

Interactive museum model: Güemes Museum

El modelo de museo interactivo: el caso del Museo Güemes

Florencia Agostina Iglesias*

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, museums are developing themselves within a context marked by communication and information technologies, the new demands from public and a trend towards consumption. The present case study of Güemes Museum, located in Salta, Argentina, is placed within this context. For this analysis we will delve into three dimensions in particular: its self-definition as an objectless museum, its tours and exhibiting resources, and its modern museum model. Starting from a revelation and analysis of visitor's comments on the websites TripAdvisor, Google Maps and Facebook, institutional and communicational pieces, and press notes, a study on its management and its social actors that contributed in its consolidation is proposed to delved on those dimensions. This case study allows us to realize the diverse commercialization trends that museums are going through currently, the role these assign to the visitor, and the type of settling of the exhibition place that this entails.

Keywords

Museum; interactivity; exhibition; public.

RESUMEN

En la actualidad, los museos se desarrollan dentro de un contexto signado por las tecnologías de la comunicación y la información (TIC), las nuevas exigencias del público y una tendencia que los orienta hacia el consumo. En el marco de este contexto se inserta el presente caso de estudio del Museo Güemes, localizado en Salta, Argentina. Para su análisis se profundizará en tres dimensiones concretas: su autodefinición de museo sin objetos, su recorrido y recursos expositivos, y su modelo de museo moderno. A partir del análisis de lo que revelan los comentarios de los visitantes del museo en las páginas TripAdvisor, Google Maps y Facebook, piezas comunicacionales institucionales, y notas de prensa, se propone un estudio de la gestión del museo y de los actores sociales que contribuyeron en su conformación, con la intención de profundizar en estas dimensiones. Este estudio permite dar cuenta de muchas de las tendencias de mercantilización que actualmente atraviesan los museos, el rol que estas asignan al visitante, y el tipo de configuración del espacio de exhibición que esto supone.

Palabras clave

Museo; interactividad; exposición; público.

* Teaching assistant at the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (UNTREF), Argentina. ffaiglesias@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8660-8492>

INTRODUCTION

As sustained by Dujovne (1995), museums are currently facing challenges linked to competition of the media and new technologies, easily bored audiences, and an institutional historic construction which is presented to be extraneous and exclusionary. This is in addition to the recent aggradation of a model of a museum related with what Fleck (2014) calls *the industry of art*, which is centered on consumption drive and reinforcement. Within the context of this case study, a survey is inserted of the Güemes Museum, of Salta, Argentina.

The analysis of this institution will be further discussed in three specific dimensions: its self-definition of a museum with no objects, its tour and exhibition resources, as well as a model of a modern museum. When considering what Americo Castilla has proposed in *Is there a curator here?* (2011), visitors are taken as key actors to assess the conveyance of contents and the museum experience. For this reason, with the purpose of studying the aspects mentioned herein, comments were used made by visitors on the museum pages on TripAdvisor, Google Maps and Facebook. Also, press documents linked to the museum, management issues and social actors who contributed to form it were analyzed, this, in relation with the theoretical perspectives proposed by different authors.

DEVELOPMENT

THE CONCEPT OF A MUSEUM

During the 20th Century, an inflexion is produced in the modern idea of a museum, which gives rise to new perspectives related to this institution. Among them are, on the one hand, those conceived from the anthropological meaning and, on the other hand, those that take it as a market-museum. This is as a result of what Garcia Canclini (1990) calls the *figure of a polyvalent cultural center* (p. 159);¹ this involves one of the central changes: extension of the object concept.

In this sense, Hernandez-Hernandez (1992) says that although in 1947 museums were defined as institutions “that keep and present collections of objects

¹ Garcia Canclini (1990) considers that one of the major attractions of the new type of modern museum lies in its diversified offer, whilst museums extend their role towards “temporary expositions of science and technology, books, magazines, and records intended for self-service” among others that “comprise the inspiring atmosphere of a polyvalent cultural center” (p. 159).

of a cultural and scientific nature, for study, education and enjoyment purposes" (p. 88); in 1974, this definition also reaches parks, movable and immovable goods and, even, cultural life testimonies.

