

**Exhibiting the countryside:
A post-colonial study of museums in North Yorkshire**

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October 2013

Abstract

This dissertation attempts to understand the images and stories of the countryside exhibited in two local museums in North Yorkshire – the Ryedale Folk Museum, Hutton le Hole and the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, Pickering. The study was conducted through qualitative methods mainly based on multi-sited museography, documentary and visual archives, and interviews. Using a postcolonial framework, this research's findings relate to three main arguments.

First, museums and modernity: the research explores both museums as theatres of memory rather than as a consequence of the heritage industry. The emergence of these museums involves practices that responded to industrialisation and modernity, which led to massive and rapid changes in the Ryedale countryside and nearby rural ways of life.

Second, museums and the marginal: “the countryside” exhibited in both museums can be seen as the margins negotiating with English nationalism and its dominant narratives of homogeneity, unity and irresistible progress. Three key aspects involved with this process are space, time, and people.

The first part of the research findings considers how both museums negotiated with English nationalism and the use of the countryside as a national narrative through images of the countryside “idyll” and the north-south divide. The second part illustrates how local folk museums exhibited “folklife” as the “chronotopes of everyday life” in contrast with the “typologies of folk objects”. The third part focuses on forgotten histories and domestic remembering of space, time and people based on the “local and marginal” rather than the “universal and national”.

The final argument is about limitations in museum studies related to the definition of museums and the distinction between western and non-western museums. This limitation may relate to the influences of Eurocentrism and colonialism which remain entangled with elitism and nationalism, and also to a lack of concern with cultural hybridity, differences, and complexity.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life and the museum staff in both. Special thanks to Gordon Clitheroe, the museum joint-founder and former curator, Roger Dowson, the museum manager, and Hilda Sissons, museum volunteer and costume curator at Beck Isle Museum and to David Stockdale, the project development manager and curator of the Harrison Collection at Ryedale Folk Museum for their warm welcomes and generous interviews.

A great deal of thanks goes to the Department of Sociology, University of York; the academic staff and Alison Taylor, graduate administrator; the TAP committees – Dr Daryl Martin and Dr Laurie Hanquinet for reading and worthwhile comments. To Daryl, your reading list on the Sociology of the North was very helpful and introduced me to an interesting area in British sociology.

I have no idea how to say enough thanks to my supervisor – Professor Sharon Macdonald for her constant support, valuable advice, many helpful comments and critical questions on my initial drafts. These made this dissertation possible. What I can do may be only to say the same again – thank you very much indeed.

Truly thanks to my friends and colleagues at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University, Thailand for their support and particularly help in changing workloads for my study leave. I am really grateful to the previous Deans – Assistant Professor Jirapa Worasiengsuk and Associate Professor Pornchai Tarkulwaranont for kind advice and recommendations for my scholarship, and also thankful to Thammasat University for the PhD scholarship which included this year of MA by research.

I particularly would like to thank the museum amateurs and friends of local museums in Thailand, especially at the Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre (SAC) for companionship, hospitality and inspiration. I am also very grateful to the SAC former directors – Dr Paritta Chalernpow Koanantakool and Assistant Professor Suvanna Kriengkraipetch for their long-term kindnesses, generous support and worthwhile opportunities to learn by doing.

Last but not least, to my family: mother, father, auntie, brothers and sisters – endless thanks to all of them for everything especially for always being there and looking forward to my coming back home.

Author's declaration

This dissertation has been submitted to the University of York for the Master (by research) degree in Sociology. The work presented is entirely my own work and has not been used for other research or presented elsewhere. Any external sources have been referenced accordingly. This dissertation contains 35,771 words.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation primarily focuses on images and stories of the countryside exhibited in two local museums in North Yorkshire – Ryedale Folk Museum at Hutton le Hole and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life at Pickering. This project provides a post-colonial reading of museum exhibitions related to the countryside, and also attempts to understand these museums as a form of people's practice responding to modernity and its impact on the countryside. This introductory chapter mainly covers the research background and framing of the study as these are related to the main research questions, conceptual framework, and research methodology. The conceptual framework of this study has mainly been derived from post-colonial theory and relevant literature in museum studies regarding colonialism and post-colonial criticism.

In the initial stage, this research topic emerged as the interplay of three main components. The first component is my background in local museums and community-based museums in Thailand, and my plan to do a comparative study of museums in Thailand and the UK for my PhD. The second component is my initial interest in the UK countryside, particularly the north of England after becoming a student at the University of York. The last is in regard to the benefit I received from the university's geographical location. I was led to first explore case studies in nearby areas, and also learned that there are various interesting museums in North Yorkshire – some of which are small museums, working closely with communities, and showing exhibits about the countryside. These museums provide a relevant basis for cross-cultural understanding of community-based museums and local museums in Thailand and also in the UK; this is an area which seems to be neglected by international museum studies.

It may seem obvious that the UK countryside, covering some areas of North Yorkshire, has been mentioned for its beautiful landscapes and scenic places via well-known paintings, literature, photography and other kinds of media. Nevertheless, one might be quite curious about other aspects of the landscape. Several questions spring to my mind, for instance – are there any things behind or below those magnificent scenes or perhaps within those scenes that are invisible or forgotten? What about people and their lives, memories or

stories, and significant changes that may have taken place during various periods of those places' histories? Curiosity over these and an interest to learn more about small local museums in the UK became my entry point into this research topic and the basis for my MA dissertation.

According to key literature about local museums and community-based museums in the academic field of museum studies (Simpson, 1996; Kreps, 2003), small local museums and community-based museums in the countryside primarily focus on indigenous cultures and rural areas outside Europe, mainly in America, Africa, Asia, Australia and also the Pacific Islands. Moreover, a number of local and community-based museums located in non-European continents or "western countries" generally have been recognised as "non-western museums" or "indigenous museums," which are obviously different from museums in western countries. Kreps (2003) examines the Provincial Museum of Central Kalimantan, Museum Balanga, Indonesia and some Native American museums in the United States. She states that there is no one universal museology and that multiple museologies are needed. She points to examples of such museums as providing an "indigenous model" or a "non-western model of the museum". Similarly, Simpson (1996) stated that there is a new paradigm of indigenous and community-based museum during the so-called "post-colonial era". Simpson focused on case studies of community museums in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, and her main argument related to the colonial construction of representations in museums that exhibit indigenous cultures.

The conceptual framework discussed above became a problematic issue for me in making sense of local community-based museums in the UK countryside. Should these museums be understood as western or non-western models of the museum? Are they non-western models of the museum in a western country? Actually, what are the similarities and differences between those museums in "western" and "non-western" countries? These problematic issues prompted me to a concern about the possible myth of the "western" and "non-western" model of the museum and to rethinking the limitations and consequences, both intended and unintended, of colonialism and Eurocentrism in the field of Museum Studies, even in the major works that make an admirable attempt to criticise and go beyond colonialism and Eurocentrism.

The existence of small local museums, folk museums, and community-based museums in the UK provides a reminder that it may not be enough anymore to explain and understand such museums – or the diversity of museums more generally (which relates closely to broader questions of cultural diversity and differences) – by using dichotomized concepts of the western and non-western museum, the indigenous and non-indigenous museum, or even the oriental museum. Due to this concern, the crucial next question is how to make sense and think appropriately about small museums or community-based museums in the countryside or rural Britain. To do so, I have chosen to adopt a post-colonial approach as my initial framework for this research. This issue will be discussed further in the section below on colonialism and post-colonial criticism in museum studies.

In order to consider small museums and community-based museums in the countryside of Britain, I started by exploring where those museums are located in North Yorkshire, and reviewing relevant literature focusing on community-based museums, small museums and various kinds of museums in rural Britain. Given the number of museums in the UK countryside, there is surprisingly little research and academic literature focused on community-based museums or small museums especially in comparison to the literatures regarding large scale museums and especially national and ethnographic museums in which there tend to be museum objects from other cultures all around the world.

According to my preliminary exploration, the situation seems to be as Bridget Yates states, in her PhD thesis on volunteer-run museums in the southwest of England, namely, that “the history of museums in England is primarily an urban history” (Yates 2010, p.12). Yates also mentions that there is little academic literature on small museums in the countryside, or in her words, on so-called “village museums” and “market town museums” (ibid.). At this stage, it appears that the amount of research and academic literature is considerably less than the information available via online searches and museum guidebooks. In North Yorkshire alone there are, at least, fifteen small museums in the countryside and small towns that might be called community-based museums, local museums, and folk museums, or that exhibit some collections and stories obviously related to the countryside. Based on these facts, I therefore propose a study of local museums in the North Yorkshire by focusing on two case studies of museums which primarily undertake exhibitions about the countryside.

In summary, the research aims of this dissertation are:

[1] To provide a post-colonial reading of museum exhibitions focused on the countryside;

[2] To investigate those museums as a form of people's practice responding to the significant changes associated with modernity in the countryside, especially during the period of industrialisation and post-industrialisation.

Both research aims then lead to the main research questions, which are divided into two related groups. The first group is concerned with the marginal position of this kind of museum both in the country and in museum studies. The second group is focused on the agency of the museums as a set of social and cultural practices rather than as a passive result of structural transformation.

In the first group are questions including:

- What are the images and stories of the countryside exhibited in those community-based museums?
- How is "the countryside" exhibited and represented?
- What are the contexts of the museums' establishment and/or exhibition?
- Is there any connection to contexts of nationalism and colonialism?

In the second group:

- Is it possible to state that the "community-based museum" is a form of people's cultural practice to reflect and respond to the socio-cultural changes both in local and wider contexts?
- What are the significances, cultural meaning and agency of those museums during periods of change?

Framing the study

This research primarily adopts a post-colonial perspective and also benefits from theoretical concepts in the field of cultural sociology and anthropology such as social and cultural agency, practice, place and memory which will be discussed further in later chapters.

In summary, the three main areas of argument that I try to address in this dissertation involve three arguments:

[1] *Museums and modernity*: this theme covers several aspects and various processes of social change such as industrialisation and the mechanisation of agriculture. Moreover, this research attempts to argue that this kind of museum is not entirely a result of the “heritage industry” (Hewison, 1987) although it may be related. Therefore the investigation of complicated and reciprocal relationships between the museums and modernity seems to be necessary.

[2] *Museums and the marginal*: this argument is inspired by post-colonial theory but applied in a different direction and with different actors of unbalanced power relations – from “the West and the Orient” to “the North and the South” or “the Centre and Periphery”. It focuses on a debate about which class and social groups these museums are concerned with and who they belong to.

[3] *Limitations and problematics of definition*: of “western and non-western museums” and also museum classifications relating to this kind of museum. This argument relates to awareness of the strong influences of colonialism and Eurocentrism in museum studies. This limitation may not only relate to the museums dedicated to ethnographic collection and indigenous cultures outside Europe but also to local folk museums in European countries such as the UK.

Colonialism and post-colonial criticism in museum studies

Post-colonial criticism and critical questioning of the ideology of colonialism and Eurocentrism in museums are not entirely new and unfamiliar for museum studies. Various museums worldwide, in different ways and degrees, have been criticised for their roles and practices in colonialism and the colonial process, especially museums established during the colonial period and run by imperial governments (Lidchi, 1997, p.153-162). Moreover, some museums have been critically regarded by various popular literature and academic work for their effective roles as tools of the European empires in the process of European colonisation. In the pioneer work in this area, *Orientalism*, Said (1978) criticised the western construction of mythical representation of "the Orient" throughout both popular and

academic western literature, and other media such as painting, photography, film and also museums. The cases mentioned in his work are mainly in Egypt and the Middle East. As Said points out, the mythical representation had been undertaken in order to initiate the higher status of the West and legitimise this higher position as rightful occupiers of those oriental lands. It could be said that the major contribution of this book was effectively to capture the crucial phenomena, which nowadays seem obvious, but were then absent. His critique of the problematic relationship between culture and colonial power not only existed in the period of past colonial empires, but also existed in contemporary empires such as the relationship between the USA and the Middle East (Said, 1994).

Over the last couple of decades or so, there have been major works in museum studies that attempt to criticise and deconstruct the ideology and practices of colonialism in museums. Coombes (1994) investigates the making of representations of Africa through visual culture in the UK over the period 1890–1913. She critically illustrates the representation of the African, and highlights the ideology of colonialism and racism built into a number of British paintings, photographs, and museum exhibitions (in both local and national museums), which relate to African culture and native Africans. She also argues that the representation of Africa during the colonial period was most likely reinvented imperially and colonially in England – Britain being one of the major imperial powers in Africa.

Despite the same concern with colonialism and its consequences in museums, Bennett (2004) responds in a different way. He investigates the ideology and practices of colonialism in another kind of museum, namely, that of evolutionary museums that are related closely to modern academic disciplines – geology, palaeontology, natural history, archaeology and anthropology. Bennett also points out the binding relationship between the evolutionary conception and colonialism, a conception that influenced and became effective through some collections and exhibitions in the UK museums at some periods. According to Bennett (2004), it could be said that various collections of material objects related to some specific culture, for example the Egyptian and Assyrian collections in the British Museum, were not meaningful there as unique cultural objects in and of themselves; they acquired meaning in the museum as part of a lineage series of human evolution or civilisation where the Greek culture is most likely to be placed at the higher stage of human civilisation.

Furthermore, there are the other activities in the field of museum studies that show the major concern of colonialism and post-colonial criticism. Barringer and Flynn (1998) discuss problematic relationships between cultural objects and colonial representations in the European countries that were once empires. They also criticise and investigate the ideology of colonialism and colonial museum practices in various areas and periods such as the colonial collection in the V&A Museum, Chinese material culture and the British perception of China in the mid nineteenth century, colonial architecture of the India artisan, and the imperial gaze and perspective on the Maori and their material objects.

Based on case studies in the pacific islands, Thomas (1991) discussed exchange relations between indigenous peoples and Europeans through the use of each other's material culture. This may not have been negative, but was limited by contrasting forms and the binary opposition between European and indigenous societies, and between the gifts and commodities as previous academic accounts describe (Thomas, 1991, p.4). Thomas points to the critical idea of "entangled objects", those that reflected reciprocal exchanges, and illustrated various possible forms of reciprocal exchanges and the use of material objects either by way of indigenous appropriation of the European things, or conversely, by way of the European appropriation of indigenous things.

Gosden and Knowles (2001) are concerned with colonialism in ethnographic museums and attempt to make sense of and interpret colonial objects in a different light rather than being limited to that cast by the shadow of colonialism. They also analyse four museum collections from Papua New Guinea during the colonial period. This comparative study aims to explore colonial culture and the history of colonialism in Papua New Guinea in particular. It mainly considers varieties and changes in colonialism and colonial relationships between Europeans and the local people. In the case of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Gosden and Larson (2007) critically explore and analyse the collections in the museum during 1884–1945 or since its opening year until the end of WWII. They state clearly that an influential approach known as "typological displays" is used to exhibit material objects in ethnographic museums during the early decades (Gosden and Larson, 2007, p. 3). Their study is a part of The Relational Museum, a major research project at the Pitt Rivers Museum during 2002–2006. Another significant project relates to folk collections in the UK is *"England: the other within – Analysing the English collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum"*. This research focuses on the

ethnographic objects collected from inside Britain, particularly Oxfordshire and Somerset. The project mainly aims to map, document, analyse and use this museum collection to shed light on the modern construction of Englishness.¹

In addition, there is another group of research studies that might be called “post-colonial museum studies”. These focus on case studies of indigenous museums and community-based museums outside European countries. Some of those museums are located in formerly colonised lands. This group of research interests also covers the study of museums of minority groups, ethnic groups and native people in USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (e.g. Simpson, 1996; Karp et al., 1992; Kreps, 2003; Watson, 2007).

In the field of contemporary museum studies, there are not only academic works that criticise and deconstruct the ideology and practices of colonialism, but also some that try to address the significant changes in the museums and its practices after the shock waves of post-colonial criticism. Some of these museums present their concerns and attempt to do “Representing difference” and “Representing differently” (Sherman, 2008). For instance, Bolton (2008) observes a significant change at the British Museum in 2003 with a new exhibition – “Living and Dying”. This exhibition is most likely an example of a new interpretation and working approach to the colonial collections of ethnographic objects at the British Museum – for instance, an attempt to formulate the exhibition through cross-cultural perspectives involving collaboration and consultation with the originating communities as much as possible (Bolton, 2008, p.349).

According to the literature cited, when looking back to the UK, one noticeable point is that post-colonial criticism seems to be used only against museums that exhibit other cultures and that are related closely to colonial collections from outside Britain, or the large scale and well-known British museums. It seems that colonialism and post-colonial criticism have been assumed to have nothing relevant to say to small museums in the UK. This point will be reconsidered and investigated carefully in this research through the case studies of two small museums in North Yorkshire.

Post-colonial criticism is not only useful for criticisms of museums related to the process of external colonisation, but also useful for critics as a tool in the process of internal

¹ <http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/>

colonisation as Anderson (1991; 1st ed. 1983) points out in his work on nationalism. Anderson (1991) states that the museums, and especially national museums, have been used as a cultural tool by the elites and national government in the process of nationalisation or during the formation of the nation alongside censuses and maps. This point may be more clear and meaningful by attempting to understand the spirit of post-colonial criticism through a wide angle lens by expanding the definition of post-colonial study as a kind of criticism, and also by critically investigating “power relationships” not only between the coloniser and the colonised, but also between the exhibitor and the exhibited; these relationships are complicated and changeable. Furthermore, the effective roles of museums related to nationalism and the making of national identities have been criticised and discussed through examining various cases including Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Brazil, Portugal, Australia and Canada (Kaplan, 1994). In addition, these case studies seem to be those of the younger generation of nations more than the old nations and their empires.

However, the museum in fact was not reserved only for national elites, to act as their cultural tool or state apparatus, or for the formation and expression of their national identity and pride. At other levels and for different groups of people, especially subordinates or the powerless – the museum is most likely an effective tool and one useful for conveying cultural practices. As Crooke (2007, p.123) points out, one contribution of the museum is to be “a part of a social movement” as in the case of the Museum of District Six in Cape Town, South Africa. Therefore, in light of the post-colonial perspective, the museum certainly could be seen as not only a cultural tool for dominance but also as one which can embody alternative values.

Post-colonial theory and its debate

Although *Orientalism* (Said, 1978) – as the pioneering work of post-colonial theory – successfully settled a new line of radical argument and became a milestone in this line, there were various critiques of it. McLeod (2000, p.46-49) summarizes four main critiques – first, it was “ahistorical” or lacked historical contexts; second, Said obviously ignored resistance by the colonised or the Orient; third, Said ignored resistance within the West and also stereotyped the West and saw it as monolithic and, last but not least, his critique appeared to lack concern with gender differences. Significantly, to deal with these critiques

and their theoretical limitations, subsequent post-colonial theorists propose new arguments in different ways.

Spivak (1988) argues that *Orientalism* demonstrates a lack of concern for gender and the agency of the subaltern. Furthermore, the situation seems to be worst in the cases of subaltern women who absolutely cannot speak. By asking the radical question “Can the subaltern speak?”, Spivak has criticised and deconstructed both colonial representation by the dominant agents, and its critiques by post-colonial theorists that in fact did the same – conserved “the subject of the West” or “the West of the subject”. (Spivak, 1998, p.66). It could be said that Spivak does attempt to address and discern the voices and agency of the subaltern or the colonised which seems to be disappeared and ignored both in the representation by the West and in the critical works by some of post-colonial theorists including Edward Said. In different direction, Young (2001) proposes a historical approach to the theoretical framework of post-colonialism. It seems obvious that he attempts to go beyond the limitations related to the critique of “ahistorical”.

Another major critique of *Orientalism* relating to its stereotypes is about its limitation of using “binary opposition” between the Orient and the West or “the colonising subject” and the “colonised subject”. Bhabha (1994) criticises this issue and points to the circumstance of ambiguous and ambivalence relationships between the coloniser and colonised through the concepts of “hybridity” and “mimicry”. Furthermore, due to his major concern with hybridity, he also points out the significance of negotiation between the contradictory and antagonistic elements rather than the mere negation of one or the other (Bhabha, 1994, p.37). Another crucial concept is “cultural difference” as he points out that “The enunciation of cultural difference problematizes the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity, at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative address” (ibid. p. 51). This concept also problematizes the idea of the “unity and totality of cultures”. In his view, “cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self and Other” (ibid. p.52).

