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Museality at breakfast : the concept of museality in contemporary museological discourse

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abstrakt | abstract ▷

The concept of museality in contemporary museological discourse After a brief reference to the Stránský-Schreiner controversy of 1983, the paper will focus on the concept of significance as published by the Australian Heritage Collections Council in 2001, trying to answer the question: to what extent does this approach “solve” the Stránský-Schreiner controversy? Via a brief discussion of valuation methods in the sphere of landscape preservation as developed during the 1990s in the United Kingdom, the paper will propose a recent Dutch method of cultural value assessment, published by the Cultural Heritage Agency in 2013, as useful collection management tool, implementing Stránský's concept of museality from an integrated and interdisciplinary perspective.

Po krátkém ohlédnutí za polemikou mezi Stránským a Schreinerem z roku 1983 se příspěvek zaměřuje na koncept significance, který publikoval Australský úřad pro kulturní dědictví v roce 2001. Pokouší se přitom najít odpověď na otázku, do jaké míry tento přístup „řeší“ dřívější rozpor mezi Stránským a Schreinerem. Prostřednictvím krátké diskuse o metodách zhodnocování v oblasti ochrany krajiny, vyvinutých během 90. let 20. století ve Spojeném království, je ve studii prezentována současná nizozemská metoda posuzování kulturní hodnoty, publikovaná Agenturou pro kulturní dědictví v roce 2013. Metoda je zde představena ve sjednocujícím a interdisciplinárním pohledu jako užitečný nástroj pro spravování sbírek, zohledňující zároveň Stránského koncept muzeality.

Peter van Mensch

Museality at breakfast

The concept of museality in contemporary museological discourse

At the end of 2014 the Museum of European Cultures at Berlin¹ organised a small participatory exhibition of contemporary everyday objects that represent the biographical experience of Europe to their owners.² The exhibition was critically reviewed by Matthias Wulff in the Berlin daily newspaper *Berliner Morgenpost*.³ Interestingly, the article uses the term “musealisation”, but criticises the musealisation of popular culture. The author introduces “Küchenzuruf” as value criterion. This term is used in journalism⁴ for what the reader might tell his/her partner/colleagues at breakfast in the kitchen, or while standing in line for the coffee machine at the office, about the core message of a newspaper article.

In his article Wulff addresses one of the core issues in museological practice and theory: what is the value of (museum) objects and who decides about this? Obviously Wulff completely missed the point of the exhibition as the organisers worked from a different approach to value, thus illustrating an often described misunderstanding between museum professionals and museum visitors. The aim of the present paper is to explore the conceptualisation of value in contemporary museology and heritage studies as contribution to the development of a framework for discussion and understanding between all stakeholders involved in the process of musealisation.

The concept of museality

One of the godfathers of contemporary museology is Zbyněk Stránský. Already as far back as the late 1960s he developed the concepts of museality and musealisation as two of the cornerstones of his understanding of museology as academic discipline. Contrary

to the concept of musealisation, the concept of museality has never been widely accepted. One major contribution to the “history of ideas” in museology is the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie* edited by André Desvallées and François Mairesse.⁵ In the book musealisation is used as headword, museality is not used as such. Instead the term “muséal” is used as “néologisme construit par conversion en substantive d'un adjectif lui-même récent”.⁶ Stránský is referred to but the term museality itself is not used.

Interestingly, outside Czech Republic the concept of museality is better known from authors other than Stránský himself, be it more in German speaking contexts rather than English ones. The concept is discussed in well-known handbooks on museology (Flügel, Maroevič, Waidacher).⁷ But despite this support it seems as if the concept has faded away in the international museological discourse. So, a few words to characterise the concept.

In 1986 Stránský was invited as keynote speaker at the official celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Reinwardt Academie (Leiden, Netherlands).⁸ He was deliberately asked to speak about his thoughts on museality. The text was not published but as it is probably his most elaborated paper on the issue (at least in English and German) I will quote the core section here.⁹

According to Stránský, the identity of museology as a distinct branch of knowledge is based upon “the totality of specific reality, which I tentatively call ‘museum reality’, i.e. objective and subjective reality that is bearing several characteristics which can be subsumed under this term”. It is a cultural reality which means “that certain objects taken out of natural and social reality are selected by man who

¹ Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

² The exhibition, in fact a single show case, was part of the intervention “EuropaTest” in the frame of the Humboldt Lab Dahlem “Probephühne 4” in the Ethnological Museum, Berlin-Dahlem (23 September 2014–8 February 2015).

