

# **New Voices and Visibilities at the Museum Frontiers**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at the University of Leicester**

**by**

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**August 2000**

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## **NEW VOICES AND VISIBILITIES AT THE MUSEUM FRONTIERS**

**VIVIEN GOLDING**

### **Abstract**

In this thesis the research question asks how can we use the museum's collections to raise the voices and make visible those who are misrepresented, silenced or excluded by the traditional framing of knowledge in ethnographic museums? In answering this question the intention of the research is to change hierarchical practices, and open up the frontiers between the museum and its audience. The focus of the research is on school communities to explore the possibilities of museums contributing to the creation of new identities and understandings, of self and others.

A new theoretical base and methodology is developed, an ethnographic action research approach informed by feminist-hermeneutic discourse, in the first 4 chapters of this thesis. It is essentially a participatory research method, which views theory and practice as a continuous cyclical process. The process demands a circle of: reflection, action, dialogical exchange and reflection from all participants. In chapters 5-8 the concentration of the thesis is on 4 project areas in order to develop the theory in practice. An African-Caribbean voices project acts as a link between theory and practice, a dialogical questionnaire project examines the establishment of a broad-based research team; a Benin project and a carnival arts project investigate work at a single field-site.

The case studies illuminate aspects of the research question through a critique of the collaborative actions taken to re-frame traditional museum meaning(s). They illustrate ways in which collaborative museum programmes can facilitate interpretive processes, which reconstruct the meaning of objects and others, and thereby reconstruct an expanded meaning of selves. In this way the thesis demonstrates how a number of subversive strategies can be developed to increase the interpretive possibilities of museums, to raise a plurivocality of voices at the museum-school frontiers and make visible formally invisible identities.



## **Acknowledgements**

During this research study I feel that I have been afforded a unique opportunity to develop and grow as a museum professional, and as a human being. A number of individuals have accompanied me and aided me on this journey of self-discovery.

Firstly I am indebted to my supervisor Dr. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, who extended a deal of support both cognitive and affective throughout my research. I especially appreciate the initial freedom she allowed me to explore ideas from diverse fields of inquiry. She helped me gradually to bring a certain focus to my work at the museum frontiers; zones of danger and possibility. Her knowledge, experience and enthusiasm for this project have proved an invaluable guide in relatively uncharted territory.

The critical conversations with fellow Ph.D. scholars at Leicester University have also helped to clarify my thought, and provide an invaluable source of friendship during these long Ph. D. years. I am especially grateful to Theano Mousourri, Kate Pontin, Hadwig Krautzer, Miriam Clavir, and Tracy Tsai.

Outside of the museum world, I would especially like to thank my research team of teacher-colleagues, and the students of BI, PS, SI Schools for welcoming me into their world. I am particularly indebted to Joan Anim Addo who made some insightful comments on this research project. Finally this thesis would not have been completed without the support of my family Jean Law, David Forster and Erika 'haven't you finished that yet?' Forster. Thank you.

# **1 Introduction: setting a research question to open the museum frontiers**

The *bricoleur*, says Levi-Strauss, is someone who uses “the means at hand,” that is the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogeneous - and so forth. (Derrida 1995: 284)

The ‘bricoleur’ ... uses devious means ... a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive is nevertheless limited. [bricolage] has to use this repertoire, however, whatever the task in hand because it has nothing else at its disposal. ... to ‘make do with whatever is at hand’, ... to bring out differences and similarities ... to engage in a sort of dialogue ... [put] something of himself [/herself] into it. (Levi-Strauss 1989:16-21)

# **1     Introduction: setting a research question to open the museum frontiers**

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## **1.0     Introduction**

In this chapter the research question is set. The research question determines the thesis structure, content and terminology which is outlined in section 1.1. Specifically the central concepts of ‘voice’, ‘frontiers’ or ‘horizons’ and ‘feminist-hermeneutics’ are considered and defined. The research question asks how can we use the museum’s collections to raise the voices and make visible those who are misrepresented, silenced or excluded by the traditional framing of knowledge in ethnographic museums? In answering this question the possibilities of museums contributing to the creation of new interpretations, identities and understanding is explored. The intention of the research is to change hierarchical practices, and open up the frontiers or horizons between the museum and its audience (Philip 1992; Giroux 1993; Braidotti 1994a, 1994b; Gadamer 1981) <sup>1</sup>.

At section 1.2 contextual information for the thesis is provided. First a brief history of education at the Horniman Museum is offered and then some demographical aspects of the research field with reference to a Local Government Report are outlined (Lambeth 1998). This context is crucial to the thesis, since a major concern lies in examining the relationship between the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning or the barriers to learning in museums, as well as the unintended outcomes of the hidden curriculum. The contextual information highlights the emancipatory intent of the research question and determines my approach to the project which prioritises personal ‘meaning making’ and the ‘standpoint epistemologies’ or ‘situated knowledge(s)’ of the research participants (Hein 1998; Hill-Collins 1991, Haraway 1991b).

In terms of method I am also working at the borderlands. The methodological approach combines the practice of ethnography (Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993; Clifford 1994, 1997) and educational action research (Freire 1972; Stenhouse 1975, 1980; Eliot 1987, 1997). The method employs qualitative *and* quantitative methods which are outlined in section 1.3. Methodological techniques used include: interview schedules, a representative sample of interview transcripts, a proforma and a representative sample of completed questionnaires.

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<sup>1</sup> There are striking similarities between the concepts of ‘frontiers’ and ‘horizons’ as elucidated by these theorists which I shall highlight at 1.2 and as the thesis progresses.

At 1.4. a concise literature review is provided which expands upon the relationship of the research to other work in museum education and related fields. In this section the ideas of writers in addition to those already cited are introduced. For example this research study prioritises plurivocality in the museum and is especially concerned to raise the excluded voices of the 'other.' Therefore the power and knowledge discourse theory of Foucault is pertinent (Foucault 1980, 1994, 1995).

### **1.1      The research question: the thesis structure and content, the aims and approach of the project**

#### **Thesis structure**

This research project marks an innovative venture within museum education. Therefore I proceed in the manner of the bricoleur to establish firm theoretical underpinnings, and justify the new methodology of the thesis in chapters 1 to 4. In particular elements from the seemingly diverse disciplines fields of: hermeneutic philosophy (Gadamer 1981, Henderson 1993); feminism, especially Black women writers (Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1991b; Morrison 1988, 1994; hooks 1994a, 1994b, 1995; Lorde 1996) educational action research and radical education (Stenhouse 1975, 1980; Eliot 1987, 1997; Freire 1972, 1996); and ethnography (Clifford 1994, 1997; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993) are utilised. The work marks a number of border-crossings between traditional disciplines and approaches to address the limitations inherent in any one system. The bricolage structure is essential since no single theory or method is entirely appropriate for the research purpose. Self-reflection and personal meaning-making are notions which draw together the theoretical realms and in subsequent chapters these concepts are expanded upon (Hein 1998; Silverman 1995; Worts 1995).

In chapters 5 to 8 the theory is developed through the 'situated' practice and 'standpoint' epistemology of the collaborative research team (Haraway 1991b; Hill-Collins 1991; Morrison 1988, 1994; hooks 1994a, 1994b, 1995 and Lorde 1996). Specifically in

# **1     Introduction: setting a research question to open the museum frontiers**

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chapters 5 to 8 the research study uses ethnographic collections in the museum as a site for active reflection and reinterpretation. The study challenges a traditional museum discourse which erases the multifaceted identities of 'others' - Black people, women, working-class, young or disabled people (Hall 1994; Gilroy 1994a, 1994b; Fanon 1990, 1993). Briefly this traditional discourse regards museum visitors as passive receptacles; in contradistinction this study prioritises the essentially active processes whereby individuals construct personal meaning(s) and identities (Hein 1998; Silverman 1995; Worts 1995).

The main concern in structuring this thesis is for all the participants involved in this study, to understand more about the personal meanings they make with objects through a self-reflective process that may enrich and empower future lives. This thesis structure is necessary in order for the complexity of an unwieldy range of viewpoints gradually to be clarified and assist my challenge to hegemony in the museum. There is a mixture of theory and description throughout, with the research question of reinterpretation and reflexive practice in museums acting as a constant thread holding the thesis together.

## **The aims of and the approach to the project**

The research question asks how can museum education raise the voice, visibility and self-esteem of young students, from areas of London disadvantaged by poverty. Towards this end the thesis examines ways in which the museum can become a site for radical reinterpretation and enable reflexive practice towards transformative action. The research question leads to the formation of collaborative project teams, where teachers, artists in residence and I, take cooperative roles as team leaders. The research question attempts to investigate the value of a radical curriculum, one which places antiracist-multiculturalism at the centre of museum education.<sup>2</sup> This thesis therefore has a philosophical and ideological motivation with an over-riding concern to improve my professional practice as Assistant Keeper of Education in the Horniman Museum.

In the research I strive to establish and maintain non-hierarchical relationships with the

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<sup>2</sup> This is a fused term which will be clarified at 6.2. It incorporates the political aspects of antiracism with the cultural focus of multiculturalism (Hall 1980; Grinter 1985; Leicester 1986; Gilroy 1994b)

research participants, although I am not naive to hegemony and the unequal distribution of power at my field-site. Investigating and transforming power-relationships is a major concern of the research partnership and a theme which flows throughout this thesis. As a feminist I aim to open up possibilities for co-operative work, at the frontiers or horizons between the museum where I am employed as a teacher, and the partnership audience (Philip 1992; Giroux 1993; Braidotti 1994a, 1994b; Gadamer 1981).

The voices of the teacher and student participants in this study are gathered through a collaboratively structured questionnaire and a series of semi-structured interview questions. Their responses echo throughout this Ph.D. thesis. Additionally teacher-colleagues are encouraged to write their own diverse accounts of collaborative efforts (Dash 1998; Desailly 1997; Anim-Addo 1998). These personal responses of the teacher participants stand in parallel with the particular form demanded by my own Ph.D. writing and the technical requirements of an academic piece of work. They fulfil an important aim of this research: to increase plurivocality at the museum frontiers. Plurivocality in this research aims ultimately to empower individuals and communities to challenge existing interpretations both inside and outside the museum. At the museum-school frontiers stereotypical and biased ideas can be raised and questioned in the course of dialogical exchange.

Specifically the thesis uses the African collection of ethnography on temporary display at the Horniman Museum. By developing an intense programme of studies and paying careful in-depth attention to these real objects and their makers and users, research participants can present a broader and more positive view of African peoples and cultures, who are too often disparaged as a result of media representations of a starving and helpless populace. The research aims, through such collaborative work to make historical African peoples, previously misrepresented, silenced or excluded by museum representation, more fully visible at the museum frontiers<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, the research aims to raise the voices and visibilities of the museum's contemporary audience at the museum frontiers, through a committed participation in projects whose foundation lies in

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Louis Gates's 1999 series *Into Africa* for BBC television takes an Afro-centric perspective which my work follows.

facilitating a special sort of dialogical exchange. The student's dialogue initiated at the museum by museum and school teacher-collaborators can be continued and expanded at school, in ways which might comprise verbal, written and the creative expressions of arts and craft. The expanded dialogue can also return to the museum as part of display or performance.

A major goal for this thesis is to show how successful interpretations can increase self esteem and release personal potential through a more inclusive and radical museum-based curriculum. I contend that meaningful collaborative work at the museum frontiers can develop vital tools of critical interpretation which students can apply to other areas of their lives. Overall the thesis explores the potential for personal and social transformation which museum objects can provide through collaborative work, in spite of a seemingly rigid framing of knowledge by the fixed displays in glass-cases. Collaboration is essential to attain this goal, and I aim ultimately to inspire the development of central ideas about the value of forging partnerships between museum educators and external agencies.

In the late 1990's, the reappearance of extreme fascism in the Balkans and Austria surrounds our individual work on antiracist-multiculturalism with a sense of urgency, to present a more forceful opposition to racist discrimination in Britain today. In this thesis I regard the challenge to racism as a crucial aim for museums to nurture.

Now I shall elaborate upon the steps taken by myself and my research partners to achieve the goals highlighted by my research question.

### **Thesis content as determined by the research question and the project aims**

In the content of this thesis new ways for museums to work with multicultural programmes and communities are outlined. The new ways of working involve engagement in an ongoing process of reflection and most importantly self-reflection. Self-reflection occurs as a consequence of or during the special dialogue *with* research 'others' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). It is in dialogue that ideas about self and others are most fully expressed in all their complexity. The purpose of self-reflection is not to attain a concept

of the self as a fixed or finalised entity but rather to appreciate and grasp the possibilities arising in our daily lives. The term 'others' is employed in a special sense which denotes a deep commitment on the part of researchers towards understanding research participants and themselves (Glesne and Peshkin 1992).

'Voice' is a central concept to this thesis. The term voice is used in a broad sense aligned with Carol Gilligan to denote a 'core' of self-hood (Gilligan 1993: xvi). Voice is composed of elements from nature *and* culture. It is constructed through perpetual processes of relational exchange, in other words through active listening and speaking. In this thesis the term 'voice' is distinguished to encompass visual and verbal expressions of human thought and feeling.

The narrative voice of this thesis uses a self reflective 'I' denotes an ideological stance that reflection should lead to transformative action; it marks a philosophical and ideological act of thought which has incorporated feminism and the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans Georg Gadamer into professional practice (Gadamer 1981). For Gadamer 'I' must always be understood in a vital non-hierarchical relation with 'Thou' not in isolation <sup>4</sup>. In the thesis 'Thou' is a term which stands against the notion of objective dispassionate discourse. It essentially points to a collaborative way of working with 'research participants' or 'research others' and prioritises dialogical 'interaction with' research colleagues who are regarded as equals. This stands in contradistinction to the more hierarchical notion of a researcher 'acting on' research 'subjects' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992: xi).

In this research study Gadamer's 'I-Thou' informed by feminism is seen as a pertinent notion for developing a more open and accessible realm of understanding through hermeneutic dialogue at the museum-school borderlands. It is necessary to employ insights from feminism to address a serious weakness or omission in the Gadamerian discourse; Gadamer's lack of attention to relationships of power in society which prevents people who are disadvantaged by poverty from entering the museum. Therefore a new

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<sup>4</sup> Gadamer has taken the concept of 'I-Thou' from the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Buber's main intention was to denote the importance of respect between people engaged in 'dialogue' towards increasing mutual understanding, as opposed to 'talk' aimed at proving superior-inferior positions on knowledge.



consciousness from postmodernism and feminist thought, particularly Black woman's literature, is amalgamated with hermeneutics to interrogate issues of power structures which determines my actual practice of museum education<sup>5</sup>. In particular the 'standpoint epistemology' of Patricia Hill-Collins is critical to the development of a theoretical positioning which I term 'feminist-hermeneutics.' Hill-Collins's thought pertinently echoes Donna Haraway's concept of 'situated knowledge' and permits me to draw on a wide range of crucial 'standpoint texts' to validate the feminist or 'subjective' positioning in this thesis (Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1991b). Feminist-hermeneutics regards all knowledge as partial in the light of standpoint or situated theory. Therefore facilitating the construction of subjective knowledge amongst research participants through hermeneutic dialogue is viewed as a strength of my theoretical framework and not a methodological weakness.

The force of dialogical argument in this thesis is intended to challenge racism through collaborative action in the field of antiracist-multiculturalism at the museum frontiers. The thesis marks a counter-hegemonic force against all discrimination; it tackles sexism and class-bias alongside racism. The research project makes an effective challenge to racism by sharing ideas and developing programmes both inside *and* outside the museum world; at the borderlands or frontier regions where travellers or 'nomadic subjects' can make positive connections and gain essentially 'embodied knowledge' (Philip 1993; Giroux 1993; Braidotti 1994a, 1994b). 'Frontier' theory stands in stark opposition to dualist thought which severs the union of mind-body, the possibility of links between man and woman, Black and white.

The notion of 'frontiers' is a useful concept which is applied to educational work in the museum and at the research field-sites; it describes a location which is theoretical, geographical and temporal. Most importantly the term denotes a region of possibilities. In this thesis it opens a vast space for new theoretical positioning at the borderlands between theories which is conceptually liberating. Additionally the frontiers crucially highlight the

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<sup>5</sup> I use a capital letter 'B' above and throughout this thesis rather than a lower case 'b' when speaking of Black women writers. This is a gesture of radical politics since the lower case 'b' is widely used to simply denote skin colour (Dash 1994). I must state my abhorrence of racist terminology here. I bristle at the essentialist reduction of peoples to a 'black' skin pigmentation, and find the term 'nigger' repellent. Although I retain these words in quotation

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emancipatory intent of my research since I aim for the research participants to transcend the narrow boundaries or seemingly rigid social structures and viewpoints which limit their potential. The abstract concept of frontiers can be clarified with reference to concrete information on my research field-sites: the Horniman Museum and a typical local school.

## **1.2 The context to the thesis: the frontier field-sites of museum and school**

### **A brief history of education at the Horniman Museum**

Frederick John Horniman (1835-1906) founded his collections in the second half of the nineteenth century; “the boom time in the establishment of museums” (Vergo 1989: 8). He entered the family tea firm<sup>6</sup> at fourteen years old, married Rebekah Emslie at the age of twenty-three and moved to the site of the present-day museum, Surrey House, 100 London Road, SE23, from where he also took on the duties of a Liberal MP for Falmouth and Penryn (1895-1904). His collections were displayed and shared with visitors to Surrey House or the ‘Surrey House Museum’ as it was affectionately known in the media. In 1889 the family moved their home to another house in the gardens, Surrey Mount. On Christmas eve 1890 the objects were officially opened to the general public in the ‘Horniman Free Museum’ at the London Road house. The Museum was initially opened from 2.00-9.00pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays with Richard Quick employed as Curator. Quick was originally trained as an artist and his efforts to impose a rational order onto Frederick’s collections largely consisted of constructing huge scrapbooks, where he pasted bills, letters and his own sketches of recent acquisitions. He speaks of aesthetics: ‘rearranging’ and ‘relining’ certain display cases “with a light green paper, which is found to make a good background” (Annual Report 1896: 9).

Quick’s first Annual Report of 1891 notes the museum made “Arrangements for the

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<sup>6</sup> Frederick Horniman’s father John was originally a journeyman trader, based in the Isle of Wight at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the early 1840’s John began to specialise in the trading of tea and in 1844 his product was delivered to retailers in sealed packets bearing the legend, ‘Horniman’s Pure Tea’ at ‘Fair Prices.’ Prosperity facilitated the family move to Coombe Cliffe in Croydon where his son Frederick was born into an industrious and philanthropic Quaker family who cared for “the poor and afflicted members of the human family” (Duncan 1972: 8).

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reception of Schools, Societies and Clubs, in large and small numbers.” From 1891-1892, a “total attendance of 1,070” individuals from 41 institutions, took advantage of the “Free” admittance, and “catalogue guide” which was “supplied gratis” Annual Report 1892: 8). Horniman’s generous and enthusiastic nature is evident in the regular invitations he extended to children from the local board schools and orphanages, to attend organised events and activities such as races in his spacious grounds. For example on 6th July 1893 “about 100 children [from 4 local orphanages] ... were shown over the Museum, and afterwards passed onto the lawn at the back, where lemonade and buns were discussed, and greatly appreciated” (Annual Report 1893: 7).

In 1897 90,383 people visited the Horniman Free Museum and Frederick was inspired to commission a purpose-built museum in 1898<sup>7</sup>. Two years later Harrison Townsend’s art-nouveau design in Doultong stone, with Anning-Bell’s decorative mosaic panel adorning the entrance, was completed at a cost of about £40,000. On 1st May 1901, in an act of great benevolence the Museum was officially given as a gift to “the people of London for ever, as a free museum, for their recreation, instruction and enjoyment”, according to the inscription on the entrance plaque which expresses an emphasis on the twin educational and recreational functions of his museum. Horniman states his aim for the collections to: “interest and inform others who may not have had the opportunity to visit other places”, illustrating a democratic concern for the educational potential of the objects and a liberal view that education may lead people to a better life (Annual Report 1901:4).

The London County Council were responsible for administering Horniman’s bequest and immediately enlisted Dr. Alfred Cort Haddon, an esteemed anthropologist from Cambridge University as Advisory Curator (1902-1915), and Dr. Herbert Spencer Harrison as Resident Curator (1904-1937). Haddon was concerned to make “the museum an educational centre of great value, as well as a place of recreation” and began to organise the ethnographic artefacts according to the new ‘scientific’ principles of

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<sup>7</sup> The popularity and size of the collections increased until by 1901 approximately 7,920 objects were amassed with the aid of dealers, agents, family and friends in the missionary and colonial services (Levell 1997; Duncan 1972: 3-6). A great breadth and diversity of objects were desired; “curios ... all sorts of things” were requested according to Mrs Keddie writing from Gaya Bengal. (Quick Scrapbook 1888-1901: 45).

anthropology (Duncan 1972: 14; L.C.C. Report 1903) <sup>8</sup>. This science applied Darwin's biological theory of organic evolution to account for the different social structures around the world. The technical achievements of societies were regarded as manifest in the products of their material culture and this provided evidence of their position on the social evolutionary scale: from the most advanced and civilised or European societies, to the most primitive and least technically accomplished or non-European societies.

Haddon and Harrison who were originally trained as biologists rapidly transformed the displays in accordance with the evolutionary thought which General Pitt Rivers was developing at this time, whereby "the privileged evidence was to be that based on the comparison of artefacts" (Chapman 1988: 22). A popular series of Saturday Lectures and Handbooks on the collections reinforced the museum's new educational message of rational classification from an evolutionary perspective <sup>9</sup>. At this time the Curator's educational programmes for adult visitors perfectly complemented the museum display. Alongside this adult service an L.C.C. appointed supply teacher organised school visits to the museum and arranged for the 'instruction' of school pupils, until January 1949 when a full-time teacher was seconded from the permanent teaching service of the L.C.C.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1950's the museum teacher worked with the school-children and their class-teachers in a small room off the North Hall. The room was quite inadequate; lacking proper storage and display space for the children's work but the service grew in response to demand and 18,619 pupils attended the museum as part of a school visit in 1968. These school visitor figures led to the construction of a two storey Education Centre and the appointment of a second full-time teacher in 1969. The Education Centre provided

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<sup>8</sup> From 1898 to 1989 Haddon was the physical anthropologist, (measuring skulls: the nasal and auricular orifices), as part of a multidisciplinary group conducting field-work in the Torres Strait Islands.

<sup>9</sup> The Horniman Museum Library holds examples of the Handbooks which include: *A Handbook to the cases illustrating stages in the evolution of the Domestic Arts (Part 1 and 11)*; *War and the Chase: A Handbook to the Collection of Weapons of Savage, Barbaric and Civilised Peoples* and *From Stone to Steel: A Handbook to the cases illustrating the Ages of Stone, Bronze and Iron*. The Lecture titles, such as "Native Races of the Empire" also suggest support for Imperialism and reinforcing differences in the exploration of non-European cultures (1908).

<sup>10</sup> This teacher, Robin Place was influenced by the 'progressive' or 'child-centered' philosophy of Molly Harrison, another L.C.C. appointed teacher who worked at the Geffrye Museum in East London (Goodhew archive 1978). Harrison contextualised museum learning in relation to the educational development of the child. She was concerned to widen children's horizons by relating teaching methods to their needs and personal experiences (Harrison 1954).

excellent facilities for: art and craft work including a pottery kiln, object handling and storage, lavatories, a lunchroom and a cloakroom. A reputation for innovative educational activities with museum objects grew but the work of the museum teacher was isolated from the development of the museum displays; a situation which was exacerbated by the different salaries and conditions of employment for curators and teachers.

The Horniman Museum displays changed marginally over the years although an overriding presentation of 'cultural otherness' remained until the late 1990's. In 1994 severe subsidence was discovered in the South Hall and a major programme of renovation was undertaken as a matter of urgency. Ethnographic objects had been exhibited in the South Hall since 1901, and during building-work the museum decided to locate a 'concise display of ethnography' at one end of the North Hall, a Natural History Gallery. One Natural History case adjacent to the Ethnographic displays illustrated 'The Varieties of Modern Man' according to the science of physical antropometrics. Another adjacent case showed a 'Family of Apes.'

At the start of this research project I regarded the ethnographic *objects* as potentially valuable aids to challenge racism through collaborative project-work, but the *museum framing* posed a serious problem. The juxtaposition of the Ethnographic and Natural History Cases seemed to transmit a mixed message to visitors: that peoples of 'other' non-European cultures were physically closer to apes and distinct from European peoples. Therefore at the time of writing this thesis the Education Centre, attached to the side of the Museum, provided an essential site for students to engage in dialogue about the nature of museum displays past and present before entering the main building.

In the Education Centre I was able to work with teachers to provide a more open framing of knowledge using objects in the Handling Collection <sup>11</sup>. This presented visitors with endless possibilities to make personal connections with the objects and to construct their own meanings in new ways. The Handling Collection permitted educational work to be carried out 'behind the back' of the museum display, or in the 'fissures and gaps' of the

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<sup>11</sup> The Handling Collection consists of 3,500 original objects which mirror the main Horniman Collections. I am responsible for their storage, care and educational usage.

## **1      Introduction: setting a research question to open the museum frontiers**

museum discourse, so that visitors might appreciate and feel some human contact with the lives of displayed ‘others’ (Foucault 1980, 1994). According to philosophical hermeneutics objects may be distanced from us in terms of time and space or subjected to false interpretation, yet they hold an enormous potential for new understanding and personal meaning-making. My educational work at the museum frontiers points to the possibility of people coming to recognise their common humanity in an ever deepening process of understanding which Gadamer terms the ‘fusion of horizons’ (Gadamer 1981). In this thesis I demonstrate this process broadening the outlook of visitors, increasing their confidence, raising their achievement and bringing them to recognise an enhanced potential for their future lives. A brief outline of a typical school field-site will highlight the importance of this for visitors on the other side of the museum frontiers.

### **The school field-site: a demographical sketch illustrating and providing validation for the research**

PS secondary school is located in a socially deprived area of south east London, between Stockwell and Brixton tube stations. Figure 1.1 uses information taken from the local borough survey. The DfEE (Department for Education and Employment) survey illustrates the diversity of social, emotional and learning needs within the student population: 60% of the students are eligible for free school meals which highlights the extent of poverty they suffer. 40% of the students have special educational needs (SEN) which highlights the difficulties these students have in terms of behaviour and/or learning within a full class of 30 pupils.

Students on roll	.	780
Students eligible for free school meals	.	470
Students who have a SEN statement	.	25
Students with SEN, not statemented	.	284
Students speaking English as a second language (ESL)*	.	401

\*The analysis undertaken by the English for Bilingual Pupils department (EBP) shows a total of 381 ESL students. This discrepancy is due to the high mobility of this student population

**Figure 1.1. Table of DfEE information on PS secondary school**

The London borough of Lambeth where the school is situated is “the twelfth most deprived area in the country and seventh most deprived area in London” (1998: 3). For “the proportion of the local authority population living in the 10% most deprived ward in England, Lambeth was ranked 5th (3rd in London)” (1998: 2). These statements are based on ‘twelve indicators’ of deprivation which I provide in figure 1.2.<sup>12</sup>

Economic  
Total Unemployment  
Male long-term unemployment  
Education  
Low educational attainment  
Low educational participation  
Low Income  
Income support recipients  
Non income support receiving council benefit  
Dependent children of income support recipients  
Housing  
Households lacking basic amenities  
Overcrowded Housing  
Environment  
Derelict Land  
Crime  
Home insurance weighting  
Health  
Standard Mortality rates

List supplied by the UK Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions - 1998 Index of Local Deprivation. London borough of Lambeth (1998: 3).

**Figure 1.2 Indicators of Local Deprivation. London borough of Lambeth (1998: 3).**

The London borough of Lambeth highlights these indicators of deprivation as major factors relating to underachievement in school. At 17% A-C grades PS school shares the bottom place on the GCSE league tables with its neighbour school BL, as figure 7.4 on page 187 shows. Yet the students participating in the intensive museum-school curriculum

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<sup>12</sup> I note Gillborn’s warning that such figures can lead teachers to operate with negative views “of black pupils as disadvantaged by broken homes and pathological family structures” (Gillborn 1996a: 54), but I offer these statistics to point out the extra hurdles which hinder PS school students’ achievement.

which is outlined in chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis gained 77% A-C grades in their GCSE art examinations. Their success is attributed to following government recommendations for an inclusive non-eurocentric curriculum which motivates students and increases their self esteem. It is almost twenty years since the Rampton report first highlighted the “under-achievement” of African Caribbean pupils in schools and in the most recent government reports this ‘under-achievement’ is seen to persist today (Rampton 1981; Scarman 1981: 9, 1996; Gillborn and Gipps 1996a).

The student achievement supplies validation for the research and a justification for undertaking 2 projects at a single field-site. This focus provides a detailed and precise account of the processes which govern the articulation of meaning for 2 groups of GCSE art students and their teachers. To achieve this end, as Hooper-Greenhill notes it is essential to make close “links outside the museum”, and further, “it is important to understand the concerns and objectives of those with whom links are made” (Hooper-Greenhill 1991:5). The PS school field-site in the London borough of Lambeth shared a number of ‘concerns and objectives’ with the Horniman Museum Education Department, but four main criteria determine our close collaboration.

Firstly demography. PS school is located in a borough with a well-established “multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, and multifaith” population (Dodd 1994: 304). In particular the borough has a high proportion African Caribbean peoples, who are one of the Horniman Museum’s target audiences since they were under-represented in the visitor profile survey (Horniman Museum Visitor Survey 1996) <sup>13</sup>. Secondly the ethos in PS school is of strong commitment to challenging racism and promoting intercultural understanding. This permits PS teachers to spend extended periods of time negotiating specific programmes of museum-based studies that are specially relevant to their students. Thirdly the GCSE projects concentrate on students who are approaching the school leaving age and collaborative work prepares the students for transition to further education, work, or unemployment. Unemployment remains a primary concern for the borough since the Scarman report which I discuss in chapter 8 (Scarman 1981). Finally the education service of this borough lacks a specialist inspector for art and my initial art

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<sup>13</sup> Figures 8.3 and 8.4 detail this evidence



training ideally places me to address this deficiency in provision.

### **1.3 A methodological outline: ethnographic action research**

In terms of methodology aspects of: ethnography (Geertz 1993a, 1993b;; Clifford 1994, 1997), educational action research (Stenhouse 1975; Eliot 1987, 1995) and Freire's radical pedagogy (Freire 1972, 1996; Giroux 1993; hooks 1994a) are employed. These methodologies are interpreted and adapted to develop a set of procedures which are appropriate to the local context of my research in South London.

#### **Ethnographic method**

In this thesis a complex area of social interactions with artefacts in the museum is studied and aspects of ethnographic method are employed to elucidate 'local knowledge' in the museum-school/college field through 'thick' or rich descriptions (Geertz 1993a, 1993b; Gilchrist 1992; Hammersley 1983) <sup>14</sup>. In particular James Clifford's latest 'travelling' theory importantly elucidates the complex Diaspora histories of dwelling and travelling which is pertinent to the local knowledge gathered at the research field-site.

Writing is an activity central to the practice of ethnography at the borderlands between field-sites. The thesis takes a view of writing from the new ethnographies which James Clifford defines as essentially including the poetical *and* political realms of lived experience <sup>15</sup> (Clifford 1989, 1997; Nelson 1995). In terms of the completed written narrative this approach results in a 'collage' effect where attention is paid to power structures and notions of hierarchical and subordinate voices are addressed. Specifically, different teacher and student voices are gathered together, and a series of fragmented or partial perspectives are presented (Clifford 1994).

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<sup>14</sup> This ethnographic notion of field or field-site has parallels with my understanding of frontiers or horizons elucidated at 1.2

<sup>15</sup> This involves researchers attending to the political activities of the researched peoples to the extent of supporting their land-claims in the courts of law

In this research I am responsible for the task of writing up museum-based projects in the form of case-studies within which I act as a participant observer. In the case of writing then it immediately appears that highly disparate relations of power are at work and I shall return to this problematic throughout my thesis. I am the writer of this thesis but the aims of my research are constructed in close collaboration with teacher-colleagues. The issues which arise are discussed with teacher-colleagues at every stage of the writing process; team leaders read and pertinently comment on draft copies which precede the construction of this final approved version of collaborative work. This procedure accords with the tenets of educational action research.

### Educational action research

The work carried out by the Centre for Action Research in Education (CARE) is a major influence on the methodology. Lawrence Stenhouse and John Eliot's action research approach encourages teachers to reflect, study and to write about their own work, which is a primary aim of this research (Stenhouse 1975, 1980, 1983, 1993; Eliot 1987, 1995; Ruddock 1995). CARE facilitates teachers' action research projects within a supportive university environment. It nurtures a number of dialogical research teams which are composed of professionals from the field-sites of university and school. They operate according to non-hierarchical principles with the primary aim of empowering teachers to reflect 'in and on' their practice for the benefit of their students (Schön 1983; Zeichner 1996: 14). I find it necessary to extend and amalgamate the CARE methodology with Freire's concept of 'conscientização' in order to facilitate interpretive dialogue with teachers *and* their students at the museum frontiers, as CARE works solely with teachers.

The thesis method attempts to take a non-hierarchical position *with* teacher and student 'co-investigators' to utilise Freire's terminology (Freire 1972, 1996). Freire warns educational researchers against positioning themselves *over* the 'objects' of their study, because if people are first objectified in this way they cannot later become subjects (Freire 1972; 1996). The thesis follows Freire in prioritising plurivocality and equitable relationships between teachers and their students in this research project. The special value of the projects considered in chapters 5 to 8 lies in facilitating the construction of

new understandings, interpretations and identities. This mirrors Freire's work in bringing the standpoints of individuals and communities to speech and action in the philosophico-political world.

To sum up the methodological dictates of the thesis. The method seeks:

- to gather primary data from specific 'life situations' at the museum-school frontiers, and gain a 'holistic overview' of the social processes which characterise this 'life situation.'
- to prioritise the perspective of teacher and student participants, and to facilitate their unique voice and viewpoints on this 'life situation', while recognising that I act as a researcher-main actor in the research study.
- to interpret data gathered according to a new theoretical position which privileges personal meaning-making, and to set the participant's interpretation in the social context of the museum-school site in which it is constructed<sup>16</sup>

### **An outline of two methodological techniques: the dialogical project and taped interviews**

In this thesis two main methodological techniques are employed which both focus on dialogue<sup>17</sup>. The first technique prioritises written and verbal responses which is pertinent for teacher-colleagues. An example of this technique is termed the dialogical project; a case-study which provides the focal point of chapter 6. It involves the long-term commitment of 25 teacher-collaborators to the investigation and development of an antiracist-multicultural curriculum at the museum school frontiers. The teachers words attest to the positive influence of the museum experience on the young people's end of key stage tests and their GCSE examination results, which form the assessment programme of the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum is organised by division into four key stages (KS) according to the age of the students, as figure 1.3 shows.

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<sup>16</sup> This criteria is adapted from qualitative or 'naturalistic' inquiry (Miles and Huberman 1994: 5-7). These principles of qualitative research help to determine the boundaries of my study. I am a single part-time researcher; it is therefore necessary to delimit my field of inquiry in order to gain a deep understanding of the museum-school 'life situation' and achieve a high degree of critical analysis.

<sup>17</sup> Dialogue is defined according to Gadamerian thought which includes written and verbal language.

<u>Key Stage</u>	<u>School Year</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Student Age</u>
KS1	1 and 2	Primary, Infants	5 to 7
KS2	3, 4, 5 and 6	Primary Juniors	7 to 11
KS3	7, 8 and 9	Secondary	11 to 14
KS4	10 and 11	Secondary	14 to 16

**Figure 1.3. Table of National Curriculum Key Stage<sup>18</sup>**

The second technique employed in this thesis is based on interview and visual responses which is appropriate for the students. Interview and evaluation of visual responses provide the focus of case-study work with students which is outlined in chapters 7 and 8.

In the course of this research I realise that my earliest techniques of self-completed postal survey and questionnaires, the Dialogical Project, carries assumptions about literacy and culture which are suitable for teacher-respondents but not transferable to their students. In this Ph.D. research project therefore, self-reflection is encouraged through an interviewing programme which is qualitative, and involves a sample of approximately 70 young people between the ages of 6 and 16. A representative sample of these interview transcripts can be seen at Appendix 4. I argue that interviewing is the most appropriate method of gaining access to young peoples' views and experiences, of their multicultural museum education, especially as this relates to the visual and literary arts.

Teachers acted as 'key informants' during the interview programme. This was especially helpful in obtaining access and gaining the trust of the young students in a specific urban school setting where a high proportion of members came from various ethnic communities<sup>19</sup>. The duration of the interviews ranged from 8 to 20 minutes but the estimated average length was closer to 10 minutes. The interviewing process reveals the

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<sup>18</sup> In 1988 the Conservative government made it a legal requirement, under the Educational Reform Act, for all schools in England and Wales to implement a National Curriculum. Scotland and Ireland have their own curriculum.

<sup>19</sup> Interviews were conducted in 2 regions of inner London: Lewisham and Lambeth, between March 1996 and April 1997. These boroughs were selected because they made more school visits to the Horniman Museum than other boroughs.

individuality of the interviewees. One teacher collaborator comments on the danger of making stereotypical judgments about the individual respondents. This colleague has a code-name: T standing for teacher and the initials of her name.

TSD    I was amazed at the responses you sent me. Some children I thought would find it difficult to express their feelings, just flowed with information, and other, very bright children I thought would make really pertinent remarks, didn't really.  
(Telephone conversation, June 1997)<sup>20</sup>

TSD's remarks refer to a difficulty of expression which is not confined to the relatively young age of her Year 6 students. The responses from older participants in the Benin and the Carnival-Arts projects of chapters 7 and 8 share in a struggle to articulate. In common with the finding of Harland, Kinder and Hartley this thesis shows that "Most significantly, many interviewees had difficulty in articulating the nature of any effects of the arts upon them" (Harland et al 1995: 16-17)<sup>21</sup> .

I am working as the main researcher, in greater depth and within a much smaller field than Harland et al. This enables an interrogation of complex 'categories' and attempts to rectify the limitations which their recent research has highlighted. For example 704 individuals are placed within just 5 broad categories of ethnic group membership in their table 2.3. They problematically group together Black/African-Caribbean; Indian Pakistani/Bangladeshi (Asian); Other; White European and Missing cases. Their largest group is the White European with 77% and the smallest group is the Other with 4%. The richness and diversity of case studies from my own field demands a much greater attention to the fine details of 'ethnic group membership' and the fusions between various groups in terms of ethnicity, which essentially includes the felt heritage of the students. In the words of Anne Dummett, children from mixed race parentage 'rather helplessly' identify themselves 'Others' (Dummett 1985: 5).

The substantial amount of qualitative and quantitative information gathered during research are usually analysed together and contiguous in the thesis. I make an effort to

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<sup>20</sup> I have guaranteed the anonymity of all individuals involved in this research, although I intend to publish some collaborative articles with teacher-collaborators, when the pressure of teaching permits. Throughout this thesis I obscure real identities by applying code-names and letters to teacher, students and their schools.

<sup>21</sup> This difficulty is investigated in the case study chapters 5-7

achieve statistical accuracy in this project while remaining alive to the nuances in individual testament gained through the interview process. This thesis seeks to acknowledge the individuality of interviewees, their subject-hood as 'Thou' and the significance of the unique insights which are often generated in dialogue. Alongside this attempt I hope to uncover general patterns, and I suggest this research might provide a wider frame in which the experiential accounts of individual participants can be interpreted and appreciated.

## **1.4      Topology: contextualising the thesis in the literature of museum education and related fields**

The key areas of thought which have proved most relevant and useful to the aims and objectives of this thesis in museum education have already been highlighted: philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer 1981); feminism, especially Black women writers (Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1991b) radical education and action research (Freire 1972, 1996; Stenhouse 1975, 1980; Eliot 1987, 1997) and ethnography (Clifford 1994, 1997; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993). It is these authors who provide the crucial elements on which a new educational praxis at the museum frontiers has been built; one which is theoretically and methodologically strong. Since the central texts of this thesis lie outside of the field of museum education in this section I shall first explain why I have found it necessary to survey literature outside of this field.

When I set out on this Ph.D. study in 1995 the majority of literature on museum education by practitioners in the field was of a descriptive and empirical nature. The texts on museum education comprised largely practical guidelines for action; typically a rather enclosed museum viewpoint premised on realism and prioritising cognitive learning was presented. For example Gail Durban, Sue Morris and Sue Wilkinson's publication *Teachers Guide to Learning from Objects* (Durban et al 1991), Sue Morris's *A Teachers Guide to Using Portraits* (Morris 1992) and John Yorath's *Learning about Science and Technology in Museums* (Yorath 1995)<sup>22</sup> are prime examples of very useful manuals. They are full of practical ideas and descriptions of projects to aid a certain sort of learning

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<sup>22</sup> I contributed the paper on 'puppets around the world' to this volume.

in museums. The manuals are primarily intended to promote a closer attention to real objects and to increase observation and cognitive skills in the learner. These are necessary tools for any learning in museums but they present only a limited picture of the enormous range of educational possibilities which are explored in this thesis. This research project is concerned with new ways of drawing out the broader potential of learning from museum objects: the ethical, the aesthetic, the philosophical and ideological implications which can be investigated through an intense collaborative engagement. Therefore a new critical praxis is developed in the thesis.

In Britain Dr. Hooper-Greenhill's work stands out in this field of critical practice in museum education for two main reasons that are pertinent to this thesis. Firstly she strives to engage in collaborative research effort, which is a vital aspect of this thesis. I have contributed to two of her edited collections, and my positive experience on these collective endeavours, of intense dialogue and written response nurtures my independent research effort (Hooper-Greenhill 1996, 1997). Firstly, I participated in a long-term collaborative research project that resulted in *Improving Museum Learning* (1996). This publication has critical sections which investigate: learning from objects, exhibitions and written resources. Secondly, I contributed to *Cultural Diversity. Developing Museum Audiences in Britain* (1997), which gathers together a number of challenging voices, many of them from the margins of or outside of the museum. This book acts as a spur to my own prioritising of plurivocality at the museum frontiers.

Secondly several of Hooper-Greenhill's other publications provide an invaluable guide in the uncharted terrain of critical educational programming in the museum. Hooper-Greenhill addresses the issue of communication in museums and provides a comprehensive historical survey of educational ideologies which is vital to this thesis (Hooper-Greenhill 1999, 1994b). Specifically this thesis builds on work in *Museums and their Visitors* (1994a) where the different voices of the museum visitor and non-visitor today are carefully considered and pertinent questions centred on improving the museum experience are raised. This research project extends Hooper-Greenhill's focus on holistic museum experiences into a new site of collaborative practice; the 'situated' or 'frontier' location between museum and school, where special attention is paid to the wide power of

objects to stimulate and inspire a questioning process across a range of traditional subject boundaries (Haraway 1991b; Philip 1992). In this respect the thesis importantly unpacks questions which Hooper-Greenhill posed in *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (1993): what has counted as 'knowledge' in museums? For whom is this 'knowledge' displayed, and why? In the careful tracing of these questions *with* research participants 'reading' displayed objects in museums becomes an experience of emancipation from fixed notions of 'truth', and a way forward for the more liberatory practice which I am developing in museums is accentuated.

While writing up this thesis the professional journal *JEM* (Journal of Education in Museums), which regularly published practitioner accounts of good practice following the 'manual' approach, began increasingly to feature a number of contributions written from a more critical and theoretical perspective. In particular a growing interest in psychology and learning theory amongst museum educators in the United States of America is beginning to influence museum education in Britain (JEM 16). This thesis builds upon a number of the psychological approaches to museum learning which have been developed in the States while differing from them in vital respects. I note four authors from this field as particularly important to the construction of a new theoretical platform in this thesis: George Hein (1998), Falk and Dierking (1995, 1992, 1998) Howard Gardner (1993a, 1993b) and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1995).

Firstly George Hein provides some useful ideas which support my research direction. In *Learning in Museums* Hein expounds the vital idea that learners 'construct' meaning(s) individually and socially (Hein 1998). His thesis reinforces my challenge to the realist picture of museums presenting objective 'knowledge', existing outside of and independent from individuals and communities of 'knowers.' Hein's thesis also presents an important challenge to the myth of curatorial 'authority' which this research project strives to dispel. However Hein's concentration remains rooted in 'detached' scientific method and on scientific learning, while the focus of this research project is on a broader creative learning from ethnographic collections. Specifically the thesis investigates the ways in which museum educators can work *together with* teachers to develop students' confidence, skills and achievement in language and art.



This Ph.D. thesis promotes a complex picture of museum learning which takes account of the personal, social, physical and immediate contexts of learning in the museum that Hein's American colleagues Falk and Dierking discuss in *The Museum Experience* (Falk and Dierking 1992). Their evaluation of this more inclusive 'museum experience' engages visitors in face to face dialogue, which is pertinent to the aims and objectives of this study. Hein, Falk and Dierking importantly prioritise the voice of the museum visitor and utilise qualitative research techniques: unobtrusive tracking and interview, to uncover or 'map' the personal meanings which visitors make in science museums (Falk et al 1998). They 'listen' to the natural language of the visitor and discern the persistence of 'personal agendas' in the face of the museum 'knowledge' which museum labels strive to impart. Their work provides a rich body of evidence from visitor voices and this thesis employs aspects of their qualitative methodology, in particular the listening interview, as a source of audience advocacy for museum education.

Howard Gardner also propounds a thesis which is important for this study (Gardner 1993a, 1993b). In *Multiple Intelligences* he describes seven different learning styles or 'intelligences' which offers an important theoretical corrective to the denigration of people's abilities in comparison with the 'logico-mathematical' and 'linguistic' intelligences of IQ testing (Gardner 1993a). His broadening of the term intelligence to incorporate areas of expertise such as the musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal is appreciated; but his relative inattention to art which is incorporated within the bodily-kinesthetic, and his failure to adequately address the essential mixture of intelligences poses a problem for this thesis.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is unique in attending to art and in particular the aesthetic experience. The project work of chapters 5 to 8 which explains how the theory is developed in practice are premised on the voices of teacher-colleagues gathered initially from the Dialogical Project (Chapter 6). The formation of many questions and the structure of the Dialogical Project questionnaire (see Appendix 2) owe an enormous debt to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's methodology outlined in the *Art of Seeing. An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter*, although the intention of this thesis differs from

his in certain respects (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Most importantly while aspects of Csikszentmihalyi's 'flow' theory are endorsed the methodology by which he demonstrates its scientific and measurable truth are not fully embraced. This thesis denies objectivity is a guarantee or even a means of attaining Truth; in place of a universalising concept of Truth the notion of partial truths and personal meaning-making is fore-grounded.

To sum up, my praxis builds on the thought of these American writers but diverges from them in taking a primarily philosophical and ideological position. The interest in listening to and exploring visitors personal interpretations is shared, but more attention is paid to the principle of power relations and dismantling the power structures in the museum. The roots of this positioning lie outside of museum education and in addition to the writers already cited a number of French theorists have proved most relevant and useful to this thesis.

Foucauldian thought has permitted a vital tracing of the ways in which power and knowledge operate together in the museum discourse. Foucault speaks of discourse as inseparable from power structures, but at the same time he highlights ways in which discourses can slip between the cracks and spaces between structures of power or 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1995) In my museum work these cracks in discourse are understood as potentially positive 'horizons' or sites for feminist-hermeneutical exchange (Gadamer 1981; Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1991b). This reading provides an empowering thesis for museum educators and research teams of teachers and students, who all occupy a relatively lowly status in the respective power structures of their institutions. Educators at the museum-school frontiers can use Foucault's thought to challenge the notions of 'truth', which appears fixed on text panels and in glass cases, to insert a multiplicity of alternate readings. This thesis uses Foucault to make a justification of truth which prioritises understanding and personal meaning-making for individuals previously silenced by the master 'scientific' discourses, that regard them as 'docile bodies' or obedient objects of data for professional analysis (Foucault 1980, 1994, 1995). In particular the case study chapters 5 to 8 document a coming to voice of groups previously marginalised in the museum discourse and these groups come to recognise aspects of new identities and possibilities for future lives at the

museum frontiers.

Additionally the thesis usefully employs a French feminist interpretation of the frontiers or horizons as 'fissures' or margins and blank spaces of discourse, where it is possible for women's words to enter language (Cixous 1987; Kristeva 1989a, 1989b; Irigaray 1981). In this sense my praxis is located in a Lacanian-feminist reading of the Freudian discourse. Freud's case studies provide a model for the way in which philosophical and creative concerns might be amalgamated into a healing practice, if the analyst is able to 'listen' and permits the analysand to speak in the special therapeutic location. In this thesis the psychoanalytical situation is viewed as reminiscent of a feminist-hermeneutic dialogue at the frontiers of the museum. Specifically the thesis echoes feminist psychoanalysis through a case-study with a group of women writers in chapter 5. However in this research project a central engagement with the thought of Black writers expands upon the Foucauldian and French feminist attention to power relations, and their universalising tendency to assume the white middle-class experience as the norm.

The Black women writers: Hill-Collins (1991); Lorde (Lorde 1996); hooks (hooks 1989, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1995); Philip (Philip 1992, 1993, 1996); Morrison (Morrison 1988); and Minh ha (Trinh T Minh ha 1989) all strongly emphasise diversity both between and within groups. Additionally they assert the importance of maintaining a community of supportive equals and forging personal alliances across community boundaries. These points are crucial for this thesis. The thesis also uses the Black writers vital blurring of the boundaries between the theoretical, scientific, historical and the literary. This notion grounds a crucial anti-dualist position and extends the range of texts which museum educators can draw upon to improve their practice. Most importantly in this thesis Toni Morrison's conception of the Clearing in the novel *Beloved* is taken as a pertinent metaphor to illuminate the notion of frontiers or horizons between museum and school communities at the end of chapter 2 (Morrison 1988). Morrison's *Beloved*, and Philip's *Caribana: African Roots and Continuities. Race, Space and the Poetics of moving space* are critical texts which illuminate chapters 5 to 8. These texts elucidate elements of the debate between western scientific-realism, and a more imaginative engagement prioritised by feminist-hermeneutics and the African Caribbean oral tradition (Morrison 1988; Philip

1996)<sup>23</sup>.

In conclusion this thesis especially privileges excluded or silenced voices and aims to facilitate an open space at the museum frontiers whereby a multiplicity of views: verbal, written and visual can come to expression. The collaborative aim in this research project is to challenge the museum ethos and framing of 'knowledge', to provide specific cases of new and 'situated knowledge(s)' (Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1991b). Towards this end research participants stand 'shoulder to shoulder' in ongoing processes of dialogue and negotiation, which can be extremely painful for all equal participants; because it demands careful listening, intense moral thinking and action from the museum audience and the museum-worker(s). Overall the method emphasises and attaches a greater value to facilitating individual articulations while broadening the notions of Truth and Knowledge as under constant construction.

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<sup>23</sup> In this thesis I follow Gillborn and Gipps who use the term 'African Caribbean' which they consider more acceptable than 'Afro-Caribbean' and 'West Indian' (Gillborn and Gipps 1996: 8)

## **2 Exploring interpretation and meaning-making in museum education**

Is there to be *no knowledge in art*? Does not the experience of art contain *a claim to truth which is certainly different from that of science*, but equally certainly is not inferior to it? And is not the task of aesthetics precisely to provide a basis for the fact that artistic experience is a mode of knowledge of a unique kind, certainly different from that sensory knowledge which provides science with the data from which it constructs the knowledge of nature, . . . but still knowledge, ie the transmission of *truth*?

(Gadamer 1981: 87)

[My emphasis]

### **2.0     Introduction**

The central questions of interpretation and the construction of meaning at the museum frontiers are located within the long hermeneutical tradition in this chapter. In particular Hans Georg Gadamer's epistemological concerns around the concepts of knowledge, truth and meaning are discussed, and the relevance of his thought to educational work in the museum are established (Gadamer 1980, 1981, 1986)<sup>1</sup>.

Firstly in section 2.1 the roots of hermeneutic thought are traced to provide some historical framework for the theory. Then in 2.2 the Gadamerian notion of understanding and knowledge emerging in the 'play' of language is discussed. Gadamer emphasises the dialectic of questioning and answering as a route to understanding and knowledge. In this thesis I have found the dialectic is a vital notion to facilitate radical education programmes at the museum frontiers (Freire 1996). Additionally the 'productive attitude' essential for understanding in Gadamerian thought is related to the constructivism of George Hein and the context of the museum (Gadamer 1981: 264; Hein 1998).

At 2.3. Gadamer's key concepts of 'prejudice' and 'tradition' are examined and related to the museum context. These notions importantly rehabilitate the truth of the arts by unsettling both the Enlightenment notions of truth as rational objectivity, and the Romantic mystification of truth as lying solely in the expressive value of art. Finally the central role of understanding in the 'fusion of horizons' is considered within the notion of the 'hermeneutic circle'. These areas are not absolutely distinct in Gadamerian thought and central points will recur throughout.

In section 2.4 a serious lack of political awareness in Gadamer's approach is critiqued in the context of museum education. This lack leads Gadamer to neglect the position of disadvantaged people such as the PS students described at figures 1.1 and 1.2, who experience difficulties attempting to enter a museum dialogue. To address this problem I

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<sup>1</sup> Gadamer's magnum opus *Truth and Method* was published in German in 1965 but an English translation was not widely available until the 1981 publication by Sheed and Ward. This is due to the overriding influence of the logical positivists on English philosophy and their dismissal of Gadamer's concern with art as 'nonsensical' or unable to be presented in a logical statement. In the 1990's Gadamer's thought continues to present a radical thesis for English philosophy which this historical note highlights.

## **2     Exploring interpretation and meaning-making in museum education**

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first interrogate feminist readings of the Gadamerian discourse, specifically thought on 'active listening' to the 'unsaid' and to Black women's voices (Corradi Fuimara 1995, Henderson 1993, Wolff 1975). Then a pedagogical practice informed by feminist-hermeneutics is developed to address the question of power structures at the museum-school frontiers, and the hermeneutic notion of 'saying true' is considered to provide validation in the radical thesis (Freire 1996; Giroux 1993; hooks 1994; Ricouer 1982)

Finally at 2.5 the main import of the Gadamerian discourse to museum education is drawn together in Toni Morrison's concept of the 'Clearing'. The 'Clearing' provides an image that is helpful to the thesis, since it pertinently reflects Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons and the notion of frontier locations that are vital to the research (Morrison 1988).

### **2.1     A concise historical overview of hermeneutics**

Richard Palmer traces the roots of the word hermeneutics to the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, "to interpret"; and the Greek noun *hermeneia*, "interpretation" (Palmer 1982: 12-13). Our term hermeneutics originates from Hermes, the ancient winged-messenger of the gods, whose role was to bring the word of the gods to the people. Hermeneutics is intimately connected with ideas about how individuals come to know and understand. Words from the realm of the gods are removed from the world of the people in terms of time and space, and require interpretation for any understanding to take place. The Ancient Greeks attributed the discovery of the human tools of understanding, language and writing, to this god Hermes. Today the term hermeneutics describes different theories of interpretation; all of which are premised on the employment of language to grasp and convey meaning.

Traditional hermeneutical inquiry was at first concerned with Biblical exegesis and interpreting elements of scriptural law. Gradually during the Enlightenment, hermeneutics began to be used as philological methodology, where the task of interpretation was to penetrate historical texts with the tools of rationality; for the intellect to uncover great moral truths. Truth is viewed in this tradition almost as an object having an independent existence in the world, yet somehow knowable 'in itself' by a perceiving subject.

Friedrich Schleiermacher is a particularly important hermeneutician who started to reconceive hermeneutics in a series of lectures in 1819, as a science or “art of understanding” (Palmer 1982: 84). Schleiermacher regarded all human acts of historical interpretation as essentially a process of reconstruction, and viewed the interpreter’s task as primarily concerned with reexperiencing the mind-set of the author during the composition of the text. In this way he hoped to demonstrate that understanding operates in accordance with a set of laws or principles; to prove hermeneutics was a field of scientific inquiry<sup>2</sup>.

In the context of museum education the emphasis of Schleiermacher’s project to establish a scientifically valid universal hermeneutics is considered to be restrictive. This thesis fundamentally objects to his aim of reconstructing absolute “laws and rules” of creativity as if artistic production were a simple mechanical process, since this limits “the scope of hermeneutics” (Gadamer 1981:166). The thesis contends that Schleiermacher’s aim is mistaken in principle. No reconstruction of the moment of creation can constitute a successful hermeneutical method or “art of avoiding misunderstandings”, such psychologism cannot guarantee scientific truth and the attempt to gain such truths results in an irrevocably flawed approach to interpretation in the museum (ibid 163).

The position of Wilhelm Dilthey: a philosopher, a literary historian and Schleiermacher’s first biographer, constitutes a welcome reaction for this thesis against the prevailing view of his time. Dilthey objected to the transposition of methodology from the natural sciences to the study of human life, famously declaring “No real blood runs in the veins of the knowing subject that Locke, Hume and Kant constructed” (ibid 217). Dilthey sought to construct a new methodological foundation for all the humanities and social sciences, the *geisteswissenschaften*, following Schleiermacher’s conception of hermeneutics. Towards this end Dilthey developed a concept of lived experience, *erlebnis*, as the only firm basis for interpretation in the field of the human sciences. He also prioritised a notion of *verstehen* or understanding in this human context, notably saying: “We explain nature;

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<sup>2</sup> Schleiermacher was concerned with the validity of method in the social sciences. He adopted a method from the natural sciences aimed to logically deduce ‘Laws of Mind’ from observations of uniformities. ‘Laws of Mind’ are thus seen as akin to ‘Laws of Nature’ which are governed by ‘causality’ or “knowledge of cause and effect”, and arising “entirely from experience when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other” (Winch 1971: 7). This scientific method claims “truth” lies “waiting like a crop of corn, only to be harvested and gathered in” by astute observation (Hammersley 1983: 12).



man we must understand” (Palmer 1982: 115). The concept of lived experience marks an attempt to take account of temporality and historicity from a human perspective which is vital to museum education, yet Dilthey’s thesis is marred for the purpose of this research project by his inability to fully extricate his thought from Schleiermacher’s scientism and notion of objectivity.

According to Dilthey-Schleiermacher’s scientism understanding is best achieved through a reconstruction of the original authorial experience. This view demands contemporary interpreters fully immerse themselves in the life world of the author, and abandon their contemporary positioning in order to gain understanding. Ultimately the aim of this return to the historical world is for the present-day interpreter to understand the text according to the author’s original understanding and intention. In this way true interpretation and understanding can occur.

A major contention of this thesis is that the desire to gain “exact understanding of particular texts” is mistaken. This ‘mistake’ is finally resolved by Gadamer’s teacher Martin Heidegger (Gadamer 1981: 173). Gadamer’s hermeneutics, which is helpful to museum education, rests on the ground-work laid out in Heidegger’s vast philosophical project *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1997[1927])<sup>3</sup>. In *Being and Time* the “idea of fundamental ontology, its foundation in There-being” is established (Gadamer 1981: 226). Heidegger’s philosophy accords a primacy to There-being, *Dasein* in the original German, and thereby successfully topples a central problematic of western metaphysics: the transcendental position, or the notion of a self-reflecting cogito which splits ‘mind’ and ‘body’. *Dasein* is conceived as already in an a-priori state of “thrown projection” into a ‘world’, which denotes a direct engagement with world not reflection from an external position of isolation outside of history and tradition (Linge 1977: xlvii)<sup>4</sup>. The notion of ‘thrown projection’ which Linge clarifies fundamentally includes the temporal: past history, present and future aspect inherent in *Dasein*.

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<sup>3</sup> *Being and Time* was first published in German in 1927, but an English translation of this work was not published until 1962, by Basil Blackwell. This is due to the overriding influence of logical positivism on English philosophy, which opposed much continental work as ‘nonsensical’ as I noted in footnote 1.

<sup>4</sup> The term ‘world’ here denotes something closer to a ‘personal world’ rather than the world as it appears to the scientific gaze or any disinterested sense perception.

World for Dasein is peopled, 'Being-with-one-another' and tools such as language are 'present-at-hand'. Language is fundamental to understanding for Heidegger, for Gadamer and for the theoretical perspective of this thesis which privileges dialogical exchange as a route to understanding and the construction of knowledge in the museum. In *Being and Time* Heidegger expounds an existential hermeneutic whereby understanding for Dasein is made possible through discourse. R. Nicholas Davey highlights an explicit statement by Heidegger on this point, "Discoursing or talking is the way we articulate "significantly" the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world" (Davey 1991: 48).

I have outlined the broad historical areas of traditional hermeneutics in which Gadamer's hermeneutics, although developed in the 1960's, provides a radical positioning that is helpful to this 1990's thesis. I shall now make an exposition of central elements of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics which have enabled the building of a new critical foundation for the practice of museum education in the late twentieth century and twenty-first century.

### **2.2 Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics in the Museum: questions of objectivity and knowledge in language**

Being that can be understood is language. ... For man's relation to the world is absolutely and fundamentally linguistic in nature.  
(Gadamer 1981: 432-3)

Hans Georg Gadamer poses certain fundamental questions about the concept of knowledge and individual knowers which are pertinent to the museum. Gadamer essentially recognises the central role of the knower in the shaping of knowledge. He asks how we can know others in their complex person-hood and takes a position which opposes picturing any knowledge of people as objects. In this respect his thought on knowledge is aligned to the educational work of Paulo Freire (Freire 1996; hooks 1994; Gallagher 1992: 338) <sup>5</sup>. Gadamer privileges language throughout his discussion of

<sup>5</sup> In developing a conception of knowledge that essentially "includes an active learner", my reading of Gadamer also has strong basic allegiances with the constructivism of George Hein, although I place my emphasis in this thesis on the centrality of language use to make personal meanings (Hein 1998: 18).

knowledge which also echoes in the thought of Freire. Language or *sprache* encompasses a wide range of expressive activity including ‘a language of art’ which is vital for my research; but it is the notion of ‘living’ language in the sense of speech that is prioritised as useful to radical museum education (Gadamer 1981: 432) <sup>6</sup>.

The feminist philosopher Gemma Corradi Fuimara highlights Gadamer’s description of ‘living speech’ or “Socratic dialogue” as an art, of “philosophical midwifery”, which provides me with a useful model of museum pedagogy (Gadamer 1981: 331; Corradi Fuimara 1995: 82; 143-168). This model views knowledge and understanding as essentially derived from a questioning responsiveness to aspects of lived experience which arise in dialogue. Dialogue is a “discipline of questioning and research, a discipline that guarantees truth” (Gadamer 1981: 447). This concept of dialogical exchange implies a methodological procedure for the museum context but it is distinct from what Gadamer terms as the “limitation of ‘method’,” which focusses on manipulative or technical thinking (ibid).

At the Horniman Museum the visitors, of whatever age and ability, spend a part of their visit engaged in face to face dialogue. At the museum they are encouraged to ask questions about museum objects together with a collaborative team of museum-school professionals; to “reconstruct the question to which the transmitted text [displayed object] is the answer” (ibid 337). This ‘discipline’ of posing questions leads to more questioning, both inside and outside of the museum, according to the teacher testimonies in chapter 5. The discipline is essentially facilitated at locations along these museum frontiers through collaboration. Pre-visit cooperation is vital for successful museum dialogue to increase the knowledge-base of participants in multi-cultural museum education projects, as the testimony of my teacher-collaborator outlined in the video “Using Museums” attest (Using Museums C4).

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<sup>6</sup> *Sprache* retains some connection with the primordial form of speech, or the medium of living speech in which understanding takes place, according to the Platonic Socrates who inspired Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics. This aspect of Gadamer’s thought is useful in terms of my museum praxis which is centrally concerned with understanding and personal meaning-making; elements which Janet Wolff emphasises in Gadamer’s “insistence on *meaning* as the frame of reference” (Wolff 1975: 125).