Furthermore, some works of Stuart Hall are important and contribute significant ideas not only to the field of cultural studies and cultural sociology, but also for post-colonial studies. It could be said that Hall is one of post-colonial thinkers who brings post-colonial studies

outside the text, especially literature, to other kinds of media such as film, television, and also museums. However, it should be noted that a numbers of post-colonial theorists, are, in fact, post-colonial literary theorists.

Significantly, Hall (1992) critically describes how the concept of “the West” functioned in the process of colonisation. First, this concept allows the West to classify societies into different categories such as “western” and “non-western” and became a tool for thinking and creating knowledge about those categories. Secondly, it conceptualised and represented a number of different characteristics into one picture – an image or set of images. The West, as a concept, functions as a part of a language, or a system of representation which does not stand alone but works together with other images and sets of ideas. For instance, the west = urban = developed while the non-west = non-industrial = rural = agriculture = under-developed. Thirdly, this concept provides “a standard or model of comparison” and explains “difference”; it defines the gap between societies such that some societies are “close to”, or “far away from” catching up with the other societies. These, by implication became non-western societies close to or far away from, catching up with western societies. Lastly, it provides “criteria of evaluation” and thus creates a hierarchical order and ranking value for societies – some are better and more desirable than others. For instance, the West = developed = good = desirable; the non-west = under-developed = undesirable. So these are powerful mechanisms in the process of colonisation; the idea or concept of “the West” had worked, and legitimised the dominance of the West above the rest (Hall, 1992, p.186-187).

In addition, while post-colonial approaches seem very popular in various fields, Hall (2000) also reminds us about the limitation of post-colonial theory. In fact, his main concerns are held in common with those of the major critiques mentioned above. Some of the problematic issues are about binary oppositions between the West and the rest, and the clear-cut politics embodied in binary opposition (Hall, 2000, p.244); the multiplicity and complexity of “the post-colonial” in a different context – especially in a different national context; the limitation of the post-colonial as “a form of periodisation” (Hall, 2000, p.246) and its “problematic temporality” (Shohat, 1992 cited in Hall 2000, p.249), and also the effects of Eurocentric temporalities (ibid. p.251). The false and confusing distinction between colonisation as a system of rule, of power and exploitation, and colonisation as systems of knowledge and representation that are being refused (ibid. p.254), is also cited

as problematic along with a serious concern deserving critical consideration is the relationship between post-colonialism and global capitalism (ibid. p.257).

The key literature on post-colonial theory illustrated above is relevant to this research although at first sight it may seem irrelevant to match post-colonial theory with case studies in the countryside of the country that not only had not been colonised but once was one of the powerful empires – the British Empire. After reviewing the literature, it seems to me that the contribution of post-colonial theory is not only limited to understanding the colonial relationship between the West and the rest, or the idea that external colonisation could make sense of the internal colonisation and unbalanced power relationship between the North and the South, or even the relationship between the national and the local that will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Chronotope: definition and significance

The concept of chronotope is also relevant for this research as a methodological and analytic tool for capturing and interpreting various scenes in museum exhibitions, which seem fragmented, accumulated, and so diverse. Clifford (1988, p.236-237) points out the idea of “chronotope” which was originally used and defined by Bakhtin for making sense of the practice of collecting art and culture. According to Bakhtin, this term literally means “time-space” “with no priority to either dimension”. “The chronotope is a fictional setting where historically specific relation[s] of power become visible and certain stories can “take place” (Bakhtin, 1937 cited in Clifford, 1988, p.236).

Moreover, Bakhtin (1985, p.250) states the significance of chronotope and its meaning for narrative as the “organizing centre for fundamental narrative events of the novel. The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied”. As a dialogical landscape, Folch-Serra (1990, p.263) also explains the significance of Bakhtin’s chronotopes and its connection with place and voice:

What is the significance of all these chronotopes? Bakhtin found them to be places where the ‘knots’ of narrative are tied and untied. The representational importance of the chronotope makes time become palpable and visible. The time of human life and historical time occur

within well-delineated spatial areas. It is this fact that makes it possible to structure a representation of events in the chronotope, and around the chronotope. It serves as the primary point from which events unfold, whereas at the same time other 'binding' events, located far from the chronotope, merely appear as dry information and communicated facts. In this way, the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a centre of concretizing representation, as a force giving body to an entire narrative – whether a novel, an ethnography, or the analysis of a region.

The chronotopes, therefore, are the gates to narratives and multi-voices or “polyphony” in Bakhtin’s term (Bakhtin, 1986). Multi-voices are special characteristics of the “novel” in contrast with the “epic” which primarily refers to the single-voiced, fixed meaning and narrative unity (Lawson, 2011). Bakhtin concludes that:

whatever these meanings turn out to be, in order to enter our experience (which is social experience) they must be take on the *form of a sign* that is audible and visible for us (a hieroglyph, a mathematical formula, a verbal or linguistic expression, a sketch, etc.). Without such temporal-spatial expression, even abstract thought is impossible. Consequently, every entry into the sphere of meanings is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981, p.258).

Research methodology

This study is conducted by using qualitative research methodology which mainly involves three kinds of research methods: multi-sited museography, documentary research, and interviews. During the process of data collection and analysis, three types of data collected by different methods, from different data sources, were compiled as supporting evidence for research findings and data verification according to the principle of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978, p. 302).

The research initially focuses on local museums in North Yorkshire. The first part of data collection and analysis is multi-sited museography. This research method was inspired by,

and derived from the anthropological research methodology of “multi-sited ethnography” (Marcus, 1995). According to Marcus (1995, p.105–110), “multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of location”; the researcher then defines the focus of their study, traces and also collects data by following the People, the Thing, the Metaphor, the Plot – Story – or Allegory, the Life or Biography, the Conflict and so on.

In practice, the multi-sited museographic research was undertaken in two stages – the first stage entailed visiting and researching the background of a large number of local museums in North Yorkshire. In several cases, I visited and took photographs, gathered documentary data such as leaflets and guidebooks, and consulted available sources in libraries about the histories of the museums (see below). This was located too within wider reading about the history of museums in North Yorkshire, on the social and cultural history of Northern England, and on museum and cultural development in the UK as a whole. In the two case-study museums, I undertook a second stage of more in-depth multi-sited museography. This engages museum observation of visual displays, exhibitions, photographic collections in the museums.

On the basis of this initial study, I selected several museums for more intense case-study. Originally, I began with four of these – the Ryedale Folk Museum, Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, Whitby Museum and Yorkshire Museum of Farming – but then refined this to two museums for especially detailed attention and analysis. The main reasons for my research interest in both cases of Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life are as follows: First, both museums are located in the countryside of the North, areas which are recognised as industrial. In the North, the North York Moors and the Ryedale countryside are significant rural areas of Yorkshire similar to the Yorkshire dales. Second, both museums have been dedicated to folk life and rural life (as reflected in their names), and have been continually active for a long time since their first opening in the 1960s. Third, their exhibitions, collections and related stories are very interesting, diverse and complex, and raise a number of questions regarding the museums themselves and the relationship between them, their communities and the wider society.

In addition, multi-sited museography was not limited to one site or one museum but was concerned with the interaction and linkage between two or more museums. Furthermore, in this research, it was used in wider range than a comparative study of both museums. The multi-sited museographic research was also concerned about relationships among both case-study museums and other museums which were involved or being as museum contexts such as some museums of folklife and rural life which were previously established, famous or located nearby.

This methodological guideline is applied throughout my museum observations and close readings of all exhibitions in the museums. In order to capture various scenes of exhibition and large numbers of objects, I have followed Bakhtin's idea of chronotope or "time-space". Thus the chronotopes can be opened by various kinds of media – photographs, museum displays, exhibition spaces, places or contextual reconstruction as Bakhtin (1981) points out that the chronotopes could be the gateway to narratives, memories and multiple voices.

Significantly, both museums also have large and valuable collections of photographs that belonged to several professional photographers e.g. William Hayes and T. Geoffrey Willey at the Ryedale Folk Museum, and Sidney Smith at Beck Isle. This research benefits from these photographic archives, which have been presented in various forms such as exhibitions, photographic publications, and photo catalogues. In fact, it could be said that both museums seem like a thick and complex book. In order to understand and make sense of a great deal of visible content and invisible meaning, close reading for a long period of time and several times over may be necessary. I therefore took some photographs in the process of data collection and collected off-site materials for complementary reading, analysis and interpretation.

In this research, visual analysis played a major role and was useful especially for understanding the similarities and differences between the museums, and comparing them to other related museums. Ball and Smith (1992) addressed two paradigms for analysing visual data, especially photographs: visual realism and the visual representation. Through the lens of photographic realism, the major concerns in the analysis of visual data are [1] its content – what is given in the photograph; [2] its referent – whatever the photograph is belonged to; and [3] its context – which context it appears in or has been made (Ball and Smith, 1992,

p. 19-20). On the other hand, analysis of visual representation focuses on alternative aspects, which depend on the different theoretical basis underlying the analysis, such as the symbolic meanings and hidden or deep structures of the empirical data (ibid. p. 41).

Similarly, Banks (2001) points to the methodological idea of “reading pictures” and addresses various concrete examples of reading pictures as visual representation such as analysing visual forms as “representations of society” and “representations of knowledge” (Banks, 2001, p.14–33). Moreover, Banks is also concerned with the “multivocality of the photograph images” and the problematic relation between pictures and their captions as these are crucial points that should be addressed in the process of analysing visual data (ibid. p.15). One example that involves working on “reading” museum exhibitions is “Seeing through solidity: a feminist perspective on museums” (Porter, 1996). This focuses on exhibitions related to women’s life and gender relations, some of which are feminist exhibitions such as an exhibition on “Housework” in the Woman’s Museum, Denmark.

However, analysing visual data currently covers a wider range of visual materials than photographs or pictures which are restricted to two dimensions. Emmison and Smith (2000) precisely summarise a variety of visual data based on its multiple dimensions: two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and lived visual data. So the three-dimensional visual data which includes objects and visual setting is crucial and is a major component of the museum. Emmison and Smith essentially point out that one of the advantages of material objects or three-dimensional data is that it seems to be “more ‘democratic’ than much published data” and it is also intimately engaged with the everyday experiences and practical activities of ordinary people (Emmison and Smith, 2000, p.111). Moreover, the museum also involves four-dimensional or lived visual data as same as the house, garden, park or other kinds of places or public spaces that people “interact in” rather than “interact with” as objects or three-dimensional things (ibid. p.152). These aspects are valuable for analysing and interpreting how visual data relates to the museums.

Conforming to these methodological concerns, the data collection of this research, therefore, covers museum observations on site during museum visits, and close reading of the permanent exhibitions in and ex situ as well as observation of some annual events at both museums including craft days, historical enactments, and Christmas weekends. During

the events, the houses, workshops, village hall, and several other areas of the museum were used for demonstrations, and became settings for museum participation between visitors and demonstrators.

The second part is documentary research based on various documentary sources, and especially museum documents and publication such as brochures, guidebooks, booklets, and books. Data collected also included websites and online documentary sources. Both museums have produced a number of various publications related to the museums and these are major sources for understanding the histories of these museums from local perspectives through the memoirs, biographies and autobiographies of museums founders, curators and volunteers, who worked closely with the museums during their formative years. Relevant documents also cover various books of local and social histories and interesting stories of places where the museums are located. In addition, I also received useful information and hospitality from Pickering Information Centre and the Pickering Library. Materials from local sources were very useful for investigating the geographical location and landscape, historical background and local contexts of both museums.

The third part of data collection is interviews with the museum managers and curators of both museums. In the case of Ryedale Folk Museum, I interviewed David Stockdale, the project development manager and curator of the Harrison Collection. In December 2013, I met David at the museum during the Christmas event 2013 and later at a workshop of the Research Network on The Public History of Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine (PHoSTEM), hosted by the National Railway Museum, York. He and another museum volunteer presented their experiences at this event on curatorial and collaborative working with the Ryedale Folk Museum. This led to a further interview and a museum visit, at which he generously offered to be the museum guide and provided very worthwhile information about each element of this open-air museum.

In the case of Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, I interviewed Roger Dowson, the museum manager and Gordon Clitheroe, the former curator and joint founder. Here I was invited by Hilda Sissons, museum volunteer and costume curator of the Beck Isle Museum, to visit the back stage of the museum – the storage room, and explore some of the costume collections. Occasionally, I also met the same people at the museum and had informal talks

with them and some volunteers, who worked for the museums on a weekly basis and whenever the museums launched various annual events and public activities.

Mainly, the interview data was used as data verification and guideline. It provided substantial support for the visual and documentary data that underlay my research findings. In fact, during the period of May to August 2013 when I visited both museums and did interviews, the museums were actively and continually running annual public activities thus the museum staff and volunteers were very busy. I therefore decided to do some interviews with key persons for data verification as they provided very warm welcomes and seemed pleased to give interviews and share useful information. In addition, both museums also had set up their library and information centres which are accessible to researchers and the public by appointment.

It is important to note the limitations of this study in this section. As an MA dissertation, this research has had a limited time period of one year (October 2012 – September 2013) to undertake the whole process. Consequently, this study has primarily been based on the museum exhibitions and documentary data related to both museums and to interviews with the museum curators and managers. Owing to a limited time to work and restricted public transportation to museums in the countryside, this research has focused on only two cases studies in the same area near Pickering. In fact, this is a small proportion of the large numbers of local museums in North Yorkshire and the north of England. Moreover, for museums in the countryside, museum opening periods and activities for the public are based on weather seasonality thus they are necessarily closed during some periods in the winter or during damaging floods. Some plans of data collection were affected by these circumstances. In the future, data collection should take account of these factors.

Furthermore, both case-study museums are very complex – there are large numbers of items and diverse collections related to various groups, and a number of museum participants both inside and outside the area. The museums have expanded their museum space, changed their exhibitions, launched museum activities and publications many times during the last four decades. In fact, the data and materials that I have used in this research were limited to the current museum displays and accessible sources of documentary and visual data. I should note that these are just a small part of what it was possible to explore

and selectively collect in a few months. Nevertheless, by making my selections against a larger background knowledge of these particular case-studies and also of other museums in North Yorkshire, I believe that the multi-sited museography followed has allowed me to identify significant modes of display and narratives that are likely to also be of relevance to other – though not necessarily all – museums of folklife.

The dissertation structure

This dissertation comprises seven chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction and background to the study, the statement of the research problem, the main arguments, conceptual framework and the research methodology.

Chapter 2 illustrates the historical background and relevant context of folk or community-based local museums as these relate to the countryside of rural Britain and especially the north of England and North Yorkshire. The main topics in this chapter consider the changing countryside and rural England as well as the North-South divide and the northern consciousness in England.

Chapter 3 – local museums in North Yorkshire – is an overview of exhibitions in both museums and stories of how they were created. This chapter focuses on the agency of local actors in the museum-making process and the significance of local museums in the countryside.

Chapter 4 discusses how the countryside has been exhibited in both museums based on its spatial aspects – the countryside as land and home. This chapter also considers how English nationalism used the countryside as narration of the nation through its images of the idyllic countryside and the North-South divide. Another major concern of this chapter is how the museums negotiated those national images.

Chapter 5 examines folklife and people, and focuses on how local folk museums have exhibited “folklife”. How these exhibitions are different than conventional museums relates to their conception of folklife, which in the early 20th century had been strongly influenced by evolutionism and nationalism.

Chapter 6 focuses on “forgotten histories and domestic remembering” as well as the temporal aspects of the countryside. These are reflected through the following questions: how people’s histories, memories, and differences have been forgotten, and how museums negotiate with the gravity of forgetting both from the structural conditions of modernity and from the imbalance of power. The last topic is a reflection on “western” and “non-western” museums which was my entry point to this research. This topic also relates to the significance of cultural differences, hybridity and complexity in the museums. Finally, chapter 7 covers the conclusion and attempts to sum up the main arguments and overall research findings of this dissertation.

Chapter 2

On the Countryside and Rural Britain

The landscape, and especially the countryside, is a central icon of English heritage and national identities as the following sentences suggest: "... countryside has been its people's supreme communal creation since prehistoric times ... in all the arts, rural England is endlessly lauded as a wonder of the world" (Lowenthal, 1991, p.213). According to Raymond Williams (1976, p.71), "countryside" originally is a Scottish word that means "specific locality". Since the 19th century, in English, the countryside generally means "not only rural areas but also rural life and economy". In modern English, countryside relates to another word—country—which has two different meanings, the rural and the nation. Williams states that although both words have the same meaning for native land, the country has a more positive sense than the nation, which seems abstract and the state, which refers to the structure of power (Williams, *ibid.*). Significantly, the definition of the countryside above also reflects an ambiguous relationship among the countryside, the country, and the nation; this ambiguity is a main interest of this research on local museums in the countryside of northern England.

In order to understand local museums in the north of England, some basic knowledge about those museums and their location is essential. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the historical background of folk museums, community-based museums and other related kinds of museum in Britain. It also explores the related relevant context of rural Britain, the north of England and the countryside of North Yorkshire. Its content is divided into three topics: the countryside and rural Britain in museum studies; the changing countryside and rural England; the North–South divide, and the northern English consciousness.

The countryside and rural Britain in museum studies

According to the literature in Museum Studies, it could be said that there is little research focused on case studies of the community-based museum or small museums in the UK countryside or rural areas, as indicated in Yates's comment that "the history of museums in England is primarily an urban history" (Yates, 2010, p.12). Nevertheless in the academic field

of Museum Studies, a number of studies of community-based museums worldwide are being undertaken, both inside and outside of European countries, and in the USA, Canada, Oceania and other countries once called the third world (Karp et al., 1992). There are a few academic texts on community-based museums that focus on case studies of Britain as will be shown below. However, this number does not reflect the number of small museums and community-based museums in rural areas of Britain.

Macdonald (2002, p.89-106) addresses the cultural phenomenon that there are numerous small museums in contemporary Britain which focus on “life gone by” in their local village and island areas. The material objects exhibited in such museums mostly relates to “ordinary folk” or to local, everyday life in the past. Macdonald (2002) sheds light on these circumstances as “the fetishization of the past everyday life” based on the case study of the Skye Museum of Island Life in Scotland. According to Macdonald (1997), this possibly has a bearing on the emergence of cultural revival in several local areas across the UK.

More recently, Macdonald (2013) conceptualises this phenomenon, not only in the UK but in Europe, as the “musealisation of folklife” and traces it back to some inspiring sources for this kind of museum especially in the Skansen open-air museum in Sweden (founded 1891) – a name that I have heard often in the UK. According to Macdonald (2013, p.142), the first wave of museums dedicated to folk life in Europe were initially developed around the late nineteenth century. Most of them exhibited items in conventional displays in glass boxes but some such as Skansen exhibited in an open-air museum, different styles of buildings, which looked like a natural setting although some were recreated or newly constructed. Moreover, a number of museums dedicated to folk life across Europe are “national museums” which developed in the context of “newly forming nation-states” in Europe, although they were less a priority than other kinds of museum such as the National Art Gallery. These include, for instance, the Austrian Museum of Folklore (founded 1895), the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography (founded 1872), and the Museum of the Romanian Peasant (opened 1906). It is interesting that there is no such museum in Britain.

Although there are continually attempts to set up an English Folk Museum in the UK, so far it still has not been successful (Yates, 2010, p.204). Nevertheless, both Wales and Scotland opened museums of rural life in 1948 and 1949 respectively. One institutional museum in

England that focuses on rural life and ordinary folklife is the Museum of English Rural life (MERL) at the University of Reading opened in 1951. (Macdonald, 2013, p.145)

Furthermore, in the UK, Kavanagh notes the expansion of folk life museums in Britain between the wars, especially in the 1930s in the context of “the war, the depression, industrial strife, and frightening changes taking place in Nazi Germany” (Kavanagh, 1990, p.22). In England, one of the well-known cases is York Castle Museum, based on the private collection of Dr. John Kirk which opened in 1938. Kavanagh observes that although this museum is often recognised as a significant landmark in the history of museums, in fact Kirk’s collection lacked intellectual and methodological foundations in both the practices of collecting and displaying items. However, Dr. Kirk finally was successful in implementing his dream by setting up a museum for folklife to display his large collection at the York Castle Museum. Unfortunately he could not come to see its opening because he was dying and passed away later in 1940.

