Introduction

The Expanded Spaces and Changing Contexts of Author Museums

Ulrike Spring, Johan Schimanski and Thea Aarbakke

What transformations have author museums undergone since the nineteenth century, when they became part of the heritage landscape? What challenges do they face today in an increasingly diversified world, and how might we imagine them in the future? What new strategies do today's author museums use to interlink real and literary spaces, texts, objects, new media, authors, readers and visitors? These are some of the questions we give provisional answers to in this volume.

Since their establishment as public institutions from the eighteenth century onwards, museums as keepers and communicators of collections have had a transformative potential. By narrating the world through specific collection strategies and exhibition designs they have offered new interpretations of history and contemporary society. Museums influence future interpretations of the past, through their roles as not only 'conserving/depositing' but also 'interpreting/exposing' institutions (see e.g. Korff 2002). They both respond to and shape cultural, political and social changes in society. In 2019 the International Council of Museums (ICOM) proposed (but did not agree upon) a new definition of museums, emphasizing their active role in society and showcasing the increasing relevance of museums as communicators within a global and diverse society (ICOM 2020). A stronger focus on the societal role of museums today is also an attempt to make them more relevant to their visitors, by connecting the past to present events and conditions that people can relate to through their own experiences.

Author museums – that is, museums in former homes of literary writers or dedicated to specific writers – have been part of these changes in the museum landscape, and here too we can see increasing efforts to

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allow new stories into hegemonial museum narratives and to open themselves up to new groups of visitors. However, because of their history as sites of apotheosis and pilgrimage, and their inherent hagiographic tendency, many author museums – and personality museums in general – at the same time seem to lag behind wider changes in the museum landscape. The challenges they face are not always similar to those faced by the grand national history, art or ethnographic museum.

This book focuses on the role of author museums since the nineteenth century, when they became public institutions. It discusses their various functions, and investigates some of the challenges and transformative potentials author museums have had in society up until today, encompassing a wide geographical scope. While the phenomenon of author museums stems from a Western tradition, it is today a global phenomenon. This book includes discussion of author museums in China, South Africa and the former Soviet Union, in addition to several case studies from European and particularly Nordic countries. Previous English-language literature on authors' home museums has focused primarily on such houses in Britain, the United States, France and Italy. This book seeks to redress this imbalance by including lesser-known cases, often coming out of rich traditions of musealizing authors. Scholars of museology or museum studies have for some time argued for the importance of studying museums and cultural heritage in different regions of the world, acknowledging that museums have different meanings, tasks, statuses and societal roles within the places they are situated (Macdonald 2006; Brenna 2009; Soares 2019). Museum professionals also recognize this diversity (Sandahl 2019), and the present volume emphasizes the relevance of studying museums within a broad spectrum of regions with different political systems and cultural traditions. In widening the field, our volume complements previous work on, for example, literary museums in Japan (Meyer 2015), and acknowledges author museums as a global phenomenon, while at the same time being alert to their variations, which are often a result of different traditions, influences and contexts.

Moreover, it expands upon the existing research on author museums in the English language, by integrating research in other languages. It is, for example, striking that the extensive and rich scholarly literature on literary museums in German has hardly been adopted into English-language scholarship. By approaching author museums from a wider range of perspectives, the volume follows Sharon Macdonald's suggestion that the multiplicity and complexity of museums 'call[s] for a correspondingly rich and multi-faceted range of perspectives and approaches to comprehend and provoke museums themselves' (Macdonald 2006: 2).

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While this volume can primarily be seen as a contribution to what might be called the 'interdisciplinary discipline' of museum studies or museology, it involves the disciplinary perspectives of cultural studies, literary studies, history, architectural history, media studies and biography studies, and can be expected to speak also to related and overlapping fields such as heritage studies, memory studies, material culture studies and tourism studies. By including a wide range of non-English-language references that have previously not been made available in English-language research, and by addressing their theoretical perspectives, the volume aims to open the field to a broad audience of museum professionals and scholars around the world.

The academic literature on author museums in English is not extensive, in spite of some major contributions, in particular by Nicola J. Watson (2006, 2009, 2020), Harald Hendrix (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2020), Andrea Zemgulys (2008), and Alison Booth (2009, 2016). This research has first and foremost focused on authors' (or, more widely, writers') home museums – the dominating tradition in the English-speaking countries – often seen through the field of literary tourism. The extensive German-language research on literary exhibitions and author museums bridges across a wide variety of disciplines: mostly literary studies (particularly the discipline of German literature), but also museology, museum pedagogy, cultural theory, history and art history, reaching at least back to 1971, when historian and museum professional Franz Rudolf Zankl (1971) published a book on the personality museum as a specific museum type, including a chapter on writers and poets. Conspicuously, the primary focus of this extensive research is on German authors.

An investigation of author museums and their transformative potential must however go further than a discussion from a purely academic perspective. It requires also the analytical and experience-based insight of museum professionals. The present volume therefore includes contributions by both academics and museum professionals. It offers theoretical reflections and hands-on research, integrating scholarly and curatorial knowledge on diverse communication processes, and manifold encounters with visitor groups, objects and narratives.

Literary scholars have previously by far taken the lead in the research on author museums, with other disciplines such as history or museology (at least English-language museology) paying little attention to author museums specifically, or even to personality museums in general. The cultural theorist Hans Dam Christensen has argued (2001: 204) that the reason for this lack of interest among museum studies scholars is that

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much museological research has been published by American scholars studying the United States museum landscape, where there are few single-artist museums. Another reason may be that in recent years museologists have studied museums primarily from a perspective that is part of a broader development within cultural and social disciplines, known as 'representational critique' (Vergo 1989; Macdonald 2006; Soares 2019). This approach owes a lot to postcolonial and feminist theory, which have both contributed important knowledge on how museums have a legacy as patriarchal institutions, and have been used as political tools for nation-building (e.g. Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Bennett 1995; Duncan 1995). In these studies on museums' power structures and colonial heritage, smaller biographical museums dedicated to authors or other single artists have not attracted the same attention as the larger, national art museums, ethnographic collections or museums of natural history. These two factors may explain why author museums have not been the focus of attention for museological researchers writing within what is known as the New Museology, and later Critical Museology. There is, however, an obvious critique of patriarchalism in author museums to be made because of the dominance of personality museums dedicated to white, Western men (e.g. Bohman 2010: 31). At the same time, author museums differ from cultural history museums in how they became public institutions, in their actual size and in their collection history and strategy. The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, an example of a major museum, is based on a donation to the University of Oxford from Lieutenant-General Pitt Rivers in 1884. Some twenty thousand ethnographic and archaeological objects from his collections were donated to the university, and became an important part of how anthropology was taught and researched there in the early twentieth century (Gosden and Larson 2011). Author museums are to a lesser degree interwoven with questions of scientific legitimacy and representation, partly because they have often come into being on the initiative of literary fans, local actors, family members of the late author, or even by the author her- or himself. In addition, they are usually much smaller and less noticeable than many other museums, being placed within the authors' former homes and often outside the larger cities.

