CHAPTER 9.

FROM METAPHOR TO ANALOGY: HOW THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN CAN INFORM THE AUGUSTA COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

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The museum metaphor captures some of the more obvious affordances of the digital, networked environment in which ePortfolios are composed and used. Museums feature multiple media working in concert and offer their visitors a choice of multiple ways of navigating their collections. Many ePortfolio scholars emphasize the importance of individual, rather than institutional, ownership of ePortfolios and the capability of the ePortfolio genre to create a highly personalized representation of individual learning and identity. The chapter proposes an extended analogy between the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and the Augusta Community Portfolio to map to key debates about ePortfolio practice.

MUSEUM AS METAPHOR

Metaphor has long been a powerful tool for thinking about portfolios (see Barrett, 2009). Metaphors help teachers and learners envision purposes for portfolios, most famously through the three offered by Mary Dietz (1996): the mirror (portfolio as reflection of the past and the self), the map (portfolio as plan for the future), and the sonnet (portfolio as form that helps identify what is most significant). Metaphors have also been used to think critically about issues of ownership and motivation, such as through Helen Barrett and Joanna Carney's (2005) juxtaposition of ePortfolio as test and ePortfolio as story. Meta-

phor has played a central role in the design of portfolios as well. Students are often encouraged to choose personal metaphors for their ePortfolios to guide their visual design (Kimball, 2002). At the institutional level, metaphors can also provide scaffolding for reflection, such as the metaphor of a journey of an outrigger canoe used at Kapi'olani Community College (Kirkpatrick, Renner, Kanae, & Goya, 2009). ePortfolio metaphors proliferate: a page on Barrett's website lists at least 25, and I can think of dozens more that have been employed in conversations about ePortfolio practice in which I've participated over the last ten years (Barrett, 2009).

Of the many possibilities, the ePortfolio as museum has proven powerful for my own thinking. While I do not know who was first to suggest it, Kathleen Yancey (2004) often refers in her work to items within a portfolio, most commonly called artifacts, as "exhibits," implicitly evoking the museum. Both museums and portfolios work by taking artifacts out of their original contexts and recontextualizing them within new and purposeful interpretive structures. The museum metaphor captures some of the more obvious affordances of the digital, networked environment in which ePortfolios are composed and used. Museums feature multiple media working in concert and offer their visitors a choice of multiple ways of navigating their collections. Up and beyond these features, a museum is fundamentally a space, not just a text. Populated by both objects and people, it is made more powerful through the interactions that happen within, and are elicited by, that space. Adding to the affordances of interlinked Web pages, the interactivity offered by ePortfolio systems and social software, ePortfolios are becoming simultaneously text and space. Authors who design their ePortfolios to capitalize on this dual character are likely to reflect more deeply and connect more fruitfully to the audiences they value.

Many ePortfolio scholars emphasize the importance of individual, rather than institutional, ownership of ePortfolios and the capability of the ePortfolio genre to create a highly personalized representation of individual learning and identity. The museum metaphor also appeals to me because it complicates those orthodoxies. Through the sponsorship of institutions with cultural capital and high production values made possible through that sponsorship, museums' messages are socially validated. Similarly, although ePortfolios are traditionally highly individualized, the additional persuasiveness offered to authors by institutional endorsement and the mediation of technology that viewers perceive as professional and cutting edge should not be discounted. Museums are also fundamentally collaborative creations, the product and site of the work of teams of experts with a range of areas of expertise. Because they reflect not only their primary author's ideas and achievements but also the design decisions of technology developers, the feedback of peers and instructors, the responses of

other audiences, and, often, shared conceptual frameworks for understanding learning and performance, all contemporary ePortfolios are in some sense collaborative efforts.

For several years, I have been interested in the possibility of the ePortfolio genre as more explicitly collaborative, representing the achievement, reflections, goals, and plans of groups and organizations as well as individuals. The Urban Universities Portfolio Project, sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education in the late 1990s, demonstrated the power of electronic portfolios to represent the work of an entire higher education institution to multiple audiences, both on campus and in the larger community the institution serves (Kahn, 2001, 2002). Some of these institutional portfolios, such as those of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and Portland State University, have played a key role in presenting evidence of institutional performance to regional accreditors, and the Western Association of Colleges and Schools now encourages such portfolios as part of their review process (Western Association of Schools & Colleges, 2002). A growing number of regional ePortfolio projects, in the US and particularly in Canada, the UK, and Europe, seek to link individual ePortfolios to collaborative portals to services offered to citizens to support their learning and civic participation by a range of organizations (le Carpentier, Groot, & Wasko, 2008; Hartnell-Young, Smallwood, Kingston, & Harley, 2006; Slade, 2008). Synthesizing the collective representation function of the university institutional portfolios and the portal to services focus of the regional initiatives, Serge Ravet (2005) has proposed an "ePortfolio city" in which a single ePortfolio represents and helps to enact the capabilities, activities, aspirations, and plans of an entire community. This call echoes the vision of a community ePortfolio with which individuals and their individual self-representations can interact as envisioned by Barbara Cambridge and me (2003).

AUGUSTA COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

It was with this vision in mind that Barbara, Kathleen Yancey, and I, in our roles as leaders of the Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research, jumped at the opportunity to work with David Joliffe, of the University of Arkansas, and community leaders in Augusta, Arkansas to build and study the Augusta Community Portfolio (ACP). Still in its early stages, we intend the ACP to represent the capabilities, history, and desired future directions of the town as a whole through exhibits featuring the products of residents' literate activity and their individual and collective reflections upon them.