Heumann Gurian (1999) makes a more in-depth reflection on the changes of the museum object statute that arises from political, identity, cultural and epistemological conflicts, related to the museum as a service provider. Some of the changes listed by the author are linked to the existence of a number of interpretative frameworks and interests inferred in the catalogue, preservation and periodicity of the objects; extension of the heritage concept; interaction of several uses for the objects; incorporation of reproductions and change of meaning of what "is real"; inclusion of the society as an agent for the assignment of value; introduction of tangible forms; complexity of the idea of possession from the "use of collection" or shared possessions, and preservation and conservation ideas; position in history carried by the object as a central element; and the possibility of sale, among others.

All of these transformations enable the displacement of the *object as an end* to the *object as a means* for the presentation of history, the definition of which results from the territory and sensory inquiry. In line, the phenomenon develops which Hernandez-Hernandez (1992) calls *museumification* (p. 89) linking the museum to constant renewal dynamics and to the prioritization of didactic attractions on exhibition objects, consistent with new consumption models.

This phenomenon displaces the museum from its sacred nature and links it to the concept of a market-museum, mainly centered in the diversified offer of cultural products for a massive audience. This concept has also been developed by Fleck (2014) who considers that, currently, the museum is consistent with the idea of the industry of art, that is to say, it represents the intensification of the consumption of culture and its commercialization.

In this sense, museums have centered their efforts to adapt to new consumption patterns, to generate spectacular infrastructures, to develop digital tools and to claim the present. In this respect, the temporary dimension becomes a priority and allows the contemporary dimension to adopt a criterion of value for consumption, as it generates a tour into history from the present, or by using a topic categorization as an exposition strategy. The temporary dimension becomes relevant over the permanent dimension, while it allows a constant flow of audience and places the museum as a capital production agent.

On this basis, profitability and marketing parameters are incorporated to their organizational logics; thus, behavior control was promoted aimed to foster new dynamics and times of use of their facilities, for example, by incorporating stores and leisure space within their structures. This has further strengthened the incidence of private capitals in museum management.

As a result of these transformations, Hernandez-Hernandez (1992) acknowledges that the current museum is under an identity crisis related to the difference between theory and practice of the museum management and the existence of “unwieldy” institutions (p. 93), deficiency of public policies that are to be remedied by using private capital, and the fear to lose the sacred essence related with the museum. From the above, it may be upheld that there currently is a complex institutional heterogeneity related with museums, that make a stress on the interests of the market, the state and the community.

THE GÜEMES MUSEUM

The Güemes Museum, located in the Province of Salta, Argentina, is located on a tract of land of 700 square meters, in one of the houses used by the great Martin Miguel de Güemes to live during his years as a child. Inaugurated in 2017, this museum is characterized by incorporating technological and interactive devices throughout its circuit. It addresses local and tourist audiences, it is managed by the province, and there is a fee to enter, with differentiated prices for foreign and domestic tourists, residents, retired people and students.

The museum is dedicated to Martin Miguel de Güemes, a renown military and politician in national history for his role as a chieftain, warlord in the Argentinian independency wars held during the first half of the 19th Century. As the museum is dedicated to this character, the recent claim of the personality of Güemes as the official historical account must be mentioned; therefore, along with a historical analysis, it may be inferred that this has been filled with conflicts and controversies in the reconstruction of our memory. A number of historians (Mata, 2008; Galvez, 2008) say that the controversial character of Güemes lies both in his vocation as a federalist and his connection with the popular field.

So, the museum intends to do a tour through “the milestones in the life of General Miguel de Güemes and the wars of independence” (Secretariat of Culture of the Government of Salta, s/f); through ten rooms which, in a chronological order,

give an account of different moments in the life of Güemes, from his first years as a child until his passing. There are lighting and staging effects intended to replicate the atmosphere of the time, in addition to audiovisual resources and electronic devices for the story to continue during the tour.

At the central patio, where all the rooms converge, there is a group of sculptures *Los Infernales* (2017) made by the artist Carlos Benavidez and Daniel Brandimarte, representing a militia formation prepared for battle. As its many communication pieces, the Güemes Museum stands out for its character as a modern and interactive museum with no objects.

The museum is a dissemination and cultural capital production agent; however, neither these nor its collections are of a neutral nature, but that they are crossed by historicity and a human dimension (Alderoqui, 2011). In consideration thereof, this case study intends to give an account of some of the commercialization trends passing through museums, of their role assigned thereby to visitors, and of the type of configuration of the exhibition space,² this is focused on the Güemes Museum case.

