CHAPTER 39

The Never-ending Story About Heritage and Museums: Four Discursive Models

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The present chapter attempts to articulate an integrative perspective on heritage and its models of presentation, particularly on its relation to historical and cultural learning. First, recent developments surrounding heritage and its conceptualization will be analyzed, in addition to some fundamental issues. Second, the citizen as a producer, user, and decision-maker with regard to heritage will be focused upon. Third, heritage presentation spaces will be addressed, that is, in situ heritage, museums, and exhibitions. These presentation spaces are among the current privileged settings for coming into contact with historical knowledge. They are a fundamental tool for history education because they can be accessible to society as a whole and throughout the citizen's life. Heritage presentation spaces gain social relevance. From the economic perspective, they result in very substantial investments, and in many cases, they become the center for processes of urban and territorial distribution. However, they also constitute a field of ideological debate.

From Monumental Heritage to Patrimonial Process

For a variety of important reasons, it is not a simple task to define heritage and museums as historical spaces. In the first place, this is due to the entire scope of museums and heritage. The editor of one of the most influential recent manuals in the field of museology introduces his book with the following statement: 'The absence of a "canon" is paradoxically both a liberating fact and an imposing responsibility' (Carbonell, 2012: 1). Indeed, in this context, the canon

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represents diversity. However, this is a recent issue. In the not-too-distant past, we had a clear model of what a museum or heritage was. One hundred years ago, no one would have argued that the ideal of the museum was the *Ashmolean* in Oxford or the *National Museum of Denmark* (to mention but two examples). In this sense, if someone was asked to give an example of heritage, he or she could mention the Doric temple of *Segesta* in Sicily or the *Pyramid of the Moon* in the Aztec *Teotihuacan*. However, attempting to define museums and heritage is like facing a very complex reality that gathers many expressions from our current society. In general, it can be said that they only have two minimum basic conditions in common. One condition is referring to the past even though it is neither the focus nor the main purpose of its discourse. The second condition is that the reference must be directly or indirectly linked to heritage.

Second, the very definition of heritage is ambiguous. The classical and traditional perspective of heritage was identified with monuments and with uniqueness and value from an artistic or historical perspective. The concept was progressively extended to any object that was a purveyor of culture, which ended up losing even its tangible nature. For example, today, heritage is considered to be the gesture adopted when using a tool, as might be the use of a typical *laia* of the southern Atlantic coast. Thus, considering heritage as intangible (Beier-de Haan, 2006) has helped to include heritage contents hitherto excluded from heritage discourse and hence excluded from the possibility of being preserved and of creating narratives in the future (Roigé & Frigolé, 2010).

The huge advantage of this extension of the concept of heritage is that it allows the possibility of keeping outlooks on aspects of history that hitherto was not taken into consideration (Santacana & Llonch, 2015). That is the case of much of the knowledge associated with everyday life, the world of labor, and rites and beliefs. The challenge of accepting a wide openness of the heritage concept is that it enables including large amounts of heritage items, thus tremendously hindering their selection. However, this openness may also have drawbacks. Indeed, if there is no specific criterion, for example, to determine how many and which battlefields must be preserved among the vast number existing in Europe, this task becomes unsustainable. On the other hand, poor judgment *a fortiori* entails the application of random criteria that have nothing to do with the real significance of the heritage to be preserved for future generations.

Third, in the sphere of museums and heritage, there is a change not only in the manner in which heritage is considered but also in the manner in which it is studied. For example, if a painting by Pieter Brueghel, *De korenoogst* (1565), representing a country scene at harvest time, is displayed in an art museum, then it will be studied for its aesthetic characteristics and artistic technique. However, if it is exhibited in an anthropological museum, then it may generate studies on rural occupations, their tools, and agricultural programs. In the same vein, an astrolabe is very differently perceived, depending on whether it is part of the collections of a museum of history, a museum of decorative

arts, a maritime museum, or a museum of science and technology. In a specific heritage context, each piece in a given museum, and not in another, is studied with a different intention of providing knowledge and with distinct methods, seeking a specific social function.

In this sense, four major disciplinary trends may be identified in the study of collections and in reference disciplines in the museumization of heritage sites, namely, those related to art, science, anthropology and history, and archeology. The latter could be further divided into two, including immovable cultural heritage in archeology. Furthermore, some tendencies are more homogeneous than others. Most likely, the most uniform tendency is that related to art museums, in which the artistic and aesthetic interpretations of collections include the domains of history and sociology. On the other hand, science museums have two models: classic museums of 'natural history' and 'science centers'. Science museums generally provide exclusively scientific interpretations, but they often have a descriptive character of mere classification. However, the most recent science and technology museums, especially thematic museums, often include aspects of history, art, and anthropology. By contrast, archeological sites and history museums are often more interdisciplinary, with a greater influence of artistic contents and, to some extent, of anthropological contents (Leon & Rosenzweig, 1989).[1] For their part, history museums reflect a clear difference between those dedicated to prehistory and archeology[2] and museums of medieval and modern history. Finally, anthropological museums are very different from one another because they vary from classical ethnographic museums to the most intercultural museums, heavily influenced by information from other disciplines. These types of museums are analyzed in the second part of this article. Regardless, the growing tendency is to include views from different disciplines in the same heritage exhibition. However, it is also true that even today, there are very few multidisciplinary and even fewer interdisciplinary interpretations.

Patrimonialization is a process of the re-signification of an item or intangible manifestation that may be performed by experts, a heritage institution, or recipients of heritage. In 1998, a series of conferences was held at the Louvre Museum that scrutinized the objective character of the value of a work of art (Danto et al., 2000) and how it depended on factors and decisions sometimes as futile as its location in the museum, its communication support, contents, or successive historical interpretations (Davallon, 2010).

