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Imagining the Way Forward Through Museum Space: Approaching Working Relationships between Museums and Indigenous Communities

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Imagining the Way Forward Through Museum Space:

Approaching Working Relationships Between Museums and Indigenous Communities

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in American Indian Studies

by

Allison Hana Fischer-Olson

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Imagining the Way Forward Through Museum Space:

Approaching Working Relationships Between Museums and Indigenous Communities

by

Allison Hana Fischer-Olson

Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Paul V. Kroskrity, Official Chair

This study addresses the need to further what can be achieved by collaborative projects between mainstream museums and Indigenous communities. *Katsina in Hopi Life*, an exhibition at the Autry National Center in 2013, is used as a case study to explore how frameworks for collaboration in museum space can be useful when informed by discussion about contemporary Indigenous issues. Interviews provide insight into the story and inter-workings of the creation of the exhibition, highlighting the relationship between frameworks and goals. To achieve Indigenous-derived goals, an exhibition requires a framework to match; however the relationship works in the other direction as well, and a limiting framework inevitably promotes less creative and productive projects. In working collaboratively on projects about Indigenous content, a more fluid approach is explored in the idea of the hybrid framework, promoting the idea that a one-size-fits-all model for collaboration with Indigenous communities is not productive, nor appropriate.

The thesis of Allison Hana Fischer-Olson is approved.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

<u>Introduction</u>

Museum space is a space for truth, authenticity, authorship, and imagination. Yet, seeing through to these pillars of museum space is difficult sometimes, especially where content about Indigenous, Native, or other source communities are concerned.[1] Questions surrounding who has the authority to tell truths, bear or disseminate authentic knowledge, author stories and narratives, and imagine futurities still come up when creating ethnographic representations in museums. If they do not come up, they should. In the current era of "New Museology" collaboration is largely expected (Boast 2011:59). While the museum field has made strides in uncovering and addressing complications from a history of inherent colonial underpinnings, one solution being the direct involvement of source communities (Simpson 2001:56), room for improvement remains. This study explores improving collaboration between mainstream museums and Indigenous communities. Specifically, the study looks at how frameworks for collaboration in museum space informed by Indigenous discussion can broaden capabilities for what can be achieved by projects between museums and Indigenous parties.

While working through this question, a secondary issue surfaces in complications of the concept of collaboration itself. Perhaps one reason that collaboration is so inconsistently incorporated into museological endeavors is because the term seems to be used to refer to any strategy on a spectrum of involving source communities in museum work. Amy E. Chan's article "Incorporating Quliaqtuavut (Our Stories): Bering Strait Voices in Recent Exhibitions," which compares the ways that two different exhibitions featuring similar content about Alaska Natives at different museums engaged in collaboration, serves as a good example (2013). The two exhibitions had completely different approaches, one involving four community advisers

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[1] "Indigenous" and "Native" are largely used interchangeably, except in instances specific to the United States, in which case "Native" is used.

providing "advice" and the other utilizing an "intimately involved" seventeen member panel of respective Natives (Chan 2013:21-2). Though the two exhibitions incorporated Native involvement very differently, and thus ended up drastically dissimilar in their usages of Native voice, they are both considered to have engaged in collaboration (Chan 2013). For the purposes of this study, the term "collaboration" continues to be used broadly to mean a mutually beneficial working relationship between a museum and another group, such as a Native or Indigenous community, advisors, etc. The term needs to be questioned further in order to get a clear understanding of different types of collaboration and when they are appropriate to use. Unfortunately the entirety of this conversation is beyond the scope of this study.

Overall, this study points to new frameworks for collaboration that are beneficial for Native communities in a few ways. The suggested hybrid framework, composed of ideas from more than one person, brings us away from previous frameworks for collaboration that can be stagnant. A hybrid framework can also serve to align the museum world with other scholarly realms, offering museum space as another creative medium for Indigenous voices and activism, potentially strengthening goals and causes. Most importantly to this study, using new frameworks for collaboration can enable and encourage goals in museum space that are important and desirable for Native communities and their representations.

In order to get to this point, a very brief background is first provided on the topic of collaboration and why healthy working relationships between museums and Native communities are necessary and important. Next is a discussion about the widely used contact zone concept by James Clifford (1997) in terms of its usage and merits. The discussion about the contact zone concept is followed up with a discussion proposing the idea of a hybrid framework in order to further possibilities for collaboration. The specific hybrid framework presented utilizes the work

of Indigenous scholars, Daniel Heath Justice (2008) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), and is

followed by the methods and methodologies surrounding this study. Next, a case study is

presented on the exhibition, *Katstina in Hopi Life*, providing an institutional background of the

Autry Museum, a walkthrough of the exhibition, and a presentation of the main overlapping

themes from interviews conducted with curators Paige Bardolph and Susan Secakuku. The

following section is a discussion about what we can glean from the information provided from

Bardolph and Secakuku about goals, authority, responsibilities in a collaborative relationship,

and working between intercultural epistemologies. Lastly is a concluding discussion of how the

inter-workings of the collaborative project for *Hopi in Katsina Life* are reflective of the hybrid

framework proposed, and thus, how working out of new, dynamic frameworks enable important

goals for museum space that can foremost benefit Native groups.

Background

   The discussion surrounding the importance of collaboration between museums and Native

communities is rooted in the role of museums historically as purveyors of truths and informed by

those entrenched in epistemologies (or ways of knowing) derived from colonial mindsets. As

strategies for ordering and relating to the world have changed over time, representations of

Indigenous peoples shifted to reflect current ways of knowing.[2] The historical progression of

epistemologies in the Western world, as written about by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1992),

provides much insight into the connection between epistemologies and knowledge production in

museums. Her work in turn helps us to understand how Native representations have changed

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[2] In her book, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill effectively lays out these
epistemological shifts within the museum through use of Foucault's concept of the *episteme,* in which each *episteme*
is associated with a specific set of characteristics that demonstrates a noticeable shift in the parameters of what
constitutes knowledge during that era (1992:12-18).

over time, as written about by Robert Berkhofer (1978) and Amy Lonetree (2012).

Unfortunately, the entirety of this history is beyond the scope of this piece.

One useful example of how representations of native peoples have changed over time lies in the era of the rise of natural history and anthropology, in which the utilization of evolution to hierarchically order the world situated Indigenous peoples below Euro-American humans, amongst the flora and fauna of their respective regions (Lonetree 2012:15). During this era in which Indigenous peoples were categorized for their deficiencies or otherness in relation to the dominant Euro-American perspective, the image of the Native became solidified and perpetuated as that of a sub-par human (Berkhofer 1979:26). I do not offer this example to make the point that all curatorial projects of this era were malicious in their intent. In his brief stint with museum work at the U.S. National Museum, Franz Boas, the "father of anthropology" himself, worked with Kwakiutl assistant, George Hunt, using some degree of collaboration in his curatorial endeavors (Jacknis 1985:76). Rather, the foundation of the methodologies that drove the museological strategies of the time enabled the production of problematic representations. Many representations that have been created within museums and through the lens of colonialism have been very damaging for Indigenous peoples, such as perpetuating the vanishing Indian of the past. These inequalities, like the falsehood that Native Americans ceased to exist, have had the museum world rethinking and restructuring over the past few decades.[3]

We look to dominant museums as ultimate and authentic knowledge bearers within our society. Therefore, we must be aware of consequences that arise from representing Indigenous peoples, and the information being shared through the museum as truth. This responsibility is one that has driven the New Museological era (Dubin 2001:83-99; Cobb 2005:488). As Ruth

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[3] Amy Lonetree discusses implications of stereotyped representations in museum displays, as well as the movement to combat them through working with Native communities in her essay, "Acknowledging the Truth of History: Missed Opportunities at the National Museum of the American Indian" (2008:306).

Phillips explains, two key moral developments enabled this shift into New Museology: 1) the critical reflexivity of early traditions of the display of cultures that were informed by colonial structures, and 2) the evolution of human rights discourse (2003:158). There have been a number of strategies and solutions aiming to reconfigure relationships within museum space with varying degrees of success. Aside from collaboration, two examples are employing methods to keep the process of collection and exhibition creation more transparent,[4] or using irony to explain how cultural diversity has played out in realities of colonialism.[5] Of all the strategies, asking the appropriate group of Native peoples or other source community to be directly involved in museum projects addresses the importance of recognizing a peoples' right to control representations of themselves.

