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In Search of Heterotopia: Immersive Experiences in the Museum

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IN SEARCH OF HETEROTOPIA:
IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES IN THE MUSEUM

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
Resource Management

by
Nicolas Alexander Crosby
November 2016

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

IN SEARCH OF HETEROTOPIA: IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES IN THE MUSEUM

by

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Museums everywhere are waging battle to find ways to attract new audience members. In this thesis I draw upon participant observation, interviews, and event planning in order to examine how museums create heterotopic, interactive immersive experiences. I focus on the work of two Seattle-area museums, and a gallery and a museum in Ellensburg. The Entertainment, Music, and Popular Culture museum (EMP), the Nordic Heritage Museum (NHM), and the Museum of Culture and Environment (MCE) developed opportunities for visitors to engage with museum-created heterotopic events. I approach this analysis through a theoretical framework that emphasizes structure and agency. On one hand, visitors feel empowered to create their own experiences through imagination, heterotopic flow, and seductive narrative. On the other hand, visitors, especially white visitors, may unconsciously reproduce assumptions about race, class, and age embedded in accounts of “the Other” distanced from themselves in time and space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From when I was a child, through my years as an undergraduate student at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), I traveled the world extensively—both with family, and on my own. One constant was that we would visit many museums, no matter my travel companions. Another was that each of these museums bored me to tears, and I eventually began to dread those day trips that would send us to those cemeteries of culture, and experiences. No matter how much I loved the idea of a museum—and I did—they could never live up to my hopes, or expectations. However, at Central Washington University, in the Resource Management graduate program, I came to look at museums in a completely different light, due largely to the excitement and overall quality of my professors—especially the three stalwart scholars who became my committee. I would not be where I am today, without any of them.

My committee chair, Dr. Mark Auslander has supported me, from before I even thought of Central Washington University as a possibility for graduate studies—before I even knew just how fascinating museums truly are—although his discussion of Studio Ghibli’s museum certainly hooked me, the first time we met. When I did enroll, he aided me with that as well. Then, when I first started classes, the support continued, when he immediately offered to work with me on my thesis—starting with GIS story mapping, and continuing on through vampire literature-based analyses of social undercurrents, and finally into this thesis itself. Dr. Auslander worked tirelessly with me in order to further myself, not only as a scholar, but as a museum professional—and not only because he was my supervisor when I served as the Graduate Assistant public programs manager at Museum of Culture & Environment. He also helped me land two amazing experiences over my two summers here, first at the (then) Experience Music Project (EMP), and the following summer, at the Smithsonian as a part of their Summer Institute

in Museum Anthropology program. In short, I am a museologist because of Dr. Mark Auslander.

My other chair, Dr. Hope Amason, has served as the grounding rod for my time, and work, here at Central. Even on her busiest of days, she always sets time aside to help me with any and all my questions. Not only do we have many similar interests—including anime and other popular culture mediums—but she also has had a clear image of what I am working on from when I first explain it, even if I don't have one myself. My papers originating in Hope's classes have almost all been incorporated into, and influenced this final work—in fact, it could be said that all of what you will read subsequently originated from a single paper that I wrote for one of my first museum classes. This paper, “Bonds of Blood: Vampire the Masquerade as Heterotopia,” can really be seen as the beginning for my serious pursuit of social connections between events and society itself. Also, for better, or for worse, she introduced me to Michel Foucault, and ever since then, I've been lost in a heterotopia of my own, and her, own making.

My final committee member, is Dr. Kathleen Barlow, and there is no possible way to say just how much she has helped me, through most of my life. I met her when I was still in middle school, as I tagged along with my mother to a department function of one sort or another. I remember playing with her dog Hersey, watching FIFA with her sons, and so many other memories of an amazing person, when I was young. And this has continued even into my time as a graduate student. Dr. Barlow has served as a calming influence these past years, and has remained an excellent source for humor, and alternative perspectives on my work.

The second group of people I would like to thank, are the reason that my interest in museums, once launched, took off as they did. The staff at the Experience Music Project (now the Museum of Popular Culture), and the exhibits I experienced with them, led to my total

surrender to the museology field. First, Jasen Emmons, to whom Dr. Auslander introduced me to, took me through the EMP, and gave me an insider's perspective that I had never before experienced—and I still remember vividly walking out of that, and telling my parents that I had decided to one day work with him and his colleagues, in THE popular culture museum.

A modicum of this came to be, that very summer, when I met with the curator who introduced me to the in-depth world of curation, and planning, for a major exhibit at a large institution. Brooks Peck became my grounding, my mentor, and my friend, over the summer that I worked as a curatorial intern under his guidance. My time, working with him on *Star Trek: Exploring New Worlds*, was my first time having a role from the ground up, in a museum exhibit—and I learned a great many lessons that I will carry with me. Going back, and seeing our work on display, and being able to meet up and talk, is one of the highlights of every time I travel through Seattle.

I would also like to thank the Seattle, Ellensburg, and Rochester area curators, each of whom took time out of their busy schedules to speak with me. Without them, I would be missing a very large portion of data, and their input also allowed me to grow as a museum studies scholar. And before all of this, at PLU, Dr. Aimee Hamilton, Dr. Agnes Choi, and Dr. Suzanne Crawford O'Brien all gave me the solid grounding in Religious Studies that allowed me to begin work with museum scholars, when I had little formal anthropology under my belt. Dr. Erik Hammerstrom also gave me this background, but went even further, giving me life advice, scholarship, and the most stringent course work that I have yet to top—more than preparing me for my following endeavors. Almost as important, I also have the honor of being able to call everybody I have mentioned, my friends.

I also thank the people at Central, who contributed so richly to my time here. Lynn Bethke helped me learn about the everyday workings of a museum, always lent an ear to my problems, and brought many smiles with her dry humor and amusement at many a subject. Cindy Klein, Penny Anderson, and Dawn Anderson all helped me scale the mountains of paperwork, even if they had full plates or guidelines to constrict them

Finally, as for family, well, in more than one way, they're the reason that I am where I am. Having three parents who were all professors could be tiresome, but they gave me a reason to strive, and reach where I am now. Dad, mom, and Luanne have all had my back from the very get-go—even when I have been able to do little to recontribute to them. Seeing my sister, Leah, go through college, and land a job on Martha's Vineyard, and seeing my brother Jesse take up a love of fantasy and now venture into higher education have gladdened me, and I hope to see them do more of what they love. I love all five of you, and I look forward to everything that lies next!

I would also like to give a shout-out to my friends, both near and far. John and Audrey Eyler, Tony Saunders, Cameron Moore, Dusty Pilkington, Liz Seelye, Matt Johnson, Dusty Pilkington, Barbara Hammersberg, Mark (Mr. Barbara), Peter Okoniewski, Nathan Gartner, and Dylan Cottrell have all kept me (semi) sane in this insane period. Finally, I send my love to Kobuk and Grandma Crosby, who both passed away during my writing— and Taiya, who reminds me to keep working forward, whilst enjoying life, every day.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

NEVER-STOPPING HETEROTOPIAS

In 1967, Michel Foucault wrote that, “Museums and libraries have become heterotopias in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, even at the end of the century, museums and libraries were the expression of an individual choice” (1967:7). In the 21st century, museums still bear all of this overloaded time and tradition upon their backs, but they have become more of an expression of the societies in which they dwell—or at least, that is the idea. Unfortunately, visitors in the American museum are predominantly white, upper middle to upper class, and of the under 18 or over 35 age range—even if the communities they reside in are not necessarily so. I posit that the strength of the museum already resides within their omnipresent heterotopias, but would see this space enlarged, empowered, and extended in order to create relevancy, and draw visitors of all ages, ethnicities, and class back in.

The idea of heterotopia is one that details the juxtaposition of multiple spaces, in one singular space, and emerged from Foucault’s study of knowledge itself. In his book, *The Order of Things* (1966), he discusses the mental representation of objects, and how this formed classical knowledge. However, he also believes that at the heart of humanity we are limited by physical, economic, cultural, and linguistic forces of our past—which museums both reinforce, as well as weaken. For this is where I find his idea for heterotopia emerged from—the dual nature of humanity, and the items that we choose to interact with, and think about. In other words, he attempts to reconcile the conflicting natures that embody humanity, whether it be our inherent potential for chaos and order, evil acts and good acts, and so many more possibilities, and bring them into a single space.

While museums may be physical constructions that force ideas into exhibit space, and struggle with attracting marginalized races, genders, and ages, at the same time ideas abound—and everybody remains welcome. Simply put, a heterotopia is a space/time that exists and is formed in the very founding of society, which is something like a counter-site, where all sites which can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted (Foucault 1967:3). In other words, temporal, mental, and physical aspects exist in a single representation of the site, rather than being viewed separately.

There are two main types of heterotopia—the heterotopia of crisis, and the heterotopia of deviation. A heterotopia of crisis is distinguished from the latter by its dependence on sacred space, in relation to age, sex, belief, or experience (such as a shared disaster, or trauma)—where individuals in liminal periods are allowed, or affected, apart from the other members of their society who are not experiencing that same crisis. On the other hand, in a heterotopia of deviation people are marked as different from society at large, because of their abnormal actions—they set themselves apart through actions (Foucault 1967:4). Each of these have their own strengths and weaknesses, but heterotopias of crisis are fewer in number, as many have shifted into their counterpart—something that must be taken into account when studying their particular uses in the museum.

The potential of a museum is not in its artifacts alone. No, the vast potential lies in the interactions between these objects, and the visitors themselves. The communities that make up museums, the stories that they can tell through interaction with objects, and the ways in which the institution itself brings life to both their collections, and people, are all a part of this, and none would be complete without the others—artifacts bring joy to the viewer, but the viewer gives meaning to the objects. It could be said that the viewer gives life to the objects, and that

rather than being items simply existing in a state of undeath—as they could be seen from a material culture perspective, as they become unused, and simply stored away—are actually brought to life by visitors, and through the accompanying illusion of interaction between the encased physical form, and person outside, unbound. This would result in a form of symbolic immortality, as the viewers would retain the memory of the object, in relation to the space. In a heterotopic situation this mirrors North American native mythology and ritual, in which the interaction of object and person, expands the life of the item, even though in truth it remains dead (Lévi Strauss 1962:21). Indeed, the true power lies in the transformative possibilities inherent in the museum, as well as its accompanying mystery—contained by countless untold items that to the visitor remain unseen, and unknown.

That said, museums the world over still face the challenge of generating the interest of many at-risk populations—whether they be young adults, minorities, or simply urban dwellers with little free time on their hands. This also includes, many “revolutionary” museums that still do not provide creative or open-ended experiences for their visitors (Simon 2010:Who Am I?). To address this overwhelming problem many seek to incorporate play and imagination in their efforts to spark and engage communities, and increase their own relevancy. Many museums, especially including tribal museums, have long been involved in these more inclusive strategies—including altering decision making, and building up audiences—however, this remains an area of further potential and one also in need of methods for evaluating the success of such efforts. Indeed, most of these institutions actually emerged out of a desire to spread knowledge, and cultural wealth amongst people who would ordinarily be unable to access it—although there were most definitely limitations put upon said access. One current method that

has proven effective, and which I labor to make even more so, is what my work here has been based upon.

My thesis is an attempt to refine and apply the highly suggestive concept proposed by Michel Foucault in 1966 and 1967—the heterotopia. Subsequently, I explore whether museums, especially popular culture museums, can enhance existing events such as Live Action Roleplaying games (LARP), by using the principles set forth by that scholar—to involve participants and change spectators into the protagonists of the multiple stories held within exhibits, and collections. Every day, museums deal with the pressing question of how to attract or retain visitor attention, frequently with less powerful events—and utilizing the heterotopia as set forth by Foucault can greatly increase the liminal potential inherent within these institutions of knowledge. This is done by utilizing differing types of heterotopia, in different situations, as well as various strengths of both the deviation and crisis types, to varying effects.

I take the theoretical idea of Michel Foucault’s heterotopia, and adapt it to the museum setting, with the goal of showing the strengths and weaknesses of museum events. I further dissect these, through the use of specific events, in order to put forward ideas for the improvement of them through better application of theoretical frameworks. To explore these concepts further, I organized, visited, and volunteered at various interactive, immersive, experiences, at museums across Washington state—while also talking to professionals, and practicing participant observation, at museums across the country, and ultimately the world.

When one steps through the door of a museum they are taking a journey that transcends both space and time. They are walking through a portal, from the ordinary, profane world, into a world set apart, that holds the potential to change them. Visitors are moving from a world of animated life, into a realm of the inanimate and un-living, but where imagination and souls

abound—this is a powerful space where the profane and sacred coexist (Durkheim 1915:40).

Durkheim was not explicitly talking about museums, but I have found his work on transitional space/time to be key, when discussing what occurs during institution events.

Discussing various rites of passages, Van Gennep notes that, “whoever passes from one [zone] to the other finds himself physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time: he wavers between two worlds”—an experience that most visibly happens, I say, in the museum entrance way, and ticketing counters (1910:18). These areas are one of the best examples of the major changes in the modern museum, compared to the cabinets of curiosity of the pre-modern. The museum undergoes an opening of the sacred, or in this case of the democratization of the institution, wherein it becomes both a space of sacredness, as well as a forum for the masses to enjoy and move about in—while still keeping items in their own space, only more accessible. That is to say, that the museum can be both temple, as well as forum, through the act of, “accepting and incorporating the manifestations of change” (Duncan 1971:73). And one way of doing this, is by creating ritualized events, through which the museum itself can adapt to the times, in the course of an evening.

The museum is a powerful space which holds the potential to transform spectators into protagonists, aided by ritual and rites to transition them—as can be seen through the popularity of films such as the “Night at the Museum” franchise, and books such as *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*.¹ Both of these retain popularity, largely due to their tapping into the potential inherent within the museum setting—a potential that emerges from the liminal space of the museum institution. For Victor Turner, liminality is a state of ambiguity, as people

¹ Night at the Museum franchise: *Night at the Museum* by Shawn Levy, 2006; *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian* by Shawn Levy, 2009; *Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb* by Shawn Levy, 2014. E.L. Konigsburg, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (New York, NY: Atheneum Books, 1967).

shift from one state to another (1966:111). By walking through a museum door, where the blend of the profane and sacred, alienation and community, and temporality and non-temporality, a person will perfectly experience what the scholar describes. And in an event, when multiple people are going through the same rituals in the same time/space, then this liminal space provides a most effective breeding ground for “communitas”—as with the hippies that Turner discusses, the museum event-goer will be distinguished from those who are not a part of that culture by actions, clothing, and habits (Turner 1966:112).

If learning becomes too free, one might say, the whole world could be seen as a museum. Many museums may be avoiding becoming truly free-choice learning institutions because of this, as they seek also to maintain their professional responsibility. Yet, when museums regulate the possible learning avenues, both to keep their spaces safe and to keep true to their mission statements, this often results in a marginalization of young adults and certain ethnic groups who usually appreciate the freedom to push beyond current boundaries. This is where I wish to contribute: I want to create a change in perspective by which both institution and visitor can gain as many rewarding experiences as possible—something which many museums have been attempting to do, to varying degrees of success. For example, the Denver Art Museum (DAM) approached this issue by looking at their space, and making it so that it was open for people to, “be true” to themselves (DAM 2011: 6). One specific example of this was the “Detour,” wherein tours would be led by experts in fields other than art, lending a unique feel to the experience and a fresh perspective— even though the physical objects remained the same. The informal nature of this also appealed to every age group, increasing attendance within all age brackets (DAM 2011:12).

If my logic, and my models are followed properly, they hold the promise of generating increased interest and attendance of young adults, and racial minorities, as well as other missing audiences. Additionally, if basic interest is raised in the museum, community awareness of the museum as a powerful learning space will also increase, and both will feed off each other. This, in turn, will create a space for reinforcing and creating social ties in the urban context. Rather than simply draw in visitors, I aim to make museum-goers participants in the very exhibits that they walk amongst. My proposed heterotopic events allow for visitors to create their own narratives, within the framework already provided by the museum—or at least facilitate their branching off, and doing this on their own. The beauty of this is that it can be tailored to fit any museum, as a new type of space emerges— one of audience-created narratives, where they draw themselves into the exhibit’s story by questioning their surrounding stories, and designing their own answers, informed by their own curiosity and critical introspection (Bruner 1991:9).

I suggest that such an event is a particularly fruitful area for this, also because it may be viewed as a heterotopia—where areas are layered, and inverted, upon each other, rather than separated and ranked hierarchically (Foucault 1984:1). A LARP activity, or other such interactive immersive experience, and other narrative creation/enactment events in a museum space, gain from building on a physical site, where sacred and profane spaces overlap and coexist, to create a new cultural one. In this case, I suggest, the heterotopic event takes two of the traditional problems that exist within interpretation, and turns them into strengths— the problems of intention and background knowledge (Bruner 1991:10). The former becomes an issue because most stories are colored with a bias, in one form or another, with both museums as well as their visitors having stories that they either want to get across, or hear—based off of personal experiences, as well as viewpoints. An event, however, can include many more

narratives, with varying angles, in one space without having conflict that degrades the underlying themes. This is especially the case if the museum can provide narrative scaffolding, or material, for participants to utilize, work around, or work with. When the latter is a problem listeners will find more difficulty in using curiosity to continue the story if they do not have background knowledge for it—and an event is something that can adapt itself to its participants, creating new stories that still relate to the original, as needed. In other words, multiple events should be held, with complexity and intensity being built up gradually, in order to acclimatize participants to what they should expect for the most complex ones—initial experiences will lead to further ones, in a positive manner. Additionally, this allows the museum to analyze what goes wrong, and what goes right, in each stage of the events—which are largely, if not completely, based upon visitor actions and choices.

Shore submits that performance, especially cultural performance, is a key element of what he calls a “ludic model” (1998:75). He examines cultural knowledge, and how ludic models—such as games, contests, and spectacles—serve to display underlying culture to all who care to pay attention. He believes that the most important aspects of culture are seen in those seemingly timeless moments of play, with the “will of the people,” exposed for all to see—giving form to the intangible (Shore 1998:85). In short, through play we see society, although different people in different positions see different aspects. Museums, especially those interested in popular culture, are examples of this—serving as sites that transform the will and interests of the people, so to speak, into the physical manifestations of exhibitionary space.

The dynamic narrative of a heterotopic event—replete with personal performances—created of the museum-visitor relationship in the context of an immersive experience is a yet unexplored method to provide an active educational museum experience. Especially as opposed

to the more passive nature of traditional schooling—with micro-communities also serving as entities unto themselves. During the summer period of my research, I moved to Seattle to live close to the Museum of Popular Culture—formerly the Experience Music Project (EMP)—or more commonly now, MoPop, where I interned.² Whilst there, I utilized the public transit system, local grocery stores and produce centers, and stayed with local contacts made through mutual friends, and museum professionals. Toward the end of analyzing, and improving upon some current attempts, I proceeded in my research in four main phases.

Methodology

Phase 1. Pre-Fieldwork: An assessment of young adult relationships with museums through preliminary interviews and popular culture analysis.

I first conducted a focused reading project upon the relationships of 18-26 year-olds with museums. This pre-fieldwork and exploratory part of my project consisted of me analyzing various events and studies in order to determine differing patterns and methods utilized by museum professionals. I also used this period in order to find both weaknesses as well as strengths within the approaches used by different organizations, in conjunction to the type of institution it was, and the focus it had.

At the same time, I found specific museums that I decided to study and speak to while in Seattle over the following summer. This preliminary phase commenced at Central Washington University (CWU) in April 2015, and continued over the summer of 2015 in Seattle, Washington. It was here that I began this more localized study with the museum and event professionals who are involved in museum planning. It was around this time, that I also began to look at various racial—in addition to age—issues such as lack of representation, and weakness of

² As of the writing of this work, this museum was known as the EMP, and so I use that designation throughout.

programs meant to welcome them. As well as interactive museum exhibits which failed to draw in both young adults and minorities, who make up a large percent of absent populations in the museum world.

Phase 2. Early stage of fieldwork: What are museums in general, and the EMP in particular, doing to attract young adults?

The second phase of my project shifted the attention from the underlying interests of 18-26 year-old audiences and their relationships to museums, to the institutions of the museums themselves. My findings from the pre-fieldwork stage, as outlined above, informed this next phase of my project, where I focused specifically on the museums that I selected as possible targets in my previous stage, to see what they had already done to reach 18-26 year-olds and other at-risk audiences.

For this section of my research, I reviewed documents released by various museums that purported to appeal to my target demographic, including the EMP. At the EMP, furthermore, as I commenced my summer internship, I created a survey in order to determine people's interests in both *Star Trek* as well as an exhibit based upon it. This coincided with my main project of the summer, research for the upcoming exhibit— *Star Trek 50*. This celebration of the 50th anniversary of the original *Star Trek* television show presented a fruitful opportunity to draw in young adults, through the possibility of seduction of self-created narrative, which I utilized to ask questions concerning interest in Live Action Roleplaying (LARP) within exhibits.

In addition to this, I also began to conduct interviews with museum professionals in museums that I had an interest in, for various reasons. In Ellensburg, I'd been speaking with professors, local gallery contacts, and friends about this issue for quite a while. Once I reached Seattle, I spoke with event planners from the Wing Luke museum, Museum of History and

Industry (MOHAI), and Nordic Heritage Museum (NHM). Finally, in a previous trip to my home state of New York, I had met with a curator at the Strong Museum of Play.

Amongst the people that I interviewed, and collaborated with, were three museum professionals, from different museums—all of whom I use pseudonyms to represent. The most influential of these for me, was Corvus, an employee at the MOHAI, who dealt with audience outreach as well as various other fields. She was the most helpful of my informants, with a strong interest national museum affairs, and how they influenced other institutions across America. Lontra was another such museum professional, and informant, who was also primarily focused upon audience interests, but at the Wing Luke—she spoke mainly about racial representation, and how that connected with her work, as well as the museum’s in general. Canis, on the other hand, worked at NHM and spoke mainly about day-to-day events/tours that the museum put on, as well as more in-depth knowledge of their annual event, Viking Days. This was in addition to the various museum professionals who I spoke with on a more informal basis.

Finally, I had two participants who I selected to talk to, and look upon as more than people to simply observe—I also wanted something of their outlook, again using pseudonyms to represent them here. The first of these, Culpeo, is a fellow student of mine, and also a participatory member of the event that I planned from the ground up: Function over Fashion. I focused, with him, upon some of the experiences he had during and after my craft and ingenuity-based experience. The second, and final, of the people I interviewed was Draco, a well-known performer, who makes a living off of appearing at various events around the Seattle area. Rather than a simple cosplayer, Draco has a persona that he uses across all of these events, and that he has turned into a Seattle staple in many of their local attractions and institutions.

Phase 3. Event: Event participation.

In the third phase of my project, I participated in three Ellensburg, Washington located events, and one put on by Seattle museum, the EMP. At CWU's Righteous Dopefiend talk, two prominent anthropologists revealed their own research methods and findings, in relation to homelessness and heroin use in urban America—while also linking it to our current exhibit of the same name and theme. Then, in the Museum of Culture and Environment's lobby, I held a tea party in celebration of both Mother's Day, as well as the popular culture show, *Downton Abbey*. At the EMP's "Myth and Magic Faire" participants were divided into four realms, each corresponding to a fantastical world from popular fiction. Additionally, I specifically spoke with Nordic Heritage Museum education specialists concerning their own annual event, Viking Days, which allows visitors to partially immerse themselves in an imagined Norse world on the outskirts of suburbia. Finally, taking what I'd learned from these previous examples, I created my own event in which personal intelligence and problem-solving were brought to the forefront, as post-apocalyptic garb and settings were created in a costume contest, stressing reasoning and function over sheer fashion—while causing participants to imagine the impacts of environmental disaster on everyday life.

Bennett writes of the museum as a disciplinary space where items are held away from the public gaze, and hence as a place not as conducive to free-choice as I have hoped. The power of this space, says Bennett, is one of making order out of the world, rather than one that allows for self-empowerment (1996:87). While such stability may be appealing on many levels, for example in terms of presenting or receiving reliable information, it also means that there is not much flexibility for people—most of whom tend to want to be able to make their own niche in the scheme of things rather than simply being placed in one. His work in particular struck me as

especially relevant. While, on one level these audiences want to be in the museum, on another they may find it stifling, and not comfortable. He continues, saying that such reactions can be seen in museum visitors, by observing the way they tend to huddle and silence themselves in the museum space (Bennett 1996:72). To state my point more clearly; at events such as the more powerful ones that I shall discuss, participants were at ease with themselves and their surroundings—especially compared to their attitudes while in the museum exhibits, even as they entered the space, undergoing a liminal shift. As Turner writes, “In liminality, the underling comes upper-most,” being shown, in many cases in events through the museum staff becoming non-player characters—or simply guides, while visitors come to dictate the experience themselves (1967:364).

Bennet argues that this silence, within exhibits, amounts to an act of societal control or discipline carried out by the museum, as it instills new behavioral codes, separating the controlled, and the uncontrollable—which is what a proper event will attempt to shatter, or at least appear to, while actually upholding the majority of the rules (1995:102)—with liminality playing an enormous role. This can also be seen in religious ceremonies and individual institutions—although I am primarily speaking about Christian churches here, due to the overwhelming nature of that particular American-based moral majority. Indeed, while both of these spaces are completely different in many ways, at their hearts they are both temples created around the sacred—and around bringing their respective flocks in touch with it. Carol Duncan, looking at the art museum, argues that museums frequently appear as to not be embodying ritual, due to the, “contemplation and learning that [they] are supposed to foster,” but she continues on to state that traditionally, rituals are often not flashy, or brought to the forefront—also with very few being connected to the traditional conceptual church (1995:8). The museum event serves

both as ritual, as well as the staging ground of the intellectual religious experience of the heterotopia, which can be seen as the ‘spirituality’ of the museum space—what people come into contact with as they traverse the sacred halls, inundated with constant ritualized behavior, and beliefs.

Eventually, due to the theories I accumulated, I began to change my project’s specific focus from a question of only young adults, to the problems of the museum space/time itself, in relation to the effects that its activities and characteristics have upon visitors. This largely occurred through my participation in the summer event, the Myth and Magic Faire, at the EMP. Specifically, I was able to utilize participant observation, and casual discussion, with event-goers as well as event planners, allowing me to analyze the various core concepts and stories of a large-scale event, in a large-scale museum.

Study Area

The communities that the EMP strives to connect with have steadily expanded from those solely vested in music, into an interest in all things pop-culture. This can especially be seen in their forays into Science Fiction, Fantasy, gaming, and costuming. Popular culture museums serve to show the core interests, and culture, of the society that houses them.

The EMP is in the middle of Seattle Center, a part of the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood. This area also contains the iconic Space Needle, the Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum, the Pacific Science Center, the Kobe Bell, and a piece of the Berlin Wall; and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is right across the road. The site, which is approximately one mile from Puget Sound and a short distance from the Pike Place Market, was the scene of the 1962 Century 21 Exposition, or the Seattle World’s Fair, at which time the Monorail was constructed to connect the fair grounds and town center—and which now passes directly through a gap in the

museum, remaining a popular, and busy, destination for tourists—drawing people from all over the world for attendance. Nonetheless, during its opening year the museum was only able to bring in 800,000 out of its 800,000-1,000,000 expected visitors. By 2006, it was reported that attendance had dropped to around 400,000 visitors annually. Equally disconcerting, most of them were not from local Seattle communities. Due to cost and other obstacles, many Seattleites do not readily go to the EMP, though recent policy alterations are beginning to bring about a change (TRG Arts 2013).

Even with all of its rain and seasonal climate change, as of 2013, 650,000 residents have made Seattle itself their home, with approximately 3.6 million inhabitants in the overall metropolitan area. Many belong to an overall young demographic, including the age group that we hope to attract to museums. A full 50.5 percent of the population in the 2010 census were between the ages of 18-44, which is statistically significant when compared with national percentages, where only 39.9 percent of census participants were in that age range (Seattle.gov 2010). Most have moved to Seattle to obtain jobs connected to the industrial and population growth that accompanies port and other trade centralized cities, which here is accompanied by a growth of internet and technology companies. It also holds the headquarters of companies such as Amazon.com, Microsoft, and Starbucks. Precisely because it is a city with many technology companies, there is also a strong population of young adults in Seattle for whom summer is a time of night culture and enjoyment. The population reflected in the 2010 census is predominantly middle class, approximately 69.5 percent of whom identify as Caucasian. Those in the next largest group identify as Asian, though of the total population, only 13.8 percent are in this category. In order of percent size, the other ethnicities are Black/African American (7.9 percent), Hispanic/Latino (6.6 percent), Native American/Alaskan (1.2 percent), and the rest,

who don't fall into these categories consist of 2.4 percent of the population—and those of two or more races at 5.1 percent.

In addition to the EMP, I interviewed events employees at other Seattle museums—the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, and MOHAI—and NHM in the Seattle suburbs. The Nordic Heritage Museum located in Ballard, Washington is currently housed in what was once the Daniel Webster Elementary School building, from 1907 until 1979. Because of this it is surrounded by suburban housing, but has a nicely sized yard space adjacent that can be used for events. The themes of the exhibits within are all related to the heritage of Nordic immigrants from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, and feature their American descendants as well. As such, the majority of the artifacts within are of Nordic holidays, rituals, and pastimes, with some nostalgic inclusions as well—such as a cobbled street imported from Copenhagen.