In the patrimonialization process, some social bias regarding what is considered to be heritage may occur. For example, in Spain, greater importance has traditionally been given to the Roman remains over other Visigoth, Arab, Moorish, or Iberian remains. This bias has in part contributed to a unified vision of a glorious past of the nation itself, which was identified with the Roman Empire, thus producing a false idea of territorial unity by an implicit analogy between the territory of Hispania as a Roman province and present-day Spain.

In the context of this chapter, the perspective of memorial sites (Nora, 1986) warrants special mention as a specific case of the patrimonialization process (Levin, 2007). This perspective, which appeared a few years ago, had the effect of guiding the museumization of heritage sites of periods and events relatively close in time. Much of the thinking that led to this perspective comes from the depletion of museums and heritage sites that attempted to spread awareness of genocides that were recently committed in different parts of the world. Museums dedicated to the annihilation of American Indian tribes in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century are an example of this tendency. The last official campaign against Indians goes back to 1905, but numerous violent altercations subsequently occurred (see the exhibition at the *National Museum of American Indians*) (Bates et al., 2009). Museums dedicated to the Holocaust (*Houston Holocaust Museum*) or the most recent attempts to document and museumize the last Balkan war (*Balkan Museum Network*) may also be mentioned.

It should be noted that the museumization of a heritage site is a bet on the future. It is the same for disciplines such as history (Lowenthal, 1985) and, naturally, historical education (Carretero, Asensio, & Rodriguez-Moneo, 2012). Julie Higash (2015) describes it very well in her article, which she starts by stating that 'the way of depicting the past is usually determined by what you want to transmit to future generations' (p. 12). Today, the reason why thousands of testimonies are collected for the patrimonialization of September 11 is that we want it to be a significant event in the future. Our concept of heritage conditions the patrimonialization process: what becomes heritage, which direction, with which tangibly and intangibly associated culture, and whether certain evidence is collected. A background for this desire can also be found in the past. For example, when Trajan ordered the construction of his column after his victorious campaigns against the Dacians, he had no other aim than to leave his mark on the future, recalling his exploits and emphasizing aspects that were remarkable according to his own perspective.

Finally, within the general heritage panorama, society has not given the same value to all of its manifestations. Heritage was traditionally at the service of the political and economic authority and of dominant ideologies (Hofmann, 1999). The authority-selected heritage, which was amplified or lost, based on the service it provided in creating a generally elitist discourse of interest to some social groups or self-interested in orientation and often hidden in nationalist positions. For example, in many parts of Spain, and despite complaints,[3] symbols of Franco's fascist dictatorship remain in prominent places in certain public institutions on the ground that they are a heritage and historical relic. However, they are not exhibited in a museum or in a contextualized exhibition, where their meaning is explained. They remain in their original position, without interpretation, as part of the institutional image of the surrounding in which they are included.

Therefore, these manifestations, monuments, and collections, which were likely to support the authority's image, were patrimonialized due to their intrin-

sic value or their artistic or historical significance. That is, they were preserved and gradually enhanced. However, the remaining heritage fell into oblivion until its destruction, without regard for whether it was very important or so as not to re-signify certain periods, groups, or social events. For example, in countries such as France or Spain, a privileged group of tight-knit and exclusive museums and heritage sites related to the royal collections were formed over several centuries. Their aim was to keep the idea of one nation with a centralized power. Simultaneously, insufficient attention was given to the remains of the diversity of societies that inhabited these lands before the creation of the great nation-states. Only recently have tendencies appeared that give up homogenization with regard to heritage conservation and defend an inclusive multiculturalism (Pieterse, 2005).

Thus, all countries have developed national museums used as a central symbolic element of national identity (see the excellent edition by Knell et al., 2011). Indeed, these museums collect heritage, considering it to be the 'crown jewels' or fundamental monuments (Coombes, 2012). In other words, there are museums that attempt to convey national identity and museums that seek to have an influence on this construction in a partisan manner (all of this is related to the nationalization of history and its educational use: Berger & Conrad, 2014; Berger, Eriksonas, & Mycock, 2008; Berger & Lorenz, 2010).

However, this consideration of heritage also occurs beyond national boundaries (Macdonald, 2012), as observed in the development of criteria for granting world heritage sites by transnational organizations such as UNESCO,[4] which have followed criteria and a trajectory similar to that discussed here.

Three Categories of Reasons for Considering Heritage from the Citizen's Perspective

Let us change perspective. Let us consider not heritage itself but who produces it, that is, who potentially enjoys it and, ultimately, who eventually contributes to its preservation: the citizen. Generally speaking, it may be stated that three reasons were defined to consider heritage from this perspective.

The first relates to what was discussed above. Heritage generates identity, as shown by studies that explore the psychological construction of identities through symbolic resources of a historical nature (Carretero, Asensio, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2012).

The second reason is related to heritage as a first-level tourism generator (MacDonald, 2005). We refer to cultural tourism, which historically began before sun and beach tourism and generated a much more sustainable and less invasive model of development. Furthermore, this type of tourism uses existing social structures and has a multi-purpose behavior according to which global network proposals such as attractors are more significant than certain individual attractors (Dumont, Asensio, & Mortari, 2010) and in which digi-

tal technology plays an important role (Ibáñez, Asensio, Vicent, & Cuenca-López, 2012).

Initially, the public of both trends is different (Eidelman, Roustan, & Goldstein, 2008). Heritage as an identity-shaper has an internal public, whereas heritage as the main attractor of cultural tourism has an external public (without forgetting that in many cases, there is also a significant flow of domestic tourism). The paradox is that each reinforces the other. Attractors of cultural tourism for external visitors end up becoming important reference points of identity for domestic visitors (Santacana & Llonch, 2008). An example close to us is the cultural tourist offer in the city of Mérida (the capital of Hispania in the first century), which, for years, has revolved around the classic Roman heritage. The city transformed its own history and heritage to a current identification with the Roman world that is embodied in a wide participation in events, actions, and cultural programs related to this culture.