³ WULFF, Matthias. Jute-Tüte in Vitrine. *Berliner Morgenpost*, 19-09-2014.

⁴ Coined by Henri Nannen (1913–1996), editor-in-chief of Stern (1949–1980). LAMER, Annika [online], [cit. 2015-02-10]. Available from www: <<http://www.annika-lamer.de/henri-nannens-kuechenzuruf-so-bringen-sie-ihre-werbetexte-auf-den-punkt>>.

⁵ DESVALLÉES, André and François MAIRESSE. *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*. Paris: Armand Collin, 2011.

⁶ Idem, p. 235.

⁷ FLÜGEL, Katharine. *Einführung in die Museologie*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005; MAROEVIČ, Ivo. *Introduction to museology – the European approach*. München: Verlag Dr. Christian Müller-Straten, 1998; WAIDACHER, Friedrich. *Handbuch der Allgemeinen Museologie*. Wien: Böhlau-Verlag, 1993.

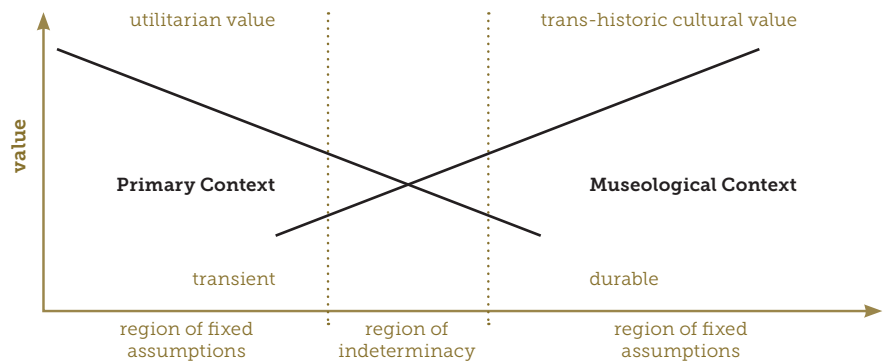
⁸ 24 November 1986.

⁹ The text was copied in limited edition and distributed among students and staff of the Reinwardt Academie.

puts them into a new context and preserves them against the nature of their changes and destruction. It is characteristic of this approach that there is an ontological agreement between material and selected objects, but the reason why they were selected does not consist in this agreement, but because they bear a different meaning for man. This shift in weight is motivated by the value of the object. If value is understood as an expression of the object subject relationship, then it means that selected objects correspond to the intentions of value relationship of man to reality, i.e. that they satisfy him. Still it is not only the question of this value relationship, because it has a much more general social impact. In our case it is the value relationship, or values which represent that part of cultural reality which man wants to preserve and use in the interest of his evolution as a cultural being. [...] in the museum reality we can find the reflection of a very specific value relationship of man to reality which might be immediately inferred from his substance as a cultural being. As there is a value relationship, i.e. the value aspect of reality, I [i.e. Stránský, PvM] have tried to find the term by which I could unambiguously define the specificity of this value relationship to other kinds of these relationships. Thus I have introduced the concept of museality into museological terminology. I regard museality as a value category. Its specificity consists in the implicit values which are preconditions of man's evolution as a cultural being, i.e. they have the significance of being an integrating factor between the past, the present and the future. These values are conditioned ontologically, i.e. the value estimation is conditioned by the nature of material reality. Consequently these values have the significance of being authentic witnesses of natural and societal reality, i.e. they are arguments of truth". Elsewhere Stránský emphasizes that museality "is a value which [...] goes beyond temporal values thanks to its cultural importance ("eternal" as opposed to temporal)".¹⁰ As Schimpff writes: "A museality oriented museology allows those who work in museums to make the right decisions and to work well - beyond political and other moods, subject-matter horizons, and economic or fiscal boom and bust".¹¹

Something may very well be "lost in translation", but the combination of "authentic", "truth", and "eternal" did not favor the acceptance of these ideas in the West. Neither in the social-