The ACP builds on two years of the work of the Augusta Community Literacy Advocacy Initiative. The Initiative has achieved impressive results in a relatively short time. Based out of the White River Rural Health clinic, with which many of the potential literacy activity participants already have a valued relationship, the Initiative has worked extensively with local schools, the county library, and several churches, work coordinated by Joy Lynn Bowen, a retired teacher with seemingly limitless energy and deep roots in the community. Through the partnerships the Initiative has engaged students in oral history work that has produced plays and poems, improved the reading skills of new mothers alongside their children, paired younger members with elders to write about the meaning of church life, help community members compose stories and gather documentation of the experiences of WWII-era veterans, and raised awareness of the centrality of reading and writing in community life through distributing books and information in doctor's and dentists' office and in many other businesses throughout Augusta. Public celebrations of achievement feature prominently into many of these initiatives, reflecting such events' central role in building community identity in rural communities (Procter, 2005). In choosing this distributed approach, the Initiative builds on recent research that shows that multiple sponsors, not just schools and families but a wide range of institutions and cultural traditions, shape the development of literacy over the course of a lifetime (Brandt, 2001). Engaging multiple sponsors of literacy has led to measurable results. In two years, the number of graduating seniors at Augusta High School admitted into college rose from three to 33.

To date, most of the Initiative's work has focused on print-based literacies. An eventual goal of the ACP project is engaging residents of Augusta in cultivating their digital literacies as well, combining audio, video, hyperlinks, and interactivity with text to effectively communicate with their audiences. An exhibit within the ACP, Augusta@College, is a first step in this direction. Students from Augusta in their first year of college are blogging about their experiences, including posting videos they have made using cameras provided by the project. By reading and commenting on their peers' posts, the students support each other as they transition into college life. The blog provides residents of Augusta, particularly high school students, with the opportunity to learn about the realities of college life, perhaps making the prospect of enrolling after graduation less intimidating. It is one thing to get more students admitted into college and universities; it is another to get them to go and then to graduate. While helping students and residents work with multiple media and interact online and develop important digital literacy skills, we hope Augusta@College also helps address this larger challenge.

Primarily because I was the person involved in the project with the most appropriate media and coding skills, I designed the first version of the ACP in consultation with leaders of the various existing literacy projects, drawing on artifacts produced by participants. In addition to Augusta@College, three additional exhibits focus, respectively, on the Delta Oral History Project, through which advanced high school students researched local history and produced creative works based on their research; the Soundtracks of My Life project, which asked younger students to create and annotate selections of music that expressed their identities; and the Augusta Veterans' Stories project, which involved a diverse group of residents in composing stories and gathering artifacts to represent the experiences of veterans from Woodruff County. Each exhibit is an interactive Flash movie in which selected documents, such as the veterans' stories, and complementary images, such as the cover artwork of the Soundtracks, are combined with video clips. In the videos project participants reflect on the processes of composing the texts, their meaning, and what they have to say about the present and future of Augusta. The ACP also links to pieces of writing contributed by individual Augusta residents to the National Council of Teachers of English's National Gallery of Writing. Rather than being natively digital creations, most of the initial exhibits remediate the print based activity and artifacts into an attractive and usable digital form (Bolter & Grusin, 1999).

The video sections of the exhibits are one form of reflection within the portfolio, focusing on the interpretations of participants in the literacy projects. Readers can join the site, adding their photos to those of other members on the ePortfolio's main page, comment on exhibits, respond to the comments of other members, and link to other websites that provide additional perspectives. The connections between the physical space that defines the community and the new virtual space created by the ePortfolio is emphasized through having the primary entry point to the exhibits be an interactive map that displays the geographical locations of the literacy work across the county. This map-based interface was suggested and enthusiastically received by Initiative participants.

The expert-produced exhibit media and visual interface, the tightly integrated and customized interactive social software functionality, and the map combine to give the ACP a professional, technically sophisticated feel. To a reasonable extent, it seems to be on par with what many Web sites residents see as high profile and cutting edge, particularly when compared with other representations of Augusta found online. In the contemporary culture of the US, representation in media is a powerful means of validating knowledge and identity (Miller & Shepherd, 2004). See also Shepherd and Goggin (2012). Towns like Augusta—indeed, much of rural and lower class America—are al-

most invisible on the Web. In its design, the ACP makes the implicit argument that the experiences and achievements of all Augusta residents are on par with those of communities and individuals with greater access to the Internet, which shapes what many see as real and valuable.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF MUSEUM

The use of "exhibits" throughout this brief description of the initial iteration of the ACP points to the importance the museum metaphor has played in our thinking so far. David Joliffe first suggested it on our first trip to Augusta to introduce the concept of a community ePortfolio to participants in the literacy initiative. As discussed in the opening section, making public, validating, and enabling reflection about the products of activity is also at the heart of ePortfolio practice, so the conceptual jump from museum to ePortfolio appears straightforward.

However, one of the challenges of employing the museum metaphor to help residents of Augusta understand the idea of a community ePortfolio is the problem of ownership. Traditionally, historical and anthropological museums have been designed and curated by academic experts from outside of the culture being represented (Archuleta, 2008; Griffin, 2007; Isaac, 2008). In contrast, portfolios have traditionally been designed and composed primarily by the people who are also their subjects, and the author's ownership of the portfolio is generally considered a central principle of good practice, both from ethical and pragmatic standpoints (Joint Information Systems Committee, 2009; Yancey, 2004). While a museum is designed about you, you design an ePortfolio about yourself. Although the initial version of the ACP was largely expert-designed, we want it to become increasingly the product of community members' reflection, deliberation, and composition, for the residents to feel that they themselves are the designers and owners of the ePortfolio.