Ballard is a neighborhood north of downtown Seattle that began to grow as families moved to the area to work in local mills. In addition to this, many Scandinavians eventually ended up settling the area because of the excellent local fishing opportunities. It is because of this that the Nordic Heritage Museum came to be founded in the community. That said, while Ballard's population of 167,429 is predominantly white, there are still many other cultures with sizable representation. Indeed, only 82.1 percent of the town is white, with 6.5 percent being Asian, 6.4 percent Hispanic/Latino, 3.4 percent Mixed, 1.3 percent Black/African American, and 0.4 percent being from assorted other backgrounds (Cedar Lake Ventures 2015). That means that there are approximately 18 percent of the community who are for the most part not taking part in their largest, and most publicized event of the year—Viking Days.

Finally, I utilized two spaces for events in Ellensburg, Washington—Gallery One, and the Museum of Culture and Environment at CWU. Ellensburg is the county seat of Kittitas County and is located in the valley of the same name. As of the 2010 census, the overall population was 18,174 and as of a 2014 count the approximate racial breakdown was broken down to: White 79.6 percent, Hispanic/Latino 10.3 percent, two or more races 3.7 percent, Asian 3.5 percent, African American/Black 1.8 percent, and Native American 1.1 percent (United States Census Bureau 2010). Presently, the main claim to fame of the valley as a whole is its timothy hay production, and Ellensburg is one of the major areas where this is focused upon the most. As opposed to Seattle and Ballard, the weather is dry and the town is surrounded by desert.

Gallery One is an Ellensburg nonprofit organization and, “is dedicated to the creation, exhibition and appreciation of visual arts in Central Washington” (Gallery One 2016). Alongside its gallery areas it holds resident artist studios, art classrooms, and space for events. The whole building is predominantly focused towards local artists, and products, with strong connections over the entire valley—both with individual talents, and other similar institutions.

Central Washington University, on the other hand, is its own community, in many ways. Its predecessor institution, the Washington State Normal School, was given to Ellensburg as a sort of consolation prize, after the town lost the bid for state capital to Olympia. According to college ranking site collegefactual.com, CWU’s undergraduate attendees can be broken up approximately as follows: 61.7 percent white, 12.5 percent Hispanic/Latino, 9.8 percent unknown, 6.2 percent two or more races, 4.3 percent Asian, 3.1 percent African American/Black, 1.2 percent Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, 0.6 percent non-resident alien, and 0.5

percent American Indian students (College Factual 2016). From the 2015-2016 year, there were 10,912 students enrolled, almost all of who originate from within the state of Washington.

It is from this population that the Museum of Culture & Environment pulls most of its visitors—numbers which are augmented by local school groups, and visitors to the city. This institution is by far the smallest of those that I worked with—consisting of one main professor, a graduate assistant, and a single full-time collections manager, meaning that everybody does a little of everything, and the collections manager has a job and a half at the calmest of times. The museum was officially opened in 2009—although the collections existed long before that. The exhibits have drawn a steady enough stream of college classes, community members, and younger school groups over the course of its existence, reliant largely on content, and events. A standard event will have anything from several dozen to 150 participants, and will generally occur on a weekly basis. In addition to this, exhibits typically will last for only a quarter before they are switched out for a new one, allowing for new audiences, and curriculums that the local museum minors can sign up for.

Apart from these Washington museums that I specifically looked into for data on events, and their heterotopic potential, I also explored local museums wherever I traveled during my time as a graduate student. One of these was the Strong Museum of Play in Rochester, NY, where I used to visit whilst in elementary school. The other two were in Denmark, and included the Ladby Viking Museum, and the National Museum in Copenhagen. These allowed for a broader perspective, as well as a realization that American museums seem to be in the most trouble due to financing problems and other various issues. The US government, in 2012, was determined to pay 24.4 percent of museum funding overall, with private gifting at 36.5 percent, earned income at 27.6 percent, and investment at income 11.5 percent (Bell 2012:2).

Meanwhile, reports from nearly every other first world country, show far heavier support of their cultural institutions. However, museums around the world all have to deal with the same problems when it comes to relevancy—and they can all address the problems the same way—through the creation of opportunities for heterotopic emergence. The museums that I visited in Denmark both benefited from such activities, and that tale was told by every other museum case study that I came across.

Outline

Chapter II, *Relevancy in the Museum (or lack thereof?)* looks at the overall state of the museum world, in relation to at-risk audiences such as young adults and marginalized ethnicities in the United States. I rely upon previous studies that have been made, that informed my studies, and decisions made in relation to this work. Several specific museums are also featured briefly, as they have put especial effort forward, to analyze such problems.

Chapter III, *Through the looking glass, to find Heterotopia* begins with a theoretical discussion concerning the meaning and nature of Michel Foucault's heterotopic space/time, and many of the vagaries contained within. First it describes what the original idea of the heterotopia was, in relation to his thoughts on the matter, as well as the six principles that define what it is, and the latent power within it. This is concluded by a change in direction, in which I place my own theoretical aspect of heterotopia—the heterotopic event—and the inherent power within. In other words, I take Foucault's heterotopic model and overlay it upon the structure of museum events, which effectively create such time/space countercultures as he initially described.

Chapter IV, *Charismatic Nomads: Museum Lecturers* takes this framework and theory, and puts it into relation with the academic lecture event hosted by the Museum of Culture & Environment, that I have classified as being the least heterotopic event of those that I

experienced. More specifically, I discuss the potential power of charismatic personalities in the museum space, as well as the weaknesses of the same—and how this cannot create a complete inversed space/time.

Chapter V, *Teatime in the Lobby: Downton Abbey Tea Party* starts where the previous chapter's discussion of the possible heterotopic enveloping power ended and expands it further, deepening the level of the event and the change in space. In other words, this example has more potential of having an effect upon visitors than the previous one. I specifically discuss a *Downton Abbey* tea party at the Museum of Culture & Environment that I conceptualized and organized, with the hope of bringing in uncommon museum guests through a popular culture event. When the idea of a more concrete setting is added, from which the individuals with the ability to move others can act with more authority, then this additional power to draw in people becomes more readily available.

Chapter VI, *Suburban Scandinavia: Viking Days* expands even further upon both previous event types, and goes on to focus on the Nordic Heritage Museum's Viking Days. It looks at this museum-based version of a renaissance faire, and connects it to the heterotopic strengths and weaknesses that differ and resemble other events in various ways—but also keeps its uniqueness as its own event. This type of situation also is explained through Lears' nostalgia of the medieval, and explains the power that modern Western audiences have transposed over representations of this long-gone time period.

Chapter VII, *Personalized Apocalypse: Function over Fashion* discusses how an event can be used in a manner that is not completely dictated by its planners, while still including many elements that in previous tiers would be reliant solely upon those constricting boundaries. I use an event that I planned, created, and ran by myself in a space provided by Gallery One, with

minimal supplies and money. Museum events that allow for the creative space of the individual, within the events themselves are just that more powerful, although there is still a need for some semblance of control—even if costs are kept low. I also touch upon the strength and inherent beauty of the post-apocalyptic setting in popular culture today.

Wrapping up the sections of the various events that I have played roles in for my thesis, Chapter VIII, *Western Oceans: Myth and Magic Faire* takes all the previous event types, and rolls them up into one singular spectacle at the EMP's Myth & Magic Faire—specifically the one that I staffed in my 2015 summer internship. Here I talk about the three-day event that began with a showing of the movie *Legend*, continued with the most important part—the Wizard's Feast, and Masquerade Ball—and ended with the Day Faire. I finish this portion with a discussion of the specific weaknesses that are portrayed in the EMP itself, and more specifically, this event.

Chapter IX, *Difficulty in Relevancy Creation and Maintenance* is an aside upon the problems that museums face, overall, concerning these various issues—and the difficulties of putting on a heterotopic event. In order to address this more potently, I have taken my experiences of two Danish museums, the National Museum of Denmark, and the Ladby Viking Museum, into consideration, and compared and contrasted their approaches and outcomes concerning relevancy.

Finally, I conclude this thesis in Chapter X: *Heterotopia Found*. I complete my thesis with a discussion of what the ideal museum exhibit is—a constantly heterotopic event. I look at various museum exhibits that have been attempting to reach such a state on their own, as well as the weaknesses and/or failures that have been created through their approaches. Case studies such as the Apartheid museum's entirety, and Museum of Thessaloniki are analyzed and taken

apart from an event creator's standpoint. I detail one method that any museum could do to create a strong base of loyalty, as well as a successful exhibit that is based upon their city, and their purposes. Ultimately, however, I further detail the problems faced by the museum, and offer several examples of what a relevant experience should look like.

CHAPTER II: RELEVANCY IN THE MUSEUM (OR LACK THEREOF?)

Relevant experiences were initially defined by Nina Simon, “as those connected to the needs, assets, and interests of [host] communit[ies], and to the art and history in [their] collection” (Simon 2016). However, more recently she has come to believe that there was something wrong with this first approach, or rather, its conceptualization. Instead, she decided that relevancy was centered upon the forging of connections that unlock meaning, and are dependent upon museum programming rather than simply content—although she also does not focus so much on events, as she does on exhibits and objects.

Relevancy is still, at its heart, the possible connection between the needs, assets, and interests of the host community. However, that is an oversimplification. In truth, relevancy is the interest that comes out of anything a museum does or portrays, that connects to the lives of the possible audiences—but that it only truly becomes that once the people enter the museum space. Relevancy is measured by the interest shown in what you offer, and can range from personal to cultural in scope.

Hein states that museums should be informal learning centers that use self-directed methods of education, which have the advantage also of reflecting respect for all learners (1998:7). As noted in the introduction, a certain lack of relevancy is a problem that all museums around the world are facing—after all, you can never have too many visitors. However, a more specific problem is that certain target demographics aren’t visiting museums. More specifically, certain ages and races—and classes—are significantly underrepresented in museums, and especially in American museums.

Now, as to the need for these heterotopic events that I will describe in most of my thesis—they are an optimum method by which to effectively address audiences. The largest

problem that any museums faces is, as I stated in my introduction, the decrease in public interest within the museum—due to modern lessening of relevancy for those same people. This very issue is also one that museums—even those such as the EMP—face since they have studied and exhibited the past. While largely staying in that same past, exhibit-wise. And audiences have picked that up, and have fallen into particular patterns when thinking of the museum as an institutional warehouse of old and/or dead culture. The public has come to perceive museums as collection-centered spaces that remain sacred and untouchable, even as they attempt to shift into open spaces which focus on social life and events.

Freeman Tilden offers what he has classified as two brief concepts of interpretation: 1) for the interpreter, they should remember that interpretation is a method for revealing the actual truth, that lies behind any fact, and 2) that interpretation should use curiosity not as an end goal, but as a method for the enrichment of the visitor's mind and spirit (Tilden 1957: 33). I would add onto this that by enriching somebody else's mind and spirit, the interpreter will also enrich their own. This is followed by six principles that should be used for the most effective interpretive effort—which is more relevant than it may initially seem, for museum events. The six are as follows: 1) in order to be effective an interpretation must relate to what is being displayed, and must be in a frame of reference to be understood by the listener, 2) interpretation is not pure information—although any interpretation will include information, 3) interpretation is teachable to anybody, because it is an art—not a technical skill, 4) interpretation is meant to provoke, not instruct—you have to make them want to learn more on their own, 5) interpretation at its most effective will provide a whole picture, not an incomplete one, and 6) interpretation should be catered to your audience—in other words, children should be taught differently, but not less (Tilden 1957: 34).

To present how a museum should approach relevancy is extremely easy to think about, although it is quite a bit harder to effectively put your approaches into place—especially considering that every museum is different and serves a different audience. Hein states that museums should be informal learning centers using self-directed methods of education, which has the advantage also of reflecting respect for all learners, but this also introduces a risk of the museum not being able to do their part if they step back too far (1998:7). As for the first, to be relevant, you have to not rely solely on facts—you also have to allow your visitors to go on a journey of self-discovery, by which you aid them in finding their own truths. This allows for personal curiosity to be fostered, which leads to self-improvement, rather than unease or distraction. This is also why interpretation is teachable to anybody—because the sparking of others’ curiosity is something that can be taught—through use of rhetoric, body language, and other such methods. Of course, to do this properly, the planners cannot excise anything too drastic—they have to listen to the audience, and tailor what knowledge they offer up to people in a way that doesn’t offend, dictate their journey, or leave them bewildered. And if all of these are carried out properly, then your participants will want to come back, in their own manner, and continue their self-education as they themselves desire—which leads to extreme relevancy, and hopefully spreads to their friends and acquaintances, until everybody is coming to events, as well as exhibits.

Many of the most free-learning oriented museums design their exhibits making sure that everybody can learn something, even if it is through a different approach, or at a different speed. However, this does not go nearly far enough, since even if exhibits are designed for anybody to be able to understand them, that still doesn’t really create an appeal for people—it doesn’t make it a safe space, or one that’s entertaining to be in. The most effective method for any museum to

show that they have a safe, and fun, place to hang out is to do an event that reaches out to the people that they need to reach. This is time-effective, usually cost-effective, and more importantly, it's efficient—although you have to try many various methods, and these will depend entirely upon where you are located and the content you have to offer, as well as the way you offer it. There is also an additional catch here, being that it is necessary to build an audience base, and that this can take time, where one bad experience can drive somebody off permanently. An event can be repeated daily, monthly, annually, or whenever the museum feels like it. This is especially true in cities, where there are so many different people with different backgrounds.

Missing relevancy is a particular problem in urban centers—where there are so many options available to the at-risk museum audiences, and also where certain demographics might not feel so secure in a museum setting. Lears states, in *No Place of Grace*, that there is a, “soul-sickness which emerged in the late nineteenth century and which has spread throughout the twentieth—the sense that modern life has grown dry and passionless, and that one must somehow try to regenerate a lost intensity of feeling” (1981:1420). This soul-sickness that Lears speaks of has also become prominent primarily in urban centers where a weakening of societal bonds exists, stemming from what Simmel calls, “liberation from all the ties which grew up historically in politics, in religion, in morality and in economics,” which is additionally accentuated with the growth in importance of labor division and specialization (Simmel, 1903:324).

Also according to Simmel, the city's bonds are more intellectual and adaptable because of the rapidly changing nature of the city, while rural bonds are emotional and form out of traditions. In other words, they are inherently more stable and stronger, even if there are fewer of them—factors that Simmel extols. Lears adds that, “People who felt overburdened by

intellectuality and cut off from “real life” did not want the scholastics’ rational system, however elegantly constructed” (1981:142). The most powerful events play into this, and they create momentary “real life,” that carries forward further than expected—and also tying participants together with bonds that are rooted in the rituals and heterotopia created over the course of their narratives.

An interesting example of this is one that actually links one museum, and two of its events together. Canis, the audience-focused museum employee at the Nordic Heritage museum, spoke with me concerning an event that sometimes took place in their *Dream of America* exhibit. Docents who lead tours through the museum space create immersive experiences with a late 1800s setting for local visiting elementary school groups. She told me that, “[they] create families with the kids, and give them different roles, and usually kill off the father—have the rest of the family move to the city, and make their way through the ship, and so forth, to America.” In addition to this, they continue the narrative on through Ellis Island itself, and have the children go through as if they are being tested upon arrival, straight from the ship. This is augmented even further by tactile experiences, such as being able to touch a button hook, which would have been used to flip an eyelid inside out—it is important to note that they do not allow this to actually happen in the museum setting, but that some kids can do it on their own... and delight in doing so. It is these children, who get so involved in that event that also usually bring back their families for Viking Days, an event I describe in-depth further below—even though the two events are separated by completely different temporal traditions, as well as overall themes. In other words, the *Dream of America* exhibit tour turned event created relevancy for the children, who brought their parents to a far larger heterotopia, which then subsumed their many consciousness into the museum as well.

In another exhibit-centric example of this we can look to the EMP's exhibit, *Can't Look Away: The Lure of Horror Film*, in which visitors are drawn into a horror-inspired thicket through the use of a narrative created in design—with written, verbal, and artifact-based/expanded narrative within. Visitors enter themselves into a narrative that is created by the museum, but they are seduced by their interest in the genre or exhibit, and are drawn through by that. In this particular case, the museum's thorny thicket plays into the moral confusion that has been built up in literary works throughout the years—in drama, fantasy, and religious works especially. Participants wend their way through seemingly tight corridors and spaces that draw them further and further in, until they open up into exhibit cases and activities—leading to their relaxation, and feelings of having found something special within themselves as well as the exhibit. We may also build on Bruner's notion in our work with young adult museum audiences, drawing them in with a seductive narrative, and then presenting them with opportunities to become creative participants in the museum narrative—although a large portion of it in this case is put in place through environment alone, with minimal help from blocks of text in that section.

An example of a museum exhibit that displays such methods of narrative seduction, yet serves as a form of forced roleplaying event, as opposed to an improvisational one, or solely forced path system, is the Holocaust Museum, whose beginnings are detailed by Linenthal (1995). In an attempt to convey, “an almost unbearable mixture of empathy, disgust, guilt, anger, and alienation” to the “war-weary American public,” the first directors decided to create a narrative out of the various scraps of surviving memory, and make their visitors experience it firsthand (Linenthal 1995:6). To do this, and bring the Holocaust into the public's mind, the museum envisioned a forced march, of sorts, where visitors would be assigned the role of a Holocaust victim through the use of an identification card, and would have to walk the only path

available — one that led them through every step of the Holocaust as a whole, as well as individual experiences (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2015).

This particular experience is one that I myself have recently experienced, whilst interning at the Smithsonian with focus on material anthropology. I traversed the exhibits with another intern, and both of us museum scholars were blown away by the created atmosphere and inherent narrative seduction. The very shape of the rooms, and the way that lighting—and surrounding color— would grow lighter each floor further we went to, created multiple environments that transported you into the stories that the main exhibit was telling—the main exhibit being a four-floor affair, with a forced flow, and several overarching thematic rooms, such as one with hundreds of portraits of the sufferers. In short, even though this was an intensely enforced path, it did give an illusion of some little freedom with a flow forced along through use of tight spaces, and ever-present, ever-moving, crowds.

Visitor-pathing observation in these situations, and willingness-to-pay studies elsewhere are all standard methods for creating exhibits, but events are forged in the fires of the committee and quenched in the practicum. In other words, events usually receive a lot of initial input, from different people with different backgrounds—and different goals—but the only way an event becomes stronger over its iterations is by doing them and learning from them. I must also add here that any event can grow stronger through the use of another event—it just depends on the nature of the experience, and the people running and staffing, it. In the above cases, however, the exhibit designers worked with audience members, as well as community leaders and people who held knowledge about the subject, and created spaces that fit the exhibit content—as well as creating paths, and spaces that would draw visitors further on into the world conceptualized by and in the museum.

To effectively carry this out beyond relying solely on the methodologies of traditional visitor studies—in which visitors are followed on the floor to analyze their paths, and interests—we must also explore other options (Kirchberg and Trondle 2012:447). For, without this, we cannot really know how to target a wider variety of audiences, and immerse them in individual museum narratives. One attempt to do this is through that of narrative methodology—a methodology that is focused upon providing in-depth accounts of visitor relations with museums (Everett and Barrett 2009). One-on-one interviews are held with selected visitors to discover what draws them personally to the museum (Everett and Barrett 2009:10). This approach allows you to track the visitors' journey to the museum, and how it has affected their life, but more importantly, how their relationship with the museum has changed over time—placing the visit in the broader context of the visitors' lives. This kind of data can then be compared with survey results, as well as generally accepted ideas (Everett and Barrett 2009:12).

However, this is only useful in determining what people who are already visiting the museum are interested in—it is necessary to find out what those people who are not visiting are interested in. One way to approach this particular issue is through the use of more non-traditional visitor studies—this means that you can't just understand the patterns that you can see with your eyes, on the museum floor. You also have to understand your surrounding city, and all the different sectors of it with people that you want to draw in to experience what you have to offer. Techniques available for this can include focus groups, surveys, or interviews—however, this still doesn't increase interest in the museum.

Age Relevancy

Based on a broad review of museums as well as her own research at the Jurassic Lounge in Sydney, Australia, Emma Shrapnel found that young adults want inexpensive night-time

museum events, where they can experience something new, unique, and entertaining in a social environment (2012:30). Visitor studies, especially those done with young adults, indeed show that creative options constitute the most effective method for drawing people into the museum space, and creating a loyal visitor base. This model has been most successfully utilized by the museum tour group, Museum Hack, which turns each of their group experiences into games and team building exercises—or as they put it, “We lead renegade museum tours for individuals, private groups & company team building” (Museum Hack 2016).

This differs from Detour, at DAM, in that these tours are not created by the museum, since Museum Hack works as an independent company. This allows them to tailor their activities to their particular audiences and space, which has proved to be quite successful for them—allowing them to maintain many individualized tours, and reach the same end as Detour—increasing museum attendance across various sectors.

In order to reach that particular goal, you have to understand the environment in which you live. One effective method of doing this in particular is by focusing efforts upon the intended audience, through advertising, and fun activities—and talking with groups that have already organized people, from which base you can further expand. One excellent example of this is the Museum of History and Industry’s Anti-Freeze—a free monthly networking social hour meant for young professionals of Seattle. The audience that they expected to reach were the aforementioned young professionals, and the organization was the Amazon workforce, which has taken over downtown Seattle.

My contact Corvus at MOHAI, one of their programs coordinators, was the one who told me the most about Anti-Freeze—so named because it was meant to combat the Seattle Freeze.³ This phenomenon is a rather common circumstance in growing city sites, in which professionals of various backgrounds feel like they don't have any social activities that they can really do, due to time constraints, social awkwardness, or any number of various problems. This particular event, as I just mentioned, is meant for young professionals newly moved to the city, usually from Amazon's growing presence there, and it is an excellent way to meet new people. Increasing attendance of young adults is particularly important in the museum world. As Black and many other museum researchers and professionals have determined, young adults tend to stop visiting museums once they graduate from school, and only return when they have children of their own—and so forth, as these children go on to repeat the cycle (2005:38). If a museum can bring in adults without the need of having children, this will be a section of the population that can expand, rather than dwindle—which requires a strengthening of relevancy.

In order to carry this out effectively—i.e. instruct participants about the new city they moved to, and meet people with common interests—there is always a bit of a theme. For example, one time the theme was football. Rather than just watch a game, or just talk about the sport, MOHAI worked with local businesses and organizations and brought more of a special power to the whole event, by creating a Seattle football microcosm in their atrium. This also allows for the continuance of bonds in the future, since if you go you'll get to know local people and things to do in the area nearby—and it also brings some of the city's past into the present,

³ A Seattle phenomenon in which newcomers are treated nicely, but not in a long-term or meaningful manner, initially. For example, it could take months, or even years, before a coworker invites a newcomer into their life outside of work, to any degree.

since many of these outside collaborators have pretty deep footholds in the Seattle Center lifestyle, leading to a deeper connection for the newcomers.

However, these events have not been working out as desired, as far as the organizers have been concerned. Corvus informed me that they had meant for the monthly gatherings to be drawing in 18-25 year olds. This did not end up as they expected though—with many 25-40 year olds coming into the event instead. The most likely cause of this is that these people have more of a schedule worked out in relation to workdays, and that they also have a little more freedom, and already present connections that they can further grow. In addition to this, even though food and drink do attract people—especially college students—these people both live further away, and they're usually already flooded with advertising, which Corvus aptly titled 'static.' There is such an overabundance of advertising on most campuses that the posters and fliers ironically all tend to fade into the background. That is not to say that the event is a failure participation-wise, as they still have full events, it's just not the ones that they particularly wanted—it is not largely relevant to college students, although it is to certain other demographics. The participatory spaces had to be changed from the gallery spaces, into the open atrium due to numbers, and stricter schedules were enacted for events like the Bootleggers' Bash—a dancing and drinking event.

This is because what was supposed to be an artificially induced heterotopia of crisis has instead been forcibly transformed into one of deviation, and this has weakened it, since they maintain the same rituals as before. In this case, the crisis is put into place when young adults move into an unfamiliar city, leaving behind all that they know, and arrive bereft of social connections outside of work. It is through the rituals that create heterotopias that I claim exists the most potential to transition young adults, such that they emerge transformed through the very

kind of free choice learning and facilitation of multiple learning styles that will help attract and engage them.

This actually backfires, as the special space/time is changed while not adapting a better initiation ritual. In other words, by enveloping them with the heterotopic event and using the inherent rituals that go into separating the participants and the Other, then they should be able to completely let loose and let the movement of the fluid time/space move them, and become connected on a personal level to the exhibits, event, and other people.

While the stability of the event as it is may be appealing on many levels, for example in terms of presenting or receiving reliable information, it also means that there is not much flexibility for young adults—who tend to want to be able to make their own niche in the scheme of things, rather than being placed in one. While on one level these audiences want to be in the museum, on another, they may find it stifling and not comfortable. This leads to the aforementioned body postures that project discomfort and not-belonging (Bennett 1995:102).

Now, the age range that MOHAI selected is one of the most commonly accepted groups to be targeted as young adults, as far as museums are concerned. This is because it brackets the time just after graduation, and the early years of work, or further schooling. Some other studies done by the Reach advising group's James Chung and Susie Wilkening increase the upper end, to around 35 when children begin to draw their younger parents back into the museums—though it is frequently the adults instigating the return, on behalf of their heirs and pupils. It is also interesting to note that these two also have stated that 55 percent of museum visitors are made up of under 50 year olds, with a stronger focus on children (Wilkening and Chung 2009:7). This is the particular age—an upper end of 35—that I agree the most with, because it is when people begin coming back to the museum, unless there is a specific exhibit that they come to see. Now

this is a sort of relevance that is reliant completely on the charisma of a particular exhibit, but it doesn't make the museum more interesting in general. In other words, is it a well-known and/or loved theme, or does it have to have a deeply local connection that can be exploited easily in terms of advertisement?

There are two types of museums that have a relatively easy time bringing in busloads—literally—of people because of this connection to age. History museums and science centers have a built-in audience generator, in local schools, and other educational groups that go there to augment their lessons—ironic, because this is what many children growing up see museums as, and also that they are only something for children. This fault, I feel, lies on the more formal school systems that make up America's early education, as well as the larger more esoteric museums that don't put as much effort into cultivating young people as audiences—further lessened by rigidity to adapt exhibits and activities, and especially prevalent in art museums, which predominate many regions. In other words, school children's first experiences with museums are usually presided over by their teachers and security, and therefore proceed in a very standard manner—as determined by common core standards, and other such foci. This is also largely in part due to a shift from extremely hands-on environments, to those that are hands-off (Wilkening and Chung 2009:37). When museums with a more narrow focus, and one meant for older audiences, attempt to interest these children after they grow up, they are frequently left with memory of a previous uninspired museum trip—and so they decide upon a different locale for entertainment.

Very few young adults, relatively speaking, go back to a museum that they visited as children—especially with friends their own age (Kelly and Bartlett 2009). Indeed, the Australian Museum, with their most popular and effective event—Jurassic Lounge—don't even place their

logo on the event's advertising. As planner David Bock states, "There is a perception out there, and we see it as well, of museums as this old dusty musty institution. So while the museum itself might not be the drawcard, it might be the thing that brings them back and impresses them when they're here" (Shrapnel 2012:18).

This trend continues on as well, since the main time adults will go to a museum is when they have kids of their own, and come back to augment their education. This is why a history museum such as MOHAI has put so much effort into creating an audience through their Anti-Freeze events—which are also constructed much the same way that Corvus says that their exhibits are. She told me that she believes that a successful event must contain, "a continuous narrative like a history exhibit," leaving no space/time for mere thought of escape from the heterotopia—by offering a narrative that keeps the visitor within the exhibit over its entire course, they remain enveloped within it.

Bruner's "seductive narrative" is paramount in this type of event because self-created narratives often serve to cause participants to feel a sense of empowerment, to take away any sense of being secure but also stifled in the museum— while even such events as Anti-Freeze rely on schedules and railroading. An example of such a seductive narrative, could be seen in *The War of the Worlds* broadcast made by Orson Welles—in which the audience believed the radio reading to be actual news reports saying that the Earth was at war with aliens, and losing (Bruner 1991:9). This sparked panic across the nation, even though the Welles himself did not intend for it to be so—with listeners attempting to escape their homes and secure themselves. As Bruner notes, it is powerful and engaging when this movement occurs, and it can be overwhelming even for the instigator (1991:10). A seductive narrative should set in motion a

growth, a cultural development of the individual—in this case, a sudden interest in the state of their homes, and their world, and a questioning of humanity’s place in the universe.

Of course, young adults aren’t the only people who are not getting the attention or support that they need, as far as museums and their events are concerned. Racial minorities over all of the United States are seriously underrepresented in their local museum attendance numbers—and in many cases this is justified, because of a complete lack of understanding, or effort, from the museums. However, this is also somewhat unfair to say, because a large part of the problem is that these institutions are having to fight against years of being stodgy, sacred beings, and show that they are safe places that can have fun social space/time for anybody to enjoy.

Race Relevancy

This idea of the safe space is one that is relatively new, in the scope of the museum as an institutional concept. The first real museums were those belonging to nobility, and royalty, and at their heart were personal, while attempting to show the worldliness and wealth of the owner. As such, only a select few were allowed into the space, and these all had to be a certain class, race, gender, age, or whatever other limit the collector put upon it—needless to say they were generally quite restrictive. Unfortunately, this also carried forward, mostly, when museums became a standard public institution. However, the main carryover presented itself through presentation style—with examples such as the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, and others, hosting exhibits that placed certain classes, races, genders, and ages beneath others in the same space. In other words, people were ranked hierarchically, as better or worse, or more and less advanced—which led to many people not feeling at all comfortable in

the museum setting, and resulting in much of the struggle that museum professionals are needing to face today.



Source: Reach Advisors analysis of census data and survey data.

