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Title:

**A Fine Balance: Steadying the Heyerdahl's Heritage and
Indigenous Knowledge at the Kon-Tiki Museum**

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Abstract

Thor Heyerdahl (1914-2002), the Norwegian explorer, in 1947 did his first major expedition over the Pacific Ocean, which brought him world-wide fame. He believed that people from South America could have settled Polynesia in pre-Columbian times via crossing the Pacific Ocean by means of balsa-wood rafts. Nonetheless, this theory was in contrast to the ongoing theory at the time. In order to prove the feasibility of this theory, he decided to mount the Kon-Tiki expedition in company of 5 other men. On 28 April 1947, they started the journey and sailed the raft for 101 days. Finally, they had a successful landfall on 7 August 1947 in the Tuamotus archipelago. And now, the private Kon-Tiki museum housing the original Kon-Tiki raft is placed in Bygdøy, Oslo- Norway.

Since this expedition took geographically place within Global South areas, and indigenous knowledge was playing a role in both the formation of the theory and building the raft, I found it pertinent to my Master's program on Multicultural and International Education-South. The Kon-Tiki museum is exhibiting the raft, and is informing the visitors about the theory behind this expedition, and the Kon-Tiki leader as a hero. Thereupon, I decided to assess how this museum is making a meaningful learning environment for its visitors, and which notions are being emphasized in this regard. Consequently, I intended to analyze the Kon-Tiki theory and expedition from epistemological perspectives, alongside pedagogical issues at the museum. Being so, this thesis addresses both Global South related issues and pedagogical issues which have been the focal center of interest in this Master's program. For data collection, I did oral interview with both museum staff and museum visitors who were selected based on convenient sampling. In addition, I observed 4 museum guided tours, and observed/interviewed a number of museum visitors outside the museum. Plus, I observed informative text and photos at the museum and on the Kon-Tiki website. The data was analyzed through the theoretical framework of heroism, adaptation theory, reader-response theory, monumental history, appeal structure and constructivist museum learning. The main findings of the study show that the Kon-Tiki museum is highly focused on the visitors' needs and tries to present knowledge in an adapted form to suit its visitors interest and yet to grow its prosperity and fame. They have different modes of exhibiting the Kon-Tiki information, hence in all of them, they strive to engage emotionally the visitors in order to convey messages such as Thor Heyerdahl, an infinite source of inspiration who heroically conducted the Kon-Tiki expedition.

Key words: Kon-Tiki, reader-response theory, adaptation, appeal structure



Picture number 1. Thor Heyerdahl on Easter Island (Ralling & Heyerdahl, 1990, p. 169).

“Borders? I have never seen one. But I have heard they exist in the minds of some people”

Thor Heyerdahl (1914-2002)

Prologue

Heroes and heroines are needed all the time. In our life, certain figures become larger than life, because we ourselves crave for guides to lead us through complex realities. One such hero in the twentieth century is the Norwegian experimental archeologist, Thor Heyerdahl (1914-2002). He stunned the world with his 1947 Kon-Tiki raft expedition across the Pacific, which turned out to become a world-wide media sensation (Andersson, 2010), mainly because people at that time were fed up with the plague of war, and had a thirst for listening to stories they could rejoice over. Since this expedition took place two years after World War II, it managed to spur a wave of postwar optimism regarding human achievements and global cooperation (Magelssen, 2016). And the glorious notions of bringing hope and exploring the world with no belief in any limiting “borders” after the devastating War is the appeal of the Kon-Tiki expedition, which did scaffold it to stand out, attract and survive after these many years.

The Kon-Tiki expedition in short was to prove the theory that indigenous South Americans were the first people to populate the Polynesian Islands (Andersson, 2010; Holton, 2004). The voyage of the Kon-Tiki, with its “edge-of-the-seat battles” with freak weather, sharks, and against-all-odds reliance on primitive navigation, inspired a host of new academic projects using performative historiography for understanding past human practices (Magelssen, 2016, p. 25-27).

Heyerdahl’s “performative experiment”, sailing a balsa raft named after the Peruvian sun god from South America to Polynesia, proved the feasibility of his theory of east-to-west population of the islands (Magelssen, 2016, p. 25-27). Heyerdahl enjoyed a high profile in popular culture and became an international celebrity, and his affiliated Kon-Tiki turned into a brand by the second half of the 20th century (Magelssen, 2016). He has been famous for his adventurous spirit and his scientific career (Hunt, 2006). He is widely recognized as one of the most prominent explorers of the 20th century, whose name is linked with bold expeditions, and his books and works have inspired millions. Thor Heyerdahl lived a life of adventure for well over five decades, posing scientific theories which often challenged the status quo and made him controversial (Andersson, 2010). Currently, the Kon-Tiki Museum in Bygdøy- Oslo houses the original Kon-Tiki raft and also RA II raft, and millions of people have visited this museum over the years. This is a private museum being financed by selling Kon-Tiki books, the expeditions’ memorabilia and by the museum visit entry fees.

A little more than 6 months before the raft's departure from the Peruvian port of Callao, the ambitious Thor Heyerdahl travelled to New York. In that trip, he was carrying copies of a manuscript in which he had collected evidence that the Polynesian islands had first been settled through prehistoric migrations from the Americas, and not from Asia as the prevailing scientific opinion decreed. However, Thor Heyerdahl met massive opposition and at the time it seemed like nobody would take him seriously. Back in time, Thor Heyerdahl decided to discontinue his studies at the University of Oslo, and instead carry out research on his own, to prove that it was possible to drift with the Humboldt Current from South America to Polynesia on a balsa-wood raft. Almost 10 years before taking this decision, he had travelled to Polynesia with his newly-wed wife, Liv Coucheron-Torp, in a failed attempt to abandon Western civilization. But this time, in 1947, he intended to return there on a balsa wood raft from South America with a specific intention. The intention was to prove his theory that the indigenous South American peoples were the first ones to populate Polynesia, since they had the means (balsa wood rafts) to travel there (Andersson, 2010).

On 28 April 1947, the vessel was ultimately towed out of the naval dockyard in Callao, the harbor town of the Peruvian capital Lima. Fifteen large balsa wood tied together and covered with bamboo matting, made a small raft named Kon-Tiki. The crew consisted of 6 men, 5 Norwegians and a Swede. They were to live aboard for 101 days in a small hut made of bamboo strands and banana leaves. The Kon-Tiki drifted more than 4000 miles in the Humboldt Current, from the shores of South America to French Polynesian islands (Andersson, 2010).



Picture number 2. The Kon-Tiki crew. Left to right: Knut Haugland, Bengt Danielsson, Thor Heyerdahl, Erik Hesselberg, Torstein Raaby and Herman Watzinger. (Ralling & Heyerdahl, 1990, p. 108).

Thor Heyerdahl published the Kon-Tiki book in 1948, and the first English Language edition was released in 1950. Besides the bestselling Kon-Tiki book, the Kon-Tiki movie produced in 1950 won the year's Academy Award for the best documentary feature. Consequently, in the mid-1950s, Kon-Tiki had turned into a household name appearing on everything from cocktail menus to tourist hotels (Magelssen, 2016).

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1 Introduction

1.1 Preliminaries

The Kon-Tiki raft expedition conducted in 1947 was a journey across the Pacific Ocean from South America destined for the Polynesian Islands. The young Norwegian expedition leader, Thor Heyerdahl, was of the belief that people from South America could have reached Polynesia on balsa-wood rafts. Thor Heyerdahl developed this theory- which encountered a great deal of opposition- essentially based on his talks with the oldest people in Fatu-Hiva during his stay there in the late thirties, and attributed to similar stone structures found in South America and Polynesia. Currently, the original Kon-Tiki raft is preserved in the Kon-Tiki museum in Oslo, Norway. Consequently, in this chapter I present the study's rationale, definition of key terms, the reasons why this study is carried out, as well as a presentation of the research objectives and research questions.

1.2 Rationale behind this Study

Before proceeding, I assume it important to briefly clarify the links between the Kon-Tiki expedition and the Kon-Tiki museum, and the way these two notions are going to build up my thesis leading ideas. The Kon-Tiki expedition took geographically place within areas, which for me - with a background in Multicultural and International Education - are classified in the Global South areas. Studying the intentions and presuppositions behind the journey, and the process of building the raft by relying on Indigenous Knowledge of South Americans, can have implications concerning the Global South issues and Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

As will be explained later on in this chapter, the main division between the North and the South has to do with developmental and economic factors (Reuveny & Thompson, 2007). Being so, the idea of the Kon-Tiki expedition and the Kon-Tiki museum emerged noticeably relevant to the dual purpose of my Master's program, i.e. pedagogical issues and Global South issues. Since this expedition took place within areas being part of the Global South areas (therefore having implications concerning the South issues), and the Kon-Tiki museum as a memorial to the expedition, holding the expedition memorabilia and the original Kon-Tiki raft, can have pedagogical implications for its visitors.

Indigenous knowledge is defined as culture-bound folk knowledge that can be in contrast to formal and specialized knowledge of both Western and non-Western societies. In other words,

“indigenous knowledge is the systematic information that remains in the informal sector, usually unwritten and preserved in oral tradition rather than texts” (Stabinsky & Brush, 1996, p. 4). In a more narrowed-down sense this type of knowledge system refers to the knowledge of indigenous people and minority cultures (Stabinsky & Brush, 1996). The definition of Indigenous Knowledge is provided here, since Thor Heyerdahl was relying on this type of knowledge to gain information about the origins of the Polynesians ancestors and about their journey means which were the balsa rafts.



Picture number 3. The Old chief Tei-Tetua, said to be the last man on Fatu-Hiva who have tasted human flesh. It was this man who told Thor Heyerdahl about the legend of Kon-Tiki (Ralling & Heyerdahl, 1990, p. 68).

1.3 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms Global South and Global North need to be defined primarily and briefly here. Henceforth, they are repeatedly used throughout the research. The terms Global South and Global North are problematic in many ways. However, they imply the division between the wealthy and economically developed countries in the northern hemisphere of the globe, plus Australia and New Zealand, which are known collectively as “the North”. On the other hand, the poorer countries which are “less” or “least” developed, mostly located in the Southern

hemisphere are known as “the South” or the “Global South” countries. As nations improve and prosper economically, they may become part of the North regardless of their geographical locations (Reuveny & Thompson, 2007), and of course a wave of new thinking and development is actually sweeping across the Global South (Hulme, Hanlon, Barrientos, 2012).

1.4 Problem Statement

Museums have signs for instruction (Allen, 2004; Bennett, 2013; Witcomb, 2003). They have been always institutions for public learning, and are among the most successful ones in this regard (Falk & Dierking, 2018). From instructional perspectives, people may go to the museums to learn, make meanings and find connections. Learning from and at the museums is now a more important topic compared to the past. Formerly, it could have been a topic of interest, but presently it is of high importance to the very essence of museums’ success and survival (Falk & Dierking, 2000).

The museums which are especially associated with science (such as the Kon-Tiki museum which is concerned with archeological and Global South expeditions), are among the many places where heroism is debated in distinctive ways. This debate around the topic of heroism is of importance to the sustainability of such museums, which generally are dependent on public support of their exhibitions. And, the same public might indeed have a thirst for heroic figures. Not surprisingly, however, heroism is featured predominantly in many museums (Jordanova, 2014), one of which is the Kon-Tiki museum.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

My objectives in this study are to explore how the Kon-Tiki museum creates a meaningful learning environment for its visitors. And further how Thor Heyerdahl, the Kon-Tiki expedition leader, is presented and perceived as a hero correspondingly by the museum staff and by the museum visitors.

1.6 Research Questions

This study is set out to investigate the following research questions:

1. How does the Kon-Tiki museum create a meaningful learning environment for its visitors?
 - A. Whose history is constructed and narrated at the Kon-Tiki museum?
 - B. How is this history constructed and narrated at the Kon-Tiki museum?
 - C. Which viewpoints did Thor Heyerdahl have regarding indigenous knowledge and applicability of this knowledge for conducting the Kon-Tiki project?
 - D. To what extent are there any frictions between Thor Heyerdahl's application of indigenous knowledge and his reliance on modern, European epistemology?
 - E. How did Thor Heyerdahl approach the notion of "mobility" for the ancient people in the Kon-Tiki theory and expedition?

2. In what ways does the Kon-Tiki museum portray Thor Heyerdahl as a hero?
 - A. Which notions are used by the museum decision makers to present Thor Heyerdahl the hero?
 - B. What heroic perception(s) about Thor Heyerdahl are the adult museum visitors left with?

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into six chapters:

The present chapter has aimed to introduce the thesis main objectives, problem statement, and the research questions.

Chapter two, Background, will present background information about the birth and development of museums as educational centers, as well as information about museums in a modern world, with an eye on European/Western museums. Moreover, a concise review on the museum history in Norway will be presented.

Chapter three, Methodology, will provide an outline of the research methods.

Chapter four, Theoretical Framework, will place the study in a wider theoretical setting, present key concepts and make explicit the particular academic discourses, within which my thesis is framed and is further analyzed through.

Chapter five, Findings, will present pure findings of the study. And lastly,

Chapter six, Discussion and Conclusion, will discuss the thesis findings within the framework of the presented theories, accompanied by the study's concluding remarks.

2 Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will be about the importance of museums as educational and cultural centers in many of the European / Western societies. I am mainly focused on the museums in European / Western societies, since this study is based in Europe, and is about one European museum, i.e. the Kon-Tiki museum. My purpose, hereby, is to put emphasis on the formation, roles and functions of museums. I specifically focus on the pedagogical roles that museums can play. I will provide explanations about the advent of museums from historical perspectives, and will carry on to present the notion of museums in the modern and Western world. Subsequently, I will narrow my focus down to the museum history in Norway and the Kon-Tiki museum.

2.2 Instructional Signs at the Museums

Learning happens undeniably at the museums (Falk & Dierking, 2000), and the modern sense of museums was designed to instruct beside delight (Bennett, 2013). Museums take on more tasks as cultural and educational institutions, while they have been once known mainly as institutions catering to school visits and elite scholarship (Nafziger, Paterson & Renteln, 2010). Formerly, the responsibility of the museums was limited to acquisition, conservation, research and display of different art, archaeological, ethnographic, scientific and technological objects. However, in the modern world this responsibility has brought much wider roles. The museum visitors not only look at the objects, admire and enjoy them, but at the same time learn from them and pass this visual learning to the succeeding generation (Singh, 2004).

Opponents and proponents of learning from museums have formed a polarized debate in this regard. A probable explanation for this polarization lies in the nature of critical traditions on museums which up to the present time has represented museums as not-good places for learning. This viewpoint regarding the museums is particularly noticed in the avant-garde tradition of those schooled in theories of Marxism. Hence, according to their traditions, museums are institutions caught in the nineteenth-century origins which are not able to escape from their conservative political meanings (Witcomb, 2003).

Many of the scholars engaged in the museum community ponder questions on why people go to museums (Falk & Dierking, 2000), and look at a shard of pottery or a scribbled poem (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998), and further why and how the museums arrange and select

artifacts to shape knowledge and construct the views of the visitors. Moreover, there are questions on how the values are produced in the minds of active audiences through their experiences at the museums (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). So far, having mentioned a variety of viewpoints regarding the roles and functions of museums from both opponents and proponents, I would assert myself by adding that in my viewpoint museums have significant roles to play above merely demonstration of valued objects.

2.3 The Birthplace of Museums in the History

From a historical perspective, hoarding and collecting state treasures and documents have been recorded in many cultures, but the Athenians refined this social and religious area of public life. In order to demonstrate and house the statues, precious objects and armor, they built special additions to their temples and sanctuaries (Lind, Jarvis & Phelan, 2002).

Museum, the temple of the Muses. This definition of the word indicates museums as places of learning and study, being mingled by a sense of sacredness. However, the importance of museums from a religious and ethical perspective has shifted to the intellectual side for the first time in the Hellenistic Institute of Alexandria established in 283 B.C., where the term ‘museum’ was used. It was an academic institution where scholars carried out research and higher learning in social and natural philosophies (Singh, 2004).

2.4 Museums in the Modern World

In contemporary times, museums are understood as key institutional space of modernity in “addressing the changing character of experience” which happens through learning at the museums (Hetherington, 2006, p. 597). In a modern sense they are designed to serve instructional functions alongside entertaining the visitors. The public museums in a modern sense acquired their formation during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This process of formation was complicated, since it was involving the most obvious and immediate transformation of the practices of earlier collecting institutions. The birth of museums enjoyed a creative adaptation of aspects of other novel institutions, for example the international exhibitions and department stores, which improved alongside the museums (Bennett, 2013).

The context in which museums are operating has evolved considerably up to the modern era, and along the same lines they are facing a variety of challenges (Camarero, Garrido & Vicente, 2015). For example, they have encountered increasing demands for having a popular mode of address. A number of commentators in the field have oriented themselves towards

such demands by introducing museums as mausoleums weighed down by the past and captive to the elites' interest. Other commentators hold that contemporary museums have broken with the past to become democratic and in a sense open institutions. However, both positions can be rejected by arguing for a long history of museums engaging with popular culture and addressing a variety of audiences. Rather than aligning clearly to one or other side, museums have been key mediators between popular cultures and high cultures (Witcomb, 2003).

Witcomb (2003), has a somewhere-in-between position regarding modernism and traditionalism concerning the museum presentations. She agrees that museums need to move towards meeting the needs of diverse visitors for example through increasing the diversity of their offered programs. On the other hand, she is a proponent of maintaining traditional perspectives.

2.5 Museums in the Western / European World

Museums are a characteristic feature of the cultural pattern of modern Europe and of the world influenced by Europe (Pearce, 2017). They are placed at the center of modern relations of culture and government, and it is argued that they should be understood not merely as places of instruction, but above that as reformatory of manners in which a wide range of regulated social routines take place (Bennett, 2013). The way museums are perceived is changing (Selwood, 2018), and over the past few decades, these institutions have drawn attention due to their needs to belong to the present time, and to be relevant and sustainable in the rapidly changing twenty-first century (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002).

In the United States, museums, until recently, were described as cathedrals, and were looked upon as expressions of community values, social instrument and as midwives giving birth to democracy (Nafziger, Paterson & Renteln, 2010). In Great Britain as an example, there have been challenges to museums and museum workers due to the widening of roles and expectations within cultural policy discourses. There has been an expectation that museums are transforming from an old to new museology, and that this transformation has reformed the roles and functions of museums. There has been a major shift in Great Britain from the expression museum education to the expression museum learning. And this semantic shift from education to learning demonstrates a major philosophical shift in the way in which educational functions of museums are interpreted. Using the word learning indicates an

increased focus on the learning process itself, instead of being focused on the educational delivery of museums (McCall & Gray, 2014). Having mentioned so, it can be stated that museums may be seen as icons of Western society which act as signs for liberation, domination, leisure and learning (Selwood, 2018).

The process of museum making in Europe resulted in different interpretations of universal, national and transnational values and identifications. The notions of Western civilization and Western values became nationalized in this process of museum making. The implications of such different interpretations took different shapes, and brought a range of different consequences. In Scandinavian context, as an example, the cultural reconstruction of Norden (referring to Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland) had a significant role in the production of a peaceful and emancipated environment in terms of museum making. The reconstruction of Norden happened in the midst of a political climate of rival nationalism that could have been used or abused to encourage revenge and/or territorial re-acquisitions (Aronsson & Elgenius, 2014).

2.6 A Concise Review on the Museum History in Norway

Having a review on the Norwegian museum history makes it necessary to present some major issues in the political and cultural history of the country. As a consequence of the political processes of the late medieval and early modern history, Norway became part of the Danish Empire. Under Danish governance, Norway to a certain extent developed a separate legislation and economy. In 1814, European post-Napoleonic politics resulted in the forced dissolution of the dynastic union between Denmark and Norway. Despite the Swedish demands on Norway based on the Kiel Treaty in 1813, Norwegian politicians managed to establish a parliamentary assembly, to sign a new Constitution for their own, and to elect a new King. The new King abdicated the throne after a few months. However, the permanent result of the political actions in 1814 was that Norway was established as an independent country with its own Constitution, but it was still in union with the Kingdom of Sweden. After 1814, Norway had its own economical, administrative, religious and legal structures. The country's union with Sweden was dynastic and political, however the cultural development of Norway and Sweden was individual and distinctly different (Amundsen, 2011).

