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**The World in the Garden: Ethnobotany in the Contemporary Horniman Museum
Garden, London.**

Abstract

This article traces the evolution of the Horniman Museum garden, London, from the nineteenth-century and focuses on its current design. The design (2007-present day) mimics the founder Frederick Horniman's approach to collecting and displaying, which is now described as ethnobotanical, but with an increased focus on unifying the museum collections and garden.

The Museum contains displays of ethnological, zoological and entomological specimens. Sections of the contemporary garden showcase world plants, which are part of the ethnological museum trail, leading visitors from the gallery into the garden, to witness nature and culture intertwined. Interpretation panels describe world cultures' relationships with botany. Through this process of display and interpretation, the museum produces ethnobotanical knowledge for its visitors. The mode of construction of knowledge in this didactic garden is two-fold. It is materialist and representational, while providing space for the visitor for a translation of ethnographic meanings.

I borrow James Clifford's "Ethnographic Allegory" (1986) to examine the ways in which this method of curating enables processes of translation and the role of the garden within this. While this curating approach attempts to mimic Horniman's vision, it produces a historicist vision of world cultures – objects from the past juxtaposed with plants growing in the garden and descriptions of contemporary lives. The garden as a living entity provides the allegorical process, the element of coevalness. This is distinct from Horniman's vision, which located plants and people within an evolutionary timeline. The didacticism of this contemporary museum garden, therefore, is crucial in producing the idea of coeval lives, a unique practice in an ethnological museum.

Introduction

This article is a study of The Horniman Museum garden, which, in recent years has been explicitly designed to intertwine the appreciation and knowledge of nature and culture. This development in curating is an attempt to revive revisit its nineteenth-century form, when the founder Frederick John Horniman and the curators of the museum propagated the pursuit of knowledge of the natural and artificial world as a unified whole. Located at Forest Hill in London, UK, the current site of the museum was Frederick Horniman's residence until 1901. He was a successful tea merchant, philanthropist and collector, and amassed a vast variety of objects during world travels. His collection, comprised of art, ethnological artefacts and specimens of natural history, was widely admired in Britain. A newspaper article described the collection as 'most interesting' with instructive labels and perfect illustrative specimens.¹ Noteworthy examples within the collections between 1888 and 1901 included artefacts from China, Egypt, India and Japan. From 'the work of man' to 'the work of nature',² the visitor would have encountered specimens of butterflies, moths, minerals, fossils and zoology. In 1890, according to contemporary trend, the collection, private residence and garden was made public, renamed Surrey House Museum and was freely accessible three days per week. The gardens were opened to the public in 1895 on the three days, as well as every day during the summer months. Horniman's munificence received much praise in newspapers, as did the museum's unique and popular collection. As the collections grew, plans to build a new custom-made museum building were developed in 1898. During these decades, the garden was used for fetes and celebrations, and was valued for its capacity to

enable physical and mental rejuvenation. A visitor to the museum and grounds described the experience and potential benefits of visiting the garden:

During the spring, summer and autumn, thousands of persons find enjoyment through the kindness of Mr Horniman in placing his beautiful grounds at the disposal of visitors. In the first place they can, if they choose, inspect the exhibits in the Museum, with which I have already dealt, and then, leaving that Institution behind, are at liberty to stroll in the grounds and thus add to their pleasure. Here, amidst pleasant surroundings, they can reflect upon the beauty and wonders enclosed within the walls of the Museum which is ever in sight; here they can sit protected from the burning rays of the sun and enjoy the refreshing breeze; here one can relieve the monotony of every day life and receive inestimable benefits both mentally and physically.³

While paternalistic in tone, these words and other reports, as well as the design of the garden underscore the latter's significance in the institution's history. The museum garden has, and continues to, allegorically bridge the changing meanings, epistemes and links between cultural and natural objects. Plants, animals and objects from the non-western world could be encountered in the museum's building, as well as outdoors in the garden. This article posits this designed landscape as a didactic and symbolic site, and as a space perpetually in the making, shaped by the arrangement of specimens and the facilitation of encounters with nature and culture. Its design is symbolic of the shifts in institutional histories: its management and museum curating practices. A close tracing of these transformations reveals societal values and the use of the museum garden to educate and entertain.