Since the 1990s, museology has grown and expanded as a research field. In addition to enquiries related to representational critique informed by postcolonial, feminist, structuralist and poststructuralist theory, museologists and museum professionals have become interested in questions related to materiality and the senses. These can in new ways make literary museums and authors' homes interesting research objects

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for museological research. Edited volumes such as *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations* (Dudley 2010) and *Museum Objects: Experiencing the Properties of Things* (Dudley 2012) have introduced a focus on the sensory and aesthetic aspects of museums. Here the focus lies on other aspects of the museum institution than those addressed in the aforementioned works by Hooper-Greenhill, Bennett and Duncan, such as the sensory and emotional as vital parts of the museum experience and our understanding of the museum. Watson has addressed the embarrassment of literary tourism as an explanation of why there has been so little research on writers' homes: 'As a practice that tries to make the emotional and virtual realities of reading accountable to the literal, material realities of destination, it is bound to make literary specialists uneasy' (Watson 2009a: 5). Contributions such as Dudley's can encourage questions of materiality and emotions to author museums, and give them a terminology with which to investigate these questions.

This volume acknowledges the various possible functions of author museums: they can be monuments, tourist attractions, places of pilgrimage or recreation, historical sites, artistic or architectural expressions, loci for extended forms of reading, pedagogical resources or cultural hubs. They can be symbols confirming local, regional, national or global identities, or a critical, destabilizing force, challenging the establishment. In most cases, a museum has more than one of these functions. Analysing these manifold functions can help us to discern specific areas where the transformative potential of author museums became particularly conspicuous, or where this potential was halted – and in both cases, to explain why.

Our underlying conception for this volume is to study ongoing transformations in author museums from two entangled perspectives: one *expansion*, going from the inside of museums and out (transforming genres, spaces, themes and techniques); and the other *politics*, going from the outside of museums and in (transforming contexts and functions). While these two themes run through the whole volume to a greater or lesser extent, we have divided the book into two corresponding parts that each showcase the transformations going on in author museums, along with their transformative potentials, with a primary focus on one of the themes. In the following we present each perspective with reference to the contributions and to previous research, while in the volume's epilogue we sum up the book as a whole and focus on a form of transformation that both perspectives contribute to, namely *democratization*.

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Expansion

In the first part of our volume, we focus on expansion, specifically when it comes to the extension of author museums into related museum genres, their physical or virtual extensions into architecture and the urban, rural and digital landscapes that surround them, their inclusion of new themes beyond that of the biographical literary works they focus upon, and their utilization of increasingly multidimensional exhibition strategies and techniques. Indeed, we see the expansion of genres as related to the extension of space, theme and technique in contemporary author museums. The change of genre, which takes place when author museums are supplemented by multi-author museums, literature museums, author centres or theme parks, also opens up author museums to potential new visitor groups. Today, it is not only literary fans, authors and scholars who visit these museums (or institutions with strong museal aspects). Literary museums have developed sophisticated outreach programmes and align tourist landscapes to their needs. With star architects having begun to build such museums, people interested in or attracted by their architecture also visit them. Contributors to the present volume show how the museum genre has opened up to new visitor groups such as schoolchildren (Benedek), tourists in general, or in some cases architecture fans (Haugdal). Changes in genre and space have influenced the exhibition strategies and aesthetical choices when authors and their authorships are put on display, be it in their homes themselves, in refunctioned outhouses, in added exhibition annexes, or on marked pathways and itineraries.

How Did the Author Museum Come into Being?

To be able to say something about the extension and expansion of author museums, it is first necessary, however, to look at them from a historical perspective, taking into account their geographical spread and variation throughout the world.

While most work in English-language research on literary tourism and author museums has been by literary scholars, the perspective has been strongly historical, tracing the origins of the writer's home museum back to the Early Modern period in Italy and France (Hendrix 2008a, 2009) and literary pilgrimage practices through the Romantic period and onwards (Watson 2006, 2009b). These pioneering works placed the author's home museum in a continuity beginning with the authors' attitudes to their own homes as places worth exhibiting, followed by the subsequent life of these homes as museums, and culminating in the

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practices of literary tourists as visitors or of museums as negotiators of cultural memory and identity. This focus on different stages of the musealization process – production, institutionalization, reception – where authors' homes are concerned, is a product not only of the approach through literary tourism (Watson 2006, 2009b; Booth 2016), but also of perspectives from performance and memory studies, as indicated in the title of the introduction of one of the very few previous English-language edited volumes with a focus on literary museums, 'Writers' Houses as Media of Expression and Remembrance: From Self-Fashioning to Cultural Memory' (Hendrix 2008d).

Literary tourism existed before literary museums, with a focus on poets' graves stretching back over two millennia (Watson 2006: 32). Hendrix (2008a) examines the first pilgrimages to the homes of Petrarch (1304–74) from the 1530s onwards, and their transformations into museums, and traces the spread of cultures of literary tourism from Italy to France and then to Britain (Hendrix 2009). These homes and others like them often developed from being places to visit (sometimes already in their authors' lifetimes, and often unwished for – cf. North 2009; Roberts 2009: 204; Booth 2016: 13) into museums – often slowly, and maybe over decades. Watson (2006: 13–14; 2009a: 3; 2020: 8–9) and Hendrix (2009: 13) point to how in the nineteenth century, particularly in Britain, literary tourism was a product of the combined forces of a romantic resistance to the 'massification' of tourism and printed literature, the invention of book genres such as the 'Homes and Haunts' genre, the influence of a realist aesthetic on the desire to see the real and authentic, a boom in bourgeois memorial culture and cultural nationalism, and also specifically in the musealization of authors' homes. Julian North (2009) points to how a new focus in literary biographies, on the inner lives of authors, also helped to create an interest in their homes. Nineteenth-century realism and memorial culture are both aspects of a shift to a modern and historicist view of time, setting the stage for a dialectic of, on the one hand, the privileged authenticity of past times and new practices of documentation and restoration, and on the other of myth-making and monumentalization, all principles of concern in research on author museums (Alexander 2008; Colaiacomo 2008; Thomas 2009). These concerns frame the expansion in the number of author museums; in Britain for example, authors' home museums were being founded in 'significant' numbers from the 1890s onwards (Booth 2016: 13).

