

## MUSEUMS AND COMMUNITY: LANGUAGE, CULTURE, POSITIVE CHANGE AND PLANNING

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*"About 30 years ago there was much talk that geologists ought only to observe and not theorise; and I well remember saying that at this rate a man might as well go into a gravel pit and count the pebbles and describe the colours. How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service."*

— Charles Darwin to W. W. Bates on Nov. 22, 1860

### INTRODUCTION

Communities are made of people who possess culture and language. Culture is the shared ideas, beliefs, mores, technologies, stories, songs, language, and so forth, held by people. Language is the transmitter of ideas and shared cultural aspects among those people. Often language reflects and gives dimension to cultural aspects that translation does not allow to be understood in exact ways. While some aspects of culture can be understood in some ways, they cannot always be understood in all ways outside the language: language creates images and ideas that have direct relationship to a culture's view of the world (or cosmos).

This document attempts to illustrate the use of museums as interactive, co-operative partners and facilitators with communities; and how those relationships can promote and encourage language retention (or introduction) through various museum programmes. This document highlights museum history, basics, philosophies and programmes, but as such information is lengthy and complex, only an introduction to the essentials is given here. Since there are some new developments and directions in museological philosophy, it will be helpful to understand the potential that is just budding.

This new direction in museological philosophy has been termed *New Museology*, but it should be noted that this direction has also influenced a new class of museums termed *Ecomuseum*. These two directions should be helpful for linguists and language-culture activities in planning strategies and in useful partnerships.

This document is divided into several sections:

1. A brief history of museums: both European and American.
2. New Museology and related philosophies, with examples of each.
3. Cultures: holistic approach
4. Museums and language-culture programmes

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF MUSEUMS: EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN

Historically, the museum and its collections provided examples for study, for those who had prior knowledge of those materials or fields of study. Objects were grouped to represent variations and relevant objects. The intended audience was limited; and access by the public was not always allowed.

It is important, when studying and understanding the development of museums historically, that although the idea of museums originated in Europe and underwent their formative stages there, that there is a difference between the ideas behind those in Europe and those in America. In America, most of the early museums were the work of women from the new industrial upper class, who through collecting of European art (a symbol of connection to European heritage, a sign of aristocratic taste and privilege, and a display of power), founded museums to educate the masses. It was considered that the influence of high art would not only be beneficial, but would defuse any hostility in class differences. Understanding the lofty, albeit snobbish, approach to art and to culture (European culture lifted, appropriated and grafted directly onto and American culture), is a key to understanding the philosophical approach of social leaders and social direction in America. When this information on the origins of American museums, is coupled with an understanding prevailing ideas (from the Romantic movement, the Industrial Revolution—and now the Age of Information), a sense of a paternalistic, elitist, Euro-Centred Americanism emerges. These American attitudes can spell doom to those who are outside that narrow culture, or those who have conflicting views.

Understanding these disparate elements, of museum history and American culture motives, (and viewing them from the various vantage points of social, historical, political, educational et al), is to begin to understand the dimensions of the problems, the ingrained undercurrents of ideologies, and the pervasiveness of social and political inequality, which is endemic in American culture generally, and most definitely those events that have been imposed on Native American cultures from the beginnings of European contact to this very minute. Attitudes of inequality towards indigenous people (and minority cultures) are not the sole possession of Americans, but persist in many other countries.

It is enough to note that these historic situations have occurred and the matrix that has been handed down to us. Judgement should not be cast, pro or con, on what has been past as it is lesson for understanding background of museum development.

### THE NEW MUSEOLOGY: DEFINITION AND COMPONENTS

The New Museology and its related aspects, require definition since these philosophies may not be familiar to all readers. Each philosophical term is first defined, then is briefly explained. The terminology introduced here is:

- The New Museology
- Relational Education
- Holistic Exhibition
- Ethnocultural Preservation

### THE NEW MUSEOLOGY

*The use of museum collections and holistic exhibition methodologies as a resource base and focus for education both within the museum and within the community; and for community interactive and co-operative projects and exhibitions aimed at amplifying and supplementing general education/language/culture.*

The New Museology has its origins in the 1972 ICOM (International Council on Museums (UNESCO)) Regional Conference in Santiago Chile. Resulting from the discussions, and the directions that would be beneficial for museums, a document of resolutions was drawn. These resolutions formed the body of the *Declaration of Santiago* from that the New Museology was shaped.

The New Museology sets museums as educational institutions, where collections are a resource. In this rôle of educator, museums work interactively and co-operatively with the communities they serve. This rôle allows museums and communities to develop and to implement curriculum and programmes that meet the requirements of the community, and utilise the services and resources of the museum (with the museum collections and archives acting as a resource). Museums have a long history in various educating activities, but in this new rôle, museums primary activity is education.

### ETHNOCULTURAL PRESERVATION

*The consideration of the sacred or spirit that either is contained or is invested in an object; and is crucial to adding dimension to the understanding and interpretation of a culture.*

Ethnocultural Preservation, (as the prefix *ethno*, and the terms *cultural* and *preservation* imply), preserves and documents cultures holistically (material and non-material), thoroughly, honourably, responsibly and respectfully.

