

Regeneration of a community: Development of a township museum in the post-apartheid South Africa

Kyoko Murakami*

Abstract

In this paper, I rehearse an argument for building a local museum for the regeneration of the township community in Western Cape, South Africa. In particular I explore the question of what such a museum might offer to the people of a South African township community and their future. In 2004 South Africa celebrated its 10th anniversary of democracy and freedom. The current government is faced with insurmountable tasks of poverty reduction, creation of employment and battling with HIV/AIDS pandemic. Living with the legacy of apartheid, the black township community presents itself as the most conspicuous and rampant case of these problems to be dealt with. By rethinking an orthodox, static image of national museums, I propose a concept of museum, whose space would help redress the imbalance of the racial and social economic divides and create dynamic human dialogues and exchanges as well as the mobilisation and sharing of cultural and economic resources that mediate the dynamic interaction in the museum. The issue of shaping the community's identity can be promoted through story telling and other symbolic, discursive activities that the museum space would afford. Vygotsky's concept of consciousness is considered as theoretical underpinning for the concept of the museum and forging of a collective identity. My thinking involved in the development of the township museum emerges from a research project that develops ethnography of intercultural activities of partnership (twinning) of schools in South Africa and the United Kingdom. For a blueprint of a township museum, unique features of two museums in Cape Town as an example of a symbolic site of reconciliation are illustrated. The paper concludes with a suggestion that the research project and the international school partnership are integral part of the conceptual and physical development of the township museum and serves as an impetus for the sustainable community development.

Keywords: Museum; Regeneration; Development; Consciousness; South Africa.

Reconstrução de uma comunidade: desenvolvimento de um museu municipal na África do Sul pós-apartheid

Resumo

Neste artigo, eu tento um argumento para a construção de um museu local para a reconstrução da comunidade de Cabo Ocidental, África do Sul. Em particular, exploro a questão do que tal museu deve oferecer às pessoas de uma comunidade da África do Sul e ao seu futuro. Em 2004, a África do Sul celebrou seu décimo aniversário de democracia e liberdade. O governo atual enfrenta tarefas insuperáveis de redução de pobreza, criação de emprego e luta contra a epidemia de HIV/Aids. Vivendo sob o legado do *apartheid*, a comunidade local negra apresenta-se como o caso mais visível e violento desses problemas, com os quais se terá de lidar. Repensando uma imagem ortodoxa, estática de museus nacionais, proponho um conceito de museu cujo espaço ajudaria a repensar o desequilíbrio das divisões raciais e econômicas, e criaria diálogos e trocas humanas dinâmicos, bem como a mobilização e o compartilhamento de recursos culturais e econômicos que interfiram na interação dinâmica do museu. A questão da formação da identidade da comunidade pode ser melhorada pelo contar histórias e por outras atividades simbólicas, discursivas, que o espaço do museu possibilitaria. O conceito de Vygotsky de consciência é considerado justificativa teórica para o conceito de museu, além de forjar uma identidade coletiva. Meu pensamento envolvido no desenvolvimento do museu municipal emerge de um projeto de pesquisa que desenvolve a etnografia de atividades interculturais de parcerias (geminadas) de escolas na África do Sul e no Reino Unido. Para um anteprojeto de um museu municipal, características únicas de dois museus na Cidade do Cabo servem de ilustração para exemplo de um lugar simbólico de reconciliação. O artigo é concluído com a sugestão de que o projeto de pesquisa e a associação escolar internacional sejam parte integral do desenvolvimento conceitual e físico do museu municipal e servem como um impulso para o desenvolvimento sustentável da comunidade.

Palavras-chave: Museu; Reconstrução; Desenvolvimento; Consciência; África do Sul.

Introduction

This is an account of my reflection and thinking regarding a recent research project that involves

British and South African school partnerships. I wish to rehearse an argument for building a museum in a black township in Western Cape for the regeneration of the post-apartheid township community. In particular I

* Endereço para correspondência:

E-mail: k.murakami@brunel.ac.uk

would like to explore possibilities of what such a museum might offer to the people of a South African township community and their future.