Changes in the value build-up of objects (after Thompson 1979)



ist world. The strongest opponent of Stránský's ideas was Klaus Schreiner, one of the most influential museologists of the German Democratic Republic. In his book on museology and archive science in the GDR, Hanslok highlights the controversy between Schreiner and Stránský, or actually Schreiner's criticism of some aspects of Stránský's theoretical approaches.¹² The core of Schreiner's criticism is that there cannot exist general human values that are independent of class interests.¹³ In speaking about objective, eternal values, Stránský, according to Schreiner, is guilty of promoting bourgeois ideology. In addition, Schreiner states that there can be no specific significance of objects outside the scientific disciplines ("fachwissenschaftliche Disziplinen"). In post-1989 Europe the first criticism soon lost its validity. To what extend cultural values other than those connected with scientific subject-matter disciplines should play a role in museums is still a much discussed issue, but present day museological rhetoric seems to move away from a strict scientific approach. The main thesis of the present paper is that despite his emphasis on eternal truth, Stránský's concept of a cultural value that goes beyond scientific subject-matter values and is an expression of a specific relation between people and their environment, was (far) ahead of notions developed within the context of contemporary Critical Heritage Studies which raises the question whether Stránský's conceptualizing could (or should) be revived again.

Rubbish theory

One of the main models to fit the process of musealisation into the biography of an object

is the model presented by Michael Thompson in his *Rubbish Theory*.¹⁴ It is an old model, but has proven its value. Moreover, it is an interesting example of how a model from one heritage sector (monuments) can be popular in another (museums). Thompson's model is often linked to the concepts elaborated in the book edited by Appadurai *The social life of things*,¹⁵ especially the article by Igor Kopytoff therein.^{16,17} Like Thompson's publication also Kopytoff's article found broad resonance in the heritage sector. Both texts belong to the canon of heritage theory.

The usefulness of the model of Thompson relies mainly on two aspects: the distinction between three phases in the process of musealisation and the premise that there is always both a utilitarian value as a trans-historic cultural value. In Phase A (primary context) the handling of the object is determined primarily by its use value, in Phase C (museological context) the handling is determined primarily by its cultural and historical value. In Phase A, however, we already see a quality developing that potentially turns the object into a unique document. In Phase C, this quality is formalized because the object is included in a collection. However, the object, in principle, could still be used in the function for which it was originally intended.

Phase B is the most interesting because here a trade-off between the two values. Thompson calls the Phases A and C "regions of fixed assumptions", where there is more or less

¹⁰ STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Museology. Introduction to the study of museology for the students of the International Summer School of Museology – ISSOM*. Brno: Masaryk University, 1995, p. 39.

¹¹ SCHIMPF, Volk. *Musealität in Zeiten des Umbruchs. Curiositas. Jahrbuch für Museologie und museale Quellenkunde*, 2011, vol. 11, p. 58–68.

¹² HANSLOK, Andreas. *Museologie und Archivwissenschaft in der DDR. Abgrenzung und Annäherung zweier Nachbarwissenschaften*. Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2008.

¹³ SCHREINER, Klaus. *Einführung in die Museologie – ein Beitrag zu den theoretischen Grundlagen der Museumsarbeit. Heft 1*. Neubrandenburg: [no publisher], 1982.

¹⁴ THOMPSON, Michael. *Rubbish theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

¹⁵ APPADURAI, Arjun. *The social life of things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

¹⁶ KOPYTOFF, Igor. *The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process*. In APPADURAI, Arjun. *The social life of things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 64–91. The social life of things: *Commodities in Cultural Perspective*.

¹⁷ PARSONS, Liz. *Thompson's Rubbish Theory: exploring the practices of value creation*. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 2008, vol. 8, p. 390–393.

consensus on how to deal with the balance between the utilitarian value and the trans-his-toric cultural value. Phase B is the “region of indeterminacy”, a state of uncertainty because it is not clear how the two values relate to each other. Thompson himself defines the value of the object at this stage as rubbish: the use value has dropped below a threshold and the cultural and historical value is not yet established. Thus Phase B finds its boundaries at the one hand when the (potential) significance of the object is identified as heritage, and at the other when the object is formally included in a collection.