The political and cultural elite in Norway were insisting in the independence from Sweden and distance to Denmark. After 1814, the cultural and intellectual elite were seeking distinct expressions of national identity following traditional nineteenth century standards. For this issue of national importance, scholars, literates and politicians vividly took part in different cultural and institutional projects aiming at developing Norwegian language, symbols and literacy (Hodne, cited in Aronsson & Elgenius, 2014, p. 657). The Norwegian national scholars started writing the Norwegian History as something different from that of Denmark. Consequently, Norwegian museums were established in order to publicly show the materials of such a separate Norwegian national culture and art (Kjus, cited in Aronsson & Elgenius, 2014, p. 657). Moreover, Art Museum was established to display the Norwegian national art. This development was further strengthened by the establishment of Art History as a separate academic discipline at the University of Oslo. In the nineteenth century, Norway was able to establish its own national, regional and local museum collections on the basis of what was still kept in the country (Amundsen, 2011).

The Norwegian political and cultural authorities started to develop museum policies immediately after 1814. But, these actions were mainly based on private and historical initiatives. Back in history, in 1767, a group of Enlightenment scholars had established a Museum of Natural Science and Archaeology Knowledge in Trondheim. In 1820s, Bergen was the location of a similar museum establishment, and in the Norwegian capital of Christiania (Oslo) collectors and scholars established different public collections (Andersen, cited in Aronsson & Elgenius, 2014, p. 658).

The process of museum making in Norway has an important implication to the country's eagerness towards realizing its national identity. In other words, the most important national museums in Norway were established in periods when Norway was eager to demonstrate independence and national identity. In the year 1814, the first year of the new state of Norway, Norwegian state institutions were few and weak. Accordingly, many of the first initiatives for museum making were taken by Professors at the University in Oslo. The main perspective in these nineteenth century museum initiatives was to combine the need to establish academic competence, search for comparative research material, and the necessary safeguarding of National antiquities. The Antiquity Collection and National museums in Norway had a major role in developing and sustaining important national symbols and heritage of a nation proud of its ancient past and material representations (Amundsen, 2011).

The Kon-Tiki museum is also a nation making institution. In the Kon-Tiki expedition, Thor Heyerdahl was conveying this essential message that the world was a united place by demonstrating the possibility of traveling across the ocean between two faraway places. Through this expedition, he spoke up to the archeological dogmatism and to the bipolar political culture stemming from the Cold War at the time. He is by now an international celebrity whose appealing account of life on a remote island far from modernity has attracted younger generations too (Anker, 2020).

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the methodological foundations used to conduct this study, as well as a discussion on the research design. I will also include a presentation and discussion of methods utilized for data collection, sampling of informants, field-related issues, interpretation and coding of findings. Additionally, I present my epistemological stances in conducting this study.

3.2 Research Design

In this study I followed a qualitative model, using semi-structured oral interviews, and overt participant observation. Interviews were in short used to collect data in the areas of why and how of the Kon-Tiki expedition, and its implications regarding the Global South issues. Furthermore, through the interviews I gathered data on how the adult museum visitors reflect on their learning experiences, and further how the museum decision makers transfer the Kon-Tiki related information at the museum. Observation was another method utilized to gain information about how the museum guides and the museum informative texts presented the Kon-Tiki expedition and Thor Heyerdahl to the visitors.

In this qualitative research design, I was not dealing with numbers. The information was mostly based on expressed ideas in words, accounts, descriptions, feelings and opinions. This research approach is common where people are the focus of a study, which was the case in my current study, as well. This type of research method can also be concentrated on more general beliefs or customs (Walliman, 2015).

My study is inductive in the sense that it posed research questions to narrow down the study scope, and thereafter the theory is generated from research (Bryman, 2004). Inductive research approach has been refined and elaborated during the last two decades as a way of conducting interpretive, qualitative bodies of research, and as a guidance to the analysis and presentation of qualitative research (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013). Through using an inductive research approach, I had the possibility to collect and analyze the data simultaneously (Geertz, 1973).

The importance of research design stems from its nature that provides the research and the researcher with a general framework for the collection and analysis of the data.

Epistemological paradigms are the very foundation of a research design, which is referred to as a researcher's worldview. And this is the researcher's worldview which reflects his/ her intrinsic beliefs about the world we live in, and the world which aspires us to explore (Bryman, 2012).

My epistemological assumptions in this study dwell upon interpretivism, and by assuming that, reality is multiple and relative. Consequently, within the framework of this epistemological stance, there are more than one single way of exploring such realities and that the social subjects are different from those in the natural sciences (Bryman, 2012). Taking this epistemological position provided me with a greater scope to investigate the meanings, reasons and motivations behind the subjective experiences and subjective interpretations of the interviewees at the Kon-Tiki museum.

While I have been conducting this qualitative study, I kept constantly in my mind that in social research studies, the researcher herself / himself is a part of the world being studied (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Along the same lines, I found myself following the constructivist stances. Looking through the lens of constructivism, production of knowledge is highly likely prone to change, which may well undergo continual negotiations and recycling (Bryman, 2012). When applied to my study, I assume that what is done in order to portray Thor Heyerdahl the hero, is by and large performed through the ways in which the actors in a setting (in this case the decision makers in the Kon-Tiki museum) construct the meanings and values about a given phenomenon (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). My research methods in this thesis which are basically a strategy of enquiry stem from these epistemological assumptions.

There has been a great variety of approaches to assess the Kon-Tiki museum and Thor Heyerdahl, but in this study I attempted to explore these issues through the interpretations formulated by the actors and providers in the Kon-Tiki museum. To me, this is also the reason for choosing small but manageable samples, i.e. five informed museum staff, ten adult museum visitors, and observing four museum guided tours.

In the next subsections, I provide information about how I started to contact the museum authorities, how openly they treated me, and further how I initiated to gather my research data through qualitative research methods.

3.3 Access and Gatekeepers

For conducting this study, I started to contact the Kon-Tiki museum workers in order to ask for permission to use the resources at the museum about Thor Heyerdahl, and in order to have interviews with the museum workers and museum visitors. First of all, in a morning in August 2018, I called the museum, introduced myself and my affiliation to OsloMet University, explained concisely about my thesis topic on Thor Heyerdahl, and then asked for the contact information of the museum curator. I spoke in English on the telephone and there was obviously no linguistic barrier regarding that, since almost all the people at the Kon-Tiki museum knew English and communicated effortlessly. I could have done that phone conversation in Norwegian too, but I was not fully confident to carry on the conversation in Norwegian at the time. However after being at the museum for a while, I was communicating in Norwegian with the staff, except for the times when I had an interview with a number of them for the purpose of the thesis, or during the time when necessity arose and I needed to communicate in English.

After the first time that I called the museum, the answering staff who replied kindly and professionally provided me with the email address of the museum curator. Thereafter, I sent the museum curator an email. In that email, I introduced myself and provided brief information on my educational background, and about being a Master student at OsloMet University, and further about doing my Master's thesis about Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki expedition. He replied to my email at her/his earliest convenience and we agreed on a date and time to visit regarding my project description. The agreed time arrived and I was present at the museum for the first time. The museum curator was accompanied by another person who was the head of communications at the museum. I explained one more time about my thesis project, and about the requirement for having oral interview with the informed staff at the museum, and with the museum visitors for the data section of the project. They were really welcoming to both me and my requirements. The museum curator in the meeting offered me the opportunity to come to the museum at any day and any time, and to use a room facilitated with computer desks, and a PC, and a huge number of books about Thor Heyerdahl's life and expeditions.

The two people at the meeting, and all the others at the museum that I acquainted with later, were to a great extent helpful, caring, open, and friendly. The museum curator also provided me generously with the museum keys. Hereby, I am to acknowledge that they were all beyond my expectation truly affectionate and accommodating to me. The room in the museum that I

was working in was in the vicinity of the museum curator's room, and therefore I had the opportunity to ask her/him and discuss with her/him any sporadic questions or popping up ideas regarding the thesis topic.

Gatekeepers may provide or block the access (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2007) to researchers. However, in my project the gatekeepers were truly willing to help and provided me with everything to ease my access, and were all very generous with their time and resources, which I am truly grateful for. On the other hand, there is the possibility that the gatekeepers may modify or steer the course of the research, possibly in the direction of their own desires (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2007), and I was being cautious about this possibility, while I was having interview with the informed museum staff about Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki voyage. I confess that being affectionately surrounded with that sense of always-willing-to-help, was in a sense challenging to me. However, I tried my best to remain personally an independent researcher and not to be subordinated by their kindness, and therefore not feel guilty if I came up with critical data and results regarding the museum and the Kon-Tiki expedition.

3.4 Research Methodology

As mentioned, the present study is qualitative and of inductive type, which normally suggests for qualitative research methods, such as interviews and observations (Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2002). Interviews and observation complement each other, since through observation I learned to calibrate the interviews. And by interviews I learned to look at things likely differently. By having these two methods at hand, I could be able to cover much more grounds, because they mutually support each other.

This study can also be regarded as a “front-end” evaluative type, since it can reveal and evaluate the visitors' experience, knowledge and expectations. In front-end evaluations one can make use of interviews and observations (Diamond, Horn & Uttal, 2016, p. 3), and these are among the methods I utilized in this research. I decided to have interviews, since they provided me with a sense of flexibility and the opportunity to go deeper in the investigation of the subjective matters. And, I chose to have observations due mainly to the advantage of thick descriptions which entails provision of cultural context and meanings that people can put on actions (Geertz, 1973).

3.4.1 Interview

I used face-to-face, semi-structured, oral interviews as one of my data collecting methods, including both museum informed staff, who were five people, and adult museum visitors, who were ten people. I chose interviews in order to explore the interviewees' thoughts and experiences individually (Seidman, 2012), regarding their impressions and thoughts about Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki theory / expedition. The oral accounts produced by the affiliated staff at the museum could be a valuable source to gain insight into the informed staff mindsets regarding the research issue, since the museum staff played a crucial role in exhibiting how and what regarding Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki project.

Another rationale for choosing the interview method was to allow my interviewees to provide deeper insight into their values, views and meanings (Seidman, 2012) regarding the topic under investigation. Moreover, my thesis research topic according to the informed museum staff was an interesting topic to them, since it had to do with their daily occupation, and therefore they had the opportunity to flexibly ramble on the familiar subjects and topics. And, in another respect, I gained the opportunity to code, compare and correlate the findings afterwards (Bryman, 2012).

According to Kvale (1996), semi-structured interview is defined as,

Neither an open conversation nor a highly structured questionnaire. It is conducted according to an interview guide that focuses on certain themes and that may include suggested questions (Kvale 1996, p. 27).

Considering the above definition of semi-structured interview by Kvale (1996), I was flexibly following "certain themes" during the interviews, while there was intentionally enough margin to add or include any "suggested questions". I did provide an interview guide with a number of questions (Appendix number 1) to address the study issues, however I provided myself with the flexibility to include and pose any popping up questions and ideas (p. 27).

According to Kvale (2006), qualitative research interviewing has developed into an important data collection method. And I intended to make use of this method, since through that I could investigate the interviewees' "public" and "private" lives. The investigation of their "public" life could be manifested for example while the museum informed staff were interviewed about Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki as a part of their everyday and public profession. And, the investigation of their "private" lives could be demonstrated while both the museum staff and the museum visitors were talking about Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki project as

a favorite or interesting figure in their personal living. Furthermore, such features of this method regarding the investigation of the interviewees' public and private lives have been often described as a "democratic emancipating form of social research" (Kvale, 2006, p. 480). My purpose for doing semi-structured interview was further to attain descriptions about the world of the interviewees with respect to rendering the meaning of the "described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p. 6).

I used different interview guides for the museum staff (Appendix number 1), and for the adult museum visitors (Appendix number 2). However, if there were any questions or ideas crossing my mind during conduction of the interviews I would have included them in my interview questions. Moreover, all the interviewees approved audio recordings during the interviews, and I recorded the conversations on my mobile phone. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to do all the interviews in a quiet and peaceful place at the museum, with almost no interrupting noise.

Sampling

The five informed staff at the Kon-Tiki museum were part of my informants. Moreover, ten adult museum visitors were also the other group whom I did interview with. Among my fifteen interviewees I had both males and females, however I did not intend to reveal their genders when I wrote their quotes in the Findings chapter, and every interviewee is exposed only by a number hence their identity is kept undisclosed.

In order to select my interviewees from among the museum staff, firstly I needed to know whether they had knowledge about my interview questions. The museum curator was the first one who demonstrated her/his knowledge about the thesis topics, through the first meeting we had at the museum. And it was her/him who introduced me through snowball sampling (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) to the other museum workers who could elaborate on my interview questions. However, I emailed my interview questions to more people than the ones whom the curator suggested, as I had the intention to hand pick the interviewees through purposive sampling to be included in my sample on the basis of my own judgment on the interviewees' typicality (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p.114- 115). And what is intended by "interviewee's typicality" is possessing some features such as having knowledge about the interview questions and having the willingness to take part in the interview.

Thereafter, there were four more people who registered their interest to have the interview with me.

For conducting the interview with the museum visitors, I started going around at the museum hall near the Kon-Tiki raft, and through convenience sampling (also called accidental or opportunity sampling) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 113-114) approached the visitors, and introduced myself as a researcher. Consequently, I informed the visitors that I was at the museum hall to gather data about the visitors' experiences at the museum and about their acquired knowledge regarding Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki museum.

To summarize the above, the intention to apply purposeful sampling was in making use of a sample that was satisfactory to the specific needs of my study, such as having visited the Kon-Tiki museum, and having the interest to elaborate on their experiences from that museum visit. While this purposive sampling satisfied my research needs, it did not pretend to represent the wider population, i.e. "it is deliberately and unashamedly selective" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 115). Another rationale to use purposive sampling was to access the knowledgeable people who had in-depth knowledge about the issue at hand, due mainly to their power, position, and their access to networks, expertise and experiences (Ball, cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Furthermore, the intention to apply convenience sampling was that I had easy access to the sample. My convenience sample did not represent any group apart from itself, because I did not seek to "generalize" about a wider population (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 114).

English and Norwegian Languages

Although this study was conducted in Norway, and Norwegian is the official language of the country, I did all the interviews in English with both the Norwegian interviewees working at the museum, and the international visitors at the museum. And the interviewees were almost all to a professional degree ready to communicate their thoughts in English. Although English is not my mother tongue, conducting the interviews in English did not cause serious linguistic barriers to me. Since, if there was any unclear parts during the interviews that I was not sure about, I could have simply asked for repetition or clarification. And it was what I did several times during the interviews. I agreed with the interviewees in advance that the interviews will be in English, since I had more control over English than the Norwegian language. Moreover,

as I was writing the whole thesis in English, it was naturally more convenient to me to do the interviews in English as well.

The four museum guided tours which I observed, were however conducted in Norwegian language. Due to my acquaintance with the Norwegian language and with the topic at hand, I could figure the meaning out while the museum guides were presenting the information to the museum visitors. Regarding my familiarity with the Norwegian language, I had passed Norwegian language courses at OsloMet conducted for the international students, before I went to the museum. Moreover, through self-studying Norwegian I gained a considerable amount of information in Norwegian. Furthermore, when there was something that I was wondering about, I would ask for explanations or for its English equivalent, and everyone was more than willing to help in that regard.

3.4.2 Observation

Having participant observation at the Kon-Tiki museum, was a unique method for investigating the complex, rich, and diverse experiences, thoughts, feelings, and activities of my interviewees. Through this research method, I interacted with the people in their actual life while being at their daily work or while visiting the museum (Jorgensen, 2015). In addition, I observed the museum guided tours, the informative texts on the museum walls, the design of the information at the museum, and the Kon-Tiki museum website (<https://www.kon-tiki.no/>).

Employing this research method emerged with the professionalization of sociology and anthropology where it gradually was formalized and later spread to a full range of human study fields (Jorgensen, 2015). Moreover, this method has the potential to yield more valid data than is the case with mediated or inferential methods, hence guaranteeing more validity (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 196).

While the interview with the informed museum workers could cover the inquiry into “why” and “how” of Thor Heyerdahl’s Kon-Tiki expedition, it seemed beneficial and highly relevant to additionally observe the actual learning practices (as I name it learning) that happened at the museum through oral explanations by the museum guides (e.g. Bryman, 2012; Patton, 2002). My purpose of having observation was to better familiarize and immerse myself in the information delivered to the museum visitors. Every time, before attending the museum

guided tours, the museum guides would introduce me to the visitors as a researcher at the museum, hence I was an overt participant observer.

During observation of the museum guided tours I was specifically paying attention to the accounts that the museum guides were offering to their audiences, regarding Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki expedition. Having these goals on my mind, I observed four guided tours at the museum, done by two museum guides. After the second museum tour guide, I came to understand that the information delivered to the museum visitors were almost the same.

However, I continued to observe two more tour guides, since the second couple of tour guides were for the school students, while the first couple of guided tours were for adult visitors. I wanted to observe how different their approach was regarding delivering the information to the people of different age groups, although it was not a main emphasis in my study.

However, I would argue that the content of the information they delivered to the people of different age ranges was to a considerable degree similar, while they managed to present the adapted information in accordance with the age of their visitors.

Besides having participant observation at the Kon-Tiki museum, I had in a sense participant observation while I was on the bus named 30 Bygdøy, towards the Kon-Tiki museum. The distance from the place where I live in Oslo to the place where the Kon-Tiki museum is located, is almost one hour. To get to the museum, after arriving to the city center, I would take the bus 30 Bygdøy, a twenty-minute ride to the museum. A lot of times, this bus got packed with tourists destined for the Kon-Tiki museum, or other museums along that route. When I was on the bus towards the museum or on the way back, I would take the chance to have small casual talks with the tourists who have been at or were heading to the Kon-Tiki museum. I would introduce myself as a university student working on my Master's thesis about the Kon-Tiki expedition and Thor Heyerdahl. And they were almost always willing to share passionately their experiences and ideas regarding the Kon-Tiki and Thor Heyerdahl with me. Through these informal conversations on the bus, I got informed about how almost every tourist was praising Thor Heyerdahl for conducting several expeditions including Kon-Tiki.

3.5 Research Site

The Kon-Tiki museum in Oslo-Norway was the primary research site where I conducted my interviews and observations. I did some of the interviews at the museum library and some of them in the museum lunch room. Moreover, during the time when I was conducting the interviews there was fortunately no disturbing noise or people.

Epistemologically speaking and in a wider outlook, the Kon-Tiki museum itself, belongs to and is located in the Global North. However, the Kon-Tiki expedition took place in the areas geographically categorized in the Global South. And the Kon-Tiki theory was basically inspired by the legends and accounts of the native people on Fatu-Hiva.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

As it is common for most qualitative researchers, I was more concerned with the validity- the degree to which data and interpretation fit the case - of the study than its generalizability, replicability, or the reliability (Patton, 2002). However, since my study was a qualitative one, the subjectivity of the respondents, their attitudes, opinions, perspectives, and feelings all in all contributed to some degree of biasness (which I was aware of), and therefore the validity had to be seen as a matter of degree than as an absolute state (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 133).

In qualitative data, validity might be addressed through the honesty, richness, and scope of the archived data, and also through the extent of triangulation (Winter, 2000). In my study, I applied triangulation when I made use of different methods, i.e. interview and observation to investigate the topic at hand. According to Campbell and Fiske, triangulation can be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection, which is regarded as a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, specifically in qualitative studies (cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 141).

