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CHANGING PRESENTATIONS OF POLAND IN THE CONTEXT OF NEW MUSEUMS

Introduction

The production of particular narratives of identity necessarily involves leaving out or de-emphasizing some things, while emphasizing others¹. These dematerialized resources are never fully erased, though, leaving behind traces that can be potentially appropriated as resources for alternative identities². Individuals and groups may alternate contextually between different identities drawn from different resources of memory and symbolism³. From the perspective of identity formation, maintenance, and reconstruction, research in Central and Eastern Europe, and Poland in particular, presents interesting case studies. In Poland's case, the last few centuries have included not only the presence of two totalitarian governments, but also drastic border and population changes, including over 100 years of partition during which the Polish nation ceased to be represented by a physical state. Nevertheless, publicly available historical narratives, including those in museums, often posit continuity, tradition, and homogeneity. However, alternative narratives are increasingly being made public, many of which draw on Poland's pre-World War II history as a multiethnic state.

Historical Background

The historical, political, and cultural background against which museums displaying Polish historical and cultural museums are realized is complex and fraught with implications for both the understanding of Poland's past and its future. Through practices and

¹ I. Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland*, New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction Publishers, 1989; *Frames of Remembrance*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994.

² M.R. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1995; L. Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

³ K.P. Ewing, "The Illusion of Wholeness: Culture, Self, and the Experience of Inconsistency," *Ethos* 18(3): 251–278, 1990.

ceremonies involving everyday people, the meanings of historical events are shaped⁴. The historical development of Polish national identity through the co-articulation of particular meanings and symbols in particular historical and cultural contexts can be traced by examining it over time. In doing so, the different ways in which it is being reasserted and resignified in contemporary contexts can also be analyzed.

The past takes on the role of symbolic capital among politicians in particular⁵. The idea of “new historical policy,” or simply “historical policy,” became influential in public discourse about the past in Poland in the mid-2000s. The term has been used in Polish media and public discourse to refer to an imprecisely defined, yet controversial, set of political programs concerning the public treatment of history. According to critics of historical policy, its vision of patriotism tends to be characterized more by the re-promotion of past glories and the building of a sense of national pride than by accounting with difficult past events⁶. This rebuilding of national pride, according to its proponents, is partly in response to, and constitutes a rejection of, perceived current social and political conditions, such as “amnesia,” “moral permissiveness,” and poor knowledge of history among young Poles in particular⁷.

Defining Museums, Old and New

In the absence of what Pierre Nora calls *milieux de mémoire* – spaces of lived and experienced memory – memory is retained in particular places, or *lieux de mémoire*, in which the past is deliberately evoked and preserved. *Lieux de mémoire* are produced, Nora writes, to protect against the sweeping away of lived memory by history, a threat which he sees as inherent to the modern era⁸. A museum is a particular kind of public display – and *lieu de mémoire* – connected with collective memory and national identity.

Museums understood as *lieux de mémoire* are distinctive for the way they organize knowledge and meaning. I will speak first of all of museums in the traditional sense – institutions designed around displaying objects perceived within a particular society to be of historical, artistic, cultural, scientific, or other value to that society. As we will see from the examples described below, many newer institutions differ in important ways from this model. First of all, museums, because of their connection with academic and official structures, are associated with science and knowledge, and thus seen as authoritative. Secondly, museum collections and narratives provide semiotic paradigms for the interpretation of their contents⁹. In being displayed in a museum, objects – material artifacts as well as stories, photographs, etc. – become part of the collection, being resig-

⁴ M. Lampland, “The Politics of History: Historical Consciousness and the Hungarian Revolutions of 1848/49,” *Hungarian Studies* 6(2): 185–194, 1990; “Death of a Hero: Hungarian National Identity and the Funeral of Lajos Kossuth,” *Hungarian Studies* 8(1): 29–35, 1993.

⁵ B. Korzeniewski, *Transformacja Pamięci. Przewartościowania w pamięci przeszłości a wybrane aspekty funkcjonowania dyskursu publicznego o przeszłości w Polsce po 1989 roku*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, 2010, p. 8.

⁶ B. Korzeniewski, *ibid.*, p. 205.

