations anticipates contemporary accounts of the relations between trans-border cultural flows and migration in breaking with the modern order of nation-states. It was, Ira Bashkow argues, 'axiomatic to the Boasians that cultural boundaries were porous and permeable,' citing Robert Lowie's contention that any given culture is 'a "planless hodgepodge," a "thing of shreds and patches"' as economically summarising the view that any particular culture 'develops not according to a fixed law or design but out of a vast set of contingent external influences' (Bashkow, 2004: 445). These are brought into historically contingent, impermanent and unstable fusions with one another in particular territorially marked culture areas, only to be later disaggregated in the context of different relations of cross-cultural contact and population migrations. Brad Evans similarly interprets Boas's significance as consisting not in his pluralisation of the culture concept – something that Herder had already done – but in his conception of the 'detachability' of the texts and objects that comprise the elements of a culture from any organic association with any particular spatial or historical culture so that they might serve as 'vehicles for the articulation and disarticulation of meaning across discontinuous geographies and temporalities' (Evans, 2005: 15). Recounting Boas's role in the reconceptualization of folklore studies under the influence of turn-of-the-century developments in philology, Evans argues that these undermined earlier romantic and nationalist conceptions of an inherent connection between a particular people and a particular culture by reconceptualising cultures as being, like languages, 'public objects' formed by processes of historical interaction and migration beyond the control of individual speakers or speech communities.

The pattern of a culture, then, is not expressive of an essential set of relations between a people, place and way life but is a conjunctural and pliable articulation of those relations that derives its distinctive qualities from the creative, form-giving capacity of the people concerned. As cultural traits are diffused across culture areas, their meaning is transformed: 'The nature of the trait,' as Benedict put it, 'will be quite different in the different areas according to the elements with which it has been combined' (Benedict, 2005: 37). As A. A. Goldenweiser, like Benedict one of Boas's students, put it:

All cultures, finally, are historical complexes. Every culture combines with traits that have originated within its own borders, other traits that have come from without, from other cultures, and have become amalgamated with the recipient culture. Now these foreign traits are obviously independent of the environment of the recipient culture. Thus, as a historical complex, every culture is largely independent of its environment.

<div align="right">(Goldenweiser, 1916: 629)</div>

The questions to which I now turn concern how these spatial and aesthetic aspects of the culture concept interacted with racialised conceptions of bodies and populations in shaping the governmental rationalities that characterised the development of the relations between earlier 'settlers' and more recent immigrants, and between both of these and Native Americans and African Americans.

The culture concept, race, and assimilation

In his periodisation of American anthropology, Eric Wolf (1999) identifies its Boasian moment as one lodged between its associations with a period of rampant capitalist development and westward expansion after the Civil War and the close links it was to establish with the military-industrial complex during and immediately after the 1939–1945 war. Connected rather to liberal and reforming traditions, and eventually to the distinctive governmental articulation of these that was forged in the New Deal, its practical history consisted largely in the role it played in facilitating the entry of previously unrepresented groups into a more pluralistic America, albeit one still hedged with limitations. Dorothy Ross (1991) offers a similar perspective and, like Wolf, sees the connections between anthropology and John Dewey's probing reformulations of American liberalism as significant in this regard. Dewey – who for a part of his career worked at Columbia at the same time as Boas, with the two often corresponding – drew on the lessons of anthropology on a number of occasions (see Dewey, 1929: 201–15), but most extensively in *Freedom and Culture* where he argued that they pointed

> to the conclusion that whatever are the native constituents of human nature, the culture of a period and group is the determining influence in their arrangement; it is that which determines the patterns of behaviour that mark out the activities of any group, family, clan, people, section, faction, class.

<div align="right">(Dewey, 1939: 18)</div>

It was, then, culture that Dewey looked to as a mediating filter through which the activities of government had to pass if they were to connect with and shape the attributes and conducts of both groups and individuals. He argued, indeed, that the individual conceived as outside of and independent

of culture was a fiction that had best be left by the wayside of liberalism's history if it were to engage effectively with the task of adjusting the members of society to changing conditions – something that could only be done by acting on and moulding the plasticity that was testified to by the diversity of culture's arrangements.

This was, however, in the practical forms of the culture concept's deployment in the assimilationist agendas of the 1920s and 1930s, a plasticity with limits in that some groups were regarded as more malleable than others; it was, in other words, a plasticity that operated within a set of exclusions arising from the continued force of biological race categories which excluded African Americans and Native Americans from the machineries of assimilation that the culture concept was a party to. The logics in play here were, however, somewhat differently articulated across these two groups. Although Boas contested the conception of 'primitive cultures' as having had no history ('even a primitive people has a long history behind it' [Boas, 1909: 68]), the distinction between primitive and civilized peoples was never entirely jettisoned. As we have seen, it informed Boas's account of the difference between 'modern aesthetic feeling' (Boas, 2010: 356) and that of the 'primitive.' This relative generosity toward the 'primitive' was not, however, matched by a corresponding assessment of the cultural creativity of either contemporary African Americans or Native Americans.

When Boas wrote about the 'creative genius' of Africans, it was always only with reference to their traditional culture in Africa. He took no account of the consequences of the Middle Passage or the contemporary cultural creativity of African Americans, even though he produced his most important work at the University of Columbia at the time of the Harlem Renaissance (Lamothe, 2008; Zumwait, 2008). When, toward the end of his life, discussing African Americans, Boas's attention focuses on 'the backwardness, inertia, and lack of initiative of the great masses in the South,' contrasting this with the 'active life that the same people led before the baneful influence of the whites made itself felt' as the slave trade separated the 'Negro' from 'the culture that he has developed in his natural surroundings'.[8] He adopted a similar position when writing to Felix Adler in 1906 proposing the establishment of an 'African Museum' that would – in accordance with the differentiated functions he attributed to museums in his 1907 essay on the principles of museum administration – serve both a public educational and a scientific purpose. With regard to the former, he envisaged that the exhibition of African culture would, in testifying to what the 'Negro' had accomplished in his own country prior to slavery, serve as a counter to prejudices about the inferiority of Negro culture and physique. But there would also be a need for 'a room for anatomical preparations and studies, and the usual outfit for statistical investigations' to permit exploration of the innumerable 'obscure questions' – of body and brain type – that 'have the most important bearing upon the question of general policy to be pursued in regard to the negro.'[9] Overlooking entirely the distinctive cultural

practices of contemporary African Americans in favour of an honorific assessment of traditional African cultures, the policy questions he posed in relation to the former were couched in racial, not cultural, terms. Questions of cultural assimilation were of secondary importance to the extent that Boas anticipated the disappearance of the 'Negro' as a distinct physical type through the process of miscegenation. Arguing that this would lead to a progressive whitening of the black population, he concluded that the continued persistence of 'the pure negro type is practically impossible' (Boas, 1909: 330).

The situation with regard to Native Americans was different but scarcely more auspicious. On the one hand, in racial terms, they hardly mattered. The degree of intermarriage between Indians and settlers, Boas argued, had not been sufficient in 'any populous part of the United States to be considered as an important element in our population' (Boas, 1909: 319). Nicely distanced from the urban centre of metropolitan America, Native Americans were not a part of the mix from which the future of America's population stock or its culture was to be forged. This was, indeed, as an extended literature has now shown (Brown, 2003; Griffiths, 2002), the central message of the life group which, from the 1880s through to the 1930s, became a staple component of ethnographic exhibitions in American museums: the exhibition of patterned ways of life, yes, but of ways of life that were exiled from the temporality of present. As Steven Conn (2004) has shown, Boasian anthropology more generally played a key role in detaching Native Americans from the realms of American history and painting and assigning them to a timeless anthropological present that was in America, but not of it.

It was, then, not in regard to either African Americans or Native Americans that the conception of the plasticity and malleability of cultures as impermanent fusions of varied traits in movement across culture areas gained its most distinctive governmental traction. This was limited largely to the role it played in adjudicating a new set of relations between America's 'white natives' – that is, free white persons with rights of residence who, shortly after America's Declaration of Independence, were defined as uniquely entitled to citizenship rights – and new generations of immigrants (Jacobson, 1998). The influx of immigrants from increasingly diverse sources over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had resulted in a set of revisions to the category of whiteness which excluded new cohorts of 'whitish' groups of immigrants from the criteria defining fitness for citizenship by producing new shades of darkness that differentiated groups like the Poles and the Irish from Anglo-Saxons, the privileged representatives of white nativism. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act constituted a new articulation of this tendency in differentiating desirable European migrants (defined as 'Nordic,' a wider category than Anglo-Saxon in that it also included German and Scandinavian migrants) from 'Alpines' and 'Mediterraneans' (who had been the main sources of new immigrants since the 1880s, and whose numbers were curtailed by this measure).

It was in this context, through the 1920s and into the 1930s, that racialised and cultural conceptions of difference allied, respectively, with eugenic and cultural strategies of ordering and governing differences oscillated in their influence, rarely entirely disentangled from one another but rather employed in different combinations in relation to different segments of America's population. The culture concept found its main field of application in relation to projects of assimilation organised around a newly homogenised category of the Caucasian which, by enlarging earlier definitions of whiteness to include European groups that had previously been racialised as 'dark' (Celts, Slavs, Mediterraneans), allowed previously excluded European migrants (Irish, Greek, Italian) to be regarded as candidates for inclusion in an expanded conception of what was later called the American melting pot. However, this application of an assimilationist logic to hitherto excluded European populations was set against the exclusion of the racialised categories of the 'Mongolian' – which netted both Asians and Native Americans (interpreted as descendants of earlier migrations from Asia) – and the 'Negro.' The 'cuturalisation' of some populations, as Trelow puts it, was accompanied by the 'naturalisation' of others in order to exclude them (Trelow, 2014: 38)

A central paradox of the culture concept, then, is that, although developed mainly in the context of anthropology's new 'scientific' fieldwork engagement with Native Americans, it found its main field of application 'back home' in the cities of the eastern seaboard and Chicago where its contributions to an expanded programme of assimilation were derived largely from its aesthetic properties. This was true in a number of ways. First, as Susan Hegeman (1999) has noted, anthropologists' fieldwork among the distanced populations of the West coast resulted in a production of the Other which functioned similarly to modernist conceptions of works of art in constituting a defamiliarising device that could be used to make American culture perceptible and actionable in new ways. Melville Herskovits, another of Boas's students and his first biographer, and Malcolm Willey thus argued:

> It is, perhaps, one of the most confusing characteristics of culture, that we are quite unconscious of it, almost as much so as we are of the air we breathe. We have been born into it and our responses have been completely conditioned by it. It is only when we consider cultures as different from our own as are those of primitive people, that we begin to see the working of culture.
>
> (Herskovits and Willey, 1923: 197)

Herskovits also placed considerable stress on the analogy with works of art implied by the concept of cultural pattern. It is, he argued in his 1938 text *Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact*,

> necessary to know the "style" of a culture – which is merely another way of saying that we must know its patterning – in precisely the same

way that the student of art must know the styles that characterise the various periods of art-history in order to cope with the individual variations that are exemplified in the works of artists of a given epoch

(Herskovits, 1938: 22)

Just as style is central to a knowledge of changing modes of painting, so the concept of pattern needs to inform analysis of the relations between different cultures.