In order to encourage residents to begin making this conceptual shift, at the launch of the ACP at the Woodruff County Educational Forum in August 2009, I used an analogy to the National Museum of the American Indian to suggest that a different kind "museum" was possible for Augusta. The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) opened in September 2004, occupying the last remaining spot on the National Mall in Washington, DC. The mission and design of the museum was the product of extensive consultations with Native leaders and community members from throughout the Americas. Rather than presenting primarily what expert anthropologists or art historians believe is important about American Indian culture and notable in the mu-

seum's extensive collection of artifacts, the NMAI seeks to offer a genuinely indigenous perspective (Archuleta, 2008; C. Smith, 2005). Beyond just consultations in the planning stages, the NMAI embraced a community curation model in which groups of community members from the nations profiled in the museum's exhibits collaborated with NMAI staff throughout the design process, choosing the stories and objects to be featured, deciding how they are arranged, and offering their interpretations through written labels and video commentary (Lamar, 2008; P. C. Smith, 2008). In addition, members of the native communities serve as cultural interpreters at the museum itself, interacting with visitors through guiding tours and conducting other programming. While certainly not the first museum to adopt the community curation model, the NMAI is unique in its scale and international visibility (Lonetree, 2008).

Analogously, we hope that future exhibits within the ACP will be curated by teams of participants in the Augusta Community Literacy Initiative's projects. While experts on portfolios, media production, and Web development will certainly continue to play a role in building the portfolio, we hope that our job will be to facilitate reflection that catalyzes the groups' visions for their contributions to the portfolio and to provide technical assistance as needed to translate those visions into compelling digital texts.

ANALOGOUS TENSIONS

In the five years since its opening, the NMAI has produced an outpouring of popular and scholarly commentary, including numerous newspaper and magazine reviews, scholarly articles in multiple disciplines, special issues of several journals, and an edited collection. These critical perspectives run the gamut from highly celebratory to flatly dismissive. The tensions scholars have identified in their analyses of the NMAI also warrant consideration as we continue the development of the ACP. In fact, these tensions map to key debates about ePortfolio practice more generally. While the analogy to the NMAI cannot offer resolutions, it can help to identify key questions we must consider as we move forward.

HERITAGE VERSUS HISTORY

Much of the critical commentary on the NMAI focuses on the respective roles and responsibilities of the American Indian curators representing their communities and the professional curators employed by the Smithsonian with whom they collaborated. While sections of each exhibit are curated by professionals, most exhibits include sections that are curated by groups of members

of the communities on which they focus. For example, the Our People exhibit, which presents a historical perspective on American Indian culture, includes a central display that frames the exhibit as a whole, surrounded by installations focusing on eight different native Nations. These installations were designed in close collaboration between the staff and the community curators, and the community members made the final decisions about what to include and what to foreground. Many critics, particularly in the popular press, saw the exhibits as "unscholarly" or even "random," failing to provide a single, authoritative curatorial voice that would enable viewers to "judge" the perspectives offered by community members and as neglecting items from the collection that they deemed more objectively important than those chosen by community members (Fisher, 2004; Richard, 2004; Rothstein, 2004). The exhibits do indeed differ from the conventions of traditional museums in presenting multiple voices and styles of presentation, many unfamiliar, and in choosing not to judge which are more truthful or significant.

In addition, critics saw most of the community-curated exhibits not as honest reflections about the history and current cultural state of the native nations but as purely celebratory "sales booths" within a museum-wide "trade show" that failed to represent the very real problems facing the communities and glossing over the conflicts within them to present a falsely unified voice (Fisher, 2004). To some extent, the reflections of NMAI staff curators working on the exhibits support this interpretation. For example, Cynthia Chavez Lamar (2008, pp. 147-148) reports that the design process of a number of the nations' contributions led to candid discussions about restrictive gender roles and concerns about youth engagement, but "these frank, difficult representations of the communities proved prohibitive to include in the exhibit for various reasons. Considered sensitive topics by some of the co-currators, they felt the inclusion might be perceived as 'airing dirty laundry.'" Because of the hard-won trust she had established, she did not feel it was "within [her] authority or conscience to include sensitive information" the community curators did not wish to become public, even if it would have made for a more engaging exhibit.

Views on the appropriate balance of power of making decisions about the museum's content and design reflect different understandings of the purpose of a museum and the source interpretive authority. Stephen Conn (2006, p. 72) quotes the historian David Lowenthal to distinguish between history and heritage: "History tells all who will listen what has happened and how things came to be as they are. Heritage passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose." Conn argues that what the NMAI is really doing is cultivating American Indian heritage while

trying to pass that off as history. In foregrounding Native voices, Conn is certainly right that part of the NMAI's mission is to support a sense of pride and agency on the part of American Indians.