Dutch historian Willem Frijhoff identifies four basic operations involved in Phase B.¹⁸ These basic operations are the mechanics of what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) meant when she defined heritage in terms of meta-cultural production and what Laurajane Smith meant by saying: “The discursive construction of heritage is itself part of the cultural and social practices that are heritage.”¹⁹ Frijhoffs basic operations are:

- 1 The mechanism of inclusion and exclusion to determine who or what does or does not play a role in the process.
- 2 The formation and establishment of cultural rules, codes and standards.
- 3 The formulation of a discourse about the culture, which will legitimize selection by equating the culture of the community with its dominant self-image.
- 4 The appropriation of all the components of external, seemingly “foreign” cultures that appear to be important, attractive, profitable and adaptable in the native culture.

The outcome of these operations is that the object becomes “recognized heritage”. Thompson’s model suggests that the cultural and historical significance of this “recognized heritage” is constantly increasing in Phase C. That is not the case. Meaning is relative and thus fluctuating. A loss of cultural and historical value could lead to removal from the collection (de-accessioning).

A multitude of values

It is easy to make a connection between trans-his-toric cultural value and museality as values opposite to scientific values. However, since the 1970s more differentiated approaches

towards value have been developed.²⁰ Several authors have made comparison of several value typologies. Based on the comparison of a number of typologies Randall Mason makes the distinction between two categories of heritage values: socio-cultural values and economic values.²¹ As to socio-cultural values, Mason gives five categories: historical values, cultural (symbolic) values, social values, spiritual (religious) values and aesthetic values. Under historical value he understands the “capacity [...] to convey, embody, or stimulate a relation or reaction to the past”. Included are educational value and artistic value. Artistic value is defined as “value based on an object’s being unique, being the best, being a good example, or being the work of a particular individual, and so on”. As such it is different from aesthetic value, being “perhaps the most personal and individualistic of the socio-cultural values”. Mason relates the cultural value to identity. Political value is a form of that. The distinction with social value is not entirely clear. Here too, it is the binding capacity of heritage. Economic value consists of in use value and nonuse value. Nonuse value consists of values “that are not traded in or captured by markets and are therefore difficult to express in terms of price”. In this context Mason mentions existence value (“Individuals value a heritage item for its mere existence, even though they themselves may not experience it or ‘consume its services’ directly”), option value (“The option value of heritage refers to someone’s wish to preserve the possibility (the option) that he or she might consume the heritage’s services at some future time”), and bequest value (“Bequest value stems from the wish to bequeath a heritage asset to future generations”).

Markus Walz presents a different inventory of cultural and historical values.²² He makes a distinction between primary and comparative criteria. As primary criteria he gives nine options: scientific source value (“wissenschaftliche Quellenwert”), historical testimonial value (“historischer Zeugniswert”), artistic value (“künstlerischer Wert”), aesthetic value (“ästhetischer Wert”), contemporary social value (“gesellschaftlicher Wert”), contemporary

religious value (“religiöser Wert”), contemporary philosophical value (“weltanschaulicher Wert”), age value (“Alterswert”), and emotional value (“emotionaler Wert”). As secondary (comparative) criteria he also mentions nine values: authenticity (“Echtheit”), intentional commemorative value (“gewollter Erinnerungswert”), design quality (“Kreativer Gehalt (Gestaltung/Erfindung)”), technical and technological relevancy (“technische/technologische Relevanz”), illustrative value (“Beispielhaftigkeit”), rarity (“Seltenheit”), provenance (“bekannte Provenienz”), condition (“Erhaltungszustand”), and educational value (“Anschaulichkeit/Vermittlungsrelevanz”).

Behind these attempts to “objectify” the definition of value is the same ambition as reflected in Stránský’s proposal even though not all values as mentioned in preceding paragraphs might be considered as parts of museality. However, the values as given by Mason and the primary values listed by Walz express different aspects of a value relation with reality that is not based on a scientific information value.