A stress on pattern similarly informs an earlier assessment and qualification of Clark Wissler's *Man and Culture* (1923) by Herskovits and Willey. In summarising Wissler's account of the diffusion of cultural traits across different cultural areas and his concept of the 'culture complex' as the distinctive assemblage of those traits that characterises a particular culture area at a particular point in time, they take him to task for neglecting 'the *form* of the culture within the area – the manner in which complexes are interrelated, and the importance they assume in the lives of individuals' (Herskovits and Willey, 1927: 260). Invoking the concept of cultural pattern as a necessary corrective, they elaborate its role in providing a formal grammar, as it were, that regulates the relations of exchange between the diffusion of cultural traits associated with cultures in movement and the cultural areas they are diffused to. In his later study, distinguishing the different grammars of acculturation, defined as the exchange of cultural traits between groups of equal power, and assimilation, conceived as the adjustment of a culture to that of a group with a superior power, Herskovits nonetheless stresses the respects in which both involve the reshuffling of the arrangements between the selected elements of the cultures that are thus brought into contact with one another into order to reconfigure them into new formal combinations. In elaborating this conception, Herskovits argues that these processes of formal exchange mean that the biological aspects of contacts between different peoples can be passed over except, he goes on to note,

> in such cases as that of the Eurasians of the Far East, or in certain aspects of contact between Negroes and Europeans in the New World, where the fusion of culture is intimately associated with the crossing of the physical types involved

(Herskovits, 1938: 2)

It was in being cut to the cloth of assimilationist policies, then, that the governmental career of the culture concept was fashioned. The ordering principles it effected were those of a diversity of traits, brought together from diverse sources, that were to be woven into a distinctively American 'cultural pattern' whose political logic arose from a fusion of white nativist and European perspectives into which, once they had shed their differentiating racial characteristic, African Americans and Native Americans would eventually be melded. Benedict articulated this political logic clearly when, in asking why public schools, in arranging assembly programmes 'where the

Negro children sing their spirituals and the Balkan children dress in their native costumes and wonder why they don't like it,'[10] she answers:

> In Eastern Europe such programs would be realistic – each group is proud of its traditional customs and they have perpetuated them generation after generation. In America each generation wants to be more and more American. It is the barriers we native born set up against their learning how which hinders them. They have the will to be Americans until we prevent it.[11]

This is, then, by no means an equal form of exchange. The very logic of cultural patterning, indeed, required that those migrating into another culture must be prepared to jettison those traits that could not be fitted into its pattern.

It is significant in this regard that the most influential interpreters of the culture concept – Boas and his students – shared two characteristics. First, they were either white nativists – like Benedict and Mead – or they were first- or second-generation European migrants, like Boas himself, Edward Sapir and Alfred Kroeber. Second, they were all, in their family backgrounds, schooling and early intellectual careers, steeped in European aesthetic traditions. The influence of Kantian conceptions of *Bildung* on Boas is well-covered territory (Cole, 1999) while both Benedict and Mead had backgrounds in literary education prior to their acquaintance with anthropology, particularly Benedict during her years at Vassar College (Banner, 2004). It is, however, notable that none of the other participants in the Boasian fieldwork tradition played any significant role in the development of the culture concept. It was not something that George Hunt, Boas's Native American 'informant' at Fort Ruppert, contributed to (Briggs and Bauman, 1999). Nor was it an aspect of Boas's work that significantly engaged Zora Neale Hurston. An African American woman who had studied with Boas, Hurston's *Mules and Men* (1986) brought Boasian methods to bear on the collection of African-American folk tales in a significant departure from the black folklore collecting practices that had earlier been developed in association with the 'uplift' programmes of the Hampton Folklore Society. However, her affiliations were firmly with the Harlem Renaissance rather than with the practical applications of anthropology developed by Boas's white American and European students.[12]

These Boasians were all, it should be added, committed anti-racists in the sense of being opposed to any forms of prejudicial discrimination being applied to the individual members of any cultural or racial group; and, of course, Boas was a significant anti-fascist campaigner. They were, however, blind to the significance of the operation of the racial categories that their work retained, and it is by way of foregrounding this that I have sought to show that – far from shifting the ground from race to culture – the new ways of ordering cultural difference that they proposed remained couched within a racial problematic. The consequences of the distinction between different ways of governing those differences defined as cultural from those defined as racial were often sharply drawn. William I. Thomas, a founding member

of the Chicago School, drew on Boas's work in his study of Polish migrants, published in 1918 as *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, to argue that the process of assimilation needed to take account of the pattern of the culture that Polish migrants brought with them and reconstituted in America rather than treating them as individuals abstracted from that culture. Robert E. Park, republishing aspects of Thomas's work under his own name in 1921, accepted this process as being applicable to the assimilation of Europeans but not to African Americans or 'Orientals' whose visible markers of racial difference stood in the way. In such cases, he argued, assimilation did not require likeness but only loyalty, remarking that 'there is no greater loyalty than that which binds the dog to his master' (cit. Ross, 1991: 361). It is, then, no wonder that W. E. B. Du Bois felt it necessary to keep his distance from the culture concept, preferring instead a distinctive black politico-religious mobilisation of post-Kantian conceptions of the role of the aesthetic in preparing the ground for the overcoming of a divided humanity. Advocating a collectivised form of *Bildung* in urging the need for a 'striving in the souls of black folk' (Du Bois, 1994: 7) whose end was their conversion to become co-workers 'in the kingdom of culture' (3), his work played a key role in the formation of an alternative concept of culture which, like the Boasian culture concept, has had a significant international career in the post-war period.

These are among the questions to which I turn in the next chapter. Before doing so, however, let me return to my starting point in this chapter by reviewing the light that the intervening discussion has cast on the nature of the author function performed by the name 'Boas.' Toward the end of his essay 'What is an author?' Foucault notes that 'in the sphere of discourse one can be the author of much more than a book – one can be the author of a theory, tradition, or discipline which other books and authors will in turn find a place' (Foucault, 1998: 216–17). Citing Freud and Marx as his examples, Foucault argues that these were 'not just the authors of their own works' but also of 'the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts' (217). These made possible 'not only a certain number of analogies but also . . . a certain number of differences'; they created 'a possibility for something other than their own discourse, yet something belonging to what they founded' (218). Such 'fields of discursivity,' he argued, 'require an endless "return to the origin"' (218) which, however, never stops modifying that origin. It is in this light, then, that we should view the authorship of the culture concept as having, in Boas's work, a point of origin which, in its successive re-elaborations by 'the Boasians,' was both, in some ways, warranted by Boas's texts and, in others, revised and adapted, but never going beyond its founding limitations, in the contexts of its ongoing uses and applications.

Notes

1 Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers, 1905–1948, Vassar College, Archives and Special Collections Library, 49.5. Contributions to Ethnology: 3.

2 It is clear, reading the correspondence between Boas and Hunt, how much the latter was caught in the tension between multiple worlds. With both English and Tlingit parentage, his position at the crossover point between settler and native cultures and languages was further complicated by his need to negotiate the sometimes contradictory pressures arising from the demands of the Canadian bureaux for the administration of Indian affairs, missionaries, and the distant demands of the museum and Boas. Their correspondence in 1901 gives a sense of the pressures Boas exerted to obtain traditional materials. Hunt, knowing of this interest – it had been stressed often enough in Boas's previous letters – informed Boas of some caves which he had learned were used to hide older items of traditional culture. On hearing of these caves, Boas, in a number of letters, exhorted Hunt to focus his activities on them, making it clear that his continued employment would depend on his success in this regard. 'If you are successful in getting good old material from out of the various places where the Indians used to hide it,' he wrote on 1 May 1901, 'we shall go on collecting; but if you cannot get the material, I shall not be able to get any more money for you'. Franz Boas Professional Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Correspondence, May-October 1901.

3 American Museum of Natural History, Department of Anthropology Archives, Department of Anthropology Correspondence, 1894–1907. Box 9, Folder 9, Boas to Jesup, 17 February 1902.

4 American Museum of Natural History, Department of Anthropology Archives, Department of Anthropology Correspondence, 1894–1907. Box 9, Folder 19, Boas to Jesup, 7 May 1897.

5 I draw, in this section and the next, on my discussion of these issues in Bennett (2015a) and (2017b).

6 Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers, 1905–1948, Vassar College, Archives and Special Collections Library, 54.7. The Growth of Culture, Unit 1 Man and His Culture.

7 While I have not encountered any critical discussion of the matter, Boas would quite frequently import these Western democratic conceptions of elite/mass divisions into his accounts of Native American social relations. In his correspondence with Hunt, for example, he urges him to turn his attention away from tribal chiefs to find out more about the names of lower-rank men since 'the rights of the common people are just as important as those of the people with high blood.' Franz Boas Professional Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Correspondence, Hunt Folder 12, Boas to Hunt, 16 January 1918.

8 Franz Boas Professional Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Boas to Boas, 1942.

9 Franz Boas Professional Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Correspondence, Boas to Adler, 30 October 1906.