For this reason, the central theme was considered from aspects emphasized by authors such as Fleck (2014) and Alderoqui (2011) who, from the museology field, attribute interactivity to the model of a modern museum, as well as new modes of visiting dynamics, consumer promotion, the place where the objects are and the political and historical meanings signing the museum narrative.

The listed bibliographic reference concentrates on a group of specialists who, from the museum and curatorship fields, do not only describe and characterize the qualities implied by this model, but they also see the museum from an anthropological meaning, as this is a space of experience involved in the different structures of social life. In other words, they believe that the museum appeals to the spirit of communities and that, along with knowledge and resources, forms the core of testimonies of collective life (Heumann Gurian, 1999). Therefore, its relevance is centered in the appeal to history, identity, memory, conscience, and visions of a community world.

From this perspective, it may be said that the museum operates as a memory space of history, which fosters the critical eye and includes subjects. Additionally, it

² The exhibition represents a means of communication, a place for the production of meanings that translates a scientific discourse, gives meaning to objects, that support messages and convey ideas (García Blanco, 1999).

serves as a producer of subjectivities and as a stage that offers values and beliefs on the identity of a community from a specific depiction of a fragmented reality (Duncan, 2007; Hernandez Hernandez, 1992). For this reason, they are ritual spaces creating ideas, as they operate within current ideological limits and regulate conducts behind political intentions to adapt behaviors or to question the current *habitus* (Bennet, 1995).

In this sense, for this study, it was decided to use a qualitative, methodological approach, of the descriptive and exploratory type. As a central technique, an analysis of digital press-media notes was used, institutional communication pieces, and comments made by the public on the main social networks and digital platforms linked to the Güemes Museum, were considered: Google Maps (269 opinions), TripAdvisor (412 opinions) and Facebook (51 opinions). When reviewing these opinions, it was found that the words *technology*, *interactivity* and *history* prevailed, that were considered when deciding on the thematic areas upon which work was to be done.

In principle, emphasis must be made that the largest proportion of opinions from visitors made on each of these platforms show a high satisfaction degree during their visit. In this sense, they have qualified the Güemes Museum with an average of 4.7 stars and 5 stars, in Google Maps and Facebook, respectively, and as excellent in TripAdvisor.

For the analysis, the comments that better summarized and represented the relationship between the museum intention -made in different press and institutional documents- were selected, as well as the perspective of visitors and the aspects the above authors underscore in respect to the model of a modern museum.

A MUSEUM WITH NO OBJECTS

Natalia Martin, the museum advisor, told local media: “Sometimes, when you tell (visitors) ‘go ahead, you are not going to find any of Güemes’ objects’, they reply: ‘Ugh, but there is nothing? What a shame’. But when they live the experience, which is completely novel, something different takes place” (In First Person, 2017). For this, Berra, in his capacity as CEO of the company *Berra Desarrollos Creativos*, in charge of the construction and design of the museum, adds that “museums no longer are a place to display objects. Nowadays, the main character of the museum is not the object, but the subject, the man” (Premat, 2016). It was with this same perspective that the design and construction of the Museum was intended.

Regarding the above statements, which at the same time are disseminated in several media pieces of the institution, several aspects are to be noted. First off, the museum does have objects to give an account of some historical factors related to Güemes; however, they have a merely decorative purpose as well as to accompany the tour. "This is an interactive museum that recounts and details the whole life history of Martín Miguel de Güemes, including our exhibits of furniture of the time and displays objects and manuscripts facsimiles related to his career as a military" (Vanessa E, 2019).

In accordance with the previous comment, the museum has some objects which, although they did not belong to Güemes specifically, refer to his historical times; that is the case of some pieces of visual arts, uniforms, garments and weaponry facsimiles. In spite of these elements, the museum is self-defined as a "museum with no objects", because the main role of the exhibit is undoubtedly occupied by the different technological devices behind the display cabinets on the side walls of the corridors.

Alderoqui (2011) argues that "the value of the displays does not predominantly lie on the objects, but on the phenomena, the processes or concepts, intended to convey the public, by means of equipment, modules or displays especially designed for that purpose" (p. 65). In this sense, Gurian (1999) analyzes the statutory change of the object and notes that this concept has extended and has even reach such materials built for the purpose of the exhibition, and for the "made-up" experience.