Gadamer succinctly states the importance of such pre-visit discussion when he states. “The first condition of the art of conversation is *to ensure that the other person is with us*” (Gadamer 1981: 330) [my emphasis]. In the context of this thesis I understand Gadamer’s remark to emphasise the importance of first establishing the existing knowledge base of the student. Then a collaborative team of teachers and museum-workers can facilitate the flow of meaningful conversation by building on and extending the interests of student-visitors. Teachers have established long-term relationships with particular students in their groups and in addition they have direct contact with the wider social world of the students’ families. Therefore a museum educator working together with teachers’ knowledge of individual subject positions can ensure the success of museum dialogue, which leads to further in-depth questioning rather than a final ‘correct’ answer. I offer two questions posed by one group of year 6 students to illustrate this point.

Should we return things that were taken from other countries without their permission?

Do you think sacred or religious artefacts should be on show in the same way as other things?

(Christchurch Primary School 1998: 39)

**Figure 2.1. Questions posed in *Mr Horniman and his Victorian Museum***

George Hein elucidates this argument. Hein refers to the important aspect of the learners’ location with reference to constructivist pedagogy. He asks if the learner is enabled to make connections with “a familiar reference, object, idea or activity that will allow the learner to engage with the issue?” (Hein 1998: 38). Teacher-collaboration provides insider-knowledge that permits such engagement in the museum. Hein also notes how constructivist practice places greater “demands on the teacher to ensure learning can take place” (Hein 1998: 39). His words highlight part of what Gadamer refers to as the “pedagogical responsibility” of dialogue (Gadamer 1980: 46)<sup>7</sup>. In chapters 5 to 8 of

<sup>7</sup> Gadamer’s understanding of pedagogy differs from Hein’s in its rootedness within the Platonic dialectic which he describes as an art “of guiding a person in thoughtful discussion” (ibid 3). Museum-school colleagues ‘guide’ discussion in the museum-school frontiers around specific themes and objects, because we share with Socrates a desire for this discursive process to have a positive “effect on the youth” in terms of increased self-esteem (ibid 44). Gadamer elucidates this effect on “Lysis” noting: “... he is at the same time made certain of the desire to learn that is awakened within him and he thereby acquires a new and more genuinely substantiated self-image” (Gadamer 1980: 9).

this thesis I discuss specific ways in which museum-dialogue leads to an improved sense of self-worth. In part this is achieved by presenting a challenge to preconceived and fixed notions of value and self in the questioning dialectical process. Gadamer questions all “fixed criterion” and speaks “against the solidity of opinions” since “questioning makes the object in all its possibilities fluid” (Gadamer 1981: 107, 330). In this Gadamer is seen to share common ground with the post-structuralist and post-modernist refutation of any rigid positionality regarding knowledge, but his view is not one of extreme relativism. For example his dialogical work aims to reach a ‘common’ understanding. He states this clearly in *Truth and Method*.

Hence the meaning of a text is *not to be compared with an immovably and obstinately fixed point of view* which suggests only one question to the person who is trying to understand it, ... We can see that this is the full realisation of conversation, in which something is expressed that is not only mine or the author’s, *but common*.<sup>8</sup>  
(Gadamer 1981: 350) [My italic emphasis]

Gadamer predicates his optimistic thesis of a possible coming to understanding and sharing meaning in common, on our human potential as creative language users; a concept adopted in this research project with disadvantaged students at the museum frontiers. This commonality of human language-use irrespective of the particular language spoken is a crucial aspect of Gadamer’s thought which is utilised to defend the truth claims in this thesis. The Gadamerian discourse is employed to restore a truth-telling function to personal meaning-making or interpretation in the museum, and to emphasise that understanding of museum objects is not confined to scientific truth-telling. In the museum dialectical pedagogy “totally contradicts the idea of scientific methodology” (Gadamer 1981: 421).

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<sup>8</sup> This idea of language as essentially held in *common* has echoes in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, and Gadamer approvingly notes his reading of “Wittgenstein’s concept of ‘language games’” (ibid xxiv; 500). The similarity is striking when Wittgenstein states, “if language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement”, and in his dispute with the notion of “a language ... for his private use?” (Wittgenstein 1974: para 242-243).

### **2.3    A Gadamerian challenge to tradition and prejudice in the Museum: fusing horizons and circles of understanding**

It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to the language that speaks to us in tradition. ... historicism ... is based on the modern enlightenment and unknowingly shares its prejudices. And there is one prejudice of the enlightenment that is essential to it: the fundamental prejudice of the enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself, which deprives tradition of its power.

(Gadamer 1981: 239-240)

This thesis is concerned with an area of social studies and Gadamer's concept of 'prejudice' is found to be useful. The thesis employs 'prejudice' to question the basic methodological structure of science which recommends a dissociation of personal value systems and reference points from the social field of enquiry. Furthermore, the concomitant claim that only an en-distanced scientific procedure can avoid relativity, by permitting strict objective truths about the real world to be recorded empirically, is repudiated.

In direct contrast to the distanced scientific approach Gadamer contends "all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice" (Gadamer 1981: 239). He argues that 'prejudices' are an intrinsic part of the researcher's enquiry, and additionally that only through challenging our biased preconceptions can we attain a certain objective knowledge of the world. For Gadamer there can be no neutral space of exteriority from which individuals gain pure knowledge of 'reality', since there is no 'objective' location outside of personal prejudice. Prejudices comprise part of our lived-experience in a social world, and are inescapably part of Dasein's thrownness, with ready-at hand language through which they are expressed. Language marks "a central point" of convergence "where 'I' and world meet, or rather manifest their original unity" (Gadamer 1981: 431). Thus Gadamer denies any "single and knowing consciousness standing over and against" our development and use of language, and it is in this context that his famous assertion is to be understood: "Thus it is more correct to say that language speaks us, rather than we speak it" (ibid 421) <sup>9</sup>.

Two categories of prejudice, fore-conception or fore-knowledge are distinguished and in

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<sup>9</sup> This is a concept which echoes Heidegger's existential notion, 'language is the house of being'.

the museum the “will of our knowledge must be directed towards escaping their thrall” (ibid 446). Prejudices are detrimental to the hermeneutic task of understanding objects and other people if they remain “imperceptible habits of thought” (ibid 236). Alternatively prejudices can assist the hermeneutical process if the interpreter uses “one’s own preconceptions so that the meaning of a text can really be made to speak for us” (Gadamer ibid 358). The text can speak ‘for us’ if we are prepared to ‘listen’ as Gadamer poetically elucidates.

A person who does not accept that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what is shown by their light. ... In human relations the important thing is to experience the ‘Thou’ truly as a ‘Thou’, ie not to overlook his claim and to listen to what he has to say to us. To this end openness is necessary. ... any one who listens is fundamentally open. ... Belonging together always also means being able *to listen to one another*.

(Gadamer 1981: 324) [my emphasis]

Corradi Fuimara usefully theorises this notion of listening as essentially denoting an *active* engagement, and this is a vital conception for museum theory which opposes a view of learners at the museum-school frontiers as passive receptacles, since it connects the positive power of prejudice to the idea of *actively* listening to questions which arise in museum conversation (Corradi Fuimara 1995). The concept of ‘active listening’ demands that all learning of new material must be predicated on the current learning position of the student if museum pedagogy is to be successful.<sup>10</sup> Gadamer notes the importance of this successful pedagogical structure in challenging bias; a central aspect of antiracist-multiculturalism at the museum frontiers. The process whereby “foreconceptions are replaced by more suitable ones” is clarified with reference to the concept of the ‘hermeneutic circle’ (Gadamer 1981: 236).

The hermeneutic circle describes a structural movement of understanding; a state of perpetual motion between “the whole and the parts and back to the whole” (ibid 259). The “circle of understanding” also emphasises a distance from scientific method; it is “a ‘methodological’ circle, but” rather describes “an ontological structural element in

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<sup>10</sup> Shaun Gallagher links this notion to the educational theories of John Dewey (Gallagher 1992). The possibility of active openness demands a standpoint of familiarity for Dewey, who wrote of “luminous familiar spots from which helpful suggestions spring,” and “an invasion of the unknown, a leap from the known” (ibid 71). Gallagher’s theoretical position is also linked with that of Falk and Dierking (1992), and Hein 1998) who I cite in chapter 1.

understanding” (ibid 261). This is a circle of “positive possibility ... of knowing” rather than a “vicious circle”, and applied to museum learning the concept presents understanding as a dynamic thesis, promising change and transformation from a number of starting points (ibid 235-6). In this research the knowledge-base of the key stage 1-4 students and their teachers is increased via a ‘circle of understanding’ during their museum projects. The crucial point is acknowledging that deeper understanding is always predicated on the “anticipatory movement of fore-understanding” or prejudice (ibid 261). The concept of ‘tradition’ out of which personal prejudices arise will clarify this notion with regard to museum learning.

Personal prejudices inevitably arise out of ‘tradition’ in the Gadamerian discourse. The concept of ‘tradition’ represents both the present-day ‘horizon’ of the interpreter, and the distant ‘horizon’ from which the object of interpretation originates. The museum interpreters who aim to gain understanding of another ‘tradition’, “always stand within tradition”, and they understand another tradition by connecting with its contemporaneity, its meaning ‘for us’. In this respect tradition is not conceived as “something alien. It is always a part of us. ... a recognition of ourselves”, and ‘ourselves’ are not seen as fixed entities but capable of growth through engagement in the dialectical process towards understanding (Gadamer 1981: 250). In the context of museum education the lack of fixity in the face of tradition implies an increased faculty for self-development; a capacity for resistance and creative departure<sup>11</sup>.

This creative process is characterised by putting the beliefs of one’s tradition “at risk”, in a ‘fusion of horizons’ with another tradition (ibid 239). In the museum location interpreters can increase their knowledge and understanding of self and others; ultimately gaining a greater self-knowledge if tradition on display is approached as: “a genuine partner in communication, with which interpreters have fellowship as does the ‘I’ with a ‘Thou’ ” (Gadamer 1981: 321). This requires students learning in the museum not simply: “to know and be in command of” an exhibited tradition, but rather to recognise tradition as a ‘Thou’. This ‘I-Thou’ model of conversation demands an attitude of deepest respect for another which is vital for antiracist-multiculturalism, since a ‘Thou’ “is not an object,

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<sup>11</sup> There is a certain overlap in this notion with Foucault’s concept of ‘gaps and fissures’ in discourse which permit resistance to the structures of power (Foucault 1980, 1994).



but stands in a relationship with us” (ibid 321). The relationship is one of fused horizons and a special recognition “which does not leave him who has it unchanged” (ibid: 89).

Thus philosophical hermeneutics as a discipline of radical museum education, is seen to be concerned with a much wider sense of understanding than that which “takes place in science”, although both disciplines can bring interpreters to a “state of new intellectual freedom” (ibid 231). The ethnographic museum in particular, as a location of multiple traditions seems to be an obvious place for present-day understandings, where a ‘fusion of horizons’ might be negotiated. The work of art has “suffered an injury, in that it has become an object in a museum” but, an ‘I - Thou’ dialogue “protests against” this “profanation” and the gulf between past and present horizons fuse in a new understanding (ibid 133) <sup>12</sup>.

Gadamer avoids relativism by placing his hermeneutics firmly within the bounds of language, and tradition or horizons, which fuse in the hermeneutic circle of understanding. In this view as Wolff observes “there is no question of abandoning one’s own linguistic perspective in order to enter that of the subject”, for in the fusion of horizons “The interpreter necessarily maintains his *own* language” (Wolff 1975: 114). There is a central notion of understanding as a “productive attitude” in the fusion of horizons (Gadamer 1981: 264). The attitude which emerges permits “the present to be continually formed” as an acknowledgement that horizons “which we imagine to exist by themselves” merge in greater understanding (ibid 273). This notion specifically elucidates the hermeneutic circle of understanding where ‘horizons fuse’ in an ‘I-Thou’ dialogue as a borderland, an in-between location:

The *place between strangeness and familiarity* that a transmitted text has for us is that immediate place *between* being an historically intended separate object and being part of a tradition. The true home of hermeneutics is in *this intermediate area*.

(Gadamer 1981: 262-3) [Italics indicate my emphasis]

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Rorty’s concept of *bildung* or “edifying discourse”, which enables interpreters to make connections between cultures, historical periods and disciplines, echoes this point. *Bildung* points out the importance of “poetic” activity; the creative work involved in hermeneutic attempts to “reinterpret our familiar surroundings in the unfamiliar terms of our new inventions.” In this way edifying discourse “takes us out of our old selves” and “aids us in becoming new beings” (Rorty 1980: 360).

It is in this 'inbetween' location that my reading of Gadamer's fundamental opposition to binary-thinking is reinforced and a connection with contemporary thought on "hybridity" is highlighted<sup>13</sup>. This anti-dualism is a vital aspect of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics that I draw out in this thesis to break down the perceived barriers between theory and practice. As Gadamer states, "Any talk of the application of theory to practice would presuppose a separation" which "does not exist here" (Gadamer 1986: 161). In the museum antiracist-multiculturalism as a mode of philosophical hermeneutics similarly strives to unite theory and practice, as well as highlighting *Selfsameness and Difference*.

The main elements of philosophical hermeneutics which prove useful to the theoretical position of this thesis have now been outlined, and a theory which explains museum learning in terms of dialogical exchange is emerging. However the theory neglects the difficulty of disadvantaged students entering the museum dialogue this lack of an ideological perspective will be addressed in the final section .

### **2.4 Critiquing Gadamer's approach to interpretation in the museum: listening to the unsaid and women's voices**

What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way.  
(Heidegger 1997: 195 (32. 153))

#### The 'unsaid' as structures of power in hermeneutic dialogue at the museum

The analysis of power-structures is a special focus of this thesis and this analytical work is viewed as akin to an investigation of the 'unsaid' within philosophical hermeneutics. Firstly Gadamer's view on ideology will be considered. Then the unique reading of the Gadamerian 'unsaid' by Mae Gwendolyn Henderson (1993) will begin to highlight the validity of my feminist stance within a 'standpoint' or 'situated' epistemology. Finally Janet Wolff (1975) and Paul Ricoeur (1970, 1982) will provide further justification of my view on the 'unsaid' as structures of power in this research project.

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<sup>13</sup> For example he states "mixture" is paradigmatic in the *Timeaus* ... Only the interweaving of *Selfsameness and Difference* make (logos) possible" (Gadamer 1980: 143) [My italic emphasis].

In the dialectic of question and answer Gadamer presumes a straightforward easy access to the questioning process. He notes that “The questioner [teacher] seems to them [students] *to play a superior role*”, but contends that “the question [which inspired the text] is posed for him [teacher] as it is for the other person [student]” (Gadamer 1986: 59). Gadamer highlights an important pedagogical point for radical museum praxis. He draws attention to the possibility of challenging the ‘unsaid’ of power relationships between teachers and students if *both* parties focus on the questioning process. In this, Gadamer’s hermeneutics echoes Freire’s pedagogy which regards students not simply as docile listeners but as “co-investigators” alongside their teachers (Freire 1996: 98f). This non-hierarchical positioning of teacher and student cannot be taken for granted in the museum today but it is something that this feminist research project works towards.

By facing hegemony directly the aim of the museum-school team-leaders at the Horniman Museum is for all the students to experience an open dialectical engagement with objects at the museum-school frontiers<sup>14</sup>. This engagement as seen as marked by intensely personal interpretations and understandings which can be arrived at by means of social interaction. Feminist-hermeneutic dialogue vitally takes account of past and present life-worlds, and involves active play with future possibilities. Mae Gwendolyn Henderson (1993) illuminates this point. She speaks of a “multiple *dialogic of differences*” alongside a “*dialogic of identity*” (Henderson 1993: 258). This new conceptualisation of feminist-hermeneutic dialogue provides an appropriate model for educational work in the museum. It permits the exploration of differences *and* the similarities between individuals and social groups and additionally it allows for some recognition of the vital differences *within* individuals.

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Frontiers’ is used here to denote collaborative project work which is initiated at the museum and continued at school. The term frontiers adds a crucial ideological significance to Gadamer’s notion of the fusion of horizons, which has been outlined as useful to understanding how learning can take place in the museum. The notion of frontiers emphasises the importance of developing a radical curriculum premised on a non-hierarchical collaboration and dialogical exchange between project team-leaders from the museum and the school (Freire 1996). The frontiers expresses a desire for a meeting of academics and the wider communities in which they live. It points to the possibility of academics entering into communities to create a space for dialogue and struggle. The richer meaning and fuller implications of this term are clarified at 2.5.

Henderson provides a hermeneutical analysis from the Black experience<sup>15</sup> to highlight the 'unsaid' in the museum context. She further elucidates the complex fusion which characterises understanding for Black women with reference to the Black theorists Audre Lorde and Barbara Christian. Lorde deals with the "external manifestations of racism and sexism", and also with the 'unsaid', "the results of these distortions internalised within our consciousness of ourselves and one another" (ibid 259; Lorde 1996d). Teacher-collaborators note the relevance of these Black writers in providing useful tools for analysing and addressing the 'unsaid' hierarchies of power in the context of the museum. Their thought breaks down the hierarchical barriers between peoples, which offers a prime tool for understanding and empowering all oppressed visitors to the museum. This tool emphasises the importance of recognising "the other in ourselves" and using difference as a means of "conducting creative dialogue" at the museum frontiers (Henderson 1993: 259-260).

The thesis contends that it is by creatively engaging with difference during dialogue about museum objects that interpreters can come to recognise shared aspects of the self. Power relationships in the traditional museum displays of ethnography leaves this complex mixture of difference *and* similarity 'unsaid', which places a pedagogic responsibility on team-leaders to collaborate and address the imbalance through museum-school programming, to bring the silenced or 'unsaid' aspects of identities *and* differences to speech. In chapters 5 to 8 this theory of the 'unsaid' is developed in practice. These chapters demonstrate the ways in which an open questioning space in the museum is facilitated. This is a dialogical space which permits students to make a wide range of personal connections with objects; to draw differences and similarities with their everyday lived experiences and the displayed objects. The dialogical space sanctions an interest in the 'unsaid' of the museum, or what lies behind the museum displays in terms of collecting and exhibiting policies. This empowers students and further motivates them to actively consider a broader range of possibilities for their own future place in the world. Studying the 'unsaid' then students can make new interpretations and achieve new understandings. These new understandings or *verstehen* are effective forms of self-

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<sup>15</sup> Henderson does not utilise the capital B in her references to 'black' women although I discern her elements of this political terminology and retain the capital unless I am quoting her words directly.

presentation which are seen in conversation, and in the works of art and literature which they produce at the museum frontiers.

For example, in chapter 6 I consider the unspoken 'other' of the museum discourse on Africa, specifically with regard to imaginative re-reading(s) of our Benin Collection. In Chapter 7 I outline a Carnival Arts project where the 'unsaid' of Transatlantic slavery which lies behind our African Collections finds imaginative expression. Finally in chapter 8 I introduce a range of creative museum-work on the theme of African Caribbean culture which brings a series of healing 're-memories' to speech and writing (Morrison 1988). In my consideration of this project work I analyse the provision of a new space for this 'unsaid' to enter language in the museum. I also justify bringing these silenced and hidden, or 'unsaid' discourses to speech at the museum frontiers.

The museum-school projects outlined in chapters 6-8 are collaborative attempts to address and to heal the damage caused by this sphere of the 'unsaid' in the museum discourse, but they are not presented as the final word. As Gadamer says, "there is always a gap" or a remainder, in what is said in the dialectic, for "every word carries with it the unsaid" (Gadamer 1981: 369, 416)<sup>16</sup>. Janet Wolff clarifies this notion in her comments on the 'un said'. She remarks, "what is actually said is always balanced in a dialectical relationship with what remains *un* said", and further, the interpreter's search for words is always a "*new* creation of *verstehen*" not a simple repetition of the text as Schleiermacher's contemporary followers desire (Wolff 1975: 116).

In terms of museum education the projects discussed in chapters 5 to 8 are not intended to be simply appropriated as a set of foolproof recipes for future action. They are rather highlighting a personal attention to these problems at the borderlands of the Horniman Museum. Other professionals are invited to collaborate and investigate the specific 'unsaid' of the situation at their own museum frontiers. Now a point on the validity of this theoretical position will be clarified.

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<sup>16</sup> This remark echoes Derrida's notion of the 'supplement' (Derrida 1995)

### A question of hermeneutic validation

An active concept of 'productive' understanding has been highlighted in the Gadamerian discourse by Wolff. For Wolff the 'new creation of verstehen' is the deeper understanding of self and others in the world. In the museum context this is made manifest through dialogue and creative art work constructed at the museum frontiers. It is in this new creation that the ultimate justification and value of hermeneutic inquiry is placed in this thesis; not in any simple retention and reiteration of museum 'facts.'

Paul Ricoeur contributes a valuable insight into this important distinction between repetition, or mimicry to borrow Homi Bhabha's term, and new creation (Bhabha 1995: 85-92). In his discussion of hermeneutic understanding Ricoeur highlights a hybrid space of psychoanalysis, where forgotten elements of the *un* said as unconscious desire are remembered, and not endlessly repeated without understanding.

His analysis also marks a characteristic feature of justification for the hermeneutic inquiry with which this project is engaged. This is contrasted sharply with the justification demanded by scientific inquiry, with reference to a Lacanian reading of the Freudian discourse on dreams. Ricoeur asks what is to count as a "verifiable fact" in psychoanalysis. In answer he quotes Freud who notes the facts of dreams are characterised by a creative freedom emerging in the space of the transference. This is a frontier space; "an intermediate region between illness and real life" (Ricoeur 1982: 248-9). This analysis is useful for the museum since the structure of understanding is not conceived as linear but complex, and the coming to discourse of desire is therefore to be viewed as, "a saying-true rather than a being-true" (ibid 265). This argument does not condemn truth to a position of absolute relativism, since Ricoeur's 'saying true' is not equivalent to saying anything. The claim to truth of psychoanalysis is misunderstanding brought to light in the transference; in the field of communication or dialogue with another. Truth here connects fantasy to the realm of the real on the level of the imaginary. Furthermore, there is an inner consistency of the new text which relates to fantasy in a new way, and replaces the scattered remnants of misunderstanding from the unconscious.

Ricouer's analysis of psychoanalytical interpretation is significant for our creative work at the museum frontiers. Students in the museum must address the complex realities of objects and themselves, which includes a consideration of past, present, and future possibilities. Their imaginative artistic responses are a result of hermeneutic dialogue which exemplifies Ricouer's 'saying true' taken to the level of expressive textual work. This thesis regards the art work of museum visitors as expressive works of language, since the students' art holds a strong intention to communicate their feelings for objects in concrete visual terms. The students' construction of art is therefore viewed as marking an understanding and control of the world; a viewpoint which echoes Ricouer on verbal language.

Ricouer provides a specific example of such control in his discussion of "the game *fort-da*" (Ricouer 1970: 385). This is the famous instance when Freud observes a small child playing with a reel on a thread; the child throws the reel calling 'gone-*fort*' and retrieves the reel with a cry of 'there-*da*.' Freud interprets this linguistic act as an early instance of the human ability to master. The child copes with feelings of loss brought about by the absence of the mother through play and language. Ricouer detects a new sphere of meaning here; reality appearing in absence as an aspect of linguistic control. He states, "By alternately voicing the two words, the child interrelates absence and presence in a meaningful contrast" (ibid 385) In Ricouer's terms the creative work of research participants in this thesis can be regarded as a form of control through the playful voicing or construction of new possibilities, new personal worlds.

The concept of playful voicing to construct new possibilities at the museum frontiers will be clarified with reference to Toni Morrison's concept of the Clearing.

## 2 Exploring interpretation and meaning-making in museum education

### 2.5 The Clearing as a frontier location permitting fusion of horizons in the museum

It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women and then it got mixed up. Women stopped crying and danced; men sat down and cried; children danced, women laughed, children cried until, exhausted and riven all lay about the Clearing damp and gasping for breath.  
(Morrison 1988: 88)

I was about to turn around and keep on my way to where the muslin was, when I heard him say, "No, no. That's not the way. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right. And don't forget to line them up."  
(Morrison 1988: 193)

In this research project Morrison's concept of the 'Clearing' usefully reinforces Gadamer's concept of the 'fusion of horizons.' These notions illuminate the special 'frontier' location which is vital to radical museum education <sup>17</sup>.

The two quotations at the beginning of this section are taken from the nobel-prize winning novel *Beloved*. In these quotations Toni Morrison depicts vastly different scenes of learning. These scenes reflect the historical situation at the Horniman Museum. The second quotation from *Beloved* describes an objective 'scientific' project which is reminiscent of Haddon's project for the Horniman Collections in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this section of *Beloved* Morrison examines a project to record data for the political purpose of denying a common humanity to human 'slave-property' and members of the research team consider these issues further in chapter 5. The research participants were inspired by the narrative structure of *Beloved* which circles back and forth in an imaginary time-space; a complex time-space which contrasts the racist perspective of the first quotation with the creative potential of the Black woman who has been able to interrogate this historical context in a 'Clearing' location.

The first quotation describes a forest 'Clearing', where members of a previously enslaved

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<sup>17</sup> In developing his concept of the fusion of horizons Gadamer may have been influenced by Heidegger's concept of the clearing. Heidegger states "There is a clearing, a lighting ... this open centre ... the lighting center itself circles all that is, like the Nothing which we scarcely know. ... Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are." (Heidegger 1976: 679-80).



community are permitted a degree of personal growth and self-understanding. The Clearing is a frontier location, a creative territory lying somewhere between nature unrestrained and a human construction resembling an assembly-hall. For example, in the Clearing newly freed children, women and men are allowed to physically express their emotions, their joy and sadness. People experience ownership of their bodies. They form relationships, “touch each other” cry, laugh and dance (Morrison. 1988: 89).

In *Beloved* people collaborate across race and gender lines against a society which renders their experiences invisible. Collaboration is for change. In the Clearing people gather to transform their lives and form new self-images in opposition to the internalised negative reflections imposed upon them by the discourse of slavery. In this way Morrison essentially takes account of the “journey’s end” which is crucial to contemporary museum education and which bell hooks feels is neglected in James Clifford’s recent work (hooks 1992: 47).

During the founding of a research team at the museum frontiers Morrison’s notion of a ‘Clearing’ was inspiring and this term was employed as a ‘metaphor’ to describe a new location of learning (Miles and Huberman 1994: 250-252). The notion of metaphor is employed from Miles and Huberman. Miles and Huberman recommend the use of metaphor as a ‘type of trope’, which involves comparing two things for similarities while ignoring differences. Metaphor enables an understanding of abstract ideas by mapping them onto concrete things. In this research it facilitates ‘pattern-making’ or ways of ‘connecting’ findings to theory. The research participants also use metaphor to escape the ‘matter-of-fact’ description which may result in ‘intellectual poverty’, since “metaphorical thinking effectively unites reason and imagination” (Miles and Huberman 1994: 250-252).

Morrison’s image of the Clearing is helpful to thought about how radical education works in the museum context. The Clearing highlights a special space of learning in the museum. This Clearing space is understood as full of possibilities for the construction of new *verstehen* and thus it is vitally connected with Gadamer’s notion of the fusion of horizons. Additionally the Clearing is crucially related to the notion of frontier locations, since the positive learning experiences initiated in the museum Clearing extend beyond

the time and space of the museum visit. In short the thesis argues that it is the new Clearing or frontier context of learning which fuses horizons in new verstehen, and this new verstehen extends beyond the walls of the museum in a physical, emotional and intellectual sense. Thus the concepts of the fusion of horizons, the Clearing and the museum-school frontiers are vitally related and overlap in this research project.<sup>18</sup>

The concept of the museum frontiers will now be clarified.

### **The museum frontiers**

The concept of the frontiers which emerges from a reflection on the Morrison and Gadamerian discourses, is used in this thesis to denote a particular posture of questioning. The questioning stance demanded at the frontiers of museum and school empowers research participants to think and act critically. In particular, the 'knowledge' and assumptions received from the institutions of the museum, the school and the wider structures of society are critiqued. Critical dialogue makes museum knowledge an object of analysis rather than reverence and this requires the museum to be self-critical.

In the context of the museum the notion of the frontiers opens up new spaces and possibilities for reading writing and acting, inside and outside of the museum. The expanded museum-school frontier space can be utilised by collaborative education programmes to critique the historical presentations of the museum, and to facilitate the engagement of lived difference in the museum frame. Most importantly the concept of frontiers provides a location which allows the museum visitor to imagine and desire beyond the existing limitations and practices imposed by their social groups.

The notion of frontiers expresses a desire for connections across all boundaries, geographical, emotional and intellectual in this research project. In the next chapters,

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<sup>18</sup> In this chapter the concept of the fusion of horizons permitted an analysis of the museum text in terms of presences and absences. The 'unsaid' of the museum was singled out for a special consideration of absence in the museum and this concept pointed to the possibility of re-reading texts dialogically. A dialogical reading process is reinforced by the concepts of the Clearing and the museum frontiers and this will produce a configuration of many voices in the case-study chapters, chapters five to eight. In the case-studies a dialogical reading process provides an opportunity and support for excluded voices to mount a resistance to the traditional museum text.

## **2     Exploring interpretation and meaning-making in museum education**

chapter three and four, an ideological solidarity with postmodernist feminism and ethnographic action research will be outlined. At the end of chapter four the notion clearly extends an invitation to engage in a radical project.<sup>19</sup>

Overall the thesis will emphasise how the concept of the frontiers enables students to move in and out of boundaries and cross borders of meaning to construct new maps of knowledge and social relations. It points to a particular form of educator authority in the museum and in the school; an authority grounded in mutual respect and a radically decentered notion of public life. This in turn points to new found relations rooted in democratic interests and emancipatory social relations in the museum and in the school.

### **2.6     Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrates that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics yields considerable potential for radical museum education. In particular the concept of possibilities for new *verstehen* marks an optimistic perspective which is valuable for the educational work of interpretation and increasing understanding. Gadamer's notion of interpretation as a fusion of horizons is based on a dialectical model of conversation; it is a hermeneutics predicated on trust. This opposes Derrida's call for suspicion, although the priority Gadamer accords to questioning also opposes any naive acceptance of tradition. Gadamer conceives of tradition as structures of power which can be transformed in new *verstehen*, but not destroyed.

The thesis argues for the relevance of philosophical hermeneutics to radical museum education in the questioning and challenging dialogical approach, which is shown to provide a theoretical basis to disrupt traditional hierarchical power relations and facilitate a movement into more open Clearing spaces at the museum frontiers. The concept of the frontiers has usefully been defined in this chapter as describing the theoretical and geographical borderlands between the museum and the school. This definition of the frontiers importantly strengthens the ideological stance of the thesis.

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<sup>19</sup> In chapter five a sympathy with constructivism will be emphasised and in chapter six an allegiance with antiracist theories will be outlined.

The particular reading of Gadamer's hermeneutics outlined in this chapter makes room in the museum for the excluded voices of discourse, those classed as other: Women, Black people, the poor, the sick, the mad and the bad. These voices will be listened to and incorporated into a feminist-hermeneutic theory in the next chapter.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> It is in this challenging and questioning or 'productive' attitude that the ultimate value of philosophical hermeneutics is located in the context of the museum. The value of the project work documented in chapters 5 to 8 is based on the potential for generating a general increase in understanding, knowledge and truth at the museum frontiers. The project work rests on the arguments outlined in this chapter which defend a claim to truth for the thesis. To reiterate, the Gadamerian concepts of truth, knowledge and understanding are not entirely subjective although they privilege a personal 'application' of museum knowledge to the life situation of the interpreter. This crucial point concerning the concept of truth will be emphasised and strengthened with reference to Black feminist thought and Donna Haraway's notion of 'situated' knowledge in the next chapter. Then in chapter 4 the issue of validation which arises in terms of methodological procedures will be addressed.

### **3     Reconstructing knowledge in museums**

Nature and Culture is in reality a non-universal *human* dis-ease.  
(Trinh T. Minh-ha 1989: 67)

Feminists, and others who have been most active as critics of the sciences and their claims or associated ideologies, have shied away from doctrines of scientific objectivity in part because of the suspicion that an 'object of knowledge' is a passive and inert thing. Accounts of such objects can seem to be either appropriations of a fixed and determined world reduced to resource for the instrumentalist projects of destructive Western societies, or they can be seen as masks for interests, usually dominating interests.  
(Haraway 1991: 197)

### **3      Reconstructing knowledge in museums**

#### **3.0      Introduction**

In this chapter constructivism, feminist epistemologies and the Foucauldian discourse are employed to address the political power-knowledge gap of philosophical hermeneutics which arose in chapter two. In the first half of 3.1 George Hein's constructivist paradigm in Museums is engaged as a productive theory for this thesis which reinforces elements of the Gadamerian discourse (Gadamer 1981; Hein 1997). Hein prioritises the active meaning-making of museum visitors in his theory of constructivism, and this addresses the traditional power imbalance in museums, where curators construct knowledge for passive consumption by visitors. In the second half of 3.1 postmodernist thought from a Black feminist perspective is examined and this viewpoint is distinguished from the related notions of high modernism. It is contended that feminist readings of postmodernism subvert and disrupt scientific discourses of the traditional centre. This fragmentation of the one true centre assists museum educators in the construction of innovative multi-centres, and facilitates a plurivocality of voices from the margins to be heard in a multiplicity of museum-border locations.

At 3.2 the feminist concept of 'situated' knowledges is related to the 'standpoint' epistemologies of Black feminist thought. Standpoint or situated epistemologies are viewed as essential to the theoretical constitution of the creative frontier spaces which are examined in this research project (Haraway 1991a, 1991b; Hill-Collins 1991; Trinh T. Minh-ha 1991; Lorde 1996; Morrison 1988). In this thesis standpoint theory vitally strengthens the ideological positioning of philosophical hermeneutics. It provides a crucial feminist stance to facilitate the reconstruction of knowledge(s) in radical education programmes at the museum frontiers, and this permits new interpretations and identities beyond the glass-case displays.

In sections 3.3 and 3.4 the amalgamation of standpoint theory with philosophical hermeneutics is reinforced by Foucault's work on discourses of power-knowledge and resistance (Foucault 1980, 1981, 1994, 1995; Falzon 1998; Crary 1995). Foucault's thought serves as an important point of reference for developing educational strategies which challenge the all-pervasive visualism of museum displays. In the field of museum

### **3     Reconstructing knowledge in museums**

education his concept of active ‘power to’ is elaborated with the feminist concept of ‘embodied knowledge(s)’ (Braidotti 1994b; Haraway 1991a, 1991b; Cixous 1987; Irigaray 1981; Kristeva 1989a, 1989b). Specifically an intermingling of the powers to look, touch, listen and speak, are considered which result in a cyclical process of thinking about museums, displayed others, and ourselves. At the end of this chapter a theoretical positioning is achieved which enables the development in chapter four of a non-hierarchical method to facilitate and validate the interpretations of the research subjects, people disadvantaged by poverty, silenced or erased by the traditional museum framing of knowledge.

#### **3.1     Constructivism and postmodern feminism: challenging dualism and questioning the ‘objectivity’ of western scientific knowledge**

##### **Using constructivism and Gadamer’s hermeneutics to reconstruct knowledge in museums**

George Hein’s theory of knowledge and learning shares much common ground with Gadamer’s hermeneutics. Firstly Hein echoes Gadamer’s prioritisation of language in all meaning-making or learning activity. He explicitly states, “learning involves language: the language we use influences learning” (Hein 1991: 6). Secondly Hein and Gadamer both emphasise the dialogical approach to knowledge. Hein recognises “the social aspect of learning” which “uses conversation” and essentially demands “interaction with others” (Hein 1991: 7). Thirdly Hein presents a strong view on the “contextual” nature of learning. He speaks of the ways in which all meaning-making is contextualised in terms of the prior knowledge and experiences of the learner, which reflects Gadamer’s views on the role of ‘prejudice’ in the path to meaning-making. Hein comments, “we learn in relation to what else we know, what we believe, our prejudices and our fears” (Hein 1991: 7). Finally Hein specifically notes the importance of temporality alongside historicity and the inexhaustibility of texts in terms of meaning-making. He says “It takes time to learn; learning is not instantaneous. For significant learning we need to revisit ideas, ponder them, try them out play with them and use them” (Hein 1991: 8).

### **3     Reconstructing knowledge in museums**

In terms of the research question, to increase the possibilities for reconstructing knowledge in museums, the views which Hein and Gadamer share emphasise the need for collaboration at the museum frontiers. Firstly, by working together museum and school teachers can facilitate a dialogical journey towards a greater understanding for all students, since collaboration permits museum-school programmes of study to be based on the “learners previous knowledge” (Hein 1991: 8). Additionally, extended collaboration between museum and school colleagues can best “provide for visitors who wish to stay with a topic longer”, since we can develop central issues over a longer time scale than the day of the museum visit<sup>1</sup> (Hein 1991: 13).

A collaborative focus on the personal ‘construction’ of knowledge stands in “conflict with traditional museum practices” (Hein 1991: 13). Constructivism and philosophical hermeneutics emphasise the complexity of human understanding. These theories take account of the learners past, present, and future lives in a social world. In contradistinction, traditional museum practice prioritises the subject matter of museum displays over the learner’s individual positioning. A traditional museum display organises knowledge chunks as if they were components of a machine with each part fitting neatly. These traditional displays pay insufficient regard to the differences between learners and the different paths to knowledge they may take in museums, because they are based on the principles of ‘realism’ rather than ‘constructivism’ (Hein 1991: 3). This thesis challenges realist claims to a value-free position on knowledge presented in museums and employs Hein’s constructivist stress on the need for all theories to be questioned in educational institutions, since a major aim for the research project is “for all citizens to learn skills to enable them to draw their own conclusions” (1997:15).<sup>2</sup>

In chapters 5 to 8 the ways in which a radical museum curriculum can develop Hein’s questioning of museum ‘knowledge’ is considered. In these chapters a hermeneutic-constructivist theory of knowledge in practice is developed, and an argument is made for

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<sup>1</sup> The average duration of a museum-school project is half a term for primary and one term for secondary students, as I demonstrate at figure 5.2

<sup>2</sup> Roger Miles objects to ‘constructivism’ and argues for the ‘value neutrality’ of scientific knowledge premised on realism. He esteems realism as “a style of knowledge” which accounts for the “success of science” as seen in its “spread throughout the world” (Miles 1997: 8). For Miles this knowledge is “economically, militarily, and administratively” powerful, yet it is linked to “objective scientific activity”, which is removed from “political activity” (Miles *ibid*).



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museum education to question more deeply the problem of children ‘failing’ at 7, 11 and 14 years old. Like Hein the thesis is not concerned with narrow notions of “right and wrong answers” but with the “quality of arguments”. Additionally the research project is concerned to develop student’s *dialogical skills* so that they may be empowered to question ‘right answers’ in their future lives (Gadamer 1981; Hein 1997: 15)<sup>3</sup>.

Hein’s constructivism is critical to the theoretical position on knowledge and learning in museums. In summary three major elements have been taken from his thesis. Firstly constructivism’s overriding concern to dismantle traditional structures of power in the museum highlights the importance of a “negotiated production, rather than the imposition, of meaning” (Hooper-Greenhill 1997: 18). Secondly Hein views the role of museum educators in the learning process as a ‘negotiated production of meaning.’ According to Hein the museum educators’ role should involve facilitating a non-hierarchical provision of opportunities “for the visitor to make connections with familiar concepts and objects”, since “in order to make meaning of our experience, we need to be able to connect it to what we already know” (Hein 1995: 23). Finally, constructivism provides museum educators with a dynamic thesis of knowledge and learning in museums. Hein states:

Proponents of constructivism argue that learners construct knowledge as they learn; they don’t simply add new facts to what is known, but constantly reorganise and create both understanding and the ability to learn as they interact with the world.  
(Hein 1995: 22)

In this thesis Hein’s theory of ‘constructivism’ further problematises the question of ‘knowledge’ in museums and reinforces the hermeneutic position on meaning-making which was established in chapter 2. Hein’s thought opens the field of museum learning to consider the *active* processes whereby knowledge is reconstructed from past and present experiences, to aid new understanding or *verstehen* and impose meaning on the world. Constructivism provides a new way of investigating the complexity of learning in museums, most importantly it essentially takes account of the ideological underpinnings of ‘knowledge’ that may result in biased or ‘prejudiced’ interpretations are simply

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<sup>3</sup> This position is challenged by Miles. Miles draws attention to the schools curriculum in England, which tests whether children aged 7, 11 and 14 years old can provide “one and only one answer” to the set questions. He notes, “unless the answers correspond precisely to what the examiners consider to be correct, they are failed.”

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assumed and left unchallenged (Gadamer 1981). Next the constructivist view of museum 'knowledge' will be strengthened with current postmodern feminist theories.

#### The contribution of Feminist-postmodernism to the reconstruction of museum knowledge

It is difficult to define precisely the "contested terrain" of feminism and post-modernism (Usher 1994). For the purpose of this thesis a movement from modernism to postmodernism is situated in the history of feminism within European thought, and this movement is viewed as having the implications for the practice of reconstructing knowledge in museum education. In this research project the Atlantic holocaust is seen to reveal the bankruptcy of modernism, as characterised by a faith in rationality and the progress of science. It is the Atlantic holocaust which heralds a new period of postmodernism. In conversation with Paul Gilroy Toni Morrison illuminates the key points of this view<sup>4</sup>. I quote her at length.

From a woman's point of view, in terms of confronting the problems of where the world is now, black women had to deal with "post-modern" problems in the nineteenth century and earlier. ... Certain kinds of dissolution, the loss of and the need to reconstruct certain kinds of stability. Certain kinds of madness, deliberately going mad in order, as one of the characters says in the book, "in order not to lose your mind. ... Slavery broke the world in half, it broke it in every way. It broke Europe. It made them into something crazy. You can't do that for hundreds of years and it not take a toll. They had to dehumanise, not just the slaves but themselves. They have had to reconstruct everything in order to make that system appear true. It made everything in World War 11 possible. It made World War 1 necessary. Racism is the word that we use to encompass all this. The idea of scientific racism suggests some serious pathology.  
(Toni Morrison 1994: 178)

Morrison notes the problem of racist 'knowledge' which emerges when a scientific world-view based on realism treats subjects as inanimate objects, and excludes the investigating self from its objectification. She thus highlights a problem of universalising 'grand narratives' and also underlines a postmodern oppositional strategy. This stresses the potential of employing 'fragmentation' and a series of subversive strategies as techniques of resistance when a grand logic of emancipation may prove impossible (Lyotard 1984).

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<sup>4</sup> Theorists place a differing emphasis on the origin and end of 'modernism' according to their ideological perspective. Norman Denzin locates the defining eras of modernism with the three major phases of capitalism which Frederick Jameson's analysis highlights: market or local capitalism (1900 - World War 11), monopoly capitalism (World War 11 - 1960) and multinational capitalism (1960 - present-day) (Denzin 1998: 15). Consequently this analysis leads Jameson to view the contemporary period as one of 'high modernism' rather than 'postmodernism' (Jameson 1993: 71).

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The Black woman's perspective within the feminist discourse is viewed as a vital corrective to the universalising tendency of the 'grand narrative' of feminism, which can serve to erase the unique positioning of Black woman's scholarship.

In this research study post-modernism refers to the final collapse of all the 'grand narratives' or universalising theses of modernist 'knowledge' which attempts to describe a peopled and essentially social world, yet certain radical and liberatory features of the modernist discourse are incorporated into a postmodern-feminist stance in the museum. Therefore this view does not abandon us to an "anything goes" dispensation (Crimp 1985: 44) On the contrary, the thesis contends that postmodern-feminist theories can open up the museum to a range of fruitful positionings which demand a blurring of the traditional boundaries between disciplines, as well as between the 'personal and political' realms. It echoes Hal Foster idea of the "political necessity" for feminists to dissolve the opposition between "theory and practice", and highlights the "museum" as a "closed system" which postmodernist theories of knowledge might open to the "discourse of others", to a "heterogeneity of texts" and multiple re-writings (Foster 1985: viii-ix).

In terms of restructuring museum 'knowledge' the thesis regards postmodern-feminism as a mode of thought; a way of thinking and working which most importantly emphasises a new sensitivity to difference and similarity. The thesis also cites a new, more engaged positioning for museum researchers. This is an optimistic view following the Gadamerian discourse on knowledge, which seeks out multiple meanings and facilitates a number of ways for 'situated' subjects to produce their own 'little narratives' of self-legitimation and constant reinvention (Gadamer 1981; Lyotard 1984: 60; Haraway 1991b). The projects of chapters 5 to 8 elucidate this theory in specific examples of museum practice

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#### **3.2      Standpoint epistemology: validating alternative situated knowledge(s) and expanding the museum community**

##### Standpoint or situated epistemologies

In this section the possibilities for reconstructing knowledge in the museum will be elaborated by closely attending to Trinh T. Minh ha (1989) and Patricia Hill-Collins (1991) as key exponents of ‘standpoint’ theory. Additionally connections will be drawn between their ‘standpoint’ view of knowledge and Donna Haraway’s (1991) ‘situated’ theory.

Hill-Collins’s ‘standpoint’ theory transforms the realist viewpoint of true knowledge gained through scientific objectivity into a politics of experience by a simultaneous movement in two directions. Firstly ‘standpoint’ focusses on the primacy of lived experience and the social world of oppressed peoples as articulated in their dialogical exchanges. Secondly, through an ‘ethic of care’ and personal accountability it brings a value to their ‘knowledge’ which is suppressed by the dominant epistemologies. The ethic of care is based on “Afrocentric ideas” which prioritise a sharing and taking responsibility in the “extended families and communities” (Hill-Collins 1991: 10-11). This ethic also suggests “personal expressiveness, emotions and empathy are central to the knowledge validation process” (ibid. 215).

‘Standpoint’ theory is fore-grounded in the texts of black women intellectuals, writers and musicians. Hill-Collins draws upon this work without distinction in a positive effort to erase the dividing lines between the forms of their discourse. The Black women’s voices in these texts are the kernels of her epistemology since they have articulated a complex standpoint about ‘racism, sexism, violence, economic exploitation and cultural denigration’ that has been suppressed by the dominant discourses (ibid: 22). ‘Standpoint’ texts do not make a claim to universal ‘truth’ but rather aim to provide “a partial perspective on domination” (ibid: 236). Most importantly for this thesis the partial perspectives of these texts are not closed within the Black community, but are accessible to all readers who adopt the appropriate ‘listening’ attitude of feminist-hermeneutics.

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The ‘standpoint’ texts are selected for their power to create affective and intellectual responses in readers. In their struggle for voice within the structures of oppression that operate in African-American communities they create new spaces, for the voices of other oppressed peoples to be heard, and from which new understandings can be forged. The texts highlight a notion of community which rejects “theories of power based on domination” to offer an alternative vision of power based on “self-actualisation, self-definition, and self-determination” (ibid. 224) This research project outlines ways in which the museum community can be enriched by expanding its traditional community and facilitating their alternative interpretations. Hill-Collins cites the texts of Audre Lorde as ‘standpoint’ in this context. Lorde vitally illuminates a way for museums to increase communication with their diverse communities and premises her analysis upon an understanding of difference *and* similarity.

#### Developing the notion of community from standpoint theory for the museum context

Audre Lorde eloquently speaks of fundamental differences between women’s lives, which are disguised under the “pretence to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not in fact exist” (Lorde 1996c: 164). However she does not regard this as an excuse for separatism and takes an optimistic stance on the possibilities of collaboration.

Change means growth and growth can be painful. But we sharpen the self-definition by exposing the self in work and *struggle* together with those whom we define as different from ourselves, although *sharing the same goals*. For *Black and white, old and young, lesbian and heterosexual women alike*, this can mean new paths to our survival.  
(Lorde 1996c: 170) [my emphasis]

The teacher and student participants in this research study view the museum as a site of meeting which enables personal ‘growth’ as their testimonies in Chapters 5 to 8 demonstrate. Lorde, who describes herself as a warrior woman, tirelessly sought during her life to, ‘make common cause with others.’ She argues for collaborative ‘struggle’ which recognises and builds on combinations of ‘differences’ as possible sources of

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increased power for oppressed people. Her thesis stands against effacing differences in fixed stereotypical viewpoints, which erect barriers between peoples. To achieve this she appeals to a concept of 'community' which presents a distinct possibility of building positive bridges between very disparate individuals.

Audre Lorde does not offer any simple solutions to aid bridge-building but she issues a warning about curtailing the power of 'creativity' by employing inappropriate 'tools' (Lorde 1996b). She contends that "community" is prevented while women insist on using the "*master's tools*", which "*will never dismantle the master's house*". The master's tools which Lorde rejects are understood in this thesis to be the 'either or' dualist model of enlightenment thinking. It is the narrowness of this discourse she argues, which renders it impossible to realise any mutual understanding. Her alternative is demonstrated in poetry. She implores the "I" in each of us to discard the passivity of this inherited discourse and actively engage in an imaginative search, by being "creative," we can "take our differences and make them strengths" (ibid 159).

In the museum context differences can be turned into strengths by taking a 'standpoint' or 'situated' epistemology as starting point: the lived experiences of people excluded, erased or misrepresented by the dominant discourse on 'knowledge.' The projects outlined in chapters 5 to 8 provide concrete examples of reconstructing museum and community 'knowledge' from 'standpoint' or 'situated' perspective(s). These projects do not attempt to articulate a single 'standpoint', since 'standpoint' theory does not attempt to simply replace the traditional white-middleclass-male viewpoint which the traditional museum displays present, with another overriding view. In terms of reconstructing knowledge in the museum 'standpoint' theory usefully strengthens philosophical hermeneutics with a political positioning. These theories both strive to facilitate a dialogical relationship with individuals which recognises their specially 'situated' subject positions (Haraway 1991b). This is not to deny that individuals form groups who share commonalities, but to stress the complex diversity and inextricable mixture of our positioning, which universalising and essentialising theories of 'objective knowledge' erase.

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#### Challenging dualism or masculine objective knowledge with alternative space(s) for constructing embodied knowledge(s)

Not one, not two either. “*I*” is, therefore, not a unified subject, a fixed identity, or that solid mass covered with layers of superficialities one has gradually to peel off before one can see its true face. “*I*” is, itself, infinite layers.  
(Trinh T. Minh-ha. 1989: 94) [my emphasis]

Trinh T. Minh-ha elucidates Lorde’s anti-essentialising ‘standpoint’ on knowledge construction which is vital for this research project and strengthens the argument in this thesis against notions of “absolute presences” and “pure origins” in dualist thought (ibid). The thesis contends that differences need to be grasped as multiple presence, “*both between and within* entities” (Trinh T. Minh-ha 1989: 90, 94). Trinh T. Minh-ha elucidates a silencing of woman as other which results from dualist notions of ‘objectivity’, which is actually a means of subjection that serves the political purpose of maintaining unequal power structures and laws of exclusion<sup>5</sup>.

Trinh T. Minh-ha highlights the problems of dualist thought erasing or alienating woman. In the context of this thesis Trinh T. Minh-ha expose the underlying hegemony of a supposedly ‘neutral’ stance premised on binary oppositions<sup>6</sup>. For example evaluation questions about learning which focus on memories of the museum text as a finite self-contained message leave little space to investigate how visitors pose their own alternative questions and challenge any stereotypical or biased representation to construct their own knowledge. Another example is the problem observed by Munley.

Some museums use attendance figures as the indicator of their success. Yet, as important and useful as those figures are they tell us nothing about the *quality* of the visitors experience.  
(Munley 1986)

In chapters 5 to 8 the ‘quality’ of the museum experience is examined *with* teacher-

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<sup>5</sup> The anthropologist Shelly Ortner reinforces this point. She notes that in every society, “Women can appear from certain points of view to stand both under and over (but really simply outside of) the sphere of culture’s hegemony. Woman has been condemned to play nature to male culture, emotion to reason, body to mind (Ortner 1974: 86).

<sup>6</sup> According to Trinh there is a high emotional cost for women who employ a distanced stance and reject the subjective voice, since “For a woman, such distance easily takes on the face of Alienation” (Trinh T. Minh-ha 1989: 27).

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colleagues and students. In particular the ways in which a radical museum curriculum can encourage more personal meaning-making and self-fulfilment is considered, and an argument is made for a broadening of the museum-school space to permit a further reconstruction of knowledge(s). This new space is envisaged as a site where the five senses are employed together with mind to produce ‘embodied knowledge.’ Embodied knowledge represents a state of wholeness which characterises human knowing, understanding, and meaning-making in the museum and in the wider world. A complex thesis of ‘embodied knowledge’ as ‘power to’ act will be clarified from a theoretical perspective in the next two sections.

#### **3.3.    Personal and political knowledge in the Museum 1: embodied knowledge as a new power to see**

##### **Terminology: ‘embodied knowledge’ and ‘power to’**

In this thesis the feminist concept of ‘embodied knowledge’ is employed which emphasises the bodily roots of reason. Embodied knowledge is viewed as a vital mixture of intellectual activity arising out of bodily experiences (Braidotti 1994a, 1994b; Lennon and Whitford 1994). In the context of the museum ‘quality’ experiences of education are seen as arising from an acuteness of heightened senses, which promotes a hermeneutic circle of ever deepening thought. In other words museum experiences and museum learning is understood to be predicated on the properties and limitations of the body, or as proceeding in sensual *and* intellectual ways.

To achieve ‘embodied knowledge’ at the museum frontiers *activity* is essential and the Foucauldian discourse has proved pertinent to the research project in this respect. Foucault centrally distinguishes active and passive bodies in his histories of the prison and asylum (Foucault 1991, 1995). He notes how the “capacities and forces” of the body are severely curtailed in the classical age when techniques of power over the body make totally “docile bodies” (Foucault 1991: 137-8). Hooper-Greenhill’s application of Foucault’s analysis to the spaces of the museum differentiates: the public spaces where



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knowledge is actively produced, and the public galleries where knowledge is passively consumed by 'docile' bodies under constant surveillance (Hooper-Greenhill 1989: 63).

In this thesis the hierarchical production and consumption of knowledge in museums is disrupted and the visitors' active (re)construction of knowledge is privileged. In the main the dialogical tool of feminist-hermeneutics is used to prioritise an active engagement with museum visitors, so that the museum might "become more fully dialogic" and "function as an instrument for public debate" (Bennett 1990: 51). Overall, an optimistic thesis is developed from the Foucauldian discourse which highlights new possibilities of *verstehen* and facilitates radical changes in the construction of museum knowledge.

Christopher Falzon's recent reading of Foucault on the disciplinary society clarifies the theoretical position of this thesis (Falzon 1998). Falzon states, active human beings have the capacity to transform their world, to revolt and "transgress existing limits" (ibid 52). He also elucidates the notion of 'standpoint communities' which I have applied to the museum with reference to relationships of power, that are not passively reproduced from generation to generation but, "emerge and change within a given historical community" (ibid 29). This thesis notes how changes in particular relationships of power can occur by opening up concrete spaces of embodied freedom, of corporeal capacities and forces where a human "power to" act can be facilitated (ibid 51). This 'power to' activity is essentially "creative activity", which Falzon describes as a "process of experimentation with different possibilities", it is not an elitist thesis of genius or super-heroes but one which emphasises the "creativity present in *all active* humans" (ibid 55) [my emphasis].

In the context of collaborative educational work with ethnographic collections at the museum frontiers, facilitating this new 'power to' activity demands an imaginative reconstruction of museum knowledge and priorities. It demands a change in focus: from the static display of museum knowledge about the material objects in the glass cases of our public galleries; to a continual cycle of creative investigations into how new 'embodied knowledge(s)' might be constructed *with* the museum audience. The concept will be clarified by attending to the activation of specific human capacities and corporeal forces, or the role of the individual senses in the construction of knowledge.

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#### Power to see

My purpose in this essay is to examine the assumption that *looking at an object is a major source of knowledge*, not just about the thing itself but about larger process. ... Objects are triggers of chains of ideas and images that go far beyond their initial starting-point.  
(Jordanova 1993: 23) [my emphasis]

This research project counters the hierarchical valuation of the senses which prioritise vision inside and outside of the museum. It offers a corrective to “the eye that masters, predominates over smell touch etc” (Owens 1985 : 70). This is not to dismiss vision. A “poetry and politics” of sight is highly valued in the thesis (Koven 1994: 25). But sight is regarded as a vital component of a mixed discourse which constitutes much learning and can enable museum visitors to construct their own knowledge(s). The important point for museum education is to distinguish an active ‘power to see’ from a passive looking or “mindless gawping” (Vergo 1993: 58) [My emphasis]. A new ‘power to see’ requires students at the museum frontiers to take account not simply of the “visible features” of objects displayed in a linear way, but of the socio-historical world, the more complex narratives and the broader philosophical context or “the articulatory practices” from which the objects emerge (Hooper-Greenhill 1990: 60).

Jonathan Crary further illuminates a history of vision for this thesis from a Foucauldian perspective, within a framework of epistemic shifts. Crary’s delineation of the “separation of the senses” and especially the “*dissociation of touch* from sight” in the nineteenth century is particularly relevant (Crary 1995: 19) [my emphasis]. Foucault specifies how the Renaissance notions “intersect, overlap, reinforce, or limit one another on the surface of thought”, and make “adjacent things similar” to each other so that “the world is linked together like a chain” for Renaissance thinkers (Foucault 1994: 17, 19). This view shifts during the Classical age when observation is importantly related to knowledge, and “perceptible Knowledge” guarantees Truth. ‘Perceptible knowledge’ excludes ‘heresay, taste, smell and touch’, to prioritise “visibility freed from all other sensory burdens and restricted, moreover, to black and white” (ibid 132-133). This ‘scientific’ understanding persists until the nineteenth century when there seems to be a “realisation of the

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corporeality vision” and alongside this, a more “abstract optical experience” is conceived, in the “discovery of the visionary capacities of the body” (Crary 1995: 141) <sup>6</sup>.

Foucault links this ‘abstract optical experience’ to a positioning of ‘man’ in “modern knowledge”, which is different from “Renaissance ‘humanism’ and Classical ‘rationalism’”, because it is characterised by a new regard for human temporality (Foucault 1994: 318). The movements towards “modern thought” in the nineteenth century are characterised for Foucault “by a finite act of knowing, as the concrete forms of finite existence” (ibid 316). This crucial feature of human finitude leads the human being to be regarded as “a strange empirico-transcendental doublet” (ibid 318). In addition we are led to the recognition that “knowledge has anatomico-physiological conditions”, as well as “historical, social or economic conditions”, and is formed in the “relations woven between” people (ibid 319). In other words, vision is seen as an “irreducible complex of elements belonging to the observer’s body and of data from an exterior world” which is essentially a socio-political world in the Foucauldian discourse (Crary 1995: 70-71).

Next the relevance of the Foucauldian analysis to contemporary museum education will be elaborated with reference to contemporary feminist thought on vision. In the museum context an argument will be made for a new ‘postmodern’ movement of knowledge construction which takes account of the difference and similarity between knowers. Specifically ‘Nomadic’ travel beyond the Modern episteme and a lingering Classical concern for prioritising the visible will be advocated, to enable a more fluid reconstruction of knowledge at the museum borderlands (Braidotti 1994a).

#### **Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway’s feminist analysis of vision applied to the museum**

Rosi Braidotti counteracts the ancient dualism of mind and body, with the concept of thought as essentially embodied experience. She elucidates this aspect for active vision as part of museum education by drawing attention to the connections between knowledge

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<sup>6</sup> Most importantly for museum education Crary highlights individual theorists whose work seem to circle hermeneutically and slide between ‘regimes of truth’ in different eras. For example, Walter Benjamin in the Modernist discourse regards vision as “multiple, adjacent to and overlapping with other objects, desires, and vectors” (Crary 1995: 20). Benjamin echoes Foucault’s thought on the “incremental Renaissance way of knowing”, which vitally included “fables and stories” (Hooper-Greenhill 1990: 56).

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and vision (Braidotti 1994b). She firmly acknowledges “the corporeal roots of subjectivity” while questioning the continuing equation of the visible with truth as a male “fantasy” (ibid 18). Her statement, “There is no adequate *simulacrum* : no image is a representation of the truth” is applied to the realm of pornography as well as the modern medical studies in anatomy (ibid 25). In both these areas men reign powerfully in domination over women’s bodies which are treated as almost dismembered parts of an object. The fantasy is the rendering intelligible of woman’s bodies by means of technology such as the camera and microscope.

For Braidotti it is through an intense focus on the visible under patriarchy that a hierarchy of power is maintained, with the active subject behind the lens observing and controlling the passive woman as mere flesh <sup>7</sup>. The security cameras in our museums can similarly be viewed as instruments for rendering the male and female visitor a passive object, of the distant but dominant gaze (Hooper-Greenhill 1989: 63). This rendering passive can be read as a ‘feminisation’ in psychoanalytic terms since women under patriarchy are subordinated; a notion which reaches a climax in Foucault’s account of male prisoners in Bentham’s panopticon, where men are ‘feminised’ by the state of extreme passivity and observation to which they are subjected. Braidotti sees psychoanalysis as providing a positive reevaluation of subordinate positioning. Braidotti believes Freudian psychoanalysis adequately addresses this problematic of knowledge and the body within a political space for women.

Far from being a mere therapy, psychoanalysis has developed into a philosophy of desire and a theory of the body as libidinal surface, a site of multiple coding, of inscription - a living text.  
(Braidotti 1994b: 18)

Braidotti notes the contribution of psychoanalysis in a re-theorization of the body which admits the bodily roots of all knowledge claims. Her psychoanalytical focus is useful to the theoretical position of this thesis since it suggests a space and a technique to assert alternative knowledge, truth and representation on an affective and corporeal ground which is denied in strict logical terms. Thus Braidotti’s analysis reinforces the contention

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<sup>7</sup> Braidotti notes that woman’s body as the ‘materialism of the flesh’ can be reduced to the sum of its organic parts by scientists and pornographers, while the body is recognised as the site of transcendence and the very condition of any possible knowledge for the male subject.

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in this thesis that only a greater attentive ‘listening’ and truly cooperative action with the museum audience can achieve the possibility of constructing “three-dimensional, philosophical links between the objects” of vision in the museum, or in other words facilitate a ‘new power to see’ (Corradi Fuimara 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 1990: 63).

The thought of Donna Haraway enables museum educators to facilitate a ‘new power to see’ in the museum. Firstly her “political myth” of the “cyborg” points to the imaginative possibilities or “potent fusions”, which oppressed people might explore to gain greater visibility and further the “political work” of increasing equality in the museum (Haraway 1991a: 149, 154). Secondly Haraway offers a postmodernist reading of new relationships between mind and body which might be permitted by new technology to reemploy vision for the feminist discourse. Haraway also offers an essential redefinition of objectivity for feminist epistemology in her idea of ‘situated knowledges’ which insist “on irreducible difference and a radical multiplicity of local knowledges”, and additionally her thesis most crucially repossesses “ethics and politics” (Haraway 1991b: 187). She views the ethical and political achievement of ‘situated knowledge’ as lying mainly in making the community involved in the presentation and perception of this knowledge responsible, accountable or “answerable for what we learn how to see” (Haraway 1991b: 190). In these respects Haraway echoes the earlier discussion of ‘standpoint’ theory, and her thesis also links back to the discussion of ‘constructivism’ which prioritises the visitor’s personal viewpoint or construction of knowledge.

In the museum context the notion of a new ‘power to see’ regards knowledge as a “passionate construction” which radically opposes the “cannibal eye” of single-point perspective (Haraway 1991b: 191, 189). The ‘power to see’ concept essentially points to processes of seeing in ‘partial perspectives’ which permits the constant unfolding of multiple and complex viewpoints at the museum frontiers. This notion also supports the concept of new *verstehen* taken from Gadamer since students and teachers are presented with limitless possibilities to learn from museum objects without reaching a climactic or final end point.

Next, to further the thesis of ‘embodied knowledge’ as a new ‘power to’, the relationship

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of knowledge with the senses of touch, hearing and speech will be addressed.

#### **3.4      Personal and political knowledge in the museum 2: embodied knowledge as a new power to touch, speak and listen**

##### **Power to touch in the museum**

Luce Irigaray has contributed to the theory of embodied knowledge as essentially including feeling and emotion, “the passional foundations of reason” (Whitford 1991: 10). The ‘double gesture’ in Irigaray refuses the binary oppositions of logic and insists on the linkage of ‘both at once.’ Irigaray rejects the elevation of *either* ‘male’ or ‘female’ reading in preference to a ‘creative and fertile partnership’ (my italics). She emphasises the importance of acknowledging differences within woman as well as between women, and locates relationships between the ‘global’ and the ‘specific’ by drawing connections between theoretical positions (ibid 24-25).<sup>8</sup> Most importantly for this thesis Irigaray emphasises the power of the sense of ‘touch’ in opposition to the power of the gaze. She argues for the concave surface of the speculum to counter the flat reductive model of the human psyche seen in Lacan’s image of the mirror that is his ‘other’, woman. Women she states, need a surface that will reflect and validate them as autonomous subjects “for-themselves and not just in their exteriority, for others” (ibid 142).

