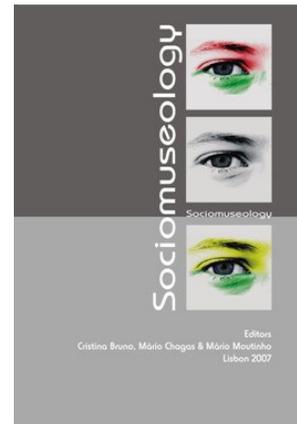


MOUTINHO, M. C. M.; BRUNO, M^o.C.O. CHAGAS, M (Org.) .
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Museology: New Focuses / New Challenges* (pp. 7-9)

Mário Canova Moutinho

Certain days, when I wake up in the morning, I have no doubt I am the hunter in the Little Riding Hood's tale.

Free of angst, I am sure of my role in this tale, I know what to do, how to do it, evaluating situations well and defining aims.

In such days, museology as defined by ICOM is easy. The Museum is indeed a permanent institution that collects, keeps, classifies and exhibits objects for cultural, leisure and development purposes; and I do not get traumatised in the search for a definite meaning of the museological object. In such days, in addition, I refuse to acknowledge the new colonisation wars in Iraq, in Cuba, in Candelária or Armenia. I also ignore that 80% of the resources in the planet are for the exclusive use of 20% of humanity, I ignore the dependency on the IMF and the migration of labour towards the North.

But, in other days, when I wake up, I am the granny. I have consolidated experiences and foresights, and I know perfectly well that all is provisional. All I have is past. My role in the tale does not force me to question history or its function. I will be reborn as many times as needed, regardless of change.

I have no doubt that museums are divided into museums of art, of history, of archaeology, of ethnology, of science, of this and that.

* Ciências em Museus magazine, nº 4, Proceedings of the International Symposium "O Processo de Comunicação nos Museus de Arqueologia e Etnologia" [*The Communication Process in Archaeology and Ethnology Museums*], São Paulo University Archaeology and Ethnology Museum, São Paulo, 1995, p. 99-100.

I know how easy and good it is to believe in the redemption of memory, abdicating for once and for all the right to change the world.

It is clear that the idea of transgression and adventure, as well as its own limitations, appears when Riding Hood's restless bustle wakes me up. She, full of good intentions, has before long scared Morpheus away and driven me out of the hammock.

In such days, curiosity flowers and the pleasure of contradiction drives me to do things myself, to leave the Forest trail and to provoke emotion. I build history my own way, I am for ecology and for interactive things. What I do is enough and I even forget that beyond the forest there are other worlds. Indeed, in such days I feel the forest teeming with Riding Hoods, each one restless and busy.

Finally, as it could not be otherwise, there are days when I wake up as a wolf, knowing that fate will carry out its task of slaughtering me, disembowelling me, quartering my body and displaying the parts by the four roads leaving the city, so that history is resumed, fulfilled, and so can start afresh, irrevocably, regardless of anything or anyone. Here, the hope of one day changing the characters and forest paths is fragile.

There is neither redemption nor memory building. There is something else. Who amongst us is not also a little bit the granny, the hunter, Riding Hood or the wolf? And who amongst us has not muffled one of these characters without knowing why?

Who amongst us has not battled with them all and has wanted to be everyone at the same time?

To recognise that, deep down, is to believe that in the contemporary world there is a new intervention space conditioned above all by each one's attitude, each day.

A kind of attitude interdisciplinarity, a lot more complex than the always intended and ill-loved interdisciplinarity of knowledge.

If there is a new challenge in the forest of museology, in our understanding, it does not regard, in its essential, the shape it presents, but above all the place within it that we wish to occupy, and the possibility of deepening and finally recognising that the actors' posture is what determines the meaning of the work we do.

So much so that we cannot control nor even condition the final effect of our intervention, which in truth ends up far away, so often perverse and alienated from our first intentions. In the culture of the now that determines our submissions, which we rarely acknowledge and reject, we forget that time introduces, in a certain way, new conditioners, which escape us, transforming the sought for path, irrevocably. What is actually within reach is no more than the possibility of choosing the beginning of the direction we wish to imprint our action.

If so it is, we can more easily relativise the successes and failures, doubt our short-term evaluations and consciously start afresh each day a new history, a new museum.