Valuation systems

Since the 1970s the idea of landscape evaluation was developed in Great-Britain, since the 1980s preferably designated as landscape assessment. The principle is that “landscape is different to environment: a characterization or landscape is a matter of interpretation not record, perception not facts; ‘landscape’ is an idea not a thing, constructed by our minds and emotions from the combination and inter-relationship of physical objects”.²³ The importance of landscaper assessment is its methodological approach, referred to as “integrated characterization”. The method provides two “stages” and a total of six “steps”. The first phase (“Characterisation”) is descriptive, the second (“Making judgments”) appreciative. This is similar to the method as developed by Mason who gives three phases:

- 1 Identification and description.
- 2 Assessment and analysis.
- 3 Response.²⁴ Response involves the establishing of policies, setting objectives and developing strategies. The outcome of phase 2 is a “Statement of significance”.²⁵

²⁰ Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858–1905) was the first to give a theoretical elaboration of the different values of historical objects (Riegl 1903; Arrhenius 2004). His key publication from 1903, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen, seine Entstehung*, was published in English in 1982. FORSTER, Kurt and Diane GHIRARDO. The modern cult of monuments: its character and origin. *Oppositions*, 1982, vol. 25, p. 20–51; ARRHENIUS, Thordis. The Cult of Age in Mass-Society. Alois Riegl’s Theory of Conservation. *Future Anterior*, 2004, vol. 1, iss. 1, p. 75–81.

²¹ MASON, Randall. Assessing values in conservation planning. Methodological issues and choices. In *The Heritage Reader*. London, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 99–124.

²² WALZ, Markus. Erbfallfrei Geerbt vererben. In KANIA-SCHÜTZ, Monika. *In die Jahre gekommen. Chancen und Potenzialen Kulturhistorischer Museen*. Münster, 2009, p. 159–171.

²³ FAIRCLOUGH, Graham and Lesley MACINNES. *Understanding historic landscape character*. London/Edinburgh: The Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002, p. 2. Also: ALDRED, Oscar and Graham FAIRCLOUGH. *Historic Landscape Characterisation. Taking stock of the method*. London: English Heritage, 2003.

²⁴ MASON, Randall. Assessing values in conservation planning. Methodological issues and choices. In *The Heritage Reader*. London, New York: Routledge, 2008, fig. 7.1.

²⁵ Idem, p. 119.

¹⁸ FRIJHOFF, Willem. *Dynamisch erfgoed*. SUN, Amsterdam: SUN, 2007.

¹⁹ KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT, Barbara. Intangible heritage as metacultural production. *Museum International*, 2004, vol. 56, iss. 1–2, p. 52–65; SMITH, Laurajane. *Uses of heritage*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, p. 13.

A similar approach was adopted by the Australian Heritage Collections Council. Under the title Significance it published a method for valuing collections.²⁶ The method relied heavily on the work of Australia ICOMOS, which had developed the *Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (the so-called *Burra Charter*, 1979, 1999) and the *Guidelines to the Burra Charter: cultural significance* (1984, 1988).²⁷ The *Burra Charter* itself was an elaboration of the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments* (Venice Charter, 1964). The model defines significance as “the meanings and values of an item or collection through research and analysis, and by assessment against a standard set of criteria”.²⁸ Four primary assessment criteria are given: “historic, artistic or aesthetic, scientific or research potential, social or spiritual”. In addition, four comparative criteria are given to “evaluate the degree of significance. These are modifiers of the main criteria: provenance, rarity or representativeness, condition or completeness, interpretive capacity”.²⁹

The importance of the Significance methodology is that a step was made from monuments and sites to museums, thus preparing an integrated approach towards heritage.³⁰

Stakeholders

A shortcoming of Thompson's theory is that he does not refer to the actual practice of assessment, i.e. the role of different actors.³¹ As Walz observes: value assessment takes place in the present and is independent from the attribution of values in the past.³² In this respect Mason states: “Newer thinking about preservation recognizes that significance is made, not found. It is socially constructed and situational, and it recognizes that appraisals of significance may have as much to do with the people and society making them as with any actual site”.³³ In addition he points out that

all cultural and historical values are political values “in that they are part of the power struggles and exertions that determine the fate of heritage”.³⁴ It is therefore important to analyze which parties are involved (or excluded) in the process of valuation. Recently museum theoreticians have in this respect successfully applied the Actor Network Theory of Bruno Latour and others, for example in the book *Unpacking the collection. Networks of material and social agency in the museum*.³⁵ The book aims to uncover how “museum collections have been and are still active in forming social relations between varied persons and groups, including creator communities, collectors, anthropologists [the authors focus on ethnographical museums, PvM], curators, auctioneers and museum administrators, all of whom have also been shaped through interactions with each other and with the material objects”.³⁶ All stakeholders have a different interest and a different role in the construction of values.