⁷ “Polityka historyczna.” In *Transodra Online*. Retrieved 21.2.2012 from <http://www.transodra-online.net/pl/print/book/export/html/1256>.

⁸ P. Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26:7–25, 1989, pp. 12–13.

⁹ J. Baudrillard, “The system of collecting,” in J. Elsner and R. Cardinal, eds. *The cultures of collecting*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 7–24, 1994.

nified within the museum's narrative in addition to retaining whatever original meaning or function they may have had¹⁰.

Museums are also connected with collective memory. They both reflect the social and political culture¹¹ and help to shape collective memory¹². People visit museums not only to learn or to remember, but also to come into contact with objects defined as culturally, scientifically, or historically important and thus to constitute themselves as "cultured" or "informed" citizens. Visiting a traditional museum constitutes a type of ritual in the sociological sense used by e.g., Goffman as well – it is a defined social situation with particular ways of behaving (e.g. visitors look at objects rather than touching them) and structures and conventions of authority and knowledge (e.g., it is assumed that the knowledge presented by the museum is authoritative and objective).

Do "new museums," understood in a global context, comprise a definable category? It is difficult to say. While in some ways it appears that historical and cultural museums are shifting in the way they present their subject matter, there is indeed a great deal of continuity with regard to both form and content between museums conceived and constructed within the last few decades and older institutions. Older ideologies underlying museums, including the ideas of the museum as "cabinet of curiosities" and modernist temple of science and knowledge coexist, often in tense relationships, with newer and theoretically more democratic ideas, for instance, that of the museum as space for the dialogue of multiple voices¹³ or critical institution¹⁴. In all of these models, the museum retains its power as the arbiter of dialogue, providing the institutional framing for visitors' interpretations.

A few prominent general tendencies in recent museum developments can be discerned, and can also be linked to global cultural trends. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett¹⁵ describes a "crisis of identity" experienced by museums in recent years. As museums have had to compete with other, increasingly accessible, forms of entertainment "within a tourism industry that privileges experience, immediacy, and what the industry calls adventure," and have come to rely increasingly on earned income, they have had to shape their forms of presentation to fit visitors' desires. In connection with this, and perhaps related to the fact that a large part of museum audiences have historically been made up of children, youth, and students, the museum's role has come to be seen as one of entertainment in addition to, or in place of, its mission of education¹⁶. The museum as "theme park," with immersive, experiential, and often overwhelming displays, has become

¹⁰ J. Baudrillard, "The system of collecting," in J. Elsner and R. Cardinal, eds. *The cultures of collecting*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 7–24, 1994; J. Clifford, *The predicament of culture: twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988; B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

¹¹ B. Jules-Rosette, E. Fontana, "Le Musée d'Art au Hasard': Responses of Black Paris to French Museum Culture," *African and Black Diaspora* 2, 2 (July):213–229, 2009.

¹² M. Zychlińska, "Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego jako wehikuł polskiej pamięci zbiorowej," *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, rok LIII, nr 3, 2009.

¹³ This can have varying results; see, for instance, B. Jules-Rosette, E. Fontana (2009) on the Musée de Quai Branly in Paris, which promotes itself as an institution "where cultures converse" (*Là où dialoguent les cultures*).

¹⁴ P. Piotrowski, *Muzeum krytyczne*. Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy REBIS, 2011.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁶ S. Sayre, C.M. King, *Entertainment & Society: Audiences, Trends, and Impacts*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 42–43, 2003.

a familiar comparison and critique¹⁷. In keeping with this entertainment role, many newer museums act as multipurpose arts and cultural centers, hosting a variety of events such as concerts, games, parties and movie screenings¹⁸ and often designating space specifically for these purposes in their construction.

Technology has played an important role in shaping contemporary museums. Familiar technologies such as audio guides and, more recently, touch-screen displays installed in museums enable visitors to explore topics in more depth according to their own interests and at their discretion, although nevertheless still according to institutional framings. Other technologies allow visitors to use their own electronic devices such as cell phones to interact on a more individual basis with displays, creating what Kevin Walker¹⁹ calls “personalized learning trails” on their trajectory through the museum.