Figure 1, Minority museum populations

The elephant in the room concerning many museum events, is the disregard of race, and racial connections, when planning common or scheduled events—and within museum staff, generally, as well. Figure 1 comes from a 2010 study, done by the Center for the Future of Museums, with the American Association of Museums, and contains copious amounts of research done by Reach Advisors. In the report, the authors state that their preferred future for the museum field, is one in which museums serve to benefit all segments of society, and in turn, museum users reflect the community in which they are present (Farrell and Medvedeva 2010:5). As can be easily discerned, we are failing miserably. As minorities become more and more

prevalent, and are projected to be even more so, core museum visitors today are far out of proportion with society as a whole. The fact is, even though we should never generalize cultures as a whole, it is often even worse to even ignore them altogether—there is no sign that minority populations will decrease, and museums need to adapt to that idea faster—although museum staff are not usually as cutthroat as to only want to bring in marginalized audiences for numbers, since they are learning institutions at their heart.

Predominantly, museum events either are specifically targeted towards a certain audience, or they are inherently uninteresting to various marginalized audiences—and this is also true for museums themselves. Of course, increasing relevancy by appealing to certain audiences isn't as simple as it might initially seem. There are all sorts of complications that must be taken under consideration concerning race focus in anything that might be seen today. Two of the most noteworthy being the difficulty of cultural appropriation, and the fact that you shouldn't outright exclude any race—but you should be able to include multiple ones, through language use, symbolism, and the power of advertising. Or include a theme—something that popular culture conventions have been utilizing effectively for decades. Much like an academic conference too, you can direct the energies of advertising, and participants, through charismatic presences, as well as word of mouth in key regions—and the hiring of staff who mirror the demographic makeup of the regions that the museum lies within, and is supposed to cater towards. After all, “To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and its highest values and truths. It is also the power to define the relative standing of individuals within that community” (Duncan 1995:8).

An older example of such cultural appropriation, that is still unfortunately relevant in many cases to this very day, would be the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibit, *Harlem on my*

Mind. Here, a Harlem-based theme was presented with little to no art by African Americans at all—let alone those from the community the exhibit purported to represent. Instead African American voices were minimalized or trivialized, and prominent Black artists had to step up and call the museum out on their failure. William T. Williams, an artist who was one of these prominent voices stated that, “One of the things that’s happening is that every show that concerns Black artists is really a sociological show. The *Harlem on My Mind* show is a pointing example of total rejection on the part of the establishment, of saying ‘Well, you’re not really doing art,’ or of not dealing with the artists that may exist or do exist in Harlem. These shows deal with the sociological aspects of a community, a historical thing” (Bearden, Gilliam, Hunt, Lawrence, Lloyd, Williams and Woodruff 1969:246). In other words, by showcasing a community that has many representatives—who are more than qualified to speak for themselves, and tell their own stories, within their own narratives—and ignoring those voices, a truth about the society that overlooks them is revealed. Unfortunately, as I stated above, this is not a problem that can be traced to only one community, or one era—although this particular example did lead to an official apology and the beginning of a more cohesive movement for inclusion, it was only a beginning of sorts, and a beginning of an uphill battle against hidden and obvious racist beliefs and actions, at that.

However, African American and Black populations in the United States have most certainly had the worst time of this misappropriation, as well as with overall racism—serving as the anchoring point for all racism here, as it has continued to exist at the bedrock of our society, around and through all other ethnic-based persecution. In his 1914 publication, *The Crisis*, W.E.B. DuBois mentioned—while writing of the African American boxer Jack Johnson, who had just defeated an Irishman in the Heavyweight Boxing World Championship final round—an

“unforgivable blackness” (181). This referred to the fact that White cultures the world round (mentioning America and Paris specifically) could not find something to display disgust over, concerning the moral nature of either the bout, or the boxer, and so it clearly came down to a problem solely of race. And this is an issue, that while changed in some ways, has remained amongst us in modern day life, even where it is least expected. Athletes, leaders, and people on the streets are judged solely on their skin color frequently, and this remains the truth in the case of African Americans especially—even when they visit a museum. They often don’t feel invited to museums, and frequently—when they do go—they feel especially on edge, as they feel compelled to act extra cautious, so as to not feed into the stereotypes and unjust fears of those around them, simply because of an unforgivable blackness (Heaton 2014).

While not quite at the above level this is also, unfortunately, a problem with other ethnic minorities as well. An example of such a situation that was more recent—and centered upon a different appropriated culture—took the internet by storm the year previous to this one. This was the Museum of Fine Arts Boston kimono disaster in 2015, during which the institution put Claude Monet’s 1875 painting *La Japonaise (Camille Monet in Japanese Costume)* onto exhibit along with a kimono matching the subject’s in the painting. Then they began holding Kimono Wednesdays, during which visitors were urged to wear kimonos in the exhibit—and loaning out ones that were similar to the one in the painting. This was met with tremendous outrage from many Japanese Americans, who in turn faced counter protests from other Japanese Americans and Japanese. This exploded practically overnight, with calls of racism, yellow facing, and exoticism—with overtones of Said’s *Orientalism* (1978). Meanwhile the museum replied with a statement saying, “We don’t think this is racist. We hope visitors come away with a better understanding of how Japanese art influenced the impressionists like Monet. However, we

respect everyone's opinion and welcome dialogue about art and culture in the Museum”
(decolonizeourmuseums 2016).

From the other side of the country, Corvus gave me her input on the matter: “My stance on that is; if they had done that exact same kimono try-on in front of a Japanese painting, and you talked about women's clothing and the social meaning of women's clothing in Japan, I think that program would have been wildly successful, and people would have the experience of trying on the kimono. But the fact that it was connected to this painting that had such an orientalist and appropriation tone to it... it was just off”. And this is the main problem that people have problems with concerning cultural appropriation—almost always, the offending article, or statement, simply does not include a backing of deep thought on the matter. In other words, it is simply put up as something ‘fun’ and not something that actually addresses the problems that the offended party desires—there is little to no effort to reach a middle ground, and issues of stereotyping, power/knowledge ownership, colonization of identity, and other such matters arise instead. If an event were to approach this matter, while making sure to remain informed by the purportedly represented or addressed groups, and not overwhelmingly focus on any one demographic—and include statements, or even activities that provoke thought—then this could be powerful, and bridge communities.

For example, an event based on the popular *Journey to the West* story at the EMP, in relation to some of the artifacts that they would probably be able to bring out for their exhibits, would be effective in attracting audiences that would otherwise be uninterested. Indeed, it could still be modeled after the same schedule and method as the Myth and Magic Faire, with various travel-based quests that deal with Bodhisattvas, Taoist deities, and historical Chinese figures. Not only has the story been reimagined and recreated since its origin in 1592, but it is a format

that would be accessible to everybody in the Seattle area—with no forbidding boundaries of age, or race. Additionally, it could be a multi-museum event, by working with Wing Luke, and other local institutions, and organizations. In fact, with the event experience of the EMP planning staff, and the knowledge and connections of Wing Luke, this could be a powerful time/space. It could also be used to promote social messages, which Lontra stated any audience-seducing event should do—additionally through the use of powerful imagery, an example of which she gave with Trayvon Martin being made into the icon of a national movement, with him often portrayed with Christ symbolism. I'd like to make clear that an event based around that particular idea would be gauche, if done by an institution, in many ways. Mainly, since it is a very powerful subject, with many dark sides to it—that may not be displayed effectively in many settings. However, the powerful symbolism and the use of powerful and tragic events can make for an equally powerful museum experience, so it would come down to the methods and ideas used. In other words, it is a worthy, and meaningful topic and theme, but could very easily be misappropriated, or mishandled.

However, to use Trayvon Martin as an example again, a museum event that used imagery such as this, would not be healthy at all, for the host community. The event, or exhibit, would need to be willing to cede more control to the represented community, and would need to have a focus on reconciling any differences—while guiding people towards the museum's, and community's, message. In other words, slip them gently into the heterotopic water, and let them drift to where you would like them to go—keeping several boundaries in place, even as you let the participants and community planners direct most of their own conscious actions. This allows for the creation, or providing of, a safe space, in which many people of different backgrounds can come together, and have positive discourse—positive for societal inclusion and growth, that

is. Corvus adds, “maybe not always challenge someone down to the core of their being... you want it to be a safe space for them to challenge their assumptions, and to consider new ideas.

They’re not going to consider those new ideas, if they feel that this is not a place for them, or if somebody else is like, ‘Wait. I don’t like how you’re misrepresenting my community’”.

Alternatively, if a museum has been established as a safe space that approaches harsh—and even dangerous—topics carefully, then there is more ability to create hard-hitting exhibits and events that drag the viewer under, and into the provided narrative. Again, this would depend on the host institution and their past, as well as the trust and loyalty that they have built within their community. In many cases, the most effective exhibits are these latter ones, which have come after several of the prior, which built the space in a way so as to make it such a safe environment.

Unfortunately, if you were to go to any of the events that I detail below and study the audience there would be one terrible, and terribly obvious, fact. There are massive segments of our population missing from them, and many cultures and peoples are either not represented at all, or in no way represented to the extent that they should be—even in demographic regions that have a large number of “minorities”. To the point, in fact, that they shouldn’t really be called minorities anymore—they are African American, Chinese, Native American, and many more, with many representatives— who aren’t represented by our museums, or their events.

This is especially the case when you look at young adult members of the minority populations, such as I just mentioned—who are usually both uncomfortable, as well as not interested, in many museums, or who are simply not reached out to. I would like to clarify here, that when I say minority populations, I don’t mean that every one of these is the same. I simply don’t have the time or space to single out every single group, of which there are quite a few. Indeed, this is a problem that many museums run into frequently, where they label everybody

who is not a white American, as a minority, and approach them all the same. One segment that most definitely needs to be addressed, is that of the African American, and Black populations—who face tremendous amounts of overt and covert racism in practically every area of American society. Museums also have had a history of misrepresenting, ignoring, and being harmful of these cultures, including, but most certainly not limited to the issue of *Harlem on My Mind*. Indeed, only a few years ago, 13 percent of the national population were African American—and only 3 percent of museum attendees were—and this grew directly from the hidden, and explicitly stated racism that most institutions have had to work against for most of modernity (Heaton 2014).

One way that this could begin to be approached is through the methods used to reach potential visitors. Advertising needs do differ depending on who you want to reach, and you need to approach from a cultural standpoint that doesn't alienate—meet your audiences halfway, don't make them spend the effort to find you, or else what's the point of advertising at all? First the museum itself needs to be changed into a space that they want to come at all. There are several messages that must be sent, and realized to do so, including simply making people feel welcome in the environment created within the museum, and making it clear that the institution is not “color blind,” but rather ethnicities need to be seen and accepted for who they are (Heaton 2014).

In order to do this there are many different changes that most museums must make, and not just the event-based ones that I've already discussed. As I stated above, concerning what a heterotopic event is, the break with history and creation of a completely new timeline is possible, in large part, due to events being closed, yet permeable, in nature. However, too often are high prices charged, limited table space available, location inaccessible, and other such problems

brought in that make it harder to attend—especially if you live outside a certain distance from the museum, or your family makes below a certain wage. So, these issues should be addressed, at the same time as the museum itself is changed to create a safer feeling space.

Regardless, no matter how one thinks of that part, none of the events that I listed above had strong attendance from minorities, and I would argue that they were not explicitly meant to. I do not mean to say that they were actively attempting to exclude anybody, but I do mean to say that the events themselves do not lend themselves to it. This is something that could be solved through an event with intertwining mini-events perhaps, or something along those lines, allowing for different people to interact with each other, while at the same time focusing on what they themselves are interested in—or what they feel comfortable doing.

Fortunately, young adults and marginalized ethnicities have both been gaining the attention of the museum world recently—especially in America, where there have been drops in attendance and interest in both demographics. This has led to a surge in studies done upon both, with new attempts being made in order to bring both in, and even new museums—such as the new National Museum of African American History and Culture—being opened to celebrate previously missing culture in the museum world. There have also been attempts, though perhaps not as many, to bring members that represent both of these demographics at the same time. Perhaps the most common method has been to create focus groups that contain members of local schools, and pay explicit attention to young people of color in order to have their voices be properly heard—although this is not frequently as effective as would be liked, due to the previously discussed problems.

One question that is oft asked when this topic of inclusion is brought up is how much it even matters. What is more important? Getting as large an audience as possible, by using any

popular theme, or is it necessary to begin looking to audiences that haven't traditionally been pursued? Of course it's necessary, and by not pursuing everybody, or hosting events that do not appeal to all, it becomes increasingly difficult to remain relevant. However, it is not only a matter of sheer numbers—deeply meaningful events that speak to the goal of larger, cross cutting inclusion, are vital. The longer you hold off on it, the more you alienate those people who could possibly forge connections. And with that in mind, why hasn't every museum undertaken this goal? One way that this could be pursued is through the knowledge and the use of heterotopias—especially in events, and exhibits.

CHAPTER III: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS TO FIND HETEROTOPIA

What is a Heterotopia?

Michel Foucault, the great social philosopher, once wrote that, "We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed" (Foucault 1967:1). This epoch, as Foucault then stated, comes out of thoughts and ideas originating in the medieval—one that focused on hierarchical rankings of space. An era where sacred and profane spaces were treated differently, and both protected and exposed spaces were valued (Foucault 1967:1). While Foucault is correct in his own belief that all of the previous spaces are juxtaposed upon each other, there are still areas in which they have vast differences.

Foucault coined the term “heterotopology” to refer to the study of these areas, and came up with six separate principles to determine what space is a heterotopia. Briefly, these are: 1) "There is probably not a single culture in the world that fails to constitute heterotopias," though these are varied, and can be split into heterotopias of crisis, or deviation (Foucault 1967:5, 2) Heterotopias change over time, as the cultures that they formed from change (Foucault 1967:5, 3) Heterotopias can juxtapose, "in a single real place, several spaces, [or] several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1967:6, 4) "The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (Foucault 1967:6, 5) Heterotopias introduce systems, and/or rituals that help to isolate, and at the same time, expose themselves to the Other, as defined by JZ Smith (Foucault 1967:7), and finally, 6) "that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains, "those that aren't heterotopias themselves (Foucault 1967:8). Several examples of this that can be found within society all around us, include graveyards, churches, protests, and—most central to this work—museums.

The first principle is extremely basic, and yet is also the most important. Essentially, a heterotopia can and does exist in any culture, though the tendencies will change depending on the host site. This makes the heterotopia something that every country, every ethnic group, and every culture can relate to, or make use of. Coming out of this line of thought, one would have to assume that a metropolis such as Seattle, with all of its many coexisting cultures, would have multitudes of heterotopias. Additionally, the city as a whole would have a sort of ‘over-heterotopia,’ created when the multitude of smaller heterotopias combine in one space, while still retaining some individuality.

This is made easier by the existence of the two main types of heterotopia—the heterotopia of crisis, and the heterotopia of deviation. As discussed above, a heterotopia of crisis is based upon a dependence on sacred space, in relation to various shared experiences, life stages, or personal details. In other words, where individuals in liminal periods are allowed, or affected, separately from the rest of society who are not experiencing that same crisis, or experiencing it in a separate space or way. Again, as mentioned in the introduction, a heterotopia of deviation sees people designated as different from society at large, because of their differing actions that leave them removed in some manner from surrounding populations (Foucault 1967:4). In other words, the former is inherent and the latter is adopted/adapted. Foucault took the two of these specifically, but he also wrote that he believed the heterotopias of crisis were morphing into those of deviation, more often than not, in modern times. This means that even the very nature of the idea of heterotopia can change over cultural shifts, though it will retain the heart of what made it so. This does not mean that any, or every, heterotopia will be the same, it does imply that they can be carried over, even if they do adapt to their most recent

habitat. And yes, I am saying that the heterotopia is a time/space phenomenon that is alive—as alive as the societies that they dwell in, and the cultures.

Same as with a living being—the second principle states—heterotopias cannot remain stagnant, and will inevitably, and constantly, change. Since this time/space is a reflection of society itself, as the society changes the heterotopia will mirror it. An excellent example of this is the “modern” American graveyard, or cemetery. While in the 18th century, these memorials, and houses of the dead functioned as religious institutions where the dead were commemorated and centralized in the city, for all to connect to, they eventually began to move further towards the suburbs—out of church hands—as religious minorities grew out of powerlessness and obscurity. Additionally, the very idea of the cemetery changed. It went from a sign of communal solidarity and a closeness to the dead, to a symbol of gothic interest, and deathly removal. After all, there were many reasons for this shift, both overt and unconscious. Planners desired a space available for suburbanization, greenspace, and other such areas—and racial views of heaven and the afterlife were reproduced alongside the physical resting places of the dead. Out of these very changes, now comes the ability to use the past as an analytical lens upon the present—as well as for predicting the future. This ambivalence also opens up cultural channels for people to pursue the past in their off-time and personal activities.

William Veeder writes, "Not consciously and yet purposively, Anglo-American culture develops gothic in order to help heal the damage caused by our embrace of modernity" (1998:20). He argues that the most harmful aspect of society is repression, and that the gothic is a mode that can safely bring up almost any contentious issue, and get away with it, since it exists a liminal space that is vaguely between reality and the mythic (Veeder 1998:28). This is partially, but not solely, due to the fact that the gothic arose out of the power of the medieval and

has taken the hearts of the citizenry, especially young adults, and become a romantic notion with popular culture, events, and myths erupting out of the land of the dead. Baudrillard states that the only difference between the living and the dead is that of status—where death is simply an aspect of life, and so the visible and invisible are merged, not separate (1993:188). As such, it is both close to humans as well as being separated, even as the space itself has shifted, while remaining the same in basic nature—as a place for the dead to rest. The heterotopia of the cemetery has adapted through these changes as well, from ossuary to family plots, from religious site to site of the unliving, the past worshipped as the past not religion, and of the fluidity of life—much as the museum has, and does.

The museum, in this sense, also rose out of the medieval collections made by the rich and noble, as well as the worship of the past—most frequently seen in reliquaries, and other such religious items that could be collected to show off one's piety, wealth, and societal status. Much as dead family members could be shown off and lauded, so too could their remains and items of note. Additionally, the cemetery's proximity to the heart of population centers, and the same with the housing for collections—while remaining sacred spaces, with very strict rules of who was allowed to go in, and when, also changed over time—with the cemetery eventually becoming intrinsically separated from the metropolis, as the museum joined the public sphere. This, of course is quite ironic, considering that both of these institutions are largely concerned with containing and showing the history, and stories, of their host sites.

This is largely because of the third principle, which stated that heterotopias juxtapose opposing, incompatible, ideas and sites. A heterotopia doesn't need to make sense from a locational view. In the case of the graveyard, it can become a place of play, as well as revival, as well as a memorial to the dead. An example of just this are the parties that are held in

graveyards, by millennials who follow the gothic lifestyle. As LaCapra claims, “Acting-out may well be necessary and unavoidable in the wake of extreme trauma, especially for victims” (LaCapra 1996:198). In this case, of course, the survivors, or those still alive, are in a sense the victims—those who remain upon this mortal coil to remember and mourn for those who already passed onwards. In other words the ability to play—to find humor—emerges, perhaps, from a certain degree of emotional distance from the initial experience. Whether it be originating in culture, or location. This allows for some cognitive recognition of the paradox of joy found in pain, and in turn leads to more introspection.

In the museum setting, there are frequently experiences of trauma—both inherent in the exhibit, as well as in the visitors’ responses—which generally take one of two types. These are that of a consciously noticed trauma, and that of an unconsciously experienced one. The former can usually be found in relation to traumatic experiences being portrayed, such as in exhibits on the Holocaust or Apartheid—which tend to force people through in order to better understand what they are going through, to relive a moment in time that should not be forgotten, or even to simply make it through and escape. The latter version will generally display itself through a sense of discontinuity, or discombobulation, in which visitors feel unease—or a tension—that draws them in more subtly. This can even manifest as a positive feeling, as participants are more gently swept away by their trauma, and through the exhibit, or event.

The heterotopia of the cemetery brings discontinuity to those who walk upon its grounds, since it also portrays the lives of all those interred within, while still serving as the physical location of the present. In other words, when one enters a cemetery they come into close (but separated) contact with the dead, and all of the memories that go along with that—a physical manifestation of remnant memories and emotions accompanying the dead. Ideally,

museums do this as well, although the degrees to which they actually do differ greatly depending on content, presentation, and interpretive designers.

Indeed, the third principle of the heterotopia actually gains power from those shifts that occur over time, throughout each iteration. This shift also lends itself directly to the fourth principle, which declared that when the heterotopia consists of a separate time, as well as location, then it will have become its most powerful. This, when taken into consideration with the heterotopia of crisis, is telling enough, but it is the deviation type where this truly makes the most sense. After all, the heterotopia of deviation, which relies on participants separating themselves from the rest of their culture through differing actions, would obviously gain more power if it had more of a difference. By having a different time in addition to the location, people within would be even further removed, and with that distance—and obvious distance at that—would be more clearly different than those without. This is also where trauma, or anxiety, can actually be beneficial, as it causes visitors to become even more caught up in the experience, and desire to enter in even further, if only to become one with it.

This is especially the case if you take the fifth principle to heart, and realize that heterotopias are exclusive, but that they do not remain hidden to outsiders, or the “other,” as used by Jonathan Z. Smith—where this distinction is, “a political and linguistic project, a matter of rhetoric and judgement” (Smith 1985:46). For example, museums—or their human equivalent, cemeteries—remain open to all by nature, but an exhibition tour, or a funeral service, are both meant for a specific group of people. While these spaces are separate from what most would consider normal, it is in fact not so much that people cannot cross into it. This is why cemeteries can grow, and why people feel comfortable entering into them, and why museums allow visitors in at all—in fact, this is how museums gather and retain loyal patrons—by bringing their visitors

into the world created by exhibition design experts, and showing them the wonders that they have wrought. Theoretically, at least. Many heterotopias lure the Other inside, by displaying these same wonders, and causing those outside to become curious, or jealous, of those already within.

To carry this cemetery example forward, the museum also helps to explain the power inherent within the sixth principle, which states that a heterotopia will not have replaced the original pertinent area. It still remains and exists in the same manner that it did before the change was enacted—even though there is another, new, layer alongside it now. Museums are perfect for this, because they are constantly bringing in what should be powerful heterotopic spaces known as exhibits—although in truth they are usually not so powerful as they could be in practice—and then changing them in and out as time passes on. Even national-level museums, with dozens of exhibits, that change completely, or partially, on scheduled bases, do not actually change themselves. The exhibits alter, but the museum remains a museum, and the mission statement should stay the same—or at least similar, as otherwise it would in actuality become a new museum.

Of course, this does change when museums begin using events, and approach visitors differently. An event that goes well but is left partially in the hands of the visitors themselves will reveal their desires, and interests in the museum and the exhibitions present inside—allowing for museum staff members to observe, and respond to these observed preferences. Or, watch how they deal with the provided infrastructure present within the exhibitions, and the present narratives, and how they use them and interact with them. In other words, the potential for a museum to change exists, not predominantly with their exhibits alone—it is the visitors, and their visions, and experiences, and feedback that change the museum over time. One way

that this can be measured is through attendance numbers, and through economic approaches, such as by carrying out a willingness-to-pay study over time to see how much potential visitors would be willing to pay in order to visit the museum. If the museum has changed positively, in their opinion, then they would pay more in order to visit it—and vice-versa. However, this could also simply show changing societal views and opinion, so scholars would have to take that into consideration as well.

These varied and yet completely similar examples only go to show the sheer scale of the variety present within that one word—heterotopia. However, those of you who paid attention to the final two principles will note that I changed my focus explicitly to museums. This is because the museum is the space in which any, and all, of the examples of new heterotopias, can be seen to stop in. Since there is already a predetermined, and pre-conceptualized, heterotopia in place, new ones frequently find themselves in contention rather than cooperation—and that is the possible role that a museum event can take, in order to reconcile conflicting, and frequently juxtaposed, realms of existence. The power present within this state is one measured by the depths of various heterotopias that can be brought into play within one space, and/or the amount of draw that they can put in place in the various human participants—or inhabitants.

Absolutely any idea can be contrived of and/or created in a museum space, and as long as the museum stays faithful to itself, it will be able to remain as itself. In other words, the museum may fulfill every heterotopic principle, and if done properly, transport visitors into both and/or all layers present within. This instance is something that is not as simple of moving from one place to another—it is a state of being, and of the mind, in which the visitor becomes an actual part of the world which they just entered. And this is not even the most powerful potential of the heterotopic space of the museum.

What is a Heterotopic Event?

While most museums claim to be immersive spaces for imaginative engagement, this frequently only goes as far as a computer screen and thus is only participatory, and not an example of the sort of immersive experience that they are capable of. Over time, this has resulted in many people who do not feel comfortable, or interested, in museums, and it is largely the museums who have borne the responsibility. The range of visitors who are engaged through the artifacts and exhibition text, is far smaller than it used to be, as younger generations have come to expect more action and immersion with their surroundings, and marginalized ethnicities feel tensions frequently, in many exhibits. However unfair this may be today, with many institutions changing, or attempting to do so, the past has led to this outcome, today. One way that this can be changed is through the use of heterotopic events, such as those discussed above, or immersive improvisational play.

Another way to look at this is that the only way to truly engage the interest and the intelligence of participants, and to inspire free-choice learning, is to give them power over the story into which they have just entered. As Beverly Serrell wrote, in response to “Who Am I?” an article on Nina Simon’s blog, *Museum2.0*:

In [these] cases, aren't visitors still in the traditional role of passive receivers of information in the exhibition? These pseudo-identities allow them to focus on someone else's personal experience, but they do not affect the content of the exhibition (e.g., change it, add to it, deal with it in an open-ended way) as individuals themselves (2010)

To use a piece of *Dungeons & Dragons* jargon, the types of exhibits being spoken of can be considered to be railroaded—in common parlance, it was a time/space during which all the events are scripted, and happen along plans made by the organizer, with no initial additions by the audience, who can only follow these pre-laid tracks. The audience members in cases such as these, are not actively becoming a part of the exhibits that they walk amongst—they remain

mostly outsiders. This also depends on the person who is going through the exhibit, as well as their expectations and interests, but the museum experience leans towards one of captured objects, in an unchanging path. Although this is also influenced by the fact that many visitors do come in groups—whether it be with family, friends, school groups, or other such social herds. The immersive experience makes use of this dynamic, instead of forcing the group to experience everything on their own. However, in the majority of these cases, visitors are still forced into a path of passive reception of information—predetermined by the exhibition set-up, with the exhibition itself remaining static, even if the people change.

Rather than a standard tour through the museum—which not only diminishes self-empowerment but also reduces the amount of improvisation or playability of the exhibit, I propose to provide participants a setting for a story that they themselves will create, act out, and transfer to their everyday lives. This will allow for them bring their experiences back with them when they return to the museum. This in turn opens the museum up to people, who may have had previous trouble enjoying museums due to their disciplinary nature, and offers more creative options for everyone (Bennett 1996:87). The self-created narrative, in what might be viewed as a heterotopia, arguably is the most apt place that one can answer the problem that Beverly Serrell stated so succinctly in response to Nina Simon’s blog post—that even the most “revolutionary” museums still do not provide new experiences for the visitors themselves.

Taking this in mind, I look to Augusto Boal’s *Theater of the Oppressed*, for any further answer to this problem. Boal coined a term, “spect-actor,” which is essentially defined as a spectator who, by use of forum theatre, is able to break free from the chains of impotency, and serve as an actor themselves. In other words, they leave the passive audience, and become an active participant of sorts—another type of personal heterotopia, if you will. “The members of

the audience must become the Character: possess him, take his place—not obey him, but guide him, show him the path they think right. In this way, the Spectator becoming Spect-Actor is democratically opposed to the other members of the audience, free to invade the scene and appropriate the power of the actor” (Boal 1974:xxi). In a museum event however, rather than the theater, the visitor must join with the exhibit that they are going through. Instead of being passive, they need to become an active part of it—and the exhibit is not complete until they do so. The space is altered from an ordinary exhibition or event into one that is empowered by the very visitors themselves—creating a cycle by which the visitors are re-empowered themselves.

To tie this back to Victor Turner, I say that museums should be ritualized, and therefore transformative—most especially events, which layer multitudes of ritual in a liminal time/space. Unfortunately, however, due to the abounding lack of racial, age, and class relevance in many circumstances, they instead tend to become ceremony—and therefore confirmatory, in the eyes of the marginalized (Turner 1967:95).

After all, by being able to cut ties with the present, visitors are able to enjoy themselves more. By being able to juxtapose several incompatible times, with clear temporal breaks, and spaces on top of one another an experience of both education and relaxation is able to be offered—as expectations, and responsibilities alter, and become more open to interpretation. This said, it is not enough to be able to have a static experience to fully enter the heterotopic state—after all, a heterotopia must constantly evolve, and shift in relation to the pervading culture. Additionally, by adhering to the systems and rituals inherent in the event, visitors are able to distance themselves from the outside world, and create a socially unique space in which they are able to interact with others in that same mode, via their shared experience rather than the huddled, individual, traversal of the museum space that Bennett details. After all, Greenblatt’s

wonder and resonance still play a large role in events—with resonance providing connections to the exhibits themselves, and wonder invoking the participants’ depth of connectedness to the setting portrayed (Greenblatt 1991:42). However, this goes beyond the objects themselves, since in an event these will tend to take second fiddle to the actual activities and the setting created by the museum—although the resonance and wonder of the objects themselves, and overall collections, will very frequently draw people in as well. One example of a freeing type of event that utilizes both of these power sources is a Live Action Roleplaying game (LARP), which allows players to select their own paths—and also can easily weave in items and ideas that allow, “supposedly contextual objects [to] take on a life of their own,” and become more than what they may first appear (Greenblatt 1991:44). In a setting, such as a museum, this is made even more powerful through the tension inherent between scripted role-playing and the free-choice learning that such institutions purportedly facilitate (Hein 1998).