Ethnocultural Preservation emphasises the holistic study, examination, information ordering and transmission, and education of or about non-material and material culture; and that culture's environment setting and resources. This holistic approach to the documentation, preservation and presentation of culture, also effects material culture objects, in the conservation and preservation of those objects.

Museums can document what exists in a culture and what is being lost (before it is forgotten); and to provide information from its archives, and collections to communities who are attempting to understand their past.

Ethnocultural Preservation, and the changes in information inclusion it advocates in exhibitions and in education programmes, effects several areas within museums. Among those changes are in the handling, conservation and preservation of objects. Objects are created with an intended use. Since some objects either are intended for sacred use or are considered to contain spirit, the handling, conservation and preservation of objects should reflect the culture's rules. Such sensitivity to a culture's rules reflects a need for greater awareness for museums and participation with respective communities.

### HOLISTIC EXHIBITION

*The presentation of objects or artefacts in relationship with their intended task, and in context with the environment, season, or other associated environmental task-related materials or attributes.*

Holistic Exhibition is a tool in the transformation of museum to museum-as-educational-institution. In Holistic Exhibition, an exhibition contains not only artefacts or objects, but supplemental, crucial, information on environment, season, historical placement, technological development and so forth. These directions in the basic requirements for an exhibition will help to illustrate culture more completely. Since the artefacts or objects are placed with environmental, task-related, and similar information, a greater depth for understanding can be conveyed.

Non-material cultural aspects and material cultural objects and artefacts make up the substance of exhibitions, while information in text, documents and education programmes, conveys the information about those non-material aspects and material objects and artefacts. Non-material aspects (language, songs, stories, belief systems, world view, et al) are integral to understanding material culture objects and artefacts since those aspects give the museum visitor a sense of the people.

It is important to understand information as wholly and as completely as is possible—information on cultures needs the same intensity of completeness of information. Since information

can encourage further discovery, and application of that information can lead to other discovery, we need to consider the thoroughness and the quality of the information we provide in an educational setting.

### RELATIONAL EDUCATION

*The interrelationship between facts and events and ideas and those facts and events and ideas that relate to them, in ways that explain, define or illuminate that primary fact or event or idea. Strategies where hands-on, direct participation can take place, are preferred activities; as are traditional learning situations where combined activities are taught.*

In many of our current educational systems the social foundations of personal responsibility, learn-by-doing, critical thinking, and selfless service seems to be by-products instead of foci. In these assembly-line institutions, students appear to be moved through with an ease to the administration and to the teachers, an unyielding standardisation, and reaction that is responsive to public pressure. In many ways, museums and a handful of higher education institutions have escaped part of the pressurisation that has daunted primary and secondary education. Museums are in a position where they can be leaders in education, act as socialising institutions, provide the honouring models of teacher and student as co-learners, provide the 'why' in teaching, highlight those lines of relationship between an item and those tangential items on that it touches, influences or influenced: it is to these relationships that education should strive and to these ends that education can best serve students.

In teaching about any subject, and developing curriculum it is important to understand the various relationships and implications such information can present. These relationships and implications can help the student understand the place and importance such information can have and why that information is being presented (the placement of facts and events, in relationship to connecting facts and events, which directly illustrate the primary fact or event (or define or to add depth to that primary fact or event)).

For example: *In 1789 Gustav III of Sweden declared himself absolute monarch.* This fact tells us about an event—possibly something can be inferred about Gustav's personality, or that he appeared to have some autocratic intentions, but why he made this declaration is not clear. When this event is placed in relationship to the French revolution of 1789, (that has wiped away the French absolute monarchy, and resulted in the detainment and imprisonment of the French monarch and his family), Gustav III's action takes on a very different appearance: no longer does Gustav III appear as an ambitious autocrat, but in reaction to the events in France resulting from the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

When we follow Gustav III's history a little further, we find that he is assassinated in 16 March 1792—not long after the execution of the French monarch, Louis XVI, and his family. In this context, the declaration and the assassination take on a different meaning: no longer are they isolated events, but have an influence and a precedent from similar events in another country.<sup>2</sup>

The influences from France and their impact on distant Sweden, say much about the movement of ideas across borders and cultures. In this example, the addition of the information about the events in France and their connections that influenced events in Sweden, do much to put these historical events (in both countries) in a frame that is more revealing than just the information that Gustav III declared himself absolute monarch. It is in these ways that education can do more when information has relationship.

It is important for students to understand the "why" and "in relationship to" when information is presented. Without understanding "why" the information has been presented, and what its

relationship is to other facts; information can become shallow and without application. Facts can easily become a recitation without feeling when they become lists of unrelated and unconnected items. It is necessary to provide the relationships and connections that give them meaning and will instruct—not just the superficial mono-plane, but multi-level and multi-dimensional. To exclude such relationships and connections, which is the mainstay of some education programmes, information becomes only empty facts—making a thin picture. Relationship and application of information are the tools for problem solving and understanding.

