Conclusion. A Play in the Field of Words: From Material Culture to/and Cultural Heritage

Conclusão. Um jogo no campo das palavras: da cultura material ao/e patrimônio cultural

Claudia Augustat
Weltmuseum Wien, Austria
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4667-0937
claudia.augustat@weltmuseumwien.at

The articles in this volume impressively link the collections of indigenous groups in Brazil, now held in European museums, with a historical perspective. The focus is both on the historicity of indigenous cultures, which for a long time was not recognized, and on their interaction with global actors. The changing interests, the different uses and interpretations of the collections move within a spectrum that understands ethnographic collection as both material culture and cultural heritage. There is a wide range of literature on both terms, which I cannot go into at this point. I would like to use the contributions in this volume to see how and whether the authors use the terms and to derive some thoughts from them. The relationship between material culture and cultural heritage is obvious and materializes in an intersection. Material culture can be part of cultural heritage, even if not every material culture is part of cultural heritage. Likewise, cultural heritage includes material things, but there is also immaterial cultural heritage. However, to keep it short, material culture can be defined as "[...] everything that people produce and use, from their great monuments and supreme works of art to the simplest crafts and everyday objects" (Penny 2019, 17). Cultural heritage can be defined as the legacy of a group that can be tangible like material culture or intangible like knowledge, songs, myths or language. Creating cultural heritage is a highly selective and contested process done by humans under specific circumstances and with specific intentions. Although cultural heritage, because it refers to the past, suggests stability, it is still subject to change, because it relates the past to the present and future. Therefore, Laurajane Smith defines heritage as a cultural practice (Smith 2006, 11). It is connected to questions of identity, politics and power relations, and therefore it is understandable that it has become more important in recent years in the context of ethnographic museums and the efforts to decolonize them.

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Building cultural heritage on material culture collected by others

When reading the papers, I was immediately thrilled by the paper of Christian Feest as it gives an idea of how material culture becomes cultural heritage in the context of ethnographic museums. For the major parts of his contribution, Feest considers the collection of Prince Maximilian Wied zu Neuwied to be material culture. With the help of the Prince's travelogue, the illustrations contained therein and other documents, he reconstructs the history of acquisition in the field as well as through the Linden Museum in Stuttgart (Germany). In doing so, he can correct several mainly ethnic attributions, as well as identify objects that have already been lost or were not collected by the Prince himself. The correct attribution of the objects is the prerequisite for making them usable for further scientific research questions about the history of the indigenous groups in Brazil or for intercultural comparisons. For the latter, production techniques play a particularly important role. Here the interest of the author meets those of the collector, as Feest emphasizes Wied's interest in technological aspects of material culture. The objects are seen from a Western, scientific perspective and they matter because of their value for research. Decontextualized from the original creators and owners they are 'just' material culture.

Only when the descendants of indigenous people – in this case the Pataxó – enter the stage does Feest move to the term 'material heritage'. Two representatives of the Pataxó visited the Linden Museum from September 24 to October 2, 2017. Such visits, ideally culminating in collaborative projects, have been increasingly taking place in German-speaking museums in recent years. The re-encounter of people and things in a museum sets in motion a process in which the things of the past are attributed a meaning in the present and for the future as cultural heritage. However, creating one's own cultural heritage with material culture that was collected by Others 200 years ago is maybe a mission impossible. Feest questions this process if the provenance of the collections has not been researched as thoroughly as possible in advance. The probability of false ethnic attributions is not low in many collections. Documentation is often poor and seems to be incorrect. Apart from this, the collections are fragmented and don´t represent the entirety of the material culture of a group. As creating heritage is a selective process in the context of ethnographic collections, it is also very limited. The result will be highly influenced by the choices European collectors made in the past. The collections reflect the specific interests of the collectors and the availability of objects. Thus, creating heritage out of this seems to be a puzzle where many pieces are missing. Feest summarized the Pataxó case from his perspective as follow: "Thus, the Pataxó, who recently went to Stuttgart as the place where their heritage was preserved, were looking at objects that, as I have shown, were the not made by their ancestors […]" (Feest, this vol.). In its journal *Tribus* the Linden Museum published an article about the 2017 visit of the Paxató (Mota Cardoso *et al.* 2018) that gives a deeper insight into the creating of cultural heritage by means of a museum collection.

