

journalistes pour les nouveautés — de l'intérêt de préserver non seulement le patrimoine, mais aussi tout ce qui pourrait un jour en faire partie. Pour le définir simplement, le patrimoine sert à raconter l'histoire ; il est le support privilégié pour exprimer notre histoire à travers son propre récit, qui prend force de témoignage. En soi, le patrimoine en voie de perte ne peut pas s'exprimer lui-même, ni crier toute la valeur historique et symbolique qu'il recèle. C'est à ceux qui en connaissent le prix

d'en manifester l'existence et d'en communiquer l'importance, par exemple en publiant des livres comme ceux-ci.

## Références

- Clusiau, Éric. 2000. *Des toits sur nos rivières : Les ponts couverts de l'est du Canada*. Montréal : Éditions Hurtubise HMH.
- Nora, Pierre (dir.). 1984. *Les lieux de mémoire*. Paris : Gallimard.

## GERALD POCIUS

Review of

Marstine, Janet, ed. 2006. *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pp. 332, black and white illustrations, ISBN 1-4051-0559-3.

Macdonald, Sharon, ed. 2006. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Blackwell Companions in Cultural Studies. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pp. 570, black and white illustrations, ISBN 978-1-4051-0839-3.

Over the past twenty years, a number of edited collections dealing with new directions within the world of museums have appeared—collections chronicling what is often referred to as the “New Museology.” Some of these have focused primarily on the scene in the United Kingdom, others have come from a North American context. At the risk of overgeneralizing, while these two worlds overlap in many regards, they do seem to emerge from different schools within the museum world. In the North American scene, a series of collections edited by Ivan Karp (and others) have become standard *entrées* into museum issues (Karp et al. 1991, 1992, 2006). For whatever else they suggest methodologically, their dominant grounding is primarily in anthropology (and related disciplines). Coming from such a background, their content has often dealt with marginalized cultures and peoples, with a concern about issues of cultural representation, cultural identity and alternatives to the world of western curatorship.

Janet Marstine's and Sharon Macdonald's volumes come out of an institutional context that is primarily based in the United Kingdom. Their

collections harken back to the recent trends marked by seminal works such as Peter Vergo's (1989) *The New Museology* and Macdonald's earlier volume co-edited with Gordon Fyfe, *Theorizing Museums* (Macdonald and Fyfe 1996). Volumes continue to appear in this tradition, including Carbonell's (2004) *Museum Studies* and Corsanne's (2005) *Heritage, Museum and Galleries*. The 2006 collections by Macdonald and Marstine are two of the most recent collections coming from Britain, and their appearance indicates the sophisticated evolution of museum studies in that part of the world.

While the books by Macdonald and Marstine contain essays that are a product of the new museology movement, their actual purposes are somewhat different. Marstine's book is intended to be an introduction to new museum theory and practice, a volume that can be used as a textbook. While important for the museum scholar generally, the book is primarily aimed at both an undergraduate and a graduate audience. The book is divided into two major sections (“Defining New Museum Theory” and “Looking into the Future: Theory into Practice”), with subsections and twelve individual

contributors and their chapters. Each chapter is prefaced by an introduction by the editor, putting the essay into a wider context of current museum scholarship. Each is followed, as well, by a series of discussion questions that can be used in an academic context to promote classroom dialogue.

Marstine's choice of essays includes a variety of issues, from the technical to the more philosophical. The chapters range from discussions of the iconography of the types of buildings that museums have used, to issues about current practices in the conservation of artifacts. Throughout the volume runs the theme that the new museum is no longer a voice of authority, but rather one more voice in competing arguments over cultural meanings. Marstine states in her introduction how the postmodern museum "...is sometimes more self-reflexive. Frames are challenged, fragmented, and made transparent as the museum declares itself an active player in the making of meaning" (5). What is called the post-museum "exposes conflict and contradiction. It asserts that the institution must show ambiguity and acknowledge multiple, ever-shifting identities" (19).