The heterotopic event is so important because of the nature of both the heterotopia, and your common museum visitor, or event guest. The idea is essentially that by creating a heterotopia within a museum, you create an inversion of what the museum would ordinarily be. Since an event is most effective, the host institution can throw their all into it and create a space that immerses, and exhilarates the visitor—and leave behind their tendency to try and hold on to everything, and allow their space to shift back to a semblance of normalcy—lying in wait until the next event. Then, by interacting with the event specific space/time, they will also be interacting with the museum standard at the same time. Through their interaction with both, they will become interested in both, and desire to experience both again, hopefully bringing further people with them the next time, to spread the heterotopia throughout the target audiences—which should really be everybody that they can possibly reach. On the other hand, if

mismanaged, this experience could further distance the participants as they grow insecure and unsure of themselves in this new space/time.

This is possible especially if the space the inversion is created within has preset rules, and guidelines. The museum space contains absolute potential within its bounds, and the heterotopia is the means by which the host can begin to alter that, and the experience of those who enter into it. The moment the idea is born is the moment that all of the possibilities begin to emerge, and that is the moment that the heterotopia is initially shaped, and only awaits human interaction for true completion.

The point of this thesis is that I will add not only an example of a heterotopia—I will add a whole new dimension to that old theory. Rather than focus only on spatial theory, where time augments that space, I say that we need to look at space/time together and in general. I posit that the most powerful heterotopia is no place—it is an event. That is to say, that is a time/space experience in which participants transcend their own world, and coexist in multiple dimensions, over the course of a time/space with defined boundaries put in place by event coordinators—whether they be purposeful or not. Now we come to the crux of my specific question and goal—the refining, and defining, of a heterotopic event—where an event is an occurrence in which something happens, is done, is experienced, or is planned, especially with some sort of importance to the participant(s). These can be personal, communal, societal, or global in nature, and should ideally be what a museum is centered upon—including their responses, interpretations, activities, and overt messages. Also to be noted, a heterotopic event can occur once, sporadically, or constantly, depending on the type, and the desired experiential outcome.

The most effective singular museum events are constantly most effective when they can also be approached as a heterotopia. Here, I shall show that these events fall into the six

principles that I defined above, beginning with the first principle. That is to say, that events with Live Action Roleplaying of any sort at their heart such as the Myth and Magic Faire, or Viking Day, that I shall be discussing later, serve as heterotopias of deviation, where people are marked as different from society at large, because of their abnormal actions. This rises, in part, out of the bonds that are created in the event, which are outside the norm, as far as most non-participants are concerned. That is to say, by the very strength of their bonds, within the event setting, they are seen as separate from the rest of society—indeed, very much like a miniature nation unto themselves, replete with culture, ritual, and history passed down from leaders, to their followers.

However, this is a nation formed off of a religious creed—or the equivalent thereof. The Master of Ceremonies serves as a temporary deity of sorts, staff members serve as prophets, interpreting and carrying out the word of their god, and the players form bonds amongst their fellow participants as they are wont to do. They become united in common belief in their deity, and the rituals and practices that they undertake that serve to nourish, and protect them during the space/time of the heterotopia. Like Weber's solidarity, the inhabitants of this temporary nation state, are made up of various groups and factions (Weber 1978:923). The unifying nature of these types of groups are found almost solely in common interests or goals—with some events having the potential to bridge all gaps, depending on the planning, and execution, complete with ambiguous, or fluid, value concepts. Indeed, this actually serves as an example of solidarity formed through concerted action of the visitors.

By carrying this unification out properly, it becomes a sacred time, and space, though it can still be somewhat based on outside rituals. To make the break even more obvious, museum employees still tend to preside over the events, and people talk about their days as they prepare to begin—enter the space, find their place, and mingle. However, once the event truly begins

participants are in a world of their own, where the most important of the conversations can begin—the conversations that don't have direct bearing on their everyday lives, but hold the most important aspects of their lives, and activities even as they remain in character. By acting out their desired roles, they in turn reveal their own thoughts and feelings, even though this can frequently be unconscious—a truth that feeds into the power of such events, but is not explicitly sought out.

One could say that visitors are participating in an event that celebrates solidarity, rather than individuality, which is something that is sorely lacking in our society. Rather than working solely by themselves, for themselves, the participants have come together to form a society that is extremely different than their norm—even if it doesn't last past the event in the same manner as during it. This understanding is key, when taking the second principle into consideration. That is to say that the game has a precise function within society. People who feel the pressure of social rupture unconsciously come together in such public forums in order to repair this, by creating strong, lasting, bonds within the heterotopic setting formed for them by the museum.

The third principle is one of the most easily linked ones, while also being quite deceptive in that simplicity. On the surface, it is quite obvious: within the various museums where events are held, the in-game rules and laws are overlaid directly on the spaces that the participants currently exist. That is to say, that, there are political boundaries, and buildings, that don't physically exist, but which are 'written' into the narrative—frequently by the event planners, or other museum employees. Frequently these are also written in order to somewhat define the available spaces, as well as keep to rules and guidelines set forth by the city that contains the museum. However, it goes far deeper than just this—the visitors themselves actively define their new planes, as the event continues throughout.

This is also linked into the fourth principle, which states that a strong heterotopia is only possible when the people within it arrive at an absolute break with the standard time (Foucault 1967:6). The people who have arrived at the break, in this case, are the visitors, who have been presented with completely separate timelines, whose narratives are original and exist only in-game. Since they have built their own history, with completely new events, at real times, this is even more telling. Not only is there a completely new history; it is also set side-by-side with our world's actual history, showcasing the breaks that more efficiently. Most commonly, this can be seen in fantastical events such as the Myth and Magic Faire, or ones built upon the premise of a created narrative—such as Cluseum at the Minnesota Discovery Center, in which a scripted crime is perpetrated by the museum staff, and participants are enlisted to solve it.

The break with history, and creation of a completely new timeline is possible, in large part, due to events being closed, yet permeable, in nature. Participants generally need to reserve a slot for themselves, but in an ideal world, it would be open to anybody. Unfortunately, however, we do not live in such a world, and racial, financial, and ideological differences and problems, can cause many visitors to not be able to come to an event—or even if they can come, they might not feel welcome or invited. These issues can be increased even further through the varying requirements necessary to even sign-up for the event. In order to join an event of this nature you must go through several different steps, such as creating a costume for yourself, purchasing tickets, signing in, and creating stories for your character while introducing yourself to the other visitors.

Finally, as far as the sixth principle is concerned, depending on the particular event it might invert all of the aspects of the areas within the boundaries, such as its purposes, or its physical nature. For example, an exhibit, which ordinarily serves as a place for learning,

reading, and observing, is turned into a lavish banquet hall in a mythic castle, where politics and intrigue become the norm, and duels are fought as the newly created creatures and courtiers dine upon delicacies from a myriad of dimensions, and mindscapes. Alternatively, the event also may create a better-organized, more perfectly defined area, not possible in the real world—such as a mini-world with faery woods, battlefields, quests, dining, and dancing, all within a small number of rooms in a single building. However, it will remain as a museum space, or at least a museum provided one—no matter what inversion is enacted as part of the event itself.

As I stated above, the most common heterotopia today is that of the deviation subtype—and this arose out of the joining of many spaces that were once crisis heterotopias, to the deviation ones. Partially because of this, as well as because of the fifth heterotopic principle—in which we are told that heterotopias introduce systems and rituals that separate and at the same time, expose participants to the Other—heterotopias are entities defined by liminal journeys, and space/times (Foucault 1967:6). After all, when you step through the door of a museum, you are taking a journey that transcends both space and time. You are walking through a portal, from the ordinary, profane world into a world set apart, and it holds the potential of changing you.

It is also a state where, as defined by Van Gennep, “Whoever passes from one [zone] to the other finds himself physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time: he wavers between two worlds” (1910:18). The museum is a powerful space that holds the potential to transform spectators into protagonists, aided by ritual and rites to transition them from one to the next. The rituals are each fit into separate spaces that still overlap and shift fluidly, as the participants and experiences do. However, I would like to call attention to the entire day in the life and death of the museum. As van Gennep wrote about the “Osirian ritual,” where the god comes back to life as day comes, so does the museum die and return to the

living—with its visitors. Every day in the museum commences with the return of the curators, docents, front deskmen, and all the other staff members. These priests of the museum being make sure that everything is in order, and prepare its halls—its veins—for the return of its lifeblood, in form of visitors. Over the course of the day, the museum deity's organs—exhibits— are visited by this sweet nectar of life, and over the course of the evening, they slowly drain out. Finally, after the last person—the last drop—leaves, the antibodies are able to come in, and prepare the corpse for its immanent revival in several hours—with the coming of the sun. And the event space/time is a stay on the daily death—the museum lives, and fills with visitors and interest yet again, even if it is for only a few hours more.

It is the museum space as an area of both the profane and the sacred and as an area "between worlds" that can be actualized and tapped into through a heterotopic events and, in turn, alter the way that participants feel about the museum, engaging their minds to the point that they would want to come back. Falk and Dierking point out that, "In a very real sense, the knowledge and experience gained from museums is incomplete; it requires enabling contexts to become whole" (2000:140). I would add, however, that immersive experiences provide the aforementioned context within the museum itself, and the heterotopia—even if it is created for only an evening, can provide both knowledge—as well as the contexts necessary for understanding it. Then, museums will provide more enlivening settings that fit their missions, since the context will frame and guide the participants' actions to some extent.

Part of this particular goal emerges out of the preparations that museums can put into their event repertoire—or overall approach to event planning. As I discussed in the introduction, the museum could host a series of heterotopic events that build into a larger, more powerful one—building a scaffold or mold, in other words, to allow participants to get used to being a part

of the museum provided heterotopias. Then, when people are acclimated to the idea of being subsumed by the events, even if it's to a smaller extent, you can create a truly powerful example and have them fully enjoy it—something that young adults would be able to do more quickly, in general, as desirous for immersive experiences as they are. Another way to look at this is that the events move from minor, to central, in power and theme—participants who come to all of them will be slowly but surely transported in the most effective stage of heterotopic immersion. This can be further augmented, as well, by actions such as holding an event when the museum may not ordinarily be open.

This potential especially exists in museums, because of the additional power of the liminal time/space created by the hosting of a heterotopic event during the evening and night—after all, this separates the participants even further from the Others, and also invokes the discombobulation of staying within a sacred space which is created when the museum would ordinarily shut its doors, while remaining profane themselves. The participants are privileged with the power to break rules and enjoy a space thoroughly, which might otherwise be closed to them completely. For example, dancing and food can be found within the museum itself—even if it is kept to certain areas. This is, in fact, why many such institutions have a space specifically set aside for events. Visitors are able to take their pilgrimage through the gate of the sacred and either become a part of it, or draw it towards themselves into the profane.

This ritualized transition is largely what has led to one of my breakthroughs, if you will—the ranking of museum heterotopias, and heterotopic events, based on their power to seduce participants into coming back for more. This includes when exhibits change out or events end—otherwise the event really does not do much for the host institution. This hierarchy of the heterotopia is based off planar depths, and the distance of the profane to the sacred, which stands

outside of both the original site and its inverse, as it also defines them simultaneously. Those that have more depth and further distances between the two are more powerful in nature, and further up the hierarchy. It is important to frame the relations between events as such, because it allows for a more concrete understanding of the complex relations between heterotopias.

A large portion of this power actually occurs as, "...the sublime both converts trauma into an ecstatic source of elation and correlates—even conflates—transcendence with extreme transgression that breaks or goes beyond normative limits" (LaCapra 2000:136). The trauma that is brought about from the discombobulation of breaking normal museum and socio-cultural constraints, deriving from special and temporal norms, leads to even greater enjoyment and interest in the things and exhibitions that remain normal—indeed, this normalcy makes the break even more distinct, since you can't observe differences without a normal aspect to relate back to.

Frequently, in times of yore, religions and mythoi would revolve around the presence of water—especially in those stories concerning death, or other transitional periods. After all, every human starts life within a watery womb, from whence they are forced to evacuate. In ancient Egypt, the Book of the Dead contained stories of the world after ours, which contained rivers, and rush fields, and boats to travel upon—as well as spells for power over the water there (Taylor 2010:171). In ancient Greece, the river Styx served to form the boundary between Earth and Hades, upon which the deities swore their oaths (Hesiod). In Christianity water is used to cleanse, to represent God through Baptism, and for our own survival so as to continue to worship—so it serves as liquefier of boundaries, and barriers, while maintaining rigidity. In Hinduism, the mother Ganga or Ganges is also a purifier, and it is said to flow from the very heavens, down to the earth, serving as both umbilical cord, and connection to the Sacred.

Every one of these, and most every culture and religion shares this tie to the life-giving substance—also including modern tales such as Huck Finn, or *The Magician's Nephew*, or even *Inception*—and the museum heterotopic event does as well. As with water, a heterotopic event extremely augments its host body, while also dissolving its boundaries; as with water the museum may also be viewed as a space where the profane and sacred coexist (Durkheim 1915:40), and as potent space of potential. Set apart as it is, it may become a space where the visitor "wavers between two worlds" (Van Gennep 1910:18), or as Victor Turner put it, finds him or herself "betwixt and between" (1967:359).

Heterotopic Events as Water

Heterotopic events are not solely, as Foucault claimed the heterotopia was, a mirror—a true heterotopic event is more of a reflection, atop a moving surface of water. After all, the museum space within an event changes quite frequently—even as it remains the same in many manners—and the original example provided by Foucault is lacking. A mirror is static, and only shows the reflection, while a heterotopia is not reliant upon human presence. Indeed, the heterotopia is a mental construct that can exist easily without physical humans being there nonstop—and it will change in such an environment as well.

However, it is when you place humans into such an environment that it really begins to gain power, and the ability to capture them engages harder than before. Instead of only being able to catch the imagination, it pulls in the participant and makes them want to wade in deeper, until they get swept away by the current of the event. If a museum goes out of its way to create a certain flow for moving through it this—again—may be reassuring to some, but also not fully empowering as it forces a very specific narrative onto the participants. This limitation might be

alleviated through the use of Bruner's concept of the seductive narrative, which is one that causes suspicion or curiosity, and thus draws in the listener (1991:9).

If done most effectively, the physical institution will retain this pull after the person leaves the event, experiences more and more, and is eventually drawn back into the museum. Falk and Dierking write specifically about the connection between free-choice learning and museum space. They find that the most important time for true learning was actually after departure from the museum, when visitors complete their learning—incorporating the contexts of their lives outside the museum setting to what they learned within (2013:256). A properly done event will constantly nag at the thoughts—even the undercurrents—of its participants, and will also begin to influence their thoughts. Indeed, the most powerful visitor empowered events today, namely Burning Man and Comic Con San Diego, constantly draw even people who have never been to them, back to them—and if a person has gone, they will try their hardest to return.

In other words, in order to create a powerful heterotopic museum event flow, it is absolutely necessary to drag participants both in and under the heterotopia presented in the exhibit itself. If they have things that are holding them back, such as nervousness, lack of interest, or being alone—to name but a few—then it is the museum's job to strip them down and to envelop them completely. While this may initially sound terrifying, this is part of the strengthening of the event. A loss of normal control, and being completely at the mercy of your environment is not necessarily a bad thing—especially since it allows you to break with your traditional time, and in a sense give yourself up to the whims of the eddies and currents of your current path. This is therapeutic, discontinuous, terrific, and awesome—leaving those in its grasp having a wonderful time, with everybody else who has been sucked in, while still having

that sense of something not being quite normal. Of course, this also depends on the event and on the people you have running, as well as actually manning it.

In this thesis, each of the main events that I discuss fall into one of five specific tiers that I have developed to describe hierarchical levels within heterotopic events. Each level builds into the next, and each higher level contains attributes of those below it—at least the most positive traits. Additionally, most of these more heterotopically powerful events augment what previous ones lacked, in order to reach levels of heightened power. Every single one of the events that I will be discussing has two main goals. The first is the most basic—to create an enjoyable space, where people will hopefully learn something. The second is strongly linked to the former, since it is the increase of audience attendance, and participation. In other words, museum events are done to draw in people who might not otherwise come to the museum, or not at that time, and spark or fan an interest in them—turn them into a stakeholder.

The first tier, and the weakest on its own, is a single—localized—event that has one focus, and is generated by a single entity. To clarify further, this entity can be a single person or a unit with one specific focus. For example, this could be a classroom lecture, a political rant, or a written speech. This type of event is reliant completely upon that entity's charisma, or ability to draw people into its narrative, and world. This can, as in the rest of the world's happenings, be a quality inherent in actions, appearance, message, or sheer willpower. Rather than having a strong setting, outside that of the normal museum, the only appeal of this event type will be the person or character that is leading it.

In other words, it could be a boring speaker, and barely attract the listeners. Or, it could serve to drastically increase interest within the room, and drag people onwards with it, and continue to influence their lives into the foreseeable future. However, even with the latter this

usually enough to influence them for only a little bit, and only concerning to a few matters. Eventually, too, the shorter term nature of this type of event results in the leading people eventually moving on, leaving participants without their external heterotopic source. While they most certainly bring something away, in memories and influences, they are only in remembrance of the heterotopia—not currently within it. Even if they recreate it mentally, it serves more as a shadow of heterotopia, rather than the original juxtaposition in physical space. However, this can also spread rapidly, depending on the strength of the leaders, and the level of embodiment of their ideals within listeners.

This differs from the next highest level of heterotopic event. In this designation, there is some sort of constant tug at the participants, and a charismatic type will only cause a narrow draw—not at a level to completely sweep away those who are aware of the danger. Some examples of this are larger affairs that have stronger connections to people in local communities, on a larger scale. For example, limited levels of LARPing are the most commonplace of this type of event. They pull on participants who have an already present interest in the topic subject, and threaten to trip them up, and send them spiraling into heterotopia. This is, again, very reliant on individual personalities, but can be extended to actors, or other characters who are not actually present. For example, when I went to the steampunk convention, Steamcon II (the Weird Weird West) in 2010, I interacted with both people in costume, and those without. The cosplayers were by far the most popular people, and almost always had the most people circling around them, and interacting with them. This is because they can bring even further interest, and strengthen the heterotopia of deviation—however, only one primary activity at a time is held in this level. For example, they would interact with a group of people who were looking for pictures, and therefore there would only be that particular setting in that one space. It is when

you have a series of these events, or multiple key activities happening at once, that you find yourself in the next event type.

This particular event type forms when multiple of the previous examples feed into one localized occurrence. In other words, it takes limited LARPing, and expands it through the expansion of both setting and available activities. Additionally, all of these have to have some common theme of a sort—so that they feed into each other, rather than detracting from the overall heterotopia. In the case of the previous example, it was when the various cosplayers began to interact with each other that people really began to have a good time and were drawn in, both as spectators, as well as spect-actors. All of a sudden, everybody was acting more as a part of the worlds presented by the cosplayers, than in their own—something that was shown most clearly when all the participants gathered for the sending-off concert, and danced, played, and conspired with each other in one giant ballroom.

As with the previous level, if a charismatic personality is present, it can always add something, but the more powerful the person, the more powerful the heterotopic space—and the more of these in connection, the stronger the draw. In this case, the band that closed the night, Abney Park, served as this charismatic figure due to their knowledge, and fame for thematic music, amongst event participants. Each of these fed into the overall narrative the same as all the rest, with conflicts or dislocated space/time to make things even more hazardous, and interesting—more possible disconnect, to make the sublime even more so once visible.

By the time you reach the penultimate straight-up event level, there is next to no hope of staying outside of the heterotopia, and not getting forced within it. This type mixes elements of all those preceding it and causes the participants to mingle and expand their collective experiences. When done properly the individual personalities are given some leeway as to their

own directions—meaning that the participants can decide more on their own, even as they all contribute to the same power catchment. There is also more possibility of a more turbulent meeting of charismatic people—as the event-goers become able to influence each other more, than in previous levels. This is also one of the harder levels to attain, due to problems such as being too close to the previous tier, and too close to the next highest—it can take a lot of effort, with more risk of low payout for planners, although the potential heterotopic power is seemingly infinite.

This final level, the highest tier that I dedicate an actual event to here, is one that generally feels oceanic—both in scale, as well as feeling. For Freud, religion grows out of the “oceanic feeling”—a sentiment that is constituted of a ‘oneness with the universe’—emerging from our infantile feelings of helplessness, and time in the womb. Both at one with our surroundings, and yet separate (Freud 1930:7). In the event’s case, the universe is the mold or setting, that is provided for activities, and emotions of the participants fills this space, causing a form of *communitas*. Ideally, in which, everybody present is drawn in and shares the experience—while remaining themselves. And they can feel helpless at points—drawn to where the event is moving, or to how the other people are acting, and sacred in its timeless temporality. This is also a space/time that lends itself to the experience of flow, for the participants—essentially when they become a part of their surroundings, or become one with their own actions. To facilitate this, they are provided some basic guidelines to facilitate comfort and learning, intrinsic and explicit goals exist, and feedback is provided through other Player’s responses and reflexive critique—all of which are fundamental requirements for Csikzentmiyalyi’s “experiential flow” (1990:72).

This oceanic sentiment takes over the more heterotopically deep event types, and completely immerses the space/time—along with any remaining trepidations or defensiveness on the side of the visitors—as they undergo a merging of oneness with everything, and their conscious into their subconscious as thought becomes action. Participants gain almost infinite power to go their own directions within the somewhat created setting, but they also are put at the whim of the event, and any of the charismatic representatives attending. This, and the accompanying events, are an infinitely deep well of possibility and potential and nobody can truly know what to expect—reluctance and ennui are next to helpless here, and so is anybody who is compelled into the depths of the heterotopic powers. Here there be monsters!

CHAPTER IV: CHARISMATIC NOMADS

MUSEUM LECTURERS

To start off, I shall describe the lowest tier of heterotopic events that I have experience with. That is to say, I shall be following the ranking, from lowest strength of heterotopic event to the highest. This section details a basic museum event—the exhibition lecture—a prime example of the inherently weakest sort of heterotopic event. As with speakers, and leaders throughout history, any strength that the heterotopia has comes nearly completely from the person at the podium, and how far they can pull their audience into their speech. This of course means that there are examples of lectures that are utterly remarkable and transformative, changing listeners' lives, and giving them a sense of touching something greater than themselves—but these are rare, no matter how vital they can be.

The main strengths are that speeches can be done nearly anywhere, usually at relatively low cost. However, no matter how powerful the draw is, the heterotopia itself is bound by the constraints of the event itself. One example that pervades almost any community is that of religion. For instance, preachers come in many different styles—with solemn ones, interactive ones, ones that preach about brimstone and hellfire, to name but a few—but each of these will have their own draw and if they are truly charismatic, will gather people to them. Charismatic authority, as designated by Weber, allows for leadership based upon demonstration of insight or accomplishment, more advanced than the people who follow or listen to them—and as such, it remains as long as the listeners believe in his/her ability (Weber 1978:216). In terms of the museum speaker, this is as the preacher, in that power arises out of the position, as well as the personal ability and deeds of the leader. By tying these personas to the museum itself, the

speakers become a part of a traditional society in many ways, and are therefore examples of routinization as they take their own actions and tailor it to the host space, and society.

As a part of my duties as the Public Programs Manager for the Museum of Culture & Environment at Central Washington University, and the Senator for the CWU Museum Club, I aided and oversaw over a dozen programs and speeches, that we hoped would create our own flock of attendees. The most common of these events was the standard, usually weekly, lecture, with a connection to the exhibit that was currently on display in the adjacent museum—talks are held in the lobby of the anthropology and geography building, which is right next to the exhibition space, and collections.

Each of these was also typically held in the same manner, and followed the same pattern. Even if they did not connect directly to a story told within an exhibition, the subject had some connection to the exhibit, and the speaker would expound upon topics that they were an expert upon—or had been conducting research upon recently. The speaker would come to campus, with prepared slideshows, documents, and narratives. When they arrived at the lobby—now set up with chairs, podium, and other accommodations for all involved parties—they would then set up, be introduced and finally begin to present. The preparations would take place from approximately 5:00 to 5:30—when the audience would expect the lecture to actually begin. From 5:30 until 7:00 or 8:00 at the latest, the speaker would talk about their subject and then answer questions.

You'll notice that I put some focus on time here. This is extremely important with this particular example of heterotopic event, and the space that it is held within. On the one hand, 5:30 to 8:00 is not the most powerful space/time, since it only slightly stretches out the hours that the museum would be normally open—and even that is a stretch, not an absolute break.

However, on the other hand, this was an academic museum, and the students and audience members that make up the event participants are bound by their own time constraints—in that they need to attend classes, or have other scheduled events that would be effected negatively by a late night, or an early morning.

Another important temporal factor is the day of the week that most of these events are held on, at the MCE. The weekday that these are held, it is important to note, is Thursday. This is not the weekend, obviously, but it does allow for events to be more easily slotted in and around class times. However, this does mean that the lectures lose even more power, since they lose that special time that the end of a week constitutes, although many students also spend weekends at home. Now, some weekends, the museum does hold specific events, but the talks still suffer from this lack. More recently, however, both of these factors actually proved to be beneficial, as we were working with local Hispanic groups who, for various reasons, had to have specific times and days set aside, so that they could have free time in order to come visit. But during most quarters, and exhibits, this does end up being more a scheduling problem than not, for potential visitors/audiences. When it comes down to it, in the end I feel that the weekend—even Friday—would work best, since it would be able to tap into the powerful forbidden time/space of the museum event, as well as create reasons for students to come to the museum, depending upon the event itself. Ultimately, this might even work to filter the heterotopic space/times into their most beneficial forms.

In order to exemplify this specific type of event, I shall describe one of the more effective times that this was carried out. In the winter quarter of 2015, two prominent anthropologists came to Central Washington University, to speak in conjunction with an exhibit they developed with museum professionals, from their work. It is also important to note that various classes had

been assigned the accompanying book prior to their arrival, and readers had been introduced to the scholars, the people upon which the exhibit were focused, and the settings and themes that they were coming to talk about.

While I was not the Public Programs Manager at that time, I did work with the one at that time, as a liaison from the museum club, and as a student who had read their work and developed several programs around it. I had also worked with local homeless community members, and their advocates, who were a central part of our own addition to the exhibit—which also contained homeless narratives, and stories, only locally gathered. As such, I was able to fully experience their heterotopia creation, from when we first heard they were coming, until they had given their presentation in front of one of the largest and most responsive audiences that the museum has ever had for a midweek lecture. In other words, not this isn't only an example of a charismatically induced heterotopic event—it is an example of a successful one, though this is also due to the way that they carried it out, and the exhibit itself stands as a testament to the power of their subject. The particular subject in this case being homelessness and addiction in urban America.

Not only was the culture of the exhibit American, but it also involved urban centers, the community of Ellensburg, and other smaller ones such as the MCE itself—in addition to homeless community members, and all those who had seen the exhibit. As such, this exhibit speech was most definitely a heterotopia of deviation—only those who were present at the talk were a member of this particular charisma-based heterotopic event. This was strengthened further by the fact that the two anthropologists didn't rely solely on their own voices and pictures. We had heard them talk in classes, in the exhibit, and elsewhere, with no real distinction of who we were hearing about. However, in the actual event, they spoke, showed

pictures, and transported all of us present to their field site through the use of audio components. We were able to sit there, and listen to the voices of their friends and informants—to hear the narratives, but more than that, to hear their lives. As they spoke we could hear cars pass by, birds make their song, and more than that—the story told by timbre, inflection, and emotion.

Indeed, one could actually say that our own culture was shifted into that of the people we heard. We had heard secondhand about the culture that we were supposedly entering when we went into the exhibit, but it wasn't until that moment, when we heard a son talking to his father about addiction and family loss, that our own culture shifted slightly—and our heterotopia took on a bit more of what the anthropologists had brought to us.

In other words, there were really three heterotopic layers present. The first was ours, created in the museum, by the exhibit and artifacts within. The second was the speakers', who had studied the culture that we could hear—which made up the third. This was the one that could only be reached by subsuming the anthropologists' heterotopia with our own, since that one bridged both others. We had, in one room, a museum event space, a busy urban center, and connecting them, the workroom and life of two people who had experienced it all.

That room, specifically, is what established the boundaries that separated listeners from the Other, who are literally outsiders in this example—in addition to whether or not people listened. After all, it relied completely upon the heterotopia created by the speakers—not the audience members, who merely found themselves within somebody else's complete creation. However, those who listened, and thought about the subject matter still fulfilled their role in the heterotopia, put up through the actions of the speakers.

It is also important to note that the space of the exhibition itself remained unchanged, and static—the only area that actually changed was the lobby, with the configuration of audience

seating, and the projector screen. However, the museum as a whole was augmented even further by the conversations that were begun through the talking. The heterotopia created through the Weberian charismatic authority of the founders, and the strength of their personally transported data, worked in concert with both the lobby, as well as the exhibition, as it lay over top of both, and continued on in a way past the actual event. Listeners became followers of a sort, as they walked the narrative laid out by the speakers, whose draw had come from their actions, and their authority as anthropologists. After all, even if people didn't necessarily go through the exhibit after the talk, they still thought of it in a different way, or with additional views that were created through the inverted space—that of a city street, for example, over top of the almost overly sterile museum space. This space also included an artificial homeless camp that was influenced by the book of the two anthropologists—the most heterotopic space of the exhibit, combining the messages inherent within the narrative, and the student's lives.