The visit was part of a larger process of cultural reclaiming and revitalization through which the Pataxó "deny both the idea of physical extinction and cultural loss of their people" (Mota Cardoso *et al.* 2018, 162). It is also a way for them to keep their indigeneity in creating a distinctive Pataxó patrimony of knowledge and practice. The travelogue of the Prince that was translated into Portuguese in 1989 is an important source in this process but also the objects he collected. As Nitinawã Pataxó explains: "[...] it was a meeting with the relatives of the past to address the present, where we seek to strengthen our culture and our identity" (2018, 179f). However, "relatives" does not necessarily mean only members of the Pataxó people. During the visit, the close connection to the Maxacali was also pointed out. It is easy to imagine that the idea of ethnic authenticity – if something like this ever existed among the indigenous groups in Brazil – has been abandoned in favor of a common history that can serve as a source for the construction of a cultural heritage. If we use the approach of Laurajane Smith, we can maybe go so far as to say that the ethnic origin of the objects matters less than the "present-day cultural processes and activities that are undertaken at and around them" to make them heritage (Smith 2006, 3) Or as Steven Hoelscher puts it: "[...] what we today call 'heritage' is something rather different, and more a product of a self-conscious kindling and celebration of the past than a genetic bequeath" (Hoelscher 2011, 200).

From the contribution of Christian Feest we can suggest that ethnographic collections preserve material culture which becomes cultural heritage through the reclaiming and revitalization by indigenous people. This could lead to the assumption that indigenous cultural heritage is a recent development that didn't exist in the past.

That indigenous cultural heritage should not be seen as just a recent invention in the face of ethnographic collections but as a concept on its own is the topic of the contribution of Meliam Gaspar and Igor Rodrigues. It is an impressive analysis of Wai Wai material culture and their ontology of technology. The material culture of the Wai Wai is a visualization of their relationships to humans and non-humans. Objects were acquired from supernatural beings and in exchange with other indigenous and non-indigenous people. They are connected with cosmological and social aspects of a community and are related to an identity which is constantly recreated between the Wai Wai and the Others. In the Wai Wai language, the word for material culture is Kahaxapumko, and it can be translated as 'objects which were made and still exist'. In this sense, it stresses the continuity between the past and the present and how this is materialized in objects of daily use. Like cultural heritage, it is about continuity and identity.

Gaspar and Rodriguez mention an interesting point in the cultural meaning of things: their interrelatedness. In the case of the Wai Wai there is a strong connection between basketry made by men and ceramics made by women. They are connected via function, technology and design. In museum storage, this interrelatedness is normally disrupted as objects are mainly organized by material. Something similar can be mentioned for the

"ugly things" Caroline Fernandes Caromano is dealing with in her contribution. When she is talking about "the family of fire", she recreates an interrelatedness between objects but also between beings, landscapes and knowledge that goes beyond the categorization of museums. In the case of the Tapirapé the family consists of fire sticks, fans, pipes, pyrographed gourds, brushes for body painting, beeswax figurines. The family is related via the fireplace to the family nucleus and to the wider organization of society into two groups, and "fire and smoke are essential in the contact with the invisible world". Fernandes Caromano also mentions the importance of fire in the transformation of landscape into cultivated gardens, relating it to ecological knowledge. However, families of fire can give complex insights into wider concepts but normally only fragments of these families are preserved in museum collections. Maybe the individual members of the family can be seen as material culture while the whole family seems to be a distinctive cultural heritage.

In all contributions mentioned so far, the fragmentation of ethnographic collections is mentioned, and it is also the key word in Konrad Rybka's contribution. He prefers to see ethnographic collections as 'selections' characterized by Western interests and values. However, Rybka understands fragmentation not only as incompleteness of collecting but also of knowledge. His analysis of more than 1000 fire fans in museum collections shows the "axiological, epistemological and ontological biases" that lead to the misinterpretation of these objects. For example, Julian Steward and Erland Nordenskiöld claimed that Amazonian fire fans made from bird feathers were indications of an influence from the South American Highlands. This claim seems to reflect the appreciation of Andean civilizations over those of Lowland groups and of animals (feathers) over plants (fibres). It ignores trade patterns, linguistic evidence, recent practices and the environment.

