

Stacy Douglas

"Reconciling the Polis: The Quest for Universal Representation through Museums and Constitutions"

Q. What are some of the motivational forces behind and/or historical developments that have contributed to the project of universal representation at the museum and in constitutions?

This chapter explores the motivations behind the quest to "bring community together" through representational inclusion at the museum and in constitutions. Building on the themes of "representation" and "democracy" laid down in my literature review (see page 17-21 and 31-35), this chapter links these practices between the two sites. Specifically, it will explore the ecumenical background of these practices and draw out differences and similarities between the museum and constitutions. Aside from this historical exploration, the chapter also investigates the limits of a politics of representation. It does so by addressing two major arguments. The first being that such a politics is limited both because its quest for universal representation differentiates between populations even as it seeks to include. The second being that the project of representation is always limited because it can never adequately represent the infinite complexity of life forms.

Major works to be consulted: Talal Asad, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Didier Maleuvre, Saba Mahmood, Max Weber, Slavoj Zizek