Even though five of the heterotopic principles fit cleanly, and clearly, with this event—one of the strongest of its kind—that is not to say that it was as powerful as an event could be. I remind you that this is the lowest tier of power, in my heterotopic hierarchy. The main weakness of this type of event lies with the fourth principle of the heterotopia. That is to say, it is extremely rare that a charismatically induced and propagated heterotopic event can arrive at an absolute break with current time, on its own. For example, at no point at this event did we, the audience, travel completely to a different temporal stage. Everything that the anthropologists did was in connection with the exhibit. Even if we were talking about a region in a different part of the world, it was framed by a discussion of what was in the community we all knew intimately—our own. It was a partial break in our traditional time, and this was enough to establish the heterotopia—but not to fully form it, or cause it to grow. No matter what they said, we knew

that we were still in Dean Hall, in Ellensburg, Washington, hearing about people that we had already been introduced to, through the exhibit, and books.

In addition to this, the key word here is charismatic—and the reason I chose it is because it is very much up to the speaker to draw people in. It then follows that if the speaker leaves, that will frequently cause the audience to lose interest—or the speaker will only be able to connect the audience to the one exhibit that they were attached to. There is really nothing causing the overall heterotopia to last past that exhibit. Instead, frequently the heterotopia will last only as long as the exhibit that originally drew in the origin of the charisma in the first place. As such, they follow the path of charismatic succession, where one charismatic leader is replaced by the next, in the next event. In other words, means of charismatic succession is provided by the museum—or the first followers—while the actual draw is still placed with the speakers that we bring in. However, there is not a complete transference of legitimacy, as the type of draw can differ—although some of the more powerful experiences can create continuation of authority.

We've seen that frequently at the MCE, where we have trouble retaining many visitors, even if we make good attempts at connecting with groups that last longer than the four years of an average student. There is also simply not enough difference from ordinary museum activity to create the necessary discontinuity to increase enjoyment. In other words, this type of event is not enough to create a foundation of loyalty. Even if you have a constant stream of them over a period of time, the effect will be uncertain unless tempered with other events.

Many of the examples that exist within this level are hindered by their very limited nature—they can't reach out to many of the less represented demographics. As I stated in my introduction, in Ellensburg—where the MCE's event took place—as of the 2014 census the approximate racial breakdown was approximately 80 percent white, with the rest of the

population being predominantly Hispanic/Latino, and the remainder being a mix of Asian, African American/Black, and Native American (United States Census Bureau 2010). I had gone to middle school in this town, and by the writing of this thesis, I've been here for the last two and a quarter years. This event was not a mirror of the society that it took place in—and I do mean the town of Ellensburg, not the university—which is good, because according to college ranking site collegefactual.com, CWU's attendees are made up 61.7 percent White, 12.5 percent Hispanic/Latino, 9.8 percent unknown, 6.2 percent two or more races, 4.3 percent Asian, 3.1 African American/Black, 1.2 percent Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, 0.6 percent non-resident alien, and 0.5 percent American Indian students (College Factual 2016).

The audience make-up for this event was overwhelmingly white, as would be expected both from content, as well as demographics—however, it was a little too overwhelmingly so. After all, the demographic make-up of a museum-event audience should reflect what the community has, as well as the everyday visitors. There were very few Hispanic/Latino people in this particular crowd, and the same could be said about every other demographic—although there was a comparatively good showing of African Americans—which is being compared to Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Asian listeners. I'm not saying that the event was a failure, per se, since it did bring more awareness to the community, and further support to the homeless shelters and other such aid structures, but it had not built up a steady following of community members from across people of all nationalities, cultures, or race to fill seats—and the two anthropologists, as well-known in their field as they were, and as well-spoken as they were, also did not draw in a crowd from outside classes, or academic circles.

However, this is also not as bad as it initially sounds—although it is most definitely not good. As my informant Corvus from the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) told me,

“You can’t just have one theme. They’re all part of the same story, but you can’t tell the whole story, and you can’t have too narrow a focus—have multiple narratives that entwine over the course of the event.” In other words, our cities are not made up of one homogenous culture, with a single overarching narrative. Corvus continues, “after all there are simply too many things to focus on, to fully tell any story in one event.” Since an exhibit is an ongoing event of sorts we can look at this particular example as but one noticeable change in the overall event.

In other words, to make the most of the first type of event, many of them should be held, that focus on a wider range of possible audiences. Since an academic lecture is usually limited to at most two racial groups—reliant upon theme of course—there should be many, with very different focuses, over the course of an exhibit. If a serious academic event is held one week, hold an art making workshop the next, but don’t limit it to just that—create popular culture connections, have students lead a lecture, play games that demonstrate your points, maybe even take it outside of the museum initially, and give a follow-up event that makes use of what is learned through that. The most powerful of these would most likely be the popular culture event—which drags people in and makes them connect more on a personal level, because you have something that they’re interested in, that is typically lighter but still makes them think the same deep thoughts that you initially would like them to. You only need to forge a connection between the issue that matters—and keep it serious—and the popular culture idea while not losing your original message.

Popular culture is an especially effective method for drawing in young adults, and other ages who have become disaffected with museums due to feeling them elitist, or stuck in the past. As for the ages represented at this particular example, there was a decent turn out from young adults, across the disciplines, for this type of event—with the primary groups being from

anthropology and art. The anthropologists were there largely because of the renown of the two charismatic scholars, while the art students came for the immensely moving photography shown within the gallery, and to hear the photographer speak. On the down-side, some students were only there for extra credit or assignments, meaning that it might not have been the event itself that drew, or interested them. After all, some people like to not become engulfed in an event, or have chosen not to, since before they enter it. Because of this, many will not be effected in the same manner as those who came to fully enjoy themselves, or learn from the speakers—although these people may, most assuredly, leave just as excited as anybody else. To increase this number of participants even further, I would also increase the types of events that specifically interest young adults in general, as well as by taking foreign, or older, material and updating it for the eyes of the viewers.

In a study done by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM)—titled *The Cultural Museum 2.0: Engaging Diverse Audiences in America*—they narrowed interview answers, online surveys, and six different focus groups, into four common themes that participants thought would grab their interest. Three of these can be addressed to all ages, and they are: 1) get the word out to neighborhoods, and on the streets where people can see them, and don't rely only on static advertising—sponsor events, and work with local groups on their terms, 2) enliven the museum, and don't act full of yourself—people don't have fun in elitist institutions, where they feel looked down upon for any reason, and 3) create active programming, with popular culture and fully immersive exhibits—or at least exhibits that require audience participation to complete. The fourth of these was directly linked to young adults, who said that they would want the museum to bring the stories from the past, into the present—make them relatable, and enjoyable. For example, by including the museum's stories in connection to

an item or tale from the past that's already in the exhibit, younger independents will be able to associate with that space (Japanese American National Museum 2009:41). Even though this is a culturally specific example, the results that they found are lessons that can be learned by any, and all, museums today. In order to envelop participants more deeply you must have more events based around your exhibit, and you must also bring in engaging speakers, but you must always keep exhibits fresh—relatable to the experiences of all your audiences.

CHAPTER V: TEATIME IN THE LOBBY

DOWNTON ABBEY TEA PARTY

Rather than only focusing upon one person, and the setting that they can create with their words and images, in this type of event you create a setting for the audience to fill in, while focusing on one time period and narrative. You create a heterotopia, but one that does not create a deep well of power—rather the participants interact largely with one layer, but one that has been spread out over a more encompassing theme. They depend mainly on the normal plane with a concentrated focus, alongside a thin veneer of the inverse of it. In other words, there is a heterotopia, but it doesn't fully or easily draw participants in—the heavily present everyday space peeks through too frequently for that.

It is also important to note that this usually contains an enveloped charisma-based heterotopia, since staff members will have undertaken to play small roles, or lecture around ideas desired to be in the event. Even as the focus will be on the building up the setting, there will not be an absolute break, because of the overall entertainment and outside factors. In short, this type takes the strengths of the charisma-based event, and takes a little away from them, in order to amplify other areas that cause it to be stronger overall. For example, this event does require more set-up and planning, but because of the created setting it becomes a stage for an even stronger heterotopia.

The example with which I have had personal experience, and feel best showcases this was a *Downton Abbey* tea party that I conceptualized and enacted with the help of the CWU Museum Club. This event, taking place on Mother's Day, of 2015 at 4:00 PM, was extremely successful in terms of audience draw, and contained a strong, popular, setting as well as various speakers and guests of different backgrounds. This included professors with backgrounds in

costuming, and architecture, and some of their students, who lent even more power to the break from the museum lobby, where this was once again, held. However, before going further into this, let us first begin to discuss the event itself.

This event, titled a Downton Abbey tea party, was thought of whilst working on an art self-expression piece, connected to the same exhibit that I talked about exemplifying the charisma-based heterotopic event. It initially began as my idea, with some input from a representative of the Central Washington University Cosplay Club, with the hope that it would bridge the gap between various on-campus clubs. The cosplayers would come in costume, theoretically, and then be seated amongst the various other visitors in order to bring to life the setting that we were attempting to simulate as context—*Downton Abbey's* 1900s England. More specifically, attendees would be taking the role of high society members, while our audience plants—otherwise known as shills, or stooges— would be a mix of high, and low society, thus making the setting complete. This would effectively bridge not only the clubs, of course, but our own focuses and planes—which would in turn create a stronger heterotopia, with multiple types of break from normalcy, and dislocation—all of which would also be entered by the audience, who would go through their own break. In other words, the heterotopic break in everybody's traditional time, would cause them to exist within the same space/time—and accompanying mindsets, especially with the scheduled speakers and thematic choices.

When it came time to actually host the event, however, the cosplay club did not show up in costume or character, so we rolled back on one of the possible layers, leaving us with the families who had shown up, for a Mother's Day event, academics who gave talks on their subjects, and several of their students who had been as kind as to show up in period costume, and to model for the audience, showing off certain apparel, and the way to wear them. This all filled

the space that the Museum Club had created using tables, plates, saucers, and silverware from facilities, as well as tea pots and platters that a club member had gotten access to. As for food, we had purchased lady fingers, croissants, and various other foodstuffs that we had made into sandwiches and the such—finger food to go along with the tea, in other words. Finally, to complete the setting, another club member created various character plates for each table (see Figure 2). These had a name of a character from the *Downton Abbey* television show, and some information on them, which allowed the visitors to learn a little more about the setting that we had them in, as well as create some small opportunity for roleplaying. Although the extent of the program was for tea and talks, so there was no real roleplaying that took place, especially since tables were generally made up of people who knew each other—families for the most part—meaning that there was little dislocation from their ordinary social and mental being.

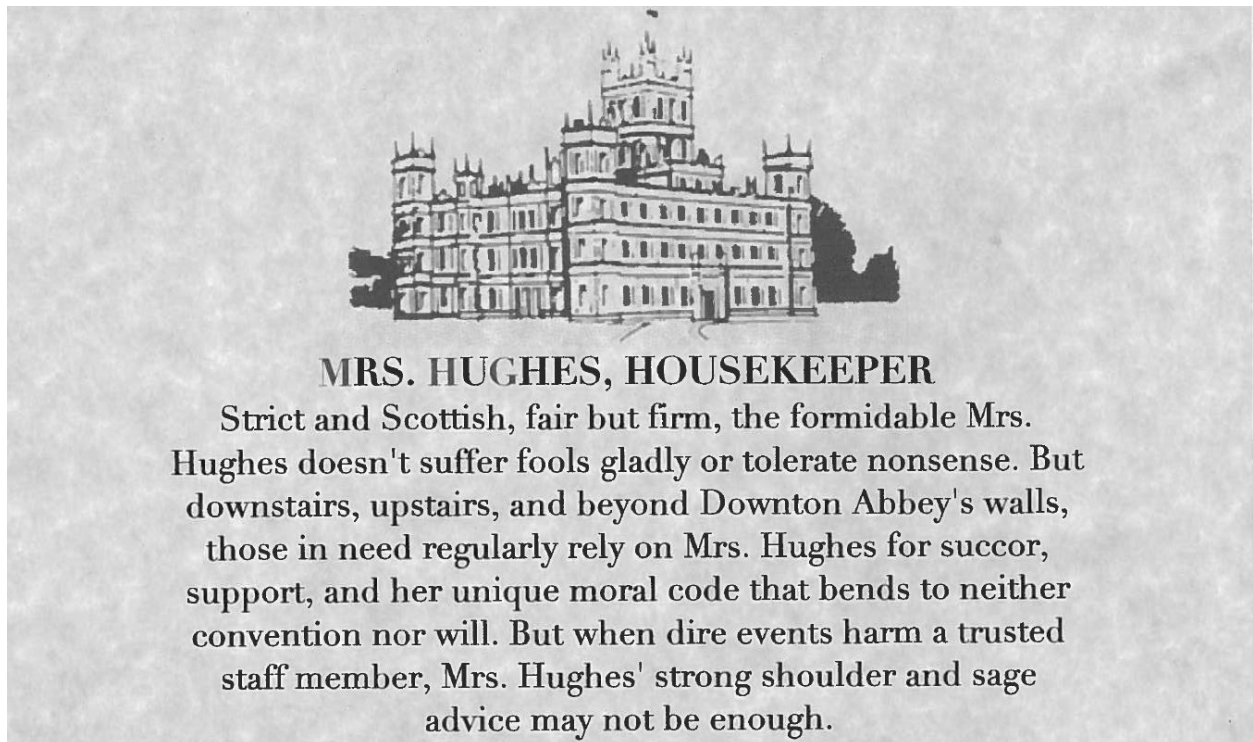


Figure 2, *Downton Abbey* tea party table character

This was fine in this case, but not the most effective, heterotopically speaking. This is because most of the audience was made up of mothers and their children and grandchildren, and because most of them were drawn into the setting and occasion that we had selected to exploit. However, the lack of coordination, and the lack of a strong break in time are both things that weaken an event's success and in turn its heterotopia. While this is not always the case in such an event type, in this particular case the use of popular culture and the allure of familiar characters and settings is what drew them in. The museum still served as the normal plane, clearly, but the idea of *Downton Abbey* created the inverse—the building lobby was changed into a tea parlor, with high society, and tea foods.

In this particular case, the culture that constituted the heterotopia had two underlying cultures. The first was the museum from where the staff entered, as well as the Ellensburg community as a larger whole from which the participants originated. The inverse of this was the high society that I just mentioned—an English noble's social mixer—rounded out with a return to the participant's normalcy, represented by speakers who spoke as professors, not as native experts of the time. Much as with the charisma-based heterotopic event, this served to draw the audience back out of the heterotopia slightly. However, due to the setting that was created, this has the possibility to create a stronger one, by strengthening the gap between normal and inverse—by increasing the discontinuity of coexisting in the past, and the present.

While this particular heterotopia did not change drastically over time—since it was a onetime event—it did change slowly, first through the professors in the front, and then through the actions by the accompanying theater students. The professors were, for the most part, very much grounded within our own timeline and did not change the heterotopia as such. However, when the students entered the floor, their professor instantly changed directions—and the

heterotopia changed along with her. The students had not only dressed for the occasion—with different settings implied by their clothing—but they also spoke and moved in character. The heterotopia instantly shifted towards a more even distribution of normal and inverse, with them being the fulcrum. Then, after they left it shifted back again towards the normal, with less intensity upon the other plane.

This newly created plane was and is the entire point of this level of heterotopic event. Rather than have the focus upon one character, or person(a), it was upon the setting, and happened to have some figures who accentuated that side of it. Rather than a heterotopia with a lot of power that was omnipresent, one where there was power everywhere in it but not so strong as to draw people in was created. As such, while the space most definitely remained that of a museum-event area, it also had the aforementioned veneer overlaying it. This turned a room made for walking and passing through, into a space for gathering remaining still—apart from the waiting staff, made up of several museum club members, who walked in very limited spaces in order to serve each table. Additionally, it turned a building that is usually populated by crowds of young adults into one that had more senior citizens, as well as young children, and every other age in-between.

This was only fitting, because time and era had a very loose fluctuation throughout—as I have already described with the theater students, and the professors, and their lending strength to the age of England which was transported atop the American university space. This is the main area, if you will recall, that the charisma-based heterotopic event suffered in—and as the setting shifted, so too did the participants who were truly a part of it. In other words, the people who were enveloped by heterotopia could also be more completely shifted by the changes in setting and speakers.

Unfortunately, while there was certainly more of a stronger heterotopia than the other example, this particular event still did not manage to reach an absolute break with the traditional timeline—since it was all still planned around the idea of current day professors lecturing, from current day podiums. However, interestingly, this particular event did happen to have an potentially potent date to be held. The fact that it was on Mother’s Day, a fact that was utilized in some advertising—but did not even mention that day in the event itself—created a stronger break, in some ways, while detracting in others. This is because it separated the event itself further, but the audience members were clearly thinking of it, so it served to draw them out a bit more unconsciously.

Even the wonderful table settings helped to defeat the purpose of this, since they acted as if the characters were merely fictional, and did not lend the audience any means to really create or enact their own—something that might be addressed in the future, through invitations that address both the visitor as visitor, and character. In other words, in this iteration the guests were not expected to come as a character, of any sort (i.e. themselves from that time period), let alone enter into a different time, or develop their own absolute break. This break in time, minimal as it was, helped to isolate participants from the outside as well—after all, how many high tea services do you see in public, on a university campus!

One area that you can begin to see most of the following—and including this one—heterotopias begin to really gain traction is the fifth principle laid forth by Foucault. After all, this event was chockfull of systems and rituals to clearly separate those who attended from all those who did not—while still keeping them in the public view, in a manner that exposed them to all who were not a part of the event. From the get-go, reservations were required and a list was kept in which participants were labeled, sorted, and stored for the actual day. This system was

done online, and through the campus Hype magazine—and it also capped visitor numbers at fifty, so that we would have enough space. Then, when everybody had arrived (the full fifty, too!) we didn't allow anybody else to take space or food from us. Everybody who walked past, or who hadn't signed up in time, or who had somehow learned of the event and hadn't decided to join, was kept strictly out of it, while still being able to see who was partaking, since we were in the public space just outside of the museum—a private event, in a public space, increasing the disconnect even more.

Ironically, it was just this that helped the newly designed space to carry out what the original was supposed to do. The reason that a lobby is so important is not only because it allows passage—but because it allows passage of groups, as well as conversation and society construction at the same time. The main difference here, of course, being that participants were seated, not standing. However, they still talked amongst each other, and learned more about themselves as the afternoon wore on. While they may have largely been seated by family, they were by no means isolated as such. Children talked to each other, which led to parents talking to each other, and throughout it all our club members talked to everybody present, telling them more about what we did, and were currently doing. Finally, most importantly, we told them what we hoped they would take away from our heterotopia—not overtly, mind you—that we were interested in making fun events that would still teach good lessons. This, in fact, did lead to us having several visitors who we would not have had otherwise—either through disability-related reasons, or simply not knowing of the MCE. On a side note, the club made a little bit of a profit, even though we did not ask for any entrance fees—thanks to our advisor, who asked for aid through donations.

Where this event tends to weaken, or not do as well, is that it is still not a complete heterotopia due to the various reasons that I have just mentioned, but most significantly due to the lack of background characters faithful to the event, as well as the implied date. It also suffers if the speakers do not have the requisite skill, knowledge, interest, or charisma—though this was not the case in the *Downton Abbey* tea party, where the speakers fit the audience perfectly. The reliance, still, upon such charisma to fully tie the audience in can be a major weakness—even if it goes well, it is reliant upon such personalities. Finally, from a statistical point of view, development is a lot more difficult—both from the planning, as well as the actual set-up. It took four people, working with numerous other university groups—club senate, club funding, catering, scheduling, etc.—as well as running food-related errands, and creating event materials, to actually put the whole thing together. This means that they are much harder to put up than the charisma-based speaking events, which can be rather spontaneous, depending on the people involved.

That said, they are still relatively easy to put on, since you build it around several people, and then the audience, with a focus on setting that doesn't need to be completely fleshed out—largely due to the personalities of those that you have to talk, or act. The strengths of this type of event, aside from the slightly stronger heterotopia, are more relevant than those of the charisma-based one. With the harder set-up you also get a more in-depth heterotopia, which means that those people who interact with the inverse layer also connect more with the normal one—although not as deeply as would be ideal. However, as with the previous example, while it would be ideal to be able to hold reiterations of the event, they are relatively easy to change, and do one-time versions of. That is why it is not higher on my list—it focuses upon one topic, with little variety, or depth, across the event. In other words, the normal and inverse planes don't

overlay that strongly, the new layer doesn't seep into the underlying one all that much, and the ability to sweep a person away is relatively low.

This particular event also took place in Ellensburg, Washington, and it also failed spectacularly in terms of racial diversity—even compared to the academic lecture. As a reminder, as of the 2014 Ellensburg census the approximate racial breakdown was as follows: White 79.6 percent, Hispanic/Latino 10.3 percent, two or more races 3.7 percent, Asian 3.5 percent, African American/Black 1.8 percent, and Native American) 1.1 percent (United States Census Bureau 2010). I'm not including the university statistics here, because the event was primarily meant for families, and older members of the community. While this may not have been planned, or foreseen, in 20/20 hindsight it is most definitely obvious that of course this would happen—although participants most definitely had an excellent time, and we received no complaints. This is because the participants for this event would be people who enjoyed *Downton Abbey*, most likely had children and families of their own, and who would feel comfortable in a setting based on high tea during post-Edwardian England—in other words, our audience was almost completely made up of grandmothers, and their families. By family, I mean that it was largely grandparents, parents, and then smaller children, still under the ages of 12 or so. This is, at its heart, a matter of audience studies, research, and planning.

This is partially what Emma Shrapnel, an employee of the Australian Museum, wrote her own master's thesis on. Shrapnel identifies several barriers that cause young adults to stop visiting museums, and addresses what this audience wants in a museum, as well as various ways in which museums have tried to draw this missing population back in (2012:5). In most cases, the reported barriers are those of cost and lack of relevance to the needs as well as the desires of young adults. Effective methods such as interactive exhibitions are oft focused at younger

audiences, while discussions are generally aimed at older ones, with no real welcome space for the middle range of ages (Shrapnel 2012:8). Responses to this issue include exhibitions designed especially for the target demographic, as well as “youth panels,” which engage 16-21 year olds in planning committees, to ensure that museum efforts are on target—programs for young people, by young people (Shrapnel 2012:13). However, her most significant research, and findings, came out of the museum’s Jurassic Lounge event—in which exhibits are opened up at night, for museum-wide parties, live music, dancing, drinking, and other assorted ‘non-museum’ activities. One example of a theme for one of these, for instance, was a silent disco—and the attendance rate of these more informal events have increased well above one hundred percent over the four iterations Shrapnel included within her research, with many attending young adults (2012:14).

At my event, however, there were few young adults—for the exact same reason as the lack of racial diversity—target audience. However, again, the target audience was quite clear from the get-go, and the only real surprise was the cosplay club not cosplaying, but attending as diners. In the future, to bring in young adults, we had spoken a little about creating an event based upon Skyrim, the virtual world of an enormously popular video game that would have operated somewhat similarly. This would have needed a little more effort, and we wouldn’t have been able to target the audience that we did, but this just goes to show how varied a category this can be—although the activities would have raised the heterotopic power further, and possibly bring it to the next level. Young adults would be the specific audience for this, obviously. It would center on a topic that was currently at the height of popular culture, and it would be a more activity-based event—a sort of fantastical reenactment, if you will. In addition to this, we could have, as a club, created an exhibit based off of the actions that happened, and could have in

turn looked at how to make it more interactive, from the ground up. As for meaningful topics, we could have talked about the intersection of reality and fantasy, genderism and racism in video games and how that affects the outside world, or more mundane topics such as historical tie-ins such as Vikings.

CHAPTER VI: SUBURBAN SCANDINAVIA

VIKING DAYS

The following event is one that I myself have not attended as of yet—and it is the only one detailed in the hierarchy that I have not had a direct (or indirect) role in planning. However, I was able to interview several of the Nordic Heritage Museum’s events planners, and talk with them specifically about my next example—Viking Days—as well as some of their ordinary exhibition planning. I’ll talk more about that later on, but know that they are a prime example of a museum that mixes interactive immersive experiences with sporadic events effectively. Viking Days serves as an example of the next higher tier on the heterotopic hierarchy, one step above the previous event—although, as with that one, some of these temporary, but larger scale events, are spread about over the entire space, with the grounds open as a fairground and the interior for lower key experiences. However, this goes slightly deeper with more focal points, and with more of a break in time to seduce participants further down. This can be marked out by its even stronger possibility to drag participants into its inverse world.

The events in this category cover nearly everything that constitutes the previous heterotopias, but it goes even deeper. That said, it still does not go so far as to supersede the final tier that I discuss in the next chapter. In other words, the heterotopia is more complete, but there are still too many distinct differences between the event and the bordering suburbs to truly create the complete inverse. As with each of the entries on this list, it also includes many of the traits of the previous event types, but it embodies the strengths more and gives the weaknesses less traction. Of course, it is tricky to hold all-out melees and other Viking-oriented activities in the middle of a Seattle neighborhood—that is to say, Ballard.

The festival lasts for an entire weekend and is hosted outside of the Nordic Heritage Museum itself, on a field nearby that is used for set-up and activities. Each day begins with a Swedish-style pancake breakfast, which is preceded on Saturday by the “Run like a Viking” 5K race. The museum has stated that this ties into the Nordic cultural tradition of athleticism and connectedness with nature. While they cannot ski in August, when this usually takes place, they can indeed run along the predetermined path set up by both city and museum (Harms 2014).

This particular event is open to anybody who desires to join—including dogs. Both canines and their two-legged companions are urged to wear costumes, and each group goes through a costume contest with prizes—Viking costumes strongly recommended. This accomplishes several goals in that it allows for person-person interaction, and for creativity with the costumes, while also raising funds for the museum—which allows participants to feel like they have a stake in the institution. However, because it does not remain solely upon the museum grounds it doesn’t really add into the heterotopia itself—just the experience, enjoyability, and the relevance via becoming stakeholders of a sort.

Regardless, after the race and the morning meal, the rest of the events, activities, and attractions of Viking Days. These are mainly focused around the large Viking encampment that is set up and filled with merchants, food stalls, and combat. These battles range from single hand-to hand situations, to enormous melees with sides selected, and alliances brokered. However, as the Vikings were not the battle crazy culture that so many modern Americans picture them to have been, there is a focus on the other elements listed apart from warfare-related ones.

When I spoke with Canis, one of the main event planners of the Nordic Heritage Museum, she specifically mentioned the importance of live-action portrayals as well as local

groups, such as the Society for Creative Anachronism. The museum has made connections with specific player groups that focus mainly upon Vikings. These players fulfill much the same role as the three theater students and cosplay students would have done in the previously discussed Downton Abbey event—creating a charismatically induced space that would increase positive, and thematic, memories. They can move around the event and interact with participants much as staffers have done in renaissance fairs, ever since they first began to be hosted. Hecklers walk around in traditional costume, with Viking warriors, lords, and ladies all over to lend credence to the legend that is being created—or recreated.

Viking life is shown to all through cooking stalls, weavers, woodcarvers, blacksmiths, and interactive games, and activities. The food is especially interesting, because it shows the wide range of differences present, even in a region as nationally diverse as Scandinavia. Some of the most notable delectables are Swedish meatballs, Danish aebleskiver, Finnish open-faced sandwiches, and Icelandic desserts—such as their iconic layer cakes. For adults there is also the Valhalla Beer Garden that serves grilled sausages, alongside Carlsberg and Odin beer, all day long. Also present are the more ubiquitous—across Scandinavia—Aquavit, and children’s treats that abound across the festival grounds. This configuration allows for many interesting insights since the food shows the cultural diversity of the Viking peoples, and the lands from which they originated; but the arts and crafts tell a more unified tale—of a proud culture that relied on nature, and craftsmanship in addition to the infamous raids. Another large scale food attraction welcomes as many people as possible. In the afternoon and evening, a salmon bake is held with, “Alder-smoked salmon and all the fixins” (Nordic Heritage Museum 2016). Salmon was included because of the deep connection with northern Europe, of course, and also because of its

presence in the Pacific Northwest, which is one of the reasons that there is a Nordic Heritage Museum in Ballard at all.

Finally, perhaps the most important of the overall attractions of the event occurs all day. There are three stages with various entertainments planned atop each that operate throughout the entire festival. While these do include some speaking events, and some calmer activities than those held in the actual field, they play host to what I deem to be some of the most exciting, and powerful, additions possible. That is to say various music and dance groups that create ambiance are able to use these stages to further project the feel of the cultures and time periods represented to all of the participants.

Looking at this event as a heterotopia, it is an example of a single American cultural institution representing and utilizing at least five other cultures, from Europe, as well as how they changed during and after their journey to the new world. The museum itself represents this complexity in its exhibits, but at the same time, those exhibits do not lump cultures and time periods all together, by any means. This event, however, mixes them all up while also keeping them separate through the inclusion of each country's foodstuff. In other words, the inversion is actually made up of five separate, semi-distinctive traditions, with one overlying one—that is Vikingdom. Finally, similarities in music and the craftsmanship serve to at least loosely tie the slightly disparate cultures that were shoved together initially by American mindsets over the years, and for this weekend, the museum—as all five represented countries have been boiled down to Scandinavia in general, and Vikings in particular. This all creates a space/time in which a heterotopia of deviation can be clearly seen. After all, how many people do you usually see dressed in armor, or with swords and shields, fighting each other, and eating traditional Scandinavian foodstuffs?

Viking Days has gotten slightly bigger over the years, and has also begun including more families. This growth signals a change in Ballard culture, as more people move in and become interested in local cultural attractions. As for the increase in families, the Nordic Heritage Museum's ordinary audience is primarily made up of children and school groups. At Viking Days, the kids bring not only their families, but also friends—including their four-legged canine ones. In other words, as more children come and ultimately return for subsequent years, the general make-up of the participants increases and shifts.