This author believes that the object is a means and not an end in itself for the presentation of a history in a sensorial way, that is to say, this does not derive from the objects but from the place and the proposed inquiry. Therefore, the core is positioned in history, and the museum, from the anthropological connotation, is conceived as a space of experience taking part in social life. Although it is possible to argue that the objects support messages and carry ideas and feelings (García Blanco, 1999), the Güemes Museum encourages an image that "the object is on one side, knowledge, on the other" (Natalia Martín, quoted in 'In First Person' (2017), and that many times it is the guide who performs as a link between them.

Even when this idea does not take the object as a carrier of history and symbolic contents, it does involve the difficulty of conveying the knowledge contained in said object. In spite that the guide may circumstantially fulfill this role, it is believed that this role is the responsibility of the exhibition itself, and that, as

sustained by Dujovne (1995), it must be a companion during the visit, and not as a bearer of an unquestioned truth.

In this sense, Garcia Blanco (1999) understands the exposition as a means of communication, which allows it to be addressed as a place for the production of meanings, the role of which lies in translating the scientific discourse that gives meaning to the objects; this should be self-sufficient to understand the knowledge that is conveyed. "Communication props would be an extra support among the possible ones, which enables that the exposition message is each time more accessible to more elaborated and higher concept levels" (Asensio & Pol, 2002, p. 100); that is to say, the idea of communication intent ought to be crystalized in the making of a communication system between the exposition and other media to guarantee the fulfillment thereof.

TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND INTERACTIVITY

The media the Güemes Museum believed to be proper to guarantee access of the exposition message included technological and interactive resources –touch screens, sound and audiovisual– film presentations, animatronics and several types of projectors which, from different perspectives, and in combination with mirrors and surfaces with reliefs, project images, recreations and holograms. The place where these devices are located in the museum are in line with the museumification phenomenon mentioned by Hernandez Hernandez (1992) and which fostered, among other things, the most relevant didactic attractions related to the objects displayed. This phenomenon, according to Tejeda Martin (2017), reduces the experience of the audience and the work to "its formal values betraying a part of its semantic charge directly linked to the context and to the formulas of the exhibition" (p. 192).

Alderoqui (2011) asserts that interactive museums mainly arose for didactic-pedagogical purposes. However, the idea of interactivity is here as a label used "as a passport of its validity and quality" (Asensio & Pol, 2002, p. 101). In the newspaper, *La Nacion*, Berra says that interactivity is one of the keys for the development of the museum and understands it as "a wrapping where the people visiting the museum ought to be so that they live an experience where they feel they are the main characters of the history being told and not only audience" (Premat, 2016). In principle, this expression makes an emphasis on how the connotation of a passive audience shifts towards an active role, but, what is understood by interactivity?

One of the visitors to the museum criticized this aspect: “It is overly supported by audiovisual elements and ignores the environs or the active participation of visitors” (Magdalena Martínez Brederke, 2019).

Before this opinion, what Asensio & Pol (2002) may be referred to in the sense that museums ought to foster an active attitude among visitors, in terms of activating mind maps at a cognitive, intellectual and emotional level, and this does not necessarily imply a motor or behavioral activity. That is, that motor executions do not guarantee a reflexive process on visitors or an intellectual connection between the subject and the exposition message.

Alderoqui (2011) believes that comparing the motor action with the learning action corresponds to “a reductionist perspective, resulting from behaviorism” (p. 67). Therefore, and in line with the proposal of authors, it is believed that the most relevant interactivity plan is the plan that achieves interaction between the exposition message and the visitor’s mind map.

From the constructivism point of view, Alderoqui (2011) suggests that learning is effective from: offering activities to engage the mind, emotions and manual activity; social activity from conversations and interaction; and context, regarding the creation of spaces concerning doubts, questions and knowledge. To test this effectivity, it is necessary to check that visitors are led to comprehensive activities and, at the same time, to address how they receive them, not only as a plain acquisition, but as a negotiation in terms of appropriation of and production of meaning.