Even the term *source community*, a community from which materials have been removed in order to add to a collection, is indicative of the necessity to breech the one-sided power relationship keeping museums at a distance. When cultural materials leave a community to enter the museum world, control is transferred with them creating a situation where the museum has the upper hand to either invite or not invite the source communities in for participation. Whether this "upper hand" translates to responsibility, obligation, or merely just an option is the question to ask. The spectrum of including Indigenous or source communities in museum work is broad, ranging from what some call autoethnography to brief consultation, all of which are sometimes considered to be collaboration[6]. The concept of using collaboration as a museological strategy is

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[4] For example, Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum* installation at the Maryland Historical Museum reflected back to the history of the institution to uncover and explain the biases in the collection and told a story featuring these omissions and deficiencies. See "Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson," by Lisa G. Corrin (1994).

[5] The exhibition, *Into the Heart of Africa* serves as a good example (Simpson 2001:25, 43; Schildkrout 1990:21).

[6] James Clifford discusses the idea of autoethnography in the context of museums and Indigenous peoples in his latest work, *Returns: Becoming indigenous in the Twenty-First Century* (2013), as a strategy most easily used by Tribal museums. Tribal museums are an important development in the museum world in terms of representations of Native peoples, but are unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. This paper focuses on mainstream museums and the incorporation of collaborative strategies in order to create better representations of Indigenous peoples.

important because it directly addresses legacies of a long history of institutionalized marginalization and racism that have placed value on Eurocentric ways of knowing. As anthropologist Karl A. Hoerig explains, one pertinent legacy of the intersection of museums and colonialism, especially in instances where collecting campaigns were involved, is that Native communities have had a difficult time of maintaining control over their own material culture and identities (Hoerig 2012:63-65). Through collaboration we are able to combat issues of misplaced or appropriated authority, for example through the use of curatorial voice, by giving it back to those who have the right to disclose, or not to disclose, those who have a right to their own histories, stories, cultures, and identities (Phillips 2003:159).

Collaboration is not only beneficial for the involved Native parties. The museum staff, Indigenous collaborators, and exhibition audience all stand to benefit from an exchange of information and mutual support. Negotiating, navigating, and translating between different ways of knowing or cross-cultural content are less of a monumental task when both sides are actively included in the conversation. Further, when intentions are in the right place, collaboration can lead to long-term reciprocal relationships where both parties can continue to benefit after an exhibition is seen through to closing (Hoerig 2012:66). Hoerig makes an important point when he says that a one-directional model of collaboration is not what we should be striving for, but rather a model that is mutually beneficial (2012:66).[7] As previously mentioned, collaboration between museums and Indigenous or source communities is largely expected in the current era of New Museology (Boast 2011:59), yet for some reason does not seem to be consistently utilized. The era is clearly not over, and the discussion needs to remain open and lively.

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[7] Hoerig's bases his discussion about the importance of reciprocal collaborative relationships around the relationship between a mainstream and a Tribal museum. While I agree that a museum to museum relationship is perhaps an ideal arrangement, I extend his ideas about reciprocity to all collaborative relationships between mainstream museums and Native groups because his idea is an important one (2012).

<u>Theory: Looking Back</u>

At this point in the discussion of why collaboration is important within the museum for reasons brought about by history, the questions arises of whether striving for mutuality in a collaborative relationship with a Native community or consulting party really is good enough. Many museums have come a long way from the days of depicting the image of the vanishing or the mystical one-with-nature Indian. One has to wonder, however, how far and how productively the current museological era can be driven by the question of what museums can do *with* Native peoples. Instead, the question needs to be what museums can do *for* Native peoples that can open up new creative avenues for working together within museum space. To illustrate this theoretical shift, I redirect our attention to one of the most influential scholars on the topic of museums, cross-cultural dialog, and representations, James Clifford, and his foundational concept of thinking about museums as contact zones (1997). The idea of the museum as a contact zone, for all intents and purposes, is essentially what it sounds like. Looking at the museum as a location where cultures come into contact with one another, a place for intercultural dialog, and thus, a platform accounting for all stories, not only the dominant one.

As he writes in his essay, Clifford borrows the term "contact zone" from Mary Louise Pratt (1997:192). In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Pratt defines "contact zone" as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (1992:6-7). Meetings occurring within contact zones are not naturally relations of equality or reciprocity, but can be negotiated by the actions of the people involved (1997:194). Clifford identifies museums space as an ideal place for developing local expressions of cultures that can be shared outward,

especially for groups that have been silenced from conversations about culture in past paradigms (1997:213-4). He delineates that the "contact work" that occurs within the museum is active collaboration, a "sharing of authority" (1997:210), and "places of hybrid possibility and political recognition" (1997:212). Allowing for new insights that cut across cultural lines and translations that could work between cultures in order to teach, Clifford's contact zone concept brings attention to existing configurations of power and authority in a knowledge-producing space. To Clifford, neither party has the automatic right or authority to decipher the histories or collections at stake, and further, resolutions as to whom assumes responsibilities of authority are situational (1997:208-9). The contact zone theory is meant to bring us closer to a decentralized space in museums (1997:214), where knowledges are navigated by conversation, rather than isolated research.

In application, some scholars and museum professionals have employed Clifford's contact zone theory as a framework for structuring relationships between museums and Native or other source communities. In their work from 2003, *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, editors Alison K. Brown and Laura Peers situate the essays in the collection around the necessity of collaboration and the important work that can come out of mutual relationships (2003:1). Contact zone theory as it applies to the task of translation is also woven throughout their compilation. Brown and Peers, both scholars of museum studies and anthropology, draw on the contact zone theory as a framework for collaborative conversations that enable new sources of knowledge in the form of counter-narratives surrounding the artifacts in a collection, and further, as a way to disrupt past methods of knowledge-making (Brown and Peers 2003:4-7). In the introduction to the first section, "Museums and Contact Work," museum anthropologist Trudy Nicks discusses the importance of utilizing Clifford's contact zone theory as a framework

because it provides the context that is necessary for deciphering and navigating intercultural exchange (2003:20). Nicks argues that to be effective agents of social change, museums need to focus on translation, a key aspect of the contact zone theory (2003:27). Translation between knowledge systems works to replace representations of Indigenous peoples informed by colonial-driven knowledge with, as Nicks states, "representations that make explicit the agency with which these peoples have always engaged their own and other worlds," (2003:27). Translation is necessary for creating humanistic representations that express Indigenous peoples as acting subjects in narratives told by museums.

Several years later in 2009, in the work *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, historian and scholar of American Indian studies, Jacki Thompson Rand writes a brief introduction piece entitled, "Museums and Indigenous Perspectives on Curatorial Practice." Highlighting a different perspective, Rand discusses the significance of Native peoples' use of the contact zone concept in a collaborative museum setting as a means to confront differences between knowledge systems (2009:129-131). Rand sees interventions like those coming out of collaborative work as moving past the concept of mere inclusion of diverse narratives, and further, are a means to better representations of lesser-known peoples and stories in exhibitions (2009:129-131).

James Clifford's contact zone concept has lent to frameworks for productive discussions about collaborative work in museums. Literature about critical museology serves as a good example, as evidenced above, of how the concept has been utilized to orient discussions in compilations of essays on the subject. The points discussed here about Clifford's contact zone concept provide an understanding of how collaboration can expose past museum traditions that perpetuate imbalances of power and authority. However, Clifford's, as well as Pratt's,

explanations of the contact zone are not frameworks in and of themselves, but are descriptions and interpretations about power-charged spaces and what happens inside of those spaces. Thus, the points discussed above are examples of adaptations of the contact zone into frameworks for collaboration in museum space, and not of ways that a preexisting contact zone framework is or should be utilized.

Other scholars see the limitations of relying to heavily on interpretations of the contact zone. In her article, "Pamela Masik and the Forgotten Exhibition: Controversy and Cancellation at the Museum of Anthropology," Meg Pinto's examination of some of the more elusive points of collaborative museum work within the current paradigm is rooted in a discussion of Clifford's contact zone concept (2013). Pinto asserts problems with widespread internalization of the concept in museum professionals in the way it promotes the normalization of conflict in museum space (Pinto 2013:4). As a result, some museum professionals frame their actions within cultural encounters in ways that accommodate tensions rather than trying to defuse them (Pinto 2013:12). She also makes the case that Clifford's widely used model can perpetuate what she refers to as a "perpetual contact zone mentality," in which professionals seek out and engage conflicts believing that something positive can come out of the engagements rather than looking for more positive ways to begin building a relationship or taking a reconciliatory approach (2013:13-14). Pinto's arguments speak to the specific issue of representation of Native peoples. Representations structured through the narrative of contact and conflict leave less room for articulations of how Indigenous peoples think of themselves, or narratives that exist completely outside of the contact zone where the two cultures meet.