This category of immersive interactive event is one in which a previous, older, culture is taken into the modern setting and portrayed by modern actors—all the while attempting to keep or attain authenticity. In the case of Viking Days, we see a medieval military camp erected outside what was once a school building, and warriors and blacksmiths set up shop alongside urban America—with rows and blocks of modern housing. Directly bordering the field are roads that feature no horses and no carts, but plenty of minivans and sedans. But it doesn't simply stop there. The museum space itself is changed from a cultural warehouse where artifacts go to die—or enter into a state of relative unlife—into a workshop that creates items from base materials and archaic skillsets that have not been seen for millennia—or at least since last year when the blacksmiths last came to show off their talents and wares.

However, the very appearance of a blacksmith, is very strong in creating a break in modernity's traditional time—although this is by no means a complete break, due to the surroundings, and the presence of all the foodstuffs in one space. While I think the event itself, during the festival itself, is better because of the cultural variety, and differences, it does take away from the overall discontinuity that is induced—the sublime cannot be fully reached in other words. The break in time in this particular event is especially fascinating, since we know quite

clearly, the time range that the Vikings lived and operated in. The reenactors and artisans, all look at the era 793 to 1066 AD, during which time the famous seafarers operated the most—that is to say, when they were raiding Europe and exploring northern Africa, as well as parts of coastal North America. Now, while this may not be explicitly stated at the event itself, it still creates a stronger break, and therefore discontinuity, to participants—even if they only know the basic timeline.

In addition to this, the very fact that it is held in a public arena in the middle of white suburban America creates temporal discontinuity. Even as they battle it out with swords and shields lent by local Society for Creative Anachronism members, polo shirts, shorts, and sneakers abound. While this make sense in that this is not quite the event for many cosplayers, and full on experts, it does make it more of a game that is taking place in modern suburbia, than an actual break with the participants' space/time normalcy.

However, what this does do is to strengthen the separation of those who are fighting and running around with Viking tools from those people who just drive by, or know of the event and don't make an appearance. The rituals to join in on this heterotopia are quite simplistic—and open to all ages and genders, although ethnicity makeup is, as I explain later, extremely white. Simply grab a sword and shield, or find some chain mail, and jump on into the fray! Or sit down and listen to traditional Scandinavian music, with common food and drink from that same region—plainly visible to all those who pass. By mingling the normal with the unexpected the shock of differences is heightened, leading to a more defined Other. Indeed, by not taking up arms, or aebleskiver, or what have you, you have clearly marked yourself as being an outsider from whatever heterotopia those inside have wrought through their thoughts and actions—while

any that actually do partake of either battle or beverage, are some extent or another, pulled in to enjoy the imagined reality.

Additionally, the museum is still present in its original state and purpose, no matter what events go on around it. While some events intermingle both spaces together, there are not many and the more boisterous ones are confined to the outside. That said, the exhibits remain open as do the facilities, such as bathrooms, so the museum still serves as itself—and as a staging ground, from which the heterotopic creators, and the charismatic, heterotopia spreading, individuals, spring forth to do their work upon the audience, and the setting—Scandinavia’s lands, not the normal setting of Ballard.

The major weaknesses of this event lie in the lack of heterotopic depth that it reaches. While it has increased, as compared to those event tiers previous to it, it still shares some of their weaknesses—especially that of the one just preceding it. After all, this one is basically just an upgraded version of the previously discussed. While it manages to remain more in touch with the inversion, through more of an overwhelming created plane—turning a Seattle suburb into a Viking battle ground and Scandinavian microcosm—it still does not manage to submerge completely. Meaning that there is still a present lack of overall heterotopia—while the inner edges overlap, the outer ones are still extremely separated and clear.

The strengths of this type of event really lie in the abilities of the personalities present and in the festival air propagated by events and staffers. The presence of the ambiance creators—in the musicians, and the smells created by both chefs and artisans, and the weaponry and armor—all help to transport the participants straight into the heterotopia. This is augmented even further by the presence of charismatic people—those Society for Creative Anachronism representatives, and anybody who decides to lift up and drag by the senses, those visitors who

might otherwise be reluctant to join in. In other words, the main possible strength of this event is that it can catch people up in its tide, and pull them in—even though it rarely truly does this totally, due to the issues I have already mentioned previously.

This representation of a return to the medieval has led to a massive rise in popular culture and immersive museum experiences—and a plethora of combinations of the two, including Viking Days. The hope of an event such as this one—that taps into the medieval period that Lears claimed was represented as a childhood of sorts for Americans—is that the doldrums of modernity will be cast off in a return (even partially) to the romanticized time of the Vikings, or the medieval in general. It became viewed as more innocent, and strangely nostalgic, than the present. I say strangely here because we have whitewashed it in many ways. We have revitalized those positive things that have been passed down in popular culture mediums such as the quests and chivalry of Camelot, and innocence won—and proven—through actions as well as through force of will, as shown in a multitude of stories surrounding the Saints (Lears 1981:152). After all, this was also a time of solidarity formed through common education—including knightly conventions, status pride, and chivalry—while also containing magic asceticism in the way of prophets. Both ‘belligerent heroic stance,’ and charismatic magic coexisted, and carried through their ‘rational specialized training,’ and ‘playful and artistic features,’ to this day and this event (Weber 1978:1006).

This event could, I feel, be bettered by holding the events in a more secluded region, or by possibly separating the various cultures a bit more. Perhaps if you separated people into various realms, or kingdoms, and had them represent them in combat, you could build the event up more around that. Utilizing this sort of pattern, the event grounds could also be split into several districts, where representative foods, environment, and crafts could be placed and/or

produced. This would cause there to be more competition, and immersion, and would even allow for a more entertaining event, as participants traveled from one land to the next—or challenged certain champions from rivaling groups to single combat.

As for the future, Canis also added that they are not very happy with their location, within Ballard. Even though they have interested people there, it is not the same bustling hub as downtown Seattle, and therefore makes it harder for people to come out and visit. This does not apply as much to Viking Days—although it definitely still does have an impact—because people are more willing to travel for it, as an event, and will come for the activities and spectacles. This will soon be remedied, as the museum is being moved into a much nicer building, which is even closer to downtown Ballard. Although this is the case, it is still not reaching the larger schools that more frequently are in central Seattle, or take their trips there more frequently. This also affects events, since people from downtown Seattle are less likely to travel out into other parts of the city that are further removed. However, due to the strong connection to Nordic countries and heritage in Ballard, the overall relevancy of both the exhibits and the Nordic-themed events are increased by staying in the museum's familiar stomping grounds—where most citizens are descended from Nordic traditions. This is, unfortunately, not saying that the fabricated heterotopia of Viking Days is succeeding in creating widespread relevancy—although it does mean that there is an inherent challenge, for them, in becoming relevant to young adults, and especially marginalized ethnic groups. This latter issue is further compounded by the recent misappropriations of Nordic culture by white supremacists, which are not messages that the museum at all supports.

Indeed, the racial make-up of this event is, again, terribly dominated by white faces, and white people—although, as with the *Downton Abbey* tea party, this is largely because of the

cultures that are being reenacted. That is to say that the Nordic countries that are being emulated were not that well known for non-European cultures during the Viking era. However, we are not currently in that era, and the point of this event is not to be faithful to history—and while Ballard is most definitely predominantly white, there are still large numbers of people from other cultures—who are not represented appropriately.

Additionally, speaking with museum staff members, I learned that the attendance of young adults was also low—which was more shocking by far. There are quite a few older 20 and 30 year old adults in Ballard—more-so than any other age group. However, they are also not the types of people who ordinarily would go to the Nordic Heritage Museum, in most cases. After all, there are a lot more things for younger children to do, and especially school groups. Many museums have young adult specialists, for programs, education, etc.—to hit that college age range—but the Nordic Heritage museum has a Children’s Education Coordinator, and an Adult Education Coordinator. Both are focused on issues that border those of the young adults, but they don’t really address them. Now, this is probably because many of the young adults in Ballard are professionals of one sort or another and this means that they are busier, can be counted among the true adults as far as educational programs are concerned, and they also will most likely not show up that often. As with the DAM, they are being offered a weaker heterotopic experience, due to a forced heterotopia of deviation that would be much stronger as multiple crisis versions—with more activities each with a particular focus, in addition to the all-inclusive ones.

The next event appearing in the hierarchy of heterotopia, on the other hand, is completely open to either type of heterotopia—but functions best as one of deviation, with a complete mixing of all ages, races, and genders in one single space/time. However, the true beauty of it is

that if you require a specifically exclusive event, this can be modified easily to become one—
focusing on age being the most obvious choice. This is an extremely adaptable model, that can
theoretically be held anywhere, with little cost, no limiting factors of knowledge or tradition, and
few requirements of time or space.

CHAPTER VII: PERSONALIZED APOCALYPSE

FUNCTION OVER FASHION

Function over Fashion: Surviving the Environmental Apocalypse through Costume Design is an event that I created entirely on my own, with feedback and artistic input from professors. That is to say that the concept, legwork, funding, and outcome were mine. This project grew out of scholarship that I had been engaged in for the last year and a half, and was supposed to tie into local environmental groups' events, as coordinated by myself, and a community leader—although this most definitely did not occur as I had expected, or had been led to believe it would. I was fortunate to be able to work together with a local art gallery—Gallery One—who let me use their space, their bar, and who also did some advertising for it. In addition to this, some staff members brought their family to come and participate, and these were the core of the event. In the end, due to short lead time, miscommunications, and some base concept misinterpretations concerning age groups and their interests on my own behalf, there were only several college students, as well as a decent smattering of elementary students.

The basic outline was a costume creation and display occurring on April 16, the Saturday prior to Earth Day. Participants would be given a wide range of cloths, plastic objects, and a variety of other easily found and procured materials, and they would be tasked to create a post-apocalyptic setting for themselves, in which they would have to survive (see Figure 3 below). They would first decide their own environment for surviving in, and then they would create a costume, with various equipment that would lead to their survival in their selected setting—having been chosen by the participants themselves, who would decide upon which environment their equipment was meant to help them survive in. As for the judging process, it was based on ingenuity in the world design segment, and their reasons behind what they included within their

creations.



Figure 3, *Function over Fashion* poster

In other words, the visitors would be critiqued not on their artistic talent—but on their creativity, intelligence, and talent at world building. Because that is what was at the heart of this particular event, and it was not solely world building—it was the creation of a concept mixer, where heterotopias would in some way actually compete against each other. The reason that I have it placed here on the scale is because the ideal would still rely upon the factors that the

previous ones did. However, it would not quite live up to the final event that I discuss later in my thesis—the final, and most heterotopically efficient of the events that I have experienced or studied. Ideally, all of the powers of the previous heterotopic types, as well as the projects and ideas of participants, combine into one giant heterotopic event in this example.

In this case, there were four specific examples that I would like to explicitly target—two young boys, one student who came separately, and my fellow student Culpeo. The two children were friends, and decided that they would both work together, and create their setting together. As such, they stayed close, used many of the same materials, and their collaboration culminated in similar costumes. The setting seemed to be more of a jungle themed one, with appearances that reflected just that. One of the friends had a snake that served as a mantle, with a breastplate, and distinctly colored epaulettes to cause him to stand out. Meanwhile, the other had a very similar overall design with epaulettes as well, but without a breastplate, and with a leopard skin cape, and shell medallion. In short, they served as lords of the realms that they had mentally designed, and decided to inhabit.

Meanwhile, the first college student created an aerial kingdom, in Tibet, after an apocalyptic disaster—costume complete with jetpack, sword, and other such utilitarian items. Her world was created as one that relied upon few resources, and so the materials that she used reflected this, with minimalistic equipment, and a beautifully evocative setting that we could all picture through her description. Also, due to the vivacity of this description, we were all able to place her within that setting, and imagine her flying amongst the clouds. She also was the one who led into the creation of the fourth person that I shall address here.

This creation, was actually begun with a theme based around a joke that participant number three had made, about a Lord of Trash appearing—which Culpeo took to heart, and

created, using flashy items, and impressive motifs. His base item was a pink kurta that he reasoned would set him apart from those others in an apocalyptic world, and would thus be a sign of status—which led to the creation of the rest of his wardrobe, namely a hat of office, portraying his divinity to the devastated world. He took a ridiculous beginning, and gave it gravitas through both his actions as well as his posture—one of holy serenity (see Figure 4 below).

Now, there were quite a few interesting outtakes to be had from this event, but the most important one to me was how the participants ended up working together while remaining apart at the same time. By this, I mean to say that while the children tended to stay together, and the older students worked largely by themselves, with more of a constant chatter, as the event went further onward in time people from either group began to give some feedback, and ask questions of the other cliques—creating a larger community from the smaller ones that originally came. This was most evident in the hat worn by Culpeo, which had artistic input from everybody present.

Then the dinner in costume that I previously mentioned—although this only included several of the students. This is an eminent example of how a heterotopia can clearly separate the inside participants, from any of the Other. The creator, Culpeo, was also one of the dinner goers. At this dinner, in a downtown restaurant, he was heckled, and called out, by one of the

Ellensburg locals, who took exception to the graduate student's pink, and rhinestoned kurta—with homophobic slurs, and gestures.



Figure 4, Culpeo in created garb

However, the heterotopia supported my friend, since he was with fellow participants, who understood both him as a person, as well as why he was dressed up in such a manner at such a time. This created a smaller heterotopic space around their table, as they showed the separation

in both mentality and physical location, in a larger societal room. This also drew attention to the event itself, and created a separation between us back in the event space, and those who weren't even near to us or initially aware of what we were doing.

Finally, the gallery was still open, and so it still functioned as its original purpose was meant to do—although it was open later than ordinarily the case. While the art classrooms were closed and we were taking up lobby space, the volunteer of the gallery continued doing her original work in her customary space. The heterotopia did not completely subsume the original—except in built-in exceptions, such as the wine and beer bar that was opened, and the gift shop that was closed. So the classrooms and gift shops were affected by the temporal setting of the heterotopia creation space/time, but the gallery itself still operated as a gallery—which participants and outside visitors could all visit as desired. That brings us back to the event itself, and the initial planning process that went into it so that we could make the most out of such a powerful time.

One initial concern was raised that the focus on the end of world would be too depressing, just from the get-go, but I looked to the words of a director who had just come out with a beautiful post-apocalyptic movie—*Mad Max: Fury Road*. George Miller, as well as many of his crew members have come out, saying that the beauty of this setting can be a very strong focus, because they believe that if one were to be alive during such a scenario, they would look for the beauty that abounds in everyday things and situations, and fill their lives with that—not force themselves to wallow in dark, depressing climes and moods. I thought that this was an empowering way to look at it, and that if that mood could be brought to the forefront of my own event then that would make it even more powerful. Instead of solely relying on heterotopic

power, I could also cause people to think about the inherent beauty of nature, even after all that they know has disappeared or altered completely.

And this is what was at the heart of my event. I wanted people to use their imaginations and their love of all that surrounds them, as well as thinking how they could use those things that aren't always front and center in their lives but are still always there. To enact this even more, ideally I would have liked to include a judging session where participants would have had to describe the choices they had made for materials, and the various items that they had created—I didn't require the creations to be functional, it was their thought process, the beauty they made out of what is traditionally considered “garbage,” and the considerations they put into the world that they would have to survive in, that led to that particular choice in customization. In other words, the most important aspect would be how well they thought their item through—what they would need in a setting such as that. Next would be the actual world that they put themselves into, and the optimistic outcomes of surviving the terminus of all that you know, and then finally the aesthetics of your costume, that would place you in that world. Hence the title: *Function over Fashion: Surviving the Environmental Apocalypse through Costume Design*. The tagline for this was created when one of my committee members designed this wonderful advertising image, for me to utilize throughout the entire buildup to the event itself (see Figure 3).

As for the end takeaways—above I mentioned the expected outcome of my event. To be blunt, I utterly failed my initial goal—but as with anything in life, this led to an even stronger lesson to be learned. In more distinct terms, I did not increase attendance of the audiences that I had originally wanted to bring in, or that I had honestly expected to attract. The purpose of this event was to test whether a museum, or gallery in this case, can use visitor built narratives in order to strengthen attendance from ages, races, classes, and/or genders that do not ordinarily go

there. I addressed this from the get-go by attempting to reach out to various campus clubs, and organizations—something that I did not do well, because I went to the wrong venues, and worked on a level that did not prove to be truly effective. For example, I approached the club senate, when I really should have approached club leadership on their own, and talked to individual clubs who would have had a stronger stake in the event, and its messages from the get-go. This would have also been more possible, if the event had been held on the campus itself, rather than requiring transit from on-campus housing.

The main reasons behind my event's statistical failure, was because of a lack of advertising—or putting advertisements in the wrong venues—and too much trust in some parties who did not really follow through on what it was understood that they would be doing. The language itself that was used to promote it, as can be seen, was tight and effective. I had been hoping to work with local organizations, who would bring in more town members, and other such groups—but this did not happen, and I heard from some contacts later that my event was barely brought up. Even my contacts with the organizations, who were supposed to have been there—or at least show up at a later point, did show up only to immediately leave, and not return for the night. This meant that I also ended up doing all of the set up, and all of the pre-event greeting and running—disappointing to say the least. However, they did bring several boxes of materials to use, so that was nice.

The second half of the event, if I had chosen to extend it over the entire weekend—which I did not end up doing— was going to be in a form of a “pre-enactment,” where it felt like a reenactment, or living history, but was open to interpretation and development, since everything would be undecided—participants would be in charge of their own creations, and the reasons behind them. This would mean that it was the visitors who would be empowered to create their

own dialogue, and in the same instance, the narrative of the museum for that day, as far as they were concerned. To help this along, it would have included some positions of authority, such as historians, or time travelers come to record the historic experience. This role would have been carried out with theater students.

This of course, would have fit in even more with the gallery's current show which discussed various environmental issues, and even more-so since it all took place so close temporally to Earth Day, and so thematically with current events. Additionally, the content could be furthered after the event, as well. One way that could be quite effective would be to involve the CWU Museum Club, and the "historians," to make a mini exhibit based off the event. The visitors would create the narratives, in addition to the event's actual happenings, and then the museum club and those event goers who helped record/develop could create labels and propagate the story(ies). This would draw event participants into the exhibits due to their own stakes in the content, and it would also serve to build communities out of the different involved groups, and it would ideally cause more collaborations in the future. Although, with the issues with intergroup planning that I have already addressed I now have some doubts concerning that—I would definitely work with different, more involved, organizations. I would, in other words, leave less up to chance.

This was an extremely interesting situation from a heterotopic standpoint since it could have been extremely powerful, or it could have been extremely weak. To be more specific, each participant would build their own setting, conceptualize it, place themselves within it, and then exit out of it in order to discuss it with both us staffers—and ideally, but which did not happen initially—with the theater students portraying futuristic anthropologists. Much as with the initial type of event, this would have relied upon the personality of those who are creating the

heterotopias, except since all of these people are creating their own alongside one another, the possibilities that are available here are so much more. And there is an overall heterotopia that links all the participants together. In the event that I ran it was the one created through the overarching communitas of building separate items through shared materials, but if I had carried it out over the weekend then the theater representatives would have made this even more powerful. The underlying culture that this heterotopia grew out of was that of America—with its strong beliefs of society rising out of individual effort—of which all participants were citizens. However, it also grew out of the science fiction society, and the stories and images that have emerged from that culture.

This is also what causes the change in heterotopia over time. As the focus switches from creation to reasoning, from societal effort to individual projects, from world building to storytelling, the heterotopia continues to change. Visitors at my event followed this very pattern, and to make it even better, several of the students went out for dinner later—in their newly manufactured regalia. This was very interesting to me, because the heterotopia was mainly constructed around both the people, as well as their creations. So, the setting completely changed, but the heterotopia remained—only different because of altering thoughts, mood, and food.

There were so many different spaces that would ordinarily be incompatible in all of these settings. You had science fiction worlds and creations, mingling with environmental focused exhibits and messages that then moved into two separate restaurants, as several of us went to another eatery after the event. While there, we talked about the event even more and planned the next one. In other words, the heterotopia was set aside, only to be taken up again, for planning put towards the next rendition of it. That meant that we were looking at environmental messages

in created settings that weren't even on Earth in some cases, but still looked at familiar issues. Even the earthly post-apocalyptic settings are foreign to modern people, since we haven't really experienced that sort of setting ourselves.

Now, as with the first level of heterotopias this type of event really has a possibility of falling apart at the absolute break with our traditional time. Ideally, it will remain completely in the future as far as participants are concerned, with even the judging being undertaken by characters looking at survivors of the end of the world. However, if the participants don't get into it—if they don't get dragged under—then the heterotopia as a whole will weaken. This didn't happen, thankfully, at the event that I ran myself. Everybody who came was good-natured and happy to be there. They also all built their own items and worlds, and had a good time during the event—meaning that the setting was complete for the entire heterotopia, which in turn meant that it remained strong. Although this was definitely not as strong as it could have been, if more participants were there, or if more staff had been able to attend. That said, if ideal conditions had been cleared, then the absolute break in time would have been absolute. Amusingly, there would actually be a series of breaks. Not only would every participant experience a break with traditional time—they would also experience breaks with everyone else's times—with the possible exception of collaborative projects.

The rituals involved in this particular event were all based around costume design, as well as world development. In other words, it was open to absolutely anybody who wanted to join in—it was also held in a public space, with no required sign-ins, or pre-event tasks. Additionally, the doors to the space were glass and any passerby would be able to see in to see what we were doing—although there were no signs out, so we had to operate with open doors for

most of it, making it even more open to the public while separating them further possibly due to already occurring conversations between those already within.

One thing that did go extremely well—indeed, exactly as planned— was the funding of the event. Since it was based on using what was at hand, or useful nearby, I was able to provide everything that was needed, along with some help from the organizations I worked with. In addition to this we were able to augment the supplies with various items purchased from the local Goodwill. This cost maybe \$20 overall, with some of the unused materials being returned at the end. After all, the theme of this event was function over fashion. If one were to be stranded in a post-apocalyptic setting, they would need to be able to use what was at hand, rather than what they wished they had. Additionally, this focus allows for the use of more creativity, rationality, and improvisation, with a strong focus on aesthetics still since rough edges, rips, or other design choices could affect survival differently. Finally, the gallery itself only had to stay open several hours longer than usual, which meant that they kept the power on, had one volunteer stay later, and put in a bartender in training, who needed those hours to learn anyways. In other words, their costs were minimal as well.

Again, we are in Ellensburg and reliant on the local demographic percentages, but this time there was a decent mix of participants—as far as race was concerned that is. I had several Hispanic/Latino participants, again a majority of white ones, and this time some Asian students joined in as they walked past. I understood this to be largely due to preexisting friend circles, which helped to grow the number of people—as in one person joined in, and knew several friends who were free, and who would also enjoy it. This also happened to increase the racial mix, since most of these invited friends were of the same ethnicity as the inviter.

As for the age range, this is most definitely where I made the largest error in judgment. While the college students, as I said, most definitely did have fun the most excited participants were the younger children. This is because they were able to fully engage themselves within the heterotopic space, simply by being less self-conscious than their older counterparts—especially once they started construction. Initially, several of them were quite shy, but once they saw older people doing the same thing, the inhibitions immediately disappeared and they were running around, talking to each other, and just having an outright wonderful time.

This was my major takeaway from this particular heterotopic example. Even though I did not have the enormous turnout that I initially hoped for, I am proud to say that everybody who actually participated had a lot of fun. This is the main thing that I learned here—not how to throw a perfect event, but how to begin building up a community of creation through the use of events. I feel that if I were to create another one of these that I would be able to make it larger, but the core of any event should be that it is enjoyable to those who do show up—not to pine after those who do not.

From the college students, to the few community members, to the young children—all told around 15 people came, and all of them left with smiles on their faces. This is also where the massive potential of this type of event comes from. The more people you have in this particular over-heterotopia—submitting their specially created smaller ones, and working both together and on their own—the stronger the over-heterotopia is, and the deeper that it goes. This means that if you have a lot of different people, the depth increases and it is more likely that anybody involved will be drawn further into the depths. However, even though this can theoretically be extremely powerful—possibly even more powerful than the event I have placed as the most powerful on this hierarchy, it is much harder to do that. In other words, this

particular heterotopia would require much more space and many more participants than I had, in order to be more powerful—but it does have the potential to do this. Actually, it has limitless potential as far as heterotopic power is concerned, but it is unfortunately usually limited by audience draw, potential participant schedules, and monetary situations—common event issues.

While I may not have had the sheer number of people come to it, the mix was not bad. Even though only several people stayed throughout the entire event—with people leaving for dinner, and other engagements, and some coming back—I believe that this was due to the complete looseness of this particular example, and that is both a strength as well as a downfall. While participants could leave as they wished, and participate according to schedules, there wasn't any real connection that would bring them back to the exhibitions themselves. If I were to do this again, I would make it a weekend-long affair and tie it directly into an exhibit at the host site—most likely by building the event itself into an exhibit, which I shall discuss further in my conclusion. This flexibility is why I have this even, as the final level of doable heterotopic event—it is extremely powerful, and doesn't rely so much on sheer numbers—in fact, as I will discuss further, there is a visitor cap.

CHAPTER VIII: WESTERN OCEANS

THE MYTH AND MAGIC FAIRE

This particular event is called the Myth and Magic Faire, and it takes place every summer at the Museum of Popular Culture—formerly known as the Entertainment, Music, and Popular Culture Museum. This is also the final event that I discuss in this thesis and is the strongest example of a created heterotopic event—at least that I have knowledge, or personal experience of. Like Viking Days it taps into the romance of the medieval in many ways, and it is also one that have to be extremely careful with because it is my favorite event—both because of how easy it is to be seduced into, and due to the sheer love that everybody involved in it showed while working with, or attending, the festivities.

In 2015, I was fortunate enough to be able to help as a volunteer, as well as sit in on several planning meetings and give some feedback. Not only did it fit in well with my personal love of both fantasy and mythology, but it served as a turning point for my academic interests. It was then that I truly began looking at museum events as heterotopias—although I had flirted with the idea before, in studies of how Live Action Roleplaying games such as Vampire the Masquerade could be used to increase social bonds in urban settings.

The main similarities between Vampire the Masquerade and the Myth and Magic Faire are their connections to fantasy, the use of interactive immersive experience, and the desire to completely transform a space into a fantastical zone of wonder. In the Masquerade, players turn their originating buildings into a royal court, and their host city into a Vampire metropolis—while the EMP event turns portions of the museum into a royal feasting hall, dueling range, and dancing grounds. This is also only one part of the festivities, which last for the entire weekend—July 10-12 the year that I participated. This allows for different audiences to be targeted,

different narratives to be formed, and different settings to be laid out—in other words, it makes for several connected, and yet not linked, heterotopias.

The first night, the year I was there, was a showing of the 1985 movie *Legend*, in which a forest dweller, played by Tom Cruise, and a princess, played by Mia Sara, must save the forest's unicorns in order to defeat Tim Curry's the Darkness. This was part of a larger program, titled Campout Cinema but was also scheduled, for this one particularly, to line up in time with the Myth and Magic Faire. The film itself was shown within the Sky Church, a 5,364 square-foot space with an HD LED screen that is 33' x 60'. Viewers are urged to bring their own seating, with snacks and drinks provided at the official EMP cash bar, with many pillows and blankets spread over the hall. In addition to this, however, they include a photo op station consisting of one of the movie characters—a cardboard cutout unicorn—along with various props, for people to pose with—and by doing so, insert themselves somewhat into the story told in the movie. Additionally, a backdrop and floor portraying a forest glen are set up, to complete the mini story—and mini it is, since it sits right to the left of the movie screen, out of the way, and comparatively diminutive.

This particular night is mainly a momentum builder for the next night, with a pretty good smattering of attention gathering for the rest of the festivities as well. However, the very idea of a campout cinema, inside a museum—key word being inside—is extremely interesting from a heterotopic standpoint. Briefly, the American camping culture has largely emerged out of societal pressures created through ever expanding city life, and this event completely taps into the power of a heterotopia of deviation—putting participants against either those people who stayed at home that day, or those who went out and actually camped in the wilderness. To move mythical, this is reminiscent of Enkidu after Gilgamesh “domesticates” him. This heterotopia

changes from a fantastical forest expedition—from the photo shoot—into an outdoor experience, within an extremely high-tech, non-natural, environment (see Figure 5). Then when the movie starts, participants are both inside and out, in Legend and real life, and in a museum and a drive through theater—of sorts. The system that keeps people out in this particular case is that of registration, and ticket purchasing. People will also use Facebook and RSVP, or say that they are coming, which anybody can look at and know who the participants are. Meanwhile, the Sky Church is still doing its intended job and serving as both an event space and a movie screen.



Figure 5, *Campout Cinema: Legend* (Photo courtesy of Brady Harvey)

Now, I'm going to cheat a little bit here, and actually talk about the third day of the Myth and Magic Faire, before closing with the most powerful part of it. It's really okay, since the order in this case doesn't matter as such, especially as the days are all connected, but at the same time separate—so as to better draw in larger audiences to each event, even if some people go to

multiple days. The final day of the faire was meant mainly for smaller children and their families—with Legend being primarily for adults, and the Wizard's Feast, Masquerade Ball also being aimed at adults. Younger adults, in particular, although the age range of the actual attendants was pretty well spread across the demographic categories. Regardless, the Day Faire was meant for families to be able to come and visit, and as such it was held for most of the day—starting in the morning and ending in the afternoon. Some highlights of the day were professional puppet plays, a unicorn riding station, sword fighting, archery lessons, and a plethora of smaller stalls and activities outside the back of the building.

The heterotopia here largely had the makings of one of crisis, which Foucault wrote meant that there was a sacred or forbidden place, that would be reserved for individuals who are in a state of crisis—or in the midst of liminal space/time shift—such as adolescents, or the elderly (Foucault 1967:4). In this particular case, the events were initially supposed to be angled towards children, who were just reaching those ages in which they would increasingly have to interact with others. And for the older children, this became a space for them to revert momentarily, and act as they once would—with some parents living vicariously through them as well.