While museum collections and their exhibitions have been the focus of much scholarship in Design History, Museum Studies and Material Culture studies, the

museum garden and its role in museum ethnography has been largely ignored. Equally, the role of the museum garden as a site for ethnographic museum displays has been underexplored in Landscape Studies. David Harvey posits the value of landscape study, in particular, the heritage landscape, as a site where tactility and the embodied experience of space leads to performativity and practice, bringing the dimension of (auto)ethnography into the fold.⁴ The knowledge produced by the study of the design and use of the landscape certainly contributes to museum visitor studies. However, I argue, it also highlights the institutional agency and agendas at play. It demonstrates the function of the space adjunct to the museum interior, yet crucial in producing a setting for museum visitor experience and the study of the grammar of display.

Recent approaches to curating anthropological collections in relation to the garden at the Horniman Museum, indicate a unique development in ethnobotanical curating and more broadly, in museum ethnography. It also highlights the current museum trend of revisiting nineteenth-century practices of display – from cabinets of curiosities and object handling bays,⁵ mimicking historic exhibitions,⁶ to invoking nineteenth-century epistemological pursuits. In particular, there has been a revival of interest in the relationship between cultural and scientific objects. This article approaches the design of the Horniman Museum landscape and the interpretation of the plants as a form of ethnographic allegory, a concept borrowed from James Clifford. Ethnographic meanings, Clifford argues, are allegorical, presenting symbolic meanings beyond the observational account written by the ethnographer. Through curating, the museum constructs ethnographic narratives that produce allegorical

meanings, moving beyond the scientific or ethnobotanical. The didactic landscape, I argue, enables the production of ethnographic allegories.

The multidisciplinary museum and ethnobotanical curating

The enthusiasm towards collecting objects of nature and culture has been traced to the Middle Ages and the early Modern period. It was part of court culture and practice of a conspicuous display of connoisseurship and academic prowess pursued by the bourgeoisie. The Ashmolean in Oxford was the first public museum (opened in 1683) in Britain with a significant collection of 'natural' curiosities, gifted by gardeners John Tradescant and his son to Elias Ashmole, the founder of the museum, in 1682.⁷ Gardener to the Earl of Salisbury, the Tradescants had travelled extensively as a result of their networks of patronage and collected plant specimens for the Earl's gardens. They also acquired botanical, geological, zoological and man-made specimens, including a stuffed body of the last dodo. The collection was incorporated with the existing objects in the University of Oxford's collections and remained there until 1860,⁸ when it was moved to a separate building, which was named and is still called the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Early natural history specimens were collected as curiosities and displayed as such.

During the late-1800s, a Darwinian evolutionary approach was undertaken for the study of natural and man-made artefacts in relation to human civilization. Museums such as the Manchester Museum, British Museum, and the Horniman Museum, focused their displays on geographical regions, tracing the progression of man, from

prehistoric, historic and contemporary 'savage' cultures' employing fossil bone fragments, material culture, botanical and zoological specimens.⁹ One of the key purposes of collecting examples of plants, seeds and bulbs in the western world was economic. Under colonial aegis, plants were regarded as useful resources: as materials to produce commodities, for food and for medicines. In the late-nineteenth century, ethnobotanical collections displayed in museums showcased artefacts demonstrating indigenous uses of plants in colonies. These displays had dual functions: to present colonial raw materials and colonial labour in order to fuel "demands of industrialised economies".¹⁰ Interpretation accompanying displays in the Museum of Economic Botany at Kew in London in the late-nineteenth century indicated the geographical origins of an article and explained properties of the plants used to produce it. These were aimed at arming the scientific botanist, merchant, manufacturer, physician, chemist, druggist, dyer, carpenter, cabinet-maker and other artisans with knowledge of these. 'Vegetable Products' were chosen for their qualities – on the basis that they were useful or curious – but, crucially, they exhibited characteristics that neither the living plants, nor the specimens in the herbarium could. They visually represented and showed the processes of production: from raw material to the finished product. The ethnobotanical collection at Kew, therefore, added to the array of bio-cultural specimens and functioned within the schema of economic botany.¹¹

The history of natural history displays at Manchester Museum is complex, reflecting wider trends in the museum sector, within scientific discourse, the politics of empire and individual connoisseurship (the Curators and Keepers). From being a

multidisciplinary museum, where mineralogy, zoology, botany and cultural displays coexisted within a Darwinian evolutionary timeframe, the divergence of nature and culture commenced in the Post-War years and became more pronounced by the late 1960s in Britain. The trend was widespread. Museums across Britain were no longer regarded as scientific institutions by the British Government Treasury office and universities replaced this mantle.¹² This affected national museum policy and funding, and shifted the institutional focus on anthropological collections.