In fact, Dr. Kirk and his work are significant not only for York Castle Museum but also for another museum of rural life in Pickering due to a part of his collection having been collected from the countryside there. Moreover, he even had a collaboration plan with the Council of Pickering to house his collection but this failed after some years of working together; he subsequently attempted to find a new home for his collection. However, for some people with enthusiasm for the museum and the hope of seeing the collections from Pickering exhibited in their location, there was certainly a feeling of loss. This became a driving force to set up the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life at Pickering, which opened in 1967.

During the formative years of the Ryedale Folk Museum and the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life in the mid-20th century, it seemed difficult to exactly define what a “folk museum” was, and what a folk museum should be. This point is complicated and controversial due to the theoretical and political orientation in several academic disciplines related to folk life and folk museums. In 1963, one year before the Ryedale Folk Museum’s first year, Higgs discussed the definition of folklife and folk museums which this kind of museum represented. According to Higgs (1963, p. 4), the definition of “folk life” and “folk museum” seemed unclear as, at that time, it had just started and was beginning to identify itself as one of a category of museum classifications.

However, an acceptable definition according to Higgs (ibid. p.4) is that “the study of folklife means the study of mankind in relation to the environment in which he lives (including of course both the material and non-material aspects of this environment)”. Following this definition, Higgs stated that folklife could be seen as a subsection of ethnography and might be called “British ethnography” in the case of Britain. In fact this idea has been used by some people. However, the term “British ethnography” and this definition is more likely to be found unsatisfactory for many ethnographers who preferred to reserve the terminology of ethnography and also ethnology for the studies of primitive communities (Higgs, 1963, p.5).

Furthermore, Higgs (1963, p.6) addressed another related term with the idea that folklife is folklore, according to W.J. Thoms (1846), an early pioneer who suggested this term be “devote[d] to the study of traditional customs and beliefs and what had hitherto been known as popular antiquities”. This concept had been modified and referred to “the traditional unrecorded lore of the people particularly that [which] is of barbaric origin”. Folklore therefore became a part of the wider category of folklife. Finally, Higgs concluded that the scope of folk museums is wider than any one term that aims to cover its subject and is inevitably involved with diverse disciplines of “ethnology, ethnography, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, not to mention history” (Higgs, 1963 op cit.).

In addition, the problematic definition of the term “folklife” and “folk museum” seems not only to be about its focus on the own or the other cultures, but includes its focus on “agricultural and rural life” or “industrial and city life”. Another debate on the definition of folklife and folk museums seems to be whether the folk collection should cover industrial materials, or only traditional folk items, or the pre-industrial. This debate is particularly difficult and controversial in the case of Great Britain which “has been a mainly industrial nation for more than a hundred years” (ibid. p.5). This ambiguity between rural and industrial is found in both Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum as well.

In another case, Bennett (1995) observes and criticises Beamish museum, an open-air museum in the north of England in County Durham. This museum, according to its guidebook, aims to exhibit the factors which “influence the life and work of people of the region a century ago, when the North-East was in [the] forefront of British industrial

development” (Beamish, cited in Bennett, 1995, p.111). According to Bennett (1995, p.111), Beamish museum “consists of a series of linked sites spanning the period (roughly) 1790s through the 1930s but with the greatest emphasis falling on the late Victorian and Edwardian periods”. The tone of the exhibitions seems like the ruralised conceptions of the English way of life which dominated the late Victorian period:

This countryside of the mind was everything industrial society was not – ancient, slow-moving, stable, cosy, and ‘spiritual’. ... The English Character was not naturally progressive, but conservative; its greatest task – and achievement – lay in taming and ‘civilising’ the dangerous engines of progress it had unwittingly unleashed. (Weiner, 1985 cited in Bennett, 1995, p.114)

Beamish Museum, for Bennett, seems to be mythical and contrasts with the fact that this is a region of the working class and the North-East mining industry. It seems to be a neutral story and a harmonious relationship between the town and country rather than one of ruptures, conflict and transformation (Bennett, 1995, p.111-114). In summary, it could be said that an “institutionalized mode of amnesia” and a “myth of bourgeois history” are his major critiques regarding Beamish museum.

Due to its location, another kind of museum similar to an open-air museum, or what actually should be called “a model of museums”, relates to folk museums in the countryside. It is the “ecomuseum”. Davis (1999) states that the main concern of the ecomuseum is the relationship among museums, the natural environment and the community. The fundamental idea of the ecomuseum is ecology – the science of the natural environment. In 1972, the term ecomuseum was coined by a French museologist, Hogues de Varine for the use of the French Minister of the Environment (Davis, 1999, p.58). However, according to Davis (1999), in comparison with its original source country in the continental European countries and countries outside Europe such as the USA, Canada, Australia and Japan, the ecomuseum was definitely ignored in Britain. However, the ecomuseum is currently one of the important and well-known models of museum related closely to the countryside.

Local museums in the countryside also relate closely to the community. Crooke (2007) focuses on the Ulster Folk and Transport museum in Northern Ireland. She looks at the

relationship between museums, heritage and communities not only in Northern Ireland but also in South Africa – the District Six museum in Cape Town. Mainly, Crooke points out the significance of the community-based museums as a part of a contemporary social movement (Crooke, 2007, p.129).

Additionally, Yates (2010) focuses on case studies of museums in the southwest of England. She looks at some museums in villages and market towns as “volunteer-run museums” and attempts to understand the motivation, working processes and relationships with communities as well as their histories. Moreover, Yates also observes the debates on “community-based museums” between Bennett and Witcomb.

Mainly, Witcomb (2003) argues that contemporary museums should themselves be re-imagined and taken beyond the “mausoleum” or treasure house of material objects that is closed and separated from the vital relationships outside. Furthermore, in a book chapter – “A place for all of us?” Museum and Communities, Witcomb criticises Bennett’s orientation to seeing community museums as part of the mission of “civic reform” based on the government’s cultural policy. Moreover, Witcomb also suggests and follows a key concept by James Clifford (1997) – the idea of museums as “contact zones”. She supposes that Clifford’s concept and his dynamic vision could move museums away from being “static and monolithic institutions at the center of power” to playing lively and effective roles as mediators making connections, conversations and engagements among different communities and different cultures (Witcomb, 2003, p.89).

According to Clifford (1997), this term was borrowed from Mary Louis Pratt (1992) who defined “contact zone” as “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (Pratt, 1992, p.6-7 cited in Clifford, 1997, p.192). Furthermore, as Clifford summarized this idea later, “when museums are seen as contact zones, their organizing structure as a collection become an ongoing historical, political, moral relationship – a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull” (Clifford, 1997, p.192). This key idea is certainly useful for museum studies, namely, looking at a museum as a contact zone and seeing several things

including how objects, people, stories, memories and so forth from several places, directions and times are contacted, interacted and brought into dialogue in the museum.

Changing the countryside and rural England

In fact, it could be said that the volume of academic literatures focusing on the countryside and rural Britain in Museum Studies seem to be different when compared with the number of museums in the UK countryside, and literatures on this topic in other fields such as social history, geography and folklore (Newby, 1987; Horn, 1987; Mingay, 1990; Boyes, 1993; Howkins, 2003; Wild, 2004). Most of the literature on social history mentioned above presents the large and rapid changes in rural England after the Industrial Revolution, which was quite a long revolution since its start in the late eighteenth century. As Horn (1987) described it below, these years were the critical moment for change in the history of the English countryside due to the increasing industrialisation through the mining industry and urban manufacturing:

In the final quarter of the eighteenth century, northern industrialism started to challenge the pre-eminence of the landed interest, as the new water or steam-powered textile mills began to make a contribution. Elsewhere country people were drawn into manufacturing process by the expansion of traditional industries like framework knitting, nail making and woollen clothmaking, conducted within the home or small workshop. (Horn, 1987, p.1-2)

The description above was been labelled “proto-industrialism” which was a unique characteristic of the first phase of industrialisation and later was destroyed by the growth of the large production unit (Horn, *ibid.*). In fact, industrialisation had an impact on agriculture in various ways such as by changing land use and altering agricultural practices to support new manufacturing methods, build infrastructure and support a transport revolution (*ibid.* p.4).

Mingay (1990) also describes the period of 1870–1914 as “the countryside in decline” which is before the next period of the countryside in war time. Howkins (2003), in the same tone, points out the long period since 1900 as “the death of rural England” – due to the impacts of the Industrial Revolution, war and the second agricultural revolution itself. For Howkins

(2003, p.142), the second agricultural revolution meant extreme use of “tractors plus chemicals” in farming, a practice which was widely expanded at the end of World War II. In fact during the war before 1945, the countryside was deeply affected and forced by the state farming policy – to feed the nation during the war. To attain peak requirements, many machines were used and the countryside became the period characterized by “the mechanisation of agriculture and farming” (Howkins, 2003, p.122).

Furthermore, Burchardt (2002) observes the variety and complexity of social change in the English countryside since 1800 and criticises academic accounts related to changes since the industrial revolution that seem to be centred on agriculture. He suggests that the countryside may be not only significant as a mean of food production but also as a mode of consumption, and relates this point to modern lives. Narrow attitudes and fixed images also disconnected the rural countryside from the other parts of English society and suggested little concern with “the other” countryside (Burchardt, 2002, p.2-3). Moreover, these changing trends in the countryside may reflect not continual decline but fluctuations and ruptures. Some change in the English countryside actually has been affected by various factors during different periods including the great wars, industrial development in the post war countryside, government policy and planning, the countryside preservation movement, the green-urban movement, and the development of rural leisure (Burchardt, 2002, p.9-11).

In addition, Brassley et al., (2006, p. 7-9) addresses some of these changes in the countryside between the great wars; such as the role of rural industries, changing rural crafts, educational reforms, and modern living in the countryside; they question those that were most likely to have declined or have been regenerated. More specifically, Burchardt (2006) observes the increasing numbers of village halls in the countryside and points to their social and leisure functions in the interwar period. In effect the village halls were used for maintaining a sense of community and citizenship, and also facilitated presentation of urban cultural forms in the countryside. For him, this situation is seen as a regeneration of the countryside rather than a symptom of its decline (Burchardt, 2006, p.35).

The North-South divide and the northern consciousness in England

The North-South divide is probably one of the most significant issues in British history (Jewell, 1994, p.16). However, “the North” has plural and diversified meanings and the border between the North and the South actually is unclear, difficult to state and often changeable. The North as a geographical notion is large and covers flexible areas; it is possible to define it in different ways such as the far North and the near North, the North-East and North-west; the North, in fact, consists of subdivisions within it (Russell, 2004, p.17) Geographically, defining the North in his study of “Looking North: northern England and the national imagination”, Russell (2004) basically adopted a seven-county North as his unit of analysis – Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire.

In fact, it could be said that the North is recognised and meaningful in British media and literature especially novels written by well-known novelists such as the Bronte sisters – *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*; Elizabeth Gaskell – *North and South*; Mrs Burton, and George Orwell – *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Through the well-known novel on the North-South divide, written by Elizabeth Gaskell (1855) images of the North, which indeed is different from the South, became rooted in the context of industrialisation. Because of the Industrial Revolution, cities in the North such as Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Leeds and Newcastle, grew rapidly. Development in those areas of the North seems very different from the other areas such as York and North Yorkshire where the Yorkshire dales and North York moors are located.

However, Jewell (1994) argues that the North – South divide and northern consciousness in England originated in the literal history of England, and is “as old as the hills and has a real manifestation throughout recorded history” (Jewell, 1994, p.6). Jewell also traces back the divide back to Northumbria and its northern consciousness in the late first century (ibid.). Nowadays, the North – South- divide seems to be a crucial debate in contemporary Britain as much as it ever has been.

In “Which Britain? Which England? Which North?”, Taylor (2001) precisely illustrates the problematic relationship between the North and the South which involved not only political and economic but also social and cultural aspects. One interesting point that Taylor

comments on is the distinction between the “British North” – northern Britain and the “North of England” which seems to be terms used interchangeably. But in strictly geographical terms, “the North of England is “Middle Britain” – the area between the English core and Scottish border (Taylor, 1993 cited in Taylor, 2001, p.129) rather than northern England. The next critical point he made is about “the image of England as the Land of the Village” in contrast to the fact that most of the area of England nowadays is urban and industrialised. Taylor criticised the presumption that “everything good about England is rural” that lay behind the idea of “England of the village” or the “rural idyll” which seems to be generally labelled and reproduced as the national identity of English nationalism.

Taylor probably agrees with Shields (1991 cited in Taylor, 2001, p.135) that this circumstance excludes England as the land of the working class, the industrial, the urban and northern. By using class leadership to define the nature of English nationalism in opposition to the experience of the majority of English people, “the dirty, unpalatable” working part of England was continually eliminated from influence and power. Moreover, Taylor also addresses Edward Said’s idea about the “logic for European construction of the Orient” and points out the same circumstances occurred in Britain in the Southern English construction of the North – the process whereby industrial Britain was “northernised” as an inferior place (Taylor, 2001, p.136).

In the context of the North-South divide, the image of the north seems to be industrial, urban, and working class but in the case of North Yorkshire it contains some areas of the countryside that had a long history as the rural areas of the north. Interestingly, the situation in this area resembles what Bhabha (1994) calls the ambiguous, ambivalent and hybrid characteristics of the colonial relationship, where a couple of actors or things appear to be in binary opposition to each other. The next chapters will explore and investigate these problematic issues through the stories and experiences of local people in the North Yorkshire countryside by way of their museums.

Chapter 3

Local Museums in North Yorkshire

In North Yorkshire, there are various kinds of museum located in both rural and urban areas. According to Fleming (1989) "Exploring museums – North-East England" and online searching, there are at least fifteen museums in North Yorkshire whose collections and exhibitions obviously relate to the countryside, or that identify themselves as folk museums, museums of rural life, farming museums or are simply located in the countryside. These include:

Ryedale Folk Museum, Hutton le Hole

Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, Pickering

Whitby Museum, Whitby

Malton Museum, Malton

Museum of the North Craven life at the Folly

Filey Museum, Filey

Swaledale Museum, Reeth

Nidderdale Museum, Pateley Bridge

Grassington Folk Museum in Upper Wharfedale

Thirsk Museum, Thirsk

Dale Countryside Museum, Hawes

Bedale Museum, Bedale

Gayle Mill, Wensleydale

York Castle Museum, York

Yorkshire Museum of Farming, Murton Park at York

However, this research focuses on providing two case studies of local museums in North Yorkshire – Ryedale Folk Museum at Hutton le Hole and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life at Pickering. This chapter aims to introduce the case studies by presenting an overview of the museum's exhibitions and its background through stories of the birth and creation process of each museum. The content mainly comes from my observations during museum visits, and secondary data sources such as museum websites, guide books, publications, and museum archives.

Ryedale Folk Museum, Hutton Le Hole

The Ryedale Folk Museum is an open-air museum at Hutton le Hole near Pickering, North Yorkshire that was opened in 1963. The museum is located on a wide area of the field and consists of small houses, shops and workshops for exhibiting various kinds of objects related to folk life in their own context. After walking through the first house which covers the reception, gallery and museum shop into the museum, alongside the main road we see a row of small shops – the village shop and post office, the chemist shop, saddler workshop and shoemaker workshop. Opposite the main walkway, are two workshops: the tinsmith and blacksmith. These shops and workshops were brought stone by stone from the village nearby, preserved and re-exhibited here as in the past when the village was alive. Inside those shops and workshops are various kinds of objects related to the working life in those shops exhibited in its context.

The next zone involves outdoor displays of agricultural machines and farming tools with explanations and related pictures that present how those machines are used in these areas during and after the WW II.

In 2012, the museum refurbished a house for the new exhibition of "The Harrison collection" and it is now open to the public. This collection is a part of the large collection which the Harrison brothers, local private collectors, recently donated to the Ryedale Folk Museum. The exhibition presents local life around 150 years ago by classifying objects into several themes entitled: Food and Drink, Neat and Clean, Fire and Light, Rare and Unusual, Love and Affection and Stuffed to the Rafters. On the top of a glass showcase, there is an

interesting quotation: – “At school we learned about kings, queens and battles but nothing about social history – the history of daily life and everyday objects”.

Another exhibition area is the model of a Yorkshire village which is an outdoor exhibition located on the ground area near a pathway. Several years ago, these model buildings were donated to the museum. At first sight, they arrived at Ryedale as a vast collection of broken elements and then several museum volunteers together made efforts to repair and reassemble them once again. In the neighbouring areas, there are several small houses exhibited as folk living places in different time periods e.g. a round house in the style of the Iron Age, a crofter’s cottage during the 13th–16th century, a 17th century cruck house and a white cottage from the late 18th century.

Figure 3.1: Ryedale Folk Museum: landscape and layout²



²Source: Ryedale Folk Museum's brochure, 2013.

Stories of museum-making at Hutton le Hole

In the initial stages, the birth of the Ryedale Folk Museum was closely related to three key persons who could be called the museum co-founders: Dr. R.W. Crosland, a historian and antiquarian who initiated the idea of the museum in Hutton le Hole and donated his collection to the museum; Bert Frank, the first curator; and Raymond Hayes, an amateur archaeologist who was studying in this area and donated his archaeological collection to the museum. All of them shared strong enthusiasm about the museum and hoped to see a permanent museum established in this area.

In fact the enthusiasm and idea of the museum in Hutton le Hole was initiated more than three decades before the opening of Ryedale Folk Museum in 1963. In 1930, Mr. R.W. Crosland opened one room in the farm building for visitors on holidays, and when the village needed to raise funds for a charity. Mr. Crosland continually influenced local residents through his talks and lectures about the history of the region that he often undertook elsewhere in the village. He had collected a number of objects from the nearby area and was successful in having many local people preserve them (Hayes and Hurst, 2005, p.83).

Bertram Frank, always known as Bert Frank, was one of the local residents who was inspired by Crosland's collection and shared his strong enthusiasm for museum affairs. The objects in Crosland's collection primarily illustrated the life and work of past generations. However, Crosland did not live to see his idea of a museum for the public realized since he passed away in 1961, two years before the museum's first opening. Instead, Bert Frank, in collaboration with the community, a number of volunteers and support from the Crosland family, successfully launched the Ryedale Folk Museum as a private venture in 1963. The museum collection at that time came from Bert Frank's own collection, Crosland's private collection and R.H Hayes's archaeological material collection. Years later the museum set up a Board of Trustees and registered as a Charitable and Educational Foundation; this process included creating an Executive Committee. After its beginning, because of the efforts and relentless work of its founders, the number of volunteers at the museum grew well beyond expectations and nowadays the museum is well-known as one of the foremost folk museums in the country (ibid. p.83-84).

The spell of Ryedale, Bert Frank's biography, presents the life and works of a man who lived during the period of critical transition – the massive industrialisation and rapid transformation from traditional agriculture to mechanised agriculture – that occurred since WWII. He was born in 1913 in the village of Hutton le Hole on the North York Moors. He grew up in the village and spent his young life at various jobs inside and outside the village before finding his place in the museum. After the 1930s Bert Frank dedicated his life to the Ryedale Folk Museum as a co-founder and the first curator of the museum.

My aim is to form a permanent museum to display ancient objects of this area, for we need it very badly. Old implements are rapidly disappearing through mechanisation and we are trying to preserve some of them. (Bert Frank's quote in Brannigan, 2011, p.29)

Large and famous museums were good at preserving the big stories of history but who, he [Bert Frank] wonders, cared about the little stories of ordinary people, their dogged will to survive on very little, their symbolic relationship with the land around them, their customs and superstitions? It was at the point that Bert began to wonder if it would have to be him. (Bert Frank's quote in Brannigan, 2011, p.23)

In addition, the intention to conserve the old buildings in this area was a crucial part of the process of museum-making. In fact, several houses and buildings now located in the area of this open-air museum were moved “stone by stone” to the museum. It would be huge and hard work, needing considerable support from the community and volunteers. Since the 1960s, several houses were successfully rescued and moved to the museum with the support of the museum's volunteers and community. Robin Butler, a blacksmith who lived at Hutton le Hole during that time and was one of the long-term active volunteers at the museum, described the first mission of moving a cruck house to the museum in his memoir:

In 1960s, Bert Frank, first curator, announced he was moving into bigger things. He wanted to show life as it was really lived rather than just lining things up in dusty glass cases. The first major project, which set Ryedale along its path to becoming [a] living folk museum, was to rebuild a 17th century

cruck house which had been saved from demolition at its original site about 14 miles away in Stang End, Danby.

