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Beyond the Single Story: How Analog Hypertext Facilitates Representation of Multiple Critical Perspectives in an Art Museum Object Study Gallery

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Beyond the *Single Story*:

How analog hypertext facilitates representation of multiple critical perspectives in an art museum object study gallery

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

BEYOND THE SINGLE STORY: HOW ANALOG HYPERTEXT FACILITATES REPRESENTAION OF MULTIPLE CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN AN ART MUSEUM OBJECT STUDY GALLERY

By Aimee Dara Hunt, MAE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art Education at Virginia Commonwealth University

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Major director: Dr. Sara Wilson McKay, Chair, Department of Art Education

This project utilized a form of arts based educational research described as analog hypertext to develop interpretative material representing multiple critical, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives on objects in a university art museum's object study gallery. Drawing on scholars' recommendations for postcolonial interpretation of non-Western art, the project created a web of information, which simultaneously revealed and critiqued the underlying ideologies and power structures shaping the museum's display in an effort to change existing interpretive practice. The project developed five color-coded thematic self-guided tours—art as commodity, spiritual practice, technology and cultural evolutionism, mortuary rituals, and postcolonial perspectives—presented to the public as an interpretive exhibition invited visitors' contributions. This paper explores how the analog hypertext functions as both a research tool and a content delivery device for the representation of multiple critical perspectives, fostering interdisciplinary perspectives and visitor meaning-making in the process.

I envisioned this project when I heard about Google Glass a few years ago, and I imagined a pair of glasses that would provide not just information about museum objects, but different theoretical perspectives or *lenses* as well. As a museum educator in a university art museum, I wondered what perspectives my colleagues in other disciplines would bring to the interpretation of the objects in our collection, and I wondered how museum educators could introduce museum visitors to those perspectives. This project took its title from Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie, who spoke eloquently in *The Danger of the Single Story*:

> I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make *one* story become the *only* story. (Adichie, 2012)

With the goal of telling multiple stories, this project utilized arts based educational research to develop an interpretive installation, which presented multiple theoretical and disciplinary perspectives on a group of mostly non-Western objects in a museum object study gallery and invited viewers to contribute their perspectives to the exhibition.

Background to the Problem

I have worked as an educator at the University of Virginia's Fralin Museum of Art since 2008. The Fralin's small galleries are primarily devoted to rotating scholarly exhibitions of European and American art. However, the Fralin maintains a collection of approximately 14,000 objects with particularly strong holdings in pre-Columbian, African, Oceanic, and Native American art. Like most museums, only a small fraction of its collection is on view at any given

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time. In 2010, the Fralin opened a small object study gallery to display three-dimensional objects from its collections. The gallery contains approximately 140 objects from different time periods and cultures throughout the world, spanning 5,000 years and nearly every continent. The artifacts include utilitarian objects for everyday use, as well as sacred objects created for ritual use and spiritual devotion. The Fralin's director at that time, Bruce Boucher, explained that the museum opened the gallery with a twofold purpose:

> To showcase smaller, largely non-Western objects, which would be dwarfed in the museum's larger galleries, and to recreate a sense of the Jeffersonian museum for the twenty-first century…In many ways, [Jefferson's] collection resembled the medieval and Renaissance "cabinet of curiosities," the forerunner of the modern universal museum, which juxtaposed objects from nature with others crafted by artists and artisans…The goal is to foster slow looking at works from diverse cultures without the distraction of numerous labels. (B. Boucher, personal communication, February 16, 2015)

By curatorial decision the gallery originally bore no signage distinguishing objects from one area or culture from those of another. Although a binder in the gallery provided basic information about the geographic origin, culture, materials, and date of each object, the absence of a numbered identification system or signage directing visitors to the binder reduced access to that information. The museum later installed a diagram of the room indicating the geographic
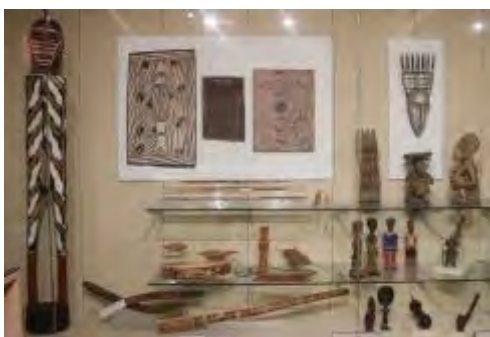
Figure 1.1: Fralin OSG South Wall
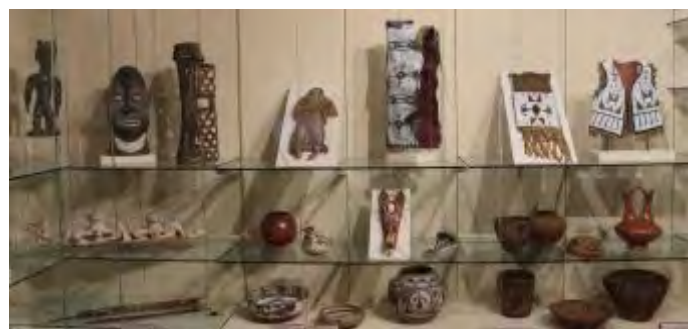
Figure 1.2: Fralin OSG Southwest Wall

Figure 1.3: OSG NW Wall

Figure 1.4: OSG N Wall

Figure 1.5: Fralin OSG Northeast Corner

origin or culture of the various broad groups of work, and enabling visitors to differentiate between objects that might otherwise be construed as originating from the same culture.

Figure 1.1 shows Aboriginal objects on loan from the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, and African objects installed on the left side of the gallery as visitors enter the room. Figure 1.2 shows a partial view of the west wall of the gallery with an African Bieri figure at the top left, four objects from New Guinea, and many pieces from the Fralin's collection of Native American objects. Figure 1.3 shows the remainder of the west wall of the gallery, including Mayan and Peruvian ceramics, and Egyptian and Etruscan artifacts. Figure 1.4 shows most of the north wall of the gallery, including French porcelain, ancient Greek objects, and Roman glass and coins. Figure 1.5 shows a selection of Asian objects grouped together in the northeast corner of the room.

The Fralin's education department is tasked with developing tours and programs based on our exhibitions for visitors throughout the Central Virginia region, so the absence of information on the history and context of the objects was an obstacle for the staff as well as for the nearly 100 volunteer docents that we train and supervise. In addition, we have been challenged by visitors to provide information and context for these objects, and their treatment within the museum setting. For example, on several occasions visitors have asked me about the function of the objects,

asked why there are no labels, and commented that they wish more information were available. This experience correlates to findings by Luke and Adams (2007) in their comprehensive survey of empirical research studies of visitor learning in art museums. Luke and Adams cite research by Temme (1992)—who reported that inexperienced museum visitors were more likely than frequent museum visitors to voice their need for more information—and by Wetzl-Fairchild, Dufresne-Tasse, and Dube (1997), and Walsh (1991), who found that when visitors voiced dissatisfaction with their museum visit, they were also likely to indicate their desire for more explanatory text accompanying exhibitions as one of the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

In addition to these concerns over visitor satisfaction, I also became increasingly concerned about the unspoken, unwritten perspectives that the installation of the object study gallery[1] subconsciously communicated to visitors. Eisner and Dobbs (1988) identified what they described as "the silent pedagogy" (p. 7) of the museum, which encompasses wall text if the museum provides it, but can still be present through the organization of the objects even when the museum does not. Vallance (1995) described this aspect of museum organization as "a public curriculum of orderly images" (p. 4), and explained it further as "an informal, randomly accessed structure of knowledge, expressed in visual images" (p. 4) available to and experienced by the diverse general public, largely without their conscious knowledge. Lindauer (2006) asserted that the display style of exhibitions influences the way visitors experience the objects and proposed instead a "critical museum visitor [who] focuses on the political implications of the written text" (p. 213), and examines "what social relations of power are engaged through the presentation and interpretation of art works or artifacts" (p. 221). In light of these assertions by Eisner and Dobbs,

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[1] Throughout the project, the Fralin's object study gallery is referred to in that manner, or simply as *the object study gallery*. In some cases I refer to the *installation* of the objects in the object study gallery, and this use of the word installation refers to the objects' presentation within the museum setting, and their placement in relation to other objects within the Fralin's object study gallery.

Vallance, and Lindauer, I began to question the silent pedagogy of the Fralin's object study gallery.

For example, a recent Fralin public program invited teams of visitors to interpret its objects in new, non-traditional ways. Visitors' contributions varied from improvisational theatre pieces created in response to works, to guided discovery of the objects as if they were maps to specific locations. The group assigned to interpret the Fralin's object study gallery created paper suitcases and representations of the objects, and invited participants to "collect" the objects by putting them into their paper suitcases as they would if they were traveling. Simpson (2001), Lonetree (2013), and others have asserted that the collections that form the basis of encyclopedic European and American museums developed primarily through colonial activity. I contend that, by inviting participants to imagine themselves as traveling tourist collectors, this exercise in novel methods of museum interpretation inadvertently asked visitors to participate in similar acts of cultural domination.

In addition, the objects in the Fralin's object study gallery are organized from left to right with Australian Aboriginal objects on the left, followed by African, Oceanic, Native American, Pre-Columbian, Ancient Mediterranean, and Asian objects on the right. Each of the six anthropologists I consulted for this project (I. Bashkow, personal communication, February 1, 2015; F. Bechter, personal communication, December 9, 2015; L. Dobrin, personal communication, February 1, 2015; M. Smith, personal communication, June 2, 2016; N. Wade, personal communication, December 1, 2015; K. Wood, personal communication, December 14, 2015) noted that the objects were presented in a continuum from the least technologically developed cultures to the most technologically developed. This presentation is consistent with an outdated theory of cultural evolutionism originating in the latter 19th century that equates human

culture with technological sophistication (Boas & Stocking, 1974). As Bechter observed, "Arranged in this way, the objects suggest that, given time, all world cultures will eventually evolve along a similar path to the 'ideal, civilized' Western culture" (F. Bechter, personal communication, December 9, 2015). In other words, given the absence of informational object labels in the room, the main silent pedagogy available to viewers is that of "European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (Said, 1979, p. 7).

In his call for museum educators to ground their practice in theory, Ebitz (2008) reported that museum educators cited a broad range of theoretical influences on their pedagogical practice, from Housen's (2007) aesthetic stage theory and Gardner's (2006) theory of multiple intelligences to the constructivism of both Piaget (1954) and Vygotsky and Cole (1978). However, Ebitz found that the most frequently invoked theories "are about objects, people, and learning, not about gender, race, class, and relations of power between individuals, institutions, and other social structures" (2008, p. 18), and advocated instead for the inclusion of feminist, queer, and postcolonial theories in the lexicon of museum education. Ebitz argued that, "By ignoring critical theory and pedagogy, we may be ignoring the tools that can empower museum educators to understand the practice of museum education in the context of other practices of power and authority" (2008, p. 19).

Statement of the Problem

I propose that the organization of the Fralin's object study gallery combined with the absence of information about its objects inadvertently re-inscribes a Euro-centric perspective and contributes to the Othering (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2007; Spivak, 1999) of non-Western cultures represented in it. As such, the gallery presents an ideal opportunity as well as a

professional mandate to apply critical and postcolonial theories to museum practice per Ebitz's (2008) recommendation.

In contrast to the Fralin's object study gallery, an exhibition that enacts new museum theory as described by Lindauer (2006) would simultaneously "instill admiration for the aesthetic beauty of the art works" (p. 222), "explore the historical context" (p. 222) in which they were created, "acknowledge the intercultural paradox" (p. 222) surrounding the creation of some of the objects, and "encourage visitors to develop their own opinions about the social, cultural, aesthetic, and economic ramifications" (p. 222) of the collection and display of the objects.

The challenge to me as a museum educator was to develop interpretive material to compensate for both the absence of information as well as the underlying pedagogy of the objects' installation, while still abiding by the Fralin's curatorial restriction on labels within the object study gallery.

Statement of the Research Question:

How can multiple critical perspectives and visitor meaning-making be represented in an art museum object study gallery?

Working visually in a form of arts based educational research (Barone & Eisner, 2012), I created a web of information that functions both as a participatory interpretive exhibition and as a research tool for the development of interpretive content, which might later be delivered through an audio tour or a mobile app. As the project developed through a combination of collage and concept mapping informed by hypertext theory, I began to describe the outcome as *analog hypertext*. This paper presents analog hypertext as one interpretive solution for the presentation of multiple perspectives in museum galleries by examining its representation of critical, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives as well as viewers' contributions in detail.

Description of the Project

I created a 7ft x 30ft two-dimensional collaged facsimile of the Fralin's object study gallery by overlaying images of the 140 objects with source documents, research, information, supporting images, as well as notes and ideas on Post-it notes. I used the resulting web-like structure of information as a research tool to identify five common themes within the objects: *spiritual practice*, *mortuary rituals*, *art as commodity*, *technology and cultural evolutionism*, and *postcolonial perspectives*.

In addition, the analog hypertext itself became a participatory exhibition when I installed it at The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative—a non-profit community art space in Charlottesville, Virginia—for three weeks beginning with an opening reception on January 8, 2016. The five common themes described above were delivered to the public in the form of self-guided tours cards that provided introductions to the themes, and directed viewers to read the color-coded Post-it notes on the analog hypertext. In addition, visitors were invited to make their own contributions to the analog hypertext, and their comments and observations about the objects suggested additional tour themes. The exhibition offered viewers multiple perspectives on the objects, revealed underlying assumptions of museum practice at work in the gallery, and engaged visitors in dialogue about the Fralin's object study gallery and its objects.

Terminology

I use the phrase *analog hypertext* to refer to the ten panels that I created as research on the objects and their themes, and the phrase *analog hypertext exhibition* to refer to the public exhibition of the *analog hypertext* with its supporting introductory text, tour theme rack cards, and invitation to visitor participation. When I use the words *tour* and *tour theme*, I am referring to the thematic self-guided tours that constituted the multiple theoretical and disciplinary

perspectives or *lenses* developed through the analog hypertext. I also use the term *tour theme* to describe contributions to the analog hypertext by visitors after I categorized them by type.

Significance of the Study

       While the interpretive material developed through this project is unique to the Fralin's object study installation, the process of developing the analog hypertext may be transferrable to other museums in three ways: 1) by providing a model for the development of interpretive material representing multiple critical, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives, 2) by demonstrating arts based educational research both as tool for object research and as an interpretive method to educate museum visitors, and 3) by documenting visitors' contributions so that we may gain further insight into how visitors construct meaning in museums.

A Philosophical Exploration of Literature Pertaining to the Project

Among the literature relevant to the Fralin's display of non-Western art, I have narrowed this discussion to six main areas: considerations in the display of non-Western art, critical theory and the academic museum, postcolonial theory, postcolonial museum practice, visitor meaning-making in the museum, and hypertext theory and intertextual narrative pedagogy.

In order to more fully understand the issues pertaining to the Fralin's object study gallery, I begin with a consideration of Cuno's (2009) description of the encyclopedic museum and the educational attitudes at the foundation of American art museums that inform the ongoing wall text debate (Dobbs & Eisner, 1987). I then explore the implications of the display of cultural objects devoid of context using the work of Errington (1998), Morphy (2001), and Reese (2001).

The second section frames the literature of critical museology within the context of critical theory as described by Horkheimer (1972) and discusses the scholarship of King and Marstine (2006) and Lorente (2012), who called for university art museums to challenge established practice.

The third section situates postcolonial theory in relation to critical theory and outlines features of postcolonial theory that are essential to this study through the works of Said (1979; 1993) and Bhabha (1994) as well as secondary scholars (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2007; Barry, 2009; Boehmer, 1995; McLeod, 2000).

The fourth section explores the work of scholars dedicated to applying postcolonial theory to museum practice and reforming exhibition practices surrounding non-Western art, including Simpson (2001), Lonetree (2012), Morphy (2001), Orcutt (2013), Roberts (2013), and Boast (2011).

The fifth section contains a discussion of the work of scholars who established the importance of visitor-constructed meaning to the museum experience and the efficacy of multiple perspectives in the museum, including Hein (1998), Roberts (1997), Garoian (2001), and Hooper-Greenhill (2006), and illustrates how these goals align with the aims of postcolonial museum practice.

The final section explores the work of Reese (2001), who described the relationship between museums and their visitors with her theory of intertextual narrative pedagogy, using the work of Barthes (1974), Deleuze and Guattari (1976), and Landow (1992).

Considerations in the Display of Non-Western Art

Although the history of museums and their collecting practices is beyond the scope of this paper, it is useful to establish some fundamental tenants upon which encyclopedic museums were founded. In *Whose Culture*, Cuno (2009) stated:

Museums have value as repositories of objects dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and the dissolution of ignorance, where the artifacts of one culture are preserved and displayed next to others without prejudice. This is the view of the encyclopedic museum, the origins of which lay in the Enlightenment ideal of universal knowledge. The encyclopedic museum encourages broad understanding and appreciation of the historical interrelatedness of the world's diverse cultures and promotes inquiry and

tolerance. And in the process, it preserves our common legacy in the public domain for the benefit of the curious public. This is the promise of museums. (p. ix)

The Fralin echoes Cuno's statement in the goals of its object study gallery quoted in chapter one, and also in its primary mission statement:

The Museum promotes visual literacy as part of a broader comprehensive education for all and seeks to enhance its visitors' perceptions and understandings of world cultures throughout history and of arts as an enduring human endeavor. To this end the Museum shall acquire, preserve, study, exhibit, and interpret works of art of the highest quality in a variety of media, that represent the world's cultures from the earliest times to the present. (http://www.virginia.edu/artmuseum/about/mission)

As increasing numbers of art museums install open storage galleries of objects from their collections, the Fralin is not alone in the challenge to provide meaningful interpretive material in its object study gallery. In her study of several museum open storage galleries, Orcutt (2013) found that many institutions struggle with how much interpretation to deliver and how to deliver it. While some museums have utilized various technologies to make information about objects accessible to visitors, others, limited in staff time and resources, have simply put the objects on view without a comprehensive system of interpretation. However, decisions over how much information museums provide are not just practical considerations based on funding and staffing. They may be philosophical decisions as well.

In charting the history of art museums in the United States, many scholars have identified a schism between museums who regard the display of objects for contemplation as fulfillment of their educational mission, and those that adopt a more active approach to the education of their visitors. This debate—which began in the 19th century and continues today—has largely played

out in terms of the kinds and amount of interpretative material museums provide to accompany their exhibitions (Buffington, 2007; Dobbs & Eisner 1987; Eisner & Dobbs, 1988; Low, 1948; Rice, 1995). In a comprehensive survey on the status of museum education, Dobbs and Eisner (1987) found significant disagreement among museum directors on the role and importance of museum wall text, from those who felt that wall text satisfied viewers with information but discouraged them from looking at the artwork, to those who felt that thoughtful wall text was the museum's responsibility and promoted longer, more careful looking. A lengthy recent essay by Landi (2015), the editor of *Art News*, explored both sides of this debate as well as several controversies faced by museums over their wall text.

However, there are additional factors to consider in the display of ethnographic objects beyond the curatorial debate over interpretive material summarized above. Morphy (2001) asserted that the debate over presentation of ethnographic works originates in an artificial opposition between anthropology and art history:

> The anthropology of art seems at times to have been squeezed between—and distorted by—two myths: the myth adhered to by the art market and some art curators, that somehow an anthropological approach to Indigenous art created its otherness and separated it from Western artworks; and the anthropological myth that classifying works as 'art' imposed a Western categorization upon them. (p. 38)

Thus, Boucher's statement, "The goal [of the Fralin's object study gallery] is to foster slow looking at works from diverse cultures without the distraction of numerous labels" (B. Boucher, personal communication, February 16, 2015), reflects the view that information about a work of art can distract from the aesthetic appreciation of the object. Yet, Cuno's assertion that one of the purposes of the encyclopedic museum is to preserve and display material culture to

"encourage broad understanding and appreciation of the historical interrelatedness of the world's diverse cultures" (2009, p. ix) implies that there is more to understand and appreciate than visual similarities between world cultures.

In order to consider the objects as markers of cultural meaning, we must acknowledge Errington's (1998) assertion that few objects collected by Western art museums can be said to be entirely utilitarian in purpose, and that the majority of non-Western objects collected by Western art museums fall into two categories—those bearing formal similarities to modern art, or those with perceived monetary value or ritual significance for the making culture.

If we regard objects as having ritual significance, then we accept that the objects have meaning beyond their visual appearance that would be understood by and conferred upon them by their making culture. However, while objects sometimes convey their cultural meaning explicitly through inscribed images, many do not. Furthermore, symbols that would have been understood by the making cultures do not necessarily convey the same meanings to contemporary museum audiences without interpretation. Reese (2001) cited Bal and Bryson's (1991) application of the linguistic theories of Charles Sanders Pierce (Innis, 1985) to the perception of museum objects, proposing that we consider works of art as *texts* to be read. Viewed as signifying structures, the objects create associations for the viewer, just as words create associations for the reader. For example, a statue of the Buddha is not just a sculpture of a man sitting cross-legged with a hand raised in the air, just as a crucifixion is not just a sculpture of a man nailed to a cross. Each cultural object was created in a rich cultural environment, attended by complex historical significance and spiritual beliefs that inspired its creation, and these invisible traits contribute to how visitors understand them.

