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- Que os benefícios da nova ordem (independência) são simplesmente o prémio para quem teve jeito e engenho para agarrar o poder!
- Que o poder tradicional é coisa de feitiçaria dos velhos e para esquecer.
- Que o exercício penoso de luta pela sobrevivência é para continuar e assim estimular a criatividade popular!
- Que a unidade angolana não está segura com a diversidade cultural das suas populações porque essa diversidade representa uma ameaça de tribalismo!
- Que a democracia é coisa boa para propaganda mas é mais seguro ter todo o poder nas mãos de um só partido.

É neste contexto de preocupações com o estado-nação em construção, tema já abordado por R.D.C., em 1993/1994³, que nas *Actas da maianga* se inscreve o último capítulo “Identidades, culturas e literaturas”, em que a constatação de que “Angola vive em pleno, a par de outras, uma crise de “percepção” e de afirmação identitárias ...” (p. 221) é complementada com a afirmação muito clara de “... aferir o espectro das identidades e das identificações colectivas ...”, ou seja, mais exactamente, é fundamental saber “... quantos outros há de facto cá dentro ...” (p. 215).

Partindo da experiência provada e comprovada dos Kuvale, um daqueles “... raros casos que entre nós poderão ainda ser aferidos recorrendo ao “formato” do atribulado conceito de “etnia”.” (p. 218), R.D.C. reivindica a dimensão da diversidade cultural no espaço territorial de Angola, em termos e sensibilidade ímpares relativamente a tudo o que até hoje se escreveu sobre a matéria.

Manuel L. Rodrigues de Areia

Departamento de Antropologia
 Universidade de Coimbra
 3000-056 Coimbra, Portugal
 areia@antrop.uc.pt

Clavir, Miriam 2002. *Preserving what is valued: museums, conservation, and first nations*. Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press. 320 p.
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Preserving What is Valued challenges ethnographic conservation to reconsider its professional values and practices towards the care and preservation of First

³ Carvalho, R. D. 1993/1994. Angola: o passado vivido e o presente em presença (hipótese para uma análise antropológica da crise em curso). *África*, 16-17(1): 125-133.

Nation material cultures. Moreover, regardless of the author's own modesty about the work, her argument implicitly and unavoidably invites museums to critically evaluate the implications and status of the meta-narratives underlying their increasing adoption of an 'heritage' mandate, and provides a compelling moral imperative for curators to reincorporate mainstream paradigms of anthropology back into museum practices by returning the focus of their work to the holistic consideration of culture. As Marcel Mauss, insisted in the *Manuel d'Ethnographie* (1947), material and non-material culture are intrinsically linked. Material culture cannot be understood separate from non-material culture. Furthermore, it needs to be recognised that objects are only part of an infinitely more complex visual and intellectual culture, which includes two dimensional media, narratives, music, film, and photography. All of these embody and express culture, not in any mutual, redundant or exclusive way, but as a series of overlapping and constantly shifting representations.

Clavir's work is divided into two sections; the first two chapters provide a history and discussion of the basis of scientific conservation; its professionalisation, values and their encodation into ethical codes, while chapters three to seven focus on indigenous values of preservation and the contradictions between them and the former. Clavir fully recognises the value of collecting First Nation's often critical views on preservation, and, as she admits: "One could read this book solely for these citations" alone, but such a selective reading would obscure the work's intercultural nature and the sustained and cumulative critical implications that emerge from it. Rather than begin with section one and use it as a context for section two as the author does, I shall follow her invitation to read the work in reverse order, beginning with section two to discuss its implications for section one.

The First Nation struggle for control over cultural resources is part of wider aspirations for the repatriation of land, acknowledgement of ethnic identities, and demands for racial equality being waged by some 200 different bands, which in 2000, accounted for some 110,500 status Indians throughout British Columbia. Not surprisingly therefore, the institutionalisation, care and preservation of First Nation cultural property has been politicised within the wider historical panoply of political, economic and cultural disenfranchisement and racial marginalisation. According to one First Nation respondent, Don Bain, museums provide a space in which two world views, the one which gives primacy to the preservation of objects and the other which prioritises the preservation of cultures, have, and continue to collide head-on.

While Clavir emphasises the different individual and cultural attitudes to preservation, she is nevertheless able to abstract and generalise most of these into a condensed tabular form. Many of the people she interviewed believed material culture was not meant to be preserved, but had a life with its own beginning and eventual end. Sacred and utilitarian objects were made to be used, after which they should be destroyed or left to decay gradually. The life of objects could be prolonged by periodic restoration and repainting done by craftsmen and artists, but once they were incapable of serving any functional use, they ought to be allowed 'to go'. Sacred objects, far from inert were efficacious and associated with power that could benefit or harm individuals or communities. They needed light and air to breath and sometimes should only be approached by specified people, defined either by age, gender or state of purity. Ceremonial objects like masks and regalia belonged to families with title over their use and were sometimes regarded as private property and only brought out and seen during ceremonies before being wrapped up and hidden in store. Above all, objects are a manifestation and support of a people's non-material culture and are essential for cultural reproduction. Many respondents saw objects as having been 'taken' or 'stolen' rather than 'collected', while museums were associated with "... negative connotations signifying the place where dead things lie" (Gloria Cranmer-Webster), and "painful symbols and reminders of cultural loss and deprivation" (Moses). However, if there are strong feelings about the connotations of museums, few of her respondents were overwhelmingly negative about their ideals. Some recalled how museums had preserved objects that might have become extinct; they expressed pride at seeing an object that had been made or belonged or belong to a family member, they acknowledge their role as stores for fragile objects belonging to families and communities who do not themselves have such facilities, and they describe their awe and sometimes delight at the sheer accumulation of objects that museums hold.