Further work on the history and phenomenology of literary tourism, such as Watson's previous monograph *The Literary Tourist* (2006) and her edited volume *Literary Tourism and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (2009b),

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has provided a larger perspective in which to situate the author museum, including not only homes, but also graves, walks, parks and landscapes. It raises questions of differing desires – and disappointments – connected to different spaces: that is, the spaces of the author's birth, life and death, of writing (the joining point of life and literature) and of fictional happenings that can be identified with actual landscapes (Watson 2006: 1–4, 123–24). These desires to see the actual living places of the author pose a particular challenge to literary scholars who have been trained by Russian Formalism, New Criticism and poststructuralism to deride historical-biographical interpretations of literature; but as Watson makes clear (ibid.: 6–8), places and homes can function as active paratexts to literary works, and visits to them can be seen as part of extended material practices of reading. Literary tourists can connect especially landscapes to the fictional settings that are identifiable with them (ibid.: 129–200). However, as Watson points out, it is uncommon for authors' home museums to privilege a fictional world at the expense of their function as authors' living places (ibid.: 202–7); notably, her two counterexamples are home museums dedicated to children's writers: Beatrix Potter (1866–1943) and Lucy Boston (1892–1990). Watson and others have also shown how literary tourism and authors' homes have been understood in relation to an extensive corpus of written texts such as place-related poetry, guidebooks, travelogues, picture books, literary geographies and plaques (Watson 2006; Booth 2016; Hendrix 2020). Authors' homes can be seen as part of literary reception (Watson 2009a: 5) and adaptation (ibid.: 6).

What Counts as an Author Museum?

There is also extensive research on the history of literary museums and author museums in German, with a particular focus on museums in German-speaking countries. Questions addressed in this corpus include the role of such museums as places of memory and remembrance (e.g. Borsdorf and Grütter 1999), the history of personality museums in Germany (Bohnenkamp et al. 2015), the history of literary exhibitions (Seibert 2011, 2015), and the future of literary museums and exhibitions (Kussin 2001). Research on literary tourism as a cultural and historical phenomenon plays a minor role compared to its prominence in English-language research.

Watson (2020: 7) makes a distinction between the writer's house museum and the author's house museum, reminding us that part of research has focused on the musealized homes of writers who might not always be considered to be literary writers (an example would be Charles Darwin,

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1809–1882). Whereas there are close connections between these types of museums, which deserve to be explored further, we focus on the writer of literary work in this volume. Fiction and poetry open themselves to differences in reading experiences and venues of imagination to a greater extent than do scholarly or scientific work. Our choice of the common denomination 'author museum' in the present volume is made so as to include the wide variation we see in the genre today, with also general literary museums, author centres and even literary theme parks in some sense being open to interpretation as 'author museums'. At the same time, the term 'author museum' also retains a focus on authors and authorships, and on the original tradition of authors' home museums or musealized authors' homes, which is undergoing multiple transformations.

Particularly in German-language research, the question of the genre and genre denomination has been central. What kind of museum may be defined as a literary museum (Barthel 1996)? In which museal category do literary museums belong (e.g. Didier 1991)? What characterizes authors' home museums? German literature scholar Christiane Holm (2013: 570) sees the author's home museum (often called *Gedenkstätte*, 'memorial site', in German, thereby emphasizing its commemoration aspect, but sometimes also *Personalmuseum*, similar to English 'personality museum') as a subcategory of the literary museum. Cultural studies scholar Anna Rebecca Hoffmann (2018: 36) differentiates between two ideal types in the German-speaking museum landscape: the literary memorial site (*literarische Gedenkstätte*) and the literary museum (*literarisches Museum*). Whereas the former focuses on the author, on authenticity, place and emotion, and manages a collection specialized on the author and their work, the latter may be dedicated to one or several writers (connected to a locale, theme, school, period, nation or language, for example), does not depend on the idea of an authentic home, has an extensive and more general collection, and presents a place of rationality (*Ort der ratio*), with a focus on an academic approach. The focus in our volume is on the former, the 'literary memorial site', but, as Hoffmann points out (2018: 36), it is vital to remember that these two museum types are often mixed. In emphasizing the difficulty of a clear differentiation between these types, Hoffmann follows a tendency in the German-language research – not so present in research in English – to discuss literary exhibitions in various cultural institutions and in authors' home museums as part of the same context. This may be a result of exhibition strategies that feature prominently in author museums in German-speaking countries, where informative exhibitions and reconstructions of the home are often combined, sometimes even in the same room. By contrast, in many British

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and Scandinavian author museums, there is a more clear-cut distinction between the reconstructed living place and an informative exhibition on the author's life and literature, with the latter often placed in an annex or a special room.

What Are the Spaces that Make Up Author Museums?

Looking at the author museum landscape in Norway, a third ideal category, the 'literary centre' or more commonly the 'author centre' (*forfattersenter*), emerges. Examples include Hamsunsenteret (Knut Hamsun, 1859–1952) on Hamarøy, Garborgsenteret (Arne and Hulda Garborg, 1851–1924 and 1862–1934) in Bryne, and Olav H. Hauge-senteret (Olav H. Hauge, 1908–1994) in Ulvik (see Egeland 2020; Hoel 2020; Aarbakke 2020). These often have a strong didactic focus and are not necessarily linked to an 'authentic' place or collection. Often these centres, along with other new or expanded author museums in Norway, feature striking architecture, as discussed by architectural historian Elin Haugdal in her contribution to this volume. Her focus on the outer space of the building rather than on its exhibitions helps us to approach author museums from a further angle: here the architect and not the curator becomes a vital interpreter of the author and her work, adding new layers to the question of which genre an author museum may belong to. This tendency to create new, signal architecture for author museums is also widespread in Japan: examples include the Mori Ōgai 森 鴎外 (1862–1922) memorial museums in Tokyo and Tsuwano, the Natsume Sōseki 夏目 漱石 (1867–1916) memorial museum in Tokyo, and the Seichō Matsumoto 松本 清張 (1909–1992) memorial museum in Kitakyushu.[1] We may ask whether these buildings – sometimes built as replacements of missing homes, as annexes to existing homes or, in some of the Japanese examples, encasing reconstructed homes or rooms – change our perception of what an author's home museum is. Are authentic spaces necessary so as to define a place as an author home? Or can we imagine such a place through contemporary architectural language?