While the garden continued to be used as a site for leisure, and the zoological collections held an important place in the Horniman collections, anthropology exhibitions and lecture series dominated the institutional programme from the 1950s. Interest in ethnobotany, which saw resurgence in 1998, had prevailed during the years of high imperialism. This was evident in the museum displays and lecture schedule. For instance, 'The Evolution of Simple Societies' lecture schedule in the Spring Term of 1910 lists four lectures delivered between 9 April and 7 May: 'Tropical Gardeners; Collectors and Cultivators of Rice'; 'Cultivators of Corn'; 'Transition from Herders to Tillers' and 'The Expression of Primitive Occupations in Religion'.¹³ Evident in this series, delivered by the well-known social anthropologist Dr. A.C. Haddon, is his anthropological approach: the study of humans in the context of their relationship to nature. Evolutionary progression was employed as a framework for the study of 'Simple Societies' and as the organizing principle for display. For example, the 1911 Annual Report records the intention to rename the collection of musical instruments.¹⁴ Previously titled 'plucked', 'struck' and 'bowed', the new exhibition would focus on the form of the instruments, rather than the

vibration of the strings. This would allow an arrangement of the instruments in an evolutionary timeline. Keyboard instruments were excluded from the exhibition as they indicated modernity and technological development. Rather, simpler instrument types such as rattles, gongs, drums, string and wind instruments were seen to be more suitable for the new displays. As described by the 1897 museum guide book, ethnobiological artefacts were displayed alongside natural history specimens in the Ethnographical Saloon. Wasps from Cuba and *Papilio Homerus*, a large insect from Jamaica, were displayed in cases on the floor, while wall cases contained North American Pottery, Mexican and Peruvian Beadwork, Malay Fishing Apparatus, samples of pottery and models of fruit. Another pertinent example of ethnobotanical curating was the display designed to illustrate the evolution of the Domestic Arts. Agricultural practices as well as the material culture of food consumption highlight an interest in the study of people and their environments. The handbook to this display was divided into two parts and explained the following:

Part I. deals with Agriculture, Fire-making and the Preparation of Food: Part II. deals with Natural and Artificial Food-vessels, Basketry, Pottery, Skin-dressing, Spinning, Mat-making, Weaving etc.¹⁵

In these examples, the focus on ethnobotany and a multidisciplinary approach to studying natural and cultural objects reflects wider contemporary museological trends and popular interests. The Horniman Museum's ethnobotanical history lies in the history of the collections and their displays, and its educational programme (in particular, the lecture series), responding to lay interest in natural history publications and exhibitions as well as colonial commerce.¹⁶ Despite Frederick

Horniman's vision that the museum and its garden be regarded as a unity, it was not until 1904, that the potential of the garden for nature study was recognized. London County Council commissioned Professor Patrick Geddes of Dundee University to design the planting at Bolton Brow (next to the museum building).¹⁷ The new plans were to use this section of the garden for nature study to complement the study of man in its saloons. The details of the design and planting and evidence of realization of this vision are not available.¹⁸ It is, however, clear that the museum attempted to undertake the study of nature through plants in the garden. The garden continued to be understood and used as a site of pleasure, leisure, bodily freedom and play after 1904, until 1998, when 'ethnobotanical' curating was introduced, if not in practice, certainly as an idea.¹⁹

Nature and culture, therefore, are intertwined in the history of the Horniman museum and its garden. The approach to ethnography, and in particular, the curating of non-western specimens (artefacts, zoological, entomological, minerological) within the context of natural sciences or as pre-historic in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries changed to a more humanistic form over the past decade, informed by the social sciences.²⁰ The garden became one of the key spaces where this shift became ostensible. This is what I turn to now.

Frederick Horniman and the museum garden: then and now

The Horniman Museum garden has been used as a site for leisure, entertainment and diplomacy since it was first opened to the general public in 1895. The Annual

Reports from 1893 until 1898 consistently describe events held in the garden and point towards the provision of free access to the grounds. The 1897 Museum Guide Book leads visitors from the museum to the garden, producing a museum trail. Included in this trail were artefacts such as the Irish Wishing Chair²¹ and a seat for resting; the trained Weeping Umbrella Ash Tree and lawns that were positioned to offer extensive views over London.²² The Annual Reports also provide detailed accounts of private diplomatic and charity events. Notable visitors such as members of the Japanese Society, a group of Burmese delegates, President and members of the Dulwich Scientific and Literary Association and the Maharajah of Baunagai attended events at the museum and took tea in the garden with Frederick Horniman and the museum staff. British as well as non-British visitors to the museum form a crucial part of the museum's history and are recorded in the Annual Reports as valuable guests for the acknowledgement and recognition of the quality of the collections. It is clear that observations and comments from international delegates on the authentic nature of the collections and their connoisseurship were welcomed and noted, as these are recorded in Annual Reports. Almost always, the visits to the museum culminated in the garden and the guests, led by Horniman and the Curator Richard Quick, made their way to the gardens that were illuminated by Japanese lanterns, for refreshments. If the collections showed off Horniman's taste and connoisseurship, the garden extended this to include the beauty of his estate.