In this study I was concerned with internal validity as well, which can be defined as “an explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides, can actually be sustained by the data” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 135). One of the ways to address the internal validity is to make use of mechanical means to record, store, and retrieve data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). When applied to my study, I used my mobile phone to record the oral conversations and to video record the guided tours at the museum. I

used the recorded videos to double-check how the information regarding Thor Heyerdahl and The Kon-Tiki theory / expedition was presented to the museum visitors.

However, there was still a risk of validity threats from myself, as the researcher's bias (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). To eliminate such threats, after I recorded and transcribed all the interviews, I checked the transcribed texts for errors by re-listening to the recording (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The process of re-listening and verifying the transcriptions, resulted in generation of rich data and reduced some bias as I let the empirical data lead the way towards a grounded theory, which is explained in the next subsection.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis in my thesis uses a grounded theory approach (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007), since I was emphasizing on the emergence and development of themes out of the data. The data analysis process consisted of examining the verbatim transcribed interviews (Ball, cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007), and observation notes. The next steps to take were coding of the data, thematic grouping and data clustering (which I did through the use of colors). In a further step, I mapped the processed findings and the theory which was grounded in the data emerged from within. Besides generating theory from the field data, I made use of the existing literature and further established theoretical perspectives to better understand and highlight the findings.

The first activity after I transcribed the data was to re-listen to the audio files, and reread the transcribed texts in order to get more in depth familiarity with them, and to notice the patterns and features among and between what my interviewees were saying (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Then I proceeded with data coding, which can be defined as an interpretation of interview responses into specific categories for analytical purposes (Kerlinger, 1970).

Considering the data coding, I kept the codes as clearly separate as possible, and started coding early in the process. However, I was aware of the risk regarding the early coding of the data, since this might influence strongly any later codes. During the process of code making, I went back and forth through the data several times, and it resulted in modification and changes into the early codes. Thereafter, by coding up the data, I was able to detect the frequencies and patterns with which the codes were appearing (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Once I had the codes and categories at my disposal, I undertook the analysis, which concerned the actual ascription of codes and categories to the text. In advance, I designed my interview questions in a way which were in a sense pre-coded. Therefore, I could immediately relate and convert the responses to one or more codes (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

As mentioned earlier in this section, in my data analysis I used the grounded theory approach. The grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data which is systematically gathered and analyzed (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.273). There are a number of features attributed to this theory, which follows:

Theory is emergent rather than pre-defined and tested. Theory emerges from the data rather than vice versa. Theory generation is a consequence of, and partner to, systematic data collection and analysis. Patterns and theories are implicit in data, waiting to be discovered (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 491).

3.8 Positionality

I conducted this study in Oslo - Norway, wherein I was not an inside member of my research site. Therefore, I had my role as an outsider, and my inceptions of Oslo's contextual background were that of an outsider who arrived to Norway one year before starting this thesis. While conducting this study, I tried best to keep myself well-aware of my probable biases and tendencies as an outsider in this cultural, social and academic community. However, I believe that being an outsider in case of doing this research could enable me for a clearer zoomed-out viewpoint. And many of the visitors were also outsiders, so in some senses I could go along with them.

Being a member of a minority culture in here, I tried to explore the fluidity of space I have been given as a novice researcher. Furthermore, I as such a member could recognize and use my own voice for enquiry from within (Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016). Taking into consideration such critical concerns in the context of multiple axes of histories and cultures is referred to as positionality on the part of a researcher and concerns that performing a fieldwork is always contextual, relational, embodied, and politicized (Sultana, 2007). Positionality is the practice of portraying my own positions in relation to the study with the awareness that this position may influence certain aspects of the study such as the nature of the collected data or the way through which the data is interpreted and presented (Merriam, et al., 2001). There was however a number of hindering factors which could be subject to bias in my study. Such

factors included my lack of cultural background in Norway, and lack of advanced language fluency in Norwegian and social networks in Oslo.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has sketched out the research approach, research design and methodology adopted in the study and included procedures, participants, data collection tools, analysis framework, validity and data analysis. Given the nature of my study, I applied qualitative methods, namely, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The next chapter subsequently presents the study's theoretical framework.

4 Theoretical Framework

4.1 Preliminaries

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework, which shapes the further discussion and analysis of my empirical data. These are five complementary perspectives, which do make sense together. The first subsection addresses theories of reader-response criticism. This framework, which can be used for both literary and non-literary texts, is drawn upon in order to firstly get a comprehension of this theory in the context of the Kon-Tiki museum, and then to better understand the interactions between the museum texts (oral and written) and the museum audiences. The second subsection deals with adaptation theory, and through that I can shed light on the adapted Kon-Tiki story at the museum. Thirdly, heroism theories are put forward in order to get a grasp of the heroic treatment given to Thor Heyerdahl at the museum. Consequently, I will touch upon monumental history, to make sense of how a single heroic history of Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki expedition is selected and offered at the museum. Lastly, I found the museum constructivist learning theories a fitting framework to analyze through the learning experiences at the Kon-Tiki in a modern sense. Accordingly, in the following subsections I will present the aforementioned theoretical frameworks.

4.2 Reader-response Theory

The interactions between the Kon-Tiki museum heroic discourse and the museum visitors, calls for theories dealing with the interactions between texts (written and oral) and audiences. One of such theories can be reader-response theory which is also referred to as reader-response criticism.

The goal of reader-response theory is to have focus on readers than on the text or the author (Mailloux, 1990). The reader-response criticism offers a framework for comprehension of text processing, revealing the way in which the “readers’ faculties are both acted upon and activated” (Iser, 1993, p. viii). This term has been used to associate with the works of critics who use words such as reader, response, and reading process to mark out a room for investigations in the mentioned areas (Tompkins, 1980, p. ix).

There are diverse approaches dealing with the framework of reading-response criticism, which are all unified in the sense that the texts meanings come to life through the readers’ reading process (Cahill, 1996). Stanley Fish (1970) for example, through his affective

stylistics argues that a text is only born when it is read by the audience. Being so, a text cannot have meanings independent from the readers. Louise Rosenblatt (1994), presented a transactional reader-response theory, which involved transactions between the inferred meaning from a text and the individualistic interpretations produced by the readers, which are influenced by the reader's personal knowledge and feelings. This transactional model is grounded in a multidisciplinary perspective, comprising of social and literary history, aesthetics, linguistics, sociology, etc. dealing with both literary and non-literary texts.

This theory concerns the question of what takes place between readers and texts. According to the reader-response criticism, a text can only come to life when it is in an interaction between the texts producer/text presenter, and the text audience. Therefore, the understanding of a text depends highly on the readers' understanding. The process of reading in this theory has been described as the "readers' transformation of signals sent out by the text" (Iser, 1993, p. 4-5). And a text must represent something, hence the meaning of what is offered exists independently of every single reaction. To present this notion in "extreme terms", the meaning of a text would be then the illustration of this meaning "existing outside itself". Therefore, a given text can be comprehended as expression of its creator's feelings and thoughts or sometimes "a mirror reflection of social conditions", meaning reflecting notions different from that of the text creator (Iser, 1993, p.4-5).

"Involving" the "spectators" or the readers as the ones who play a role in creation and transformation of meaning is of high importance. Along the same lines, texts are described as having "dynamic characters". For example, they can simulate feelings and moments or provoke senses of anger or nervousness (Iser, 1993, p. 4-5).

According to Iser (1993), there can be numerous understandings derived from a text. However, if a text could be squeezed to "one particular meaning, it would be then the expression of something else - namely, of that meaning whose status is determined by the fact that it exists independently of the text" (p. 5). When applied/compared to the Kon-Tiki-related discourse presented at the museum, the museum visitors had this feeling that they could feel connected to Thor Heyerdahl, since they managed to recreate the "preconditions" for that experience:

The preconditions for this experience are certainly provided by the text, but we as readers also play a part in the creation of this impression. It is we who bring the text to life. Obviously it must offer a certain amount of latitude, as far as its realization is concerned, for different readers at different times have always had differing apprehensions of such texts, even though the general impression may be the same—that the world revealed, however far back in the past it may lie, comes alive in the present (Iser, 1993, p. 5).

And now I am moving to my second theoretical framework that is adaptation theory, which is clearly related to reader-response criticism. This theory stands for the perspectives of the museum staff or those who produce the work at the Kon-Tiki museum.

4.3 Adaptation Theory

The rationale to draw on the adaptation theory emerged from the facts which were presented at the Kon-Tiki museum in an adapted manner. Through the interviews with the museum staff, it was revealed that they had at their disposal the body of information concerning the Kon-Tiki expedition and the Kon-Tiki leader, and they intended to select and adapt pieces of information which could suit well for their visitors' needs. On the other hand, *engagement* of the visitors was one of the main themes produced during the interviews, and this notion is repeatedly used in the theory of adaptation in a way which I could highly relate to when looking back and comparing it with the Kon-Tiki museum context.

According to Hutcheon (2012), adaptation can be understood and practiced in all disciplines, such as theater, dance, music, cinema, films, novels, science parks and so forth. Historically viewed, the Victorians had a habit of adapting almost everything, “and in just about every possible direction”. And we in this postmodern era have inherited the same habit from the Victorians, while we have even more access to the materials we can adapt, such as “theme parks, historical enactments, and virtual reality experiments” (p. XI).

Engagement of the audience is one of the main features in this theory, having three forms of telling, showing and interacting with the stories. However, this engagement with stories does not take place in a vacuum, but indexes of space, time, culture and society are present to play roles. The context for creation and reception of stories are economic, public and material, and at the same time they are cultural, aesthetic and personal. These indexes can explain why and how in our modern, globalized world changes in a story's context can result in changes in the way the same story is interpreted (Hutcheon, 2012).

The concept of adaptation might seem straightforward at first sight, however, it can be very difficult to define, mainly because the same word -adaptation- is used for both the process and the result. Adaptation as a product can have a formal definition, however as a process, other aspects are to be considered. In the process of adaptation, transposition to another medium, or moving within the same mainstream can be termed as “change” or “reformatting”.

Adaptation, either as a process or production, can be defined as an extended form of representing a piece of work into a different set of conventions (Hutcheon, 2012, p. 16 & 33).

Having a dual definition for adaptation, as a product and as a process, can be an approach to address various facets of adaptation. Emphasizing adaptation as a process, for example, provides us with the opportunity to scrutinize the major modes of “engagement”. Meaning, by considering adaptation as a process we can consider how this process allows people to narrate, demonstrate, exhibit or interact with stories in its adapted form (Hutcheon, 2012, p. 22).

The audience can be shown or told a story, but the perspectives change at the mode of “engagement”. For example, when a story is narrated for us (such as narration of the Kon-Tiki story at the museum through different modes of text, video, oral guides), the engagement begins in the realm of imagination, which is simultaneously affected by the “selected, directing words of the text” (Hutcheon, 2012, p. 23).

Stories are not merely made up of their transmission mode, or the genre which gives structure to them. But, such means and modes have a decisive voice and a guiding approach to express the meanings to specific audiences in specific contexts. Hence, the type of story presentation is decided and created by people with that specific intention in mind. Accordingly, there exists a wide communicative setting to be considered in any form of using adaptation theory. This communicative setting is open to changes when it comes to selection of the mode of presentation or engagement of the audience. Considering the differences between the different modes of engagement through telling and showing suggests that each of these modes has its specific features. In other words, each mode of expression can achieve certain goals better than other modes (Hutcheon, 2012).

The first task of those who are in charge of adaptation is to be interpreters and then to be creators. The adaptors have the liberty to choose the type of medium they want to recreate. In this case, the Kon-Tiki museum “adaptors” have access to the real historic Kon-Tiki

expedition, the Kon-Tiki raft, the movie produced based on this story, and the books written accordingly. However, they take the freedom to “reinterpret” and then “recreate” the story in a “different medium”, in accordance with whom their audience is, hence which needs the audience have (Hutcheon, 2012, p. 19). An example to mention can be the recreated story of Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki in a child-adapted language with the crab character (the written text on the museum walls accompanied by crab characters. See pictures number 4-7), intended for young children visitors.

There can be a variety of reasons for why the adapters choose a particular story to be transcoded into a particular genre or medium. One of the reasons can be to supplant “economically” and “artistically” the previous works. Whatever the motive behind adaptation, adapters’ viewpoint would be that adaptation is “an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (Hutcheon, 2012, p. 20).

4.3.1 The Appeal of Adaptation

Undoubtedly, adaptation has a huge number of audiences. People find a story which they are interested in, and consequently through adaptation make variations to it. However, each adaptation has to stand for its own, since it is not a mere copy, but it has to have elements of novelty and surprise. When applied to the Kon-Tiki museum context, the initiators at the museum in the adapted forms of the Kon-Tiki story make use of “memory”, “change” and “variation”. The appeal of adaptation can be the art of “repeating without making exact copies”. Being so, adaptation means stemming from the same work, while being another version of the work. The appeal of adaptation cannot be easily explained, however there can be a variety of reasons, such as cultural, contextual, or economic reasons, etc. for adapters to utilize this concept. On the other hand, the appeal of adaptation for the audience is the result of the adapted work, not the reason behind making adaptation. There are always certain elements of change in adaptations. However, the changes are made in order to make the source work more popular, and more alive (Hutcheon, 2012, p. 173 & 175).

4.4 Heroism

The heroic treatment offered to Thor Heyerdahl as “the lonely hero” (written on one of the informative texts in the museum), and as the “great Norwegian explorer” who conducted the “greatest sea adventure of our time” (written on the museum walls and on the museum website) made me search for the theories of heroism in order to make sense of the consequences of portraying him as a hero. Therefore, I will draw upon the notions and theories pertinent to heroism which will be the most relevant ones to my further discussion.

Heroism can be defined as an expression of self-actualization and a pinnacle social state (Franco, Allison, Kinsella, Kohen, Langdon & Zimbardo, 2018). Moreover, it “represents the ideal of citizens transforming civic virtue into the highest form of civic action, accepting either physical peril or social sacrifice” (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011, p. 99). Although, the phenomenon of heroism has been ignored for a long time by modern scholars (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011), it is finally gaining attention of scientists from multiple disciplines (Allison, Goethals, & Kramer, 2017).

The heroic act itself has often a solitary nature, however it is never a personal attribution, but a social one. Meaning, heroism is a culture-bound, history-bound and situation-bound phenomenon. Therefore, the heroes in a given era may prove to be villains in another, for example (Franco, Blau, & Zimbardo, 2011).

The ambiguity in defining the word hero, started to fade away when a number of scholars took initiatives to define it. Becker and Eagly (2004) defined heroes as people who select to undergo physical risks on behalf of one or more people, although they are aware of suffering from serious consequences, including death. Others have argued that physical-risk heroism is not broad enough to encompass the many forms of heroism (Martens, 2005). Physical-risk heroism has been further categorized as martial heroism and civil heroism (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011). Furthermore, social heroism was introduced as another type of heroism involving heroic action for idealistic purposes, and consequently the heroes may experience lowered social status, lost credibility, financial instability, risks to family members, and, on occasion, death (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011; Franco & Zimbardo, 2006).

Heroism stories are as old as the earliest written work in Western civilization. For example, the most adored Greek hero called Achilles, portrays the ways in which the exemplary battlefield legend presents a challenge to his commanders while also highlighting the pathos

of a young man who realized his own mortality and managed to personally identify with his enemies. And this story yielded the earliest scholarship on heroes and heroism (Bloom, 1991). The ancient heroism has also been a theme for the modern European philosophers such as David Hume (cited in Franco, et. al., 2018).

The theory of heroism became gradually distinguished from theories of risk-taking, altruism, and pro-social behavior (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011). However, while taking heroism as a distinguished phenomenon, Franco et al. (2016), in a comprehensive overview of the psychological framework related to heroism concluded that heroism overlaps with topics and ideas in other fields. According to Franco and Zimbardo (2016), heroism can be examined from pro-social perspectives, including leadership (Allison & Goethals, 2014), high-velocity improvisational deeds (Mendonça, Beroggi & Wallace; Rand & Epstein, cited in Franco and Zimbardo, 2016), altruism (Monin, Sawyer & Marquez; Oliner & Oliner; Staub, cited in Franco and Zimbardo, 2016), time perspective (Zimbardo & Boyd, cited in Franco and Zimbardo, 2016), and deviance-based perspectives (Smith, Lilienfeld, Coffey & Dabbs, cited in Franco and Zimbardo, 2016).

Zimbardo (2007), reminds us that heroism represents what is right with human nature. And, human beings appear to have an intrinsic desire to search for heroes. The reason for looking for heroes and further looking up on heroes is most probably because heroes serve fundamental human needs and desires (Allison & Goethals, 2014; Kinsella, Ritchie & Igou, 2015). However, “the simple presence of risk accompanying pro-social behavior is not enough to define heroism”. Furthermore, while heroism is a positive and pro-social act by itself, “a simplistic view of this behavior misses important aspects of the phenomenon” (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011, p. 99).

Heroes and heroisms at the museums are used to attract audiences, draw their attentions, and explain them about the past. Along the same lines, providing a sense of connection between the museum visitors and what they are encountered to at the museum is a vital aspect of what the museum professionals do. Heroic narratives about a lonely individual hero (such as the lonely hero, Thor Heyerdahl) transcending difficulties and challenges can be found in many contexts, including museums. And such heroic languages used at the museums are perceived by the academics as objects of study, rather than being concepts to be embraced (Jordanova, 2014).

4.5 Monumental History

Regarding the aforementioned single heroic story of the Kon-Tiki theory and expedition at the museum, I have come up with a sense of relevance between the theory of monumental history proposed by Korostelina (2016), and the one-dimensional presented account about the Kon-Tiki expedition. Although the theories presented by Korostelina (2016) in terms of critical history versus monumental history are basically grounded in the political regimes, I found them relevant to my line of reasoning regarding the single presented history at the Kon-Tiki museum about the Kon-Tiki expedition without accounting for any political issues.

Korostelina (2016, p. 290) believes in a dilemma between monumental history and critical history. The intention of providing a monumental history is to selectively promote particular events and specific interpretations, rather than to draw a picture of what really happened. Therefore, monumental narratives from the past and from what happened are based on “explicit judgments”. Hence such biased judgments and further decisions on how to reflect the history are in the hands of those in power. Monumental history is in line with heroic deeds of the people under spotlight, in this case Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki expedition. Through the theory of monumental history, the events in the past are transformed into inspiring deeds and myths. Hence, myth making as one of the mechanisms of monumental history provides a “management of meaning”.

A monumental concept about the past history can develop loyalty and interest among the young generations. Accordingly, the past history and events are presented as epic and highly valuable in order to inspire the addressee to acts of heroism. One of the mechanisms of presenting a monumental history is called “positive ingroup predisposition” which portrays, “the ingroup as having more abilities and competencies than the out-group. These can incorporate entrepreneurial ability and innovative skills, [...] humanitarian values, and tolerance” (Korostelina, 2016, p. 292).

4.6 Learning Theories at the Museums

In order to address the learning theories at the museums, I will mainly draw upon constructivism theories, which are education theories appropriate for learning at the museums

(Hein, 1999). I will offer the reasons why I chose this theoretical framework to further analyze the study's data, and to compare how learning is happening at the Kon-Tiki museum.

Since the museum world took initiatives to accept the museum visitors not as homogenous and passive mass of people, but as individuals with their own learning styles, their own preferences and their particular needs (Silverman, 1995), the concept of the old passive "general public" has changed into "new audiences" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004, p. 67). Given the change in the outlook on the museum audiences, I would argue that the way through which the museums are delivering their knowledge to the visitors in a post-modernism era logically can be in line with the changes that happened to the way the museum authorities consider their audiences in this postmodern age as "active postmodernist" learners. Hence, the reason that I selected constructivist museum theory is to assess through this theory the way knowledge is delivered and learning is taking place at the Kon-Tiki museum in our period of postmodernism.

There are different theories concerning the learning and education at the museums, however I found the constructivism theory the one which is in line with taking museum audiences as active members who are engaged in their own constructive learning process at the museum. Moreover, this theory is in line with reader-response criticism and also analogous to adaptation theory. In the next subsection, I will elaborate on this theory and its main components as a lens through which I will further analyze the data regarding the learning facet at the Kon-Tiki museum.