Certainly, the past two centuries of author museum history have shown that both outer and inner aesthetic spaces form the visitor's view of the author and their literature. Different times privilege different exhibition and architecture aesthetics. In her chapter, art historian and curator Eva-Maria Orosz discusses how the aesthetic transformation of an author home can lead to new interpretations of the functions an author home might have. Her case study is the home of the nineteenth-century Austrian playwright Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872), which in partly

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deconstructed form has been exhibited since the 1880s as part of the main permanent exhibition of the Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien (Historical museum of the city of Vienna – today, the Wien Museum). Politics, changing literary canons and visitor expectations have helped to shape the more than century-long succession of displays, which – placed among other museum displays and objects – today are often perceived more as historical interiors showing the aesthetic of the Biedermeier Period (1814/15–1848) and of the subsequent two decades, rather than as a memorial to the author. The Wien Museum is currently developing a new permanent exhibition on the history of the city of Vienna (to be opened in 2023). Considering Grillparzer's diminished relevance for the literary canon and public reception today, what place will the apartment find in the new designs, new history narratives and new literary canon of the twenty-first-century? How might or should, as Orosz asks, a modern contextualization and critical treatment of Grillparzer's legacy look?

As these examples show, the question of which genre the author's home museum belongs to may have to be extended and be asked anew. German literature scholar Anna Bers (2017: 213) has offered a refreshing perspective to this question. She suggests that rather than starting with their role as museum genre or subgenre, it might be more useful to take the display in these museums as the defining point of departure. If the author is placed at the centre of the exhibition, it may be called a memorial author house museum, or if literature is the focus, then it could be called a literary museum. Alternatively, an emphasis on the house as a historic representation may turn it into a folk museum, or one on its history into a history museum. If the meaning of the author and their literature for the nation is central, it might be defined as a national museum. Bers's approach opens for a more playful way of dealing with preconceived ideas and expectations of what an author museum consists of and represents, and challenges the often seemingly seamless connection between author, home and literature.

The varying functions of author museums come to the fore when their spaces are combined with other institutions – municipal and national museums, houses of literature, libraries and archives. Some author centres and museums – such as the Garborgsenteret in Bryne in south-west Norway, and the Franz Michael Felder Museum Schoppernau (Franz Michael Felder, 1839–1869) in Vorarlberg, Austria – share buildings with public libraries. The permanent Daniel Owen (1836–1895) exhibition in Mold in Wales is an integrated part of the town museum, which in turn shares its building with the town library and art gallery. We have just mentioned the Grillparzer interiors in the Wien Museum, and below we address the

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insertion of a duplicate of the personal archive of Swedish poet Gunnar Ekelöf (1907–1968) in his reconstructed room in Sigtuna. Such concatenations are intended to create connections and synergies, and will affect our understanding of the author museum genre.

Another form of extension of the genre author museum we discuss in this volume is the literature museum, more specifically the Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest, Hungary (see also Gfrereis et al. 2020 on working with the Museum of Modern Literature and the Schiller National Museum in Marbach, Germany). The Petőfi Literary Museum is the national literature museum of Hungary. It is an author museum in the sense that it has all Hungarian authors as its theme, but also an author museum in the sense that it is named after the Hungarian national poet Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849) and contains a fixed exhibition about him. Museologist Anna Benedek's case study in this volume comprises several projects that she and her colleagues developed at the Media Archives of Petőfi Literary Museum, where they tried to build 'virtual homes' for literature together with the museum's young visitors by extending the space of the museum not only through the use of videos and oral recordings, but also literary tours through the city. The active reinterpretation of the passed-away authors and of the places of their literature within today's digitalized world might make the author museum just one of many memory spaces, questioning its long-standing ascription as the main portal to the writer's life and work. It moreover shows the need to address new visitor groups if we wish literature to remain relevant.

How Do Author Museums Relate the Tangible to the Intangible?

There are numerous ways to exhibit the author and their works, depending on historical, cultural and political circumstances. Several chapters in the present book focus primarily on the multidimensionality of authors' home museums – in particular the relationships between authors and literary works, and between the tangible and the intangible – and how this multidimensionality can be addressed from various perspectives and with innovative exhibition strategies. The chapters we have already mentioned show how author museums are formed by spatial requirements such as architecture and place, with the extension of the boundaries of museum spaces affecting the way in which museum genres function and create interpretations. Benedek's chapter points also to how physical space is constantly transgressed by imagined spaces and the combination of different mediums. She shows that one way of thinking about the multidimensionality of author museums can be their use of new media, integrating

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new, virtual spaces for the museums to communicate with their visitors. Museums, like any form of space (Tuan 1977; de Certeau 1984; Soja 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Simmel 1997; Massey 2005), are much more than their physical location and form. The most obvious transgression of physical space in author museums is that literature in itself creates imaginative spaces, opening new venues not restricted by daily routine.

New methods may be needed to analyse the multidimensional aspects of author museums. Inspired by a German-language research tradition for semiotic analysis of museums in general (Scholze 2004) and narratological analysis of literary museums in particular (Hoffmann 2018), Schimanski and Spring (2020) have developed a model for the literary museum's 'double act of communication'. Literary and author museums are (1) acts of communication (in Roman Jakobson's sense, 1960) from museum practitioners/owners to visitors *about* (2) acts of communication from authors to readers. This model sheds light on the many paradoxes and questions that author museums raise: why so much focus on the author and so little on their works, which is the reason we are at all interested in them? How can one make a home represent a lifetime, with the writer only present as a kind of ghost (Watson 2020; see Spring and Schimanski, this volume)? Could one imagine alternative focuses for literary museums, such as museums about readers, or about literary theory? Analyses using the double communication act model can show how new museum genres can make people other than the author – such as readers, visitors, reader-visitors, curators, designers, sponsors – visible in author museums and other forms of literary museum.

Author museums attempt to convey now intangible lives and practices of human subjects not only through material and tangible objects – as do cultural history museums in general – but through their focus on human subjects whose occupations so emphatically turn around the public expression of private, inner lives and emotions in the material form of literature. This potential for imagination extends also to the author, as historian Ulrike Spring and literary scholar Johan Schimanski show in their discussion in the present volume of both Selma Lagerlöf's home Mårbacka (Selma Lagerlöf, 1858–1940) in Sweden and the ghost stories in her writings. The author's ghost is present here, and her texts influence how her house may be understood. Could a focus on the spectral and its transcendental nature also be a way of counteracting the tendency to make the museum into a monument or memorial to the author?

