

National cultures and hybrid narration: Museums for the future

“In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself”¹.

Accepting as true the assertion that a city, with its works and its good museums, today finds itself in the middle of a theme involving the construction of a modern civic community², one intends to overturn the idea of museum as a place of consolidation, conservation and transmission of the identity of a dominant social group, as well as the traditional relationship between this institution and the civil society it represents³, in order to define new museological and ostensive strategies for the multiethnic and intercultural metropolis. With this purpose, changing the concept of *contact zone* formulated by M. L. Pratt⁴, one may reconsider the identity of the museum as a historical theme, tackled on the basis of new cultural productions and new relations. Consequently, if we consider them as "contact areas", their organizational structure understood as "collection" becomes a topical historical, political and moral relation: an exchange of power relations. In a manner that is in some aspects utopian, museums are being reconsidered as public venues for collaboration, shared control and complex translation; places of power turned into places of cultural integration⁵. It is clear that a vision of this kind appears, to some extent, utopian due to the history of museums and their relationship with national contexts, but the current hybridation of contemporary culture calls for a profound revision.

“[...] If *museum* provoked a response in this fashion it would be forced to abandon the disciplinary predications of an authorised ‘tradition’ [...]. Here the limits of its precise location would open the door on to the interrogations that arrive from elsewhere. *Museum* finds itself responding not only to the increasingly diasporic condition of the contemporary world, but would itself become increasingly diasporic [...]”⁶.

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¹ F. Fanon, *Blak skin, White mask*, London 1986, p. 229.

² Ref.: A. Emiliani, introduction, *Politiche dell’allestimento*, Bologna 1995)

³ Ref.: T. Bennett, op.cit.

⁴ Ref.: M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London & New York 1992.

⁵ J. Clifford, op.cit., pp. 86-90.

⁶ I. Chambers, *Tradition, transcription, translation and transit*, in “AREA” n. 51, July-August 2000, p. 4.