If they were familiar with an object, a native of the making culture might visualize some attendant sounds, smells, textures, and feelings associated with the creation or use of the object in addition to an understanding of or belief in the object's spiritual importance. Whereas viewers unfamiliar with the history and context of an object might bring mental images of similar objects viewed in books or other museums, entirely unrelated objects with similar visual characteristics, or personal reflections to their interpretation of the object.

Reese (2001) made the point that traditionally the single curatorial voice becomes the *text* for the object, in that it speaks *for* the object. While some scholars might argue that the absence of the curatorial voice in the Fralin's object study gallery allows the objects to speak for themselves, I contend that it effectively silences the objects in fundamental ways. If objects are placed on view without accompanying cultural and historical information, then how are visitors to "read" their cultural meaning and appreciate their "historical interrelatedness" (Cuno, 2009, p. ix) with other works? As Errington wrote in *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress*, "Depleted of historicity, anything that is similar visually to anything else, is indeed visually similar to anything else" (1998, p. 95). In light of this discussion, the Fralin's endeavor "to enhance visitors' perceptions and understandings of world cultures throughout history" would seem to be at odds with its display of cultural objects devoid of their context, and it was this contradiction that led me to pursue this research project.

Critical Theory and the Academic Museum

Critical theory is "a form of social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms" (Bohman, 2016, p.1) through critique and exposition of ideologies that shape social and cultural institutions. Horkheimer (1972) described the goal of critical theory as "man's emancipation from slavery" (p. 246) and asserted that "critical theory has no specific

influence on its side, except concern for the abolition of injustice" (p. 242). In other words, there are no specific conscripted practices that constitute enactment of critical theory. Horkheimer said as much when he explained, "Transmission [of critical theory] will not take place via solidly established practice and fixed ways of acting, but via concern for social transformation" (1972, p. 241). Elsewhere he stated, "The issue…is not simply the theory of emancipation; it is the practice of it as well" (Horkheimer, 1972, p. 233), indicating that a call to action is implicit in critical theory even if the particulars of that action are not prescribed.

In the past 30 years, the increasing application of critical theory to museum practice has resulted in creation of the new field of critical museology, and produced a growing body of literature by museum professionals aimed at exposing underlying cultural, intellectual, and economic power structures, and analyzing, critiquing, and reforming museum practice (Ebitz, 2008; Hooper-Greenhill, 2006; King & Marstine, 2006; Lindauer, 2006; Sandell, 2002).

Following the acknowledgement that museums shape knowledge (Eisner & Dobbs, 1988; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992; Vallance, 1995), the debate over what information museums provide and how they provide it took on political significance. In *The Power of Museum Pedagogy,* Hooper-Greenhill (2006) stated, "In museums, as in other epistemological sites, those who interpret artifacts, buildings and sites do so from their own perspectives, making some viewpoints visible while suppressing others" (p. 236). Summarizing the research of Duncan (1995), O'Neill (2002) stated even more emphatically, "In other words, art museums reinforce the existing power structure, not in some way peripheral to some other more central function, but because that is what they are for" (p. 29). For many museum professionals, this acknowledgement of the power of museums to shape knowledge was accompanied by a desire for action. In *Museums, Society, Inequality*, Sandell (2002) asserted, "museums and galleries of

all kinds have both the potential to contribute towards the combating of social inequality, and the responsibility to do so" (p. 3).

For King and Marstine (2006), university affiliated art museums are ideal sites for radical thinking and for exploring "the methods by which museums legitimize culture" (p. 267), "because they operate in an academic environment where the questioning of authority is encouraged" (p. 268). Similarly, Lorente (2012) argued that critical museology is the logical and essential next step for university programs in museum studies. Citing the development of critical anthropology, critical archaeology, and critical pedagogy, he asserted that museum studies programs must not just train students in traditional museum theory, but in critical evaluation of museum practice as well. The Fralin is a university art museum, and King and Marstines' (2006) and Lorente's (2012) perspective on university museums is particularly relevant to this project.

Many university art museums maintain or aspire to encyclopedic collections in support of their academic departments. However, Hein (1998), Simpson (2001), and Lonetree (2012) asserted that the very notion of an encyclopedic museum is itself a colonial enterprise, engaged in *by* imperial and colonizing countries *at the expense of* colonized peoples. It is in part this colonial history that led Ebitz (2008) to call for the application of postcolonial theory to museum practice.

Postcolonial Theory

Along with feminist theory and critical race theory, postcolonial theory is a critical theory in that it is based in concern for abolishing injustice. Although the 500-year history of colonialism by imperial nations is long and sordid and beyond the scope of this paper, a brief explanation of the colonial and imperial activity is necessary to understand the discussion of postcolonial theory that follows, and its applicability to the Fralin's object study gallery.

Said (1993) described imperialism as "the practice, theory, and attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory" (p. 8). Scholars define colonialism as "the settlement of territory, the exploitation of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands" (Boehmer, 1995, p. 2). McLeod (2000) explained that imperial regimes controlled the flow and structure of narrative about colonized cultures—portraying them as exotic, morally lax, and sexually degenerate—in order to justify their continued rule, and that colonial activity resulted in internalized racism experienced by colonized peoples, absorbed and unquestioned under centuries of domination:

> Under colonialism, a colonized people are made subservient to ways of regarding the world which reflect and support colonialist values. A particular value system is taught as the best, truest world-view. The cultural values of the colonized peoples are deemed as lacking in value, or even as being 'uncivilized', from which they must be rescued. To be blunt, the British Empire did not rule by military and physical force alone. It endured by getting *both colonising and colonised people* to see their world and themselves in a particular way, internalizing the language of Empire as representing the natural, true order of life. (McLeod, 2000, p. 19)

Scholars such Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak described an "internalized otherness" (McLeod, 2000, p. 21) as central to the postcolonial experience. Accordingly, postcolonial discourse originated in the mid-20th century out of shifting power relations following decolonization, and addressed attempts by oppressed peoples to regain control of their cultural narratives, while also facing complex issues of cultural hybridity and transnationalism.

Rather than focusing primarily on the experience of colonization, postcolonial theorist

Edward Said addressed the generation of cultural knowledge *by* the colonizers *about* the colonized people. With both *Orientalism* (1979) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said established that the production of cultural knowledge by one culture about another culture is itself a form of domination, explaining, "The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (1993, p. xiii). Elsewhere, Said (1979) described the insidious nature of knowledge-production:

> There is nothing mysterious or natural about authority. It is formed, irradiated, disseminated; it is instrumental, it is persuasive; it has status, it establishes canons of taste and value; it is virtually indistinguishable from certain ideas it dignifies as true, and from traditions, perceptions, and judgments it forms, transmits, reproduces. Above all, authority can, indeed must be analyzed. (p. 19-20)

In addition to describing how knowledge is constructed, Said (1993) also called for critique and interrogation of our own understandings as well as critique of cultural institutions when he wrote, "The job facing the cultural intellectual is therefore not to accept the politics of identity as given, but to show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components" (p. 314). This issue of the production of cultural knowledge and the deconstructive practices of postcolonial theory that reveal its production are both essential to discussion of the Fralin's object study gallery.

Cultural hybridity is one of the most contested areas of postcolonial scholarship, but one essential to consider in relation to this project. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2007) explained that cultural hybridity has become associated with ideas of transcultural synergy, and explained, "criticism of the term…stems from the perception that theories that stress mutuality *necessarily*

downplay oppositionality" (p. 109). Said (1993) asserted the necessity for an understanding of "all culture as hybrid (in Homi Bhabha's complex sense of that word) and encumbered, or entangled and overlapping with what used to be regarded as extraneous elements" (p. 317). A closer reading of Bhabha on the subject yields this explanation:

> A willingness to descend into that alien territory…may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*national culture, based not on exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space—that carries the burden of meaning of culture. (1994, p.38)

Despite its complexities, it is necessary for us to grapple with the concept of hybridity for two reasons: 1) because many of the objects in Fralin's object study gallery were created in complex colonial and postcolonial environments which influenced their production, and 2) because the objects reside in a museum where their meaning is open to interpretation by visitors.

Barry (2009) provided a summary of six aims of postcolonial theory, which are useful to conclude this discussion of postcolonial theory, and consider as we explore the work of scholars who apply postcolonial theory to museum practice:

- Rejects Western claims to universalism

- Examines representations of other cultures

- Ends silence on colonization

- Foregrounds representations of cultural difference and diversity

- Celebrates hybridity and cultural polyvalence

- Views states of marginality and plurality as sources of energy and change

In addition to these six aims articulated by Barry, Said's (1979) view of knowledge production as a colonizing process and Bhabha's (1994) view of cultural meaning as a negotiated exchange are both key to this project's application of postcolonial theory to museum education. Said (1993) shared King and Marstine's (2006) and Lorente's (2012) view of the role of the academic museum, when he explained that he sought out "the utopian space still provided by the university, which I believe must remain a place where such vital issues [as postcolonialism] are investigated, discussed, [and] reflected on" (p. xxvi).

Postcolonial Museum Practice

In *Making Representations: Museums in the Postcolonial Era*, Simpson (2001) echoed many of the same concerns cited by Barry (2009) when she articulated the complex issues facing museums in the postcolonial era:

In Europe, as in North America, Australia and New Zealand, the plurality of contemporary post-colonial society gives rise to complex issues in relation to museums: display and interpretation, the classification and values attached to objects; cultural bias in representing other cultures; the lack of representation of cultural diversity in local history collections; demands for self-representation and self-expression. (p. 2)

In this section I present some fundamental claims by scholars who advocate for the application of postcolonial museum practice and decolonization of the museum, including representation of indigenous perspectives, the provision of historical and contextual information, the identification of source documents and authorship, and contemporary representations of indigenous cultures.

Among scholars who seek to decolonize the museum, one cornerstone is the representation of indigenous perspectives in the museum, and the assertion that engaging native

peoples in the interpretation of their own cultural objects can begin to mitigate some of the damages wrought by colonization (Lonetree, 2012; Simpson 2001). In *Decolonizing the Museum*, Lonetree (2012) stated, "The decolonizing direction enables museums to become places for decolonizing representations of native peoples and for promoting community healing and empowerment. In other words, museums become a means for repairing colonization's harm" (p. 171).

However, in *Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited,* Boast (2011) offered a critique of the concept of the "contact zone" as described by Clifford (1997). Specifically, Boast asserted that the contact zone—developed as a sphere in which indigenous stakeholders can interact with and respond to objects in museum collections—was in fact, "negotiated space for certain kinds of cultural exchange and transactions necessary for the maintenance of the imperialistic program" (2011, p. 57). In essence, Boast argued that when museums controlled objects created by indigenous cultures, and invited stakeholders to supply information or participate in interpretation of objects—at the museum's *invitation*, and for the museum's *benefit*—they were inadvertently perpetuating neocolonial agendas even as they attempted to rectify historic wrongs.

Thus, any museum practitioner who seeks indigenous perspectives on museum objects for the purposes of deepening the interpretive materials offered by the museum must also acknowledge the political implications of doing so. In my reading, I have also discerned a difference between the term "decolonizing the museum" (Lonetree, 2012; Simpson; 2001) and the application of postcolonial theory to museum practice (Ebitz, 2008). Decolonizing the museum, according to Lonetree (2012), Simpson (2001), and *Decolonizing Methodologies* author Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), consists of museums giving control of cultural

representations over to indigenous peoples or making indigenous voices dominant in the museum. As I understand it, although I welcomed indigenous contributions to this project, I—as a white American woman—can never personally decolonize the museum. I do assert, however, that I can be involved in applying postcolonial theory to museum practice, as the following discussion will illustrate.

While indigenous perspectives are a primary issue for scholars interested in postcolonial museum practice, the issues of historical and cultural context for objects and the authorship of that information are also important. Echoing Eisner and Dobbs' (1988) critique of the curatorial practice of omitting wall text, Morphy (2001) asserted, "It is a conceit of a particularly narrow band of Western art theory and practice that the appreciation and production of art has nothing to do with knowledge of its particular art history" (p. 43). In *Seeing Aboriginal Art in the Gallery*, Morphy (2001) challenged the exhibition of indigenous objects without cultural context on both moral and intellectual grounds:

> While people can appreciate any work of art through the lens of their own culture's aesthetics, just as they can appreciate the aesthetics of found objects, they must realize that this is precisely what they are doing. They must not be under the illusion that they are experiencing the work as a member of the producing culture would. The failure to provide the background knowledge necessary to interpret the object in relation to the producers' culture can then be challenged both on moral grounds, and on the grounds that it impoverishes the interpretation. (p. 41)

Both Orcutt (2013) and Roberts (2013) echoed Morphy's call for greater responsibility and transparency in the interpretation of cultural objects in the museum. In *Open Storage Dilemma,* Orcutt (2013) asserted, "A true democratization of knowledge that transcends

interpretation involves making primary documents available to visitors for their own consideration, and making the level of mediation visible so that visitors can choose the level or type of interpretation they desire" (p. 215). According to Lorente (2012), "a fundamental plea of critical museology is that wall labels should bear the names of their authors, putting an end to the anonymous authoritative voice of the museum and revealing that wall text presents a subjective view" (p. 245). Roberts (2013) was even more explicit in her call for educators to reveal their methods when she wrote, "To the extent that that we now view knowledge as a largely social construction, shaped by wider cultural and historical conditions, it is incumbent upon educators to frame their work accordingly" (p. 79-80).

Simpson (2001) also critiqued museums for depicting indigenous cultures as frozen in the past, suggesting either that the culture has vanished or that the lifestyle of its participants remains unaltered from that of their ancestors. Instead, she argued for contemporary representations of indigenous peoples to be included alongside historical information, and for museums to address contemporary issues faced by indigenous peoples.

Although further exploration of the complex issues at stake in the discourse over postcolonial museum practice is beyond the scope of this paper, this cursory review of the work of Simpson (2001), Lonetree (2012), Morphy (2001), Orcutt (2013), Roberts (2013), and Boast (2011) suggests these general aims of postcolonial museum practice:

- Represents indigenous perspectives, both historical and contemporary
- Provides historical and contextual information on objects
- Provides access to source documents and transparency of authorship
- Questions curatorial authority and singular representations
- Represents multiple perspectives

- Makes connections between indigenous cultures and wider human cultural patterns

Based on these criteria, museums could move in the postcolonial direction by providing contextual information on the objects; ending the silence surrounding the colonial context of the acquisition of some of the objects; representing multiple points-of-view including indigenous perspectives; providing source documents and foregrounding the subjective nature of the curatorial voices represented; making connections between cultures; and portraying contemporary perspectives on the cultures represented.

Visitor-Constructed Meaning in the Art Museum

Despite the paradigmatic shift towards critical theory amongst many scholars and museum professionals, Ebitz (2008) reported that this activist agenda was slow to extend to the field of museum education. Hooper-Greenhill (2006) asserted that the upsurge of critical museology continued the traditional focus on museums' curatorial practices, while largely ignoring the essential role that museum visitors play in the construction of meaning. However, I contend that concurrent developments in the field of art museum education dovetail with aims of postcolonial museum practice and the reform of exhibition practices surrounding non-Western art. This section charts the increasing prominence of visitor meaning-making in the field of art museum education, and explores its compatibility with the aforementioned goals of postcolonial museum practice.

Constructivist theories of learning contend that individuals construct meaning and acquire new knowledge based on past experience and prior knowledge. Constructivists view the human brain as a sorting mechanism that looks for patterns and analogous relationships, in which newly experienced information and objects are understood within the context of existing structures (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Adopting a constructivist view of learning, Hein (1998) and others

claimed that learning in museums occurs as visitors interpret what they see. Hooper-Greenhill (2006) explained, "Visitors engage in a continuous process of interpretation in order to make these experiences personally meaningful. Learning can be described as those processes which link the known and the unknown, knowledge and experience in order to produce meaning" (p. 238). Wilson McKay and Monteverde (2003) asserted that dialogic looking is a process that most museum visitors engage in naturally, and explained, "In *dialogic looking*, viewers exchange observations memories and associations with partners, while maintaining a second internal dialogue as they work to understand images they encounter" (p. 41). Each of these scholars articulates how visitors construct meaning within the museum space.

However, this increased focus on visitor meaning-making is not meant to replace traditional curatorial practice and the presentation of information, but to enhance it. Roberts (1997) advocated for including the social and historical context of objects in exhibitions as well as alternative cultural perspectives, and asserted that such practices by museums could "engage visitors in constructing narratives about what they see" (p. 143). Introducing what she described as a narrative model of education, Roberts asserted that such a model "requires that museums do what they have always done, which is present messages; but that they must do it in a way that is respectful of the narratives constructed by viewers, and that is conscious of and explicit about the constructive process engaged in by museums themselves" (p. 146). In other words, an exhibition that invites visitor-constructed meaning without also providing information is no more desirable than an exhibition that only provides an authoritative curatorial perspective. Roberts' (1997) advocacy for museums to be explicit in regards to their curatorial voice is consistent with scholars of postcolonial museum practice, who call for curators to be identified on wall text (Boast, 2011; Lorente, 2012; Morphy, 2001; Orcutt, 2013).

Instead of advocating for visitor meaning-making to replace curatorial authority, many museum educators see the dynamic tension between intended meanings of the works, curatorial didactics, and visitor-conferred meaning as a source of vitality for museums, and the essence of the educative process in which they engage. McLean (1999) noted:

Our times seem to be framed by an increasingly complex and layered dialectic of privilege, expert knowledge, and prescriptive meaning-making on the one hand, and access, popular culture, and the negotiations of meaning on the other. The public spectacle of exhibitions makes them a particularly dynamic stage for this unfolding dialogue. (p. 103)

Citing Felman and Laub's (1992) claim that a crisis of knowledge is essential to the learning process, Garoian (2001) asserted that "the disjunctive relationship between the museum's art historical content and the autobiographical content introduced by the viewers enables critical pragmatism to take place" (p. 236). Hooper-Greenhill (1992) stated, "History must abandon its absolutes, and instead of attempting to find generalizations and unities, should look for differences, for change and rupture" (p.10). Educators who see difference and rupture as sources of energy and change echo the views of postcolonial theorists who advocate for the celebration of hybridity and cultural polyvalence, and view states of marginality and plurality as sources of energy and change (Barry, 2009).

In *The Power of Museum Pedagogy,* Hooper-Greenhill (2006) described museum visitors as active, unpredictable interpreters of what museums present, and cited this as one of the main reasons why museums wield such powerful pedagogic potential. The second major reason she cited was that objects housed in museum collections are inherently capable of communicating multiple meanings:

The polysemic character of artifacts means that museums can use their collections to tell

multiple stories; the reinterpretation of objects opens up possibilities for bringing new

stories to light, re-presenting the events of the past in new ways. The active interpretive

processes used by audiences mean that museum visitors are able to use the objects,

events, and visual narratives they find as raw materials for constructing their own stories,

for their own purposes. And where audiences are used to coauthor museum narratives,

new perspectives on old stories may emerge. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2006, p. 238)

Garoian (2001) argued that "broadening the museums institutional pedagogy to include

viewers' personal and social knowledge and experiences introduces critical content to museum

experiences" (p. 235), and explained:

While they are conserved, preserved and secured for posterity, works of art represent the

potential to dialogue with history; for us to expose, examine, and critique cultural codes.

They also provide the possibility to imagine and create new cultural myths, new ways of

exhibiting and interpreting works of art that take into consideration content introduced by

museum visitors. (p. 236)

The dynamic that Garoian and Hooper-Greenhill articulated is that museums can be

places where visitors are prompted to engage in active learning through critical analysis of

cultural practices, rather than passive reception of knowledge. Summarizing new directions in

museum education, Hornsby (2007) claimed that museums are moving away from didactic

models of interpretation towards models that allow for ambiguity of interpretation and meaning,

and wrote: "Multiple readings, personal insights, cultural learning contexts, and social practices

surrounding works of art are now beginning to be acknowledged and valued" (p. 166).

Together these scholars demonstrate growing acknowledgement of the importance of visitor-constructed interpretation of museum objects and exhibitions, and place it in contrast with authoritatively delivered, curatorially determined interpretation. From this exploration of recent scholarship in art museum education, I outline these general aims for interpretive strategies consistent with new museology:

- Encourage and support visitor meaning-making

- Provide information, and acknowledge subjectivity of curatorial voice

- Embrace conflict and difference as integral to the learning process

- Diversify methods of interpretation

- Present alternative cultural perspectives

- Critique cultural codes and practices

Hypertext Theory and Reese's Intertextual Narrative Pedagogy

Within the context of this critical direction in museum education, several scholars have further theorized the relationship between museums and their visitors, including Garoian (2001), Ebitz (2007), and Reese (2001). Of these scholars, I focus specifically on Reese's work, because it parallels the aims of this project most closely.

Reese (2001) aligned herself with Hooper-Greenhill (2006), Roberts (1997), and Garoian (2001), and asserted that the presentation of a single curatorial voice in the museum discourages museum visitors from making important personal and critical connections between artworks and their own experiences. She wrote, "The pedagogical practice of presenting one perspective is considered problematic because it seems to render all other points of view ineffective, unimportant, untrue, or even invisible" (p. 52). As in postcolonial museum practice, the

presentation of multiple perspectives is considered by contrast to open up interpretive possibilities:

> Through a transformation based on the inclusion of multiple, diverse, and critically considered narratives, current theorists propose that new practices could emerge that nurture multiple knowledges, rather than knowledge, that facilitate multiple interpretations rather than an interpretation, and encourage numerous narratives rather than a single narrative. (p. 52)

Reese applied the work of postmodern theorists Roland Barthes (1974) and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guittari (1976), as well as George Landow's (1992) hypertext theory to articulate the relationship between museum visitors and art objects and exhibitions.