It is worthwhile to quote the beautiful image taken from the body of woman, of woman’s ‘two lips,’ which Irigaray offered to us in *‘the sex which is not one.’* This seminal text has been the source of so many creative responses in feminist discourse that it accentuates Irigaray’s enormous power as a poet. It is in the structuring of Irigaray’s semiotic that it has been possible for such a wide reception to her work be realised. The structure of poetic texts seems to assist a high degree of clarity for the feminist semiotic to be envisioned and *felt*.. Irigaray’s thought proceeds in a sensually theoretical way and so feminist speculation is imaginatively achieved at the margins of discourse, thereby evading the dominant phallogocentric world-view. There are repetitions, circling and

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<sup>8</sup> These ‘global’ theories will be expanded upon in terms of ‘specific’ projects in chapters 5 to 8

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refusing any closure of meaning in her work, which opens up a semantic space for ‘active’ readers to discern a plurality of meanings. Her writing constitutes a ‘healing text’ since it marks out such a range of alternative possibilities without the violent forcing of the psyche into a position where it must choose “one” (ibid: 172).

A woman “touches herself” constantly without anyone being able to forbid her to do so, for her sex is composed of two lips which embrace continually. ... The *one* of form, the individual sex, proper name, literal meaning - superseded by spreading apart and dividing, this touching of *at least two* [lips] which keeps woman in contact with herself, although it would be impossible to distinguish exactly what “parts” are touching each other.  
(Irigaray 1981: 100-101)

Irigaray, highlighting the sensual and intellectual link with the sexual, points to the sense of touch as extended over the whole surface of the body. If Irigaray’s ideas are translated to the world of the museum; to be touched by a museum object is to be moved psychically and physically<sup>9</sup>. The experience of active touching in the museum does not leave the museum visitor ‘unchanged’ to recall an aspect of the Gadamerian discourse. Using the ‘handling collection’ is an important part of a successful museum visit during which students are facilitated to construct their own knowledge, as teacher’ testimonies outlined in the Dialogical Project at chapter 5 demonstrates. Teachers highlight the importance of this direct physical contact with the materiality of museum objects to expand students horizons; their views of others and the possibilities for their future lives.

School students visit the Horniman Museum to “look and learn” from ‘other’ cultures, but knowledge cannot easily be constructed by looking in isolation from other human senses (Bennett 1996: 98). Perhaps an important lesson to be ‘learnt’ from the focus on ‘looking’ in many western museums is one of “civics” to “respect property and behave gently”. Since the British school system is rooted in a western politico-philosophical tradition a museum-visit seems to provide us with as much ‘knowledge’ about this tradition as the one displayed (Bennett 1990: 49; 1996: 102). The thesis contends that wider lessons of “respect” and “care” for ‘other’ cultures can be learnt from touching or ‘handling’

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<sup>9</sup> Danet and Katriel note how the “sensuous aspects of collecting - handling, touching, playing with, caring for the collection” are vital aspects of the collector’s pleasure (Danet and Katriel 1994: 228-9). Additionally the thesis makes the argument that touching is intimately connected with ‘knowledge’ construction for these collectors.

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sessions, and the projects outlined in chapters 5 to 8 furnish evidence for this contention.

In western cultural forms touch has long been considered an important vehicle for proving and transforming reality: Pygmalion animates his statue through touch; Carravagio's Doubting Thomas sticks his finger in the wounds of Christ; Michelangelo's God creates Adam with the gentlest brush of a finger. Today, only a tiny hierarchy of museum professionals can share these powerful sense impressions with the original makers and users of museum artefacts. The sensual pleasure of touch and its role in the construction of 'knowledge' in camera by museum curators, is a factor rarely acknowledged in the exhibition texts for 'visual' public consumption (Hooper-Greenhill 1989: 63). The admonition 'Don't Touch' in our public spaces denotes a rigid segregation, which removes this important category of affective responses from ordinary visitors, who are expected to rely almost entirely on the visual. The touch and care afforded to the object by the makers is reduced in the framing of the glass case, but democratically restored in an educational handling session at the Horniman Museum, alongside the 'power to' speak and listen

#### **Power to listen and speak in the museum**

Audre Lorde precedes Corradi Fuimara in developing a notion of genuine communication which is predicated on the possibility of really 'listening', that is central to the notion of 'dialogue' in philosophical hermeneutics (Lorde 1996c: 164; Corradi Fuimara 1995). Listening for Lorde and Corradi Fuimara does not entail passivity. Listening is rather an *active* opening up of one subjectivity to another so that further questioning of each subject can occur. Listening also imposes the responsibility of increasing self-awareness and ultimately 'self-knowledge' (Gadamer 1981). In a reference to Freire Lorde notes how it essentially requires recognition of an outer world, where the real conditions of lived experiences can be investigated as that internalised "piece of the oppressor planted deep inside each of us" (Lorde 1996c: 170).

Thus Lorde's 'listener' makes a movement towards 'realism' in her vital connection of personal 'knowledge' and ethical responsibility to the external world. She is not



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condemned to a passive wallowing in mysterious internal processes but moved to take action against the horrors of “racism and homophobia” for example. This manner of listening for Lorde points to ways in which “the personal as the political can begin to illuminate all our choices” (Lorde 1996b: 161). Listening to Lorde and Freire as an education worker in the museum, a professional responsibility is highlighted; to listen closely to the ‘piece of the oppressor’ lodged deep in the museum discourse, a discourse of extreme ‘realism’ and ‘rationality’ which silences ‘unreason’. An examination of Freudian and Foucauldian thought will begin to clarify this statement.

Listening to the languages of reason and unreason is central to Freudian psychoanalysis, as Foucault and Derrida both emphasise. Foucault notes in *Madness and Civilisation*, that Freud began “once again to *listen* to this language [of unreason]” <sup>10</sup> (Foucault 1995: 262) [My emphasis]. The language of madness was condemned to silence during the enlightenment, where it occupied a position of banishment completely outside of discourse. Foucault in his “archeology of that silence”, discusses earlier times when unreason was at least able to occupy a place in the margins of discourse (ibid 1995: xiii).

For example in the middle ages the insane were not totally suppressed but “kept at a sacred distance”, in the way that lepers were living with a certain freedom within the lazar house just outside of town (ibid 1995: 6). Neither was exclusion from the wider community considered detrimental to their ultimate achievement of ‘salvation’, a form of ‘divine knowledge’ according to the thought of the time. Foucault rapidly moves his discussion to consider the ‘Ship of Fools,’ during the “imaginary landscape of the Renaissance” where it seemed to “occupy a privileged place”. The ships also had an existence in real or historical time when madmen, “led an easy wandering existence” (ibid 1995: 7-8). ‘Listening’ would appear to grant a corporeal ‘power’ of some movement for the insane at this time.

It is not until the Enlightenment that ‘rational’ thought becomes totalising and suppresses difference and otherness. In the absolute rule of reason thoughts were ordered in a perfect

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<sup>10</sup> Derrida quotes this part of Foucault’s text in his own discussion, ‘Cogito and the History of Madness’ (Derrida 1995: 34).

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symmetry of 'either or', and "madness was torn from that imaginary freedom" which previously allowed it to flourish and flounder in "broad daylight" (ibid 64). In short, the dichotomous thinking that post-modernism argues against, reduces madness solely to its inscription on the body, to a visible 'spectacle.' Foucault tells us:

As late as 1815, if a report presented to the House of Commons is to be believed, the hospital of Bethlehem exhibited lunatics for a penny, every Sunday. ... the madmen at Bicetre were shown "like curious animals, to the first simpleton willing to pay a coin." ... One went to see a keeper display the madmen the way the trainer at the Fair of Saint-Germain put the monkeys through their tricks. (Foucault 1995: 68)

This passage has appalling resonance for the museum whose business revolves around display. In Foucault's historical analysis the insane becomes the absolute 'other', and their consequent distancing from sane humanity to a closer proximity with animals is redolent of a historical, racist organisation of museum knowledge. The idea of relegating as 'other' or to a category of sub-humanity: mad; poor; disabled and black people for example, was reinforced by a morality which equated such 'others' with 'beasts' in the discourses of the asylum and the museum (Foucault 1995: 63; Bennett 1996; Coombes 1993). Movement between categories, from insane beast to rational being and from savage slave to saved Christian was later deemed to be possible, but only by the imposition of a new totalising order of rationality which overtook the old. This was not achieved by 'active listening.' The meanings of insanity were unheard as were the traditional African belief systems of the displaced slaves whose material culture continues to be housed in western museums.<sup>11</sup>

In this thesis museum 'knowledge' of a 'primitive' other; less evolved; closer to the animal state is challenged. A resistance is mounted with feminist-hermeneutic dialogue or 'speaking back' to the museum discourse, in the newly opened space of the museum frontiers. This point will be elucidated with reference to the shameful and tragic case of Saartje Baartman, which is discussed by Sander L. Gilman (1994), Tony Bennett (1996) and Marlene Nourbese Philip (1992). The African woman, Saartje, was a silent 'display' in London during her life, where she was known to museum visitors of the early

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<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the loudest silence of all was reserved for the meanings of the unconscious fear in the oppressor. This is a fear of our desire, our own animality projected onto the body of the other as: mad; enslaved black person or as poor white woman. It is also a fear of radical change in the social order. In Pitt Rivers words displays of 'live exhibits' also presented white women with a warning "how little they resemble the beasts of burden they might have been had they been bred elsewhere" (Bennett 1996: 201).

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nineteenth century as the 'Hottentot Venus' (Bennett 1996: 202-203). Saartje suffered an early death at the age of twenty-four, when her genitalia was preserved and similarly exhibited. Bennett informs us that they are now hidden from general view in the store of the Musee de l'homme. They lie by the brain of the 'advanced European' craniologist Paul Broca which he bequeathed: so that the highest evolved form of the white male can be preserved; so that the familiar hierarchical story can be perpetuated; so that the public can gain racist 'knowledge.' Marlene Nourbese Philip comments.

For Africans the museum has always been a significant site of their racial oppression. Within its walls reasons could be found for their being placed at the foot of the hierarchical ladder of human evolution designed by the European (Philip 1992: 104)

In the late twentieth century museum workers and visitors can 'listen' to an African Caribbean voice on this atrocious 'knowledge.' Philip is one of the Horniman Museum workshop leaders whose 'speaking' back to the museum is cited alongside the voices of other Caribbean Women Writers in chapter 5.

#### **3.5     Conclusion**

At the outset of this chapter George Hein's 'constructivism' was analysed and found to be useful to this thesis, although a different emphasis was placed on the 'scientific' viewpoint which Hein holds dear, and imaginative dialogical engagement was prioritised. Next a challenge to dualism was made by considering the relevance of postmodernism for museum education and specifically the reconstruction of museum knowledge. Then the feminist 'standpoint' epistemology was examined by focussing on the articulations of Patricia Hill-Collins, Trinh T. Minh ha, and Audre Lorde. Standpoint epistemology was seen to share certain crucial features with Donna Haraway's theory of situated knowledge(s), Hein's 'constructivism' and Gadamer's hermeneutics, which were highlighted in the context of museum 'knowledge.' Finally the concepts of 'embodied knowledge' was clarified through the writing of Michel Foucault, Rosi Braidotti, Audre Lorde and Donna Haraway. Overall in this chapter a theoretical position was outlined which authorised the construction of 'embodied knowledge,' through facilitating new

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‘powers to’: listen, speak, touch and see in the museum. These powers are regarded as vital to the theoretical position of this thesis and to the practice of feminist-hermeneutic dialogue at the museum frontiers.

In the next chapter a methodology derived from feminist ethnography and educational action research will be developed to ..facilitate / empower... This method aims to nurture a new space from which to continue the challenge to traditional museum ‘knowledge’ or bias via a radical multicultural curriculum and collaborative action at the museum and participating schools/college sites.

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*At a certain moment*, therefore it is necessary to turn against method, or at least to treat it without any founding privilege as one of the voices of plurality - as a *view*, a spectacle mounted in the text, the text which all in all is the only true result of any research.  
(Barthes 1977: 201)

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### **4.0     Introduction**

In this chapter the links between the theories outlined in chapters 2 and 3 will be consolidated and applied to an ethnographic action research methodology informed by feminist-hermeneutics. Specifically, the concept of agency is introduced, and the politico-ethical problem of speaking and writing about collaborative relationships between researcher and researched in the social world.

The question of whose knowledge and identities are traditionally represented and constructed in ethnographic museums will be examined; who speaks and writes for whom, who listens, and why. First the 'new ethnographies' will be shown to provide the basis of an appropriate method to address issues of bias, essentialism and identity because they focus on reflectivity and dialogical exchange in ways which are sympathetic to the feminist-hermeneutic theory that has been developed (Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993; Clifford 1994, 1997). In addition, the new ethnographies also begin to highlight a collaborative method of teaching and learning about anthropology, which points to new ways of reconstructing knowledge(s) from ethnographic collections. In particular Clifford's concepts of 'collage', and 'travelling' theory provide important methodological insights to my research in a multicultural urban context, but certain gaps remain in terms of an adequate method for investigating *learning* at the *museum frontiers*, which will be addressed with recourse to educational action research.

In section 4.2 a brief historical overview of educational action research is provided from Schön's notion of reflection in and on action, to the curriculum development of Stenhouse and the emancipatory border pedagogy of Giroux (Stenhouse 1973; Eliot 1987; Freire 1972, 1996; Giroux 1993). These theorists all privilege an equitable relationship between human 'subjects' in their research which is vital to the dialogical approach of feminist-hermeneutics. Additionally figure 4.1 provides some visual clarification of the action research process of interaction between teacher and student 'subjects.'

In section 4.3 the methodological insights of educational action research are combined with contemporary ethnographic methods to serve the research purposes of this thesis in

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the field of the museum frontiers. This section shows how the methodology is appropriately employed in the study of museum education because it is characterised by a complete collaboration amongst researchers who aim to improve their own praxis, and from the theoretical standpoint of feminist-hermeneutics it is essentially dialogical and non-hierarchical. The truth-claims of methodology are justified through 'reflexivity,' 'member checks' and 'triangulation.' Additionally figure 4.2. outlines the criteria of an 'ethnographic action research' method informed by feminist-hermeneutics.

Overall this chapter elaborates upon the hermeneutic-constructivist questioning of objective 'scientific' methodology, and the 'power-knowledge-resistance' arguments outlined in chapters two and three. In section 4.4 some current feminist work on gathering voices and narrative from life story is interrogated for insights into the radical museum praxis which is outlined in this thesis. Additionally an examination of a pilot project, the field-site, the key informant teachers and their students is provided to demonstrate the operation of feminist-hermeneutic theory in the practice of ethnographic action research. The pilot case study highlights certain problems with the establishment of common aims and objectives for a research team, as well as the degree of commitment research demands of participants. Reflection on these pilot actions prevented any serious recurrence of problems in the collaborative work which is examined in the subsequent chapters, 5 to 8. Finally in 4.5 the case studies which comprise chapters 5 to 8 are introduced to highlight the ways in which the theory is developed during collaborative practice.

##### **4.1      The new ethnographic methodology : issues of bias, essentialism and identity**

In this section the question of 'identity' (Hall 1994, 1996, 1997; Gilroy 1996), and the 'new ethnographies' (Clifford 1994, 1997; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993) will be examined. The underlying aim is to examine the issues of bias, essentialism and identity which were raised theoretically in the last chapters, but here the implications of these concerns will be considered from a methodological perspective. Methodologically there is a specific interest in the 're-writing' of 'knowledge.' In particular the contribution ethnographic practice might make to the development of an appropriate methodology is

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investigated, for the possibilities of increasing interpretation and reconstructing knowledge at the museum frontiers.

##### The question of 'identity'

Or is quite a different practice entailed - not the rediscovery but the *production of identity*. Not an identity grounded in the archeology, but in the *re-telling* of the past?<sup>1</sup>  
(Hall 1996: 111) [my emphasis]

Stuart Hall elucidates 'Diaspora identities' in terms of a vital *mixture and movement* of historical and contemporary elements, across temporal and spatial borderlands from Africa, the Caribbean and the west. Hall's thesis on identity opposes the either-or of dualist thought and he rejects any simple reversing of binary oppositions. For example he denies a "new essentially good black subject" as well as the old stereotype of the lazy degenerate. His primary concern is with political transformation and he aims to build "forms of solidarity and identification which make common struggle possible but without suppressing real heterogeneity of interests and identities" (Hall 1994: 254-5) <sup>2</sup>.

Hall's profoundly anti-essentialist and anti-dualist thought stands in contrast to racism which fixes people into rigid categories. Paul Gilroy cites the "ubiquitous theme" of racism as an "absolutist view of black and white cultures, as fixed, mutually impermeable expressions of racial and national identity" (Gilroy 1996: 263). This view fears 'contamination' and harbours a fantasy of *Imagined Communities*, of 'return' to 'pure origins' (Anderson 1983).

Research participants at the museum frontiers rather highlight the dynamic nature of identity *construction* today. Movement and change is recognised as positive forces for creating new forms of art, writing, and ways of being in the world. 'Identity' is not seen as predetermined or fixed by racial characteristics, nor as as one continuous entity, but as a

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<sup>1</sup> Hall's emphasis on *production* and *retelling* has clear parallels with Gadamer's hermeneutic approach which is based on the construction of new *verstehen* and dialogical exchange, as outlined in chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> A similar overlap of thought is discerned here in Hall's discussion of *mixture* and *movement* which recalls Gadamer's discussion of the possibilities of fusion between horizons of understanding. Hall also echoes Gadamer's point on prejudice at the end of this paragraph when he notes the importance of not suppressing interests and identities.



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process of *active hybrid construction* from disparate fragments of similarity and difference. The museum proves an ideal site for such construction and re-construction. It provides a discursive space of “suture” or connection between the local and the global; past and present; individual and group (Hall 1997: 5-6). In this thesis a methodology is developed which might effect various points of temporary suture, or joining of subjects in different structures of meaning. Suture roots identity in complex political structures: of temporary affiliation, attachment, and ways of belonging. It also involves a perpetual re-conceptualisation of ‘subjectivity’ to permit a variety of fruitful new positionings.

Hall and Gilroy’s re-writing of dominant or ‘colonial’ discourse(s) and their Diaspora scholarship brings vibrant new voices from out of the ‘shadow’ to traditional debates, in ways that are useful to this thesis (Spivak 1994: 83). Diaspora theory marks a fragile space of alternative voice and visibility, which permits the objects of colonial discourse to *reconstruct themselves* as subjects.<sup>3</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha emphasises this point. She says.

“Writing the body” is that abstract-concrete, personal-political realm of excess not fully contained by writing’s unifying structural forces. ... It is a way of making theory in gender, of making theory a politics of everyday life, thereby re-writing the ethnic female subject as a site of *differences*. ... But once more, *they* spoke. *They* decide who is “racism-free or anti colonial”.  
(Trinh T. Minh-Ha 1989 :44,59) [my emphasis]

The ‘they’ who ‘decide’ in Trinh T. Minh-Ha’s text are men, male anthropologists. Trinh T. Minh-Ha highlights the importance of agency, of *all* ‘subjects’ actively claiming identity, and this thesis marks an ongoing process of hermeneutic ‘listening’ to identities claimed in the ‘uprising’ textualities of diverse communities. The thesis develops a radical consciousness of the possibilities for a creative ‘re-mapping’ of identities at the museum frontiers and the ‘new ethnography’ presents aspects of a useful method which facilitates such re-mapping (Boyce-Davis 1994: 108-9).

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Postcolonialism’ is rejected as a useful theoretical perspective for this thesis for three main reasons. Firstly it takes a totalising posture which assigns to the formally colonised no basis of identity outside of the colonial definition. Secondly it ‘re-males’ a discourse which postmodernism and Black feminism writing opened to the plurivocality of women. Finally the ‘post’ is premature and “represents a misnaming of current realities” (Boyce-Davis 1994: 81). In the museum context educational work cannot profitably be located in the postcolonial, since resistance to discrimination on the grounds of: race, sex, class, disability, and gender preference is demanded. Museum education requires a new kind of optimistic struggle for change.

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##### **The new ethnographies and method**

While anthropology questioned the status of the participant observer, it spoke from the position of the dominant and thus for the 'other'. Feminists speak from the position of the 'other'.  
(Mascia-Lees *et al.* 1989:11)

In developing an appropriate method to examine the research question considerable inspiration has been drawn from contemporary anthropology, whose practitioners seek "to write a genuinely new ethnography" (ibid p7). The new ethnographies considered most useful to this thesis are written from a self-reflective and feminist stance, since their aims are to understand individual meaning-making within particular social worlds, and most importantly to stand in a political position with the peopled field of research (Clifford 1994, 1997; Clifford and Marcus 1989; Bell *et al* 1993). They are "not satisfied with exposing power relations" but actively "work to overcome these relations" (Mascia-Lees 1989: 33). This discipline is profitably linked with the theory of feminist-hermeneutics to develop an appropriate method for working at the museum-school frontiers.

An attempt will be made to show how the new ethnography applied to the field of the museum encourages the expression of deepening thought processes about museum objects and 'other' cultures. The method increases 'knowledge' but not in the sense of a simple linear progression about inanimate 'things.' It does not mark a straightforward movement from lack to completion, since there cannot be any final point of perfect closure within a 'new' ethnographic field, either inside or out of the museum. Reflexive ethnographic method rather resembles the circular process of hermeneutical understanding, which is ultimately self-understanding. It is a method which can enable a 'plurality' of voices to be heard from a number of collaborative positioning(s) (Barthes 1977: 201).

##### **Historico-philosophical background examining the truth of ethnographic case study and key informant methodology**

The aim of historical ethnographic method, despite the scientific bias towards visualism, is "to describe *each case* separately and to use these cases as *illuminations* of a thesis

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rather than as irrefutable proof” (Mead 1949: 169. in Van Maanen 1983: 29) <sup>4</sup> [my emphasis]. ‘Illuminations’ are essentially gathered from extended conversation with ‘key informants’, or individuals who occupy key positions in the field under study, and are therefore able to supply ‘insider’ information. Valerie Gilchrist coins the term ‘research listening’ to describe her ethnographic approach to case study research in the field of health care, which echoes the feminist-hermeneutic concept of ‘active listening’ highlighted in chapter 2 (Gilchrist 1992: 70-89). Gilchrist provides a precise definition of the collaborative relationships between ‘key informants’ and the ‘research listener’ or ethnographer.

Key informants differ from other informants by the nature of their position in a culture and by their relationship to the researcher, which is generally one of long duration, occurs in varied settings, and is more intimate.  
(Gilchrist 1992: 71.)

The illuminative aim of ethnographic method echoes the notion of ‘situated knowledges’ noted in chapter three, and it also resonates in Clifford Geertz’s idea of ‘local knowledge’ (Geertz 1993b). Local knowledge is essentially to be achieved by the ethnographic method when the ethnographer sees things “from the native’s point of view” (ibid 56). Ethnographic understanding is achieved by a means analogous to “reading a poem” (ibid 70). This is a notion which recommends the interpreter attempt to gain some “unique form of psychological closeness”, or “transcultural identification” with the ‘natives’ (ibid 56). Geertz’s methodology is most powerfully epitomised in evocative, rich or “thick descriptions” <sup>5</sup> of field work (Geertz 1993a: 9-10). In the context of this thesis, rich descriptions are gained by a sort of “hermeneutic tacking” to and fro, between the worlds of school and museum (Geertz 1993b: 170). This ‘tacking’ is essentially a reflexive *dialogical work* of conversation and *creative production* between engaged human beings,

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<sup>4</sup> James Clifford selects the writings of Marcel Griaule to demonstrate a high point in the traditional anthropological method which prioritises extreme ‘visualism’ as a guarantee of its ‘scientific’ truth-claims. In the 1930’s Griaule spoke of a kind of necessary violence in the power of the anthropological gaze, which together with an aggressive cross-examination technique was said to reveal a ‘truth,’ hidden by the indigenous peoples who were considered natural ‘liars’ (Clifford 1989: 11). His ultimate methodological desire was for some “panoptic viewpoint” which might map every aspect of the proceedings under study (Clifford 1994: 69). Towards this end he recommended employing a large team of ethnographers, including vital airborne members monitoring from a helicopter. Griaule’s techniques involved a perpetual struggle for control to attain a truth hidden by the indigenous population of the field-site

<sup>5</sup> a term taken from Gilbert Ryle’s philosophy of mind (Ryle 1949).

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and it therefore accords with the theoretical perspective of this research study that is based on feminist-hermeneutics and was established in chapters 2 and 3.

The equitable relationship which feminist anthropologists strive to gain with their key informants is also a vital feature of feminist-hermeneutic theory. Marjorie Shostak exemplifies this relation in *Nisa*. Nisa is the name of Shostak's key informant who is permitted to speak, "not as a neutral witness" but rather as someone with, "manifest questions and desires" which are articulated during the research project work (Clifford. 1986:103-110). *Nisa* is an important book which illuminates the inter-subjective aspects of the ethnographic research method when it is applied by a feminist, since Nisa and Shostak occupy subject positions which shift between speaking and listening, teaching and learning. It constitutes a struggle for power and voice between researcher and researched, which Shostak as the 'writer' recognises and attempts to address through her multiple voiced text <sup>6</sup>.

Shostak's new ethnography clearly addresses the methodological problem of power hierarchies and provides an appropriate model for this thesis. The field of educational action research will further demonstrate the possibilities for a reflective 'thinking together' during research, by radically extending the feminist-hermeneutic concept of active 'research listening' to the peopled field of research (Silverman 1975: 1; Gilchrist 1992: 70-89).

#### **4.2      Historical overview of educational action research: from Schön to the emancipatory border pedagogy of Giroux**

##### **The essential 'reflexive' roots of action research in the USA and South America**

In this thesis educational action research method is traced to a strand of 'progressive education' with 'child-centered' roots in the theories of John Dewey (Dewey 1933). For

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<sup>6</sup> For Clifford *Nisa* highlights "consciousness raising and the sharing of experiences by women", until gradually a "commonality is produced that, by *bringing separate lives together, empowers personal action*, recognises a common estate" (Clifford. 1986: 107) [my emphasis]. 'Empowerment' is crucial to the feminist-hermeneutic stance adopted in this research project

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Dewey teachers 'reflexive action' persistently questions their practice and the underlying reasoning which supports it. Dewey's notion of reflection involves intuition, emotion and passion as well as the linguistic processes of reason. It is a holistic concept which spurs from a desire to make a difference and improve children's lives (Zeichner and Liston 1996: 9-11).<sup>7</sup>

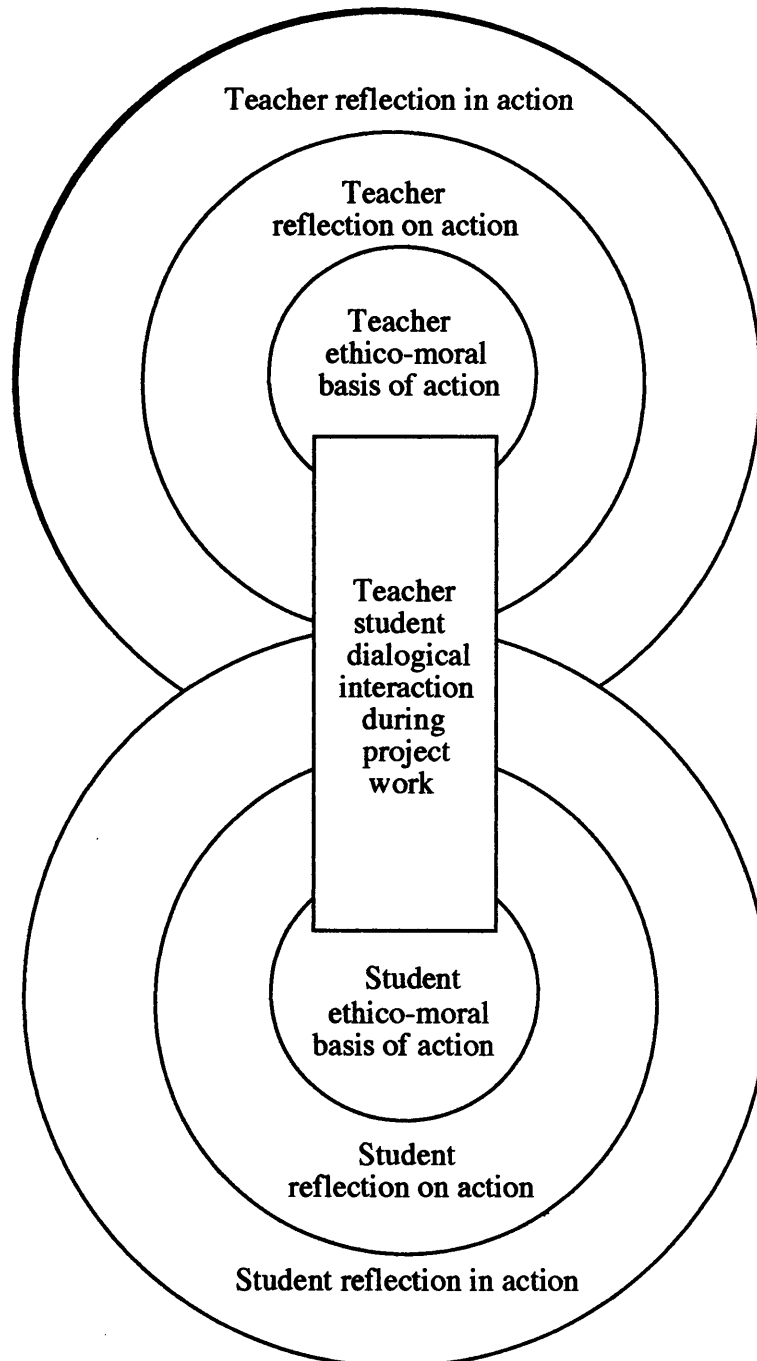
Daniel Schön follows Dewey's emphasis on reflection and vitally distinguishes 'reflection in action' from 'reflection on action' to describe the ways in which educators think before, during, and after their teaching (Schön 1983). Schön seems to envisage a spiral of reflection leading to action; then further reflection and action, which results in an improved learning environment for students. He usefully describes a circle of thoughtful activity, but fails to consider the ways in which reflection is vitally enhanced through dialogical exchange with others. From the perspective of this thesis he neglects the 'standpoint' of the immediate critical community within which education and research into teaching is 'situated,' and additionally the wider socio-political world which inevitably impinges on our educational work.

Handal and Lauvis build on Schön's notion of 'reflection in action.' They emphasise the 'ethico-moral basis' of teacher and student interaction, and in figure 4.1 I have adapted their 'practice triangle' to illustrate the importance of dialogical exchange in this thesis. Figure 4.2 mirrors the action research method of Paulo Freire which provides a radical strand to the feminist-hermeneutic dialogue employed in this thesis. Freire recognises that successful education does not take place in a closed world, and his dialogical method of improving literacy in Brazil involves teams of educators first researching into the socio-political conditions or the ethico-political base of the illiterate peasant's world. Then formulating a programme of studies *with* the students which rests on their lived experiences and prioritises equitable dialogical exchange.

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<sup>7</sup> Dewey's method makes three principal demands on the teacher which echo in feminist-hermeneutic theory. Firstly, *openmindedness*, to listen and accept "many sources of understanding" (Dewey 1933:11). Secondly, taking *responsibility* for the consequences of their teaching, which includes the personal effect of their curriculum on the students' self-concepts as well as the academic effect on their intellectual development. Thirdly, a *wholeheartedness* which continually strives to understand from different perspectives the impact of their teaching efforts on the future life-opportunities of their students. For Dewey "reflection" is crucial, it "emancipates us", it "implies activity", it "enables us to direct action with foresight and plan according to ends in view of purpose of which we are aware" (Dewey 1933: 17).

The circles describe possibilities for deep movements of understanding to occur through dialogical exchange or interaction between teacher and student. These movements of understanding affect the basis of future thought and action. [Adapted from 'the practice triangle' of Handal and Lauvis, in Zeichner (1996)].



**Figure 4.1** Action research 'practice circles' of interaction between teacher and students

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Paulo Freire's "pedagogy" is:

forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity. This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation. And in the struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade.  
(Freire 1996: 30)

Freire is concerned with the emancipation of oppressed peoples. His pedagogic practice is not simply a method by which teacher 'subjects' impart 'knowledge' or sets of skills to students, who are treated as 'objects.' Freire turns the power relations inherent in teaching and research around. He demands teachers first respect their students as equal 'subjects' by listening and learning about their life-world. For Freire it is only from this position of mutuality that research and teaching methods might increase understanding.<sup>8</sup>

#### In Britain. Power-relationships and the distinction between 'practical' and 'critical' action research

In 1966 Lawrence Stenhouse designed The Humanities Curriculum Project<sup>9</sup> to centrally consider issues of power relationships between teachers and students in the classroom (Stenhouse 1968, 1975, 1983). The Humanities Project aims to develop a number of curriculum strategies, to equalise the balance of power and knowledge between teachers and students in schools. For example the 'Neutral Chairperson' strategy demands teachers 'listen' and direct their attention to facilitating dialogue or 'discussion' of controversial issues *between students* in the classroom, instead of expounding their own 'prejudiced' views to passive receptacles (Stenhouse 1983: 117, 121). The 'role of the Neutral Chairperson' is rather to draw connections between 'school knowledge' and students prior experiences and understandings of the world outside.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Giroux develops Freire's ideas in the context of contemporary American education, and also draws on the thought of Black women writers to improve the learning conditions of his classrooms. For example he expands upon Anzaldua's notion of *La Frontera* to construct his 'Border Pedagogy' which I employ as a useful research tool in this thesis.

<sup>9</sup> This project was jointly funded by the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations in London and the Nuffield Foundation (Ruddock 1995: 1)

<sup>10</sup> The attention to 'dialogue', 'knowledge' and 'prejudice' in these strategies has a clear resonance in feminist-hermeneutics.

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Stenhouse is concerned with the possibilities of student ‘emancipation through knowledge’, and he values the notion of open ‘dialogue’ between teacher and students as a route to increasing student understanding and knowledge (Ruddock 1995: 1; Stenhouse 1983). It is dialogue which aims to promote students’ thought and to make them “more discriminating” (Stenhouse 1980: 60). Ultimately dialogue leads to the development of citizenship-skills, which might enable students to fully participate in a democratic society. Stenhouse developed his methodological theories from the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE), at the University of East Anglia, but his research method opposes any hierarchical relationship between university-lecturers and school-teachers. His concept of ‘teacher as researcher’ challenges a dominant notion of specialist university ‘researchers’ actively observing ‘teachers’ practice, and then recommending changes for the passive teachers to implement. He effectively counters this process by placing the teacher in a central role of ‘collaboration’ with university professionals. Teachers are valued in Stenhouse’s method and empowered to take ‘responsibility’ for the consequences which result from their reflexive action in their particular situation. He states:

the uniqueness of each classroom setting implies that any proposal ... needs to be tested and verified and adapted by each teacher in his [or her] own classroom ... All well-founded curriculum research and development ... is based on the study of classrooms. It thus rests on the work of teachers. It is not enough that teachers’ work should be studied; they need to study it themselves (Stenhouse 1975: 143).

John Eliot worked on the Humanities Project at CARE with Stenhouse from 1970 to 1976 where he developed the teacher-researcher movement.<sup>11</sup> Eliot stresses the ‘hermeneutical’ nature of research enquiry, and develops a sound pedagogy from Aristotelian and Gadamerian thought, through which Stenhouse’s curriculum theory can be implemented (Eliot 1987, 1995, 1997). His focus is on ‘practice’ which has a wider meaning than simple technical procedures and attention to end results (Eliot 1995: 56). Eliot emphasises the ethical roots of the practical which is why he insists that the self-reflexive stance of all good teaching makes it inescapably a ‘theoretical’ activity. He looks to Gadamer and Aristotle for whom gaining knowledge is a practical *and* a moral matter which is capable of transforming human action, and states “ethical values are realised in, rather than as a result of, praxis” (Eliot 1987: 162). Most importantly for this thesis Eliot notes that

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<sup>11</sup> Eliot most notably directed the Ford Teaching Project together with Clem Adelman from 1972 to 1974. This action research project guided teachers as researchers into inquiry or discovery based learning



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liberatory aspirations are not the exclusive property of Kemmis's 'critical' research but are central to the 'practical' approach of CARE, which following Gadamer rejects the distinction between 'practical' and 'emancipatory' or 'critical' discourse (Eliot 1987: 157; Carr and Kemmis 1986, Kemmis 1996).<sup>12</sup>

The gap between 'critical' and 'practical' action research methods is said to be closing in current thought (Noffke 1995). There are certainly echoes of CARE's dialogical approach to research method in Kemmis's highlighting of Freire's aim 'not to speak for people', but "to create conditions under which they can speak *for themselves*" (Kemmis 1996: 226). Overall this research project follows a central aim which CARE shares with Kemmis: to engage students in active learning and dialogue, that empowers them to think critically about their social environment, and marks a first step in their abilities to challenge social discrimination and inequality in the wider world

#### **4.3     Ethnographic action research: a collaborative circle of action and reflexivity to improve museum education**

In this section the elements from ethnographic and action research methodologies which were outlined at 4.1 and 4.2 are drawn together in the context of museum education. To justify the truth claims of the thesis particular attention is paid to the question of validity which arises with all qualitative and subjective research.

#### **An ethnographic case study method with key informants in the field of the museum-school borderlands**

There are undoubted distinctions between the working practices necessarily employed by the museum-educator/researcher and that of a traditional ethnographer working in the field. The main difference is the importance of a long residence and participant

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<sup>12</sup> CARE's 'reflective' methodology certainly aims to "change the educational discourse and the structure of the educational environments" as well as "their own practice" (Hirsch 1995: 144). Perhaps the focus of teachers working within CARE is more on their immediate classroom environment, or with that which lies "within their control" (ibid: 148). This is not to deny CARE's attention to and desire to transform the wider social structures outside of school and the aim of increasing dialogical skills in citizens is seen as a route to this end.

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observation as stressed in the working procedures of Mead, Geertz and Bell. Ethnographers working within the traditional paradigm step into a 'distant field', with 'suitcase in hand, preparing for a long stay in residence', an inconceivable step for this research project since the 'field' lies within a five miles radius around the Horniman Museum and participating schools. The research 'field' is characterised by Clifford's 'travelling theory.' He states.

This ethnographer is no longer a (worldly) traveller visiting (local) natives, departing from a metropolitan center to study in his rural periphery. Instead his "ancient and settled" fieldsite, opens onto complex histories of dwelling and travelling, cosmopolitan experiences ... fieldwork is ... more a series of travel encounters.  
(Clifford 1997: 2)

'Travelling' theory usefully analyses the space between museum and school yet the question of how much time to spend at the school-fieldsite remains. Martin Hammersley recommends researchers spend hundreds of hours in classrooms to fully understand the 'student' perspective within school field-sites, which would prove an impossible demand to carry out alongside full-time museum work (Hammersley 1990). Furthermore, my age and position would seem to present serious obstacles to gaining insider knowledge from the 'student' perspective (Measor and Woods 1991).

I also question ten years later, whether I would get the same response from the kids now if I went into school in that kind of research role. This year I went into school with a group of six students to do classroom observation. I was aware that the students had a far readier rapport with the pupils than I did.  
(Measor and Woods 1991: 67)

The difficulty of achieving validity through a prolonged stay in the school field-site is resolved in this thesis by working collaboratively with teachers as 'key informants.' 'Feminist' or 'new ethnographic' practice commits this research project to an intense and ongoing collaboration with key informant teachers, who provide some access to the students or 'natives point of view', indeed they are an intimate part of the students' world<sup>13</sup>. Feminism enters into the ethnographic methodology essentially to contest silences and invisibilities which are felt most strongly from the position of 'other', the

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<sup>13</sup> The problem of gaining direct access to the students' viewpoint remains problematic in this thesis although their voices feature strongly in chapters 7 and 8. This is considered a fertile area for future research

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teachers and their disadvantaged students. The central problem which arises for the relatively new methodological field of feminist ethnography is one of justification which Diane Bell pertinently highlights. She comments, “If one passes beyond the line” to speak “of self as feeling, interacting, or as an element in a relational field, one becomes ‘subjective’, and one’s work is no longer ‘good science’.” (Bell 1993: 29)

Clifford addresses the problem of justification for this research project to an extent. He contends that the methodological technique of writing a “poetic collage” of various ‘key informant’ voices from the fieldsite, does not require abandoning “facts and accurate accounting for the supposed free play of poetry”, since “Poetry is not limited to romantic or modernist subjectivism: it can be historical, precise, objective” (Clifford 1986:25-6). This notion of ‘poetic collage’ potently echoes the feminist-hermeneutic concept of new verstehen, and some poetic voices from a Caribbean Women Writers group are provided in corroboration of this statement in chapter 5. The research methodology with this writers’ group and the other research partners is premised on feminist ethics, which prioritises a notion of equality between researcher and researched. In contrast with the objectivity of the natural sciences, feminist ethics strives for collaboration in the construction of a ‘poetic collage,’ and as far as possible joint ownership of the research study.

#### **The ethics and validity of an ethnographic action research method at the museum-school frontiers**

Anne Oakley’s thought reinforces the theoretical perspective of feminist-hermeneutics which strives for equitable relations of power in dialogical exchange. Oakley notes how feminist research ideology is antithetical towards the hierarchical structure of traditional research projects. The traditional power structure of research projects is pyramidal with the researcher at the apex, deciding the research question, looking down and making interpretations of the studied ‘data’. This structure result in the dehumanisation of researcher and researched as objective “instruments of data collection” (Oakley 1984: 32). Additionally the ‘one way’ structure of traditional research involves an active interviewer forming questions and gaining data from a passive interviewee, without providing any

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opportunity for ‘answering back’ so that personal meanings and knowledge might be constructed in the dialogue<sup>14</sup>.

Collaboration counters these ethico-political problems. In this thesis a non-hierarchical position of ‘participant observation’ is taken alongside teachers-informants (Jorgensen 1989). Danny Jorgensen pertinently comments on the type of relationship that is valued with teacher-informants, who are becoming “friends” rather than just “cooperative and trusted informant[s]”, although this clearly raises questions of ‘objectivity’ and ‘knowledge’ (ibid: 73). The main problem which arises with the ethnographic action research methodology that is being developed is one of ‘validity’ due to the emphasis on active subjective researchers. ‘Reflexivity’ prioritises the subjective ethico-political dimensions of ethnographic action research method over the claims of ‘scientific’ validity. Nevertheless ‘member checks’ and ‘triangulation’ are areas of ‘scientific’ validity recommended by Eliot and Gilchrist to alleviate the problem of justification for ‘action’ or ‘ethnographic’ researchers.

##### **Member checks**

The emphasis on the interpretations or the ‘reflexivity’ of collaborative researchers admits a plurivocality of voices to challenge the authorial voice of a single researcher, which provides vital ‘member checks’ to use a term from Valerie Gilchrist’s analysis (Gilchrist 1992: 86-87, 234). A continual feedback through dialogue is an integral part of the research method. Dialogue revolves around information gathered from: questionnaire surveys, interviews and displays or publications of creative work. These areas of collaboration enable ‘member checks,’ or the corroboration of personal impressions and ideas. In addition collaborators intend that close liaison will persist after the completion of specific projects outlined in this thesis, which allows member checks to extend over time. In this sense ‘member checks’ mirror the dialogical picture of feminist-hermeneutic conversation which can be taken up again and again over time, not to any finite point of

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<sup>14</sup> This is regarded as a “masculine model” of research in the feminist literature since it rests on patriarchy and systems of oppression. The term masculine is generally associated with activity and feminine with passivity in feminist psychoanalytical thought (Mitchell 1987). The ‘masculine’ method not only undervalues alternative women’s models but does not work in practice since there is a fundamental, “lack of fit between theory and practice” for the feminist researcher who is concerned with empowerment (Oakley 1984: 31).

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closure. This reflexive feature provides an extended opportunity for questioning and answering back, which crucially differentiates the research method employed in this thesis from more reactionary processes of affirmation in traditional research. The feminist-hermeneutic approach demands a high degree of active ‘research listening’ and this implies action towards change and transformation for the museum.

##### **Triangulation**

The normal conception of triangulation is multiple method and multiple data or information source. In addition to this “multiple theoretical perspectives” from hermeneutic philosophy and feminist thought are included in this thesis, to demonstrate a strong rejection of the value-neutral claim of the traditional social sciences, and their requisition of a single objective reality (Gilchrist 1992: 87). Triangulation is a valuable validity check for the research method since it does not limit the analysis to data from a single group, nor the gathering of information from a single method. The importance of employing at least three ‘methods’ is to avoid ‘polarised oppositions’ which is a prime aim for feminist epistemology (Winter 1996: 16). In this research project the methodological criteria of ‘triangulation’ is satisfied by using the ‘normal’ methods which include: a ‘diary’ of observation notes; a collection of ‘documents’ or creative work which relates to the research situation; ‘questionnaires’ with teacher and students informants; and tape-recorded ‘interviews’ with students. ‘Triangulation’ in an action research sense informed by feminist-hermeneutics values the ‘standpoints’ or views of the various ‘actors’ in the research field-site(s) (Eliot 77:10). This research takes account of the relationship between three broad ‘standpoints’ at the research sites: the ‘key informant’ classroom teachers, their students, and my own participant observations.

Thus in conclusion it is argued that an ‘ethnographic action research’ method, rooted in feminist-hermeneutics, and perceiving key informants as collaborators can serve an ethico-political function. Information gathered can be expanded and interpretations modified by research partners. Serious ethical problems can be averted since trust and confidentiality are intimately bound up in the project itself, from the very construction of the research question and methodological outline, through the checking at each each

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stage, and finally during the writing up process for a variety of publications. Additionally an argument is made for the validity of this approach through the techniques of 'triangulation' and 'member checks.'

To summarise this section, three main criteria for the 'ethnographic action research' method can be distinguished.

**The method aims to:**

- create a more democratic community of learners by recognising a diversity of authority, from the collaborative formulation of research question(s) at the beginning of the project and through all the stages of decision making throughout the research process.
- interrupt and disturb the narrow linear notion of research purposes and outcomes through the cyclical nature of the Ph.D. research, which continually revisits issues to build new theory-practice relationships, and extends networks of communication to clarify subject positions.
- provide rich detailed accounts or case studies which are 'models of quality' and document 'success stories', to raise self-esteem and demonstrate the ways in which research can empower differently positioned practitioners, by facilitating greater reflexivity, dialogue and action about their educational and social lives (McTaggart 1996; Sotto 1993).

**Figure 4.2. Criteria for an 'ethnographic action research' method**

A brief survey of current research into life history and narrative will demonstrate the relevance of this approach to the ethnographic action research criteria. Additionally a pilot case study will allow the criteria to be tested in practice, and for the adjustment of any discrepancies between the theory and practice of the method.

#### **4.4     Gathering voices: listening to life stories, and a pilot case study**

The value of employing an ethnographic action research method informed by feminist-hermeneutics is primarily ethico-ideological: raising voice, visibility and self-esteem at the museum-school frontiers. First the theories and methods discussed which are useful to this thesis will be consolidation with reference to recent postmodernist work on listening

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and life story. This work outlines the ‘political and poetic’ act of ‘writing ethnography’ as a new educational discourse which is not a “neutral medium of expression and ideas” but “value-laden” and “utopian”; a business of ‘passionate criticism’, or ‘passionate enquiry’ in action research terms (Emihovich 1995: 45; Dadds 1995). For this research project it importantly draws attention to Marilyn Strathern’s concept of “passionate criticism”, and her call for researchers to forge a stronger linkage of thought and emotion in their narrative constructions (Emihovich 1995: 45). <sup>15</sup>

Emihovich stresses the potential of increasing a sense of human connectedness and continuity through an active proliferation of ‘life storytelling’. By working within a wide range of social groups including ‘underclass’ individuals and authorising them to speak for themselves, researchers can add breath and depth to standard life histories. This is a pertinent point for the museum-school work of facilitating the re-writing of identities told within the Horniman Museum. In addition Emihovich recommends teachers encourage all students to write life stories in the natural form of everyday speech which has “vibrancy and life”, and recognises the emotional base of thought (ibid 42). In this way life stories can challenge established power structures and break research hierarchies by evading censorship from professional ethnographers. The importance of this type of narrative work is clarified in the interviews conducted during my pilot project, and during the Benin and Carnival, projects which are analysed in chapters 7 and 8.

The basic premise of Emihovich’s work is the restoration of ‘passion and feeling to scholarship.’ In terms of this thesis a degree of self-critical reflection is implied whereby shared meanings might be arrived at from educational research within the “knowledge producing community” of museum-school (Usher 1997: 34). This raises the problem of taking an ‘ethical position’ which valorises “the subjectivity of the powerless in the name of telling their story” (Goodison 1995: 96). In the museum it is clearly not sufficient to “listen to people” and “to capture their stories” nor to simply “let them tell their stories” (ibid 95). It is questionable whether powerless groups are truly empowered by recent

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<sup>15</sup> Emihovich recalls the Latin root of narrative in *naros* meaning to *know*, and forcefully suggests researchers relinquish the use of ‘objective’ academic language; the distancing royal ‘we’ for example is incompatible with a full realisation of the power of subjective knowledge. She also stresses a vital connection with an idea of a ‘narrative of community’ which was considered in chapter 3 with reference to Audre Lorde’s work.

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efforts within the research field of life history and narrative. Permission to tell individual life stories can readily be granted and simply added onto existing structures of knowledge, without causing the status quo to change at all. In contradistinction being “part of” research informed by feminist-hermeneutics incurs a critical responsibility which makes it incumbent on all research participants to reflect and to effect change (Usher 1997: 47).<sup>16</sup>

In other words feminist-hermeneutic research must constantly address the questions which are posed most notably by James Clifford: ‘who speaks and writes, when and where, with and for whom’. Clifford draws out the ‘historical and institutional factors constraining what is written and why’ (Clifford 1989: 13). These issues recur throughout this thesis which is concerned with the precise nature of power relationships between the researcher and the researched; the ethical responsibility of the researcher/story-taker to assist the researched/story-giver in uncovering the multifaceted truths of their story. The question of ‘ownership’ arises from these hierarchies of power; who really owns a story which aims to be told entirely from the storyteller’s perspective? The researcher will inevitably have a profound effect on the field of study whether s/he desires it or not; the effect between humans in a social group cannot be denied. In addition, it is the researcher who usually gains the kudos of a Ph.D. and publication. A partial answer lies in locating the telling of research stories, giving due regard to their specific location in time and within a socialised place, which requires structures of power “be acknowledged, examined and explicated” (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995: 127).

Hatch and Wisniewski advocate the sort of ‘situated’ research narrative which Donna Haraway prioritises, which is the ‘embedded and embodied’ search for knowledge that is undertaken with particular communities of teacher-students (Haraway 1991). This is not to suggest the replacement of all theory with personal anecdote but simply to echo Valerie Walkerdine’s opinion; the idea of “equal but different” is a condescending perspective, which has been applied to single point readings when they are the only available viewpoints (Walkerdine 1996: 109-10).<sup>17</sup> A methodology informed by feminist-

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<sup>16</sup> I do not accuse Emihovich of evading this political position but, in her short paper she does not address what are major problems for me: where do the bounds of ‘community’ lie; does it matter whose, how many and what stories are gathered; who finally decides what stories should be told and why.

<sup>17</sup> I share the working class roots of Walkerdine, and as a teacher myself I also want to present alternative ways of reading to the “dominant” storylines, which people’s memories usually resort to when simply asked for their story (Goodison 1995: 95).



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hermeneutics of more 'active listening' or 'active collaboration' is necessary. This is not to deny the risk of researcher domination, tipping the balance of control back towards the academy. The question of power relationships and ethics loom perpetually; but so does "resistance to power", which "is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies" (Foucault 1980: 142). In the context of this research project I can only plead to strong feelings of a fundamental human connection between all of the participants and hope that if my 'voice is the loudest' then it also truly reflects a community who have striven to bring thoughts into speech, writing or visual expression (Hatch 1995: 126).

A pilot project which intertwines "theory and practice" will help to crystallise the methodological procedures of this thesis (Usher 1997: 34). The project echoes an understanding of ethnographic "reflexivity" in the field of education as always 'value-laden' and 'utopian' (Scott 1997). It reinforces the contention that since "the practice of doing education and finding out about education is inextricably linked together" research cannot be a "neutral medium of expression and ideas" (ibid: 155). It is rather a business of 'passionate criticism' or 'passionate enquiry' (Emihovich 1995: 45, Dadds 1995).

##### **A pilot project: the field-site, the key informant teachers and their students**

The field-site of the pilot project is B.L. Primary School which is situated in a socially deprived multicultural area of south London. The project involves 25 year 1 students and two key informant teachers, their class teacher P.L. and C.V. from the Lewisham Language and Achievement Project (LLAP). LLAP offers support for those children whose mother tongue is not English without withdrawing them from the whole group work at school, so that the whole class benefits from the efforts of the LLAP teachers. In addition, the English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers are not excluded and thereby made to feel isolated from the group.

##### **The pilot hypothesis: a museum curriculum to facilitate 'thinking' together**

In October 1994, B.L. School was the focus of the LLAP team activities for Black History

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Month and it was decided to pilot a collaborative project about 'Clothes from around the World.' This topic provides a broad focus for work across the curriculum, It incorporates materials and technologies of construction and decoration, design styles and the function of clothing. A diversity of project work can be developed from initial attention to the handling collection of clothing, which powerfully stimulates the senses to respond in 'almost involuntary' ways, and facilitate 'thinking' as Hooper-Greenhill notes.

Working with real things enables all kinds of *thinking* to occur, including making comparisons, remembering, making relationships, classifying, interrogating, moving from concrete observations to abstract concepts, extending from the known to the unknown and from specific observations to generalisations.  
(Hooper-Greenhill 1994: 102-3) [My emphasis]

'Thinking' for Hooper-Greenhill here denotes an overriding 'scientific' stance. It is the importance of extending thought 'from the known to the unknown', or 'thinking together' in a much wider sense of philosophico-ideological questioning, which the pilot project work highlights. To facilitate 'thinking' 3 face to face sessions of two hours duration were organised with the children and some museum objects. Each session was audio-taped, fully transcribed and copies of the transcripts were passed onto the teachers P.R. and C.V. for information and comments. The first and last taped sessions took place at the school and the second session at the museum. The first and last sessions occurred 10 days before and 10 days after the museum visit.

Every child was interviewed about: their hopes and expectations for the museum visit, their actual experiences at the museum, and their memories of this experience. Because they were very young people it was decided to conduct all the interviews with two children at each session, and it was hoped that this would facilitate dialogical exchange between peers in a more relaxed and natural atmosphere. Additionally interview aimed to investigate how 'peers can influence each other' by working out their ideas and clarifying their thoughts together (Tudge 1994). This notion expands upon aspects of Vygotsky's learning theory, that greater levels of understanding can be achieved "in the cooperation of the child with adults" (Vygotsky 1996:194). Vygotsky states.

With assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself - though only within the limits set by the state of his development. ... The discrepancy

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between a child's actual mental age and the level he reaches in solving problems with assistance indicates the zone of his proximal development <sup>18</sup>.  
(Vygotsky 1996:187)

Museum experiences lead teacher-colleagues to note that children make greater progress working together with well briefed adult assistants during museum visits, and young students regularly surprise their teachers with the quality of their discussion about the museum work <sup>19</sup>. The B.L. team decided to examine the 'museum' discussion between peers, and aimed for my adult input during interview to facilitate some movement towards a higher zpd. The problem of less able but more confident peers influencing opinion was alleviated by adult intervention, constantly checking the learning tasks and taking responsible intervention as necessary (Tudge 1994). During interview everyone showed an enthusiasm to record their voices onto the tape and it was ensured that everyone had an opportunity to speak. At the final interview session the task was for each child to state their name, their favourite object and a reason for their preference.

Interview provided the opportunity to 'probe' for in-depth responses. For example Sebastian and Nikesha both liked the North African 'headdress' best and were prompted to consider why. Sebastian said, "Because, my mum went to Egypt and ... she brang some, a toothbrush." Sebastian's mum hadn't actually gone to Egypt, but like a number of children he imagines a close family connection with his favourite object. Nikesha said, "'Cos, Because I like it, because, umm, because ... Becky try it on, her friend Becky try it on, and when Becky try, Becky trying this one, that's why I like this one." Nikesha cites her object preference in association with a friend, and points to the importance of establishing positive relationships with peers for children of this age. Museum objects can enhance these relationships by valuing each child's home culture.

#### **Extending dialogue with a personalised museum-visit book.**

Photographs of students with museum objects can provide an important aid to recalling personal museum experiences and form part of an important strategy to improve literacy.

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<sup>18</sup> The 'zone of proximal development is known as 'zpd' in literature on early years education .

<sup>19</sup> A vital point I note in the video *Using Museums*. Channel 4 Schools Television

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It was decided to expand the primary work of 'talk' triggered by photographs to make a personalised book about the museum trip. Student's responses during interview and the photographs taken on the day of the museum visit were utilised in this museum memory book, which I volunteered to construct. Initially the children's interview speeches were faithfully recorded verbatim as captions for the book, since the main educational role was facilitating individual thoughts about museum objects and selves into voice. I was concerned that too early an emphasis on 'correct' English might dent fragile confidences and hamper this vital process of articulation, but I adjusted the children's remarks in line with 'standard' English for their personalised museum book after discussion with LLAP colleagues. A comparison of some children's original words with the clipped language produced for the book will clarify my original misgivings to some extent. Becky and Prahasani both choose adinkra mourning cloth from Ghana as their favourite object from the museum handling session<sup>20</sup>.

Book: Becky, Prahasani and Amy's favourite thing in the Museum was the adinkra cloth from Ghana. Becky liked the adinkra cloth because one of the patterns reminded her of the stars on the birthday cake she had this year. She remembered that the adinkra pattern was done by printing.

Becky: That one. ... Because I liked the patterns. ... That one. ... Because, yesterday I had stars on my birthday cake.

Book: Prahasani liked it because it had lovely, beautiful colours. She liked the way it was joined with coloured threads to make a repeating patterns. She noticed there were a lot of patterns on this very big piece of cloth. Prahasani thought that we might make it bigger if we sewed some more pieces and did some more printing.

Prahasani: My name is Prahasani *giggle* and that one, that umm, the piece of clothes is my favourite one. ... because its got, lovely beautiful colours and both of them is the same on each, like, square and the same with the others, and it repeats itself ... humm ... it, ohh.

*Mild giggles and sighs.*

its because it got more patterns and I like the whole of it and uh uh it's very long and you could make lots of patterns, and if, if when its finished if you could sew some more and you might get it long, and you might, umm, print some more of it.

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<sup>20</sup> Adinkra means 'farewell' and the cloths are coloured red or orange reds, a good-luck colour in many cultures. They are stamped with over 40 different patterns which can each be read like text and hold meanings, such as 'may you make many friends in the after-life.' The stamps are carved from pieces of gourd which students are able to handle during their visit. I believe objects such as these can challenge the racist sentiment which denigrates African peoples who do not widely utilise a similar sign system to the western alphabet, since these African objects are amongst a number which signify quite precisely.

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Becky: *I like to listen to Prahasani's voice.*

I still enjoy listening to Prahasani, but reading these comments in retrospect it appears that the key-informants and I were “forcing students ... to speak and think only in the language of dominant [standard] English” (Giroux 1993: 74). Now it seems evident that the dominant language adopted for wider publication in the children's book is disparaging in some respects. It erases alternative expressions such as those of the working-class children and those speakers at the beginning stages of speaking English as a second language. It is monocultural and the logic of grammatically “correct” English severely clips the children's linguistic responses. In their own words they linked ‘birthday cakes’, ‘best friendships’ and absent ‘parents’, in a dialogical struggle to bring the distant museum objects closer in movements of understanding and personal meaning-making. This book project-work led to an awareness that educators can unwittingly perpetuate iniquitous power-relations in the world, through a censorship of alternative voices in museum-school spaces. As Henry Giroux states “a teacher can work from sound ethical and theoretical principles and still end up pedagogically silencing students”, if they do not “explore how pedagogy functions to ... *produce* rather than merely *transmit* knowledge”, and focus on how students “come to know” or “on the production of knowledge and identities” (Giroux 1993: 98).

In subsequent collaborative projects more of the original vigour Emihovich prizes amongst her student speech is retained. Since ‘ethnic identity’ and ‘linguistic identity’ is intertwined more than one logic and more than one language is noted and valued after the B.L. school project (Giroux 1993: 168). The rigid B.L. school approach to literacy doesn't “take seriously” the different “categories of meaning, experience and voice”, which students use “to make sense of themselves and the world around them” (Giroux 1993: 95). The thesis does not argue against teaching ‘standard’ English per se, nor does it “romanticise” any “subjugated knowledges” (Giroux 1993: 101). The pilot project simply emphasised that some students “speak patois as well as standard English”, and further that this dual language ability should be celebrated in museum-school spaces, if self-esteem

#### **4     Developing an ethnographic action research methodology**

and achievement is to be raised for all students (hooks 1989:12).<sup>21</sup>

##### **4.5     Conclusion and introduction to the situated knowledge(s) of the case studies at chapters 5 to 8.**

The application of an 'action research' method which is distinguished by certain notions taken from the 'new ethnographies' and informed by feminist-hermeneutics has been justified in the museum-school context. This method is characterised by certain key features. Firstly a view of the museum-school frontiers as a 'field-site' which is marked by Clifford's 'travelling theory.' Secondly collaboration with 'key informants' or teachers to facilitate some access to the student point of view. Thirdly the maintenance of non-hierarchical relationship with the 'key informant' teachers and their students. Equality between research colleagues is demanded by feminist-hermeneutics, new ethnography and action research approaches. These theoretical positions and methods are characterised by 'reflexive dialogical exchange' which ensures more equal relationships of power between 'researcher' and 'researched.' Most importantly the construction of initial 'research question(s)' are required to be of mutual interest to all the researchers, and tied to immediate action aiming to improve social situations (Whitehead 1985:97; Nelson 1995).

At the museum-school frontiers the research question of this thesis is central to the project work which results in collaborators' pedagogic practice, and aims to improve the learning and life chances of students. In this research 'collaborators' voices' echo throughout although I am responsible for writing up projects in the form of case-studies within which I act as a participant observer. The research is concerned to elucidate local knowledge in the museum-school/college field through 'thick' description. It aims ultimately to empower individuals and communities to challenge existing interpretations. Overall the thesis explores the potential for personal and social transformation which museum objects can provide, in spite of a seemingly rigid framing of knowledge by fixed displays in glass-case.

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<sup>21</sup> The projects which I outline in chapters 5-8 provide evidence for hooks view since they are 'success stories' in the hard sense of exam results. This success was achieved by first forging a strong 'alliance', or founding a research team committed to investigating the potential of a radical museum-school curriculum, as I outline in the next chapter.

In the next four chapters, five to eight, four case-studies are provided. The case studies revolve around specific themes which illuminate aspects of the theoretico-methodological position that has meticulously been built up in chapters 1 to 4. These case-studies provide a series of ‘partial’ perspectives’ rather than instances of a universalising theory, but they make a large claim to truth and serve as pointers for others engaged in radical museum education around the world. In this thesis an invitation to engage in dialogue is extended to other workers in museum education. The arguments elaborated in this thesis evolve from the traditional position of an education officer; one who does not participate in the construction of exhibitions, but with the development of educational programmes to aid in their interpretation. It is contended that ethnographic action research informed by feminist-hermeneutics provides an appropriate set of methodological tools, with which assiduous museum education officers, of limited power in the museum, can examine and improve their interpretive praxis together with teacher-colleagues.