### MUSEUMS TODAY: NEW DIRECTIONS

Today, the museum audience has broadened from the historical narrow academic circles to all levels of society. The demand for more information from collections and from exhibitions (and competition from television, film and computer-based information), coupled with decreased funding opportunities and rising expenses, is causing changes in the rôle of museums. These changes have caused museums to move in directions that have led to an international movement to address community needs. Museums are ideally suited to illustrate and to instruct about culture, change, technology, innovation and discovery. Museums present accumulated heritage, both material and non-material, with emphasis on education as the major activity.

In the past, museums such as the Modern Museum of Art in New York, have come under fire, for embracing new art, new designs and new ideas; but those new ideas have endured, and now have become a part of American culture. Automobile and industrial design are now seen as art; as is architectural design. Museums have learned how to educate the public and how to develop collections by recognising the creative products that are of enduring design.

Expressive arts are more than only "high culture"—it is holistic view of arts in all its aspects, elements. The pressures that bring change to culture—including low or popular culture, bring change to all parts of culture in varying degrees. In this way, the material culture objects and artefacts become art; and the non-material culture song and stories, beliefs and so forth, the supporting materials that speak about the culture that has created the material cultural objects and artefacts.

Museums use their collections and their expertise, to educate and to interact with their serving communities. In reflecting the needs of the serving communities and in their mission to educate, collections may be used to illustrate many ideas. As research institutions, museums arrange, co-ordinate and conduct research—either independently, or in conjunction with other scholars and academics—to add to the world's body of knowledge.

Museums, like every other educating (and enculturating) institution, have a responsibility to present information thoroughly, accurately, completely and honourably. This mission and this responsibility is not limited to those museums and institutions that present culture, but to all museums and institutions and their programmes. As this age of information and technological manipulation unfolds, this mission of responsibility (and goal of thoroughness), becomes more acute. While the brevity and incompleteness of information have been a hallmark of news, information distribution and even of education, such partial and incomplete information without relationship or foundation should not be the goal of museums. When we question ourselves with *what do I know?*, *how do I know this?*, and *is there another way of understanding this?*, we begin to approach the foundation on which reason, necessity to be thorough, accuracy of information, responsible, and honourable views of examined topics, is founded. Museums are obligated by the

public trust and the quest for knowledge, to assume that educational responsibility: to do the best work, in as tireless and demanding ways as is possible.

Today, museums, like children, are growing up: museums have discovered that they are no longer the inviolate, invulnerable institutions whose goal is the edification and delectation of the few, but are interactive, co-operative resources for instruction and facilitation of education for the everyone. These new rôles are still the awkward clothing for some institutions, and intimidation to others, but like every adolescent who comes of age, the change comes either willingly or compellingly. The external and internal forces and ideas that cause change in cultures, also causes changes in institutions: survival is the common denominator to individuals, cultures and to institutions. Although the growing pains can be considerable, the growth and the opportunities for going in new directions, far outweigh hesitation and impudence.

### RESEARCH, COMMUNITIES, AND LANGUAGE-CULTURE LOSS

#### HOLISTIC ANALYSIS: RESEARCH, INVESTIGATION, INCLUSION

Damage to a culture can come in many forms, but the importation or diffusion of ideas that can accelerate cultural degradation. When outside ideas, images, and so forth are the *dominating* ideas coming into a culture or are seen as the *ideal* of how a person should be, or function and so forth, erosion will continue within the community—but analysing the problem(s) can be difficult. Modern Western evaluation methods that tend to embrace the simple solution (the simple solution is often incomplete, since it is easier to grasp superficial or immediate impacts; and to understand and present those impacts as the problem) can miss deeper meaning, relationship and connections. In examining a cedar tree, to understand its being, it is easy to grasp a few roots and to consider them as the reason for the tree—when a deeper investigation will find relationships to the soil, its contents, nutrient assimilation, water, temperature, humidity, moisture, light and so forth. Understanding the cedar's place within the coastal civilisations of the Pacific Northwest, is to see that it traditionally has been considered a living being—possessing spirit—which must be acknowledged, and honoured, before taking from its resources. In this way, while the cedar remains the focus of investigation, its informational dimensions have required more than one level of understanding—a multidisciplinary approach. Damage to culture can come in ways, like the cedar, that require deeper examination to find all the influences and ideas that have impacted that culture.

A holistic approach to analysis can be difficult, even in ideal situations and circumstances, since it requires one a problem to be seen and to be understood at multiple levels, resulting in understanding and information in arrays—and sometimes in multiple arrays. Tackling cultural and social problems can be daunting and resemble emptying a lake with a teaspoon, but like every endeavour, persistence, determination and clarity of vision can prevail in the end. A key to approaching a holistic analysis of a culture and the influences and impacts on that culture, can mean looking at all the threads that have, or might have, come in contact with that culture. (For example, in Native American cultures, the researcher has to look at the historical and contemporary influences and impacts as a continuous thread—even the importation of ideas via television and books, are factors that must be considered.)