10 The position accorded the category of the 'Negro' was sometimes interpreted more fluidly by Boas's students than by Boas in being differentiated from that of the Native Americans in these regards. See Jackson (1986) on Herskovits who, although in this text clearly subscribing to a racialised conception of the 'Negro,' was the only one among the white Boasians to engage with the contemporary manifestations of a cosmopolitan black culture in America.

11 Ruth Fulton Benedict Papers, 1905–1948, Vassar College, Archives and Special Collections Library, 58.6. Anthropology and Some Modern Alarmists, Anna Howard Shaw Lecture, no. 5, 10 March 1941: 4.

12 Although, as I noted earlier, Boas did not directly engage with the Harlem Renaissance, the culture concept did contribute to the general intellectual millieu that shaped its practices (Hutchinson, 1995).

11 Re-collecting ourselves
Indigenous time, culture, community and the museum

In his essay 'On living in a new country,' English art historian Stephen Bann explores the different textures of the pasts produced by museum and heritage projects in Australia and England. His purpose in doing so, he tells us, is not to propose a bi-polar contrast between the pasts of the Old and New Worlds. To the contrary, drawing on Patrick Wright's (1983) account of a series of distinctively English heritage sensibilities and on Philippe Hoyau's assessment of the defining qualities of French patrimony, Bann interprets the museum projects of the History Trust of South Australia as, like these, producing and ordering an Australian past that is shaped by the concepts of 'family, conviviality and countryside' (Hoyau, cit. Bann, 1989: 109). All the same, the very conception of Australia as a new country lacking a deep past pervades Bann's discussion. The essay was published shortly after Bann had visited Australia and just a year after the bicentennial celebrations of the European occupation of Australia in 1788. This marked a key moment in bringing to the fore of public consciousness Indigenous Australian critiques of dominant white understandings of the Australian past. Officially conceived as a celebration of 200 years of European 'settlement,' the bicentenary was boycotted by many Indigenous Australians and their supporters as the marker of an invasion of already occupied territory and the beginning of a history which, from an Indigenous perspective, far from resonating to the values of family, conviviality and countryside, had led to the disruption of kinship networks, the enmity of an ongoing frontier war and the theft of country.

The boycott was also premised on a critique of the foreshortened historical perspective that the bicentenary implied, evoking the perspective of an Aboriginal deep time to rebut the conception of Australia as a new country. The slogan 'White Australia has a Black History' was accompanied by the slogan '40,000 Years Don't Make a Bicentennial' which, asserting a long and continuous history for Aboriginal culture, marked a relatively new aspect of Indigenous protest. In mobilising claims to represent 'the oldest continuing cultures in human history,'[1] and thereby 'shallowing out' Australia's post-invasion history, it destabilised those national and Eurocentric conceptions of duration that had previously defined the dominant relations between settler and Indigenous temporalities.

The novelty of this claim is evident if we wind the clock back fifty years to the sesquicentennial celebrations of 1938. The perspectives informing the petition that 26 January – the date of the arrival of the First Fleet that is annually celebrated as Australia Day – should rather be established as a Day of Mourning when Aborigines would 'mourn the death of the many thousands of Aborigines who were brutally murdered . . . the loss of our land and the rape of our women by the white invaders' (An Aboriginal Petition to the King, cit. Healy, 2001: 284) resonate clearly enough with the 1988 claim that white Australia has a black history. However, this earlier protest was not informed by any sense of a long, continuous and adaptive Aboriginal history and culture. Indeed, the larger history and culture that the petition invoked was that of British culture and Western civilisation. Addressed to, albeit never reaching, King George (Markus, 1983), the petition was organised by William Cooper in his capacity as Secretary of the Australian Aborigines League that had been founded in the previous year. For Cooper, the League's essential task was to 'help the Natives into full British Culture' – a process he likened to that which Roman imperialism had played in lifting 'the British to culture and civilisation' – and thus enfold them within a universal history of progress in which 'every native' would be 'headed for the culture of the white man' (cit. McGregor, 2011: 39–40). While the League also included a commitment to conserving the 'special features of Aboriginal culture' (cit. McGregor, 1997: 250), this did not, in Russell McGregor's assessment, go beyond 'preserving merely some of the trappings of Aboriginal art and ceremony, rather than fostering the continuity of traditional Aboriginal culture as a vital and viable way of life' (McGregor, 1997: 250).

While by no means the whole story, four key changes over the period between 1938 and 1988 illuminate the significant contrast in the organisation of the discursive terrain that has shaped the relations between Indigenous and different sections of non-Indigenous Australia. The first comprises the part played by archaeological excavations and the use of carbon-dating techniques to establish a deep time for Indigenous Australians; indeed, not just an officially-sanctioned deep time, but the deepest time for any population with continuous connections to a particular territory, a time which has served to shallow out those times – of Stonehenge, the Pharaohs and the Pyramids – that had previously been the markers of Australia's lack of antiquities. This has since given rise to a range of relations – of complementarity, supplement and juxtaposition – between the Western discipline of archaeology and the Aboriginal conceptions of time associated with what is popularly known as the Dreamtime. If, in doing so, these exchanges have validated the longevity of Aboriginal culture, the very conception of 'Aboriginal culture' also reflects a second change in the relationships between Aboriginal knowledge practices and another Western discipline: anthropology. Of course, many of the practices that are now grouped under this heading – rituals, traditions, customs – were recognised in earlier Australian anthropological literatures. There is, as Howard Morphy (2015) has argued, a tension in the work of

Australia's early anthropological fieldworkers between, on the one hand, their use of evolutionary interpretative paradigms and, on the other, their recognition (albeit sometimes qualified and registered as something of a puzzle) of the distinctiveness and complexity of customary Aboriginal practices. In so far as this was the case, however, the concept of culture that was invoked in relation to such practices was framed in the terms that had been proposed by Edward Burnett Tylor: that is, as a loosely coordinated set of traits rather than that of a formally patterned whole promoted in the later development of the culture concept in the Boasian tradition of American anthropology.

I will return to these questions later. For my present purposes, two points will suffice. First, so far as the organization of the relations between the settler state and Aborigines was concerned, and in spite of whatever good intentions individual anthropologists might have had in the matter, Aboriginal customary practices were most commonly and most influentially interpreted as throwbacks to earlier stages of evolution. As such, they were viewed as destined either to gradually disappear or – in their vestigial forms – to be absorbed into white culture. And second, whatever complexity was attributed to Aboriginal customs and practices, there was little sense of these interacting with one another in such a way as to add up to a culture in the sense of constituting a territorially anchored way of life with its own distinctive values and formal properties.[2] Whatever the similarities between them as fieldworkers – and these were, in truth, quite limited – there was little, if any, intellectual traffic between Australia's leading early twentieth-century anthropologist, Baldwin Spencer, and the contemporaneous work of Franz Boas. The interpretative grids provided by the Boasian culture concept had little appreciable influence in Australia before the 1914–1918 war, and its influence in the inter-war period was both sporadic and selective. It has, however, beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s, since contributed to the development of new relationships between anthropology and Indigenous communities with a range of complex, and often contradictory, implications for subsequent conceptions of Aboriginal culture and its place in the national culture.

The influence of this concept of culture has, however, been paralleled by the third change in the organisation of the discursive terrain mediating the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This consists in the positive political inflections of the concept of race which, at a slightly later date, and via different routes and networks, also made a trans-Pacific crossing from the United States to Australia. I draw here on the work of Kamala Visweswaran (2010) who, reflecting on the reasons for W. E. B. Du Bois's refusal to adopt the culture concept associated with the Boasian anthropological tradition, stresses instead the political inflection Du Bois lent to mid nineteenth-century conceptions of race as an inherited bloodline. Du Bois's innovation consisted in his interpretation of such inherited continuities as both a result of shared experiences of colonial and racial repression and a source of opposition to these. In tracing the influence of this conception of race on America's civil rights and

black consciousness movements in the 1960s, Visweswaran highlights three aspects that De Bois derived from his ancestral re-reading of the nineteenth-century 'raciocultural' paradigm, developed by Hippolyte Taine and others (see Evans, 2005), in which race was interpreted as 'accumulated cultural difference carried somehow in the blood' (Visweswaran, 2010: 56): that the ancestors of African Americans and their descendants 'have had a common memory; have suffered a common disaster and have one long memory' (cit. Visweswaran, 2010: 71). These non-essentialist conceptions of race – understood as politically performative identities which bring together 'subjects drawn from different cultures' (Visweswaran, 2010: 71), uniting them through their experience of shared oppressions – have played a significant role in shaping contemporary indigenous political movements. Their influence in Australia has been evident in the new forms of pan-Aboriginal cultural activism developed by Indigenous Australians in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (see Attwood, 2003). These have, of course, been the most powerful driving force for change informing all of the changes in the organisation of the discursive terrain mediating the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians that I am concerned with.