The thesis aims to inspire the development of central ideas about the value of forging partnerships between museum educators and external agencies. A particular concern is to demonstrate the success of a radical museum curriculum which prioritises antiracist-multiculturalism. It is hoped that more efforts in raising voices and visibilities at the museum frontiers will be encouraged, to support or contradict the findings of my small-scale research project. In this thesis it is recognised that the broader issues of changing structures of power *in* the museum are avoided, and this remains a vital avenue for further work with a larger museum-wide team and greater financial support.

## **5 Raising African-Caribbean voices and visibilities at the museum frontiers**

There is a necessity for remembering the horror, but of course there's *a necessity for remembering* it in a manner in which it can be digested, *in a manner in which the memory is not destructive*. ... The collective sharing of that information *heals the individual - and the collective*.  
(Morrison 1992: 247-8)

Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonisation. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. ... Telling our stories from the past, reclaiming the past, giving testimony to the injustices of the past ... The remembering of a people relates not so much to an idealised remembering of a golden past but more specifically to the remembering of a painful past and, importantly, people's [sic] responses to that pain. ... Both healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they have decided consciously or unconsciously to forget.  
(Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 34, 146)



### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter is regarded as a useful bridge to demonstrate the ways in which the theoretical perspective that has been elaborated in chapters 1 to 4 works in practice. The chapter considers collaborative work which deliberately opens the museum to the voices of the Caribbean Women Writers Alliance (CWWA). Specifically, at sections 5.1 and 5.2 the CWWA reconstruction of traditional museum knowledge from the new 'standpoint' or 'situated' perspectives of Black women is critiqued (Tuhivai Smith 1999:146; Morrison 1992: 247; Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1991). The subjectivity of these perspectives will be further justified with reference to the 'unsaid' of feminist-hermeneutics (Gadamer 1981; Wolff 1975), constructivism (Hein 1998; Silverman 1995; Worts 1995), and the recommendations of Government reports (Mcpherson 1999; MTI 1993).

At 5.1 some background information to the field-site and the key-informant collaborators in CWWA is provided. Then the importance of putting 'healing re-memories' into writing and publication for this group of women, and the role of the museum in facilitating this work is considered. The argument is illustrated with poetry, which is used as evidence, from *Another Doorway Visible inside the Museum* (Anim-Addo 1998).<sup>1</sup> The re-writing workshops arose out of a public demand from the local Caribbean community for a creative 'writing back to the museum', on issues which are vital to Caribbean peoples, but lie 'unsaid' behind the public displays in the museum (Gadamer 1981; Wolff 1975; Henderson 1993). *Emancipation Day* is another example of collaborative work which expands that which can be said in the museum. Specifically, on *Emancipation Day*, the museum celebrates *oral tradition performances* for the whole family, and in section 5.2 the significance of this annual event for the Caribbean and the wider communities is investigated.

In 5.3 and 5.4 an early years collaboration which was initiated at INSET with specialist teachers from CWWA and local schools is considered. The overall aim of this early years collaboration arose out of public concern for improving the academic achievement of African Caribbean children. Specifically, in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry the

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<sup>1</sup> *Another Doorway* is the result of international workshops hosted by the museum.

research participants were concerned to counter the harmful effects of racial prejudice on Black and white children in British society, through museum-school project-work with the youngest, key stage 1 children. (Siraj-Blatchford 1994).

At section 5.3 some background information to the early years research field-site, IS School, the key-informant teacher-colleagues and their students is provided. First the interrelationships between teacher-colleagues at IS School, PS School, the Caribbean Centre of Goldsmiths College where CWWA have a base, and the Horniman Museum are outlined. Finally the achievements of a museum-based world music project is highlighted. Specifically the power of museum objects framed in a particular way to raise the self-esteem and performance of the student group is illustrated (Milner 1975; Siraj-Blatchford 1994). At 5.4 the value of the oral tradition and storytelling workshops which was carried out with year 1 students at the school is considered. This value is located in a psychoanalytical context, primarily through the work of Gilroy (1994) and Bettelheim (1991). The storytelling project provides an opportunity to re-examine the concepts of meaning and truth in a specific museum context. The qualitative information at 5.3 and 5.4 shows the value of museum partnerships which privilege the creativity of the arts in a global context to increase the potential of future lives. In addition a quantitative analysis of the project work is offered. The hard quantitative evidence of the bilingual students' improved SATs performance is provided at table 5.1. <sup>2</sup>

At section 5.5 some conclusions are drawn. Teacher-collaborators feel that the opening of the museum to the alternative truths of the African Caribbean oral tradition demands an intense commitment to listening and learning on the part of the museum. The research participants also highlight the importance of disseminating this project work, which comprises an important part of the antiracist-multicultural curriculum, through publication and conference (Anim-Addo 1998a/b; Golding 1996, 1999 forthcoming; Mears 1995). <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> SATs refers to the Standard Attainment Targets, which are set for each Key Stage of the National Curriculum [see figure 1.3 for details]. In the classroom teachers set SATs tests at the end of each term.

<sup>3</sup> The way of working which resulted in the publication of these texts is qualitatively different from the collaboration with teachers in the pilot project outlined at chapter 4.4. The success of the collaborative work highlighted in this chapter led to the forging of a committed research team of 25 teacher/lecturers which is outlined in the next chapter. MK. elected to join this research team with CC. a member of CWWA, but the majority of CWWA members decided to focus on their creative writing. This fluidity of the research membership and the boundaries of the research is regarded as a positive aspect of ethnographic action research informed by feminist hermeneutics. It denotes a special passion and non-hierarchical ownership.

## **5 Raising African Caribbean voices and visibilities at the museum frontiers**

### **5.1 Putting healing 're-memories' into writing and publication: background to the field-site, the key informants, and the projects.**

In addition, writing from within the museum allows the kind of appropriating of texts which can only bring more Black women and their families into museums to look with fresh eye and to validate their interpretations.  
(Anim-Addo 1998a: 103)

A small yet vital 4%<sup>4</sup> of the formal education programmes at the Horniman Museum currently comprises project-work with CWWA. All the collaborative programmes with CWWA are long term, and the working relationship with this community is quite distinct from a one-off tokenistic association; it is intense and demands a deal of committed *work* from all participants. Throughout this chapter the value of such a deep collaborative involvement is highlighted, and two main aspects will be summarised. Firstly collaboration brings clarity to thought, especially in terms of ethical considerations about power-relationships at the museum frontiers. Secondly membership of such a supportive group permits the mutual development of skills and expertise, which benefit the wider community of museum visitors as I shall demonstrate.

#### **The Caribbean Women Writers Alliance (CWWA) field-site and the key informants.**

CWWA is a large international organisation and one series of collaborative projects which were organised at the particular field-site, between the Horniman Museum and the Caribbean Centre of Goldsmiths College will be highlighted. The key informant teacher/lecturers at this field-site are Joan Anim-Addo, the founder of CWWA, and three active committee members, Thelma Perkins, Marie Wray-Williams and Mary Boley.

The Alliance embraces mainly, but not exclusively, Black women. The regular workshops, conferences and support groups at the Caribbean Centre of Goldsmiths College are a vital and pleasant means of international networking. They also provide opportunities for learning about the culture of a particular community, and acquiring skills such as story-telling<sup>5</sup>. There are currently 130 members of CWWA whose ages range

<sup>4</sup> In a twelve month period an average of 23,000 visitors will attend specially designed sessions and work collaboratively with a number of museum professionals in the Formal Education department.

<sup>5</sup> I attended a year long course with Marie Wray-Williams and Thelma Perkins in 1996.

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from teens to elders. A large proportion of members are teachers who subsequently attend, and/or collaborate on museum INSET, as well as organising school trips for their students, while family members visit at weekends.

The Alliance was originally formed to provide a forum for dialogue, and in particular to facilitate a movement into new forms of writing by peoples whose voices have been marginalised or silenced by hierarchies of power in the established academies. Towards this end a journal *Mango Season* is published 4 times per year. I am invited to contribute pieces on museums and publicise collaborative museum ventures such as Black History month workshops, and the now annual Emancipation Day event on August the 1st, which will be discussed at 5.2.

First a series of 're-writing the museum' workshops which were satisfactorily marked by the publication, *Another Doorway Visible in the Museum* will be outlined. It was during this 're-writing' project that CWWA members and I constructed a theoretical framework for new interpretations to be made at the museum frontiers, and permit a wider collaboration between the museum and its audience.

Joan Anim-Addo concisely describes the purpose of the re-writing the museum project, "to insert a hitherto largely absent presence, that of the Black woman's, into the museum context" (Anim-Addo 1998a: 93). I shall explain how the museum permitted the women to assert themselves as subjects, by allocating an open location of dialogical exchange, and facilitating their creative-writing. In addition the way in which the workshops signified collective acts of *healing re-memory* for the members of the Alliance will be highlighted (Tuhiwai Smith 1999:146; Morrison 1992: 247).

### Constructing *Another Doorway: Visible inside the Museum*

Writing has a special significance for all colonised groups. Writing has been crucial to the Western myth of distinction between oral and written cultures, primitive and civilized mentalities, and ... *attacking the phallogocentrism* of the West, with its worship of the monotheistic, phallic, *authoritative, and singular work, the unique and perfect name*.  
(Haraway 1991: 175)

The waves of writing which followed the inception of the Alliance are seen as a vital means of disrupting the notion of the traditional centre by, mounting an attack on western *phallogocentrism*, the *unique and perfect name* (Haraway 1991: 175). In Britain today multicultural societies are composed of many cultures from the Caribbean Diaspora, and it is the Diaspora experience of CWWA members which presents a challenge to the *authoritative* work of the traditional museum text.

Stuart Hall defines the Black experience as a “*Diaspora* experience” which carries with it a “process of unsettling, recombination, hybridization and ‘cut and mix’” (Hall 1994: 258). Hall further elucidates this experience as ‘profoundly fed and nourished by ... rich cultural roots’, which encompass “the African experience; the reconnection with Afro-Caribbean experience” (ibid). Finally Hall emphasises the complexity of the Diaspora experience, which demands “creative enunciation” through “the categories of the present” (Hall 1994: 258) <sup>6</sup>.

The relevance of Haraway’s thesis to the museum will be illuminated with reference to a poem by Joan Anim-Addo, which is provided over-leaf. This poem of Anim-Addo’s has been selected as representative of a CWWA voice from the Diaspora, and the term Diaspora is used in the sense that Hall has clarified above.

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<sup>6</sup> Stuart Hall also cites James Clifford’s definition of the term ‘Diaspora’ as “a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to identify the local - I would prefer to call it - place, as a distinctive community in historical contexts of displacement” (Hall 1997: 92; Clifford 1994b: ‘Diasporas’ in *Cultural Anthropology* 9: 308).

**Was that Sethe or her sister?**  
(after Toni Morrison's *Beloved* )

maternity figure of woman  
on Ashanti stool  
suckling child  
- wooden, still -  
milk-breathed  
and at one

maternity figure of a woman  
another situation we know full well  
no child to suckle. Child done gone.  
Sold. Mother wooden - still -  
too drained, too whiplashed.  
A stone; no stool.

A stone is not a stool.  
In this hard place no comfort; no rest  
where body thieves  
separate sister, husband, infant  
Even the wisdom of elders absent

How to cook without a stool?  
How to grind peppers for the pot  
with earth spirit not knowing libation  
and palm oil an acrid memory?  
In this corner, the heart of man  
is only stone

echoing a faint, faint  
bu-dum, bu-dum, bu-dum.  
So, infant body wooden now  
stiff still. No to mothering  
in this stone place.  
No. No. No-oooh!  
Howling into stone  
On stone/through stone  
Maternity figure of a woman  
Wooden. Still.

(Anim-Addo 1998b: 39)

**Figure 5.1 Joan Anim-Addo's poem after *Beloved***

Figure 5.1 provides an example of CWWA's creative 're-writing' of a traditional museum text. The 'maternity figure of a woman', which served as an inspiration for Anim-Addo was simply labelled 'Afo <sup>7</sup> maternity figure, wood' at the time of the writing workshops.

<sup>7</sup> This sculpture has since been redescribed as made by 'Eloi' peoples, Nigeria (*African Worlds* exhibition 1999).

Further research in the Horniman Library informed us that the figure was traditionally used by men as part of a prayer “for fertility in their wives” (Picton 1995: 368). The terms ‘fertility’ and ‘maternity’ held a tragic history of meaning for CWWA visitors to the museum which were triggered by the museum object. This particular history was inextricably linked to their Diaspora experience of enslavement during the transatlantic trade, when the bodies of enslaved Black women were primarily used as human vessels for the production of more slaves.<sup>8</sup>

Anim-Addo ‘re-members’ the millions of enslaved women in her poem. She states “another situation we know full well/ no child to suckle. /Child done gone. /Sold.” Alongside this historical act of ‘re-memory’ Anim-Addo acknowledges her literary contemporary, Toni Morrison. Morrison’s imaginative fusion of history and art acts as an exemplar for the CWWA collaborators. Toni Morrison importantly highlights the ‘necessity of re-memory’ for oppressed peoples which Tuhiwai Smith also notes, but Morrison’s creative work vitally points to the need for ‘healing’ re-memory (Morrison 1992: 248; Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 34, 146). For example, the concept of ‘healing re-memory’ is evident in the lines, “No to mothering/ in this stone place./ No. No. No-oooh!” In these lines we are provided with evidence, for the way in which Toni Morrison’s ‘re-memory’ writing provides a force for resistance and liberation, for CWWA visitors to the museum.

In her poem Joan Anim-Addo makes an homage to Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, and further privileges “the Black woman’s resistance” (Morrison 1988; Anim-Addo 1998a: 100). The poem marks a multiple resistance: to the dehumanised role under enslavement, and to the position of Black women in the museum profession today. Anim-Addo notes how Black women are largely absent in the museum, or they occupy low status posts, “cleaners” rather than “curators” (Anim-Addo 1998a: 100). This statement will be corroborated with evidence from a recent Report by the Museum Training Institute.

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<sup>8</sup> This point will be elaborated in chapter 8.

**The Museum Training Institute's Report on Museum Employment**

The Museum Training Institute has recently completed a piece of research which corroborates Anim-Addo's assertion. In figure 5.2 and 5.3 The MTI research statistics are offered to "confirm in hard data what has been an impression up till now" (MTI 1993:7.6).<sup>9</sup>

	<u>All Staff</u>	<u>Curators/Managers</u>	<u>Security/Support</u>
White	97.3	99.0	96.5
Black	1.20	0.60	1.70
Asian	0.70	0.30	1.10
Chinese	0.03	0.00	0.05
Other	0.67	0.10	0.60

Figures supplied by MTI 1993: 18(3.2.6).

**Figure 5.2 Ethnic origin of staff working in local authority museums**

	<u>All Staff</u>	<u>Curators/Managers</u>	<u>Security/Support</u>
White	97.48	98.39	94.63
Black	0.89	1.04	2.12
Asian	0.82	0.54	1.88
Chinese	0.06	0.00	0.13
Other	0.25	0.01	0.24

Figures supplied by MTI 1993: 33(4.2.6).

**Figure 5.3. Ethnic origin of staff working in national and other large museums** <sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The staff profile at the Horniman Museum corresponds to this picture. The Horniman Museum employs 100 members of staff. At the time of writing this thesis 4 members of the security support staff and 1 curator were Black. The curator took early retirement in 1998 to be replaced with a white curator. One security staff member who gained an external promotion in 1999 was also replaced with a white staff member.

<sup>10</sup> The MTI figures I provide at figure 5.4 refer to 'museums employing more than 10 staff' (MTI 1993:33).



The statistics at 5.2 and 5.3 clearly “show ethnic minorities are under-represented in the workforce” (MTI 1993: 57(7.6). The MTI report cites Hooper-Greenhill’s remarks about ‘the overwhelming majority of typical museum patrons as white and middle-class’ as a possible reason for this situation. The report states.

If this is true, then perhaps the low representation of ethnic groups in the museum workforce is connected with their general attitudes to museums. If they see them as irrelevant and do not visit them, they are unlikely to consider them as possible places to work.  
(MTI 1993: 7.8)

The figures at 5.2 and 5.3 are regarded as evidence for the importance of collaborative work with CWWA. The MTI report advises museums to “redouble their efforts to increase the number of visitors from outside their traditional clientele” (MTI 1993: 7.9). Collaboration with CWWA marks a step towards this end, by first increasing the number of professional teachers on the museum workforce, and then jointly negotiating a programme of studies which are relevant to the ‘non-traditional clientele.’<sup>11</sup>

Thus the writing-workshops interrogate professional museum practice which suppresses certain voices, especially the voices of Black women in the museum. The absence of Black women extends to traditional museum displays, and accounts for the fact that so many CWWA members selected the Afo “maternity figure” as inspiration for their re-writing. The CWWA poetry presents the Black woman in a number of aspects which were previously erased or left ‘unsaid’ in the museum (Gadamer 1981; Wolff 1975; Henderson 1993). I argue that these CWWA voices importantly break the museum silencing of their experience, and in addition, I argue for the validity of their claims to truth.

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<sup>11</sup> This point is reinforced in chapter 8. At 8.5 and 8.6 Scarman is followed and the success of the carnival project is attributed, in part at least, to the “positive role model” provided by one Black teacher amongst the museum-school team-leaders (Scarman 1996: 17). In this chapter the efforts of the education department to increase the ethnic composition of the professional teaching work-force during the ‘re-writing the museum’ project is highlighted. The research participants contend that the success of the project is largely dependent on employing Black team-leaders, which permitted the Caribbean women to see themselves positively reflected in the museum hierarchy.

**A justification of CWWA 'subjectivity'**

CWWA poetic interpretations of museum objects such as the 'Afo figure' are clearly subjective, they do not claim any scientific objectivity. Their value lies closer to the fields of art, and the psychoanalytical space whereby difficult histories struggle to speech. Nevertheless, it will be argued that CWWA writing has a claim to knowledge and truth with reference to the thought of Patricia Hill Collins, who challenges both positivist and relativist epistemologies (Collins 1991).

At 3.2 the way Hill-Collins provides a re-definition of 'objectivity' in terms of "standpoint epistemology" which insists on central "standpoint texts" to establish the truth of partial perspectives was highlighted. Hill-Collins notes how "Each group speaks from its standpoint and shares its own truth as partial, its knowledge as unfinished" (Collins 1991: 236). Norman Denzin comments on her erasure of "the dividing line between science, literature, and fiction", and CWWA employ this important notion in privileging the poetic texts of Toni Morrison, to validate the distinctive standpoints and lived experiences of the Caribbean community (Denzin 1997: 65).

Feminist-hermeneutics is interested in facilitating understanding across the borderlands between communities, and standpoint theory is extended in this section to include the distinctive ways in which fictional characters illuminate the real world, through their resonance within the minds of attentive CWWA readers. In addition feminist-hermeneutics shares a mutual emphasis with Standpoint thesis on 'ethics, a politics of community, caring and justice', which Collins traces to "Afrocentric ideas of classical civilisations" (Collins 1991: 10). This tracing is a vital aspect of the antiracist-multiculturalism which I prioritise in collaborative work at the museum frontiers. Collaborators reading Collins's ideas at the museum borderlands are concerned to make the communities involved in the presentation of material culture *responsible*, or in Denzin's words, "accountable for their values and the political consequences of their actions" (Denzin 1997: 66) <sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> These words echo Haraway's which I cite at 3.3. She requires us to be accountable or "answerable for what we learn how to see" (Haraway 1991: 190). It is a pity that Denzin does not credit Haraway.

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To illustrate this point. In collaborative work with CWWA I endeavour to facilitate a questioning challenge to the 'authoritative' tone of our public displays, which make statements such as the one I note earlier, 'Afo maternity figure, wood.' This statement illustrates the curatorial power to speak, and to leave much 'unsaid' in the context of the museum, but attending collaboratively to 'healing' theories it is possible to bring some of the 'unsaid' to speech, writing, and publication (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 150).

In this section the workshops which resulted in *Another Doorway* have been discussed mainly in terms of the categories which Tuhiwai Smith recommends as appropriate 'research projects' for 'oppressed or silenced peoples'. In particular I have considered making 'connections, reading, writing, remembering and creating' as aspects of a 'healing' process, made possible by the research activity of 'networking' (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 142-162). It has also been highlighted that *Another Doorway* stands as 'testament', to the possibility of negotiating subversive strategies of resistance to traditional museum hierarchies (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 144).

In the next section Tuhiwai Smith's research categories will be considered in the light of an emancipatory museum project, which was collaboratively organised with CWWA for the wider Caribbean community. The value of this project for the purposes of challenging racism alongside the Mcpherson Report (1998) will also be considered.

### **5.2      Emancipation Day: Acts of empowerment to break the 'museum silence'**

The Museum of Silence, erected to house the many and varied silences of different peoples. ... As I wandered through this museum, I recognised many of the displays - these silences were mine as much as they belonged to the people they had been taken from. ... They told me the silences were best kept where they could be labelled, annotated, dated, catalogued .. It was all there in carefully regulated, climate-controlled rooms. ... never had so much silence been gathered under one roof, and they were proud of it.  
(Philip 1998: 136-7)

In contrast to Philip's words of indictment on the 'silencing' role of museums above Joan Anim-Addo commends events such as Emancipation Day at the Horniman Museum. She

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notes how Emancipation Day permitted “a multiplicity of voices to be heard side by side”, on “1 August, 1997”, when “sixteen artists commemorating sixteen decades since the passage of the British Emancipation Act shared their work in the Conservatory of the Horniman Museum” (Anim-Addo 1999: 9). Anim-Addo further observes how this event enabled a community of “two hundred or so” people, to come “together out of a shared need to remember an important moment in African-Caribbean history” (ibid). <sup>13</sup>

### **Constructivism and CWWA voices**

Lois Silverman’s recent analysis of ‘constructivism’ in the museum elucidates the value of events such as Emancipation Day (Silverman 1995). Silverman’s thesis will be employed to argue that Emancipation Day provides a prime example, of how the museum might relinquish its traditional or “expert” discourses, in favour of facilitating the more “personal and subjective ways in which visitors make meaning” (Silverman 1995: 165). Firstly, following Silverman, I shall consider how collaborative events such as these take account of the diverse ‘needs’ of museum visitors. Specifically, I shall address the ways in which my collaborative research with CWWA has helped to determine exactly what needs of the British Caribbean community “can be met” in the museum, and “through what techniques” (Silverman 1995: 167).

Silverman highlights the human needs of “individuality”, uniqueness and autonomy, as well as the need for “community” affiliation and interdependence (Silverman 1995: 164). Emancipation Day provides museum visitors with an opportunity to fulfil their needs in both of these areas, or what Doug Worts concisely terms the “personal” perspective and the “collective” perspective (Worts 1995: 189). These personal and collective needs were intimately related on Emancipation Day, and satisfied through the specific ‘techniques’ of feminist-hermeneutics and ethnographic action research (Silverman 1995: 167).

In the museum context these ‘techniques’ involved establishing an open space in which the participants felt comfortable, and were thus enabled to engage in dialogical exchange.

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<sup>13</sup> In this section I focus on the first Emancipation Day in 1997 for the sake of clarity, but I must emphasise here that the 1997 event was not a ‘one off.’ The museum hosted its second Emancipation Day in the Music Room in 1998, and in 1999 our assembly returned to the Conservatory.

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Anim-Addo states. “No-one could have predicted that the Conservatory could so easily have been transformed into a Caribbean *homeplace*, evoked through song, story, poetry, prose, *lest we forget*” (Anim-Addo 1999: 10) [my emphasis on ‘homeplace’].

‘Homeplace’ here seems to share certain features with George Hein’s notion of ‘compatibility’, or ‘the degree to which the environment supports what one intends to do. ‘Compatibility is one of four aspects necessary for a ‘restorative experience’ in the museum. The other ‘restorative’ characteristics which Emancipation Day satisfied were, ‘fascination, extent and being away.’ Being away refers to an environment ‘different from the usual.’ Extent relates to ‘an environment that one can enter and spend time in.’ Fascination pertains to the qualities of an environment that one finds inherently interesting and engaging (Hein 1998: 139).

This feeling of being at *home* was crucial to the success of Emancipation Day, which reminded Caribbean people of their “connections” to ‘groups, the nation, the human family’, and most importantly for CWWA, a painful history (Silverman 1995: 163). The museum setting permitted a *healing* re-memory of this painful history. I offer two CWWA voices, in figures 5.4 and 5.5, to illustrate how the museum objects stirred a positive sense of self in relationship to membership of this group and their historical suffering.

There is no forgetting/ Only the drumming/ Drumming/ drumming pain ... As I  
touch their pain/ [the ancestors] I draw hope/ for there is hope/ Hope for my  
children/ Hope for a brighter Africa

(Buffong 1999: 63).

**Figure 5.4. An extract from Jean Buffong’s poem ‘Janjangbureh’**

Remember this:/ We are the ever-present, ever-patient, watching ones/ waiting on your signal/ waiting on your call./ Stirred by the drum of your collective will/ We come. /We speak of a proud and painful past, of enslavement and a lengthier time before - / All this lest you forget - / ... And Afrika's children, unshackled,/ Soar.

(Joseph 1999: 128).

**Figure 5.5. An extract from Sharon Joseph's poem 'Remember This'**

I have taken the extracts of poetry in figures 5.4 and 5.5 from *Voice Memory Ashes: Lest We Forget*, which is the second publication of creative writing based on CWWA experiences at the Horniman Museum. Both poets reference the museum's collection of musical instruments, the 'drums.' These drums help Joseph and Buffong to make imaginative connections with a complex history which encompasses both 'proud and painful' experiences. It seems to be the power of the real museum objects in a 'homeplace' setting which trigger notions of this complexity; a complexity that permits an imaginative 'healing re-membling' and promises of a future full of 'hope', where Caribbean people might 'Soar.' This 'soaring' eludes to the interrogation and construction of identity.

#### **Personal and community identities**

The words of Buffong and Joseph speak of personal and community 'identities' in relation to museum objects. Silverman emphasises the group influence on the process of constructing self-identity. She states that it is the "specific relationship of the members of a visiting group" which "can activate certain roles or aspects of ones self-identity" (Silverman 1995: 163).

Doug Worts usefully highlights "five processes of interaction" during a museum experience, which all have "conscious and unconscious aspects", that contribute to personal meaning-making and an "individual's sense of identity" (Worts 1995: 188).

These ‘processes of interaction’ are ‘cognition, emotion, imagination, intuition and physical interaction.’ He further stresses the role of objects in these processes which “can set in motion symbolic and literal experiences that can reinforce, undermine or develop one’s sense of identity” (Worts 1995: 190).

Worts’s thesis is important for CWWA collaboration because he prioritises “personal, idiosyncratic meaning-making processes” over the “myth” of an “expert consensus”, and he urges museums to address the need for a “new form of partnership” to “encourage, support and respect” new “ways of meaning-making” (Worts 1995: 190-191). Worts privileges ‘imagination’ and ‘emotional’ responses, in his recommendations for the forging of new partnerships between the museum and its audience. These notions are clearly reflected in the partnership between the Horniman Museum and CWWA, which focuses on expanding meaning-making and developing positive identities in the museum.

Museum collaboration with CWWA during Emancipation Day essentially recognises the complexity of individual identity in relation to group identity. Hooper-Greenhill notes how individuals “fall into more than one group”, and individual members from our target group of Caribbean peoples certainly occupy multiple subject positions, which in turn demands multiple allegiances from them (Hooper-Greenhill 1995: 148). For example CWWA is composed of individuals who occupy more than one subject position: teacher; mother; sister; daughter and poet.<sup>14</sup> Emancipation Day provides us with an opportunity to acknowledge a fluid movement between all of these subject categories which help to define identities, and to challenge any fixing or essentialising of identity during museum collaboration.

‘Identity’, in the words of Beryl Gilroy, a prominent member of CWWA, is not concerned with “strands of effectiveness, group belongingness or economic stability.” Gilroy defines identity in terms of a “fear of being forgotten, of failing to resist the anguish of indifference, rejection and betrayal” (Gilroy 1998: 31). At events such as Emancipation Day the Horniman Museum works together with CWWA on this platform of forgotten

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<sup>14</sup> Similarly I am a mother, teacher, student and daughter. I am mixed race but not Black; disabled but not severely. I was born into an extremely poor working-class household but now live a predominantly middle-class lifestyle. The museum setting permits a “bridging” of “our differences” (Lorde 1996a: 13).

identities, for people of all ages.

Storytelling specifically caters for visitors of all ages on Emancipation Day. Most importantly, a contention of this thesis is that CWWA storytelling in the museum contributes to the construction of new knowledge and a positive sense of self-identity.

**Storytelling: a partnership to challenge racism and re-value ‘discredited’ knowledge(s)**

The CWWA storytelling sessions contextualise and furnish new museum readings of the traditional African artefacts since each storytelling is a new performance. Artefacts are brought to life through this performance and intense responsive listening, since our African Caribbean audience are inspired to echo appropriate calls of sympathy with each speaker. Figure 5.6 is offered to clarify the notion of ‘call and response’ which is crucial to African and Caribbean storytelling.

<u>African terms</u>	<u>English terms</u>	<u>Caribbean terms</u>
Aprapra o? WeE, weE!	Call: Ready to start? Response: Yes, sure!	Messiers Crick? Messiers Crack!
(Kwappong 1999: 44)	(Kwappong 1999: 44)	(Grell 1999: 86)

**Figure 5.6. African and Caribbean ‘call and response’ terms**

Call and response in African Caribbean storytelling provides an example of the museum engaging in a dynamic dialogue with a new audience. During Emancipation Day storytelling provides a means of making and sharing meanings in the museum, and it is Silverman’s contention that this satisfies a basic human ‘need’, to communicate or ‘express’ personal meaning-making. She states.

Visitors “make meaning” through a constant process of remembering and connecting. ... visitors’ needs affect the memories and connections that become salient during a visit. Humans share a basic *need to express the meanings we make by telling them, often in the form of stories*, to ourselves and to others. *The*



*museum setting lends itself well to this storytelling*, not only by curators and educators, but by visitors as well.  
(Silverman 1995: 162) [my emphasis]

Storytelling on Emancipation Day shows museums can make their collections relevant to people of all ages this community by working in partnership with the leaders of professional groups such as CWWA. The relevance of storytelling to the youngest museum visitors will be considered at 5.4. Finally here it is argued that this partnership work is fulfilling an important recommendation laid out in the Mcpherson Report<sup>15</sup>. Mcpherson states.

The importance of and the need for genuine multi-agency *partnership* and co-operation to combat racism, and to bring together all sections of the community with this aim. ... there must be a “multi-stakeholder” approach involving all parts of the community.  
(Mcpherson 1999: 45.18,45.20) [my emphasis]

Collaboration with CWWA certainly seems to promote a feeling that the museum is sensitive, “not just to the experience of the majority but to minority experience also” (Mcpherson 1999: 6.32). However, reading the Mcpherson Report leads me to question the museum as an institution, and specifically to examine our ‘policies and methods’ for signs of ‘institutional racism’ (Mcpherson 6.18). Mcpherson follows Stokely Carmichael in defining institutional racism, which “originates in the operation of anti-black attitudes and practice” (Mcpherson 1999: 6.22). In terms of the framing of ‘knowledge’ in the museum CWWA contend that “a sense of superior group position” prevailed during our collaboration, since the traditional display were constructed by a specialist “white” middle-class profession (ibid). Nevertheless, the museum hierarchy did encourage the education department to collaborate with CWWA, and thereby increase the construction of new ‘knowledge’ at the museum frontiers.

For all participants, Emancipation Day performances reaffirm lost, “discredited knowledge” to use Toni Morrison’s words (Morrison 1984). Morrison elucidates the concept of African Caribbean knowledge from the ‘standpoint’ of CWWA (Hill-Collins 1991). She speaks of “the way Black people looked at the world”, which she

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<sup>15</sup> The Mcpherson Report examines the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, and mounting a challenge to racism was a major concern which CWWA members brought with them to the museum.

imaginatively reconstructs in her novels as a, “blend” and an,

acceptance of the supernatural and a profound rootedness in the real world at the same time with neither taking precedence over the other. ... And some of those things were discredited only because Black people were discredited therefore what they *knew* was “discredited.”  
(Morrison 1984: 342)

In the world of Morrison’s book *Beloved* an overlapping of time and space seems to create a gap or Clearing in everyday or common-sense thought (Morrison 1988). This jolts the minds of empathetic readers to “actively listen”, in Gemma Corradi’s phrase, which she uses to elucidate the process of feminist-hermeneutic dialogue (Corradi 1995). ‘Active listening’ is empowering. It enables the conscious re-membering and articulation of “unspeakable thoughts unspoken”, which are the ghosts of the Middle Passage (Morrison 1988: 199). For CWWA these ghosts loudly haunt the spaces of the ethnographic museums, demanding to be ‘re-membered’ in ways which are “painful” but “not destructive.” CWWA contend collaboration with the museum has gone some way to facilitating this ‘healing’ re-memory.

CWWA members bring new understandings, such as Morrison’s concept of ‘knowledge’, to the museum, and this affects the way they ‘make-meanings’ there. Partnership work has endeavoured to “make a better fit” between the contents of the museum and these non-linear non-scientific ways of ‘making-meaning’, in order to make the museum more relevant to African Caribbean people who are under-represented in the visitor profiles (Silverman 1995: 165).

In the next sections the value of constructing knowledge and making meaning with a multicultural school group of the youngest museum visitors will be examined. I shall specifically investigate ways of challenging racism, increasing self-esteem, and raising achievement, which are influenced by partnership work involving musical instruments and storytelling with CWWA.

## **5 Raising African Caribbean voices and visibilities at the museum frontiers**

### **5.3 Examining positive African Caribbean connections with year 1 students: background to the field-site, the key informants, and music-work**

The principle barriers to access to museums are social class, poverty, educational disadvantage, ethnic and cultural background, disability and an individual's own attitudes. These factors often operate in combination, so that a successful strategy to overcome them requires a coordinated programme.  
(Anderson 1997: 61)

During the 're-writing' and 'Emancipation Day' projects which have been analysed above, a number of CWWA members who are primary school teachers became interested in developing an antiracist-multicultural curriculum, for early years students at the museum-school frontiers. Firstly, this curriculum was intended to instil a sense of self-esteem and pride in the diverse cultural heritage of the youngest museum visitors. The main contention, which arose out of our Emancipation Day activities, was that museums are ideally placed to motivate and raise the achievement of African Caribbean children, by nurturing a positive disposition towards museum collections.

The early years museum-school curriculum leans on recent research into 'identity' by David Milner (1983) and Siraj-Blatchford (1994). I shall briefly consider the main elements of Milner and Siraj-Blatchford's findings before outlining two early years projects which grew out of collaboration with CWWA and members of my original research team.

#### **Early years museum visitors and the question of identity**

David Milner's work on very young childrens' racial preference and identity was based on the use of 'ethnic' dolls (Milner 1975). Milner's original research demonstrated that the African Caribbean 5 year olds in his sample showed an 80 percent preference for the white doll over the Black, while all the white children clearly identified with and preferred the 'same race' white doll. Two years later Milner repeated the test on the same children who had been split into two groups, one group had received a 'mono-ethnic' education, and the other group a 'multi-ethnic' education including 'ethnic minority teachers.' None of the Black or white children who received the mono-ethnic education had changed their

views, but, of the children who received the multi-ethnic education only 40 percent of the African Caribbean children still preferred the white doll and only 11 percent identified with it.

Milner's seminal investigation into racial preference and racial identification in young children is important for this thesis. Milner shows that nursery aged children show an awareness of white supremacism "in line with current adult prejudices" (Milner 1975: 12). Milner also forcefully demonstrated the value of multicultural education. He proves that early attitudes to race can be positively influenced by a more inclusive education which reflected the diversity of the multicultural society (Milner 1975).

Iram Siraj-Blatchford has recently built on Milner's study. Siraj-Blatchford argues that some black children can be severely damaged by the racist views which surround them, and she emphasises "the need to offer all children guidance and support in developing positive attitudes to all people, and in particular black people" (Siraj-Blatchford 1994: 5). Following Milner, Siraj-Blatchford strongly recommends teachers develop an antiracist-multicultural curriculum, to provide all children with the tools necessary to challenge racism in society. She contends that racist attitudes damage Black *and* white children, and cites Kutner's (1955) evidence which shows, "young white children who are racist have a distorted perception of reality", and further that, "their ability to judge and reason is also affected" (Siraj-Blatchford 1994: 8).

**The purpose of collaboration between CWWA, primary school, and secondary school field-sites**

The primary purpose of collaboration between field-sites is to mount a strong 'coordinated programme' to increase access to museums, to encourage intercultural understanding, and challenge racism at the museum-school frontiers (Anderson 1997:61). The Horniman Education Centre is able to provide opportunities for direct visual and tactile experiences in learning, which are so important to the development of study skills for all children, of primary and secondary school age. Secondary teachers build on the study skills which are developed during the primary years of schooling, and the museum

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has a vital educational role at both these levels. Museum education can nurture a positive disposition towards learning at an early age, and provide continuity throughout the students' school years.

The research participants argue that a study of objects reflecting aspects of different cultural traditions can develop receptive and positive attitudes to education in general, as well as increasing children's awareness and appreciation of other peoples' art forms and culture. Additionally it is contended that a positive disposition towards learning promotes success at SATs and public examinations. The ways in which this disposition can be nurtured at a young age will be outlined.

The two primary school projects which will be highlighted in this section and at 5.4 illustrate the ways a questioning disposition, and an empathetic understanding can be nurtured in the youngest students. The projects show how year 1 children may come to a gradual recognition that other people have minds and feelings like their own through handling objects. In part this is achieved by dialogical processes at the museum-frontiers which aim to facilitate deep thought and privilege creative expression.

IS Primary School is located in the London borough of Lambeth. It is one of the main primary schools which prepare students for their secondary education at PS School, whose art projects are outlined in chapters 7 and 8. The teachers at IS and PS schools initially met during museum INSET sessions. A warm relationship developed when they joined the research team and especially after working together on the dialogical questionnaire project, which is outlined in chapter 6. Their collaborative work is testament to the benefits of liaising across the traditional educational boundaries or 'specialism' which the museum location facilitates.

IS teachers also initially met CWWA members at the museum during a series of INSET on *Language Development from Museum Objects*. IS and PS teachers subsequently began to attend CWWA/Horniman Museum events such as Emancipation Day and Poetry Readings. PS and IS teacher-colleagues also began to liaise with CWWA on activities which aim to celebrate the cultural diversity of their local school population. For example

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TCC, one of the PT art teachers at PS School, was invited to be artist in residence at IS School during the 1997 International Women's Day. TCC followed Joan Anim-Addo who was IS writer in Residence during the 1996 International Women's Day. Joan Anim-Addo and I also organised Marlene Nourbese Philip to be Writer in Residence at PS School during the 1997 International Women's Day.

### **The primary school field-site, the key informant teachers and the student population**

The Horniman Museum is involved with a section 11 project at IS School; the English Language Support Project (ELSP). The Horniman Museum began collaborative work with the ELSP through liaison with a teacher, TMK. TMK is a key informant member of this research project and the ESLP project Coordinator at IS School.

The ESLP aims to develop childrens' oral and written communication skills in English alongside their English speaking peers. Bilingual children who are learning to speak English are supported in their school groups to give them access to the whole school curriculum. In this way Second Language speakers are not excluded or made to feel isolated from the group, and in addition the whole class is advantaged by the efforts of ESLP teachers. Cross-curricular work which the language teams initiate to enhance the use of language by all class members is often based on antiracist-multicultural themes. The antiracist-multicultural curriculum is of benefit to all children and not just those whose particular culture is being studied, although these students certainly gain in confidence through their active participation and contribution to the pool of museum-school knowledge.

The IS student population shares many common features with its neighbour secondary school PS. In the IS student group whose museum-school curriculum will be outlined, 8 children require extra help with learning. These children are progressing through the stages of assessment for Special Educational Needs, in accordance with the criteria

established by Warnock (1994).<sup>16</sup>

In addition to these students, 11 different first languages are spoken by the group. A number of the bilingual children are only just beginning to speak English. At the start of the school year 16 out of the class of 31 children were at the first stage of English competency. I offer figure 5.7 to illustrate the language competency of the year 1 IS student group.

Name	Country	Language	Stage '94	Stage '95
D. M.	Nigeria	Igbo	1	1
L. B.	Ghana	Ashanti	2	3?
K. P.	Nigeria	Yoruba	1	2
U. P. E.	Portugal	Portuguese	1	2
N. M. Q.	Vietnam	Vietnamese	1	2
I.N.	Bangladesh	Bengali	1	1
F.P.	Nigeria	Yoruba	1	2?
M.I.	Bangladesh	Bengali	1	1
N.T.	Portugal	Portuguese	1	2?
K.D.	Gambia	Wolof	1	1
C.C.	Zambia	French/Lingala	1	1
L.Q.S.	Peru	Spanish	1	1
N.P.	Nigeria	Igbo	1	2?
R.I.I.	Vietnam	Vietnamese	1	2?left
F.P.	Zambia	Nyanji	1	3?

The information in figure 8.7 is supplied by the English Language Support Project (ELSP)

The ELSP coordinator is TMK, the ELSP class teacher is TCG, the students' names have

<sup>16</sup> The Warnock stages of assessment were established in 1994 as part of the Special Educational Needs (S.E.N) code of practice. The Warnock stages relate to children who are perceived to have various difficulties in learning. They require schools to list children and their different learning needs alongside specific plans to address the difficulty over a period of time. The national average of children awaiting assessment is 20% at stage 1, and 2% - 3% at stage 5 when a statement or a legal document is issued. The statement outlines the child's needs and the provision which will be made to address these.

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been changed for reasons of confidentiality. This table illustrates the degree of English language competency on entering CG's class in 1994 and the level attained at the end of the school year in 1995.

Figure 5.7 shows the first languages of the children: Igbo, Ashanti, Yoruba, Portuguese, Bengali, Vietnamese, Wolof, French/Lingala, Spanish, Nyanja and Urdu/Punjabi. Three of the children are newly arrived in this country. One other child recently arrived as a severely traumatised refugee. Ten children are the first generation to be born in England. Three members of the group are ethnic English.

The progress in English language competency of the bilingual children is also shown in figure 5.7. Column Four shows the language level at the start of the multicultural museum education programme in 1994, and the level attained at the end of the school year is shown in column five. 1 on the chart represents the beginning level of competency in English and 3 represents the highest level. According to this system which is used in the borough of Lambeth, it is not possible to enter a higher stage 2 or 3, unless the child is able to demonstrate similar abilities in reading and written work.

The 9 children who are seen to have surpassed their entry grade at figure 5.7 have made astounding leaps in levels of literacy. The 7 children who appear to have remained at the beginning stages of English, have nevertheless all gained quite considerable levels of oral competency during the year according to their teachers, and Pat Pinsent has shown this to be a prerequisite for literacy (Pinsent 1992).

Teacher-collaborators attribute the success achieved with key stage 1 students to the collaborative efforts in developing an antiracist-multicultural museum-school curriculum. This argument is illustrated with reference to 2 cross-curricular projects; firstly a music programme.

### **Achievements through music education at the museum frontiers**

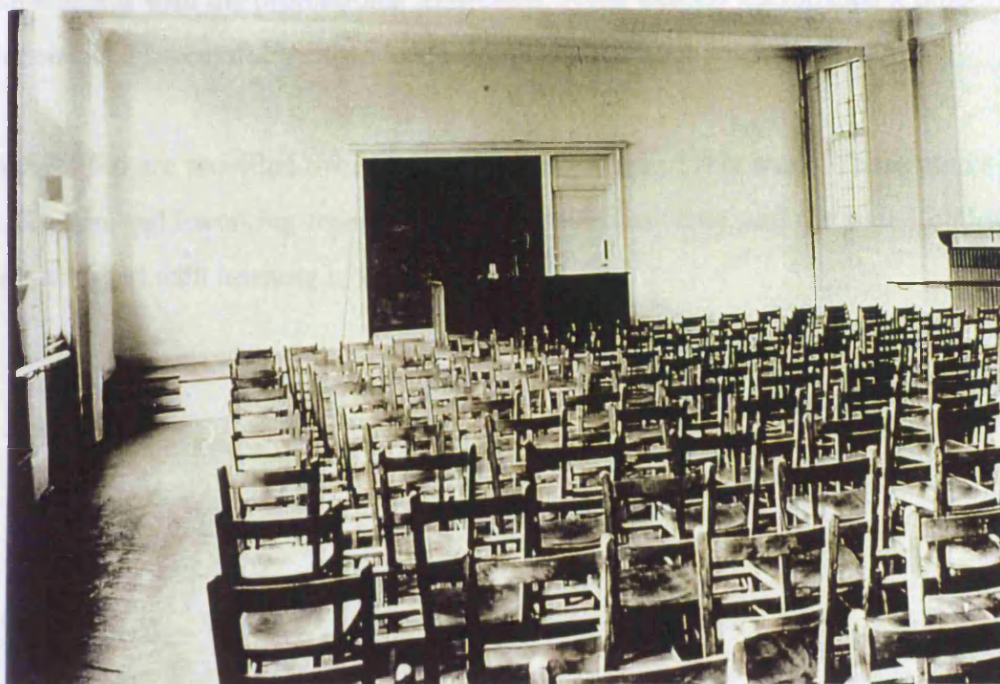
IS School views the Horniman Museum Education Centre as an essential starting point



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and a vital component for much of the ESLP work. Regular meetings are organised with group leaders to discuss the most appropriate ways of utilising the collections to increase knowledge and understanding, as well as boost individual confidence in home cultures and counteract the low self esteem from which some children suffer. In 1994 the intensive pre-visit preparation which includes INSET was singled out for a special part of a Channel 4 programme for schools, *Using Museums*. This television programme shows excellent music education in the museum today, which stands in sharp contrast with museum education at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Plates 5.1 and 5.2 are offered over-leaf to illustrate this point.



**Plate 5.1 South Hall, Horniman Museum. Musical Instruments Display c.1904 (Top)**

**Plate 5.2. Lecture Hall of the Horniman Museum c. 1913 (Bottom)**

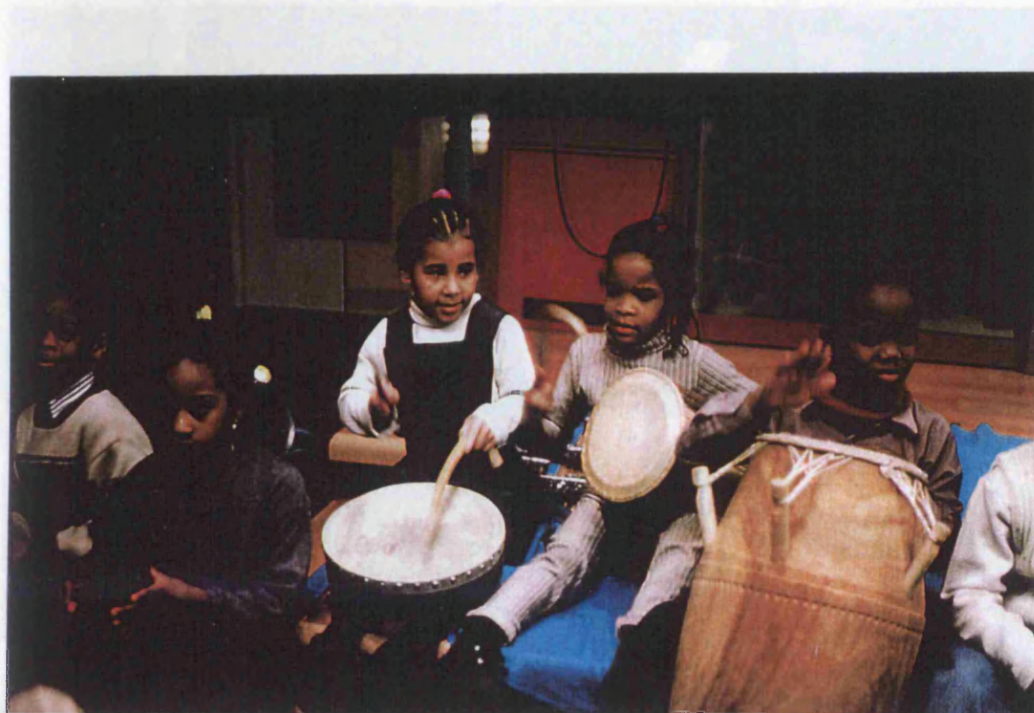
## **5     Raising African Caribbean voices and visibilities at the museum frontiers**

In plate 5.1 the original cramped displays of musical instruments at the Horniman Museum are shown, and plate 5.2 shows the original Lecture Hall where ‘knowledge’ was passed down to the public by museum ‘experts’ (Worts 1995: 191). The educational work which is shown in *Using Museums* takes place in a totally different museum location, in the newly opened Music Room. In the Music Room the instruments are displayed around a spacious central area where visitors can make their own meanings in collaboration with museum professionals.

*Using Museums* emphasises successful museum education as a collaborative partnership between the fields of school and museum. Collaborators placed an emphasis on percussion work, and concentrated especially on the drums for the film. On the day of filming in the museum, a talk and handling session made extensive use of African Caribbean percussion instruments in the handling collection, so that everyone could participate at their own ability level. Then two Ghanaian drummers, Nana Appiah and Kofi Addo, began a workshop where children listened to and then performed a rhythm accompaniment with the professional musicians. Nana quickly established a rapport with the students and successfully expanded their previous school-work on rhythm.

Plates 5.3 - 5.6 are provided over-leaf to illustrate some of this work. These plates show Nana, Kwame and I working *together with* the young students, and the year 1 children all actively engaged with learning in the museum.





**Plate 5.3. IS students making music with the drummers Nana and Kwame. (Top )**

**Plate 5.4. A group of IS students take the museum stage and make music. (Bottom)**



**Plate 5.5. An orchestra of IS students carefully count out a rhythm (Top)**

**Plate 5.6. An IS student gives a solo performance on an 'ektara' (Bottom)**

Figure 5.3 shows Nana and Kwame. When Nana announced his accompanying drummer's name, Kwame, a ripple of recognition ran through the group showing familiarity with the Ghanaian name for boys born on Saturday. Working face to face with students, educators can respond to the feeling of group dynamics, which essentially includes teacher knowledge of individuals, and builds on a newly opened potential for learning. TCG, the teacher on this occasion, introduced her 'Kwame' knowing he would proudly participate. This cannot be assumed as many children do not relish standing up and speaking out, although the aim of this research project is to encourage a confidence which makes this possible.

If individuals are enabled to stand alone and apart from the group stating their opinions and describing their experiences discrimination may truly be tackled in the long term. This work is the emotional equivalent to what is described as the setting up of an intellectual scaffolding so that the child may reach a higher 'zone of proximal development,' a fundamental idea of Vygotsky's which has been further elucidated by Bruner (Vygotsky 1996: 187; Bruner 1986: 71-78). Multicultural museum educators can provide a structure for the young ego which demonstrates to the individual psyche a potential, and possibility of developing sufficient strength to withstand the fear of attack for being different.

When Nana began to drum a basic rhythm with which the children had become familiar thanks to the excellence of TCG's previous instruction, one previously silent child rose; using no verbal language he joined the music-making, encouraged by the professional musicians. This child was actually a refugee who had wandered the school in a daze since his recent arrival in England. At the museum he seems to have found a means of self-expression, after being severely traumatised by dreadful experiences in his home country, which included the unexplained death of his mother.<sup>17</sup>

Nana and Kwame are sensitive to the special needs of children and respond through their art. On hearing details of the therapy afforded this child they spoke of the instruments' power to move, transform, and effect lasting change. On this occasion it seems to be the

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<sup>17</sup> The child's father, and his school teachers TMK and TGC, were unsure if he actually witnessed his mother's murder.

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special contextualising; the drum object brought to life by professional use, which largely constitutes a *healing* process.<sup>18</sup>

### Differentiated learning

This dramatic example of healing which is evident in the video *Using Museums* has been singled out, but the video shows all the children using their minds and bodies in conjunction with speech and song, to engage with museum objects and each other. *Using Museums* shows small hands, eyes, and voices united, to enhance and build upon the pleasures of museum looking (Bruner 1986: 122). This is a fundamental aspect of museum education, which addresses the enormous range of individual needs within a school-group through differentiated learning.

It is argued that collaboration at the museum frontiers enables the enormous progress which figure 5.7 outlines. Teacher-colleagues working from their individual strengths and genuine enthusiasms, who also appreciate the diverse cultures represented in their classroom and the museum, are truly inspiring for their students. Collaborators jointly choose and scrutinise museum objects, for different ways of promoting dialogue.

The aim of key-informant research-participants is for the choices to break the silence on issues of vital importance to all our children such as: racism, prejudice, blackness, discrimination. First a close attention to the pertinent features of objects is facilitated. Children compare and contrast through sensual exploration and then they bring their embodied attention creatively into coherent thought and word. Thus a unique sensory threshold is established, from which further learning across a range of curriculum areas can be achieved, most notably for TCG's group in language development.

In the next section attention will be focussed on a language project which collaboration with CWWA facilitated. The work privileges the African Caribbean oral tradition.

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<sup>18</sup> This verbally silent 'healing' process is reminiscent of the CWWA experiences which they are able to articulate precisely in written language.

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### **5.4     The value of the oral tradition and storytelling with year 1**

The folk tales are told in such a way that whoever is listening is in it and can shape it and figure it out. Its not over just because it stops. It lingers and it's passed on and somebody else can alter it later.  
(Morrison 1992: 253)

#### **Considering questions of meaning and truth in African Caribbean storytelling**

The development of a storytelling programme based around traditional tales at the Horniman Museum, would not have been possible without the cooperation and guidance of CWWA members Joan Anim-Addo and Jan Blake, from the Caribbean Centre at Goldsmiths College. In their INSET programme which I organised at the Horniman Museum, teachers have been able to develop skills and expertise to aid the process of museum inquiry in the smallest visitors. This is a demonstrable value of networking with external agencies. It also points to the importance of establishing an open Clearing location in the museum, which permits the founding and development of a research team of colleagues who welcome new ideas and influences.

Storytelling projects are not analogous to rationalist inquiries seeking to objectively record physical features or 'truths' of the external world, although such work does enter these projects. Bruno Bettelheim emphasises that the importance of traditional tales lies in enabling children to contemplate their inner lives, their feelings and fears (Bettelheim 1991: 117). The truth of tales is that of an imaginative engagement with, not a realist description of, the world. Bettelheim forcefully expresses the significance of 'telling' rather than reading tales to children, since this most powerfully captures the imagination and provides a stimulus to writing. For many of the children at IS School the oral tradition is considerably stronger in their home culture than in present day English society, and for these children learning is enhanced through a familiar mode.

Museum storytelling also publicly validates individual experiences by regarding what are familiar everyday objects for a number of children in a special light. Memories of ongoing traditions can profitably be awakened, and are valued by the museum setting. Children can then actively participate in this sense of worth which is transferred to them through an



acknowledgement of home cultures. For example it is possible that the traumatised boy I referred to earlier is helped by being able to recall happier experiences of village music-making through the drumming workshop.

The different truth of storytelling can promote imaginative language work in many areas of the museum. The Natural History Gallery at the Horniman Museum is organised for A level and science degree students but infant and art teachers regularly bring students with a different agenda. Such a critical attitude, seeking expression of radical unorthodox viewpoints is perhaps part of any creative interaction with the world. Artists from many disciplines share a desire to resist the status quo and Julia Kristeva refers to James Joyce's project as feminist in this context (Kristeva 1989a: 122). One subversive re-presentation of natural history objects will be elucidated with reference to 'Squirrel and Hedgehog,' a west African dilemma tale.

This African tale travels via storytellers to the Caribbean and to the Horniman Museum. Dilemma tales actively involve all participants in completing the story; listeners debate the conflicts and make an ending. There is no one correct answer in this approach, which is child-centred and allows children to develop their imaginative capacities, their aesthetic awareness and their moral sensibilities for making complex decisions. The first concern is with increasing the child's mastery of language simply by engaging in 'talk.'

This is a feat in itself as Beryl Gilroy notes; children quickly come to feel that only right answers are acceptable and the educator must bring them to an understanding that, "talking for its own sake is important" (Gilroy B.1994: 162). Through talking children become individuals capable of independent decision making. Storytelling dialogue is quite different from the often banal exchanges which pertain to a simple relation with everyday life. The storyteller, teacher and children cooperate to enable meaningful discussion over wide subject areas.

It is also the shared context of this talk, which is partly based on an imagined world that gives it an entirely different quality. This creative sharing in the world of the imagination resonates positively within the child who sees that using creative faculties is an important

adult activity. To illustrate this point I shall retell a tale from the oral and written comments of two classes of year one children, accompanied by their teachers from IS School. The reward educators derive from children's spontaneous remarks is direct information about their practice. Actively listening to the students educators come to a better understanding of their effectiveness.<sup>19</sup>

Vivien came to our school and told us a story. The story that came to our school first came from Africa. Viv's friend Jan told her the story and Jan's mum told her the story when she was little in Grenada. Stories can travel about like that. It's a bit like travelling when we hear them and think of different places. We don't know if its a true story or not, but if its not true Vivien, Jan and Stockwell Infants didn't make it up in the first place!

One day it rained and rained and rained. The water made big puddles and bigger and bigger puddles. The water got higher and higher. Squirrel was happy she had made a nest high up in a tree. Then she saw her friend hedgehog. Hedgehog couldn't swim so squirrel helped him. She let him go in her house. It was hard work for hedgehog to climb into squirrel's high nest. The friends were very tired that night and they soon went to sleep together.

Hedgehog rolled into a ball because they like to sleep like that. He slept very well but he prickled squirrel! She tried to wake him but she couldn't because hedgehog has such a good armour. In the morning hedgehog said, "I had a good sleep." Squirrel said, "Lucky you I didn't. You prickled me and you snore." Hedgehog was very very sorry and said he would be more careful.

The next night hedgehog tried to sleep on one side of the nest. Squirrel tried to sleep on the other side of the nest. When hedgehog fell asleep he rolled over and prickled squirrel again! Squirrel tried to wake hedgehog but she couldn't. If only they had a blanket they could put between them but they didn't. The next morning hedgehog was very very sorry he kept squirrel awake again. Hedgehog said he would have to be even more careful.

On the third night hedgehog tried to sleep even closer to the edge of the nest. Squirrel tried to sleep even closer to the other side of the nest. When hedgehog fell asleep he rolled over and prickled squirrel again! If only they had some hard bricks they could put a wall in the middle of the nest, but they didn't have any.

Squirrel was very cross because she hadn't slept well for three nights. She said, "You must leave my home. We can't sleep together. Your prickles hurt me." Hedgehog said, "I'm really sorry but it's still raining. I can't swim and I'll die if I leave." They decided to build a bigger nest together. They did it with their hands and used some twigs from the top of the tree.

This story is followed by careful handling of squirrel and hedgehog. These two creatures from the Horniman Museum handling collection that are literally brought to life from the

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<sup>19</sup> The two sessions are recorded onto audio tape and semi-transcribed.

words of the story prove a potent source of fascination and wonder. Handling these creatures, physical features of survival, protection and shelter are made obvious. Contemporary objects from West Africa and the Caribbean are also made available, so that historical artefacts do not fix peoples into an immovable past, but can be used to emphasise the ever developing nature of culture. For example, on this occasion the objects used included: a gourd bowl with painted decoration, cocoa and nutmeg pods from Grenada; a cassava resist-printed shirt, and a musical instrument called an mbira or thumb piano from Nigeria.

Looking closely at these goods children can perceive something of the breath of human thought and creativity; similarities and differences between cultures. Through conversation children can also come to understand some of the reasons behind differences between peoples: their clothing, food and customs. Examining determining factors such as land and climatic effects on natural resources, which in turn impinge on the different ways people live their lives, differences first seen as odd can be reviewed as an imminently sensible interaction with the world.

Squirrel and hedgehog also personify moral arguments about: justice, intentional cruelty, pain and death, personal property and ownership, friendship and hospitality. The creatures in the story are utilised to express human sentiments, and are discussed in familiar language which aids understanding of such difficult concepts. They release imaginations to transcend the limits of what is possible from day to day, and stimulate children to consider a range of different possibilities. This work importantly expands the parameters of thought and counters stereotypical thinking as Beryl Gilroy notes.

I turned to art and drama to help them towards a new awareness of alternatives and set new boundaries in their thinking. ... All this helped to give the children the chance to form new percepts, opinions and judgments about situations, incidents and people  
(Gilroy 1994: 97)

The creatures also provide a stimulus and inspiration for close observational drawing as well as more imaginative art, and childrens' ideas are further drawn out by these means. Plate 5.8. overleaf provides an example of IS drawing with a caption from the story.



**Plate 5.7. IS students handle squirrel and hedgehog. (Top)**

**Plate 5.8 An IS student's drawing of hedgehog. (Bottom)**

## **5      Raising African Caribbean voices and visibilities at the museum frontiers**

The drawing at Plate 5.8 followed the handling of squirrel and hedgehog which is shown at plate 5.7. The IS teachers and I contend that drawing can provide another channel of communication and introduce different patterns of thought. Real objects seem to provide a powerful, multisensory springboard of interest, out of which the formation of concepts arise. Tactile experiences can greatly assist and stimulate this process of attaining different forms of speech through creative storytelling, writing and drawing activities, since children gain a different perceptual experience from observing the objects close up and from all angles.<sup>20</sup>

### **Interpretation: truth and meaning from a feminist-psychoanalytical perspective**

A Lacanian or mentalist reading of Freud's work emphasises the importance of dynamics and the interpretation of desire. This view stresses psychoanalysis as primarily concerned with the acquisition of the ideas people hold and live by in culture. It looks at the order of society, providing us with a description of, not a recommendation for patriarchy. It empowers us by providing the possibility of rule outside the 'law.' Juliet Mitchell argues the Freudian discourse is properly understood within the framework of the 'two fundamental theories,' of the unconscious and sexuality (Mitchell 1987: 5). The concept of the unconscious will be singled out as of paramount importance here.

Briefly, unconscious ideas enjoy certain freedoms from those of consciousness. They are exempt from contradiction, with love and hate for instance happily co-existing. They are not temporally structured or altered by the passing of time, and often wishes from earliest childhood persist most forcefully. Finally, they seem impervious to contrary evidence from the experiences of reality. Nevertheless they do obey a certain order articulated in the theory of 'primary processes.' Freud remarks that "the governing purpose obeyed by these primary processes is easy to recognise; it is described as the pleasure-unpleasure principle, or more shortly the pleasure principle" (Freud 1984: 36).

Freud elucidates how the avowal of certain ideas would cause pain to the conscious agent and so they are relegated to the unconscious by the forces of repression. However they remain active, and as disguised representations seek release when conscious control is

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<sup>20</sup> This point will be elaborated with reference to GCSE students at 9.2

relaxed, as in the case of dreams (Freud 1980). Through analysis the roots of these ideas are often connected with unfulfilled wishes, which are usually of a sexual nature and stem from earliest childhood. The theory of the unconscious will be employed in an interpretation of the dilemma tale.

In storytelling the imaginary world of artistic production weakens the repressive censor, which allows unconscious material to emerge and be dealt with in the safe narrative space. For example the issue of conflict in the dilemma tale results from 'intentions gone awry' as in so many traditional tales according to Bettelheim (Bettelheim 1991: 117). The idea of conflict is a conscious aspect of the tale and also belongs in the realms of psychoanalysis, which is not a theory of conformity and adaption although it has been criticised as such (Mitchell 1987: 338). One of the most important features of Freud's thought is the conflict which lies at the heart of the theory of the unconscious, the persistent battle between life-affirming Eros, and Thanatos the urge towards death. The dilemma story importantly permits this conflict to escape the forces of repression, through the images of squirrel and hedgehog and through the narrative structure.

Structure here is distinct from the more familiar moral fables of Europe such as Little Red Hen, who seeks to punish lazy creatures under the constant sway of the pleasure principle. In Little Red Hen the superego is all powerful and asserts the law. In contradistinction, the essential structure of dilemma tales lie in completion by the child. This element of freedom to choose gives full rein to imaginative faculties. Story solutions are ingenious in content and range from kindly to vindictive. 'He should go,' 'But he will die,' 'Cut off his prickles,' 'Try to make the nest bigger,' 'Make another nest together.' The young psyche is given time and space in the tale, to search for a just solution to the eternal problem of conflict, as it is exteriorised and projected onto creatures in the nest.