The garden was also used as a site for celebratory functions that commemorated significant national events and often working class children and orphans were invited to partake in the celebrations. For instance, on 6 July 1893, a Royal Wedding Day,

one hundred children (boys from Shaftesbury House Industrial Home, girls from Louise House Industrial Home and girls from Lansom House, Dulwich) were entertained in the garden with lemonade and buns.²³

In 1897, the Horniman Museum proposed a plan for the national Diamond Jubilee Celebration Scheme commemorating sixty years of Queen Victoria's reign. One of the ways in which the Jubilee was to be commemorated nationally, was through the public appreciation of open spaces. Martin Gaskell notes that the Queen's Commemoration Committee 'advocated to every local authority the purchase of open spaces or places of historic interest or natural beauty as fitting forms of commemorating the Queen's long reign'.²⁴ The Horniman Museum garden was presented as one such site for the scheme. Harry Woolhouse, a reporter and visitor to the museum and garden commended Frederick Horniman's generosity in providing free access to the gardens and described him as belonging to the 'first rank of 19th century philanthropists'.²⁵ In the article, Woolhouse argued that London County Council provided parks and open spaces for the inhabitants of London. This, however, he added, was a taxable luxury. The benevolence of Horniman, particularly during the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the museum gardens, enabled the young and old to partake in the pleasures of the open green space without having to pay a fee. The improvements made to the garden included the construction of the band stand for music performances and a spacious room, creating, according to Woolhouse, a site where the museum, garden and recreation ground co-existed.

While the museum was a space for conservation and the study of zoological, entomological and ethnographical specimens, the museum garden was perceived as a site for bodily and mental freedom within nature. This was in keeping with Victorian ideas of moral and bodily regeneration from frivolities such as alcohol consumption and gambling and was claimed as the birthright of free born Englishmen.²⁶ The promotion by reformers of partaking in healthy pursuits such as walking and gardening was primarily directed to the working classes in urban environments. The rhetoric that the working population descended 'into a state of abject sloth or listless apathy'²⁷ on Sundays, was followed by solutions of healthful exercise in open air and a need for preservation of urban parks and open spaces. Not only would this improve the bodies and minds of the working classes, it would encourage them to undertake rational pursuits such as learn about plants and take up gardening. Within this context, the Horniman Museum Garden achieved recognition, as it offered free entry to all and provided a space for nature study.

Due to paucity of institutionally recorded information on planting histories, in particular, specific plant types, analyzing historic collections of plants at the Horniman Museum garden poses a challenge. Newspaper reports, the garden guide and plans, do, however, indicate the geographical origins of non-native plants or describe them as 'tropical'. An anonymous visitor reports of an American garden 'which at one time was planted with American plants only'. There were 'tropical plants' in the conservatory and the finest specimens of orchids in the cool part of the greenhouse.²⁸ It was not until 2004 that a concerted effort was made to design an ethnobotanical garden. This practice continues to the present day. The southside of

the sunken garden, which is adjacent to the museum building, contained Asian Borders from 2004 for a period of three years. In 2006, the Horniman grounds contained the Africa Garden that was originally built outside the British Museum as part of the 'Celebrating Africa' exhibition in 2005. The garden design team consisted of the BBC television programme Ground Force, the Horniman Museum's garden staff, the Eden Project staff,²⁹ four students from an African village and volunteers from the British Trust for Conservation. The garden was replanted at the Horniman Museum.

While these examples show an attempt to incorporate non-native plant displays in the garden, the 2012 redesign of the garden confirms that a part of the garden was sectioned off for ethnobotanic planting (figure 1).