Furthering Pinto's argument, Robin Boast contends in her essay, "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited," that widespread integration of the contact zone serves as a new justification for museums to maintain their central authoritative roles in society (2011:64). Lines are reformed where previously drawn instead of being re-delineated in new ways that actually restructure the space (Boast 2011:67). The question of who is really being empowered to tell the stories within the contact zone, and where that empowerment originates, highlights some of the challenges in representing Indigenous peoples in dominant museum space.

Pinto and Boast both highlight situations where the contact zone concept has not promoted forward thinking museum contact or collaborative work. Yet, they do not consider whether Clifford's work is used as intended, and further, if his ideas are actually a detriment to museology and museum anthropology. To reiterate from above, Clifford's work on contact zones is comprised of his observations and interpretations of intercultural contact in museum space. The contact zone concept was not offered as a method for structuring the space, but as recognition of the inherent features of power-charged spaces and what occurs inside. Clifford's own words actually have an optimistic tone to them. He identifies the benefits of exposing power relations, such as bringing previously silenced voices to the fore and the ability to actively decentralize and share authority (Clifford 1997:210, 213-14). Yet, other than the case studies, Clifford does not necessarily suggest methods for how to reach these goals, but rather discusses what can be achieved by being critical of the colonial baggage that comes along with contemporary cultural encounters. The distinction that Pinto and Boast do not make is that in instances where behavior is shaped by the contact zone concept, Clifford's influence only goes so far as understanding the dynamics of museum space. Solutions for how to then navigate that space are the collective responsibility of the museum collaborators working on a project,

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something that Clifford actually accounts for in making the point that resolutions for restructuring museum space are completely situational (1997:208-9).

Clifford is not to blame for the ways his work about contact zone is used by others.[8] Some have been able to use the concept as a means to a positive, productive end, such as Rand (2009) and Peers and Brown (2003). Yet this is not to say that Pinto's and Boast's work are unimportant or not constructive. Pinto and Boast give us insight into the limitations of Clifford's contact zone concept in providing shape for the future of museum cultural contacts and collaboration. Though it achieves much, using the contact zone concept to inform frameworks does not guarantee all of the successes that Clifford envisions for museum space. We can see now how a productive framework for future collaboration can be grounded in a contact zone model of museum space and then reach beyond to something new, the focus of this thesis.

Perhaps an exploration of goal-oriented frameworks is an appropriate way to move forward. As scholars such as Phillips have argued, the ability to be aware of and explicit about goals is of central importance explorations of collaborative relationships in museums (2003:159). Peers and Brown assert that goals of collaborative relationships and projects will inevitably differ between parties (2003:9), a sentiment that Clifford came to as well (1997:208-9). The presence of variation does not need to be detrimental to the success of a project, and may actually provide creative depth to the project. In order to utilize museum space to its full potential in how it can benefit Native or Indigenous communities, we must work toward flexible frameworks that enable infinite creative solutions. This way parties involved in collaborative relationships and their corresponding goals may forge a truly original relationship that is capable of new

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[8] Even the way that just the words *contact zone* are understood and applied can vary. Some museum professionals make a distinction between the contact zone as a conceptual framework that can structure relations within a space and, in the broadest sense, as a reference to physical space itself (Jim Enote, personal conversation, February 27, 2014).

directions. In order to understand what more can come out of collaborative relationships between museums and Native communities, however, we need an understanding of what some indigenous goals for museum space might look like and how privileging them can enable creative and beneficial projects.

Theory: Looking Forward

I situate my work between scholars of the museum profession who engage in discussions about collaborative work and scholars who explore contemporary issues and futurities of Indigenous peoples in any capacity. By discussing how the work of scholars can inform strategies for utilizing museum space for fresh, Indigenous-centered purposes, the goal is to encourage more dialog of this kind, which can in turn broaden creative possibilities and continue to shift the norm for relationships between museums and Native peoples. Amy Lonetree (2012), a native (Ho-Chuck) scholar of museum studies leads this discussion in her exploration of what it means to decolonize museums, and what a decolonized museum space can and should achieve for its respective Native counterparts. I build upon Lonetree's work (2012) of considering the task of decolonization in museums because decolonization can enable other goals in the process, such as exercising self-determination or sovereignty, cultural continuity, and imagining futures.[9] The goals of this study are underscored by Lonetree's criteria for a successfully decolonized museum being one that helps communities to address legacies of unresolved historical trauma and grief, challenges stereotypes, aids in community knowledge-making and remembering,

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[9] This is not to say that decolonization should always be the central, guiding goal. Another goal may be just as, if not more, productive depending on the project. My study is only meant to demonstrate one way that the work of scholars who explore contemporary issues of Indigenous peoples can be used to inform and shape museological discussions and practice.

speaks hard truths about the colonial past, and educates the public about the silencing of Native voices (2012:4-8), all of which are legitimate goals in their own right.

The work of scholars who discuss settler colonialism can aid in conceptualizing solutions for decolonization of museum space that are productive because we understand what we are actually decolonizing from and how it functions, pulling remaining structures of colonialism up by the roots, as opposed to trying to prune down only what we see on the surface: unsavory representations of Indigenous peoples. Though many scholars write about decolonization, I utilize ideas from Daniel Heath Justice (2008) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) here as two concepts that are useful in terms of imagining new frameworks for museum space. Both Justice (2008) and Smith (2012) consider decolonization through the literary realm, and Smith further considers decolonization in terms of research. Engaging them here is appropriate because museums space presents an outlet for authorship and scholarship, both of which require research to some extent, much like the literary realm does. Just as writing can challenge the past and imagine new possibilities (Justice 2998:150), museum space can in three dimensions. In a respectful relationship between a museum and a Native community, those who have an inherent right to the content, their culture, knowledge, stories, and imagined futures, will be the ones who author the content and creativity within the museum space. Recognition of Native peoples in roles of museum projects that affirm authorship and authority, not merely as informants or consultants to museum staff, is further recognition of Native peoples as legitimate purveyors of truth and as having control over their own cultural representations.

In his discussion of what it means to decolonize indigenous literature, Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee Nation) contributes a decolonization imperative that is "the storied expression of continuity that encompasses resistance while moving beyond it to an active expression of the

living relationship between the People and the world" (2008:150). As Justice explains further, stories tie the past into the present and imagination of the future, imagination being the key to decolonization because it serves as an expression of self-determination (2008:150). In applying these ideas to museum space we aim to set goals seeking to create narratives that resist and challenge false narratives by actively expressing realities of past and present Indigenous existence, and imagining them into existence in the future.

In Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou) work exploring the importance of maintaining indigenous stories and epistemologies, which often get stifled in research, she states that research methodologies need to be decolonized in order to be truly productive (2012:113). Smith clarifies what she means by stating that, "Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather it is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (2012:113). Smith's idea about centering around one's own epistemologies in order to utilize Western knowledge on one's own terms helps us to approach the complexities of working between knowledge systems, an important task when working in dominant museum spaces.

Using the work of Justice and Smith together, we get a hybrid framework for narratives or storytelling in museum space guided by principles of decolonization. The framework enables a flexible relationship between epistemologies by encouraging the use of an Indigenous way of knowing at the core of a project and making connections to other epistemologies outwardly, as well as the necessary open-ended platform for self-determined progress by suggesting a focus on expressions of story and continuity as guides for narratives. This hybrid framework is important because it aims to organize a museum space that will not dictate how a Native entity is

represented, whether a Nation, a family or clan, or any other configuration down to the individual.

The hybrid framework is also useful in its ability to look to scholars to help imagine how museum space can be useful for a group of Indigenous peoples. Taking a cue from Justice, the open-ended museum space can be utilized to exercise self-determination in any capacity that is necessary or desired through the use of story. Derived from Smith's work, the idea to reformulate the epistemological center for each new project allows flexibility in creating the context for a museum space without discounting one worldview as less than another, or suggesting that new engagements between cultures must begin where previous engagements left off. A hybrid Justice and Smith framework encourages collaborations that enable restorative, forward-looking, and non-confrontational creative projects—three characteristics that contact zone (Clifford 1997) inspired approaches do not explicitly promote—while leaving room for confrontation if identified as a constructive narrative to include.

By outlining an open-ended strategy for navigating between different epistemologies from a Native perspective, as Smith's work lends to, this particular hybrid framework is well suited for a respectful approach to working relationships between museums and Indigenous communities. While the Indigenous peoples involved should ideally have a strong hand in developing the content and creative direction for their representations, as guided by Justice, the museum staff plays an important role in many other aspects such as directing education for the museum's target demographics, as well as the actual installation or putting on of the completed project. Where a framework derived from the contact zone concept (Clifford 1997) may steer collaborative relationships into bygone roles that stifle what can be achieved, the Justice and Smith hybrid frameworks promotes more flexibility in the goals of a project and the roles that

each party can play. The success of the project is then tied to the ability of those involved to work together efficiently with the resources they have available to them.