Many newer museums have an experiential and personal orientation, relying on visitors’ sensory and emotional identification with people and places described for their effect. This is accomplished through the use of often elaborately reconstructed immersive environments – through which the visitor is encouraged to identify with those who lived through a particular time period or historical event – and, in history museums in particular, the display of individual lives (e.g., personal testimonies and biographies, photos of people) rather than larger-than-life heroic figures. New and innovative forms of visitor participation²⁰ also work to increase visitors’ sense of individual agency vis-à-vis museum displays.

The “new museum” in the sense of contemporary, multimediated, experiential, and often entertainment-oriented forms of presentation – offering new *experiences* to the visitor – must therefore be distinguished from ideologically “new” museums in the sense of institutions that embody new, critical, and democratic ideas²¹ and thus challenges to *museum narratives*, although there is certainly potential for the two to overlap. In my research, I have come across several well-advertised and technologically state-of-the-art historical and cultural museums that are either in development or have recently been opened in Poland. Among many others, these include the Warsaw Uprising Museum, the Polish History Museum, and the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw; and the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk.

Case Studies

The institutions I examine below are only three of the many new museums representative of the phenomena I discuss above, and do not cover the entire scope of my research. In the interest of space, I have chosen to discuss these three on a comparative basis

¹⁷ e.g., F. Choay, “Branly: Un nouveau Luna Park est-il nécessaire?” *Urbanisme* 350, 4–9, 2006.

¹⁸ S. Sayre, C.M. King, *ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁹ K. Walker, 2008 “Structuring Visitor Participation.” In L. Tallon, K. Walker, eds. *Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience: Handheld Guides and Other Media*, pp. 109–124, Lanham, MD: AltaMiraPress, p. 109, 2008.

²⁰ Visitor participation can take a variety of forms, ranging from, among others, looking at exhibits and forming one’s own interpretation (as in traditional museums); to volunteer work and contributing artifacts, personal stories, etc. to the museum; to displays that allow the visitor to actually alter the display or participate in the performance (for instance, some of the events organized by the Lublin-based Teatr NN); to newer, technologically enabled forms of more active participation (L. Tallon, K. Walker, *ibid.*).

²¹ P. Piotrowski, *ibid.*

because all three are in the same city (Warsaw), all have been characterized as “narrative museums” – that is, museums that are driven less by the collections of material objects (of which there may be very few, or none) than by an overarching story being told – and all have either been opened in the last decade or are still in development.

THE MUSEUM OF POLISH HISTORY

The Museum of Polish History (Muzeum Historii Polski; henceforth referred to as MPH) is a museum intended to encompass within its scope Polish history since the tenth century – including, according to a brochure available in the museum office, “the history of the gentry republic, the Solidarity movement and both restorations of independent Poland.” According to this same brochure, the emphasis is on “the most significant themes in the history of Poland – state and nation – with special emphasis on the idea of freedom... and on the struggle for independence.”

The MPH was established by the Ministry for Culture and National Heritage in 2006. As of the writing of this article, no permanent exhibit space had yet been built for the MPH. However, the MPH as an institution has nevertheless already begun realizing its aims through a diverse array of projects and exhibits, including temporary exhibitions; collaborations with other institutions in Poland and internationally; publications; and other projects, including several realized through media-based means. As of July 2012, four temporary exhibits had taken place in Warsaw, along with a number of international cooperative projects, publications, and other projects and exhibitions (e.g., street displays). The first, “Roads to Independence” in 2008, commemorated Poland’s 90th anniversary of independence, telling the story of Polish history from the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the re-establishment of the Polish state in 1918 and the March 1921 national constitution. The narrative of “Roads to Independence” is a fairly traditional one, with much of the text drawn primarily from government documents and the writings of culturally and historically important figures. A historical narrative at the level of the nation is foregrounded, rather than an emphasis on individual voices or specific local experiences are discussed²².

The second major exhibition by the MPH, “Between the Wars: The Faces of Modernity,” was held in 2008 and 2009. This elaborate, multi-mediated exhibit dealt with the theme of “modernity” and its challenges and promises in the newly independent state of inter-war Poland (1918-1937), from both a cultural perspective and that of everyday life broadly, as well as to a lesser extent political themes (e.g., diplomacy). Recently, the MPH presented the “Separated by War” exhibit, dealing with the diversely realized yet well-known phenomenon of wartime separation of families in Poland and nearby areas during the occupations, border changes, and population transfers of the 20th century²³.