Insert figure 1 about here

In an interview with Wesley Shaw, the Head of Horticulture and Kirsten Walker, the Director of Collections, Care and Estates, the strategic move to revive Frederick Horniman's vision of regarding the museum and garden as one unit, came to the fore. The garden team worked closely with the curators of Anthropology to create an object and nature trail, linking examples of objects displayed in the museum galleries with plants in the garden. The 2008 Garden Redevelopment Plan, drawn up by the UK based company LUC, was realized with funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund through the Parks for People Scheme. The Scheme is reminiscent of the Victorian belief in pursuing a healthy outdoor life, and the centrality of urban parks within this. There is, however, one distinction: the focus on community

involvement in the park's management. The particulars of this Scheme are outlined below:

The nature and purposes of the New Scheme are to make grants to conserve existing parks and cemeteries so that local user groups have active involvement in their park or cemetery's management and which—

- (a) make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities; or
- (b) are connected with health, education or the environment.³⁰

The redevelopment scheme of the Horniman Museum garden is focussed on its educational benefits. It contains the animals' enclosure, the sound garden, a dye and food garden and a new Learning Centre. The proposed plans for redevelopment also involved preservation of heritage and involvement of volunteers. The Dutch Barn and Bandstand were renovated and a number of local volunteers were involved in the planting of new beds. An article describing the redevelopment of the garden quotes a member of the museum staff:

Engaging our local community in front-facing volunteering roles brings benefits to those individuals, to the Horniman and to our visitors. Volunteers from our local horticultural and animal management college Capel Manor regularly volunteer with our Gardens team, and visitors benefit from the additional interpretation that they provide.³¹

Community involvement has been at the heart of museum practice in the UK since the late 1990s,³² and the Horniman Museum has been at the forefront of practices such as co-curating exhibitions with community members, providing access to object hands-on displays and fostering an active learning environment. Education, more broadly, and learning about cultures, in particular, involved academic methods such

as lectures and object study during Victorian and Edwardian periods and until the 1980s. The use of garden design to enable a study of cultures beyond the West only featured in the museum's agenda after 2008. Plants and artefacts from various parts of the world cohabited in this pleasure garden, since Frederick Horniman's custodianship and then the London County Council's, from 1901. These plants, however, added to the picturesque qualities of the museum garden, as reported by an anonymous visitor who stated, 'the Grounds which have been thrown open to the public are most picturesque' ³³ and referred to the tasteful arrangements of shrubs. The study of people in relation to plants and animals was restricted to the museum lecture series, delivered by invited scholars such as the Professor of Botany Percy Groom and anthropologist A.C. Haddon. The garden was regarded as a distinct space for pleasure and leisure and the dissemination of anthropological knowledge was limited to object histories in the museum, through the written word and verbal delivery. The garden now consistently fulfills an additional function: presenting ethnographic narratives.

The newly planted beds in the 2012 redevelopment scheme formed part of the nature-culture trail. Objects in the museum's collection were directly linked with the plants in the garden through interpretative panels, describing the production of the artefacts, the use of plants and the cultures within which these objects were produced. The medicine garden, food garden and the dyes garden, all formed part of the ethnography trail bringing to life the cultures represented. For example, an interpretation panel in the gourd family plant bed in the food garden directed the visitor to the Lime container displayed in the Centenary Gallery (figure 2).

Insert figure 2 about here

The text described the use of the lime container in New Guinea and Melanesia and showed the visitor gourd plants using an illustration. It also described the process of making and decorating such a container, and highlighted that the meaning of the word 'gourd' indicated both the fruit of the plant and the products made from them. Here, the living plant, the product made from its fruit and its use underscores a narrative about the lives of the people, focusing on their relationship to nature. This tripartite interconnection not only historicizes the culture, where the featured object in the collections represents nineteenth-century practices in relation to contemporary uses, it also excavates a biocultural history.

Other examples of ethnography in the museum garden includes the legumes display in the food beds, coinciding with a display showing the stages of the production of a pot in Nigeria (figure 3), and the papyrus plant bed, linked with an example of ancient Egyptian papyrus in the hands-on gallery (figure 4).

Insert figure 3 about here

Insert figure 4 about here

This method of curating requires visitors to imagine the material and time linkages to produce the knowledge of material culture and nature. The focus on processes, of glazing the pot and making the papyrus, reveal a complex set of ethnographic meanings, that the visitor is able to translate and understand, in order to appreciate the objects on display: the Nigerian pot and ancient Egyptian papyrus.

The dye garden contains a wide range of plants used for natural dyeing across various parts of the world. The display of red dye-producing plants accompanies an interpretation panel that provides information of the plants and their specific features that help produce red dyes (figure 5).

Insert figure 5 about here

The origins of Madder in the Middle East, a 3000-year-old cloth discovered in Egypt and dyed with Safflower and its contemporary usage in China, all form part of the scientific story of dyes and the cultural story of dyeing cloth. The depiction of a basket made by the Konyak Naga people exemplifies the practical usage of the dye, but it also attempts to produce a world history of dyeing. It constructs similarities between cultural practices and highlights a continuing use of the plants for natural dyeing. The presence of the plant in the garden in London and the basket in the gallery from Naga, function as evidence of this knowledge. This curating technique involves showing a live plant alongside a material artefact and prompts the visitor to construct the cultural and scientific meanings by linking these two items.