Since every culture is constantly evolving (even in isolation), the introduction of outside influences and impacts helps to shape the content and direction of that evolution. Like squeezing a toothpaste tube only at the top, something eventually will cause change when the problem is understood and approached differently—although thorough investigation does require a broader,

inclusive view (and more work)—and discovery that the toothpaste must be squeezed at a distance further from the opening. Ideas and research methods that tend to grasp at minutiae will miss a holistic analysis; therefore the researcher must be aware even of limitations that are set (for example, in the research premise) that can narrow a vision and exclude information that may seem irrelevant, but may be vital to correcting the theory (the premise) for investigation (this adjustment to the research goal, may take the investigation in directions that the original research premise did not anticipate—the researcher should look beyond the known and beyond proving what is already suggested to be there).

## COMMUNITIES, CHANGE AND CULTURE

The four major components of culture are:

1. tools and technology,
2. language and the use of symbols,
3. conscience and morality,
4. social organisation based on moral rules.

Communities, and the elements that contribute to effect positive, sustainable change and growth, is something that we all can understand since we all are part of some community—and sometimes, part of many communities. In the United States, particularly, it is not unusual for someone to belong to several cultural groups or communities. With many families maintaining cultural ties to another country, (for example like Sweden: some families are bi-lingual, maintain the various holidays (midsommardag, St Lucia, et al.). Although communities are not alike, they do have many aspects and elements that are common to all: people live in some form of communities, secure food and shelter, have celebrations, and so forth. These communities consist of people who speak a language and share similar ideas, beliefs and heritage.

In Western societies, the illusion is that we can control and direct our future and our destinies, the reality is that we are beset with variables and events that, sometimes, are beyond our abilities to control (rain, temperature, growing old, and so forth). We do possess the abilities and skills to make the some changes in our society—or make the most of changes that do occur; and to effect changes that will act positively for communities. Community change can take place with vision and planning—and determination.

Loss of language and culture can come to any culture—and for many reasons. In many indigenous communities world-wide, the loss of culture and language is a matter of concern in varying degrees. Those communities attempting to understand what has happened, or how to slow (or change) cultural loss, are all reaching for the same ends: solution. To understand some factors that have brought this loss of language-culture to this point, is not always easy, since it is rarely a single cause. The historic events that have impacted the culture, all hold clues to solution of the mystery. Some of those events in Native American cultures can easily be seen (such as mission schools, their policies of Christianisation, assimilation, and mono-lingualism), but other impacts can be less perceptible: ideas from outside the culture.

The imposition, and importation, of dominant culture (or alien culture), causes social confusion, conflict of values and change in life-styles; which can result in the loss of culture or language or both. While language and culture may be eventually lost, often the loss of sacred songs and ceremonies, is the first indication of cultural stresses. The loss of culture and the onset of cultural confusion is not always easily perceptible, but the lack of identity and loss of ideas of relationship, are more easily detected. The changes that must “correct” this situation involve bringing about some form of awareness of the losses and changes, that have occurred or are

occurring. The analysis of problems causing cultural loss, and understanding the tangential elements that influence and impact a culture, may be many and difficult to determine; but it is necessary to understand the all the problems that have impacted the culture.

Since culture is never static, but constantly evolving, it is important to understand what directions and impacts can be directed and controlled; and those actions which will allow the culture to evolve naturally—or with the least impact. Change must be carefully determined and implemented. Attempts to adjust culture or “turn back” to a point in the past, are well-intentioned, but misguided since the impacts and influences that have occurred over time can only be remedied and not reversed. Revitalisation movements are, by their very nature, doomed to fail since they view the past incompletely, and aspire to some idyllic ideal. Culture cannot return to some imaginary past, nor breathe life into that that no longer has meaning (although understanding can reveal the role that some events and ceremonies have played). One must view re-introducing language and encouraging culture, as an act that begins now (although it is based on ideas, themes and values from the past). Whatever ideas for vanished culture that are found desirable to support or to reintroduce, must have a broad reason for their usage. Supporting actions should include finding as many ways as is possible to tie the idea into daily life and the cycle of life.

Values in communities can be different, and what may seen an attribute in one culture, may not have the same value in another culture. It is helpful to be aware of values and directions that may be conflicting, especially in evaluations for education programmes. Ideas such as living styles, housing requirements (use and internal arrangement of rooms), organisation of work, may differ from culture to culture, and may require different accommodation in learning situations. The variation in values, language, world-view and ways of living, and working and so forth, are the attributes which are subjects for research and study—and implementation into museum exhibitions and education programmes.

Although cultures, such as Native American or Sámi, are grouped together as if they are variations on a single culture, actually they are more divers. Since what is perceived as Native American and Sámi both consist of many different cultures (Native American cultures number some 300+, while Sámi consists of at least eight different cultures). Historically, when ideas of groups and groupings of humans were being developed in 19th century, lines were most often based on physical appearance; therefore, in that 19th century idea of cultural group, Native Americans were considered to be one group—as were Sámi. More thorough analysis (changes in ideas about culture), and the passage of time, has shifted the emphasis to language, ways of living, belief systems and so forth.