However, his assumptions that doing so is necessarily at odds with history and that heritage is intended only for insiders and not an appropriate focus of a museum are problematic. Like many of the other critics, Conn does not see the non-academic community members who co-curated the exhibits as true authorities on their own history and culture. Exhibits produced through community consensus are presumed to lack objectivity. However, many supporters of the museum see its message as an important corrective to how the Americas' indigenous people have been represented in Western history and anthropology, particularly through museums that have often cast them as frozen in their ancient culture and passive victims of inevitable historical forces of colonization. Much of the museum is centered on Gerald Vizenor's concept of "survivance," highlighting the ways in which Indians have embraced change and continued to develop their cultural heritage within the settler society while also resisting their displacement, assimilation, and extermination. While this narrative theme does indeed celebrate continuance and cultivate a sense of common identity and purpose, it is also an important corrective to an inaccurate Western historical tradition (Atalay, 2008; Lonetree, 2008). The NMAI is hardly unique in advancing both heritage and history through a museum. Although more commonly local on focus, many of the numerous "heritage museums" throughout the United States attempt to present historical narratives both grounded in evidence and foregrounding the achievements and shared identity of a community (Katriel, 1993; Procter, 2005).

Conn objects not only on behalf of his understanding of historical accuracy but also on aesthetic grounds. The absence of accounts of controversy within communities is particularly troublesome to him because this "is the only thing that is interesting in the first place" to a non-native audience (Conn, 2006, p. 72). A museum needs to tell a good, as well as truthful, story, and doing so requires the narrative skill of a professional curator. Supporters of the museum, in contrast, explain its distinctively indigenous style of storytelling. Invoking Leslie Marmon Silko's account of Pueblo storytelling, Elizabeth Archuletta (2008, p. 190) suggests that, rather than offering a single, linear path, "museum curators structured their displays like 'many little threads' of a spider's web, each strand adding to the larger picture, radiating out from the center that is the NMAI." Properly understood, this alternative narrative structure can be powerful for both native and non-native audiences. However, it does ask more from the viewer than a traditional museum, an issue to which I will return.

FAILURE, AUTHENTICITY, AND MULTIPLICITY IN EPORTFOLIOS

In charting the future directions of the ACP, we are faced with analogous issues. Like many of the community curators of the NMAI, residents and leaders of Augusta are likely to be reluctant to foreground conflicts and controversies within the community in the ePortfolio, to "air dirty laundry." Some of those already investing their energy in its development see it primarily as a celebration of the successes of the literacy work and as a means to demonstrate that Augusta has an educated workforce to businesses that might choose to set up shop there. At present, the ACP focuses overwhelmingly on the most compelling outputs of the Augusta Community Literacy Advocacy Initiative, and the reflections of participants are almost uniformly positive. As in some parts of the NMAI, failures and setbacks—such as the difficulty in locating funding for the planned Woodruff County Veteran's Memorial, with which the unveiling of the Veteran's Stories project's publication was originally conceived to coincide—are glossed over if they are mentioned at all.

Should a community portfolio be primarily a showcase of achievements, or should it try to offer a broader perspective on community activity, including conflict, controversies, and deficits? In order for the ACP to be successful, all of us engaging in developing it—academic experts, community leaders, residents, and, perhaps, even visitors to the portfolio from beyond the community—will need to deliberate about what is most desirable and appropriate in the local context. Participants in the Urban University Portfolio Project developing institutional portfolios for colleges and universities faced a similar dilemma to the one we face with ACP. A common topic of discussions during early meetings was the degree to which the portfolios should include evidence of and reflections on things the institutions were not currently doing well. Numerous potential audience members, such as accreditors, members of the media, and policy makers, advised the project participants that their ePortfolios were unlikely to be taken seriously unless they included accounts of deficits as well as strengths. In the end, some institutions chose to present only their successes, while others used their portfolios to also reflect on areas in which they saw the potential for improvement. The institutional portfolios of two of the schools that chose the latter, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and Portland State University, have proved the most successful of those coming out of the project, their development having been sustained over a decade and playing an important role in accreditation (Hamilton, 2002; Kahn, 2001, 2002; Ketcheson, 2001, 2009).

Barbara Cambridge (2001, p. 8) argues that the portfolio genre, whether individually or collectively authored, has the potential to help individuals and institutions develop a more productive relationship to failure. When used well, portfolios can help turn perceived deficiencies into catalysts for innovation, challenging the systems within the academy that punish failure rather than productively address it:

> We all fail sometimes. Even with carefully established goals and conscientiously executed work, we do not meet the goals because of any number of circumstances. Yet we set up systems that condemn students, faculty members, and institutions for not meeting goals. Portfolios can be part of such systems if we choose to include in them only those pieces of evidence that bear good news .... Although we know that learning can and often does occur at times of dissonance or moments of difficulty, we look there not for the learning but for the problems.

Cambridge goes on to suggest that portfolios that do incorporate evidence of lack of success can do so in ways that promote individual and institutional learning through providing context. First, in portfolios, it is possible to provide explanations that help authors and audiences to understand what factors are responsible and to imagine ways in which they might transform them to prepare for future success. Second, because good portfolios include multiple and heterogeneous sources of evidence collected over time, less successful performances can be presented in relationship to more successful ones. By acknowledging the reality of imperfection and contextualizing failure within a structure that celebrates success, that affirmative message becomes both more useful and more convincing.

Some of the work featured in the initial version of the ACP does begin to employ these strategies. While a number of Augusta students allude to hardships they have experienced in the "liner notes" that accompany their Soundtracks, such as difficult relationships with multiple foster parents and the challenges of living in poverty, these are framed in terms of their success in overcoming them. These are stories of a kind of survivance that are powerful in large part because they provide the context to understand what the students have survived. In planning future activities focused on such texts, we should consider ways to help students reflect critically about how the stories they wish to tell for public consumption match the concrete reality of their current situations and future

prospects. Whether such reflections should become part of the portfolio itself is another question that I return to below.