4.6.1 Constructivist Learning Theory and Constructivist Museums

The constructivist learning theory has major implications for how the museums address the learning process (Hein, 2004). This theory has become influential in the Global North countries, such as in America and in Britain (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004), therefore I believed that I can utilize this theory as well for the context of the Kon-Tiki museum in Norway, since the Kon-Tiki museum is placed in the Global North.

What is implied through this theory is the position of us as human beings who have no access to an objective reality, since we are constructing our own version of what is referred to as reality. There was a debate formed between scholars who put more emphasis on the individual

cognitive structuring and those who placed more emphasis on the social and cultural effects on learning. These topics were under debate mainly due to widespread interest in constructivism theory (Fosnot, 1998; Fosnot & Perry, 1996; Steffe & Gale, 1995).

The proponents of constructivism theory view learning as the organization and selection of pertinent data from cultural experiences (Hein, 2002). I will discuss this particular theory in the context of other approaches. By placing constructivism theory accompanied by other approaches on a matrix, I will explain how different ways of understanding learning and knowledge underpin different kinds of museums and different kinds of learning at the museums (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004, p. 73).

Constructivism theory as any other education theory has two main components, namely a learning theory and a knowledge theory. For considering the learning process at the Kon-Tiki museum through constructivism, I started posing epistemological questions regarding the theory of knowledge, and further regarding the way this theory of knowledge is applied to the content of the museum exhibitions. Taking epistemology into account is important, since my belief as a researcher in the theory of knowledge can profoundly influence the way I approach education, in this case the education at the museum. It does make a difference if I believe that the knowledge at the museum is independent from the learners or whether the knowledge is consisted of the ideas in the minds of the visitors. However, both positions could be possible (Hein, 2004).

This epistemological dichotomy can be shown in the following continuum:

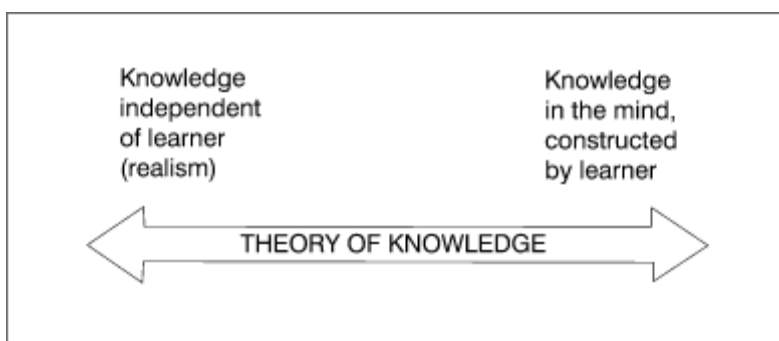


Figure 1. Theory of knowledge, According to Hein (2004, p. 74)

Alongside the theory of knowledge, there exists a theory of learning in constructivism, in order to address the question of how I believe that people learn at the museums. Similar to the

theory of knowledge, there are two extreme possible positions regarding the learning theory. One supposes the incremental nature of learning, and that the state of “knowing” something is the result of aggregation of small pieces of a knowledge domain. The opposing view regarding the learning theory holds that “the mind constructs schemata and that learning consists of selecting and organizing from the wealth of sensation that surround [sic] us” (Hein, 2004, p. 74).

The theory of learning, as the second dimension of constructivism can be represented in the following diagram:

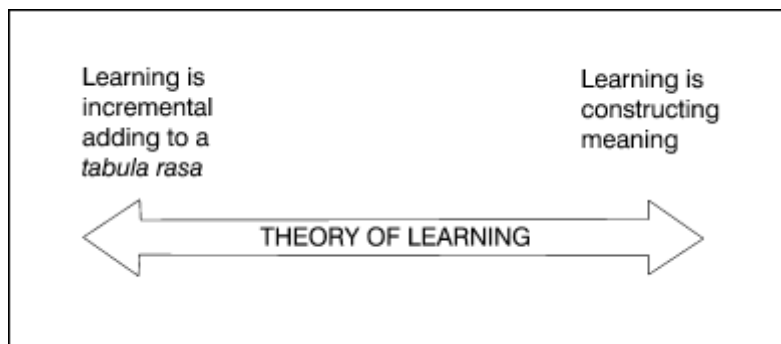


Figure 2. Theory of learning, According to Hein, (2004, p. 74)

The two dimensions of learning theory and knowledge theory can be combined together to present a four possible combination of epistemology and learning theory. Each of the quadrants in the following figure represents a different approach to education. And as illustrated in Figure number 4, the educational positions from Figure 3 can be applied to different museums, as well.

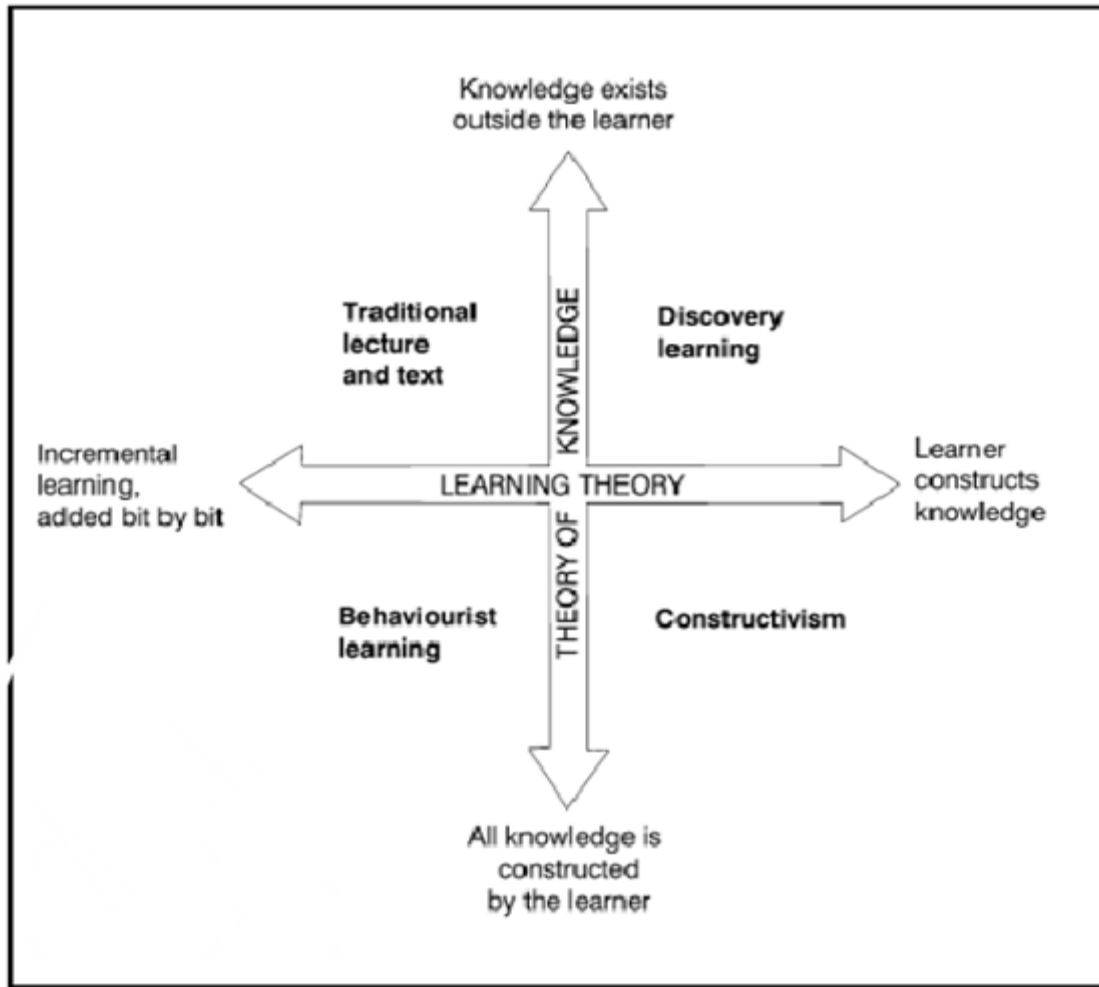


Figure 3. Four possible combinations of learning theory and epistemology, Hein (2004, p. 75)

According to the figure above, there are different educational positions possible, and these positions can be applied to the learning at the museums. I will provide information regarding the positions which are relative to my further analysis of the learning at the Kon-Tiki museum.

In the upper left quadrant in figure number 3, there is a familiar position labeled as traditional lecture and text. Within this traditional position, the teacher has two main responsibilities. The first responsibility is that she/he has to firstly understand the subject matter structure, and secondly present appropriately the domain of knowledge in a way to be learned by the learners. This approach to education can be applied in museum learning, and is aligned with systematic museum (Figure no. 4). In the upper left quadrant in Figure number 3 the systematic museum is placed, which is based on the belief that, the museum content should exhibit the true structure of

the subject matter, and that the content should be presented in the easiest-way- to- understand for the museum visitors. Deutsches Museum in Munich is an example of a systematic museum which intended to illustrate the structure of the sciences. Another example is the National Portrait Gallery in London, which, for example, hangs its paintings based on a chronological order, following this assumption that such ordering will be the most sensible (or the easiest-way- to- understand) for its visitors (Hein, 2004).

Discovery learning is a second educational position placed on the top right quadrant in Figure number 3. This learning position subscribes to the same positivist belief regarding knowledge as the position called, traditional lecture and text. Proponents of this educational position believe that the students need to experience themselves in order to learn. Although there is the risk of formation of misconceptions for the students, through experience such misconceptions will change into correct conceptions. The discovery learning position is in line with the discovery museum (placed in the top right of the quadrant in figure 4).

Constructivism is another educational position illustrated in figure 3, and this is where I position myself in terms of educational theories at the museum. Through constructivism, both knowledge and the way knowledge is acquired are dependent on the mind of the learner. This view is based on an idealist epistemology and developmental psychology, which gained support by research in cognitive psychology. Constructivism came to be known as a shock to those who wished to preserve the idea of knowledge independent from communities of learners or the individual learners. This view of learning is in line with the constructivist museum, which argue that museum learners construct personal knowledge from the museum exhibits (Hein, 2004).

Contrary to the systematic museum, proponents of the constructivist museum would argue that personal knowledge is constructed from the exhibit in the mind of the museum visitor. And, that the process of gaining knowledge is a constructivist act by itself. The museums which allow the visitors to draw their own conclusions about the meaning of the exhibition are based on constructivist principles (Hein, 2004). Moreover, the number of such exhibits are increasing, designed to offer their visitors the possibility to encounter multiple modalities to acquire information (Davidson, Heald & Hein, 1991).

There is, however, another learning position in Figure number 3, identified as behaviorism, which is in line with a type of museum called the orderly museum. According to this position knowledge is gained gradational, and behaviorism learning suits this quadrant (Hein, 2004).

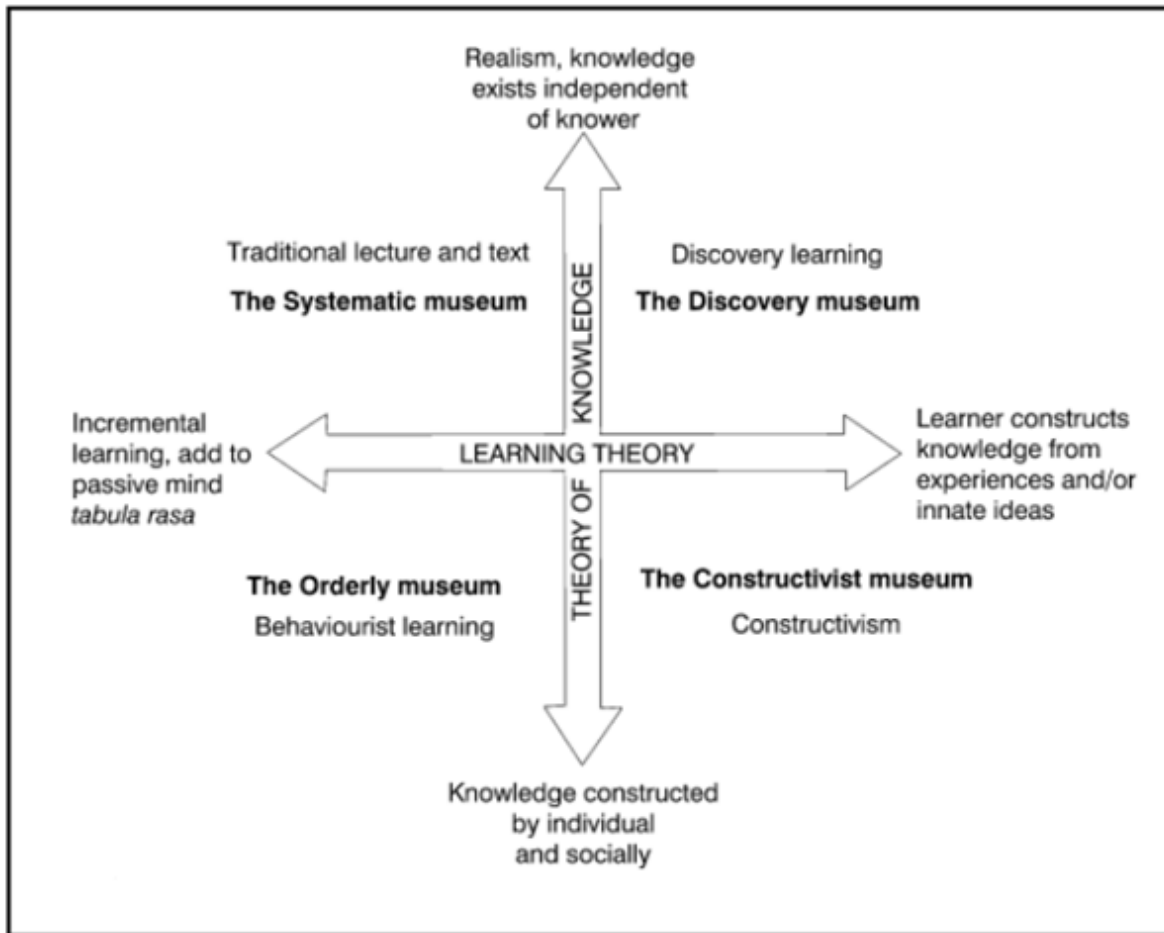


Figure 4. Four different kinds of museums. Hein (2004, p.77)

In this study, the main object at the museum which draws the visitors' attention is the very Kon-Tiki raft and hence the Kon-Tiki theory behind the expedition. The interpretation of the visitors from that object can be modified and directed to certain directions based on the responsibility of the museums towards the visitors. According to Hein (2004), although museum visitors will make sense of the objects through their own personal lenses, and according to their prior knowledge and skills, the museum actors have the responsibility for producing an exhibition with prior identification of the needs of its visitors.

5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the empirical data from my field work at the Kon-Tiki museum in Oslo, Norway. The findings are presented in three main categories, in line with the study's research questions, as follows. The first subsection is about "creating a learning environment at the Kon-Tiki museum". The second subsection has to do with "Thor Heyerdahl's viewpoints regarding indigenous knowledge and indigenous people". And consequently the last subsection concerns "visiting the museum to see the hero's bravery". The findings are derived from semi-structured oral interviews, overt observation at the museum and observation of the data on the Kon-Tiki museum website.

5.2 Creating a Meaningful Learning Environment at the Kon-Tiki Museum

Research question number one asked for how the Kon-Tiki museum creates a meaningful learning environment for its visitors. The data revealed that most of the museum staff were of the opinion that "personal engagement", and creating a sense of "relatedness" between the museum histories and the visitors is of crucial importance. On the other hand, the museum staff explained that in order to engage the museum visitors, they do not merely tell the story of the Kon-Tiki "based on the facts or based on what happened", but they "construct" stories by the help of professional writers (Museum staff number 2, October 2018).

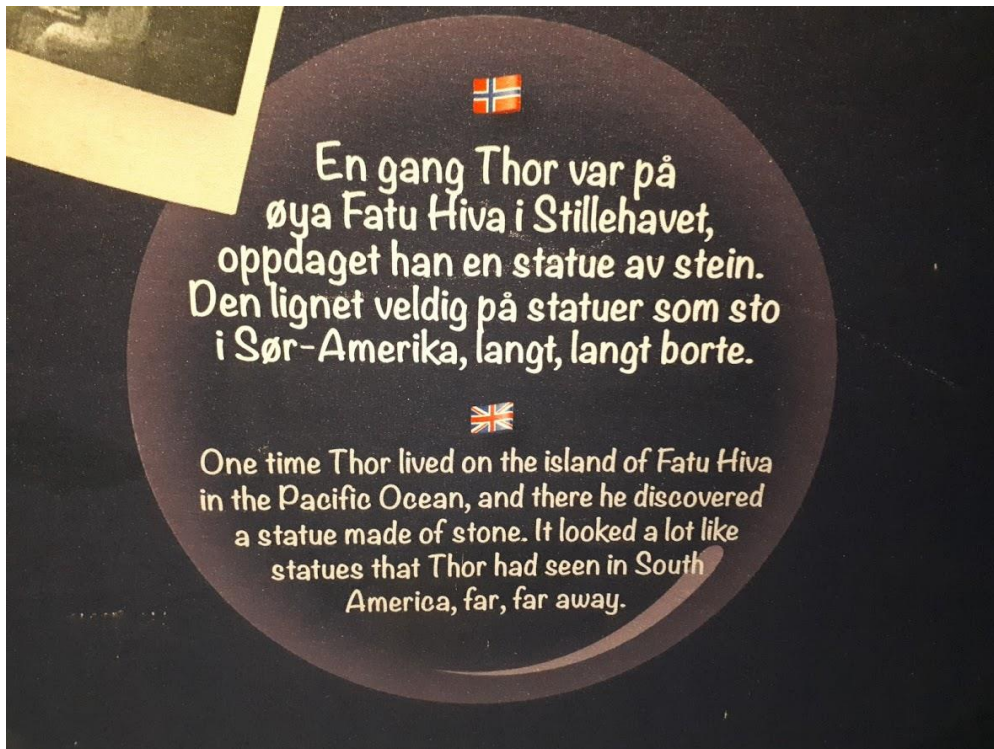
Well, I believe that the most important things to tell, are the stories that people can relate to. [...] and to make something engaging the people. I mean we worked a lot on that, [...] we have actually hired professional writers to write for the adults, and professional writers to write for the children, in order to tell the story not only based on the facts or what happened, but to construct stories. The next logical step would then be to make these people engaging the whole exhibition process (Museum staff number 2, October 2018).

Museum staff number five named "personal engagement" the greatest tool at her/his disposal while recounting the Kon-Tiki history at the museum. "What I actually do think is my greatest tool is *personal engagement*, being enthusiastic, and finding something that I find interesting, and telling things with this passion" (Museum interviewee number 5, December, 2018).