## LANGUAGE-CULTURE LOSS

Survival is the lowest common denominator for any person, community or society. The elements that allow a person, community or society to survive, is the question most important in the encouragement or preservation of culture. Language is foremost of those elements essential to cultural survival, since it is the vehicle that gives meaning to the culture. Cultural survival can have many obstacles which will hinder or impede language-culture efforts:

- political ideologies
- human frailties (greed, ego and similar)
- residue from historic events (assimilation schemes)
- learned behaviour from other cultures
- conflicting ideas and values

World-view, rôle of the individual's responsibility to self, family, community and society, are the visions the community will need to determine and to implement, based on historic precedent and contemporary needs.

Understanding the circumstances that have caused the loss of language and culture, is to see a historic and an on-going process that is aimed at the extinction and the assimilation of Native Americans. It is a difficult to see this inheritance as an on-going process, but a review of historic events and attitudes will demonstrate the continued existence of racism, assimilation (from even well-intentioned programmes), and the mainstreaming of individuals to fit into American society. What is desirable is understanding that while American culture may be seen as an ideal for the world, it is alienating and contrary to the values of many other cultures.

Whether historic and contemporary ideas and processes are good or bad is not the point in this document, but it is useful to understand their existence and their influence on contemporary cultures—and as points which may oppose every endeavour to encourage language and culture. Institutionalised and covert assimilation strategies have existed (and do exist) in one form or another: that is what has happened—and that it continues to happen. One must always know the obstacles before one can set the strategies to meet goals. The problems confronting anyone or group, in addressing language introduction or vitalisation, are many. The age-old divisions between the traditionals and mixed comes sharply into focus; as are the scars from mission schools, land allotment, public school programmes, administrations et al.

To make the investment in language-culture encouragement, from a Native American point, in our communities and cultures, is neither easy nor quick. That commitment to encouragement must be a community wide, orchestrated undertaking. Many people who do not learn the language or the culture as a child (or as an adult), can feel excluded from the culture, and often will voice objection to their children (or themselves) learning the language—even in a limited way. These problems, objections, and resistance in some sectors of a community, can pose situations that need to be addressed, and healed. In this rôle of educator (and healer), the museum can provide the medium for that healing and for that instruction.

Awareness of the problems, historic and contemporary, and awareness that leads to pride in inherited culture, can do much to help move the community towards acceptance of (and participation in) language and culture instruction programmes. It is important for people to have a direct relationship with heritage, and to see that their face is a part of that heritage. Community participation is as a vital link in any proposed programme; and for the community members to be within the circle that continues to honour and to share in that heritage.

## MUSEUMS: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EDUCATION

Museums in the rôle of educator, can provide the tools, support and expertise that can be instrumental in building (or rebuilding) communities. A foundation stone of any culture is language—can be offered in museum education programmes, find application in publications, radio, television programmes; and in museum exhibitions. Development and curriculum planning for education programmes for various age groups of learners, will require research, innovation and support from the museum, and co-operation and interaction between the museum and community. When museums offer language and culture programmes within communities, the first seeds of individual identity and responsibility (and self-esteem that such connection of relationship provides) are sown. Learning cultural identity and place within the society, is a point of emphasis for any language-culture programme.

In communities where there is little documentation, dictionaries or instruction programmes, the museum can facilitate research activities co-operative with the community, to address documentation. Some common research and documentation activities are: recording oral histories, stories and songs, photographic surveys of the community(ies), documenting private collections for study, museum archive search, library research, and so forth—a kind of surface study to determine what resources and items may exist. (Museum archives and anthropological studies and papers can uncover information on historic activities and cultural information that may have been completed in the past.)

For example, in doing preliminary research on the Quinault language, two 'dictionaries' were discovered, one from Ruth Modrow, (Introduction to the Quinault language, 1967; PM2220.M62 (497.3)), the other apparently a private publication (that I have not seen). The Modrow dictionary is a partial dictionary without cross references or grammar or pronunciation key (or phonetics). There are several surviving partial speakers, mostly elderly, but there is one teenager, whose father envisioned as a carrier of the culture, but her knowledge, too, is partial. There is also a word-a-day school programme, but apparently there is no organised programme for instruction either within the community or in the public school system. There are recordings of stories and other materials in Quinault, but no exhaustive transcription or analysis exists. In this example, to address language curriculum development, the existing dictionaries must be analysed (to determine what words and expressions are from other neighbouring cultures), the remaining speakers must be interviewed and their knowledge documented, and the archived recordings must be transcribed and analysed. The Quinault archives have done some work towards conservation and duplication of recorded materials, but the environment and permanence are questionable. Like every collection of materials, conservation and preservation are priority activities of any museum; and loss through degradation, repeated duplication and inadequate environmental controls can accelerate loss of the information.