An exhibit held in summer 2012, “Pod Wspólnym Niebem” (Under a Common Sky), uses a combination of historical objects and multimedia displays to present Poland during the period of the *szlachta* republic as a space of mostly peaceful coexistence among a variety of cultures and religions and a site of cultural interaction and exchange evident in, among other areas, politics, language, and styles of dress. Evidence of present-day Polish cultural

²² Muzeum Historii Polski, *Drogi do Niepodległości* (catalogue). Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2008.

²³ Muzeum Historii Polski, *Wojennie rozstania* (catalogue). Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Polski, 2009.

heritage beyond contemporary national borders – and of heritage of other cultures within the borders of Poland – is presented in a film at the end. The overall message is one of past and present international cooperation. Interestingly, the exhibit opened a month before the Euro 2012 football tournament – a time when presenting such an image to Polish and international visitors would be particularly helpful.

The exhibit brochure²⁴ explicitly critiques national “martyrology,” a common theme, as discussed above, in much of Polish historiography. It offers as a corrective “civilian martyrology” – the experience of suffering by everyday citizens. There is thus an implicit critique of national-level historical narratives; the implication is that the dominant narratives are not necessarily incorrect, but are incomplete. To “balance” national memory, it is necessary not to simply change or reframe familiar national stories, but to broaden the stories by remembering the experiences of civilians as well as soldiers and officials.

The influence of international and global factors is also apparent in the museum’s activities. The methods and museography – the media of presentation – are contemporary and appear designed to appeal to the interests of both Polish and international audiences. However, in my discussions thus far with people at the MPH and other institutions, interviewees have discussed the importance of new media not only as a means of appealing to (especially younger and more media-savvy) audiences, but also as a way of dealing with constraints on museum storage space and archival capacity and facilitating the organization and exchange of images and information.

WARSAW UPRISING MUSEUM

Unlike the other two museums discussed here, the Warsaw Uprising Museum deals with a specific event rather than a more broadly defined cultural or national population. The museum was founded in 1983, but did not open until July 31, 2004 – the 60th anniversary of the Uprising. The museum’s main aim seems to be to present and commemorate an event that was, and remains, important for Polish history and patriotism, but to update the media of presentation for a new generation. The museum acts as a sort of cultural center, presenting a variety of educational, cultural, and entertainment events related to Warsaw’s history, culture, and city space. Thus even in cases where there is already an established central museum space, the scope of activities extends beyond the walls of the building and into the city space, producing an institution that is broader and more diffuse in both spatial and thematic respects than many traditional museums.

The museum is organized chronologically and thematically; as one follows the visitor path, one can collect “calendar pages” describing the events of each day leading up to and during the Uprising. The presentation is strongly experiential, evoking life in occupied Warsaw through the use of an often overwhelming array of original and reproduced artifacts and documents, reconstructed spatial environments, films, sound recordings, and digital reconstructions. Histories of everyday life, in the form of oral and video interviews with Uprising participants, are displayed throughout the museum. As our English-speaking tour guide explained when I visited the museum in November 2011 with a group of Polish and international researchers, the Warsaw Uprising is commemorated as a “moral victory” for Poland despite the destruction and loss of lives during and after the event – at

²⁴ Muzeum Historii Polski, 2009, *ibid.*; p. 9.

least in particular narratives of history, including that posited by the museum. The Warsaw Uprising Museum begins with a central, uniting event, which itself is taken for granted in terms of both facts and significance, and from the “imagined community”²⁵ of people commemorating and identifying with it as part of a historical narrative of Polish morality and national pride, develops a center of experiential historical and cultural learning.

THE MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF THE POLISH JEWS

The Museum of the History of the Polish Jews, founded by a non-governmental initiative in 1999, represents a fairly explicit recognition of, and attempt to address, particular lacks in dominant national narratives, namely the understanding of Polish Jews within Polish history primarily as victims of the Holocaust. Instead, it strives to present not only this time period, but the diverse, approximately 1000-year history of Jews and Jewish life in Poland.