A second, related issue that the ACP shares with NMAI is the degree to which the artifacts chosen by community members curating exhibits within the portfolios and the reflective narratives they compose about them are authoritative accounts of the literate activity the exhibits are intended to represent. Do the community members' self-representations need to be validated by some external authority to be credible? Will their self-assessments bear weight? In what sense can we expect their writing and reflecting to speak for itself without the need for expert commentary? Many of the answers may hinge on whether the purpose of the portfolio is to celebrate the heritage and contemporary achievements of the community or present a more academic account of the community's history and level of literacy.

The scholarship on the NMAI surveyed above suggests that we may not need to pick one over the other. While the primary purpose of the portfolio may be to highlight accomplishments, showcase notable texts, and give voice to community experiences, making such evidence of literate activity in Augusta visible online in a compelling fashion may also contribute to providing a more accurate assessment of the town's fortunes and potential than is currently available to the audiences the community hopes to reach, such as potential new business owners, political leaders, philanthropic foundation officers, and residents themselves.

The tradition of ePortfolios in education also supports the validity of community members' own selections and interpretations. Yancey (1998) suggests that portfolio pedagogy and assessment is fundamentally grounded in the premise that "students are authoritative informants about their own learning." Some of the most important aspects of learning and identity development can only be made visible to the learners themselves. As Ross' (2006) review demonstrates, that self-assessment can be both accurate and contribute to strengthening learning, engagement, and motivation has been shown in numerous studies. As Barbara Cambridge (2001) argues, portfolios can be more convincing and more accurate because they allow for context, providing reflective explanations and juxtaposing multiple, heterogeneous evidence of differing levels of quality to present an account of progress that does not discount challenges and missteps along the way.

In my own work, I show that much of contemporary ePortfolio practice is grounded in the cultural ideal of authenticity—the idea that each person, and perhaps each community, may have distinctive ways of knowing and taking action that are most appropriate to themselves and that knowledge making and decision making ought to be shaped by that distinctiveness (D. Cambridge,

2010). While this ideal, prominent in Western culture since Romanticism, has been criticized for its apparent solipsism, I argue, following contemporary philosophers such as Charles Taylor, Bernard Williams, and Charles Guignon, that authenticity can be reconceived as firmly grounded in social relationships and commitments (Guignon, 2004; Taylor, 1989, 1991; Williams, 2002). When the ideal of authenticity is extended from individual to collective identity and action, this social dimension becomes inescapable. Procter (2005, p. 147) suggests that one key form of community building in rural communities is "the rhetoric of grace," which appeals to the distinctiveness of community identity and the opportunities that present themselves at the moment of collective reflection. The development of the ACP presents a powerful opportunity to capitalize on and further develop a social understanding of authenticity's power to chart the course of a community.

The ACP also shares with the NMAI the lack of a master narrative. Even more so than in the museum, portfolio visitors face the choice of what to view, in what order, and are not offered an expert voice that tells them how to interpret what they are experiencing. As is often the case of with personalized individual ePortfolios, and more so than in other self-representations such as résumé or transcripts, the audience needs to play an active role in making meaning from the exhibits (Hartnell-Young et al., 2006). While in individual ePortfolios, coherence is often achieved through the consistency of the author's voice throughout, a community portfolio such as the ACP includes a multiplicity of voices. Like the NMAI, the ACP does not judge which of these multiple perspectives is most truthful or authoritative. Unlike in the NMAI, this multivocal structure does not originate in the indigenous ways of knowing of the community; rather, it is a characteristic of the ePortfolio genre introduced by the experts working with community members on the design.

While the hypertextual organization of ePortfolios, and the corresponding role of audience choice in reading, is a central characteristic of the genre, many ePortfolios do include a central narrative that helps the reader make sense of its contents (Yancey, 2001). For example, many ePortfolios created for writing assessment include a "cover letter" that reflects on and explains the relationships between the different samples of writing incorporated (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000). Many institutional portfolios, such as those discussed above, include text that summarizes the portfolio's content and purpose and guides the reader through it (Kahn, 2001).

Therefore, another question for the future of the ACP is whether we need a guiding narrative and to what extent it should make judgments about the multiple texts and perspectives the ePortfolio encompasses. If such a master narrative is necessary, how can it be composed in a way that honors the community's

ownership of the ePortfolio? What kind of deliberative process is needed to determine which voices and artifacts are privileged and which are questioned? The answers may depend on what we decide is the most appropriate relationship to the ACP's audiences, an issue discussed below.

CELEBRATION VERSUS CRITICAL REFLECTION

In contrast to the popular critiques of the NMAI, many scholars of American Indian history and culture are sympathetic to some of the alterative processes and formats embraced by the museum, seeing their roots in native ways of knowing. However, some these more appreciative researchers criticize the NMAI for what they see as a significant failure of those processes and formats to deliver on the goal of representing American Indian survivance. The museum fails to present a clear account of the history and contemporary consequences of colonialism (Atalay, 2008; Carpio, 2008; Lonetree, 2006, 2008). Without such an account, there is insufficient historical context for visitors to truly appreciate the fierce American Indian resistance to colonialism.