The third reason for considering heritage from the citizens' perspective revolves around the following question: What does heritage have that is so appealing?

Robert K. Sutton (2015: 1), a historian and the head of the US National Park Service, raises the following question: 'Why do you think people should visit historic sites? You can get good history from books, but to visit, touch, feel, and experience the places where something happened is the best way to learn history'. Indeed, it has been stated for quite a few years that heritage experience is of important significance to visitors. Thus, regardless of the quality of heritage itself, heritage experience may be very positive or simply trivial or little lasting. However, as recurring visitor assessments show, if a person describes the visit as bad or very bad, then a major issue, typically associated with the quality of services, must have occurred, for example, harsh treatment by one of the managers, frustration over not obtaining some services, and so on. However, heritage experience is barely described in this manner, no matter how traditional or superficial it was. Even if it was unsatisfactory, the rating granted is typically at least 6 out of 10.

Therefore, it seems that heritage has a halo of credibility that helps the experience be positive. Several possible reasons may be considered. Heritage experience always has a positive dimension in itself because heritage has value, and therefore, contact with heritage is always a good thing. Second, heritage always triggers an interpretation of admiration or contemplation that is always possible to be developed. Third, the visit of a heritage site typically occurs in a climate of cultural leisure and is a break from everyday life, which also has intrinsic value. Furthermore, the fact remains that not everyone takes an interest in heritage; there is only a percentage of people that already has a predisposition to consider its value. Several assessments have actually highlighted that there are also negative aspects that lower heritage appraisal. One very clear aspect is the repetition of the offer, and another is the excessive creation of expectations that are not met during the visit.

Heritage is also highly regarded as a social institution of knowledge. American visitors consider museums to be one of the most important resources for education and one of the most reliable sources of objective information. They are even more reliable than textbooks, teachers, or family.[5] Museums uphold their reputation as respectable institutions, and what is collected there is presupposed to be of proven value. Moreover, in recent years, the museum experience has been enriched with numerous activities that help most people remember amazing and spectacular visits by creating a positive world of expectations (Azoulay, 1994).

Considered from the perspective of learning the sciences, heritage experience also has great cognitive power, given that it is a setting for learning and conceptual change (Illeris, 2012; Sawyer, 2014). For years, evidence has been provided that people, students, and families are able to change expectations and preconceived ideas, or even extend beyond formal learning programs, owing to its significance in life (Perret & Perret-Clermont, 2011) and its natural character (Asensio, 2015). The museum experience has been interpreted as a richer scenario for knowledge transmission because it typically has a tangible culture, with a contextualization that illustrates and provides new knowledge (Kavanagh, 1996).

Being aware of what visitors know and do not know about these subjects is essential when designing an exhibition to achieve the objective sought. For instance, one of the most worrying items of data reflected by visitors' assessments of Holocaust museums was that visitors who arrived and were already convinced of the existence and horrors of the genocide were even more convinced when the visit was over. However, the skeptics ended up even more skeptical (MacDonald, 2006). Once more, this double basic psychological mechanism, by which humans naturally tend to both verify and be resistant to the refutation of their own theories and attitudes about history or physics, was activated (Carretero, Castorina, & Levinas, 2013). The real issue was that many museums were designed more to have a visual impact than to change preconceived ideas and that they did not show appropriate experiences to change these ideas (Horwitz, 2012). The contents of these museums were impressive, but they were cognitively ineffective. In other words, they presented a great amount of data, but they had no impact on the visitors' preconceptions.

For example, the *Houston Holocaust Museum* opened its exhibition with the following question written on a map of forced labor and extermination camps in Europe from 1933 to 1945: Did you know that there were so many? It seeks an obvious answer to the question, which is already known in advance by the exhibition curator. The vast majority of visitors think that there were few camps. Thus, when they see so many on the map, visitors are expected to be impressed with the number. However, the exhibition curator did not consider that this high number is consistent with a wide variety of very different considerations. The aim is to convey awareness of the high extent of the extermination plan. However, the amount also explains that a huge number of people of many nationalities and diverse racial and social characteristics died (refuting

the fact that the fundamental objective was only to destroy the Semitic culture). Even that amount may be viewed as an argument according to which the phenomenon was oversized to promote Zionist interests when very different institutions are included on the map, for example, asylums and labor colonies (which would clearly be contradictory to the intention of the exhibition).

Therefore, the set-up can always produce multiple interpretations if the conceptual and attitudinal frameworks of the visitors interpreting them are not previously studied (Weil, 2002). Unfortunately, this issue is often neglected in most exhibitions. In many cases, the setting up of exhibitions to convey the horror of war are used to exalt it, as occurs with some museumizations of battlefields (e.g., the *Caen War Memorial, Center for History and Peace [Mémorial de Caen, Cité de l'histoire pour la paix]*), where many visitors look at images and war material of the D-Day invasion and the Normandy campaign. Children leave the exhibition and audiovisual presentations excited and shooting; military equipment is sold in the museum's store. Regardless, it seems that heritage experience, in either one or another direction, acquires great strength when shaping our historical thinking (Van Boxtel, Grever, & Klein, 2015).

What Is a Museum Discourse Model?

Any analysis of museum discourse and heritage should consider three aspects.

(A) The first aspect is the significance of heritage and its maintenance with particular reference to tangible culture but not forgetting that heritage has an intangible dimension.
(B) The second aspect is the type, characterization, and extent of the disciplinary discourse. To this must be added its adaptation to the recipient's historical understanding (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015), depending on the prior knowledge of the different types of public.
(C) The third aspect is a general museological conception that affects presentation formats, the spatial conception, and the type of museographical resources used in the exhibition, in addition to formats of revitalization, public and education programs supported by the exhibition, and, in general, its communication and management plan (Graham, Aushworth, & Tunbridge, 2005).