One of the central challenges for author museums has been to find the balance between a focus in the exhibition on the author on one side, and their work on the other. Should biography be central, or the literary work

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itself, or its reception? Throughout the past two centuries, author museums have approached this with different degrees of emphasis and awareness, with earlier museums tending to focus on the author, and more recent ones tending to explore the potential of exhibiting literature. The latter process has been helped by the advance of new media forms, which have opened new ways of conceptualizing and concretizing imagination. Both the ethnographer and previous director of the August Strindberg (1849–1923) museum in Stockholm, Stefan Bohman (2010), and the Danish literary sociologist Niels D. Lund (2016: 107–8), have focused on the balance between the mediatization of biography and literature in author museums, with Lund also discussing the use of digital media in the museum.

The question of location raised in discussion of the spaces in author museums also has consequences for the (re)presentation of the author. It is possible that literary museums and exhibitions that are not located in an author's previous home focus more on literary works than on author biography, and tend to be more playful and artistic in their displays and less bound to traditional ways of staging the author – though there is plenty of room for creative strategies in already established authors' home museums, as many examples show. However, we must also take into account the author's home as a project of the author, who may have both chosen its location and integrated it into their literary vision. This added dimension is the second of the two central staging strategies in author museums that Hendrix in his edited volume (2008c) characterizes as 'Cultural Memory' and 'Self-Fashioning'. As already indicated by Watson in her book on *Literary Tourism*, Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford (Sir Walter Scott, 1771–1823) is an example of self-fashioning, not only being the 'first house in Britain to have been shown as the site of the writer's work', but also the first 'consciously designed by a writer to display' their status and writing, and 'to be visited by admirers from the outset' (Watson 2006: 91). Hendrix and his co-contributors point to Abbotsford and many other examples – including the houses of Horace Walpole (1717–1797), Alexandre Dumas (1802–1870), Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938), the Goncourt brothers (1822–1896 and 1830–1870), William Morris (1834–1896), Mario Praz (1896–1982), and Pierre Loti (1850–1923) – in which authors have staged their personalities, memories, writing practices and aesthetics, often along with their literary imaginations (Hendrix 2008d; Rigney 2008; Colaiacomo 2008; Fortunati 2008; see also Hendrix 2008b, 2010). In the present volume, Spring and Schimanski examine one such self-fashioning project, Selma Lagerlöf's home Mårbacka. Also Gunnar Ekelöf's museum room, discussed by literary scholar

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Helena Bodin, may be included here, although only conditionally, as the initiative came from his widow. Scholars have also examined the musealized homes of authors such as Mario Praz, W.H. Auden (1907–1973) and Lucy Boston, who have written literary works about or set in these homes, focusing on objects, rooms and fictional plots (Watson 2006: 204–7; Colaiacomo 2008; Neundlinger 2018a). Erin Hazard (2009) has shown how American authors who visited Scott's Abbotsford were inspired to build homes that reflected their writings in the United States, and thus reveals part of the global circulation of the concept of the author museum. Houses like these can be (and were) seen as literary creations in their own right, or at least textual supplements to the author's works (Watson 2006). Booth suggests that not only authors use their homes as stages for self-fashioning, but also visitors, who may for example wish to take writers as their models (Booth 2016: 17).

The focus on authors' homes as stages for self-fashioning (and even as tourist attractions) before their eventual musealization suggests an overlap between the study of author museums and the study of authors' homes (Kennedy and Lee 2020). Hendrix (2008d: 4–6) suggests that the author's house can be a tool for writing, not only by providing a space for writing and helping to form that writing, but also as a mnemonic device. The house becomes a depository of private memories to be turned into public expression and then later into museums (ibid.: 4–5). For Watson in her monograph on *The Author's Effects* (2020), the effects she finds in writers' house museums – be they bodily remains, pet animals, clothing, furniture or other household items – delineate a transition from private life to public fame, a transition always in a sense marked out by the death of the author as establishing their literary afterlife (ibid.: 22). Authors' home museums then struggle with the paradox that in this afterlife, the actual author and their living body have gone missing. One way of overcoming this gap is by connecting objects to writing: this is the garment they wore, the chair they sat on, the desk they wrote on, the pen or typewriter they wrote with, the teapot they used, and the cat they were disturbed by while writing (e.g. ibid.: 91, 95, 101). The scene of writing itself is the bridge from private experience and literary imagination to public expression (ibid.: 101–2), often also before the actual death of the author and the musealization of their home. Elizabeth Emery (2012) has traced the connections between the musealization of authors' homes in France and journalistic photographs of these homes, including staged portraits of authors in their homes.

Watson's monograph continues a previous focus on authors' home museums as places in which to imagine past and imaginary persons (Atkin

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2009; Booth 2016: 11), but places the focus more concretely on the way in which writers' house museums use belongings and objects in order to conjure forth 'a figure of the author' (Watson 2020: 4) and create an imaginary or atmospheric space in the domestic in which visitors are co-located with the author's body (ibid.: 14–15), similar to what Polly Atkin calls 'co-presencing' (2009). In these spaces, visitors can 'stage scenes of reading, which disavow the medium of the book, erasing it in favour of a fantasy of immediate intimacy with the author' (Watson 2020: 21). In a book chapter with the title 'Virginia Woolf's Glasses: Material Encounters in the Literary/Artistic House Museum', Nuala Hancock (2010) has investigated the former residence of Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) in Charleston. She encounters Woolf's spectacles in a storage room, and speculates on its object biography, the glasses' relation to Woolf and, metaphorically, how Woolf saw the world through these very glasses. Woolf's spectacles 'offer us something tangible of her material existence', she argues (ibid.: 119).

How Can Author Museums Exhibit Literature?

One of the central paradoxes of literary museums is that their subject, literature, is eminently intangible – though even books always have a material dimension and are involved in material practices. One of the major topics in German-language research literature since the 1980s has been the question of whether it is at all possible to exhibit literature (e.g. Barthel 1990, 1996; Hügel 1991; Lange-Greve 1995; Gfrereis 2007; Käuser 2009; see also Vanessa Zeissig, this volume). Does the immaterial character of literature, as something happening in our heads and in our imagination, make literary exhibitions futile or even impossible? Most prominent in initiating this discussion was Wolfgang Barthel, who proposed his thesis of the impossibility of exhibiting literature (*Unausstellbarkeit von Literatur*) in the mid-1980s (Barthel 1984, 1990). Three decades later, art historian Britta Hochkirchen and cultural pedagogue Elke Kollar (Hochkirchen and Kollar 2015: 7) note a change in this debate, and see a move towards a perspective where the question of whether one can exhibit literature or not, is replaced by the question of what the term 'literature' entails. Depending on its definition, curators may choose different strategies: for example, if literature is defined as something happening in our heads and hence cannot be visualized or displayed, then the focus in literary exhibitions will be on the author as its creator. Extending their reflections, we would also like to add the role of the reader; after all, literature could also be claimed to be something that happens in readers' heads.