For the determination of primary values Walz mentions three actors: science, society and the individual. Each actor is in some way linked to a number of value criteria. In this respect he distinguishes between “Beurteilung” and “Einschätzung”. It involves scientific (objective) “Beurteilung” associated with the scientific source value, social (subjective) “Einschätzung” associated with the social value, and individual (subjective) “Einschätzung” associated with emotional value.³⁷

In the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003, three major categories of distinct stakeholders are mentioned: source communities, national governments and professionals. “Each brings with them a different idea of community and a range of beliefs in the Importance and contribution of heritage to their social, cultural or political project”.³⁸ However, the complex dynamics between the three parties is often not recognized. Museum professionals dominate the discourse heritage and claim a natural and exclusive right to “objectified, substantiated and verifiable statements about the value of heritage”.³⁹ It is what Laurajane Smith refers

to as Authoritative Heritage Discourse.⁴⁰ Recently, much has been written about the dynamics between (source) communities and professionals and how they are “continuously dancing around the past”.⁴¹ Not only the notion of expert knowledge is discussed but also the notion of community. Museum 2.0, participation and crowdsourcing are keywords of a new museum revolution.⁴²

Dutch archivist Theo Thomassen mentions a fourth stakeholder: the media.⁴³ He argues that the power of the collective memory is not only exercised by those managing the heritage, but also by those who control the media with which historical documents are communicated. In discussions about museums/heritage “mediated reality” tend to play a decisive role. It's not about facts, but rather about their public perception. This perception is influenced by the media.⁴⁴

Intermediate Context as Third Space

The model of Thompson describes the increases and decreases in values (use versus cultural and historical value) in the biography of objects. In the explanation above, Phase B is defined as transitional phase. In the context of this paper it is relevant to draw attention to a current tendency to consider Phase B as a valid option, a sort of “Third Space”.⁴⁵

In 2011, Museum Catharijneconvent, in the Netherlands, joined forces with churches and heritage institutions to develop the *Guidelines on Ways of Dealing with Religious Objects* as assessment framework for religious heritage.⁴⁶ The religious landscape

²⁶ [significance]. *A guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*. Canberra: Heritage Collections Council, 2001. In 2009 a new version was published: *Significance 2.0. A guide to assessing the significance of collections*. Rundle Mall: Collections Council of Australia, 2009.

²⁷ AUSTRALIA ICOMOS. *Burra Charter* [online]. [cit. 2015-02-10]. Available from www: <http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA_CHARTER.pdf>.

²⁸ *Significance 2.0 A guide to assessing the significance of collections*. Rundle Mall: Collections Council of Australia, 2009, p. 10.

²⁹ Idem.

³⁰ See also: AVRAMI, Erica, Randall MASON and Marta DE LA TORRE. *Values and heritage conservation*. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2000.

³¹ PARSONS, Liz. Thompsons' Rubbish Theory: exploring the practices of value creation. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 2008, vol. 8, p. 390–393.

³² WALZ, Markus. Erbfallfrei Geerbtas vererben. In KANIA-SCHÜTZ, Monika. *In die Jahre gekommen. Chancen und Potenzialen Kulturhistorischer Museen*. Münster, 2009, p. 159.

³³ MASON, Randall. Fixing historic preservation: a constructive critique of significance. *Places*, 2003, vol. 16, iss. 1, p. 64–71.

³⁴ MASON, Randall. Assessing values in conservation planning. Methodological issues and choices. In *The Heritage Reader*. London, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 104.

³⁵ *Unpacking the collection. Networks of material and social agency in the museum*. New York: Springer, 2011.

³⁶ Idem, p. 4.

³⁷ WALZ, Markus. Erbfallfrei Geerbtas vererben. In KANIA-SCHÜTZ, Monika. *In die Jahre gekommen. Chancen und Potenzialen Kulturhistorischer Museen*. Münster, 2009, Abbildung 2.

³⁸ CROOKE, Elizabeth. Museums and community. In MACDONALD, Sharon (ed.). *A companion to museum studies*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 16.

³⁹ SCHOUTEN, Frans. Over het waarderen van erfgoed. *Volkscultuur Magazine*, 2010, vol. 5, iss.1, p. 35–37.