The planting of parsley in the food garden and its use in Brazilian cooking offers another example of ethnobotanical curating. Here, a pop-up garden in response to the Festival of Brazil (3 July-4 September 2016) lists ingredients used to make Vatapa, a 'rich shrimp and coconut sauce' (figure 5).

Insert figure 5 about here

The purposes of ethnobotanical curating in this example are not economic, unlike examples at Kew Gardens in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. A distinct focus on cultural knowledge is evident through the use of descriptive

language that employs Brazilian Portuguese to nativize and also translate the concept of Vatapa and its consumption.

Ethnography in the garden

Object and plant narratives at the Horniman Museum are produced and made accessible through interpretation panels, employing the written word, and placed in galleries as well as the garden. The objects and plants, therefore, represent the narratives: the stories and cultural practices of people. Through this process, they function as metaphors of the cultures. This curating technique enables visitors to make connections between the meanings of the objects and plants, in order to read the constructed ethnographic narratives. The visitors are seamlessly able to relate to objects from the past with meanings in the present, the latter produced through the planting in the garden.

Susan Pearce uses the term *Konkretisation* from Roman Ingarden's literary theory to describe this process of constructing meanings. She explains that 'the meaning of the object lies not wholly in the piece itself, not wholly in its realization, but somewhere between the two'.³⁴ The person's own experience and disposition, she adds, contributes to the process of realization. The work of subjectivity is key in the process of constructing meanings in the museum; it is especially the case in ethnography. In the example of the Horniman Museum displays, the knowledge of how people live is presented to work the subjective imagination. The garden and its plants are key in this process of realization. They expand the meanings produced by

the artefacts on display as they become referential: of the raw materials, the processes of production and the context within which they are made and used. It is this context that makes the role of the garden crucial to museum ethnography, as it produces, what James Clifford describes, an 'ethnographic allegory'.³⁵ He has suggested that the writing of ethnography includes a process of signification (similar to Susan Pearce's position). The information written about the subjects of ethnographic practice enables a process of difference and similitude, where the recipient of the information is able to both relate to the information and distinguish themselves from it. The Vatapa made by the Brazilians or lime chewed by people in New Guinea and Melanesia, evoke experiences of food production and consumption and the plants in the garden become vehicles for this knowledge.

Susan Pearce has argued that certain interpretive content will work upon certain visitors, so the realization of meanings is not consistent. The recognition and understanding of the structure of beans, the taste of parsley, the making of papyrus or feeling the texture of a gourd, are all experiences that would enable some of the visitors to realize the meanings of the artefacts and plants on display, and ultimately of their cultural contexts. It is in these transcendental meanings – the wider translatable meanings beyond the specific information – that ethnographic narratives are constructed. As Clifford suggests:

What one *sees* in a coherent ethnographic account, the imaged construct of the other, is connected in a continuous double structure with what one *understands*.³⁶

At the Horniman Museum and its garden, the knowledge of the production of artefacts in the past is interlinked with the knowledge of source materials, the plants. The description of the uses of both in the past and the present, I argue, produces the image of the other and helps construct a coherent ethnographic account. The viewing of plants within the garden and a relatable understanding of their relevance, produces this double structure to enable realization.

Clifford notes that the writing of ethnography is political. It is located within a Western tradition of constructing narratives and can represent others as historic, or as 'vanishing primitives'.³⁷ While there have been significant developments in ethnographic writing, he adds, ethnographic salvage still persists. The practice of recording knowledge of cultures that are feared to become extinct, he adds, is unproductive. Clifford claims that the recognition of the kinds of meanings constructed and an acknowledgement of the allegorical nature of ethnographic writing, can lead to reflective and responsible ethnography.

I argue that it is in the garden that the allegorical nature of the ethnographic account comes to the fore. This account produces the idea of coeval lives, as opposed to the evolutionary framework propagated by nineteenth-century collectors in their quest to study people and cultures. The viewing of the plants in the garden and their uses today, in relation to objects from the past, is a process of historicization. They are not just cultures from the past in the anthropological galleries of the museum, they cohabit in this garden of world cultures today.