Hypertext technology utilizes web-based links to allow users to travel fluidly between different sites to access different related texts. Prior to its implementation on the web, the development of hypertext as a concept has been attributed to Vannevar Bush (1945) and Ted Nelson (1987) (Landow, 1992; Lanier, 2013). Landow (1994) drew parallels between hypertext theory and the works of poststructuralist scholars Barthes and Deleuze and Guattari, arguing that both arose from "dissatisfaction with the printed book and hierarchical thought" (p. 1).

Barthes was a French literary theorist who argued that the meanings of texts are determined not by the intentions of their authors, but in the process of interpretation by their readers. In advocating for more open, writerly reading of literary works, Barthes (1974) famously stated, "The goal of the literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text" (p. 4). He explained:

> In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no

beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can authoritatively be declared to be the main one. (Barthes, 1974, p. 5)

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) described a networked system of knowledge and equated it with the underground root system of rhizomatic grasses, in contrast to a tree-like, hierarchical conception of knowledge:

A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. (p. 7)

Subsequently, the rhizomatic theories of Deleuze and Guattari (1976; 1987) became important in the conception of hypertext theory, with Landow (1992), Aarseth, (1994), and Rosenberg (1994) all drawing upon them to explain aspects of hypertext. Some advocates of hypertext theory have also cited the liberatory aspects of the democratization of knowledge as a benefit of the technology (Aarseth, 1994; Landow, 1992; Landow; 1994; Rosenberg, 1994). Rosenberg (1994) asserted that hypertext democratizes knowledge through the participatory capabilities it provides for the reader:

These patterns explode the relationship between writer and reader by making the role of the reader more participatory, even subversive, and it is this subversion that proponents have cited as an example of how transformative the experience of hypertext art and pedagogy might become. (p. 273)

As cited earlier in this chapter, Reese (2001) proposed that we apply Pearce's (Innis,

1985) semiotics theory to the perception of the objects as texts to be read. Citing Landow (1992),

Barthes (1974), and others at length on the subject of intertextuality—the relationship of one to

text to another—Reese asserted:

> All of the possible connections, whether revealed explicitly or not, are intertexts,
> suggest(ing) that there are numerous relationships and interpretations that could stem
> from a single text. Intertextual relationships can thus be understood as the numerous
> potential connections that could be constructed among an infinite number of objects,
> ideas, people and places…intertextuality is the always present space of possible
> relationships between texts that have the potential to be created and identified by both
> writers and readers. (2001, p. 62)

In this description of intertextuality, Reese seems to echo Bhabha's words, when he

stated, "it is the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space—

that carries the burden of meaning of culture" (1994, p.38).

Reese (2001) went beyond the ideas of intertextuality, and proposed intertextual narrative

pedagogy as a strategy for encouraging museum visitors in the generation of multiple

perspectives. Intertextual narrative pedagogical practice would draw upon the concept of

intertextuality, but also "provide a framework that includes disclosing, examining, and reflecting

in addition to revealing relationships among texts" (Reese, 2001, p. 67). She explained:

> To treat an exhibition text as an open narrative would be when numerous narratives,
> either similar or opposing, are available for other visitors to review and react to, or
> participate with by constructing their own variation…This does not suggest that each
> interpretation will be as interesting or insightful as the next, but that it is the process of

encouraging visitors to read, re-read, and re-write the exhibition through their own lenses

that may create meaningful encounters with works of art. (Reese, 2001, p. 59)

Barthes' (1974) theory of intertextuality, Deleuze and Guattari's (1976) theory of the

rhizome, Landow's (1992) hypertext theory, and Reese's (2001) theory of intertextual narrative

pedagogy are all germane to this project because together they provide an effective description of

how museum visitors construct meaning between objects and exhibitions and their own prior

knowledge and experience.

Conclusions from these Philosophical Considerations

Based on this review of literature, I assert that postcolonial museology and the

democratization of knowledge through visitor-constructed meaning share compatible goals,

which together can shift traditional museum practice to a more progressive stance. Marstine

(2006) articulated this possibility in her description of new museum theory:

> Theorists call for the transformation of the museum from a site of worship and awe to one
>
> of discourse and critical reflection that is committed to examining unsettling histories
>
> with sensitivity to all parties; they look to a museum that is transparent in its decision-
>
> making and willing to share power. New museum theory is about decolonizing, giving
>
> those represented control of their own cultural heritage. It's about real cross-cultural
>
> exchange. New museum theory is not, however, monolithic; it embraces many
>
> viewpoints. (p. 5)

I view the issues addressed by this project as continuums of practice. Thus, this

discussion of postcolonial theory and decolonization of the museum necessarily takes place

within the larger scope of possible interpretive strategies, and a graphic might best describe the

philosophical position of this project:
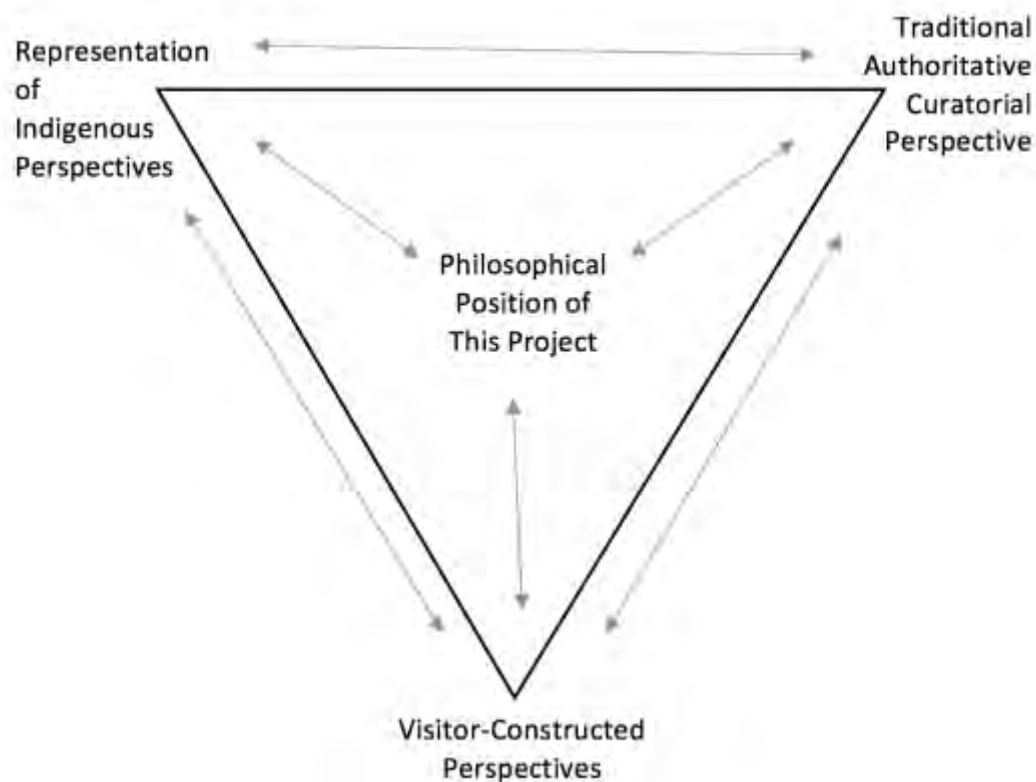
Figure 2.1: The philosophical position of this project

In this diagram, traditional museum practice is constituted by the presentation of a single anonymous curatorial perspective on the right, radical decolonization of the museum is constituted by solely representing indigenous voices on the left, and visitor-constructed meaning is represented at the bottom as the third point on the triangle. I argue that the fullest interpretation of objects and exhibitions encompasses all of these perspectives and presents them in relationship to and in dialogue with each other. For this reason, I situate this project at the philosophical center of these three positions, facilitating the negotiation of meaning between them.

Methodology and Methods

The *analog hypertext* I created falls within the methodology of Arts Based Educational Research (ABER) described by Barone and Eisner (2012). One of the key features of arts based educational research is the way it breaks down traditional distinctions among research methods, research data, and research findings. In this project, the analog hypertext functioned as both a research method for developing interpretive content and as an interpretive exhibition in itself. Therefore, this chapter describes the analog hypertext as a research method, while its aspects as data are incorporated into the next chapter on research findings.

The first section of this chapter establishes the efficacy of arts based educational research as a methodology for this project through the writings of Barone and Eisner (2012), Barone (2008), Leavy (2015), Rolling (2013), and Hafeli (2013). In the second section I describe key features of the *analog hypertext* method, including concept mapping (Hay, Kinchin & Lygo-Baker, 2008; Hill, 2005; Novak, 1998), collage (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Vaughn, 2005) and hypertext theory (Aarseth, 1994; Landow, 1992; Landow, 1994; Rosenberg, 1994). The final section presents a description of the development of the analog hypertext and outlines the ways it functioned as a data-gathering tool.

Methodology: Arts Based Educational Research

Arts Based Educational Research (ABER) is a form of qualitative research which explores, researches, and presents findings on issues through artistic processes, including

autobiography, dance, drama, narrative, poetry, music, visual arts, and performance. ABER can reveal concepts that are more effectively communicated through artistic production, or simply cannot be adequately explored through discursive means (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Hafeli (2013) described ABER as:

> Systematic qualitative inquiry—focused on the study of issues and topics related to teaching and learning—that uses visual art production methods, visual art forms, and artistic ways of thinking and practice as a means to: 1) generate research questions, 2) analyze and interpret information or data, and/or 3) communicate findings of the study. (p. 111)

I initially gravitated to ABER because I am a visual thinker, and had already developed a successful working method using visual concept mapping to explore connections between complex ideas. However, I also knew that the way that I envisioned the project at the beginning did not encompass all of its possibilities, and I desired a research methodology that would break down preconceived ideas and reveal new connections and potentialities. As I conducted more research, several features of arts based methodologies resonated with the unique conditions and aims of this project outlined in chapters one and two, and led me to adopt ABER as the methodology for this project. These features included disruption of dominant narratives, opportunities for viewer meaning-making, and the presentation of multiple perspectives, rather than singular representations.

Rolling (2013) described ABER as "research that seeks not to prove or disprove, but rather to create movement, to displace, to pull apart and allow for resettlement" (p. 99). Rolling applied Brown and Strega's (2005) scholarship on critical activist methodologies to arts based educational research, asserting that ABER has the ability to "produce resistant narratives—

counter stories to authoritative grand narratives that are critical, indigenous, or local, and anti-oppressive" (2013, p. 109). This critical activist stance is echoed throughout literature on arts based educational research. Leavy (2015) explained, "Visual art may serve as a vehicle for transmitting ideology while it can effectively be used to challenge, dislodge and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes" (p. 225). Barone and Eisner (2012) explained that the interrogative disposition of arts based research "promotes a level of dislocation, disturbance, disruptiveness, and disequilibrium that renders it sufficiently—even highly—useful, and therefore, in this unusual sense of the word, truthful" (p. 16). They asserted that this disruption of the status quo is a salient feature of arts based research, and that this "undercutting of a prevailing worldview may also mean a useful sort of emancipation of readers and viewers" (2012, p. 16). Each of these scholars (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015; Rolling, 2013) cited disruptive capacities of arts based educational research methodologies that align with the goals of critical and postcolonial practice.

Echoing scholarship by Hein (1998), Hooper-Greenhill (2006), and Garoian (2001) explored in chapter two, Leavy (2015) made a case for arts based methodologies when she stated, "Art inherently opens up multiple meanings that are determined not only by the artists, but also by the viewer and the context of the viewing" (p. 224). Barone and Eisner (2012) reiterated this emphasis on viewer experience when they claimed that the aim of ABER is "to create an expressive form that will enable empathic participation in the lives of others and in the situations studied" (p.9). Barone (2008) reflected postcolonial concerns over single authoritative perspectives, as well as museum educators' interest in dialogic exchanges when he asserted, "Abandoning the monovocal text out of faith in the social imagination invites others to engage in truly dialogical conversation and possibilities" (p. 44).

Both Rolling (2013) and Barone and Eisner (2012) asserted that ABER is not intended to produce definitive results, but rather is meant to open up possibilities and dialogue. Barone (2008) asserted that ABER "challenges the comfortable, familiar, dominant master narrative, not by proffering a new, totalizing counter-narrative, but by luring an audience into an appreciation of an array of diverse, complex, nuanced images and partial local portraits of human growth and possibility" (p. 39). Barone and Eisner (2012) stated, "If art based social research—like art itself—may interrogate an entrenched ideological stance regarding social phenomena, it must do so without imposing a correct alternative ideology" (p. 122). Later they explained that arts based educational research "is intended to open up possibilities rather than converge upon a single, correct and true answer to a question" (2012, p. 158). This ability of ABER to communicate multiple and nuanced perspectives on complex issues is another way in which it supports the critical and postcolonial aims of this project.

This research project was not intended to provide definitive content for interpretive material on the objects studied, but rather to build a framework around which knowledge and dialogue about the objects could continue to develop. Barone and Eisner (2012) stated, "The purpose of arts based research is to raise significant questions and engender conversations rather than to proffer final meanings" (p. 166). I submit that their statement is equally applicable to museum education, and that arts based educational research is an ideal methodology for this project for precisely this same reason.

Methods: Concept Mapping + Collage + Hypertext Theory = Analog Hypertext

Within the methodology of arts based educational research, this project combined three methods to develop the research tool that I now describe as analog hypertext. I first developed this working method as a note-taking and research device, and later as a presentation form while

researching ideas that required mapping and visual imagery to be communicated fully. I later came to understand it as one of many possible artistic methods of research in relation to the general methodology of arts based educational research, as well as its origins within the context of concept mapping, collage, and hypertext. This section explores the fundamentals of concept mapping and collage as they apply to the project, as well as the relevant aspects of hypertext theory as it informs the project.

Concept mapping.

Concept mapping is a teaching and learning technique, in which concepts and ideas are linked by words describing relationships among them. Concept mapping developed out of social constructivist learning theory attributed to Vygotsky and Cole (1978), which holds that prior knowledge forms a scaffold for new learning (Hein, 1998; Jaramillo, 1996). Concept mapping is an effective teaching and learning tool because it encourages cooperation and collaborative learning, promotes critical thinking and problem solving skills, and fosters meaningful learning (Hay, Kinchin & Lygo-Baker, 2008; Hill, 2005; Novak, 1998). Meaningful learning (Novak, 1998) refers to the acquisition of new information and establishing its relationship with existing relevant knowledge.

By helping makers to organize knowledge and understand relationships between various concepts, concept mapping increases depth of learning (Hill, 2005). Hay, Kinchin, and Lygo-Baker (2008) recommended concept mapping because it can facilitate the transmission, creation and extension of knowledge, and the "emergence of new and individually acquired meaning" (p. 296). The analog hypertext model used in this research project incorporated the diagrammatic and representational aspects of concept mapping. In the analog hypertext objects were linked by the tour themes, the concepts or big ideas uniting objects from different cultures.

Collage.

Collage is an artistic technique in which fragments of paper and found images are applied onto a flat surface to create another image. Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) recommended both collage and concept mapping as effective tools for brainstorming and opening new possibilities in the initial stages of research. They suggested that collage is ideally suited to research involving open-ended exploration of thoughts and feelings, whereas concept mapping is more suited to organization, analysis, and interpretation of data. Davis (2008) claimed that most collage derives its meaning from unexpected juxtapositions of images. For Davis (2008), her interest in collage was "primarily grounded in its capacity to disrupt, parody, and challenge the logic and sophism of conventional signifying practices and representations" (p. 246), suggesting it as an appropriate method for the goals of this project.

The scope of artists using collage as a research tool range from artists who employ it to investigate their own artistic and teaching practice, such as Holbrook and Pourchier (2014), to those who use it in a manner very similar to this project. Vaughn (2005) used collage to explore a family photograph album and informed her own artistic practice in the process. Butler-Kisber (2008) described a group collage project undertaken as an evaluative assessment tool for the collaborative working method used by the group. Ashworth (2015) created an enormous art installation, titled *cathARTic*, that documented her educational journey in pursuit of a PhD in art education. Her installation includes pages of research notes, images of her workspace and travels, and annotated pages from her dissertation applied to a wall-sized collage.

Each of these artists used collage in a slightly different way than it is used in the analog hypertext, but together they represent the range of possibilities. Within this range of possibilities, the analog hypertext falls on the conservative side, using collage primarily as a straightforward

way to present whole images. However, Vaughn (2005) cited claims by Lionnet (1989) and Harding (1996) that collage can be a decolonizing and postcolonial practice because it challenges traditional, hierarchical representations of knowledge. In this project, the collaged analog hypertext exhibition derives its power and disruptive capabilities from its status as an alternative, arts based form of educational research, more than through its juxtaposition of images.

Hypertext theory.

In chapter two, we explored key features of hypertext theory that have been adapted by museum educators to theorize visitor meaning-making. Although this project did not implement hypertext technology, the analog hypertext method drew on three important aspects of hypertext theory in its development: 1) the scale of its information, 2) its rhizomatic, networked organization of that information, and 3) its participatory capabilities.

In hypertext, text is formatted in easily digestible "bite-sized chunks" (Nix & Spiro, 1990, p. 185) of information, rather than being presented in large, hierarchically organized blocks. Aarseth (1994) described the individual textual units that comprise a hypertext document as scriptons, while Landow (1994) described them as lexia. This view of knowledge as divisible into small, consumable units was foundational to the development of the analog hypertext because museum visitors are most likely to read text labels between 50 and 120 words in length (Serrell, 1996; Temme 1992), and because museum visitors interact with museum exhibitions in different ways with different goals, and desire differing amounts of interpretive text (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Hein, 1998; Serrell, 1996).

The second aspect of hypertext theory that was fundamental to the development of the project was its organizational structure. Echoing Vallance's (1995) description of museums as "informal, randomly accessed structures of knowledge" (p. 4), Landow (1994) and Aarseth

(1994) described hypertexts as systems of texts with multiple random access points. Aarseth (1994) claimed that the key democratizing feature of hypertext is its fundamentally "non-linear topology" (p. 61); texts can be entered at any point and readers can travel from the entry point to any other point within the document. Art educators who apply hypertext theory in their work and research appreciate its ability to make visible links among concepts, thoughts, ideas, and research in a web that traces the evolution of process (Carpenter & Taylor, 2006).

The analog hypertext map first democratizes knowledge by offering multiple perspectives on the objects—instead of one authoritative view—and then again by offering visitors the opportunity to contribute their own observations and perspectives. By facilitating and making visible visitor-constructed meaning, this "writerly" (Barthes, 1974, p. 4) aspect is the third fundamental contribution that hypertext theory makes to the project at hand.

In *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) asserted that "structures of power characterize themselves in terms of unities, hierarchies, binaries and centers" (p. 191) even though they actually *operate* in a dispersed, rhizomatic manner, and explained that postcolonial theory sometimes invokes the rhizome to contest this myth of monolithic colonial power. If imperialism is fundamentally rhizomatic as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007) described, then I assert that the rhizomatic organization of analog hypertext is an effective tool to combat imperialism because it offers visual means by which to illustrate the invasive, rhizomatic nature of prejudice, as well as the opportunity to address instances of prejudice as they arise.

Description of the Analog Hypertext Process

The original goal of this research was to develop interpretive materials for the Fralin's object study gallery, which provided multiple theoretical "lenses" or perspectives through which

to view the objects and their installation within the room. For this reason, preparation for this project included preliminary consultations with colleagues in art history and anthropology to obtain their perspective on the objects in the Fralin's object study gallery and their presentation. Some of these scholars provided information about specific objects, while others offered theoretical and disciplinary perspectives that might be explored in the project. Although each scholar contributed his or her own disciplinary perspective, it was a key goal of the project to develop interpretive material that supported and inspired connections among disciplines.

To start the project, I began by printing photographs of each of the 140 objects in the Fralin's object study gallery, and laying them out on large sheets of paper in the same configuration as they appear within the gallery. I created ten vertical panels three feet wide and seven feet in height; the final installation measures seven feet tall and runs 30 linear feet. The ten panels correspond approximately to the glass panels fronting the cases in the object study gallery, behind which the objects are organized roughly by geographical region of origin.

After applying the images to the ten panels, I labeled each piece with the caption information available in the binder within the room. Interns scanned all available research and documentation from each object file in the museum's collection department. These files contained personal correspondence from donors, documents pertaining to provenance and value, original documentation that accompanied donations, research documents of various lengths and varying quality conducted by students and faculty dating back decades, information on comparable objects, and relevant articles or research on related topics.

I read each file, identifying key aspects of the research, but also looking for links with other objects within the room, connections to my knowledge, and the prior knowledge that visitors might bring to their interactions with the objects. Important sections of text from the

object files and research were photocopied and applied to the analog hypertext map in proximity to each object. I highlighted key points in each text or copied them onto Post-it notes. Additional research questions and personal comments were also written on Post-it notes and applied to the map. Where the collection objects were fragments of larger objects, I located images of whole objects and applied them to the analog hypertext map to provide more comprehensive information, as well as images of similar objects, or objects in their traditional context. As I read, I engaged in frequent explorations into new topics, either to supplement my prior knowledge, or to explore entirely new topics.