On a content level, the differences in these two volumes are simply that Marstine's is intended as a collection of introductory core readings, a starting point for those wishing to know what issues are important in contemporary museology, while Macdonald's is much more extensive, more encompassing by its sheer length, more specialized in certain instances. While Marstine includes twelve individual chapters, Macdonald includes six major sections and thirty-three essays. Macdonald's volume, then, covers more specialized issues; the book is as much a state-of-the-art statement for the museum professional, as it is an introductory volume for the beginner. Macdonald comments in her introduction that "the reader is presented with a set of (carefully chosen) companions, rather than a single guide" to the various developments in the museum world, echoing, she points out, the trend in museology toward polyphony, rather than coherent visions and voices (10). With thirty-three essays, thirty-three "companions," the paths are numerous.

Obviously there are many important essays in each volume that are worth noting, but to attempt to comment on every essay contained in both wide-ranging collections is not feasible. To not mention each individual contribution is not a reflection of the quality of particular essays, rather the idiosyncratic interests of the reviewer. Such interests thus warrant

the mention of selected essays that deal with issues that are personally timely and of concern.

Macdonald's chapter in her own volume, "Collecting Practices," is an important overview of the culture of collecting. While various authors have touched on this phenomenon in both historical and contemporary contexts, Macdonald provides a succinct statement of collecting cultures, and relates these to the collecting world of the museum. Indeed, she argues that the study of collecting itself should fall completely under the domain of museum studies, since museums have influenced collecting. She argues, however, that it is necessary to expand the study of collecting beyond the boundaries of the museum into wider cultural practices.

Much of the new museology has moved the work of curators beyond being the voice of institutional authority to working with communities; the museum no longer dictates, but now listens. There are many essays in both volumes that deal with the issues of museums and communities, but those by Elizabeth Crooke and Christina Kreps in Macdonald's collection directly address these issues. Kreps's chapter—"Non-Western Models of Museums and Curation in Cross-Cultural Perspective"—is especially interesting, because she presents a wide range of examples of how non-Western cultures actually curate. While scholars may have argued in many quarters that museums are largely a Western creation, Kreps's essay indicates that caring for objects occurs in many cultures—albeit not in the immediate guise of what we would call a museum.

Two essays in the Macdonald volume are indicative of several leading concerns within the museum world: economics and heritage. Bruno Frey and Stephan Meier write about "Cultural Economics" and the museum world—in short, the fact that museums have increasingly had to become generators of income, rather than recipients of governmental funding. More and more, the museum world has become one of blockbuster exhibitions (to bring in the crowds), gift shops, fund-raising drives, donors and benefactors. These new economic forces have reshaped institutions to become more attentive to funding, less able to pursue activities that seem to lack public accountability.

Steven Hoelscher's essay on "Heritage" and the museum world puts institutions into the larger framework of the range of industries devoted to hallowed pasts and cultural identities. Hoelscher presents what he sees are the seven major domains and concerns of contemporary heritage work:

display, place, time, politics, authenticity, popular appeal and development strategies. Under each of these categories, he explores how the museum world meshes with larger cultural concerns—all under the rubric of the heritage quest.

Janet Marstine's introduction to her volume touches on many of the same important issues mentioned in several essays of the Macdonald volume. In her opening discussion, Marstine deals with the museum as a shrine for cultural values, an institution driven by market concerns, a body that acts sometimes as an authority and at other times as a place of contested issues. The post-museum, for Marstine, is a place where various voices meet, and where dialogue about cultural values take place.

Both of these volumes chronicle important new directions in the world of museums. Both are important guides to the current state-of-the-art scholarship that surrounds this important cultural institution. The Marstine volume can serve well as an introductory collection for beginning and advanced students alike. The Macdonald volume is of value not only to advanced students, but to professionals—charting new directions within the museum world. Both books, then, are important contributions to the ever-widening world of museological scholarship, both are essential reading for anyone interested in museum culture, and in the future of museums themselves. The survival of the new museum is inextricably linked to how well it can evolve into new forms with new policies and directions—the evolution discussed by so many of these essays.

## References

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