I saw the pieces spread out across the ground at the museum and wondered how they could all ever fit together again. They did but took several years. As Bert directed operations, an enthusiastic crowd of helpers including me rallied round, giving up their free time and a lot of energy. One would be mixing cement, another carrying stones and me helping to cart pieces into the right position. (Butler, 2010, p. 67-68)

Stories of a museum in the making, in some sense, seem like a never ending story involving various related stories that could be included and retold by various tellers. The stories above are just some I have heard.

Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, Pickering

This museum is located on the riverside at the centre of the market town of Pickering. It was opened to the public in 1967. The museum building has significance related to William Marshall (1745–1818), who was a key figure in modern agricultural development; he conducted a survey and wrote several books about the economy and agriculture in rural Britain. These include *The rural economy of Norfolk* (Marshall, 1787); *The rural economy of Yorkshire* (Marshall, 1788); *The rural economy of the Midland counties including the management of livestock in Leicestershire and its environs: together with minutes on agriculture and planting in the district of the Midland station* (Marshall, 1790); *General view of the agriculture of the Central Highlands of Scotland: with observation on the means of their improvement* (Marshall, 1794); and *The rural economy of the southern counties comprising Kent, Surrey, Sussex; the Isle of Wight; the chalk hills of Wiltshire, Hampshire, &c. and including the culture and management of hops, in the Districts of Maidstone, Canterbury, and Farnham* (Marshall, 1798).

The original building was constructed for the first Agricultural College in Britain by William Marshall in the early 1800s but unfortunately, he passed away before it was completed and

thus the project of the Agricultural College disappeared with him. The building inherited by his family has been used in different ways until it became the museum in 1967.

From the outside, the main building appears to be small but in fact it contains 26 rooms of exhibits inside. The total area of the museum exhibition covers both the inside and outside of the main building. In the backyard outside of the main building, another small exhibition house and courtyard are located. The main exhibition space could be divided into five parts according to its area: the ground floor and the inside upper floor, the ground floor, and the upper floor of the house and the courtyard are shown on the map.

Inside the building, the reception and shop corner are on the right hand and the first room of exhibits is on the left; it is the printer room. Here there is a printer machine at the centre of the room and objects related to the printing business. The printer is sometimes worked and used for printing out museum documents.

The next room contains a display of carriages which had been very important traditionally. In the same room, there are several photo albums on the desk in front of a board displaying monotone photographs of various scenes of Pickering and Ryedale during the period 1900–1956. These were taken by Sidney Smith, a photographer who lived and worked at Pickering. The photo collection, cameras, and photographic equipment belonging to him are a museum highlight and one of the most valuable collections of the museum, donated by his wife after he passed away in 1958. In a corner of this room, there is a television playing a short documentary film about the life story of William Marshall, the first owner of the museum building.

In the next room, on the wall along a narrow pathway, hang a number of portrait photographs, taken by Sydney Smith, of people's lives in Pickering and the countryside nearby. Turn left to the camera room. This room looks like a photo shop – there is a chair for the customer who wants to have a photograph taken, and in the showcases closest to the wall various kinds of cameras and photographic instruments belonging to Sydney Smith are exhibited.

Next to the camera room is the dairy room, exhibiting utensils, cooking equipment and objects that could be seen in the kitchen; there is also a note about how to make cheese.

Out of the diary room near the stairs up to the first floor, there are small rooms exhibiting the cobbler's shop.

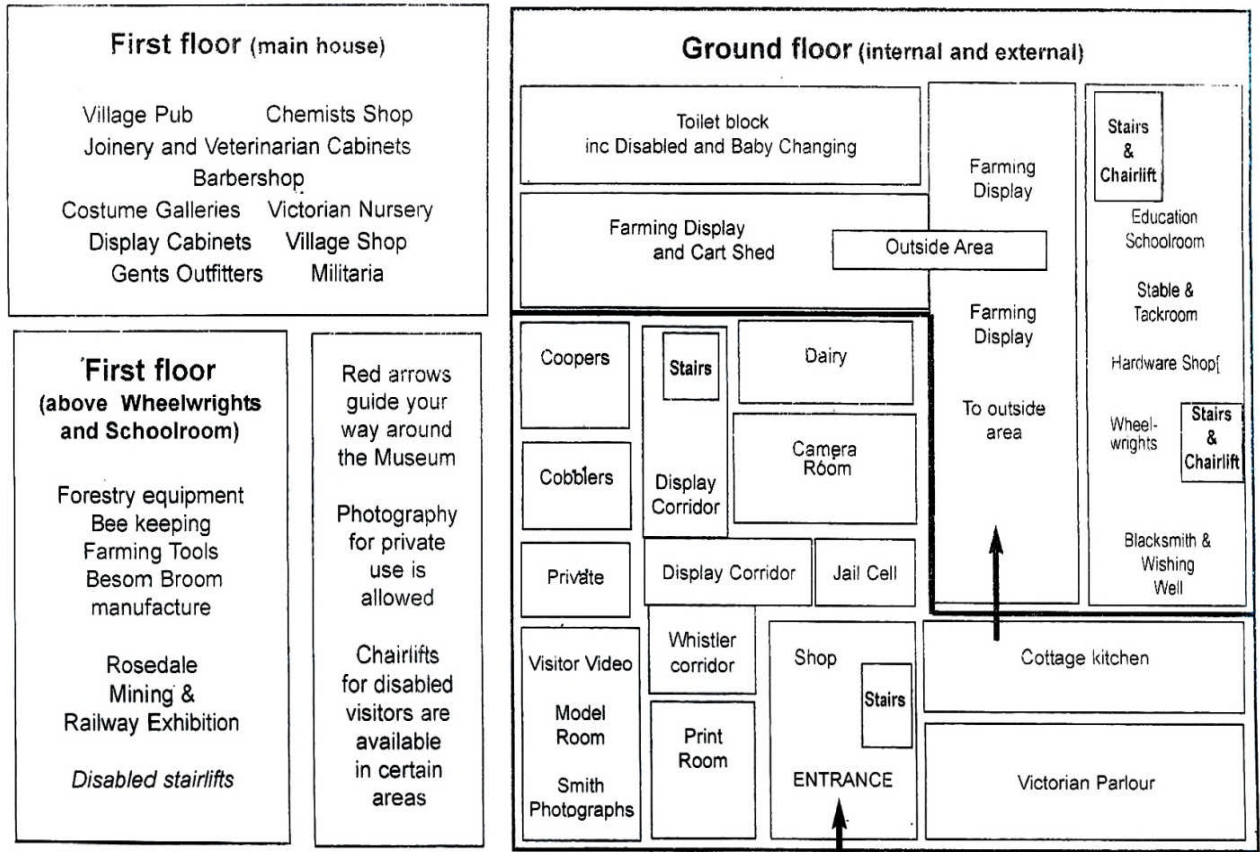
On the upper floor, the exhibition area is larger than the ground floor where space is partly reserved for a private area. On the first floor, there are various exhibition rooms; these are mainly shops including the village shop, hardware shop, barber shop, chemist shop, gents-outfitters and a Victorian pub. The other space is used to include a child's room, costume galleries, and domestic equipment. In addition, there are showcases displaying specimens and objects about natural history and whale hunting. One small case exhibits some water colour pictures and painting tools related to Francis Nicholson, one of the significant water colour painters of Britain.

The first floor of main building is connected to the domestic equipment room where forestry equipment, bee keeping, farming tools, and besom brooms are exhibited. On this floor the story of Rosedale, its mining and railway construction is also exhibited.

On the ground floor lies a courtyard outside the buildings. The courtyard area displays large items such as carriages and farming machines. Alongside the courtyard there is a small building separated into several small rooms such as a school room, stable and tack room, hardware shop, wheelwright's room and blacksmith workshop.

Figure 3.2: Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life: museum layout³

Museum layout



³Source: Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life's brochure, 2013.

Stories of museum-making at Pickering

The formation of the idea and the enthusiasm about the museum at Pickering resonated deeply with the Ryedale Folk Museum; both arose at the same period and both museums shared the same atmosphere of interest in museum affairs and their broader context. However, the museums are different because of their location – Pickering is a market town and Beck Isle Museum is located at the town centre while Ryedale Folk Museum is located upon a hill, in the countryside, six and a half miles away from the town centre.

In the early 1900s, the interest in bygone objects and enthusiasm for the folk museum was spreading widely in the area. One figure who was well-known and nationally recognised was the owner of a large collection of folk objects donated to the York Castle Museum and its founder-curator. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Dr. Kirk was significant in the history of folk museums in Britain, and actually played an important role in the birth of the Beck Isle Museum at Pickering as well.

According to one source, a booklet entitled – Doctor John Lamplugh Kirk – launched by the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, tells briefly about his life and works, especially those related to the museum, during the period he lived in Pickering as a doctor. Dr. Kirk was born in Hornsea Burton in 1847. He studied medicine at the University of Cambridge and took a BA degree in 1891, an MB and BC in the following years. He became a medical officer of health for Pickering in 1898 and then decided to work on his own at Pickering. Dr. Kirk was passionate about archaeology particularly the prehistoric and Roman periods and was a member of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society (Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, nd., p.7)

His enthusiasm in bygones and museums, especially folk museums, was initiated through visiting the Stockholm Historical Museum, Biological Museum and the open-air museums at Skansen while in Sweden for a couple of weeks in 1910. The Skansen was initiated by Artur Hazelius and well-known as a pioneer of this kind of museums. This open-air museum opened in 1891 and then had inspired a number of open-air museums in several European countries (Rentzhog, 2007, p.4-100). Dr. Kirk's memorable visit at that time inspired him to start collecting and photographing "the bygones" around Pickering and the North York moors. In addition, some of Dr. Kirk's collection came from his visits to patients living in the countryside of the North York moors where "he would often barter for "bygones" in lieu of

payment from his patients” (ibid. p.10). By 1918, his bygonos collection contained vast and various objects – “perambulators, antique weapons, cottage ornaments, horse brasses, toys, potato dribblers, Victorian hypodermic needles to horse bridles and a Tudor Barge” (ibid. p.10). Obviously, the growth of his collection meant it could no longer be housed at his home in Hungate.

In 1919, he approached the Pickering Town Council, which was planning to refurbish an old mill into a War Memorial Hall and offered his collection for display there if the town council would provide space in the hall for an exhibition (ibid. p.10). In 1922, his offer was accepted by the Urban District Council and the project of Pickering Memorial Hall Museum was started. However, museum-making is a long-term project and takes considerable resources and effort. Although he also worked tirelessly and continually after his retirement in 1925 as the honorary curator – he took on the job himself and also paid his own money for the cases and materials –the museum was not finished until 1931 and could not open to the public. Due to his own ill health and aging, Dr. Kirk was very anxious and worried as he said to his assistant that “I am going to die soon, girl, and there is going to be the war. If I don’t get my museum opened first it will never be opened, so we’ve got to hurry” (ibid. p.11). Soon after, he decided to explore the alternatives and proposed the same conditional offer to other museums and councils – first of all to the Scarborough Philosophical and Archaeology Society and then to Whitby Museum and Hull Museum. However, for local people, this decision – after it was reported in the Yorkshire Post on 22nd June 1931, “caused a furore in Pickering as the people felt the museum belonged to the town, but the council had not fulfilled their part of the agreement and the collection was Dr. Kirk’s own personal one” (ibid. p.11).

At that moment, there were several museums and councils which had expressed interest in Dr. Kirk’s collection and proposed their offers after seeing Dr. Kirk’s advertisement in the Museums’ Bulletin – Middlesbrough, Wakefield, Batley, Doncaster and York. In 1932, Dr. Kirk made his critical decision and a part of the 1705 Debtors Prison at York Castle was chosen as his best alternative. – Soon after the Kirk collection was moved to York and the Castle Museum was opened to the public in 1938. In the booklet, produced by Beck Isle, the author wrote that “Following the visit the collections’ fate was sealed, with Pickering sadly losing an immense opportunity, as the collection would never return!” (ibid. p.12).

This circumstance was one of driving forces involved in successfully setting up the museum at Pickering. Through the efforts and collaboration of the museum founders, volunteers and local residents at Pickering, the Beck Isle Museum was first opened in 1967; it has continually grown and been actively run since. In an interview by The York Press in 2011, Gordon Clitheroe, one of the co-founders and the former curator of the Beck Isle Museum, said that “At first I couldn’t for the life of me see how it was going to work because all the best objects had gone to the York museums. The area had been bled white. But look at everything here now”. Moreover, according to Clitheroe, “Most items have been donated and the museum uses them to illustrate the work, social life and customs of the local community over the past 200 years” (The York Press, 2 September 2011).

Significance of local museums in the countryside

In fact, there are several ways to tell stories of museum-making but this research is primarily concerned with the agency of the museum and interaction between structural conditions and the practices of local actors rather than a focus on aspects of external control or structural determinism. Making a museum is a long-term process and in fact never ending if the museum is still open to the public. As stories of the Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum show, the process of forming the ideas to start a museum and physically making it happen until it opens to the public requires a number of actors to be involved including local people or friends of the museum outside the local community. In addition, the participation of local people, especially those who work closely with the museums such as volunteers and vernacular curators, involves cultivating networks of both social relationships and cultural meaning with the museums – this is not only the museum dedicated to their stories but also the museum they built collaboratively. Thus there are large numbers of stories that could be told and remembered but have not been addressed in this research; perhaps it is impossible to do so due to limitations of the researcher’s perception.

Nevertheless, through the stories of museum-making above, it could be said that in the formative years of both museums, the birth of the museum is closely involved with the driving forces that form the multiple contexts outside the museums – the massive and rapid change of the area due to the larger processes changing the country such as modernity, industrialisation, mechanisation of agriculture and then de-industrialisation. However, those

are only one aspect of the stories of museum-making. Through both case studies, the driving forces inside people's minds and their agency are also important – the strong and deep enthusiasm, and especially “the sense of loss” that all of the museum makers shared, despite different details regarding implementation. These driving forces are significant in as much as they work together in the process of creating and shaping the museums.

Although the increasing numbers of museums in the UK since post-WWII have been recognised on several occasions, the increase has been mainly seen as a result of structural factors. Hewison (1987) points out that the dramatically increasing numbers of museums in the UK are part of the heritage industry which relates to the growth of commercial tourism during the period of the countryside's decline. This growth can be seen as a by-product of the Romantic movement of anti-industrialism since the 18th century (Higgs, 1963, p.14), or as a part of English nationalism and narrating the nation, which seems inclined to do the same as Romanticism – namely, to reproduce the “Country Idyll” (Hall, 1992, p.293-295).

In contrast, Samuel (1994) points out that these museums could be seen as “theatres of memory” where people celebrated their memories and being a part of a cultural movement of people's history in the country. Samuel suggests the major significance of the people's history movement is a response to English national history, which seems to be lacking concern for ordinary people and especially the working class. This tone is convergent with post-colonial critics on national history and other narratives that have been influenced by nationalism and colonialism and which seem less concerned with the agency of the marginal or the subaltern (Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1990). In this sense, the agency of the museum, museum founders and curators is crucial for understanding the process of museum-making. Bhabha (1994, *ibid.*) points out the significance of ambivalence and the hybridity of the marginal or the colonised; in the process of interaction, the main concern would be negotiation between opposite elements rather than negation of either one or the other.

This research also resonates with ideas of negotiation in relation to the national narration (Bhabha, 1990) and “the theatres of memories” (Samuel, 1994). It therefore looks at both museums as a form of negotiating English nationalism, and its national narration relates to the countryside rather than to the reproduction of English nationalism. To understand this negotiating role, it is necessary to understand how the national narrative relates to the

countryside of England. Following Anderson (1991), the formation of the nation is an imagined community, which partly relates to the countryside, and involves the formation of homogeneity and distinction in three dimensions: time, space, and people. These dimensions also relate to “the countryside” exhibited through both museums and this is discussed further in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4

The Countryside as Land and Home

The Victorians spoke much of “progress” but the benefits had spread anything but evenly. The countryside and market towns were not its focus. They seemed rather to be drawn along behind forces that were concentrated in the growing urban and industrial areas.

John Rushton, *The History of Ryedale* (2003)

In the early years of the twentieth century, the countryside of Ryedale, where both museums are located, seemed to be a marginal area within a modern Britain in which “urban and industrial areas” were the primary focus. In fact, for areas such Ryedale and North Yorkshire, the situation seems complicated and ambiguous for reasons related to its location and the problematic perception of the countryside in Britain. First, those areas located in the north of England were generally known as major industrial areas of the country and became emblematic of the distinctive self-image of “the North” that is distinctive from that of “the South”. Secondly, the countryside had been recognised as a crucial ingredient of English national identity – regarded generally as a “good thing” – even while the countryside had been declining and was neglected by industrial-state policy.

The main argument that I will discuss in this chapter is to do with the images and stories of the countryside as land and home, which not only present local changes but also reflect the marginal status of the countryside at the margins of British modernity. To capture the abundant scenes of exhibition or museum displays that are so diverse and fragmented, I will look at the museum displays as “chronotope”, which refers to “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.84).

In fact, the countryside’s image is problematic and seems to be a debate about English national identity (Taylor, 1991). On the one hand, the English countryside is well-known and has been admired for a long time for its magnificent landscapes; it has also inspired a number of artists and novelists to express its beauty and compose it as scenic background in their works. On the other hand, there are several critiques of those images of the

“countryside idyll” (Bunce, 1994; Taylor, 1991). According to Bunce (1994), the ideal countryside was socially constructed and emerged during the rise of urban-industrialism. It was also closely involved with the economic and socio-cultural transformation, and responded to the process of urbanisation especially to images offered by the literate and culture conscious middle class images which Bunce (1994, p.2) called “the armchair countryside”.

Taylor (2001) criticises the imagination of England as the countryside or the “land of the village” is in contrast to the fact that most areas of England nowadays are urban and industrialised. Furthermore, those images of the “England of villages” and “rural idyll” are a part of the process of stereotyping and reproducing the English national identity. This critique seems similar to Edward Said’s critique regarding the European construction of the Orient; by the same logic, the southern English construction of the north and its opposite – the countryside idyll – is the national process whereby industrial Britain was mainly “northernised” as an inferior place (Taylor, 2001, p. 136).

In addition, the ideal and static countryside was more likely a dream, or the optimistic imagination of the land for pleasure from the outsider or visitor’s point of view. This perception was in contrast to the fact that the British countryside and rural areas had been declining or even dying since 1900 after the Industrial Revolution (Mingay, 1990; Howkins, 2003). In fact, this also relates to the politics of national identity as Edwards (2006) observes regarding the reflection and construction of Englishness as a national identity through a project of The National Photographic Record Association (1897–1910). This project conducted surveys and photography of the traditions and monuments of the British Isles which had experienced massive change during that time.

Moreover, Matless (1998) illustrates strong congruence between landscapes and Englishness, which reciprocally constructs and shapes problematic relationships in English society such as class, race and gender. He traced the changing landscape since the First World War and surprisingly found “powerful historical connection between landscape, Englishness and the modern” rather than a nostalgic and conservative ruralism or anti-modernism (Matless, 1998, p.16). In the late 1920s, the English landscape and Englishness were formed through a sense of the crisis in the landscape; they appeared as a desire for preservation which

particularly seems to be a kind of modern expression and practice (ibid. p. 14). The situation of rural landscape since then seems to be complex and leads him to criticise the concept of the “rural idyll” and its use to make easy sense of the English rural landscape. As he argues, “the rural needs always to be understood in terms relative to those of city and suburb, and approached as a heterogeneous field” (ibid. p.17).

Matless (1998, p.17) is also concerned with variations of Englishness; these should not be divided simply into the industrial north and the rural south, or the west, (which seems associated with the spiritual, the mysterious and the Celtic), and the east, (which is more likely to be down-to earth, reasoned and Anglo-Saxon but more complicated). The English landscape is also constructed in relation to knowledge from other countries such as German motorway construction, Chinese philosophy, American regionalism, ancient Egyptian civilization, or German organic farming (Matless, 1998, p.20). He notes that both harmonious and antagonistic relationships among different contexts – local, regional, national, imperial and global, are necessary for understanding the inter-connection of the landscape and Englishness (ibid.).