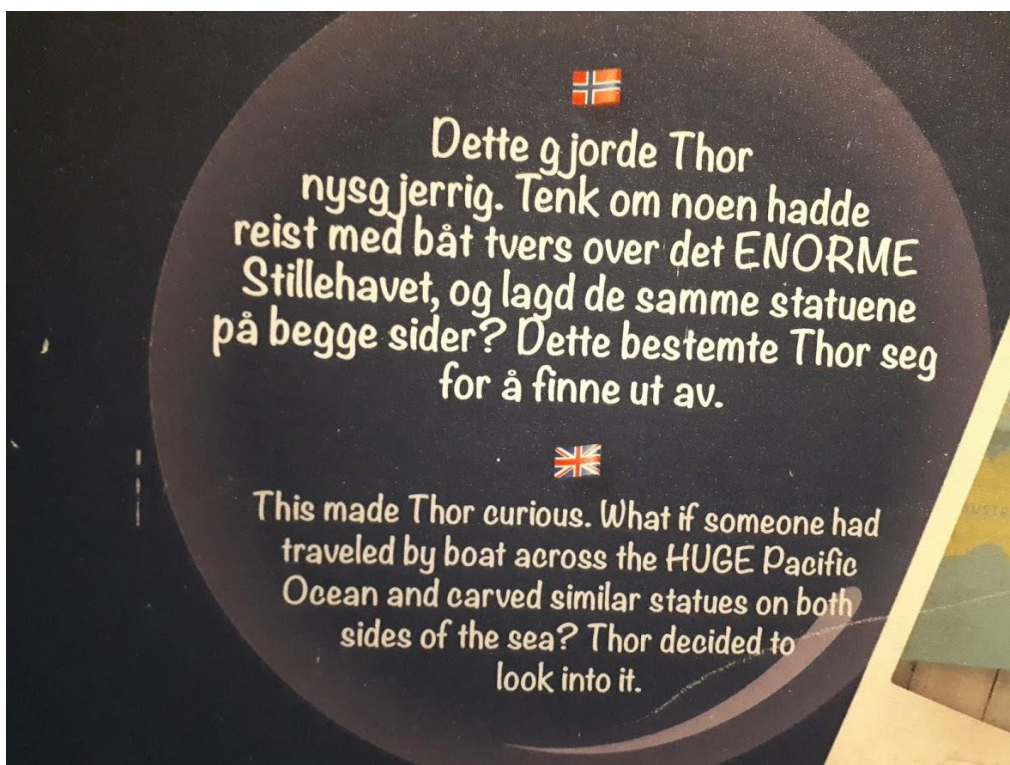
The Kon-Tiki museum had specific efforts to trigger or “engage” the children’s attention as well, by “designing and making special characters as cartoons on the museum walls”. They “spent a lot of money developing the cartoon figures and personality” for the children visitors (Museum interviewee number 2, October 2018). There are here a number of photos from the museum walls showing the information regarding Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki expedition specifically designed for children.



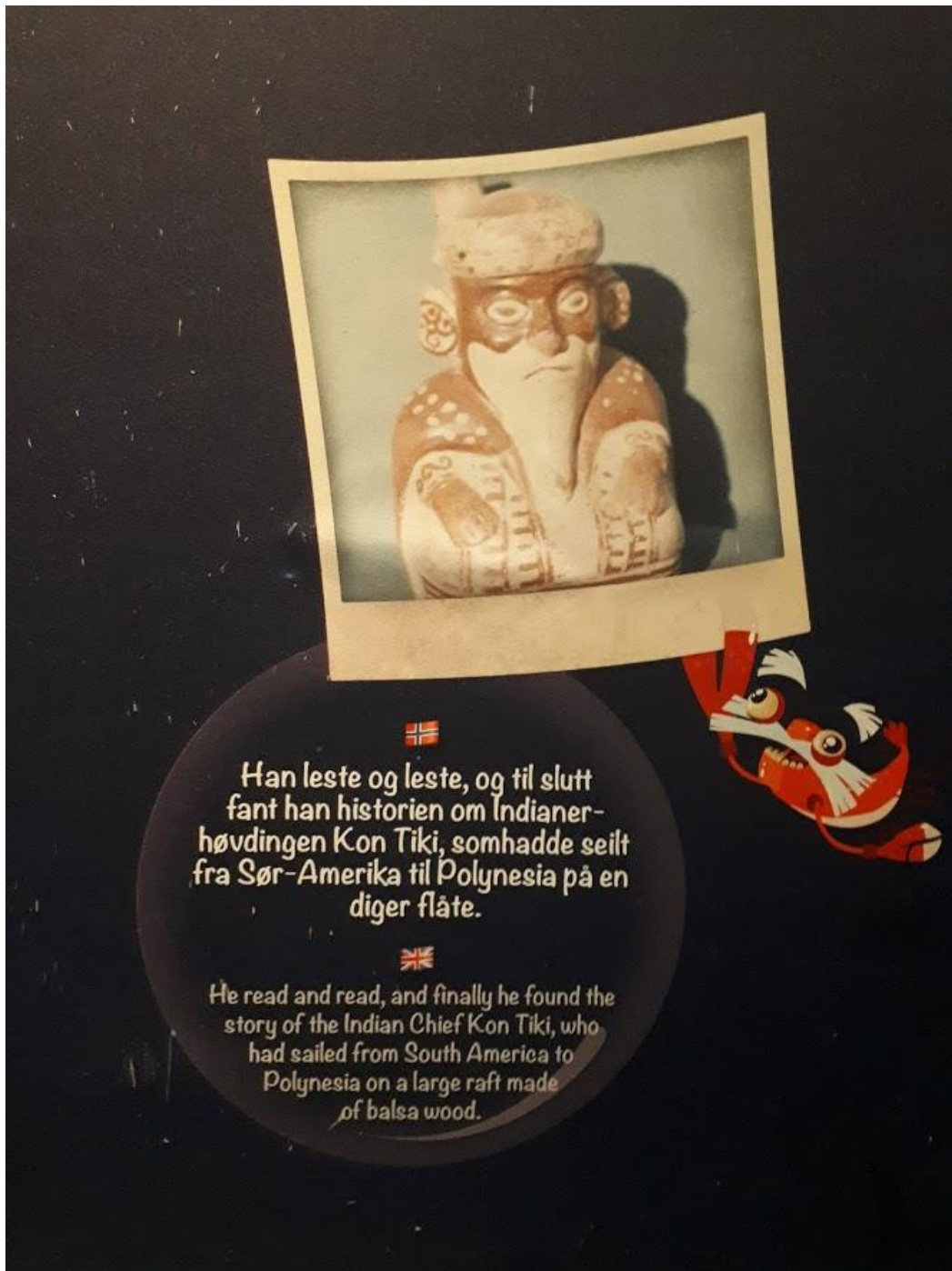
Picture number 4, Information about Thor Heyerdahl written and painted on the museum walls targeting the children age groups (Taken by: Zohreh Farzadfar)



Picture number 5, Information about Thor Heyerdahl written and painted on the museum walls targeting the children age groups (Taken by: Zohreh Farzadfar)



Picture number 6, Information about Thor Heyerdahl written and painted on the museum walls targeting the children age groups (Taken by: Zohreh Farzadfar)



Picture number 7, Information about Thor Heyerdahl written and painted on the museum walls targeting the children age groups (Taken by: Zohreh Farzadfar)

Regarding this first research question, another museum staff explained that in order to create a meaningful learning environment, they would mostly rely upon the visitors' feelings and ideas that they have not already shared by anyone in order to make them feel "related" to Thor Heyerdahl. This can be another example of "engaging" people's feelings in order to create a

learning environment. For example if they are presenting the information to the children visitors, they would present the information this way,

I (the museum staff referring to herself/himself) usually start like this: Do you have a secret dream of either doing something or becoming something? And then you can see the children are excited and some of them nod and so on, and then I try to relate it to Thor Heyerdahl, and how he had the courage to follow his dreams, you know, and how he had the courage to do things even though (when) everybody tried to discourage him from doing things, and in that regard, I can somehow relate it to them (Museum staff number 3, November 2018).

This quote has been said by one of the museum guides and it was in line with what they actually present during their oral presentation for the museum visitors while I was observing them. On the other hand, the museum staff believe that when they create a sense of relatedness between Thor Heyerdahl and the visitor's emotions, it gives a "new dimension" to the museum:

And I see that it often gives the Kon-Tiki experience (and) the museum, a new dimension, because it's not just you are here to learn about some historical facts, you are learning about things that somehow can affect your life, in your way of thinking about things, in your way of having the courage to try to live your dreams for instance and so on, and if you do that perspective, it becomes something that is personally interesting for you (Museum staff number 3, November 2018).

The museum staff number three, put emphasis on narrating the Kon-Tiki theory and history in a way which the visitors can "*connect* it to themselves". The theme of connectivism can be revealed from the interviewee number one as well, when she/he explained that during their work at the museum she/he enjoyed encouraging the visitors to have the courage to do unusual or new things in the way Thor Heyerdahl did,

I have enjoyed working at this museum to show visitors an example of believing in your own imagination, believe in your own capability, your own capacity. Do not shy away from criticism, whether it be professional. Have trust in yourself and pursue your own ideas, and never shy away from doing practical experiments, as Thor Heyerdahl did (Museum staff number 1, September, 2018).

The museum worker number 4, believes that "tactile and visual experiences" are part of the educational perspectives at the museums:

Of course the museums have educational perspectives, and in my opinion it is also important that museums are very clear to have tactile and visual experiences because since the last 20 years, the museums have been very eager to develop digital experiences and clearly many can sit in their room and then go to digital rooms and zoom in and out on pictures [...] but in my point of view it's important to have the smell, to touch, to see in real life, and I see now this is a turning point also, that people find that it's much more interesting to actually go and see, and to touch and to smell, and to feel to have the tactile experiences (at the museums). We have also tried to have a workshop for children to build. They built small models of the raft, you can see it's a construction that is very easy to do [...] I'm not against digital experiences, I mean, it's gone too far I think, it's important to not miss the learning of tactility, and the visual experiences I think (Museum interviewee number 4, December 2018).

One of the not-ordinary visitors at the Kon-Tiki museum was Bill Clinton who had a private visit at the museum many years ago. His visit at the museum is described as a fantastic one, because he was interested in and had prior knowledge about Thor Heyerdahl's works:

I showed [...] Bill Clinton around in the museum many years ago, he was here at a private visit, I spent a whole hour with him. And I well tried to explain elementary about Thor Heyerdahl and his work, he (Bill Clinton) interrupted me and well I knew that he has already read Heyerdahl's books, so then it became really fascinating to talk with him, we had a fantastic talk because he was really interested in what Thor Heyerdahl did (Museum staff number 1, September 2018).

The museum visitors whom I did interview with, generally described their experience at the museum as one which they could learn from. Moreover, they described that experience as something "different", "heroic", "interactive", "appealing", "interesting", "cool", "super-cozy", "nice", and "overwhelming". As an example, museum visitor number three commented that, "It can be a lot more inspiring to be surrounded by the story instead of just reading about it". Hence, she added that she is going to be an elementary school teacher and that she hopes they can have museum trips for the students as well.

Learning through visiting this museum was an interesting experience for visitor number eight as it was mentioned by her, "because it is more interesting to learn here than just reading a book. The whole museum is built around one thing, so you get more perspectives". Another museum visitor (number 2) emphasized on aspects of being entertaining and interesting experience for people of all ages who come to the museum, to have a "fun" and "inspiring" museum visit. Asking her about the possibility of learning about science at the museum, she replied as follows:

Yeah, I think so definitely, because, I mean it's fun going here as a senior, but it's also fun going here as a teenager, because there are many stuff to look at, and the way they made it is kind of like going in a movie and so it's very like entertaining, also for children, and I think in the long run it would be very inspiring, for children also to see, you know instead of yeah [...], so yeah I think it's a good idea and I think it's really entertaining for all ages (Museum visitor number 2, October 2018).

According to museum visitor number nine, looking at the things in the museum and watching the Kon-Tiki movie, can improve learning for the visual learners:

I mean if they have different like methods and cover more in a course [...] specially for visual learners to like actually see the raft, or watch the movie, or like have that kind of like experience, or knowledge, I think that help to learn a lot more, a lot better, than just reading, so I think it's like fantastic, I love museums (Museum interviewee number 9, October, 2018).

Moreover, learning by doing was another aspect of learning environment at the Kon-Tiki museum. Museum staff number 2 added that, they provided sample raft building, dancing and baking workshops and competition for young children visiting the museum.

5.2.1 Cinematic Learning at the Kon-Tiki Museum

Every day at the museum a documentary film of the Kon-Tiki expedition is shown which won the 1951 Oscar as the Best Documentary Feature. There is one long (one hour long) version of the movie shown at 12:00 O'clock, and a ten-minute summarized version of the movie is shown repeatedly every ten minutes. Some of the visitors commented that they were not very keen on watching the movies at the museum, for reasons like, "We saw some of the movie now, but I think we saw only half of it because it was quite long". Or they had the idea that, "I mean a movie about some men on the boat, it doesn't sound very interesting, but I mean it keeps you entertained". One of the museum visitors who has seen the movie at the museum many years ago mentioned that, "I've not seen the movie today, but have seen it previously, many years ago, when I was in the primary school and saw that for the first time. It was then very interesting and inspiring, I remember the feeling that I really enjoyed the movie".

The idea of watching the movie at the museum which served the function of cinematically exhibiting the Kon-Tiki expedition/theory attracted the attention of several of the museum visitors whom I did interview with. As they thought, "It's a very good way to learn about science from movies, it is more interactive maybe, and it could be more appealing to the

majority of the people, maybe”. Watching the Kon-Tiki movie either the short or the long version at the museum cinema, which presents a short description of the Kon-Tiki history and theory is another way of *engaging* the museum visitors,

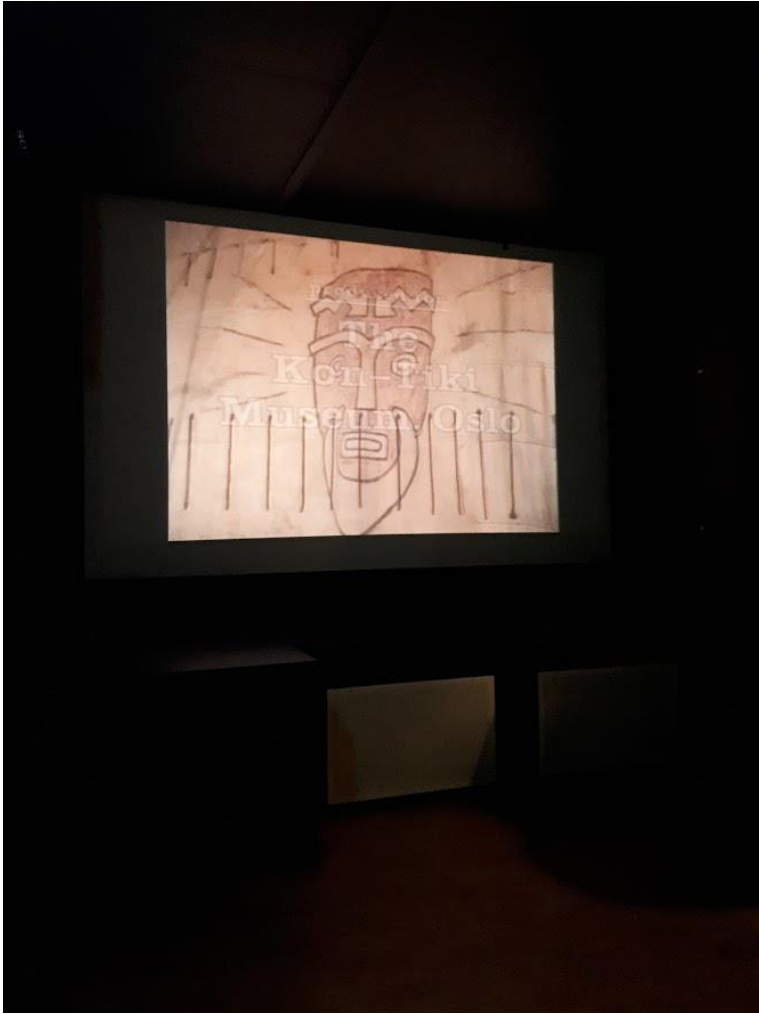
I can see that many people here [...] say that they really like our film, well we show the documentary film at 12:00 O'clock every day, which is great. But also, the short film. Most people coming here, know a lot about Kon-Tiki in advance, but some do not know anything. For example, the Oslo (tourist) busses (hop-on, hop-off) come here because it is a museum, so they ask what this is, you know. Then I recommend them to start with the short film, before they go around in the museum, and then they come back later and say wow, this was really interesting exhibition, but thank you for letting us see the film first, you know, because [...] it visualizes (and) summarizes [...] the story. (Museum staff number 3, November 2018).

Along the same lines, one of the museum visitors stated his/her ideas about the constructive role of the movie at the museum to shape the visitors' knowledge about the Kon-Tiki history and the Kon-Tiki expedition:

I definitely really liked it, because when we came here, first we saw the film, and it gave us a full background and kind of the idea of what they were trying to do and then as we went through we could actually see the different parts and kind of build on that image more. This movie and also the subject, it had footage from their actual journey, like the things in the museum was not something they had like recreated, it was like their actual footage of the men on the boat. So you could really picture what they had it all through and what exactly they're doing, and it just kind of went towards that they went toward all this, just to prove something (Museum visitor number 10, December, 2018).



Picture number 8. The Kon-Tiki museum cinema (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)



Picture number 9. The Kon-Tiki museum cinema (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)



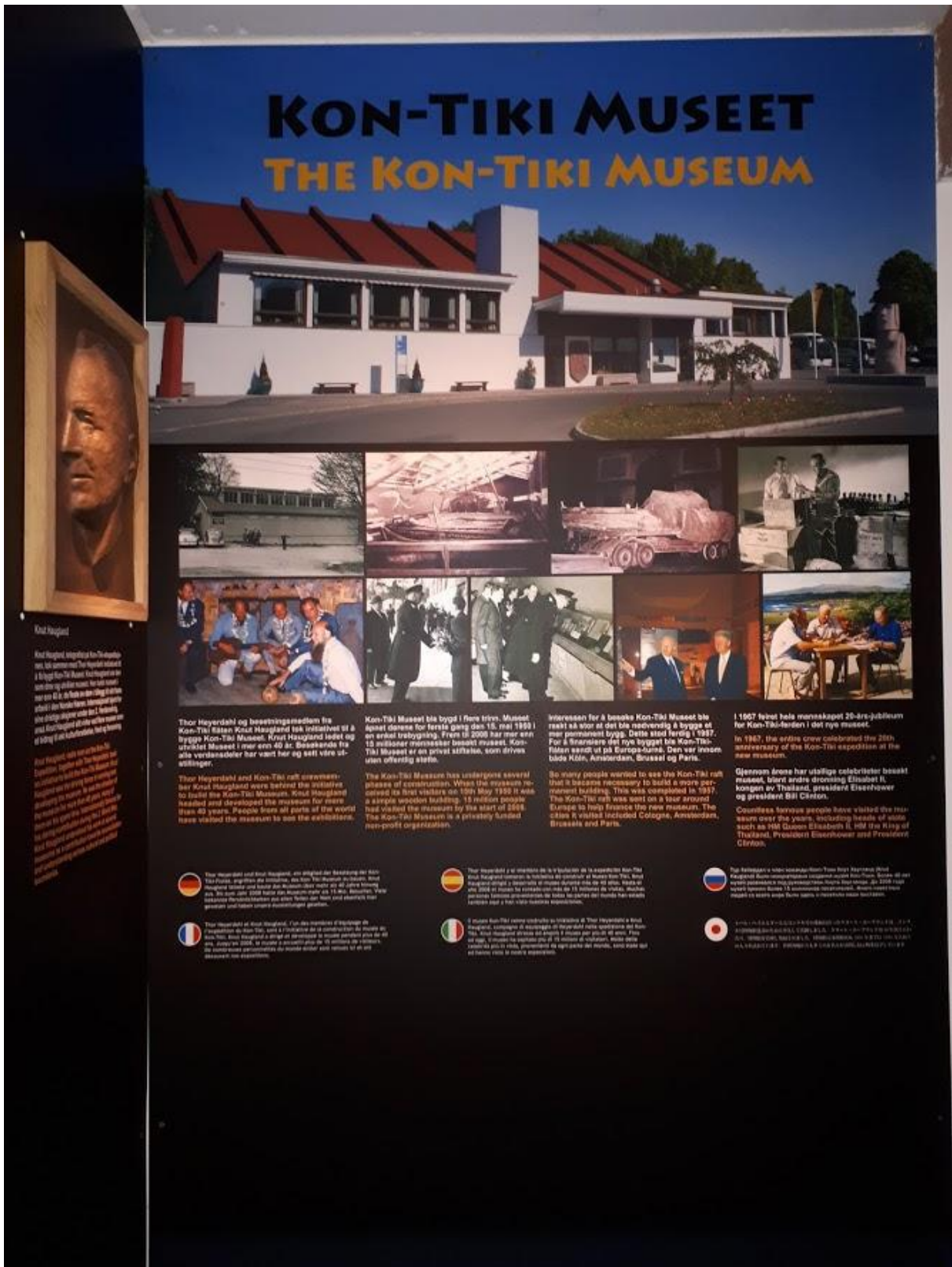
Picture number 10. The Kon-Tiki museum cinema (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)