If these impressions were to be set in hierarchical order from the particular to the most general, the issue of use versus non-use would perhaps rank as the most inclusive category of all. Through their proper cultural use the past is related to the present, continuity is celebrated over loss, and cultural renewal is achieved over extinction. Cultural autonomy, the aspiration to regain control over their own histories and interpretations, is seen as crucial in reasserting their nationhood and identity. As the author acknowledges, regaining control over their tangible cultural property provides a sense of reasserting mastery over their intangible culture, which is far deeper, pervasive and encompassing than any single object representation, and lies at the very roots of a culture's vigour.

Returning to section one of the book, conservation, with its emphasis on protecting the integrity of the object must be seen, alongside the traditional idea of the museum, as fundamentally opposed to any values that might lead to the endangerment or loss of any part of the objects physical integrity. Clavir, after describing the scientific origins of conservation and the difference between it and restoration, focuses on the professional institutionalisation of the subject and the regulation of its practices by institutionalised values and ethical codes. All science is based on values which reproduce dominant meta-narratives on which it is legitimated. Meta-narratives are reproduced through professional associations and institutionalisations which determine the values on which practices are based. She notes that the Canadian code of ethics for conservators acknowledges aesthetic, and conceptual integrity, as well as an object's physical integrity, but fails to stipulate which is more important, while the New Zealand code specifically acknowledges spiritual values may take precedence over physical preservation. With these two exceptions, however, most international and other national professional codes highlight the primacy of protecting an object's physical integrity, clearly identifying conservation with material objects rather than the wider context of cultural preservation. Conservators are defined as "advocates of the artefact;" according to Merrill, "our loyalty is not owed to our institutions, organisations or colleagues, but rather to the unique, and irreplaceable objects that embody our history, culture and aspirations"; or following Ashley-Smith: "The primary aim of conservation is to slow the process of deterioration and make sure that instances of sudden damage are made less probable".

At this point, it is worth noting that much contemporary anthropology is perhaps more sympathetic to indigenous points of view rather than others which fetishise objects above culture. I would therefore, disagree with a number of generalisations that the author makes about the subject. She states, for example that until recently ethnographic collections were primarily concerned with the past rather than present people (2002: 31); that such displays froze history to focus on an 'authentic moment' which provided criteria for defining an ethnographic present (*ibid.*: 32); and that in many museums 'historical artefacts supported meta-narratives of European nationalism, pinnacle of achievements, alleged European superiority to other cultures, and European roots in the Classical world. Indigenous collections were systematised within this perspective" (*ibid.*). While these characterisations apply to an older museum ethnography which, in Britain for example, was the product of a split between academic and museum ethnography in the 1920s, since the 1970s most museums have attempted to link collections

back to the cultures from which they were derived, or to comparative perspectives on the heterogeneities and similarities between cultures world-wide. Furthermore, Clavir's view ignores the universalism which characterised museum anthropology in Germany between 1868-1914, or the Maussian perspectives behind the reorganisation of the Musée de l'Homme in 1937. If anything, the theoretical redundancy behind much museum ethnography in the period between the 1920s-1970s in the Anglo-American-Canadian world led to a fetishisation of the object which was not shared by mainstream anthropology, and which has never been part of the French tradition. Even during the early history of anthropology, within Anglo-American evolutionary paradigms, or in Germany, Bastian's universal science, objects were primarily valued and collected as testaments of cultures that were feared to be becoming extinct, and, regardless of dissimilar notions on their signification, it was the meaning or conceptual integrity of the object that was given primacy over its physical integrity. Only after the division between material culture studies and anthropology in the 1920s, which led to the former's loss of any interpretative paradigm, did museum ethnography fetishise the object in a way never replicated in anthropology itself. Contemporary anthropology, with its re-engagement with material culture, might therefore be expected to provide support for a revised set of conservation and museum values which favour some kind of balance between the requirements of long term conservation and community access and use. This point, rather than detract from the author's overall argument, provides it with wider substantiation. Clavir in fact discusses both the new National Museum of the American Indian and New Zealand museums, where such a divide between originating communities and professional groups has shown itself to be bridgeable. If museums are to become more relevant for First Nation peoples, we must look forward to crucial shifts in some of the values which dictate their operations. Clavir's work goes a long way in demonstrating that while the science behind museums can be retained, its deployment, mediated through distinct cultural values, in an increasingly intercultural world, may need to be radically rethought.

Anthony Shelton

Departamento de Antropologia
Universidade de Coimbra
3000-056 Coimbra, Portugal
ashelton@antrop.uc.pt