For example, while the Our Peoples exhibit seeks to frame the historical narratives of the native nations it profiles in terms of an overarching story of the impacts of contact, visually it does so primarily through abstraction (Lonetree, 2008). It offers display cases of numerous guns, gold artifacts, bibles, and treaties, representing the impact of violence on native communities, the immense transfer for wealth to Europeans, the influence of Christianity on the education and spiritual lives of American Indians, and the role of legal agreements in curtailing but also to some extent protecting Indian rights. Unlike the National Holocaust Museum, which one of the exhibit's curators cites as an inspiration, there are no literal displays of this impact, such as photographs of slaughtered Indians or blankets laced with smallpox (P. C. Smith, 2008). While some of the labels that accompany the cases of artifacts do cite dramatic decreases in native population, the damage to Native religious traditions wrought by enforced Christianity, and specific instances of violence and broken treaties, they are unlikely to make clear to visitors that these negative consequences stemmed from explicit policies of the governments of Western nations, particularly the United States, to displace, disinherit, and either assimilate or annihilate the Native peoples of the Americas. Outright resistance, as opposed to negotiation, is marginalized. For example, the American Indian Movement, a powerful adversarial force for change through much of the 1960s and 1970s, receives only a single, passing reference.

In other words, according to the critics, while the NMAI to some extent represents the negative impacts of colonization, it treats it as disembodied and

inevitable, something that must be dealt with rather than rejected. In trying to portray American Indians as active shapers of their history, rather than victims of oppression, it actually renders them subjects of fate (Brady, 2008). This is an empty sort of agency, one that does little to help empower visitors to challenge the legacies of colonialism at the root of many of the problems facing Native people today. Some fear that the museum offers a shallow kind of reconciliation between settler society and indigenous people, pushing for historical closure through official recognition of the value of contemporary Native culture without assuming responsibility for substantively addressing the negative legacies of colonialism (Wakeham, 2008).

The ACP faces a similar dilemma. The ePortfolio makes visible and celebrates the creative responses of the Augusta community to low levels of literacy of many residents. Rather than simply accepting the lack of an educated workforce or their state as underdeveloped readers and writers, residents and community leaders have made impressive strides toward increasing the quantity and sophistication of literate activity throughout the town. In many cases, evidence of this reading and writing is accompanied in the portfolio by moving reflections on the experience of participating in this collective act of cultivating learning. However, there is little as yet in the ACP that explores the root causes of the situation that drove the Augustans into action. That situation arguably is the result, for example, of several decades of neo-liberal policies of globalization and corporate welfare that led to the decline of the Arkansas Delta's agricultural economy and the current focus on attracting non-unionized factories, for which an "educated workforce" is presumably necessary. The state of the educational system also likely reflects the legacy of segregation. Portfolio contributors testify to their impressive efforts to cope with change, but they do not yet question the inevitability of that change. That the ACP does not take a critical stance is typical of events and spaces in rural America intended to cultivate community. Because of their institutional sponsorship, they are generally conservative in nature, reifying existing power structures (Procter, 2005, p. 144). Whether or not residents reflecting on their community in the ACP should be questioning the sources of the structural inequalities with which they are coping, and, if so, how to encourage them do so while also honoring their ownership of the portfolio, remain open questions for me.

The distinction between the largely celebratory reflection currently evident in the ACP and the kind it, and the NMAI, currently lack is similar to the distinction between reflection in general and critical reflection made by prominent scholars of adult education (Brookfield, 1986, 1995; Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1990). While learners are often encouraged to reflect on how well their performance matches measures of quality established by institutional authority or

traditional practice within a discipline or domain, or to make connections between concepts they are asked to learn and their personal experience, critical reflection goes further to question the assumptions underlying the choice of measures and concepts. Through critical reflection learners question the justifications of the power relationships they uncover, and ask whether and how they could be transformed.

Many experts see critical reflection as the ideal for reflection within ePortfolios, albeit an ideal that often gets left behind in actual practice (Delandshere & Arens, 2003). Particularly in professional education and in relationship to learning beyond the classroom, projects at institutions such as the University of Wolverhampton, Virginia Tech, and the University of Michigan have developed pedagogies that are proving successful in moving learners toward genuinely critical reflection (Hughes, 2009; Peet, 2005; Young, 2009). For example, at Michigan, students learn "generative interviewing," a technique for helping them make their tacit knowledge of how social systems work explicit through dialog in order to envision avenues for change their abilities position them to take.

However, some research on reflection also suggests that the ability to effectively reflect critically may be a developmental, requiring preexisting skill at other, simpler forms of reflection (Broadbank & McGill, 2007). It may be that critical reflection should indeed be a goal of the ACP, but one that requires a level of readiness that the community needs to develop through reflective practice over time (Pitts & Ruggierillo, 2012). Expecting ePortfolio contributors to immediately jump into critical reflection may be a mistake. At the same time, any postponement must be planned carefully so as to not offer at ACP, or even the Literacy Advocacy Initiative more generally, as a celebratory false reconciliation, as a substitute for government policy reforms to address the problems of the town and the region. The ideal goals of the work should be transformative rather than therapeutic.

TEXT, ACTIVITY, AND AUDIENCE

The success of the ACP in reaching its goals will in large part be determined by how effectively the portfolio engages its audience. Issues of audience engagement constitute a final theme in the critical conversation about the NMAI. Defenders of the museum accuse its detractors of failing to appreciate the ways in which the museum is designed to facilitate audience experiences differently than traditional museums.