Traditionally, museums are considered as a site of remembering that collect, manage material objects and shape a collective memory. Increasingly this conventional notion of museum has been challenged as it is often regarded as a contested public forum of categorising/classifying, storing and archiving pasts. The work of Rowe, Kosyalva and Wertsch, on construction of history in the post-soviet Russia (2002) transcends this archival function of museum, looking at history museum acting as a public forum of where personal lives may be linked to collective through narratives produced by the museum and its visitors. A dynamic discursive process of recollection of the past is achieved beyond display of the object and its signification and through the narrative as mediational means identity politics is played out in such national history museums. The museum space then is no longer a site of memory where pasts become fixed, stable points that are experienced. Museums can offer a moment of re-description and reformulation of the past at issue—memories invoke people's longing for nostalgia or in some cases, memories cause people to turn away with disgust and experience emotional (and even physical) pain. The representation and maintenance of a coherent national history masks and suppresses its alternatives. What is more, the museum can be viewed as a discursive process of shaping new forms of identities and consciousness of a community and new social relations would emerge. The purpose of this paper is to reconsider this orthodox role of museum, which on one hand memory is fixed and endured, and also to underscore its flexibility of the space for use. I propose that a museum focused on the discursive process may open up further possibilities of collective being and action, through telling (and re-telling) personal and community's histories. Consequently it would bridge generational and ethnic/racial differences between black townships and other communities in South Africa. The museum space is a place of action, in which remembering practice of telling stories as a community promotes its regeneration and establishes links to an outside world that would otherwise have been inaccessible.

This alternative, perhaps new, concept of museum is to be used to propose building a township museum in Western Cape, South Africa. By using two examples of existing museums in Cape Town, namely District Six Museum and Robben Island Museum, I will highlight their unique features, which would provide the basis for a blueprint of the community museum. However, the purpose of this museum is not to build an exact replica of those well-established national museums.

The paper draws on the research that involves an international British and South African school partnership project. Its aims and interest is to explore this concept of museum and to materialise it into reality. It is not necessarily the museum building per se, but the discursive process that building the museum involves. By discursive process, people in a given community are encouraged to work together—to discuss its objectives and aims as to what this museum means for them. Faced with the question of how it is going to be built and how it will be used, the museum building project will mobilise the entire community to identify action strategies and seek financial, material and human resources. It would entail the development of a community's future. The museum would provide a multi-purpose community space for collective remembering and learning, which is woven into the social/cultural fabrics of township community and will provide black people with resources for empowerment, regeneration and working toward a forward looking future.

What is central to a theoretical underpinning of the argument for a community/local museum is Vygotsky's notion of consciousness (Vygotsky, 1979), linking the discussion on consciousness to museum development. The paper will outline a social nature of the development of consciousness and argue that the shared/collective identity can be achieved in the museum-like space. In the popular tradition of psychology, consciousness has been considered as a unique property of an individual, which in turn forms a collective/social consciousness. The argument for a township museum here is underpinned by Vygotsky's developmental thesis, known as the "general genetic law of cultural development" (Vygotsky, 1981): "First it appears between people as an interpsychological category and then within the child as intrapsychological category" (p. 163). The thesis, highlighting the social, is further elaborated in a discussion of consciousness, locating consciousness first in the interpersonal domain and then in the intrapersonal (Vygotsky, 1979). I will elaborate on this point later in the paper.

To understand the need for and thinking behind the museum development, we must consider the context. Here I sketch out the research process and emergence of research issues and interests together with the social, cultural and political context and environment within the township communities I visited and in which my fieldwork was conducted. The current research is an extension of the research project that was launched through my involvement with a secondary school, west of London, and their international school partnership project. Based on the initial findings of the fieldwork visits, I suggest that developing and establishing a museum is a way to re-generate the township community and enhance

the educational experiences of teachers and students working with international partners in tackling HIV/AIDS, poverty and other social problems that are symptomatic of black township communities in South Africa.