In short, the discourse of a museum or heritage site is the integrated set of these three aspects, creating the exhibition offer, which is itself a model of knowledge transfer. Therefore, a model is a functional perspective of the general museological position of the heritage intervention, characterized by orienting (A) the heritage maintenance, organization, and exhibition of collections and their intangible heritage; (B) the associated disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, including its historical dimension; and (C) the museography and set-up, which have a decisive impact on its management and sustainability and which must necessarily take into account the use of communication and tech-

nology intermediaries, in addition to the reception of units and set of units by different types of public. A discourse model may represent a general museological position that decisively orients the transmitted message of an exhibition and that has an essential impact on institutional management.

A Proposal for Analyzing Museum Discourse Models

In general, one can identify several models of knowledge transfer that have evolved over time. The generally implicit nature of these models and their development are considered below. In the following, our view on this evolution was composed according to the three axes discussed and the four general models of the exhibition discourse. These models typically support and orient a certain method of presenting heritage and history in galleries or in open spaces. The four discourse models are as follows: (1) descriptive, (2) explanatory, (3) narrative, and (4) participatory.

It is important to highlight two significant aspects of this proposal. On one hand, it does not reflect the development of museums over time. In general, the descriptive model appeared earlier than others, but it is also true that today, there are museums created from this perspective. Thus, these models may coexist at the same moment in time. On the other hand, this view consists of general models rather than specific cases. That is, the purpose is to provide a view that helps understand the general characteristics of museums and heritage. Therefore, there may be specific cases that are not properly represented in the characteristics above.

Descriptive Models: From Exclusive Heritage to Selective Heritage

Generally speaking, the descriptive model is fundamentally based on the items it displays. These items, as part of a particular collection of tangible culture, orient heritage enhancement and are the basis for producing the main disciplinary reflection on heritage. Therefore, the discipline of reference, be it history, ethnology, art, or other sciences, is limited to the subject related to these items. The cycle of historical thinking is often too short, with very little contextual review and little explanation.

Descriptive discourse is characterized as the most traditional and classical discourse compared to the other three models. Originally, since the eighteenth century, heritage presentation was characterized by a focus on tangible culture and its characteristics. It also took into account its symbolic value, typically linked to its tangible value and often based on uniqueness and monumentality. Thus, great heritage was a monumental remainder of the past, as in the case of great palaces, temples, and urban sculptures, or remains of architectural and technological works. These types of tangible productions were collected in royal and aristocratic collections, leading to the first and main museums,

which represented the normative model for subsequent museums. In a sense, it can be stated that heritage and the monumental remains of the past were the same. Thus, museums also emerge as places of the accumulation of valuable and exotic items from the past and also from remote places as a result of colonial expeditions. Traditional museums are unique museums by and for the elite. Museums and the first heritage visits appear as an activity for the most powerful and influential groups, and they have kept that character for a long period of time. As is seen below, that character still has some validity today.

Much like the historiography of the time, traditional museums share an empiricist view of knowledge based on a cumulative and descriptive view that leads to classification typologies. As an example, we all have in mind the image of classic natural history museums with huge windows where the collections of malacology, insects, and invertebrates are systematically placed, accompanied by their labels in Latin. The descriptive model is based on an epistemological model according to which information is cumulatively acquired. Therefore, it attempts to transmit this information to the recipient according to the belief that the more information is offered, the more you know. It is a naive encyclopedic or culturalist model that, at best, gathers various types of information regarding the heritage resource, ordering the shape of the item itself in a comparative and relational manner.

In the descriptivist discourse model, two different emphases can be distinguished. There is what might be called the 'item-based model', on one hand, and the 'collection-based model', on the other hand. The main reason for the difference between these two models is a change in the museological and museographical field to include a greater diversification of formats and new technologies of mediation. In this regard, the official conception of heritage itself, according to the UNESCO guidelines for its recognition of world heritage, underwent a change. Thus, what was initially recognized as the heritage of humanity was a well-isolated resource, and subsequently, importance was given to 'Monumental Ensembles', 'World Heritage Cites', and 'Heritage Routes'. All these names imply sets of tangible culture, not only isolated resources, no matter how important they may be.

Today, many museums with this type of orientation can still be found. This model is common in art museums, but there are also art museums with other characteristics. For example, among the many possible ones, the *Denver Art Museum*, the *Peabody Essex Museum*, and the *York Art Gallery* can be mentioned. Each has a different style, but they all stand apart from the model discussed and have a strong participatory component.

The main issue of the item or collection-based model is the superficiality of its historiographical discourse and its minimal connection to visitors. Most exhibition criteria and many of the scarce communicative supports that are included in this type of exhibition often share a high level of encryption. Discourse is typically very specialized and typical of experts, so it is often rejected by most people who are interested in heritage but who lack specific training in the collections' content. Assessment data show that only between 1 and 5 % of visitors

to museums are familiar with the contents of the exhibition (Asensio, Pol, & Gomis, 2001).

In conclusion, this museum model does not show any connection to society but is conceived as having meaning in itself based on the conservation of collections and a naive and passive empiricist view of knowledge transfer.

Explanatory Models: From Interpretative Heritage to Comprehensive Heritage

In general, the explanatory model inverts the relationship between tangible culture and the discipline of reference established by the traditional descriptive model. Tangible culture now becomes dependent on the specific discipline because it offers a view of the culture to which items and collections refer. Value rests on the significance of the subject to be developed and equally relies on knowledge regarding this subject and on the pieces and collections exhibited (Herms & Blockley, 2006; Steg, van der Berg, & de Groot, 2013). On the other hand, museology is based on extensive historical themes that must be transmitted without neglecting any reflection on the items. Museography implies a profusion of communication and support resources. Generally, there is a wide revitalization of programs, especially of an educational nature (Cook, Reynolds, & Speight, 2010). Programs contribute to knowledge transfer, which is the ultimate goal of an explanatory exhibition. Collections and the knowledge of the disciplines equally contribute to achieving this goal. The central issue of the explanatory model is to properly solve the problem posed by this relationship.