Significantly, according to Bhabha (1994), it seems possible to look at the ambiguity and hybridity of the countryside as one where the marginal or the subaltern in the negotiating process is engaging with the narration of the nation. From a post-colonial perspective, the northern countryside could be seen as a complex space and a place-based locality which negotiates with notions of the countryside idyll, the industrial north, and also the southern countryside of England.

What about the images and stories of the countryside in local museums? In both museums, there are various chronotopes of the countryside that have been exhibited. Some are held in common and some are unique in comparison to each other. Mainly, images of the countryside as land and home have been exhibited in Ryedale Folk Museum whereas the Beck Isle Museum of Rural life themes can possibly be grouped into 3 areas: [1] the land before modern times; [2] the industrialised rural landscape; and [3] the land after revolution. In the next section I will discuss the ambivalence of the countryside as home and homeland, which is a theme also related to English nationalism.

The land before modern times

According to the museum exhibition and museum guide book in the case of the Ryedale Folk Museum, the countryside was exhibited as the land before modern times through displaying living spaces from several periods of time such as the manor house originally built in the late 16th century and moved from the village of Harome to the museum in the late 1960s; the white cottage, which was also moved from Harome and restored as a Victorian house from the late 18th century; the strang end cruck house that had moved from a place near Danby to reflect a local farm house and way of life of a farming family during the 17th century; the crofter's cottage that was newly built based on archaeological and historical evidence for representing a typical village dwelling in the 13th to 16th centuries (because this type of building no longer existed in the local area); and the Iron Age round house, which like the crofter's cottage, was built as an example of the Iron Age settlement at the museum.

In addition, it seems obvious that the Ryedale Folk Museum intentionally exhibited the countryside of Ryedale across a wide expanse of time through some "typical forms" of living spaces from the Iron Age to the mid-twentieth century when the museum was forming. During the period that these old houses were moved to Ryedale Folk Museum, all houses in the plan were demolished to construct new buildings and other modern infrastructure at the original location. More significantly, exhibiting various houses from various periods of time also gave meaning to the land as a part of many different histories. This later became a slogan of the museum – back to the past – and also connected a micro locality to wider temporal and spatial contexts. Another outdoor exhibition that relates to the land before modern times is to do with the "Glass Furnace". Raymond Hayes, an amateur archaeologist who is one of the museums founders, found and evacuated this site and then moved it from its original location at Rosedale to restore it at the museum in 1969. According to the museum guidebook, this furnace was in use from about 1572–1600. This type of furnace was brought into Britain by French and Flemish glassworkers escaping from the Huguenot persecutions of the 16th century (Ryedale Folk Museum nd., p.15). Archaeological collections from the archaeological works of Raymond Hayes are another major part of the museum's collection. More recently, there is an ongoing project run by museum volunteers on mapping and exhibiting some of his archaeological collection to local geographical areas where those objects were found.

Figure 4.1: Ryedale Folk Museum – the Iron Age round house



Figure 4.2: Ryedale Folk Museum – the crofter's cottage



Figure 4.3: Ryedale Folk Museum – the stang end cruck house



Figure 4.4: Ryedale Folk Museum – the manor house



As well as exhibiting living spaces, Ryedale Folk Museum also exhibited agricultural landscapes through agricultural objects which had been used before the mechanisation of agriculture after the Second World War; livestock and animals such as sheep, pigs, chickens, horses, botanic gardens and a corn field were included. The bygone objects were a main interest for the museum, just as the historic houses were, and they attempted to rescue and exhibit both at the museum. Its chronotope has been exhibited through “traditional agricultural objects” which were meaningful and crucial for the folk museum at that time because of their rapid disappearance due to the process of modernisation and industrialisation occurring in local areas. During this time, a number of folk museums were attempting to rescue these objects, which appeared to be signs and records of what once had existed here but was now gone. In addition, it could be said that the collection and exhibition of traditional farming was a common interest of the Ryedale and Beck Isle museums. Ryedale had exhibited traditional farming through placing many objects in an open space under the roof alongside small boards of description about farming activities in each month of the year. For Beck Isle the agricultural objects were exhibited in a display space called the “farming gallery” located on the first floor of the second building in the courtyard.

Industrialised rural landscape

The second theme of chronotopes exhibited in both museums was in regard to the “industrialised rural landscape” because the countryside of North Yorkshire was encountering industrialisation. According to the museum exhibition, for the countryside the concrete implementation of the Industrial Revolution was the emergence of mines, railways

and other industries. The Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life clearly exhibited this theme through the collection of machines, industrial objects and photographs of landscapes they displayed. Beck Isle Museum has scoped their period of interest at around 200 years ago since the Victorians which prevail throughout most of the interim period are recognised as the approximate starting point of modernity in Britain. In fact, it should be noted that the starting period of modern time was not exactly the same for all areas of the country. In local contexts, it might be different from what was experienced in centres of modernity like London or even through other areas of the English north which were at the forefront of industrialisation.

Although the exhibition in the Beck Isle Museum was limited to the period of time it displayed around 200 years ago, the time-space of museum displays in fact were diverse and fruitful in the range of space they displayed and especially in the collection of photographs of the area. Those photographs were taken by Sydney Smith – a local photographer who lived and worked at Pickering during 1900–1956 and whose photographs capture that period. In his photographic collection we see diverse scenes of the transitional land of Ryedale after the coming of modernity – mining, the construction of railways and trains, factories, new buildings, and especially the changes in the countryside and rural areas.

The industrialisation of the countryside was presented through various exhibitions of mining and railways in both case studies of the museum in different degrees and details. For this theme, visual media, and especially the collection of photographs, plays a major role in the mode of communication in both the Ryedale and Beck Isle museums. Photographs seem to be particularly powerful at presenting images of the countryside as modernity encountered the land.

Railway building

The coming of railways and trains was crucial for the rural areas and as acted as a sign that meant modernity was coming into the countryside. The locomotive trains and network of railways also physically connected the land into the nation and became the ‘veins’ of those areas that once had been separated and isolated. It is impossible to ignore the massive changes that this kind of infrastructure brought into the countryside both economically and

politically. According to the exhibition, the first train from Pickering to Whitby was planned in 1931 and took six years to be constructed; first service began in 1937. In fact the trains across the moors from Pickering to Whitby were a transportation investment for connecting several mines on the moors – alum, coal and iron mines – as well as other industries that developed and grew during the late 18th and 19th centuries. It could be said that Whitby is the gateway to the North York moors and the nearby countryside, and connected these areas to the sea, the marine shipping from the North to the South, and also the world (Barker, 2007, p.72).

In fact, the Ryedale Folk Museum did not mention the significance of the trains and railways. It was Beck Isle where the arrival trains and railway building were collected through photography, and exhibited through the collection of photographs and exhibits, including a locomotive model. This was because of the strong connection between trains and mines especially on the North York moors and because Sydney Smith took a number of photographs of trains and railways scenes on different occasions and in different seasons. Moreover, the Beck Isle Museum presented an exhibition about the Rosedale Ironstone mines on the moors and displayed several kinds of objects related to mining and miners, on the first floor of the second building, next to the farming gallery.

Mines and mining

Mining was very meaningful for the countryside and the people who lived there during either the period of its rise or decline. The Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life has exhibited stories of Rosedale Ironstone mines on the North York moors between 1861–1926 through a number of photographs, which showed several aspects and details of the mines, their location, the working spaces and its atmosphere, and especially the miners' activities through the tools and equipment they used. Interestingly, the stories of mines and mining were not only about its rise and significance to local people and miners' families but also about post-industrialisation and the decline of the mines. This is shown in some topics of the museum's exhibition such as Pickering's lost industries and its industrial past.

Figure 4.5: Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life – Rosedale East mines and miners' equipment



Figure 4.6: Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life – Pickering's lost industries & industrial past



The land after revolution

The early 20th century is a period of decline for both agriculture and industry in the countryside of Ryedale; agriculture had continually declined, and mining also started to decline on the North York moors where the Rosedale mines were declining and eventually closed in 1926. Rushton (2003, p.399) describes the atmosphere of the Ryedale countryside at the beginning of the 20th century:

An old world was slipping away. Many young people went abroad into a British Empire, which had come to span one fifth of the globe. The local newspapers were full of their doings. At home, more people left the villages and the dales had shrinking populations. The newspapers had broadened the interest in national politics. Liberalism enjoyed its greatest local triumphs with landslide voting in 1906. A labour party formed in 1900 offered a more radical alternative, but made slow headway. Militant suffragettes were active in pursuit of voting rights for women, with meeting at Thornton Dale. Some at least, seems to think that the world could be changed.

Furthermore, the countryside and agricultures had been crucially impacted during the great wars, especially during WWII, due to the national policy of achieving the highest agricultural productivity for feeding the nation during the war (Howkins, *ibid.*). Exhibitions in both museums reflected those significant moments.

Mechanisation of agriculture

Another theme of chronotopes exhibited in the museums related to the land after revolution and especially to the mechanisation of agriculture and farming since WWII. Howkins points to this change as “the second agricultural revolution” where the machines and chemicals were used to achieve peak outcomes in the shortest period. After WWII, this kind of farming had also been promoted and subsidized by the British government. In 1964, the Minister of Agriculture opened an advisory office at Pickering to serve the nearly 5000 farms in the area (Rushton, 2003, p.438). However, nowadays agriculture is on the rise and its previous decline seems to have passed. Objects in this area were not only represented in the museums according to their function in contexts of use, but also told about the decline of industries such as mining and mechanical farming in the area. Many industrial objects that no longer functioned were also transferred to be a part of the museum’s collection for representing the periods of industrialisation and post-industrialisation – the recent by-gones.

Figure 4.7: Ryedale Folk Museum – “agricultural machines” as bygones



Owing to the intention of museums to rescue and preserve some parts of rural life during periods of change, these materials became a repository of social memories for telling stories of the countryside in its transition to modernity; this seems meaningful for local people. As an academic area, the emergence of both museums in the countryside could be seen as supporting evidence for the idea of a non-universal modernity, or a provincial modernity in the UK – a part of “spatialising the history of modernity” (Massey, 2005, p.62). Significantly, this concrete evidence lay behind the argument of several studies on the social history of rural England that state that there has been massive change and hard-times for the countryside and rural England since the coming of industrialisation and modernity (Horn, 1987; Mingay, 1990; Howkins, 2003). Howkins called the period since 1900 the death of rural England and others stated the same – the direction was entirely one of decline (Mingay, 1990). Nevertheless, as a part of northern England, generally known as a major industrial area of Britain, the North Riding of Yorkshire, which now covers the area of the North York moors, seems different from other areas of Yorkshire that have been extremely industrialized such as the West Riding of Yorkshire – an area close to the North Riding, which was one of the important industrial areas in Britain and the industrial basis of coal, iron and textiles (Singleton, 1970, p.27).

So the countryside of North Yorkshire such as Ryedale, Hutton le Hole and Pickering seems to be ambiguous and possibly located in the marginal areas of modernity in Britain. The area has also had different experiences and felt the impact of modernity differently in

comparison to other areas of northern England. In summary, the marginal status of the northern countryside in the early age of modernity and industrialisation in Britain may be related for two reasons. First, during the period of extreme industrialisation, this area seems to have been marginal in terms of modernisation because it was not a part of the major industrial areas of the North. While the country and academia had concerns about rural heritage due to the decline of agriculture and thus rural areas, the focus seems to have been on the south rather than the north as this is where the location of governmental museums dedicated to the countryside and rural England primarily are. Secondly, after WWII when the country and national institutions initially do appear concerned about urban and working class heritage, which again are located in the North, the northern countryside is not the main focus to the same extent as the urban areas.

However, this marginal position of the northern countryside also has some positive but unintentional aspects. Several elements of rural heritage and its traces are still left in this area. This may be because the countryside of North Yorkshire had been subject to the impact of modernity and industrialisation much later than other areas of the North, including some parts of Yorkshire. It is since WWII that massive and rapid changes emerge; this is the same period of industrial decline during which the de-industrialization of Britain starts (Wiener, 1981, p.3).

Home, homeland and nation: an ambiguous relationship

One of the crucial debates regarding the countryside in the UK and elsewhere is about its relationship with the notion of nation and national identity. Images of an ideal countryside have been critiqued as crucial elements for constructing the English national identity (Bunce, 1994). In fact, images of the countryside exhibited in both museums seem dynamic and different from the idea of the idyllic countryside – several feature loss and decline. More significantly, all refer to the countryside that is geographically located elsewhere rather than referring to the idyllic countryside which is nowhere located geographically. It could be said that these are exhibitions regarding their home or homeland whereas connection with the English national identity and Englishness seem vague. Moreover, regional identities such as Yorkshire, Ryedale, or the moors seem to be significant as well. However, during critical periods such as during a war, the national consciousness which

binds together “the country” was clearly reflected in the museums where there were several documentary projects and activities launched by both museums. These were related to social memories and remembering the World Wars. Some of the exhibition relates to local life during the wars and tells the story of a number of local men who went to war as a volunteer army; some dedicated their lives to “the country” during the wars. These are either local memories or collective memories of the country at the same time.

The relationship between locality and nationality is crucial, especially as it is mediated through the idea of homeland and related notions such as ‘patriot’ and ‘patriotism’ (in English) or Heimat (in German). Based on case studies of Germany, Confino (1997) investigated how national belonging and national memory have been created through locality and local memories. Confino investigates the crucial roles of Heimat museums in Germany, which flourished during the late 18th– early 19th century, in the process of creating the national identity of Imperial Germany locally and regionally. According to Confino (1997, p.134), during 1890–1918, 371 Heimat museums were found in Germany. Heimat museums mainly focused on folklore, local history and the ethnography of everyday life. Primarily, these Heimat museums were produced and run by various groups of local bourgeois. In some aspects, making nationality through locality and the idea of “heimat” (Confino, *ibid.*) seems similar to making the image of the “Countryside as Idyll” a part of the English national identity.

Confino’s work on Heimat museums in Germany leads me to thinking about the meaning and significance of the countryside as “home” and “homeland” in both local museums in North Yorkshire. On a similar point, Taylor (1991, p.146) observes the idea of “patriotism” which seems influential in Britain. However, in the case of Englishness, not only the idyllic countryside is crucial for national identities but also the great empire – the British Empire. In these circumstances, a number of museums in Britain especially those run by the British government have been criticised for their role as supporters of colonisation, and also for curatorial limitations due to the bias of colonialism (shown in chapter two in post-colonial criticism of museum studies). In that way, national museums of civilisation and museums dedicated to exhibiting the Empire and colonial collections seem to play a major role in the process of making the English national identity (Said, 1978; Mitchell, 1991; Coombes, 1994; Lidchi, 1997).

Regarding debate on images of the idyllic countryside, Bhabha (1990) criticises the romantic nature of views such as this, and also its critics, who seem to be the same in some respects. Both offer perspectives “from above” and stereotype the countryside as homogenous, without context and time-space (Bhabha, 1990, p.294). This argument is shared with those of Eric Hobsbawm (1992) and E.P. Thompson (1963; 1966), critics of histories from above. Both propose alternative approaches to doing histories from “below”.

This latter point also became my major concern on considering representative images of the countryside and considerations to do with the relationship of the countryside to English nationality. It is partly true that images of the countryside have been used as elements of nationality, but it is not all aspects relating to the countryside, especially the northern countryside of England, that have an ambiguous position in the national imagination of a country that is divided into the North and the South.

In this research, rather than investigate in the same manner as Confino – seeing the local as a national metaphor, I adopt the same perspective as Bhabha – one concerned with ambiguous relationships and hybridity in these local museums. Thus I argue that both local museums have negotiated with stereotypic images of the idyllic countryside and both divide the country into the North and the South.

Negotiated Images of the northern countryside

The countryside is often represented by outsiders through various media such as paintings, novels and films. In the case of museums, these representations may relate to art galleries, which exhibit countryside paintings and some open-air museums such as the Beamish museum that Bennett commented upon. However, from a post-colonial perspective, the images of the countryside in both museums discussed here are probably constructed from various ingredients in addition to the national aspects. As Taylor (1991) points out, the idyllic images of the countryside are part of the national identity of Englishness. Furthermore, the industrial-state, dividing the north and the south not only through political and cultural domination of the north by the south but also through national economic policy, intended to industrialise the north and provide the south with services (Nairn, 1977). The countryside idyll in this sense is the imagined space of greenness and peace, static and

immortal rather than the real countryside elsewhere, and this is crucial for constructing and maintaining the notion of the nation (Anderson, 1991; Lowenthal, 1991). Bhabha (1990) called the characteristics of this kind of space the universal imagined space without place or general locality. Following Bhabha's idea through to a national point of view, differences and place-based localities disappear and become meaningless. These differences as they are related to specific places are necessary to investigate post-colonial studies. It could be said that the images of the northern countryside exhibited in both museums have negotiated and engaged in dialogue three conventional images of the English countryside: the national imagined countryside, the southern countryside and the industrial north.

First, images of the countryside of Ryedale in North Yorkshire are different from the idyllic countryside mentioned above and they have been changed radically during the periods of industrialisation and post-industrialisation. Although there are some "traditional icons" of the countryside idyll such as cottages, carriages, and folk objects, all of them have been located in places identified in the nearby countryside, and the trajectory of those objects to the museums reflects change in this rural area.

Secondly, the dialogue with the southern countryside, in fact, changed rural Britain since industrialisation was not limited in its impacts to the north, but also had effects in the south including the southern countryside. According to Mingay (1990) and Howkins (2003), it is the countryside all over the country that has been extremely changed through industrialisation and the wider change to modernity. In this sense the northern countryside in fact raises related questions about the southern countryside. As Yates (2010) has observed in similar situations there are a number of local museums whose volunteers work in villages and market towns. Are there any differences between the impacts of British modernisation on the northern and southern countryside which relate to the conditions of place-based localities?

Lastly, the third conventional image involves the industrial north. As the countryside at the margin of modernity, the existence of the northern countryside and the emergence of local museums there, seem to be an effective negotiation that makes sharp distinctions between two kinds of space – "industrial/non-agricultural/urban" and "non-industrial/rural/agricultural". Exhibitions in both museums obviously presented some overlap and connected space

including a concentrated interaction through moving people in and out of the countryside. In fact, large numbers of miners in the countryside came from rural villages. Moreover, several mines were located in the countryside and particularly in North Yorkshire e.g. the North York moors and Yorkshire dales. Market town like Pickering therefore functioned as connected and exchanged space for various groups of people in the countryside nearby (Rushton, 2011).

Images of complex countryside and differences of place-based localities like Hutton le Hole or Pickering are meaningful as a symbol of de-colonisation of inherited national ideas of the countryside idyll and the sharp divide between the North and the South, a divide once used to legitimate industrial-state policy and domination of the North by the South. Therefore, it was not only to reproduce nationalism and romanticism that these museums played active roles but also to negotiate conventional images of the countryside idyll that were dominated by nationalism and romanticism.

In conclusion, as I have illustrated, the images of the countryside as the land and home, the three themes of chronotopes obviously exhibited in the museums are the land before modern times, industrialised rural landscapes and the land after revolution. Changes in the countryside, either rises or declines, seem to be relevant and worth recording, preserving and reflecting in museums. It seems to me that the exhibition in both museums is diverse and dynamic, and not limited only to traditional folk or agricultural objects. Industrial bygones have currently become a large and significant part of the holdings in this kind of museum. Furthermore, the process of modernity and industrialisation, especially as it involved the railways and mines also had significant impact on the countryside; some of the exhibitions in the museums reflected these changes and how people responded to them. These images seem dynamic and different from the ideal countryside because of local contexts. The countryside exhibited in the museums, in fact, could be seen as concrete evidence of the non-universal modernity in Britain; it also reflects local experiences of British modernisation from the margins.

In fact, English nationalism and British internal colonialism were not only working on space but also on people and time. It was not only space but also folklife and rural life that had been recognised as a result and a reproduction of nationalism. In the next chapter, I will

explore another aspect of the countryside exhibited in the museums. That aspect can be said to be the core unique interest of this kind of museum – folklife and people.

Chapter 5

Folklife and People

Large and famous museums were good at preserving the big stories of history but who cared about the little stories of ordinary people, their dogged will to survive on very little, their symbiotic relationship with the land around them, their customs and superstitions?