MUSEUM STRATEGIES

In accordance with generational categories proposed by Alderoqui (2011), the Güemes Museum is mostly correlated with a second-generation museum;³ a category covering museums characterized by: “the character showing that their exhibits were mainly created with the purpose of exhibiting historical products of sciences and technological advance. At these museums, the role of visitors consists on “implementing” devices included in the exhibition” (p. 72).

³ Paulette McManus (quoted in Alderoqui, 2011) proposes a type of museum in accordance with the generation they resemble and their corresponding characteristics, whilst first generation museums are comprised by museums with collection exhibits centered in preservation and conservation, and provide visitors with a merely contemplative role; second generation museums are intended for demonstration purposes, for the dissemination of the heritage and for visitors whose role is to activate the different devices of the exposition.

This model is reproduced in the Güemes Museum, where the exhibition circuit works as follows: “Visitors enter in groups of 15 persons, so that they may enjoy the audiovisual experience in a self-guided visit. There are sensors in each room that activate the different audiovisual resources when visitors enter” (*La Nación*, 2017). The group has 45-50 minutes to do the circuit; here, audiovisual resources have a primary role over the objects, and break the balance, which Herrera (2010) emphasizes as the central element, between what is shown and what is said.

These devices are activated when visitors appear, therefore, they contribute with the purpose of “establishing context discussions” (Alderoqui, 2011), p. 70) and, there even are exhibition panels where the audio presentation is repeated, which, at the same time presents a circuit logic preventing that visitors stop to read the whole text, should they want to.

On the same line, as proposed by Garcia Blanco (1999) regarding Davallon’s categories, it is also possible to classify this exposition as an entertaining one;⁴ which, according to authors, implies that its relevance lies on visitors and on their point of view. At the exhibition, an imaginary spatial dimension is created by taking visitors as the main performers; however, the contribution of Hooper-Greenhill (1998) is to be mentioned regarding the fact that the entertaining component of museums “always has the ultimate purpose of offering something new, that our interest be awakened, and that there be a potential value” (p. 189); however, as sustained by Dujovne (1995), it should be carefully introduced in such a way that the spectacular nature thereof does not do away with reflection.

Among the exposition strategies proposed by the museum there are ludic and evocative strategies. The purpose of the former, as proposed by Davallon (quoted in Garcia Blanco, 1999), is to bring the mind of visitors to an imaginary space, where they are the main characters. Whereas, evocative strategies, according to Hall (quoted in Garcia Blanco, 1999), recreate a theatrical ambience or an atmosphere leading visitor to identify themselves or to partake from the society they represent.

In the words of Berra, the intention is to “immerse audiences into an experience that would transport them, that they see how they spoke in those times, how they dressed and interacted with their traditions” (Premat, 2016). In this sense, one of the most emphasized strategies is the last one, called “dying with glory”; it is

⁴ Davallon (quoted in García Blanco, 1999) uses this category to characterize those exhibitions that not only focus on the visitor and their point of view, but also require many and varied technologies to transfer it to the imaginary world and experimentation that the museum generates.

an account of the moment prior to the death of Güemes, from the portrait “*The death of Güemes*”, by Antonio Alice, and his animated recreation, which is characterized as a great emotional component (In First Person, 2017).

On the other hand, according to the classification of the visitors’ reaction, the exposition of the Güemes Museum may be considered to be interactive, while a certain degree of implication is required by the audience for the informational material to be valued. At the same time, the exposition is made of response mechanisms, given that they are implemented vis-à-vis the public.

A further concern to be underscored is self-guidance. Although this strategy has been implemented with the purpose of managing a large audience, at a constant rotation, it violates the features of free transit and tour museums use to promote. That is to say, each individual’s progress is conditioned by time and by the group, whilst when one of its members enters the following room, the audiovisual device is activated and the narrative begins.

Many of its visitors believe this format is not proper, since, altogether with the absence of personnel or inquiry bodies, the possibility of voice doubts, questions and knowledge is eliminated. This is mentioned by one of its visitors: “A very well-conceived multimedia museum. As a critique, I would say that it is necessary that a guide accompanies each group, otherwise, the pace of the visit is disorganized” (Mario Daniel Veron, 2020).