The concepts of culture and race, derived initially from American experience, but reworked and given more specific meanings in the context of the social and political relations between Indigenous and white Australia, have mingled – both with one another and with the extended time horizons produced at the intersections of Indigenous and Western knowledges – in ways that have significantly transformed the relations between museums, Indigenous communities and activists. While only rarely having any say in the arrangement of the museum displays in which Aboriginal materials were initially exhibited, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have long exercised various forms of strategic agency in their relations with missionaries, anthropologists, state officials and other collectors, regulating, where possible, what might be collected and what might not, and shaping the roles that exchanged items played as diplomatic mediators in their relations with an invading, and overwhelmingly invasive, power (Jones, 2007). The three developments identified above, however, have significantly transformed the discursive coordinates shaping, and being shaped by, the exercise of such Indigenous agency while also extending its reach into the conservation, curatorial and exhibition practices of museums. The fourth development I want to highlight concerns the changing relations between anthropology, art history and aesthetics with regard to the classification, curation and exhibition of Aboriginal art. Originally exiled from the category of art proper and denied any historical dynamic, Aboriginal art practices were initially classified as solely of ethnographic interest and, until roughly the mid-twentieth century, their exhibition in museums was arranged exclusively within an ethnographic framing (Jones, 2011). Over the intervening period, the categories of Australian art history have been revised to valorise both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal art practices. At the same time, the development of productive interfaces between contemporary Aboriginal

art practice and post-expressionist forms of contemporary art more generally have supported anti-essentialising understandings of Aboriginal art.[3]

These, then, are the general contours of the changing relations between a range of Indigenous intellectual, political and cultural practices and the Western knowledges informing museum practices that underlie my concerns in this chapter. There will be three main prongs to my discussion. Each of these will contribute to a more general argument concerning the forms of 're-collecting ourselves' that are in play in contemporary Australian museum practices. I intend this phrase to refer to a range of critical interfaces that have been produced between Indigenous Australians, acting in a variety of capacities (as community members, curators, artists and activists), and museums through which Indigenous Australians have reasserted varying degrees of symbolic and material control over collections that were earlier ceded to museums in varying relations of unequal exchange. At the same time, however, I shall argue that the 'selves' that are thus re-collected are not – and cannot be – exclusively or essentially Indigenous but are also caught up in ongoing processes of refashioning the materials comprising the heritage field to yield a range of new hybridised identities and national pasts. I probe these issues by looking first at the relations between the complex set of intersecting times – a generalised Western time, national and imperial times, and archaeological and Indigenous deep times – that are now in evidence across a range of contemporary Australian museum and broader heritage practices. I shall be particularly concerned here with the forms of critical history – a concept Foucault derived from his reading of Nietzsche – that are evident in the ongoing 'un-Cooking' of Australian history across a range of Indigenous art, curatorial and popular practices. I look next at the *Encounters* exhibition that was held, from late 2015 to early 2016, at the National Museum of Australia. I consider this in the light of the longer history through which the culture concept discussed in the previous chapter has contributed to a reconfiguration of the relations between museums and their Indigenous 'source communities' that has made the latter, so to speak, 'anthropologists of themselves.' In developing this argument I draw on Nicholas Thomas's characterisation of the critical work that indigenous intellectuals perform on and with collections of indigenous cultural materials in museums as a 'kind of reverse fieldwork' (Thomas, 2015: 253). This perspective also bears on my third set of concerns, which focuses on a range of curatorial and art projects through which Indigenous Australians have sought to deconstruct the apparatuses of museum collections.

Contesting times, critical histories

I referred earlier to the significance of radiocarbon-dating techniques in establishing a new set of coordinates for adjudicating the relations between Western and Indigenous conceptions of time. The key event here, on the archaeological side, was the publication of John Mulvaney's findings

establishing the longevity of Aboriginal habitation of Australia at 13,000 years. This archaeological validation of an autonomous Aboriginal 'deep past' has subsequently been extended: initially to 20,000 years in 1965, to over 30,000 years by 1970 and, as the date that was current at the time of the 1988 bicentenary, 40,000 years. Current estimates have pushed this date back to circa 80,000 years. This establishment of an unrivalled longevity for Aboriginal presence in Australia, however, has been accompanied by archaeological confirmation of the complex patterns of exchange that characterised the relations between different Aboriginal nations prior to invasion. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that this has led to a new settlement of Western and Indigenous time perspectives. Rather, the relations between these now take many forms, ranging from a putative merging in national rhetorics of reconciliation, through rehearsals of unresolved differences to more explicit epistemological stand-offs.

The most immediate significance of archaeology's interventions in the 1960s consisted in the challenge they presented to evolutionary conceptions of Aboriginal peoples as constituting, in their bodies as well as their cultures, an unchanging pre-contact primitive time against which the achievements of Western modernity were set. This was a form of flat time: a time of repetition, lacking any internal dynamic, and so also lacking any depth of its own (Bennett, 2011). This conception of the relations between Western and Aboriginal time derived mainly from the influence of the doctrine of survivals that shaped the practices of evolutionary anthropology which, in alliance with antiquarian practices, dominated early twentieth-century conceptions of the relations between 'settler' and Indigenous times. At a time when elsewhere, in Europe, Egypt and Mesopotamia, archaeologists were digging deeper and deeper into the past, extending the horizons of human civilisation by several millennia, Australian archaeology stood out from its contemporaries in being largely a practice of surfaces, collecting evidence of Aboriginal culture as a Stone Age culture from the varied tools and artefacts that could be found scattered on the surface of the land (Griffiths, 1996). Given that Aboriginal culture was marked by a flat time, there was little incentive to dig down beneath the surface since there could be nothing to unearth that would be different from its present manifestations. In challenging these constructions of Indigenous time, the archaeological excavations of the 1960s also challenged those forms of 'white nativism' which back-projected a settler historical dynamic into remote Australia which, increasingly cleared of Aboriginal presence as a consequence of the removal of Aborigines to reserves pending their beckoning extinction, was thereby imaginarily cleared for white symbolic possession (McLean, 1998).

That said, the political articulations of this newly excavated deep past have been, and remain, variable. Denis Byrne (1996) has explored the ambiguities of archaeology's role in the production of a 'deep nation,' stressing its appropriative dimensions in annexing pre-invasion Indigenous histories to the production of an extended past for the colonial nation-state.[4] He

accordingly urges the need for a reorientation of Australian archaeology's temporal horizons in order to make it once again, but with a different purpose, a practice of surfaces in order to bring its focus to bear on the more recent material sedimentations of the conflicted histories of the post-invasion period. Recognition of Indigenous deep time also serves all too frequently as a means of evacuating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from the present. This is true of some of Australia's smaller regional museums. A case in point is the Port Macquarie Museum, where the opening exhibition space situates this coastal town as a 'part of the traditional homelands of the Birpal people' who claim a 'long and rich history dating back many tens of thousands of years'. A timeline projects Indigenous settlement back to 40,000 BC with European settlement marked at 1821, the date of Port Macquarie's establishment as a penal colony. A section of David Horton's 1996 cultural area map of *Aboriginal Australia* locates the lands of the Birpal people amidst those of neighbouring Aboriginal peoples – the Dunghutti and Ainawan to the north, the Kamilaroi to the west, and the Geawegal and Worimi to the south – as the territorial location for the maintenance of Birpal culture prior to its disruption by the establishment of the penal colony (see Plate 1). This is, however, an empty time, devoid of any specific historicity; a time of an undifferentiated sameness identified by displays of boomerangs, stone hatchets, killing and digging sticks alongside a stuffed lizard which, in evoking a timeless nature-culture, only adds to the sense of time's stillness. And once the penal settlement arrives – well, that's it; there is no reference to any Indigenous opposition to or participation in the various sites of labour, commerce, schooling, domesticity or heritage through which the post-1821 history of Port Macquarie is exhibited.

Here, then, the simultaneous recognition of a pre-Port Macquarie Indigenous presence and its total absence from the subsequent history of the town secures the conditions for what Nietzsche characterised as the antiquarian attitude toward the past in which all that is 'small and limited, mouldy and obsolete, gains a worth and inviolability . . . from the conservative and reverent soul of the antiquary migrating into it, and building a secret nest there' (Nietzsche, 1974: 24). At the national level, however, it is the figure of Cook who has most enduringly embodied what Nietzsche called 'monumental history' in which past and present are connected through a series of heroic deeds which, in serving as a spur to heroic action in the present, mark out an ongoing path that will carry the nation to ever higher levels of glory. As Chris Healy and others have shown, this iconic Cook, fabricated across a mutating network of narratives, monuments and memorials, has provided 'a point of genesis which would serve to mark the end of empty time and the beginning of continuous historical time in Australia' (Healy, 1997: 30; see also Muecke, 2008). Unsurprisingly, then, Cook has been targeted as a nodal point of reference in recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices that have taken issue with the monumental histories fashioned around the figure of Cook in order, as Nietzsche summarised the ethos of critical

history, to 'bring the past to the bar of judgement, interrogate it remorselessly and finally condemn it' (Nietzsche, 1974: 28).

Cook's voyages have been the subject of such counter-histories on the part of indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific (Sahlin, 1995).[5] What distinguishes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presentations of Cook are the respects in which they contest Cook's functioning as the founding figure through which Australia was detached from its setting in Oceania, serving simultaneously as both its point of connection to and separation from the deeper histories of Britain and Europe. He constituted, so to speak, the umbilical cord of an autonomous nation emerging from a European origin. The strategy of the counter-histories aiming to sever this cord was economically summarised in the T-shirt worn by Aboriginal activist Michael Watson on the occasion of the anti-bicentennial protest in Sydney on 26 January 1988. Asking the question, above a reproduction of the Aboriginal flag, COOK WHO, and, below the flag, answering it COOK-OO, the design of Watson's T-shirt articulated a double protest. It parodied foundational national narratives (Cook, the founder of Australia? – you must be kidding) while also levelling the charge of an unjust invasion giving rise to attempted genocide by likening the discovery and settlement of Australia to the bird that invades nests and throws out the eggs that are found there in order to lay and hatch its own in their place. There is, in this example of critical history on a T-shirt, no attempt at any accommodation with dominant national narratives. The figure of Cook has been reworked in similar ways by contemporary Indigenous artists. The legend of Reg Mombassa's 2013 *Jim Cook Mugshot* ('Jim Cook – Executed For Armed Robbery By The People Of The South Pacific – Feb 14th 1779') thus presents Cook from the perspective of an unforgiving pan-Pacific indigenous agency. That said, perhaps the dominant motif of such art practices has been that of revisioning Cook in order to unsettle national narratives of settlement and myths of *terra nullius* – as in Gordon Bennett's *Myth of the Western Man* and Michael Cook's *Undiscovered*, for example.[6]

The political registers of Indigenous references to the deep Aboriginal past are similarly varied. Its mobilisation as part of an Indigenous-led politics of reconciliation orientated toward reconstituting the national 'we' on a new historical-discursive ground is now perhaps its most common form.[7] The case I want to look at in more detail as an example of how Indigenous contestations of the timelines of colonialism have played out in Australian museums is the James Cook Museum, in Cooktown in far north Queensland, in view of the ways in which it articulates the perspectives of monumental, critical and conciliatory history into a distinctive set of relations to one another. These are a part of the broader discursive ambience of Cooktown, so named as the place where, on his 1770 voyage, Cook had beached his ship, the *HM Endeavour*, in order to repair the damage it had suffered in a collision with the Great Barrier Reef. This led to antagonistic encounters between Cook's crew – who had supplemented their depleted rations with a catch of sea

turtles – and the Guugu Yimithirr, the local Aboriginal nation for whom the sea turtle had a mythical significance as well as being an important part of their food supply. When Cook's crew refused to share their catch, this led to an angry confrontation between the two groups that was brought to a close through a gesture of reconciliation initiated by the Aboriginal leader Ngamu Yanbarigu. As the site of what was thus the first recorded act of reconciliation between Europeans and Aborigines, Cooktown was also the place from which Cook set sail to return to England, stopping by what he called Possession Island where – in spite of his recent exchanges with the Guugu Yimithirr people – he declared Australia to be uninhabited and claimed possession of it in the name of the King.