Bert Franks, first curator of Ryedale Folk Museum
(The Spell of Ryedale, 2011)

As Bert Frank noticed it seems obvious that both Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life primarily concentrated on “little stories of ordinary people”. The emergence of local folk museums is more likely meaningful for museum founders and local people as they are related to their ownership, and they also might be significant for museum studies as a part of the important debate on museums related to folklife and rural life. This is based on the fact that in both museums’ formative years, development had occurred alongside that of several well-known museums in the UK, which focus on folklife and rural life, such as York Castle Museum (opened 1938), Beamish Museum (opened 1958), Museum of English Rural life (opened 1951), Welsh Folk Museum (opened 1948), Scottish Museum of Rural Life (opened 1949), Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (opened 1964) and continued efforts to establish an English folk museum since the early 20th century (Balfour, 1909).

Main questions that this chapter will be concerned with are to do with the content and meaning of exhibitions in both museums as these relate to folklife and people; how folklife and people have been exhibited, and why is it that these local museums seem to be invisible in museum studies. The keys to these questions may relate to the conceptual orientations of evolutionism and the political orientation of nationalism, which dominated mainstream museums during that period through disciplines which were interested in folklife and folk cultures, especially ethnology, ethnography and folklore. (Douglas, 2011; Wingfield, 2011).

In fact, increasing numbers of local folk museums in the UK had been generally recognised in academia but not specifically as museum exhibitors or story tellers; instead these

museums in Britain are mainly mentioned as collectors of bygone or folk objects with rudimentary documentation (Higgs, 1963; Kavanagh, 1990). They have also been explored in terms of the movement of the heritage industry during the period of national decline (Hewison, 1987) and as simulating the past, which seems to be a result of the shift to postmodernity (Walsh, 1992). This study argues that these local museums could be seen as making an argument, from a postcolonial perspective, about the lack of concern with ordinary people and local life shown by large and famous museums, which are dominated by ideas of evolutionism and nationalism as Bert Frank's comment above suggests. Furthermore, Bert Frank also commented on mainstream exhibitions directly and stated his ideas about them. Brannigan notes that:

On travels around other museums he had often been struck by their stuffy atmosphere, the imprisonment of everything behind glass and the lack of communion between objects in people. Visitors had the privilege of viewing, as long as they behaved themselves with decorum. Bert saw the interaction of people and objects, the sharing of stories and the active demonstration of traditional skills as key to his museum. (Brannigan, 2011, p.50)

Referring to stories of museums-making in the third chapter, it could be said that the focus and styles of museum exhibition in both museums was inspired by various sources, and silently cultivated underground for several decades before the museums' public opening. In addition, both museums had been involved in working with several key persons who shared a strong enthusiasm for museums and worked either as an amateur or as a professional in related fields. These included, for example, Dr. Crosland who was interested in folklore and oral histories related to the moors and who worked continually in that area; Raymond Hayes, an amateur archaeologist who undertook several archaeological works on the moors; Dr. Kirk who collected large collections of folk objects from the moors and was inspired by Skansen open-air museum; and John Rushton who worked on social and local history, and wrote several books related to the history of Pickering and Ryedale.

Ideas about focus and the mode of exhibition in both local folk museums are different from conventional museums related to folk cultures. Despite thinking about these museums as the promoters or opponents of nationalism, Bhabha's ideas on hybridity and negotiation

with nationalism allow us to see these museums as a form of negotiation with the national narration related to folklife and ordinary people in conventional museums. The first major difference is to do with the mode of exhibition used in displays of scientific typologies of folk objects, and displays of places in everyday life or the chronotopes of folklife. The second major difference is in regard to the focus of exhibitions which differentiated “other cultures” and the “folklife or folk cultures of the nation” in general from the local folklife related to specific locality. In addition, to capture and illustrate large and various parts of the exhibitions in both museums, I will explore those complexities through Bakhtin’s idea of chronotope.

This chapter contains three main parts – first, illustrations of “chronotopes of folklife” exhibited in both museums; second, discussion of different modes of exhibition and distinction in folk museums; and third, explorations of the influences of evolutionism and nationalism on museums including folk museums. In order to understand the emergence and existence of local folk museums and their differences, it is necessary to explore and understand other kinds of museums in the UK which relate to ordinary people and folk cultures such as ethnographic museums where large numbers of folk objects were collected from several areas of the UK countryside.

Exhibiting “folklife” in North Yorkshire countryside

Overall in the case of the Ryedale Folk Museum, various rooms and displays of domestic life, working life and village life are concentrated in the interior of small houses, shops and workshops of village-craft. For the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, there are not only displays of domestic and working life, but also exhibits of the market town and early modern life. Several display rooms in the main building of Beck Isle Museum relate to the arrival of modern life at Pickering market town during the Victorian period e.g. the pub, print shop, photo shop, chemist shop, gent outfitters and barber. These displays are neither entirely simulated nor completely representative of the authentic places stand in for although their collections and stories are based on specific places and persons. As chronotopes, these are exhibitions of place–memories related to local areas where they possibly open multiple narratives, voices and interpretation based on various participants who connected them to those chronotopes both as story tellers and audiences. Moreover,

these chronotopes would be differently interpreted by different audiences e.g. from the different positions of insiders who were experienced with these chronotopes and the outsiders who were not.

Houses and everyday life

As an open-air museum, displays of the collections and exhibitions of Ryedale Folk Museum mainly dedicated to folk life are related to the following themes – houses and everyday life, workshops and working life, village and rural life at Hutton le Hole, and town life and early modern life at Pickering. Inside several houses preserved from different periods of time, there are chronotopes of domestic life exhibited in museum spaces such as the bedroom, dairy room, kitchen, dining room, and wash house.

For the open-air museum, it may not be the material objects but the context or cultural setting which this kind of museum pays attention to and attempts to capture and exhibit. Based on case studies in Scandinavia including Skansen, Sandberg (2002, p.231-232) points out that the open-air museums exhibited their collections according to the idea of immersion and intended to construct displays which could be touched and enjoyed by the audience. Through this approach, the museum space would be set up as a living picture which allowed the audience to immerse itself rather than just looking through glass showcases and perceiving the systematic academic classification found in more conventional museums.

In the case of Beck Isle Museum, although not an open-air museum, it seems obvious that several rooms and display spaces used this approach as their mode of exhibition. There are nearly twenty rooms of display space in the main building that exhibit chronotopes of various spaces over the last two hundred years. The chronotopes, which are related to domestic life include the dairy room, located on the ground floor of the main building, the cottage kitchen, and the costume and children's rooms on the second floor of the same building.

Workshops and working life

Chronotopes of working life are spectacular displays in both Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life especially those depicting the working life of craftsmen, which are

exhibited through chronotopes of their workshops. The workshops of the blacksmith, tinsmith, shoes maker, cooper, and wheelwright maker are exhibited in both museums through a large number of objects such as equipment, tools, materials, and products which are laid, hung or installed in each workshop. There are also the workshops of the saddler maker and the undertaker exhibited at Ryedale Folk Museum.

Moreover, there are also chronotopes of farming life exhibited through photographs and drawn pictures of farming objects and related stories in both museums; miners and industrial working life are exhibited in Beck Isle Museum. However, the farming life and industrial working life exhibited in Beck Isle Museum did not use the same idea of open-air museums and contextual reconstruction of chronotopes in their craftsmen' workshops. Instead, the Beck Isle Museum displays many farming tools in a so-called "farming gallery". This gallery is located on the second floor of the row of buildings in the backyard. Near the farming gallery, there is a corner that exhibits how to make brush and besom through a chart and pictures of the process. Tools used in the process, including raw materials and the completed products of brush and besom, are displayed as well.

Exhibiting the places of everyday life not only reflects radical changes in the countryside since industrialisation, but also relates to rural heritage preservation. These changes are not only preserved by chronotopes e.g. houses, workshops, shops but also by social memories related to those chronotopes that turn the museums into a theatre of memories (Samuel, 1994). Each chronotope may be meaningful and effective for different audiences in different ways, especially given the demonstrations using those chronotopes on the museums' craft days. Bert Frank often mentioned his concern with knowledge and the skill of craftsmen that will be lost along with their workshops. So the chronotopes of workshops may have different meanings for different audiences according to whether they are producers or customers. In the same way, houses and other everyday places act as a locus of place-memory that can be shared by experienced audiences and also can be perceived as cultural differences by "inexperienced" audiences.

Although the workshops of the blacksmith, tinsmith, shoe maker and so on were exhibited in both museums this did not mean that both displays were the same; some differences relate to context and the craftsmen. Due to the folk objects in both museums, displays were

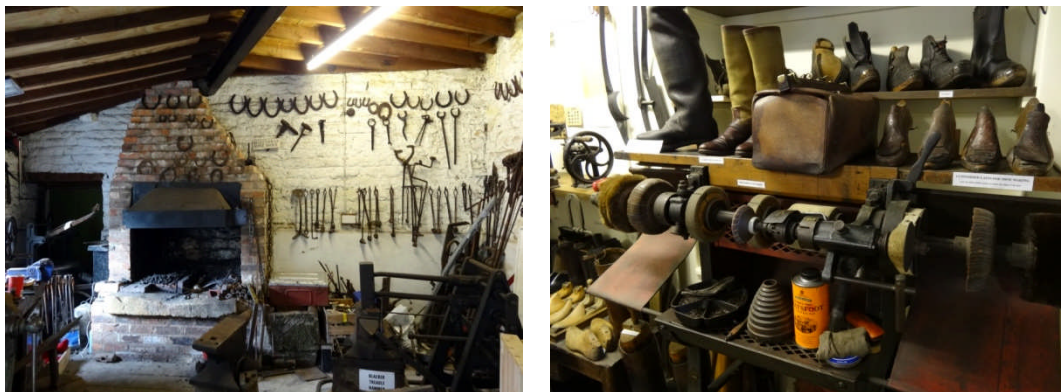
not folk objects “in general” but were involved with stories of local persons. For instance, Robin Butler, who was a blacksmith at Hutton le Hole and his workshop were exhibited at the Ryedale Folk Museum and Wilf McNeil, a Pickering blacksmith, at the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life. Moreover, the museums also attempted to state the names of persons who were involved with the exhibition, and especially in the case of Beck Isle, the museum staff tried to identify all the names of people in photographs either taken by Sidney Smith or other photographers as much as possible. This task is still undertaken by volunteers in collaboration with local residents.

As biographical objects, Hoskins (1996) points out that the objects could tell stories of people’s lives and conversely stories by local people could give meaning and liveliness to objects in the museum. Furthermore stories of people involved with objects and museums’ chronotopes also alter those chronotopes which seem similar and general to become different and unique. In this sense, objects in museum exhibitions therefore are not only presented in the ordinary life of the rural community or village as ethnographic objects but also presented in people’s life stories as biographical objects. Ryedale Folk Museum, in fact is concerned about this aspect and has launched several books of memoirs and life histories as told by local people who have engaged with the museum, its collections and activities.

Figure 5.1: Craftsmen's workshops at Ryedale Folk Museum



Figure 5.2: Craftsmen's workshops at Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life



Village life at Hutton le Hole

The village life at Hutton le Hole during the transition period of pre-modernity to modernity in the early twentieth century has been presented through chronotopes of the village shop, post office, chemist shop and undertaker office, which were set up as a row of small shops. According to the museum guidebook (2011, p.6), the village shop functioned not only as a

place for providing a wide range of goods but as a place to share and exchange news and gossip in the village. In addition, the village's post office sold stamps and postal services as well as many other things. The necessary goods provided and sold in the village shop also included fresh food, bread, vegetables, packet goods, household cleaners, pots and pans.

Another interesting chronotope of village life is the office of the undertaker which contained his working desk and living space including notebooks and some instruments intended for measuring how tall a person was, and “flat coffin-shaped wooden templates” used to mark out the size of grave (Ryedale Folk Museum, 2011, p.8). In addition, it could be said that the chronotopes of village life at Hutton le Hole, in fact, reflected the arrival of modernity into the countryside although at a smaller scale and with less complexity than actual modernity in rural life in Pickering.

Figure 5.3: Village life at Ryedale Folk Museum



Marketplace and town life at Pickering

Although chronotopes of rural life in the Beck Isle Museum were scoped at around two hundred years they varied in time in comparison with the Ryedale Folk Museum. However, it was fruitful variation in space especially as it related to the market-town life of Pickering. The print shop is one of the most visually striking rooms where visitors normally will go when following the museum's visitor route. In this room, the print machine is currently still usable and services some printing for the museum. Eric Dewing who owned a printing business in Pickering, donated this machine and a part of the materials exhibited in the shop to the Beck Isle Museum when he retired and closed down his business in 1972.

Walking through the print shop, there is a room where mixed models of rural vehicles of the horse age such as a carriage, carts and wagons are displayed along with a model of a steam engine and locomotive. There are also models of fairground carousels, the photographic albums of Sydney Smith, and a short documentary film playing in loop via a television in this room. All themes in this room lead to understanding the town life at Pickering and nearby areas from the pre-modern to the early modern period where people in the countryside used horse power and pre-industrial vehicles as transportation until locomotives and cars arrived.

At the end of a walk way outside the model room, there is a small room exhibited as a prison cell with a mannequin of a prisoner alongside a collection of local police equipment and posters related to law and order. Upstairs on the first floor of the main building, there is a Victorian pub, a chemist shop, a gent's outfitter, and a village shop that are located as they might have been. Generally, the market town was the centre of modernisation in the countryside. Modern life styles, technological and economic changes started in the market town and then spread into the nearby countryside. So the rural life exhibited in Beck Isle Museum was not only related to traditional folk but several aspects of the museum exhibition relate closely to early modernity and the rapid changes that had an impact on folklife.

Figure 5.4: Market-town life at Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life



Based on exhibitions in both museums, it could be said that folk museums primarily adopted the idea of effigy, which was popular in open-air museum. This mode of exhibition is found in several of the museum displays. Moreover, in the eyes of folk collectors, their collecting practice did not focus on old things only but on objects that are a part of ordinary life and were used at the present time. This was a time that was disappearing, or dysfunctional, and was being replaced by new practices due to technological and economic changes. Since the arrival of railways and industrialisation, large numbers of local shops notably stopped producing goods to sell in their shop and replaced them with industrial products. Gordon Clitheroe, the museum co-founder and curator noted that at the beginning of the museum, farms, home dairies, and various workshops were disappearing because food, milk and goods could come from elsewhere at a lower price with more alternatives. Several

workshops exhibited in the Beck Isle Museum were the last in Pickering or nearby areas and, when they closed down, their tools and equipment were donated to the museum. It seems obvious that not only rural objects but also “rural chronotopes” of houses, shops, workshops and so on were, in fact, their main concern to preserve and exhibit.

In addition, there are some differences between the private individual collector and community collectors. Whereas the former collected objects for themselves and imagined objects as a part of a collection based on some values or guidelines such as those relating to rare objects or any special set of objects, the community collectors are concerned with collecting objects as a means of rescuing “present things” which once had been used in everyday life and were becoming obsolete due to rapid changes in that period. So they did not collect “the past” as seen through the eyes of today, but were collecting the fragmented “vanishing present” and “place-memories” of the days in which they lived. This may be the reason why some chronotopes are exhibited in the museum rather than others – because those chronotopes have accumulated enough objects and materials for potential display in an exhibition room or a corner.

Chronotopes of everyday life, place-memories and multi-voices

According to Bakhtin (1986), the significance of exhibiting chronotopes in everyday life e.g. houses, workshops, shops in both museums not only relates to negotiating with conventional museums which had been dominated by ideas of evolution and nationalism at that time, but also connects to place-memories and the multi-vocality of various people. Connerton (2009, p.10-35) explains the significance of place for memory through the concept of place-memory and states that the relationship between place and memory is crucial and relates to modernity’s “forgetting”. Regarding place-memory, there are two kinds of memory related to place – the memorial and the locus. The memorial refers to the place for formally remembering, such as monuments, memorial places, and also museums that seem significant and meaningful in modern life. One unintended consequence is that while the memorial has been made for remembering a thing or event, it may lead to unintended forgetting of other things at the same time. In contrast, the locus is likely to be different from the memorial. It relates to places in everyday life such as a part of the house, domestic space, a location or setting in a nearby living area – the road, walkway, a corner of

a building or even a tree. So the locus is very important for people in making sense of places in their everyday life and also cultivating place-memory in any place. In addition, because of the intimate relationship between place and memory, changing topographies and temporalities probably affected the disconnection of place and people, reduced place-memory, and finally led to forgetting (Connerton, 2009).

Chronotopes of folklife as the locus for local people seem to be part of their collective memory and this is a reason why the museums are meaningful for local people. These memories seem to be what museum curators attempt to preserve and present to their audiences. It was not only material objects but also “place” or “locus” – a kind of place-memory which is meaningful for ordinary people as the collective memories of the village. This relates to one intention that folk museums adopted from the idea of open-air museums: connecting to people who have some relationship with the collection and the audiences.

Significantly, the rest of the bygone objects are not only material objects but also memories and stories related to those objects. On occasion the objects will be alive and as meaningful again such as when they were used in demonstration on the museum’s craft day; these involved various kinds of crafting activities that both museums provided for visitors several times a year. Moreover, museum collections of biographical objects can lead to telling people’ stories through people’ voices, which seem to be lost in conventional museums. In this sense, local folk museums and their exhibitions of folklife through the chronotopes of everyday life could be seen as negotiating with the scientific approach to folklife and folk cultures in the museums, which at that time primarily exhibited folklife as scientific typologies of folk objects.

From “typologies of folk objects” to “chronotopes of folklife”

Exhibiting folklife through the chronotopes of everyday life seems to be the conjunction of local needs to remember their place-memories, new ideas about open-air museums, the conventional styles of exhibition and also actual implementation; these come together in museums such as the York Castle Museum. However, one of the major concerns from museum professionals on folk museums and folk collections in the UK is to do with their lack

of concern with well-documented records on the sources and data of objects they collected. For instance, Higgs (1963, p.24) commented on York Castle Museum, particularly the major of Kirk's collection:

Unfortunate that Kirk, despite his energy and enthusiasms did not take more pains to relate his material to the source from which it was obtained. As a result the staff of the castle museum have been continually troubled by their ability to catalogue the Kirk collection effectively and to use it for anything more than public display. (Higgs 1963, p.24 cited in Kavanagh 1990, p.29)

In addition, this concern was not only relevant to private collectors of bygone but also to an increasing number of local folk museums and folklife collections in the UK after WWII (Higgs 1963, p.12). However, although this comment is important and generally would be a primary concern for museum curators, it is not the only aspect of concern in museum practice, especially, for amateur or vernacular curators who had not been professionally trained in museology. Given the idea of open-air museums, the museum exhibition that could be touched and enjoyed by public audiences seems to have been the first priority. Moreover, this approach also criticised conventional museums in which the exhibition was mainly limited to a scientific approach and typological displays of material objects.

To understand this difference, it is necessary to understand the main idea of an open-air museum – another approach to museum practice which argued the mainstream conventional museums of that time. Sandberg (2002, p.231-232) argued that it is necessary to look at folk museums and exhibitions of folk life as living pictures or a kind of dramatic film which lets the audiences immerse themselves in the museum space rather than just looking through glass showcases to see a systematic academic classification. His argument is based on the experiences of the Scandinavian museums including the Skansen open-air museum. He proposes the concepts of effigy and immersion for understanding the Scandinavian museums use of mannequins and setting properties for creating an effigy. For this approach, popularity is crucial, and museums should be meaningful not only for the professionals but also for the public. At least, according to Sandberg (2002), it seems obvious that there are at least two different modes of exhibition for folk museums – one is the conventional museology which is based on scientific knowledge, and another is the open-air museum

which attempted to do something different through using effigy as in dramatic film or theatre.

This argument is reflected in a quote of Edvard Hammarstedt, the museum assistant at the Nordic museum (1898) (cited in Sandberg, 2002, p.178):

One, perhaps even the most important, of the ethnographic cultural-historical open-air museum's tasks is precisely to popularize. But in order to speak to the people in an intimate and winning way, science (or in this case, the museum) must be introduced to step down from the pedestal that has been raised by academic aristocrats, in order to comply as much as is allowable with the demands of the masses. And the border public requires watchability and liveliness; it wants to see the breath of life in the dead bones; it wants to hear the old instruments play with full sound.