The non-material and material culture requirements needed to form a culture programme, require many activities, which will contribute to the language programme. To understand the non-material and material culture, to develop a means to teach or transmit that culture, can be a difficult matter; but it is not an impossible task. The songs, stories that have either been documented or remembered, are an easy matter, but those parts of the culture that are forgotten or missing would be difficult to duplicate or invent. The talents of anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, linguists, ethnobotanists, zoologists, et al, can be helpful in assaying the accumulated knowledge, and the information archived, in preparing a more complete picture of the culture. As with any culture that has had part of its culture eroded, the threads of what remains, can only partially fill what is gone. Knowledge and technologies that do still exist, or can be determined from museum collections, can become part of the culture programme.

Sacred ceremonies may exist in some part, but to re-institute them may be questionable, since the original intention or activities, may be lost; or the various components may not be known. Further, there may be impediments from the community: For example, at the Quinault, many people belong to the Shakers, which prohibits the use of incense, or anything burnt, as an offering. Resistance to some parts of the former culture, due to imposition of outside culture (here a religion developed to override, and eliminate by substitution, the former belief system), can be difficult to overcome.

While language and technologies may be seen as benign, efforts to develop cultural awareness (those parts that may be considered more sensitive), may cause problems. It is essential to remember that culture can never go backward, but must always go forward. Even if all the elements

of culture cannot be put back into place, those that can be supported, need to find expression and use, so that they will become a part of the community.

Aspects that should be included in language-culture development are: a programme to help adults adapt (cultural awareness), programmes for school age children, programmes for birth to pre-school. Integral to any language-culture programme should be a core that acknowledges and is responsive to the previous or existing social structures: for example, the idea of everyone belonging to a circle, their talents being contributing to whole (giving a sense of relationship and connectedness). The etiquette, mores, and relationships between people are important for the community to have, so it may function in ways that are supportive of the cultural values and vision.

### CLASSROOM, LIBRARY AND COMPUTER

Libraries have long been the repositories for information. Museum libraries are specialised in that the library collection mirrors the mission and goals of the museum; and supports its collection and research goals. Libraries are quickly becoming computerised and accessible via Internet from great distances. In such countries as Sweden, there is an active movement (and supporting work) that will standardise databases (based on ICOM standards) that will eventually link all the museums and academic libraries onto the Internet. In this way, those libraries and museums can easily be accessed from the outside and research into museum collections and library holdings will be much quicker.

For contemporary museums the collections and holdings (and activities) can help do the healing and the "reconstruction" to bridge the vacuum left by years of forced assimilation, cultural degradation, and social confusion. Museums can link the historic pre-contact past with the present: creative arts, current and oral history, botanic medical technology and ceremonies can all use the museum as focal point. (In the Pacific Northwest, the longhouse or smokehouse traditions require a separate, special-purpose structure for sacred or ceremonial events—that can be a part of the museum complex—and should reinforce traditional architecture in its faithfulness to materials, siting and purpose.) The contemporary museum can also act as a hub for an Internet server that will support its connection to the outside world and to other cultures.

With the introduction and acceptance of faster information vehicles, such as computers, CDs, and Internet, and the need for more specific, relevant information, museums cannot afford to be dismiss the potential use of similar electronic tools for the manipulation and presentation of information—even such behind-the-scenes roles of conservator, curator, museum educator and so forth, can no longer afford to be 'hidden' from direct public view. These information vehicles promise access to those who may not otherwise take advantage of the collections and information, but these electronic means are not a substitute for the museum experience, but as an introduction or supplement to the collections and programmes.

Computers, libraries, and classroom situations (with culturally appropriate instruction methodologies) can do much to convey information on several levels. An example of traditional instruction is watching and imitating a hand craft while being told stories: one not only learns the craft, but also learns the story and the instruction from the story. Learning can happen in many ways, so it is helpful to look at cultural traditions for methods that will support or amplify other activities.

Computer should be viewed as tools that can supplement instructional programmes, but not to replace them. Distance or after-hours programmes, can use computers to help instruct. Opportunities for elders to tell stories on-line (with dual subtitles), for history, for information, or for

language instruction, can easily utilise electronic media. Access via Internet to such materials can be a useful choice for the distance learner.

Since the museum can combine, educate and ease access to information, via collections, computers, Internet, library, archives, research, exhibitions and education programmes, it is suited to work as an interactive partner with other institutions and communities. Working with the communities can help determine what programmes may be helpful, desired or beneficial—even such programmes as entrepreneurial training or co-operative child care should not be seen as beyond the tasks that museums can provide.

With the community as an interactive, co-operative partner, communities can help the museum and themselves—and both may benefit from the relationship. It is important for the public to understand those roles and activities that allow the museum to maintain its collections, develop themes with that the collections can illustrate or demonstrate, the process with that the education programmes and information are developed. Often these various roles go unnoticed, but their importance to the museum is crucial to its continuance. With electronic information vehicles, even these hidden roles can be illustrated and explained without disruption to those day-to-day activities.