For most of the twentieth century, Cooktown was a key location for nationalist histories of colonial possession. Most of the major heritage sites in the town today, while preserving these earlier testaments to its monumental history, also include Indigenous critiques of celebratory presentations of Cook while simultaneously foregrounding the longer history of the Guugu Yimithirr in rebuttal of narratives of discovery. These three discursive registers shape the heritage walk that runs by the side of the town's wharf at the mouth of the Endeavour River. Routed via statues of Cook and other figures of colonial dispossession, the path narrates various episodes of post-contact history, wending its way to a marker commemorating the spot where *HM Endeavour* was anchored while undergoing repairs, but also leading to the Milbi Wall. The result of a reconciliation project conducted by the Gungarde Aboriginal Corporation, this wall undercuts 'foundation of the nation' celebrations of Cook by placing the moment of colonisation in the dual contexts of longer histories of local Aboriginal agency and interaction with other peoples in the Asia-Pacific region, and the subsequent development of the town as a major centre for the indentured Chinese workforce that came to the area during the late-nineteenth-century gold rush. The wall also depicts both the devastating and ongoing consequences of colonisation for the Aboriginal peoples of northern Queensland and the positive contributions they have made to the Australian economy and society. Its signature, in short, asserts a long pre-invasion history which also relativises the moment of 'discovery' as merely one in a succession of contact histories. It offers a critique of the monumental histories of colonisation in terms which recognise the ongoing distinctiveness of Aboriginal history and culture as a set of creative and dynamic responses to the realities of colonisation which, at the same time, acknowledges the inescapability of its entanglements with other cultures in Australia. This is set within a discourse of reconciliation which, recalling Ngamu Yanbarigu's original act of reconciliation with Cook and his crew, anchors this in claims to Aboriginal primacy: Indigenous-led reconciliation *avant la lettre* of its adoption as an aspect of state practice.

The James Cook Museum similarly orchestrates a number of different takes on Cook's position as a contested lynch-pin in the relations between European, colonial and Indigenous histories. A plaque at the entrance to

the museum juxtaposes European assessments of Cook's significance, like Charles Darwin's claim that he 'added a hemisphere to the civilised world,' with Indigenous artist Paddy Wainburianga's economical 'Too many Captain Cooks' – a reference to the place that Cook has long occupied in Aboriginal oral histories as, in the fuller version of Wainburianga's text, 'Too many Captain Cooks . . . have been stealing all the women and killing people. They have made war. War makers, those new Captain Cooks' (cit. Maynard, 2014: 19). The item in which the varied discursive registers I have identified are most economically and most tellingly brought together is a dug-out canoe that is exhibited behind a display of Chinese cultural artefacts from the gold-rush period and in front of a window overlooking the Endeavour River. This is exhibited in a room which, in the visitor's itinerary, follows an encounter with a replica of *HM Endeavour* which, built in 1915, had for many years been pulled through the town on a wagon, preceded by the Cooktown Brass Band, in an annual procession of colonial possession commemorating Cook's 1770 visit to the town. Both the canoe and the Chinese artefacts it is placed behind are located in a section of the museum where the kinds of Aboriginal artefacts that characterised nineteenth and early twentieth-century ethnographic museum displays – boomerangs, shields, digging sticks – are exhibited in traditional nineteenth-century style display cases. These are accompanied by wall charts reclaiming those objects as manifestations of the continuity of the Guugu Yimithirr nation – 'a living culture not a Dreaming' – in spite of repeated and ongoing acts of colonial violence. But the canoe is a surprise – a discursive jolt – as it is of New Guinean rather than Aboriginal origin. Washed up on a local beach in the 1970s, its exhibition breaks with the conventions of museum exhibitions of canoes – a favoured ethnographic item for the demonstration of local craft skills and aquatic economies – in presenting it as indicative of an earlier contact history in which such canoes were typically reused by the Guugu Yimithurr. Presented as symbolising 'the "pushing out"' of Indigenous culture in the past and its engagements with a succession of cultures since, it serves as an icon of a long-standing, pre-contact and continuing Indigenous cosmopolitanism and thus as a critique of shortened national temporalities.

These, then, are some of the ways in which the shifting coordinates governing the relations between Indigenous and national time now bear on museum practices. I look next at the role that changes in anthropological discourses, and particularly anthropological concepts of culture, have played in this regard.

Encountering cultures

The initial identification of the Guugu Yimithurr nation at an earlier point in the visitor's itinerary at the James Cook Museum is – like the identification of the Birpal people in the Port Macquarie Museum – by means of David Horton's 1996 map of *Aboriginal Australia* (Plate 1). This map has

quite a complicated past. The result of a research project organised by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to map all the language, nation and tribal groups of Aboriginal Australia, it has its conceptual roots in the longer history of mapping projects that spatialised the relations between different Aboriginal groups by territorialising them. The key figure in this process of what Paul Monoghan tellingly calls 'laying down the country, or reducing the country to order' (Monoghan, 2003: 47) was Norman Tindale, a curator at the South Australian Museum, whose *Map Showing the Distribution of the Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* was a game changer in this regard. Although not published in its final form until 1974, this map was the result of research stretching back to the start of the 1930s and was later significantly influenced by the Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition of 1938–1939, with the first version of the map being published in the following year to accompany the publication of the expedition's findings. Its significance, in Philip Jones's assessment, was that of rebutting settler accounts of Aborigines as nomads with no fixed attachments to land by demonstrating that 'Aboriginal groups did relate territorially to distinct regions that could be successfully mapped' (Jones, cit. Monoghan, 2003: 61). As such, it testified to the influence – mediated via the Universities Anthropological Expedition – of the Boasian tradition in American anthropology. Tindale's correspondence from the early 1930s showing a familiarity with the work of Boas and Edward Sapir reflected his earlier relations with Clark Wissler arising from their participation in projects funded by the Rockefeller Foundation (Gray, 2007: 49–61). Wissler had played a key role in systemising the culture area concept and translating it into maps which, as Tindale acknowledged,[8] had contributed to the conceptualisation of his mapping project in ways that echoed many of the racial underpinnings of the Boasian tradition. Tindale thus continued to use the language of cultural traits rather than that of formally patterned holistic cultures and, if he saw value in the concept of cultural areas, this was as much from the point of view of mapping physiological traits (Jones, 2008) alongside laws, languages and customs within what Warwick Anderson (2002) has characterised as a new biomedical model of indigenous governance. In the report of the 1938–1939 Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, Tindale had urged the ending of the isolation of Aborigines in 'segregated (almost caged) communities' where they were 'viewed only as though they were inhabitants of a zoological gardens,' advocating instead their dispersal into the white community to bring about the 'rapid dilution of these dark ethnic pockets' (Tindale, cit. Anderson, 2002: 230). However, this reflected not a cultural model of assimilation of the kind that Adolphus Peter Elkin was later to advocate but a process of somatic merging across three generations: 'Two successive accessions of white blood,' as Tindale put it, 'lead to the mergence of the Aboriginal in the white community' (230). Most important, perhaps, like many mapping projects, Tindale's map incorporated an attribute of a cadastral survey – of, as James Scott (1998) puts it, 'seeing like

a state' – that was envisaged as an aid to more exact white anthropological research that would assist the settler state in its governance of Aborigines.

Be this as it may – indeed, precisely because of this – Tindale's map occupies a key place in the development of maps which, in regionalising Aboriginal groups for the purposes of governance, have also informed Indigenous-led projects of mapping cultures for identity purposes. This brings me back to David Horton's map. Drawing on a long and complex history of exchanges between American and Australian anthropologists, Indigenous Australians and the Australian state, this and similar maps are now widely used in museum practices to provide a territorial visualisation of Aboriginal languages and cultures. The ground to which these cultures are thus anchored is thus a complexly constituted one. By no means purely autochthonous, it is, in part, a product of a particular anthropological way of organising varied practices into a culture – understood as a distinctively patterned way of life – rooted in a particular territory. As such, it is inextricably connected with governing practices – including those of self-governance – located at the interfaces between white and Indigenous Australia.[9] Its use as an organising framework for museum exhibitions is thus not without certain contradictions and ambiguities. The National Museum of Australia's 2015–2016 exhibition *Encounters*: *Revealing Stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Objects from the British Museum* is a case in point.

The curatorial and institutional signature of *Encounters* differs from that of its predecessor – the British Museum's *Indigenous Australia: Enduring Civilisation* – in a number of ways. These are signalled in the different emphases that inform the forewords contributed by Mathew Trinca, the director of the National Museum of Australia, to the catalogues of the two exhibitions. In the case of *Indigenous Australia: Enduring Civilisation*, the emphasis is on the exhibition's value in demonstrating the 'simple truth that Australia has a long and astonishingly varied human history' in which today's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are the 'inheritors of cultures and traditions at least 60,000 years old' that 'are integral to our shared global telling and deserve to be widely known' – a fitting task for 'the world's great universal museum, the British Museum' (Trinca in Sculthorpe et al., 2015: 8). This stress on the longevity of Aboriginal history is the central theme of 'enduring civilisation.' Read one way, this might have been interpreted in the spirit of political irony that informs Aboriginal discourses of survival: that is, we have survived, through our capacity to adapt and change our culture in response to changing circumstances, in spite of enduring over 200 years of attempts to civilise us. While this perspective is acknowledged in particular parts of the catalogue, it is not the interpretation that shapes the exhibition's organising discourse. This, as elaborated in the introduction written by the exhibition's lead curators,[10] is its rebuttal of nineteenth-century hierarchical devaluations of Aboriginal culture as 'primitive,' in the sense of lacking both complexity relative to European civilisation and any internal developmental capacity,

in attesting to its long-standing existence as a culture of equal complexity (Sculthorpe, Bolton and Coates in 2015: 16). The responsibility for the initial recognition of this complexity is attributed to the leading figures of early anthropological fieldwork in Australia (Alfred Court Haddon, Baldwin Spencer and Francis James Gillen) while the confirmation of its longevity is attributed to 1960s Australian archaeology. That it is now possible to appreciate the complexity of this enduring civilisation and its contribution to world history is interpreted as the unintended consequence of the varied exchanges between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and a range of collectors, and the eventual convergence of these different routes and mechanisms of collection on the British Museum.