5.2.2 Summarized Texts on the Museum Walls

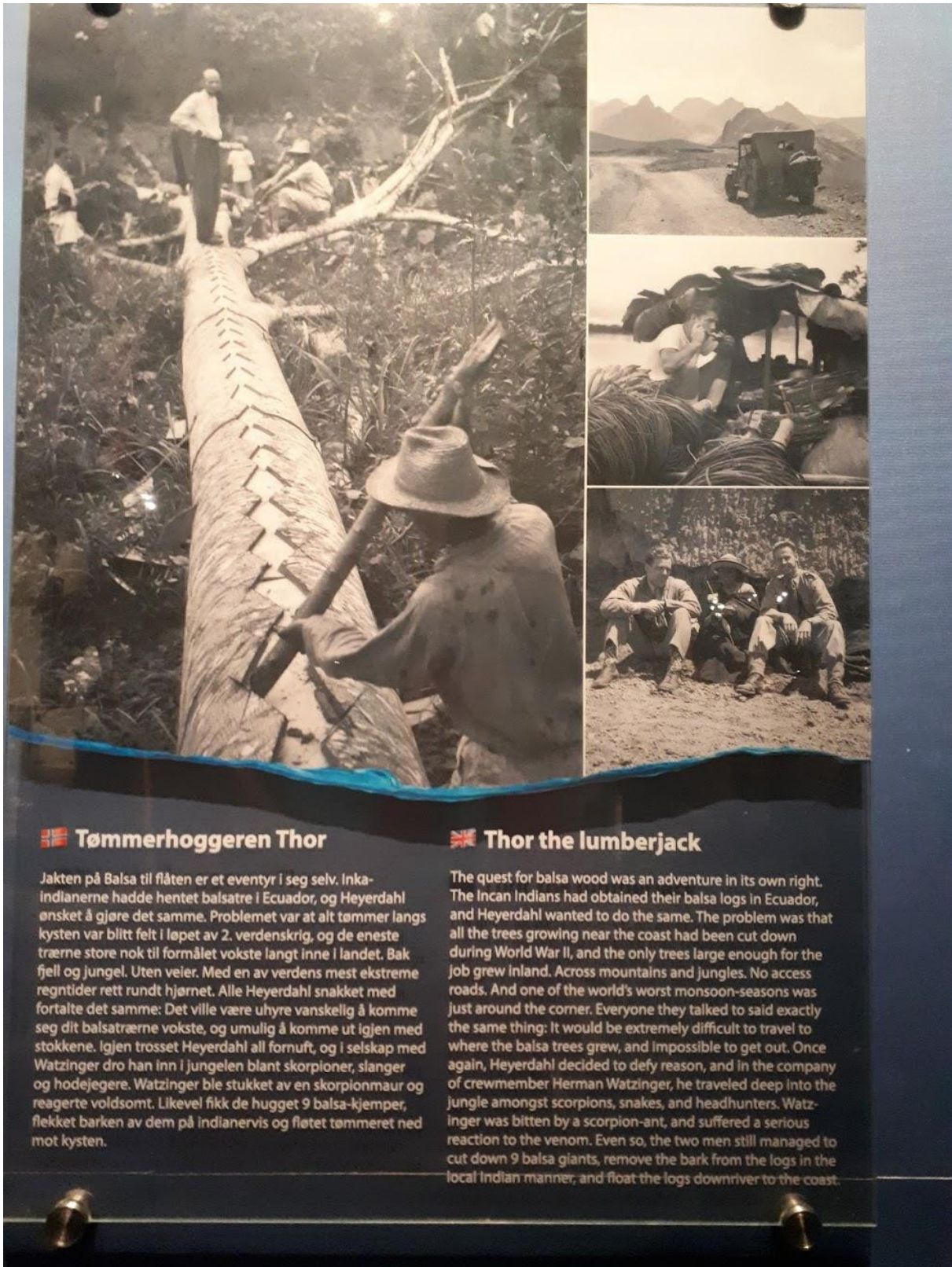
One of the other educational aspects at the museum can be the “summarized texts” written on the museum walls. They were easy to read and not very lengthy. As one museum visitor (number 9), commented about them, “The whole story was interesting to me. I think the museum did very well in summarizing some important facts, not just a lot of texts, but interesting texts. So, that was impressive. I meant the text written on the wall (Museum visitor number 9, December, 2018). I took a number of photos to illustrate how the summarized text looked like at the museum.



Picture number 11. Examples of easy-to-read summarized texts at the Kon-Tiki museum (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)




Picture number 12. Examples of easy-to-read summarized texts at the Kon-Tiki museum (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)



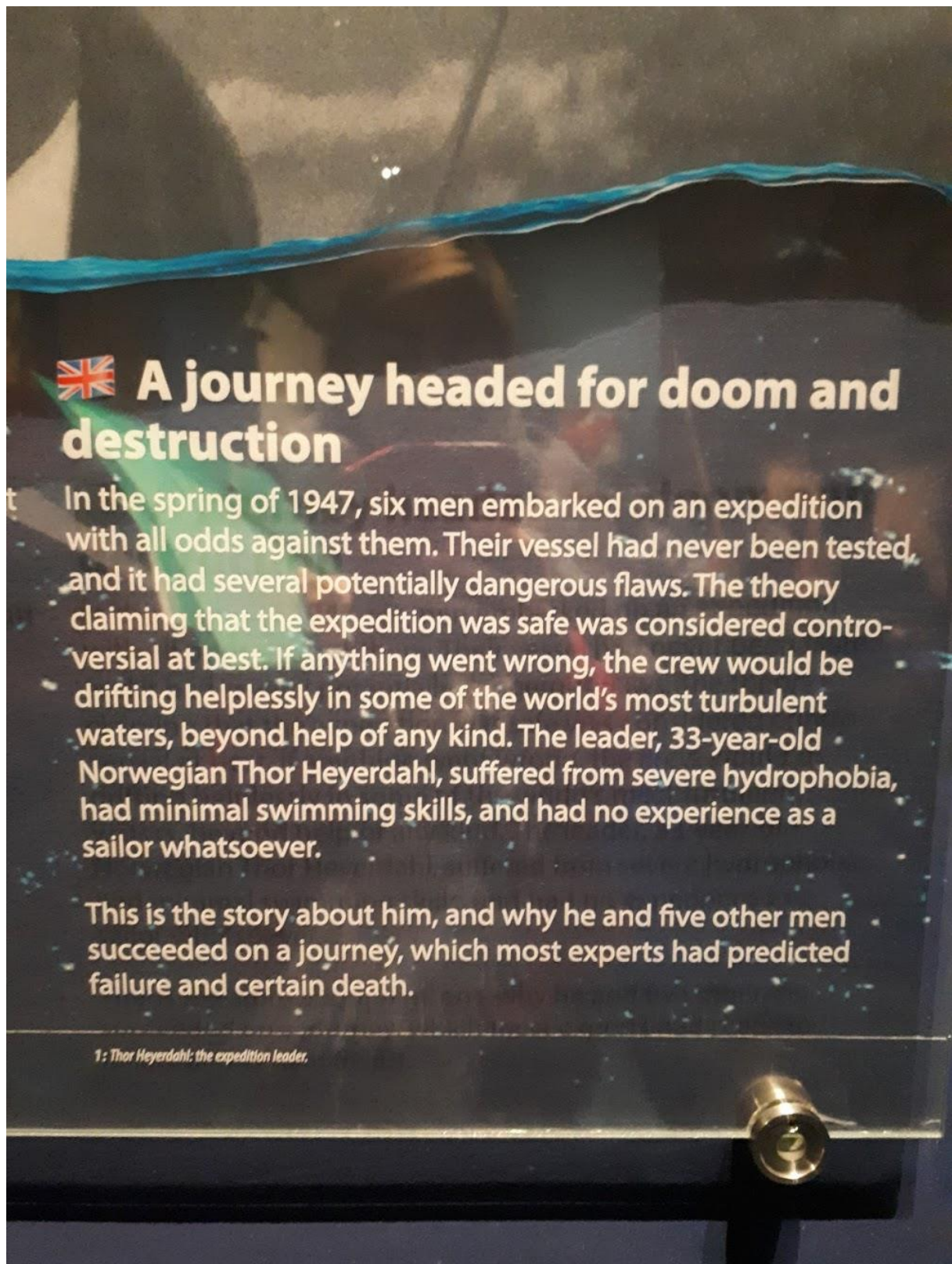
 **Tømmerhoggeren Thor**

Jakten på Balsa til flåten er et eventyr i seg selv. Inka-indianerne hadde hentet balsatre i Ecuador, og Heyerdahl ønsket å gjøre det samme. Problemet var at alt tømmer langs kysten var blitt felt i løpet av 2. verdenskrig, og de eneste trærne store nok til formålet vokste langt inne i landet. Bak fjell og jungel. Uten veier. Med en av verdens mest ekstreme regntider rett rundt hjørnet. Alle Heyerdahl snakket med fortalte det samme: Det ville være uhyre vanskelig å komme seg dit balsatrærne vokste, og umulig å komme ut igjen med stakkene. Igjen trosset Heyerdahl all fornuft, og i selskap med Watzinger dro han inn i jungelen blant skorpioner, slanger og hodejegere. Watzinger ble stukket av en skorpionmaur og reagerte voldsomt. Likevel fikk de hugget 9 balsa-kjemper, flekket barken av dem på indianervis og fløtet tømmeret ned mot kysten.

 **Thor the lumberjack**

The quest for balsa wood was an adventure in its own right. The Incan Indians had obtained their balsa logs in Ecuador, and Heyerdahl wanted to do the same. The problem was that all the trees growing near the coast had been cut down during World War II, and the only trees large enough for the job grew inland. Across mountains and jungles. No access roads. And one of the world's worst monsoon-seasons was just around the corner. Everyone they talked to said exactly the same thing: It would be extremely difficult to travel to where the balsa trees grew, and impossible to get out. Once again, Heyerdahl decided to defy reason, and in the company of crewmember Herman Watzinger, he traveled deep into the jungle amongst scorpions, snakes, and headhunters. Watzinger was bitten by a scorpion-ant, and suffered a serious reaction to the venom. Even so, the two men still managed to cut down 9 balsa giants, remove the bark from the logs in the local Indian manner, and float the logs downriver to the coast.

Picture number 13. Examples of easy-to-read summarized texts at the Kon-Tiki museum (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)



A journey headed for doom and destruction

In the spring of 1947, six men embarked on an expedition with all odds against them. Their vessel had never been tested, and it had several potentially dangerous flaws. The theory claiming that the expedition was safe was considered controversial at best. If anything went wrong, the crew would be drifting helplessly in some of the world's most turbulent waters, beyond help of any kind. The leader, 33-year-old Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl, suffered from severe hydrophobia, had minimal swimming skills, and had no experience as a sailor whatsoever.

This is the story about him, and why he and five other men succeeded on a journey, which most experts had predicted failure and certain death.

1: Thor Heyerdahl: the expedition leader.

Picture number 14. Examples of easy-to-read summarized texts at the Kon-Tiki museum (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)

5.2.3 Today's Popularity of the Kon-Tiki Expedition for the Museum Visitors

This epic 6,900 km expedition by six Scandinavians (five Norwegians and one Swede) made the world headlines. The voyage proved to its instigator, young Thor Heyerdahl, that Peruvian Indians could have probably settled Polynesia (Holton, 2004). One of the museum staff believed that the theoretical or epistemological issues did not matter to the people visiting the museum, and further argued that today's popularity of the Kon-Tiki expedition for the interested people is the "adventurous spirit" in doing the expedition, not the epistemological or ideological bases behind the expedition,

I don't really think that people care today about if the Polynesians came from America or Asia, maybe there are few researchers that are interested in that, but that is not the point of popularity of Kon-Tiki expedition, Kon-Tiki is about the adventure and the dare to do it and they were risking their lives and everything [...] they (the visiting people) are interested in how could one man at that time get this idea, plan this expedition, and then do it (Museum staff number 4, December, 2018).

The Kon-Tiki expedition "was an adventure combined with science", "indigenous knowledge" and with "ordinary people" on the board who lived together on the ocean for more than three months. Thor Heyerdahl thought that a conflict could arise within Academia after publishing the book, but he would believe that it was "not really important for the people reading the book, [...] the question is do they survive this expedition, do they survive this expedition on the ocean, so in such a way it's a deeply humanistic adventure" (Museum staff number 4, December, 2018).

5.3 Thor Heyerdahl's Viewpoints Regarding the Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous People

The revealed data in this section is in line with the following sub research questions which fell under Research Question number 1:

C. Which viewpoints did Thor Heyerdahl have regarding indigenous knowledge and applicability of this knowledge for conducting the Kon-Tiki project?

D. To what extent are there any frictions between Thor Heyerdahl's application of the Indigenous knowledge and his reliance on modern, white, European epistemology?

E. How did Thor Heyerdahl approach the notion of “mobility” for the ancient people in the Kon-Tiki theory and expedition?

On the other hand, the responses of the interviewees in this part are based on their contributions and accounts to the following interview questions:

1. How would you describe the links between the Kon-Tiki expedition and the Global South issues? If you think there are any.
2. In your opinion, what made Thor Heyerdahl come to the point to start an expedition to confirm the theory about South-Americans pre-Columbian people could have reached Polynesia on such rafts?
3. The Kon-Tiki was a balsa-wood raft built according to Indian traditions. Being relied on the Indian tradition, or in the way I would put it, being relied on local or indigenous knowledge can contribute to Global South issues in any way?
4. Regarding the epistemological perspectives of Thor Heyerdahl before, while and after his Kon-Tiki expedition, do you believe in any changes or alterations in his epistemology?
5. Do you believe that his epistemology was merely or mainly affected by European science as a white European privileged researcher?
6. What was the Kon-Tiki expedition mainly about? Was it just an adventure or an entertainment?
7. How can you reflect on this expedition from a humanistic perspective?

The data gathered from the museum staff interviewees showed that Thor Heyerdahl had in a sense great respect for the indigenous people and indigenous knowledge, and he looked for *information* and *advice* from them. Thor Heyerdahl did ask questions from the indigenous people and “let them explain in a practical way” and this “practical experiment is a legacy of the Kon-Tiki” (museum staff number 2, October 2018).

He basically believed in the existence of “a core of historic facts in old legends”. On the other hand,

He did something different from what often the Academia does. He did something new, he actually asked the indigenous people for their advice on their knowledge, their history, and of what they have learned about things [...] he lifted up the knowledge of the indigenous people, and made it a source of knowledge, he made it into an epistemology, he took that as a part, while Academia cut that knowledge off. I don't say that represents all of Academia, but it is still I think. It's a little bit of the Global North still has that attitude (Museum interviewee number 3, November 2018).

That could be why, when he reached new places:

When Thor Heyerdahl reached new places, for instance the Easter Island or other places, he always asked the local people for their advice. So, he asked them for instance what you have learned about this. And I think it shows a great thing because he thought that even though (those) people might not have big formal education, they can have a lot of knowledge that they have inherited from their ancestors and so on, and a lot of this knowledge is lost in the Global North to put it that way (Museum interviewee number 3, November 2018).

Accordingly, Thor Heyerdahl paid specific attention to the “knowledge” and “tradition” of the indigenous people and the people in the Global South. He was of the belief that “the people in the Global South had a lot to contribute” and considered that source of knowledge as a treasure that “the rest of the world lost”. Along the same lines, he was not looking for the “formal education” of the people in the Global South, but instead he was mainly interested in their “local knowledge” (Museum interviewee number 3, November 2018).

According to the Museum interviewee number three, one of the reasons that Thor Heyerdahl is being criticised from Norwegian Academia for example, is that he “relied on the knowledge from indigenous and local people” (Museum interviewee number 3, November 2018). Along the same lines, museum interviewee number three asserted that, “But of course since he didn't follow the Academic progress people were skeptical of him” (Museum interviewee number 3, November 2018).

Thor Heyerdahl was being described at the museum as a “cosmopolitan” person who had “no favourite culture other than [...] the so-called primitive culture”. Moreover, conduction of the

expeditions “have strengthened or convinced him more and more about the value of learning also from the so-called primitive people” (Museum staff number 1, September 2018).

5.3.1 The Kon-Tiki Theory and the Kon-Tiki Expedition

The ideas behind the Kon-Tiki theory stemmed basically from the trip that Thor Heyerdahl and his wife Liv took to Fatu-Hiva in 1937, ten years before conducting the Kon-Tiki expedition. The people living there believed that, “their ancestors came from the East, according to their legends”. However, “all the experts in the field of emigration in Polynesia said that the people living in the Pacific Islands originally came from Asia”. The Kon-Tiki expedition was of course “adventurous”, but “it was mainly about proving that the legends of the local people were true” (Museum staff number 3, November 2018). Moreover, “Heyerdahl did this expedition in opposition to what he called the established Academia” (Museum staff number 2, October 2018).

Thor Heyerdahl’s respect to and reliance on the Global South knowledge did not however mean that Global North knowledge systems sank into oblivion on his part:

But, it is quite evident that Thor Heyerdahl used the Global north, the museums, (and) the research environment as the antagonist [...] so, he has connections to the Global North. He has connections to the fact that he believed not only in indigenous people, but he also believed in early European explorers that wrote about meeting this possible raft far at the sea (Museum staff number 2, October 2018).

Although Thor Heyerdahl was recognized to be, “a product of some colonistic worldview [...], but much of the bases for his theories, much of the bases for him believing them, and the theories came from myths and legends that were told to European researchers by indigenous populations of South America” (Museum interviewee number 2, October 2018).

This discrepancy between the experts’ accounts and the indigenous/ local people’s legends regarding the Polynesian’s ancestors coming from the West or East made Thor Heyerdahl ponder over the issue. Initially, Thor Heyerdahl was a proponent of the experts’ ideas regarding where the Polynesians’ ancestors came from. However, “their local people (in Fatu-Hiva) said that their ancestors came from the East. “Thor Heyerdahl wanted to prove it, and he really crossed Academia by doing the Kon-Tiki expedition” (Museum staff number2, October 2018). Moreover,

Thor Heyerdahl discovered that the currents always came from America with no exception. And they also found some vegetables, for instance sweet potatoes and other things which normally only, I mean that originally you can find them in South America, but that was cultivated on this island before the Europeans came. So, this led him to ask the question that could it really be so that the first people to settle this island actually came from America. And again, he listened to the advice of the local people and he wanted to prove this theory that it could be possible, even though scientists said that it was not possible (Museum staff number 3, November 2018).

The “legends” from the local people were the only resources for Thor Heyerdahl to believe in the possibility of the expedition across the ocean:

Except for these legends, he didn't have any other evidence that this possible raft would actually float, for two, three months before he started the expedition, so, that's the basis for Heyerdahl, not only Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory, but actually for his later projects as well. As he heard a legend, or he isolated a legend, a myth, and then tried to verify it in a way (Museum staff number 2, October 2018).

5.3.2 Building the Kon-Tiki Raft Based on the Indigenous Knowledge?

Through semi-structured, qualitative interviews with the informed staff at the museum, besides observing the museum tour guides, I gained knowledge about the process, limitations, obstacles, and finally the construction of the Kon-Tiki raft. The Kon-Tiki was built “based on the indigenous knowledge of the local people of Peru, and by the logs from Ecuador” (Museum staff number 2, October, 2018). The Kon-Tiki crew members used materials and technologies which it was supposed that the South Americans had them at their disposal when they attempted to do the journey, “except for some items such as a radio, metal knives, watches and charts, and of course having different clothes and food” (Museum staff number 4, December, 2018).