Several key themes emerged from the research, including techniques used in the creation of the objects; issues of craftsmanship and the role of artists in different cultures; similarity of design elements across cultures; how the evolution of technology affected what was created by different cultures; the role of colonial histories in the collection and presentation of the objects; the way in which art functions as a commodity in different cultures; the role of art in mortuary practices around the globe; and the creation and use of artistic objects in daily spiritual practice.

Many possible tour themes emerged over the four-month development process. The criteria I used to determine the final tour themes included: Were there sufficient objects to represent the idea across several cultures? Would the topic qualify as a *big idea* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) to most viewers? Would the theme be interesting and engaging to visitors? Although this last point is difficult to evaluate without qualitative research, it is important because—as several scholars of museum education have noted—while museums are educational institutions, people visit them not just to learn, but for recreational and social purposes as well (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). Based on these criteria, I identified five strong

tour themes from these possibilities: *mortuary rituals*, *spiritual practice*, *postcolonial perspectives*, *art as commodity*, and *technology and cultural evolutionism*.

Figure 3.1 shows the project installed at The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative—a non-profit community art space in Charlottesville, Virginia—for three weeks beginning with an opening reception on January 8, 2016. The active intellectual nature of this project, and the opportunity for community engagement made it a natural fit with The Bridge's mission for their gallery space. In preparation for the public exhibition of the analog hypertext, I conducted additional research on each of the five key themes, wrote short essays introducing visitors to the important ideas explored on each themed self-guided tour, and produced five hand-held rack cards each devoted to one of the tour themes. Post-it notes on the installation were color-coded to correspond with the tour themes, enabling visitors to locate and read comments and text associated with each tour theme, while also providing access to additional information related to each object and other tour themes.

The opening of the installation was attended by some 75 visitors, who ranged in age from five-year-olds to octogenarians. Although the scope of this research project did not include formal study of visitors' *verbal* responses to the exhibition, visitors were invited to contribute to the exhibition by adding their thoughts, questions, and knowledge, as well as additional images

Figure 3.1: Analog Hypertext Exhibition at The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative

or responses to the objects and information they viewed. The scope of visitors' contributions, including personal responses, drawings of objects, factual information, questions, and suggestions for themed tours on various subjects, will be explored in chapter four. These contributions were determined permissible data without IRB approval, because they were made voluntarily and anonymously to a public exhibition.

Conclusion to Methodology and Methods

The disruptive capacities of arts based educational research are well suited to this project, which seeks to disrupt standard museum practice through the application of critical and postcolonial theory. Within the methodology of arts based educational research, this project proposed a new approach to museum interpretation by developing interpretive material using the analog hypertext method—an approach which removed the traditional, hierarchical treatment of the subject "for the kind of re-creation that follows from openness to the possibilities of alternative perspectives on the world" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 16). Like Brown and Strega (2005), my intention in using arts based educational research in the form of an analog hypertext was:

> To contribute to the project of having research reflect, both in terms of its processes and in terms of the knowledge it constructs, the experience, expertise, and concerns of those who have traditionally been marginalized in the research process and by widely held beliefs about what 'counts' as knowledge. (p. 6)

Findings

The central question in this project was: How can multiple critical perspectives and visitor meaning-making be represented in an art museum object study gallery? In chapter two, I established that museums could move in a postcolonial direction by: providing contextual information on the objects; ending the silence surrounding the colonial context of the acquisition of some of the objects; representing multiple points-of-view including indigenous perspectives; providing source documents and foregrounding the subjective nature of the curatorial voices

Figure 4.1: Introductory Materials for the Analog Hypertext Exhibition

represented; making connections between cultures; and portraying contemporary perspectives on the cultures represented.

The project proposed the analog hypertext method as one tool that may be used to research objects, create interpretive installations representing multiple critical perspectives, and facilitate visitor meaning making in museum galleries. Figures 1.1-1.5 in chapter one show the Fralin's object study gallery in its current state without visible interpretive material. In chapter three, Figure 3.1 shows the 7 x 30 ft. analog hypertext during its exhibition in January of

The Object Study Gallery at the University of Virginia's Fralin Museum of Art contains approximately 140 objects from different time periods and cultures throughout the world, spanning 5000 years and nearly every continent. The artifacts include utilitarian objects for everyday use, as well as sacred objects created for ritual use and spiritual devotion.

Basic information about the geographic origin, culture, materials, and date of each object is available to museum visitors. Developing more extensive interpretive material for the objects is a daunting task, but in the absence of more information, visitors interpret the objects through the filter of their own prior knowledge or preconceived ideas about the cultures they represent. Even when museums provide wall text about objects, they often present only one perspective on the work: that of its art historical relevance *or* its religious significance *or* its practical function, but rarely *all* of these perspectives at once.

This exhibition takes its title from a talk by Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie, who speaks eloquently here about "the danger of the single story":

> "I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make *one* story become the *only* story."

This installation is an effort to make the artifacts in the Fralin's Object Study Gallery more accessible to visitors who may be unfamiliar with the artistic traditions they represent. The project utilizes a form of arts-based research—in which the art making process is the *method* of research—to create a web of information pertaining to the objects. This web, which combines collage and concept mapping with aspects of computer hypertext, was used to identify recurring themes and connections among the objects, yielding multiple perspectives and "stories" about them.

My hope is that the exhibition will introduce visitors new ways of thinking about these objects, assist them in making connections between the objects, and encourage them to ask more questions when they are in museums.

Figure 4.2: Introductory Text Panel for the Analog Hypertext

2016, at The Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative in Charlottesville, Virginia. Figure 4.1 shows the supporting introductory panel that accompanied the exhibition, informed visitors of the

intentions of the project, and invited their participation. Figures 4.2-4.3 provide details of text panels in Figure 4.1.

This chapter begins by documenting each of the five tour themes developed and presented through the analog hypertext: *art as commodity*, *spiritual practice*, *technology and cultural evolutionism*, *mortuary rituals*, and *postcolonial perspectives*, and discusses how these themes meet the goals of critical and postcolonial museum practice. The chapter continues with

How to Use this Exhibition

There are many ways to use this exhibition.

You may browse the photographs and notes and text at will until you settle upon something that attracts your deeper interest. You may gravitate to a panel with works you recognize, or from an area that interests you, and explore the works on that panel in more depth by reading their accompanying text and images. You may devote extended time to reading one of the scholarly papers attached to the installation for a more thorough understanding of one work.

Or, you may choose to explore one of the five themed tours developed through the process of this research. There are countless recurring themes and connections between these objects, which could be elucidated through further research. These five topics are merely the first to emerge. The hand-held guides below each offer an introduction to a themed tour, which can then be explored through objects from several cultures. The notes on the panels in the installation are color-coded according to theme: spiritual practice, postcolonial perspectives, mortuary rituals, technology and cultural evolutionism, and art as commodity.

Along the way, I hope you will take the time to add your own knowledge or questions to the map. Please use the color-coding system provided, and write legibly so others may enjoy your contributions. The computers and printers are available for you to look up additional information, or print images, which will enhance our collective understanding of these objects, and diversify their stories.

Figure 4.3: How to Use this Exhibition

documentation of visitors' contributions to the analog hypertext, which are explored under four headings: associations with prior knowledge, drawings of objects, humorous comments, and suggestions for new tour themes. The chapter concludes by summarizing the analog hypertext's representation of both visitor meaning-making and multiple critical perspectives, meeting the criteria set out by Hein (1998), Roberts (1997), Garoian (2001), and Hooper-Greenhill (2006), and that of Simpson (2001), Lonetree (2012), Morphy (2001), Orcutt (2013), and Boast (2011).

Art as Commodity Tour

For each tour theme I created a handheld card to introduce the theme. The *Art as Commodity* tour theme was introduced with the text shown in Figure 4.4. Figure 4.5 shows the main object on the left, Murayana the Yirritja Honey Man, accompanied by a description provided by the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection and a supporting image of a similar figure on the right. Other text just out of view explains Murayana's importance and his relationship to Burl'manydji, the shark who hangs above him. Notes explain that collector John Kluge commissioned the objects, and that

art as commodity

Placing a work of art within the museum setting confers perceived value on it, and museum visitors often want to know how much a work of art is worth. The question of how art accrues value is hotly contested, and can include its age, the reputation of its maker, its rarity, and its authenticity.

However, the concept of authenticity is itself a contested arena, because it is defined as both: *real and genuine; not copied or false*, and: *made to be or look just like an original*. Many of the objects in this installation were created by artisans in colonized cultures. For individual craftsmen and women whose artistry is appreciated by collectors outside their own culture, art can become a valuable source of economic independence.

Objects that would originally have been created for functional use, or ritual or spiritual practice, are then sometimes made specifically for the purpose of sale to tourists and collectors. Does the creation of an object for sale, or the creation of multiple originals, make an object less valuable or less authentic?

This tour examines three aspects of art as commodity: the role of art as an economic resource to its makers; the role of art as a tradable commodity with political implications on a national level; and questions of value and authenticity in the age of mass production.

Figure 4.4: Art as Commodity Intro

Figure 4.5: Art as Commodity – Ramingining Sculpture

Aboriginal people had no tradition of figurative sculpture prior to these commissions. At the far right in proximity to a functional food-gathering vessel a visitor contributed a comment suggesting that the collection of objects "may encourage indigenous peoples to identify with those objects—perhaps far more than pre-contact natives did, perhaps skewing cultural life as a whole."

The *N'Tomo* mask at the center of Figure 4.6 illustrates the complex nature of art as a commodity in postcolonial societies. In the analog hypertext it is shown beside an early *N'Tomo* mask constructed from wood decorated with berries and cowrie shells and valued at $25,000 to $35,000 as well as a mask similar to the Fralin's that is being de-accessioned by another museum for $200. Notes describe how *N'Tomo* masks gradually changed form as a result of demand from Western collectors and the introduction of sheet metal. The turquoise note (*spiritual practice*)

Figure 4.6: Art as Commodity – N'Tomo Mask

discusses the *N'Tomo* masks' role in coming-of-age ceremonies for Bamana boys, and the orange notes (*postcolonial perspectives*) present the possibility that the mask represents both its original meaning as a spiritual object, as well as the demise of that spiritual tradition, because it was created as a touristic object.

In Figure 4.7 images of Hopi and Zia vessels are supplemented with information about contemporary Hopi and Zia potters, including Eleanor Pino-Griego, one of the Zia pueblo's well-known potters. This area discusses how the collectability of Pueblo Indian pottery makes it a source of revenue for native peoples. Here I also describe my own experiences visiting pueblos as a child—how the newness and large numbers of pots diminished my desire for them—and question whether collectors' valuation of age in an object might be connected to a felt void of tradition and meaning in their own culture. At right a yellow note bears a small ink drawing of

Figure 4.7: Art as Commodity – Pueblo Pottery

the vessel created by a young visitor, while the purple note (*technology and cultural evolutionism*) explains that ceramic technologies are generally associated with stationary cultures rather than nomadic and migrating cultures.

Figure 4.8 presents examples of Chinese export porcelain, explaining how 17th century plates designed by Dutch artist Cornelius Pronk subsequently came to be produced in China and shipped back to eager consumers in Europe. The purple note (*technology and cultural evolutionism*) explains features of China's porcelain and glazing techniques, which resulted in European demand for their products. The orange note (*postcolonial perspectives*) at right introduces the idea of hybridity as represented by the Nativity scene in the plate on the right, explaining that while such depictions may have started as a business transaction, Christianity gained a foothold in China as early as the 7th century, and there is now a sizeable Christian presence in China. Notes below this panel describe the beginnings of the porcelain trade with

Figure 4.8: Art as Commodity – Chinese Export Porcelain

Portuguese traders' journey up the Guang Zhou and subsequent restriction to coastal Macau after a threatening canon salute.

Taken together, these panels describe some of the many ways that artmaking is bound up with, influenced by, and dependant upon demand for the arts, and illustrate the way in which the analog hypertext functions to deliver complex information that expands our understanding of art as a commodity. Figures 4.5-4.8 each explore the role of indigenous art in the Western art market, describing how traditional art forms can become a source of economic power for indigenous artists, and examining Western assessments of value based on authentity as described by Errington (1998). In Figures 4.5 and 4.8 the demand for certain types of representation— figurative sculpture and Nativity scenes—explicitly influenced the art produced. Figure 4.6 shows how collectors' demand can transform spiritual traditions into collected art forms and how access to new materials can lead to mass production of formerly one-of a-kind objects.

In each of these instances, art produced by indigenous cultures has been collected by dominant cultures. Figures 4.6 and 4.8 explicitly address this power imbalance and demonstrate how the issue of *Art as Commodity* is inextricably linked to colonial and imperial power, by including the objects on the *Postcolonial Perspectives* tour. In addition, Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 each illustrate the way the analog hyperext function to support interdisciplinarity by including information pertaining to the *Technology and Cultural Evolutionism* and *Spiritual Practice* tours.

Lastly, Figures 4.5 and 4.7 also illustrate the capacity of the analog hypertext to support visitors' personal meaning-making. My comment in Figure 4.7 is a personal reflection, while the visitor's comment in Figure 4.5 demonstrates how thoughts that might otherwise remain internal can become available for contemplation by future visitors, enhancing the complexity of tour themes.

Spiritual Practice Tour

Figure 4.9 shows the introduction to the *Spiritual Practice* tour theme, and turquoise notes in Figure 4.10 explain how spiritual practice in Aboriginal culture centers on the right and responsibility of telling ancestral creation stories called the Dreaming. The panel also explains the use of dots in Aboriginal art, explains the meanings of the different shapes in the painting, and provides information about the living artist who created this piece, Long Jack Phillipus Tjakamarra. The pink note (*art as commodity*) describes how the object represents a shift from sand and bark painting to paintings on masonite, which were created for sale to collectors.

Figure 4.9: Spiritual Practice Intro

Figure 4.10: Spiritual Practice – Aboriginal Painting

Figure 4.11 depicts two Baule *blolo bien* (male spirit spouses) dressed in Western attire, while just out of view are two older *blolo bla* (female spirit spouses) dressed in traditional attire. Many African traditional religions include the creation and care of spirit spouses who are believed to control daily life. Earthly misfortunes are attributed to unhappiness of the spirit spouse, and efforts are made to care for the spirit spouse in order to keep him or her happy so that the living partner may

Figure 4.11: Spiritual Practice – Baule Blolo Bien

prosper in daily life. The photograph in the center bottom shows a person caring for their spirit spouse by draping him in beads and cloth, and bringing him an egg to eat. Commissioning a statue of one's spirit spouse dressed in Western attire was felt to confer status, thus contributing to the spouse's happiness. Orange notes (*postcolonial perspectives*) on the panel explore issues of postcolonial consciousness and hybridity raised by this practice, which represents evidence of "internalized otherness" (McLeod, 2000, p. 21) described by Bhabha (1994) and Spivak (1999).
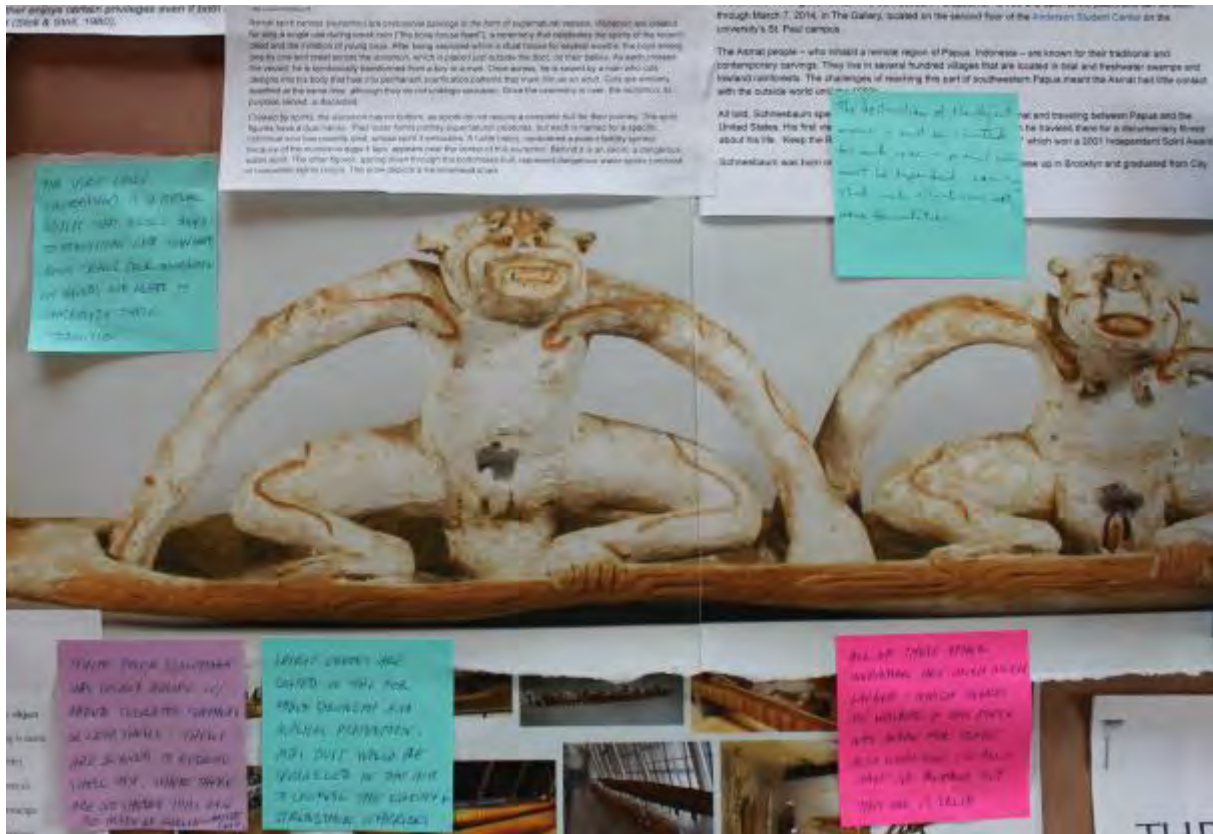
Figure 4.12: Spiritual Practice – Asmat Wuramon

Figure 4.12 shows two wooden female figures of a larger Asmat *wuramon* (or spirit canoe) surrounded by notes describing the *wuramon*'s function in Asmat coming-of-age rituals for boys. Boys are sequestered in ritual houses for several months, after which they crawl over the *wuramon* as they emerge, and are ritually scarred to mark their transition to adulthood. Source documents describe the use of spirit canoes, and raise questions about essential differences of this object from other known *wuramon*, including its size, the fact that it has a bottom, and the orientation of the figures to the side, rather than forward as is traditional. Based on these discrepancies, the pink note (*art as commodity)* suggests the possibility that the object was created for sale to collectors. The lavender note (*technology and cultural evolutionism*) describes materials used in the creation of the white surface coloring, while the turquoise note (*spiritual practice*) explains how these materials were invested with spiritual powers.

Figure 4.13 shows a Ming dynasty Shakyamuni Buddha surrounded by a cluster of interpretive notes and source documents, and the image of a second, Indian Buddha in the museum's collection. There was a strong popular belief in Buddhism in the Ming secular world, and this Chinese figure originated out of that tradition. One note describes *mudras* as symbolic hand gestures used in the iconography of Hindu and Buddhist art, as well as yoga and Indian classical dance. Another note explains that the figure exhibits the *bhumisparsa* (touching the earth) mudra, which indicates the nurturing power of giving and benevolence. Other notes describe how common features in depictions of the Buddha—including serene facial features, pendant earlobes symbolizing wisdom, graceful robes, elaborate hair dressing, and the *ushnisha* (a topknot symbolizing knowledge)—all combine to represent subtle beauty and imposing spiritual power. The area also shows two ink drawings of the Buddhas contributed by a young visitor, and an appraisal for the Hungarian processional crucifix above this panel.

Figure 4.13: Spiritual Practice – Shakyamuni Buddha

Figure 4.14: Spiritual Practice – Buddhist Stupa

Figure 4.14 shows a carved stone Buddhist votive *stupa*, which for me has always been one of the most perplexing objects in the object study gallery. Primary research documents are presented in this panel, as well as notes explaining the role of votive *stupas* in Buddhist practice. Votive *stupas* such as this one would have been placed on terraces surrounding shrines or large structural *stupas*. This piece would sit atop a larger stone column, and serve as the base for a series of graduated stone discs, which can be seen in the supporting image at the left that shows the use of votive *stupas* in context. Like later figurative Buddhist sculpture, the commission and placement of votive *stupas* was considered an act of piety and devotion. The green note (*mortuary practices*) explains that structural *stupas* are reliquary mounds containing the ashes and relics of religious figures, and originated from earlier use of burial mounds in northern India.

These panels present a range of spiritual practices across several cultures, and explore the similarities as well as the differences among them. Figure 4.10 presents Australian Aboriginal painting as part of a larger oral tradition, in which artists retell Dreaming stories in a communal setting as they paint them for community members. Figure 4.11 explores the Baule tradition of spirit spouses and their connection to postcolonial consciousness in depth. Figure 4.12 introduces the *wuramon* as part of the Asmat coming-or-age ritual, as well as its possible role as an object created for sale to collectors. Figures 4.13 and 4.14 explore different practices within the Buddhist faith that occurred over different time periods. Despite obvious differences in the spiritual practices of each culture, there are similarities across each culture as well, such as each culture's investment of special spiritual significance in the creation of the object.