The influence of the institutional script of the British Museum as a universal museum – a script that received a renewed prominence under the directorship of Neil MacGregor – is evident here. This is less true of *Encounters* where a didacticism aimed at an international museum audience gives way to a concern to orchestrate the relations between three sets of encounters: those between a range of collectors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and the subsequent object itineraries through which the British Museum's Aboriginal holdings were assembled; the new encounters those collections enter into on their (incomplete) return to the communities from which they were taken (back in Australia again, but only on loan, and travelling only so far as the National Museum of Australia rather than back into country); and the encounters between different knowledges that have informed their transit to and from Western centres of collection. These encounters are presented from the perspectives – sometimes different, sometimes agreeing – of the different authorities that had been brought together through the process of arranging the exhibition: its curators, representatives of the 'host communities' involved, and anthropologist researchers.

The role of the objects as material entanglements of the different knowledges at play in these encounters is foregrounded in the quote from Don Christophersen, of the Muran people, which opens the section of the catalogue on 'Objects in the exhibition': 'You have to listen to both versions: the Indigenous version of our history and the non-Indigenous version of our history, because they are both telling the truth, but they're both not the same story' (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 47). This immediately precedes the catalogue's presentation of the exhibition's most politically charged object: the shield that was taken from the Gweagal warrior Cooman after he had been shot and wounded by a member of the Cook expedition of 1770 (see Plate 2). This was also the object that constituted the symbolic nodal point connecting the different parts of the *Encounters* exhibition. Encounters with explorers, new settlements and pastoralists were shown in display areas on the left of a central aisle; encounters with collectors and exhibitions, missions and colonial authorities made up the display areas on the right of that aisle. Each of the areas of the exhibition dedicated to these encounters articulated a two-fold set of relations between, on the one

hand, the forms of exchange or dispossession which led to the eventual acquisition of the exhibited materials by the British Museum, and, on the other, accounts by various 'community voices' that had been brought into the exhibition via its Indigenous Reference Group of the significance of re-encountering the objects in question for members of the communities of origin to which – symbolically if not actually – the objects were returned. These communities were identified through territorial mappings of language groups drawing on the culture areas tradition.

Each of these aisles led to and from the central exhibition area – *Encounters at Botany Bay* – which contained, as its centre, the Gweagal shield. The responses of Michael Ingrey and Shayne Williams – both of the Dharawal people whose country, south of Sydney, includes Botany Bay – indicate something of the multi-accentuality of Indigenous responses to this item. For Michael Ingrey, its key significance is that it 'gives our young people strength in identity to say that they've actually held something that was held by our mob prior to contact' (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 49). For Shayne Williams, the shield reverberates more to the histories of dispossession and resistance:

> [T]he shield too represents all Aboriginal people because that very place where the shield was taken from is where the rest of Australia was annexed to the British. Aboriginal dispossession started there, in that very place . . .
>
> What it reminds me of is Aboriginal resistance. And not just resistance back then, but resistance to the destruction of our culture right up until now.
>
> (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 50)

During and since *Encounters*, the Gweagal shield has become a site of and for disputed histories in two ways. First, it is now the subject of a repatriation claim on the part of Rodney Kelly, one of Cooman's descendants, a claim which foregrounds a lament that ran throughout the exhibition: namely, that the objects in *Encounters* have only made a temporary and incomplete journey 'home' (see Sprague, 2015/16). The second dispute has concerned whether the hole in the shield was caused by a bullet, as Cook's diary suggests, or whether, as Joseph Banks claimed, it was created by a 'single pointed lance.' There is more to this dispute than at first meets the eye; or rather, what now meets the eye is a hole that hovers indecipherably between different interpretations. If it is to stand as a mark of colonial violence and dispossession, then it matters that it should be a bullet hole. Its significance changes, however, if it is a hole made by a lance – or spear – albeit still in ways that resonate with current Indigenous activist concerns. Ian McLean throws useful light on this matter in the interpretation he places on the exchange of five musket shots that Cook's crew fired in return for three spears launched by Gweagal warriors when Cook landed at a small village on Botany Bay instead of at a nearby beach to which – at their

first encounter – the Gweagal had invited Cook. As Mclean glosses it, this was intended as the site for a performance of 'rattling spears,' a traditional performance for the negotiation of first contact with strangers in which spears were exchanged in a symbolic contest of calculated near misses and dodges (McLean, 2016: 29–32). If, then, the hole had been made by a spear, the shield would resonate to a ritualised performance for negotiating relations with strangers that has subsequently acquired a currency as a metaphor for Aboriginal renegotiations of the terms of engagement with the dominant culture through acts of resistance and critique.

The central aisle of the exhibition running between the different encounters that were staged on its left and right was devoted to a number of 'objects without a story' (a model Torres Strait Island canoe, shields from somewhere in south-eastern Australia): that is, objects which, since no specific community of origin to which they might be returned has been identified, hover in a kind of cultural no-man's land. For Rodney Carter, a traditional owner from the Dja Dja Wurrung people, these are objects 'out of context, without connection to a creator' so that a 'story can't be completely or appropriately communicated' for them, and thus, irrespective of whatever value museums might place on them, 'it is not real' (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 227). Elverina Johnson of the Yidinji people, commenting on another section of the exhibition, articulates a similar perspective, likening the British Museum's claim to ownership of the objects taken in colonial histories as 'like keeping the stolen generation of objects' that will finally receive their full meaning when they are eventually able to 'make their way home' (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 194).

This is a recurring theme in both the exhibition and catalogue. For Carol Christophersen of the Muran people:

> The Encounters project is really about people. There's no other way round it. Yes, the British have got these objects and they want to show us photographs and they want to put some in the museum, but it is about the people . . .
>
> Who were these people? Who are these people today? Well, we are these people.
>
> Without the people, they're just objects. Without the stories, without the knowledge, they're still just objects.
>
> (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 77)

For Treasy Woods, a Noongar Elder, similarly 'You've got the sticks and that but we've got the stories and without the stories the sticks mean nothing' (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 102) while, most pithily, for Aunty Doolan-Leisha Eatts, a Ballardong Elder, it is only culture that makes real: 'This is the people, this is their culture, this is the real stuff' (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 95).

The culture/community couplet

But what is the culture in question here? Let me go back to Nicolas Thomas's conception of 'reverse fieldwork.' Thomas invokes this concept in summarising the orientation of the British Museum's Melanesian Art Project as one which called into question the contention that there might be some intrinsic connection between source communities and items of customary material heritage which can alone recover the true meaning of the latter. A significant aspect of the discourse of *Encounters*, by contrast, is one in which items, in being returned to such communities, are being returned to themselves, to their truth. But this conception does not, of course, come from nowhere; it has a distinctive anthropological history and provenance. One of the key signatures of Franz Boas's conception of fieldwork was that the true meaning of objects could only be appreciated by placing them in the context of their interpretation and use by the members of the cultures to which they belonged. 'What does this mean?' he asked of the design of a cooking ladle of the Thompson Indians. 'According to the Indians,' he answered, pointing to different red bands on the ladle,

> this means that the salmon is being boiled; this is some smaller fish being boiled; this is the spring from which the water was drawn. Of course we get no idea of such a notion simply by the red decoration of the object, unless the Indian would tell us what it really means.[11]

For Boas and his successors, cultures were conceived territorially as culture areas defined not in essentialist terms – as intrinsic and permanent connections between a people, their economic and social practices, their language, religions and myths, and their material culture – but as territorially marked temporary fusions of these effected by a creative synthesis of peoples, objects and languages in movement from diverse sources.

   As I have already noted, this conception of territorially defined cultures, rebutting earlier conceptions of Aborigines as nomadic and thus without fixed attachments to place, became influential in Australia via Norman Tindale's map which, while reworked in many ways, has continued to provide a basis for subsequent maps constructed in accordance with the same principle. The processes through which such maps and the associated concept of culture areas became effective operators in relations between anthropologists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Australian state agencies and non-Indigenous Australians were complex and protracted. They also by no means constitute the only interface through which the relations between state agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been organised. This point is tellingly made by Michael Griffith (2016) in qualifying Russell McGregor's (2011) account of the delayed, hesitant and zig-zagging post-war Australian career of the culture concept as it has sometimes been connected to somatic conceptions of Indigenous populations as objects of biomedical

administration and, at others, to assimilationist programmes identifying the specific cultural values and practices that Aborigines need to be weaned from in order to enter into Australian society alongside other citizens. Emerging only latterly as a marker of differences that are to be respected and – within limits – cultivated, it would be a mistake, Griffith argues, to conclude that this represents a completed transition from biopolitical programmes of governing to a liberal program of governing through culture. Rather, it is now as much as ever, the relations between these that needs to be attended to.

And if we are to do this, it is necessary to appreciate that the distinctive inflection of governing through culture that is involved in its conception as the property of territorialised indigenous peoples has involved the production of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures where there were none before. To avoid misunderstanding, let me stress again that distinctive rituals, customs, artistic and religious practices of course existed, and were recognised as such by some of Australia's early fieldwork anthropologists; but they were not interpreted as parts of specific cultures whose elements derived their significance from their relations to one another within territorially marked ways of life. Nor, as we have seen, did this vocabulary of culture play any significant role in how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders interpreted the relations between material objects and their economic and religious practices. The conception of area-specific cultures, then, is properly understood not as referring to pre-contact realities but as referencing relatively recent artefacts which, shaped through the complex and constantly changing relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, also shape those relations in comprising a new interface between them. The culture that is invoked in these regards is, in Foucault's terms, a new 'transactional reality' through which the relations between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations has come to be increasingly, albeit not exclusively, enacted.[12] It is, moreover, now increasingly entangled with the language of 'communities' in ways that resonate with the broader rationalities of governing through communities that play a much larger role in contemporary forms of governing through culture.