Just as any approach, this hybrid framework is not without its pitfalls. In dissipating the dominant museum's ultimate authority in order to privilege Native truths and futurities, this framework does not necessarily account for the reality that even Native representations of themselves can close off multi-vocal narratives where there may be more heterogeneity amongst a group than is being represented. The responsibility to avoid closing off other narratives, or to be very specific about whom an exhibition *does* represent, is one that must be addressed with each new project. Furthermore, the above is only one specific example of how the work of scholars can be used to structure new frameworks for museum space, and I do not suggest that a hybrid framework for collaboration can only work with the ideas of Justice and Smith. In fact, other Native voices could be more conducive to the goals of one exhibition over another. The important part is that the first step in the creation of a collaborative exhibition about Indigenous content should be the formulation of an appropriate framework, and a recognition that each project could benefit from a unique starting point.

Methods and Methodologies

In this study, I look at how a framework driven by ideas from scholars, such as the Justice and Smith hybrid framework presented above is reflected in the Native goals for an exhibition, as well as the successes of project created through a collaborative relationship between a museum and Native collaborators. Using a specific exhibition, *Katsina in Hopi Life*, at the Autry Museum from June 29, 2013 to December 1, 2013, as a case study, I delve into the inner-workings of the development and goals of the exhibition as they are explained by key individuals who worked on

the project. The study was originally supposed to center around four interviewees speaking about their work on the case study, two key staff members from the Autry, and two key Native (Hopi) collaborators. Unfortunately, one of the Hopi collaborators, Hartman Lomawaima, passed away part way through the exhibition development process, and so I did not have the privilege of speaking with him. In light of the circumstances allowing me to speak with only one of the Hopi community curators, Susan Secakuku, I balanced her voice with that of Autry staff curator, Paige Bardolph.

Using the element of interview in my study is imperative to my understanding of the development of the *Katsina in Hopi Life* exhibition, as well as my ability to test whether a new framework for collaboration could be useful in guiding more efficient relationships between museums and Native peoples. Most of the data shared with me through the interviews was of a nature that I could not possibly glean just from seeing the exhibition, even multiple times. Like in any relationship, there is much to be established—division of roles and responsibilities, goals, etc. While these organizational details are important, the *whats* in the story, the *whys* and the *hows* provide the insights into the dynamic ways that the collaborative relationship between the Autry and Susan actually functioned. The *whys* and the *hows* provide a look at the human actions, the decision-making, and the negotiations that occurred in the museum space.[10]

My approach to interviewing falls somewhere between designations of the structured and the unstructured, as discussed by Fontana and Frey in, *The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text* (2003). While I began with a list of questions to help me establish what content I wanted to cover, the questions were not shared with the interviewees, and ultimately, I did not use them to guide my interviews. Three ideas did guide my interviews. I employed, a loose

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[10] The *how* and *what* questions in the context of interview are explained by Fontana and Frey in *The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text* (2003:646).

chronological approach, talking about the exhibition from inception to retrospect, but not course correcting when the interviewee jumped around. Next, using broad topical questions allowed the interviewees to speak to the question in any direction they felt was most relevant and important. Actually, I wanted to avoid presupposing what was important as much as possible because their own identifications of important moments in their experiences said just as much about the collaborative project as the process itself. Lastly, and most importantly, the interviewees guided the interviews. When their narratives lead me to a new question that was out of order or that perhaps I had not originally thought to ask, I asked it anyway.

Overall, though I utilized a skeletal structure, the interviews were less like a question and answer session with me doing all of the leading, and more like a conversation where each of us had a hand in shaping the story. This conversational approach did not make for an unbiased discussion of the topic, and I did not play a neutral role. Aside from wanting to understand how the collaboration worked, another goal was to understand whether the accomplishments that I see the collaboration and exhibition as having achieved were intentional or not, and this certainly directed the questions that I asked. My desire to learn, my enthusiasm, and my positivity toward the subject matter and for the work that the interviewees accomplished allowed for more fruitful dialog, and eventually data. In order to minimize directing the interviewees' answers, I always let the interviewees speak to the questions or topics first, before furthering the conversation with my own ideas. When voiced, my comments were meant to deepen a conversation already begun by the interviewee, not to open new conversational avenues.

While I intentionally wanted to talk about certain important overall topics, the way that those topics could be spoken about was left up to the interviewees. For example, once the interviewees finished telling me about their prior experiences with collaboration and how they came to be

involved on the project, I began to ask questions about thoughts on collaboration before they began working together. Questions ranged from asking each interviewee about their own approaches to working in a collaborative project with a museum and what the Autry's approach to working collaboratively with Native community members is, to whether there was any discussion within the Autry prior to establishing new relationships about arrangements of authority and power. I asked a majority of the questions about the planning and execution of the exhibition, and topics included how goals and responsibilities were delineated, the approach to curatorial voice, and whether and how a dialog was promoted between different knowledge systems and worldviews. I reserved overarching questions about difficulties that arose, and the Hopi community curators' responsibility to their community for concluding topics. The interviewees were clearly being asked to speak to the questions in their capacity as museum professionals working on the *Katsina* exhibition, but no other specific context was suggested, and they could speak to the question in any direction that felt relevant to them. Understanding what the collaborators did or did not discuss before beginning to work, what decisions were made and by whom, and what issues or challenges the collaborators worked through, among other questions, are all imperative to my assessment of the case study of *Katsina in Hopi Life* as a collaborative project. The qualitative set of data derived from conversation with two key agents in the story, Secakuku and Bardolph, will allow me to discuss the study in the larger context of collaborative work in dominant museum space.

Institutional Background

Located in the Griffith Park area of Los Angeles, the Museum of the American West at the Autry National Center (the Autry), formerly known as the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, was co-founded in 1988 by Gene and Jackie Autry and Monte and Joanne Hale (Autry Website, History of the Autry section). The idea for the museum was imagined out of its namesake, Gene Autry's, dream to have a place to share his love of collecting Western heritage materials and the story of the West with the world (Pubols 2009:72). Since its opening, the Autry has continually faced the challenge of maintaining a distinction between the romanticized old West that Gene Autry is associated with from his acting career, and further entrenched by visitor expectations and stereotypes, and the New Western history that is expected of serious scholarly institutions (Pubols 2009:72). Narratives such as that of the "White Man's Indian," stemming back to the era of contact (Berkhofer 1979), or the later Hollywood old West derived from depictions of Natives in film, complicate representations of Native peoples because they bring up questions of authenticity. Considering their beginning point then, the Autry had and still has their work cut out for them.

Louise Pubols, former historian at the Autry National Center and current chief curator of history at the Oakland Museum of California, discusses the Autry's development in representing the history of the West in her article, "The Singing Cowboy and the Professor: The New West at the Autry National Center" (2009). The Autry's founding staff, as Pubols attests, had seemingly had good intentions, seeking to create a narrative of the American West based around rich histories of many intersecting cultures (2009:73). However, through a series of questionable decisions, a multicultural narrative was only patchily achieved (Pubols 2009:73). For example,

the Indian Wars were featured in the Autry's narrative of the West, but the story and corresponding experiences of Indian boarding schools were left out of the story entirely (Pubols 2009:73). Though Pubols situates issues with the narrative around the museum's beginnings, the question remains open as to the success of representing a multiplicity of histories.

Pubols suggests two points in particular as reasons why efforts to fully develop lesser known stories have not been fully realized (2009:73). Firstly, she makes the point that visitor expectations greatly influence what a museum can talk about and how in depth, and that just bringing certain characters into a story at all, and with minimal development, might be all the audience is ready for (Pubols 2009:73). In other words, notifying the audience that American Indians or other marginalized groups existed during this era and in this region is good enough because audiences might not be able to handle the truths evidenced by their stories. If Pubols' assessment is accurate, it raises questions about the Autry's dedication to being a knowledge-making institution, a place to seek truths. Catering to the possibility of preconceived public misconceptions can only further enable those misconceptions, and can render representations of Natives and other minorities down to versions that may be hardly recognizable to themselves if they walked through the door.

The second reason that Pubols offers for the lack of development of lesser-known stories within the Autry's narrative is that the collections limited the stories that they were able to tell (2009:74). A museum's collection certainly plays a crucial role in creating exhibitions. Lucky for the Autry, their fairly recent merge with the Southwest Museum left them with an extensive addition to their collection. Pubols is optimistic that the Autry will do better in expressing "the continuous presence of Native peoples" (2009:75). One thing is for certain: now that they have plenty of materials with which to tell Native American narratives in the West. This case study

will look at the second major exhibition the Autry put on utilizing the added Southwest collection and the degree of success of their working with Native peoples collaboratively.