The way through which the Kon-Tiki raft was built, is one of the aspects of significance in this study, since it shows which sources of knowledge (epistemology) were taken into account and were relied upon through the raft building process. The raft was built not based on modern science at the time of the expedition, but purposefully by relying on the indigenous knowledge of the people in South America, indicating signals regarding the “prehistoric knowledge”:

And I think that's also a signal in a way, you know, I (the museum interviewee here uses the pronoun I to refer to Thor Heyerdahl) as a scientist in 1947, I respect, I understand, I see that the knowledge, the prehistoric knowledge, is something that I can use today, and in doing that we also say that those people they also could (Museum staff number 4, December, 2018).

Thor Heyerdahl decided to prove that it was possible for the people living in South America at around 500 A.D., to migrate to Polynesia on balsa rafts. Literally conducting the expedition, was in a sense the "last resort" for Thor Heyerdahl to gain acceptance to the feasibility of his theory from the Academia,

That (conducting the expedition) was the last resort, and that is why he had to do it because you can always get so much learning from books, and that is also that what is exciting about Thor Heyerdahl is that he then, it was him against the rest of the society, and his colleagues and academia who was so used to sitting behind desks, and he was a hands-on experimental maritime archeologist meaning by building it he also opened up to new branch of science, kind of, so that is why it had to happen that way or else he wouldn't have gotten any accept for that theory (Museum staff number 5, December, 2018).

As mentioned above, using the indigenous techniques, materials and forms to set up the Kon-Tiki raft, was done purposefully in order to create as much similarity as possible to the prehistoric rafts. In this regard, one of the informed staff at the museum commented that,

But clearly [...] it highlights that he (Thor Heyerdahl) believed in the knowledge of indigenous people, and that is clear, and it was also the only way to prove (the probability of that expedition), because the only way to do that (the expedition) is to copy the prehistoric raft, with all the materials, with all the forms, and the only thing that they did not do, was that they took some medicine, they had radio, and they had of course different food (Museum staff number 4, December, 2018).

Regarding Thor Heyerdahl's reliance on the indigenous knowledge to construct the Kon-Tiki raft, one of the informed museum workers pointed to the belief of Thor Heyerdahl into the capability of indigenous people to produce valuable knowledge, and the interviewee went on by adding further about Thor's "skepticism" on accumulating knowledge merely through pure studying:

He (Thor Heyerdahl) became more and more skeptical to scientists who spent all their lives in their labs and libraries, he was a much more practically concerned, so he

experienced when he traveled around in the world, that non-academics, like indigenous people, they had well just as good brains, they had acquired just as much knowledge with their background. So he was very impressed with the capability of any indigenous people, being an Indian or South American, in North America, People in the Middle East, wherever, that they although they had not written PhDs or acquired any academic degrees, they sat on an enormous amount of knowledge. So, he had deep respect for natives, indigenous knowledge all over the world. And the combination of the practical knowledge of so-called primitive people and the theoretical experts in the so-called civilized world, that combination he found very fruitful (Museum staff number 1, September, 2018).

Another museum informant's account on the construction of the Kon-Tiki raft reveals the belief of Thor Heyerdahl in the existence of "historic facts in the old legends". Moreover, this informant's account shows that when Thor Heyerdahl was in a dilemma of listening to the modern or to the indigenous science for choosing type of the tree to build the Kon-Tiki, his choice was to heed the indigenous knowledge, "and the thing is that it was very well documented that indigenous people in South America built balsa wood rafts which looked similar to the Kon-Tiki raft [...] and Thor Heyerdahl relied on that knowledge" (Museum staff number 3, November, 2018).

5.3.3 "Borders? I have Never Seen One. But I Have Heard They Exist in the Minds of Some People."

This title is a direct quote by Thor Heyerdahl, and I used it to connote Thor Heyerdahl's ideology on the notion of mobility for the indigenous people. Before conduction of the Kon-Tiki expedition, Thor Heyerdahl "was much more focused on the question about the Polynesians, of how they travelled". Therefore, he came up with the idea that "the oceans were not barriers to indigenous people having contact, it could actually be highways for contact". Consequently, "he became much more interested in diffusionism" and "he became much more convinced that diffusionism was possible" (Museum staff number 2, October 2018).

So, I think his understanding and his thinking about the mobility of ancient cultures increased, (and) I mean he got more respect for them, he understood that he really need to nail down the aspects of their knowledge, not just the design, not just the materials but actually the working methods when you cut the tree, cut the breed [...] and then the fact that the mobility was greater (Museum staff number2, October 2018).

Basically, "the idea of indigenous knowledge (and) their practical knowledge deepened his view on the mobility" (Museum staff number2, October 2018). And, "he became more and

more convinced that cooperation between different cultures, different people, different experiences, that was the most fruitful approach” (Museum staff number 1, September 2018).

5.3.4 Encountering the Opposition

The opposition from the “researchers who said South Americans did not have boats or technology to cross the ocean”, made Thor Heyerdahl prove them the opposite by accepting the challenge of literally doing the expedition (Museum staff number2, October 2018).

According to the scientist at the time,

They (indigenous people in South America) had balsa wood rafts in the pre-inca time, but they could only sail on the rivers or along the coastline, there was no way to cross the ocean. But again, he (Thor Heyerdahl) wanted to prove the theory of the local people. And I think that’s a way of approaching things which is uncommon in Academia, to put it that way (Museum staff number 3, November 2018).

🇬🇧 A theory born out of opposition

In the spring of 1946, Thor Heyerdahl traveled to New York to present his radical theory written up as *Polynesia and America. A study of Prehistoric Relations*. He had spent ten years writing this thesis, and found what he regarded as conclusive evidence: the South American myth of Con-Tiki Viracocha, a pre-Incan Indian chief who had lived in Peru; been driven off after losing a battle, and escaping off into the sunset on a raft made of balsa-wood.

Thor was met with massive opposition. No one would take him seriously—they would not even read the thesis. As time went by, his personal funds were depleted and the list of authorities he could present his work to grew shorter. One alternative became increasingly clearer: To prove that it was possible to drift with the Humboldt Current from South America to Polynesia on a raft made of balsa-wood, he would have to do it himself.

He did not know it then, but he had just introduced the concept of maritime experimental archaeology.

1: Heyerdahl's map illustrating his theory. 2: Planning the expedition at the Explorers Club in New York. From the left: H. Watzinger, chief of Classification; P. Freuchen and T. Heyerdahl. 3: Herbert Spinden, the researcher who challenged Heyerdahl to prove his theory by sailing a balsa-raft across the Pacific (Courtesy AMNH Anthropology Archives). 4: Library, where Heyerdahl spent the summer of 1946 researching his theory.

Picture number 15. Explanations on the museum wall regarding the oppositions Thor Heyerdahl met after presenting his theory (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)

A challenge



Herbert Joseph Spinden (16.8. 1879 – 23.8. 1967)

In «Kon-Tiki. Across the Pacific by raft» (1950) Thor Heyerdahl tells the story about meeting an old man "in a dark office on one of the upper floors of a big museum in New York". Thor Heyerdahl had mailed the man his manuscript "Polynesia and America. A study of cultural diffusion" and now hoped that the man, who was an archaeologist and curator at Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York, would publish it. But the envelope containing the manuscript lay unopened on the desk. The old man believed Thor Heyerdahl was wrong.

"He pushed the unopened manuscript carefully to one side and leaned over the table.

- It's quite true that South America was the home of some of the most curious civilizations of antiquity, and that we know neither who they were nor where they vanished when the Incas came into power.

But one thing we do know for certain—that none of the peoples of South America got over to the islands in the Pacific.

He looked at me searchingly and continued:

- Do you know why? The answer's simple enough. "They couldn't get there. They had no boats!

- They had rafts, I objected hesitatingly. You know, balsawood rafts.

The old man smiled and said calmly:

- Well, you can try a trip from Peru to the Pacific islands on a balsa-wood raft.

The man was Herbert J. Spinden and he will forever be known as the man who challenged Thor Heyerdahl to undertake the Kon-Tiki Expedition. Although Herbert Spinden is portrayed as a cocky opponent of the lonely hero, Thor Heyerdahl had enjoyed Spinden's friendship and hospitality. When WW II came to Norway in the spring of 1940, Thor Heyerdahl was stranded in Bella Coola, in British Columbia, Canada, where he had come to study the West Coast Indian Culture. Almost penniless he travelled to New York by bus in April of 1942 to sell his precious collection of ethnographic artefacts collected on Fatuhiva, the Marquesas Islands, a few years previous. Brooklyn Museum of Art, represented by its curator Herbert Spinden, who bought the collection for US\$ 1.000.

Thor Heyerdahl sold his collection for a ridiculous price and the "old man looking like Santa Clause" (TH in letter to his wife) probably felt sorry for the young Norwegian explorer and ethnographer. Herbert J. Spinden was on his way to a scientific congress in Mexico and he would be gone almost a month. In the meantime, Thor Heyerdahl was staying for free in Spinden's apartment, with full access to his private book collection. Spinden also told Heyerdahl about which libraries to visit, and the young Norwegian researcher began to re-write and extend his manuscript "Polynesia and America. A study in cultural diffusion".

Picture number 16. Explanations on the museum wall regarding the "challenge" Thor Heyerdahl met after presenting his theory (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)

5.4 Visiting the Museum to See the Kon-Tiki Hero

The data in this subsection is in line with the research question number 2, which deals with the notion of heroism regarding Thor Heyerdahl at the Kon-Tiki museum. Through my interviews with the museum staff and museum visitors at the museum and also through casual talks on the bus with the tourists who have been at the Kon-Tiki museum, I got the impression that the majority of the people visiting the Kon-Tiki museum were highly impressed by Thor Heyerdahl's bravery deeds in his expeditions, specifically the Kon-Tiki expedition. For example, one of the museum visitors expressed his/her interest in Thor Heyerdahl's deeds by expressing passionately, "I liked it very much, I learned about Thor Heyerdahl and his experiences, and I thought it was very interesting. It was very interesting that he had this idea that no one believed in, and he still did this whole project and built the raft and everything (Museum visitor number 8, October, 2018).

Similarly, I received accounts about some visitors who struggled working hard for many years to afford a trip to Oslo, in order to visit this museum, mainly due to their enthusiasm inspired by Thor Heyerdahl's efforts regarding the Kon-Tiki expedition: "People come into the door and they say, I have read all the books (Thor Heyerdahl's books), and saved money for ten years, this is my greatest inspiration, this is the man that changed my life. And finally, I'm here, and people are crying [...]" (Museum staff number 4, December 2018).

A museum visitor would agree with Thor Heyerdahl about his huge experimental design to test his theory by literally doing that: "I mean, how else to do what you believe in? So, just do it. So, I agree with Thor Heyerdahl also because, you know, he made it happen, so I also think that's why I agree with him, because he succeeded in doing it" (Museum visitor number 7, December, 2018).

Another museum visitor interviewee who was doing a chemistry project all year long last year, was in favor of Thor Heyerdahl in conducting a practical research and testing a theory by personally doing that,

Yeah, I've done some research before [...] more of chemistry kind of research. I did a project all year last year, and for me the cool part is that they (the Kon-Tiki crew) were not reading through pages and pages and pages of journals and stuff, that is so boring [...] So, I could definitely see how he would want to go out and do it for himself to conclude that, yeah they (the Polynesians) could do it because I did it, like

it's not that hard, you can build the raft, well it is pretty hard, but you can build the boat you can do it, it is possible (Museum visitor number 3, December, 2018).

Thor Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki story and expedition is one which "restores his fate in the good of humankind" in a way "which *everyone* can relate to", specifically due to its appearance timing after World War II plague:

Because, the Kon-Tiki was after the War, Kon-Tiki as many other books in that area [...] I don't know if it had any effect on society in that way, but one of the English reviews I think, writes about Kon-Tiki, I mean he obviously likes the book, and how it's written, but he also says that this voyage restores the faith in human kind, I mean it's a very heavy statement you know, but that's more or less what he writes. I mean, it restores his faith in the good of humankind, because it connects history with the modern time and across cultures, but basically it's a story that everyone can relate to. At the time when everything was in conflict, I mean the conflict of the World War II (Museum staff number 2, October 2018).

Besides the information gathered through the interviews, observing the museum informative texts and the information written on the museum walls provided me with the impression of Thor Heyerdahl as the "hero". Thor Heyerdahl has been also referred to as "the lonely hero", which was written on one of the informative texts in the museum to describe Thor Heyerdahl, when he was challenged by Herbert Joseph Spinden (see picture number 16) about the feasibility of the Kon-Tiki expedition. Correspondingly, he is represented as someone "who wanted to be completely independent" (Museum staff number 1, September 2019). Similarly, he is described as the "great Norwegian explorer" who conducted the "greatest sea adventure of our time" (written on the museum walls).

THOR HEYERDAHL (1914-2002)
THE GREAT NORWEGIAN EXPLORER



Picture number 17. Describing Thor Heyerdahl as the great Norwegian explorer (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)



Picture number 18. Describing the Kon-Tiki expedition as the greatest sea adventure of our time (Taken by Zohreh Farzadfar)

And on the Kon-Tiki museum website, Thor Heyerdahl is described as “one of the history’s most famous explorers”, whose “extraordinary life and expeditions are an endless source of inspiration” (Kon-Tiki Website, 2019 a). Moreover, on the same website he is portrayed as an alone theorist whom nobody would listen to:

Heyerdahl had presented his theory to a group of leading American anthropologists in the spring of 1946, but they gave him the *cold shoulder*. One of them, Herbert Spinden, even went so far as to challenge Thor: “Sure, see how far you get yourself sailing from Peru to the South Pacific on a balsa raft! (Kon-Tiki Website, 2019 b).

The museum staff number 4 criticized the masculinity on board of the Kon-Tiki, and depicted Thor Heyerdahl as a “man of that time” who with his men were even “killing sharks for fun”. “Why didn’t he have a woman on board or why was it just men? [...] and also, they were killing sharks for fun, you know? In our point of view today in 2018, we don’t kill animals for

fun” (Museum staff number 4, December 2018). The very point to be cautious about in this quote is that such information is not offered to the museum visitors, since the museum staff comprehend that the visitors’ attention is focused on other issues when they go to the Kon-Tiki museum:

[...] the point of popularity of Kon-Tiki expedition is about the adventure and the dare to do it and they were risking their lives and everything, and I could see that the people come here and that fascinates them very much. They understand the concept very clearly, it’s a raft, it’s very little, and the ocean is very big, that’s very easy to grasp, and very easy to understand (Museum staff number 4, December 2018).

The Kon-Tiki theory and expedition is described by the museum staff as a “puzzle” which was not solved or thought about before Thor Heyerdahl did:

So, clearly this was new ground, nobody have done this before, it was a puzzle that he took together, and he gave birth to the idea, and clearly it was nobody else that have thought about it [...] So, clearly it was new knowledge and new ground, his theory. This theory was very different from other theories at that time [...], I mean it was new knowledge, and it was a revolutionary theory (Museum staff number 4, December 2018).

Along the same lines, since Thor Heyerdahl is represented as somebody who “was very clever at making science appeal to the common man”, a variety of people from different backgrounds were interested in not necessarily where the Polynesian came from, but in the way this story is narrated by Thor Heyerdahl:

Why should a taxi driver in New York or a farmer in your country or a sailor or fisherman in Northern Norway, why should he be or she interested (in) whether do the Polynesians come from there or do they come from there. So what? But, he (Thor Heyerdahl) made it interesting, he made it a puzzle, he made it a detective story [...] and he could engage other people as well (Museum staff number 1, September 2018).

Almost everybody around Thor Heyerdahl was “tremendously” admiring him in his different expeditions:

[...] the Kon-Tiki members, (were) all Scandinavians. They all admired Thor Heyerdahl tremendously, [...] so he had knowledge in how to treat people well (those)

of different personalities, and to solve conflicts and so forth. So, all the Kon-Tiki men admired Thor Heyerdahl tremendously, I know, so I was proud to hear that [...], and also people on the RA expedition, they all admired Thor Heyerdahl (Museum staff number 1, September 2018).

However, according to the interview accounts it seems like Thor Heyerdahl had in a sense no choice, but to *become* a hero independently. And there were “practical reasons” for that choice:

So, I think that was the practical reason. He was broke, (and) he needed to make a decision to either stop or continue. The same with his personal life, his wife was also putting down him, making some demanding, now it's time to be a family man and she felt like he was betraying him because, I mean not literally but symbolically, because they had made the dreams (in Fatu-Hiva) together, of course his problem was that he did not see that while they made dreams together but Heyerdahl was the only one experiencing (the dreams). She (Liv) had to stay home, take care of children, so she was not able to participate in their common dreams, and then you have this academic questions, they would not believe him unless he (Thor Heyerdahl), I mean people suggest a dream, maybe you can take a year off study the floatability of balsa wood, and you can, and Heyerdahl saw the problem with that [...] it would just take a lot of years and he would write up a functional small papers [...] it was much easier for him in a way (to conduct the expedition) I think, this is Heyerdahl's dramatic side. It would be faster, it would be in a way easier, but it would be in a way more expensive, and as an addition if you could put it up, he would have stories to publish, so it was just pros [...] (Museum staff number 2, October, 2018).

5.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the data from the field work regarding Thor Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki expedition and regarding learning at the Kon-Tiki museum. The data were classified into three main sections, in line with the study's main research questions and sub-questions. Consequently, in the next chapter, Discussion and Analysis, I will present a discussion of the data within the theoretical framework.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Preliminaries

In this chapter, I present a discussion of findings within the theoretical framework of the study. The treatment has three subsections, namely learning environment at the Kon-Tiki museum, notions of indigenous knowledge and mobility, and heroizing Thor Heyerdahl. Moreover, I provided information about the limitations for conducting this study, and finally concluding remarks are presented.

6.2 The Learning Environment at the Kon-Tiki Museum

Searching for which didactic choices were made in order to communicate the Kon-Tiki message in the most efficient ways, led to the following discussion based on the study's data and in line with the theoretical frameworks. According to the findings, the major communicative approaches at the museum to create an effective learning environment with having imagined audiences in mind were narrating and demonstrating the Kon-Tiki stories in an “engaging” way which people could relate to personally and emotionally. Being a private museum sustained from vending Thor Heyerdahl's books and the expeditions' memorabilia calls for being specifically focused on the museum visitors' needs. Accordingly, they make use of “different modes” of presenting the Kon-Tiki-related information, such as showing (the photos and the movie) and telling (Hutcheon, 2012). For that purpose, the museum initiators did not merely tell the Kon-Tiki stories only based on what happened, but they constructed stories to communicate the messages in the most interactive ways accompanied by the assistance of professional writers and designers. This interaction between the text (oral and written) presented at the museum and the museum visitors can be in line with the reader-response theory, where more of the emphasis is put on the text audience rather than on text producers (Iser, 1993; Mailloux, 1990; Tompkins, 1980), or in this case the text presenters who are the Kon-Tiki museum staff. Along the same lines, the Kon-Tiki museum initiators have specific attention on their visitors, and it can be fair to add that they struggle to convey the Kon-Tiki message as comprehensible and influential as possible for their varied audiences through different modes.

As mentioned, transformation of the core meanings at this museum has to do with the sustainability of a privately-funded museum in a competitive modern era. However, this

transformation of the core meanings or “the appeal structure” embedded in the Kon-Tiki museum cannot be taken for granted, since as a text is delivered to the audience it will be in the audience realm to make sense of it with their knowledge and resources. According to reader-response theory, in the process of comprehending a text “the readers’ faculties are both acted upon and activated” (Iser, 1993, p. viii). Along these lines, Iser (1981) holds that, “the more a text loses determination, the stronger the readers involvement becomes in the realization of its possible intentions” (p.105). Meaning, a text is born through being read or exposed to the audience (Cahill, 1996; Fish, 1970) and the audience knowledge and feelings can determine the inferred meanings from a text (Rosenblatt, 1994). Therefore, it can be a crucial responsibility on the part of museum decision makers to assure that the appeal structures of the Kon-Tiki concept which has a decisive role for the museum’s sustainability are transformed properly to the visitors.