The didactic landscape

The Horniman Museum garden is an example of a didactic landscape. It is designed for leisure, entertainment and education. It is used as site of museum ethnography, extending the museum gallery, producing a trail, and through this process, it promotes a complex method of constructing object and plant knowledge. The visitor to the Horniman Museum and garden has choice. They can choose their path and experience the panoramic views of London, visit the animal enclosure, relax in the grounds, produce music in the sound garden, enjoy the English sunken garden, or be led through the ethnobotanical garden. Both, the nineteenth-century Horniman museum garden and its present day form, highlight modes of didacticism. The 1897 Museum Guide states in detail the routes visitors could take in the museum grounds. It suggests spaces for rest and reading (the Guide Book), spaces for children to play in, and the trees and objects they might encounter along the way. Implicit in these instructions is a promoting of particular forms of civilized behavior. The visitor to the grounds could enjoy bodily freedom in the outdoor space after enjoying the visit to the museum. This, however, involved an appreciation of nature and culture, with a separated space for children's play. Identifying trees, shrubs and flowers formed part of the knowledgeable experience of nature, reminiscent of nineteenth-century ideas of appreciation of nature. The guide book, a well-established form of printed marginalia by the late nineteenth-century, helped the visitor navigate the grounds.³⁸

The contemporary Horniman Museum garden produces a different kind of didactic space. It is a form of mimesis. The visitor to the museum and gardens is not led through the garden by instruction, rather, they are guided between the museum and the grounds through the object and nature trail. The interpretive text located next to the objects and plants interlink the two, and mediate the experience of the museum and garden displays. Frederick Horniman's vision of a unified museum and garden is most literally realized in the contemporary design. The desire to mimic and reproduce Horniman's vision has led to a design that is not purely about producing a copy, it is about realizing a new form of curating. It is a strategy to reconnect cultural and natural items and to test new methods of interpreting and producing ethnographic knowledge.

Conclusion

Through a study of its design, the Horniman Museum garden's mediation of the institution's changing approaches to the study of culture and nature, has come to the fore. It has highlighted that between the late-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, the garden was used for leisure, pleasure or for the study of nature. The study of culture within the context of natural history, was restricted in the museum, and artefacts such as Japanese lanterns and the Irish Wishing Chair were used as outdoor furniture or to add to the picturesque qualities of the landscape. The late-twentieth century phenomenon of revisiting Horniman's vision of unifying the museum and its grounds reveals the museum's interest in developing the educational potential of the garden, as well as approaching it as a heritage site with listed buildings. The garden, rather than an adjunct to the museum, was directly

intertwined with object histories, unifying the study of nature and culture through the 2012 design. While the display of economic botany at Kew gardens combined the knowledge of the production of artefacts from plant sources, the Horniman Museum's contemporary curating demonstrates this knowledge. The example of biocultural curating at Kew was of colonial commerce, whereas, the garden at Horniman Museum produces ethnographic meanings. The juxtaposition of artefacts in the anthropology gallery with plants in the garden, constructs a set of meanings that neither locate the cultures they study as bygone or unevolved, nor fixed. There is a seamless travel between the past and the present, from one place to another, to construct meanings that show an element of coevalness. Therefore, while the contemporary museum garden attempts to mimic Horniman's vision, it does not reproduce it. The garden as a space that is constantly in the making through planting, replanting and transforming with changing seasons, becomes the site that inserts contemporaneity into the processes of historicization.

The didactic landscape in this case study is used to control narratives and the movement of the museum visitor. While it promoted particular modes of engagement with nature in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the contemporary landscape in doing the same complicates museum ethnography. It creates an alternative approach to studying world cultures through their plants today. The Horniman Museum horticultural team continues to reshape its gardens, but the crucial aim, to undertake ethnobotanical curating, continues. The new anthropology galleries have been redesigned and reopened in June 2018. The gardens have followed suit. Both, the museum and its landscape form part of the

curatorial strategy creating a didactic landscape, that does educate and entertain, but also radically shifts approaches to museum ethnography.

Notes

¹ Horniman Museum Scrapbook of Press Cuttings and Other Items 1888-1901, Museums and Museums [Communicated.].

² Ibid.

³ Horniman Museum Scrapbook of Press Cuttings and Other Items 1888-1901, Through "The Horniman Museum" (By a Visitor) No. XXI.

⁴ David Harvey, 'Emerging landscapes of heritage', *Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. by Ian Thompson, Peter Howard and Emma Waterton (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 152-165 (p. 155).

⁵ For example, UK museums such as Brighton Museum and Art Gallery contains a Cabinet of Curiosities, the Horniman Museum and the British Museum contain object-handling bays.