The Autry National Center currently consists of three entities: The Museum of the American West, the Southwest Museum of the American Indian, and the Institute for the Study of the American West (Autry Website, History of the Autry section). The Southwest Museum opened in 1914 under the direction of historian Charles Fletcher Lummis and joined the Autry National Center in 2004 in the same overhaul that prompted the Autry's official name change (Autry Website, History of the Autry section). The Autry's current mission states, "The Autry brings together the stories of all peoples of the American West, connecting the past with the present to inspire our shared future" (Autry Website, What is the Autry section). What is particularly interesting about this statement is that it reflects part of the Indigenous-driven hybrid framework for museum space that was suggested in the previous section. The Autry's mission statement particularly aligns with Daniel Heath Justice's decolonization imperative in underscoring of the importance of story in connecting the past, present, and future (2008:150). With the alignment of the Autry's mission statement and Justice's decolonization imperative, the museum seemingly has the conceptual foundation it needs to enable use of museum space for ends imagined by Native minds, including decolonization. Whether the Autry has been successful in aligning with the other half of the proposed framework for museum space, as inspired by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), will be discussed upon further examination of an exhibition featuring Native content, *Katsina in Hopi Life*.

<u>Exhibition Walk Through</u>

The Autry's exhibition, *Katsina in Hopi Life*, was shown at the Museum of the American West from June 29, 2013 through December 1, 2013. The exhibition began with the Hopi creation story, and set the stage for interpreting the exhibition content in terms of a balance between traditional and modern Hopi lifestyles. Visitors were also introduced to the Hopi calendar in the introductory portion of the exhibition, accentuating the central intertwined themes of the seasonal cycle of life-sustaining regeneration and the *Katsinam* (friends) that reside in the realm of the clouds. Though the Hopi no longer grow corn for subsistence purposes, their corn crops are an integral part of their existence as Hopi people, as explained in their origin stories, and are sustaining in ways other than physically. The very first case that one encountered contained clearly old tools used for dry farming of corn, indicating that what we are about to learn about Hopi life goes far back in time. The visitor would then proceed to a video in which we learn how this information has been transmitted from Hopi to Hopi for so long: through story. In the video, an uncle teaches his niece about why Hopis grow corn. The color scheme was distinct, with shades of blues, tans, and browns, reminiscent of the landscape of the mesas shown in the exhibition's photographs and media. In contrast, the most colorful aspect of the exhibition was the collection, itself.

The first half of the exhibition was arranged to follow half of the seasonal calendar, beginning with *Ahöla* (winter), when germination occurs and the *Katsina* (singular form of Katsinam) season begins. The exhibition moves through Katsina season into spring. In order to depict the presence and involvement of Katsinam in Hopi communities during this half of the year, *tithu* were exhibited throughout. *Tithu* is the word for dolls depicting Katsinam, and *tihu,* without the *–t-*, designates the singular form (Pearlstone 2001:43). In the context of the exhibition, tithu were

used to teach about the different identities of the many Katsinam. In Hopi life, as explained further on through a video, a Hopi girl receives a doll as a gift from a Katsina during one of the festivals that the Katsinam appear at during the season, one of which is *Powamu* (the bean dance). Tithu are meant to communicate messages, such as moral lessons or warnings, or to reinforce appropriate behavior and relationships within the community. Dolls from the 1900s were displayed with ones made through to contemporary. The show featured tithu from different eras and artists, thus affirming cultural and artistic continuity. When possible, the names and information were written in the Hopi language first, followed by translations into English. When a name did not translate accurately from Hopi to English, no translation was given at all.

The second half of the exhibition was the Hopi home section and focused on more domestic Hopi life-ways. This half of the exhibition reinforces that dry farming corn practices and the Katsinam touch every aspect of Hopi life in one way or another. The first room was meant to look and feel like the inside of a Hopi home. Tithu hung from rafters, and other fine works of Hopi craftsmanship were exhibited in cases cleverly integrated into displays that looked like furniture. These displays, however, were clearly not the main attraction in this room. A video about what a *tihu* means to Hopi girls who receive them looped on a fairly large flat screen television. A large comfortable couch was placed in front of the television, suggesting that visitors were encouraged to stay and watch because the content must be important.

The next room was likened to a typical Hopi kitchen. Environmental video footage of a Hopi family having a meal was projected onto a wall. Women buzzed around the table, children ate and laughed, everyone passed plates back and forth, nibbling on traditional Hopi dishes. The Hopi family's table protruded from the wall into physical museum space, with seating provided all around. Once seated at the table, a visitor figuratively dined with the Hopi family, a gesture in

sharing and an access point for thinking about similarities between Hopi family life and visitors'

lives. The table featured backlit pictures of Hopi staple foods and their origins. The room also

featured other Hopi material culture relating to food preparation, along with small videos of Hopi

traditional foods being prepared, such as *piki* (paper-thin bread made out of blue corn). In the

following room, traditional women's outfits were displayed amidst walls covered in large

photographs, continuing with the life-ways theme.

The final room brought the exhibition to a close by bringing the uncle and niece back into the

narrative through one last video. The niece had now received a tihu and relays the story of how

she received it to her uncle. Her uncle tells her more about the specific katsina that her tihu

depicts. It begins to rain, suggesting that the niece and himself as well as other Hopis, have done

their duties and acted appropriately during the year, and are now being rewarded. The final

display case near the very end held particularly exquisite and favorite tithu from the Autrys'

personal collection. The last images presented upon exiting the exhibition were large

photographs, past and contemporary, of Hopi people.

<u>Presentation of Data</u>

The qualitative data set for this study was collected through interviews with two key

individuals who worked on the exhibition, *Katsina in Hopi Life*, at the Autry. The first interview

was with the Autry's assistant curator of the Southwest Museum Collection, Paige Bardolph,

conducted on January 23, 2014. Bardolph joined the Autry team in June of 2011 and worked

extensively on the *Katsina* exhibition in the year before it opened in June of 2012. The Autry's

curator of the Southwest Museum Collection and her former boss, Steven Carr, established and

worked on the collaborative project with the Hopi community curators until he left his position,

leaving the assistant curator, Bardolph, to lead the curatorial team (interview with author, January 23, 2014). The second interview was with professional museum consultant and community curator for the Autry, Susan Secakuku, from Sipaulovi Village at Second Mesa in Hopi Nation, Arizona on February 24, 2014. Work on the *Katsina* exhibition originally began with a second Hopi community curator, Hartman Lomawaima, who unfortunately passed on part of the way through the creation of the exhibition (interview with author, February 24, 2014). Through the interviews, Bardolph and Secakuku each told their version of the story of *Katsina in Hopi Life* with guidance from the conversational interviewing process toward key topics. Four common themes—goals, redistribution of authority, working together, and moving between epistemologies—emerged as particularly important in terms of understanding how collaboration was set up and functioned in the project.

Goals

Bardolph and Secakuku provide fairly straightforward consensus about goals for the exhibition, *Katsina in Hopi Life*. As Bardolph explains, the main institutional goal for the exhibition was to support the Autry's official initiatives, the most relevant being the "integration of Native voice" into the museum's narratives. Bardolph further notes that working off of the initiatives meant aiming to represent contemporary Hopis, refraining from interpreting Hopi stories for them, and involving as much collaboration as possible (interview with author, January 23, 2014). Secakuku underscores the institutional goal of integrating Native voice in her assessment of the Autry team's goals as privileging community voice and utilizing community curation by handing much of the project off to the Hopi curators. Secakuku identifies the goal of

featuring the extensive Southwest Museum Collection, one of the larger in the country, as a secondary goal (interview with author, February 24, 2014).

In terms of goals generated from the Hopi community curatorial team, Secakuku explains that though Katsina culture is a very popular subject because of the value of tithu among collectors, the content is actually a religious aspect of Hopi culture and can be sensitive. Herself and the late Mr. Lomawaima really wanted to share as much as was appropriate and respectful to the larger Hopi community about Katsina culture, while maintaining an important distinction between Katsinam as they exist within Hopi communities, and the tithu, or dolls that depict Katsinam, as collectors pieces.[11] A broad goal for the exhibition was to focus on the cultural aspect of Katsinam in Hopi culture, and not to be an exhibition about the art of carving or collecting tithu. The main goal was to look at how Katsinam and Hopis interact from a community perspective, specifically from the perspective of Sipaulovi Village. Eventually even more specifically from the perspective of a woman from Sipaulovi Village.[12] Goals of showing how Katsinam are a part of contemporary Hopis' lives and how Hopis continue to learn from them even today are also brought up by Secakuku (interview with author, February 24, 2014). In agreement, Bardolph sees the task of exhibiting a living tradition and how contemporary Hopis live between worlds as two goals that were most important to Secakuku, as well as the goal of sharing as much from Hopi culture as was possible and appropriate (interview with author, January 23, 2014).