⁴⁰ SMITH, Laurajane. *Uses of heritage*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, p. 13.

⁴¹ SCHOUTEN, Frans. Over het waarderen van erfgoed. *Volkscultuur Magazine*, 2010, vol. 5, iss.1, p. 36.

⁴² VAN MENSCH, Peter and Léontine MEIJER-VAN MENSCH. *New Trends in Museology*. Celje: Muzej novejšje zgodovine, 2012. Also: MEIJER-VAN MENSCH, Léontine and Peter VAN MENSCH. From disciplinary control to co-creation. Collecting and the development of museums as praxis in the nineteenth and twentieth century. In PETERSON, Susanna, Monika HAGEDORN-SAUPE, Teijamari JYRKKIÖ and Astrid WEIJ. *Encouraging collections mobility – a way forward for museums in Europe*. Helsinki/Amsterdam/Berlin, 2010, p. 33–53.

⁴³ THOMASSEN, Theo. *Archiefwetenschap, erfgoed en politisering*. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers, 2011.

⁴⁴ For examples, see: VAN MENSCH, Peter. “Against all norms and values”: dilemmas of collecting controversial objects. In BATTISTI, Jacques. *Que reste-t-il du présent? Collecter le contemporain dans les musées du société*. Bordeaux: Le Festin, 2012, p. 138–145.

⁴⁵ The concept is derived from Ray Oldenburg and Homi Bhabha, but not identical. See: OLDENBURG, Ray. *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You Through the Day*. New York: Paragon House, 1989.

⁴⁶ *Guidelines on Ways of Dealing Religious Objects* [online]. [cit. 2015-02-10]. Available (in English) from www: <<http://www.handreikingroendreligieuserfgoed.nl/assets/Uploads/Guidelines-on-Ways-of-Dealing-with-Religious-Objects-1.1.pdf>>.

the Netherlands is changing dramatically. Fewer and fewer people attend church, and many churches and monasteries are being forced to close their doors. As a result, besides finding a new use for these buildings, it is also necessary to deal with the religious objects they contain. Increased secularization has brought much religious objects (and buildings) into Phase B, the region of indeterminacy, where use value(s) and cultural-historical value(s) have to be redefined as well as the relation between these two sets of values. In the framework, the utilitarian value as dominant value in Phase A is defined as "current value", namely "the current emotional/religious value that a churchgoer, church leader, preacher, pastor or sexton assigns to an object". The value goes beyond pure functional use. In determining the current value, the following questions must be answered: "Is the subject closely related to the proclamation of the Word of God, the celebration of the sacraments, or does it otherwise take an important place in the liturgy? Does the object have devotional significance? Does the object illustrate current traditions or customs characteristic to the church community? Does the object illustrate a connectedness within the community? Does the object possess a certain memorial value for the community? Does the community have a certain interest in the object?". In the same assessment framework trans-historic cultural value is defined in plural as "historical values": the church-historical, general historical and art-historical values. In case the use value is still adequate, Phase A can be extended. In case both the use value and the cultural-historical value are not satisfactory disposal may be considered. When the cultural and historical values are sufficiently large, musealisation is an option (Phase C).

What is at stake here is the recognition of the heritage character of objects that are still in use and "even" the assumption that the use value is enhanced by this recognition which is common practice in the sphere of the preservation of historic buildings and landscapes, but new in the sphere of movable cultural heritage. To some extent aforementioned UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* is a plea for institutionalizing Phase B with safeguarding instead of conservation as leading principle: "To be kept alive, intangible cultural heritage must be relevant to its community, continuously recreated and transmitted from one generation to another. There is a risk that certain elements of intangible cultural heritage could die out or disappear without help, but safeguarding does not mean fixing or freezing intangible cultural heritage in some pure or primordial form. Safeguarding

intangible cultural heritage is about the transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning. Transmission – or communicating heritage from generation to generation – is emphasized rather than the production of concrete manifestations such as dances, songs, musical instruments or crafts. Therefore, to a large extent, any safeguarding measure refers to strengthening and reinforcing the diverse and varied circumstances, tangible and intangible, that are necessary for the continuous evolution and interpretation of intangible cultural heritage, as well as for its transmission to future generations".⁴⁷