I shall explore possibilities and opportunities of the international educational partnership project as how the partnership is incorporated into the development and regeneration of the township community and address how an ethnographic research project could help consolidate concerns for the development of a new collective identity and a new narrative of the post-apartheid South Africa.

“Finding voices”: The international educational partnership

To contextualise the argument I put forward here, I outline the South Africa-UK educational partnership project. The partnership was initiated, and has been driven, by the passion of a teacher of English and citizenship education from a Catholic convent high school in Slough, England, former anti-apartheid activist and currently also a citizenship coordinator. The history of this project dates back to 1992, when she succeeded in obtaining funding from a South African Foundation. The funding helped her link up with a like-minded teacher at a primary school in Western Cape, South Africa.

In the course of partnership related activities, the project invites Local Education Authority staff, university researchers, and musicians and artists in order to strengthen and widen the scope and potentials in teaching and learning through the partnership. Up until October, 2003, person-to-person exchange visits, primarily between teachers took place. In those early years of the partnership project, several South African primary school teachers visited schools in Britain followed by a personal visit of a teacher from Britain to South Africa. Personal correspondences kept them in touch with one another. In October 2003, a larger group consisting of 6 teachers, a local educational official and a researcher from a university made a two-week study visit to potential partnership schools, local education authority offices, and British Council and other educational institutions in Cape Town area. The study visit also included a tour in the South African parliament and two museums that stand on the sites of monuments of political struggle and hardship during the apartheid era.

The main aim of the October 2003 study visit was to develop good practice in teaching, literacy, numeracy, ESL (English as Second Language), citizenship education, curriculum, understanding historical and cultural differences between two parties. Teachers visiting from Britain joined their respective grades and subject classrooms for

observing and teaching lessons of their subject areas to the South African students, often without much induction and time for preparation. The British teachers said that they learned tremendously from the South African teachers and pupils, and despite historical, political, social and cultural differences, the two parties came to connect one another, realising how similar their educational challenges are. By the end of the two weeks, they became more and more convinced that this partnership could grow on a long term basis and offer one another in terms of professional as this opportunity to see the other in hugely difference circumstances allow a critical reflection on their own circumstances and appreciate gaining a cross-cultural perspective of educational practice embedded in history, culture and society.

The follow up visit in April 2004 was made by one of the teachers who participated in the October visit. She was to help preparing 12 students and 6 teachers who were invited to take part in a subsequent study visit to Britain in summer 2004—two students and one teacher from each school, in total 6 schools. The third visit in February 2005 was similar to that of October 2004 with mostly new membership with a few old faces such as the English teacher in Slough and her colleagues and myself as university researcher. These three trips in which I as researcher took part became the source of data ranging from group interviews and video diaries to video clips recording classroom visits and various formal ceremonies that the participating schools staged to welcome their visitors.

The research initiative aims to document the development of the international partnership with ethnographic details. However, as the project continues, the research offered significant insights into understanding our current educational problems. Furthermore, the role of researcher changed from an objective observer to an involved active change agent. The researcher was engaged in discussions with teachers in interviews, as a co-participant to think together for problem solving and suggest some measure for action. For instance, the initial findings gained from the earlier fieldwork paws used to generate a rationale and framework of proposed practical workshops, which would enhance the understanding and skills needed by students and teachers. The workshops were to set up and conduct a community based oral history project and to examine opportunities of working with staff at Slough Museum in forging links with museum education in the townships, with our partner school as the learning centre. This is a long-term objective – beginning in February 2005 with the exploration of funding sources in South Africa. This paper in part sums up the collective thinking and planning process of the project members (including the researcher).