A feature of the museum narrative is its focus on presenting in its core exhibition the words, images, and stories of Polish Jews throughout history, in part to showcase diversity and counteract monolithic images of Polish Jewish history. This presentation technique also reflects the focus on everyday life and individual stories described above and the orientation toward narrative and meaning rather than, and in addition to, objects. The museum will include primarily these kinds of intangible objects, as relevant artifacts are held not by the museum itself, but by the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, one of the museum’s founding organizations. The museum was envisioned by one of its original creators, Albert Stankowski, as a “museum without walls” – a participatory institution whose reach extends beyond the museum scope. In a way, all three of the institutions in this paper fit this description. I would argue that, if we can speak of such a category as a “new museum,” this fluid relationship to place, objects, and materiality can be counted among its characteristics.

Of the three narrative museums discussed here, this museum’s narrative seems to be among the most open to public contributions to the story being told. This is likely in part a response to the lack of previous historical explication in widespread public narratives. The protagonists of the museum’s narrative are mostly absent in the present context, and the 20th century has seen attempts by totalitarian regimes to forget or erase their history. Thus a variety of available methods and sources, in the frames of several different sub-projects under the museum’s jurisdiction, are drawn on. The physical museum itself is as of the time of this writing in development, being built in Warsaw next to the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes and scheduled to open in 2013. The Virtual Shtetl, a Web portal, offers researchers, those with Polish Jewish heritage, and other interested people the opportunity to contribute information – photographs, stories, individual names and biographies, and other data – about Jewish villages in Poland’s history. Thus contributions related to specific local histories and memories are solicited, in part to showcase the diversity of experiences and address the deficiencies of often monolithic historical narratives. A third project involves the reconstruction, using traditional construction and painting techniques and drawing on archival material such as photos and building plans,

²⁵ B.R. O’Gorman Anderson,, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. New York: Verso, 1991.

of the roof of a wooden synagogue from Gwoździec in present-day western Ukraine, to be displayed in the museum when it opens – a new physical object, but representing historical techniques, places, and meanings. Finally, the museum is associated with “The Polish Righteous – Recalling Forgotten History” project, which is dedicated to people who rescued Jews during World War II.

The museum’s set of projects is ambitious and multi-faceted. It remains to be seen what kinds of narratives the deliberate absence of an imposed narrative – i.e., allowing the “voices” of Polish Jews throughout history to speak – will leave space for. It will also be interesting to note how these voices will in fact be heard in a present characterized by competing and overlapping forces compelling historiography and its public presentation at once toward local, national, and transnational directions.

Conclusions

Based on my admittedly limited research thus far, it appears that new Polish historical and cultural museums encompass attempts to bring the past into the present in several ways – re-presenting and “re-ritualizing” existing historical narratives, as well as addressing the shortcomings of these narratives from the perspective of the present cultural, social, and historical climate. A society’s imaginations of its own past, in the form of history as presented in public, reflect current conditions and values; the past is kept alive in, and framed by, present interests²⁶. As such, trends in recent Polish museography reflect the multi-directional and complex influences on attitudes toward history.

There remains a valuing of traditional historical narratives, at least in museum exhibits, which by their nature tend to be oriented more toward presenting history to the public than toward detailed critical historiography. To varying degrees, all three museums described above appear to engage with narratives likely to be familiar to the museum-going public in Poland – whether in reinforcing such narratives, supplementing familiar knowledge and perceptions and attempting to address the perceived shortcomings of existing museum methods, or, most commonly, both. Many of the exhibits presented by the Museum of Polish History, for example, deal with familiar historical themes, often presenting them in innovative ways or seeking new perspectives (e.g., individual, regionally representative life stories) from which to present historical events. The Warsaw Uprising Museum is based around a familiar historical event considered important in Polish national history and presents it to visitors through contemporary technology in a highly experiential manner. In doing so, the museum engages a public of museum-goers who identify with this history, and also presents an opportunity for ongoing engagement through cultural and educational events. The Museum of the History of the Polish Jews will attempt to draw on various sources of knowledge to craft a more detailed and diverse public narrative of Polish Jewish history than those that are currently well-known.