⁶ The 2013 exhibition *The Unrivalled Collection* at the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow was a revisiting of the Hunterian Museum's first catalogue. It showcased the items exhibited in 1813 by the author of the catalogue Captain John Laskey.

⁷ Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, 'History of the Ashmolean' <<https://www.ashmolean.org/history-ashmolean#nav>> [accessed 31 July 2018]

⁸ With the exception of the stuffed dodo, which suffered extensive decay and was removed from the collection.

⁹ Samuel Alberti, *Nature and Culture: Objects, Disciplines and the Manchester Museum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 65.

¹⁰ Caroline Cornish and Mark Nesbitt. 'Historic perspectives on western ethnobotanical collections', *Curating Biocultural Collections: A Handbook*, ed. by Jan Salick, Katie Konchar and Mark Nesbitt (Richmond: Kew, 2014), pp. 271-293 (p. 276).

¹¹ Ibid., p. 279.

¹² Alberti, p. 43.

¹³ Horniman Museum, Museum Guides and Handbooks, ARC/HMG/PB/001-012, The Ninth Annual Report, 1910, p. 15.

¹⁴ ARC/HMG/PB/001-012, The Tenth Annual Report, 1911, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁶ Alberti, p. 31

¹⁷ Horniman Museum, ARC/HMG/VOL/001/001, Discovering the Horniman Gardens, Second Draft, Clive Bell, September 2006, p. 6.

¹⁸ In the introduction to a Special Issue 'Gardens at the frontier: new methodological perspectives on garden history and designed landscapes', the editor James Beattie highlights the challenges of undertaking the study of garden history. He states that the challenge for garden historians is to write a history of a garden that no longer exists. This is certainly the case with this research, however, archives and garden plans do, to a certain extent help chart the designs of the garden, even though the

history of the plants may not have been recorded. See: James Beattie, 'Gardens at the frontier: new methodological perspectives on garden history and designed landscapes', *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 36/1 (2016), 1-4.

¹⁹ Horniman Museum, ARC/HMG/BD/001/004/021. Long term conservation principles for the buildings and gardens.

²⁰ James Clifford, 'On ethnographic allegory', in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 98-121 (pp. 101-102).

²¹ The Irish Wishing Chair was a replica of the wishing chair at the Giant's Causeway in (Northern) Ireland.

²² Horniman Museum, ARC/HMG/PB/001/005 Gratis Hand-Guide for Use of Visitors to the Horniman Free Museum and Pleasure Gardens, 1897, p. 16.

²³ ARC/HMG/PB/001-012, The Third Annual Report, 1893, p. 7.

²⁴ S. Martin Gaskell, 'Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure', *Victorian Studies*, 23/4, Summer, 1980, pp. 479-501 (p. 493).

²⁵ Horniman Museum Scrapbook of Press Cuttings and Other Items 1888-1901, The Queen's Glorious Reign by Harry Woolhouse.

²⁶ Gaskell, p. 479.

²⁷ S. Martin Gaskell quotes James Kay Shuttleworth from the Manchester Guardian, 22 August 1846. Ibid, p. 489.

²⁸ Horniman Museum Scrapbook of Press Cuttings and Other Items 1888-1901, Through "The Horniman Museum" (By a Visitor) No. XXI.

²⁹ The Eden Project is an educational charity based in the UK and a millennium project, partly funded by the Millennium Commission Grant. It opened its doors to the public in March 2001. It could be described as a large garden housing tropical plants in Biomes that are akin to geodesic domes. The Project focuses on conservation and sustainable programmes.

³⁰ HM Government, 'The New Parks for People (England) Joint Scheme (Authorisation) Order 2013'

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/1098/schedule/made> [accessed 16 July 2018]

³¹ Museums and Heritage Advisor, 'Horniman Museum and Gardens – Linking the Museum to the Outside World

<http://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/features/horniman-museum-gardens-linking-museum-outside-world/> [accessed 16 July 2018]

³² Elizabeth Crooke, *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges* (New York, Routledge, 2008), p. 45.

³³ Horniman Museum Scrapbook of Press Cuttings and Other Items 1888-1901, Through "The Horniman Museum" (By a Visitor) No. XXI.

³⁴ Susan Pearce, 'Objects as meaning; or narrating the past,' ed. by Susan Pearce in *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19-29 (p. 26).

³⁵ Clifford, pp. 100-121.

³⁶ Clifford, p. 101.

³⁷ Clifford, p. 112.

³⁸ Vaughan, John Edmund, *The English Guide Book, c. 1780-1870: An Illustrated History* (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1974).