### A STORY

Long ago, when there were few humans, but many animals, the wolves and the humans decided to hunt together. Since the wolves and the humans hunted the same animals for food, hunting together, this was a beneficial relationship. They could both share the work of hunting and the efforts of their work together. Over time, there came to be more and more humans; and more and more wolves. As there came to be more wolves and more humans, the competition for the same food began to be a problem. The humans decided that they should kill the wolves since there would be fewer wolves and that would mean less competition for the animals the humans hunted for food. Finally, all the wolves were gone except the very last one. When the hunters saw him, they chased him to the point of land at the mouth of the Quinault river. The wolf looked at the hunters approaching him and the water that was the only route for escape. The wolf asked the grandfather spirits to help him. As the hunters came within striking distance to the wolf, the wolf jumped into the ocean and disappeared beneath the waves. When the hunters came to the end of the point of land, they saw where the wolf had disappeared beneath the waves. At that point in the ocean where the wolf had disappeared, there emerged in the water, the first orca whale.

### CONCLUSION

Most of these explanations of community and cultural needs, and museum activities and programmes, are drawn simply—they are presented as examples of the ideas and dimensions of the problems and possible situations one may encounter, and those a museum can address or facilitate. Each community will have different objectives and needs, but some of the strategies to address those identified ends may move in similar ways to other language-culture development programmes.

Museums and community partnerships can be rewarding for both, when both work towards goals that will enhance each other. The rôle of museums has been changing to accommodate the public needs, and advances in information and learning. As museums move towards interactive and co-operative relationships with communities, (in a rôle of educational institution), museums can do much to help and to facilitate programmes developed with their serving communities. In Native

American communities, where language and culture retention programmes are desired, museums can help those communities to research and develop those language-culture programmes; and programmes that will be socially and economically beneficial to the community.

The obstacles opposing language and culture are many; but the rewards of those programmes are more important than the obstacles. The historic events that have torn at the foundations of Native American (and other minority cultures) and those ideas that continue to undermine communities, erode self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, and the viability of those communities, must be acknowledged and understood. Language and culture programmes can only do so much (and must not exist in isolation), it is newspapers, signage, radio and television programmes that can provide the need to use the language—and the pride to hold that language and culture. Innovation and determination can help the community to realise its goals through various museum and self-help programmes.

The heart of these programme activities, is the desire that co-operative, interactive partnerships can help communities to be viable, eliminate violence, substance abuse, suicide and other social ills within the community. The problems are not new: acknowledgement of the problems has been a community concern for some time. In the past, elders have met together to talk about how to address these social problems and what solutions may work. (Traditionally, it is the elders who are the keepers of wisdom, to whom one must ask for permission and insight on what may be helpful to the community.) Language and cultural loss have been identified by the elders as a reason for the growth of community problems. In some communities (like the Quinault), the museum has been seen as a means to correct cultural loss, and to encourage "the old ways." If museums are to help communities, to contribute to community well-being, museums must listen—and be patient. What has taken many years to accumulate and to erode, cannot be undone overnight: patience, determination and persistence can overcome the inertia to resolve the problems confronting a community. We should have communities where we have self-esteem, self-reliance, humility and the gift for selfless service. We must see that we are a part of a whole, where our presence does matter, our contribution is necessary, that their contributions are also welcome and that others matter as we matter.

## GLOSSARY

**Community-Based and Determined Institutions:** Those institutions that support and reflect the spiritual, cultural and linguistic needs of a community; support self-esteem, expression; individual and community roles that include everyone within that community.

**Components of Culture:** The four major components of culture are: 1. tools and technology, 2. language and the use of symbols, 3. conscience and morality, 4. social organisation based on moral rules.

**Ethnocultural Preservation:** The consideration of the sacred or spirit that either is contained or is invested in an object; and is crucial to adding dimension to the understanding and interpretation of a culture.

**Holistic Exhibition:** The presentation of objects or artefacts in relationship with their intended task, and in context with the environment, season, or other associated environmental task-related materials and attributes.

**Holistic Presentation of Cultures:** Consideration of both material and non-material culture as valid attributes and crucial elements for understanding, interpreting and presenting a culture.

**Museum:** a non-profit-making, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, entertainment and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment. (ICOM Statutes, Article 2, adopted by the 16th General Assembly, 1989)

**New Museology:** The use of museum collections and holistic exhibition methodologies as a resource base and focus for education both within the museum and within the community; and for community interactive and co-operative projects and exhibitions aimed at amplifying and supplementing general education/language/culture.

**Non-material culture:** Those parts of culture that non-material and consist of such culture components as language, symbols, morals, conscience, social organisation, belief systems, world view and so forth.

**Relational Education:** The interrelationship between facts and events and ideas and those facts and events and ideas that relate to them, in ways that explain, define or illuminate that primary fact or event or idea. Strategies where hands-on, direct participation can take place, are preferred activities; as are traditional learning situations where combined activities are taught.



## APPENDIX 1

## MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

NORDISK MUSEOLOGI, 1993/1: SUMMARY PP. 61-65

Per-Uno Ågren

The literal and original meaning of the term museology—science of museums—was connected with the practices of the big museums in the continent of Europe. The term was used to cover the different methods applied in museum work. In recent years the concept has been expanded as a result of the continuous debate going on within ICOM (The International Council of Museums). Museology, it is argued, should study how, in different cultures and societies, people select and treat their material heritage, the movable property as well the physical environment, and what type of institutions and structures are established to manage the preservation, care and communication of the historical heritage. Such a definition of museology is easy to accept and adopt in Scandinavia, where historically there has been a close connection between the State Board of Antiquities responsible for the care of monuments and sites, on the one hand and the public museums on the other.