Ethnography of international school partnership

An ethnographic approach (Denzin; Lincoln, 1998; Hammersley; Atkinson, 1995) was used to understand the development of international school partnership and the nature of cross-cultural understanding between schools, teachers and students. The researcher was a participant observer, accompanying the members who were involved in activities and events for building a school-to-school partnership. The main aim of the researcher as participant observer is to experience the event as a member of the partnership project and trace changes in perceptions and attitude of not only the teachers and students, but the researcher's own perception, often biases, prejudices and assumptions about her research context. In order to systematically reflect on the participants' experiences, the video diary was employed to give participants the opportunity to talk about their experience of encounters with social and cultural others in recollection and how the experience enabled them to think about their own situations in the UK. In addition to video diaries, one-to-one or group interviews with the participants were arranged and were similarly made use of by the participants.

This visit generated a large corpus of data—anything that the researcher saw, heard, read and felt became data—over 60 hours of interviews and video diary conversations recorded on mini disks and over 30 hours of filming study trip activities and other visits made by the participants.

Currently, whilst writing this article, I as researcher am covering and documenting the third visit from the UK, as a continuation of the partnership project, in which a group of twenty British high school students and four teachers are visiting their partnership schools in townships of Western Cape.

Township schools: Microcosm of black South Africa

Nothing—no books and research papers—could have prepared me to work and undertake research in townships. Of course many people in the western world are well-informed on the poverty that exists in various parts of the globe. Public and mass media have repeatedly exploited the issue of poverty, questioning why and how this prevailing human suffering ceases to exist. We, as general public, know about apartheid, the system of racial segregation that was used to divide the country of South Africa and its people for more than half a century. What is not as well documented and therefore came as a shock to the researcher are the long stretches of shacks and squatter camps that line up

parallel to the highway leading from the airport, with people living in appalling conditions.

The enormity and extremity of poverty is stunning. It is fair to say this poverty is one of the legacies of apartheid, stemming from a direct result of the Group Areas Act (1950) in which the apartheid government established the system of “Homelands” and divided urban areas into zones where members of one specified race alone could live and work (Thompson, 2001, p. 194). A few miles down the road from Cape Town International airport is a community enclosed by barbed wire. Within the fence is an endless stretch of shacks and prefab houses with lines of sun-dried laundry and women hand-washing clothes in tubs. Even after 10 years of the new democracy, the country still lives with the consequences of apartheid—a massive scale of poverty, deprivation, and despair that humans created for other humans.

The division and inequality at all conceivable levels is palpable. Schools in townships are perhaps a better-off example of public service, but they ironically take on the appearance of prisons or military camp. They are fenced more than twice my height with barbed wire. The flow of pupils and the community's access to the school are tightly controlled and monitored by a custodian as gatekeeper. Perhaps security of pupils and school property are increasingly the concern in the UK and other countries, but the design and materials used do not disguise the fact that it is a school that is behind those fences. The school as an institution is designed like a prison. One teacher commented on our very first visit to a primary school, “it is like a Victorian prison.” Walking through a foyer of the school and passing the school reception, we found ourselves in a huge atrium, in which one can have a sweeping view of classrooms both upstairs and downstairs. The principal's voice echoed like a commander, controlling the pupils' behaviour. Layout of the classrooms is very similar to what we are normally familiar, a blackboard, in front a teacher's desk with books, notebooks and other teaching related materials, and student's desks facing the board. Classrooms however are typically overcrowded with 60, 70 or even 80 students, with not enough desks and chairs for everyone. Sharing resources is part of being in the classrooms. In many cases, two or three students share a desk with two chairs, each chair being shared by two or three students. Perhaps comparing a township school to a prison is an overstatement, but it captures an element of an institutional space that is designed to separate a particular group of people. The only difference I see is that the school to many pupils (and teachers) is a safe place for them to be, a place where the only significant meal of the day is served and attention and guidance from adults, however divided they may be, are given under the name of education.

As a researcher, this most depriving and dehumanising condition ironically created an “opportunity” for me to undertake research into the formation of social identities in a rapidly changing society as to how the new South Africa takes on the agenda of democracy and human rights, whilst remembering apartheid and working toward the national reconciliation project. How individuals who lived through times of social upheaval and political and personal struggles move on with the troubling past to build a bridge between white and black/coloured communities and write a new page of history.