Alderoqui (2011) states that this kind of experience “does not offer [visitors] “hooks” or links with their own lives”. Therefore, the author mentioned that learning is of a contextual nature, that is to say, “you learn based on knowledge, fears, prejudice, experiences and prior knowledge” (p. 68). The possibility of creating these links, therefore, contributes to the effectivity of the process. In this sense, it is also possible to affirm that the museum promotes a type of mass communication or “distance education”,⁵ in accordance with Hooper-Greenhill (1998), characterized by a unidirectional development, absence of response capacity and unilaterality.

⁵ Hooper-Greenhill (1998) considers that the educational function of the museum may be interpreted in accordance with two communicative methods: mass communication and interpersonal communication. The former compares it to distance education, as it promotes unidirectional and unilateral communication which lacks receiver’s response capacity. Interpersonal communication, on the other hand, is associated with direct education, as it enables interpretation from exchanging knowledge and the possibility to change it during the development of the communicative act, and includes auxiliary communication systems.

THE MUSEUM'S HERITAGE

Isabel Zacca, the museum director, explained: “At the museum, there is no materiality, relics that may have been owned by Güemes, but we have the house, with a high value as heritage and which was completely restored in two years; it currently keeps the woodworks and ironworks of the 19th Century” (La Nacion, 2017). At this affirmation, it is possible to verify that the central purpose of the museum is its location. Notwithstanding, there are some conflicts around its preservation processes and value enhancement, because, indeed, the house was completely recycled and it only keeps some of the external features of the original building. This is a reflection of some of the comments: “The original shape of the house was not preserved or no attempt was made to have it restored” (Paula del Giorgio, 2017).

The construction of the building is maintained on adobe and painting of the time, whereas the internal space has been modified, divided into ten rooms, separated by gypsum wallboards, and one of the original doors of the building is covered by a projection. In spite of this situation, the members of the museum underscore the fact that the features of the building structure and infrastructure of the museum “allow for the combination of history and modernity” (In First Person, 2017).

Some historians and agents of the local community consider that installation of the Güemes Museum, in that specific building, is contradictory to the historical narrative. Although the forefather dwelled in this house during his first years as a child, it was owned by his brother in law, “an enemy to the patriotic cause” (Caseres, 2019, quoted in Costello, 2019). All this adds up to the neglected state by the provincial management of the only one property, located in the same area, which Güemes acquired during the struggle for independence and which served as training headquarters of the Gaucho forces.

It must be underscored that, as sustained by Duncan (2007), the ritual characteristics presented by the museum include those produced by the museum from its structure and, therefore, this may interfere with the meaning and experience of the museum space.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF THE EXHIBITION

In an interview with the newspaper *La Gaceta Salta* (2017), Berra explained that “the task of this consulting firm was that of summarizing and sieve the large amount of

information on Güemes". He also sustained that, at the several historical currents on the life of Güemes, "we have addressed it from a poetic and narrative point of view, without falling in a partisan issue". These lines in the analysis were clearly crystalized in a depoliticized and decontextualized exposition narrative harbored by the museum. First off, the superimposed discourse in the exposition ignores some historical details that may be considered to be "controversial" in the preparation of a narrative of these characteristics, such as the participation of women in history or the role assumed by the Salta elite in the plot to murder Güemes. From the idea that the whole interpretation of the historical narrative is a clip, it would be proper, as sustained by Herrera (2010), to have the causes exposed as well as aesthetic, historical or ethical sources that support said clip.

Pacheco (2014) ensures that there currently is predominant descriptive dynamics creating the display of history, with expositions focusing on assertive readings about its construction. At this, it is paramount to understand that the whole exposition materializes the position-taking of the struggle-for-power relations or, as supported by Alderoqui (2011), that "museums and their collections never are neutral, they are always based on complex theoretical arguments" (p. 93), characterized by historicity and a human dimension. The exposition, in this sense, "is a constructed narrative, presenting versions of present and past, and contributes to the construction of collective imaginaries" (p. 107). To deepen into this subject, the category proposed by Huberman (2010) *the state machinery* is proper in contrast to the *war machinery*.⁶

At the museum, the history of Güemes is narrated with romantic nuances which, from a Manichean perspective, very superficially divides the conflict, between realists and patriots. This renders invisible, not only internal antagonisms and debates on the federalization of the territory, but also eliminates divisions of the local people themselves and the participation of a heterogeneous group of agents of history. In addition, a large part of the narrative is centered on the first years of Güemes as a child, leaving out his political and social work. This is noted by some of its visitors: "Tell me more about what he did, and not so much, four rooms, about his youth" (Frank V, 2019).