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The alternative to author or reader is to accept that only substitutes of literature may be exhibited, such as authors' biographies or literary texts. Literary researchers Lis Hansen, Janneke Schoene and Levke Teßmann (2017) approach this topic from the perspective of the material/immaterial opposition: if literature is immaterial, they ask, how can it be exhibited in a setting that is as material as an exhibition? They conclude that it may not be constructive to differentiate between these two, and rather that it is a question of being aware of whether one wishes to focus on either the material or the immaterial aspects of literature, and how this will impact exhibition and communication strategies. Hochkirchen and Kollar (2015: 12) point out that a focus on the materiality of literature rather than on its semantics opens up a wide variety of possible ways of communicating literature. Hoffmann (2018: 45) suggests exhibiting 'literary communication' (*literarische Kommunikation*) – that is to say, quotes, autographs, information about the work's reception, how works came about and what stages they were written in. One possible way to materialize literature is thus to focus on the writing process and its circumstances, on the study and the desk, and their function as places of literary production (Jens 2013; Kastberger and Maurer 2017; Krajewski 2018), an argument also made within the English-language tradition by Watson, as we have seen already. A material semantics approach (*Materialsemantik*) may help to exhibit the physically accessible parts of literature such as the handwriting or typescript, the ink or the writing machine, or the very materiality of the book (Böhmer 2015). Another approach entails asking how the various objects may generate aura, and what 'aura' means for understanding the medialization of literature (Kroucheva and Schaff 2013).

In addition, in their introduction, Hochkirchen and Kollar call attention to the literary tradition in which the curator positions her- or himself and how this also has an impact on the exhibition. If one prefers a hermeneutical approach to literature, one will consider the author as essential for understanding literary work, and hence their biography becomes important: exhibiting the author's desk may help us to understand their work. In the tradition of reception aesthetics or poststructuralism on the other hand, the author's role is less important, and the focus may shift to their work and away from biography (Hochkirchen and Kollar 2015: 12–13). Hendrix (2008d: 2–3) suggests that the house in particular is a solution to this paradox, as it can be made to stage both literature and the literary imagination.

Approaching author museums from the perspectives of the material turn and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) has shown that objects and exhibition strategies can challenge uniform narratives by creating links to

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the world outside the museum (Aarbakke 2019, 2020). ANT offers a perspective that gives insight to how the world of things – such as design and objects – shape how we interpret the stories being told in the exhibition rooms about authors and their literature. In museologist Thea Aarbakke's contribution to this volume, the focus is on the materiality of books, and specifically on how they are perceived through various displays and how they transgress the physical boundaries of the museum. Her starting point is the book collection formerly owned by Norwegian writer and Nobel laureate Sigrid Undset (1882–1949), today on display in the author's home museum Bjerkebæk. Although the books are closed off from visitors in glass cases, the museum has made them accessible through a public database that visitors and others with interest can scroll through. Personal belongings hence are transformed into sources for research, and dislocated from their place of belonging. As Aarbakke argues, this also transforms the author museum into a private archive or a library, opening up to new potential functions for the author's home museum. She thus examines how different media may influence the way in which relations between the author and her book collections are communicated to the museum's physical and online visitors.

Author museums can house authors' book collections, but also collections of their papers. In recent years, new actors entering the academic field in German-speaking countries, such as literary scholars working in and with literary archives, have examined the role literary archival institutions and archives have for the imagination and representation of the author and their work. In 2017, Petra Maria Dallinger and Klaus Kastberger launched a book series focusing on the intersection of literature and archive. In particular, its first and third volumes (Kastberger and Maurer 2017; Kastberger et al. 2019) discuss the role of literary archives in the context of exhibitions and as providing a stage for literature. Literary archives may also be responsible for author museums and for curating their exhibitions, as is the case at the W.H. Auden house in Lower Austria (Neundlinger 2018b). The role of author museums as archives is the main focus in Helena Bodin's case study of the estate of the Swedish modernist poet Gunnar Ekelöf, in the present volume. In the Gunnar Ekelöf room in Sigtuna, Ekelöf's widow created a duplicate archive which was to become a major point of entrance to her husband's life and work.

In her contribution to the present volume, scenographer Vanessa Zeissig reflects on various ways of how (not) to exhibit literature, blending theoretical and practice-based concerns in an appeal to think differently about literary exhibitions. Taking a workshop that she had organized with author museum scholars and museum professionals as her starting point,

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she asks us to take a step back and not to start with the question of the aesthetic or how to materialize biography and literature in exhibition space, but instead to ask *why* we choose a particular space for exhibiting literature? Returning to questions of space and genre, Zeissig argues for a perspective that allows each exhibition to have its own flow and not be bound by 'universal' exhibition rules. By starting with the 'space' of the exhibition rather than with the author's biography or works, one can develop a deeper understanding of how each particular writer created art, and how the curator imagines this process of creation. Such an approach might also help us to question established literary canons and preconceived ideas about an author's life and work. As several contributors in this volume show, the location of writing might in fact be a central question also for author museums, as it forces us to reconsider why certain geographical localities are said to represent the author to a greater degree than others (see e.g. Narve Fulsås's contribution to the volume).

Politics

In Part II of the volume, the role of author museums as contested political and politicized cultural institutions is central. Author museums can be formed by national cultural policy and have also been important to local politicians in their work on regional identity-building. Museums can be part of the political establishment and may be used to achieve certain political goals, but they also have the potential to resist and to create their own narratives – see the contributions by sinologist Emily Graf and historian and heritage scholar Anastasia Felcher on the Chinese and Soviet contexts, respectively. Some authors may be more suitable as the subjects of author museums, depending on the political and cultural climate. As political environments change, some author museums strive to reinterpret the past and find new ways of communicating across former social and political divisions (see the contribution by Dana Ryan Lande on South African author museums), and museums are dedicated to previously marginalized authors. Author museums may also ignore or downplay political issues (as Marianne Egeland shows in her contribution on Norwegian author museums). In the end, it all boils down to *which* authors are musealized and, as historian Narve Fulsås points out in his contribution on how various museums of Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906) came to be established, *how* authors should be remembered, *where* they should be remembered, and *to whom* they are important.

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Who Gets an Author Museum?