Involving and engaging the visitors were among the themes being produced several times during the interviews with the museum staff. On the other hand, the museum visitors also hold that they could feel connected to Thor Heyerdahl and had sympathy for him, for example when he presented the Kon-Tiki theory and nobody would listen to him, but he finally conducted the expedition to prove its feasibility. According to Iser (1993), involving the (museum) text addressee who play an important part in creation and transformation of meanings are of high importance. Along these lines, texts have dynamic characters which can stimulate feelings or provoke senses. As already mentioned, several understandings can be interpreted from a given text. However, if a text could be squeezed to “one particular meaning, it would be then the expression of something else - namely, of that meaning whose status is determined by the fact that it exists independently of the text” (p. 5). When applied to the Kon-Tiki context, the museum visitors mostly had this feeling that they could feel connected to Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon-Tiki expedition, and that this museum was worth coming back again. This sense of connectedness can be regarded as one of the “appeal structures” (Iser, 1981) for transferring the museum intended meanings from a variety of meanings which can be interpreted.

This sense of connectedness again between the Kon-Tiki visitors and the Kon-Tiki museum can be deemed as a mutual relationship. On the one end stand the visitors as whole beings who own their feelings, their learning styles, and their understandings from the Kon-Tiki phenomenon. And on the other end, stand the Kon-Tiki museum initiators who are to manage to recreate the “preconditions” for that involving experience to take place. According to Iser

(1993), the preconditions for this experience to happen between the text and the text audience must be provided by the text itself. However, the readers play a part in the recreation of this impression, as well.

Nestling in the previous paragraph is the idea of having engaged visitors, who are meant to get involved through the impressive texts and photos and videos at the museum. According to the data, the museum initiators are practicing to provide preconditions for the better engagement and comprehension of Kon-Tiki texts for example through “adaptation” (Hutcheon, 2012). Looking at the Kon-Tiki setting through the adaptation theory, one can notice that the body of knowledge concerning the Kon-Tiki expedition was not basically presented in its raw or intact form. But, the data revealed that professional writers were at work to rewrite and redesign the information with an open eye on different audiences at the museum. One of the key concepts in the adaptation theory is the engagement of the audience through the new and adapted form of a story. Moreover, through the lens of this theory the economic factors are decisive for recreation and reception of newly adapted stories. Hereupon, engagement of the visitors was among the intended goals of the Kon-Tiki museum to transfer the appealing structure of the Kon-Tiki meanings, hence leading to economic prosperity for this non-governmental museum.

As time passes on, the same story can hardly be repeated in the same way for the upcoming generations, and yet expecting it to be similarly appealing to them. Hence, it can clarify why changes in a story context through adaptation can lead to changes in the way the same story is interpreted through time. According to the data, the museum initiators chose specific contents to be revealed and they leave some parts out. Alongside, the “engagement” process which is intended to happen through the adapted stories is controlled by “selected and directing words of the text” (Hutcheon, 2012). This selection of directing words can be comprehended through the adapted story, which is exhibited at the museum by the help of professional writers and need to comply with the aims of this museum, which is in commemoration of Thor Heyerdahl.

The appeal of adaptation to the visitors can be understood through the elements of change and variation. In other words, in the adapted works the same story is repeated with an element of novelty while without making exact copies. Cultural, contextual and economic reasons are behind adaptation to be appealing for the viewers (Hutcheon, 2012). A specific example of adaptation at the Kon-Tiki museum is the exhibition of crab characters intended for young

children which chronologically narrates the story of Thor Heyerdahl and appearance of his interest in the Kon-Tiki theory. The changes applied to the original story which led to the adapted crab characters were made in order to represent the source work more alive and more popular. And, this is one of the ways which can make adaptations appealing to the museum visitors.

Regarding the piece of information which could be more appealing to the visitors, one of the museum staff was of the opinion that the museum audience do not care if the Polynesians came from West or East. But, what they are excited about is the story of six men drifting on the ocean with a prehistoric raft with no access to modern technology, yet managing to get to the destination alive. Moreover, the interviewee continued to add that not every piece of information is to be put up at the exhibition, since they are aware of their audience needs. Therefore, they can select and offer a “monumental history” about the Kon-Tiki that can “selectively promote particular events and specific interpretations” (Korostelina, 2016, p. 290).

Similarly, Fredrik Barth (1990) holds the idea that as time goes by the factual knowledge about a given message is no longer there as it used to be, however the message has to be communicated. Being so, this condition can lead to some factual slippage. Meaning that things can gradually move away from the original message, and even become something else in the long run. And “that else” could be what holds the “appeal structure” for the audience, for example in an “adapted form”. Accordingly, the story of Thor Heyerdahl in the long term can grow into something which might resemble a myth, and it can become hard to distinguish between myth and reality. For example, there is an awareness among the museum staff that the indigenous knowledge aspect of the story is important to be retold for the visitors, even though it is not necessarily factually true. The museum staff are aware that this is the Kon-Tiki message that has to be transferred, and this message can be accordingly adapted based on the visitors’ capacities or based on the conditions.

Historically viewed, the Kon-Tiki expedition took place two years after World War II, and at the time people who experienced the plague of war needed something to rejoice over. The message of the Kon-Tiki in 1947 was to believe in a world with no limitations or borders wherein still great and inspiring discoveries could be done with a prehistoric raft.

Accordingly, the myth making and heroising about Thor Heyerdahl can stem from the notion that great things can be done, as was the case in “the greatest discovery of our time” done by

“the lonely hero” Thor Heyerdahl. Now, after the passage of these years this story needs some adaptation, some parts are added and some parts are left out as is the case in “monumental history” treatment (Korostelina, 2016).

The learning experience at the Kon-Tiki museum can be explored and discussed through constructivist learning theory at the museums proposed by Hein (2004). Based on this framework, there is a traditional learning theory called lecture and text which is aligned with the notion of systematic museum. According to this learning theory the presenter of knowledge, in this case the Kon-Tiki museum guides and staff, has two main responsibilities namely, understanding the subject matter and then transferring this knowledge to the learners. This knowledge transformation is to be done based on the true structure of the subject matter, and in the easiest way to understand to the learners. In this regard, the data suggests that the Kon-Tiki museum staff “adjusted” the Kon-Tiki information based on their visitors age and background, and provided different modes of presenting the knowledge to make it more comprehensible, yet aiming at making the visitors have the connection and engagement with the Kon-Tiki concept.

There is another educational position in the framework offered by Hein (2004), referred to as discovery learning being in line with discovery museum. Based on this learning theory, the learners are to experience in order to learn. According to the data, the museum has offered previously some workshops for young children where they could make small samples of the Kon-Tiki raft.

Being constantly surrounded by an atmosphere echoing notions of the lonely hero, the single hero, and the great explorer who conducted the greatest sea adventure of our time against all oppositions which was destined for doom and destruction may not simply provide a room for personal construction of meanings. According to constructivist museum learning (Hein, 2004), the museums which allow the visitors to draw their own conclusions about the meanings of the museum exhibitions are following the constructivist principles. Such museums can provide their visitors with the possibility to encounter multiple modalities to acquire information (Davidson, Heald & Hein, 1991). According to the data, it can be argued that the Kon-Tiki museum in that sense is not in line with the constructivist museum guidelines.

The presentation of information in the Kon-Tiki museum is however following a chronological order, starting from Thor Heyerdahl's trip to Fatu-Hiva where it sparked his interest into the issue. This is a specific route that they want to take us through in order to navigate and condition our behaviour and emotions around the museum. That can be a behavioural aspect at the museum which can fall under behaviourist museum learning (Hein, 2004).

6.3 Indigenous knowledge and Notion of Mobility

Thor Heyerdahl gathered a noticeable amount of information from the folk knowledge in both Polynesia and Peru during the process of making the Kon-Tiki theory and building the Kon-Tiki raft. As data suggests, he gathered the required information from informal sectors, which was mostly unwritten and preserved in oral traditions (Stabinsky & Brush, 2007).

Additionally, he did account for the holistic and metaphysical foundation of indigenous knowledge systems (Breidlid, 2013). Thor Heyerdahl as a European person who was educated in the formal education system (Coombs, 1973; Etling, 1993) had respect for and made use of indigenous knowledge which can be in contrast with formal form of knowledge (Stabinsky & Brush, 2007). Moreover, he heeded to pieces of advice from the local people of Peru for setting up the Kon-Tiki raft. However, heeding to the local people of Peru and Polynesia seemed to be the only resort to replicate the Kon-Tiki expedition in order to get acceptance for his theory. From this perspective, I can call Thor Heyerdahl an indigenous knowledge seeker whose work was an example to promote indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in a modern and constantly changing context. One of the goals of Thor Heyerdahl as an indigenous knowledge seeker could have been developing the relationships between and among ideas from both formal and informal sectors, and Global North and Global South knowledge systems which might be in line with the ideas of Wilson (2008), regarding the achievement of enlightenment in approaching indigenous research methods.

6.4 Thor Heyerdahl, the Hero?

According to the data, Thor Heyerdahl was broke at the time, and his wife was putting down on him. Therefore, the "dramatic side" of Thor Heyerdahl drove him off from going back home as a family man. According to the data, the museum visitors were mostly describing

Thor Heyerdahl as their known hero from before, or as a hero whom they become familiar with through visiting the museum. Thor Heyerdahl was described by the museum visitors as a singular hero, who had fascinating ideas nobody was willing to listen to. At the museum, similarly, he is presented as a lonely hero, who encountered a lot of objections and oppositions. Yet, he believed in the existence of historical knowledge from the side of indigenous people, and accordingly he gained the courage to stand upfront for his own ideas stemming from indigeneity. The experimental design of the Kon-Tiki project was among the notions which the visitors were interested in. According to them, conducting a large-scale, risky experiment such as the Kon-Tiki to prove his theory was worth praising, and the museum was worth coming back and revisiting.

According to the data, one of the main reasons for today's popularity of the Kon-Tiki expedition is due to "the adventure and the dare to conduct the expedition across the ocean". Moreover, the Kon-Tiki expedition leader is being presented as a hero through oral and written texts at the museum, who was brave enough to conduct an expedition across the Pacific against all the oppositions and objections. At the Kon-Tiki museum, I found Thor Heyerdahl representing "the ideal of citizens virtue into the highest form of civic action" when he accepted the "physical peril" (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011, p. 99) for conducting the life threatening Kon-Tiki expedition.

Although heroes can be defined as people who decide to undergo physical risks (Becker & Eagly, 2004) such as what Thor Heyerdahl did, Martens (2005) on the contrary argued that physical-risk heroism is not broad enough to encompass the many forms of heroism. However, Physical-risk heroism has been further categorized as martial heroism and civil heroism (Franco, Blau & Zimbardo, 2011), which I would argue Thor Heyerdahl's deeds in the Kon-Tiki expedition can fall under. Having mentioned that, I can arguably make sense of why the Kon-Tiki museum decision makers present a bold picture of Thor Heyerdahl as the hero, since they most probably are aware of the intrinsic desire of the visiting people to search for heroes, and this can be in line with the ideas of Allison & Goethals (2014) regarding the human beings' longing for heroes.

Similarly, Jordanova (2014) believes that the notion of heroism at the museums is used to draw the visitors' attention, and explain to them about the past with Homeric effects. Additionally, having a pertinent relish of heroism at the museums can provide a sense of connection and engagement between the museum visitors and the museum. This theme of

creating connectedness and engagement has been one of the leading ones the museum staff were constantly looking for. Accordingly, this sense of connectedness is a vital feature of what the museum professionals do for a variety of reasons including reputation and economic growth. Making use of such heroic languages at the museums, however, are deemed by the academia as objects of study, rather than notions to be embraced.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study could lie in the multilingual nature of the research. I as the researcher, have a different mother tongue than English. However, I was conducting the thesis in English, moreover the museum guided tours which I observed were in Norwegian. And the Norwegian people affiliated to the Kon-Tiki museum had the interviews in English with me, due to its simplicity on my part for writing the transcriptions in English, and because I had more control over English than Norwegian.

On the other hand, I have been cautious that my interpretations of the Norwegian context is limited by my lack of cultural and linguistic background as an outsider in that sense. This might have impacted the way I perceived and elaborated on the data. However, this limitation can be common in an ethnographic research conducted in foreign cultures.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

Throughout this research I intended to explore the learning environment at the Kon-Tiki museum through making sense of the museum initiators' didactic choices and their effort to portray Thor Heyerdahl the hero. Two major conclusions can be made from this study. The first conclusion is that, since the museum decision makers are highly focused on their visitors' needs, they adjust and adapt the body of information to be appealing to their varied audiences. On the other hand, they exhibit the data through different modes, such as oral guides, showing pictures and informative texts, and showing the Kon-Tiki movie at the museum cinema. They provided as well different modes of transferring knowledge in child-adapted and adult languages by assistance of professional designers and writers.

The second conclusion is that the museum initiators are constantly insisting on Thor Heyerdahl being the hero, who had controversial ideas which nobody was willing to listen to.

But finally, he managed to build up the prehistoric raft, and conducted the expedition in order to gain credit for feasibility of his theory. Hence, it was argued that the Kon-Tiki museum was not in line with constructivist museum learning, which calls upon bestowing freedom to the visitors so that they can make their own conclusions about an exhibition.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview questions intended for the museum staff

Introductory comments:

The terms Global South and Global North are used in this study, and it is acknowledged that these terms are problematic in many ways. However, they imply the division between the wealthy and economically developed countries in the northern hemisphere, plus Australia and New Zealand, which are known collectively as “the North”. On the other hand, the poorer countries which are “less” or “least” developed, mostly located in the southern hemisphere are known as “the South” or the “Global South” countries. As nations improve and develop economically, they may become part of the North regardless of the geographical locations (Reuveny & Thompson, 2007). Having mentioned so, I would like to gather information about the role and implications of Kon-Tiki expedition/ museum towards or about the Global South, and on non-formal learning about Kon-Tiki through this museum.

One more concept I am interested to dig up about is the “epistemology” of Thor Heyerdahl. Here, by the term epistemology what is meant is the theory and the nature of knowledge and truth, which poses questions about the sources of knowledge, the reliability of these sources and the things one can know (Wilson, 2008).

Therefore, my interview questions will be as follows:

1. How would describe the links between the Kon-Tiki expedition and the Global South?
2. In your opinion, what made Thor Heyerdahl come to the point to start an expedition to confirm the theory about South-Americans pre-Columbian Indians could have reached Polynesia on such rafts?
3. The Kon-Tiki was a balsa-wood raft built according to Indian traditions. Being relied on Indian tradition, or in the way I would like to put it, being relied on local or indigenous knowledge has a lot to contribute to Global South knowledge and Global south issues. How would you elaborate on that?
4. Regarding the epistemological perspectives of Thor Heyerdahl before, while and after his Kon-Tiki expedition, do you believe in any changes or alteration in his academic epistemology?
5. Do you believe that his epistemology was merely or mainly affected by European science as a white European privileged researcher?
6. What was the Kon-Tiki expedition mainly about? Was it just an adventure or an entertainment?

7. How can you reflect on this expedition from a humanistic perspective?
8. Generally speaking, how would you reflect on non-formal learning from museums through a visual experience?
9. How can you describe the way to trigger the students' attention and interest to the history of Kon-Tiki expedition/ museum through the use of movies and realias?
10. Have you ever had the experience of having questions from the students/ other people about this expedition? How have you helped them out to reach their answers?

Appendix 2: Interview questions intended for the museum adult visitors

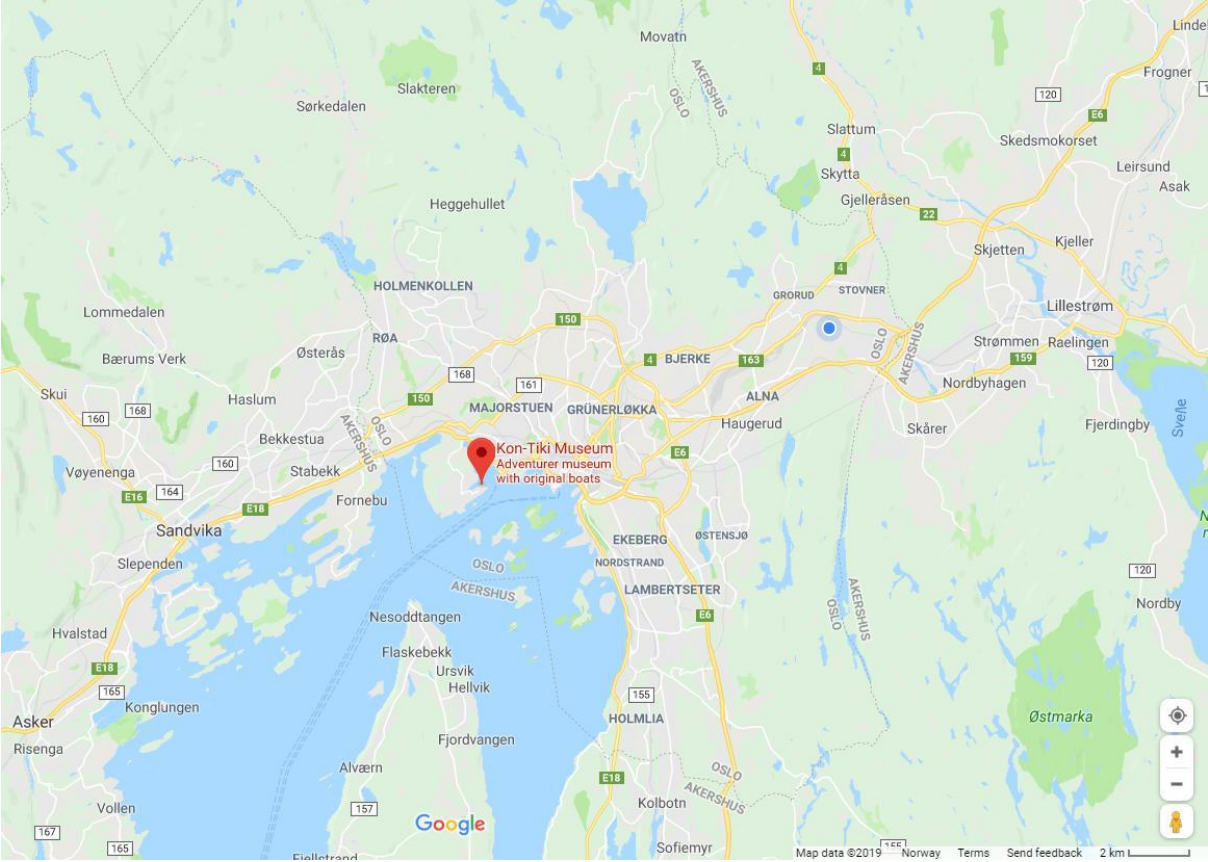
Introductory comments:

My name is Zohreh, affiliated with Oslo Metropolitan University, and I am doing a research about the Kon-Tiki museum. I would like to know about your experiences at this museum.

How would you describe your experience at the Kon-Tiki museum?

2. Was the museum visit interesting for you? If yes, can you tell me more about it?
3. Are you interested in doing research through travelling, like Thor Heyerdahl?
4. Do you think that people can learn from museum visits? If yes, how?
5. Did you see the movie about Thor Heyerdahl at the museum? How did you like it?
6. Do you think it can be a good idea to learn about expeditions through museums and movies? If yes, how and why?
7. During your visit at the museum, the museum guide gave you explanations about the Kon-Tiki expedition. Do you think the explanations were suitable to you and your interests?

Appendix 3: The Research site at the Kon-Tiki museum in Oslo, Norway (source: Google map)



Appendix 4: The original Kon-Tiki raft at the museum



Appendix 5: Photographs from inside the museum