A prime example of this model is the exhibition held a few years ago on the culture of 'Iberians', a group of villages often undervalued in history, most likely because of their contemporaneity with the Roman world that ended up militarily defeating and culturally assimilating them. However, Iberians were not a set of minor towns with a poorly developed culture. On the contrary, their great statuary reflects a high level of representational power and elaboration. Their bronzes show their military power, their cities a great social structure, their ceramics the stylization of everyday life, and their votive offerings the richness of their world of beliefs. A few years ago, several European museums agreed to hold a major exhibition on Iberians with the goal of changing our perception of this culture. The exhibition design and all of its contents were oriented to provide images and explanations of the huge dimension of the Iberian world and its relationship based on equality, with cultures of the Iberian peninsula of between 2000 and 3000 years ago. The aim of detecting a previous misconception or unsophisticated idea in society and trying to change it through heritage education (Fontal & Ibáñez, 2015; Jiménez-Pérez, Cuenca-López, & Ferreras, 2010) is a new approach. In fact, it is completely different from the endogamic enhancement of architectural heritage of the previous model (Asensio, 2013).

The explanatory model explicitly seeks to connect to the public. It is even referred to as the comprehensive museum, to the extent that it must be cognitively accessible to visitors. From this perspective, heritage and museums set in motion communication procedures with visitors to help convey these contents. Similarly, the sites of heritage presentation and the exhibition itself begin to be filled with communication resources in many different formats: texts and panels, audiovisual supports, hands-on 'interactive' supports. This is a process that is triggered by the development of so-called new technologies, first analogue technologies (virtual theaters, slideshows), then digital technologies (digital games, tactile tables, augmented reality or virtual reality) (Clark, 2011).

An important issue is whether the media or formats used in the exhibition's communication of these new contents are effective, that is, whether they reach their ultimate goal of achieving a conceptual change. The assessments performed on some specific heritage exhibitions and on heritage education (Ibáñez, Fontal, & Cuenca, 2015) show that these informal learning scenarios are often very effective in terms of acquiring new knowledge in general (Asenjo, Asensio, & Rodríguez-Moneo, 2012; Schauble et al., 1996), particularly in the area of history (Marcus, Stoodard, & Woodward, 2012; McRainey & Russick, 2010). However, there still is little information as to their capacity to produce deep conceptual changes that include complex and structured theories resulting in a real explanatory change (Ohlsson, 2011). For the moment, some results are optimistic (Crowley, Pierroux, & Knutson, 2014), whereas others are more disappointing and critical (Eshach, 2007; Rogoff, 2012; Ucko, 2010). However, the testimony of many people who have visited explanatory exhibitions and have acquired a substantial knowledge is good evidence (Comas-Quinn, Mardomingo, & Valentine, 2009; Klossteman, 2014; Kumpulainen & Lipponen, 2012).

There may also be significant differences among museums that share the explanatory model. Indeed, it is easy to find examples of museums and spaces of heritage presentation that use the explanatory model as a hypertrophy of the descriptive model. That is, they overlap with the previous model's focus on the collection, with a more general explanatory discourse of a broader period or themes. This strategy often results in very comprehensive exhibitions that are stressful for visitors, given that they attempt to use vast amounts of information that are not always relevant or serve a communicative interest.

There have been many successful explanatory museums. We should first mention the *Smithsonian Institution* for its size and influence, which has continued to set standards for best practices in many fields of not only exhibition but also museology. Its exhibitions, which are of a high scientific level, with a socially correct and relevant museology, have been the basis for an explanatory museography that, in each technological period, has used all of the advances available to connect to visitors and convey all types of knowledge. For example, instead of isolating scientific instruments from the nineteenth century in a showcase, the Smithsonian uses Edison's instruments to explain the electrification of the cities and societies of the late nineteenth century. In the same vein,

it is interesting to observe the great success of the method of the National Archives, where each year, millions of visitors go and not only see the original documents but are also informed about the institutional development of the country.

Another example of a best practice is the *American Association for State and Local History*. Many museums that comprise this network explain the state history and local history of the United States, with a profusion of communication media and access to sources. Additionally, the views of not only European minorities but also natives are often included. Many of these institutions underpin the contribution of academics, scholars, associations, and institutions for the greater development of local stories.

In Europe, many museums following this model can be cited, but only three are highlighted here. The first is the *Haus der Geschichte*, the famous museum in Bonn featuring two parallel paths of federal Germany and democratic Germany from WWII to the fall of the Berlin Wall. This *House of History* combines items from that period with primary and secondary documents to create a tour that presents to visitors the dual values of the Cold War. On the other hand, *Crypta Balbi* explains like no other the development of a city of the classical world such as Rome, with its expansions and reductions of urban perimeters and its everyday life and culture, by using analogue tools such as drawings and models and by mixing collections with in situ remains in its discourse. *The Laténium, the Archeological Park and Museum of Neuchâtel* (Parc et Musée d'Achéologie de Neuchâtel), is a museum that includes digital technology tools and modern museography at the service of the reconstruction of a very technical and rigorous historical discourse, but it is well adapted to the needs of visitors.

Finally, the explanatory model also presents some drawbacks. On one hand, it lacks a complex and complete model regarding the manner in which the visitors' understanding works (Templeton, 2011). Indeed, studies on visitors are subsequent to the emergence of the interpretive model (Asensio et al., 2014). Furthermore, it lacks a method of transmitting scientific knowledge. Studies on visitors have advanced a great deal in building a model of the visitor (Daignault, 2011), but exhibitions rarely systematically incorporate it (Aidelman, Gottesdiener, & Le Marec, 2013). On the other hand, there has also been progress in assessing exhibitions by considering not only physical but also sensory and cognitive accessibility (Diamond, Luke, & Uttal, 2009; Falk & Dierking, 2013), although it is not typically taken into consideration in a consistent manner by the designers of the exhibition.