Then the paper states that the relationship between material and non-material culture, which are both present in public discourse, constantly presents tensions—the one being static and permanent, the other dynamic and transient. In museology the study of the museological process, wherein the cultural heritage of a society is created through the interaction of the non-material and the material elements of culture, is of central concern.

The second basic concept is the museological object—how it is selected and defined in different societies over time. Museology has three main theoretical perspectives—a historical one that describes and explains the cultural heritage in different places and times, a sociological one that studies the behaviour, activities and institutions that the idea of cultural heritage has produced, and a communicative one that studies the way in that the heritage has been passed on in different societies. Finally the paper exemplifies the type of research that should be carried out by museologists in the fields of theory of documentation, preservation and communication. The necessity for an interdisciplinary basis for museology is stressed throughout the paper.

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## APPENDIX 2

## FROM: «EN BIBLIOGRAFI OM ØKOMUSEER»

NORDISK MUSEOLOGI 1996/2, 57-70

JOHN AAGE GJESTRUM

"... Musée de la Grande Lande à Marquèze (Parc Régional des Landes de Gascogne), og Ile d'Ouessant (Parc Régional d'Armorique). Dette var lokale museumsprosjekter i tråd med idéer Rivière hadde arbeidet med gjennom mange tiår, og som nå fikk sin profilering knyttet til økomuseumsbegrepet. Det tredje økomuseet i 1972 var l'Ecomusée du la Communauté Le Creusot-Montceau-Les-Mines. I motsetning til det vi kan kalle park-økomuseene lå dette i et industrisamfunn. Museets eksperimentelle karakter som redskap for lokalsamfunnsutvikling markerer et mer radikalt syn på økomuseets sosiale rolle.

Disse to typene preget utviklingen av de franske økomuseene, som etter ti års tid tellet omkr. 30 museer. Rivière fortsatte å spille en aktiv rolle, og formulerte sin definisjon av økomuseet, - en definisjon som gjennomgikk stadig nye endringer fram til 1980, og som Rivière hele tida kalte en "Définition évolutive":

"... An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority, and a local population [...].

It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations that have preceded it [...].

It is a mirror that the local population holds up to visitors [...].

It is an expression of man and nature. It situates man in his natural environment. It portrays nature in its wildness, but also as adapted by traditional and industrial society in their own image.

It is an expression of time, when the explanations it offers reach back before the appearance of man, ascend the course of the prehistoric and historical times in which he lived and arrive finally at man's present. It also offers vistas of the future, while having no pretensions to decision-making, its function being rather to inform and critically analyse [...].

It is an interpretation of space [...].

It is a laboratory [...].

It is a conservation centre [...].

It is a school, in so far as it involves the population in its work of study and protection and encourages it to have a clearer grasp of its own future. [...] (Utdrag fra Rivière 1985)."

Den nære forbindelsen mellom økomuseene som nye museumseksperimenter og ICOMs toppledelse gjorde at prosjekterne raskt fikk stor internasjonal oppmerksomhet. Det skjedde gjennom publisering i ICOMs fora, og ved at museumfolk fra hele verden oppsøkte de franske økomuseene og tok idéene med hjem og tilpasset de til andre kontekster. Med et 25-års perspektiv kan det i ettertid ikke være tvil om at økomuseumsidéene har representert noe av det viktigste som har skjedd i fornyelsen av museumsinstitusjonene. Og da ikke bare knyttet til gjennomføringen av de ulike økomuseumsprosjekter, men også fordi det er blitt skapt miljøer i mange land for en kritisk omvurdering av de tradisjonelle museene. . ."

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<sup>1</sup> («1789 är det revolution i Frankrike. Där låter medelklassen halshugga kungen och avskaffar adeln. Här hemma i Sverige är det kungen själv som gör revolution, avskaffar privilegiesamhället och ger medelklassen mer makt.» "Revolutionen i Sverige - en lång historia 1772-1810," *Den Svenska Historien*: Nordiska museet, <http://www.rashm.se/sture/Nm/htrevo.html>; (Updated: 1997-01-15)

<sup>2</sup> («Adelns valde bryts och medelklassen får mer makt. Efter statskuppen får Gustav III många fiender. En del adelsmän betraktar honom som tyrann. Några går så långt att de bestämmer sig för att mörda kungen. De sammansvurna slår till 16 mars 1792. Gustav är på maskeradbal på Operan - trots varningar att något kan hända. Där skjuts han av officeren och adelsmannen Johan Jacob Anckarström! Skottskadad och blödande förs kungen till slottet, där han dör tretton dagar senare. Mördaren grips, döms till döden och avrättas.» "Revolutionen i Sverige - en lång historia 1772-1810," *Den Svenska Historien*: Nordiska museet, <http://www.rashm.se/sture/Nm/htrevo.html>; (Updated: 1997-01-15)