Together these panels illustrate analog hypertext's ability to portray complex information in an easy-to-understand format, allowing visitors to gain general understandings as well as pertinent details of spiritual practices across different cultures. Each of these five panels presents contextual information in the form of original source documents, including their authorship as prescribed by Lorente (2012) and Orcutt (2013), alongside thematic content introduced through the color-coded notes. Figures 4.11 and 4.14 both present images of objects in situ, assisting visitors in visualizing the objects' roles in everyday cultural life. Four of the five panels present opportunities for interdisciplinary exploration advocated by Garoian (2001), with connections to at least one of the other tour themes: *Art as Commodity* (Figures 4.10 and 4.12), *Postcolonial Perspectives* (Figure 4.11), *Technology and Cultural Evolutionism* (Figure 4.12), and *Mortuary Practices* (Figure 4.14).

Technology and Cultural Evolutionism Tour

Figure 4.15 shows the introduction to the technology and cultural evolutionism tour, and Figure 4.16 shows two Aboriginal arrowheads, one made from calcite and the other made from brown bottle glass. The note on the left explains that prior to European arrival Aboriginal peoples used tools made of wood, stone, and bone, and many still hunt using traditional tools. Another note explains that visitors often think these are the oldest objects in the room when they are actually the newest. The orange notes (*postcolonial perspectives*) explain the

Figure 4.15: Technology and Cultural Evolutionism Introduction
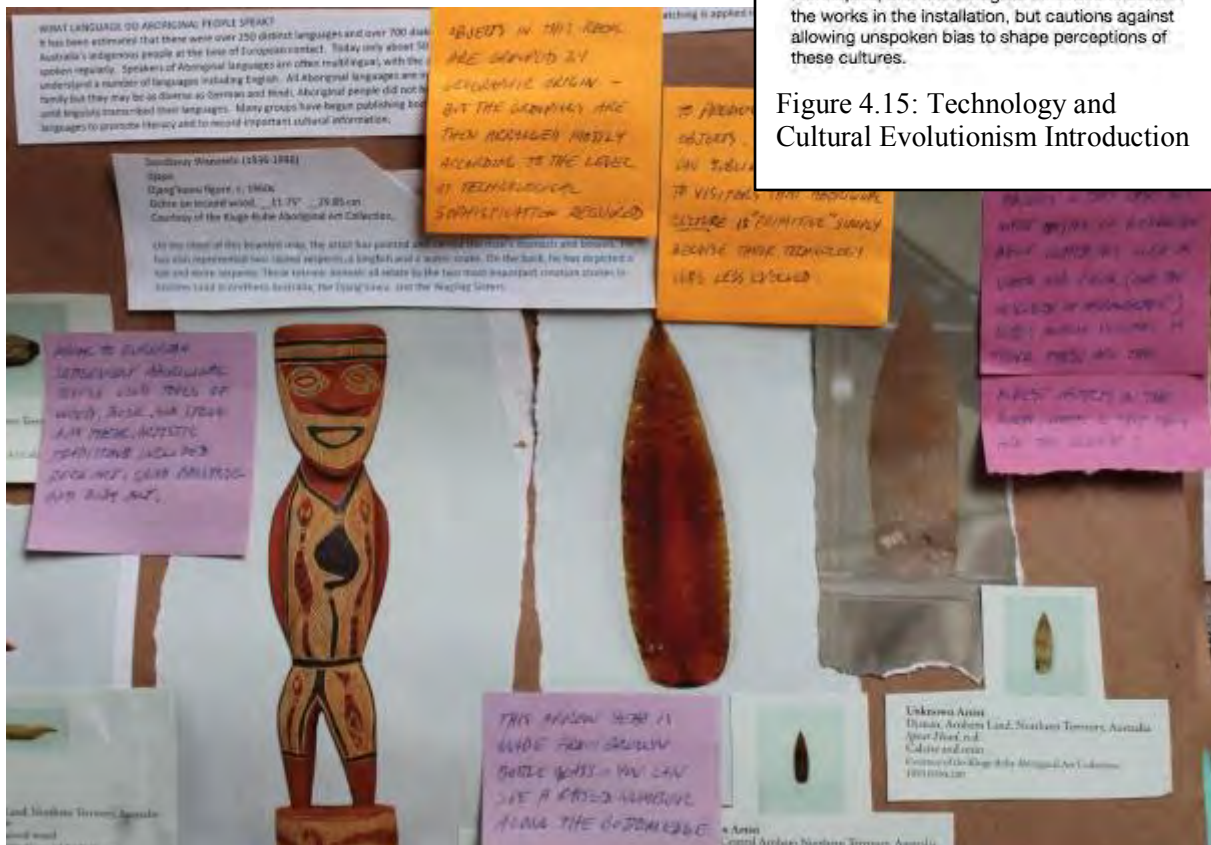
Figure 4.16: Technology and Cultural Evolutionism – Aboriginal Tools

organization of the objects from least technologically developed to most, cautioning visitors against viewing Aboriginal culture as primitive just because they use primitive tools.

Figure 4.17 shows a drinking vessel on the left, explaining that it is decorated with symbols that mimic writing, and might have been purchased by someone illiterate who aspired to the status associated with owning a vessel with a dedication. In Mayan written language, when groups of symbols are regularly seen together they comprise primary standard sequences, which have recognized meanings. These vessels would have been given and received as objects of status and power, and displayed for political purposes to demonstrate alliances between individuals, families, or groups. Writing was an important technology in Mayan culture, and vessels with dedications held much more value than those without. The pink note (*art as commodity*) explains that potters who could write dedications could command more for their work, providing financial incentive for non-literate potters to produce fake writing.

Figure 4.17: Technology and Cultural Evolutionism – Mayan Dedication Vessels

The color yellow was used exclusively by the Chinese imperial family. Figure 4.18 shows a porcelain plate from the Hongzhi period in the late 15th century, along with an identical one the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The plates were manufactured until the late 16th century to replace broken ones. High-fired cobalt oxide was used to create the blue design, with the yellow applied later and fired to a lower temperature. This process distinguishes this plate from the highly prized high-fire yellow ceramics created during the Xuande period. Figure 4.19 shows American potter Otto Heino, who became a multi-millionaire after developing a high-fire yellow glaze in his Ojai, California studio.

Figure 4.18: Technology – Hongzhi Plate

Figure 4.19: Technology and Cultural Evolutionism – Otto Heino

Figure 4.20: Technology and Cultural Evolutionism – French Porcelain

Notes in Figure 4.20 describes the development of the French porcelain trade, from the early soft-paste varieties created to mimic Chinese porcelain to the discovery of kaolin deposits at Limoges in 1772, which led to the development of hard-paste porcelain. One note explains competing porcelain manufacture in Germany and England, where bone china was developed, while an orange note (*postcolonial perspectives*) just beyond this panel describes how the word "china" was adopted to describe porcelain, and later came to be used to refer to all white ceramic dishes. Other notes explain that mercury was used to bind the gold to the porcelain, and women and children working in the factories were exposed to toxic fumes when the mercury burned off during firing. Pink notes (*art as commodity*) explain Louis XV's increasing control of the Sevres porcelain factory from the 1750s to 1780. Other factories were only allowed to produce monochrome wares until the unpopularity of the royal family led to loosening restrictions prior

to the French Revolution. Orange notes (*postcolonial perspectives*) explain that an estimated 20,000 children currently work in gold mines in Mali, Africa's 3rd largest gold producer. At the time of the research gold was trading at $1742 per ounce, with gold miners often paid in bags of dirt, which they must clean in order to receive payment.

Together Figures 4.16 through 4.20 illustrate the complex political implications of technological development, including the danger of dismissing cultures with less developed technology as inferior, and demonstrate how items discarded by one culture can become valuable tools in another culture. Figure 4.17 shows how the development of written language had important social, political, and economic consequences for artists in Mayan culture. Figure 4.20 presents the French porcelain industry in all its complexity, from its competition with Chinese export porcelain to its control by the French royal family. Figures 4.18, 4.19 and 4.20 each present different historical and contemporary instances where scarce natural resources such as kaolin or gold, or secret technologies such as glaze recipes drove inflated prices and exclusivity of artistic creations. The issue of technology in the production of art is inextricably bound up with issues of art as a commodity, and four of the five panels in this section offer cross-disciplinary connections to that tour theme as well.

Mortuary Rituals Tour

The *Mortuary Rituals* tour introduced in Figure 4.21 is important to the Fralin's object study gallery because many objects in the gallery were created for mortuary purposes. Hollow-log coffins are an Aboriginal mortuary practice from Central Arnhemland and are used to collect the bones of the deceased. The installation of hollow log coffins shown in Figure 4.22 is a large grouping created as a memorial commemorating Australian indigenous people who lost their lives defending the land since European arrival in 1788. The

mortuary rituals

Because objects of material culture rarely survive extended daily use, many of the objects in museum collections are mortuary or burial objects, obtained either through legitimate archaeological excavation or through the looting of tombs.

Examining how a past culture regarded death and their deceased can reveal rich information about the complex web of relationships between the dead, the living, and the community as a whole. The death of an individual is an occasion to mark the significance of that person to their family and to the community at large.

In cultures around the world, community alliances are reinforced and cultural identities are strengthened through elaborate mortuary rituals, which include feasting and gift giving. The objects utilized in these rituals hold powerful meanings for their cultures.

This tour examines objects associated with mortuary practices in several cultures. In the process, it offers an opportunity to examine our own beliefs and community traditions surrounding the end of life.

Figure 4.21: Mortuary Rituals Intro
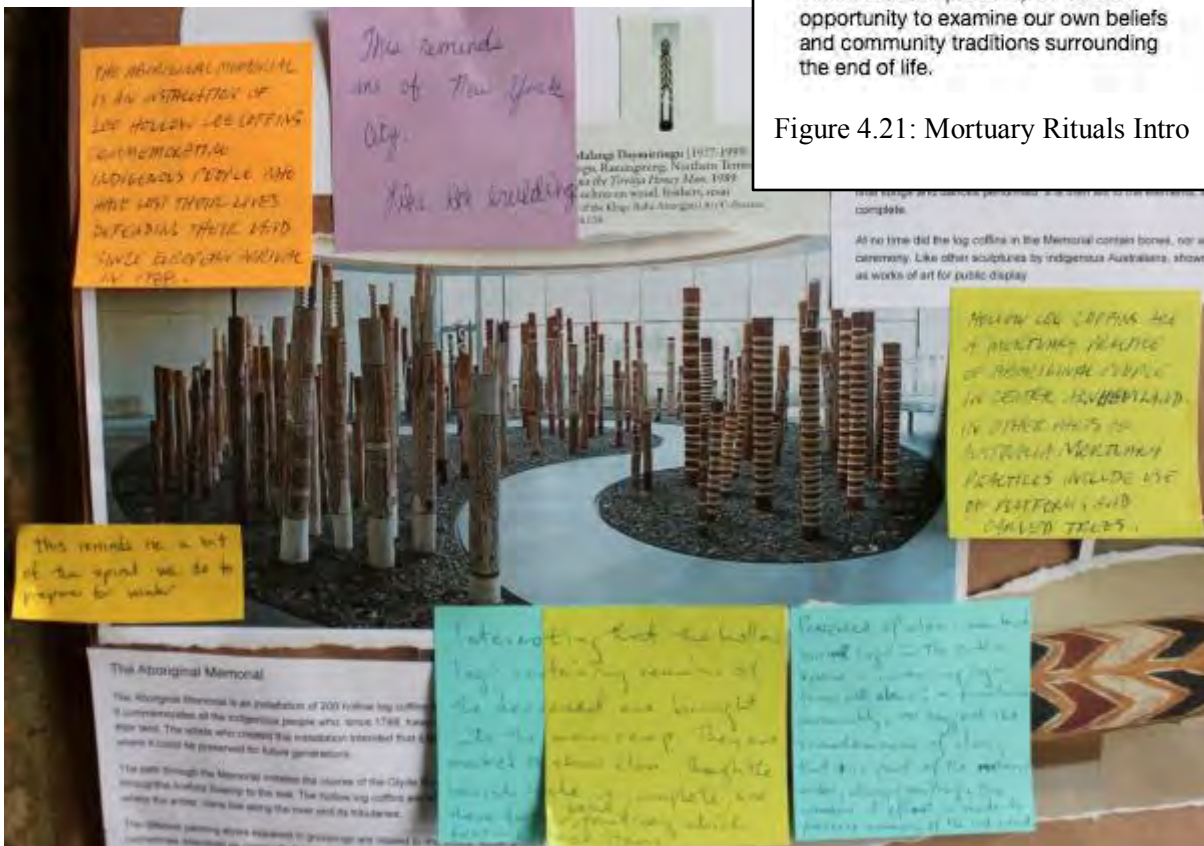
Figure 4:22: Mortuary Rituals – Aboriginal Memorial

orange note (*postcolonial perspectives*) explains the memorial, while a green note at the right

explains that Aboriginal mortuary practices also include use of platforms and carved trees. The

purple and yellow notes show that visitors make personal connections to the images they view—

one associates the memorial with a spiral of lights ceremony, while another thinks it looks like a

group of skyscrapers in New York City. At the bottom of the panel, a visitor writes across

turquoise (*spiritual practice*) and green notes to indicate the interdisciplinarity of his/her

question: "Interesting that the hollow logs containing remains of the deceased are brought into

the main camp. They are marked to show clan. Though the burial cycle is complete, are there

further social practices which features these items?"

Figure 4.23 shows a fawn whistle from 300 CE, created by the Vicus culture in Peru,

mainly as a burial object. The fawn whistle would have been filled with water, and sound would
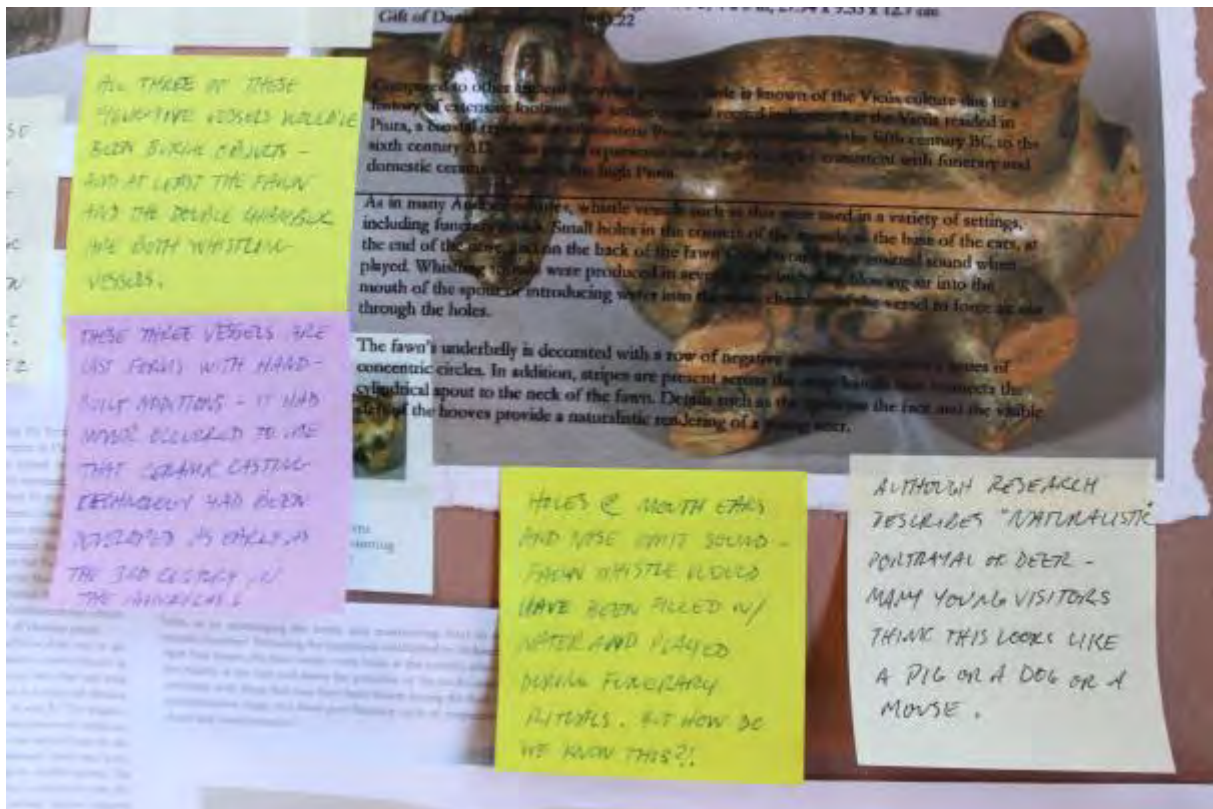
Figure 4.23: Mortuary Rituals – Vicus Fawn Whistle

come from holes in its mouth, ears, and nose. The lavender note (*technology and cultural evolutionism*) at the left expresses my surprise that Vicus cultures had casting technology, something I didn't know before the project. Early in the project, I found that some object files contained just enough information to answer my most basic questions, but not quite enough to satisfy me. I portrayed this experience of the research process by placing the object label over the object, because I felt the information obscured the object in some way. On the note in the lower right I comment that the object file describes "a naturalistic portrayal of a fawn," but most visitors I encounter think it looks like a pig, or a dog, or a mouse.

Mayan plates like the one pictured in Figure 4.24 are most often found in tombs covering the face of the deceased. This plate bears a "kill hole" bored into the plate after firing, and interpreted by scholars as an opening through which the spirit escapes in the journey to the afterlife. The symbols on these plates would also be found on the inside of tomb lids of the elite. Visitors often express surprise that these plates have a function beyond utility as food vessels.

Figure 4.24: Mortuary Rituals – Mayan Plate

Figure 4.25: Mortuary Rituals – Cypriot Bull Rhyton

Figure 4.25 shows a Cypriot bull rhyton, which is a small ritual vessel used to hold oil or other liquid as a sacrificial offering for the deceased. The rhyton is adamantly not a cow creamer, though this is often the way that visitors perceive it. The orange note (*postcolonial perspectives*) attempts re-education by explaining that Western art historians sometimes interpreted antiquities through the lens of their own cultural bias, such as this page from an old art history textbook suggesting these objects are cute toys when it asks, "Playthings, or friendly supernatural powers?" One visitor added a note exclaiming, "looks like a dog!!!" while another visitor added the lavender note at the bottom, explaining that the pig reminds her of a painting in her dentist's office. At the top is my own note that I have thought of holding a workshop to make ritual animal figures with the terminally ill, because I feel we don't do enough to acknowledge and prepare for death.

This tour theme provides visitors with an opportunity to contemplate a serious life event through art in a museum gallery. The central theme of *Mortuary Rituals* is communicated through examples from different cultures, demonstrating the diversity of mortuary practices across many cultures. Figures 4.23, 4.24, and 4.25 show that the presentation of contextual information on the objects may dispel misconceptions about objects that arise based on visual similarities to familiar objects in a visitor's culture. Figure 4.22 demonstrates how supporting interpretive material such as the image of the Aboriginal Memorial can enrich visitors' understanding of primary objects. Simultaneously, Figures 4.22, 4.23, and 4.25 show opportunities for cross-disciplinary exploration by including the objects in the discussions of *Spiritual Practice*, *Technology and Cultural Evolutionism*, and *Postcolonial Perspectives*.

Visitors' comments in Figure 4.22 about the similarity to a spiral of lights and New York City, and the visitor's note about the pig's similarity to a painting in her dentist's office in Figure 4.25 demonstrate how visitors continue to construct personal meaning in spite of or in addition to interpretive material accompanying an object. Together these images demonstrate the rich diversity of interpretation possible within small areas of the analog hypertext.

Postcolonial Perspectives Tour

Figure 4.26 introduces the topic of *Postcolonial Perspectives* and Figure 4.27 explores the topic through the work of Australian artist Djambawa Marawili, who successfully presented his artwork as evidence in court to argue his peoples' right to control fishing in tidal lands. Other notes explain that forcible removal of Aboriginal children from their families for "re-education" continued until the 1970s, that Aboriginal people gained the right to vote in 1970, and that Aboriginal peoples only began to be counted in the Australian census in 1967, since prior to that they were not even classified as people. Other orange

postcolonial perspectives

Many of the cultures represented in this exhibition experienced brutal repression during periods of colonial occupation and European expansion. These histories, which are often invisible to museum visitors, are also often pivotal to the inclusion of these objects in museum collections.

The history of collecting has its beginnings in the "cabinets of curiosity" maintained by gentlemen of the European renaissance in their pursuit of knowledge of the greater world. These private collections—which often included bones, fossils, and other specimens of natural history, as well as cultural objects collected by colonists and explorers of the "New World"—later formed the foundations for the first public museums.