Narrative Models: From Communication Heritage to Immersive Heritage

In general, the narrative model uses a direct relationship between people through a basic mechanism, a conversational strategy that seeks a more effective and natural communication. It is no longer a question of telling what

happened; visitors directly witness what occurred, although they may be marginally part of it. The narrative model is based on a logic of narration that takes into account the subjects provided both by the disciplines of reference and by the tangible culture (Roberts, 1997). However, it builds a sustainable scenario as a communication tool, taking certain references from literature, theater, and cinema.

Value is linked to the significance of the overall context in which the subject and knowledge to be transmitted are developed and in which pieces, collections, and heritage are shown (Tsybulskaya & Camhi, 2009). Museology is also based on these three aspects to support the exhibition narrative. The museography employed is typically not explicit, at least in the perspective of the main scenes, and can have complementary spaces for interpretation or exhibition that often involve the same profusion of communication resources and support that were used in the explanatory model. However, these museum resources are often located in areas adjacent to the main scenes without being part of them. In the narrative model, public and educational programs are also used. They are typically developed in the same narrative environment; thus, it is difficult to separate them from the rest of the elements.

A prototypical example of the narrative model is the so-called '*living history*' environments that help visitors 'live as if' they were characters of that time, working in some simple activities but providing a subjective feeling of immersion (Anderson, 1991).

Fundamentally, the narrative model represents a return to transmission mechanisms based on cognitive analyses of the centrality of narration for the human mind (Bruner, 2003). On the other hand, it is also based on the idea that heritage is the product of a human group and that tangible culture is the result of individuals and societies. From this perspective, heritage recovers people. 'People are more important than objects' reads the theme statement of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) meeting in Melbourne in 1998. On that occasion, a representative of the Maori tribe went before the assembly and argued that when he went to museums presenting his culture, based on the Western cultural model, he saw objects but could not see their spirits. That is, members of his community and the voices of his culture were missing.[6]

This return to the embodiment of heritage is very important because it involves the explicit recognition that tangible culture is a means to a more fundamental end that goes beyond itself. In this sense, one must recall that both the narrative and explanatory models do not imply a loss of value of pieces and collections. Nor do they emphasize their preservation. This argument was sometimes used to hide a lack of deep reflection regarding heritage, its enhancement, and sustainability (Campolmi, 2015).

Moreover, the narrative model recovers the basic psychological mechanism of oral communication, that is, conversational mechanisms such as reiteration or several others that are used to provide the key information to the other person that this specific part is very important. However, in a written explanation, such as those that abound in the explanatory model, reiteration is often

avoided, and many mechanisms of emphasis are also lost when written in a much plainer text. When heritage activity monitors use the explanatory model, they can reintroduce these oral mechanisms, but they are undoubtedly influenced by the initial structure of the discourse and thus necessarily lose conversational value and the capacity for connection to recipients.

'Living History is an idea well known to lay historians and museums interpreters but seldom heard of in academia'. Thus, begins Anderson's famous volume on *Living History* (1991: 3). Initially, it was a practice rather than a reflection, interpretive in nature, to support the explanatory model discussed above. In its current and elaborate levels, it has gradually become a participatory movement, also generating its own resources and characteristic institutions.

Special mention must be made of dioramas for their historical significance. They have become widespread since the 1930s and 1940s because of their effectiveness and remain very attractive and comprehensive for many visitors. Dioramas consist of the scenographic contextualization of originals. In other words, originals are integrated into a 'scene' in which parts of the elements are recreated by using plastic techniques while maintaining the rigor of heritage. The selected scene typically relates a prototypical action. For example, one can cite those reflected in the *Vicksburg National Military Park* on the famous battle of the Civil War or the famous diorama at the *National Museum of American History* on the Vietnam War.[7] Dioramas and scenographies have been and still are very important in history museums (Sherman & Rogoff, 1994). Anyone visiting European Viking museums, for example, will find exhibitions (Moesgaard, Oslo) in which a wide range of scenes are displayed, providing a representation that will be impossible to forget every time visitors' knowledge about the great culture of early medieval northern Europe is activated. Several studies have shown that dioramas still retain great attractiveness for visitors, especially for those who are less experienced, and are still more 'interactive' than many digital proposals (Bitgood, 2011).

The narrative model has evolved, from more contemplative proposals, such as classic dioramas, to proposals for more immersive and participatory recreation, such as *living history* proposals and proposals of the 'natural' contextualization of contents, for example, so-called 'ecomuseums' or 'open air museums'. The narrative model has greatly defended intangible heritage because, in narrative proposals, intangible aspects play a key role in the script of the story. However, tangible culture also plays a fundamental role in the narrative model, as in the case of institutions such as *Colonial Williamsburg* or *Mystic Seaport*, where, for many years, they have insisted on the fact that the enhancement of heritage collections and the rigor of recreations and reproductions are a central aspect in the experience assessment by visitors (Klingler & Graft, 2012). *Living History* represents a useful alternative when tangible heritage is scarce, helping to highlight it far beyond what descriptive and explanatory models would have succeeded in doing. The Danish park of the Iron Age of Lejre is a good example of such an achievement.

As noted above, a central aspect of the narrative model is communication through people and their training is therefore crucial. A very common mistake is to think that people who participate in a living history park are actors and therefore develop a role with stagecraft. On the contrary, people involved in a *living history* have a basis on which they improvise contents, depending on the visitors' involvement and interest. Their action is not a fixed performance, but it varies in each case and adapts to the demand of participants. Hence, they are often called 'interpreters' instead of 'actors'. On the other hand, the descriptive model may have 'guides', the explanatory model has 'monitors', and the participatory model has 'intermediaries', each emphasizing different functions.