In this view, exhibitions in both museums through the various chronotopes of folklife as illustrated above, contrast with the conventional museums exhibited folklife and folk objects of that time. Those museums mainly exhibited typologies of material objects based on scientific knowledge and primitives cultures overseas rather than the folk life of ordinary English people. Significantly, several display rooms of shops and workshops, such as those of the blacksmith and tinsmith, were constructed and exhibited by collaboration with craftsmen and local people and were based on their experiences of working and living in that area. It means there is another kind of knowledge that lay behind their exhibition although those objects may lack the systematic classification and data records expected by professional curators. This seems to be another difference between local and professional folk museums with regards to methodology and museum practice.

The distinction of typologies of folk objects and chronotopes of folklife is not only in their style of display but relates deeply to different conceptual frameworks and museum purposes. The typologies of material objects were mainly rooted in scientific methodology, which is strongly influential in academic disciplines related to folk cultures such as ethnology and anthropology (Chapman, 1985; Stocking, 1987; Gosden and Larson, 2007). The scientific mode of exhibition therefore deserved specific prominence at the museums influenced by the sciences and this is very different from local folk museums. Moreover, the scientific

mode of exhibition was possibly related to nationalism and colonialism through the ideas of evolution and human civilisation (Stocking, 1987, p.5-6).

Local folk museums as negotiation with evolutionism and nationalism

In fact, it is not only the methodologies or modes of exhibition that marked a distinction in folk museums but also the theories or subjects of exhibition. The distinction was reflected in the definition and exhibition of several museums in Britain which concentrated on folklife and the cultures of ordinary people. Moreover, it is worth exploring how folk life and rural objects were exhibited in professional folk museums in England such as the Museum of English Rural Life and the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Douglas (2011) precisely illustrates how strongly evolutionism or “progressionism” influenced academic disciplines and museums concentrated on folklife and folk objects. In the late 19th century, there were three main approaches which related to the homeland ethnography of “British vernacular life”, and which strongly influenced museums: folklore, cultural survival, and the neo-archaic. Folklore and anthropology, which closely related to folk museums and ethnographic museums, obviously were involved with the idea of cultural evolution. Through this paradigm, “human cultures progressed from simple forms to reach more complex states”. Moreover, this idea was not only used for analysing material objects but to imply the “intellectual progression of humanity from ‘lower’ to ‘higher’ developmental states” (Tylor, 1867 cited in Douglas, 2011, p.224). In museums, evolution or progress had been practically supported by large numbers of artefacts from various contexts such as colonial contexts, archaeological sites and various areas of the country (ibid. p.225).

More specifically, Wingfield (2011) analysed the English folk collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Museum of English Rural Life and found the same circumstances in which evolutionism influenced museum practices in the late 19th century through terms such as civilisation, progress, and development. In addition, Wingfield (2011, p.250-51) points out the influence of nationalism in the 20th century; the idea that the nation or “nation-like groups” increasingly had become the unit of historical analysis for archaeologists and historians including anthropologists, through the idea of a national folk museum that shifted the focus from human civilisation to culture. Dr I.F. Grant who was working on Highland folk

culture, and was one of the founder curators of the Highland folk museum in Scotland, also comments on the distinction of folk museums from conventional museums.

...this was no “peasant” culture but an ancient and an aristocratic culture. Highland society, through hierarchical, was well integrated and adhered to the values of an aristocracy whose values had a long pedigree. These values were adopted, imitated, and reflected on by all levels of society as, for example, Gaelic song and story clearly indicated. Every member of the Highland community looked to an aristocratic and heroic past and understood its conventions and metaphors. (Cheape, 1986, p.115 cited in Kavanagh, 1990, p.25)

Due to the influence of national orientation, several ethnographic museums such as the Pitt Rivers Museum concerned themselves with collecting rural and agricultural objects in Britain alongside their collections of primitive objects from overseas cultures. However, the strong influence of evolutionism on ethnographic museums was responsible for classifying British rural collections as “internal primitives” at a lower stage of evolution. As Henare states “the emergence of folklife museums in Britain marked a shift in status of Highlanders and other domestic “primitives” from quaint “survival” of the past to a people embodying the vital regenerative spirit of the land, which could rescue Britain from the threat of cultural and physiological degeneration brought by urban industrialisation” (Henare, 2005, p.243).

In summary, ideas of evolutionism and nationalism seemed to strongly influence institutional museums relations with folklife and folk cultures in the UK, and especially those large museums run by universities and the government. Moreover, this orientation involved colonialism because both English nationalism and British colonialism were basically bound together – both rising to a peak in the mid 19th century and declining together after WWII or around the mid 20th century (Nairn, 1977). In the atmosphere of theoretical and political orientations such as evolutionism, nationalism and colonialism, the reason seems clear why local folk museums are absent or over-looked in the academic world but flourished in the social world. According to both case studies of the Ryedale Folk Museum and the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, local folk museums, in fact, were growing up alongside the

institutional folk museums in the UK, but their driving forces and modes of exhibition were influenced by different conceptual and political orientations.

During the colonial period, when folk and ethnographic museums played active roles, English national identities were primarily formed through the British colonial empire (Taylor 1991). Several well-known institutional museums in the UK, which owned large colonial collections related to indigenous folk and primitive cultures overseas were criticised for their roles in the context of British colonisation, a critique which derived from postcolonial studies (Coombes, 1994; Lidchi, 1997; Barringer and Flynn, 1998). Moreover, based on the explorations of Douglas (2011) and Wingfield (2011), if there had been a national folk museum in England during the early 20th century while nationalism and colonialism were influential the first likelihood seems to be that rural folk probably would have been presented as part of a pre-modern stage of human civilisation due to the academic, evolutionist orientation during that time; the second possibility was that rural folk were regarded as survivors of the same kind of evolution; and the third possibility was that rural folk from various countryside areas of England were exhibited as “a narration of the nation” where localities and differences were disappeared and forgotten (Bhabha, 1990).

The chronotopes of everyday life are most likely meaningful and related to a number of objects, memories and voices. On the one hand, they serve as collective memories. On the other hand, they relate to personal memories. What is the significance of this kind of exhibition? This question relates to mainstream museum exhibition during a period of time which was influenced by evolutionism – a time when human civilisation and nationalism were displayed as typologies of scientific classification based on the scientific study of folklife and folk objects. Although there is a national folk museum, it may not mean that local folk museums or little museums in the countryside are worthless or unnecessary for local people and public audiences. The situation seems to be the opposite – they are crucial and meaningful due to their uniqueness as a means of domestic remembering and, the differences in each kind of museums, as Bert Frank noted, are that “Large and famous museums were good at preserving the big stories of history but who cared about the little stories of ordinary people”. This point will be explained and discussed further in the next chapter on forgotten histories and domestic remembering.

Chapter 6

Forgotten Histories and Domestic Remembering

“The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common and also that they have forgotten many things”.

Ernest Renan (1882) What is the nation?

In the broader context of Britain, the images and stories of the countryside exhibited in the Ryedale Folk Museum and the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life could be seen as a part of the forgotten histories of ordinary people that both museums attempted to remember. On the other hand, they could be seen as negotiating the conventional narrative of the nation. As Renan points out, what the nation required was homogeneity and unity rather than difference; this is a main reason why forgetting is crucial for the genesis of a nation. In the process of doing so, the earliest things one needed to forget are differences and also the violence involved in the origin of political formation of a nation because “unity is always effected by means of brutality” (Renan, 1882, p.11). Moreover, it was not only that nationality had affected social memory and forgetting but also that modernity had changed the structural conditions related to space and time (Connerton, 2009).

Although these ideas seem to be different from the former set of explanations related to the heritage industry and reproduction of nationalism and romanticism, they focus on structural determination and have less concern with the agency of the local or the marginal. In relation to time and temporal aspects, I argue that both museums in the countryside of North Yorkshire are a part of the people’s history movement and also negotiate with forgetting and the historical narrative of the nation as it relates to the countryside.

In fact, both museums had resonated with new approaches to history after the second world war – for instance social history, local history and an increasing interest in people’s history, which initially focused on the working class; one of the major works, in fact, is “The making of the English working class” (Thompson, 1963), a well-known approach of “history from below” (Thompson, 1966). Local histories and people’s memories seem to be the main

concern of both museums presented here as well. These included stories of forgotten histories and untold memories related to local people and local areas which have partly been presented in previous chapters through exhibitions of the countryside's relation to space and people.

In addition, it was not just stories that these museums attempted to remember but stories of the museums themselves. In Britain, Yates questions the absence of village and market town's museums in British histories of museums (Yates, 2010) despite there being a number of local museums active in the British countryside and small towns (Fleming, 1989). In museum studies related to folk museums, community-based museums, local museums, and indigenous museums flourish in international museum studies, but stories of community-based museums in the North and other areas of British countryside seem to be of less concern. Why is the status of either stories in these museums or the museums themselves marginalized or entirely forgotten? How do local folk museums concern themselves and their practice with forgotten histories? These crucial questions are discussed in this chapter.

This chapter covers four main topics – the first is concerned with the question of how modernity and nationality impact on forgetting; the second is the sample stories of forgotten histories and untold memories; the third topic focuses on domestic remembering of the museums. The last topic is a discussion on the significance of this kind of museum in wider contemporary contexts.

Forgetting as gravity of modernity and nationality

Forgetting and remembering, which are related closely to social memory, have become increasingly of concern in contemporary societies and various academic disciplines (Olick and Robbins, 1998, p.105-6). Sociologically, forgetting and remembering may not be failures or symptoms of failure on an individual basis but are possibly related to the structural condition of societies. They may seem to be irrelevant but in fact are influential to nationality and modernity.

In fact, it seems impossible to ignore the influences of nationality and modernity on local agency including the museums, but I argue that the structural condition can be seen as having to do with gravity rather causality. To start with, the gravity of modernity, according

to Connerton (2009), has to do with the alteration of topographies and temporalities, which are two types of structural conditions in modernity. These have affected social memory and forgetting. This is because of the significance of place-memory and the deep relationship between place and memory. There are several changes in the structural condition of modernity related to the gravity of forgetting. First, changing temporalities mainly relate to increasing the speed, not only of production processes, but also of consumption; this changes labour skills training from long-term to short-term. The deep impact of “new” modern media such as newspapers, radios, televisions and the latest internet which has extremely high speeds and wider reach are also factors. A second set of factors are the changing topographies with regard to the transformation of the physical environment and places including the expanding scale of human settlements through new buildings, construction of superhighways and mass transportation including railways. We can add changing transportation and rapid production of speed associated with new technology to the list. Modernised topographies tend to be standardised and create the disappearance of public spaces and material objects. These structural conditions may lead to detachment between people and place, and loss of place-memory or even actual forgetting.

With regard to the idea of place-memory, the disappearance of living and working places in the countryside did not mean the disappearance of geographical landscape but of people, objects, practices, knowledge, and place-memory involved with those landscapes. For instance, the disappearance of farming means the loss of fields, plants and trees, farming objects, knowledge and skill in farming. It also includes changed temporalities involving changed schedules, seasons, standardisation of time, and a rapid pace of life, all of which have an impact on place-memory. Most places had disappeared during industrialisation and the concerns of both museums seem to be in preserving locus or places of everyday life – mainly, the houses, rooms, farm, livestock, cornfield, workshops, various local shops, the pub, barber and so on. The disappearance of these places can lead to forgetting due to the disappearance of place-memory, especially for a rural locus. These places that were lost also related to local people, rural objects, skill of farming, crafting, rural tradition, local knowledge and so on. Without places, consequently, other related things and the place-memories seem to have been forgotten and have disappeared. Nowadays, both museums own large numbers of material objects which generate untold memories.

On the gravity of nationality, based on the original idea of Walter Benjamin (1937), Anderson (1991) points out the significance of national history. These ideas are crucial conditions for imagining the nation as a community through historical time which was regarded as single, linear, progressive, and irresistible, a concept based on “homogeneous empty time”. More precisely, Benjamin (1937) explains and criticises the idea of progress on the basis of homogenous empty time, an idea which relates closely to dogmatic claims of the universal and irresistible progress of mankind.

Social Democratic Theory, and even more its practice, have been formed by a conception of progress which did not adhere to reality but made dogmatic claims. Progress as pictured in the kinds of Social Democrats was, first of all, the progress of mankind itself (and not just advances in men’s ability and knowledge). Secondly, it was something boundless, in keeping with the infinite perfectibility of mankind. Thirdly, progress was regarded as irresistible, something that automatically pursued as a straight or spiral course. Each of these predicates is controversial and open to criticism. However, when the chips are down, criticism must penetrate beyond these predicates and focus on something that they have in common. The concept the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through homogenous, empty time. A critique of the concept of such progression must be the basis of any criticism of the concept of progress itself. (Benjamin, 1937, p.252)

This critique resonated with J.R. Green (1887) who criticised English national history that seemed to him like “drum and trumpet history”. Green also launched a book entitled the “Short history of the English people,” to oppose the history of English civilisation and its concern with the history of society rather than of the state. As he wrote in his famous preface:

The aim of the following work is defined by its title; it is history not of English kings or English conquests but of the English people I have preferred to pass lightly and briefly over the details of foreign wars and diplomacies, the personal adventures of kings and nobles, the pomp of

courts, of intrigues of favourites, and to dwell at length on the incidents of the constitutional, intellectual, and social advance, in which we read the history of the nation itself. (Green, 1887 cited in Samuel, 1981, p.xvi)

In fact, forgetting could be impacted by unbalanced power relations and especially colonial power (Renan, 1882; Bhabha, 1990). In the colonial context, although some things have been remembered, there may be inaccuracy or distorted memories which were influenced by the limited and biased perceptions of the subjects who remembered. Significantly, the memories of the colonised by the coloniser are one of the critical examples, as Said noted when he originally criticised western representations of the Orient (Said, 1978). Other cases include Mitchell (1988) on colonising Egypt, Coombes (1994) on representing Africa, and several cases of nationality creation through museums worldwide (Kaplan, 1994).

In addition, Bhabha states that ideas about the nation are “narration” and points out that the narrative of nation needs a timeless discourse of irrationality and homogeneity of modernity so that “people may assume something resembling the archaic body of despotic or totalitarian mass” (Bhabha, 1990, p.294). Consequently,

to write the story of the nation demands that we articulate that archaic ambivalence that informs modernity. We may begin by questions that progressive metaphor of modern social cohesion – the many as one – shared by the organic theories of the holism of culture and community, and by theorists who treat gender, class, or race as radically “expressive” social totalities. (Bhabha, *ibid.*)

In an atmosphere of rising nationalism, greater orientations to nationality and national identity, according to Bhabha (1990), suggest that “timelessness” and “space without place” locality are necessary as national narratives and may lead to ignorance of place-based localities, ordinary people and especially the marginal or the subaltern. To sum up, both conditions of modernity and unbalanced power relate to the influences of nationalism and colonialism, and are crucial factors shaping histories and memories. The gravity of forgetting seems vague but powerful.

Forgotten histories and untold memories

This section will focus on forgotten histories and untold memories related to time and the crucial period of time that has not been displayed in permanent exhibitions, but through temporary exhibitions and other media such as publications and documentary films. In order to present the significance of the museums as mnemonic practice or domestic remembering, I will focus on some stories that occurred during two periods of time – the colonial period and WWII. These were once forgotten or were untold memories but recently have been told in the museums as a part of exhibitions using other media. Certainly, both periods of time are crucial not only for the countryside of Ryedale, but also the UK and wider areas across the world. Nevertheless, as domestic remembering based on the differences of specific localities and persons, these unique stories seem to be significant. They contribute to local and community-based museums in contemporary societies by providing multi-vocality and multi-experiences, the constituents of social memories during critical times or, as Bakhtin (1981) points out, the significance of chronotopes as the gates to the making of meaning and multiple narratives related to those chronotopes.

Ryedale at war – Ryedale Folk Museum

The Ryedale countryside during the Second World War was mentioned in the Ryedale Folk Museum through the village hall. According to a description board at the museum, during the war local families had played a major role as the host for thousands of young evacuees from Middleborough and Hull. The village hall functioned as the centre of the community and as a social space for meeting, maintaining a sense of community and also as a venue for relaxations such as the weekly dance. The museum also mentions the hard work of “land girls” at the local farms for feeding the nation and “timber girls” in the forests who provided wood for urgently needed pit props and railway sleepers. At Ryedale, British airmen and woman worked in the battle alongside Canadians at Wombleton Aerodrome. After the end of WWII, some of the Canadian airmen and evacuees “fell in love with the place, and its people, and never left”. In 2006, the Ryedale Folk Museum in collaboration with Malton School launched a film project on “Ryedale – the countryside at war” made by pupils and volunteers. In this project, pupils also interview elderly people about their experiences

during the war, do record and retell people's memories through the film (The York Press, 27 September 2006).

The countryside during WWII was at a crucial moment of change due to the national policy of achieving the highest production of food. This policy affected large numbers of local families as did the national call to arms for battle. According to his biography (Brannigan, 2011, p.19), during the war Bert Frank was asked to work as manager of Lund farm near Hutton le Hole and tried his best to "feed the nation" through doing so. His brother Kit who was serving in the Army had been killed in action. Bert's experience has been reflected in his biography, which states that "When the victory in Europe was declared in May 1945, Bert watched with mixed feeling as a huge bonfire took shape on the village green. He knew the time would come when his brother's name and the names of all others who had died during the conflict would be carved into the war memorial. It was a memorial intended to record only one war and here was another list already (ibid.)". The national victory and also defeat always comes alongside the families' loss and a number of stories probably are told in silence as forgotten histories and untold memories. Bert's story is one example.

Beyond courage: Ron's story – Beck Isle Museum

In 2003 Beck Isle Museum started a project to interview, document and record "Wartime Memories" during the Second World War and this project is a part of the Beck Isle Museum Oral History Group. The first published book of this project is "*Beyond courage: Ron's story*" which was compiled from memories of Ronald and his wife Margaret Scales. According to Rodge Dowson – the Project Co-ordinator, this book is the story of Ronald Scales of Pickering who was a former WWII RAF aircrew veteran and one of the first local people who agreed to talk about his wartime experience. In his introduction to the book, Dowson notes that "There are many contributions both from veterans and civilians who shared even the most painful of their memories with us, often for the first time since the war had ended", and also "This then is a microcosm of one personal aircrew story, from what one interview called "A different generation" (Ron and Margaret Scales, 2010, p.4). In 1940, Ron joined the British Army when he was nineteen years old and then served in the RAF as a rear-gunner. In 1943 his plane was shot down over the North Sea and he was captured and imprisoned in

Germany until he could escape during a prisoners transfer; he successfully returned to England in 1945. Ron has reflected on his memories at an old airfield during the war.

Many years after the war was over I returned to the old airfield at Tempford. It lay silent, covered in agricultural crops which were intersected by the remains of the old runways. I wandered there, the memories of those wartime days and nights still vivid in my mind. In my imagination I heard again the crackle of the Rolls Royce engines and the screech of the tyres as they touched down. For a while I relived those heady days and I recalled the faces I had known and experiences I had shared. I hope that those of my friends, together with all the others who had given their lives will not be forgotten. In later years as I have reflected on the struggle that convulsed the world in 1940s it becomes easier to consider it in a wider perspective. (Ron and Margaret Scales, 2010, p.81)

This is another example of forgotten history and untold memory which the museum plays an active role in preserving. Roy's recalled memory also reflects the deep relationship between place and memory. In fact, there are not only the visible or material chronotopes that are preserved in museum spaces but also the chronotopes in mind and in people's memories that the museums could preserve and make visible. These memories have been recalled, recorded and retold through the museum's media because of increasing concerns with people's memories. This is reflected on the book cover that states: "There are memories and experiences from a vanishing generation. The debt we owe them is never to forget."

Heather and Maple – Ryedale Folk Museum

In the village hall at Ryedale Folk Museum, there are some posters about a school project of making a documentary film entitled "Heather and Maple". This was launched and shown at the museum in 2006. This film was produced by students of Malton School in collaboration with the museum to tell the stories of people and families from Ryedale who had emigrated to Canada during 1830–1880; the Fewster family was one of them. According to the description in the poster, due to the limited space on their family farm, three sons from the seven children of this family decided to leave their homeland to go to the New World in

1849. This film tells the story of their long journey and lives in Canada both together and separately. After four decades, Robert who had married and had eleven children had become a prosperous farmer and landowner. The branches of the Fewster family flourished and now have annual meetings; they appreciate their family history, their Ryedale roots and their successes in the New World, which now has become their adopted homeland. This project also covers stories of other families who immigrated from Ryedale to Canada during that time. Moreover, it also raises questions which relate to the countryside during the colonial period – overseas immigration; experiences in the New World and the colonial empire; and connections and interaction between local England and the British Empire worldwide. In comparison with stories related to the centre of the British Empire, there are large numbers of stories from the periphery of the empire that still quietly remain in the area of forgotten histories and untold memories.