⁶ The concept of *State Machinery* is used by Huberman (2010) to refer to museums that, positioned as keepers of the canon history, center their logic on achieving results; they territorialize and center the senses from traditional categories and favor the *status quo* required by dominant systems. Conversely, the notion of *war machinery* is proposed by the author in an antagonistic way to the former, while he submits expositions related to nomadism and deterritorialization which, in a constant renovation, further, from their assemblies, suspicion and critical vocation on hegemonic culture. Therefore, he conceives that they increase the audience's power of thought.

This situation is clearly exemplified at the first room in the museum, where audiovisual reproductions, in a portrait format, of Güemes' father and mother welcome visitors and invite them to tour the facilities, while several historical aspects are introduced of the house and they introduce their son's character, from a "dialog" between them and the audience. Another example is an open chest which, by means of monitors connected to video players, present the games and hypothetical dreams of Güemes' childhood.

This trend, as mentioned above, is accompanied by a decontextualization, understood by Huberman (2010) as the neutralization of the original conditions of the objects and the reduction of experience to a merely formal experience. Tejeda Martín (2017) adds that expographic media tend to create a "grammar devaluation", that is to say, to ignore and neutralize experimental and ideological values of original conditions of the objects and to extract them from their temporary space, historical and current contingencies. This does not only have an impact on its political function, but it also prevents any access to the critical content of the objects. Therefore, every evocative strategy mentioned above, is intended to contextualize the audience, loses effectiveness within the narrative which seems to be exempt from antagonism, conflict and internal dispute.

In order to understand the relevance of these processes -depoliticization and decontextualization- it must be underscored that the museum operates as a producer of subjectivities. Duncan (2007) retakes this aspect from his definition of a museum as a ritual space. In this sense, museums comprise a scenario offering values and beliefs on the identity of a community which, from performative resources, invite visitors to interpret a specific presentation thereof. Therefore, in its ritual character, museums create an idea within pre-existing and current political boundaries, and present a fragmenting reality.

As supported by Ranciere (2004), a museum is a political machinery that takes part in the division of sensible components and partakes in the preparation of collective conflicts; it, on the one side, contains a construction of an official memory where several disciplines take part, and on the other, it performs, dramatizes and stages a set of values and beliefs, and a true and specific construction.

Bennet (1995) emphasizes that, although the museum places man as an object of knowledge, this creates "tension between the shared space and the apparent universality of the subject-object of knowledge under construction" (p. 7), and the partial shape of how this universality is presented. This goes hand-in-hand with the political power of the museum, which, to Duncan (2007) lies in its character as a

stage whereas in them “the politically organized power and socially institutionalized avidly seeks to materialize its desire to be presented as beautiful, natural and legitimate” (p. 19) and, therefore, materializing the intersection between power and history of the different cultural shapes.

The museum operates like technology producing subjectivities and with the potentiality to promote the regulation of conducts behind political desires to adapt behaviors or to question the *habitus*, therefore, preparation and meaning of the history clip proposed by the Güemes Museum is not a minor issue, since, as part of cultural institutions, it fulfills a political function that may contribute both to structure the social world and to question it.

THE IDEA OF A MODERN MUSEUM

Lastly, the position of the Güemes Museum as a *modern museum* ought to be underscored. The dispute for the formation of subjectivities, mentioned above, materialized from the beginnings, according to Garcia Canclini (1990), when an idea was imposed of a “real nation”, mostly, by hegemonic cultural and religious groups.

As a result of the development of modernity, economic groups and technocrats joined this dispute afterwards, which redefined the museum. From globalization processes and new technologies, a model was settled in relation to what Fleck (2014) calls *industry of art*, centered on the drive of consumption logics.

This new model sought to have new habits manifested in the social structure, mainly linked to the market and adapted to the new globalized age. This has permeated into some of the concepts of the institution: “The museum is fashionable” (Berra in Premat, 2016).