Secakuku speaks to one common overarching goal between the Autry curatorial and Hopi Community curatorial teams: that authority would be given to the Hopi team to inform the creation of *Hopi in Katsina Life*. In order to achieve this, control over all content would be

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[11] Because goals for the exhibition were delineated toward the beginning of the project, while Mr. Lomawaima was still alive, the Hopi curatorial goals refer to the wishes of both Susan Secakuku and Hartman Lomawaima. After Mr. Lomawaima passed on, it was largely up to Ms. Secakuku to carry out the goals to the end of the exhibition process.
[12] Susan Secakuku became the sole Hopi community curator for the exhibition after Mr. Lomawaima passed, so her perspective—that of a Hopi woman—informed much of the formative stages of the project.

handed over to the Hopi community curatorial team, and the team would tell a Hopi story from their own perspective, using both the frameworks and boundaries suggested by the combined goals of both teams. The space and content of the exhibition were to be designed in the Hopi image and through the Hopi knowledge system, a goal very important to Mr. Lomawaima, in order to transport all visitors Southwest to Hopi upon walking in the gallery (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014).

Redistribution of Authority

Though Bardolph did not experience much formal discussion surrounding authority or power relationships within museum in the context of the *Hopi in Katsina Life*, Secakuku recalls many productive conversations back toward the beginning of the project (interview with author, January 23, 2014; February 24, 2014). Secakuku explains that some of the discussion about authority and the more theoretical side of collaborative work occurred in casual conversation between museum professionals. Despite moving forward on the project in the midst of the merger, the Autry and Southwest Museums' leadership were on the same page in terms of the topic of authority. Secakuku recalls that it was made very clear at the beginning of their role as guest curators that she and Mr. Lomawaima were the authority over the content for the exhibition. Secakuku and Lomawaima were also the final decision makers. Interestingly, Secakuku feels that it took years for the entirety of the Autry staff to get on the same page of the decision making process as laid out from the start, with the Hopi community curators in control. She contrasts the Autry staff with those staff members originally from the Southwest Museum, as she felt less "push and pull" from them. Secakuku attributes the difficulties on the part of the Autry staff to their previous reliance on the in-house curators as the authority, while the

Southwest staff were more used to interacting with community members as decision makers (interview with author, February 24, 2014).

Working Together

According to both Bardolph and Secakuku the Autry intentionally wanted to work with Hopi collaborators who had experience working with museum exhibitions (interview with author, January 23, 2014; interview with author, February 24, 2014). As Bardolph explains, hiring Hopis with experience in curation was helpful because they already understood the process, and were also able to provide information about Hopi culture as representatives of their community. In exhibition development at the Autry, a small team of staff members from each of the necessary departments, including guest curators, is pulled together for each exhibition and meets regularly. In cases where the guest curator is not in-house all the time, as was the case with Secakuku, the team would coordinate by phone or e-mail between Secakuku's visits to Los Angeles (Bardolph, interview with author, January 23, 2014). Secakuku recalls that from the start of the project, she had been designated the curator and decision maker, and any decisions made regarding the exhibition required her permission. Each department would check in with her regularly for direction or permissions, whether she was at home in Hopi or in Los Angeles. Secakuku estimates that she probably spent about two and a half months in Los Angeles of the nearly seven year process of making *Katsina in Hopi Life* (interview with author, February 24, 2014).

Secakuku wrote all of the original text for the exhibition and several staff members reviewed it at different stages, including an editor, in order to gear it toward the appropriate audiences. As she explains, she wrote the text from a strong emic (or insider's) community perspective, so extensive review and editing were necessary in order to ensure clarity for everyone. Different

departments, such as education, public programming, or marketing, would pull from Secakuku's text for varying purposes. As with all other content, Secakuku always gave the final go ahead (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014).

The responsibility of being the final decision maker was not always an easy one to wield for Secakuku. Sometimes she had to really think hard about what was okay and what was not, especially when it came to content with spiritual or religious meaning. Her personal gauge was to ask herself whether someone from home would be offended upon seeing the questionable content displayed. However, there were times where she felt that, as a representative of her community, she could not make a decision alone. For these times, she and Hartman had created a community advisory committee at Hopi to meet with periodically for affirmation or to take questions to. For example, Secakuku questioned the appropriateness of including the first doll in the exhibition because that particular Katsina is not traditionally supposed to be carved. Upon presenting the situation to the Hopi advisory committee, they told her that her job was to tell a story about Hopi Katsina, and that this doll was part of the story. Secakuku recalls questioning whether she was being too sensitive, but she relied on her own intuition as a Hopi community member to come to appropriate conclusions. At another moment in creating the exhibition, Secakuku struggled with whether or not to include a particular prayer that would sum up the exhibition nicely. She eventually came to the conclusion that her feelings of discomfort at the thought of sharing the prayer were meaningful, and that the prayer should remain private amongst Hopis (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014).

Between Epistemologies

Secakuku was mainly alone at the helm during the later stages of the exhibition, using her authority to determine what was going to be included in *Hopi in Katsina Life* and what was going to be left out or remain private to Hopi peoples (interview with author, February 24, 2014). One of the main challenges, as Bardolph recalls, was figuring out how to explain to visitors why there were questions that could not always be answered, or why there were things that could not be shared. Secakuku provided explanations behind the withholding of knowledge in training sessions for staff members dealing with the education portion of the exhibition, mainly docents and museum teachers. Bardolph remembers Secakuku being clear about which content would be discussed, and when staff were expected to answer questions with, 'we cannot actually answer that question,' reason being that there are some things the Hopi community does not want for the museum to share. With so many opportunities for conversations about who knowledge belongs to or why communities have a right to retain secrets, Bardolph hopes that the exhibition encouraged some dialog between the Hopi and greater American knowledge systems, especially with the Autry's desire to move in the direction of telling diverse stories of the West from different perspectives (interview with author, January 23, 2014).

Secakuku has a similar hope to Bardolph and provides insight into her own strategy for working between knowledge systems. By purposefully choosing more universal themes to present some of the content in the exhibition, such as education, food, or family relationships, Secakuku aimed to make connections between knowledge systems and lives, in addition to making distinctions. These themes were used as access points, creating bridges between epistemologies, in order to show visitors how Hopi people live their lives and encourage reflection back on viewers own lives and ways of knowing the world. Secakuku narrates, "this is

the Hopi way of doing things, the Hopi outlook or perspective or teaching, and then asking the question, how do you guys do it? Or is it important in your family?" The kitchen portion of the exhibition, as Secakuku points out, serves as a good example of an access point or bridge between knowledge systems. A visitor learned about the importance of the Hopi calendar, the yearly cycle of growing corn, and keeping up relationships with the Katsinam in the beginning portion of the exhibition. Once they got to the kitchen room, they saw corn being passed around the table in a very casual setting—one recognizable to the average visitor—the dinner table. Feasting is an important part of the experience during ceremonial times at Hopi. As demonstrated in the video footage, the foods are the same ones seen around the table in the exhibition too. At this moment in the exhibition, Secakuku explains the question meant to stir in the visitor's mind is, "What kinds of foods do you share around your table during what times?" She makes the point that many of these themes are not foreign, and that this was purposeful in order to reach the diverse audiences (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014).

Secakuku provided translations, not interpretations, between knowledge systems where appropriate, but as explained above, much was left unsaid as well. In order to make sure that the theme of information sharing and secrecy was clear in the exhibition, an explanation was included in opening interpretive texts. The text explained not only what visitors would see, but also the idea that visitors would be seeing only what the Hopis wanted to share and no more (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014).

Discussion

Every exhibition surely poses a number of challenges for those working on it, and *Katsina in Hopi Life* was no exception. The task of collaborating is not easy, nor simple, especially when the content of the exhibition involves taking a different than traditional approach to divisions of

authority and goals, or working between more than one epistemology. Secakuku's reflection about how long it took some of the Autry staff to get comfortable with her role of authority in the exhibition exposes the reality that practicing collaboration is not natural for everyone, and further, not necessarily normal practice for all museums yet. Bardolph explains that use of reciprocal collaboration is an official new direction for the Autry, and that participation from the respective community is formally defined in each project (interview with author, January 23, 2014).