Rybka pleads for a holistic approach, which can lead to a deeper understanding of the objects and where a fire fan can be correctly identified as a cassava fan. What is interesting here is his reference to Reichel-Dolmatoff's work (1985) and the idea that Indians do not think in the categories of a museum inventory. Inventories and today's databases are subject to standardization, which is always a limitation because it is firmly anchored in a Western worldview. In addition, objects are usually first inventoried in a museum, in a sense posthumously. This may encourage people to be satisfied with the classification in their own categories, especially since the comparability mentioned above seems to be guaranteed. Although Rybka's contribution highlights the fragmentation and misinterpretation of ethnographic collections, he still sees them as indigenous heritage.

Shared Heritage

Understanding ethnographic collections as "shared heritage" has become popular in recent years. However, it can mean different things. In one sense it means to document the history of Europe´s subjugation and appropriation of the world, and in this context the collections are sometimes named 'difficult heritage', especially when they were

acquired in a context of injustice. In relation to indigenous people, the "ethnographic collections are connected with the trauma of colonial conquest and yet provide a direct link to pre-colonial times" (Onciul 2015, 26) What is shared is the common history of colonialism that can be understood as shared heritage when "Heritage items [...] be preserved which similarly reflect this diversity of historical experience" (Mardsen 1992). However, history in this case becomes heritage through practice. In recent years, the development of collaborative projects with representatives of Indigenous communities has become common practice in many ethnographic museums around the world. It is widely accepted that exhibitions about Indigenous people and their heritage, especially in former settler colonies, including the United States, Canada and Australia, are no longer possible without their active participation. The emergence of such practices – often summarized as sharing heritage - raises wider questions concerning power relations within the museum space, especially concerning the sharing of authority, the re-thinking of the ownership of collections and the role of Indigenous curatorship.

Instead of conceptualizing sharing heritage as a practice, Leandro Matthews Cascon and Caroline Fernandes Caromano search in their contribution for shared heritage as an inherent quality of the thing itself. The feather-decorated hammocks they are discussing are excellent examples of this kind of shared heritage. Even if the colonizers adopted hammocks as beds and for transportation, they were at the same time a symbol of the primitivism and indolence of the indigenous people. Hammocks were produced and used at the contact zone as they unite indigenous techniques and European ornaments. They also tell stories about oppression and agency in colonial interaction as many of these hammocks were manufactured by indigenous people under the control of missionaries and merchants. The authors see them as a "transcultural art form", and, depending on the perspective, they were associated by researchers with indigenous or non-indigenous people in relation to authenticity and authorship. The discussion of authenticity and authorship is useless as it is embedded in the imagination of indigenous people as static and frozen in traditions that never changed. The adaption of European designs and techniques in the production of the hammocks was part of indigenous agency in a colonial world, and it created cultural heritage for future generations: "Feathers are transformed into ornaments using specific technological processes, which operate as ethnic markers, creating a style for which ancestors were known and are recognized by subsequent generations".

In addition, the objects discussed by Felipe Vander Velden also can be seen as shared heritage, as they are results of contact with the colonizer and the non-humans that were introduced by them. His research focuses on animals brought from Europe and Africa to South America and the museum objects that were made for them, out of them or to represent them. In the case of the Kadiwéu the adoption of the horse leads to a whole new form of living, and everything connected to the use of horses became part of their

cultural heritage. The integration of dogs into the worldview of the Tukano is another example. Vander Velden mentioned also that new materials can lead to adapting indigenous arts and techniques. So, influence goes in both directions. Unfortunately, the deeper meaning of materials from native animals and plants is not well researched in the literature about material culture of indigenous groups. Therefore, the consequences of a material change on the meaning of an object cannot be assessed now. With reference to the work of Nicolás Careta, Vander Velden offers an interesting suggestion. The incorporation of materials offered by the new animals was a way to integrate them into everyday knowledge. In this way the history of the relationships between these animals or non-humans and the indigenous people was passed on to the next generations and became cultural heritage.

The contributions discussed in this section show that besides sharing heritage as a practice in the museums there are also objects in the collections that are transcultural and can be understood as shared heritage or maybe better – in relation to Thomas (1991) – as entangled heritage.

World Heritage?