However, there has also been a recognition of both international museographical trends as Polish museums seek international audiences and partnerships and as “univer-

²⁶ J. Assmann, *Pamięć kulturowa. Pismo, zapamiętywanie i polityczna tożsamość w cywilizacjach starożytnych*, Robert Traba, introduction and editor; trans. A. Kryczyńska-Pham. Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw, 2008; M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, translated and edited by L.A. Coser, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1950].

sal” media and ways of talking about memory become more present²⁷. The aesthetic and performative qualities of the museum display have taken an increasingly important role, as can be seen in these three institutions. All have drawn on, or are drawing on, the expertise of dedicated exhibit design specialists to put together their presentation. With regard to museum content, the rise of local and specific stories and images, and visitor and volunteer participation in a diverse array of forms, are related both to attempts to critique and address monolithic concepts of history and, I would hypothesize, to a turn toward individuality and sensory experience in global discourses of memory. A multiplicity of voices and perspectives is also evident in many museum exhibits. This phenomenon of emphasizing local, specific, and/or individual stories, evident to some degree in all three museums, points to a shift in both form and content with regard to museum practice and display.

²⁷ B. Korzeniewski, *ibid.*

Erica Fontana

Changing presentations of Poland in the context of new museums

The past few years in Poland and, indeed, globally, have seen a shift from the predominance of traditional museums to the rise of multi-mediated, multi-sensory, and interactive “new” museums. However, in the midst of technological shifts in museum forms as well as broader social, cultural, and political changes, are the images of Poland and Polish culture and national identity, as presented in museums, also changing? If so, how, and what resources are being drawn on to construct new identities and/or reproduce old ones?

In this paper and in my ongoing dissertation research project, I ask several questions: What images of Polish history and culture are presented in Polish museums, particularly newer ones? Are these images changing, and if so, in what ways? Can we speak of such a category as a “new” museum, and if so, what are its characteristics? Finally, what are the various dimensions and considerations of “participation” in these museum displays and processes, and who participates in these processes? I hypothesize, first, that new museums understood as a sort of public “ritual” represent in part a means of addressing uncertainty over national identity; and secondly, that local/regional and transnational resources, in addition to national ones are increasingly being drawn on in both museum form and content in the process of constructing new public images of Poland, in part in dialogue with broader and more diffuse audiences, but also that these new images coexist, at times uneasily, with familiar discourses of the nation.

Zmiana sposobów prezentacji Polski w kontekście nowych muzeów

W ostatnich kilku latach – nie tylko w Polsce, lecz również globalnie – dało się zauważyć przesunięcie od tradycyjnego muzeum do powstawania placówek multimedialnych, „wielozmysłowych” i interakcyjnych – słowem „nowych muzeów.” Jednakowoż pojawia się pytanie, czy wskroś tego przesunięcia technologicznego, związanego z nową formą muzeum – jako przejawu szerszych przemian o charakterze kulturowym, politycznym, społecznym – zmienia się także wyobrażenie o Polsce, polskiej kulturze i narodowej tożsamości, w tych nowych typach muzeów?

Jeśli tak, to z jakich zasobów się korzysta i na jakich podstawach konstruowane są nowe narodowe tożsamości, bądź też reprodukowane są stare? W moim całościowym projekcie, jak i artykule – będącym jego częścią – stawiam kilka pytań: Czy wyobrażenia polskiego narodu i jego tożsamości zmieniają się i w jaki sposób? Czy możemy mówić o takiej kategorii jak: nowe muzeum i jaka jest jego charakterystyka? Jakie są nowe wymiary partycypacji w tej nowej placówce oraz procesy, które towarzyszą tej partycypacji?

Moja hipoteza jest taka, iż muzea te mogą być rozpatrywane jako forma nowych publicznych rytuałów, odgrywanych wobec pewnej niepewności kształtu narodowej tożsamości, która wytworzyła się w Polsce po transformacji, a po drugie – lokalne, regionalne, i transnarodowe zasoby, nałożone na narodowe, wpłynęły zarówno na formę, jak i treść tych nowych muzeów, przyczyniając się do konstrukcji nowego wyobrażenia Polski, jako części dialogu z szerszą i bardziej rozproszoną publicznością. Jednocześnie – te nowe wyobrażenia koegzystują ze starymi, znajomymi dyskursami dotyczącymi narodu.

Tłumaczyła Anna Wachowiak