Squirrel and hedgehog are both viewed as aspects of life which are valued by small people, incredulous that museum creatures are 'real' but 'dead' and that someone long ago, not the storyteller, may have 'killed' them. They are live representation and dead reality, speaking of our desire to escape the transience of existence. The different features of the animals also point to different aspects of ourselves, some of which lie dormant but

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not defeated. The IS children are squirrel and hedgehog, ego and id. They are not yet, nor can they ever be entirely rational beings. The demands of individual libido seeking expression must remain unsatisfied, for the sake of society which seeks to contain them. But conflict remains between the primitive desires of human nature which are relinquished, though not entirely, for the sake of a life within culture (Gabriel 1983: 30).

Bruno Bettelheim notes an important point of traditional tales (Bettelheim 1991). Through their telling small children whose very existence is reliant on the care of others, are given an opportunity of transcendence from the fears inherent in this attachment, loss and abandonment. Storytelling assists us towards a greater understanding of objects, others and ourselves, by providing a safe space of imagination. Handling real things and asking questions about them leads us to imagine different pictures of the human place in the world and alternative possibilities of being.

### **5.5      Conclusion**

In this chapter the theoretical questions of interpretation, truth and knowledge were considered through the practice of museum-based projects around the 'unsaid' of African Caribbean culture. The 'unsaid' was defined here as the oral tradition which is vital to the 'passing on' of African Caribbean knowledge and cultural truth, but which is disparaged by the traditional museum discourse.

This unsaid was re-valued at the museum frontiers through collaborative project work with key informant members of the research project. Specifically the ways in which the museum-based projects facilitated a movement from speech into writing, for people marginalised by the traditional museum framing of knowledge was outlined. The project work challenged limiting racist perspectives in the museum and validated new interpretations and understandings, which constituted a work of *healing* for participants (Morrison 1988).

The first projects involved 30 members of the Caribbean Women's Writing Alliance,

CWWA, who are mostly teachers. The second projects involved a local primary school, 2 key-informant teachers and 2 musicians in residence. The primary project work drew on the storytelling skills and expertise gained from CWWA collaboration. Thus the positive value of liaison and networking between teachers of different age groups, and from different field-sites was highlighted.

The key informant research participants involved in these museum programmes considered a special feature of collaborative work to reside in publication and dissemination at professional conferences. Publication and dissemination has increased the self-esteem, plurivocality, and visibility of the participants at the museum frontiers, (Anim-Addo 1998a, 1998b; Golding 1997; Mears 1995). This was empowering for the research team members and it pointed to further areas for collaboration with other teacher/lecturers and other museum professionals.<sup>21</sup>

It was noted at 4.1 footnote 3, that the collaboration with the key-informant research participants in this chapter was qualitatively different from collaboration during the pilot project discussed at 4.4. The reason for the success of the collaborative effort outlined in this chapter is the high degree of commitment which everyone involved in the project work displayed. It was the successful networking experience discussed in this chapter which suggested the possibility of expanding the key-informant research participants and extending the range of collaborative activities at the museum school frontiers.

In the next chapter the work of forging a committed research team of 25 teacher-collaborators, to further investigate the potential of working with museum objects will be outlined.

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<sup>21</sup> This thesis contends that empowerment is an important value of museum education. In this chapter the notion of value was addressed from a qualitative psychoanalytical perspective (Gilroy 1994; Bettelheim 1991). An important reference was also made to the quantitative data analysis of bilingual students' improved SATs performance at figure 5.7. The broad value of museum education will be further contemplated from qualitative and quantitative viewpoints in subsequent chapters and conclusions will be drawn in chapter 9.



## **6 Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors**

Race prejudice in fact obeys a flawless logic. A country that lives, draws its substance from the exploitation of other peoples, makes those peoples inferior. Race prejudice applied to those peoples is normal. Racism is therefore not a constant of the human spirit.  
(Fanon 1970: 5)

## **6      Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors**

### **6.0      Introduction**

In this chapter the work of founding a research team of 25 key informant teacher/lecturers is considered. The founding of this research team revolved around engagement in an intense feminist-hermeneutical work of dialogical exchange. This dialogue aimed to examine the critical factors which determine the successful praxis of an antiracist-multicultural museum curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of 6.1 background information on the participants in the research group and the process of selecting these individuals is outlined. Then the construction and analysis of a detailed six page questionnaire is discussed. This questionnaire is essentially regarded as a dialogical text created *together with* teacher/lecturers and this feature differentiates the questionnaire survey from current work by Merriman (1991) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990).

In section 6.2 the fused concept of antiracist-multiculturalism which is employed in this thesis is clarified through a brief outline of the debates between antiracist and multicultural educationalists (Hall 1980; Grinter 1985; Leicester 1986; Gilroy 1994b). Challenging racism is a most important critical success factor of museum education and Toni Morrison's notion of the Clearing is shown to provide a new location of antiracist-multiculturalism, which enables ongoing positive relationships between teacher/lecturers, students and the museum at the museum-school/college frontiers (Morrison 1988).

In sections 6.3 and 6.4 the views of the research participants are examined by constructing a collage of teacher/lecturers' voices gathered from the questionnaires. The voices describe the essential elements of a successful museum-school curriculum which centrally comprises an approach informed by antiracist-multiculturalism. This curriculum involves active multisensory learning induced by dialogical experiences of 'fused horizons' or 'flow'; it is educational *and* fun which reinforces recent research (Gadamer 1984;

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<sup>1</sup> The voices of 25 teacher/lecturers are privileged in this chapter and provide a broad perspective on a radical museum-school curriculum. A more detailed consideration of specific issues which arise will be addressed together with 5 teacher-colleagues *and* their students in the next chapters, chapters 7 and 8. The actual voices of students are not considered in this chapter although the teacher/lecturers refer to their views by citing conversations at school and noting their impressions of these conversations on the questionnaires.

## **6 Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors**

Csikszentmihalyi 1975; Roberts 1997; Falk and Dierking 1992, 1995; and Moussouri 1997). Ultimately, the curriculum works towards increasing self-esteem and new ways of seeing. It is empowering, and widens the possibilities for future lives through a movement of knowledge(s) about museum objects, the others who made and used them, and oneself.

### **6.1 A questionnaire survey: creating a dialogical text *with* team leaders to critique the aims and objectives of project-work**

#### **Inducting an 'interpretive research community' at the Horniman Museum frontiers**<sup>2</sup>

The 25 key-informants are self-selecting to the extent that they initially expressed a strong interest and enthusiasm for developing a successful 'multicultural' curriculum at the museum-school/college borderlands. They elected to join the research project by making regular use of the museum education centre and participating in face to face dialogical sessions with artefacts. Firstly the research participants negotiated regular school-trips to the museum. This involved intensive pre-visit dialogue with the education centre, attending these educational sessions with their school students and engaging in post-visit evaluation. Secondly, the teacher/lecturers regularly made use of the museum for their own professional development or INSET sessions.

It was at INSET that teacher/lecturers were originally inspired to participate in a more in-depth and long term analysis of collaborative praxis. INSET was collaboratively organised with advisors, artists, writers and musicians from local communities to achieve this end. The INSET sessions prioritised practical work in the creative arts and crafts, language and music. There was a theoretical aspect and a practical arts aspect to all INSET sessions which reflects underlying elements of this thesis. The level of courses ranged from a basic 4 week, 8 hour block to a 10 week 40 hour block of sessions that led to an M.A. module (see Appendix 1.2).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 'Interpretive communities' is a term Hooper-Greenhill (1999) borrows from Stanley Fish to describe the boundedness of interpretations within particular social or interest groups.

<sup>3</sup> Intensive INSET programmes revolved around 'multiculturalism.' To recap, multiculturalism at the Horniman Museum aimed to promote an understanding and respect for the diversity of peoples and cultures around the world. The aim of INSET was to achieve this understanding through a philosophico-political consideration of historical museum artefacts and their place in the world today.

The research team participants

The 25 research participants whose voices echo in this chapter are divided into 2 groupings. In group one (secondary/college) there are: 2 university lecturers who train teachers (1 primary art and 1 secondary art); 1 further education lecturer in art and 9 secondary school art teachers. In group two (primary) there are 13 primary school teachers. The gender balance of these groups is: group one 7 women and 5 men; group two 11 women and 2 men. These individuals work in two different colleges; five different secondary schools and seven different primary schools. The schools and colleges all serve communities in south London and the surrounding regions where 'social deprivation' is high. The museum is located in the London borough of Lewisham, which borders on Greenwich, Lambeth and Southwark, all geographical areas of extreme poverty.<sup>4</sup>

The research collaborators are all very well qualified. In group one (secondary/college) all 12 colleagues hold a first degree; 8 colleagues an additional PGCE qualifications and 3 colleagues also have an MA. In group two (primary) all 13 colleagues hold a first degree; 2 colleagues hold an additional PGCE qualification and one colleague is currently studying for an MA. Excellent qualifications do not relate to high positions in the work place. The highest position is Department Head, which 5 colleagues hold. The teacher-colleagues in the research team have an intense involvement with the arts and tend to prioritise the actual practice of their subject over promotional opportunities. In this respect the thesis confirms aspects of Carey Bennet's extensive fieldwork on this subject (Bennet 1989).

The aims of a dialogical project questionnaire

At the museum frontiers, school/college staff and museum staff are viewed as possessing certain areas of knowledge and expertise, which are equally vital in the development of a museum-school curriculum for the benefit of the students. The ultimate aim in the

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<sup>4</sup> As noted at 1.2, according to the 1998 Index of Local Deprivation, "Lambeth is the twelfth most deprived area in the country and seventh most deprived area in London" (UK Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions 1998 Index of Local Deprivation).

## **6      Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors**

initiation of the dialogical project questionnaire was pedagogic: to facilitate individual and group *reflection* on the features of successful, multicultural education at the museum frontiers.

Additionally a major concern was to address areas of absence or ‘the unsaid’ at these border regions. One serious lack was perceived to revolve around some form of *written voice*, whereby the teaching community could make their professional interests known, and gain respect from external agencies. The construction of a forum in the museum aimed to encourage the teachers’ engagement in *writing*, and ensure the dissemination of excellent practice. Research collaborators now hold a wealth of self-reflective information about multicultural museum education, and different aspects of this research can be ‘written up’ for journals by colleagues at a later date, when the pressure of teaching permits. To date three colleagues have written about aspects of collaboration (Anim-Addo 1998a; Desailly 1997; Mears 1995). It is also hoped that the ‘dialogical questionnaire’ strategy for facilitating personally written accounts will result in further publications.<sup>5</sup>

It was at INSET and school visits that the research team realised the need to initiate a simple process of putting verbal ideas into a written form, and so further the face to face discussion of successful ‘multiculturalism.’ The research team decided to pose a series of the most vital questions which emerged in dialogue and compose these into a questionnaire format. In accordance with the tenets of action research, every team member was invited to contribute questions around the issues they were particularly interested to examine, which accounts for the length and complexity of the dialogical project questionnaire.

### **A comparison with Merriman and Csikszentmihalyi’s use of the questionnaire format**

A proforma of the dialogical project questionnaire can be seen at Appendix 2.i. The questionnaire complies with some of the investigative intention underlying Nick

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<sup>5</sup> I remain troubled about the notion of “giving voice” to others, but I took final responsibility for the construction and eventual form of the questionnaire, as well as the ‘writing up’ of this chapter (Rabinow 1986:259). To an extent therefore I ‘give voice’ to the research collaborators. I have a greater commitment to completing this research and fewer time-constraints than my over-worked research community, who struggle with OFSTED and National Curriculum requirements.

## 6 Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors

Merriman's postal survey, although he investigates a huge random sample of 1500 people taken from the anonymous electoral role in Cambridge. The Horniman research participants share Merriman's interest in how people understand 'the past', and the role of museums in their personal meaning-making (Merriman 1991). There is also agreement with Merriman's desire to transfer the emphasis of museum research, from the "*production* and dissemination" of knowledge and presentation about the past to its "*consumption*", or the way individuals make meanings (ibid: 18). A common interest was in the:

different and creative ways in which individuals construct ... [meanings] from their personal experiences and memories, and from the materials, such as museum presentations, that are given to them by others  
(Merriman 1991: 18).

Unlike Merriman the Horniman research team were not interested in 'non-visitors' but in *our* students as 'social actors', and *our* role in providing the 'materials' for their creative constructions. The research participants were differently, more intimately positioned in the research field, and therefore some of the problems which Merriman highlights do not apply in this case. For example the questions posed in the dialogical project questionnaire are of immediate 'relevance' to the research collaborators. Similarly the assumption of 'literacy levels' and linguistic 'fluency' in questionnaire surveys which Merriman notes as problematic is not problematic for this highly educated and committed research team. It is for these reasons that a different stand is taken on 'layout' and the sequencing of questions from Merriman, who attempts to minimise the 'cost' of responding to his survey (ibid 146).<sup>6</sup>

'Cost' in terms of time is an issue for the Horniman research team and a time-saving device is borrowed from Nick Merriman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. A version of the Likert scale is applied to the questions at parts C and E.<sup>7</sup> The scale allows a degree of

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<sup>6</sup> Merriman uses the term 'cost' here to denote the personal effort, time and trouble respondents might perceive at first sight of the questionnaire. His 'low cost' format comprises: a 14 page, A5 booklet design, with an image front and back to 'reduce the imposing appearance'. The most interesting topics for the researchers are dealt with first and only major blocks of questions are numbered, so that they 'appear fewer'.

<sup>7</sup> Csikszentmihalyi utilises a numerical version of the Likert method for expressing degrees of agreement and disagreement with particular statements, some of which are contradictory to provide a degree of validation by cross-confirmation (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

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choice in levels of agreement and includes ‘the important category neither agree nor disagree’ as an option by marking the mid-point (ibid). The Horniman team agree with Merriman that this scale provides a space for reflection and definite non-random decisions to be made when responding. Additionally in the Horniman case working together on the questions at the outset provided a reflective space for considering new ideas from the start of the project. <sup>8</sup>

The research team members were familiar with a simplified form of the Likert technique, which just requires teacher/lecturers to mark the different aspects of their school/college visit to the museum, from a sliding scale of 5 to 1. A proforma of this school evaluation sheet can be seen at Appendix 2.2. There is also space on this evaluation sheet where it is possible for colleagues to include more detailed and descriptive comments which some colleagues favour. Teacher/lecturer’ preference for linguistic analysis with words and sentences, rather than the quicker mathematical grading, is taken into account at parts B and D of the dialogical project questionnaire.

In terms of question-sequencing the first concern is for people to feel addressed directly by the papers, and so part A at page one requests specific background information, which focusses attention on the individual self and the student group. This stands in contrast to the usual research advice noted by Merriman, for such details to appear in the final section of the questionnaire. The intention behind the Horniman format was to provide the feeling of a particular ‘I am speaking’ here at the outset of collaborative work. Collaborative ownership of the project is essential for ethnographic action research and the team consider this a strong factor behind the high response rate; every participating school/college guaranteed and delivered at least one individual or group response. <sup>9</sup> Another transfer of authority to teacher/lecturers is evident with regards the completion of

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<sup>8</sup> This factor reflects an equitable notion from feminist ethnography and the emancipatory demands of action research, that participants actively investigate a theme of deep interest to the improvement of actual praxis.

<sup>9</sup> This contrasts with the 66% return of Merriman’s questionnaires. 66% is regarded as a good response for the postal survey method which he employs.

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the questionnaire, which lay with individuals in the time/space of their own home.<sup>10</sup>

### **Analysis of questionnaire responses**

The dialogical method of questionnaire analysis is similar in certain respects to that which Richard Addison describes as part of “grounded hermeneutic research” (Addison 1992). For Addison this is ‘interpretation’ or deep personal meanings which essentially grow out of the ‘data’ or the personal texts. The research team are sympathetic to the hermeneutic idea of negotiating meanings through dialogue, although the emphasis is rather in “aspiring to” the more “radical dialogism” ensuing from Rabinow’s thesis (Rabinow 1989: 246).

Following Addison, to analyse the results of the questionnaires a “hermeneutically circular process” of picking out certain key concepts is employed (Addison. 1992: 116). These are discussed with groups of teacher/lecturers at INSET and/or after school meetings; then the process of re-circling for deeper insights is resumed and these are again shared. A hermeneutic process of analysis such as this is never ‘completed’, and the writing-up here is rather to be seen as adjourning the dialogue at a certain point, for the work within a feminist hermeneutic framework continues with research colleagues.

At a latter stage of this hermeneutic circling the notion of dividing the 25 questionnaires into 2 main groups, according to the age-group taught by the participants arose. This division enables a consideration of whether different meanings are applied to multicultural museum education, by teacher/lecturers of the different Key Stages. Group 1 colleagues work with Key Stage 3 and 4 school students, adult students and students training to be teachers; while group 2 colleagues teach Key Stage 1 and 2 primary school-children.<sup>11</sup> Slowly, several important areas of general agreement emerge from collated information, and this feature can be considered a form of ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Most importantly these critical success factors are linked to ‘flow’

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<sup>10</sup> A feminist argument highlights the woman’s total command of her situation when watching television in the home. Women can decide to begin or to stop watching, to go away and make tea, to talk with children or combine these activities in the home. I am grateful to the Women’s Studies M.A. group at Westminster University 1993 for clarifying this point.

<sup>11</sup> Full details of this analysis can be seen at Appendix 3.



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experiences in a 'Clearing' atmosphere for all participants, teacher/lecturers as well as students and museum professionals (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Morrison 1988)

The research team regard the possibility of presenting a strong 'challenge to racism' as a critical success factor of a museum-school curriculum, and this is the first aspect of collaborative programmes at the museum frontiers which will be considered.

### 6.2 Toni Morrison's Clearing inspires a new location of antiracist multiculturalism and positive relationships in the museum <sup>12</sup>

The research team in the museum Clearing "Call for a politics of collectivity" and move towards a "conceptual shift from the totalized to the multiplitious subject" (Lidinsky 1994: 191-2). This is a large claim which will be justified with reference to the dialogical work of challenging racism. In their questionnaire responses collaborators note the importance of museum-school relationships, and consistently remark on the vital *input from museum staff* for a successful museum experience. The following comments are taken as typical.

T16D11 <sup>13</sup> It has been very inspiring to visit the museum, *the staff have been very helpful*. I look forward to working with them again.

T02E22 I cannot emphasise enough that the Horniman's *accessibility* for young children is paramount to a successful visit or series of visits. I always look forward to our visits and the children's responses and follow up work

Museum *accessibility* necessarily involves the language use of museum educators. What is said about objects and others in the education centre needs to be expressed at a language level appropriate for the age and ability of the student visitors. Museum professionals in the Horniman education centre strive for ways to make connections with the world of the student, reaching out to their horizon through speech during face to face

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<sup>12</sup> Multiculturalism is essentially regarded as antiracism by the Horniman research team, since it necessarily includes an awareness of the historico-political frame and the institutionalised structures of power within which it must function. Beyond this it encourages antiracist action in the political sphere, and is centrally located within positive relationships in the museum Clearing.

<sup>13</sup> T stands for teacher/lecturer, 16 for the number allotted to this teachers questionnaire and D11 for the question she is responding to. This code system is used throughout this chapter.

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dialogue. The words employed and the manner of delivery are obviously crucial, since a condescending approach is just as reprehensible as one which completely disregards the subject position and the life experiences of the visitor. In the words of John Falk and Lynn Dierking, “to be successful, the educator must know where the learner is starting from” (Falk and Dierking 1992: 160). It is the teacher/lecturer who can provide a full picture of their learners’ starting point, and so success in museum learning, which has appropriate and clear ‘goals’ to use Csikszentmihalyi’s term, can only be achieved through close collaboration between school/college and museum professionals.

In this context of successful museum learning, the speech of the museum staff and the manner of delivery is noted as valuable by respondents. The comments of two colleagues are provided below to illustrate this point.

- T09D7      *The staff were really enthusiastic and talked to the children in a way which involved them.*
- T15D8      Artifacts, coupled with *good commentary* is one way of bridging cultures, showing puppets.

These concise remarks emphasise the efforts of *museum staff*, to create an environment where museum knowledge can be made *accessible* through collaboration; and where significant or *involved* learning, which successfully builds on the student’s previous experience can consequently take place. Significant learning involves arousing “curiosity” and minimising feelings of “anxiety” in the museum (Falk and Dierking 1992: 87). Falk and Dierking elucidate this point.

Giving each person a little attention, making her or him feel special and important, almost guarantees that the museum experience will be both positive and memorable. No amount of mimeographed work sheets or self-guided tours will do this. People, especially well-trained and committed people, are still the key to high-quality education.  
(Falk and Dierking 1992: 157-8)

Museum professionals at the Horniman Museum successfully help to create an atmosphere that is reminiscent of Morrison’s Clearing. Collaboration in the museum Clearing prepares students for the interpretation of museum displays as T23 and T19 highlight. T23, under ‘any other comments’, notes the importance of a *non-threatening*

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*environment* , and T19 speaks of a special *staff atmosphere* .

T23D11 I personally think the museum allows students to see many artefacts from other cultures in a very pleasant, *un-threatening environment*. Displays should be well documented with information.

T19D7 Both the *staff atmosphere* and artefacts provide a unique learning experience.

The distinctive *mixture of objects and people* in a particular space is emphasised here. Museums are not simply empty spaces where sympathetic colleagues might engage students in a reflective dialogue. The research team do not suggest a “rainbow coloured” museum “curriculum” would completely answer all the world ills such as racism, but research-colleagues link the overriding aspect of collaboration with museum-staff and objects to the concept of a special location in a museum Clearing (Suleri 1996: 335). Stuart Hall echoes the importance of a supportive environment, which vitally permits questions to be raised, as an essential prerequisite for effective programmes to combat racism (Hall 1980). He observes the significance of maintaining an open space for any genuine dialogue on racism and states.

Nevertheless I do think that *you have to create an atmosphere* which allows people to say unpopular things. ... that the natural and ‘common-sense’ racism which is part of the ideological air that we all breathe is ... allowed to come out. ... your own position emerges *without people feeling over-weighted by its authority* (Hall 1980: 3-4) [my emphasis]

Hall does not deny a museum professional’s opinions, or prejudices to use Gadamer’s terminology, but he does highlight the importance of reflexive dialogue that this thesis prioritises. In the museum, professionals can create a space opened to the ‘to and fro’ of this hermeneutic dialogue. But, the museum becomes a location resembling Morrison’s Clearing only when the authorial voice really listens to alternative experiences and knowledges. Racism is challenged in the museum Clearing partly by museum professionals relinquishing absolute control, as the project work of chapter 5 highlighted. Collaboration during this dialogical project is another example of yielding authority.

Stuart Hall also importantly remarks on the connections which need to be made by the organisers of courses, museum professionals in this instance, with the wider socio-

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political world. He says. “it becomes a great deal more complex because it requires putting together explanations from different areas of knowledge” (Hall 1980: 4). This is what the work of museum-school collaboration through the antiracist multicultural curriculum is able to achieve, a vast conglomeration of different knowledges from diverse disciplines and ages, or a Clearing space of plurivocality.

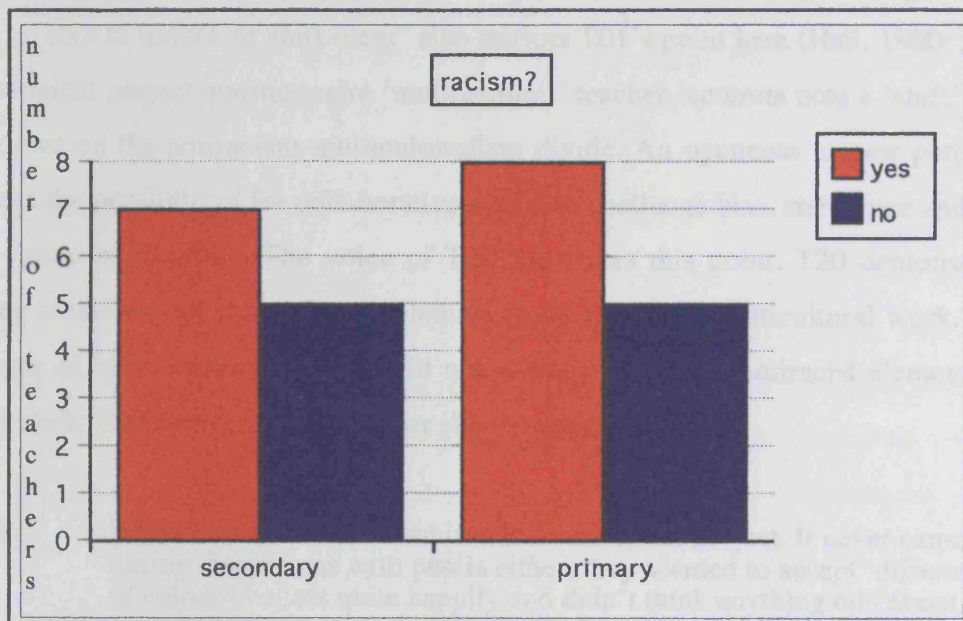
### **Antiracist multiculturalism: expanding and extending the curriculum through the dialogical questionnaire**

The antiracist-multiculturalist debate continues to fester and erect false barriers between teacher/lecturers today. The work of the research team on the dialogical questionnaire demonstrates how this barrier can be broken by developing strong collaborative relationships, and ‘thinking together’ broadly and deeply about a radical museum-school curriculum. The initial divide between ‘antiracists’ and ‘multiculturalists’ on the research team was healed through the supportive dialogical *relationships* in a museum Clearing atmosphere.

For example some teacher/lecturers, slightly more than 50 per cent of respondents, entered the research group with strong beliefs in the essentially antiracist stance of their multicultural curriculum. Seven of the twelve group one secondary/college colleagues and eight of the thirteen group two primary colleagues consider their project presents a challenge to racism, in answer to the first question on antiracism at A 36. Figure 6.1 over-leaf shows the responses to this question This figure implies a strong antiracist intention behind their multicultural project-planning, or what Grinter terms an “antiracist multicultural strategy” (Grinter 1985).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> A proforma of the questionnaire, showing the questions and the relationship between the groups of questions, is provided at Appendix 3



**Figure 6.1. A challenge to racism**

Figure 6.1 shows the responses to question A 36: 'Does your project present a challenge to racism.' The figure is regarded as teacher/lecturer testament that 'challenging racism' is a critical success factor of the museum-school curriculum for more than 58% of secondary/college participants and 62% of primary teachers in the research team. This finding also highlighted a need to clarify the terms antiracism-multiculturalism through dialogue

For Grinter an 'antiracist multicultural strategy' potentially reflects "the diversity of cultures throughout the curriculum", so that "insistent questions about justice and equality" remain "in students' minds" (Grinter 1985: 8-9). The 'antiracist' research collaborators concur with Grinter's general hope that "sympathetic teaching of other value systems will weaken the hold of prejudices" and "act as a form of inoculation against the future development of racist attitudes" (ibid 7). At 'Part C: any other comments?' of our questionnaire T01 echoes Grinter. He states

T01C16 All of the above are positive, any understanding of other races is a *challenge to racism* which feeds on ignorance and complacency.

Stuart Hall, speaking of “a kind of wager or bet that if we understand things better we might be able to unlock or shift them” also mirrors T01’s point here (Hall. 1980: 5) After the dialogical project questionnaire ‘multicultural’ teacher-lecturers note a ‘shift’ in their own views on the antiracism-multiculturalism divide. An openness to new perceptions broadens the possibilities for collaborative action to challenge bias, stereotype and racism at the museum frontiers. The voice of T20 illustrates this point. T20 demonstrates a growing awareness of the antiracist element in all intensive multicultural work. On the first page of her questionnaire T20 did not initially mark any antiracist element to her project work. Halfway through the paper she remarks.

T20C16        I didn’t really have racism in mind during this project. It never came up during discussions with pupils either, they seemed to accept ‘differences’ of colour / beliefs quite happily and didn’t think anything odd about it.

These words seem to imply that T20 operates a ‘colour-blind’ curriculum. In fact the aims of her museum-school project on ‘carnival arts’ forcefully addresses the appalling issues around transatlantic slavery, and a new thought process is noted later in the questionnaire.

T20D10        To show that third world countries also have beauty and creativity.

T20D11        I never thought of it in that context.

T20 arrived at this position after dialogue with the wider research community at INSET and with her close school colleague T19. T19 expands on the power of museum artefacts to ‘challenge racist stereotyping.’

T19D10        ‘Third world’ countries give the implication of poverty and ugliness which *can be challenged by museums* displaying the beauty and creativity of other cultures.

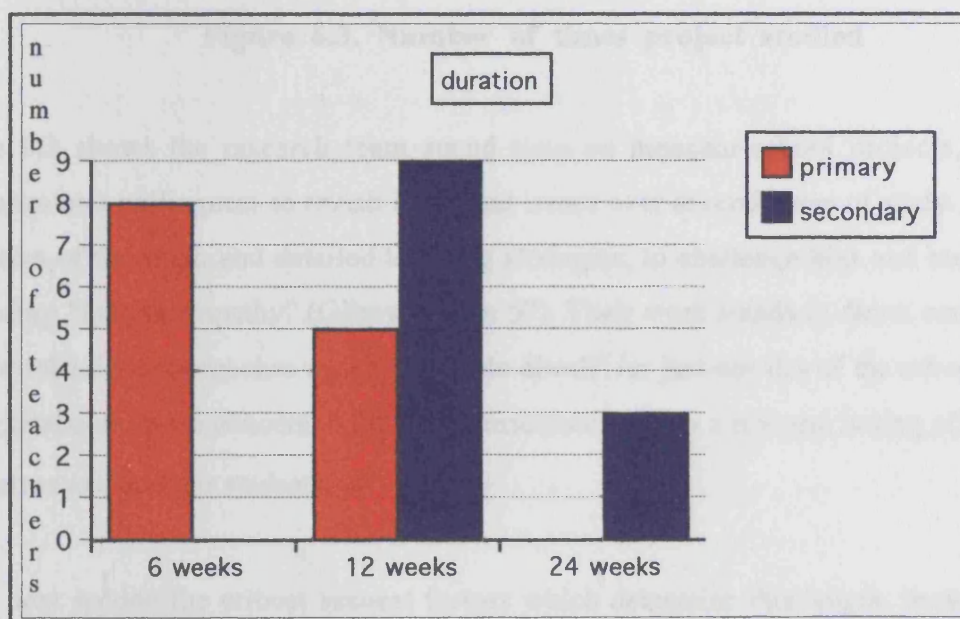
Participating in INSET and the dialogical questionnaire enabled these colleagues to develop the ‘antiracist’ aspects of their ‘multicultural’ museum-school curriculum. They gained in confidence to tackle the wider issues surrounding their project, such as remnants of a transatlantic slave-trade mentality in media representations today, by ‘thinking together’ broadly and deeply. The original ‘multicultural’ content of T19 and T20’s



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curriculum was greatly enhanced by attention to 'antiracist' elements. Their 'antiracist-multiculturalism' captured the students' interest by making their historical studies contemporary and this motivated them to produce excellent work, such as the African mask prints and the Carnival masks that were later displayed in the Museum Cafe Gallery.

The research team distinguish 'antiracist multiculturalism' from racist 'tokenism' in museum education by: expanding the *content* of the curriculum as T19 and T20's comments show, and additionally by extending the *duration* of the project work. Figure 6.2 shows the substantial duration of the research teams collaborative projects. This figure implies a degree of depth to the programmes of study which is vital to antiracist multiculturalism. In group one (secondary/college) the duration of colleagues projects was: 1 term for 9 colleagues, and 2 terms for 3 colleagues. In group two (primary) the project duration was 6 weeks for 8 teachers, and 1 term for 5 teachers. These figures reflect the shorter concentration span of the younger students.

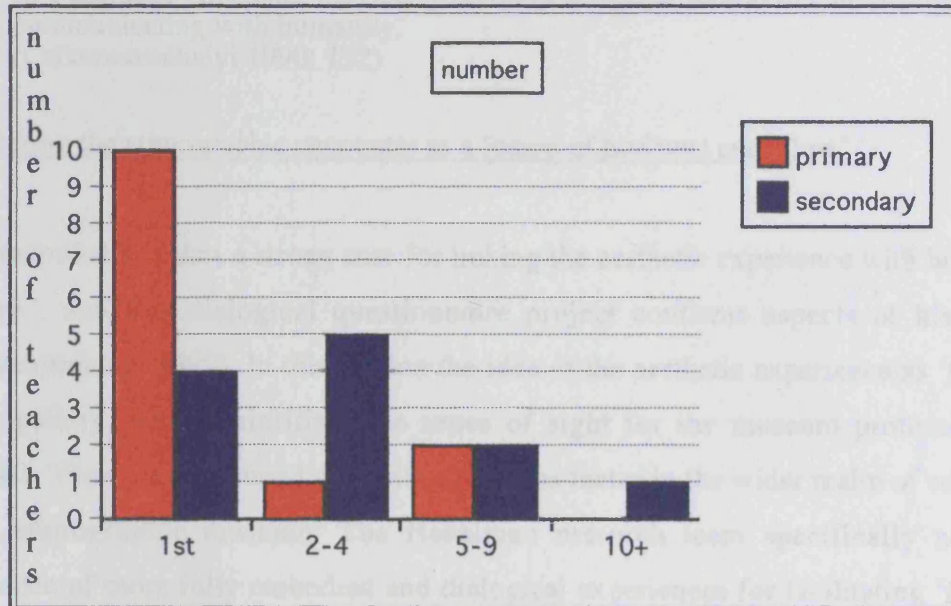


**Figure 6.2. Duration of the museum-school project**

Figure 6.2 shows that none of the research colleagues subscribe to tokenism, but rather strive for ever greater personal understandings. Towards this end some secondary colleagues attempt to perfect their museum-project over several years of adjustment and

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modification. Figure 6.3, showing the number of times teacher/lecturers have organised their museum-school project work illustrates this point.



**Figure 6.3. Number of times project studied**

Figure 6.3 shows the research team spend time on museum-school projects, which demonstrates a willingness to revisit important issues over several years of study. This is indicative of thorough and detailed teaching strategies, to challenge bias and racism by facilitating “human empathy” (Gilroy 1994b: 57). Their work stands in direct contrast to shallow tokenistic approaches which might ‘do diwali’ for just one day of the school term, since collaborators are concerned for their curriculum to have a real and lasting effect, on themselves and on their students. <sup>15</sup>

In the next section the critical success factors which determine this length, breadth and intensity of studies to challenge racism at the museum frontiers will be examined and particular attention will be paid to the object-base of the work.

<sup>15</sup> My long-term intensive relationship with these research colleagues permits me to make this statement. I have been familiar with the work of the teacher/lecturers for a number of years, and my experience of their project work is sufficient to counter any charge that their efforts are simply repetitive or lacking in renewal and revision. Figure 9.1, which revisits a Benin project, illustrates this point.



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### **6.3.    Teachers' voices analyse successful programmes at the museum frontiers: 1 multisensory experience building self-esteem and new ways of seeing<sup>16</sup>**

The aesthetic encounter inevitably involves some realisation that humanity is communicating with humanity.  
(Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 132)

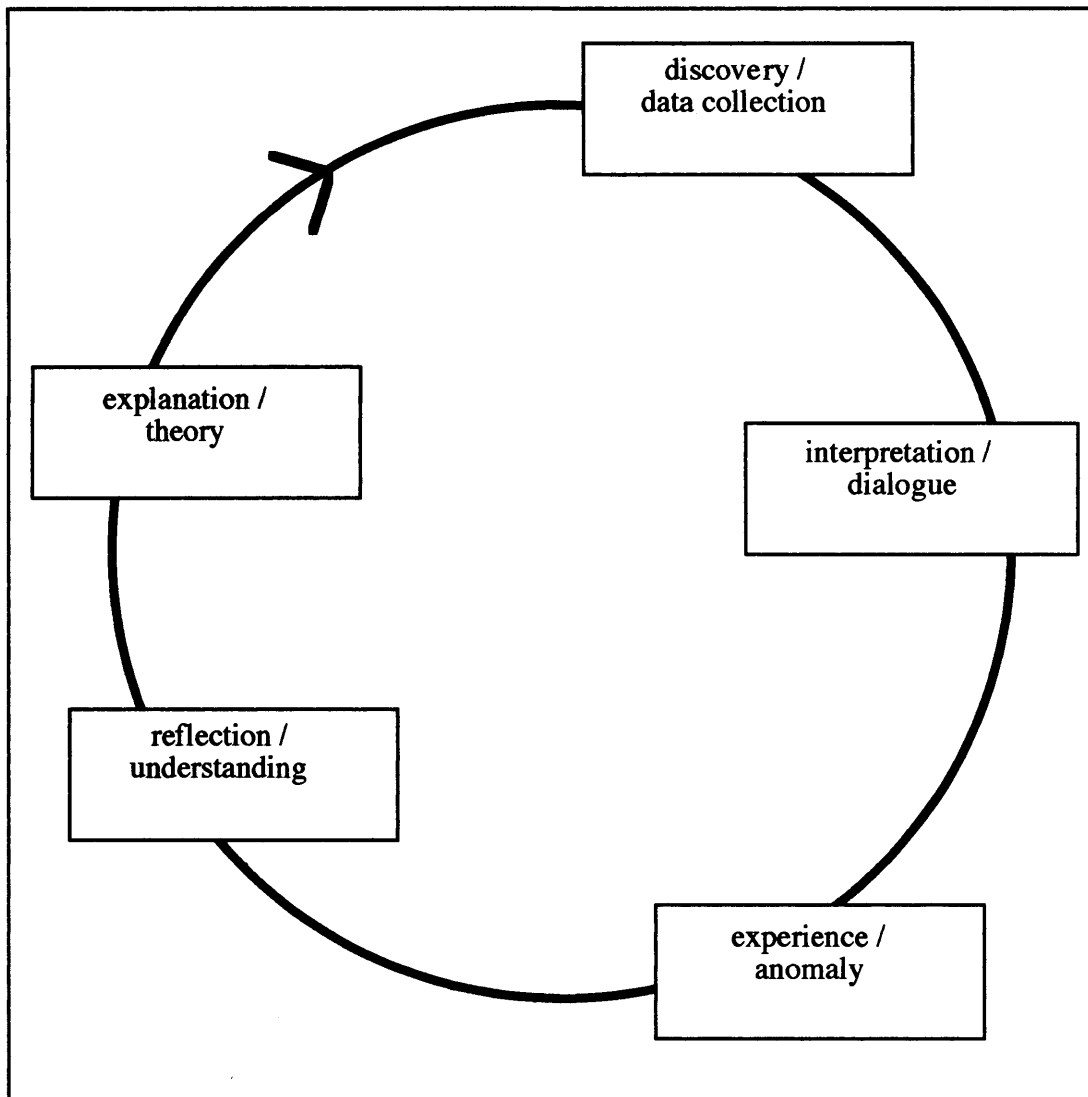
#### **Considering the ethnographic encounter as a fusion of horizons and 'flow'**

Csikszentmihalyi makes a strong case for linking the aesthetic experience with his notion of 'flow', and this dialogical questionnaire project confirms aspects of his theory (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). In this section the idea of the aesthetic experience as 'flow' in the art-gallery, which prioritises the sense of sight for the museum professional is extended. 'Flow' is considered as a critical success factor in the wider realm of education in the ethnographic museum. The Horniman research team specifically note the importance of more fully embodied and dialogical experiences for facilitating 'flow' in their school students.

The term 'flow' describes a state of total absorption in a task, that is undertaken entirely for its own sake without any extrinsic rewards. For example, some individuals report deriving intrinsic rewards from activities, such as chess and mountaineering (Csikszentmihalyi 1975). Feelings of intense involvement and engagement with the task is an inherent part of the desire to repeat the experience, which is said to originate from a 'match' between the practice of personal skills, and the challenges of the task. Repetition obviously improves skills and increases knowledge which in turn stimulates the desire for performing the task, over and over again. This larger structure of repetition which flow participates in is understood as a hermeneutical circular *process of understanding* in this thesis. Figures 6.4-6.6 over-leaf provide some visual clarification of this process.

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<sup>16</sup> The term 'teachers' here and at 6.4 includes the college lecturers on the research team.



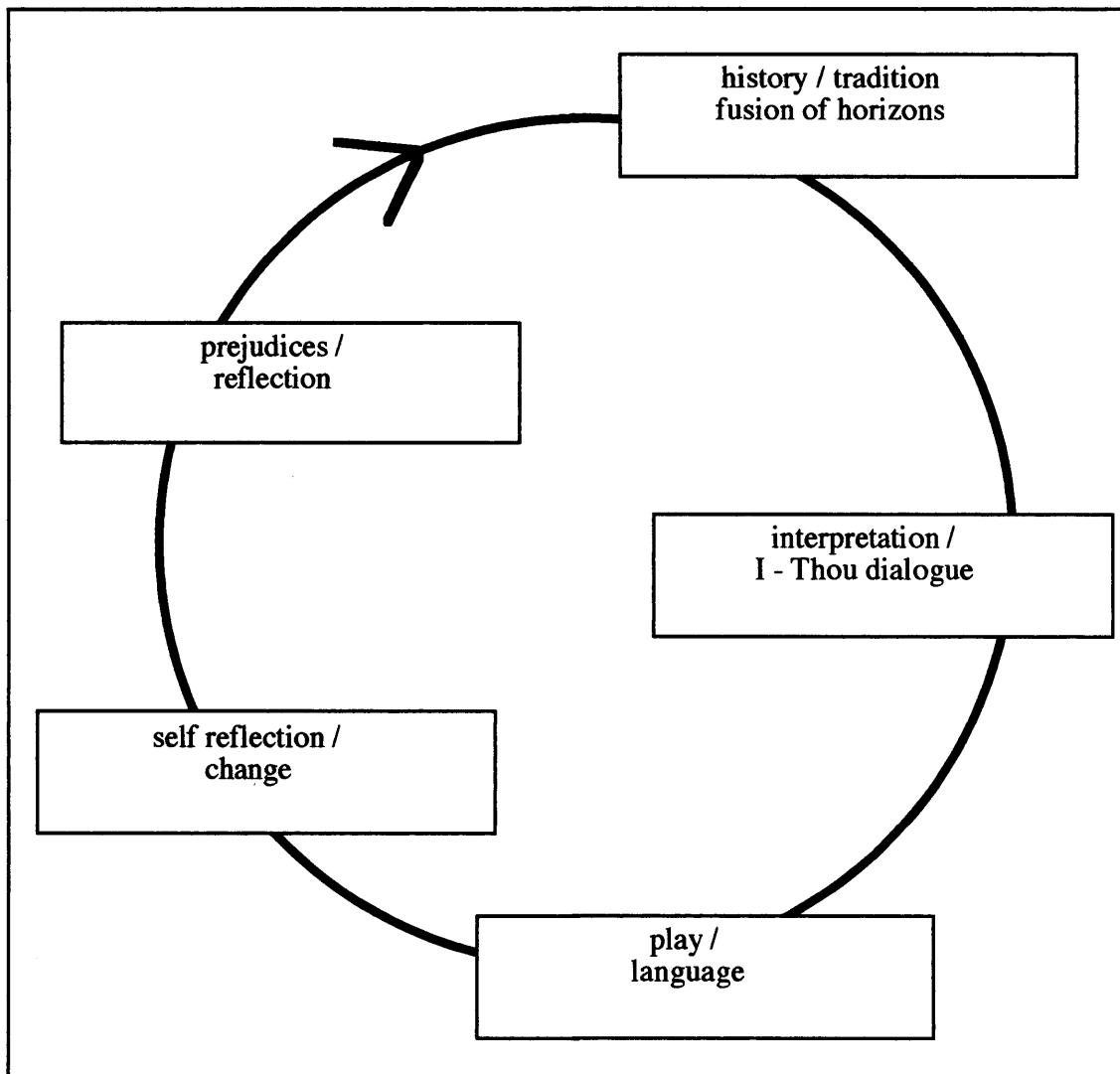
**Figure 6.4. Research circle after Gadamer**

Figure 6.4, which is based on Shiva's circle of Constructivist Inquiry, describes a dialogical circle of research (Crabtree and Miller 1992: 10). It explains the relationship between the ethnographic design and execution of the research methodology that prioritises feminism to facilitate dialogical exchange and action. In this figure the researchers and researched are already positioned non-hierarchically within the ontological circle of understanding.

In figure 6.5 the elements of the research circle 6.4 are connected more precisely within

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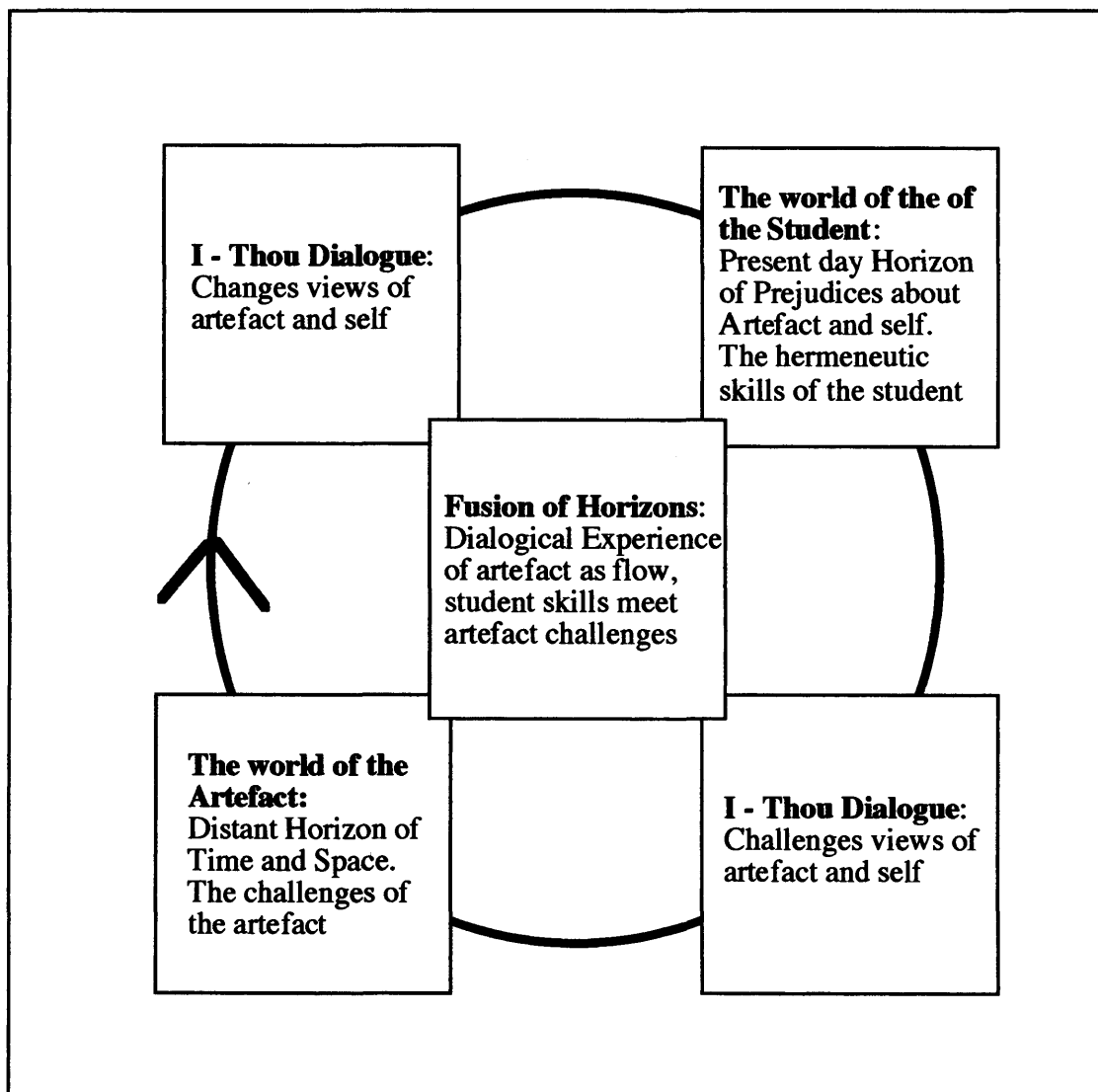
Gadamer's hermeneutics. Figure 6.5 describes the active process of new verstehen which results through dialogical exchange. In feminist-hermeneutic dialogue participants are enabled to confront and reflect upon their prejudices, which are then seen to arise inevitably from their cultural traditions.



**Figure 6.5. Elements of the Gadamerian research circle**

This figure illustrates the relationship between the elements of the hermeneutic circle of understanding. The researchers and the researched meet in an ontological space which is opened to understanding by the concept of goodwill.

In figure 6.6 the process of interpreting museum objects is explained in terms of ‘flow.’ The research team regard ‘flow’ as a vital characteristic, or a critical success factor, of a positive museum experience with ethnographic objects. Museum-school projects attempt to ‘match’ student skills with the challenges of the tasks set, and additionally collaborators strive to stretch the student’s abilities through the various elements of the project work. Students are encouraged to excel and a multisensory route is provided by the museum-school/college team-leaders for their achievement. The route is holistic and active. It encompasses: dialogical exchange or thinking, listening and speaking, looking, touching and creating something new, according to the research team.



**Figure 6.6. Fusion of horizons as a dialogical experience of Flow**

Figure 6.6 illustrates the museum ‘frontier’ location, where the skills of the museum visitor meet the challenges of the artefact in a dialogical experience of flow. This experience challenges prejudices and demands changes in the visitor, whose horizons are broadened by this process. The frontier location which figure 6.6 describes encompasses the historical world of the museum artefact and the present-day world of the interpreter. Teacher/lecturers’ comments anchor meaning in the present-day horizon of the interpreter, but this is not to deny the vital connection of all meaning with the distant horizon from whence the artefact came. The materiality of the object ensures this link between horizons. The voice of a representative collaborator highlights the artefactual nature of museum experiences challenging stereotypical viewpoints and racism.

T09D10      They [museum displays] provide accurate information about peoples around the world, coupled with *real artefacts*, this gives us a more *positive picture to challenge media stereotypes* [my emphasis]

In the museum Clearing a new ‘*picture*’ is constructed from the artefactual encounter, which is determined by the world of the viewer and the world of the object. The picture can then be utilised like a tool, to ‘*challenge media stereotypes*’. Csikszentmihalyi notes a clearer ‘empathetic’ picture emerging in terms of *flow* experiences.

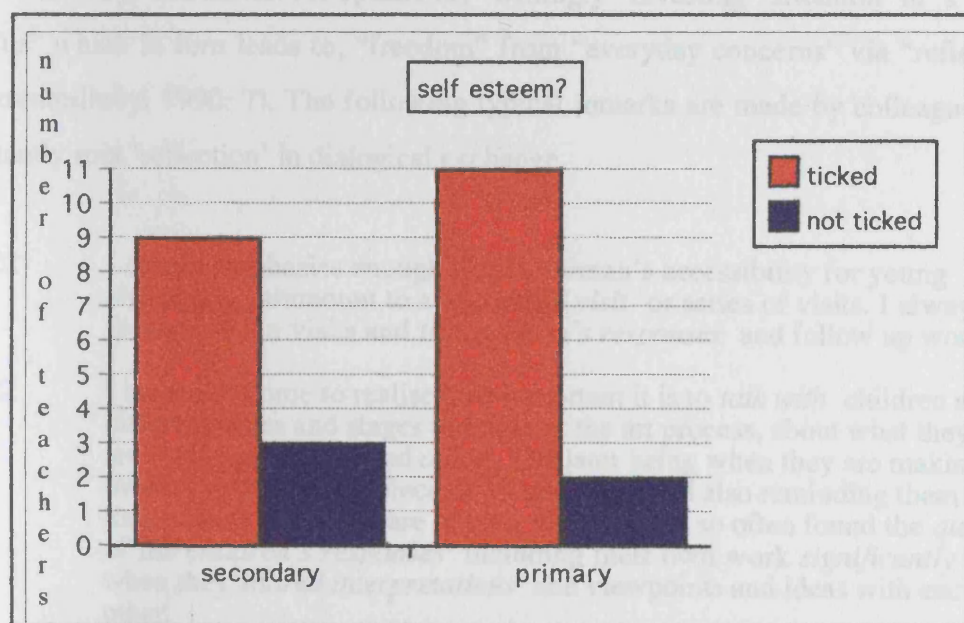
With the help of *information, imagination, and empathy*, the viewer can in fact share the dreams, the emotions, and the ideas that artists of different times and places have encoded in their work.  
(Csikszentmihalyi. 1990:70)

An intense depth of attention and focus is necessary for the museum ‘flow’ experience to be of lasting value, and enable students to produce more successful work. Csikszentmihalyi locates the value of flow experiences in the link between cognitive and emotional faculties, which result in “a feeling of self-acceptance and self-expansion” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 7). This notion of ‘self-expansion’ is highlighted by the Horniman research team as a discernible increase in *self-esteem* resulting from project-work. The following typical comments demonstrate these connections.

T16A35 Some had made very *good progress* and *gained confidence* from the workshops.

T23A35 *self esteem*, yes, they were able to follow through research.

These extended comments surprised me. I had expected colleagues to simply mark a tick or a cross at question number A35. Figure 6.7 shows those teacher/lecturers who did respond with a tick to this part of the questionnaire.



**Figure 6.7. Evaluation of museum-school project-work by increased self-esteem**

Figure 6.7 shows responses to question A 35: 'How did you evaluate the project, students increased self-esteem?' Seventy-five percent of secondary/college teacher/lecturers and eighty-five percent of primary teachers regarded increased self-esteem as a positive aspect of the museum-school project work during evaluation.

Colleague T16 also cites self-worth at question B9, which inquires into the expressive capacities of art. She specifically notes the raising of 'voice' as a vital feature that endows greater *self-esteem*. More than half of this teacher's students are speaking English as a

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second language as Figure 7.1 shows. It is therefore doubly important that the production of museum-inspired art-work acts as a vital stimulus to wide ranging conversation.

T16B9        It can give them a *voice*, and reinforce that they have worth, and thus give them *self esteem*

Group 1 and 2 colleagues spontaneously single out the importance of *dialogue, talk and voice* in their questionnaire responses. For the research team dialogue implies intense ‘reflection’ resulting from flow experiences with museum objects, a point which Csikszentmihalyi elucidates. He speaks of, “willingly” investing “attention in a visual stimulus” which in turn leads to, “freedom” from “everyday concerns” via “reflection” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 7). The following typical remarks are made by colleagues who importantly root ‘reflection’ in dialogical exchange.

T02E22        I cannot emphasise enough that Horniman’s accessibility for young children is paramount to a *successful visit* or series of visits. I always look forward to our visits and *the children’s responses* and follow up work.

T24E22        I have also come to realise how important it is to *talk with* children at different times and stages throughout the art process, about what they see, are *thinking, feeling* and *doing*. The later being when they are making their own art response to a piece of art and craft, and also reminding them to look closely and take care of their work. I have so often found the *quality of the children’s responses* including their own work *significantly higher* when they *shared interpretations* and viewpoints and ideas with each other.

In common with his colleagues T24’s remarks pertinently link the senses with cognition. He speaks for the research team when he emphasises *dialogical exchange* above, which he finds *improves responses*.

Next the discussion of collaboration and dialogical exchange will be widened to consider the diverse value of ‘multisensory’ experiences at the museum frontiers. <sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Overall teacher/lecturer-colleagues regard *multisensory* experiences, not just ‘visual stimulus’, best constitutes the depth of ‘attention’ necessary to provide flow and consequently inspire quality work (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). In particular collaborators consider it is *multisensory* experiences which facilitate the development of multiple skills, ‘tools’ or ‘intelligences’ (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, Gardner 1993a, 1993b).

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### Multisensory experiences: developing multiple skills, ‘tools’ or ‘intelligences’ in the Museum

To help the public develop the skills necessary to make the experience rewarding, the museum should - in a departure from the traditional museum presentation of art objects that implies only art historical information is relevant - provide a *diversity of tools* that highlight the *perceptual, the emotional, the cognitive, and the communicative* context of the works.  
(Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 174-5)

Horniman Museum collaborators seek to develop and nurture a ‘diversity of tools’ in their school-communities of learners at the museum frontiers. Collaborative museum programmes are essentially multisensory. They emphasise the importance of mind *and* body in gaining knowledge, and address the ‘perceptual, emotional and cognitive’ which Csikszentmihalyi speaks of above. These *tools* will be considered, beginning with touch.

Colleagues widely regard ‘handling’ with ‘excellent education staff’ as a valuable learning experience for students of all ages and abilities. The importance of tactile experiences echo throughout the questionnaire responses, and the following remarks are selected as typical to illustrate the significance of *touch* for the research collaborators

- T07D7      Its a great museum with excellent education staff - it is nice to be able *to handle artifacts* without being shouted at.
- T02B5      It is important for very young children to experience ‘*hands on*’ experiences of museums, particularly smaller *user friendly* ones like the Horniman.
- T08D7      It is ‘*child friendly*’ - educational, yet not so ‘stuffy’ that they [the students] feel they can’t move, or *touch* anything. A comfortable atmosphere.

These colleagues draw attention to several features of a school visit that are considered separately in the questionnaire for clarity. The positive *contribution of museum staff*, the agreeable *museum atmosphere* and *handling* are convincingly cited as crucial to challenging the ‘*stuffy*’ stereotype of the traditional museum by T08. Her statement counters the poor image of a museum and points to a Clearing ‘atmosphere’, which can provide ideal conditions for multiple challenges to fixed binary reasoning, and multiple



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opportunities for *all* participants to learn as T10 notes.

T10D7        It plays an integral part in much of our topic work. *Both pupils and teachers learn* much outside their own experiences

This colleague interestingly remarks on the change the museum-experience had on the future lives of her very young key stage 1 students.

T10C16       I hope that after visiting the museum and looking at the collection the children will “*look*” at their own environment in a different way, and apply *these ways of looking* to other objects, both extraordinary and ordinary. For example visiting Brixton market, children have pointed out African and Asian fabrics and *made unprompted links* with fabrics they have seen previously in the museum.

In conversation during INSET, T10 further elucidates a way of seeing that enables students to make connections outside of their immediate experiences. The children in her class demonstrate their ability to link thoughts of the distant time and space that is housed by the framing of museum objects, with the present time and space of a school-day. A meaningful joining of thoughts and experiences is part of what the research group understand as ‘intelligence.’

The students in T10’s class are able to make their reasoned observations, through a heightened sense of visual perception, which she terms a particular ‘look’. This ‘look’ is a sort of skill or ‘tool’ to borrow Csikszentmihalyi’s term, which students learn and develop at the museum, through recognising and relating positive connections with their own lives. They are later able to recast this ‘look’ onto ordinary and extraordinary objects in their wider environment. In dialogue T10 illuminates the main benefit of the ‘look’ as a vehicle whereby children are better able to appreciate the finer details of their surroundings. She speaks of an intense visual pleasure initiated by the museum experience enriching her students’s world-views.

Research-colleagues connect this ‘look’ with one of the ‘multiple intelligences’ Gardner theorises (Gardner 1993a, 1993b). The research team further view it as an element which sustains life, in recognising and relating diverse aspects as personally meaningful. Most

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importantly in T10's words this 'look' arises out of multisensory experiences with museum objects, which are not isolated from verbal, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. The findings of the Horniman research group extend Gardner's thesis in this respect, while he doubts the total independence of intelligences, his view of their association is modestly expressed. He states.

The theory is simpler, both conceptually and biologically, if the various intelligences are totally independent. However, there is no theoretical reason why two or more intelligence could not overlap or correlate with one another more highly than with the others.  
(Gardner 1993b: 41-42)

Collaborators argue for quite a considerable extension of this "overlap" in their discussion of multicultural museum education. The openness of the museum Clearing undoubtedly allows the particular talents of students to be fostered, but, new sets of skills and attitudes are also importantly developed together with these. For example colleague T24 cites student *enthusiasm* with a fluid movement of embodied knowledge at the museum-school borderlands, which results in a broadening of ideas about different cultures. His words regard the in-depth investigation into *Benin* as an enriching experience for his key stage 1 students which positively opens their minds.

T24D2 [Students are] much the *richer for looking closely at* this kind of art and craft work from other cultures. They are enthusiastic towards it and *more ready to approach new work* ie new forms of art that they have not come across before. Their *ideas* about work from different cultures such as Benin are *not so narrow*.

T24 remarks on an intense engagement and attention or flow experience which leads students to approach new learning willingly. This colleague draws out the distinction between a desire for repetition of flow and a simple mimesis. The Horniman research team are not speaking of the sterile processes which Fanon refers to as "mummified fragments", or the reproduction of material culture by colonised societies (Fanon 1993: 41). In contradistinction to such notions of 'mummification' the desire to repeat flow is a highly creative activity; inextricably connected to a fluid process of learning, understanding, and making *new constructions*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The research team employ Fanon's words to reinforce the argument made at footnote 14 for renewal rather than simple repetition in the construction of project work.

Lisa Roberts regards the museum as providing the “optimum conditions for learning - openness, loss of self, and what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi called “flow” (Roberts 1997: 40). The research team concur with this opinion and also confirm her emphasis on the museum experience as “playful, enjoyable, and fun” (ibid).

This important relationship between learning and entertainment which Falk, Moussouri and Coulson have recently highlighted will now be considered (Falk et al 1998).

**6.4.    Teachers’ voices analyse successful programmes at the museum frontiers: 2  
education, enjoyment and empowerment from self-reflexivity**

In short, what critics have called frivolous, uninformative entertainment may have satisfied a powerful need to experience a sense of personal power and control.  
(Roberts 1997: 27)

In her recent work, *From Museum Knowledge to Narrative, Educators and the Changing Museum* Lisa Roberts writes of museum education within the four categories of ‘entertainment, empowerment, experience and ethics’ (Roberts 1996). Roberts’s rigorous historical survey denies any gulf between ‘education and entertainment’ in the field of museum learning, and this thesis supports her view. Additionally, Roberts’s analysis which connects ‘entertainment’ with an ‘experience of personal power and control’ is pertinent to the thought of the research team, although her study revolves around the American situation. However, the Horniman study diverges on the socio-political construction of knowledge. The research team takes an antiracist position which prioritises the ‘standpoint’ or the ‘situated’ nature of ‘knowledge(s)’ (Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1991b). Roberts does not share this firmly antiracist stance, nor the overriding challenge to any authorial view particularly a positivist scientific one.

‘Enjoyment’ like ‘discussion’ was not a factor that the Horniman research team anticipated or elicited in the questionnaire, but in their responses teacher/lecturer-colleagues regularly cite ‘enjoyment’ as a critical success factor. The following remarks

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are selected as typical areas of testament. <sup>19</sup>

- T09A37 Children's interested *enjoyment* in *discussion* following visit
- T21A34 *Enjoyed* hugely
- T04A34 They not only *enjoyed* the visit they learnt about museums and how to implement them into their teaching

The work of Falk, Moussouri and Coulson has recently provided further supporting evidence for Roberts and this thesis (Falk et al 1998). They carried out an investigation into whether visitor's pre-visit "agendas" affected their subsequent learning in a science museum. Visitor agendas were measured in terms of motivation and strategy, while visitor learning was measured according to a constructivist method, Personal Meaning Mapping or PMM.

PMM is a new constructivist method which measures changes in the 'understandings' of museum visitors. It takes account of the prior experience and knowledge each individual brings to a new learning situation such as the museum experience, and how this shapes the ways in which individuals perceive and process their new experiences. PMM pays attention to individual 'concepts, attitudes and emotional understandings', which results in unique learning experiences for individuals that are 'situated' within the context of the learning, the museum frontiers for our research team.<sup>20</sup>

Falk's study of 40 randomly selected museum visitors shows that the visitors who are motivated by a primary desire for 'entertainment' made a significant increase in their learning. Falk et al states.

Individuals with a high entertainment motivation, regardless of their educational motivation showed significant vocabulary development (Dimension One) and overall mastery of the topic (Dimension Four). Individuals with a high education and entertainment motivation showed gains in all three - vocabulary, concepts

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<sup>19</sup> Enjoyment' is a term generally used to describe the student's personal evaluation of their museum-school work in answer to the questions at A34. It is also noted at question A37 which asks for any other comments.