The role that museums might play in this regard was signalled by Ronald and Catherine Berndt in envisioning how the culture concept might be put to use in Australian museum practice. They thus critiqued the evolutionary arrangements of Aboriginal materials that still prevailed in Australian museums until well into the 1960s in terms that echoed Boas's criticisms of typological displays (Boas, 1887, 1887a). As Ronald Berndt put it:

> Without its meanings an object, however beautiful, is dead, absolutely and irrevocably dead. Allocated to some museum which concerns itself largely with relics of the past, a past which can be re-created only from the imagination of aliens, or ripped from its cultural context to serve an alien purpose, its death is just as definitely assured.
>
> (cit. Stanton, 2008: 522)

In a later reflection on his role in establishing the Anthropology Research Museum at the University of Western Australia, Berndt, echoing Ruth Benedict's conception of the need to understand the distinctive 'socio-cultural patterning' (Berndt, 1979: 144) of Aboriginal communities, stresses his concern in relation to Aboriginal material culture as being 'among other things, with preserving these objects, providing a permanent home for them, and ensuring their transformation as "living" entities placed within their socio-cultural contexts' (144). It is this, their re-contextualisation 'as part of contemporary Aboriginal heritage,' he continues, which, in 'bringing new life to the objects displayed in museums' provides 'the means for a new kind of transformation which can, on the one hand, be relevant to Aborigines today and, on the other, stimulate new directions for research' (Berndt, 1979: 151).

Here, then, are the conceptual underpinnings for an exhibition like *Encounters* as an instance of contemporary processes of 're-collecting ourselves' which operates within many registers. The result of an extended set of collaborations between museum curators (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), anthropologists and diverse representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, *Encounters* stages the putative re-collection by such communities of the materials they had exchanged or lost in earlier contact histories while also re-collecting Aboriginal cultural heritage into a revised place within a changing national culture. The selves that are collected and governed are both singular and specific to particular Aboriginal communities while also beckoning these and those of the wider Australian community into a new national self that will be recomposed through the process of its re-collection. June Oscar, for example, tellingly orchestrates an uncompromising indictment of the ravages of colonialism, testifying to the endurance of Aboriginal people through the 'killing times' of the frontier wars, together with an acknowledgement that the setting sail of the First Fleet in 1788 was the harbinger of her future identity when she would 'no longer be wholly Banuba, or collectively Aboriginal, but also an Australian' (National Museum of Australia, 2015: 24). The exhibition does not seek to smooth over or conjure away such conflicts and contradictions. Nor does it shy away from the histories of dispossession and ongoing violence and discrimination that settler Australia has inflicted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, or from differences of perspective and interpretation within Aboriginal communities. In a pointed contribution, Barbara Paulson (2015), the curator of the museum's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program, probes changes in the distribution of the authority to speak on behalf of community that the consultations that were entered into in arranging the exhibition were obliged to take into account. Noting that changing social pressures had obliged a partial departure from late twentieth-century curatorial practices that had given precedence to the voice of community elders, she identifies some of the consequences of a shift in the baton of responsibility for these matters down the age hierarchy in complicating ideas about a

singular authentic voice for communities. In coming home, she intimates, objects can expect a more cacophonous and multi-accentual reception than the invocation of singular forms of community authority imply.

Encounters, then, in all these respects, exemplifies aspects of the refashioning of museums as 'contact zones' according to which, in James Clifford's conception, museums must seek to decentre themselves, accepting that the materials they temporarily host are entangled in 'unfinished historical processes of travel' if they are to 'work the hinterlands between different worlds, histories, and cosmologies' rather than impose a singular curatorial vision of their own (Clifford, 1997: 211). As such, it bears witness to the role that the culture concept – as mediated and interpreted by different generations of post-war Australian anthropologists – has played in organising the particular texture of the contact zones produced by reforming tendencies in contemporary Australian museum practice and, in the process, recruiting Indigenous Australians as 'anthropologists of themselves.' And it underlines a point I made in an earlier engagement with the conception of museums as contact zones when I asked:

> And is it not also true that the communities that the museum is to involve in dialogue are often the artefacts of its own activities rather than autochthonous entities which come knocking at the museum's door seeking equal rights of representation and expression?
>
> (Bennett, 1998a: 212)

My answer to this, in the case of *Encounters*, is a qualified 'yes'. To explore the implications of this further, I want now to look briefly at the revisionist account offered by Howard Morphy – who had a formative influence on *Encounters*[13] – of the roles played by multiple forms of agency in the constitution of Australia's ethnographic collections. This involves a critique of what he calls the 'presentist histories' associated with contemporary critical museology for placing a misleadingly singular emphasis on the respects in which the relations between anthropology and museums had been implicated in the development of practices of colonial dispossession and administration. While not denying these aspects of anthropology's history, Morphy puts the case for a more nuanced and variable assessment that will both take account of the role played by complex forms of indigenous agency in the constitution of museum collections and recognise the positive role that those who built the collections – whether as missionaries or anthropologists – played in enabling the recognition of the internal integrity and complexity of Aboriginal cultures. To do so, he proposes a corrective to those histories of anthropology that propose a paradigm shift between the era of museum anthropology associated with evolutionary theory and its later role in the promotion and recognition of cultural difference.

This involves a reading of the history of anthropology which pushes the latter orientation back beyond the generation of Australian anthropologists

informed by the post-war engagements with the culture concept to encompass the relations between anthropological fieldwork and museum collections associated with Baldwin Spencer and Francis Gillen. Morphy likens these to Boas for their role in building museum collections that have come to play a major role in 'leading anthropologist to understand people in cultural relativist terms in the context of their own complex present' and in 'celebrating and evidencing the creativity of Aboriginal people in northern and central Australia' (Morphy, 2015: 378).[14] Morphy brings these perspectives to bear on contemporary museum practices through his conception of 'the displaced local.' Ethnographic museums, he argues, contain two locals: 'the local of the museum and the displaced local of the source community where objects originated' (367). The distinctiveness of the current relations between these two locals consists in their coming together in the context of projects orientated to repairing the spatiotemporal disjunctions between them that have arisen from the manner in which the former obtained their collections of materials from the latter, and the sequestration of those collections in museums disconnected from the communities from which they were taken. Endeavours to reconnect communities with their materials contained in dispersed museum collections will be hampered from the start, Morphy argues, if museums are 'reductively cast as instruments of colonisation' thus 'making it harder for present members of the community to engage with the collections and to work with the institutions to utilise the full potential of the resource for present purposes' (368).

While this rings true, the conception of such encounters as geared toward overcoming the spatiotemporal disjunctions between two *locals* does not. It is, indeed, something of a play on words in which the museum, as a *locale* or *location* for collections, is presented as similar to the 'displaced local,' thereby implying an equivalence of the exchanges between museums and communities that is unconvincing. This has been the basis of recent criticisms of the concept of museums as contact zones in its tendency to iron out the differences in the relations of power between the different knowledges and constituencies that are brought into dialogue through such museum enterprises (Boast, 2011; Message, 2015), particularly when they are the projects of major national museums. A certain degree and kind of institutional ventriloquism is inevitably involved in an exhibition format which, in its construction of the relations between culture and community, draws primarily on a particular set of Western discourses to authorise the truth of those who speak on behalf of the 'displaced local' of source communities. It is the museum that assembles and configures the relations between the materials it brings together – the objects from the British Museum, past and present Aboriginal works of art, descriptions of and quotes from collectors – and, within and among these, assigns to the testimony of community representatives, who are reached and authenticated through very specific and selective routes, the particular truths they enunciate.

These aspects of contemporary Australian museum practice form part of a new set of governmental rationalities associated with the place that is now accorded communities as a key relay mechanism in the organisation of contemporary forms of social governance, particularly those which work through the mechanisms of culture.[15] This does not, in the case of *Encounters*, entirely displace the earlier governmental logics informing the relations between museums and their publics – indeed, these are foregrounded as the third set of encounters, those with its visitors, that the exhibition orchestrates, albeit that these are now pluralised in form. Visitors are addressed as members of particular Indigenous communities if connected to the source communities identified in the exhibition; as individualised citizens rather than as members of particular communities in the case of non-Indigenous visitors; with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders being called into both positions simultaneously and also into the general category of Indigenous Australians. It is the first of these currencies of community that interests me here. Its significance, like that of Boas's culture concept on which it draws while also subjecting it to a distinctively contemporary community discourse inflection, is that of having replaced the earlier transactional realities through which indigenous populations have been made knowable and governable in particular ways. Audra Simpson (forthcoming) draws attention to the role that pre-Boasian American anthropology had played in this respect by substituting the ordering systems of clan and kinship for the conception of Native Americans as 'subjects of sovereign political orders' in order to make them knowable and governable in ways consistent with the biopolitical imperatives of a settler state. I argued similarly, in the previous chapter, that the significance of the culture concept has to be assessed in terms of how it came to operate as a complex set of interfaces between America's diverse populations and, in doing so, to differentiate these in terms of the distribution of the mechanisms of liberal and biopolitical government across and between them. In the kind of museum enterprise that *Encounters* exemplifies, it is the culture/community couplet that serves as the interface through which both selected and self-selecting Indigenous Australians are recruited to take part in a process of re-collecting themselves in ways that will contribute both to their self-governance and to the process of re-collecting and reconfiguring the national 'we.'