Asking about the changing roles of the relations between author and work in author museums, leads on to what is basically a political question underlying our discussion of the transformative potential of these museums: who gets a museum? After all, despite the active flux of author museums worldwide, most writers will never be chosen to have a museal afterlife, and we have already mentioned the patriarchal tendency to let white male authors writing in canonical modes dominate the author museum landscape. Scholars define various reasons that help to turn an author's life into a museal exhibition; we have previously mentioned self-fashioning and the role of the author's descendants, when an author or their family take the initiative to create a museum or even to manage their own homes as museum-like spaces (Hendrix 2008d; see also Bodin, this volume). Literary scholar and sociologist Karyn Wilson-Costa (2009) discerns several motivations that help to transform a place into a literary place, and legitimize the opening of such a museum: the author should preferably (1) have lived in that area, and (2) have made the place, the surroundings or the local people part of the literary work. It also helps if (3) other authors or literary fans have started visiting this place (and have written about it, for example as travel memoirs), and (4) the place is marketed as the author's home in tourist brochures or travel guides (ibid.). In addition, it is primarily authors who are already part of a regional and preferably national and international canon, and who are considered important for local, regional or national cultural politics (and more recently, place-branding), who are assigned an author museum (see e.g. Olsen and Spring 2020). Until recently, another factor affecting who got a museum and who did not, was class and prosperity: one needed to have owned a house in order to get a house museum. Today, as Elin Haugdal reminds us in her chapter, author museums can also be placed outside the former homes of authors, in new buildings designed by 'starchitects', or within larger, national literature museums or historical museums. This development points to a process of democratizing the definition of 'house', 'home' and 'museum', and has opened up new possibilities for lesser-established authors to be musealized.

In addition to geopolitical, cultural and class imbalances in the selection of author museums, also gender and sexual identities can exclude authors from musealization. The focus of representational critique on marginalized groups in museums such as women and indigenous people has led to research on the representation – or, rather, non-representation – of gender in museums, such as the LHBTQ+ movement, and has been

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inspired by masculinity theory, feminist theory and gender studies (see, for example, Levin 2010; Brenna and Hauan 2018; Grahn and Wilson 2018; Adair and Levin 2020). In his chapter 'House Museums or Walk in Closets? The (Non)Representation of Gay Men in the Museums They Called Home' (Adair 2010), Adair discusses the 'straightening' of biographical records in conventional House Museums, such as in the writer Jesse Shepard's (1848–1927) former home in San Diego. He argues for a more honest presentation of the past, in which people who do not fit into the heteronormative category can be represented in a respectful way. Watson suggests that more monumental forms of staged writing are more likely in the homes of male rather than female authors (Watson 2006: 107; see Spring and Schimanski, this volume, for an exception), and she is highly aware of the gendered connotation of 'home' and 'domesticity' (ibid.: 108–10). The house museums of women writers are, however, no less susceptible to being restaged in accordance with expectations stemming from their fiction (ibid.: 110–11; Alexander 2008).

The present volume addresses these demands by including research on museums dedicated to female authors and authors from outside the 'West' or Global North, such as the Olive Schreiner (1855–1920) in South Africa (Lande), and Mo Yan 莫言 (b. 1955), Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936), Lai He 賴和 (1894–1943) and Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895–1976) from the People's Republic of China (Graf). Two chapters in the first part of the book discuss multidimensionality in museums dedicated to the Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf in Sweden (Spring and Schimanski) and Nobel laureate Sigrid Undset in Norway (Aarbakke); although queer perspectives are not central in either, both cases might have a potential for such an approach, given the increased attention given to the close relationships these two authors had with other women (Palm 2019; Myrvang 2020). A further contribution on the Swedish poet Gunnar Ekelöf (Bodin) brings the author's wife into the story, pointing to a democratizing tendency in personality museums to focus also on partners, other family members and servants. As Bodin shows, the author's widow Ingrid Ekelöf (1911–2005) copied his manuscripts meticulously and created a 'Home Archive' that was a duplicate of the official archive of her deceased husband. It is this archive that researchers can use today in his musealized room in Swedish Sigtuna. The room dedicated to Gunnar thus becomes also a room belonging to Ingrid. As Bodin asks, '[w]hat if the room devoted to Gunnar Ekelöf's memory might also be regarded as a memorial site for the mediating work of his widow?' Her example shows that an author museum can include many more voices and actors than just the author himself. Its borders are porous, and, in

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this case, family members actively use, shape and change the space of the museum.

Bodin here addresses an issue that runs through the museum narratives of (mostly male) author homes: they are often represented as the *genius loci* of the author's inspiration and work, but they tend to neglect the role that family and servants played in bringing this place about. The question of the presence of the author in their homes discussed earlier becomes a question of plural presences in their homes, leading to a decentring of the author and an opening for an approach based on collective biographies. As literary scholar Marianne Egeland shows in her chapter on the Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832–1910) home museum at Aulestad, this one-sided focus on the (male) writer may reinforce a gendered perspective of nation, house, writer and work. The inclusion of other inhabitants is part of a wider tendency to democratization in the author's home museum. As all chapters show, these museums are 'in process', rather than stable institutions.

What Identities Do Author Museums Build?

Research has underlined the way in which author museums have staged authors and localities as representative of spirits of place, region, nation and even empire (Watson 2006; Zemgulys 2008; Rigney 2008: 86; Hendrix 2008d: 6–7; Booth 2016: 4). The nation-building function of author museums is one that has also been emphasized in other national contexts, such as the Swedish, where Bohman has examined the close relationships between personality house museums (including many author museums), celebrity culture, canonicity and the reinforcement of national identity (Bohman 2010). A recent research project carried out by literary museum practitioners in Norway has resulted in a collection of essays focusing on 'memory politics' (Grepstad 2018), closely related to nation-building. Both Bohman and, in Norway, Marianne Egeland have addressed the problem of authors and other personalities disturbing constructed national idylls in museums by their involvement in problematic activities (Bohman 2010: 128–49: Egeland 2018a, 2018b, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, writers have mostly been given museums on the basis of their literary status as canonized writers, closely linked to their roles in nation-building and international sacralization. Even within a more democratic era, there is still a tendency for authors who for various reasons cannot be associated with national identities, particular places or canons – for example, women, migrants, travel writers, writers of popular fiction, science fiction and fantasy writers – not to be musealized.