A first difference is that activities beyond simply viewing the exhibits are central to the museum's intended function. Douglas Evelyn (2006, p. 54), past

associate director of the NMAI, points to the activities that the museum mediates as equal in importance to the static content of its exhibits. The museum maintains an intensive, ongoing relationship with numerous indigenous nations, hosts large-scale events attended by both Indians and non-Indians, and features numerous educational activities led by indigenous cultural interpreters, as well as frequent guest artists and speakers from throughout the Americas. Evelyn rightly objects to critics evaluating the museum solely on the basis of the content of its exhibits, discounting the activities the museum mediates. When my own students wrote about their visit to the NMAI on a course fieldtrip this fall, they pointed to their dialog with tour guides and artists offering demonstrations as among the most powerful learning experiences of the day.

I have already touched upon the second difference between the NMAI and a traditional museum. Audience members are challenged to be active meaning makers rather than passive receivers of expert-authorized truth. In contrast to the approach of reviewers who singled out artifacts or texts in isolation from the larger contexts into which they were incorporated, for audience members to take full advantage of the exhibits, they need to consider them holistically, examining the elements that make them up in relationship to all the others within the exhibit and to the museum as a whole (C. Smith, 2005). As previously noted, many scholars connect this style of museum design to indigenous ways of knowing and to Native narrative traditions, as a challenge to museums' role as instiller of the conventions of Western historical and anthropological discourse. Some also see it as a critique of the modernist conception of a single historical truth, offering an alternative version of historical interpretation that foregrounds the role of the audience member in making situated meaning (Isaac, 2008).

On the other hand, some scholars who do understand the transformative intentions and indigenous cultural grounding of the exhibits nevertheless question whether this design is likely to be successful in reaching non-Native audiences, or, indeed, even Native audience members without an academic understanding of American Indian storytelling and poststructuralist critiques of historical knowledge. Given that addressing a broad audience of visitors to the National Mall, including both American Indians and non-natives from numerous countries around the world is central to the NMAI's mission, it may not be wise to demand so much work from visitors. As Amy Lonetree (2008, p. 311) puts it:

> Is this really an effective way to present Native American history and culture to a nation and world with a willed ignorance of this history of [genocide and colonialism]? Or a

society that carries with them so many stereotypes about who we are as Indigenous people and to a nation that has defined itself by "playing Indian"?

By leaving so much of the interpretive work to visitors, the NMAI runs the risk of having its objects and narratives "hijacked" in service of ethnocentric stereotypes of _Indianess_ and an ideology of manifest destiny. These scholars point out that museum research shows that visitors vary considerably in the amount of time and energy they are willing to invest in taking in exhibits and that they choose different styles of engagement (Atalay, 2008). The more casual visitors, like the initial newspaper reviewers, may either dismiss the NMAI in its current form as unscholarly and incoherent, or, worse, ascribe to it ideas that work against its mission.

These debates can inform the design the ACP. First, the issue of interpreting the NMAI by its content versus also taking into account the activity it mediates raises several important questions: How much of the reflective and self-representational activity that the ACP project produces ought to be incorporated into, or occur within, the portfolio itself? In what sense might the activities that the ACP mediates count as part of the portfolio, even if ephemeral and producing no tangible record?

Like the NMAI, a goal of the ACP is not just to showcase artifacts and stories but also to be a forum through which community and audience members can engage in reflective dialog. When records of that dialog are preserved and incorporated into the content of the ACP itself, the portfolio will arguably become a more transparent—and so, perhaps, more credible—representation of the process of community deliberation and identity building. Both live and archived, the presence of community members' voices within the portfolio made possible through its social software functionality becomes central to its message. The full meaning of the portfolio comes not just from the content of the exhibits but also from the conversations that surround them.

Research on ePortfolios has shown that the conversations and events they mediate can be as important to understanding and learning from them as their content. Perhaps the most important contribution of the ePortfolio systems that have been developed and implemented over the last decade is the ability for multiple audiences to provide feedback within the portfolio space and to have that feedback become available to be used as part of the author's self-representation (Lane, 2009). Offline, institutions and programs have successfully used individual conferences with students and public presentations of their portfolios to engage audiences in dialog (Yancey, Cambridge, & Cambridge, 2009). These conversations are sometimes recorded in order to become part of the students'

ePortfolios. Some institutions, such as LaGuardia Community College, have even established physical spaces, ePortfolio studios, within which such dialog can be supported (Eynon, 2009).

At the same time, stressing the often highly personal nature of reflection, many ePortfolio teachers and learners value the ability to share portfolio content selectively offered by ePortfolio systems and similar database-driven technology for managing and sharing content. The principle of ownership suggests that portfolio authors need to decide for themselves how public to make their reflections and self-representations. While some ePortfolios are published on the open Web, others are shared only with a select group of peers, mentors, or potential employers. Portfolio authors often benefit from bouncing ideas off of each other, sharing work in progress, and receiving encouragement from a group with which they have established a trusting relationship (D. Cambridge, 2008).

Research on supporting groups in developing capacity to pursue collaborative inquiries into their own practice and to participate in public deliberations points to the importance of what the rhetorician Rosa Eberly (2000) terms "protopublic spaces," in which individuals can share their private experiences and ideas with trusted others and develop the skills they need to present them effectively in more fully public forums. In their analysis of faculty communities in the scholarship of teaching and learning, Randy Bass and Dan Bernstein (2008) call such interstices between the privacy of the classroom and the publicity of scholarly publication "middle spaces" and stress their essential role.