Among the successful *living history* museums, the point of reference is undoubtedly *Colonial Williamsburg*. On the other hand, the *Mystic Seaport* best knows how to combine the rigor of maritime heritage with the cultural context in a complex web of cultural, educational, and touristic interests.[8] Museums that are not *living history* but have a strong narrative component may consist of many of the so-called house museums (which do not fall into the descriptive model). A classic example of a classical style may be the *Margaret Mitchell House and Museum* in Atlanta; whereas an example with a more recent approach in many ways may be the *Tenement Museum* in New York.

An interesting case is that of *Shakespeare's Globe*, a project to recreate an English theater from the early seventeenth century, which began as a cultural tourism project but has led to the enhancement of the immediate site of the *Rose Playhouse*, allowing its heritage regeneration. At the *Globe*, classic plays are performed, many guided themed tours are also developed, and the performing actors explain and tell all types of stories in the museum's annex.

In Europe, *living history* parks developed late, and indeed, they are still less relevant than in the United States. The cases of the *Lejre Museum* and *Roskilde Museum* are well-known; these are two areas of the continuously interesting Danish museology that have spent many years restoring heritage from the Iron Age and the Viking Age, respectively, by using *living history*, among other techniques, which are permanent in case of the first and restricted to programs in case of the second.

Compared with all of the others, the narrative model learns to live with technology (Hwang & Tsai, 2011; Tallon, 2012). For example, technology has brought great dynamism not only to classic dioramas (an excellent example is the *Pequot Museum*) but also in ecomuseums or archeological parks or in *living history* parks by providing a significant complement with mobile devices (Ibáñez-Etxeberria, Vicent, Asensio, Cuenca, & Fontal, 2014).

Participatory Models: From Community Heritage to Social Heritage

Generally speaking, the participatory model is mainly interested in enhancing a greater visitor involvement and higher levels of reflection about the museum message (Heath & Lehn, 2010). It is inspired by the idea that the creation

of knowledge, in its different forms is a socio-cultural process in which the number of actors involved necessarily increases. It is determined by a notion of knowledge distributed within a broad notion of 'system' (Chesbrough, 2006), with different participation processes (Gherab, 2012) seeking collective construction (Kelly, 2004).

The participatory model emphasizes the museum-society connection, the social role of museums, and the conviction that tangible culture will be preserved to the extent that each society is able to re-signify heritage in accordance with its own purposes (Frisch, 1997). Tangible culture and intangible culture become dependent on a much more complex patrimonialization process than in previous models. On the other hand, this model also aims at giving heritage significant social functions for reflection, in addition to a proper and external identification of the different groups and societies (Sabaté & Gort, 2012). Enhancement focuses on the social significance of a tangible culture, its themes, and figures (Chittenden, Farmelo, & Lewenstein, 2004).

In this model, the characteristic feature of museology involves a broad reflection that, from the beginning of the planning, covers phases of social participation at various levels and at various stages of the project design, its development, and its subsequent management. Participatory museums have a very different perception of visitors: '*Over time, museum audiences are likely to expect to be part of the narrative an experience at museums*' (Chung, Wilkening, & Johnstone, 2009: 43). An important issue in this type of model is the dialogue among the different narratives: among the narrative of the curator, the narratives provided by users, and a probable negotiated common narrative, not necessarily unique or unitary, created in cooperation with visitors. An interesting possibility is that these narratives may coexist to reach a discourse with multiple voices that may certainly be difficult to represent. In this sense, the underlying museological conceptions necessarily imply settings that involve the participation of different groups of visitors. Indeed, this model refers to participants more than visitors. In analogue museography methods exist for promoting participation, but digital technologies have greatly facilitated the possible interaction of all types of participants, both real and virtual (Tippelt, 2011). Typically, these spaces of heritage presentation use a profusion of communication resources. The expansion of the social functions of heritage institutions also implies maintaining the diversification of public and educational programs. Participatory museums have the ultimate goal of social dialogue, with tolerance as a method, pluralism and difference as a value, and competence and creativity as an instrument (Laishun, 2010).

Clearly, new digital formats play a key role in having enabled and empowered these conceptions (Horton, 2012). The basic starting point would not only give visitors the freedom to contribute and obtain knowledge or not, but also harmonize how participation is undertaken so that it is aware of the final products, with a proactive positioning and scope of the collective contribution. It is essential to take care of the visitors' digital channels contribution so that it is performed through attractive, simple methods adapted to different levels of

users, without entailing a barrier that limits access to only a group of initiates. The new formats are not as focused as were the initial formats on providing access to information (level 1.0), but they facilitate communication between users (level 2.0), and the joint construction of shared knowledge (level 3.0) (Asensio & Asenjo, 2011).[9]

One of the first primary functions of museums with social sensitivity is to create a community (Vagnone & Ryan, 2015) and identity (Crane, 2012; Lubar, 1997), that is, to provide a basis for organizing events and programs around heritage. Doing so means revitalizing cultural life, enhancing certain types of heritage that had hitherto not been sufficiently recognized, for example in the so-called museums of identity and mentality at the time (Asensio, 2012). Another key function of the participatory discourse is to gather testimonies for the creation of exhibitions to honor the memory of recent historical events (Davison, 2005; Kyvig & Marty, 2000).

Participatory models also lead to the development of social and community programs through participation into proposals initially more or less linked to equity (Archivald, 1999). The concept of the social museum,[10] which is very close to the participatory museum, is too vast and recent to assess its extent (Alcaide, Boya, & Roigé, 2010; MECD, 2015). However, it is true that although it still does not produce a particular type of complete and differentiated museological proposal, it does actually influence the ways of considering museums with a new sensitivity (Scheiner, 2010). The model of participatory museums has been more present in anthropology and history museums, but it is also present in all subjects (Bedford, 2014), science, archeology, or art (Campolmi, 2015).