This tour introduces postcolonial perspectives in four ways: first, by documenting some of the colonial history in the cultures represented; second, by revealing the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of such objects; third, by questioning some of the assumptions underlying the presentation of these objects; and fourth, by exploring the work of artists who address their own cultural identity as well as their colonized past by making their own voices heard within the contemporary art world.
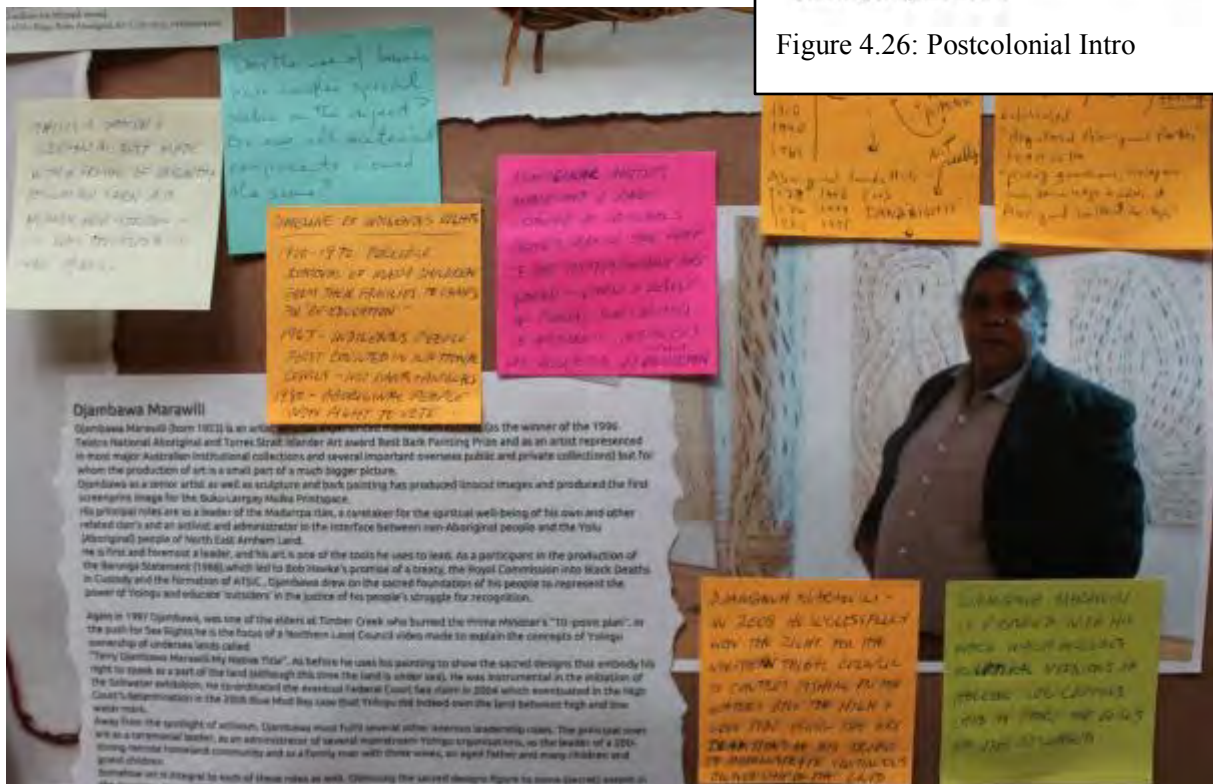
Figure 4.26: Postcolonial Intro

Figure 4.27: Postcolonial Perspectives – Djambawa Marawili

notes contributed by a visitor include a timeline of indigenous land rights. The green note (*mortuary practices*) explains that Marawili's work includes sculptural hollow log coffins—used to collect and store the bones of the deceased after the body has decomposed—which are employed as a powerful reminder of the devastating consequences of colonialism on Aboriginal peoples. The pink note (*art as commodity*) explains that Aboriginal art represents a rare instance of traditional indigenous art making the transition to the contemporary art world, likely as a result of its formal similarities to abstract modern art (Errington, 1998). Pertaining to another object, a turquoise note (*spiritual practice*) from a visitor asks, "Does the use of human hair confer value on the object? Or are all material components viewed the same?"

Figure 4.28 shows a painting by contemporary artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, *I See Red: Salmon Recovery Act*, which I included to balance other Native American objects in the gallery. Quick-to-See Smith uses imagery associated with Native Americans in popular media—

canoes, bison, and horses—to explore issues of contemporary Native American identity.

Figure 4.29 depicts a beaded Lakota Sioux child's vest, surrounded by interpretive photographs from the Astor Collection. The majority of the Fralin's Native American collection originated from the Hotel Astor's famous Grill Room, an exclusive restaurant and ethnographic museum created in 1904 to celebrate and preserve what was viewed at that time as dying American Indian culture.

Figure 4.28: Postcolonial – Quick-to-See Smith

72

Figure 4.29: Postcolonial Perspectives – Lakota Beaded Vest

Objects in the Grill Room were arranged in eight sections representing quasi-linguistic groups. War bonnets were displayed on busts based on life-masks of appropriate tribes, and artifacts relating to each group were arranged in decorative wall displays around the mounted head of an animal from the region. Orange notes explain that the Grill Room was established even as Native Americans were being confined to reservations, separated from their families, forbidden from speaking their native languages, and undergoing mandatory cultural re-education. At the top of the panel, yellow notes discuss another potential tour theme, the tradition of craftsmanship and notions of authorship among Lakota women, which was not fully developed during this project. At the bottom left, a photograph from the Grill Room titled *Types of Sioux Indians* illustrates how indigenous peoples were Othered by identifying them by group characteristics rather than as individuals.

Figure 4.30 shows a Chinese bronze lion or dragon figure, presumably a mortuary figure like the ceramic one at the top. I included it in the tour of *Postcolonial Perspectives* because the object label identifies it as Chimera—a Greek word originally used to describe a monstrous fire-breathing mythological beast with a lion's body, a goat's head protruding from its back, and a snake for a tail. This is important because visitors often ask what kind of animal it is,

Figure 4.30: Postcolonial Perspectives – Chinese Figures

and are often unfamiliar with the word chimera, which inevitably leads to questions as to why it is referred to in this manner. An image of the Etruscan *Chimera of Arezzo* provides supporting documentation for the origin of the term. Lavender notes (*technology*) discuss the development of bronze lost-wax casting techniques in each culture. The panel also shows how young visitors engage with the objects by drawing them or imagining the sounds they might make.
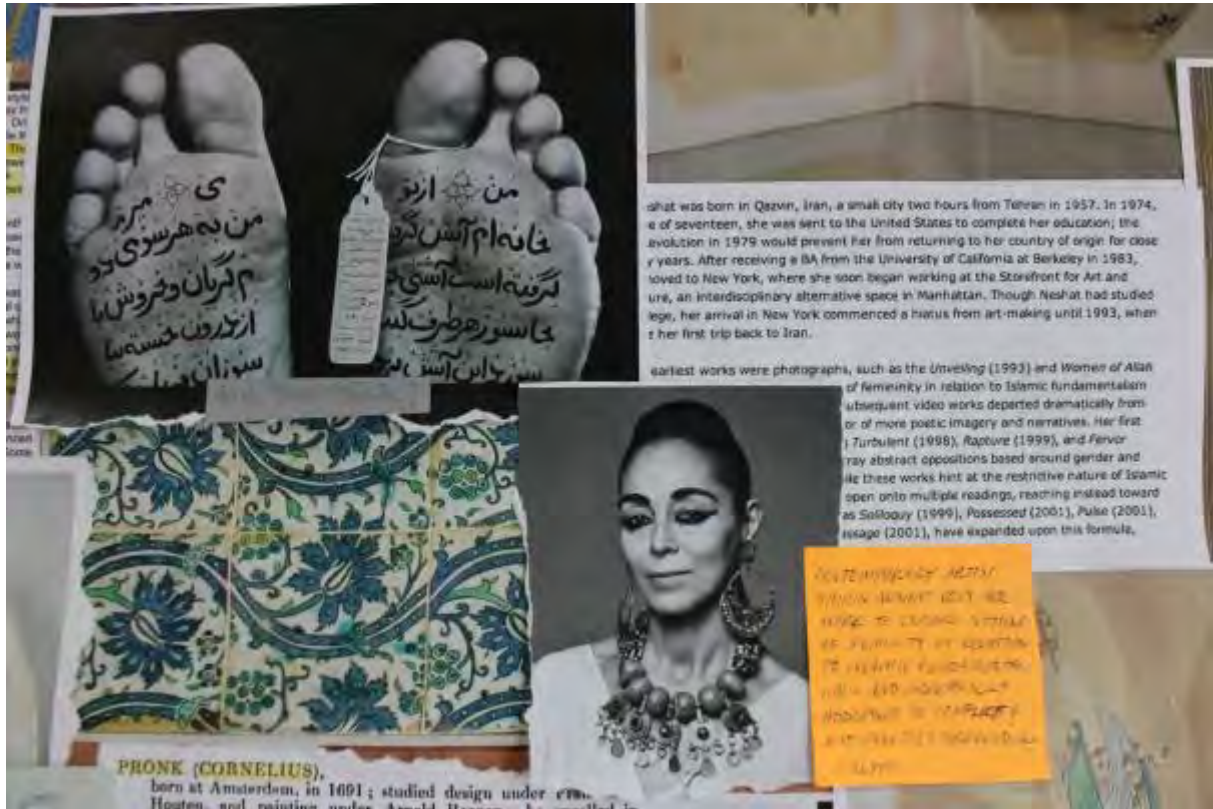
Figure 4.31: Postcolonial Perspectives – Shirin Neshat

Figure 4.31 shows a portrait of contemporary Iranian American artist Shirin Neshat. Neshat was born in Iran and later educated in the United States. I included this area on Neshat because I felt the Middle East was underrepresented in the gallery, and also because her work is so timely. Her work explores the complex relationships between Islam and the West, and femininity and masculinity. For example, she explores notions of feminine identity and Islamic fundamentalism by overlaying women's bodies with Persian calligraphy. A visitor's note undermines the seriousness of a work referencing a morgue tag by asking, "did this tickle?"

Figure 4.32 shows a Songye power figure from the Democratic Republic of Congo juxtaposed with a map of Africa and images of Man Ray's 1926 photograph, *Noire et Blanche,* and Yinka Shonibare's 2001 sculpture, *Leisure Lady with Ocelots*. The turquoise note (*spiritual practice*) explains that the figure contains mystical powers instilled by the nganga priest, who

Figure 4.32: Postcolonial Perspectives – Songye Power Figure

hammers metal nails into the nose and forehead to empower invisible forces to protect the village

from danger. A note at the bottom left wonders what changes would induce a village to give up

such a powerful protectorate figure, while notes at the upper left describe an episode in colonial

history in which nearly all members of an 1897 European expedition to Nigeria were killed

because they ignored warnings to stop, and subsequently interrupted a sacred ritual. The British

retaliated by destroying the entire city of Benin, and looting more than 2000 artworks, including

bronze, ivory, wood, and coral sculptures, many of which are now held in European museums.

The Man Ray photograph illustrates European modernists' appropriation of African art to

represent their repressed, animal Other, projecting sexuality and other disowned aspects of

themselves onto it. Shonibare's work illustrates the ways Western cultures sometimes glamorize

African culture through appropriation of African textiles and wild animals, and alludes to colonial history through Victorian dress.

Together these panels present an example of postcolonial museum practice, including presentation of historical and contextual information, access to source documents for that information (Figures 4.27, 4.29, 4.31, and 4.32), representation of indigenous perspectives, presentation of colonial histories and how they have contributed to the acquisition of artworks by museums, questioning curatorial authority through the presentation of multiple perspectives, and connecting these objects to broader cultural patterns through their inclusion in other tour themes.

Figures 4.27, 4.29, and 4.32 present some details of the histories of colonization in specific areas. Figures 4.29, 4.30 and 4.32 explore issues of collection of indigenous objects by Western collectors, as well as the appropriation of indigenous cultural traditions by Western artists. Figures 4.27, 4.28, 4.31, and 4.32 all include the work of living artists, presenting contemporary perspectives on cultures represented in the Fralin's object study gallery through antiquities.

In addition, some of the panels that most richly represent *Postcolonial Perspectives* have been described in other sections of these findings, including Figures 4.5 through 4.8 which explore the inextricable links between colonialism and indigenous art as a commodity in Western cultures, as well as the continued influence of Western collection on current artistic production by indigenous cultures, and Figure 4.20 discusses how demand for a material in one region can lead to the oppression and subjugation of people in another area. Figure 4.11 is one of the most richly realized areas supporting the postcolonial aspirations of the project, with the internalized Otherness of postcolonial consciousness represented through the Westernized dress of the Blolo Bien figures.

Visitors' Contributions to the Analog Hypertext Exhibition

This section introduces visitors' contributions to the analog hypertext installation with a goal of discerning how visitors interacted with the installation, and what it can tell us about visitor meaning-making in the museum. The contributions discussed here were collected over a period of three weeks. IRB approval was not required because all contributions were voluntarily and anonymously applied to the analog hypertext in a public gallery space and were therefore intended for public consumption. No data were collected about participants, and no records were kept attributing specific contributions to individual participants. Visitors' contributions are grouped by common features suggesting different types of interactions with the exhibition: associations with prior knowledge, drawings of objects, humorous comments, and suggestions for additional tour themes.

Associations with Prior Knowledge

These comments represent a range of ages and levels of knowledge and experience with the objects. They are interpreted through the lens of constructivist learning theory because they share the common feature of communicating associations with the viewers' prior knowledge (Hein, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Some visitors responded to familiar images in the exhibition and constructed their

Figure 4.33: Visitor Contributions –
Looks like a sheep!!

interpretations based on associations with basic knowledge such as types of animals and the sounds that they make (Figure 4.34). In her aesthetic stage theory, Housen (2016) describes beginning or accountive viewers as museum visitors who "talk about what the painting reminds him/her of" (p. 7). Several sections of the analog hypertext discussed earlier illustrate examples of Housen's (2016) theory, such as Figures 4.22 and 4.25, in which visitors contributed comments that the image reminds them of New York City, a Spiral

Figure 4.34: Looks like a woolf!!!!

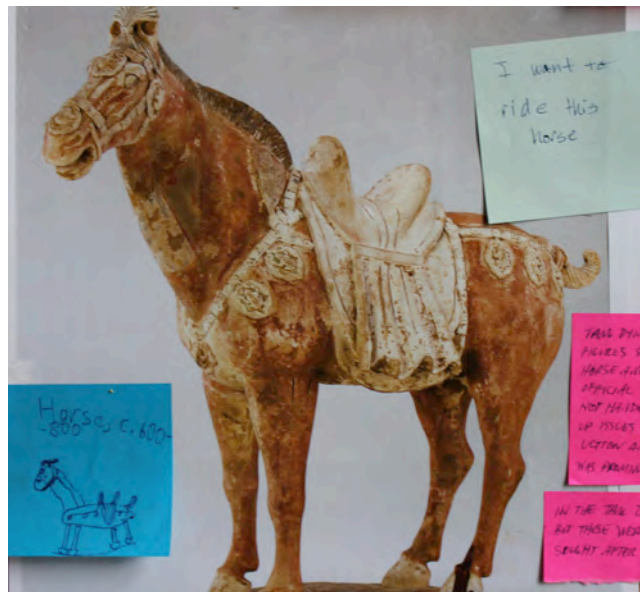Figure 4.35: I would dance in this belt

Figure 4.36: I want to ride this horse

of Lights ceremony, and a picture in their dentist's office, as well as identification of the types of

animals represented and the sounds they make. Figure 4.11 shows another example of accountive

viewing, "Reminds me of a soccer player today," as well as two other visitors' associations with

their prior experience: "Hands are often difficult to represent," and "Pockets haven't changed

much. Hands need a place." Figures 4.35 and 4.36 both show visitor contributions illustrating

personal associations: "I would dance in this belt," and "I want to ride this horse." Taken as a

group, these comments illustrate an early stage of aesthetic development (Housen, 2016) in

which interpretation takes place through personal association, and fit Reese's (2001) description

of "intertexual relationships based on association" (p. 64).

In several sections of the analog hypertext, visitors contributed their thoughts or prior

knowledge to existing tour themes. Figures 4.5, 4.12, 4.22, 4.27, 4.37, and 4.38 all illustrate that

visitors' contributions may enhance existing tour themes by adding to the on-going dialogue.

Figure 4.38 shows a prime example of the type of interdisciplinary constructivist learning that

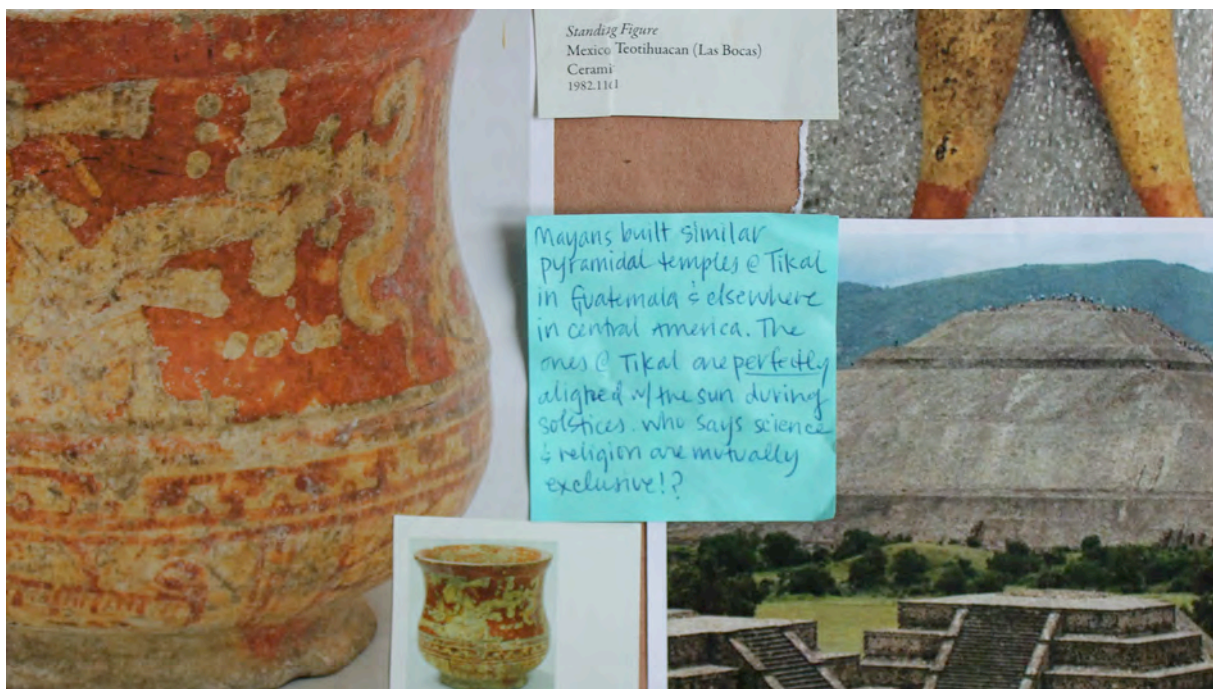the analog hypertext may facilitate. After reading this excerpt from Geshe Kelsang Geyatso's

Figure 4.37: Visitor Contribution on Tikal
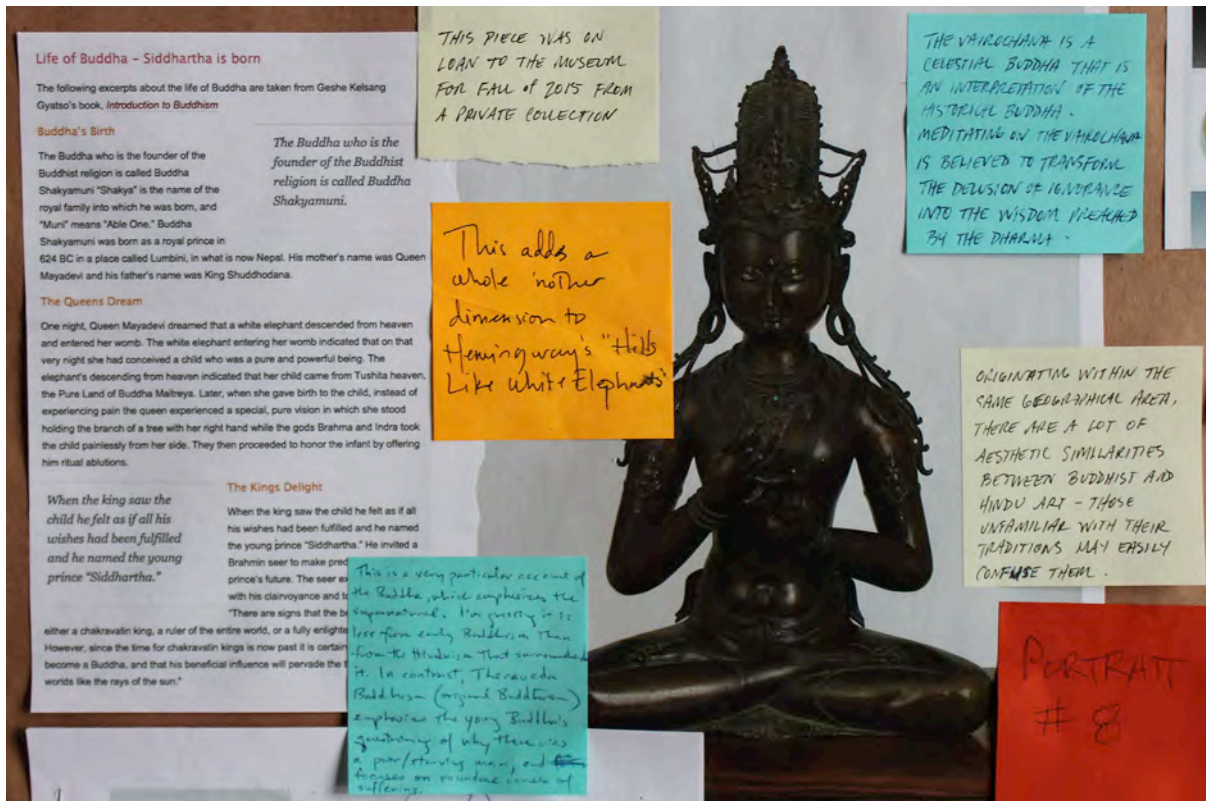
Figure 4.38: Visitor Contribution on *Hills Like White Elephants*

Introduction to Buddhism: "Queen Mayadevi dreamed that a white elephant descended from heaven and entered her womb. The white elephant entering her womb indicated that on that very night she had conceived a child who was a pure and powerful being," one visitor wrote, "This adds a whole 'nother dimension to Hemingway's *Hills Like White Elephants*." The note refers to Ernest Hemingway's short story recounting the dialogue between an American man and a Spanish girl as he pressures her to have an abortion.