In the case of *Katsina in Hopi Life*, the collaborative strategy was to incorporate a reversed configuration of authority, giving all of the decision making power over the exhibition's content to the community curator(s) instead of to the museum staff. The strategy of reversing authority or power in museum space could be viewed as unproductive if we make the assumption that in collaboration, we should always strive to keep an even balance of power. However, keeping responsibilities on an even keel is perhaps only necessary sometimes and must be determined based on each new project, the institution, the content, and people involved. For example, if the Autry were to have invited different Hopis with less or no museum experience to work as community curators, a more balanced configuration of power might have been beneficial. This is not to say that non-museum professionals are less capable of working to produce the content for an exhibition about their culture or community. But in order to ensure that the process would run smoothly, a non-Museum professional would need to rely more heavily on the museum staff to guide them in the process. Secakuku, and the late Mr. Lomawaima, are (or were) both museum professionals in some capacity. They were experienced in the process of creating an exhibition, allowing the Autry to rely on their ability to be more self-sufficient, and further allowing the Autry to recognize more than half of the power or authority in them.

The collaborative work surrounding the exhibition, *Katsina in Hopi Life*, as well as the exhibition itself reached several achievements in terms of the goals met. Firstly, the team of Hopi curators and Autry staff transformed the space literally and figuratively into a Hopi space. The team took a museum space and transformed it as informed by aesthetics of the Hopi landscape Susan Secakuku (interview with author, February 24, 2014). She creatively regulated the space in her desire to transport guests to Hopi upon stepping into the space, and to ensure that other Hopis would feel at home if they visited the exhibition (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014). More importantly, the collaborative team succeeded in creating a Hopi space, specifically from the Sipaulovi perspective where Secakuku is from, in the way that information was regulated within the space. Visitors were subject to the Hopi rules around which the exhibition was organized, such as which information was appropriate for outsiders to know and what should remain private within the community as previously discussed (Bardolph, interview with author, January 23, 2014; Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014).

The division of information could not have worked in practicality without the cooperation of the Autry staff, but further, the recognition of Secakuku as the authority on the subject matter. A second accomplishment, *Katsina in Hopi Life* reflects the success of the collaborative team at reassigning authority in the museum space. As explained previously, the Autry intended from the beginning to recognize Secakuku and Lomawaima, the Hopi curators, as the authority on the exhibition content. To reiterate, Secakuku and Lomawaima were not *given* authority, but rather were recognized as those who have it, while the staff members did not. The distinction between given and inherent authority is crucial, as the Autry recognized what already existed in Secakuku

and Lomawaimas' right to speak on their own Hopi culture, on behalf of their community, and how to best represent it, as opposed to the Autry doing this for them.[13]

Secakuku's own reflections on her role in the making of *Katsina in Hopi Life,* as discussed above, reveal a layer of complexity to the role of authority. Though she and Lomawaima were recognized as the authority and final decision makers on the content of the exhibition, Secakuku still used her discretion as to where that authority ended and should be deferred back to someone else in her community. She generally made decisions herself relying on her own intuition as a Hopi person in tune with her community, but at other times she relied on her elders to help her make the right decisions. Though authority was recognized in Secakuku and Lomawaima and not in the museum, authority does not actually reside in the individual, but in the individual's role as an active member of his or her community. In a perfect world, perhaps the entire community should have an authoritative voice or hand in representations of themselves. Through no fault of their own necessarily, the Autry was unable to engage the entire Hopi community, or even just Sipaulovi Village, in collaboration. However, working with a community curator like Secakuku, who purposefully and responsibly positioned herself between the museum and her community, allowed the community to retain authority by proxy. As a trusted member of her community, Secakuku was responsible for making respectful decisions about Hopi content in the exhibition and the responsibility was entrusted to her from two directions.

Secakuku's responsible approach to the role of authority, along with the transformation of the space, directly contributed to another success of the exhibition, the task of bringing the Hopi knowledge system to the exhibition's core. One facet of creating a Hopi space was to privilege

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[13] The idea of inherent authority is used here with the recognition that notions of authority differ between cultures, communities, and down to individual preference, and I do not speak on Hopi ideas of authority. In the context of *Katsina in Hopi Life*, the term inherent authority refers to the concept that a cultural community has the right to control and author representations of themselves.

Hopi perspective above all others, allowing it to structure the exhibition's content and creativity. As discussed above, Secakuku provided the Hopi perspective. Secakuku used a translation approach to account for the fact that she was presenting the information in the exhibition foremost from a Hopi perspective. Translations would highlight access points in the exhibition narratives for visitors to process what they were learning in relation to their own cultural values or ways of life, so that more literal interpretations of the content from a Euro-American or other perspective could be avoided. Another way that Secakuku privileged the Hopi perspective was by only sharing content that was appropriate for non-Hopis to know and enforcing the reality that not all knowledge is for everyone. Visitors walking into the exhibition space were subject to Hopi rules about the flow of information, extending the lessons and narratives past tangible aspects of the exhibition.

The Hopi rules about the division of information did not end with the visitors. Secakuku coached education staff members at the Autry on where the line between appropriate to share and not appropriate to share was so they were better equipped to teach to the exhibition, provide tours, and answer (or not answer) questions. Of course, being told that one cannot know what they would like to is not always well received in any context. Bardolph and Secakuku both understandably identified the issue of working between knowledge systems in terms of education as one of the biggest challenges to *Katsina in Hopi Life* (interview with author, January 23, 2014; interview with author, February 24, 2014). The team certainly did not choose an easy path, yet they remained true to it. The dedication to privileging the Hopi epistemology, even if it meant that some visitors might be put off or that material was not always presented in ways expected of dominant museums, underscores the concept of privilege.

Furthermore, privileging a Hopi epistemology and the division of appropriate knowledge in *Katsina in Hopi Life* speaks to the important theme of cultural continuity, past, present, and future. The exhibition is built around the approach of recognizing differences and simultaneously creating bridges where similarities exist between Hopi and other cultures, lifestyles, and ways of knowing. In turn, the exhibition perpetuates a degree of alienation between Hopis and others, while also promoting humanistic understanding and recognition. In other words, the exhibition suggests that though Hopis are a distinct group of people for many reasons, they are still humans just like all of us. As the community curator, the exhibition is a reflection of how Secakuku sees her own community, and is also a representation of Sipaulovi to outsiders or visitors. We can then glean that Secakuku sees her people as truly distinct and unique with a past of rich cultural traditions, yet living as humans in the contemporary world. The importance and care she affords to continuing to keep some content private to her community communicates that she and other Hopis have no intention of giving up any portion of their identity as a distinct people any time soon. Through her role in *Katsina in Hopi Life* as the keeper of authority for her community and as the guest community curator at the Autry, Secakuku in an act of self-determination asserts her vision of Hopis into the future as a distinct entity, with all of their traditions and religion intact.

Overall, in *Katsina in Hopi Life*, privileging Hopi authority led to the creation of a Hopi space governed by Hopi rules. Secakuku's strategy of working firstly through her Hopi epistemology, by presenting information from a Hopi perspective and then making connections to universal or humanistic themes in order to make sense of the Hopi content for a broad and diverse audience, is congruent with one of the two pillars of the hybrid framework proposed earlier in this study. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's declaration that decolonizing does not have to entail a full rejection of Western knowledge, and instead, Western knowledge can be utilized for indigenous purposes

after re-centering completely around indigenous ways of knowing and acting in the world (2013:113), aligns with strategies and goals for *Hopi in Katsina Life,* and vise versa. The Autry's goal to feature Native voices by giving the museum's authority over Hopi content to the Hopi guest curators, enabled Secakuku to make the Hopi epistemology the core of the exhibit. The result was an exhibition that originated from an indigenous epistemology, with purposeful navigations from Hopi to Western ways of knowing in order to share, or not share, appropriate and respectful information and create a carefully controlled representation of an indigenous culture and people.

The second pillar of the hybrid framework, derived from Daniel Heath Justice (2008), also coincides with *Hopi in Katsina Life.* The exhibition reflected Justice's directive for decolonizing through story encompassing resistance and expressing contemporary life-ways in the use of the collection and the narratives utilized to tell stories about and represent Hopis. The exhibition featured a central narrative about a Hopi girl and her relationships with humans and non-human subjects, or her uncle and the Katsinam that was presented using video footage. This allowed the audience to see contemporary Hopi faces speaking about time-honored traditions and practices corresponding with the collection. The mixed use of first voice and cultural materials from many eras promoted Hopi culture as continuous and contemporary. Further, Secakuku's creative work speaks perhaps most strongly to Justice's concept that story and imagination are key in expressing self-determination in ways that encompass the past (2008:150). As opposed to literally incorporating Hopi stories into the exhibition, Secakuku used the museum space to retell a fresh, yet old story about Katsinam and Hopi life, as she was charged to do by the Hopi advisory committee she consulted with (interview with author, February 24, 2014). Secakuku's care to maintain an element of isolation of Hopi knowledge and culture amongst the more

relatable narratives was a creative expression of her will to keep Hopi cultural integrity and identity intact for future generations, imagining a future for Hopis through a creative expression of self-determination in museum space.