The next two contributions I want to discuss are interesting because they put the collections in a wider context. In their contribution, Carla Jaime Betancourt and Diego Ballestero make us again aware that the museum's collections are a "restricted and selected materiality". They address the way in which the collections represent a Eurocentric perception of certain regional spaces. In their example, this becomes visible through the dichotomies of the Andes/archaeology and Amazon/ethnography. These dichotomies do not go far enough and do not make it possible to really describe and understand the respective habitats with the help of the collections. As a mirror of Western research ideas and imagination and representing a selection, it is therefore questionable whether these collections can be regarded as cultural heritage. It is therefore not surprising that the authors avoid the term cultural heritage for the collections and they present a much broader concept. This concept overcomes the separation between man and nature and includes landscapes and the immaterial cultural heritage. They refer to this concept as deep history.

The contribution of Adriana Muñoz and Manuela Fischer focuses on the connectedness of the collections. Especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the formation of collections was embedded in a global system of exchange between Naturalists, collectors and institutions. In the early nineteenth century, most of the Naturalists travelling through Brazil got in contact with the Russian consul Baron Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff and spent some time on his farm Mandioca outside of Rio de Janeiro. It is easy to imagine the great exchange of knowledge and recommendations among this group and maybe they also exchanged objects. There is firm evidence of the latter on an institutional level from the late nineteenth century on. The exchange served to complete

the collections and was based on the idea of duplicates, objects of the same type that were considered interchangeable. Here we meet the idea of "archive of humanity" formulated by Adolf Bastian at the museum in Berlin and by Erland Nordenskiöld at the museum in Gothenburg. This archive was conceived as an encyclopaedia conserved for future generations. Under these conditions, collecting also took on a certain urgency, as one foresaw the downfall of the indigenous groups. "Because the diverse human cultures that once flourished throughout the world fell victim to the unifying power of this so-called civilization, ethnologists had to act quickly. They had to save the material culture, the only historical testimonies that the unwritten peoples possessed" (Penny 2019, 67). Because of the decolonization debate this aspect of the foundation of ethnographic collections and museums is sometimes overlooked. As an archive of humanity, the purpose of the collection is in the words of Penny: "The objects are diverse, their stories numerous, and they can tell us a lot about different ontologies and worldviews and ultimately about being human" (Penny 2019, 268). With this in mind, can we see the collections also as World Heritage? The term World Heritage is officially connected with UNESCO and can be awarded only to cultural sites and landmarks. Until today, collections or museums cannot be designated World Heritage sites by UNESCO. Regarding the criteria for becoming a cultural World Heritage site, some of them would fit ethnographic collections as well. For example: "to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance" or "to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius" or "to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared". Even the concept of transculturality is presented in the criteria: "[...] an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world [...]" (https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/).

What would it mean if ethnographic collections could be designated by UNESCO as World Heritage sites? Would this be another act of colonial appropriation? Could such an approach lead to focusing the debate on how and where collections could best be used, rather than primarily discussing - sometimes for years - ownership claims? Would this be a way of freeing the collections from the institutional corset of the museum and developing a completely different kind of curating and caretaking?

In the meantime, when understanding ethnographic collections as indigenous cultural heritage we should look at the Declaration of Indigenous Rights adopted by the United Nations in 2007. Article 11 states:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to preserve, protect and develop past, present and future manifestations of their culture, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, patterns, rites, techniques, visual and performing arts and literature (https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html).

This questions the management of indigenous collections by Western museums. If we regard ethnographic collections as cultural heritage, the division or transfer of the sovereignty of interpretation is inevitable. Cultural heritage is not defined by others, but by the group itself. Through their collecting activities, ethnographic museums have created an exuberant repertoire from which cultural heritage can arise and be defined. The value of ethnographic and World Cultures museums in the future will depend on their praxis and how they overcome the contradictions of the past, between the treatment of indigenous people and the appreciation of their material culture as curiosities and objects of prestige. Developing trustful and strong relationships with indigenous communities and taking their ontologies and needs seriously lie at the core of this, or in the words of Christina Kreps: "[…] how changing attitudes toward cultural property ownership and its curation are mirroring the changing nature of relationships between anthropology museums and Native peoples" (Kreps 2003, 3).

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