Together these visitors' contributions indicate a broad variety of ways that visitors construct meaning by associating what they see with their own prior knowledge and experiences, from simple associations such as "This reminds me of…" and personal responses such as "I would dance in this belt," to thoughtful contributions on suggested tour themes, and new discoveries which enhance understanding of previously read literary works.

Artistic Interpretations of Objects

Some visitors also contributed to the analog hypertext exhibition by drawing what they saw. Hinton (2012) found that drawing enhanced visual observational skills. Earlier in the chapter, in Figure 4.13, a visitor responded to the exhibition by focusing exclusively on one type of object—representations of the Buddha—and created detailed drawings of each one with a caption attached. Figure 4.39 shows a visitor's note stating, "Reminds me of a ladder," accompanied by a drawing of the handle on the drum. In Figure 4.40, a visitor responded by making several small drawings of the objects accompanied by their caption information. In Figure 4.41, a visitor focused on small details within the work by drawing the bugs and flowers

Figure 4.39: Reminds me of a ladder

Figure 4.40: Drawings of Greek Vessels

on a French tureen. Figure 4.42 shows creative use of the Post-it notes to recreate pictures of Native American pueblo dwellings, while Figure 4.43 shows a detailed drawing of a Navaho squash blossom necklace.

All of these visitors used the creative act of drawing to interact with the objects, suggesting that they may learn more successfully through visual and spatial intelligence or bodily and kinesthetic intelligence described by Gardner (2006) in his theory of multiple intelligences. By providing an invitation to interact with the exhibition in any way visitors desire, and supplying the materials to do so, the analog hypertext facilitates a mode of interaction—drawing—that is often missing in museum galleries.

Figure 4.41: Details of a French Tureen

Figure 4.42: Drawings of Pueblo Dwellings

Figure 4.43: Drawing of Diné Squash Blossom Necklace

Humorous Contributions

Another way that visitors responded to the exhibition was through the contribution of humorous comments. Martin (2007) asserted that humans use humor to extend play situations and create social cohesion through the creation of mirth and laughter, so the contributions of humorous comments to the analog hypertext may be seen as an attempt to establish social presence with other visitors. Yet, while such comments could promote social cohesion in some instances, they may also contribute to the Othering (Spivak, 2001) of represented cultures by using humor derived from "disparagement and superiority" (Martin, 2007, p. 43). Reese (2001) and Roberts (1997) both conceded that educators and museum professionals might question the value and validity of some visitor-contributed perspectives. However, Roberts (1997) asserted that tension is part of the "real, lived world" (p. 133), and that exploration of conflicting views inspires meaningful learning. Consequently, despite the potential for humorous comments to

Figure 4.44: Roman portrait head –
　　　　　Give me back my body!!!
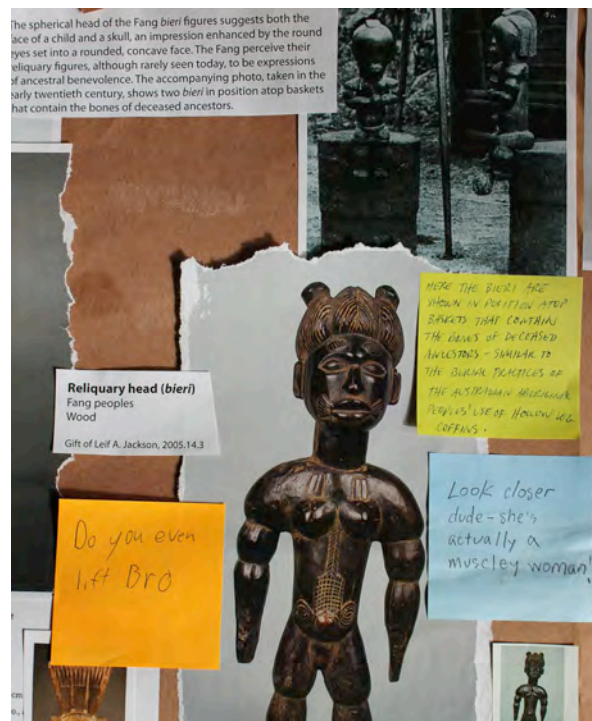
Figure 4.45: Tiv Female Bieri Figure –
　　　　　Do you even lift bro
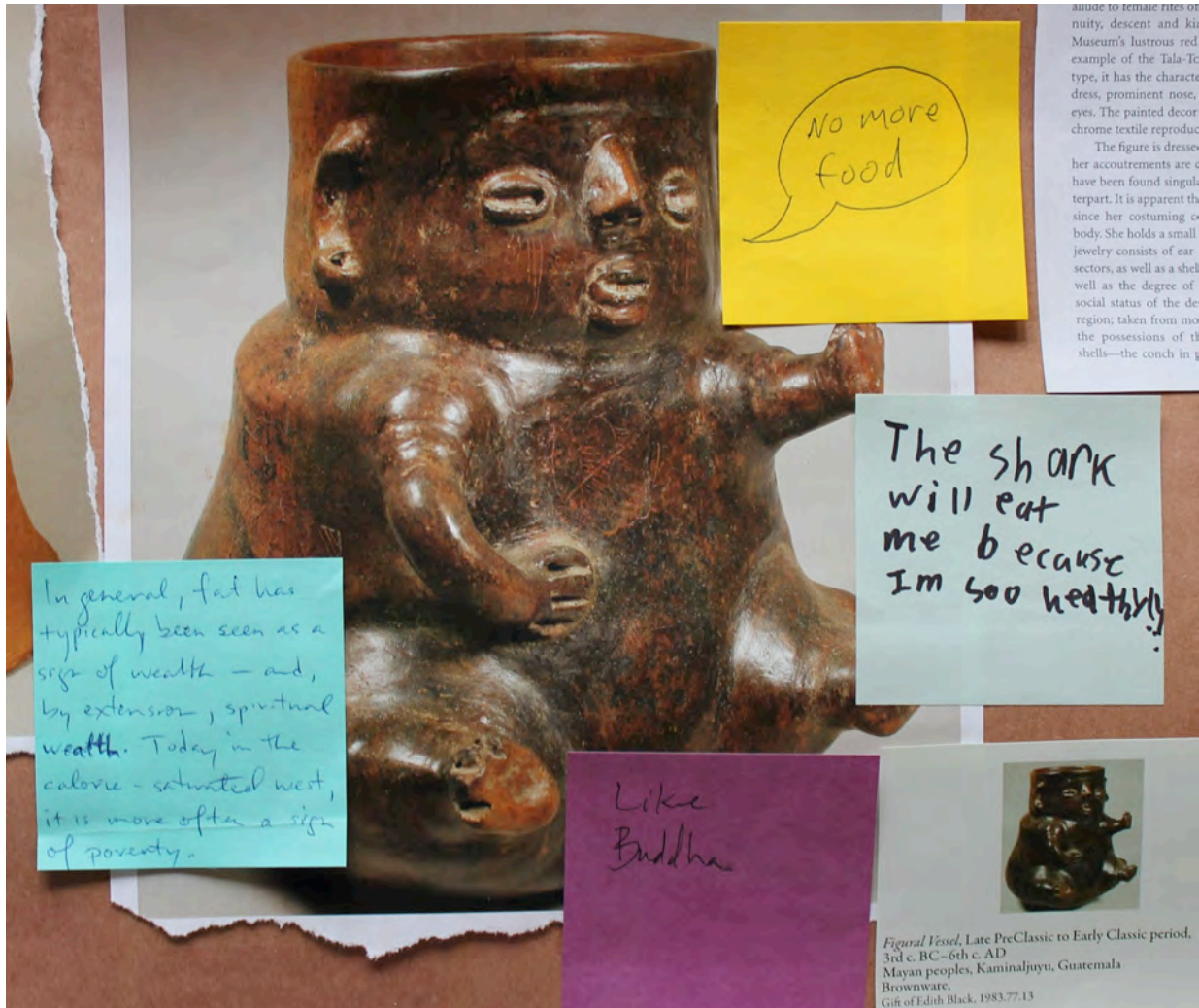
Figure 4.46: Mayan Figural Vessel - No more food

undermine the postcolonial aspirations of this project, I support the openness of the analog

hypertext for two reasons. First, it facilitates engagement with the art that might not happen in

any other way, and second, because it provides a public forum to respond to comments and/or

misconceptions that visitors might think privately or share with friends, but may otherwise go

unchallenged. Each of these three figures, 4.44, 4.45, and 4.46 represent genuine responses to the

formal, visual aspects of the works. Figures 4.45 and 4.46 both demonstrate the ability of the

analog hypertext to provide a forum in which visitors talk back to other visitors. In particular,

comments from four viewers in Figure 4.46 demonstrate the complex dialogue that can take

place between visitors. One visitor made a speech bubble in response to the figure's appearance, stating, "No more food," while another visitor notes that it looks "Like Buddha." A third visitor added, "The shark will eat me because I am soo healthy!" A fourth visitor contributed this comment: "In general, fat has been seen as a sign of wealth—and, by extension, spiritual wealth. Today in the calorie-saturated west, it is more often seen as a sign of poverty."

Some humorous contributions to the analog hypertext extended beyond the goal of making other visitors laugh, and foregrounded uncomfortable aspects of the artwork, which might otherwise have remained hidden. For example, in Figure 4.47, a visitor placed this comment beside an Aboriginal bark painting depicting two people poking each other with woomeras (spear-throwing devices): "Now we can hurt from farther way." According to Bailin (2015), Wilson and Sperber (1992) characterize irony as an *echo* of a thought that is used
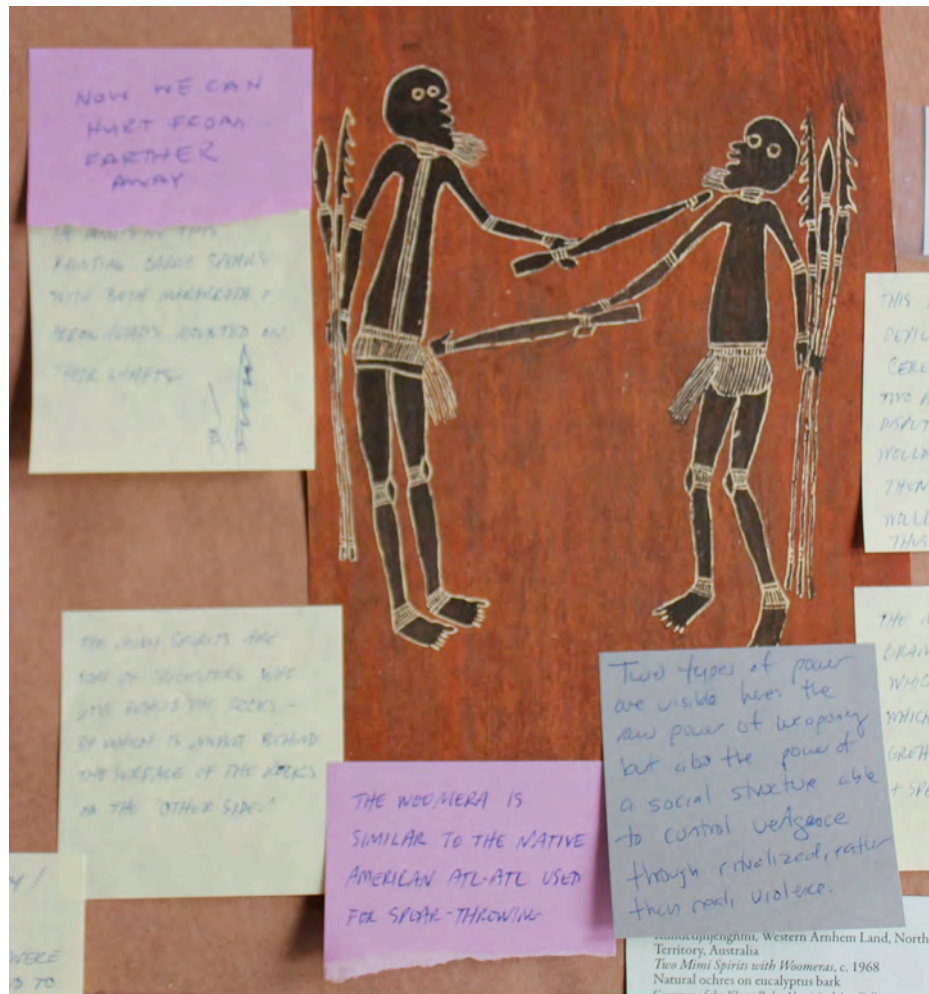

Figure 4.47: Woomeras – Now we can hurt from farther away

to express disapproval of what is echoed. This comment represents the use of irony to foreground an uncomfortable aspect of human culture—that technological development frequently results in more sophisticated weaponry, and therefore more deaths. In fact, the painting depicts an Aboriginal judicial process, in which conflicts are resolved through a public ceremony that mimics violent exchange without injuring participants. Another visitor has added the gray note, stating: "Two types of power are visible here: The raw power of weaponry, but also the power of a social structure able to control vengeance through ritualized, rather than real, violence."

Because humor and laughter promote social bonding (Martin, 2007), these comments have the potential to appeal to a broad audience, including individuals who are less familiar with museum-going as a pastime. I also assert that these comments collectively constitute a potential tour theme, which could allow visitors to explore and critique the use of humor in relation to the galleries' objects.

Suggestions for Additional Themed Tours

Two visitors to the analog hypertext suggested additional themed tours. One viewer suggested a theme of Portraiture, while the second proposed a theme of Representations of Power. These two proposed themes offer an interesting juxtaposition, because the proposed tour theme of Portraiture represents a topic about which a visitor wants to know more, whereas the proposed theme of Representations of Power illustrates a visitor engaged in constructive meaning-making by contributing associations with his or her own prior knowledge.

Figures 4.48-4.51 illustrate a few of the objects identified by the visitor for potential inclusion in the Portraiture tour theme, as well as Figure 4.44 included above. Figure 4.48 shows Murayana the Yirritja Honey Man, an ancestral being in Aboriginal Dreaming. Figure 4.49
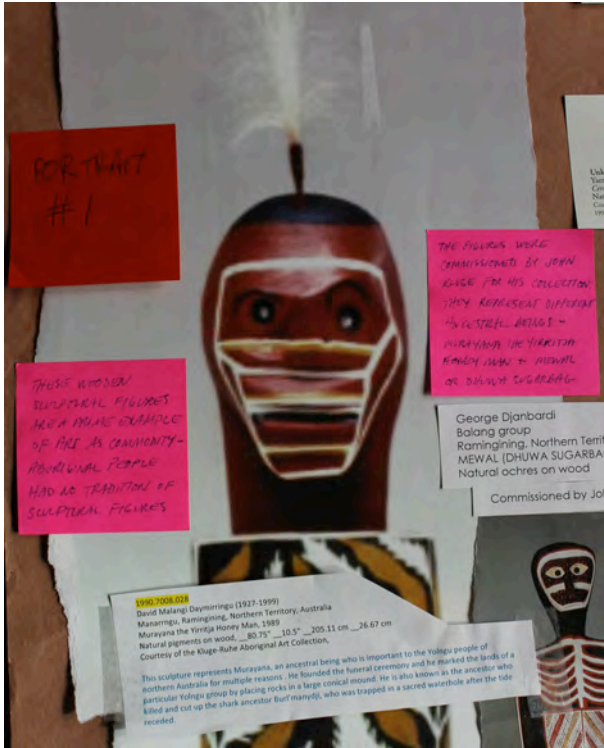
Figure 4.48: Murayana the Yirritja Honey Man
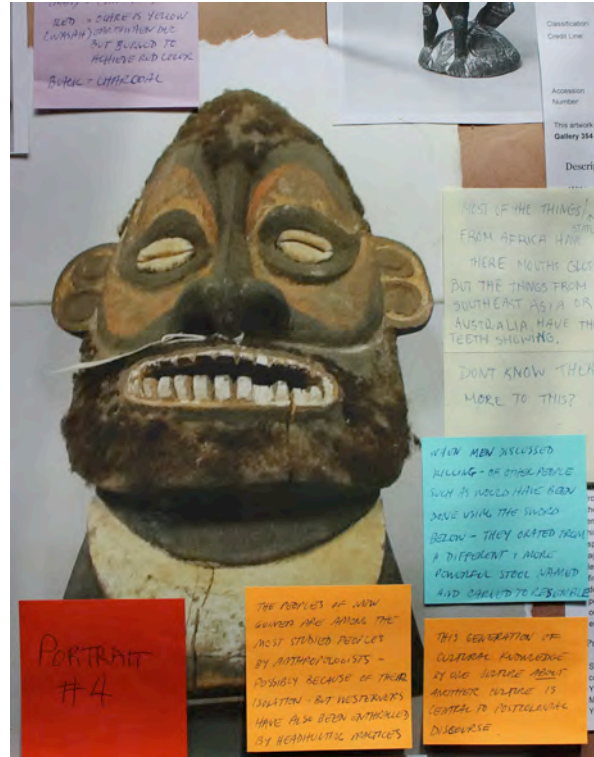
Figure 4.49: Sepik Debating Stool Portrait
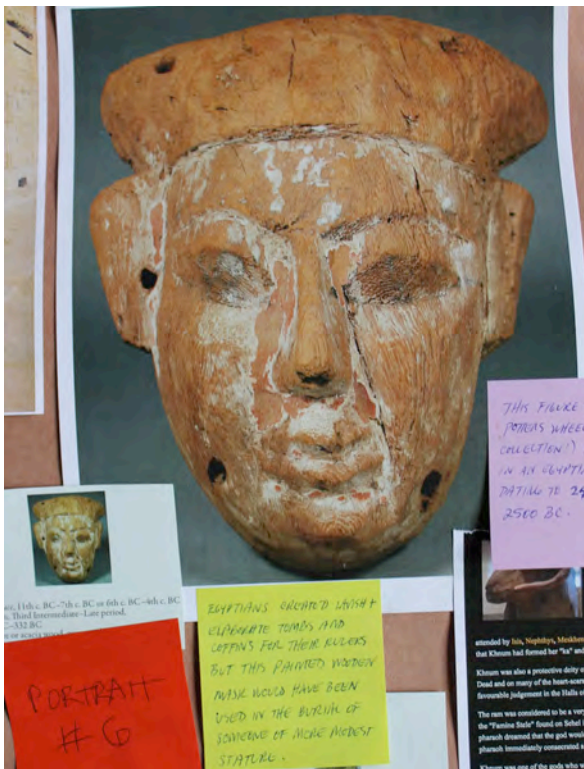
Figure 4.50: Egyptian Funerary Mask Portrait
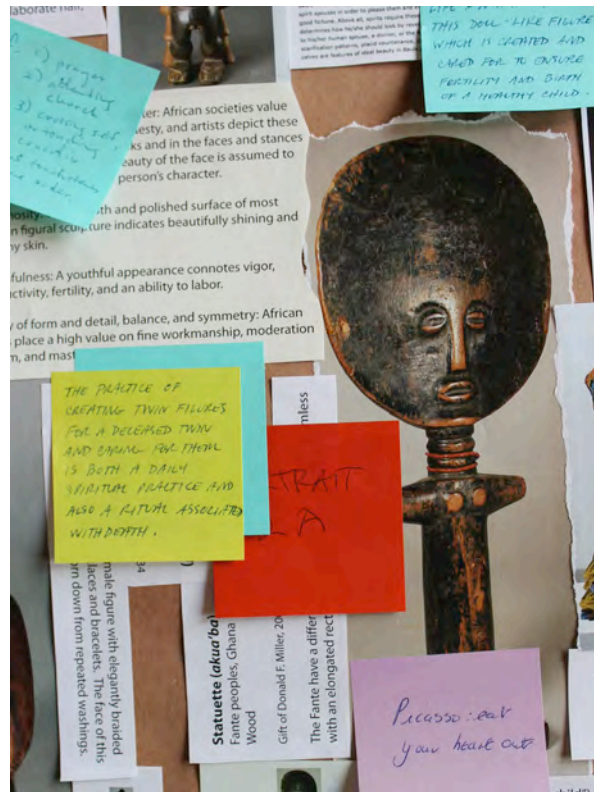
Figure 4.51: Ashanti Statuette as Portrait

shows an important Sepik human ancestor whose portrayal on a debating stool adds authority to the person speaking at an assembly. Figure 4.50 shows an Egyptian funerary mask that would have been placed over the face of the deceased, while Figure 4.44 shows a portrait head created as a memorial and grave marker for a deceased Roman boy. The statue in Figure 4.51 was created for a pregnant woman, to ensure a healthy birth. The theme of Portraiture is interesting to consider because it follows what might be considered a traditional grouping of the works by their formal similarities (Errington, 1998) and would therefore allow visitors to consider the wide variety of reasons that different cultures create representations of the human face or figure beyond the traditional Western understanding of portraiture as a depiction of an individual.