A question for the ACP going forward is how to create such trusted spaces for dialog. One option is to create spaces for social interaction within the social software functions of the portfolio only accessible to certain groups, such as verified residents of Augusta or members of the community teams developing exhibits. Face-to-face events provide another opportunity. We plan to host a series of community reflection events in which members of the community come together to view and talk about the contents of the portfolio and what it says about the history, identity, and future of the community. While it may make sense to record some such events for integration into the ACP, others might remain ephemeral, limiting how widely what was said is shared. We will have to think carefully about how to balance the need for a safe space for open discussion and the desire to make community process visible.

The second challenge the NMAI controversy about audience and activity raises for the ACP is how to balance fidelity to the conventions of the ePortfolio genre with the expectations and motivations of the audiences the portfolio is intended to address. My own recent scholarship has focused on demonstrating how the ePortfolio genre powerfully addresses needs for lifelong learning and

identity development that individuals and institutions face in contemporary Western society (D. Cambridge, 2010). My collaborators and I chose to develop the collective representation of literacy in Augusta as an ePortfolio, rather than some other digital genre, because we believe the genre also has the potential to address similar needs of communities. However, it may need to adjust to the new context in order to have the desired impact.

My empirical research on the eFolio Minnesota project shows that one of the two most important factors predicting a self-reported high level of impact of composing an ePortfolio in learning and identity is what I term integrity (D. Cambridge, 2008). An ePortfolio has integrity when it helps its author show coherence across multiple life contexts and roles, such as career, family life, and civic engagements. An ePortfolio with integrity helps its author demonstrate how his or her core commitments are consistently evidenced by his or her activity across these boundaries and to reflect on conflicts and inconsistencies when they do occur, helping him or her plan for future action that is true to those commitments. Through its ability both to incorporate diverse artifacts from multiple contexts and to draw interpretive connections between them, the ePortfolio genre appears to be well suited to helping individuals articulate integrity to their own satisfaction.

Achieving integrity to one's own satisfaction through the process of composition does not necessarily mean that the resulting portfolio will prove effective in communicating that integrity to an audience. Even some of the most compellingly integral ePortfolios require significant work on the part of the audience to grasp how the whole is more than the sum of the parts. For example, Samantha Slade, an instructional designer in Montreal, composed an ePortfolio to "find the thread in [her] life," to articulate integrity. At first look, the portfolio appears to consist of arbitrarily ordered lists of competencies, skills, activities, work products, and assorted videos about Slade's experiences and beliefs. However, when these elements are considered not in isolation but as part of an integral whole, the portfolio presents a powerful story of how Slade's commitment to creating resource-rich social environments for learning not only informs her diverse professional engagements but also shapes the way she interacts with her family and participates in her community (D. Cambridge, 2010). Like the NMAI, portfolios such as Slade's require a level of engagement that many casual visitors may not be motivated to invest.

For the ACP, another compelling characteristic of the ePortfolio genre is its ability to link up diverse types of artifacts and reflection. Like NMAI, we hope that the ACP will speak with many voices that represent the range of experiences and values of the people of Augusta. Yet this very multivocality can work at cross-purposes with the goals of representing integrity and connecting with

multiple audiences. Finding consistency and coherence across a single life is difficult enough. As the ePortfolio genre moves from individual to collective, this challenge intensifies. Again we face the question of how to maintain multiple voices without imposing an unrepresentative master narrative while still providing enough orientation for the audience to appreciate the whole.

While the best ePortfolios have traditionally asked a lot of readers, in practice they have also been adapted in order to meet successfully the needs of the audiences to which they are addressed. This often entails compromises about the depth of reflection, range of artifacts, and distinctiveness of design (Hartnell-Young et al., 2006; Kimball, 2006). It may be possible to better accommodate audiences through providing explicit guidance on how to read the ePortfolio for readers unfamiliar with its purposes and structure, such as through the "readers guide" that is sometimes suggested by faculty as a useful component of student portfolios. Scholars have suggested that the NMAI could become more accessible by making it clear to visitors as they enter exhibits the logic behind the choice and arrangement of artifacts and the context of indigenous ways of knowing that informs those choices (Atalay, 2008). Similarly, the ACP might include on its homepage an account of how it differs from other community websites, why the design serves the goals of literacy project participants, and why it might prove worthwhile for readers to engage with it despite its unfamiliar form.

I hope we can achieve a balanced relationship between community ePortfolio authors and readers, developing design and content that both provides audiences with immediate value and convinces them to stretch a bit beyond their comfort zone to create a more powerful experience. I hope that we will both take advantage of the potential of the ePortfolio genre for literacy learning and community building but also not be afraid to depart from it when it doesn't serve our purposes. The same balance of fidelity and flexibility would be welcome in the process of composing individual portfolios and in the design of museums.

UNITY AND DIFFERENCE

The metaphor of portfolio as museum was powerful for envisioning and launching the Augusta Community Portfolio project. The analogy to the National Museum of the American Indian has the potential to help guide it into maturity. Through evoking unity between the familiar and novel, metaphors provide an active, immediate entry point into a new domain. Analogies, in contrast, acknowledge difference alongside similarity. They honor the complexity

of situated identity and practice. As the ePortfolio field matures, transforming from a marginal innovation into a pervasive practice, it may also want to shift its focus from metaphors for ePortfolios in general to analogies that capture the complexity of specific contexts and purposes.

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