Conclusion

Through this study I have explored the question of whether new frameworks for museum space informed by scholarship in contemporary indigenous studies can broaden our capabilities for what can be achieved from collaborative projects between museums and Native people. To get to this point, I firstly provided a very brief background to the topic of collaboration and why working relationships between museums and Native communities are important. Next, I discussed the widely used contact zone concept remade by James Clifford (1997) from Pratt's original work (1992) in terms of its usage, merits, and shortcomings. I countered with a discussion proposing the idea of a hybrid framework, utilizing the work of Indigenous scholars, Justice (2008) and Smith (2012), followed by the methods and methodologies surrounding my study. At this point, I presented the case study on *Katstina in Hopi Life*, providing an institutional background of the Autry Museum, a walkthrough of the exhibition, and an overview of the main overlapping themes from interviews I conducted with Paige Bardolph and Susan Secakuku. In the section that followed, I discussed what we can glean from the information provided from Bardolph and Secakuku about goals, authority, responsibilities in a collaborative relationship, and working between intercultural epistemologies. Lastly, I demonstrated how the inter-workings of the collaborative project for *Hopi in Katsina Life* are reflective of the hybrid framework I proposed.

As presented above, the specific hybrid framework I introduce in this study using the work of Justice and Smith aligns very well with the specific goals, relations, and accomplishments of

Katsina in Hopi Life. To be clear, this framework was not adopted or utilized by the Autry and Hopi team in their project, yet I find through this study that the framework happens to parallel the work done in the exhibition quite closely. Perhaps there is something to be said about the fact that the goals Secakuku and Lomawaima, two experienced and responsible Hopi community curators, pursued were so inline with both Justice's and Smith's ideas on decolonization. I do not mean in any way to say that all Indigenous minds think alike, or agree on everything. However, imperative issues such as decolonization, self-determination, identity, cultural continuity, and recognition as contemporary peoples touch many communities. The fact that scholars across disciplines sometimes align over similar topics is not only unsurprising, but should be better heard and utilized, especially in the museum field which is generally preoccupied with "Truth" and disseminating knowledge.

As I have discovered through the case study, fresh frameworks or approaches can provide useful guidance in sorting out goals and responsibilities in collaborative projects. As suggested by the case study, looking to the writings of scholars on Indigenous issues can to help shape new, unique frameworks that better align museum work with related discussions occurring in other circles. The goals and achievements derived by Secakuku and Lomawaima for *Hopi in Katsina Life* fit into the discussions that Justice (2008) and Smith (2012) speak to in their work, just in a different medium—museum space. Further, the concepts borrowed from Justice (2008) and Smith (2012) inform a framework that encourages more work in support of broad goals such as decolonization and self-determination. Both themes are reflected in the exhibition, decolonization being implicit in the redistribution of authority and power, and self-determination also being implicit in Secakuku's representation and projection of Hopis. Utilizing ideas from scholars to help define goals for an exhibition about Indigenous content can provide guidance on

how responsibilities would need to be divided up in order to achieve those goals. This includes identifying who should provide the curatorial voice(s), who is represented by whom, who is recognized as having authority over the content, who will be making the decisions, and many more important responsibilities. In the case study we see that responsibilities were divided in ways meant to restructure power, and enable and privilege Secakuku and Lomawaima's goals.

The case study also brings to light those structures of authority and power in a museum that collaborating teams have much less control over. The building itself could not be changed if necessary to suit the needs of the Hopi curators or collection, such as directionality or access to the elements. The physical location of the Autry in Los Angeles, in addition to the museum's status in the Los Angeles community as a knowledge-making institution, dictated that the Hopi curators had to do most of the travelling, since the exhibition was going to be shown in the museum. The exhibition did not travel to Hopi, and the only other Hopis who saw the show were presumably the Hopis brought out by the museum for programming or those living in the Los Angeles area. The finances further constrained the situation. Funding came through the Autry's side (Bardolph, interview with author, January 23, 2014; Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014), and there was a finite amount, which limited the amount of time Secakuku and Lomawaima could spend working in Los Angeles (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014). The budget also limited Secakuku's creative direction, causing her to need to constrain some of her initial ideas (Secakuku, interview with author, February 24, 2014). Other exhibitions at the Autry were being worked on or showing at the same time, necessitating that resources be shared. The priority of the Hopi exhibition over others within the Autry is unknown.

The above limitations, as a result of structures of authority and power in the Autry, serve as a reminder that a fully decolonized and decentralized mainstream museum space is not only extremely difficult to achieve, but is actually quite idealistic, and thus, unrealistic in practice. Despite the fact that the Autry's power in terms of status, money, and physical space did impose on the *Hopi in Katsina Life* exhibition process, the collaborative teams succeeded in doing the best job possible with what they did have control over. The Autry staff had little control over the authority and power vested in the institution itself. Yet, the staff identified, whether consciously or unconsciously, the authority they held as people working within the institution, as well as the authority that the Hopi community curators held. All the authority held by people was decisively put on the table, decentralized, and redistributed in order to suit the collective goals of privileging Hopi voices and ways of knowing.

Interestingly, upon looking at the case study for what the people involved could reasonably and did do, a cycle emerges. A framework for museum collaboration supporting Indigenous-centric views enables and supports worthwhile and productive goals and relations, which in turn reaffirm and support an Indigenous-centric framework as the project evolves. The cycle outlined here was enabled by an approach to museum space much like the contact zone concept (Clifford 1997). Clifford's interpretation of contact in museum space encourages a sort of full disclosure of all of the power and authority that come into play at an intersection of cultures, as well as the limitations imposed. To Clifford, the obstacles, which are specific to each intersection, are then navigated collectively through collaboration (1997:208-210). Again, Clifford does not offer specific solutions for how navigations should occur. The case study of *Katsina in Hopi Life* is one example of how a cultural intersection was subsequently navigated from a beginning point of the Autry museum space as a contact zone.

In the case of *Katsina in Hopi Life*, the solutions fall on one extreme end of the spectrum of the redistribution of authority. The Indigenous-centric framework strategy does operate on the assumption that the Indigenous or Native side "wins" in the conflicts over authority and power. However, it would seem that regardless of how it was achieved, a successful collaborative project is restorative in the affirmation and encouragement that museums and Indigenous communities *can* have healthy working relationships. Given the history of museology and reasons for needing collaboration in museums at all, at least being open to the possibility of a power reversal in cases when it would ensure meeting the goals for an exhibition is not unreasonable.

I do not propose that we strive for an ultimate form of collaboration. In fact, I am beginning to think no one "best practice" exists, though there is no question that respective indigenous communities should be included in as much of the process as possible in museum endeavors utilizing Indigenous content. What I propose is beginning to think of collaborative relationships between museums and Native communities as more fluid and nuanced than the common connotative understanding of collaboration allows. The exhibition, *Hopi in Katsina Life*, was a projection into the future for Secakuku and Hopis of Sipaulovi Village, a worthwhile and important goal for the project, and an achievement in decolonization for the collaborative team considering the Autry's history. These achievements would have been difficult to attain if the team had used a standard model of collaboration that revolves around maintaining equality and evenly sharing in responsibilities or sorting out past conflicts first in order to determine how to share. Every team for a museum project should freshly define what collaboration means to them and how it could play out based on the inherent power and authority, institution, parties involved, content to be covered, and goals for the space. Even the concept of using a hybrid framework

44

incorporates an element of fluidity in the idea to create a unique framework for collaboration to suit the needs of each particular project and the experience of the people involved.

We should rethink what it means to collaborate and whether there is always a need to have an even exchange. Relations and responsibilities can be uneven and still be mutually beneficial, it just comes down to planning to the suit everyone's needs and expectations. Easier said than done, but it can be done, as demonstrated by this study. *Hopi in Katsina Life* is part of a transformative era for the Autry Museum in validating one of their new official initiatives to incorporate contemporary Native voices. The exhibition moved them one more step away from outdated practices, and also showcased their extensive collection of *tihu*, two of the main goals of the institution voice (Bardolph, interview with author, January 23, 2014). Though the exhibition was created around a power reversal, both sides of the team benefitted in ways they expected from the successes of the project. But, one framework will not work for every collaborative project. The power reversal, worked for *Katsina in Hopi Life*, yet would likely not work for all exhibitions about Indigenous communities depending on the objectives and experiences of everyone involved. When all is said and done, the most important aspect of collaboration is pushing against that which formerly constrained the relationship in the first place. If the term "collaboration" itself is too saturated with the concept of evenness or even just too broad to be useful, then maybe we just need a new term altogether for how museums can share with Native or other source communities.

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