<sup>20</sup> The Horniman research team would have found it useful if Falk had provided examples of individual 'concepts, attitudes and emotional understandings.' There is an absence of the participants' 'voice' in Falk's paper, which would have illuminated his thesis for the Horniman researchers. This point will be further considered at 9.2.

and mastery.<sup>21</sup>  
(Falk et al 1998: 113)

Falk's study found that individuals with a high education *and* entertainment motivation make the most gains in their learning, perhaps because both groups demonstrate a highly 'focussed strategy' during their museum visits (ibid 114). Entertainment-focussed individuals concentrate on museum objects, showed a great enthusiasm for them and spend more time with them; a strategy which probably leads to an increase in their abilities to describe what they have seen (dimension 4).

John Falk's analysis presents a strong challenge to the "academic" or "museum" connotation of education with 'quality and importance', and entertainment with 'vacuousness and frivolity' (ibid 117). He reiterates the vital point that education and entertainment are "not mutually exclusive" or separate ends of a 'motivation continua', but rather two continua which are both regarded as important by individuals who visit museums (ibid 115). The high incidence of 'enjoyment' *and* 'increased or improved performance' cited by the Horniman research team, is an indication that the findings of the dialogical project corroborate those of Falk's. <sup>22</sup>

Falk emphasises that entertainment in the 'museum' is distinct from entertainment in the 'theme park'. 'Entertainment' has a different significance in the museum and the theme park because of its link with 'education'. It is entertainment *and* education which lead to learning in the museum. The museum learning experience in this regard offers a counter-argument to a recent description of young people's need for 'extreme' experiences, which are too often satisfied with drugs as bell hooks notes.

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<sup>21</sup> Falk's study refers to the measurement of learning across 'four semi-independent dimensions: extent, breadth, depth, and mastery' (ibid 107). Dimension 1 (extent) measured the "change in the quantity of appropriate vocabulary used", as an indication of the extent of new "knowledge and feelings". Dimension 2 (breadth) measured the "change in the quantity of appropriate concepts" used, as an indication of the breadth and range of new conceptual understanding. Dimension 3 (depth) measured the detail and complexity of "conceptual category description", as an indication of non-superficial understanding. Dimension 4 (mastery) measured "the overall facility with which visitors described their understanding. (Falk et al 1998: 111)

<sup>22</sup> The Horniman research did not utilise the new method of PMM during the dialogical questionnaire project since it had only recently been theorised and trialed. PMM certainly offers researchers a higher degree of scientific validation for project-work with students. An investigation of its potential for future collaborative studies at the museum frontiers will be elaborated at 9.2.

## 6 Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors

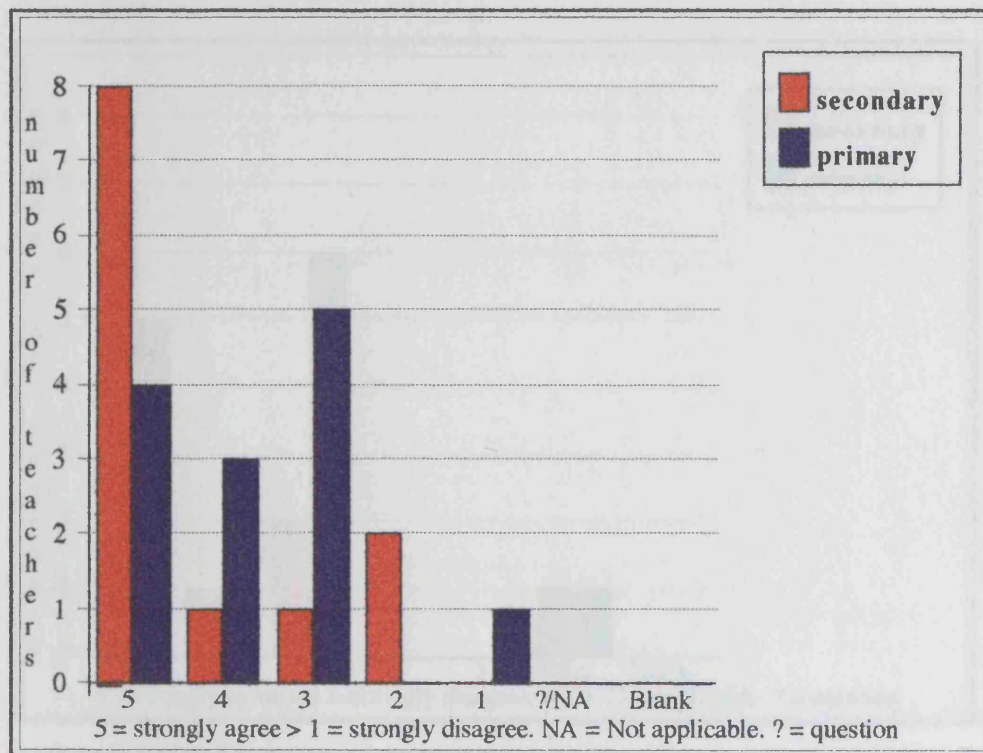
In the United States where our senses are daily assaulted and bombarded to such an extent that an emotional numbness sets in, it may take being “on the edge” for individuals to feel intensely.  
(hooks 1992: 36)

Participants in the dialogical questionnaire project contend that ‘intense feelings and thought’ or ‘embodied experiences’ are provoked by museum objects, but this thought and feeling results from a quieter focussing on artefacts and most importantly engaging in dialogical exchange about them. The intensity of thought and feeling is due to the empowering nature of learning at the museum frontiers. It is empowering because it opens up possibilities for new interpretations and understandings through reflexivity, which is ultimately self-reflexivity.

### Self-reflexivity and self-knowledge

The research teams’ collaborative work in the museum enables a degree of ‘self-reflexivity.’ In Sue Pearce’s words the team “are dealing with attitudes” not simple ‘facts’ since, “the glass of a showcase gives *both* a transparent vision *and* a reflection of our own faces” (Pearce 1994: 204) [my emphasis]. This reflection may reveal aspects of the self that are hidden deep in individual psyches. Clifford speaks of “intimate encounters” with ethnographic artefacts, which gives us permission to become ‘adult-children’, exploring “territories of danger and desire” (Clifford 1994: 216). The Horniman research team find that these ‘territories’ are ‘tabooed zones’ because they reveal the complexity of a common humanity; our differences *and* our similarities; our past and our present.

In the dialogical project questionnaire specific questions were posed about the differences *and* similarities between people. Figures 6.7-6.9 over-leaf show the teacher/lecturers’ responses to these questions, C12 to C14.

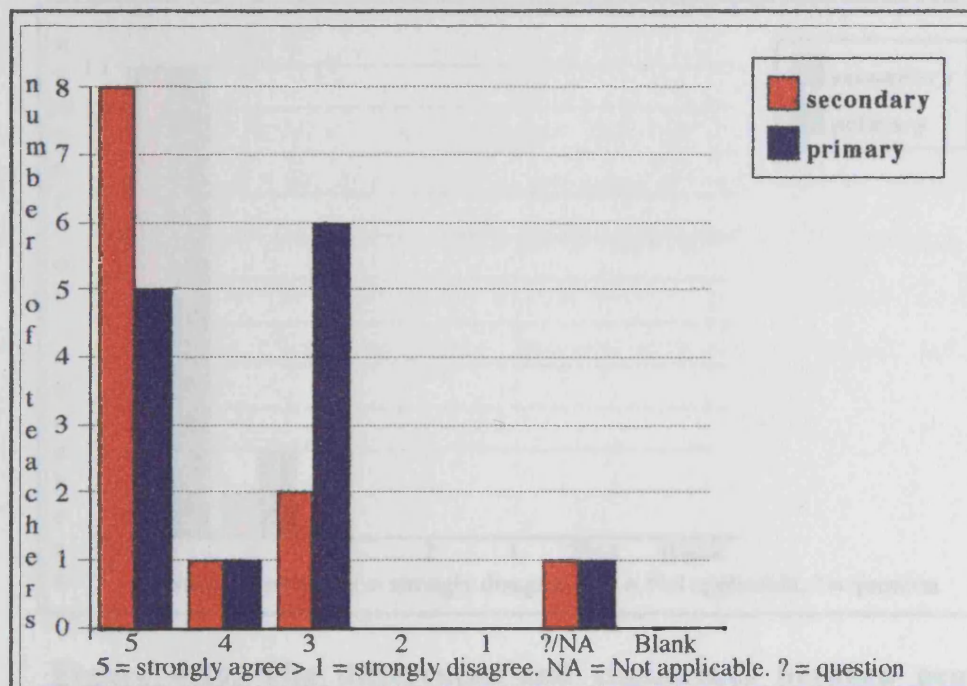


**Figure 6.8. The similarities between people**

Figure 6.8 shows the responses to question C13: 'Art from other cultures shows us how similar peoples all over the world are.' The figure shows a strong agreement from secondary/college teacher/lecturers at seventy-five percent, but less agreement from primary teachers at fifty-four percent.

The teacher/lecturers who disagreed with the statement at C13 also disagreed with the statement at C14. These colleagues noted similar problems with these statements which had escaped our analysis when compiling the questionnaire. The responses to question C14 are shown over-leaf.



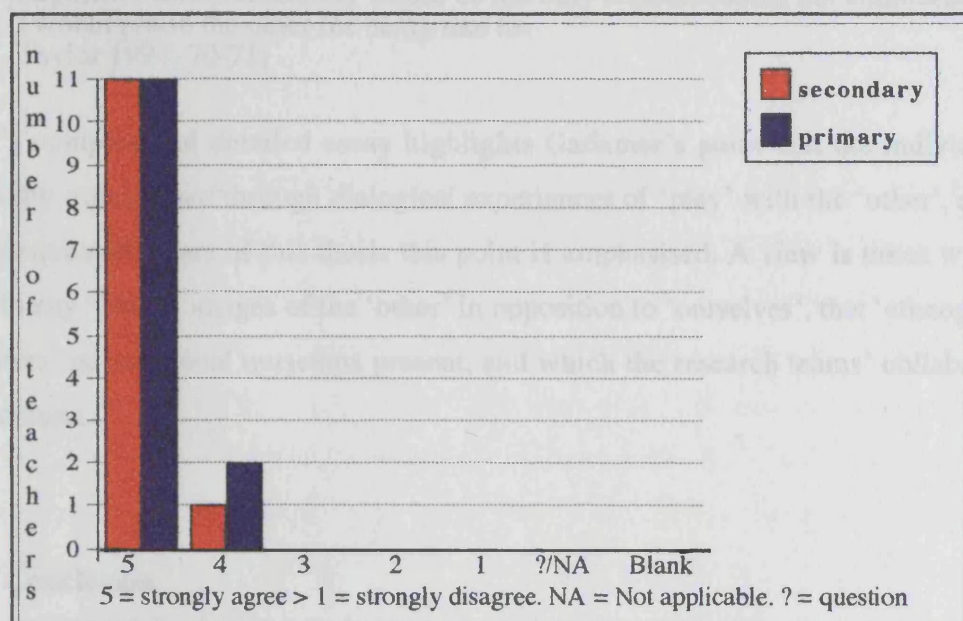


**Figure 6.9. The differences between peoples**

Figure 6.9 shows teacher/lecturers' responses to question C14: 'Art from other cultures shows us how different people from all over the world are.' The figure shows strong agreement from secondary/college teacher/lecturers, seventy-five percent, but less agreement from primary colleagues, forty-six percent. The teacher/lecturers who agree with the statement at C14 are comfortable with the idea that appreciating art objects from around the world does not require masking of 'difference.'

One colleague, T07, who disagreed with the statement at C14 commented. "A difficult question to answer as 'different' is a difficult word here." In conversation I later agreed with this Black male colleague that the isolation of 'difference' in this question is problematic. In retrospect the statements C13 and C14 appear too simplistic. They seem to disguise the concept of a shared humanity. This problem is averted with the statement at C12 and teacher/lecturers' unanimous responses to C12 are shown in Figure 6.10 overleaf.





**Figure 6.10. The differences and similarities between people**

Figure 6.10 shows the teacher/lecturers' responses to C12: 'Art from around the world points to the differences and similarities between peoples.' There is one-hundred percent agreement from secondary/college teacher/lecturers and primary teachers with this statement which is more complex than the statements at C13 and C14. The figure shows colleagues feel appreciating real objects of high quality can aid understanding of cultural diversity, which importantly includes our similarities *and* our differences.

In discussion during INSET, colleagues further interrogate the notion of similarity and difference and widely concur with Charles Taylor's recent criticisms of supposedly neutral "difference-blind" principles which are "in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture" (Taylor 1994: 43). Dominant cultures actually suppresses differences in the notion of 'blindness' and force minority groups to take an 'alien form'. Taylor calls for an active 'politics' which recognises and respects *both* the differences *and* the similarities amongst *all* members. Ultimately Taylor recommends Gadamer's concept of the 'fusion of horizons' as a way of learning to live in a broader framework. He states.

For real judgments of worth suppose a fused horizon of standards, as we have seen; they suppose that we have been transformed by the study of the other, so

## **6      Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors**

that we are not simply judging by our original familiar standards. A favourable judgment made prematurely would be not only condescending but ethnocentric. It would praise the other for being like us.  
(Taylor 1994: 70-71)

Taylor's complex and detailed essay highlights Gadamer's point that the individual is perpetually *transformed* through dialogical experiences of 'play' with the 'other', and in the subsequent chapters of this thesis this point is emphasised. A view is taken which is averse to any 'fixing' images of the 'other' in opposition to 'ourselves', that 'ethnographic encounters' in traditional museums present, and which the research teams' collaborative work contests.

### **6.5      Conclusion**

In this chapter the founding of an ethnographic action research team was highlighted and special attention was paid to a dialogical questionnaire project. Constructing the areas of inquiry to establish the critical success factors of learning at the museum frontiers proved a useful team-building experience. This project stimulated my own writing for this Ph.D. thesis, and additionally two members of the group were encouraged to write about aspects of collaborative museum-based work for their own M.A and B.A. degrees.

All of the information gathered from parts C and E of the questionnaires have been collated and analysed in the form of bar-charts. These figures enabled the research team to easily appreciate the import of emerging patterns, and it is hoped that further work on this material will be carried out by other members of the research team when time permits. The figures which have not been discussed in this chapter appear at Appendix 3.

My particular interest in relationships and dialogical exchange to challenge racism have been addressed in this chapter. Specifically, an understanding of the non-hierarchical relationships between research team members was elaborated using a metaphorical term the Clearing which was taken from Toni Morrison; while the relationships with museum objects was theorised in terms of Csikszentmihalyi's 'flow' experience (Morrison 1988;

## **6      Founding a research team and identifying critical success factors**

Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990). The relationship between antiracist and multiculturalist project work at the museum borderlands has also been more precisely defined as antiracist-multiculturalism.

Finally the critical success factors of museum learning which emerged from our dialogical questionnaire project were specified. Teacher/lecturers' voices provided evidence for the importance of a range of multisensory museum experiences, including opportunities for discussion and touch. The importance of a broad museum-school curriculum which facilitates personal points of reference were also noted. It was suggested that this curriculum might permit new ways of seeing, increase individuals self-esteem, and their achievement. It was thought likely to break perceived barriers between the role of the mind *and* body in gaining knowledge about 'others' and 'ourselves.' It should value our differences *and* our similarities. Finally the museum-school curriculum is regarded as educational *and* intensely enjoyable.

In short, the dialogical questionnaire project led the research team to regard the museum frontiers as one of the "cultural spaces where boundaries can be transgressed", where "new and alternative relations can be formed" (Braidotti 1994a; hooks 1992: 36). The dialogical questionnaire project demonstrated that new relations of mutual regard can be achieved through a special centring in feminist-hermeneutic dialogue and ethnographic action research. This dialogue involves making new interpretations about artefacts, which in turn leads to new interpretations about ourselves and the possibilities for our future lives.

In order to provide a depth to the broad analysis of museum-school education outlined in this chapter, specific instances of collaborative work carried out with three dialogical project team members will now be detailed in the subsequent chapters.

## **7      Developing theory through the praxis of a Benin project**

*Writing and reading are not all that distinct for a writer. Both exercises require being alert and ready for unaccountable beauty, for the intricateness or simple elegance of the writer's imagination, for the world that imagination evokes. Both require being mindful of the place where imagination sabotages itself, locks its own gates, pollutes its own vision. Writing and reading mean being aware of the writer's notions of risk and safety, the serene achievement of, or sweaty fight for, meaning and response-ability*  
(Morrison 1993: xiii) [My emphasis]

"Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" ... I was battered down by tom toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave ships. ... What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that splattered my whole body with black blood?  
(Fanon 1993: 112)

### 7.0 Introduction

In this chapter a movement is made from the opinions and generalisations of 25 teacher/lecturers analysed in the last chapter, to a more detailed investigation into the views of all the participants engaged in one particular project. Specifically, a number of students' voices feature in this chapter which begins to explore the potential of museum objects to inspire an active process of 're-reading' that challenges stereotypical and racist views.<sup>1</sup>

The focus of attention in this chapter revolves around individual responses to a year 11 project on Benin which comprises: art work, questionnaires and interviews. This focus presents an opportunity to develop the theory already introduced, through the practice of a collaborative museum-school project. The theory developed here is derived from four sources which are cited earlier, and will now be considered in some detail. Morrison (1993) and Philip (1993) provide a feminist framing of *reading* and *writing* as applied to the visual arts. Gadamer's (1997) analysis of Celan's poetry illuminates impressions gathered from student evaluations of the different aspects of their museum-school project. The emancipatory aims of Freire (1996) supplements feminist-hermeneutics and supports the concern to forge an antiracist *and* antisexist pedagogy *with* participants. Finally Coombes (1994) Kaplan (1994, 1997) and Hooper-Greenhill (1994) guide the ethico-theoretical concerns in the world of museum studies.

First at 7.1 some background information to the field-site is provided, as well as a brief description of the project, a Nigerian artist in residence and the key-informant teachers. The voices of the year 11 participants, gathered from one to one interviews and questionnaires, echo throughout this chapter to illustrate the major points. A representative sample of PS voices can be examined at Appendix 4.

Next at 7.2 pertinent historical and contemporary debates on the concept of African art or artefact and the related notion of primitivism are considered (Vogel 1988; Picton 1998;

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<sup>1</sup> The approach extends Gaby Porter's understanding of the curator of museum displays as a writer of texts, to centrally address the reader/visitor empowered by feminist-hermeneutic dialogue (Porter 1991). This special dialogical exchange empowers museum visitors to write back, in a visual as well as a textual sense, to the authoritative framing of knowledge by the curator.

Hiller 1993; Bryson 1992). An argument is made for African objects to be accorded the highest accolade in western terms and for a more inclusive museum curriculum; western *and* African *arts*; insider *and* outsider interpretations.

At section 7.3 Benin iconography is read as meaningful sign systems, and this point is clarified via a comparative reading of western art and a re-reading of Benin iconography. Morrison (1993) and Kaplan (1997) are also employed to develop an argument which challenges racism and sexism through the Benin project work.

At 7.4 Freire (1996) and Philip's (1993) thought is utilised to clarify and justify a prioritisation of personal meaning-making in the Benin project. Specifically, their concepts of 'dialogue' are employed to illuminate Gadamer's concept of understanding gained through an 'I - Thou' dialogue. An analogy is drawn with 'I and I' dialogue in Rastafarianism which pertinently facilitates the year 11 students 'i-maging' of a Benin Collection today. Then the project work is evaluated. The hermeneutic attitudes of the student participants in the Benin project are considered in the light of Gadamer's (1997) work on risk, and being prepared to make mistakes in order to gain new understanding(s). Evaluation also involves addressing issues of reparation from the perspective of African scholars and the London school students (Eyo 1994; Eboreime 1998).

Finally at 7.5 some conclusions are drawn on the value of imaginative interpretive efforts, which break a long silence to uncover meanings distorted and hidden by 'prejudices' (Gadamer 1981). Most importantly for the Benin project team-leaders (museum/school teachers and artist), the antiracist-multicultural museum-school curriculum developed with this year 11 art group proved to be highly successful. In terms of motivating students, improving examination results and raising self-esteem, the results of the Benin studies were excellent as figure 7.5 demonstrates. Figure 7.6 provides some visual clarification of the creative frontier region between museum and school which facilitated the students' achievement, and some illustrations of the project work are offered to reinforce this point.

## **7      Developing theory through the praxis of a Benin project**

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### **7.1    Background to the field-site: a year 11 group at PS School, and a description of their Benin project**

#### **Key-informants: teacher-collaborators and an artist in residence**

TFD, TCC, and TRC are code names for 3 teachers in the art department of an inner city secondary school, code name PS. TFD, TCC and TRC are founder members of the dialogical project research team and the key informant teacher-collaborators in this project. These teachers were especially stimulated by their contribution to the dialogical questionnaire project. They remain committed to the antiracist-multicultural initiative at the Horniman Museum, and still regularly attend INSET. The abiding interest of these dedicated colleagues lies in exploring ways of raising self-esteem and achievement for all their students by developing a radical museum-school curriculum. The art teachers are supported in their efforts by the newly appointed headmaster, TML, who adopts the phrase 'high achievement for all' as part of the leadership strategy for the school. His management emphasises the various contributions made by cultures around the world to present-day multicultural society in London. TML is proud of his own Caribbean roots in Grenada and aims to foster pride in the diverse heritage of the entire school, staff, students and parents.

In 1994 the Art Department made a special budgetary request to TML. They asked for an additional sum of £500, to develop their antiracist-multicultural work together with a Black artist in residence, code name AC. AC is a Nigerian painter/artist in residence at the 198 Gallery.<sup>2</sup> I initially made contact with him when researching for Benin as a key stage 2 National Curriculum option. He provided assistance during 2 INSET sessions, and with the construction of a teacher's pack. TML readily allocated the extra money to the art department for a special collaborative project with the museum, and after 2 brainstorming sessions in the education centre it was decided to work with the year 11 GCSE group. The priority was to raise their self-esteem and promote a sense of achievement during their final year at school through carrying out a successful project.

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<sup>2</sup> A further collaboration with this gallery is highlighted at 9.3.

**The school field-site and the question of access** <sup>3</sup>

PS secondary school was selected as the field-site for the Benin project work outlined in this chapter and for the Carnival project work outlined in the next chapter, chapter 8. In this chapter the problem of access is highlighted as a major reason for the choice of this school. PS school offered a high degree of both physical and intellectual access; an ideal situation for an intensive ethnographic action research project at the borderlands of the Horniman Museum. Firstly, in terms of intellectual access, the commitment demonstrated on the dialogical project by the key-informant teachers was exceptional. The PS teachers spent at least 2 after school sessions each month, either at school or at the museum, to investigate the possibilities of a radical museum-school curriculum. Secondly this commitment to a museum-school partnership was mirrored by the head-teacher TML <sup>4</sup> Finally, in terms of physical access, the school extended an open invitation to me. I was provided with space in the office of the art department and welcomed to visit regularly.

It was this exceptional access which provided a wealth of valuable information, such as the number of Special Educational Needs (SEN) students, the number of free school meals provided and the number of students speaking English as a Second Language (ESL) listed at Figure 1.1. More than 50% of the PS pupils are bilingual. Figure 7.1 shows 45 different languages are spoken in this school. The highest numbers of ESL speakers are Portuguese with 85 speakers; then Cantonese 44 speakers; Bengali 35 speakers; Yoruba 25 speakers and Vietnamese 23 speakers. Figure 7.2 shows the stages of competency in English language which the bilingual pupils have achieved. Finally Figure 7.3 shows the ethnic origin of the students.

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<sup>3</sup> To briefly reiterate the argument at 1.2 for selecting this field-site for two intensive projects the following 4 points were highlighted: 1) The school is located in a London borough which has a large population of African Caribbean people and the Horniman Museum has targeted this under-represented audience for reasons of social inclusion. 2) The school is committed to a partnership approach to address the problem of social inclusion which allows PS teachers time developing a radical museum-based curriculum (Mcpherson 1999). 3) GCSE students are approaching the school leaving age and collaborative work can prepare them for transition to further education, work, or unemployment which is a problem for the borough (Scarman 1981). 4) My art training is valuable since this borough lacks a specialist secondary art advisor.

The argument for focussing two projects at this field-site is reinforced at the beginning of section 8.1

<sup>4</sup> TML, his family and his art teachers attended the Emancipation Day events at the Horniman Museum which were discussed at chapter 5. He also encouraged a partnership between the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Art Department at Goldsmiths College and the Horniman Museum; a partnership which grew out of networking between the university and school teacher/lecturers during the dialogical project.



<u>Language</u>	<u>No of speakers</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>No of speakers</u>
Acholi	2	Lingala	15
Akan	2	Luganda	1
Amharic	1	Mandinka	2
Arabic	21	Mende	1
Bandal	1	Nepali	2
Bengali	35	Punjabi	1
Benue	1	Portuguese	85
Cantonese	44	Serbo-Croat	1
Efutu	1	Shona	1
Fanti	2	Somali	13
French	2	Spanish	17
French Creole	3	Swahili	5
Ga	4	Tagalog	3
Gujarati	2	Temne	1
Hakka	1	Tigrinya	5
Hindi	3	Turkish	11
Kalabari	2	Twi	16
Konkani	1	Urdu	1
Kokongo	1	Urhobo	3
Kimbundu	1	Vietnamese	23
Kioko	1	Yoruba	25
Krio	10	Zulu	2
<b>Total no. of languages spoken in school:</b>			45
<b>Total no. of bilingual pupils:</b>			381
Information from the Education for Bilingual Pupils Department. (EBP)			

**Figure 7.1. PS School. First language census. April 97**

<u>Class</u>	<u>Stage 1</u>	<u>Stage 2</u>	<u>Stage 3</u>	<u>Stage 4</u>	<u>Total</u>
7S	4	4	2	1	11
7T	0	3	3	1	7
7K	6	6	2	0	14
7W	0	7	3	2	12
7E	7	7	7	0	21
7L	7	5	4	1	17
8S	3	7	2	0	12
8T	4	4	1	0	9
8k	3	2	3	1	17
8E	7	1	2	1	11
8L	6	11	0	0	17
9S	1	8	4	2	15
9T	1	4	1	4	10
9K	6	5	5	0	16
9W	4	3	2	4	13
9L	1	8	6	3	18
10S	2	7	3	1	13
10T	3	5	4	1	13
10K	4	11	5	1	21
10W	2	9	1	0	12
10L	3	6	8	2	19
11S	1	4	7	1	13
11T	1	4	6	2	13
11K	3	6	4	2	15
11W	2	5	6	5	18
11L	2	4	3	5	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>

(Stage 4 = highest)

**Figure 7.2. PS School analysis of Bilingual Pupils' stages of English**

Country of origin	yr7	yr8	yr9	yr10	yr11	Total	Percent
Angola	3	2	4	3	2	14	1.9
Bangladesh	11	8	4	3	2	36	4.76
Bosnia	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.14
Brazil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burma	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.14
Chile	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.14
China	5	2	2	1	1	11	1.5
Colombia	1	2	2	0	0	5	0.7
Cyprus	0	0	4	4	0	8	1.09
Ecuador	0	1	0	2	1	4	0.54
Ethiopia/Eritrea	3	0	2	4	5	14	1.9
Gambia	1	0	0	1	0	2	0.27
Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.41
India	1	2	1	1	1	6	0.82
Iraq	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.14
Ivory Coast	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.14
Kenya	0	1	0	0	2	3	0.41
Laos	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.14
Lebanon	1	0	1	0	1	3	0.41
Malta	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.14
Mauritius	0	1	1	0	1	3	0.41
Mexico	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.14
Morocco	1	1	1	0	4	7	0.95
Nepal	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.14
Nigeria	11	6	11	7	8	43	5.84
Pakistan	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.14
Philippines	2	0	1	0	0	2	0.27
Portugal	16	23	10	22	14	85	11.55
Sierra Leone	3	1	3	3	2	12	1.6
Somalia	5	4	1	2	1	13	1.77
South Africa	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.14
Spain	1	1	0	1	0	3	0.41
Sudan	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.14
Tanzania	0	1	2	0	0	3	0.41
Turkey	1	1	1	1	1	5	0.7
Uganda	0	1	1	0	0	2	0.27
Vietnam	7	8	10	10	8	43	5.84
Venezuela	0	0	2	0	1	3	0.42
West Indies	34	47	38	44	33	196	26.63
White British	56	25	21	22	21	145	19.7
White Others	0	4	4	3	3	14	1.9
Yemen	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.14
Zaire	2	7	1	1	1	12	1.63
Zimbabwe	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.14
Total	171	156	134	146	129	736	100

Largest groups: West Indies (26.63%); White British (19.7%); Portuguese (11.55%)

Figure 7.3. PS School. Ethnic Origin Survey. April 1997

Figure 7.3 shows the term ‘minority’ to be meaningless here. Twenty-seven percent of students are of ‘West Indian’ heritage; twenty percent of students are ‘White British’ while twelve percent of the pupils originate from Portugal. In addition more than twenty-five percent of the pupils originate from various African countries.

The Government imputes a sense of failure to this school through the publication of performance league tables at GCSE examinations, since the tables do not take account of this enormous emotional and learning needs amongst the diverse student population. In comparison to a ‘national average’ LM’s school is ‘under-achieving’ in most subject areas, as figure 7.4 demonstrates. At 17% A to C passes for the GCSE examination PS school shares a position at the bottom of the league tables with its neighbour, BL school.

C and HS High school	95
GTB school	47
RL school	36
NL school	36
MS school	35
BEC school	33
D school	29
GN school	27
TA school	18
BL school	17
PS school	17

\* Figures taken from the Guardian newspaper November 18th 1997 showing the percentage of A-C grades at GCSE examinations

**Figure 7.4. London borough of Lambeth 1997 League table**

These statistics are offered as essential background information on the field-site, PS school. The museum-school partnership project which will now be critically described was specifically developed, and must be viewed, in this socio-cultural context.

**The Benin project**

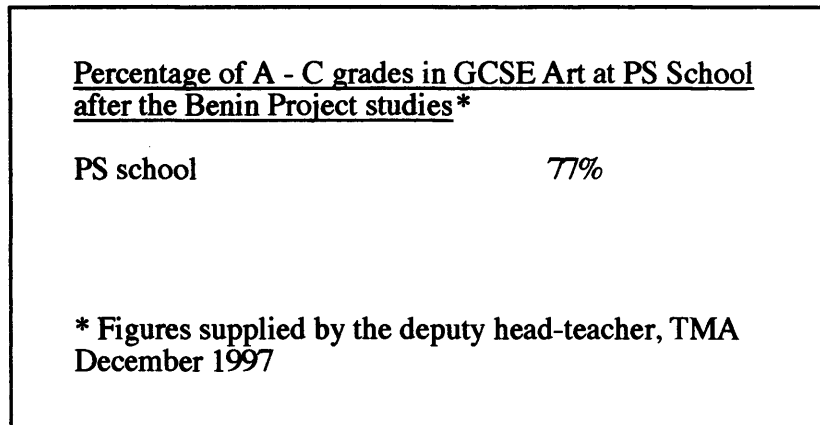
The students' bilingualism is not regarded entirely as a 'problem' or 'deficit' to be adjusted by the Benin project team-leaders (the key informant teachers and I). The many dual language speakers are rather considered to have an asset which should be a source of personal pride and self-esteem to them. Similarly the diverse 'ethnic origin' of the students is perceived as a positive resource for inter-cultural understanding. Therefore the Benin art project is developed to fully utilise these student resources, and provide the group of young people with an inspiring model of excellence from within the diverse cultural heritage of the group.

As Figure 7.3 shows, for more than 75% of the students, the topic of Benin has a special resonance in their home culture. The Benin project team-leaders anticipated that the Benin theme would highly motivate all these students and raise their self-esteem, because they would see aspects of themselves *positively* reflected in their project work. It was also believed that the students would appreciate working alongside the artist AC. AC would provide a live role model for the students and thwart any fixing of Benin arts in an 'extinct' past (Picton 1992).

A multifaceted Benin project was designed by the museum-school Benin team-leaders and a feminist-hermeneutic approach which prioritises dialogue was employed, to motivate the *whole* group.<sup>5</sup> Through their arts curriculum it was hoped that the students would actively learn to value the cultural achievements of each other. Optimistically it was believed that this might encourage a mutual respect for world culture, and lead to harmony amongst the world's peoples that are represented in a small corner of multicultural society in south east London. It was also believed that this non-eurocentric more inclusive curriculum might enhance the achievement of all the students. Figure 7.5 over-leaf clearly illustrates the success of the Benin students at the GCSE art examination, where 77% gained an A-C grade.

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<sup>5</sup> It was emphasised at 5.3 that the *whole* group of students should benefit from the efforts of the language support teacher. The art teachers at PS school emphasised that for reasons of social inclusion the *whole* GCSE art group should benefit from the Benin project and not just the students of African, Caribbean or Portuguese heritage. The excellent exam results confirmed this thought.



**Figure 7.5. Percentage of A - C grades in Art GCSE at PS School 1996**

The PS school-teachers, AC the artist in residence and myself opted to study the topic of Benin with the year 11 students, during two brain-storming sessions. There are three reasons behind this choice. Firstly everyone was newly inspired after a recent INSET on Benin. Secondly AC as a Nigerian born near Benin city was able to provide some 'insider' knowledge of this historic culture. He was also able to demonstrate the techniques employed in his current work which drew on historical Benin. Finally the two largest groups of students, the 'West Indian' (27%) and the 'Portuguese' (12%), are positively reflected in the Horniman Museum's Collection of Benin artefacts<sup>6</sup>.

The plans for the project included elements of: dialogical exchange at the museum frontiers, and drawing from the artefacts in the handling collection and in the galleries, as well as a practical school component. The school-work centred around the traditional African craft of batik, and adapted designs taken from the museum drawings of the Benin Collection. In this way the school art-work was thought to make an homage to the original Benin pieces, which were made by the complicated lost wax casting process, by using wax as a medium. In addition some of the more able students also managed to translate their design ideas to the form of A1 sized mono-prints. Examples can be seen at 7.5, at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>6</sup> Additionally as noted earlier, figure 7.3 shows the combined numbers of students originally from Africa exceeds 25%. These pupils should also be particularly proud of the African project. This is not to deny the value of the study for all the students, a point which will be emphasised in chapter 8.

**The research method**

The research methods employed to evaluate this project were both qualitative and quantitative. Some hard quantitative data has been outlined above to illustrate the distinctiveness of the field-site, and the details of the quantitative data analysis can be appreciated with reference to the figures 7.1 to 7.6 which are provided at the beginning of this chapter.

Additionally a similar questionnaire approach to the one considered in chapter 6 was adopted, since this had proved so thought-provoking to the teacher-participants in the dialogical questionnaire project, as outlined in the last chapter. The year 11 students completed the questionnaire with the assistance of their teachers but they found it extremely arduous, and it was decided to implement qualitative methods to supplement the information gathered from the questionnaires. The quantitative questionnaire method assumed a high degree of English literacy and because some of these students were at the beginning stages of speaking English the written expression of their ideas and feelings was severely restricted.

A qualitative method, such as a sympathetic face to face interview, enables these students to take a higher degree of control over the evaluation of their project-work, since literacy levels were not assumed. In addition, engaging in dialogue with a more experienced adult enables the students to clarify their thought processes and bring them to speech.

The age of these students and their familiarity with me determined the choice of one to one interviews, in preference to the interview pairs which were selected for the pilot project. The interviews involved a representative sample of the students: 9 students from a group of 25. The teachers were interested in representing the full range of ability levels and to ensure an ethnic and gender balance. They provided a quiet office/store location, which was suitable for the interviewing process, and also organised the order of student interviews.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Following the success of this interview process the key-informant teachers and I decided to increase the number of students interviewed in the subsequent Carnival project, when the whole student group was interviewed rather than a representative sample. This point highlights a value of the ethnographic action research method where the 'extended stay of residence' leads to a progressively more informed approach.

Together the qualitative interview method and the more quantitative questionnaire method provides a wealth of student's voices, which resonate throughout this chapter. These voices are fragments of questionnaire and interview from which a collage of student responses is formed. A complete interview, which is selected as typical, can be examined at Appendix 4. Finally, a representative sample of the art-making process and the accomplished visual responses to the Benin project are provided at the end of this chapter.

## **7.2 Re-reading and writing a Benin Collection: historical and contemporary voices on the art-artifact and primitive art debates**

### **Historical voices on Benin**

The Benin project work for the year 11 group began with a Nigerian video *Dormant Genius*,<sup>8</sup> which dramatically lays out a number of events leading up to the sacking of Benin City, by the British, on the 18th February 1897. The Nigerian narrator speaks from an Afro-centric perspective. He explains why Acting Consul Phillips and his small party were repeatedly warned against visiting Oba Ovonramwen during February. This is a time when the Oba, a political and religious leader, is engaged in the annual yam festival, and is unable to receive visitors who are not Edo people. The video also includes contemporary footage from Ogun Street in Benin city, where the artists continue to produce metal sculptures. A viewing of this video was followed by discussion with the artist in residence, AC, who had recently arrived in England from a trip to Ogun Street.

The video is supplemented for the students with further, conflicting accounts of Edo peoples, written around the time of the 'punitive expedition'. As Annie Coombes observes, these accounts "tell us more about the speaking subject than they do about the African" (Coombes 1994: 22). To illustrate her remarks R. H. Bacon, an intelligence

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<sup>8</sup> The new exhibition *African Worlds*, opened in March 1999. This gallery features the excellent video *Dormant Genius* as part of the Benin redisplay. The Benin section also benefits from collaboration with Dr. Joseph Eboime on the text panels. Dr. Eboime is Director of the Benin City Museum, and his research in the Oba's palace at Benin city provides important historical information on the Horniman plaques, such as the names of the specific chiefs who are represented.



officer to the 'punitive expedition' and Richard Quick, curator of the Horniman Museum in 1897 are cited. Bacon writes in contradictory terms about the Edo. The Edo are 'liars' and mentally 'slow', yet also 'courageous' in battle. This point about the Edo 'courage' transparently adds greater prestige to the British military victory in Benin.

Richard Quick's writing is illuminating on the changing *emphasis* of Benin objects; their movement from artefacts to valuable art-works with fine aesthetic qualities<sup>9</sup>. Quick's training as an artist flows through his unusual museum record books, where sketches and letters are pasted next to press-cuttings. Little time seems to have been spent curating in the 1890's, although his annual reports note how he 'generally went through the collections' or 'found a new green card which made an excellent background for some exhibits'.

One letter dated 23rd March 1897 is from a Mr WJ Hidder, who wants 'about £100' for ... "some *valuable curiosities* taken from the city of Benin by myself." Hidder knows "*for certain that these are the only collection that were brought from Benin*, as the city was destroyed by fire just before we left ... by a fluke my collection were *saved from the fire through being placed in a building with a brass-roof*. [My emphasis]

In fact 895 plaques were 'saved', apart from other artefacts (Ben-Amos 1995: 58). Canny Quick actually pays £30 for Hidder's 'curiosities' and later writes in the *Illustrated London News* about "the fierce fire" which "destroyed much of the spoil" that "would other-wise have been brought back" (Quick 1897: 493). The term 'spoil' is an interesting choice of words which accurately describes the devastation inflicted onto the city by the British army, but Quick does not expand upon this point. The 'spoiling' of Benin city is not subjected to any intense philosophical inquiry, and his overriding interest seems to lie in the *practice of* art, visually recording his personal affective and aesthetic responses to the museum objects.

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<sup>9</sup> For Coombes Quick's writing highlights a 'radical change' of academic opinion about Benin artefacts at the end of the 19th century, especially after 1898 when the artistic quality of Benin artefacts are privileged over the "Customs and Horrors" of the culture (Coombes 1994: 26-7; Ling Roth 1903). I take a slightly different approach from Coombes and analyse the documents in a different way. For example, in his early and later articles Quick continues to employ the art-historical practice of comparative analysis, noting similarities between Ancient Egypt and Benin.

Nevertheless Quick's public writing on Benin in 1897 highlights the evidence of "civilisation", at a time when Benin objects are dismissed in the media as "hideous bronze heads" or a "hideous Benin god", and his later writing in 1899 shows a greater appreciation of Benin culture. His words cherish the "fine deep carvings" made by extremely "skilful craftsmen" which proves for him "that artists of no mean talent were formally attached to the King's court" (Quick 1899: 248, 251, 254).

The PS school Benin project team-leaders approve Quick's reading, which prioritises aesthetic qualities in a historical context which originally dwelt on the 'barbarous practices of blood sacrifice', and regarded the Edo musical taste as 'savage' or 'childish' (Ling Roth 1903: 108). Following Freire's pedagogy the contrasting historical views on Benin art are made relevant and meaningful to the lived experiences of the learners, by drawing similarities with present-day politics. For example the desire of the British to control trade in west Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, is pertinently compared with a more recent 'punitive expedition' into Iraq, so that the control of oil in Kuwait might remain under western influence. Dialogue on this issue enables students to begin to interrogate the dominant discourses in the media and the museum<sup>10</sup>.

To engage students in dialogue on these issues is to raise the question of evidence, opinion and prejudice which is vital to historical understanding, and contemporary meaning-making. By these dialogical methods the team-leaders aim to prepare citizens for a fuller participation in democratic society; to provide them with the tools necessary to challenge discrimination and prejudiced opinion today. The Benin year 11 students addressed the notion of prejudice further, with reference to the 'art-artifact' and 'primitive art' debates surrounding their Benin project. The main points will now be considered and the team-leaders position with regards these issues will be justified.

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<sup>10</sup> All our teachers notes recommend posing questions to students such as: "What happened to the kingdom of Benin in 1897? Why do you think this happened? What are the facts and what are the points of view?" (Golding 1995c: 2).

**Contemporary voices on the question of African 'art-artifact' and 'primitivism'**

'Art' is one of the highest accolades in terms of western thought. The Benin team-leaders considered it important to bestow this privileged term onto the Horniman Museum's 15th century Benin plaques. A celebration of the ethnic heritage of the student group was aspired to and therefore Quick's reference to the Benin plaques as 'works of art' was applauded during the Benin project. The broad term art which has fluid boundaries that reach into political and religious realms for the Benin team will now be unpacked.<sup>11</sup>

The western term art is derived from the Greek word *techne* which translates as 'human skill' in making an object (COD 1976: 52). Therefore, although there may be no term denoting art in any African language, it seems preposterous to deny Africa has any skilfully made objects of art (Vogel 1988; Burt 1995). The Benin plaques are superbly crafted. Their makers obviously employ a sophisticated aesthetic sense in their construction since they display a serious attention to the relationship between visual forms.

The approach of the Benin project team-leaders is situated in a professional art training, which the contemporary artist Rasheed Araeen shares. Araeen wants to praise the "extraordinary formal qualities" of African sculpture, without being accused of "reducing them" to these aspects (Araeen 1993: 165). He does not deny the ritual function of the African works, but sets this function alongside those western works which have been produced for ritual purposes, and are similarly ripped from their original context by siting them in art galleries. This is not to deny the complex history and tradition from which the objects emerged. As emphasised above, the year 11 researchers paid careful attention to the original "context and contextual meaning" of the Benin plaques, and thoroughly interrogated the social world(s) in Africa and London during 1897 (Howell 1993: 215).

The fact that the plaques are made according to royal patronage, to commemorate historic

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<sup>11</sup> The question of ethnographic 'art' is a contentious issue for museum display and the educational programmes which utilise them, as a dialogical project research colleague and I discovered during the presentation of our papers at the 1999 MEG conference. Our argument for utilising the term art was based on a knowledge of the multicultural communities of south London school students and the need to raise their self-esteem by bestowing this familiar accolade on the 'others' represented in their home.cultures.

events, and for overriding religious purposes does not irrevocably sever them from the world of western art at this time. On the contrary, systems of religious and royal patronage are found throughout the 15th century art world. Historically workshops of artists and apprenticeship systems existed in the west, that bear some similarities to the historic guilds of brass-casters in Benin city. The Romantic notion of an individual artist working in glorious isolation from any patronage is comparatively recent, and moreover a largely imaginary conception. Artists in the west and in Africa remain dominated by the demands of the Global art market.

John Picton stoutly defends the notion of African 'art', but he deplores the way this global market privileges the arts of 'tribal' or 'auto-didact' artists over 'academic' artists today (Picton 1998: 281). The PS students' work with a contemporary 'academic' artist from Nigeria highlights Picton's "proposition" that, "The academic artists are concerned to hold on to and explore their place within the traditions of practice inherited from the past; it is they who use these traditions as among the resources with which to explore current concerns" (ibid: 284-5). Collaboration with AC was vital to the success of the project which would otherwise have been fixed onto distant historical aspects. AC shared the experiences of 'travelling' across cultural horizons with the students. The PS Benin team all became 'active participants' with AC, 're-forming and redefining' a relationship to the derogatory notion of "a primitivised, colonised 'other'", through an empathetic engagement with historical *and* contemporary Benin arts (Hiller 1993: 285).

In short, the Benin project challenged the idea of any 'childlike' or 'primitive other', and exposed 'Primitivism' as a western notion about 'art'. 19th century Europe defined itself against the 'primitive' as an essentially superior point, while 20th century Modernism saw aspects of the self 'lost' by 'us' in our "rapid evolution at the centre" (ibid 87). The PS project work attempted to "widen our aesthetic horizons to include African sculptures", without rendering "invisible the facts of historical and cultural difference", and "the brutal history of European colonialism" (Bryson 1992: 96,100).

The year 11 students came to recognise specific African art-skills, within a framework of African knowledge and history, which had previously been obscured or hidden from

them. Their comments from the written questionnaires are overwhelmingly favourable towards the idea of *African Art* as opposed to *African craft*. The term art is felt to more fully celebrate and honour African achievement, as a representative sample from two African Caribbean students demonstrates

RR ... different races can learn about Benin *art*. ... It helps us to understand *how talented these artists are*. ... A Benin artefact *should be put into every art gallery* so everybody can see the great works of the Benin people.

DS Taking an interest into the *sculptures* ... *all the time and effort they put into their wax sculptures*. ... doing the project of Benin on wax ... it was an interesting experience. ... It would *teach the young about their African past*.

### 7.3 Re-reading and writing Benin iconography to challenge racism and sexism

Fifteen years ago we didn't care, or at least I didn't care, whether there was any black in the Union Jack. Now not only do we care, we must.  
(Hall 1994: 258)

Olokun is the giver of children, which the Benin [Edo] regard as another form of wealth  
(Kaplan 1997: 80)

The pedagogic responsibility that facilitated a critical *re-reading* of what was considered to be the authoritative texts on 'Benin art' has been highlighted. Now the justification of the 'art' approach will be justified with reference to the expressive powers of Benin iconography. In particular similarities between Benin and British iconographic meanings are drawn out, to counter the notion that because 'primitive art' often "contains a mixture of human and animal attributes", the primitive mind-set tends "towards an animalistic conception of the universe" (Miller 1993: 64). Overall the complexity of Benin iconography as a richly meaningful sign system worthy of study in the context of global art history is stressed.

Artists working under the direction of the Oba pick out features of the natural world to stand in symbolic relationships as part of a sign system. The symbols can be *read* by anyone who has gained familiarity and possession of the relevant codes. It is part of the hermeneutic claim that everyone has interpretive resources which can be developed, by

permitting what is familiar in the work of art to illuminate what is not. Gadamer states. "One person knows from experience what another knows only from books", or books, video, artefacts and dialogue with museum/school teachers in our case (Gadamer 1997: 35).

A prime example of learning to *read* a Benin code which PS students find fascinating, is the merging of mud-fish and ruler in both Benin and Yoruba visual arts. In these neighbouring west African kingdoms representations of kings can be identified by their possession of mud-fish legs. The mud-fish is characterised by its ability to move across land and water as well as its ability to survive the severe climatic conditions of the African continent, most notably burrowing deep in the mud searching for moisture to sustain life during harsh droughts. Ancient African artists noted such special abilities in the creatures around them, and made a kind of visual praise-song by representing them connected with their leaders, who thereby took on some desirable mud-fish attributes.

Benin team-leaders remind students of a parallel relationship which traditional European artists noted; the ancient association between the English king and the lion, king of the forest. This connection, locating the power of two realms in the body of the king has only recently been attributed to African iconography. A comparative analysis of British and Benin royalty and court-life during the Tudor period provided further congruencies. Collaborators vitally marked such similarities as points of reference, in order to challenge animal-human fusions in the context of the racist imagination, which Toni Morrison discusses.

Morrison notes the "collapsing" of categories between animal and African person serve the express purpose of preventing contact and human relations between people. In her view certain works of late twentieth century American literature, close 'the possibility of communication' amongst human-beings (Morrison 1993:68). She cites the use of the nameless term that occupies a territory between animal and person, "nigger". This word is employed to site and to denigrate a black African person, especially a black female who is described as occupying the lowest rung on the evolutionary ladder. Her quotation of Hemingway's imagery which merges woman and predatory shark stands in sharp contrast

to the Benin artists merging of Oba and mud-fish. “The strong notion” for Hemingway “is that of a black female as the furthest thing from human, so far away as to be not even mammal but fish” (ibid:85).

### **Benin iconography: gender and power**

Now iconographic representations of power will be considered within traditional Benin arts from a gendered perspective. There is no representation of women and children on the Horniman Benin plaques. Therefore the focus will be on one historical infiltration into the all-male power hierarchies by a woman, a queen mother. Additionally the year 11 study of female subversion is located within a contemporary movement of feminist understanding. Specifically the ways in which a historical museum discourse relates to *new* understandings about the roles of women and men in the world is investigated. The Benin team-leaders take the view that these roles are not ‘natural’ and immutable, but ‘constructed’ in social situations and therefore amenable to change. These views are made evident from the beginning of the project through to the production of art work and this has a positive effect on the female students as I shall demonstrate.

Benin plaque artists sculpt a familiar male history, of kings, ceremonial and court life. Smaller figures on the plaques are not women or children but less powerful men. Men and women usually occupy separate spheres in traditional Benin, and continue to specialise in different crafts in many parts of present day Africa. Men traditionally work in metals and the earliest plaques are made by male craftsmen to honour the male ruler. Plaques often speak of male exploits such as victories at war, but they also document the important history of all Benin peoples, through the glories accorded to the Oba. Iconographic signs that the Oba figures bestow power to the chiefs and recognise their role in Edo victories are also clearly read in the rings of coral beads which are represented on the Horniman

plaques<sup>12</sup>

Flora Kaplan notes how rarely females are depicted in the presence of the Oba, just twice “out of nearly one thousand plaques, known, and some late examples” (Kaplan 1997: 90). But in the 16th century one woman, a queen mother or *Iyoba* called Idia, broke through this male dominated structure. Legend tells of Idia’s son Oba Esigie (A.D. 1504-1550) who was advised against marching into battle by the cry of the bird of prophesy. Oral tradition tells how Esigie’s mother Idia, alone of all her peoples, encourages the warriors and actually leads her son’s army into a great battle where their enemies are defeated. As a consequence of Idia’s foresight brass cocks are allocated to the altars of all deceased queen mothers.

Queen Idia accompanies an important position alongside a number of great and powerful women who command respect and wield enormous authority in African society. African Queens, Market Queens and Priestesses are powerful figures but they do not all take an active role in contemporary government. They may perform more ambiguous ceremonial roles on behalf of the whole ‘community’, by ruling over a separate sphere of influence as the *Iyoba* does from her palace at Lower Uselu, Ontude Town (ibid: 76).

Sandra Barnes elucidates this by citing one famous Ghanaian warrior-woman who governed her country in the nineteenth century. Queen Yaa Akyaa brought “her 15 year-old-son to kingship” in 1884 (Barnes 1997: 11). She was “fabulously rich” and politically astute but ended her life in exile, as a result of her resistance to British colonial rule. The “important point” for Barnes “insofar as queen mothers are concerned is that ultimately they came to their positions by promoting the interests of others in addition to their own.” (ibid: 12 )

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<sup>12</sup> On the Benin plaques multiple rings of coral-beads are depicted around the necks, wrists and ankles of chiefs. Coral-beads are traditionally bestowed on chiefs to indicate ranks of importance. They clearly denote *power* and also represent coral regalia, which is worn in great quantities by the Oba on ceremonial occasions. The quantity of coral worn determines the status of the wearer, and consequently the Oba requires assistance walking, due to the enormous weight of his coral garments. Legend tells it is Oba Eware who first stole coral after wrestling with Olokun, god of the waters and underwater world (R.A. Teachers’ notes 1995: 18). Coral therefore speaks eloquently of an early spatial expansion of the Oba’s power to incorporate underwater realms. Representations of crocodiles, the ‘policemen of the waters’ similarly serve to highlight this watery part of his kingdom.



The Benin team-leaders were interested in studying these great historical women to transform the place of women in patriarchal society today. The examples of Idia and Yaa point to the possibilities of change and deviation from what is regarded as the norm in home cultures. They provide information that different societies are organised according to different rules, which can have an empowering affect on individuals and members of communities. Once students glimpse different social structures through their art projects, they can translate this seed of transformation into the prospect of creating alternative orders in their lives

The words of one female student, MD, demonstrates the effect of our study at the museum-school frontiers, albeit indirectly. We were discussing her batik banner when she asked “Do you know who ironed it miss?” I asked if her teacher did and she replied.

MD Mr. [TFD] yeah. I couldn’t believe a man actually ironed! ... Yes. Sir ironed it. I didn’t. I didn’t finish, I left it here, then sir, when I came next time he said, just said, I ironed it for you! I couldn’t believe it. A man ironing. A Portuguese man would never do that. They never lift a finger. ... I will never marry a Portuguese man.

MD didn’t feel empowered to change Portuguese men; to insist they iron. She decided to follow the example of Idia and occupy a separate sphere. Analysing this part of the interview dialogue together with the teacher-colleagues it was realised that the crucial impact of the project framing; the *everyday practice* of antiracist *and* nonsexist philosophy in the art room and in the museum politicises the personal world outside of our institutions. MD’s speech proclaims the crucial importance of executing ‘theory’ at the grass-roots level of ‘praxis’, and highlights the inseparability of theory and practice in a ‘pedagogy’, which directs students to question the comparative positions of men and women in historical and present-day societies. MD’s speech vindicates the use of Freire’s pedagogy.

a pedagogy ‘forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity. This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation. And in the struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade.  
(Freire 1996: 30)

**7.4 Forging antiracist and antisexist pedagogy through i-maging a Benin  
Collection today. A justification of truth and the dialogical project method**

In this section the pedagogic practice during the year 11 Benin project will be more precisely justified within the action-research method of Paulo Freire's radical education. Then similarities between Freire, Gadamer, and Philip's thought will be drawn out. The chief interest here lies in investigating their common views about employing the 'I-Thou dialogue' as a pertinent methodological device. These connections have proved useful to the Benin team-leaders in clarifying the aims of the methodology, and the Caribbean teachers especially appreciated the theorising from within a 'home' culture.

Essentially for Freire, "The correct method lies in dialogue" (Freire 1996: 49). Freire's complex notion of *conscientização*<sup>13</sup> emerges in 'dialogue', a concept which he outlines in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and this is fundamental to all the museum-based work on Benin. Freire's ideas on a dialogue which facilitates *conscientização* shares some common ground with Gadamer's notion of the 'I-Thou' relationship that characterises true dialogical exchange. Primarily, according to my reading which links these theories to the praxis of museum education, both writers emphasise the worth of each individual human being. Additionally they both demand a certain questioning stance from everyone involved in the learning situation. They also specify that this attitude must be respectful of all participants and not simply combative.

*Conscientização*, Friere observes, demands a strict observation of person-hood since "Liberation" is a human phenomenon, which "cannot be achieved by semi-humans" (ibid: 48). A particular problem which was tackled in the Benin work was precisely this de-humanising of the peoples whose culture was displayed in the museum. An urgent in-depth re-reading of these artefacts was prioritised to complement the silenced gallery displays. For example, the indigenous production of Benin metal sculptures was emphasised. The sophisticated range of ideas which Benin iconography expressed was also referred to, and the necessary codes for reading these symbols as text were provided,

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<sup>13</sup> The term *conscientização* refers to learners coming to an understanding of the oppressive elements in their socio-political lives, and taking action to bring about greater equality and justice (Freire 1996: 68-105).

as has been clarified earlier.

In addition, the Benin project contrasted with the oppressive, 'banking system' of traditional education. Freire's notion of banking system education denies the 'life-affirming' humanity of students. To illustrate his central idea he makes a vivid analogy between the meaningless storing up of information, irrelevant to the everyday experiences of the students, and simply depositing money in a bank. To counter the banking system Freire urges teachers to tackle the problems of power in pedagogic hierarchies directly by admitting the students into the centre of curriculum decision-making.

Working within the British School system with students who wanted to pass examinations at GCSE level, the Benin project team adapted some of Freire's philosophy to the British situation. The school teachers and I regarded ourselves as leaders of the project but not in the sense of occupying a traditional role at the summit of an educational hierarchy, from which height we might pour information down to the ignorant masses of people 'things.' We rather regarded our role as listening leaders. Leaders who listened actively, to increase a liberating conscientização in all the students. Freire elucidates this.

The oppressed have been destroyed precisely because their situation has reduced them to things. In order to regain their humanity they must cease to be things and fight as men and women. This is a radical requirement. They cannot enter the struggle as objects in order *later* to become human beings.  
(Freire 1996: 50)

Freire's clear demand that both team-leaders and students take the role of Subjects during the Benin project was acknowledged and the year 11 team-leaders facilitated the students' journey towards subject-hood, primarily through their struggles with the media of art. Therefore creative art tasks were set with the intention that they should come to 'know,' and knowledge was counted here as encompassing two interconnected realms. Firstly the world from which the original Benin brass sculptures sprang and came to be displayed in the museum, as well as Benin sculptural production today. This essentially required a *re-reading* of various historical sources from a contemporary antiracist and feminist location to counteract the traditional racist and male framing of the subject. As Philip states

muse

museums

of man -

...

the lost I's

the lost equation:

you plus I equals we  
I and I and I equals I  
minus you.

(Philip 1993: 22)

Secondly and intimately related to this point, the Benin team leaders wanted students to arrive at an increased perception of their own potential for imaginative expression in the visual arts, which they might be enabled to pursue in Further Education. The students' work during the project encompassed a variety of art media as well as dialogue. For elucidation Philip's ideas on 'I-magination' which range over a broad spectrum of the arts: 'dance, music, plastic arts, and writing' will be referenced. Philip states. "The process of giving tangible form to this i-mage may be called i-maging, or the i-magination" (ibid 78).<sup>14</sup>

Philip's concept of 'i-magination' further illuminates the use of feminist-hermeneutics during the Benin project through a re-reading in terms of Rastafarianism. Her thought on the i-mage, or i-magination importantly draws attention to a similar privileging of the 'I' and the stress on individual experience, although the 'I' is not viewed in complete isolation. Rastafarians speak of 'I' and 'I' while philosophical hermeneutics speaks of 'I' and 'Thou.' Both systems stress an intensity of experience, a deep concentration with and respect for an 'other', whether object or person which enhances 'I and Thou' and 'I and I' (Philip ibid 78). The disturbing history of the museum's Benin objects, and the socially deprived backgrounds of the year 11 students demands this high degree of mutual respect.

Increasing respect and understanding of difference and similarity in a local and global context was an important outcome of the Benin project work, which evaluation from the

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<sup>14</sup> Nourbese Philip is a Canadian author originally from Trinidad who has written extensively on the relationship between word and image. Her thesis is useful to the radical museum-school project since she pays special attention to individuals speaking in a second language, most notably Creole speakers. Creole is a language whose roots lie in the terrible transatlantic slave trade. The use of African languages by enslaved peoples was strictly prohibited during colonialism, when language groups were deliberately separated. This was a deliberate policy to prevent enslaved peoples fomenting "rebellion and revolution" (ibid 30). Therefore slaves constructed a new means of communication, from an imaginative recreation of English the 'master tongue,' with a number of African languages.

interviewing process highlights. Evaluation also pondered the contentious issue of reparation. The work of evaluation is summarised by Friere, when he speaks of ‘unveiling’ the problematic of what appears to be straightforward ‘reality.’ Year 11 were encouraged to further interrogate presentations of ‘knowledge and truth’ through “common reflection and action,” thereby discovering themselves as “permanent re-creators” (Freire 1996:51). The words of the year 11 students will clarify these points.

## 7.5 Evaluation

### 1: students’ voices on the different aspects of the project

The process of interview facilitated communication for some students who obviously struggle when speaking a second language. Philip articulates the ‘anguish’ of these students. She understands from an insider or ‘emic’ position, the “mother tongue” struggles towards an alien “father tongue”, the overriding law of English-speaking schools which all students in English schools must master (Stake 1995: 20; Philip 1993: 29-30). Two comments made by students during interview are selected as typical.

CP     It was, I thought it was really good, because I, err err err I really, it was my first time seeing that things. I think that I think that, art was only drawing but then I I *I learn that, about other things*, because art is, is not only about drawing, it is about *different different* things, art.

JV     Yes it’s just really *broadening your horizons* and everything it’s *not only art you learn about everything else*, the *culture* and I think it’s really useful.

These two students have gained very different levels of competency in English, their second language. But they both highlight the specificity and diversity of the Benin project. The focus was on Benin but the material culture was located on the borders of diverse disciplines, ‘different things’ which ‘broaden our horizons’. These comments reflect the scrupulous efforts of project leaders, not only to avoid stereotypes and generalisations, but to welcome *difference*. The *different* ways in which individuals learn during the Benin project was acknowledged in practice.<sup>15</sup> Looking, drawing, handling, and contextualising

<sup>15</sup> Howard Gardner importantly speaks of ‘multiple intelligences’ to elevate the status of non-linguistic or non-mathematical ways of learning, and I am indebted to him here (Gardner 1993a, 1993b).

the Benin *part* of the collections into the *whole* Museum, to use Gadamer's terminology.

PS students singled out the following aspects.

- QC Yeah it was pretty fun like, it was *different* like, I hadn't come across that kind of thing before, like going to the museum and *doing drawings*. ... and do drawings no, and its like I haven't done these type of work like Benin and like work so, its like kind a different, different from my other work
- MD That was, we had downstairs and upstairs. I liked them both. I liked the museum, the best thing was *I liked going round and seeing the museum*, everything, and getting to know about it and then actually seeing and *being able to touch*, being able to touch the things on the tables. That *was good*.

At the museum frontiers, true understanding of 'other' or different cultures is attained by locating specific points of contemporary contact within the lived experiences of each individual student, and the personal meanings they make. Ultimately, the other must be found within each individual, or as Gadamer says. "To understand a text always means to apply it to ourselves" (Gadamer 1981: 359). Benin studies obviously have a personal resonance for students from Portugal, since the Portuguese were some of the first Europeans to visit Benin. This provided a personal 'hook' for PC.

- PC *I was quite interested* in this because, the the *the talk about the Portuguese thing*, so that was a bit kind of interested. ... I mean, I was *interested you tell us about Portuguese*, and I was quite interested in that because its once in a life time that people talk. I mean on television o o o. Portuguese when there is something that is on the television I just turn it on because of it. I did like the work of Benin, because I mean I thought ... it was *it was a good thing to learn it*.

Gadamer places the focus of interpretation within a present day sphere of special relevance to the interpreter. PC has an abiding interest in the land of his birth and became fascinated with the museum plaque that portrays two sixteenth century Portuguese traders, plate 7.1. This allowed him to feel a direct intimacy with the museum project, an "intimacy mediated by strangeness", which was a satisfying route to a new understanding of his place in the world (Gadamer 1997:27).

Plate 7.1 over-leaf illustrates this point and a brief analysis of this plaque which stimulated PC's interest in Benin is provided.

The central figure on the Benin plaque shown below represents an Edo chief. The chief is adorned with representations of coral beads on the high 'odigba' collar, the ring and necklace. Portuguese traders, with long straight hair, are represented on either side of the chief. The figure on the left carries a sword and the figure on the right a manila.



**Plate 7.1. Benin Architectural Plaque 9.229**

This plaque was displayed in the North Hall of the Horniman Museum during the PS Benin project 1995-1996.