Rattling the museum

Let me recall my opening remarks regarding the role played by various shifts in the organisation of the discursive terrain that have been brought to bear on the role of Australian museums in mediating the relations between Indigenous and Western knowledges. I have, in the intervening discussion, applied this perspective to museum practices located at the interfaces of anthropology, archaeology and Indigenous conceptions of time and country. However, I also indicated at the outset the need to take account of the

role of art history, and of its complex relations to both anthropology and to Indigenous art practices, in these matters. While I shall have to defer a fuller reckoning of these issues for a later occasion, some of the questions at stake were evident in the adjacent but separate exhibition – *Unsettled: Stories Within* – that accompanied *Encounters*. This featured the work of five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists who, as a part of *Engaging Objects* – a component of the *Encounters* project – had visited the British Museum to engage creatively with the processes and relations through which (some of) the objects exhibited in *Encounters* had originally been collected, curated and exhibited. In standing off somewhat from the *Encounters* exhibition, however, the art works in question also engaged critically with museum practices more generally and, thereby, unsettled some of the assumptions underlying *Encounters* too. This aspiration of *Unsettled* was economically summarised by Waanyi artist Judy Watson in describing her concern as being 'to rattle the bones of the museum.'[16] The Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi artist Jonathan Jones offered a telling example of such rattling in action in one of the works he exhibited: *mugugalurgaa (conceal)*. This consisted of a selection from the National Museum of Australia's collection of Aboriginal objects from south-east Australia which, wrapped in the 1878 text of anthropologist Robert Brough Smyth's *The Aborigines of Victoria: With Notes Relating to the Habits of the Natives of other Parts of Australia and Tasmania*, were exhibited on both flat open surfaces and in traditional nineteenth-century display cabinets. At one and the same time, therefore, they were fully open to and yet hidden from view, their meaning occluded by the layers of anthropological interpretation in which they were wrapped. Jones's purpose, he tells us, was to highlight 'the inadequacies of anthropology and attempts to deconstruct the contextual framework that defines museum collections' by showing how a 'handful of historical anthropological texts dominate how we understand and interpret museum objects and, in turn, our cultural heritage, often obscuring our ability to see our objects and claim them as our own.'

    While this might seem to condemn only the past practices of anthropology in this regard and to validate those of *Encounters*, interpreting *mugugalurgaa* in the light of Jones's more general practices and affiliations as a contemporary urban Indigenous artist suggests a more complex and ambivalent reading. In discussing the work of Gordon Bennett and Brook Andrew – urban Indigenous artists who, like Jones, work critically on the colonial archive comprised by museum and other collections – Ian McLean argues that they do so not in order to 'construct a family, clan or tribal genealogy that might authenticate one's fragmented identity' or to 'recover an authentic Indigenous voice' but to 'draw transcultural connections that insert Indigenous histories into the cosmopolitan discourses of modernity' (McLean, 2016: 233). Jones also occupies a key point in McLean's interpretation of the role that the 'rattling of spears' has played in Indigenous practices of protest and resistance. This consists in Jones's contribution to

the Kulata Tjuta Project, an installation at the 2014 Adelaide Biennal initiated by a group of Pitjantjatjara men. This comprised a large collection of spears, brought together and hung from the ceiling in a threatening density, accompanied by a soundtrack of Aboriginal chanting to the rattling of spears and a wall text connecting the exhibition back to the moment of first contact when the Gweagal shield began its journey to the British Museum and – temporarily – back again to Australia for *Encounters*. Together with other Indigenous artists and curators involved in *Unsettled*, Jones extended his rattling of museums specifically to the *Encounters* exhibition in an impromptu panel arranged to protest the subordination of independent and critical Indigenous voices to the dominant institutional script of the exhibition (see Gough et al., 2016).

It has been in a kindred spirit that I have sought, in probing the organisation of the discursive ground that underlies *Encounters*, to subject the contemporary relations between museums, anthropology and Indigenous Australians to a little critical theoretical rattling. It should be clear that, in doing so, I have also sought to echo some of the ways in which, in the uncertainties this exhibition manifests, the museum rattles itself.

Notes

1 The wording here is that used by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in his 2008 apology to Indigenous Australians. This has since become a standard part of official recognition of long-standing Indigenous priority.
2 There was, though, in Baldwin Spencer's work, recognition and engagement with the formal properties of Aboriginal art practices, albeit somewhat hesitant and contradictory. While, in some instances, comparing the degree of differentiation between the works of individual Aboriginal artists and, thereby, the creativity they manifested to that evident in Chinese, Japanese and British art, he would, on other occasions, impute the disproportion evident in Aboriginal depictions of fish and animals to a purely functional interest in those parts of their anatomies of food value. See, for example, Spencer (2008: 107, 133).
3 Ian McLean's work has been particularly important here (see McLean, 1998, 2011, 2016).
4 See also on these questions the essays collected in McGrath and Jebb (2015).
5 I draw here on an earlier discussion in Bennett (2000).
6 See Chandler (2014) for a collection illustrating a range of politico-aesthetic strategies in Indigenous artistic engagements with the figure of Cook.
7 This was the tone struck by Deborah Cheetham in mobilising this past to foreground a contradiction between Australia's official recognition of 'the indigenous peoples of this land' as 'the oldest continuing cultures in human history' and the denial of this in its national anthem. Invited to sing 'Advance Australia Fair' at the Australian Football League's 2015 Grand Final, Cheetham – an Indigenous opera singer – agreed to do so on condition that the opening line be changed from 'Australians let us rejoice for we are young and free' to 'Australians let us rejoice in peace and harmony.' The condition was refused. Elaborating on her reasons for proposing it, Cheetham invoked '70,000 years of Indigenous cultures' on the one hand and the experience of 227 years of colonisation on the other to dispute that Australia could be regarded as either young or free. Maturing together as a nation, she argued, means that 'we simply cannot cling to this desperate

premise' but requires that we, that is all Australians, should 'value, understand and embrace the fact that we alone in the world can lay claim to the longest continuing culture' (Cheetham, 2015).

 8 See, on Wissler's culture area maps, Bennett et al (2017): 149–51. Their influence on Tindale is discussed in the conclusion to this study. I am indebted to Ira Jacknis and Rodney Harrison for first alerting me to the significance of, respectively, Wissler's and Tindale's maps in these regards.

 9 These conceptions and the mapping projects they have generated have played a significant role in providing an actionable basis for Indigenous land claims by establishing long-standing ancestral connections to country.

10 These are Gaye Sculthorpe and Lissant Bolton from the British Museum where Sculthorpe, of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent, curates the museum's Oceania collections, and Ian Coates from the National Museum of Australia.

11 Boas, Franz (1899) 'The art of the Thompson Indians', address to the Psychological Laboratory of Yale, American Museum of Natural History, Department of Anthropology Archives, Department of Anthropoloigy Correspondence, 1894–1907, Box 1, Folder 1.

12 See my discussion in chapter 1 of this aspect of Foucault's work and, for a fuller elaboration, Bennett (2013).

13 *Indigenous Australia: Enduring Civilisation* and *Encounters* were the product of a collaboration between the National Museum of Australia and the British Museum, but also involved the Australian Research Council through a grant to a team led by Morphy at the Australian National University.

14 There is much to value in Morphy's account, particularly his insistence that anthropological collections have long been implicated in both histories of colonial dispossession and genocide and in histories of cross-cultural recognition, and that there is no need to collapse these different histories into either the one or the other option as mutually exclusive. The similarities he posits between Spencer and Gillen and Boas are less convincing; indeed, the museum collections based on their fieldwork practices were clearly governed by the principles of the typological displays that Boas took issue with. See Bennett et al (2017): 10–11.

15 The classic account of the role played by community in comprising a new interface through which practices of governance operate is Rose (1996). I have discussed the implications of Rose's account for practices of cultural governance in Bennett (2000).

16 Taken, as are all quotes relating to this exhibition, from the on-line guide to its installations.
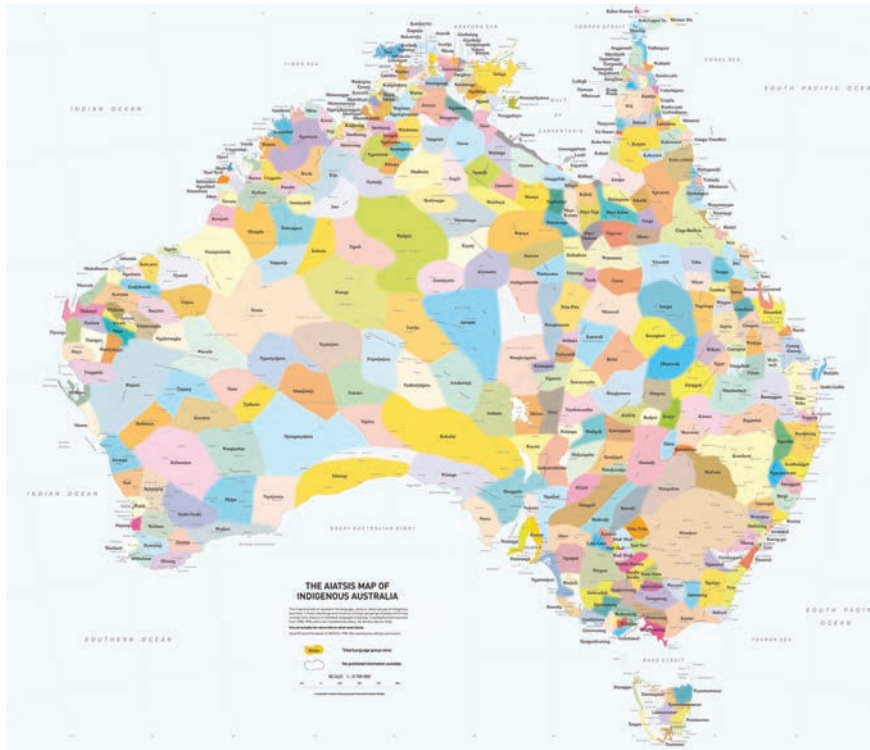
Plate 1 The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies
         (AIATSIS) Map of Indigenous Australia

This map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal
Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which
may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. It used published
resources from 1988–1994 and is not intended to be exact, nor the boundaries fixed.
It is not suitable for native title or other land claims. David R Horton (creator), ©
AIATSIS, 1996. No reproduction without permission.

Plate 2 The Gweagal shield. Collected at Botany Bay in April 1770

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