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The growing number of museums celebrating lesser-known authors on the national stage – authors who are associated with local/regional rather than national identities – has changed the picture somewhat. Developments in the author and literature museum genres, with the rise of general literature museums and temporary literary exhibitions, have led to new opportunities to exhibit marginalized authors. The research project TRAUM – Transforming Author Museums (TRAUM 2016) – out of which this book has come – has particularly focused on two types of author museums on the fringes of the major national narratives, not included in this volume: those about authors who write in lesser-used languages such as the Nynorsk written norm in Norwegian (Aarbakke 2020; Hoel 2020), and 'transnational' author museums located in a country not directly identified with the authors concerned, such as the August Strindberg and W.H. Auden museums in Austria. Author museums within dominant, national traditions may actively focus on transnational or local elements in their exhibitions, where such elements have previously often been undercommunicated. Author museums can be actively used to support new and more inclusive national narratives, such as in the Olive Schreiner Museum in South Africa (see Lande, this volume). However, national canonization, combined with the need for positive branding, can cause author museums to undercommunicate controversial aspects of canonized writers and their museums (for the latter see Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's Aulestad; see Egeland, this volume). In such cases, author museums can become arenas for the negotiation of biographical and historical narratives.

Author museums may function both as spaces of resistance and as spaces of reinforcing state ideology. Anastasia Felcher reminds us in her chapter on author museums in the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1979 of the central role culture plays in politics. One reason for the rapid spread of author museums after 1944 in the Soviet Union was the official policy to integrate newly acquired territories into Soviet life through culture. Writers' biographies were rewritten as a result. As Felcher shows, this process of politicizing culture in general and literature specifically had profound consequences for the definition of the various regional literary canons, as the regional museums were forced to negotiate between necessary adaptation to state ideology and resistance. Emily Graf, in her chapter on contemporary author museums on mainland China and in Taiwan, focuses on their potential as a destabilizing force. As in Felcher's study, the notion of literary canon is central: who defines and decides the canon and what consequences does this have for literary exhibition strategies? Graf's examples, taken from exhibitions in author museums and

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in museums of literature, show how slight changes in design and choice of artefact may open up new narratives and interpretations of the author and their literature. At the same time, both Felcher and Graf demonstrate how powerful national and other narratives are by either confirming or contesting the dominant interpretations of the author and their work. The author museums in various republics or regions of the Soviet Union and its successor states, or in China/Taiwan, may create counterspaces to state or literary establishment ideologies, but they themselves may also create narratives that serve specific cultural-political goals.

This continuous process of confirming and contesting hegemonial narratives is the topic in literary scholar Dana Ryan Lande's chapter on the South African Olive Schreiner museum. After the end of apartheid, South Africa had to rethink existing definitions of culture and find new ones, and many heritage sites today aim at inclusive and reparative strategies. Lande's analysis of the textual display at the museum of the feminist writer Olive Schreiner shows that the relevance and meaning of writers is continuously being negotiated, depending on political and cultural needs. How might a pre-apartheid author coming from a missionary family be integrated in post-apartheid narratives of community-building and new South African literary identity? Lande's study demonstrates that not only the author's literary heritage needs to be reinterpreted, also the representative space she occupied, where she worked and lived.

How Can Author Museums Deal with Controversy?

In Lande's research, the reinterpretation of the past with the aim of creating a liveable and inclusive future is central, but her case study also points to the process of collectively disremembering painful pasts by laying them to rest in books, museums and other archives of culture, and by constructing conciliatory narratives. In her chapter, Egeland focuses on such a process of disremembering, but in the very different cultural and political context of Norway. The writer and Nobel Prize laureate Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's home Aulestad is one of Norway's oldest house museums (opened in 1935) and has an important place in national memory, even if Bjørnson no longer attracts the attention of readers to such an extent. Egeland discerns 'a distinctive Aulestad discourse' produced and formed by the museum throughout the years, which has reinforced the national relevance of Bjørnson and his home. Possibly because of this close connection between nation and writer, the museum has mostly disremembered Aulestad's darker legacy as a place of Nazi activities after Bjørnson's death, initiated by his son Erling.

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The larger question that Egeland's chapter raises is how heritage institutions such as author museums might deal with difficult pasts and legacies. Does a biographical museum include stories of the house and its occupants, even though these go beyond the life and works of this one person? To what extent should author museums consciously activate processes of remembrance and disremembrance in their strategies, exhibition designs and outreach activities? The underlying question concerns which role author museums should take in today's societies. As the chapters in Part II show, this is also a question of what pressures, demands and opportunities states provide.

In his chapter, Narve Fulsås explores the delayed musealization of the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906). In contrast to admirers of his contemporary Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, and despite Ibsen being part of the established canon and being world-famous at his death, fans had to wait for half a century before Ibsen's former homes were opened as museums. Fulsås's analysis reveals the multiple reasons why an author may be slow in being assigned a museum space, ranging from unclear financing, class tensions, and country/city- and periphery/centre-divisions to the question of whom a writer belongs to: is it the world, the nation or the places where he was born or lived and worked? At the same time, his case study shows that there exist varying and possibly contradictory interpretations of what the national consists of, and that writers and their work may accordingly be integrated into one of those national spaces, but rejected from another.

Museum buildings themselves also contribute to turning authors into regional or national icons. As Haugdal's examples of recently constructed museum buildings in Norway show, the nineteenth-century idea of the museum as a temple of art and science, expressed through grand imposing buildings, is still present today. The difference is that whereas this earlier desire for grandeur only applied to national or other museums that were perceived as culturally and scientifically significant for the nation, today this also holds true for smaller museums, such as personality museums. As Haugdal's examples illustrate, prominent architects have been building twenty-first-century temples to writers and their work. While this trend has to be seen as part of an effort to promote tourism, it is also an indication of the importance assigned to art in national contexts – and it reinforces the relations between authors, literature, place and nation.

In many ways, the tendency to expand the canon of authors constituted through author museums to cover authors previously perceived as having less symbolic importance to the nation can be read as signalling a different conception of the nation. When theorist of nations Benedict

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Anderson (1991) posits the development of the modern nation-state as dependent on a homogeneous and horizontal conception, this conception is one that avoids the need for the national heroes of the kind represented by great authors. The success of the nation-state is precisely a product of a homogenization of everyday national identity across national space. Author museums may always retain a form of sacral aura as places a pilgrimage, but their often-regional location and expansion in numbers to include also non-canonical authors allows them to play the role of Anderson's national 'plurals' (ibid.: 30), metonymies rather than symbolic metaphors of the imagined community, often assigned to authors – for example, Arne Garborg and Olav H. Hauge – who are only known and recognizable within a national context.

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Note

1. We use the English-language convention of placing given names first and family names last in transliterated Japanese and Hungarian names – except the pseudonym Mori Ōgai, which is conventionally written with the family name first in English. We place family names first in Chinese names.

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