“Museum” revisited

So, why a museum in townships? What does it offer in terms of changing the current condition of a South African township community? In what ways does it create possibilities and opportunities for those who are left out from national-collective efforts and government initiatives to reinvent South Africa as a nation of democracy and new freedom? Here I start with a dictionary definition to examine our own assumptions and preconception about what museum means and how it operates in the society:

Museum

1. a place or building where objects of historical, artistic, or scientific interest are exhibited, preserved, or studied [C17: via Latin from Greek *Mousetion*, home of the muses, from *mousa* Muse],

To muse: (when intr., often foll. by on or about) to reflect (about) or ponder (on), usually in silence (intr.) to gaze thoughtfully. Archaic.: a state of abstraction [C14: from old French *muser*, perhaps from *musse* snout, from medieval Latin *mūsus*] (Oxford..., 1996)

The first entry of the above dictionary definition highlights our commonsensical understanding of what museum means to us. This definition is often realised in museum as a heritage institution. When we think of museums we, in Britain, tend to think of the British Museum or Science Museum and in Brazil there might be the equivalent of these. What I am interested in developing here is not so much in line with this type of museum, which the first definition refers to. The former definition of museum often invokes an image of static, uncontested representation of material objects associated to exotic, indigenous cultural practices. It also means, to many, the creation of a national, state, authoritative, and/or official version of history, which is far removed from the lived experience of peoples involved. The process of inventing a history involves an exercise of power and appropriation such as rooting and plundering from the colonised land and its people.

Horizontes, v. 23, n. 1, p. 57-65, jan./jun. 2005

In the contemporary consumer society, museums are considered as a memory industry, in which our memories are not only represented in the material form, but also become an object of our consumption. Copies of original paintings, drawings and replica of famous sculpture are constantly created for mass consumption for their domestic and private use to relish their personal spaces. Memories in this context take a material form, linking our psychological world to the lived world. Our attempt to learn what the object is about and in what context is a sense-making practice. In making sense of the object and the stories told about/behind it, the object makes a link between the person gazing at the object and the history and cultural meaning that the object invokes. We become part of the world in which the object is situated. Such a relation is more than what we call memory; it involves an act of remembering as we actively engage in the world and make sense of the object. The museum is a social space in which such a psychological act is performed. This act then opens up for further possibilities of remembering as the sense making and act of remembering move around when the person moves from one setting to another.

Furthermore, the second entry of the definition—to muse: to reflect about and ponder on—leads us further into thinking about the visit to a museum as a psychological experience. The museum makes visible our knowledge of other realities, which in turn makes us reflect on our own methods of knowledge production (and reproduction) and its use. Reflection is often thought of as an asocial, individual, personal experience, but I would argue the otherwise, drawing on cultural psychological perspective on the development of consciousness, which is an interpersonal and social experience.

Cultural and social psychological argument for the project of museum

What I am keen to develop here is a concept of museum in which “people” are a focal point of the process of building and using the museum. From a standpoint of cultural psychology, “people” are not referred to as just individual units, separated from places, material objects, history, art, language, and culture and any other creative form of meaningful activities.

The very process of building a museum is a mean to achieve social change—the researcher would play an integral role in the museum building process—conducting a plausibility study, helping the community mobilise, cultivate its own resources and articulate missions and goals. The process is reflexive and dynamic, involving change at all levels. The museum development

project would empower and encourage people in townships to build infrastructure that is desperately needed for economic development.

One of the unique features of the concept of museum is that the development of a township museum is part of the agenda and joint activities of British and South African schools under the international educational partnership agreement. The UK participants work together with South African teachers, students and their community workers on oral history projects and educational programmes for HIV/AIDS intervention. Oral history projects would make township community members become aware of their own heritage, history, and culture. Under the apartheid regime their identity as a citizen of equal rights to the white South African had been denied. The apartheid government imposed Bantu education, a model to create a class that served the white class. Their cultural and social identities have long been suppressed and devalued.