Among the most successful museums of this model are some museums that, clearly, are pioneers in enhancing the relationship with the community and the participation of visitors, in addition to memory and the creation of different and even complementary discourses. In the United States, the *Civil Rights Museum* in Birmingham, Alabama, stands out because it is a center with a truly impressive discourse and an emotionally immersive exhibition, with multiple resources that reflect participants' emotions, memories, and thoughts. In a similar vein, the exhibitions of the *Brooklyn Historical Society* have focused on fostering the community and emphasizing the visitors' demands as a cultural claim. Similar experiences are those of the *Bronx Museum* and the *Museo del Barrio*. Migration museums in general can be mentioned, such as the *Immigration Museum* in Melbourne, *the Immigration Museum (Museo de la Inmigración)* in Buenos Aires, and the *German Immigration Center* in Germany. However, some of them, such as the Ellis Island museum, employ a more explanatory model and involve less participation than those mentioned here.

In Europe, we may start with the *National Museums Liverpool*, a network of seven museums that has managed to go beyond superficial participation (2.0) to generate experiences of a real local involvement in the urban territorial regeneration. In the peninsular part of the Basque Country, the *Bakearen Museoa* is based on the memory of the massacre at Gernika planned by the

fascist Spanish government and executed by the German and Italian air forces in 1937. This museum is an international example of peace work, focused on involvement and the generation of social projects. Among the recent memorial sites, the *Auschwitz-Birkenau Miejsce Pamięci i Muzeum* (Poland) and the *Center for Memory of Oradour sur Glane (Centre de la Mémoire d'Oradour sur Glane)* (France) can be mentioned.

Epilogue: Is Too Much Being Asked of Heritage?

The level of heritage demand most likely goes hand-in-hand with the cultural development level of a society. Visitors become more demanding with heritage presentation spaces and their discourses, asking for monumentality and precious value as well as entertainment, efficient communication, and sustainability. We do not believe it is inappropriate to increase the level of demand, but we do believe it is important to realize that this makes future efforts more complicated than what has been done until now.

A similar situation occurs with the development of the traditional museology, that is the basis of the descriptive model, to the new museology or critical museology, that has progressively inspired new explanatory, narrative, and discursive participatory models. We are well aware of the old museology and its descriptive discourse model. It was and is a coherent model. Many museums keep on operating on the basis of this model and are recognized by the society that enjoys and supports them. On the other hand, new or critical museology has been used to review and suggest new models that have managed to create new solutions (Gurian, 2006; Santacana & Hernández, 2006; Simon, 2010). However, it is true that there has not always been a unanimous opinion on these proposals, without a sufficiently extended explicit agreement among professionals. Museology (without a qualifier), understood as a global view of heritage, has evolved into a more complex model in which the functions of museums and heritage sites become diversified. It has not lost sight of the traditional functions of preserving and enhancing the tangible culture, but they give greater significance to the intangible. It has maintained the rigor of the discipline and also an interdisciplinary view on knowledge construction, with a necessary adaptation to its users and a real cultural, educational, social, community-oriented, and touristic function, in which economic sustainability is critical to its very survival.

This requirement and this awareness are essential because heritage has always been used by the powers that be to influence social attitudes. On the contrary, a more inclusive view of heritage may be required, where various interpretations are possible and difference predominates as a value (Acuff & Evans, 2014). Of the four models reviewed in this study, the participatory model may be closest to meeting this need. This model would be more responsive to memory without discriminations and would be more respectful toward different interpretations. It is, in other words, an inclusive model in which we all view ourselves and that we all consider essential to preserve.

In conclusion, heritage *in situ* or in museums is a privileged arena for being in contact with knowledge and with one's history in an active and thoughtful manner. Heritage presentation spaces are reliable and attractive to citizens, and they are a powerful tool for developing knowledge, values, and identities. The panorama of heritage has been enriched by elaborate proposals through the re-signification of its own culture. Heritage has become the agora of history.

Notes

1. This book contains an interesting reflection despite the elapsed time, especially in the chapter by G. Kulik, pp. 2–37.
2. Museums of paleontology are more similar to museums of natural science.
3. See www.eldiario.es/andalucia/sevilla/escudo-franquista-Arenal_0_429057438.html
4. See http://en.unesco.org/
5. See the study by the American Alliance of Museums, quoted in the 'Museum Facts' section on its website: www.aam-us.org/about-museums/museum-facts
6. 'Voices' was the title of an exhibition with this spirit in the Forum of Cultures (Foro de la Cultura), Barcelona, 2002. See www.monakim-projects.com/projects/voices#slide-21 and www.fundacioforum.org/eng/download/eng/b04.pdf
7. A curious museum, which is now under renovation, mounted around a huge diorama, is the so-called *Atlanta Cyclorama*, which is based on an immense historical canvas (11 meters high by 117 meters long), that represents the Battle of Atlanta in 1864.
8. It must not be forgotten that *living history* parks have a very important tourist dimension and that they often become attractors for an entire territory, with a high economic impact that cannot be assessed in an isolated manner but only as a whole for the tourist destination (Smith, Waterton, & Watson, 2012).
9. These three levels, that is, 1.0 information, 2.0 communication, and 3.0 interaction, with their differentiated final products, are also linked to the four types of discourse. Indeed, 1.0 may be correlated with the descriptive and explanatory models (focusing on information), 2.0 with the narrative model (focusing on communication), and 3.0 with the participatory model (focusing on the collaborative interaction and generation of productions of memory).
10. This is an old label in the Latin American context, especially the Argentine context. It has recently been used in the English-speaking world and in several European countries, linked to the approaches of participatory museums and to social sensitivity.

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