As such, the day was replete with activities that mainly appealed to younger audiences—and the ones that did so to adults, did so only through their children. The sacred space being the museum itself, as well as the special attention paid to certain types of decoration, and setting construction. This also meant that as different attractions were opened and closed, depending largely on attention span and performers, the heterotopia would undergo pretty big changes as different age groups or genders got more focus, based on interests. One of the largest of these was a costume contest occurring directly after a puppet play. Of course, participants in the

costume contest also watched the show in-character, so there was a mixing of the two as the shift occurred; and the museum exhibits were open all over the building and had people walking in and out constantly. The break in time occurred when participants were transported into the tales told through puppets, and the overall focuses on the age groups led to a stronger separation of those within the heterotopia—usually the children—and those who had mainly served as methods of transportation to arrive at the heterotopia staging area.

This could not have been more different than in the main event that put the entire weekend into the highest heterotopic hierarchy level—the Wizard’s Feast, followed immediately by the Masquerade Ball. The Wizard’s Feast began this truly most powerful of events at 6:00 PM the night following the Campout Cinema showing of Legend. This particular portion of the evening had some people in costume, but just as many of them were out of it—the truly powerful parts were the setting created by the EMP, the ambiance created by the EMP, inclusion of professional cosplayers, and the selection of food. The food, it should be important to note had catered meals for the base, and then fantastical treats for sides, and dessert.

Now, if you would recall my suggestion from Viking Days above, that the separate countries be more defined and relied upon for event structure, you will see similarities in what I describe next. The main difference that should be kept in mind being that the EMP only kept the realms separate for one part of the evening’s festivities. However, if they centered the rest of the activities that night on that stylistic choice, they could have done a lot more. This would allow for stronger settings, more seductive narrative creation, deeper immersion, and simply stronger creative space/time.

Squire Cheat Sheet

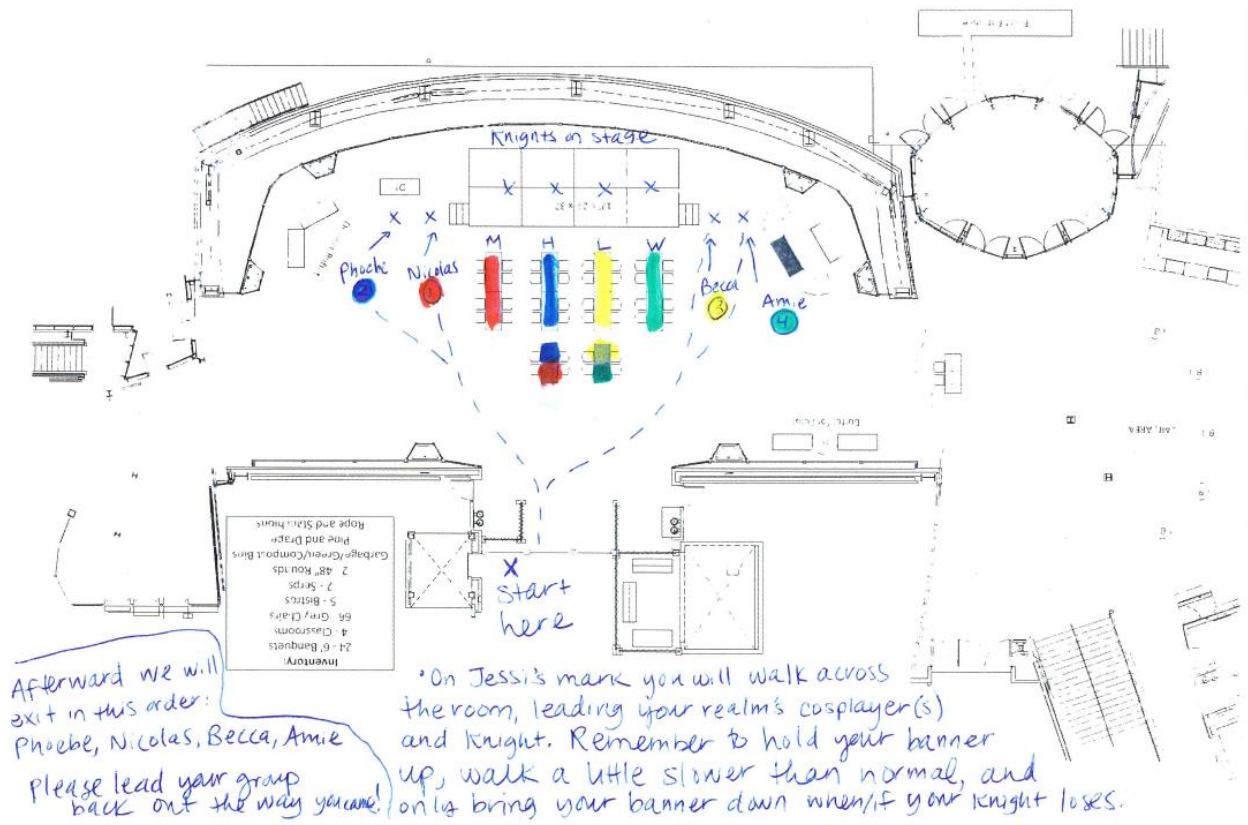


Figure 6. Wizards Feast

The basic concept of the world that had been built by the event planners was an inter-realm banquet—where all the realms were from fantastical works, well-known by most people today. Guests were divided among the various fantastical realms: Hogwarts, Middle Earth, Westeros, and the Lands of Legend (containing the good witch, unicorns from Legend, and characters from other assorted series, novels, and movies) (see Figure 6). Each realm had an accompanying cosplayer, knight (courtesy of the Knights Veritas, a group of living historians who specialize in Medieval hand-to-hand combat), and squire. As an aside—for this portion of the night, I was the squire representing Middle Earth. This actually proved to be quite fortuitous because I have since struck up something of a friendship with my assigned cosplayer, as can be seen below in Figure 7—Bilbo Baggins of *The Lord of the Rings*. Other cosplayers featured

were Wesley and Buttercup from *The Princess Bride*, Daenerys Stormborn from *Game of Thrones*, Harry, Ron and Hermione from *Harry Potter*, and Glenda the Good Witch of *The Wizard of Oz*.



Figure 7, Bilbo Baggins (Photo courtesy of Brady Harvey)

As one can see by looking at the represented franchises, from the get-go the focus of this event was not only upon that of Western fantasy—it was also upon multi-billion dollar representations thereof. I credit this to the EMP fantasy exhibit itself—*Fantasy: Worlds of Myth and Magic*, which largely shows the most stereotypical works of the genre, rather than working with some of the more fringe, yet still popular and powerful works—or themes that stray further away from stereotypical archetypes. In other words, the exhibit doesn't really address the racial, gender, or class politics of the franchises that are present within—instead, it mainly focuses upon the surface topics of fantasy, such as the characters from an archetype level, or a mapping

computer interface that doesn't address borders, or even fantasy world creation, as deeply as it could. Many visitors—and from them—many event participants, are then only thinking about those surface level topics, rather than the deeper ones, from the get-go. This is reinforced even further if they happen to go by or through the gift store, where many pieces of merchandise from these narratives are waiting to be purchased—further cementing the lack of critical depth, concerning race, age, gender, and class issues.

As people were sent to their seats, and table, they were able to sit amongst the characters of their realm, and were encouraged to cheer for their knights, who were doing battle atop the stage, to determine from which land the King and Queen of Myth & Magic would be selected. The Knights Veritas, also being an educational group, would give a sort of running commentary after each fight to show how and why the victor had come out on top. This is important, because it lends credence to the feeling that this is an authentic high fantasy event, created especially for the audience, over the course of the evening—although the Knights' breaks in the narrative only served to weaken the overall narrative, so there was certainly a tradeoff. It is the same reason that almost every renaissance faire has jousting, alongside all of the vendors, and historians. It is also quite interesting to note that while the live music, and the fighting, were medieval period specific—tying into the aforementioned nostalgia that that time period now represents—the food was not. After all, in order to preserve the power of the past as something to draw interest, we must not completely transpose past over present—otherwise you don't experience as discombobulating a break in time... and your participants won't need to endure the mud, blood, and excrement, that the popular imagining of the medieval can skip over between dreams of questing, true love, and honor!

Before, I mentioned the ambiance that was created for this event specifically. While the other mentioned aspects also have an influence on this one, I am thinking more specifically of the smaller touches. For example, as people lined up, and later wined and dined, a professional hammer dulcimer player plied his craft—first in front of the hall where registration was, and second in the feasting hall on top the stage that the Knights Veritas would soon fight upon. In addition to this, the Sky Church screen had absolutely gorgeous movie clips on it—including the massive hall of floating candles from Hogwarts main hall, and Lord of the Rings, Westeros, and Legend videos as well. This made the event connected to the rest of the weekend, and more than solely a meal and duels. It turned it into a spectacle of all that the fantastical realms had to offer, in terms of geography, mystical creatures, and the beauty inherent in magic itself. In conjunction with the cosplayers, this served to transport visitors in a way that transcended the historical sword fights. In other words, the space became a vessel in of itself, by which participants could travel to the portrayed realms and narratives. These images, mixed with the food and music, were so iconic that to this day I think of it and yearn for a return to that absolutely gorgeous space.

The culture that made up this heterotopia was a mix of stereotypical Western medieval culture, with knights and feasting, and Western fantasy characters and narratives abounding all over the space. This all emerged, fittingly, from an overarching Western culture—with all the trappings that go along with that. The food, even the fantastical ones, were all ones that came from either England, or France, or other originators of what became stereotypical Western culture, and the same can be said of the music, as well as the scenery showed upon the screen—and the costumes that the feasters wore, if they had come in costume. I will also add here, that the visitors came in whatever costume they chose—they were not assigned them, not even a

basic theme—since they pulled table/realm arrangements upon entrance. It was most clearly obvious during this section that this was truly a heterotopia of deviation, as common visitors became increasingly curious as to what was just being set-up, as they were leaving—but could only stand and watch as participants entered—although the Others were gone by the time that the heterotopia was first experienced by the diners.

The most obvious change in heterotopia here was completely scripted. That is, the event was changed from a fantasy event into a medieval one—with rather tenuous ties to the original, although this was more the decision of the Knights Veritas, rather than the event planners. These duelists wanted to stay true to their mission, as an educational knight troupe, that teaches history lessons around the Germanic sword styles that they have adopted—and so the only connection to the fantasy element were us squires standing alongside the stage, with banners representing our various households—and we were definitely entwined in this event, to the point where I helped my assigned knight put on his armor before battle commenced. The audience too kept a semblance of continuity through their cheers for their representative knights—led by the powerfully charismatic cosplayers.

I'd say that the main problem of this heterotopia was the clash between these two segments—the knights, and the fantasy banquet. Rather than having a true juxtaposition of several incompatible spaces, in a single real place, there was a clash at the border of the space/times that only served to harshly divide the two. While this most definitely increased the dislocation of the experience, it was more of a conscious one, than an unconscious one—and this proved to be practically palpable. This was also the case because the event began as a railroaded experience. This breaks the visitors' sense of enveloped time/space, and generally thrusts them out of the heterotopia's deepest parts, due to an overabundance of control.

This was heightened further since, once the duels began, a different conductor took over and switched to tracks laid in a different direction—the leader of the knights taking over the stage to further promote his lessons, rather than continue the more compelling heterotopia. In this type of a heterotopic event, this is actually a weakness, because of the otherwise oceanic nature of it. Instead being forced to stay on one course, participants should experience a sense of endless possibility and adventure—the oneness described by Freud. However, rather than being placed into a situation where sacred—ritual—enwombment is brought about, there appeared cruel figures attempting to drag participants from their connection to the heterotopia. This differs ultimately from most of the previously discussed events, due to its underlying freedom—unconstrained by the strict bounds, and heterotopic weaknesses present.

This section of the night also served to weaken the absolute break in time that was reached earlier in the night, when only the meal was being had. During that time, the dulcimer was being played, the cosplayers were in full form, and the scenery was taken straight out the most evocative scenes of the most transportative fantasy worlds alive and present today. Without these overt lessons, this would have been a very clean second break, when moving over to the second half, but with the lessons it was rather ruined. Nowhere could this be seen more clearly than in the middle of the duels, when the four realms of the audience were led by the cosplayers, and were cheering on their champions with all their vim and vigor. In other words, they kept being submerged in the heterotopia, and then forced out—they were being dunked, not enveloped.

However, this was all possible due to the isolated, and yet revealed, nature of the event as a whole. The visitors who I was talking about previously, who were turned away from the hall, were shown glimpses of what lay beyond a literal curtain, and this just increased their distance

from the actual event. These people were leaving just as this spectacle was being put up, and so they knew that something exciting was happening, but at the same time there was no way that they would be able to make it in—all the reservations had been done online, and a time ago. I also have to say that the Facebook page for this particular event was full up of people who were talking about the reservations that they had just made, or the desire to be able to come, when they were actually turned away, or those who had gotten in too late and hadn't been able to sign up. This was because, as I mentioned in my Viking Days section, there was a limit placed on the number of participants—so that there would be enough food, and enough table space. Of course, each slot was filled with a visitor, so this worked out for the museum in concept.

And everybody was sitting in the middle of the largest popular culture museum in the world. In other words, they were toasting to the success of popular culture, right alongside exhibits that portray and support just that segment of Western culture—with some basic allusions to other regions' popular culture. Even as this heterotopia was created and sustained by effort of volunteers, cosplayers, and visitors, the museum continued on—preserving items, and awaiting inspection by hordes of aficionados. This all continued until 8:00 PM, when visitors had to leave that space, for us to set the same space up for the Masquerade Ball—which was the second full portion of this most powerful part of this most powerful hierarchical tier.

From 8:00 PM until 1:00 AM, the museum was opened up for those participants who so desired to break out their own costumes and characters, and dance to beats provided by a local science-fiction/fantasy themed DJ. Throughout the entire period of time that I shall now be discussing, dancing was open on the floor, and people could do that as they wished, while still a part of the other activities and mini events.

The Masquerade Ball had begun! This was my favorite part of the night, and I feel safe in asserting that the same could be said of many of the guests. Also, a normally forbidden space/time was desacralized, and the museum opened up its actual *Fantasy: Worlds of Myth and Magic*, exhibit. Bennett writes of the museum space as a disciplinary space where items are held away from the public gaze, and hence as a place not as conducive to free-choice as hoped (1996:60). The power of this space, says Bennett, is one of making order out of the world, rather than one that allows for self-empowerment (1996:87). Ideally, although not always the case perhaps, the opening of the exhibits during this time, and the allowance of some small interaction with the setting, most definitely strengthened the heterotopic depth, and all out fun that participants felt (see Figure 8 below).

From the time that the Sky Church was opened up for this latest event, to the time that it closed, people could actually go through the museum, when it should have been closed. As I brought in LaCapra before, this is where it truly can be seen in play, as "...the sublime both converts trauma into an ecstatic source of elation and correlates—even conflates—transcendence with extreme transgression that breaks or goes beyond normative limits" (LaCapra 2000:136). The dislocation that was brought about from breaking into this sacred, and socio-culturally forbidden, space/time led to a far greater enjoyment and interest in the items and exhibitions.

People were fully able to enjoy themselves as they entered into the exhibit, especially with the only real guards present being quest givers and other participating staff members.



Figure 8, Visitors in the exhibit (Photo courtesy of Brady Harvey)

The entire time/space became truly interactive, with museum employees (myself included) and the professional cosplayers, mingling with guests in order to enhance their experiences. There were hair stylists, low lights, and new notables, such as Draco—who says that he is not a cosplayer, but first and foremost, a performer. This is what really made this part the best of all the various times and days of the Myth and Magic Faire—the personalities, but also the opportunities provided for visitors to go around the museum and explore (see Figure 9 below).



Figure 9, Draco the performer (Photo courtesy of Brady Harvey)

Indeed, that was how the event was planned out and set up for participants—the overall theme of the activities was a quest that our noble patrons were to sally forth and complete. These quests, as can be seen on this document, followed fantastical archetypes, as questers were sent forth to complete tasks that pertained to intelligence, wisdom, charisma, fate, vanity, and dexterity (see Figure 10 below). Each of these had a special component in where they were located, a personal side in that a staffer presided over each one, and a temporal aspect since there was the overall time limit set to allow for rewards to be handed out at the end—and some of these would change since they were bound to certain times, or because of moving staff members.



Figure 10, *Quests*

While I was not ambulating, I was one of the non-player characters manning one of the quest sites, and I had a firsthand experience as to the depth of the heterotopia that people were entering. I came to the conclusion that, as your body remains stable your mind and spirit are

submerged in the time/space created by heterotopia, and actually become a part of that new world. I should know, because of how I completely cast aside my constantly present shyness, and fully entered into my role as a dwarven runecaster who was handing out quests for people to save my homeland. I did this through use of a coded message written in dwarven runes, and a map—outside of the event these being Nordic runes, and a map from *the Hobbit*. Another large part of my particular task was handing out clues to those who were having difficulty taking apart the codes of my task, or too inebriated to do so. That's right—there was a cash bar open and supplying beverages of choice to those wandering around—and did the brave knights, and fae folk, and beasts ever take advantage of that!

This all culminated in the announcement of the victors of both the costume contest, and the raffle (of which the entrants were the quest finishers). Also, I would like to give a mention to the skill of the master of ceremonies here, who kept up a running commentary for most of the night, and lent excitement and hilarity to all those participating. However, as I began to say, the event had to come to a close—and what a time to have it end. This happened at midnight, to take full effect of the witching hour, and the heterotopic potential of that time—closing it off at a time that would allow participants to travel home in yet another time, that is out of the norm, especially since most of the participants looked to be having work the day after. And finally, after all the guests were gone, the volunteers, staff members, and interns were able to get out on the floor and shake themselves loose and dance—thus ending the 2015 Myth and Magic masquerade ball.

This particular type of overall heterotopic event can very well be seen as oceanic because of how deep its power to seduce goes, and also because of how broad the topics are and how overarching their reach goes. There are also tides that push and pull the people who inevitably

are enveloped—perhaps not as brutal as railroading, but frequently far more effective.

Additionally, an event of this level will inevitably combine the attributes of each previous tier—from the presence of charismatic participants increasing the overall sublimation potential on smaller scales throughout the entirety of the event, to smaller scale settings teaching lessons with smaller heterotopic events within the larger ones, leading to the slightly larger versions that serve to tie these into further combinations—leading to the collective and yet separate events in which participants create their own meanings, and their own storylines in conjunction with everybody else. It is the most powerful class of heterotopia that I have knowledge of, but that still does not mean that it is perfect.

In order to get closer to that particular dream—unattainable as it is—events must create something more than solely a fun and seductive time/space. Rather than forcing the order of common society upon the museum space, such an approach should allow—nay, struggle—for the birth of new culture. Emerging out of what Foucault refers to as, “an insurrection of subjugated knowledges,” which is what is revealed when criticism is leveled upon societal systems (1980:81). In other words, the major weakness of this particular example is that it did not really bring something new to either fantasy or society—apart from one single fun night. This was largely because of the heavily powerful heterotopia of deviation that persisted throughout the entire event—all five hours. This emerged out of an open invitation to those above 21 years of age, and a focus upon a topic that many people love—fantasy. A fantastical culture was created out of Western legend and lore that attracted a wide range of individuals with connections to individual loves in the genre—partially showing itself through the wide range of costumes. However, the focus here specifically, is that of the Western inherent themes. After all, due to societal mentality, the very words of myth and magic in America bring to mind King

Arthur and Merlin, or Titania—not Journey to the West, Eight Immortals, Kaveh the Blacksmith, or Sita. In addition to this the focus on the entire evening was fun, without any philosophical or moral discussions concerning fantasy, and the problems that exist in modern portrayals of race, poverty, and sexism. This is something that could have easily been added in as a part of a quest, or narrative event during the male-only duels conducted by the Knights of Veritas.

It was most likely largely a part of this that there were next to no people of color, or different racial backgrounds. That is not to say that it was this event’s fault, solely, but it is because of events such as this, with no focus at all upon other cultures—outside of Western stereotypical fantasy races such as dwarves, elves, and Shakespearian faeries—happening over and over again, that popular culture-based events have become so centered in Western Mythoi (see Figure 11).



Figure 11, Western crowd (Photo courtesy of Brady Harvey)

Corvus had this to tell me, concerning her approach to fantasy and the roleplaying that goes along with it: “When you play D&D, and you are building a character, you’re building a class, you’re building... I am building a human mage, and then in my head I can put on... I can add whatever skin tone, or background culture that is suitable to that character, but there is nothing that says this mage has to be white, or this mage has to have brown hair”. While people may not separate themselves from their own ethnicity that frequently, the truth remains that there are infinite possibilities available for participants. Now this is something that immediately left its impact upon me—because this could go either of two ways. The first, as previously discussed, is that of cultural appropriation. However, the second is that there are many character and culture archetypes in popular culture that are easily used by anybody—that can also be used in a powerful and positive manner. This inherently allows, and even welcomes, many young adults with different backgrounds especially, since they can play with their character concept, and choose freely what direction they wish to go with it. It also frees them from social discomfort in many ways, as they can play as somebody else—in a manner of speaking—rather than revealing themselves, although they still do show through their inner truths by doing so. Indeed, I believe that this is what has so strongly drawn them to fantasy video games—and others where they can customize their personal avatars.

The beauty of a heterotopia of deviation is that it is all-inviting—as long as you have access to the rituals of entrance. However, when only 66.2 percent of your city’s population is white, and at your event you have maybe three or four people who are not white, and only one or two people who have come as a character from a non-Western mythos, then there is evidence of an overproduced or supported ideology, or hegemony. Additionally, this event cost money to enter—from \$22 in admission fees, to unknown costume costs (with some presumably very

intricate, and expensive, and handcrafted examples), to transport, to refreshments, and more (EMP 2015:Myth & Magic Faire: Masquerade Ball). In addition to this, if somebody wanted to attend the Wizard's Feast, then it would cost them \$125, since that portion of the night was only available if one bought the all-access Wizard Pass—although this would gain you access to all Myth & Magic Faire events (EMP 2015:Myth & Magic Faire: Wizard's Feast). This probably severely limited the possible college student attendees, let alone many minorities who might not live in Seattle Center—who even if they have a costume from a background in cosplay would still usually be more strapped for cash than their older counterparts. From the get-go, the represented franchises and those present within the gift shop during open hours also fed into this implied need for money to enter, as participants would most likely come across these examples as they went through the museum normally. In other words, when they thought of the EMP, and fantasy, they would think of the franchises and commodification of the presented worlds, leading to more anxiety over costume quality and costs.

As far as age is concerned, the spread was relatively broad—with attendants ages 21 or above—and a valid ID being required for entry. There were many young adults, but there were still fewer than I initially expected for a fantasy event; and I credit this to it not containing any space for a heterotopia of crisis, which would have created a more powerful space for young adults and given them a space from which to enjoy the company of those closer in age than many of the older participants—who in my experience rather took over the space. The addition of drink, and the stronger break in time experienced by these older generations, had them in a far stronger release of tension, and thus they dominated the event—although I don't mean that there were large number of geriatrics on the dance floor. They were primarily mid 30's to 40's I'd

say—using this time to break away from children, jobs, and the continual stress of everyday life that becomes more and more pressing over the years.

Now, while this is important in any museum, it is especially so at a museum such as the EMP, where many of their visitors are tourists—and not as heavily local as one would initially expect. This is due to issues such as cost, free time, and other common problems that many museums face—but it is one more reason that events are so useful. If you would like to create special times for your local populations to come in and see your exhibits, and what else you can offer, creating times that fit into their schedules and interests will do wonders for both building a loyalty base as well as increasing the overall relevance of your offerings—both by working and learning about your audience, on the floor, as well as spreading word about what you have to offer, even if it is a while until they come back again. Another way that this is done, that I experienced at the EMP, is to create days where there are discounts up to completely free entry, for locals.

While events—such as Myth and Magic Faire, and the Jurassic Lounge at the Australian Museum—can bring in hundreds of local visitors, they still do not guarantee further visits from them. Nor do they serve to cure the soul-sickness that society faces outside of the liminal space of the event—because it does not go far enough with the separation, and therefore does not lead to as complete a sense of invigoration afterwards. The complete temporal and spatial alteration of the museum space into a medieval-based world does—and it allows the participants to return to the culturally nostalgic state of that time period. This heterotopia shifted constantly over the course of the evening, with different focuses being put on different activities and a steady whirl of changing positions and stories. I remained in the same space with the same role, but that meant that I was able to more clearly spectate the nature of the floor. I saw dance partners

change hands, groups of people moving in concert towards singular goals, those same groups splitting up as they went to separate activities, and the master of ceremonies dictating the night as it wore on. It was amazing, and yet, also felt a little too chaotic at points—with growing levels of drunkenness and strange visions in stranger costumes careening past at regular intervals.

However, this constant flow of change also served to keep several differing sites in constant competition—and yet symbiotic coexistence at the same time. For example, the questors would walk amongst those who were dancing, and the cosplayers and performers would continue to drag participants down into the depth of the heterotopia, or keep them down if danger of escape occurred—usually by them finding people who appeared to not be enjoying themselves, and going over to include the visitor in the cosplayer’s activities for a while, whether it be a quest, a picture, or a helping hand (see Figure 12 below). In addition to this, the fact that we quest givers remained still served as anchors to keep back absolute anarchy, and also linked most of the other sites so that they did not drift completely apart at any point. I can’t speak for the others, but I even collected a few participants who remained close by all night and spoke with me about fantasy and the event in general—whilst staying in character.



Figure 12, A helping hand (Photo courtesy of Brady Harvey)

As for the break in the traditional timeline of all participants—there was no traditional time to be seen until the master of ceremonies called it all to an end. People remained in character throughout the entire night and lived that time in a fantasy world with no connection to our own ordinary lives. As I mentioned previously, a part of the ranking of heterotopias comes from the distance between the profane and the sacred. By utilizing the discontinuity of entering a sacred space and turning participants into an aspect of the sacred as well—a lesser aspect certainly, though still an aspect—then through the use of fantasy this is increased even more, as you break completely with your everyday self. Unlike the Viking Days event, which also had elements of the medieval, as I discussed, this is able to take it a step further—leading to a truly absolute break in time in many ways—since participants are lifted from this world and transferred to one that has never, and will never, exist outside of our own imaginations and the

ensuing heterotopic narratives. One of the main reasons that this event of linked heterotopias is actually possible is because of how strong the break in participants' traditional time is. By selecting Myth and Magic, even when bound in the Western mindset, the planners really meant to evoke—or at least insinuate similarities to—fantastical interpretations of the medieval. This is so effective because a feature of modernity is to engage in nostalgic reconstructions of the past—studying it, discussing it, worshipping it, and romanticizing it. This lends immense power to the unconscious discontinuity that is inherent when bringing fantastical worlds and creations into that of the actual world—fantasy is a staggering inversion of normalcy, and that is its main point. To not be of this world. This is in large part because of an increase in nihilism, and forlorn hope, which is directly connected to humanity's everyday existence—particularly within the setting of any urban environment—in this particular case, Seattle.

The system that separated the participants from the Other was still along the lines of a registration fee and process. More people were allowed into this event, but Facebook and other social media sites most definitely served as the main way in which visitors were differentiated from those who did not make it in for whatever reason. In fact, this really served as the only way—because of the power that holding an event at night conveys. The event becomes mysterious all of a sudden—and privileged for those who can make it in. After all, they can go into the museum when nobody else is even allowed and they can eat and drink in it, and wander the exhibits in extraordinary costumes while staying up later than ordinary as they forget about work and the outside world and let their inner self out upon the museum. So, more often than not they brag about this hidden event. Regardless of whether it be to friends, or on social media sites to friends—either way, the word will spread, and those who come will submerge completely into the heterotopia where only the select are allowed.

However, this will all be over in the morning—the carriage will turn back into a pumpkin, and the wildfolk, the beastmen, the faeries, and all the other kith and kin of fantasy will revert back to businessmen, baristas, and other urban dwellers working as cogs in the machine that is the city. And the museum will change along with them, losing the audacious edge that the special space/time gave them for the duration of the event, and reopening all the exhibits that were closed, as well as the one that was open—and the ordinary visitors will flood on into that space, marking the profane clearly again as the ordinary rules take place after their night of relaxation. Of course, in this case this process doesn't happen abruptly—first the Day Faire is held, which is half way between an event and an ordinary day, as new stalls are opened outside as mini events and extremely temporary exhibits in many a way. Then, the day after that, which is a Monday, normal museum functions take place again.

Overall—when considering all three days—it is clear that this event was for adults. They could come the first night's showing of *Legend* to relive the nostalgic past of their childhood, come to the second night and completely cut loose through the powerful heterotopia created through fantastical retellings and recreations of myth and lore, and finally on the third day come back with their children and families to use their nostalgic heterotopias—to spread their interest, and submerge their heirs alongside themselves. However, each particular event had its own heterotopia and its own goals, which were planned to fit together but wouldn't necessarily be for everybody—or anybody who could, or would, go to any specific event. So, if forced, I would say that the entire process was extremely powerful, but I would also say that parts of it were much more so than others.

In the age of hyper-rationalization, everybody feels the need for the simpler, more elegant, times of yesteryear—in this case, the white majority and their views of the medieval

period. A time of good, and a time of evil. A time during which dichotomies stood clear and chivalry ruled supreme—while vagaries disappeared into the mists of time. In short, the medieval was viewed as a time where sacred and profane, and the sublime and grotesque, were always constant—and constantly present. All the more-so, so that the unreachable could be seen, and while not touched, approached—whether it be through pilgrimage, flagellation, or myths and magic. This is even clearer when looking at fantastical worlds, as the EMP’s aptly named Myth and Magic Faire does.