We may be able to see what identities were suppressed by the way in which the three primary schools performed welcoming ceremonies for us in October 2003. The ceremonies showcased their cultural heritage as an ethnic Xhosa group—formal speeches, choir, African dance in traditional Xhosa costume, followed by the serving of a buffet of their indigenous food and drinks. This across-the-board presentation of their culture indicates that the traditional African (Xhosa) culture is central to the life of the school as well as to that of the community. The visit of the British teachers, including the process of preparation by the South African teachers and students, created an opportunity to think about themselves and of what it is that they wanted to show to the British guests and how they wanted to be perceived. The cross-cultural and international encounter therefore prompted them to present who they are and how they want to be seen. Cultural identities of both South African, as well as British, matter to this understanding of themselves and others. When one looks at a cultural-social other, they also see themselves. The dialogical nature of self is supported by Vygotsky's thesis on consciousness, as he argues that consciousness emerges first at the interpersonal level and then at the intrapersonal level. In the following I elaborate on the social nature of development of consciousness and explain why the international school partnership would contribute to forging new self and community's identities that would not confine to the continuous churning and dwelling of the apartheid past whilst remembering it as legacy and a valuable lesson not to repeat.

On consciousness

For Vygotsky, consciousness is built from outside

through the relations with others:

[T]he mechanism of social behaviour and the mechanism of consciousness are the same [...]. We are aware of ourselves, for we are aware of others, and in the same way as we know others; and this is as it is because in relation to ourselves we are in the same [position] as others are to us. (Vygotsky, 1979, p. 29-30)

Consciousness is not regarded as a cognitive, inner experience. Rather it is built socially through mediation—by use of material tools as well as psychological tools such as language. The crucial role of mediation on development of consciousness is evident in the concept of significant symbol developed by George H. Mead:

As we shall see, the same procedure which is responsible for the genesis and existence of mind or consciousness—namely, the taking of the attitude of the other toward one's self, or toward one's own behaviour—also necessarily involves the genesis and existence at the same time of significant symbols, or significant gestures. (Mead, 1934, p. 47-48)

In Vygotsky's view, mental functioning in the individual can be understood only by examining the social and cultural processes from which it derives. This involves an analytical strategy that calls on the investigator to begin the analysis of mental functioning in the individual by going outside the individual (Vygotsky, 1979, p. 54). His student, Luria, puts it:

In order to explain the highly complex forms of human consciousness one must go beyond the human organism. One must seek the origins of conscious activity [...] in the external processes of social life, in the social and historical forms of human existence. (1981, p. 25)

With this view of consciousness, the analytic priority is given to social processes. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary (Vygotsky, 1979).

As we have established the need for examining social processes, by use of materials and language, the concept of museum would justify the need for space for such social processes which would create the consciousness of a township community embracing schools, families, businesses, social services, and other institutions and agencies as well as individuals who are members working in those institutions. The two museums in Cape Town would give us a blueprint for the form of museum I envision.

District Six Museum, Cape Town

The District Six Museum is a museum and a monument for remembering the history of forced removal and the re-settlement of black, coloured and Muslim people living in the area since at least the nineteenth century (Field, 2001; Rasool; Prosalendis, 2001). The museum has created and implemented the concept of an interactive public space where it is the people's response to District Six that provides the drama and the fabric of museum. Here, remembering becomes a fundamentally human experience, through interacting with the displayed objects and photographs of the time before the forced removal and responding with emotions and feelings, experiencing the represented past in a way that the visitors and the museum guide jointly interpret events, poetry, music and art and other forms of representation.