In Figure 4.47, I described a visitor's contribution on the subject of power. Figures 4.52-4.55 show other contributions made by the same viewer (R. Goluboff, personal conversation,
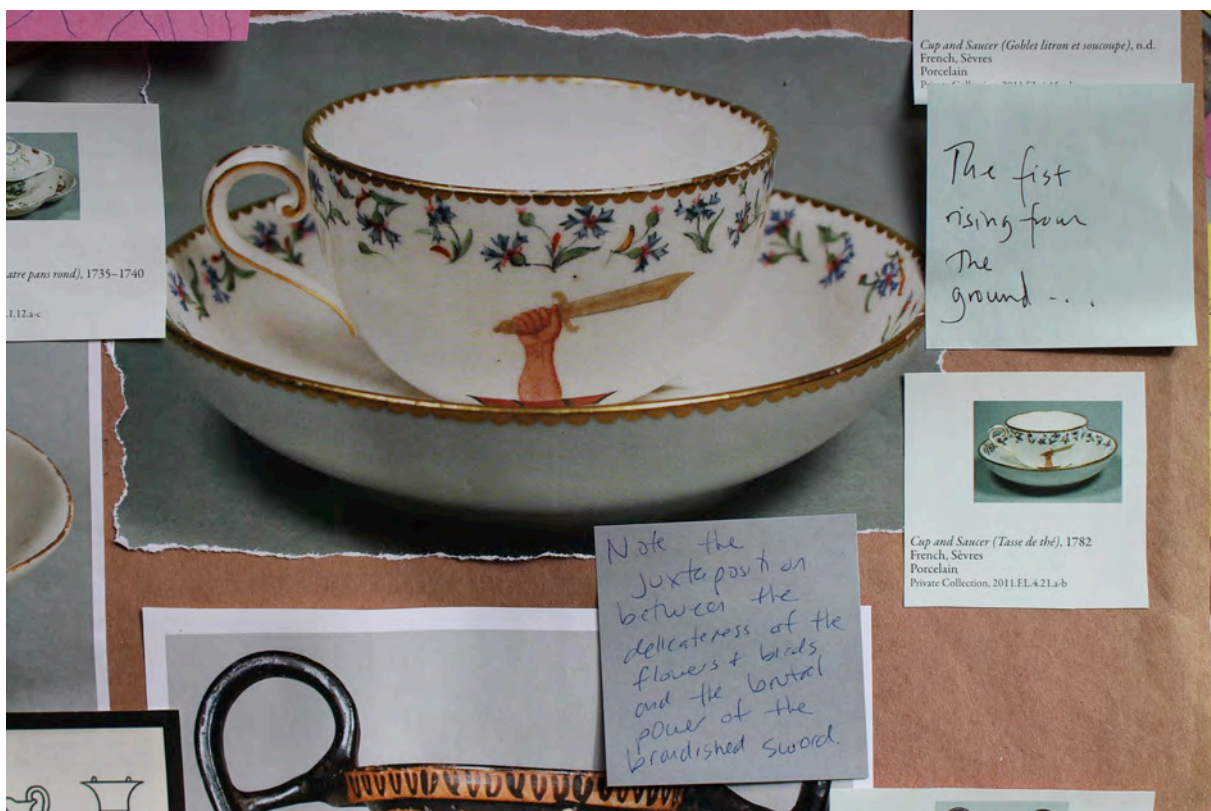
Figure 4.52: Porcelain Teacup Foreshadowing the French Revolution as Power

January 16, 2016) addressing the proposed theme of Representations of Power. In response to a porcelain teacup created during the French Revolution, she wrote, "Note the juxtaposition between the delicateness of the flowers and birds, and the brutal power of the brandished sword." Another visitor added a note, "The fist rising from the ground…."

Figure 4.53 shows Goluboff's contribution in response to the Roman marble torso, "Power is represented here as physoical prowess and strength. The prominence of the naked penis is also a form of power." In figure 4.54, her contributions included "Knowledge is power, and Shiva as teacher is a sharer of knowledge and therefore power," and "Shiva also holds power as the god of life and death." Figure 5.55 illustrates her comment, "The power of women resides in their fertility—the power to perpetuate the human race," in response to a female Baule spirit
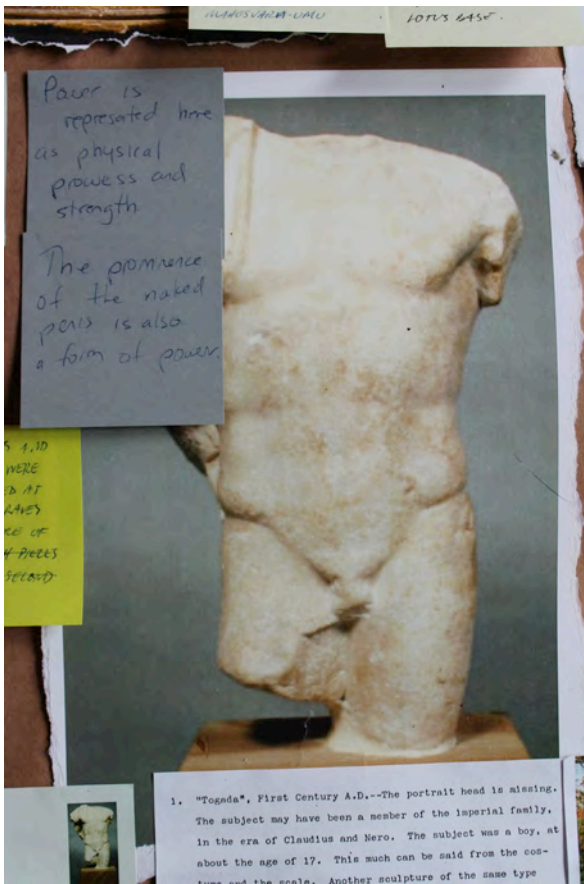
Figure 4.53: Roman Torso as Power   Figure 4.54: Dakshinamurti Shiva as Power
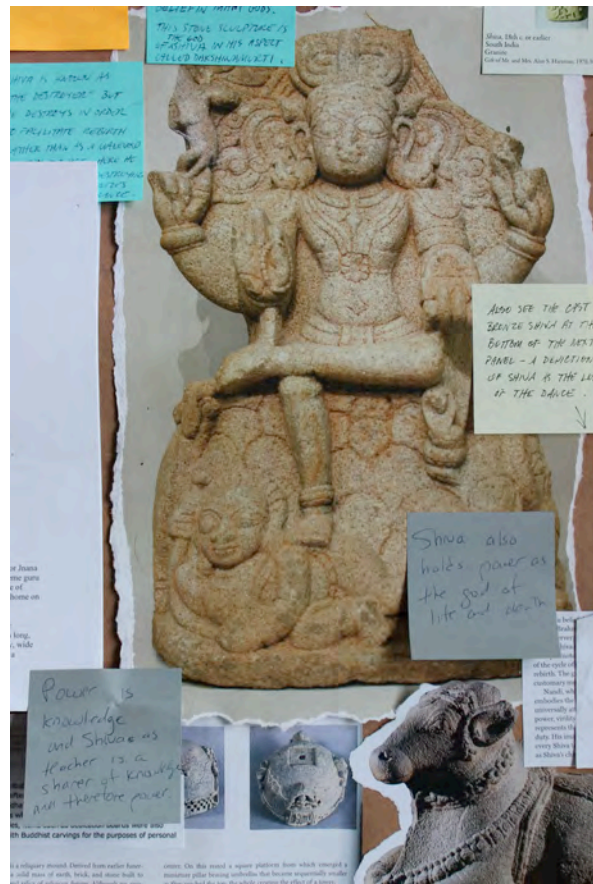
Figure 4.55: Baule Blolo Bla as Power   Figure 4.56: Tang Dynasty Official as Power

spouse who shows the physical traits associated with female fertility. In Figure 4.56, in response

to the Tang dynasty court official, Goluboff wrote, "The court official is the state's

representation of power. Power in the Tang dynasty shifted from the aristocracy to a

meritocracy." A noted legal historian, Goluboff is dean of the University of Virginia School of

Law, and her contributions on the subject of power illustrate the potential for the analog

hypertext to represent multiple critical perspectives if scholars from varied disciplines were

invited to contribute to it.

Reese (2001) made the point that intertextual relationships usually occur within the mind

of the visitor, or in a conversation with another visitor. However, the analog hypertext provided a

forum for these intertextual relationships to occur explicitly, making them visible to other

visitors as well as to museum staff and scholars. Together, these contributions emphasize the variety of ways that museum visitors respond to museum exhibitions, and demonstrate the effectiveness of the analog hypertext installation in assisting a broad range of viewers in constructing meaningful personal interpretations of the objects in the installation. Within a short time, and with contributions by a relatively small number of visitors, the analog hypertext installation generated five new potential tour themes—associations with prior knowledge, artistic interpretations, humorous contributions, portraiture, and representations of power—which complement and enrich the initial tour themes presented in the analog hypertext.

How This Project Represents Multiple Critical and Postcolonial Perspectives

At the outset of this chapter and in chapter two, discussion of the criteria for postcolonial museum practice included:

- Representation of historical and contemporary indigenous perspectives,

- Provision of historical and contextual information on objects,

- Access to source documents and transparency of authorship,

- Questioning curatorial authority and singular representations,

- Representation of multiple perspectives, and

- Establishing connections between indigenous cultures and wider human cultural patterns.

This concluding section considers the effectiveness of the analog hypertext in meeting these goals, as well as other critical perspectives supported through the project.

Connections between these objects and wider cultural patterns are explored on a macro-scale in this project through the central tour themes developed—*Art as Commodity*, *Spiritual Practice*, *Technology and Cultural Evolutionism*, *Mortuary Practices*, and *Postcolonial Perspectives*—as well as on a micro-scale through discussion of small details. Two of the

themes—*Spiritual Practice* and *Mortuary Rituals*—primarily represent connections between cultures by exploring the objects' roles in their making cultures. Three of the five themes—*Art as Commodity*, *Technology and Cultural Evolutionism*, and *Postcolonial Perspectives*—can be considered both critical, in that they challenge issues of inequality (Horkheimer, 1972), and postcolonial (Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1993; Spivak, 2001), in that they explore interactions between colonized cultures and the cultures that colonized them.

Historical and contextual information was presented throughout the analog hypertext, enriching visitors' understandings of the roles of the objects in their making cultures. Although I sought indigenous perspectives on the objects in this project, I was not able to identify local individuals with expertise on the objects, and consequently decided to represent indigenous perspectives through additional contextual information on the objects, and information on contemporary indigenous artists, rather than through first-person accounts of and responses to the objects. The project's position as an application of postcolonial theory would be considerably strengthened through the addition of firsthand accounts of the objects it represents.

The project supports the questioning of curatorial authority and singular representations explicitly, by challenging dominant narratives, and implicitly, *through* its representation of multiple perspectives, invitation to visitor participation, access to source documents, and transparency of authorship of the information presented. These features were demonstrated in the images throughout the chapter, describing details of the analog hypertext.

<center>**Conclusions**</center>

The central question of this project was: **How can multiple critical perspectives and visitor meaning-making be represented in an art museum object study gallery?** The project proposed the creation of an analog hypertext as one solution to the question, and chapter four presented the project and demonstrated how it represented multiple critical perspectives and visitor meaning-making on objects in the Fralin Museum's object study gallery. In this section, I present two key aspects of analog hypertext and offer thoughts on how these features contribute to its effectiveness as a method for representing critical perspectives: the rhizomatic presentation of the research and information, and the personal, dialogic representation of that information.

Rhizomatic Presentation of Research and Information

Arts based educational research and hypertext theory were both appropriate forms for this project because of the disruptive capabilities of arts based research, as well as the complexity of the representation of knowledge and meaning-making that is possible through the hypertext form. Garoian (2001) stated, "Performing interdisciplinarity in the museum exposes, examines, and critiques the boundaries that exist between the disciplines and works of art in order to interconnect academic knowledge with museum knowledge with knowledge of the world" (p. 245). As a delivery mechanism for interpretive material, analog hypertext represents the intertwined nature of multiple perspectives, and facilitates the type of interdisciplinarity described by Garoian by representing multiple critical perspectives simultaneously within the viewer's sight.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1993) asked, "What important transformations and transfigurations should there be in our traditionally and Eurocentrically defined ideas of the writer, the intellectual, [and] the critic?" (p. 311). Later he answered his own question:

What matters a great deal more than the stable identity kept current in official discourse is the contestatory force of an interpretive method whose material is the disparate, but intertwined and interdependent, and above all, overlapping streams of historical experience. (Said, 1993, p. 312)

I contend that the rhizomatic structure of the analog hypertext supports its ability to represent the "disparate, but intertwined and interdependent, and above all overlapping streams of historical experience" (Said, 1993, p. 312) described by Said as central to representations of postcolonial consciousness, and indicated by Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*, when he wrote:

It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality and 'purity' of cultures are untenable…It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew. (1994, p. 37)

This quote from Bhabha articulates his belief that the relationship between the elements of culture, and the negotiation of their meaning constitutes an unfixed terrain based on complex circumstances and shifting perspectives. I assert that the analog hypertext form is supported by Said's (1993) and Bhabha's (1994) descriptions of negotiated meaning described above, and by Reese's (2001) description of intertextual narrative pedagogy, in which viewers construct

meaning *between* objects in "the *inbetween* space—that carries the burden of meaning of culture" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38). Museum educators and docents encounter divergent interpretations of artworks every day in museum galleries. By representing knowledge in all its complexity and changeability, analog hypertext may support museum educators and docents as they assist visitors in negotiating the shifting terrain of meaning inherent in the process of looking at and understanding art.

Personal Dialogic Representation of Information

According to Garoian (2001), "a critical pedagogy that enables viewers to challenge dominant speech codes of museum culture makes it possible for them to re-present museum narratives through their respective subjectivities" (p. 238). I contend that, by constructing much of the analog hypertext in the first person, the project highlights the subjective nature of interpretive material and encourages visitor participation in the process. Although much of the information presented in the analog hypertext was directed at a scholarly audience, the method supports viewer participation and engagement at many levels.

In *Postmodern Blackness*, bell hooks (2001) stated:

It is sadly ironic that the contemporary discourse which talks the most about heterogeneity, the decentered subject, declaring breakthroughs that allow recognition of Otherness, still directs its critical voice primarily to a specialized audience that shares a common language rooted in the very master narratives it claims to challenge. (p. 2480)

In *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Spivak (2001) quoted Michel Foucault on the subject of subjugated knowledge. Foucault described subjugated knowledge as "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or

scientificity" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82, quoted in Spivak, 2001, p. 2197).

I assert that the dialogic presentation of information (Wilson McKay & Monteverde, 2003) in the analog hypertext installation—as opposed to the authoritative curatorial voice—is one of the features that could make analog hypertext an effective educational tool. By disrupting the singular, authoritative narrative prevalent in museums, the project fostered personal meaning-making by viewers that could, in some cases, be identified as subjugated knowledge—as described by Foucault (1980), Spivak (2001) and hooks (2001)—in relation to the knowledge structure of museums.

Supporting visitor-constructed meaning is important in and *for* museums because visitors interact with and *understand* museum objects by making associations with their prior experience and knowledge. If encyclopedic museums are to fulfill their promise to promote "tolerance and inquiry and the dissipation of ignorance" (Cuno, 2009, p.1), they must first do so by helping visitors to make connections between their own culture and the culture they are viewing. Thus, validating visitors' perspectives and making the objects relevant to their own lives is the first step towards helping them to see themselves as participants in global cultural patterns. This, in the end, is what museums are *for*.

In making museums more inclusive and relevant to their potential audiences, making space for the representation of subjugated knowledge is an important step for museums in righting the historic wrongs that were sometimes perpetrated during their creation. Two readers of this project (F. Bechter, personal communication, September 15, 2015; M. Smith, personal communication, June 2, 2016) have suggested that the project itself can be viewed as a postcolonial act against the power and authority of the museum. In other words, if museums are viewed as colonizing entities in the sense that they strive to advance a singular, dominant

narrative—as Simpson (2001), Lonetree (2013), O'Neill (2002), and others have suggested—then actions to disrupt that dominant narrative can be viewed as applications of postcolonial theory. By critiquing the Fralin's installation of its non-Western objects, this project contributes to the critical museum scholarship advocated by King and Marstine (2006), Lorente (2012), and Said (1993) as appropriate to university-affiliated art museums, and offers an additional perspective on how museums can become more reflective, and in the process, become more inclusive.

This project contributes to the scholarship of art museum education by presenting a method that can be used by educators and docents to educate themselves about objects, develop interpretive content on objects, present complex interdisciplinary perspectives to museum visitors, and record their contributions, investigations, and personal meaning-making. I believe that the success of the analog hypertext method lies in these two key features: 1) it supports "the maze-like structure of the text" (Eco, 1984, p. 9, in Reese, 2001, p. 59) in that the viewer is able to see the interconnected and overlapping concerns of various critical perspectives, and 2) it illustrates the dynamic dialogic process that constitutes the construction of knowledge between the mind of the viewer and the information provided by the museum described Garoian (2001), Hooper-Greenhill (2006), and Wilson McKay and Monteverde (2003).

Reese (2001) asked the question: "What would an exhibition be like if it were imagined as an activity in constant production?" (p. 60). Through the creation of a participatory installation communicating multiple critical perspectives and facilitating visitor-constructed meaning in response to the Fralin's object study gallery, this project provided an example of an exhibition as a text continually in the process of being written and re-written, and—like museum educators ourselves—continually developing, expanding, and refining our practice.

Limitations of the Project

The first limitation of this project is the newness of the analog hypertext method. This was only the second analog hypertext I had constructed, and it was the first in which I invited visitor participation. Although visitor response was positive, additional testing and formal measurement of visitor response would be necessary to determine its efficacy as a teaching and learning tool in museum education.

The second important limitation of this project was its installation at a distance from the museum. Most of the people who visited the exhibition at The Bridge were unfamiliar with the Fralin's object study gallery, and consequently had no reference for the project. Therefore, visitors' contributions to the exhibition do not necessarily reflect actual experiences of the objects represented, and the installation's efficacy as an interpretive device for museum visitors *in museum galleries* has not yet been adequately documented. Implementation within the museum setting as well as pre- and post-testing would be required to adequately measure its performance as an interpretive tool representing multiple critical perspectives.

The third limitation that may have influenced the results of this project is the high degree of scholarly engagement by the Charlottesville audience where the project was exhibited. When the project was subsequently displayed at another location, visitors' contributions included lewd drawings and expletives. Consequently, analog hypertext installations may need to be monitored much as museums monitor blog posts and Twitter feed.

Implications for Future Practice

The analog hypertext method has implications for both my personal practice as an educator and for practice by other museums. Through the application of critical and postcolonial theories to museum practice and the representation of multiple disciplinary and theoretical

perspectives as well as visitor constructed meaning about the objects, this research project straddled the terrain between projects representing multiple voices in the museum, such as the audio tours representing multiple voices, and contemporary art making practices by artists such as Fred Wilson and Mark Dion that critique and disrupt museum practice.

For me, the construction of the analog hypertext map was a successful learning and research tool both because the construction of it facilitated my learning, and because it provided a physical instantiation of the mental web of information I was creating inside my head—one I could reference throughout the process when I needed to be reminded of key aspects of earlier research. I believe that the analog hypertext model supported my learning because I rewrote notes in order to reclassify and re-categorize them, reinforcing my learning through manual writing as documented through recent research on the efficacy of handwritten note taking over keyboarded note taking on memory and recall of knowledge by Mueller and Oppenheimer (2014) and Wollscheid, Sjaastad, and Tømte (2016). For this reason, the analog hypertext method has potential as a learning tool for visual and kinesthetic learners (Gardner, 2006) who may respond to the opportunity to see and touch their research through colorful visual imagery and a tactile, interactive process.

Analog hypertext could also be used as an effective method for museum docents and staff to learn about museum objects and brainstorm connections between them, thereby supporting both docent education and the development of themed tours for museum visitors. For example, the Fralin's education department and docents subsequently created an analog hypertext to explore thematic and formal connections between a group of unrelated artworks selected for a creative writing program offered by the museum. This exercise assisted educators in

personalizing didactic material and prepared them to deliver tours that supported connective, interdisciplinary thinking by visitors.

Suggestions for Further Research

The first suggestion for further research includes utilization of audio and mobile app technologies to facilitate delivery of the various thematic tours developed through this project, as well as an implementation study which would record responses and learning outcomes among visitors. This could establish the efficacy of the project as a learning tool, and gauge its success in communicating multiple critical perspectives.

The analog hypertext created through this project could be installed as part of a larger gallery devoted to the exploration of museum learning, which would foreground the issues surrounding museum installations and gallery learning in general, and encourage visitors to deconstruct the process through which they consume exhibitions. This gallery could be framed as a research tool, designed to collect information and record visitors' responses.

The Fralin's object study gallery could be reorganized to emphasize thematic connections between the works, or to foreground the way that objects' presentation within the museum can affect visitors' perceptions of the objects. Framed as a learning laboratory for university students engaged in critical inquiry into museum practice, the Fralin's object study gallery has the potential to become a vibrant site of active academic inquiry and constructive meaning-making for university students and community visitors alike.

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