2: students' voices on risking mistakes and gaining new understandings

It is generally true that even when one misunderstands something, if one has been listening carefully, more has probably been understood than if the most exact knowledge had been applied without listening to the poem as a whole.  
(Gadamer 1997: 186)

A major reason for the phenomenal success, 77% A-C grades in GCSE art, was the close collaboration between museum and school, which led to the joint development and delivery of an ambitiously wide yet in-depth programme of 'studies' from key stage 3 to GCSE. Throughout these museum-school programmes the team-leaders essentially demonstrated an open and respectful attitude towards the 'other' peoples studied and this encouraged the students to adopt an open attitude and to experiment with their work.

It was experimenting which permitted travel from a safe knowledge-base to a 'broadening of horizons', and during this journey students risked making mistakes in order to gain vital new understandings. Year 11 found the Benin project *good*, despite certain 'difficulties and mistakes' encountered along the way. Gadamer says. "I am convinced that it is a serious mistake for one to think it is an advantage to have in mind what is "correct" (ibid 133). In interpretation "correct" is always relative, since in terms of poetry, "the poet himself reads it differently each time" (ibid 181).<sup>16</sup>

During my questioning of their artistic 'intentions' year 11 widely expressed an anxiety about making 'mistakes' or incorrect interpretations. Mistakes in the batik project were generally deemed messy, impure mixtures, as these representative voices illustrate.

VJ It was complicated actually you had to be really careful of the wax and if you made a *mistake* it was really hard to sort it out. ... I didn't really plan it out all that well and its sort of a *mess*.

MD Yeah and then when it dries up its too light. There was *loads of mistakes* though. ... Eh, all these cos they show through.

Students speak of *mistakes*, *mess* and *mixture*, which denote the areas of experimentation in their batiks. Team-leaders do not want students to worry about inappropriate notions of

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<sup>16</sup> These comments do not plunge the interpreter into absolute relativism for the Benin works of art are the 'irrefutable witness', guiding the interpretation (Gadamer 1981).



‘correct’ work in art. On tape I regard the overlapping colours and interesting mergings of tones as “very beautiful”, reminiscent of “the sky, or fireworks.” These remarks prompted reappraisals of the finished products.

MD Yeah its all different, ... Its *a good green, contrast.*

DS Yeah. I wasn’t too happy at first cos all the colours they all were you know *all mixed together.* ... It *didn’t look nice, until it dried.*

My comments undoubtedly lead the students to change their opinions about the ‘mistakes,’ and this engaged stance could be seen as producing ‘invalid evidence.’ My ideological reasoning for refusing to take up the neutral role of a distanced researcher was emphasised at chapter 4.4, where methodology was not intended to guarantee a scientific notion of correctness, nor regarded as universally appropriate. It is rather seen as akin to a philosophical work of conversation and to hold the value of ‘reflexive thought’ for a democratic community. As Gadamer states.

The philosopher stirs up the observation powers of speech, and every stylistic boldness and act of violence has its place and succeeds in penetrating into the speech of those who would think-with and think-further [*mitdenken und weiterdenken* ]. This means shaking up, extending, and throwing light on the horizon of communication.  
(Gadamer 1997: 11)

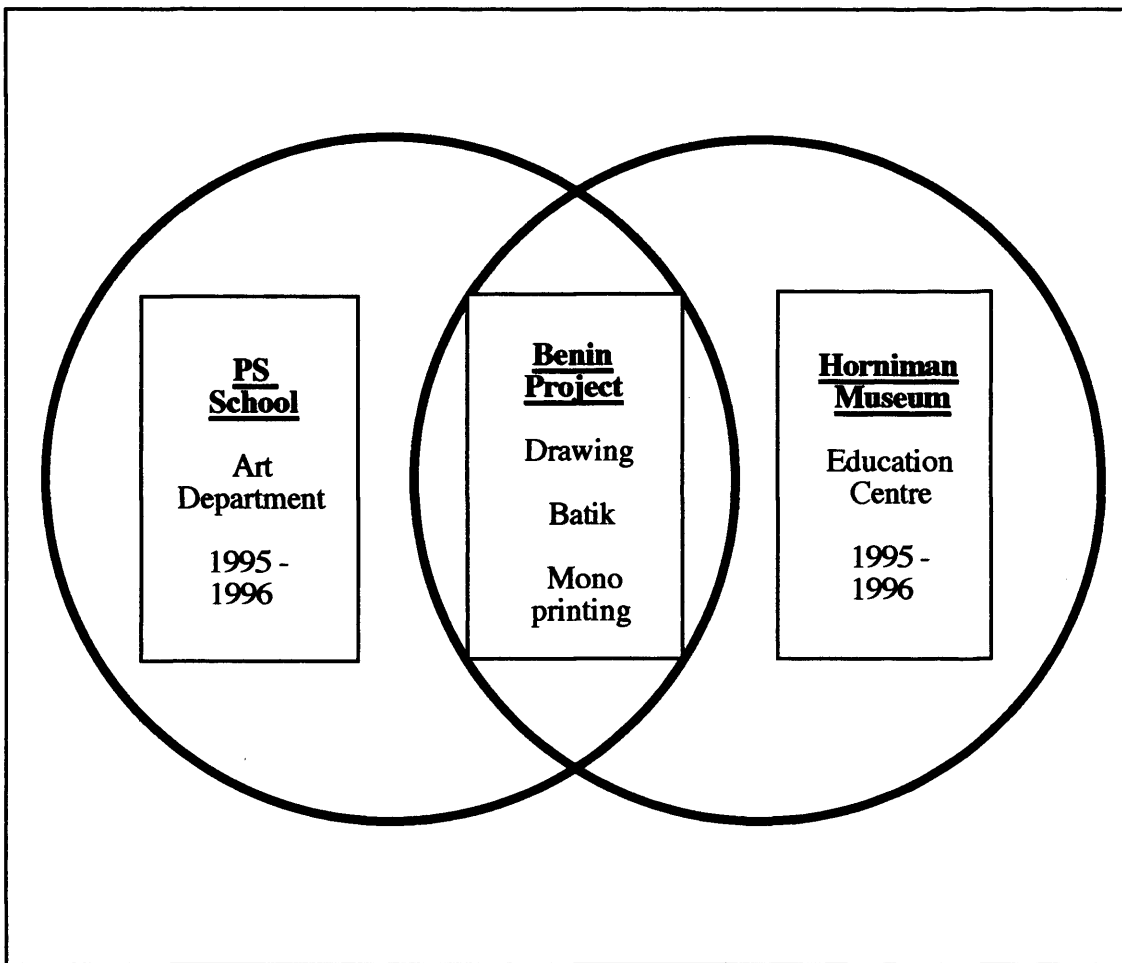
Reflexive thought or ‘thinking-with and thinking-further’ during the Benin project complicates a simple ‘reception model’ of communication in the museum context. It favours a model of interpretation which rather resembles a ‘feedback loop’. The feed-back loop provides a more appropriate model for the interpretation of museum objects, it challenges the linear reception model which essentially regards the receiver as a ‘cognitively passive’ recipient of straight-forward meaning. Hooper-Greenhill observes.

Once the receiver is brought into the process to play a *more active role*, the whole process changes and begins to break up. The *linearity of the process is altered*. The meaning of the message is no longer defined only by the sender, but also by the receiver. The *work of making meaning* begins to be *shared between two parties*.  
(Hooper-Greenhill. 1994a: 44-5) [My emphasis]

A *shared work of making meaning* is a continuous circular process of gaining new

understandings for both student and teacher-collaborators. There is no attempt to absolutely fix opinions at the museum frontiers; team-leaders rather strive to open a space for dialogical exchange, respect, and understanding.

Figure 7.6 graphically illustrates the ‘frontier’ region of ‘meaning making’ in terms of the art work which students produced for their GCSE examinations.

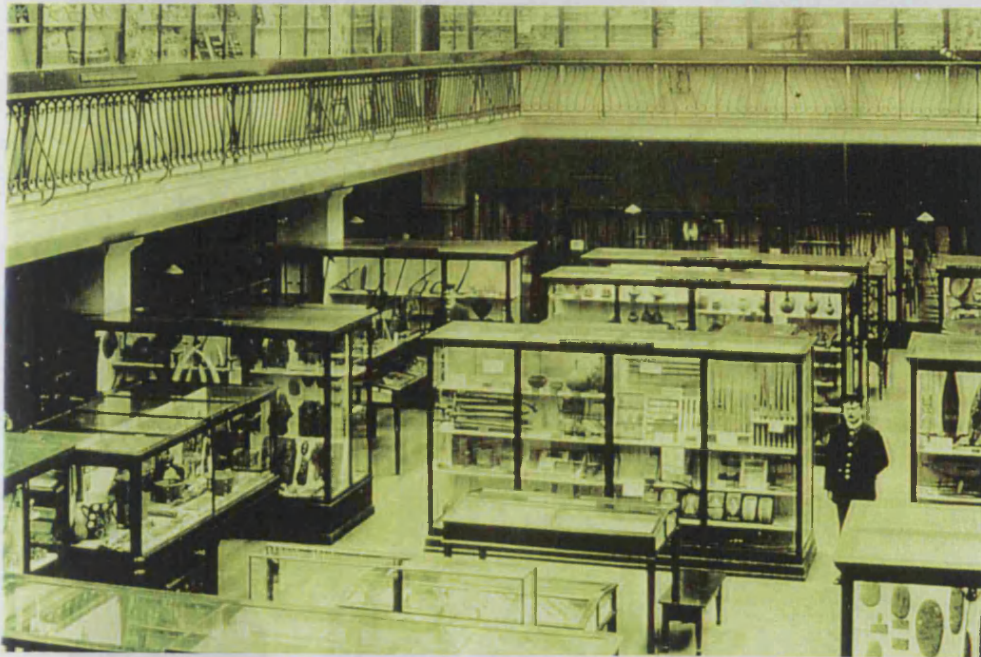


**Figure 7.6. A ‘frontier’ region of ‘meaning making’ between museum and school<sup>17</sup>**

The figure illustrates the ‘fusion of horizons’ between the two ‘worlds’ of museum and school, for the duration of the Benin project during 1995 to 1996. Each of these ‘frontier’ regions of ‘meaning making’ will now be graphically identified. Plates 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 over-leaf represent the ‘Horniman Museum’ region of the Benin project which is

<sup>17</sup> In drawing this figure I followed Edmund Leech’s example (Leech 1993: 35).

illustrated in figure 7.6. Firstly, in Plate 7.2 the original Benin displays at the Horniman Museum are shown. The Benin display is cited on the left, and the 'Evolution of Decorative Art' is in the centre. At the time of the PS students' Benin project in 1995 - 1996, these displays and the spatial arrangement of the public galleries had hardly changed since their inception in 1901. The security guard on the right shows the restricted space between the cases.



**Plate 7.2. The South Hall of the Horniman Museum, c.1904**

The cramped spaces between the display cases necessitated small group work in the galleries and in the education centre during the Benin project. Some small group work is shown in Plates 7.3 and 7.4 over-leaf.



Using the handling collection permits the student in plate 7.3 to turn the model of a chief side-ways for her drawing; a pose which is reflected in her banner design at Plate 7.7



**Plate 7.3. A PS student drawing in the Education Centre (top)  
Plate 7.4. PS students drawing in the North Hall Gallery (bottom)**

Plate 7.5 shows PS students developing their Benin project work in school together with the batik artist AC. This plate illustrates one stage of the batik art work which took place in the 'PS School' region of the collaborative Benin project. The PS School region is represented at figure 7.6.



**Plate 7.5. PS students making their batik banners with the Nigerian artist AC**

Two of the completed banners are shown over-leaf at Plates 7.6 and 7.7. These pieces of work have been selected from two students who gained an A Star grade in their GCSE Art examinations.

Plate 7.6. PS students making their batik banners



In plate 7.6 below the PS student JV has carefully noted the two crocodile or 'policeman of the waters' in the bottom corners of her banner.



Plate 7.6. JV's batik banner

In plate 7.7 PS student LA portrays her central chief figure in a sideways stance with hand on hip. This stance is reminiscent of contemporary fashion images which LA is interested in. The attitude of the 'chief' here seems to represent a 'fusion of traditions.'



**Plate 7.7. LA's batik banner**

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The argument in favour of collaboration to facilitate personal ‘meaning making’ at the museum-school ‘frontiers’ will now be expanded upon, by outlining dialogical work on a contemporary museum issue: the question of reparation, and the restitution of cultural property to Benin.

### **3: addressing issues of reparation from PS student and Nigerian perspectives**

Meanwhile, museums are refusing to return the Benin treasures. As one curator put it: “We are not in the business of redressing historic wrongs.”  
(Richard Gott. 22.2.1997 Independent)

Indigenous peoples ... want their materials back, and they want control over their own history and its interpretation ... Since those who control history are the ones who benefit from it, people should have a right to the facts of their own lives.  
(Ames 1992: 140)

In 1980-81 the government of Nigeria used “oil money ... \$1 million (US)”, to buy “6 Benin pieces” on the open art market for the National Museum in Lagos. Unfortunately, the increased demand for Benin art from rich ‘collectors’ in the west put “strong pressure” on poor Nigerian workers “to steal from the museums storage”, and these objects later appeared for sale in ‘New York’, where they were seized by customs officials and returned to Nigeria once again. This situation further complicates the general issue of ‘restitution’, which the Museum Ethnographers Group (MEG) are committed to deal with on a ‘case-by-case basis’, after Glasgow’s return of a Ghost Dance shirt (MEG Newsletter April 1999).

The year 11 students were well aware of the complex issues of reparation surrounding their Benin project. Their opinions were solicited, on the restitution of cultural property to the Oba of Benin, 100 years after the ‘punitive expedition.’ The following representative comments illustrate a range of critical views expressed by the group. Firstly the voices in favour of returning the artefacts note the ‘original’ ownership and state:

DX	It rightfully belongs to Nigeria
CQ	It’s going home
CP	It was there that it started
JV	People in Nigeria should learn about it



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These students have no regard for the concept 'legitimate spoils of war' which was noted in newspaper articles of 1997. Instead they challenge the low opinion of some 19th century Europeans in making their art-work and try to show.

PS                The creativity, that Benin people are not primitive or inferior

These judgments stand in contrast to the positive responses for retaining the Benin displays in western museums. Typical remarks emphasise that the artefacts hold "valuable information" which presents opportunities for studying and coming to a greater understanding.

CQ                People in England can learn about it  
LA                The English can have a better point of view

Each year 11 student considers and makes a reasoned argument for *both* viewpoints which may reflect a degree of their 'thinking with' the open-minded attitude of their team-leaders. Their comments circle around the aspect of presenting a challenge to racism through the serious study of artefacts at the museum-school frontiers. One student concisely points out.

SM                It can be shown off to many people in England

The words of these students appear to support a noble "one world" view, "in line with UNESCO and ICOM proposal for the democratisation of culture and the accessibility of cultural artefacts to all the world." (Eyo, 1994: 345) Dr. Eyo elucidates this worthy notion.

The proposal aims to spread knowledge and culture about other peoples and other cultures, with a view towards creating understanding and harmony and eliminating mutual suspicion among the peoples of the world.  
(Eyo, 1994: 346)

Ekpo Eyo also highlights a problem with the "actualisation" of this proposal, since cultural artefacts "flow in only one direction". They move from the "peripheries" or "underprivileged" countries, to the "center" or "economically powerful" nations (ibid:

346). The Benin project team had no direct political power to challenge this movement but successfully stimulated reflexive dialogue on this issue during the collaborative work. This impressed Dr. Joseph Eboreime, Director of Benin City Museum, who came to stay in my house while working as a member of the Anthropology Consultative Panel(ACP).<sup>18</sup> Dr. Eborieme generously gave up time to visit the Benin project teacher-colleagues. He thought the PS student's comments and their art-work which celebrated the achievements of the Benin peoples, would raise self-esteem and pride in "national identity" amongst Benin school pupils when he informed their teachers of the PS work (ibid: 332).

Dr. Eboreime's visit presented a unique opportunity for British teacher-colleagues to discuss their projects with another "culture bearer", and the Horniman Museum was inspired to investigate the possibilities for a range of collaborative ventures which might permit a greater sharing of expertise, skills and technologies (Kaplan 1997: xxx). The aim is to "set up joint field expeditions under preconditions of mutual benefit to both sides", rather than simply return artefacts, which the Horniman Museum is not in a position to authorise (Eyo 1994: 349). One proposal is to produce a resource package for Benin and London school-teachers, another might facilitate the exchange of skills between Horniman conservators and Benin crafts-people.

These proposals may fall short of the Oba's aim for the "British Government" to "repatriate our looted works of art" ( The Observer, 20.2.97:4) <sup>19</sup>. In his excellency's address to the Edo people, the Oba appeals "to all my people" to remember the "gallant forebears of 1897", the "strength and pride with which they built the Kingdom." He also notes his contact with "some eminent people in London who are sympathetic to our cause and are seriously helping". I contend that the Horniman Museum is "seriously helping" by re-membering the "gallant forebears of 1897" (Ibid).

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<sup>18</sup> The main members of the ACP comprised: 2 Nigerian scholars, 1 Trinidadian artist, the director, the deputy director, and the anthropology department of the Museum. The ACP were joined at various times by Helen Coxall and other museum professionals; together they formed a positive collaboration to gather diverse 'voices' for the text of the African Worlds exhibition.

<sup>17</sup> This comment is taken from a Nigerian Newspaper. Dr. Eboreime kindly sent me more than 50 articles from Nigerian newspapers, after my request for 'one or two newspaper cuttings about the centenary of the sacking of Benin'. They are stored in the Ethnography Department and will provide a useful resource for future work on this issue.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter a theory of 'reading *and* writing' has been developed in the context of visual art (Morrison 1993; Philip 1993). Morrison and Philip have provided a feminist framing for Gadamer's (1997) analysis of 'thinking with and thinking further', which illuminated 'different' aspects of the museum-school project on Benin from the students' viewpoint. The emancipatory aims of Freire (1972, 1996) were employed to further justify the feminist-hermeneutic approach, and finally Coombes (1994), Kaplan (1994, 1997) and Hooper-Greenhill (1994) guided the theoretico-ethical concerns in the world of museum studies.

The Benin project was 'worthwhile' in the 'action research' sense because it permitted a high degree of dialogical exchange and action around a particular collection of museum objects. Comparative readings were made of African and western iconography as meaningful sign systems, as well as Rastafarian i-maging and Gadamer's 'I-Thou dialogue'. Additionally the notion of primitivism was interrogated and the issues surrounding the restitution of cultural property was considered.<sup>20</sup>

Overall a detailed investigation was made into the value of one particular project which aimed to challenge stereotypical and racist perspectives through a series of detailed 're-readings and writings' on museum objects from Benin. The research method of questionnaire and interview provided a wealth of student voices which echoed throughout, although in subsequent projects the questionnaire was dispensed with as it was found to be too arduous for students at the beginning stages of speaking English as a second language.

The background details to the field-site and the project collaborators demonstrated the special resonance of this project theme for PS participants, whose 'home culture' or 'ethnic heritage' was accorded a high value through its central location in their art

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<sup>20</sup> The tragic sacking of Benin City by the British army on the 18th of February 1897 constitutes a powerful *re-memory* for all project participants (Morrison 1988). In chapter 5 Morrison's notion of 'healing re-memory' was developed with another museum-based project, and in the next chapter the ways in which a hidden African heritage was *re-remembered* with a year 10 group will be examined.

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curriculum. These students gained a sense of pride in their history which increased by seeing aspects of themselves positively reflected in their project work. This greatly increased their motivation and led to an improved achievement at the GCSE examinations, although the 77% A-C grades in comparison to a school score of 17%, shows that the majority of the students have benefited from the intense museum-school work.

In the next chapter the reasons behind the excellent examination results which were maintained at this school will be examined more fully, with reference to Csikszentmihalyi's (1995) thought on motivation and Gillborn's (1997) research into a more inclusive curriculum. Additionally the issue of appropriation in relation to cultural property held in museums will be considered, since the project theme relates to an 'unsaid' of the Horniman Museum African Mask Displays.

## **8      Developing theory through the praxis of a Carnival arts project**

Carnavalesque discourse breaks through the laws of a language censored by grammar and semantics and, at the same time, is a social and political protest. There is no equivalence, but rather, identity between challenging official linguistic codes and challenging official law.  
(Kristeva 1989: 36)

Mummy of an Egyptian Lady in Coffin, XX1st Dynasty; 3,000 years old; both in splendid preservation. ... African Slave Chains, from Dar Salem, East Africa. Dahomey Tom Tom, 10 ft. long, with curious handle in the form of a leopard.  
(Horniman Museum Annual Report 1893: 14)

## **8.0      Introduction**

In this chapter a year 10 carnival arts project is examined. At the outset of the chapter in section 8.1, the argument for the choice of the same field-site and similar aged students for two projects is strengthened with reference to the ethnographic action research methodology. Additionally, a series of charts which draw on the hard data of government statistics provide further support for this justification throughout the chapter.

The hierarchical, teacher to student, relationships of power during art projects is considered next at 8.2. The maintenance of the status quo, in terms of project theme and course content is justified with reference to the thought of Gayatri Spivak (1988). Then the emancipatory nature of the carnival project theme, which attempts to open up 'in-between' or Clearing locations for the construction of new 'hybrid' identities (Bhabha 1995; Fanon 1993) is highlighted.<sup>1</sup> Finally an attempt to adjust the hierarchy of teacher-power through the organisation of an in-between or Clearing museum space which facilitates 'neighbouring' is considered (Matusov and Rogoff 1995; Evans 1995).

At 8.3 the roots of carnival arts are traced to their African heritage. First the issue of cultural appropriation or misappropriation of material culture by our students is considered. The thought of bell hooks is employed to validate the 'use' of African art (hooks 1995). Finally a cross-cultural study of the transgressive 'witch woman' in Yoruba and French feminist thought is provided to illuminate the similarities of a shared humanity in myth making activities (Nicklin 1993; Cixous 1987).

In section 8.4 the tracing of carnival arts to Africa is continued since this work is central to the construction of an Afro-centric curriculum, which the research experience shows is crucial to enhancing the learning and achievements of the particular student groups in PS school. In particular carnival arts are considered as creative works which defy bodily limitations, and confounds fixed notions of what is regarded as beautiful in the

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<sup>1</sup> In particular Fanon's (1993) thought on identity and 'masking' clarifies the reasoning behind the choice of a 'carnival arts' theme. The carnival theme addresses and challenges the historico-economic 'unsaid' of the museum discourse which is defined here as the silent history of Transatlantic slavery, and the misrepresentation of an African heritage in the museum (Gadamer 1981).

contemporary western world. Thus the art project work of constructing carnival masks is seen as a visually healing and empowering work of subversion and transgression, which Philip's writing on Carnavalesque discourse(s) illuminates (Philip 1996).

In section 8.5 this argument is developed from Fanon's (1993) theoretical perspective and recent research on carnival (Philip 1996). The Afro-centric carnival curriculum is also considered in terms of motivating year 10 students. The factors of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are addressed in the light of Csikszentmihalyi's work (Csikszentmihalyi 1995). Overall this chapter supports the thesis argument that it is a high regard for multiple intelligences in an antiracist-multicultural programme which boosts the self-esteem of the diverse student population, motivates them, and consequently raises their achievement (Gardner 1993a Gardner 1993b). In this respect the research findings of this chapter are shown to support the recommendations of Scarman and Gillborn on the inclusive curriculum (Scarman 1981; Gillborn and Gipps 1996a).

At 8.6 the threads of this chapter are draw together and some concluding remarks are made which relate back to the methodology that was designed to answer the research question. This methodology is seen to empower the students whose verbal expression at interview is severely limited in comparison with the expressive power of their art. The ways in which the research practice welcomed and validated alternative means of expression is reflected upon. Finally students' voices regard their museum-based arts education as a 'holistic' series of experiences from primary school. Their achievement at GCSE level is not viewed as an isolated piece of work, but rather as part of a continuing circle of hermeneutic work on objects, and the construction of their own identities.

### **8.1      Investigating the 'unsaid' of an ethnography collection with a year 10 group at PS school**

#### **The field-site, the key informant teachers, and the aims of the year 10 carnival project**

This chapter examines a year 10 GCSE project on carnival arts at PS school. The project is

conducted with the same teacher-collaborators, TCC, TRC and TFD, and at the same field-site as the year 11 Benin project. First, the decision to undertake a second project at this field-site, with a similar age group of students will be justified. The methodological justification is based upon the principles of the ethnographic action research methodology informed by feminist-hermeneutics, which has been discussed in chapter 4. In the context of this thesis the method seeks to provide a more detailed and precise account of the processes which govern the articulation of meaning, for the teacher/lecturer key-informants and their students. Three criteria were developed and outlined at figure 4.2. To summarise, the method aims to:

- create a democratic community of learners and recognise a diversity of authority, from the development of the research question, *throughout* the research process and beyond.
- revisit issues through a cyclical research process and build new theory-practice relationships to clarify the subject positions of differently positioned practitioners.
- provide richly detailed case studies which are ‘models of quality’ and document ‘success stories’ of empowerment, by facilitating greater reflexivity, dialogue and action. (McTaggart 1996; Sotto 1993).

Additionally a set of ‘naturalistic’ criteria was employed during the ethnographic action research field-work. To summarise the outline at chapter 1.3, these criteria seek:

- to gather primary data [art-work and interview] from specific ‘life situations’ at the museum-school frontiers, and gain a ‘holistic overview’ of this ‘life situation.’
- to prioritise and facilitate the unique voice of teacher and student participants on this ‘life situation’, while recognising my role as a researcher-main actor in the study.
- to interpret data gathered according to a new theoretical position which privileges personal meaning-making, and to set the participant’s interpretation in the social context of the museum-school site in which it is constructed.

During this Ph.D. research the field-site was originally located at a vast frontier region between several schools, a university and the Horniman Museum, but it was considered profitable for the research to gradually focus more narrowly on a single field-site, PS school. In this way the demands of ‘a long stay and participant observation’, at a particular field-site were satisfied (Van Maanen 1983:19-20). The open access to the PS field-site outlined at 7.1 permitted a ‘hermeneutic tacking to and fro’ between the world of the museum and the world of the school (Geertz 1993b: 170). It also enabled more



detailed work to overcome power hierarchies and facilitate a greater plurivocality of voices at the museum frontiers.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter presents the opportunity to further “understand the concerns and objectives of those” PS teachers and GCSE students, with whom I have developed very close “links outside the museum” (Hooper-Greenhill 1991:5). The PS field-site and the key informant teachers have briefly been described at 1.2 and at 7.1. Additionally the figures 1.1 and 7.1 to 7.5 provide a picture of the student population. Now some additional demographic information on levels of ‘deprivation’ in this borough will further justify the second project at this school, and establish the context for the carnival theme of this chapter.

The London Borough of Lambeth highlights ‘twelve indicators’ of deprivation, which are listed under the seven headings in figure 1.1.<sup>3</sup> ‘Unemployment’ is listed as the first factor which relates to ‘deprivation’ on this index. The borough of Lambeth “has an acute unemployment problem”, which “is compounded by the length of time which many Lambeth residents remain unemployed, 44.5% remain unemployed for over 6 months” (Index of Deprivation 1998: 2). Unemployment is one of the major factors listed by the Education Department on their list of ‘Social Characteristics of the Lambeth Population.’ This list is reproduced in figure 8.1 which illustrates factors relating to underachievement in school.

Single parent households	9%
Long-term illness	12.5%
Overcrowded	15.1%
Unemployed males	20.3%
Without use of car	55.4%

Figures supplied by Lambeth Education Statistics 1996-1997: 2

**Figure 8.1. Social Characteristics of Lambeth Population**

<sup>2</sup> For example the positive effects of the interview process on the students during the Benin project led to the decision to extend this aspect of the methodology to all the student participants on the carnival arts project. The problem of power relationships during this research is further considered at 8.2.

<sup>3</sup> To briefly reiterate: economic, education, low income, housing, environment, crime and health are the 7 headings which are used to indicate the levels of deprivation in Lambeth.

It is almost twenty years since Lord Scarman highlighted unemployment as a major factor contributing to riots in the borough during 1981. He states:

When the young people of Brixton leave school, many of them, white and black, face unemployment. ... [while] unemployment in the area ... stood at 13 per cent ... The level of ethnic minority unemployment as a proportion of total unemployment at Brixton Employment Office in May 1981 was 25.4 per cent. ... unemployment among members of the ethnic minorities is of longer duration than that among the white population. Most significantly, blacks are without doubt over-represented among the registered and unregistered young unemployed. ... the rate of registered unemployed among black males under 19 has been estimated at 55 per cent.  
(Scarman 1981: 2.20)

Scarman highlights “unemployment” as “an evil that touches all of the community”, and John Benyon provides a “staggering” unemployment statistic for the year after Scarman’s report (Scarman 1981: 6.28; Benyon 1984). He states. “In March 1982, Robin Pitt, leader of the Conservative-controlled Lambeth Council, announced a staggering 78 per cent of black youths in [Brixton] between 16 and 19 years old were out of work” (Benyon 1984: 166).

Lord Scarman’s report also drew attention to two other areas of disadvantage which seriously affect ethnic groups in the London borough of Lambeth, housing and education. Housing will be commented upon next since the rest of this chapter deals with education. Scarman found that at least 12,000 dwellings in the borough were defined as unfit, and a further 8,250 lacked one or more basic amenities. These figures amounted to 20 per cent of the housing stock, with a further 12 per cent requiring major renovation (Scarman 1981: 2.6 -2.9).

At the end of his report Scarman also comments on the local estate where the majority of PS students live. The PS estate “houses some 1,050 families, about 40 percent of them being single-parent families.” This estate is described as “a planners dream” turned into “a nightmare”, because the “exterior walkways and interconnected bridges, made the control of crime a problem” (Scarman 1981: 144-5).

Scarman relates ‘crime’ to unemployment and the other factors of deprivation noted in figure 1.1, and Kenneth Roberts reinforces this point. He cites “the evidence of probation officers who explain how 80 or 90 per cent of their clients were unemployed at the time of their offences” (Roberts 1984: 182). Lord Scarman emphasises the contributing factor of racial discrimination in his statistics, and he recommends “*urgent action*” be taken to prevent “racial disadvantage”, which “is a fact of current British life”, becoming “an endemic, ineradicable disease threatening the very survival of our society” (Scarman 1981: 9.1) [my emphasis]. Scarman specifies the establishment of “special programmes” in his call for urgent or “positive action” (Scarman 1981: 6.32).

Usha Prashar defines Scarman’s recommendation for “positive action”, as concerned with the promotion of “*racial justice and equality of opportunity, and not giving special privileges to minority groups*” (Prashar 1984: 208). Prashar urges us to make a “*systematic effort to implement positive policies at all levels and in all areas*” (Prashar 1984: 217). The PS carnival project is one example of a “special programme’ or a “systematic effort to implement positive policies” at the museum-school frontiers. The formal education programme will be considered presently. In passing it is important to note a major aim of the carnival project was to promote the Horniman Museum as a leisure facility for local Black youths, who may find themselves subject to periods of unemployment after leaving school. Unemployed peoples could form a huge proportion of visitors to this free museum but the Black population is seriously under-represented in the latest survey of the Horniman Museum audience.

Figure 8.2 over-leaf shows the details of the most recent visitor survey (Horniman Museum Visitor Survey 1995).

<u>Question 11: Which ethnic group best describes you?</u>	
<u>Ethnic group</u>	<u>%</u>
White	89
Black Caribbean	2
African	1
Other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
Other Asian	0
Other	4
Total	100

Note: This survey was not completed by school parties, which represent a wider spread of ethnic

**Figure 8.2 Horniman Museum Visitor Survey 1995-1996**

The London borough of Lambeth “has the highest proportion of Black Caribbean residents of any London borough”, with a figure for this Caribbean population of 13% (Education Statistics 1997-1998: 2). Since the museum is easily reached by public transport from Lambeth, the PS carnival project team-leaders hoped to encourage the students to visit the museum outside of school-time, and their comments during interview confirmed this outcome. I contend that the make-up of the key-informant teacher colleagues during the carnival project, is a determining factor in this outcome.

#### The key-informant teachers

The PS carnival arts project revolves around the teacher collaborators TRC, TCC and TFD. TRC and TDF are responsible for the GCSE examinations and TCC provides an ‘insider’ interpretation of carnival arts for the whole project team of teachers and students. TCC has fond childhood memories of Trinidad, where she still owns a home, and she plays an active role in the Notting Hill carnival with her band leader uncle.

A number of factors inspired TCC, TRC, TDF and I to tackle a museum-based carnival arts project. Firstly, the Horniman Museum Carnival Project 1995 proved a great success in terms of creative art work and student motivation, as the activity in plate 7.1 shows.



**Plate 8.1. A Horniman Museum carnival arts poster, 1995**

Secondly the London borough of Lambeth further stimulated the enthusiasm and research efforts on carnival arts with their sponsorship of the first schools carnival south of the river Thames. Finally following the Horniman Museum INSET sessions, which followed the museum's summer carnival in October 1995, 7 teachers from the dialogical project research team instigated museum-based action research projects on the theme of carnival. 3 of these 7 teachers were PS key-informants, and collaborative efforts will be highlighted with these PS teachers in an attempt to consider further, certain key issues which arose during the Benin work. The problem of power relationships will be the first area of consideration.

### **8.2      Team-leaders address issues of power-relationships**

A liberating teacher will illuminate reality even if he or she lectures. The question is the content and dynamism of the lecture, the approach to the object to be known. Does it critically re-orient students to society? Does it animate their critical thinking or not?  
(Freire and Shor 1987: 40)

From the outset of the carnival arts project a close collaborative relationship was developed with the PS art-teachers and the equitable relations which were maintained throughout the project work continues. Hierarchical barriers between the project-leaders were successfully broken down, but this spirit of team-working was not extended to fully include the year 10 students as decision-makers. Gayatri Spivak expresses the feeling of the team-leaders who recognised being "caught in another labyrinth "I," "you," and mastery" (Spivak 1988: 23).

In an ideal situation according to radical and constructivist learning theories the barriers between 'us' as teacher-organisers of hard won knowledge chunks and 'them' as student-consumers should be shattered (Freire 1996; Hein 1998). The project team-leaders should have involved the students in the decision making process of what to study, when, where, for how long, and why. After extended dialogue this absolute approach was rejected and a compromise position was adopted, which will be justified.

To attempt involving students at the primary level of course content would deny the existence of a gap in age, experience and knowledge. Enrolling on a GCSE exam course students expect a high degree of teacher-responsibility, while valuing the scope for personal interpretation within an art curriculum. The carnival project team-leaders endorse the “teaching to transgress” recommendation from hooks’s and Giroux’s reading of Freire (hooks 1994; Giroux 1993; Freire 1996). This demands a pedagogic *responsibility* to engage students in thoughtful action, and it requires a less dogmatic view than suggested by the team-leaders initial polemics.

Following Freire, the work of art education at the museum frontiers is considered to lie in empowering students with transformative knowledge; to open realms of personal and political action. The praxis is informed by radical education and feminism; the team-leaders wanted to transform the social world, but for the duration of the carnival project the aim is more modest. Spivak elucidates.

Feminism lives in the master text and not just in the pores. It is not determinant in the last instance. I think less easily now of ‘changing the world’ than in the past. I teach a small number of holders of the can(n)on male or female, feminist or masculinist, *how to read their own texts*, as best I can.  
(Spivak, Gayatri 1988: 92)

### **Addressing power relations as the ‘unsaid’ of the ethnographic museum**

Team-leaders argue that the empowerment programme during carnival arts is comparable to a deep reading of texts. It is akin to a dialogical work of language which aims to reveal the historico-economic ‘unsaid’ of the British galleries and museums. In the context of the museum the ‘unsaid’ is read here as the intertwining of intellectual discourses with the financial bases of collections. For example, the profits from sugar plantations have helped to furnish the Tate galleries in Liverpool and London, and the missionary system which had a pacifying effect on enslaved peoples during the Transatlantic slave trade has helped to furnish historical ethnography collections.

This statement will briefly be illustrated. Frederick Horniman purchased vast numbers of his ethnographic ‘curios’ from friends in the missionary and colonial services (Duncan

1972: 3-6). According to Nicky Levell Frederick had amassed approximately 7,920 objects by 1901 (Levell 1997). The breadth and diversity of objects he desired and his 'method' of collection are explained in a letter Mrs Keddie wrote to Richard Quick in 1896, from Gaya Bengal. She states. "Mr Horniman has asked me to send a lot of curiosities. ... He said all sorts of things" (Quick 1896: 45).

The PS teachers and I decided to discuss this 'historio-economic unsaid' of the museum with the year 10 students during the carnival project, and to relate this 'unsaid' to the lived experiences of the students, who live in the shadow of a very fine Tate library. It was also decided to consider the 'unsaid' or the absence of Caribbean arts in the museum, and in particular to trace the African heritage of carnival mask and masquerade.

The team-leaders contend that carnival *arts* hold an expressive capacity to signify as language, quite precisely on occasions and yet always evading the closure of a final meaning. Throughout the carnival project attempts are made to unpack the concepts of expression, communication and understanding, by a process of mutuality. In this way the carnival project essentially reaches out into a broader concern for making sense of complex human interactions, and creating more equitable relations in a socio-historical world. In Fanon's words "our purpose is to make possible a healthy encounter between black and white", by all the means in our power as museum educators (Fanon 1993: 80).

Thus dialogue is prioritised as verbal exchange *and* graphic production during the carnival project. Year 10 students consider museum displays of African masks *and* a hidden Caribbean heritage; they re-member the horrors of slavery *and* celebrate the creative resistance of carnival. In the main work involves looking at historical African masquerade and creating a new piece of art, a carnival mask for the GCSE examinations.

It was the particular carnival-arts theme which importantly extends the close observational work with African artefacts into areas of the hidden and absent history of the Transatlantic enslavement. Team-leaders consider it vital to address the silence of the slave trade, which lies beneath the surface of our interpretive efforts in the ethnography museum, because it silently distorts the human psyche of both Black and white students. Fanon elucidates the



psychological problems which results from the racist roots of this museum ‘unsaid’. It is not simply a ‘Black problem’ but a problem for humanity (Fanon 1993: 86). He says “The Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation” (Fanon 1993: 60).<sup>4</sup>

This neurosis causes a white racist denial of Black humanity to be planted deep in the Black unconscious, so that Black people wear ‘white masks’ in an effort to deny their corporeality. It also causes the white person to be ‘degraded’, for “in the whole world no poor devil is lynched, no wretch is tortured, in whom I too am not degraded and murdered” (Fanon 1993: 83). A major aim of the carnival team-leaders is to counter this ‘neurosis’ by tracing its roots in African art and re-valuing the achievement of an African heritage.

The carnival project attempts to free participants from “the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment” (Fanon 1993: 30). We strive to achieve this end by highlighting the silent gaps in museum language, the spaces at the margins and between words where this museum ‘unsaid’ might gain access to speech. This provides students and teachers alike with more open ‘in-between’ or Clearing spaces; locations of hybridity which are determined by many migrations, for reading and *re-reading our own texts*. (Bhabha 1995) The PS students are assisted in the ‘reading of their own texts’ by the evaluation process of interview.

#### **Addressing power relations through a qualitative research method of interview**

As noted earlier, the qualitative research method of interview had proved so fruitful for the Benin students at this school, that it was decided to evaluate this project by following the same methodological technique, and to extend the interview method to involve all the participants, whereas the Benin evaluation was conducted with a representative sample of

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<sup>4</sup> Fanon’s thinking here echoes John Stuart Mill, who drew analogies with the slave economy to attain a wider enlightenment on subjugation in general. In the nineteenth century Mill employed recently successful anti-slavery arguments to aid his own campaign against the repression of women. Readers of Mill’s text are able to empathise with one group, then by association with the other, until finally thought is directed to the harmful effects, of ‘such magnitude’ on the psyche of the oppressor himself. Mill asked, “Is it imagined that all this does not pervert the whole manner of existence of the man, both as an individual and as a social being?” (Mill 1886: 87)

students. The team-leaders regard this feature as an improvement in research methodology during the carnival project, since every student is engaged in dialogical exchange at the evaluation interviews.<sup>5</sup>

This improvement is the result of abandoning the time-consuming questionnaire element of the Benin evaluation, which is inappropriate for students beginning to speak English as a second language. However the team-leaders again prioritise a questioning dialogical attitude throughout the carnival art-project, including the interview evaluation. The carnival team-leaders consider that it is dialogue which empowers students to become more proficient ‘readers’, “to construe and construct the contradictory texts that constitute their own lives” (McCabe 1988: xix).

The dialogical evaluation method of semi-structured interviewing demands an active listening to the ‘unsaid’ of the museum by the interviewer and the interviewee. Students are facilitated in bringing the unsaid or silenced history of museum objects to speech during interview. In interview the construction process of their carnival art is interrogated, from the original attention to African mask and masquerade to the finished carnival mask. The positive connection with an African heritage is investigated through ‘active listening’, which is conceived here as crossing multiple divides of power: between student and teacher, museum collection and the African context (Corradi Fuimara 1995).

All reigns of power depend on the suppression of human voices and it is in the recovery of plurivocality, “as if from a psychological illness”, that the carnival project evaluation is to be further understood (Spivak 1988: 123). In short, recovering plurivocality through interview comprises a *dialogical work* of ‘active listening’ to the suppressed histories of museum objects with contemporary ‘others.’ This work seeks to break down hierarchical power relationships through conducting an extended dialogue over time. It refers to an *ongoing* process of communication and collaboration between myself and my ‘others’ in the field. Therefore I do not occupy the position of a distant ‘investigator’ momentarily beamed in “from another planet free to come and go as she pleases” (Spivak 1988: 150). I am rather one member of a team committed to challenging discrimination and power

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<sup>5</sup> The carnival evaluation technique was essentially the same as the Benin interviews and involved conducting one-to-one semi-structured interviews in the same quiet art-office location.

hierarchies at the museum frontiers. A voice from interview will illustrate this challenge.

Organising an 'in-between' museum space to adjust the hierarchy of teacher-power

S15, one of the year 10 students' uses a wheelchair, and Lambeth Council's disabled transport service makes a 30 seater coach available for school trips, to ensure the whole group of students enjoy equal participation. The museum has unsatisfactory disabled access; at the time of writing. Disabled visitors are separated from their group on arrival and make a trek to the disabled garden entrance. This involves S15, her adult helper and our education assistant making their way: back down the Education entrance, along the main road and into the gardens, through the Music Room and into the Craft Room where the day's activities have been prepared. An excerpt of an evaluation dialogue is offered where S15 makes her first impassioned response after a series of "yeah's." <sup>6</sup>

V Have you enjoyed museums when you've gone?

S15 Yeah.

V Umm. How do you find it being in a wheelchair, is it difficult or

S15 Sometimes it *really gets on my nerves*, 'cos there's *separate entrances* and you *have to go all the way round* <sup>7</sup>

S15's speech shows how the Horniman Museum relies on a considerable amount of determination and good-will from visitors with physical disabilities; just entering the building is extremely difficult during the carnival work. Once inside the museum year 10 are assembled in the craft room; a space which had been carefully designed for the maximum broad-based learning to take place. A "sociopetal furniture arrangement" was made in the craft room by "clustering" twenty chairs around two large tables "within a comfortable distance" of approximately "one and a half feet." This configuration follows Gary Evans's advice that easy "eye contact" encourages "social interaction". He specifies, "The ease with which people see each other is a major component of neighbouring" (Evans 1995: 123). 'Neighbouring' is a vital concept of antiracist-multiculturalism, which involves 'participation in a community of learners.' The participatory approach of

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<sup>6</sup> S refers to the students name and 15 refers to her place in the interview schedule.

<sup>7</sup> It is hoped that lottery monies will rectify this situation by October 2001.

neighbouring addresses the team-leaders concern with power-relations in an educational field during the carnival project. <sup>8</sup>

The participation approach is not one-sided but is mutual, based on shared engagement among the participants with an educational agenda emerging in collaboration (with potentially differing responsibilities) among the participants. This approach was inspired by Lev Vygotsky (see Vygotsky 1978) and his students”  
(Matusov and Rogoff 1995:100)

Matusov and Rogoff emphasise the importance of social interaction in knowledge acquisition, particularly when the participants are involved in extending beyond their current repertoire. They provide a socio-political reading of Vygotsky’s concept of the ‘zone of proximal development’ (zpd), <sup>9</sup> which proves useful to this thesis. The carnival team-leaders utilise this reading of Vygotsky to tackle the problem of hierarchical relationships, and to extend the arts curriculum into broader areas of learning. The team-leaders prepare the movable furniture in the Craft Room to facilitate a comfortable and informal learning environment, with the tables and chairs forming a circular arrangement.

At the Horniman Museum most of the teacher-led programmes are initially conducted in the Craft Room, which provides an intimate location in contrast to the vast spaces of the public galleries. During the carnival project the Craft Room provides a suitable location for introductory discussion and drawing sessions with the handling collection of African masks and musical instruments. In addition to the group-work in the Craft Room, the museum displays in: the Music Room, the Natural History Gallery (which included some Ethnographic material at the time of writing) and the Aquarium are highlighted with slides. In these public areas, more independent learning and research proceeds from a confident knowledge-base, which the team-leaders establish during their preparatory sessions. Most notably during the carnival project., a number of PS students found the fabulous fish in the aquarium an inspiration for their design work as plate 8.2 over-leaf demonstrates<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> It also echoes Audre Lorde’s notion of community which is discussed at 3.2

<sup>9</sup> Vygotsky’s zpd was considered at 4.4.

<sup>10</sup> The Aquarium also directs attention to conservation issues, in the rain-forest regions of the world as well as closer to home in our local ponds and rivers. This stimulates ethical thought which is a major concern of the carnival project.

Plate 8.2 shows a batik banner design which gained an A star GCSE grade for a PS student who is of Chinese heritage.



Plate 8.2. J19's 'Fish' carnival banner

**8.3      Tracing the roots of carnival masks 1: examining the appropriation of  
African art through the cross-cultural case of witch women**

Cultural misappropriation, or legitimate museum “use”

At the museum, the year 10 research is mainly concerned with investigating African mask and masquerade. African masks are contextualised through processes of dialogical exchange around original artefacts, slides and video. Students also gather visual information on the masks or another area of the the collections such as the aquarium cited over-leaf by sketching and drawing techniques. The aim in seeking inspiration from museum artefacts, is to gain an understanding of the thinking behind the making, and thereby to attain a state of empathy with the original makers. The team-leaders encourage London children to develop personally meaningful work, which is inspired by the in-depth study of African art.

This approach, which prioritises personal meaning-making, might be criticised as a misappropriation of the original African culture. The position taken will be defended with reference to the Black theorists Fanon (1993) and hooks (1995). Firstly the carnival team-leaders are concerned with “not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitudes to these conditions” (Fanon 1993: 84). We are interested for all the students to “find a valid historic place”, and prove the colonial “white man was wrong” on matters such as ‘primitivism’ (ibid 130). This demands not just collecting “facts” but learning how to interrogate the facts for underlying “meaning.” The construction of personal art work is regarded as one way of engaging thought processes in this interrogation; an interrogation which might later be ‘applied’ to contemporary situations of injustice and discrimination (ibid 168).

As noted earlier this challenge to injustice is not simply a problem for Black people. hooks also argues against an “essentialist” stance on the topic of ‘cultural appropriation’ and draws on Stuart Hall for support. In short Hall’s complex reasoning declares the “self” to be “a fiction,” along with the “arbitrary closures” that “create communities of identification - nation, ethnic group, families, sexualities, etc.” He further complicates

simplistic notions of ‘purity’ in his comment, “all identity is constructed across difference” (hooks 1995: 11). Hooks responds with the following words.

Given this reality, *acts of appropriation are part of the process by which we make ourselves*. Appropriating - taking something for one’s own use - need not be synonymous with exploitation. This is especially true of cultural appropriation. The “*use*” one makes of what is appropriated *is the crucial factor*.  
(hooks 1995: 11) [My emphasis]

In this analysis hooks defends the art work of Alison Saar which makes an homage to Black American folk arts. She counters the simplistic “nationalist identity politics” and their “notions of ethnic purity,” by emphasising the importance of “imagination”. Finally, in her view, identity is “locally constructed, formed by choice and context.”

Hook’s analysis is useful to this thesis since carnival arts participants *use* their knowledge of west African masks to construct a powerful body of work for the GCSE exam. An additional *use* is to present a forceful challenge to racism. Towards this end enormous value is placed on students making imaginative leaps in their efforts to empathise with and further understand the African work under study. This point will be illustrated with one instance of antisexist/antiracist praxis, or *use* of a Yoruba mask from Nigeria.

#### Cross-cultural cases of witch-woman

All the African masks in the handling collection are carved from a solid piece of wood. There are no joints and even quite considerable areas of the masks have been chiselled away with an adze rather than pegging additions. PS students are shown a gelede mask which has the serene and tranquil face of a women carved at the base half. Her face has wide-open staring eyes and scarification marks on her cheeks. This permits some discussion of adornment and cross-cultural concepts of beauty to be addressed. The upper parts of gelede masks signify strength and power; in this instance representations of a strong man controlling a wild-boar are ‘read’ as symbols of power on an old mask. Present-day symbols of power are also utilised by gelede mask-makers and students are also shown a slide of a mask with a motor-bike/power sign, to emphasise cultural change, movement and hybridity.

This modern gelede image is reproduced at plate 8.3 over-leaf.





Plate 8.3. Yoruba peoples gelede mask and costume from Nigeria



Slides also indicate how masks are carved to fit male masqueraders heads, 'helmet' style, while their bodies are altered by costume. During masquerade an absolute transformation of 'self' is achieved, but the museum displays suggests a simple change of head is involved, because they fail to show the accompanying costume. In this meagre show of 'parts', <sup>11</sup> wrenched from the 'whole' context of the museum display, the masks are full of what Helene Cixous terms 'lack' and absence (Cixous 1987). Cixous attributes the male projection of 'lack' onto woman as fearful attempt to contain female power.

Gelede, like the vast majority of African masks are made by men and worn by men yet the gelede masquerade honours and celebrates woman's power. Older women, especially mothers, have their abilities, particularly their powers over life recognised in gelede. Traditional Yoruba communities esteem this supreme gift of life but their respect is coupled with fear, as the gelede metaphor of the bird/woman indicates. This image describes women taking on the powers of flight, by transforming themselves into birds at night. Gelede masquerade invokes the power of the mother allied to the mystery of creation and this concept, identifying and equating the mother with such power is translated in European discourse as "witchery" (Boyce Davis 1994: 77). The west is familiar with ancient images of this male fear; 'witches' inhabit dreams and take to the air by riding broomsticks. Helene Cixous draws attention to this metaphor of flight.

To fly/steal is woman's gesture, to steal into language to make it fly. ... woman partakes of bird and burglar ... hesheits fly by, hesheits pleasure in scrambling spatial order, disorientating it, moving furniture, things and values around, breaking in emptying structures, turning the selfsame, the proper upside down. (Cixous.1987: 96)

In western feminist discourse, figures of witches appear as wicked demons because their alternative knowledge(s) present a disruption and danger to male phallocentric authority. Witches commit the most serious crime against the law of the father and must therefore be relegated to the realms of unreason and insanity. Three theorists will illustrate this point.

Cixous unpacks the bird/flight fearful metaphor of the subversive knowledgeable woman,

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<sup>11</sup> Exhibiting mask without costume is reminiscent of the 19th century fascination for antique sculptures of broken bodies, in "bits and pieces" which indicate for Linda Nochlin "the trope of fragmentation," playing "a shifty and ever -shifting role" (Nochlin 1994: 56).

and convincingly links her with madness. She states, "I was Saint Teresa of Avila, that madwoman who knew a lot more than men" (Cixous.1987: 99). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar similarly re-read the figure of the witch as a source of transgressive female power. Witches' resistance of male dominance incurs a silencing of their 'mad' voices in patriarchal society (Gilbert and Gubar 1979). Finally Foucault provides abundant clarification of woman's 'madness' in his "archeology of that silence" (Foucault 1995: XII).

These writers offer some justification of the carnival project which presents students with opportunities for bringing a silenced museum discourse to speech, through experimenting with the alternative languages of art <sup>12</sup>, and engaging in an evaluation dialogue with me. One student's speech is selected as providing a typical description of her connection with the *makers* of African masks, who are rendered invisible and silenced by current museum labelling. She speaks as a fellow *maker*, of a particular 'use' which African masks hold for her and illustrates this point.

J19 I think that it's good that we have them [masks] here so that *we can share the culture of other countries, and they should have some of our works*. ... So, well so every place in the world has got like art-work from all over the world, *then we can share the, well the experience of, other artists, from other places*

V Umm do you think if we look at the arts and crafts of other people from other parts of the world, we, we learn something more about them then?

J19 Yeah because, there's *works from quite far*, like could be *historical*, it can tell you the way they lived quite a while ago, and how they would have crafted it, it could be quite *different from the way we do it*, and, we, *we could improve our own* ... Yeah I think definitely, 'cos I think that's the way *you learn really, by the, seeing, by the mistakes you make, and looking at other peoples work and, the good parts of other peoples work*, you can kind of well, *not steal it* but you can get ideas from it, and next time you can kind of take them ideas, and, *change them into your own*

J19 concisely eludes to the importance of considering masks such as the gelede in a historical context. These come to have meaning for her through examining the relationship with her own present-day lived experience as a mask-maker. In feminist-hermeneutics this is the movement of tradition which can only be understand through a fusion of horizons, between the contemporary world and the distant world from which the

<sup>12</sup> This important point is expanded at 9.2.

work of art sprang. Interpreters return to the present-day with greater self knowledge, and awareness of increased possibilities for the future.

J19 comments on her personal *learning* from the weight of *history*. This is a dominant feature of the museum dialogue where present day slides of modern African cities and universities, permit comparison between traditional village and contemporary urban life. In addition, team-leaders discuss many uses and functions of mask-making *all over the world*, so that African masks are viewed in a global context and not exoticised. Finally the process of practical art-work is vital; constructing art-work facilitates a connection with everyday lived experiences. This provides alternative perspectives; a wider conception of 'ourselves' and the 'other.' J19's inspiration or borrowing from an other culture is illuminated in terms which demonstrate an enormous respect and appreciation for the makers. I believe hooks would consider J19's work constitutes part of an honourable 'use' or appropriation of another culture. The appropriate cultural connections which year 10 students make through their art-work will be investigated further.

#### **8.4 Tracing the roots of carnival masks 2: healing work to defy bodily limitations and confound fixed notions of beauty**

This is the guts of the people, their blood; this is the self of the people that they screaming they possess ... 'This is the people taller than the cathedrals; this is the people more beautiful than avenues with trees.' ... He was Manzanilla, Calvary Hill, Congo, Dahomy, Ghana. He was Africa, the ancestral Masker, affirming the power of the warrior ... saying to the city: I is a dragon. I have fire in my belly and claws on my hands; watch me! Note me well, for I am ready to burn down your city. I am ready to tear you apart, limb by limb.  
(Lovelace 1979: 123-125; Philip 1996: 18-19)

Philip's use of "poetic language" connects Caribbean carnival with African roots. She actively works with the crisis of the sign, the gap between signifier and signified to make healing speech (Kristeva.1989: 89-136). Her writing illuminates the way carnival-arts make a poetic play with the slippage between sign and referent; enabling spectators and masqueraders to move from despairing oppression to images of renewal, life, hope and freedom. Carnival optimistically points to healing possibilities of connection, change and

transformation through a visual poetic coupled with a political community effort.

In the context of the museum, year 10 carnival students enter a territory Homi Bhabha aligns with Morrison's 124 Bluestone Road, where ghostly "unspeakable thoughts" murmur. Bhabha utilises Freud's concept of "unheimlich" the uncanny or unhomely, to acknowledge Morrison's re-remembered "60 million and more" victims of the transatlantic holocaust, who "demand revision, reinscription, and our struggle approaching death (Bhabha 1995: 10,192). At the museum-school frontiers the carnival participants seek expression for this 'unspoken' of the African collections, the "haunting memorial of what has been excluded, excised, evicted" (ibid 198). The year 10 mask constructions are powerful 're-memorations' but primarily in a *visual* sense, which contrasts and compliments with Morrison's written text.<sup>13</sup>

The carnival students were led to regard "unheimlich" as a location for the fresh "negotiation of history and identity" (ibid 198). The team-leaders contend that the wide range of carnival project work might aid students in their later lives; providing them with a positive example of interrogating suppressed meaning lying behind received opinions. The contention here accords with Fanon's recommendation noted earlier at 8.2. Similarly, the method of investigation which aimed to esteem an African heritage follows Fanon.

Philip also helps year 10 to trace the roots of carnival to Africa, and the silence of slavery hidden in the African displays. Philip poetically speaks of original rupture from these African carnival-roots; a "looking back, back to where they coming from" (Philip 1996: 3). She quotes George Lamming's account of severely constrained bodies.

On ships the slaves were packed in the hold on galleries one above the other. Each was given only four or five feet in length and two or three feet in height so they could neither lie at full length nor sit upright. ... close proximity of so many naked human beings, their bruised and festering flesh, the fetid air, the prevailing dysentery, the accumulation of filth, turned these holds into a hell. ... No place on earth, observed one writer of the time, concentrated so much misery as the hold of a slave ship.  
(Philip 1996:3)

The year 10 carnival work acknowledged a trace of this tyranny in the Horniman

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<sup>13</sup> A re-writing project and an *oral* project has been outlined in chapter 5.

Museum's African display. But work did not dwell on Caribbean peoples as simply oppressed and helpless. Instead their powers of resistance and the creative reworkings of fixed limiting notions, so vital to the first carnival artists, are celebrated. In homage to the memory of these carnival pioneers PS students are encouraged to conceive really original designs for a complete 'marse.'<sup>14</sup>

The imaginations of year 10 carnival students negotiate numerous boundary crossings in their marse design. In typical carnival fashion their designs blur the binary borders of male/female, human/animal, day/night, earth/sky, fire/water, god/goddess. Plate 8.4 over-leaf graphically demonstrates this blurring, and this point will be illustrated with the words of one student. S13 describes the inception of ideas for her carnival mask at the museum.

S13 Heroes, I think it was heroes, [and sheroes] I mean the theme was heroes *but I didn't* I just did a mask of Medusa. I mean *she's not my hero, but you know*, hee heee. .. [a pretty powerful figure though] ... Umm, it was like a whole face mask, *with like long hair bits coming down.*

There is "a dismantling and re-presentation of the body" in carnival masks such as S13's (Stewart 1994: 105). The 'boundary' of the body, so constrained in the slave ship, is deliberately confused in carnival where the audience witnesses the body in an act of becoming. The '*long hair bits coming down.*' which S13 cites above is reminiscent for the team-leaders of the costume accompanying a traditional women's mask, from the secret or Sande society of the Mende peoples in Sierra Leone, which is shown at plate 8.5 over-leaf.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "To play marse is to take part in the Carnival parade usually wearing a costume" (Philip 1996: 31).

<sup>15</sup> The mask is part of a donation from Major Saunders. Keith Nicklin, our Keeper of Ethnography accepted the Saunder's collection in the late 1970's, and loaned some masks to the education centre in the early 1980's. Nicklin continues to impart valuable information on African objects. His data interestingly marks contradictory views about meaning. For example the rings of fat I cite above can be interpreted as part of a butterfly cocoon, with the face representing the newly emerging woman.



Plate 8.4. Fire-queen carnival mask





**Plate 8.5. Woman's mask and costume, Mendi peoples Sierra Leone**

The wooden Sande mask features: thin eyes, pointed chin, elaborate hairstyle and rings of fat around the neck. These aspects represent signs of beauty, wealth and well-being in this part of the world. Fatness is a particularly important 'feminist issue' for the research project to deal with and this object allows the concept of beauty to be raised cross-culturally, since the historical women painted by Rubens are referenced, as well as the contemporary fashion models Naomi Campbell and Kate Moss (Orbach 1987). Thus antiracist-multicultural education in the museum can make a contribution to work on self-image and self-esteem. This work positively counteracts messages from the wider world, where psychological states of mind cause the physical conditions of anorexia and bulimia that threatens the welfare of young people.

The central use of this mask in traditional Sande societies is part of an initiation rite. It marks the emergence of girls from the world of childhood, to that of young womanhood. Clitorectomy, or female circumcision, essentially marks the final Sande masquerade; an actual physical change which takes place. This aspect of the mask presents problems of power and control to a methodology informed by feminist-hermeneutics. The carnival team-leaders questioned the possibility of attacking the sexist practice of female circumcision, without endorsing the familiar racist perspective of the 'primitive other.' It was decided that the young age of the students made it inappropriate to consider the control of female sexuality in patriarchal societies. Instead, it was decided to focus attention on the more positive aspects of mask-making and explore the possibilities of making temporary changes to bodies through the construction of carnival masks.

#### **Year 10 carnival mask making techniques**

The main technique employed in the construction of the carnival masks also occupied a position of hybridity. Wood was used as in the west African masks, but not carved. At PS school young willow saplings are soaked in water and easily bent into the desired structural-frame. PS students use this method to achieve the beginnings of extraordinary new boundaries to their bodies. Plates 8.6 and 8.7 show year 10 students using this mask-making technique. <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Willows used in this way are known as 'withies' in Barbados where they also make the basic frame of kites and toys.





**Plate 8.6 PS students beginning to construct the carnival masks**



**Plate 8.7. PS students finishing the construction of their carnival masks**

The carnival mask-frames are finally covered with brown sticky paper, painted and varnished. Alternatively some students apply collage designs, using more papers and/or cloths. A wide colour-range of nets and quite luxurious fabrics, as well as brilliantly coloured and textured papers with silvery glitters or fluorescent hues are utilised. This technique is generally felt to be, in J3's words, quite "easy, not as hard as I thought." The beauty of this simple method is belied by the complexity of the images created, which can make an ironic parody of the enslaved peoples' human status, that was belittled under colonialism. In one student's comment on his design a 'playful' link between the categories *fish* and human is illustrated.<sup>17</sup>

D7 Yeah, we done some of the animals, yeah, and the *fish*. ... Yeah that's basically what I done my project on. ... The fish mask, it comes onto your head, it fits on then it's got like poles coming out onto them, it's got like two fish here.[points to the sides of his head] ... It's a whole head mask.

Unfortunately, time constraints prevent PS students constructing and playing a full 'marse.' But like the Notting Hill participant who could "only use four" ideas, from the "forty different dreams" for carnival costume she awoke with, PS students relish the potential to "dream again" (Philip 1996: 21). The intention of a chaotic mingling finale, or 'mix up, mix up' between spectator and performer is merely postponed. Part of the students' success lies in the individual construction of a carnival mask, which *uses* African masks in the museum as a trigger for the displacements of memory, and the in-directions of visual art. Students' voices taken from interview will illuminate this point.

#### Student enunciation, stutters and fragments on African connections

For all *colonisation involves* the taming of the beast by bestial methods and hence both *the conversion and the projection of the animal and the human, difference and identity*. On display the freak represents the naming of the frontier and the assurance that the wilderness, the outside, is now territory.  
(Stewart 1994: 110)

During evaluation interviews I inquire into the African roots of year 10 carnival masks, to

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<sup>17</sup> D7's remarks contrast with Hemingway's disparaging statements about the 'black woman' which I cited at 6.3. According to Hemingway Black women occupy the lowly 'fish' category; lower even than 'mammal' as Morrison notes.



investigate the extent students read a suppressed discourse of slavery at the museum. I also address the broad question of what individual learning occurred during this project, and the necessary conditions of learning. First the team-leaders understanding of 'learning' will be clarified with reference to Csikszentmihalyi's analysis.

For Csikszentmihalyi museum learning should have a wider agenda "than mere knowledge acquisition," while "that is certainly an important part of it." Museum learning involves an "open process of interaction with the environment." It is essentially an experimental process developing and expanding the self, "allowing one to discover aspects of oneself that were previously unknown." Museum learning can increase self knowledge only by involving "the whole person," our intellectual, sensory and emotional faculties (Csikszentmihalyi 1995: 67).

Evaluation of the carnival project involves dialogical exchange in one-to-one interviews, which are conducted in sympathy with Alan Peshkin's ideas about 'the whole person.' Peshkin compares research interviews with the 'non-directional' psychotherapy of Carl Rogers or a psychoanalytical 'talking cure', which aims for the acknowledgement of difference within the individual as opposed to the denial and projection of certain elements onto the 'other' or the 'outside' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992).