Museality revisited

The lack of resonance caused stagnation in the development of the concept of museality.⁴⁸ Where others refer to the concept, they just repeat one of the publications of Stránský rather than discuss it.⁴⁹ At the same time elaborated value assessment methodologies have been developed in a wider heritage sphere, which are by and large adopted by museums. These methodologies agree with Stránský's attempt to conceptualize the specificity of the museum relation to reality in terms of value, but follow another road. Increasingly the assessment of value, i.e. the definition of heritage, is seen as collective, participatory enterprise and not as museological scientific work. Even though contemporary museologists may speak of shared or even collective interests, "truth" and "eternal" are not part of current vocabulary. The ambition is not to make "right decisions", knowing that heritage values are socially constructed and situational.

An influential methodology, the one from Australia, favors the term significance rather than value. The consequence of this change in terminology is still to be discussed, but a more challenging development is the introduction of the concept of agency.⁵⁰ The potential of the Actor-Network Theory in museological theory is after thirty years still underexplored but will eventually bring new perspectives on the creation of heritage values.⁵¹ It is interesting, and to some extent disappointing, to see that strong supporters of the Actor-Network

Theory and the concept of agency in the book *Unpacking the collection. Networks of material and social agency in the museum* do speak of creating collections and the attribution of values, but never use the term musealization, let alone the term museality. It is obvious that there is a danger of becoming marginalised when museology is not able to catch up with contemporary thinking in related fields.

Parallel to the introduction of valuation methodologies, a new academic discipline emerged: "heritage studies", with "critical heritage studies" as special branch. Heritage studies traditionally focusses on buildings and landscapes, but there is no sharp demarcation between heritage studies and museology. After a general acceptance of the opinion that museology should focus on the idea behind museums (one of the main achievements of Zbyněk Stránský) and not the institute museum as its most typical expression, a growing number of authors suggested to broaden the scope of museology to a wider range of heritage institutions. One of the early supporters of this paradigmatic shift, Tomislav Šola (Zagreb), proposed to replace "museology" by "heritology". Although this half-jokingly proposed neologism met some approval, the term did not hold against "heritage studies".

Significant museology and museum studies programmes developed into heritage studies programmes (Amsterdam, Newcastle), while a large number of new heritage studies programmes were created. Even though, apart from the new Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS, founded in 2013), there is no international infrastructure comparable to the International Council of Museums, the International Council of Archives, the International Council of Monuments and Sites, etc., and even though there is as yet no integrated code of professional ethics – two necessary preconditions for turning a discipline into a profession – critical heritage studies show a strong appeal especially to university staff (lecturers and researchers) more than to professionals working in heritage institutions.

Can the concept of museality be revived and, in view of its potential to meet the needs of a broader heritage field, made relevant for (critical) heritage studies? Yes and no. Yes, because the concept refers to "a cultural and social process, which engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present"⁵² which is precisely what (critical) heritage studies is about. However, in current

⁴⁷ *Safeguarding without freezing* [online]. [cit. 2015-02-10]. Available from www: <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00012>>.

⁴⁸ Compare for example STRÁNSKÝ, Zbyněk Z. *Archeologie a muzeologie*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita v Brně, 2005. (To the text of 1986).

⁴⁹ For example: *Muzealization in contemporary society and role of museology*. Prague: Czech Association of Museums and Galleries, 2008.

⁵⁰ *Unpacking the collection. Networks of material and social agency in the museum*. New York: Springer, 2011.

⁵¹ LATOUR, Bruno. *Science in action. How to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.

⁵² SMITH, Laurajane. *Uses of heritage*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, p. 2.

conceptualisations of heritage as “a mentality, a way of knowing and seeing”⁵³ the concepts of heritage and museality seem to coincide. Emphasising its discursive character, Smith’s approach to heritage seems to have a stronger position than Stránský’s emphasis on the eternal truth of authentic witnesses of natural and societal reality. Following Smith’s observation that “the discursive construction of heritage is itself part of the cultural and social processes that are heritage”⁵⁴ we may treasure the concept of museality as heritage of our own professional field, worth to be discussed with a little touch of nostalgia during breakfast. ■

Keywords:

theory of museology – contemporary museological discourse – concept of museality – methods of cultural value assessment – landscape preservation

Klíčová slova:

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⁵³ Idem, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Idem, p. 13.