The father of the Chinese Methodist Church – Beck Isle Museum

Another sample of forgotten stories during the colonial period exhibited recently at the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life was entitled “The Reverend George Piercy (1929–1913): The father of the Chinese Methodist Church”. According to a museum leaflet on this topic, George Piercy was born on 27th February 1829 at Lockton and christened at Levisham near Pickering. He grew up on farms in Pickering areas. In 1852 he came to Hong Kong as a missionary with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. At Canton, he opened a church and schools for boys and girls. Rev. Piercy continues to be greatly revered by the Chinese Methodist Church and community. In 1858 he started to translate hymns, scriptures and “The Pilgrims Progress” into Cantonese. He returned to England in 1883, settled in London and began to work among the Chinese community in the Limehouse area, helping Chinese sea men suffering from opium addiction. Nowadays, the Church he founded in Canton is still thriving. In 2011 he was the subject of the Overseas Mission Conference in Hong Kong, marking the 160th anniversary of his arrival there.

This museum exhibition was created by several supporters from the Piercy family, the local Methodist Church circuit, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Rev. Law from Newcastle. Jane Ashby, Rev. Piercy’s great-granddaughter who has researched Piercy’s history both in Hong Kong and England for a number of years said that “It was his wish to

come back to Pickering which is why the family wanted something in the town which would remember him and his work” (The York Press, 24 July 2013). This story is a good example of how forgotten history relates to local figures and partly uncovers the complexity and multiplicity of relationships between both sides of the colonial relationship. Moreover, “the local” seems to be related closely to “the colonial” and “the global” but perhaps in different ways from the centre of the empire.

The period of colonialism and war are certainly the crucial chapters of the national history for several countries, but where are these stories located in the official narrative of the nation? This seems to be a postcolonial question which may lead to several related issues, especially the significance of domestic remembering and negotiation with the national narration of critical times.

Domestic remembering as negotiation to nationalism and modernity

The stories of local memories related to colonial and war times have faith in similar stories about the countryside and people during the transition period to modern times; once forgotten and untold memories are returned to museums’ remembrances. Exhibitions in both museums presented in the previous chapters, and the stories of forgotten histories and untold memories above can be seen as the anti-gravity of forgetting due to the impact of modernity and nationalism. Primarily this remembering is “domestic and local” rather than “universal and national”. Its stories are based on embedded characteristics of domestic contexts and the subjects who are remembering.

The complexity of domestic remembering, especially in the case of local folk museums, relates to three key things – space, time and ordinary people. These aspects are crucial, and probably responsible for the appearance of each museum. All three aspects are bound together and refer to the idea of Bakhtin’s chronotope – the fact that things could not exist in time without space or in space without time. However, focusing on each aspect independently is also worth considering independently due to its distinctive characteristics. Thus, the three aspects that I will discuss further are to do with domestic remembering of space, time, and ordinary people.

Domestic remembering of time

In its temporal aspects, this kind of museum not only has remembered “space” that has changed massively and rapidly, but also uses “time” as domestic remembering. The stories of forgotten histories and untold memories of the colonial period and war time are strong evidence supporting the significance of domestic remembering and how this kind of remembering is different from national remembrance. In the section related to museum exhibitions, the Ryedale Folk Museum and its domestic memories of time seem more various than the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, which scopes a period of exhibition around 200 years ago. Coming across the museum slogan “Step back to the past”, the times remembered in the Ryedale Folk Museum are ancient ones – houses and living space, agricultural change and decline, modern times in the village, and local areas such as Hutton le Hole and the Kirkby moor side.

The Beck Isle Museum begins its domestic remembering of time from the early modern period of Victorian time. This was when the railway was arriving, agriculture and rural settlement were changing, and the industrial revolution in mining and factories was rising and later, declining. Life styles were changing and modern forms of consumption and popular culture were becoming part of everyday life in Pickering and nearby areas. In addition, difficult times such as the war, and disasters such as floods are remembered in the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life. During the process of modernisation, rapid and massive changes seem to be a clear reality for people especially for those who were living in the transitional period.

Domestic remembering could be seen as a means of negotiating with the single, linear, progressive history of the nation. Rather than being limited by “homogenous empty time”, this kind of remembering could reveal multiple narratives, memories and voices through the gates of various chronotopes of the countryside. This is most likely the major significance of this kind of museum.

Domestic remembering of space

The second aspect is related to space or the spatial aspect of domestic remembering. Some parts of the exhibitions in both museums are related to the countryside as land and home are good examples of domestic remembering of space. In the case of North Yorkshire, and

especially the North York moors countryside, encountering modernity seems different from other areas of Britain and even different from West Yorkshire with regard to circumstances or periods of time. For both case studies, the question is what kind of space is remembered in these museums? It could be said that these museums primarily try to remember various spaces of everyday life and it is possible to remember each space in several different ways. A house could be exhibited as a living space in some period of the past; it could be remembered as a preserved house that had been moved stone-by-stone from elsewhere to be rebuilt at the museum, as space for a museum exhibition, or as an example of typical house-building techniques of this area and so on. Another kind of ordinary space like a pub, or shops, workshops and so on are not only remembered as general spaces, but in local museums are remembered as “domestic memories” where someone has been involved, and has contacted or interacted with those spaces in some way. For the Ryedale Folk Museum, pre-modern spaces such as traditional houses, shops, workshops, livestock have mainly been remembered and exhibited as domestic memories as well. Industrialised spaces, changing landscapes and emergent new spaces are major means of remembering in the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life.

As Massey (2005, p.62) points out, the idea of spatialising the history of modernity and also state “space” could not be annihilated by time (Massey, *ibid.* p.90). The significance of spatialising history accounts for the multiplicity and de-centring the centre of power to the peripheries which have been forgotten in the centralised history of modernity through the processes of colonisation and nationalisation. Through the gravity of nationalism, cultural differences and specific localities seem to be less significant than the homogeneity and unity which are imagined spaces based on the idyllic images of the English countryside and the North-South divide. Various spaces that have been exhibited or remembered in these museums are meaningful as the stories from the margins of modernity and the periphery of a nation.

Domestic remembering of people

The third topic of domestic remembering in both museums is ordinary people. Domestic remembering of people relates to memories of, and about local people, both well-known figures and ordinary people who are recognised and mentioned in the museum by their

names and stories. If without individual people's stories, several chronotopes in both museums sometimes seem to be similar such as the workshop of the blacksmith, the wheelwright maker and the photographer. But those chronotopes of folklife in fact referred to different names and groups of people belonging to their local contexts. In several parts of the exhibition, both museums have attempted to address people's names as much as possible in order to recognise and make sense of place through people's lives. Looking through the lens of local and social history from below places the focus on ordinary people and everyday life; all individuals are crucial as the subject of social experiences. This seems to be the same direction taken in the field of heritage studies which is closely related to the museums. The heritage of the working class and industrial heritage are currently becoming a focus and concern for preservation and inheritance by the next generation in the same way that high culture is inherited and preserved (Smith, 2011, p.1-13).

Comparisons with exhibitions of the Yorkshire countryside at the York Castle Museum are based on Dr. Kirk's collection. One significant difference seems to be the "agency" of people who exhibit and have been exhibited in the museum. As in the York Castle Museum, it seems to be Dr. Kirk himself who was the centre of the museum as owner of the collection, exhibition designer and story teller. But looking through both local community-based museums at Hutton le Hole and Pickering, the situation seems different due to the various people involved with the museums and their agency either as exhibitors or the exhibited.

Significantly, domestic remembering of people could bring cultural difference into museums. This is crucial for local museums, community-based museums and folk museums, which basically concern themselves with people rather than objects, local and social history rather than national history, and individual agency rather than mass action. In addition, it is important to note that the orientation of the folk museum is not elites but ordinary people, and the groups of marginal people who tend to be ignored and forgotten.

Reflection on "western" and "non-western" museums

According to the exhibition in Ryedale Folk Museums and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, it seems to me that both museums are complex and related to various topics and sources of inspiration. Owing to the complexity of domestic remembering of time, space and people, it

seems difficult to identify these museums by placing them into any category of museum classification. For instance, if a folk museum was limited in its definition to being a museum of rural traditions and agriculture, these museums perhaps could not be definitely classified as folk museums. However, the Ryedale Folk Museum called itself a “folk museum”. Due to their domestic remembering of local contexts, it is possible to call these museums “local museums”. Due to their domestic remembering of space, these museums become closer to ecomuseums which define themselves as museums related closely to their environment or ecology. Due to their remembering of time, they become closer to history museums, which certainly concentrate on the past. Finally, it seems to me that “hybridity” probably is a crucial characteristic of this kind of museum. Moreover, mixing the diverse aspects mentioned above can lead them to be involved with cultural differences and complexity, which would be worthwhile and meaningful not only for the museums, but also for the practical and theoretical world of museums.

The existence of local museums and exhibitions of the countryside in both case studies illustrates some limitations in museum studies, insofar as these are influenced by the ideology of colonialism and Eurocentrism, and entangled with nationalism and elitism. Certainly, colonial ideology has been explored and very much criticised in the case of museums related to “non-European” cultures. However, in the cases of British culture and folk cultures in Britain, it seems to be of little concern. Both museums uncover not only the limitations and problematic definitions of “western and non-western museums” but also the rigid classification of museums and their collections. Four decades ago, both museums grew up independently and cultivated inspiration, knowledge, and support from various sources. Their characteristics of hybridity and flexibility turn them into complex museums where cultural differences and multiplicity are uncovered, and this could be meaningful for a wide range of museum participants.

In museum studies, one direction of travel covers various approaches which are concerned with relationships between museums and ordinary people – for instance, museum anthropology and ethnomuseology all currently seem fruitful and worthwhile in international museum studies (Simpson, 1996; Kreps, 2003). However, these mainly seem to have a limited focus and are based on case studies of “non-western museums” and “indigenous museums” in non-European countries rather than small community-based

museums in European countries, even those which are highly significant like the Scandinavian open-air museums (Rentzhog, 2007) and those in the UK (Yates, 2010). The limitations imposed by colonialism and Eurocentrism in museum studies especially relate to “ordinary people”. Both museums seem to be critics of the “limited dichotomy of the western and non-western” and the stereotype of “homogenous or universal Europe or the European”.

As Anderson (1991) observes, some of national and official museums in South East Asian countries have been used as a means for making and maintaining the nation as an imagined community. In fact, in the same countries where those national museums are located, there are large numbers of local museums and community-based museums located alongside. Moreover, based on both case studies and a number of other local museums and community-based museums in the UK, similar events may have happened in European countries as well. One thing they have in common may be the fact that these small, local, and community-based museums are located on the margins of modernity and the nation. It may not be a “western” or “non-western” location but the purpose, legacy and agency of those museums that matters. Consequently, museums and museum curatorship may not be simply classified and stereotyped as western and non-western.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This research aims to explore and understand museum exhibitions focus on the countryside and investigate those museums as people's practice responding to the significant changes in the countryside since the museums' formative years. That is the period during which land and local life were encountering modernity and concentrated industrialisation. I have already discussed three main arguments in previous chapters regarding [1] museums and modernity; [2] museums and the marginal; and [3] the limitations related to the conceptual and political orientation of nationalism and colonialism in museum studies.

The first argument is in regard to the relationship between museums and modernity. It covers several processes of social changes including industrialisation, urbanisation, and mechanisation of agriculture. Instead of looking at museums as the "result" of modernity, in fact they can be seen as people's practices for responding to modernity and its impacts.

This research argues that these museums are a part of a movement about people's history after World War II and can be seen as a theatre of memory rather than a heritage industry, which has been on the rise since the 1970s (Hewison, 1987). Moreover, formative ideas and enthusiasm about museums was rooted in the countryside of the North York moors for several decades before the both museums first opened in the 1960s. The museum-making in the countryside, according to both case studies of local museums, is related to the driving forces from the structural effects of modernity; these have led to massive and rapid changes in the land and rural ways of life.

The intention to rescue and preserve some parts of a disappearing rural life led to collecting a wide range of local objects from nearby areas and then establishing a museum to house, preserve and exhibit those objects. In the cases of the Ryedale Folk Museum, the target for concern was the countryside of Hutton le Hole where part of a large area called Ryedale, which covered the area called North Riding at that time, existed. It has now become a part of North Yorkshire. For the Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life, the focus is on Pickering market town and the countryside nearby. In fact, both shared some part of the same area

of Ryedale and North Riding but the first museum focuses on village life and the other on town life.

The second argument relates mainly to museums and the marginal, through the conceptual framework of postcolonial theory. This approach leads to a micro level understanding of local folk museums and is connected to influential ideas of colonialism and nationalism in the UK around the late 19th century until the early years of the museums formation in the mid 20th century. Through a conceptual framework of post-colonial theory, the emergence of local folk museums could be seen as a means of negotiating nationalism and its narrative, which was dominated by ideas of homogeneity, unity and progress. Anderson (1991) explains how the nation has been imagined as a national community. In this process, the nation as the subject creates its nationality as a homogeneous identity with unavoidable, serial progress through different means and media – especially maps, censuses and museums. Combined with Bhabha's idea of the nation is the narrative, the national narration which relates to Englishness and the countryside, and which seems to be involved with three key themes – space, time, and people.

First, as the national narrative is related to space, English nationalism may have made the imagined national boundary in areas not necessarily based on specific locations or place-based localities (Bhabha, 1990). The idyll of the countryside and the division of the nation into the North and South seems to be a part of this process. Second, according to Anderson, "homogenous empty time" is crucial for the national imagination as an organism that has moved through serial time – the single evolutionary history of the nation. However, through the process of making the nation, a number of differences and histories from below may have been forgotten. Thirdly, in the area that relates to people, the national narrative relates to the idea of human civilisation and a national homogenous culture but retains less concern with ordinary people and cultural differences.

However, for the countryside of northern England, these areas also relate to another national image of the North-South divide. Through this national narrative, the North is recognised as an industrial area opposite to the South of the country. Significantly, both cases studies of local folk museums which are dedicated to the countryside seem to be ambiguous and 'in between', paradoxical images of both sides of the national narrative. In

the main, the idyllic images of the English countryside may be related to nationalism, and they have been criticised as a means of making the English nationality. This critique is reasonable and relevant, but whether local museums play a major role in relation to this process is problematic; this is the main point that I attempt to argue in this research. Rather than seeing local museums as the product or reproduction of a definitive nationalism, I argue that museums in the northern countryside probably can be seen as a means of negotiating an English nationality. Moreover, this national narration not only relates to space through the idea of the idyllic countryside and the North-South divide, but also relates to time and people.

The countryside of Ryedale, Hutton le Hole and Pickering are meaningful for local people in ways different from the general images of the English North and the British countryside. As geographical areas of northern England were primarily recognised as industrial areas, the countryside of the north seems to be marginal and out of focus. Conversely, for Britain, the countryside has a high status as part of its national identity, but that countryside relates mainly to southern England or the imagined idyll of the countryside that lacks place or specific geographical location, although it is visible through modern media such as paintings, novels, photographs, and films. This situation seems similar to critics of Said's "Orientalism" in which the processes that create the mythic images of the orient are made by the west according to their unbalanced relationship during the colonial period (Said, 1978). From a postcolonial perspective, images of the idyllic countryside and the North-South divide have played an effective role in 'managing' the inferior North and maintaining a superior status for the south or the centre of the nation. Conversely, both museums have presented images of the northern countryside through exhibiting placed-based localities and massive changes since the coming of modernity and industrialisation.

Although images of the countryside in both museums were linked with changes from wider contexts in the country, the museums reflected those changes in different ways according to local perspectives. Mainly, the museums exhibited the countryside as a land and home that had encountered modernity and industrialisation since the railways came, and one which was changing more rapidly and massively since World War II. Through both case studies, the three main themes of chronotopes in the countryside which were remembered and exhibited in both museums could be summarized as: the land before modern times, the

industrialised land and the land after the industrial revolution. Given the time-space of locality, it could be said that the significance of those exhibitions of the countryside are that they are a part of histories from below (Thomson, 1963). They are histories that seem to be “absent” from the official national history; although they are there in some works that critique nationalism, they are still doing history “from above” (Hobsbawn, 1991; Bhabha, 1990). These museums therefore can be seen as a part of the spatialisation of the history of modernity (Massey, 2005), but one presented in museums rather than through other kinds of media.

The next key theme is about exhibiting “folklife and people” in Ryedale Folk Museum and Beck Isle Museum of Rural Life. Images and stories of the countryside exhibited in the museums are not only about chronotopes of physical landscapes, but also consider folk life and people who lived in those chronotopes of rural landscapes. Both local museums are primarily exhibition spaces dedicated to folklife, rural life, and local people who were involved with the countryside there. Domestic life was exhibited through various chronotopes of everyday life such as houses and related objects. Working life in the countryside was entirely exhibited in various workshops such as the workshops of the blacksmith, tinsmith, wheelwright, saddle, and cobbler. Village life and town life were presented through chronotopes of social space such as the village shop and post office, pub and barber. These chronotopes of folklife were also connected with place-memories and the multiplicity of people’s voices of who were involved with the museums.

The stories of folk life and rural life in the museums remind us about the existence of both common rural ways of life and local people in the countryside. Both museums attempt to identify the names of local people through their exhibitions and museum publications. These efforts make the museum meaningful for local people and distinctive in a wider context. These local museums seem different in comparison with other museums in England such as the Museum of English Rural life and Pitt Rivers Museum, which had an interest in folklife and the objects of rural England, and owned large numbers of English folk collections in the UK. Moreover, these local museums seem to be different from the York Castle Museum where the core collection of rural objects of the Yorkshire countryside was collected from Pickering and the countryside nearby.

Exhibiting chronotopes of folklife in both museums could be seen as negotiating with the mainstream and with conventional museums dedicated to folklife, folk objects and folk cultures in the UK during that time and the former period. Those conventional museums primarily collected, classified and exhibited folklife and folk cultures as scientific typologies of folk objects from primitive overseas cultures. This kind of exhibition was strongly influenced by the idea of evolutionism, which was closely related to nationalism and colonialism especially in the case of Britain; the British colonial empires are major sources of large numbers of ethnographic collections from the colonial period. Moreover, both museums may negotiate with the national narrative of homogeneity and unity but they lack concern with cultural differences and personal agency. Rather than looking at this kind of museum as the reproduction of nationalism through museum exhibitions, I attempt to focus on the hybridity and ambiguous relationship between the countryside and the nation through ideas about home, homeland and the country. In this sense, negotiation and agency in both museums, including cultural differences can be explored and understood.

Another crucial point of this research is in regard to forgotten histories and domestic remembering. Forgetting often has been impacted by the gravity of modernity and political orientation due to nationalism and colonialism. This chapter has illustrated how the structural conditions of modernity, both in their spatial and temporal aspects and unbalanced power, are probably responsible for forgetting. However, this structural condition seems to me a source of gravity rather than determination. Through stories of forgotten and untold memories of and about local people during the colonial period and World War II, both museums play a major role in domestic remembering. This kind of remembering can be seen as the agency and practice of the museum in resisting the cultural gravity of forgetting; it acts as a means of negotiating with nationalism and modernity as these relate to the countryside. In addition, domestic remembering reveals multiple narratives, memories and voices through the gates of various chronotopes of the countryside; it negotiates with national history which appears single, linear, progressive and irresistible. In summary, it could be said that domestic remembering basically concerns itself with cultural differences and the agency of the “local and marginal” rather than the “universal and national”, and this is a crucial significance of this kind of museum. The complexity of this kind of museum relates to at least three aspects of domestic

remembering – space, time and people. These aspects of domestic remembering of space, time and ordinary people also affect the museum exhibitions and public activities.

Last but not least, the third argument is based on my reflection on “western” and “non-western” museums. This research critiques the dichotomised distinction between western and non-western museums and the stereotypes of “homogenous” Europe and the European which is related to influential ideas of colonialism and Eurocentrism. Furthermore, based on case studies from various countries both European and non-European, the emergence, movement and practices of local, vernacular and community-based museums worldwide is one of the significant areas in museum studies, which warrants increased concern and further studies.

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