The model of a *modern museum* proposed by the institution is in line with the category of Garcia Blanco (1999) of an *attraction museum*, as it presents a fundamental ludic component, and requires of the participation of visitors with amusement and informational purposes. Berra affirms:

The challenge of this type of museums, containing hard data, is to try and capture an audience, of all ages, and that the theme is not a boring one, especially as the audience may not be keen on history or science. We intend to take them through an entertaining circuit by using modern expression resources (*La Gaceta Salta*, 2017).

Using this type of resources mentioned above is related with Fleck’s (2014) ideas, on the establishment of the contemporary component as a value criterion on

cultural consumption; that is, the tour to history is done from the present time, as an introduction to review other historical moments.

As mentioned above, the self-guiding format also corresponds to restructuring museums in favor of managing a large number of audiences, with a limited visit time. The trend is included of pseudo-privatization of museum spaces for agents of the private sector; in the specific case of the Güemes Museum, the facilities usually hosts events related with the wine industry.

Fleck (2014) affirms that these trends enable the creation of new manners to enter and the acquisition of a renewed economic independence that positions museums as autonomous agents for the production of value. In this case, the statement of Garcia Canclini (1990) is presented, the alliance between museums, the media and tourism, which have contributed to position the former as leisure and recreation agents.

Fleck (2014) sustains that incidence on consumption logics of museums also has an impact on their architectural design, from the introduction of structures containing rest areas and shops to articulated contemplation and consumption. This may be seen in the incorporation of a store at the end of the circuit –the stay of which, different from the exposition, does not have a time limit– by its own Facebook page, it is centered on the sale of several articles with iconographic references to Güemes, Gaucho military and other elements referring to the Gaucho side, such as ponchos, knives, the horse and the *mate*.

These profitability logics promote a study of quantitative variables of the museum that only consider the audience as a total number, which does not allow any further investigation on the appropriation of contents or on the behaviors of visitors.

CONCLUSION

From this study case, a first remark may be made, along with is sustained by the number of consulted bibliographies: there are new requirements on the heritage, along with the traditional ones, which remand economic exploitation and spectacularization. The ways to be in contact with museum materials play a decisive role on learning, and those that compromise an active manner to doing this are withheld in the memory with greater effectiveness. In view of this, interactive

museums have created the possibility of seeing experimentation and active participation as an effective way to learn, therefore, they have fostered the concept of a visitor from its active dimension.

As mentioned above, interactivity is no guarantee for reflection. In this sense, the Güemes Museum sees a technically asserted institutional configuration to foster the participation of and attendance of society; however, its depoliticized and decontextualized hues on the narrative do not become materialized more than a historical description that is presented to be neutral and established, which discourages the reflection, appropriation and critical thinking process of the audience.

It is paramount to understand the reception of cultural messages and education on their own, as a negotiation process. Processes are a lot more centralized on museums than on results, as they imply the idea of unfinished knowledge whereas it is a way to allow visitors to face possible relations of the sample and to make their own conclusions. In addition, the likelihood of facing topics from possible questioning and of creating materials that enable an actual exploration, contribute to the generation of a deeper reflection by visitors.

Presenting a historical narrative as a set of indisputable answers does not only reconstruct a false image, but also restricts individual reasoning and inquiries. The exposition ought to enhance the visitors' eyes, to allow that they start a critical process on the power apparatus and to channel their concerns and questions. Therefore, the Güemes Museum could reinforce this aspect from displacing its commercialization and consumption focus of attention towards the formation of a museum that fosters serious and actual participation.

This also allows understanding that, truly, the fragmented presentation of the museum is in line with certain political desires which have an incidence on the historic clip and on aspects and factors mentioned therein. It is likely that extending the clip aimed to include a set of social, heterogeneous actors who partook in that historical stage enables the creation of shared bases to do a remake that adapts to the needs and demands of the present time. Assuming conflicts that form part of history may also contribute to consolidate the country as well as the union and cohesion of residing social groups and, at the same time, to interpret the presentation of the past in its collective dimension.

For that purpose, it is essential to take the museum as an agent for the dissemination and production of cultural capital which, in accordance with its political programs, may contribute to favor the way the symbolic capital of a society is allocated and

hierarchies and practices governing the social world legitimated; or, contribute to question the *status quo* and encourage questions by means of its cultural production under a distribution mode. Hence, it is necessary to rethink museums and heritage as key stages of value that may have a potential impact on the intensification of social differences or on cultural democratization.

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