Museums must increase the social enjoyment of the participants, not solely transport them into the setting completely—and this is precisely the point of the Masquerade Ball. The Masquerade Ball was an unforgettable experience, with visitors being able to walk around a usually forbidden space, with all sorts of exhibits and normally hidden areas open and revealed to be seen by the naked eye. However, the artifacts were obviously still not to be touched, the exhibits apart from the fantasy one were all closed off as per normal, and there were many rules and regulations put in place specifically for the sake of the event—making it safe, and possible to hold the event at all—of course, but still present.

While this was the case, any event that any museum will ever hold will have very similar constraints. I particularly like the EMP’s Myth & Magic Faire, because it takes it a step further, by introducing magical elements which have traditionally been very colorful. It also makes use of its theme and genre extremely well. The sheer scale in addition to the vibrant themes and colors of fantasy help to address the soul-sickness that Learns wrote about, and serve to somewhat alleviate modernity’s constant nihilistic ennui that sets in on so many people—this is why many people are interested in fantasy and science fiction, in all of their mediums—especially when brought into conflict with social norms, inside an institution that is built upon society’s strictest

traditions and laws. To get around some of these constraints a museum can open their space/time to an environment that propagates an extremely open space for play.

Huizinga declared that play and contest serve as functions of civilization, as well as culture itself (1949:46). He additionally states that they not only enhance life, but also—in ways not otherwise possible—express those aspects that are closest to the heart of the culture in question. Play, he stresses, is usually completely serious and must be treated as such, by contrast to comics and laughter which are not serious, even if they are frequently mistaken for play (Huizinga 1949:6). A study of LARPing lies very close to this notion, since an event of this type usually consists of creating a new culture that differs from the culture that the players emerge from, and so contains radical and purposeful differences—even as the existing culture can be seen in the in-game gaps.

I believe that this also applies on a more personal level, where it can be seen in people's facades—otherwise sometimes known as their masques. While people may take up and toss aside differing personalities, and they may be seemingly false, they oftentimes consist of the most real aspects of the wearer—their innermost subconscious, truths, and states of being. In other words, the participants, their society, and the spaces that they play in—physical and mental—are all a part of the heterotopia. Additionally, it is the revelation of these truths that leads to true abandon as participants begin to feel unburdened and utterly alive. To place this within Boal's framework, the spectators have usurped the floor and now guide the characters of the non-visitors, and have thus become spect-actors within the stage provided—choosing their own paths, as well as those surrounding them (Boal 1974:xxi).

And this is what happened in the Myth and Magic Faire's Masquerade ball—especially so when looking at the questing period. In fact, it was terrifyingly clear that the existing,

underlying, culture was still overwhelmingly present. Rather than a wide range of cultures being shown there were really only around three—all of which were Western. You had Shakespearean faeries, European vampires and nobility, and the standard Western fantastical characters such as hobbits, deities, and beasts. In other words, the past tendencies of museums to cater to themes representative of the dominant culture that we live within also oppresses everybody involved—including the dominant culture—by limiting options unconsciously and causing mainstream culture to continue in its generation of mainstream fantasy. Not only does this play into stereotypes—it also weakens the possible relevancy of your event to more populations—who don't even appear, due to a history of this.

Up until this point, I've spoken primarily centered on "West" themed events. Even though the events I've talked about utilize past Western cultures, we live in an area of the world that keeps the diversity of our population at the forefront of our lives. While none of the events that I have discussed really tapped into the power of sorrow, or social movement, or really had problems with cultural appropriation, every single one of them failed spectacularly when looked at through the lens of racial relevancy, and/or inclusivity. This was especially the case when looking at the demographics of each host town, or city. One possible example of a way to address a more varied culture through use of advertising, would be, rather than using a Myth and Magic Faire with a unicorn as your advertising, you could use a different creature or symbolism—from another culture.

Why aren't events, even those most powerful examples such as the Myth & Magic Faire, connecting with minority groups—lack of relevancy. Where are the non-Western characters? Where are the Geds, the Sulaweyos, the Shoris, and the Ahmads? Where are the Krishnas, Anansis, and Amaterasus? Where are the Journey to the Wests? Where are the changing

approaches to traditional Western—traditional American—events, to mirror the changing nature of the nation?

CHAPTER IX: DIFFICULTY IN RELEVANCY CREATION AND MAINTENANCE

Of course, it isn't all as simple as a museum realizing that they are not relevant and subsequently changing major aspects about themselves—although this is definitely a key component. There are many considerations that museums must face concerning this problem. Several types of complicating properties include host city, the demographics of said city, the location of the museum, the mission of the museum, and the size of the museum. Any one of these can turn out to be a problem, and it may not always be the most clear until a situation occurs that forces it out into the open. Several of the best museums that I have ever been to have had about zero relevancy, because of their distance from any large populations—although they have tended to still draw in crowds through powerful events as well as potent collections, sites, or publicity. On the other hand, several of the worst museums that I have seen have been able to draw in crowds, even with their lackluster exhibits—due to being famous, a national symbol, or simply being in the right place.

I first began to critically think upon such problems faced and propagated in museums during a visit to my motherland, Denmark, during which I visited two museums with different scale, different missions, and different audiences, to name but a few of the myriad differences. Most telling, however, were their differing approaches to visitors as well as my own interest level in the methods that they attempted in order to seduce me into their respective narratives. The first of these separate examples of cultural, “free choice,” learning institutions was the Ladby Viking Museum in Kerteminde, DK, and the second was the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, DK. One a tiny countryside museum with its only claim to fame being a Viking burial ship over a thousand years old, the other a national museum with too many

rooms for me to see, with artifacts and exhibits featuring everything from ancient rune stones to the exhibit *Cosplayer! Manga Youth*.

Before continuing further, I would like to state that I was equally excited about each of these museums before actually visiting them. I had stakes in each one from the get-go, and had very clear goals of what I wanted to see when I went to both. Vikings have always been an exciting, and mysterious, historical group to me—with a possible connection to my ancestors. On the other hand, the National Museum of Denmark had its own Viking artifacts—even though they didn't focus upon them—but they also had an exhibit that was very close to my own interests, and excitement, in *Cosplayer! Manga Youth*.

However, upon my departure from each, I had completely different reactions. Even with the vast disparity in manpower, fiscal support, artifact variety, and sheer size, the museum that I felt the most excited about—after departing from its premises—was the smaller, countryside, Viking museum. This was a museum with very limited resources with the overwhelming exception of local volunteers. However, they used these resources to draw me in and take me on an adventure through ancient Denmark. They carried this out in a variety of different ways, from having a rune/knowledge game present in every room, to introducing popular culture characters through their ancient lenses—such as Thor, who they showed via the Marvel character, as well as a collection of Mjolnir necklaces—to having a mockup of the burial ship, complete with chainmail to try on, and spears to try out, and reproductions of what the bodies might have looked like right before burial, while in the same spaces as the actual remains were in, in the ship. Finally, on top of all of this they had something that truly completed any visit there.

The volunteers that I mentioned above were what truly made this experience so memorable, although the exhibits themselves were all set up in a way that invited interaction and

created narratives. The day that I visited, they had a sewing circle of five women who were creating a recreation of a tapestry telling the tale of the Viking chief who was buried in the nearby funerary hill. They were sewing in a room that had some more information about the actual tapestry, but they were also able to sit and talk to us about the techniques that they were using—as well as the story that their piece of art was telling frame by frame.

However, even though the weavers were skilled and knowledgeable, the most exciting and eye-catching area was an actual ship that was being created by a group of “grumpy old men”—so called to build up something of mythos around themselves. They had done everything concerning the building of this ship, in the traditional method, including the forging of the nails that would be used to keep it together—and they would sail it down the nearby river upon its completion (see Figure 13 below). Even that was not the most powerful thing about the museum. The most seductive aspect was that it all tied together, and tied together extremely well—they had created a narrative, and they had made it impossible to enter without becoming a part of it.



Figure 13, Viking ship, in progress

To most effectively explain this, I shall discuss the game that they had created. The game was pretty simplistic at its heart—but not limited to only children. Each room of the museum had, as most museums do, a sub-theme that fit into the overall theme that the museum was

portraying. For example, they had one room that was about the geography of the region and why that might appeal to Viking chiefs, and next to that they had the room with Thor and Mjolnir, which spoke of religion, and next to that the tapestry room, and so on and so forth. In addition to their artifacts and panels, they had wooden trunk segments with different shaped nails within them, alongside sheets of runes and a wooden mallet. The runes spelled out questions that visitors would answer by pounding the mallet onto the correct square on a sheet that the front desk handed out, leaving a distinct mark into that square, and which could only be answered by finding clues among the written text or the rooms' physical objects. Finally, after you had visited every room and had filled out the sheet, you could take it to the shipyard, and there they would give away metal scraps from the ship building. In other words, participants would go from room to room, both reading the text and learning from it, and then they would learn rudimentary runes, and finish the whole experience off by seeing history in re-action, where they would also be able to take home an artifact of their own to remind them of their experience.

In addition to it not being at all high cost, visitors were brought into the world of the museum, and obtained a trophy to bring home and remember their experience through, whenever they looked at it—all without actually taking the Viking burial ship into account. When that is added in, you add in a physical experience where you enter the darkness of a barely lit burial mound, in which you can smell the presence of the earth, feel the chill of death upon your skin, and view remains of horse, livestock, and men ingrained in the very wooden vessel that they were interred within. To say it mildly, this is something that I shall remember for many years to come—and until the day that I die, since I can look at my own forge scrap that I obtained from finishing the quest that I undertook.

Taking all of this into consideration, it is probably rather easy to see how it would be hard to live up to such an interesting example. The National Museum was very disappointing, even though they did have the possibility to be truly potent. And the heart of that problem was the exhibit *Cosplayer! Manga Youth*. This exhibit brought back memories from my years prior to beginning the path of a museum scholar, when I dreaded entering these temples to boredom and sore feet. Even though they claim, on their website that, “The exhibition *Cosplayer! Manga Youth* tells how Japanese popular culture is created, shaped and recreated across physical and visual boundaries between Japan and Denmark,” they did nothing of the sort (Nationalmuseet 2015).

What they did do was place several banners around a single room, with brief asides concerning three Danish, and three Japanese, cosplayers who the museum claimed online, “transcend[ed] the borders between industry and consumer, media and human, Japanese and Danish,” without any context alongside the actual text in the museum (Nationalmuseet 2015). Then they had what the museum was clearly the most excited about: Denmark’s only purikura machine—a photo booth that allows for some preset Photoshop filters, and changes, to be applied—with assorted younger children’s costumes to the side for wearing within the booth. Finally, there was a second room with a depressingly small selection of manga and several videogame consoles. Rather than creating a narrative, they created a dissonance that clashed with the story that could sometimes be barely glimpsed—that of barriers being broken and defined. A story, incidentally, that I wouldn’t have gathered without having seen an online interview with curator Martin Petersen, a senior researcher and curator at the National Museum, with a focus on Modern History and World Cultures (Nationalmuseet 2015). While in this online interview, the curator of *Cosplayer!* seems to be very well informed about the culture of

that very topic, and while he is by no means degrading the subject matter the exhibit fails to show that, instead making tenuous connections between Denmark and Japan... because some people dress similarly—at least that's what was portrayed.

The examples of the two Danish museums are extremely pertinent to this thesis. One is a historical museum with very historically themed exhibits that weaves a masterful narrative that a visitor can't help but fall into. It also draws in participants and interested parties through their shipbuilding and sailing, and then once they get people inside they hit them with powerful exhibits as well as popular culture addition. The other is a national museum that has brought in an exhibit that was born in the popular culture world of anime—and is at its heart supposed to be all about interaction and experiential events, and yet doesn't create a proper interactive experience at all. This is because the Ladby Viking Museum has created a relevancy that can seduce visitors into its heart, while the larger museum has a name that can force people through its doors—with school groups across Denmark, tourists, and all other people connected to Denmark, inherently interested by its size and title as a national institution. While I won't say that that is a bad thing—a visitor is a visitor after all—if the Nationalmuseet took a lesson from the Viking museum, then they would be able to expand their visitor base exponentially—as well as simply have a more entertaining place to visit.

These aren't the only relevancy issues facing museums the world round, and one of the other major ones is directly related to some of the dangers that go along with hosting a museum event. The sublimity of a museum event done right—with breaks in time, and full on heterotopic drag—creates an excellent source of discombobulation, as I've discussed for the entirety of this paper. However, this is just what worries so many museum staff members as well—since this ecstatic unconscious tension can even be what leads to damaged exhibits and artifacts during

events as limits are cast aside to fuel the event's heterotopia even further. After all, no matter the distance between museum event space/time and the normal plane, there are still limits to what visitors can and will do—in other words they will rein themselves in, and/or be reined in by staff members. The fact that they will be able to use what is ordinarily a forbidden time where they are unwelcome within the museum—and use their presence within that space, in that forbidden time—will be enough to cause them to be even more careful concerning the artifacts and cases, as shown in the Jurassic Lounge (Shrapnel 2012:17). This is yet another positive aspect of museum heterotopic events—the more fun somebody is having, the more they desire to retain that feeling and attain it again at a later point.

CHAPTER X: CONCLUSION

HETEROTOPIA FOUND

As the years have marched on the museum world has not been in lockstep, and they have fallen behind the times—which is something that they are now struggling to catch up with. Young adults can feel this, so-called “minorities” can feel this, and museum professionals can feel this—and have begun to do their utmost to turn things around. That said, nobody really has a good handle on what exactly to do, or how to do it effectively. Museum events are one very powerful method in our arsenal that could be used to work wonders as far as many museums are concerned. However, I also know that it is not enough to simply rely upon one-time events or even annual events, or even monthly events for that matter. In order to make museums truly interactive truly relevant again, we must also make them truly heterotopic—and not only the events, but the exhibits as well.

Canis mentioned to me that the Nordic Heritage Museum does something somewhat closer to what I just proposed above, but it’s only set up at certain times and is not truly all that strong, as could be hoped. The museum works with the group Living Voices, who put on living history performances alongside certain exhibits that they have up at certain times—including some plays created specifically for the museum. She told me that, “Rather than talking to kids for an hour, we want to make them more invested in us, so they come back”—kids will come back to the museum, bringing family and friends along with them. This both increases attendance, as well as community relevance levels.

Although the individual events are truly powerful, and have the possibility to be far more flexible—yet remain manageable on more a frequent basis—to truly create a powerful exhibit I would recommend making any exhibit, not a static site, but a constantly evolving, heterotopic,

permanent event. That's right. I would create events that never end, for as long as the exhibit is open. The EMP exhibit, *Star Trek: Exploring New Worlds*, which I worked on as a curatorial intern—researching socio-cultural and technological impacts of Star Trek in the modern world—does quite a good job at this, but it is also not perfect. Positively, the exhibit does draw visitors in and places them into many of the settings that Star Trek has to offer. You can walk around what appears to be a set piece of the Star Ship Enterprise, pad underneath crags that the Gorn probably just scaled, put yourself into a Borg assimilator, and there are Tribbles hidden everywhere. In addition to this, if you approach the second floor/walkway, then you can sit and watch various powerful people talk about how Star Trek influenced them, listen to people talk about moments they had with family, or look at popular culture appearances and connections in the world today—all because of Star Trek in some way or manner.

However, even with all of this and with all the touch screens and information, it is still an exhibit that doesn't become truly interactive. Even with a room where you can insert yourself into a scene that could have been taken straight from an engineering room, or the Khan shouting booth (from which the signature yell of Kirk echoes out of, in the voice of the visitors), you are still not transported out of the exhibit and into a fully immersive interactive experience. This is additionally reinforced due to far too many screens and untouchable exhibits—one of the first words that comes to mind is sterile, which is admittedly a common feature in museums (see Figure 14 below). I'd say that part of this problem specifically is due to the overall scope of the source material—since all of Star Trek, and many of its iterations are used. Although there is a main focus on the original show, this is still an immense topic, with an immense amount of information and artifacts.

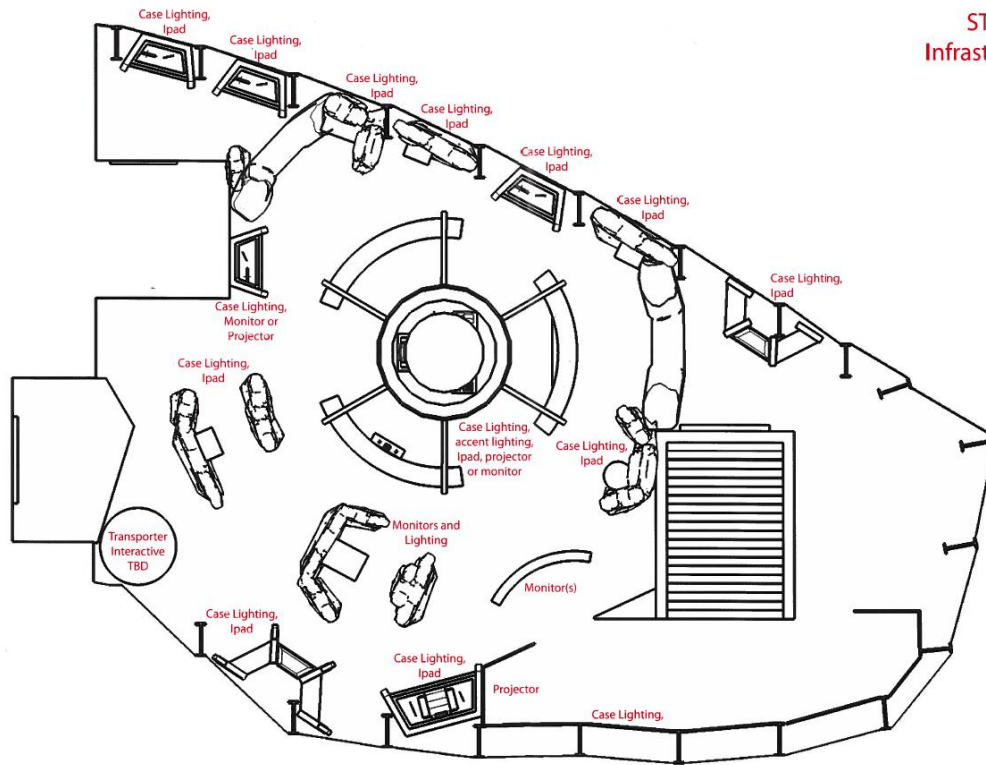


Figure 14, Star Trek technology plan

One thing that did surprise me pleasantly was the age and race representation both times that I went—the first being opening night and the second being an ordinary weekend day. The first night, of course, it was absolutely packed—but it was packed with around an even mix of young adults, and middle-aged fans. The latter group also would frequently have their families with young children, and spouses in tow—many of the former who were only really experienced with the JJ Abrams films, and were being educated by parents on what The Original Show (TOS) meant for them. I myself was there with one of my old college roommates, who is slightly younger than myself and an enormous Star Trek fan. By the end of the one exhibit he was already experiencing pretty serious museum fatigue, although this was partially due to the crowded room with all and sundry pressing in around us—and he did pick up a bit at the gift store.

As for the racial representation, the two non-white races that were most present were, by far, African American, as well as South East Asian—namely subcontinental Indian. From what few conversations I overheard, the former were there from several local colleges, and the latter were largely from new tech industries, or Amazon—although I only spoke with several groups, as I was with my own invited guests. Additionally, it should be noted that both these groups were predominantly young adults who had been introduced to Star Trek prior to moving to Seattle, or by friends who had been long-term fans. All this said, the white presence was quite overwhelming, ultimately—and this was even more-so when I visited on my own, on a normal day. Additionally, this second time the population was also older, though I won't really count this, due to my visiting on what would have been a school day.

I do honestly believe—although I am biased—that this exhibit is one of the better ones at drawing participants in, but it is still nowhere near being oceanic in heterotopic nature. This is an extremely tricky situation, for many reasons, including a need for more personal interactivity, size limitations with current artifacts, and less abundance of text—although people whom I saw were definitely reading it all. Regardless, these are all issues that would need to be addressed in some manner. To do so, I would have one main suggestion—allow for a sizeable space to be cleared of anything, and allow visitors to completely build mini sets in that space for them to look at, take pictures in, and show to following groups. Also, to make it a community building event and not a completely exclusive one—the heterotopia of deviation is already in place, due to tickets, and entrance costs—allow for anybody to work on it at once, with some volunteer to keep a semblance of control. However, this would still not be able to become one of the most powerful heterotopias—perhaps one or two degrees below.

Bruner's self-created narratives cause participants to feel a sense of empowerment, to take away any sense of being secure but also stifled in the museum, and also applies here—this should set in movement a growth, and a cultural development of the individual. If a museum goes out of its way to create a certain flow for moving through it, this again, may be reassuring to some, but also not fully empowering as it forces a very specific narrative onto the participants. This limitation might be alleviated through the use of Bruner's concept of the seductive narrative, which instigates suspicion or curiosity, and thus draws the listener in (1991:11). It is powerful and engaging when this happens, drawing audiences in with a seductive narrative, and then presenting them with opportunities to become creative participants in the museum narrative. (1991:10).

In addition to the EMP's *Can't Look Away*, and the Holocaust Museum's permanent exhibit—both of which I've personally experienced—I have also seen case studies that discuss this. One that is similar to the Holocaust Museum is the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, South Africa—and although I have not been myself, I have heard and read about it. This museum, through architectural strategies and assigned roles, has created separate experiences for its visitors; one for whites under apartheid, and the other for non-whites—each of which leads to a separate path through the exhibits (Rankin and Schmidt 2009:86). This, again, gives no real choice as far as pathing is concerned, but it does convey the messages that it was designed and meant to send. Additionally, it is able to effectively portray one of the most powerful and traumatic events of current history.

A more lighthearted immersive experience was created by staff in the Museum of Thessaloniki, where visitors would take on the persona of visitors to 6th century Thessaloniki (Nikonanou and Venieri 2014:71). This LARP consisted of a narrative—or adventure—pre-

created by the staff, who would assign a role and missing artifact to the participants. The players would then carry out the roles assigned to them in a quest for the missing artifacts, as they searched exhibits for clues. This also followed the model set by the Holocaust museum slightly, since visitors would be living out the lives set forth by those who came before, which gives a stronger sense of authenticity.

However, these three types of narrative set-ups will never be able to get past a certain level, since they are all forcibly created—and this is what spawned the conversation between Serrell and Simon. In other words, the participants don't even have a semblance of control over what they are able to experience within the exhibits—it's all managed for them in a way that is quite uncomfortable, which is beneficial due to the content matter but not as heterotopically powerful as it could be. One way to do this would be to make use of something that surprises visitors. Rather than have something that railroads them through, make it a confusing exhibit to go through, with guides, and maps available, in case you wish a more normal journey through. In other words, you can't just make visitors uncomfortable—to make it even more powerful, have them make the choices and see as they go deeper into the terror of the exhibited material. Or, if they make it to the happier moments, then they will realize the horrors that they evaded.

These types of exhibits are actually what inspired the blog conversation between Beverly Serrell, and Nina Simon, that I brought up in my discussion of what a heterotopic event is. Although she doesn't approach it as Boal does—from a theater standpoint—Nina Simon also approaches her theory from the perspective of the audience. However, she doesn't look at her particular audience as a part of the exhibit, so explicitly—instead looking at how they can be brought in from the very beginning, for building up the exhibition space. Rather than spect-actors, they are more of a mix between visitor and technical assistant—changing sets in-between

exhibits. This is predominantly based around the new museum accomplices being able to create meaning for themselves from the very originating point (Simon 2010:34). While I feel that there are definitely similarities between the two different approaches to audiences, I feel that the museum should really be approached with a stronger resemblance to the theatrical standpoint—still with a noticeable presence in the creation of the exhibit, but not quite to the point where they are helping to build an exhibit that will be going up soon but still completely ruled over by the museum once instated.

This use of surprise is one that can be immensely powerful, but it doesn't need to stem only from exhibition content. A particular exhibit idea that I have been considering for several years now, is one that is only nominally designed by the host museum itself. Rather than this standard exhibit type, I would create a space—much as with my suggestion with Star Trek above—that is created and maintained by visitors themselves. The museums' main task in this situation would be providing tools for this creation—for example, they could provide costumes, various items, wall-based Legos, and/or magnetic walls with accompanying letters. Or, visitors themselves could bring things in that they would want to build an exhibit around.

In other words, the community itself would build the exhibit—and if a photo system were included, then I posit that it would spread across the region like wildfire. Keep several volunteers, or a camera, in the room and order could be maintained, there would be less worry about thefts, and people could create their own events around the exhibit—or even better, the museum staff could create events that made use of the exhibition space formed by the visitors' minds and hands. Of course, communities can also be rather volatile, and clash with each other in many cases—though this contains many varying degrees of severity, and does sometime end on a very positive note. Nina Simon gives one example of such a conflict taken from Guest

Experience Manager Michelle Evans in which a black woman and a white male reached a verbal and cultural, impasse—that ended with an even more powerful discussion of the exhibit, that resulted in everybody heading out for dinner together. Simon states that for more volatile exhibits and experiences, “You have to balance the intensity of the planned experience with the social dynamics of strangers working in groups” (Simon 2010:155). In order to do this, it is necessary to draw everybody into the heterotopia, where they enjoy it in unison—and keep the narrative moving along.

The Nordic Heritage Museum is a rather special case itself, with extremely interesting ways of drawing people in during their everyday exhibits—although they do not generally have volatile issues on exhibition. For example, in one section of the museum they have a cobblestone street that was imported from Copenhagen itself, with a manufactured backdrop of that very city surrounding it. As somebody who has walked similar streets in Denmark, I have to admit that it was very powerful, and I felt as if someone had transported me to Europe for at least several steps. Of course, the relevance of this experience was additionally augmented for me because of the other exhibits that I had seen concerning Denmark. I was able to see holiday ornaments and foods that I ordinarily only see during the celebrations of those very holidays in my own home. I was transported out of the museum almost altogether, and visited old memories of mine, as well as streets that I had walked upon previously while visiting my mother’s family. The long and short of it, however, is that an ongoing heterotopic event would be the most effective exhibit type—and if one were somehow able to make it oceanic, then it would be deeply powerful.

However, I have one more idea that I claim would strengthen any exhibit, before it is even held. Falk and Dierking speak specifically about the connection between free-choice

learning and museum space/time. They find that the most important time for true learning was actually after departure from the museum, when visitors complete their experience—incorporating the contexts of their lives outside the museum setting to what they learned within (2013:256). I wholeheartedly agree with this viewpoint, but I feel that many museums do not use it to its strongest effect. If a museum were able to create a traveling preview exhibit—that served as a popup exhibit in every one of the museum’s target areas, and collected feedback, data, and audience-created pieces at the event itself, then they would be able to do an extremely powerful amount of on the ground advertising, as well as relevancy building. If the participants saw that their feedback was being incorporated and that there was a community connection through the audience-created pieces, then they would be more interested in the actual museum exhibit itself, as well as the path that it took through their homes and city. This type of permanently transient preview exhibit would also be able to make a round during, or after, the museum-based exhibit is gone.

Falk, Dierking, and Adams also placed much importance on "learning societies," the newest evolution of society, which was based on the educational experience (Falk, Dierking, and Adams 2007:323, 327). However, if costs, time, and/or interest are lacking, then there is no way that a positive learning society would grow, connected to a museum. By holding the type of event-exhibits that I have just detailed, admission fees could be done away with—instead, have neighborhoods provide the set-up space and refreshments—times could be set for optimum exposure depending on area schedules, and interest could be gathered on the ground. The only complications really arise with needing curatorial staff, initial costs, and the necessity to work with local leaders. However, with one person leading the effort, several volunteers to help run it, and perhaps some local high school kids selected through honors programs, these could be

overcome relatively easily—and if the younger people are included then you have already begun building up a base of relevancy already, even more so if their input is seen to be taken seriously and considered thoughtfully. After all, this would initiate a community creation event, that could additionally lead into future focus groups and local advertising networks—especially if you could connect these traveling events to the exhibit, with prizes, free tickets, or other such benefits for the input effort. In other words, it’s about finding methods that are good regardless of participant provenance—for maintaining connections between museums and audiences, and for the sake of feedback, and adaption.

While doing my research, various institutions and people have asked the question of whether or not including all audiences is the most effective way of doing things—saying that the number of visitors is the only thing that matters, since this should help naturally spread overall relevancy. My response to this is, in the immortal words of H.G. Wells, “Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature’s inexorable imperative” (Wells 1945:19). This is a concept that all things, including museums, need to take to heart. When it comes down to it, the unavoidable truth of the modern museum is that audiences will lose interest and even more will drain away, if we become complacent or allow our relevancy to disappear. One very effective method to help fight against modern nihilism and despair, that causes weaknesses in museum interest bases, is through the use of powerful heterotopic spaces. However all events are not created equal, and there exists a need to develop a method of more plentiful puissant events. My first step in this matter has been to detail several types of events that I myself have experienced, and target their relative strengths and weaknesses. Now, I—and other museum professionals—must take this event further. We must hold more events and test even more boundaries until we find ways—

both new and inspired by old—to increase all audiences and shore up those that have weakened due to our misunderstandings or slackness.

Foucault once wrote, "In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates" (Foucault, 1967:9). Modern museums could be such vehicles of dreams and adventure—carrying visitors and spect-actors along with them atop heterotopia and immersive experience—but they have been disappearing from the public interest and support. Museums are the boat that by necessity must float upon dreams, and inspire adventure. We must not let these vessels of knowledge and potential run themselves aground, and if creating a new ocean for them to sail upon is what it will take to save them from irrelevancy, then make it so.

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