It can be argued that the museum is a place of healing, as we engage in seeking meaning, insights and being in touch with innermost feelings regarding political and personal struggle, painful loss and suffering. The reconstructing of the past, materialised in the form of the museum, serves as a place of being able to forget: through public display of those stories and details, the victim can be liberated from kept anger, bitterness and animosity toward the oppressor/perpetrator. It is a way of reformulating the critical experience that made an indelible mark on our memory by revisiting the past. People reorganise and reorder the moral order of the past in such a way that fits the ideological principles such as non-racism, anti-class discrimination, and so forth.

Memories are grounded in the human experience, both now and then. The central to this museum development is the method of oral history, pioneered by Paul Thompson (1978). In the course of building this museum, an extensive oral history project was conducted and documented in the book by Sean Field, an oral historian and university scholar (Field, 2001), which includes stories of the former residents of District Six. The oral history project gave a thrust to the planning and development of the museum. A township museum can constitute a home to the story telling activity for oral history purposes. It would invite township people to come and tell their stories, as well as inviting people from outside townships to come and hear the stories and share theirs. This is a dialogic and discursive forum which would dismantle gaps between race, ethnicity, age groups, generations, gender and social class.

Robben Island Museum

Robben Island Prison, now a museum, is visited by people from all over the world. It signifies a

range of ideological themes: a symbol of freedom, social justice and personal liberation and thus serves an ideological means to remind, warn and prevent from repeating the apartheid again. What is particularly unique about Robben Island Museum (and also the District Six Museum) is that the tour guides are for the most part former political prisoners. As former political prisoners they tell powerful stories about their incarceration and violent treatment by the prison wardens as well as their social and cultural life in prison: where an informal higher leaning emerged. The only time they were allowed to be with other prisoners was during their eight hour labour in the quarry. For many, it is difficult to imagine working in the place that represents the former experience of torture and hardships. It therefore seems inevitable for them to recall their experiences of hardships, struggles, and tortures. As those that bear witness, however, these are the best, most credible people to show the public around the museum. Further research would focus on understanding their experience of daily remembering the difficult past, asking questions of how they present themselves in the new political and social landscape of South Africa and how they represent the former days within the present context of a museum tour guide.

We could learn from this very unique dialogue between the guides and the visitors from all over the world. The dialogue is not limited to a genre of stories of resistance, endurance and hardship by former political torture victims, but offers as a positive, forward looking means of communicating their experience of reconciliation and the meaning of forgiveness to the public. Moreover, the former prisoners' experiences are valuable to younger generations for deeper understanding and appreciation of their political and social histories. Otherwise their sense of being part of the larger history would be lost in the post-apartheid euphoria.

A township museum would feature the community members' story telling as a critical experience of building collective consciousness and would create a dynamic, interactive and participatory space for it. The major concern in South Africa and especially for township communities, is the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. This issue has been handled as a stigma that was swept under the carpet. It has caused trauma and sadness to many black people. There are a number of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, hospices aided by international NGOs, which tackle this issue by educating the public and treating the terminal patients with dignity. This issue can be a common thread to build a community's identity, which would generate a shared narrative of working together to battle against HIV/AIDS. An oral history approach might be a way in which to understand people's biased beliefs and perceptions regarding HIV/AIDS sufferers.

Conclusion: Museums as reordering the world

In this paper, I have rehearsed an argument for building a township museum. I explored the possibilities and opportunities which a township museum would offer to black people in townships and people outside them. The traditional concept of museum was reconsidered and stretched into thinking about a space that is dynamic, interactive and participatory for everyone. Such a form of museum would enable ordinary people and those whose voices were not otherwise heard to tell their stories. People involved in developing and building the museum would reflect on one's own culture, convention and values, and often would be engaged in uncovering and revisiting the difficult experience of the past. The museum would provide a space for interactive learning and produce new knowledge of self, community and society as a whole as we allow ourselves to hear, feel, think and remember both our own and other stories together through active engagement in the process of building collective consciousness. In recapitulating the concept of the museum, it would constitute a place for re-membering and would create a room for writing a new history of self and others together. It is this act of 're-membering' and 're-ordering' the world that would provide a basis for a new concept of museum. The project of building a local museum would ask for collaboration with museum experts, researchers, community workers and those who are in the community. Consciousness building process is a social and discursive practice, which would require others to make reflections and sense-making possible. The international educational partnership programme would be an impetus for the process of building collective consciousness. Both parties, the UK and South African teachers and students, continue to work together to this common goal of building a township museum.

As a final comment, just to be reflexive about my experience of the research, I am aware that the argument presented here may have come across to some readers as rather simplistic and overly hypothetical, and therefore merely my wishful thinking. The argument does not have any empirical basis, i.e., no results and findings were reported to back it up. This paper in part has communicated my voice (however implicitly it may sound) that I don't want to dismiss this ongoing thinking process. Traditionally, social science researchers and university academics, unlike commercial researchers and helping practitioners (e.g. aid workers of NGOs), have conducted research projects on a slower pace, without having to delivering "real" outcomes, products, measures and actions. My involvement in the school partnership project (which is still ongoing) forced me to stretch my capacity and to move around in different

positions. I saw myself taking up multiple, often unfamiliar, roles that may be considered outside my remit as researcher. Perhaps, my proposal for the development of a township museum should not be a part of university research. Or should it? In doing fieldwork in township schools and troubled (and dangerous and unsafe) communities, I felt occasionally frustrated and uneasy about the limitation of university research, which is often criticised and undermined by those who do not wear the academic hat. In this paper, I have traversed, rather consciously, these borders between university/academic research and working in and for the community that needs support and resource. I have not certainly resolved the dilemma between keeping distance and being objective and feeling compassionate and driven by moral imperatives. In the course of writing about this research experience and discussion, one thing that is clearer to me is that social boundaries between research and non-research are not as predefined; they are emergent. Writing makes such boundaries visible as well as being blurred.

References

- ATKINSON, P.; COFFEY, A.; DELAMONT, S.; LOFLAND, J.; LOFLAND, L. *Handbook of ethnography*. London: Sage, 2001.
- DENZIN, N. *Interpretive ethnography*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997.
- DENZIN, N. K.; LINCOLN, Y. S. (Ed.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.
- DENZIN, N.; LINCOLN, Y. S. (Ed.). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998.
- FIELD, S. (Ed.). *Lost communities, living memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town*. Cape Town: New Africa Books, 2001.
- HAMMERSLEY, M.; ATKINSON, P. *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- LURIA, A. R. *Language and cognition*. Ed. and translation J.V. Wertsch. New York: Wiley, 1981.
- MEAD, G. H. *Me, self and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.
- OXFORD English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- PEROLD, J. J. Paradox and pedagogy: Double binds and the culture of learning in South African schools. *Culture & Psychology*, v. 7, n. 4, p. 411-431, 2001.
- RASOOL, C.; PROSALENDIS, S. *Recalling community in Cape Town: Creating and curating the District Six Museum*. Cape Town: The District Six Museum, 2001.

- ROWE, S.; KOSYAEVA, T.; WERTSCH, J. V. Linking little narratives to big ones: Narrative and public memory in history museums. *Culture & Psychology*, v. 8, n. 1, p. 96-112, 2003.
- STURKEN, M. The wall, the screen, and the image: The Vietnam veterans memorial. *Representations*, v. 35, p. 118-142, summer 1991.
- THOMPSON, P. *The voices of the past: Oral history*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- THOMPSON, L. *A history of South Africa*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- VYGOTSKY, L. S. Consciousness as a problem in the psychology of behaviour. *Soviet Psychology*, v. 17, n. 4, p. 3-35, 1979.
- VYGOTSKY, L. S. The genesis of higher mental functions. In: WERTSCH, J. V. (Ed.). *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 1981.
- YOUNG, J. E. *Texture of memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Sobre a autora:

Kyoko Murakami é doutora em Psicologia e professora na Brunel University, West London, UK (School of Sport & Education). O projeto de pesquisa mencionado no artigo foi possibilitado pelo Brunel Research Initiative and Enterprise Fund.