Students' thoughts are often uttered hesitantly in evaluation dialogue. Speech comes in stutters and fragments, which recall in my mind the words of *Beloved* for Bhabha, "lynched people with broken necks; disembodied, like dead children who lost their ribbons" (Bhabha 1995: 17 on Morrison 1988: 180-181). The taped interviews record 'inarticulate' speech according to National Curriculum 'standard English', as the following remarks demonstrate.

- V Yeah, sounds good. Umm, do you think it was very different from the African masks that you looked at?
- S13 It wasn't, I mean African masks is quite, their, the *features* they were quite you know, *prominent and that*, and on my mask they weren't, 'cos it was quite hard to do the features, for me it was anyway, so, I just put *my attention to like the Skin and all of that so that it makes the effect*. ... Yeah, like *the texture and that*.

This art project is primarily concerned with meaning and expression, not with grammatically correct sentences nor sterile precise art-forms. The transcripts were analysed together with the key informant teacher-colleagues and it was considered that the students were enabled to put their feelings into more ordered forms during the face to face interview dialogue. The 'umms' and I 'dunnos' were regarded as indications of vital points, the gaps between thoughts and words which became distinct through conversation. In S13's case he articulates sculptural qualities as *prominent features* of African masks, and he contrasts these with his own *attention to surface effects*.

The students are comfortable with me during this project although I am an external researcher, much older than them, and my face is not as familiar as their teachers. They are exceptionally keen interview participants who campaign their teachers, anxious to know when their 'turn' is scheduled. The atmosphere is generally relaxed during interview and the team-leaders are usually able to grasp the meanings which flow in the conversation, despite the non-standard forms of speech. Two speeches are selected as typical to illustrate a hidden African influence on year 10 carnival masks.

C18 Oh umm I just done a headdress and it was a big star on top, blue, and like little stars on top of it, but I had to take them off because of umm, the way I had it they kept falling off, so I *just had like a veil*. ... The wire. ... Yeah, not wire, um [Net] ... Yeah, all round it, *cut into strips though, it looked all right* and we had our photos done with it

A2 An its got *like a cape kinda thing, that goes round*, its like, *its like hair*. ... It kinda comes down here [Gestures to the area of his body covered by the 'cape thing'] You know *like those African women that have that little frock and it comes down*

Teacher-colleagues highlight striking similarities between the cloth and raffia face-coverings of African masks, which students observe in the Education Centre, and their own carnival masks. For example the faces of gelede masqueraders are disguised by open-weave cloths *hanging down*. Similarly, long strands of raffia conceal the face of Mendi masqueraders from Sierra-Leone, and Bambara antelope masqueraders from Mali. A number of students *cut strips* of coloured tissue papers for hanging fringes to extend their helmet masks and camouflage their faces. Plate 8.8 over-leaf shows the original raffia costume which seems to have influenced PS students.



**Plate 8.8. Bambara peoples Tyi Wara mask and costume from Mali**

Bambara antelope masks warrant further consideration of African influences. In Mali the antelope is associated with a mythical god who instructed the first peoples in the skills necessary for land-cultivation, and in present day village masquerades sexed antelope masks are distinguished. A woman wears the female mask portraying a smaller female antelope carrying a baby on her back, while a man wears the bigger male antelope mask. Bambara masks have impressive *elongated horns* which reappear in several PS masks.

D1 Umm, it was like, um, its um, a thing *with two big horns*, and these black eyes.

M16 Yeah, *it had horns* on it.

A2 Right it comes over your head, right around, and *its got like two horns going up*

These African links which teacher-colleagues noted were largely unconscious connections for carnival students during interview. Figure 8.3, which shows the English language competency of PS students, provides a partial explanation for this difficulty in verbally articulating connections.

Free meals	59.5%
English as a Second language	40.7%
Non-fluent in English	34.3%
Figures supplied by Lambeth Education Statistics 1996-1997: 12	

**Figure 8.3 Social Characteristics of Lambeth Secondary Pupils**

Figure 8.3 is not offered to illustrate any 'lack',<sup>18</sup> but to make a distinction between different forms of communication. The PS students' difficulties with English in its written and verbal forms contrast starkly with their success in connecting and 'constructing' ideas through the various media of art (Hein 1998). Plates 8.9 and 8.10 over-leaf graphically shows the many instances of 'horns' and 'hanging bits' which students remember from their studies at the museum frontiers.

<sup>18</sup> In chapter 7 it is noted that PS teacher-colleagues and I regard bilingualism as an asset,

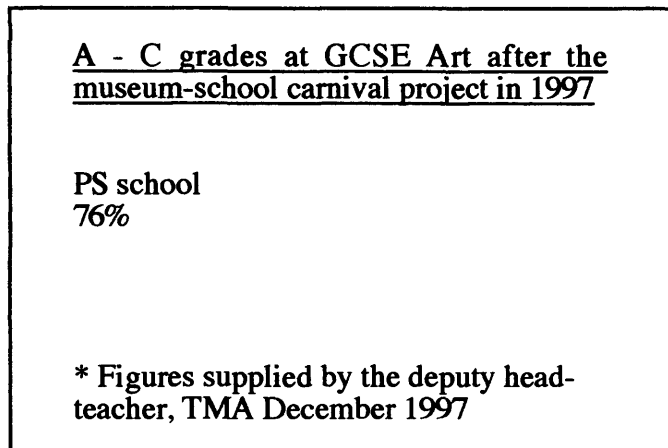




**Plates 8.9 and 8.10. Display of PS carnival masks in the Horniman Museum Cafe Gallery**



The excellent quality of the art work in plates 8.9 and 8.10 is obvious. The PS teachers and I were delighted that this quality was recognised and commended by the external examiners for GCSE art. All of the students gained very high grades in their GCSE art examinations as figure 8.4 shows.



**Figure 8.4. Percentage of A-C grades at GCSE Art 1997**

The 76% A-C grades for art GCSE contrasts with the average A-C score for the school, which remained at 17% in 1997. PS teacher-colleagues attribute the success in art GCSE to the intense carnival project work, and in particular the range of educational ‘experiences’, which drew on a hidden or ‘unsaid’ African heritage lying behind Caribbean culture. It was the positive museum-school experiences of PS students in year 10 that motivated them to continue their efforts in year 11 and these museum-school experiences were importantly ‘linked cumulatively to one another’, since as Dewey states:

Everything depends on the *quality* of the experience which is had The quality of any experience has two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences. ... [the educator must] arrange for the kind of experiences which, [are] more than immediately enjoyable since they promote having desirable experiences in the future. ... every experience lives on in future experiences.  
(Dewey 1968) [original emphasis]

The significance of the experience which linked Caribbean carnival with an African heritage will be further examined, since the PS teachers emphasise this as a critical success factor of their museum-school curriculum, in terms of motivation.

**8.5 Motivation: regard for multiple intelligences to raise self-esteem and achievement in antiracist-multicultural programmes**

Had I read it right? *I read it again with redoubled attention.* From the opposite end of the white world *a magical Negro culture was hailing me.* Negro sculpture! I began to flush with pride. Was this our salvation?  
(Fanon 1993: 123) [my emphasis]

Fanon's words highlight the motivational value of the Afro-centric curriculum. Educators in the ethnographic museum are ideally placed to bolster the myriad strengths of all the student visitors, but in a 'white world' there is an urgent need to emphasise the splendours of Black cultural achievements. In short, the African connections with carnival masks were prioritised during the year 10 project to shatter the equation, "in the collective unconscious, black = ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality" (Fanon 1993: 192).

**Dynamic cycles of movement: life and fertility triumph over death**

The PS teachers and students were fortunate when Marlene Nourbese Philip discussed the underlying meanings of carnival arts during a visit to the school and the museum. Her writing on carnival, which she adapted for the age, ability, and interest levels of the students will be referred to. Philip notes that in addition to the visible features of *horns* and *bodily disguise*, gelede, Mendi, and Bambara masks, centrally celebrate life and fertility. These intertwined meanings have parallels with many carnival masks, which confound essential sexual characteristics, as well as entangling human and animal elements in their creations. Philip perceives in this blurring of logically separate aspects, a wider power that masquerade asserts over life and death itself.

Philip sees an ultimate power reflected in Canadian carnival marse when she asserts, "is living AND dying. And then living again" (Philip 1996: 29). She also reads female jouissance during carnival as a power over life. Female masqueraders are "sisters - brown, black, white, Indian and Chinese" who can show "their sexuality open open" (ibid 23). Philip speaks of "Externalisation, catharsis, sexual stimulus and sexual release", which she associates "conceptually with some fertility cult (the planting season and emphasis on the sexual form of the dances)" (ibid 24). Her words transport readers to a carnival where

an African heritage is celebrated. She states:

Women wining round their space - their inside space, the space of their becoming,  
where anything happening - the crossroads! that is their space - their inner space  
where woman meeting woman meeting man meeting woman.  
(Philip 1996:23)

Philip also uses the crossroads as an African metaphor of power. She states, “the power of the crossroads of Eshu-Elegbara,” the Yoruba god that imparts the strength to break “up space into rhythm which is time, and time space making one” (ibid 31). Philip’s poetic writing and year 10 art-work both draw on historical research, which convinces the team-leaders of deep African connections occurring in carnival. For the PS students these connections lie at a subconscious level; African elements are visually evident in their work but not fully acknowledged in their ‘I dunnos’ (J12).

For the PS teachers Philip’s theoretical references to Morrison’s work on ‘re-membering’ clarifies this African link. Philip’s notes how her imaginary carnival characters ‘Totoben and Maisie’, though “they unremembering the meaning ... but their bodies remembering the instinct” (Philip 1996: 24). In her writing on carnival, this remembering essentially takes place by virtue of the people’s power over bodily movement. The masqueraders who control “their own moving,” who “move and move and move”, are permitted a *healing* amnesia (ibid 8/25). In carnival activity people forget “the jobs they not getting, the money they not making” (ibid: 31).<sup>19</sup>

These references are rather abstract. They will be set in the museum-school context, and in the light of the theoretical perspective of the thesis. At 8.1 the Scarman and Local Government Reports, on the high levels of unemployment which await many students after leaving PS school, were cited (Scarman 1981; Index of Deprivation 1998). During their carnival project work, which lasted for one school year, the students became totally absorbed. They often returned to the art room at lunchtimes and after the school day, as well as visiting the museum at the weekends. In short this museum-school project seemed to provide PS students with a ‘*quality* of experience’ which induced ‘flow’, and certainly resulted in their ‘forgetting’ the prospect of ‘unemployment’ (Dewey 1968;

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<sup>19</sup> At 9.2 this ‘movement’ of the body during the production of art is highlighted as a critical success factor of the year 10 museum-school curriculum.

Csikszentmihalyi 1990). In addition, the quantity and intensity of PS students' effort also resulted in their excellent achievement in GCSE art.

The key-informant teachers and I claim a certain level of nonverbal '*enunciation*' inherent in the students' artistic achievements (Bhabha 1995: 251). We contend with Bhabha that art objects share an affinity with written language in making acts of communication concrete. They express and affirm a profound human desire for connection, for social solidarity, for community. As *Beloved* says "I want to join" (ibid 213). A tremendous moral and ethical sense of community emerges during the carnival project which is glimpsed during interview. For example, one question concerns choosing just one or two costume designs for group construction, since time constraints prevent individual pieces being made. D1's comment was typical.

D1 Depends, if there's enough time yeah, I wouldn't mind doing the whole costume yeah. But really, *it wouldn't have been fair to the others* that wanted their design made init.

#### A diverse carnival curriculum for motivation, pleasure and success

In his speech about the conflict between personal desire and community achievements D1 cites an ethical notion of *fairness*. Considerations of social justice are a vital feature of carnival studies, part of the rich and varied activities which are appreciated in student comments. The interviews with year 10 also confirm my earlier connection between learning and enjoyment at 6.3, and 7.5 as the following typical comments demonstrate.

A2 Yeah, yeah it was all-right, it was *sort of like different* type of, umm, you know, different types of art and stuff

D1 Umm, yeah, it was *different*, 'cos I ain't done something like that before, making a structure, yeah, so, *I enjoyed it*

H4 I, *I enjoyed* coming

Two 1996 research publications from the Department of National Heritage also support the thesis here. Firstly, *People Taking Part* confirms "fun" is a prime motivation for people deciding on leisure activities (DNH 1996a: 8). Secondly, a more detailed DNH

review of peoples 'attitudes' for participating in 'the arts, heritage, broadcasting and sport, again highlights the "global categories of 'fun' and 'enjoyment', as the "most frequently cited forms of reply" (DNH 1996b: 23).

In the carnival-work the students 'enjoy' all their learning activities, but they were not entirely self-directed or "intrinsically motivated", they have the "extrinsic" reward of gaining a good GCSE result for art (Csikszentmihalyi 1995: 67-68). S13 mentions this as a motivation for learning.

S13 Oh I hope so, its the only subject I'm hoping to get more than a C

S13 achieved an A grade in GCSE art. The collaborative research into the achievement of the carnival arts project confirms Csikszentmihalyi claim that students are usually motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic rewards at the same time (Csikszentmihalyi 1995: 68). A part of being motivated to learn via antiracist-multiculturalism at the museum frontiers relates to Csikszentmihalyi's notion of activities being carefully matched to abilities (ibid 70). In the context of the museum-school carnival project this involved team-leaders providing all students with opportunities to achieve a degree of success. This necessitated an enormous amount of research, negotiation and planning by team-leaders. Carnival team-leaders pooled their different knowledge(s) and resources to ensure, in Csikszentmihalyi's terms, that student abilities 'matched' the 'tasks' set. It was close collaboration, over an extended period of time, which ensured excellent concrete outcomes such as drawings and masks, as well as the development of a more questioning attitude towards views of history presented in museums.

The project's success at all these levels rests on previous work within the antiracist-multicultural curriculum which stretches students. Their remarks show that 'quality' or 'flow' experiences endowed them with a willingness to risk *mistakes*, make *changes*, and confident that their own art would *improve* if they continued to work hard. In addition, PS comments generally highlight a respect for African Caribbean cultural achievements. C18 states.

C18 Yeah 'cos *the people who done it were very like experienced, see that was my first*

*time, but I got a feeling, that if I was to like try out some more things, maybe I would be able to do, produce more better work. ... Well the theme was, my first one was, umm. I think it was angel queen and she was gonna have wings, that was when I was thinking of the the dress, actual costume, and she was gonna have big wings, and I can't remember what miss said that word was that, you know in the olden days when the rich ladies had those big skirts. ... so big they couldn't move. ... Yeah, was something like that, yeah, they are really big, but then I changed it, changed it to sky-star queen instead and done the stars on them, so, it was all right.*  
[my emphasis]

Plate 8.11 over-leaf shows C18's carnival mask. Her words here echo Boyce Davis's comments on the creative power of the novel, to re-write the ways in which patriarchy and capitalism is inscribed onto the bodies of black women (Boyce Davis 1994: 79). C18 seems to be speaking of a similar visual strategy; through the claiming of multiple spaces within a radical museum-school curriculum. C18's work and her words present a challenge to fixed ideologies of placement and location, which restrict women 'moving moving.' She re-members the '*ladies*' who '*couldn't move*' and '*changed it*' in her art work.

Carnival studies permitted all the year 10 students to identify and create alternative sites of 'hybridity' (Bhabha 1995). PS students worked in groups and individually on the carnival project. They were provided with opportunities in the 'museum-school Clearing' to examine the interrelation of: politics, race, class, disability, sexuality and gender preference, which allowed alternative meanings to be established, and new alliances to be forged across traditional boundaries.

For example, the PS teachers and I forged a new alliance between museum and school as well as between Black and white teachers. Additionally we fore-grounded the carnival project in a questioning of the traditional museum discourse, to examine that which lies behind the museum's public displays. In this way a 'Clearing' location was facilitated, a space whereby assumptions about students' abilities and future prospects could be challenged and countered.

C18's work over-leaf illustrates this point; she is 'average ability' student who made enormous gains, in levels of self confidence, and attainment during the project.



**Plate 8.11. C18 and her Sky-Star Queen mask**

Large claims have been made for the value of the carnival arts project. Now these claims will be justified with reference to government recommendations for education.

Following government recommendations for an inclusive non-eurocentric curriculum

At 1.2 it was noted that the “under-achievement” of African Caribbean pupils in schools, first highlighted by Rampton in 1981, persists today (Rampton 1981; Scarman 1981: 9, 1996; Gillborn and Gipps 1996a). Gillborn has recently provided a comprehensive analysis of qualitative research which catalogues the poor performance of ‘ethnic minority pupils’ in school. He values these studies for “revealing perspectives and highlighting patterns of experience and achievement that are not visible” in purely quantitative studies (Gillborn and Gipps 1996a: 48-9). For example, qualitative studies have allowed researchers to “recognise patterns of control that heighten conflict with African Caribbean pupils” (Gillborn and Gipps 1996a: 56, Mac an Ghail 1989)

Qualitative studies provide a fully textured understanding of life situations, and in this chapter a qualitative approach which stresses “the importance of understanding how teachers and pupils view their situation”, is employed. The key-informant teachers and I have made an attempt to unveil the “complex dynamics of teaching and learning” during a particular museum-school project. Overall we aim “to persuade the reader that our explanation” of the carnival project is “a plausible one”, but we recognise that it is not “the *only* plausible one” (Brewer 1994: 243; Gillborn 1995: 54) [original emphasis].

This qualitative study of a carnival arts project is distinctive in the literature because it provides evidence of an “effective” learning situation for “particular ethnic groups” (Gillborn and Gipps 1996a: 44). Gillborn states.

To date, the majority of work in this field has concentrated on the problems facing ethnic minority pupils and not on the successes. In the future, it is possible that similar research methods will help develop a more sensitive and perceptive basis for attempts to improve the educational experiences of all pupils.  
(Gillborn and Gipps 1996a: 59)

Gillborn warns of the risk of ‘over-simplification’ if attempts are made to summarise the



‘effectiveness’ of teaching in terms of an ‘overall concept’, and he notes how the search for ‘a single quantity’ can be misleading. This carnival research is not intended to not provide one universalising concept to guide future action but it does highlight certain factors which reinforce the Scarman Centre’s recent recommendations for improving the performance of African Caribbean pupils (Lyle 1996).

The Scarman Centre considers the evidence of African Caribbean children’s under achievement and in their proposals for improving this situation a lack of motivation is emphasised. This chapter reinforces Lyle in providing an analysis of how African Caribbean children might be motivated to take an interest in a museum-school topic, and to perform well (Lyle 1996). In order to motivate “African Caribbean children” and improve their performance Lyle stresses the “importance of fostering cultural pride” (Lyle 1996: 16). He suggests two strategies for achieving this end, both of which are incorporated into the carnival arts project. Firstly he recommends an increase in the numbers of Black teachers who can serve as “positive role models for African Caribbean pupils”, and are “much more likely to understand the views and experiences of black children” (Scarman 1996: 17). TCC and Marlene Nourbese Philip provide these positive role models for the PS students. Secondly Scarman urges the development of “curricula and syllabuses to include topics of interest and relevance to African Caribbean children.” The pertinent comments of two pupils interviewed by a research team at the Scarman Centre in 1996 illustrate the importance of this point. They complain:

There’s nothing about black people in any of the lessons. I think that is wrong especially as we have to learn things about everyone else.

There is not enough education for black children. The teachers tell us nothing. There should be more in schools about us.  
(Scarman 1996:16).

Lyle argues that if materials reflecting “African Caribbean culture” and experience is provided at school this will “benefit *all* children” since it helps them “develop a greater knowledge, understanding and respect for each others cultures” (Lyle 1996: 18). Lyle’s commitment to challenge discrimination is embraced in the museum-school collaboration on the carnival project. The PS teachers and I are “strongly and visibly proactive” in our

“stand against discrimination”, and constantly remind the learning community “that racism and discrimination is abhorred and is one of the key evils that can undermine both the school [-museum] and society” (Lyle 1996:8).

In carnival art studies the hidden history of colonialism and imperialism is seen as an abomination against humanity. This hidden history is tackled by presenting an entire community of young people with the opportunity to question what is ‘unsaid’, as well as what is ‘said’ or displayed at the museum frontiers, for the sake of a truly ‘post’ colonial world where human beings might recognise the inherent worth of all their comrades.

In addition to the concrete evidence of improved examination results, antiracist-multiculturalism at the museum-school frontiers is seen to effect some therapeutic ‘remembering,’ of more personal histories and socio-political issues for teachers and students. Both of these outcomes emerge from the refusal of team-leaders to be “colour-blind”, which as Gillborn notes, is too often a “synonym for rose-tinted” (Gillborn and Gipps 1996b). The carnival work seems to vindicate Gillborn’s thesis that if race continues to be denied, inequalities in achievement persist and “get bigger.”

There is a willed amnesia about everything we’ve learned from past research, about the way that judgments about the aptitude, ability and motivation of pupils are disfigured or reproduced by racism. The more we try to ignore the fact that race matters, the more we leave the door open for these trends to go on unchallenged.  
(Gillborn and Gipps 1996)

## **8.6. Conclusion**

What is crucial to such a vision is that we must not merely change the narratives of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces, both human and historical.  
(Bhabha. 1995: 256)

In this chapter the ‘unsaid’ of the museum discourse was defined as the lingering effects of colonialism and imperialism, which impedes educational achievements at the museum frontiers. An argument was made with reference to Fanon and Philip that the dreadful

events of the transatlantic slave trade have been etched into the deepest recesses of the unconscious, and that the rumblings from the return of this repressed economy is not the exclusive inheritance of Caribbean peoples (Fanon 1993). Detrimental effects were inevitably thought to follow from any restricted view of the world that inhibited the full potential of all its inhabitants. Therefore the carnival project proceeded from a 'Black perspective' which aimed to open up a world of learning for all the students, and present them with the opportunity of fighting negative "stereotypes in constructive (rather than self-defeating) ways" (Gillborn 1996a: 21, 58).

The carnival project team-leaders attempted to fragment hierarchies of power during this project work, but responsibility was accepted for the development of a radical museum-school curriculum (Spivak 1988). The horror of Transatlantic slavery was acknowledged during the curriculum work, and the students were engaged in dialogue about political injustice today. Most importantly the theoretical writing of one of the team-leaders, Marlene Nourbese Philip was employed. Her writing poetically fuses historical analysis and theorising to emphasise the highly *creative resistance* of oppressed people. She also provided the PS students with a splendid role model (Philip 1996).

The emphasis on resistance to power and transgression were regarded by the team-leaders as vital components in building the self-esteem of the student group. Increasing self-esteem was considered to be an important 'motivating' factor which might result in improved examination results and this was demonstrated at figure 8.4<sup>20</sup> (Csikszentmihalyi 1995). The dialogical aspects of learning about carnival from an Afro-centric perspective has been shown to build self-esteem throughout this project. The qualitative interview method of evaluation also raised self-esteem. At interview students were presented with opportunities to enunciate their thoughts and feelings on their 'carnival art' achievements, as well as articulate more precisely their ideas which positively connected the Caribbean to its African past.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Figures 5.1 and 7.6 also reinforce this point.

<sup>21</sup> The carnival project work outlined in this chapter and the Benin project work outlined in the last chapter was disseminated with teacher-colleagues at a Goldsmiths University INSET in April 1999. The teacher-colleagues noted a striking paucity of linguistic expression during the PS student interviews, which contrasted with the richness of their artistic expression. This is an area of interest which will be considered in the concluding chapter, chapter 9, since it relates to both of the projects conducted at the PS field-site.

The investigation into the roots of carnival masks provided abundant opportunities for a creative work of constructing new hybrid identities. The year 10 carnival masks defied bodily limitations and confounded fixed notions of beauty. This work comprised a visually healing ‘re-memory’ or means of expression for all participants and as such it is regarded as a great value of the museum-school curriculum.<sup>22</sup> The wider value of the museum-school curriculum will be explored in the next chapter, the concluding chapter 9.

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<sup>22</sup> In chapter 5 Morrison’s notion of healing re-memory was expanded from a textual perspective (Morrison 1988). The early years work at the museum-school frontiers, upon which the GCSE carnival and Benin project-work rests was also examined in chapter 5.

## 9 Conclusion: embracing a liberatory practice at the museum frontiers

It had begun with Christmas and the gift of dolls. The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. ... Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs - all the world agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it." ... I could not love it. But I could examine it to see what all the world said was lovable. ... It was as though *some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question.* "The master said, "You are ugly people." They looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, *support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance.* "Yes," they had said you are right.

(Morrison 1990: 13, 14, 28) [my emphasis]

**9.0      Introduction**

The research question posed at the outset of this thesis asked: how can we use the museum's collections to raise the voices and make visible those who are misrepresented, silenced or excluded by the traditional framing of knowledge in ethnographic museums? In answering this question the research aimed to change hierarchical practice, and open up the borderlands between the museum and its audience (Philip 1992; Giroux 1993).

It was necessary to employ elements from diverse fields of inquiry in the course of establishing a theoretical base for this research project. In particular aspects of: hermeneutic philosophy and Toni Morrison's literature (Gadamer 1981; Henderson 1993; Morrison 1988) were utilised in chapter 2; feminism, especially Black women writers (hooks 1994, 1995; Lorde 1996; Braidotti 1994a/b) in chapter 3; educational action research (Stenhouse 1973; Eliot 1987; Freire 1972, 1996) and ethnography (Clifford 1994, 1997; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993) in chapter 4. A sound theoretical position was carefully built by making a number of border-crossings between these traditional disciplines and approaches in chapters 2 to 4.

In terms of method, work was also conducted at the borderlands between theories and methodological techniques. Specifically, in chapter 4 the feminist-hermeneutic theory was applied to an educational action research method. This method has a strong ethical dimension which was determined by the theoretical base of this thesis. It was distinguished by an overriding concern to address power-knowledge relationships in the museum context (Foucault 1980, 1994a, 1994b; Porter 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1996). Quantitative and qualitative techniques have been combined to address the limitations inherent in any one system throughout this thesis. Additionally, a more detailed analysis of the information which was gathered as a committed participant observer is provided in the appendices. The appendices include: interview schedules and a representative sample of interview transcripts, as well as a proforma and a representative sample of completed questionnaires.

In chapters 5 to 8 the methodological framework was elaborated to develop the theory,

through the ‘situated knowledge(s)’ and the ‘standpoint epistemologies’ of the collaborative research team (Haraway 1993; Hill-Collins 19991; Morrison 1988, 1994). These chapters have been written as research case studies. The case study approach allowed a consideration of general theoretical issues in a specific practical context. In each case study ethnographic collections in the museum were used as a site for active reflection and reinterpretation. The case studies have each challenged the traditional museum discourse which regards museum visitors as passive receptacles or receivers of museum ‘knowledge’, and negates their multifaceted identities. In these case studies the concept of knowledge has been problematised, and the active process whereby individuals construct personal meaning(s) and identities has been privileged (Hooper-Greenhill 1993, 1994a, 1998; Hein 1998).

To limit the thesis and make a more detailed investigation the research has focussed on collaborative project work with school/university communities in south London. The choice of this geographical area as a field-site for this research study was also determined by my insider positioning. South London is a multicultural area where I have lived, studied and worked for most of my life; it is a ‘homeland’ where I have positive experiences of Black people, women, working-class, young or disabled people working together. Most importantly in this thesis my local knowledge has translated into the museum context, and permitted the ‘others’ of our public displays to articulate new identities and understanding by ‘writing back’, both visually and textually, during their collaborative projects (Hall 1994; Gilroy 1994b; Fanon 1990, 1993).

The aim of this research project was to explore the possibilities of museums contributing to the creation of new interpretations, identities and understandings. In section 9.1 and 9.2 the success of these aims, and the objectives which regarded the affective and the cognitive aspects of learning in the museum as equally important, will be evaluated. The strengths, weaknesses and value of this thesis will be addressed. First at 9.1 the value of this research study is considered from a personal perspective. Then at 9.2 the value of this research to the teacher/lecturer-colleagues and their students is reflected upon. Finally in section 9.3 the value, use and application of the work for other museum-school/university partnerships is considered, and the possible contribution to the museum itself, museum

studies, and other research in general is highlighted.

### **9.1 The personal value of developing a new theoretical location for liberatory practice**

During the construction of this thesis I have spoken from a position inside the museum profession. I have insider knowledge of the museum and this is a strength of my work because my experiences cannot simply be dismissed as naive or lacking in relevance. I also have insider knowledge of those erased by the traditional museum discourse. As a woman, a professionally trained teacher of extremely poor working-class, and mixed racial heritage; I also speak from the position of the 'other' outside of the museum framing of knowledge (Mascia-Lees et al 1989; Porter 1991). <sup>1</sup>

This dual positioning is a strength of the thesis; it has allowed an expansion of the theoretical borders of the museum discourse. This positional 'doubling' is also a weakness of the thesis from a strict scientific perspective, since I do not speak from a unified position of distanced objectivity. Neither do I speak about simple things which might be easily measured. The thesis specifically challenges the notion of 'fixed' identities and does not offer straightforward recipes for programmes to improve learning in the museum (Hall 1994). It rather presents the 'standpoint epistemology' and 'situated knowledge' of certain local communities (Hill-Collins 1991; Haraway 1993).

In chapters 2 and 3 the theoretical location with regards museum knowledge and personal meaning-making was defended. An argument was developed which denied a strictly realist concept of universal truth, while making a strong claim for the truth of the research (Gadamer 1981; Miles 1997; Hein 1997). The truth of the thesis was considered to lie in the articulation of 'partial' perspectives, and a great value of the thesis lies in the opportunity it has provided for individuals to articulate the truths of their own life

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<sup>1</sup> While I do not claim total empathy with all the research participants, my background does permit entry to worlds which are closed or mysterious to many museum professionals. It has been inappropriate to labour this point in a Ph.D thesis but my poetry notes: extreme economic poverty, a museum-cleaner mother, gypsy and Jewish grandfathers, Irish grandmothers and a persecuted childhood which resulted from this heritage (Golding 1998c).



experiences by constructing their own meanings in the museum, by visual, verbal, and written means (Hein 1998).

At the final stages of writing up this thesis, an effort has been made to communicate the major findings of the research with a wider audience. I have been invited to share the fruits of my research through writing (Golding 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996), and speaking at conferences in England (1999), Portugal (1998) and Egypt (1997). This sharing has been challenging but it has contributed to the clarification of my thought, and permitted a degree of professional growth.

Publication has also resulted in some international interest in my work and a certain amount of networking. For example, I received a very warm request for further dialogue and advice on *working with* multicultural communities, from the Department of Communication at the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam the Netherlands. This request has led to a close personal contact, and an exchange of ideas on 'cultural diversity' which the Netherlands Museums Association is currently undertaking.

In the work of dissemination the importance of theory to my practice has consistently been highlighted. The need to stretch the theoretical boundaries of 'museum education' and encourage a wider search for more diverse theories which might prove pertinent to museum work has also been emphasised. For example, the methodological position which is outlined in chapter 4, is based on an amalgamation of action research (Stenhouse 1975, 1980; Eliot 1987, 1995) and new ethnographic techniques (Clifford 1994, 1997; Bell, Caplan and Karim 1993). The main value of these methods for me personally lies in their attention to power structures, and a concern to shatter the traditional hierarchical relationship between researched and researcher. This is a feminist concern which runs throughout the thesis.

This concern rests on Black feminist thought in particular. In this thesis Black feminism began to guide the building of the theory in chapters 2 to 4, and it continued to illuminate aspects of the praxis, which was outlined through project work in chapters 5 to 8. Black feminism highlights the importance of the oral tradition, and overall the thesis has

clarified theory in a reflexive dialogical exchange with teacher/lecturers and students.

A continual circular movement from dialogical reflexivity to practice has been accentuated in the thesis. The circle of dialogical reflexivity and action has proved both personally and professionally fulfilling for myself, and the other participants. For myself as a professional museum teacher, intense dialogue with professionals from outside of the museum has enormously increased my understanding of the possibilities for museum learning, which this thesis documents. It has also proved highly successful in terms of developing programmes to maximise learning in the museum as the figures 5.7, 7.5 and 8.4 demonstrate.

The success of the museum programming rests on collaboration with a committed research team which was founded at the outset of this Ph.D. study. In chapter 6 the reflexive dialogical project was outlined which enabled the forging of new alliances with teacher/lecturers as vital colleagues or key-informants, who were committed to establishing the critical success factors of museum education. Following on from the work of this chapter, a movement was made from the general points highlighted by the whole research team of 25 teachers-colleagues, to consider particular issues with 5 members of the research team in chapters 7 and 8. This narrowing of focus provided an opportunity for a more in-depth study of the students viewpoint, over time, and at the frontiers between the museum and school/university.

In chapters 5 to 8 the central notion of frontier locations between the 'home' field-sites of school or university and the museum was elucidated (Philip 1993). These chapters have shown how the development of new relationships with the research partners in these borderlands shake any rigid ideas out of thought. Specifically, the new ways of working in close contact with external agencies was achieved through non-hierarchical exchange in dialogue. The thesis endeavoured to engage key-informant teacher/lecturers in an equitable 'I-Thou' dialogue throughout these chapters (Gadamer 1981; Henderson 1993). This special dialogue was informed by feminist-hermeneutics, and it has enabled an expansion of the range of texts which museum educators might usefully draw upon to understand and improve practice.

During the period of research museum education was primarily concerned with the translation of psychological learning theories to the museum context. Museum education was also largely preoccupied with learning in science museums. This thesis is concerned with the broad potential of learning from ethnographic objects, which are categorised as art in chapter 7. Additionally the importance of philosophical and Black feminist texts have been highlighted; texts which were regarded as peripheral, irrelevant, or beyond the bounds of museum education. A strong claim for the truth of this thesis has been made through philosophical and feminist argument (Gadamer 1981; Hill-Collins 1991). In addition these texts have pointed to ways in which new alliances might be forged at the museum frontiers to benefit all museum students.

## **9.2 The value of developing a liberatory practice from the perspective of teacher-colleagues and their students**

In terms of maximising students' learning at the museum-school frontiers, the key-informant teachers have highlighted the importance of developing a more inclusive curriculum, one which positively reflects the ethnic and cultural heritage of all the students in British society today. The curriculum developed in this thesis followed the recommendations of the Swann Report, and more recently David Gillborn's report for OFSTED as noted in chapter 8 (Swann 1984; Gillborn 1996). For Swann and Gillborn the curriculum must speak to the individual child, whatever their culture or ethnic group, of his or her worth.

The teacher-colleagues totally endorsed Swann and Gilborn's view that this more inclusive curriculum can raise the childrens' self-esteem, motivate them to learn, and as a consequence improve their achievement. The projects outlined in chapters 5, 7 and 8 highlight the central aspect of the museum-school curriculum: to reflect and celebrate the diversity of the multi-ethnic and multicultural pupils in British society today.

The student' voices which echo throughout these later chapters are testament to the power

of the museum-school curriculum to increase student motivation and their commitment to learning. Student motivation via the inclusive curriculum was dependent on a radical educational ideology and the high expectation of museum-school teachers (Freire 1972, 1996). The key-informant teacher/lecturers considered it a vital factor of success that the expectations of the students was not limiting. The success of collaborative effort stands against the social labelling of the 'disadvantaged child', which leads to a cycle of: labelling, low expectations, low achievement (Lacey 1970).

The museum-school projects which were outlined in chapters 5, 7 and 8 are seen to be successful in terms of GCSE examination or SAT results, as figures 5.7, 7.5 and 8.4 demonstrate. The project team-leaders and I attribute this success to the *joint development* of a museum-school curriculum, through the circle of reflexivity and practice which ethnographic action-research informed by feminist-hermeneutics demands.

The museum-school team-leaders did not apply one universal solution to the creation of a good learning environment. Acting as equal team-leaders the teacher/lecturers and I developed a number of strategies which were dependent on two interrelated factors. Firstly the school-teachers' professional knowledge and their knowledge of the individual children in their groups which they gathered from close observation; secondly my knowledge of the museum collections and my experience as a trained teacher.

The professional abilities of the museum-school teacher/lecturers also encompassed two factors. Firstly an understanding of the individual children was needed. Secondly this understanding required proficient translation into educational programmes which might increase the students' knowledge and develop their full potential. The team-leaders acknowledged their role as the prime holders of knowledge, who combined their resources to develop a highly skilled style of teaching which was based on 'pluralism' to improve the student learning (Swann 1984). For Swann 'pluralism' is seen as a compromise between assimilation into, and separation from the dominant culture. He states.

... pluralism, which enables, expects and encourages members of ethnic group, both minority and majority, to participate fully in shaping society as a whole within a framework of commonly accepted values, practices and procedures, whilst allowing and where necessary, assisting the ethnic minority communities

## 9 **Conclusion: embracing a liberatory practice at the museum frontiers**

in maintaining their distinct ethnic identities within this communal framework. (Swann 1985: 5).

In this thesis the concept of an identity shared in common with all members of a community, has been balanced with an identity specific to a particular ethnic groups (Silverman 1995). Similarly, the notion of personal and group identity has been interrogated in the museum context. Swann's emphasis on the important role of museum-school education in forming new views, attitudes and values has also been followed. Overall the projects discussed in this thesis have shown how a museum-school curriculum can equip students with knowledge, and replace ignorance with understanding.

Like Swann, the team-leaders wanted to encourage critical thinking through project work; to challenge the false assumptions so easily acquired from family, peers or the media. The team-leaders were determined to counter prejudice, mistaken impressions or inaccurate heresay with the evidence presented in a new museum-school curriculum (Gadamer 1981; Swann 1985: 13). This demanded a total commitment to equality and antiracist-multiculturalism. As Swann notes, 'adding' multicultural aspects is not consistent with multicultural education (Swann 1985: 323).

The key-informant teacher/lecturers and I constructed a whole new educational framework from feminist-hermeneutics and ethnographic action research, to develop an antiracist-multicultural curriculum which facilitated a greater understanding of objects, others and ourselves. It was contended that the new Clearing location at the museum frontiers, which was outlined in chapter 2 and illustrated in chapters 5 to 8, promoted new interpretations and understandings (Morrison 1988). The Clearing location provided a safe space, whereby dialogical exchange and action led to a raising of voice and visibility in the museum, as well as greater self-knowledge for the research participants. <sup>2</sup>

In the museum context this knowledge which is ultimately self-understanding increases every time we return to those objects which first moved us, and it begins with a

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<sup>2</sup> For Kristeva, such active dialogical exchange constitutes a return to the maternal chora (Kristeva 1989b: 124-147). Kristeva borrows the term chora from Plato's *Timaeus* where it seems to allude to the world of the forms, from whence all life originates and to which it returns (Plato 1976: 514-521. p.227-235; 1977: 51-52. p.70-72). In short, Kristeva appears to argue for access to the maternal chora, the time and space of symbiosis with the mother, as the source of all imagination and creativity. In her view the ability to keep these lines of choric movement open broadens individual horizons and understanding.

questioning position. The ancient question and answer method, the philosophers path to knowledge and truth is useful to the thesis, since the museum visitor is prompted to profound meditation when questioning (Gadamer 1984). The open Clearing location of the museum-school frontiers permits students to develop both cognitively and affectively, by asking questions over a wide range of issues. This point will be clarified with some examples.

A question to develop perceptual abilities might ask what materials the object is made from? A question to extend knowledge of social structures might ask who originally used the object, how and why? A question to encourage ideological thought might ask how the object arrived in the museum, should it remain and why? A question to develop aesthetic sensibilities might ask what are the formal qualities of the object, the perfect marriage of line and colour which make the beauty of the object resonate within the observer? Finally and most importantly for antiracist-multiculturalism at the museum frontiers, each interpreter must ask their own questions of the museum objects.

In Chapter 6 teachers highlighted the importance of multisensory experiences in provoking questions. Touching, listening, speaking and looking; these 'minds on hands on' activities were regarded as stimulating an active dialogue and questioning of museum knowledge, as opposed to a passive consumption (Hooper-Greenhill 1994a, 1994b, 1998; Hein 1998). It is through dialogical questioning that students learn to read museum objects, and to re-read the underlying messages of the museum display. Teacher/lecturers and I contend that eliciting personal questioning responses in students, by generating an interest in authentic museum objects, is a great value of the museum-school collaboration; answering questions students become thinking 'subjects', who confront their 'prejudices' and taken for granted notions (Freire 1996; Gadamer 1981).

A questioning stance is viewed as vital for citizenship and full participation in democratic society (Giroux 1993). This is why antiracist-multiculturalism at the museum frontiers is centrally concerned with objects, and interrogating the different ideas which have been attached to them. Handling real things and asking questions about them has been shown to lead people to different pictures of their place in the world, and to alternative possibilities

of being. It is in this way that objects can be said to have expanded our minds and widened our 'horizons' (Gadamer 1981).

The non-hierarchical questioning method most importantly provided all the members of the research projects, teacher/lecturers and students, with a voice. To facilitate new voices at the museum frontiers team-leaders acknowledged and respected polyvocality. Students were moved beyond certain kinds of speech, standard English, into different visual and non-standard forms of communication. This was empowering for all the participants. For museum-school team-leaders it brought new sources of energy into the collaborative work, which enlivened thought about levels of literacy and degrees of competency in the English language.

**The value of the research in terms of PS student achievement**

The case-study on carnival arts in chapter 8 and the case study on Benin in chapter 7 showed a striking contrast between the richness of PS students' art-work and the paucity of their linguistic expression at interview. The PS key-informants argued that the superb accomplishment of artistic expression demonstrated by the carnival art-work and the Benin art-work was the result of a particular research practice which demanded intense collaboration between the fields of museum and school. The practice was characterised by being developed over time, by a committed team of museum-school researchers, at a single field-site and with similar aged students. This praxis clearly benefited the student participants in terms of increased creativity and art-skills which was reflected in their subsequent achievement at the GCSE examinations as figures 7.5 and 8.4 demonstrated. The elements of this achievement in art production and expression will briefly be explored.<sup>3</sup>

Art production seems to have provided a means of organising and concretizing various life experiences for the PS students. Additionally, in the process of making these life experiences manifest they were brought into sharper focus in thought, which made them more comprehensible to the individual artists. In this sense the process of making art was

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<sup>3</sup> One obvious reason for this difference is related to the information at figures 1.1, 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3, which indicates the high number of PS students for whom English is not their mother tongue.

## 9 **Conclusion: embracing a liberatory practice at the museum frontiers**

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seen to be a sensitive processing of everyday life that enabled the young artists to gain a sense of reflexive control over their life situations.

During the research the PS key-informants regarded art as a sign system like language in general, although the body was found to be more intimately involved *with* the mind in art-making; to a far greater extent than in the processes of language construction such as speech or writing. However, while the materials of art were being manipulated and conjoined by the PS students, conversation flowed and the expressive qualities of art were enhanced by the elements of verbal language, the words and sentences of feminist-hermeneutic dialogue. This feature permitted vital questions such as 'who am I' and 'where am I going' to be considered in the process of art-making. These questions would be difficult for any young person to consider in a first language; they were extremely difficult for the young PS students to articulate in a second language. Therefore the research team argue that art-making provided a potent means for the PS students to come to a deeper knowledge of themselves, by articulating the narratives of their everyday lives with their minds *and* bodies.

Most significantly for the team-leaders, during the PS project work art was viewed as means of constructing identities. For example, the process of making art during the carnival project in particular provided a great relief from the social pressures to conform to strict gender roles. The act of making art facilitated a new femininity in the boy students and a new masculinity in the girl students. A reversal of the traditional or stereotypical perspectives on gender was achieved with female artists developing a sense of being strong *and* female in their portrayal of sheros; male artists of being soft *and* male in their portrayal of butterflies. This was facilitated by the girl students increasingly being enabled to pursue a high degree of autonomy and independence alongside their male peers.

Finally the PS key-informants consider the Carnival and Benin art-work most importantly expressed the power of the PS student, to overcome the familiar ways of interpreting the world, which had relegated them to an inferior position in terms of prospective success at the academic level of GCSE. The museum-school art curriculum suggested the need to



suggested the need to cultivate flexible responses to situations encountered in life and the possibility of jumping over the hurdles and self-prophesising stigma of 'deprivation.'

### **Personal Meaning Mapping (PMM)**

Following this Ph.D. research, members of the extended dialogical project team discussed the value of Personal Meaning Mapping (PMM) to future collaborative research projects (Falk et al 1995). This discussion led four new members of the research group, from PS school and Goldsmiths College, to adapt aspects of the PMM analysis for the special needs of students at the frontiers between the school and the museum in south London.

A system of employing key-words and sentence-webs was developed to facilitate student learning. These techniques are related to Falk's notions of: extent (increase in vocabulary used), breadth (quantity of appropriate concepts used), depth (complexity of descriptive categories used), and mastery (the overall facility to describe understanding). Key words and sentence webs provide particularly pertinent tools for school students at the beginning stages of learning English, and younger visitors to the museum. They now form a crucial part of each museum-school project for these teachers, from the initial instruction stages, throughout the project work, to the final project evaluation.

For example, year 8 students were asked to complete the sentence: 'I think that the Benin artifacts should/should not be returned to Benin city (State reason)'. The responses ranged from poetic and impassioned pleas for return, to extremely sophisticated and rational arguments for retention. NS and JP's replies are selected as typical.

- NS     Because it is part of the history and culture of Benin, stolen from them. I think that the people who stole the precious artefacts are fiefs [thieves] and god will sin them. The fiefs couldn't take the fact that someone else had thought of something that hadn't even occurred to them. They were JEALOUS, jealousy, jealousy.
- JP     Firstly it would be good if Benin artefacts were returned to Benin - but if people could only see things from their culture, they wouldn't be able to observe or sample other cultures and could grow to become xenophobic

A complete example of this key-word and sentence-web evaluation, which revisited the problematic of studying Benin at the museum-school frontiers, is provided over-leaf.

art dept

KS4 PROJECT SHEET

TERM ☐1☐2☐3☐4 YEAR ☐8☐9

stockwell park school

**PROJECT TITLE: Benin ( Art and Culture)****PROJECT Description:** Looking at the art and culture of ancient Benin city. Visit to the Horniman museum, talk, slides, access to handling collection, drawing from collection.**MEDIA:** Drawing in pencil, working with recycled materials, working with copper and aluminium**KEYWORDS:** BENIN, bronze, lost wax, coral, Ivory, The Oba , expeditionary force, imperialism, African art, museum collections, culture, heritage, national identity**UNITS**

Work will be assessed at the end of each unit or at the end of week 6

- ☐1 Small Drawing
- ☐2 Recycled can
- ☐3 Large Drawing
- ☐4 Copper plaque
- ☐5

**Evaluate your own work Name****Form****Complete the following statements :**

In making my work I tried to show...

What the Benin plaques look like.

I think that the Benin artifacts should ~~not be~~ returned to Benin city ( state reason)

Because they belong there and if you put alot of work into something and it was taken away like that you wouldn't like it.

I think my work is successful because ...

I put alot of time and effort into my work  
I am proud of my work and am happy to show it to any one.

I could improve my work further by ...

Varying the background and putting more detail into the plaques.

**Figure 9.1. A student evaluation sheet from the 1998 Benin project**

The original research team commended PMM as providing a conceptually simple system of analysis for accurately ‘measuring’ an increase in student learning over the 4 dimensions of extent, breadth, depth, and mastery. However, in the context of this research project, the key-informant teacher/lecturers felt PMM would have presented two related problems. Firstly PMM would disrupt the vital notion of *collaboration*, which was a prime feature of the ethnographic action-research method and the resulting case studies which are documented in this thesis. Secondly, as summarised at 8.1, this research prioritised an intimate relationship between the researchers and researched, which strove towards a *non-hierarchical* subject positioning between all the participants in the research project, and this feature is lacking in the more distanced method of PMM. In short, this thesis has sacrificed the absolute rigour of measurement provided by PMM, to facilitate a raising of disadvantaged voices in the museum.<sup>4</sup>

Finally the importance of dissemination must be noted as a value of this thesis for key-informants and their students. This has raised visibility in the professional domain. A next step for the team-leaders is to pursue further publication and dissemination of the research findings. The American publication *Building Museum School Partnerships*, edited by Beverly Sheppard (1997) would provide a useful model for the British context. Sheppard’s collection of essays is notable for the close liaison between the museum, school and university; a collaboration which I highlight in this thesis. Another avenue for my research team to explore is the possibilities of working on a conference with Women Heritage and Museums, WHAM. Collaboration with WHAM could develop international networks between museums, schools and universities which would be very interesting.

### **9.3      The value of this research study to the museum in general and museum education in particular**

From the perspective of the museum an enormous value of this research lies in the emphasis on theory. A new theoretical ground has been established, which enables an

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<sup>4</sup> The teacher/lecturers regarded the notion of ‘measurement’ in the strict sense as a disadvantage of the PMM system. The Government focus on the measurement of learning was felt to be excessive, to such an extent that 6 members of the 25 strong dialogical project have left their workplaces. The GCSE examinations and SATs were adopted as necessary ‘measures’ of learning in this research.

examination of certain silences and erasures in the museum context. The theory and practice that has been developed in this thesis points to ways in which traditional museum praxis might be changed, from a hierarchical organisation of knowledge and a measuring of learning, into a more liberatory practice which privileges the position of the learners.

A certain museum visitor-learner has been have privileged in this thesis: Black people, women, working class and disabled people. Chapters 5 to 8 have demonstrated how new alliances might be forged, and new collaborative ways of working together might be developed. The collaborative projects outlined in these chapters have raised the voices and made visible those who were excluded by the framing of knowledge in the traditional museum. The projects addressed the historical voices or the 'unsaid' which lay behind the public displays, as well as the contemporary voices of museum visitors today.

For example in chapter 7 the historical sacking of Benin was considered from an African-centred perspective, which regarded the acts of the British army in 1897 as unjustified. The ways in which the art project on the theme of Benin permitted some attention to contemporary injustice such as sexism was also accentuated. In chapter 8 the 'unsaid' of transatlantic slavery which lies beneath the ethnographic collections was considered with year 10 students, and in chapter 5 this particular 'unsaid' was addressed with a Caribbean Women Writers group, CWWA.

The issues which arose in chapters 5, 7 and 8 are difficult for the Museum, but the thesis contends that it is necessary for the Museum to address these issues with integrity. In these chapters the urgent need for professionals inside the museum, to acknowledge the painful experiences a museum visit can promote for some of our communities was emphasised. The positive healing effect which collaborative attention to this painful history might invoke was also described. CWWA members achieved a personal healing which resulted in their gaining a published voice. The publication *Another Doorway. Visible in the museum*, (Anim-Addo 1998b) is testament to this positive contribution museums can make to the well-being of a community.

It is argued that all the projects outlined in this thesis have a two-fold value: not only for

the communities involved but also for the museum in general. The CWWA projects illustrate one of the ways in which collaborative work has brought polyvocality and creativity into the Museum. This is a value for the Museum, in addition to the personal value for members of the Caribbean community, since authorising new voices and visibilities at the museum frontiers expands the museum audience and broadens the interpretive potential of museum collections.

Collaborative projects have also validated new interpretations in the museum, through developing new relationships with teacher-colleagues from external agencies. This has permitted a new museum audience of young students to see themselves more positively reflected in the glass-case displays, and it has also permitted some development of the museum discourse. The traditional museum discourse has been disrupted; specifically the focus of attention has been shifted from the surface features of objects, to the layers of complexity which lies behind them. Most importantly the teacher-colleagues contend this change has been achieved through close collaboration.

In feminist terminology collaboration has been necessary to “turn the proper upside down” and permit new voices to enter the museum discourse (Cixous 1987: 95). A limitation of this thesis is that the collaborators and I, working solely in the Education Department, have been writing ‘in the margins’ or the blank spaces of the museum discourse. Nevertheless, women and other subjugated peoples have taken a first step, to infiltrate new experiences and multiple identities into the museum frame of reference.

Additionally an increased visibility has led to some liaison over the *African Worlds* exhibition (Horniman Museum 1999). Some of the research team members were encouraged by their positive experiences with the Education Department, and committed themselves to join the Community Consultative Forum, the CCP. The CCP worked alongside the Anthropology Consultative Panel, the ACP, to a certain extent during the construction of *African Worlds*. The CCP contribution is less obvious than the ACP input in the public exhibition, but this collaboration with other museum departments does mark a vital beginning for the Horniman Museum.

Collaboration with the museum on public exhibitions demonstrates a commitment to 'relinquish absolutist authority', and disrupt the hierarchical flow knowledge from the museum as centre and font of wisdom (Silverman 1995). It enables meanings to be constructed afresh from new multi-centres by readers from outside of the museum: teachers, young students, artists and creative writers. This expansion of the museum boundaries is valuable and stimulating for the museum discourse, since it challenges any tendency to fixed views and prevents thought from stagnating.

Janet Vitmayer (Director) and Anthony Shelton (Keeper of Anthropology) at the Horniman Museum are responsible for supporting this initiative. They are aware of the need to counteract the traditional museum view of the 'other,' as an exotic curiosity, a feared or noble savage. The inferior status implied by this lens of western capitalist perceptions justified the exploitation of what was necessarily regarded as the underbelly of a divisive society. Women everywhere, the white working classes and black colonial subjects share this history of oppression. The 'dissident' feminist discourses which have provided a stimulation in this thesis suggest that, from the silence of shared experiences painfully achieving speech in the museum, people inside and outside of the museum may glimpse alternative possibilities for working together, and break out of the limiting moulds imposed upon them (Kristeva 1989a: 292-3).

For example the African Worlds exhibition was specifically designed with gaps and blank text panels, to accommodate new voices which will be gathered through future programming. In this way the museum exhibition mirrors the research project, where teacher/lecturers and I have challenged the linear model of museum communication, with a new dialogical model of communication (Hooper-Greenhill 1994a). The dialogical model is circular, and facilitated collaborators in their pursuit of alternative readings or interpretations, from those viewpoints which appear natural or established in the traditional museum and in society.

The special feminist-hermeneutic dialogue outlined in this thesis has enabled the construction of alternative programmes at the museum frontiers and this has permitted a greater intellectual access to museum objects. Feminist-hermeneutics has facilitated

informed debate and acknowledged the perspectives of people outside of the museum, empowering them to construct alternative truths which oppose the notion of a single truth and objective knowledge. These empowerment programmes have helped to develop the museum as institution which holds itself socially responsible, by providing mechanisms for learners to shape the future of the museum, alongside their own. Specific examples of the way in which this vital notion of dialogue *with* the museum audience has filtered into the public spaces of Horniman Museum will illustrate the wider benefit of this research.

Three projects were initiated alongside the opening of the African Worlds Exhibition in the South Hall of the Horniman Museum in 1999. The South Hall Balcony area, which is situated above the African Worlds exhibition, was set aside for hosting visitor responses to the exhibition. The projects profitably develop aspects of the thesis in the wider context of the museum and they provide specific models for future practice at other museums.<sup>5</sup>

#### My Africa, Your Africa. The Artist in Residency Project

The Horniman Museum's collaboration with the 198 Gallery has been extended to include an Artist in Residency Project, which is intended to feature the work of 6 Black artists over a 2 year period. Individual artists have been invited to make a personal response to the African Worlds Exhibition. Each artist has an initial 6 week period of research in the museum library and object store, followed by a 2 month period of workshops for visiting school, college and family groups. Finally the museum hosts a 6 week exhibition of all the work produced as a response to the African Worlds Gallery.

At the time of writing 2 popular residencies have been facilitated by the museum. Rita Keegan's 'Transformations' used the idea of masking in relation to contemporary culture. Maria Amidu's 'Finders Keepers' explored the notion of museum ownership through alternative narrative and storytelling devices. They have provided the opportunity for visitors to work with a professional artist in the South Hall Balcony area of the museum, and Black artists have been enabled to serve as positive role models for Black youth.

---

<sup>5</sup> The projects specifically extend the concern highlighted in this thesis, to raise 'new voices and visibilities in the museum.' This is a concern which the 'voices' project incorporated into the text displayed in the African Worlds Gallery, as noted at 7.5.

My Africa, Your Africa. The Responses Project <sup>6</sup>

The Horniman Museum has provided A5 sized 'Response Cards' to elicit a visual or written response to the objects displayed in the African Worlds Gallery. Visitors have also been encouraged to make a remark on their 'identity' by writing a brief description of themselves on the cards. The comment 'strong woman' often features in this section which is heartening for feminist observers (figure 9.1).

A different selection of the cards are displayed on the South Hall Balcony every two months. In their responses visitors are often moved to remark on their fascination with each others comments as well as with the exhibition. A "mum, wife, teacher, SW London, notes.

This is a wonderful exhibition. We have enjoyed our visit very much. Man's creativity is fascinating. I have loved reading the response cards - also a testimony to creativity and individuality. They make a brilliant display in themselves.  
(Helen Priest. 17.04.00)

Another respondent, a "student, female" states.

Fantastic selection of exhibits. In response to other comments. Mr and Mrs Lewis and child misunderstand the richness and truth in these artefacts. We all fear what we do not understand and without museums like the Horniman we do not learn about cultures and see past the philosophy of 'I don't like it because I don't understand it.' May this free museum live long and inform us all.  
(Pam Glew 10.3.00).

The tremendous popularity of this 'Response Card' activity has led the museum to consider extending the work of facilitating dialogue between the museum and the visitors as well as between visitors in the new building. <sup>7</sup> A representative sample of the response cards, which illustrate an ongoing process of dialogical exchange between the museum and the casual visitor to the museum, as well as complex histories of 'travelling' in the construction of identities, are provided at figures 9.2 to 9.5 over-leaf. (Clifford 1998).

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<sup>6</sup> The museum was inspired by Doug Wort's idea of providing these cards in an art gallery, although Worts did not display the visitor response cards in his gallery (Worts 1995).

<sup>7</sup> The education department have been made responsible for planning a new 'hands on - minds on' gallery in the new building. New technologies and changing display panels are expected to form a strong feature in the new gallery to facilitate visitors personal meaning-making and empower them to engage in a dialogue with objects and each other.



9 **Conclusion: embracing a liberatory practice at the museum frontiers**

Draw and/or write here - your response may be displayed as part of *My Africa, Your Africa*

Skeleton mask



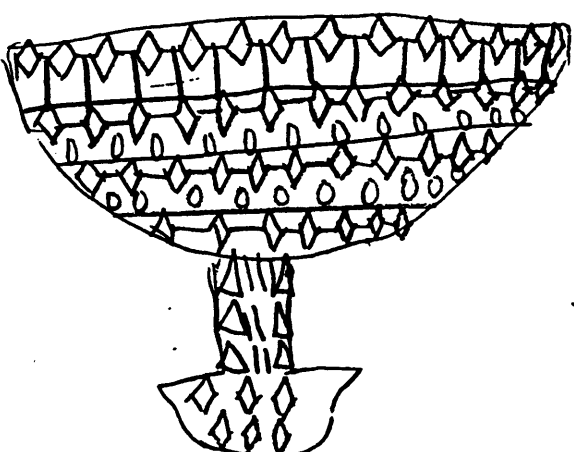
Name (optional) megan mcgery Date 30 May

How would you describe yourself where you are from, background, age, etc (optional)

Post your completed card in the box on the balcony.

I am 5

Draw and/or write here - your response may be displayed as part of *My Africa, Your Africa*



This is  
called a  
Ka Daku Duhg  
Bowl

Name (optional) Viviana Rivera Date 13/11/2000

How would you describe yourself where you are from, background, age, etc (optional)

I am from Ecuador how I like in London

Post your completed card in the box on the balcony.

**Figures 9.2 and 9.3. Visitor Responses to the African Worlds Exhibition**

Draw and/or write here - your response may be displayed as part of My Africa, Your Africa

I consider myself to be Black first and British second. My parents being Jamaican encouraged me to stretch my imagination beyond society's definition of me. Do I feel African. No. Do I feel a bond with my forefathers. Of course. Yes.

And so, visiting this exhibition compels me to wonder - 'If I had been born in the Congo say, what would my life be?' Would I feel some link to my past, the past of my forefathers. Food for thought. If nothing else the exhibition has got me thinking is the I am - what am all about? I love the representations of strong African women nurturing their children and in effect the community as whole. Perhaps I have found the answer. Maybe that is me too!

Name (optional) Maxine Vernon Date 24/03/2006

How would you describe yourself where you are from, background, age, etc (optional)

32 years, a strong loving woman

Post your completed card in the box on the balcony.

Draw and/or write here - your response may be displayed as part of My Africa, Your Africa

As an African from the diaspora (Jamaica) and now married to a Yoruba and living in Nigeria this exhibition has given me insight into ~~some~~ how some of the practices in the West Indies originated from Africa. It is very culturally inspiring and revealing. Africa is very culturally rich and has much to offer to the world.

Name (optional) Sybil Date 31/3/2006

How would you describe yourself where you are from, background, age, etc (optional)

Born Manchester Jamaica now living in Ogun State Nigeria

Post your completed card in the box on the balcony.

**Figures 9.4 and 9.5. Visitor Responses to the African Worlds Exhibition**

**The Inspiration Africa! Project**

A cross-curricular project Inspiration Africa! was funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in September 1999. The Museum was awarded £72,000 by the DfEE for work spanning a 2 year period with 12 schools: 6 in the borough of Lewisham and 6 in the borough of Bromley. Each year the Inspiration Africa team will work with 2 special needs, 2 primary and 2 secondary schools. All of the project work was designed to spring from a close attention to museum objects and then to cross the curriculum areas of art, English and Information and Computer Technology (ICT). To date, an enormous amount of successful art, creative writing and ICT work has been completed with 6 schools, and the team-leaders are investigating the possibility of further funding which would allow the project to be extended to other London boroughs. The success of the project is attributed to close collaboration between the Inspiration Africa! team-leaders and the partnership approach taken by the participating school-teachers.<sup>8</sup>

This project has recently been disseminated by Finbarr Whooley, Deputy Director at the Horniman Museum, who presented the project at a conference entitled *Museums and Social Exclusion*. The conference was run by the London Museums Agency and the Horniman paper comprised one of three case-studies. At conference the ICT elements of the project were considered to be a special feature and an exciting direction for future museum-school project-work. For example, ICT presents a challenge to traditional power-hierarchies, by presenting the student participants with the opportunity for dialogue with each other via a chat-room. Additionally, each project is carefully documented on the internet at the Cloth of Gold web-site which really motivates students, and some of the older students have been facilitated to construct their own museum-school web pages.

The web-site address is: [www.clothofgold.org.uk/inafrica](http://www.clothofgold.org.uk/inafrica) and some representative examples taken from the web pages can be seen over-leaf.

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<sup>8</sup> The Inspiration Africa! team-leaders are multiracial and include: myself as project partner from the museum, Tony Minion as project co-ordinator from the Arts Company 'Cloth of Gold', Jaqui Callis as ICT specialist, Sola Oyulele as a writer/director, Andrew Ward as a writer/rap poet, Ayo Thomas as a musician and Kevin Mathieson as the project evaluator.

## 9 Conclusion: embracing a liberatory practice at the museum frontiers

Christ Church Primary School  
INTRODUCTION DAY 1



Day 1 with Year 5 began with introductions using rhythmic name games which was followed by **Viv** showing a range of different masks, fabrics and musical instruments from the Horniman Museum's handling collection.

After this **Ayo**, a drummer and story-teller from Nigeria, introduced the children to the talking drum, explaining the phonetic nature of the Yoruba languages and its 3 pitches - low, middle and high. Using his name as an example, he played it on the talking drum.

He then introduced his Gembé drum and explained the importance of the cowbell in maintaining the main rhythm - changing it when required. The class learnt a call and response song and heard about its history by way of a story.

Next **Viv** introduced a session where the children worked in pairs writing stories around particular objects from the handling collection. Using their imaginations they named the object, wrote about how it might have been made and how it made its trip to England.

Some of the pupils read their wonderful stories out aloud. If you would like to read a selection, please click on one of the buttons below.

Finally before lunch **Ayo** talked about the importance of names in Nigeria, his own name means "Joy comes to me" and he explained why he was called this.

He then told the story of the Tortoise and the Elephant.



Plate 9.1 A web page from the Inspiration Africa! project



## Sandhurst Junior School WORKSHOP DAY 1

The pupils were lucky as a Mende mask was part of the collection and it meant they could look closely at their key object before the visit to the Horniman Museum. The masks represent the Mende people's view of womanly qualities and spiritual and physical beauty. Viv showed lengths of cloth and garments from West Africa and a discussion took place about different cultural perceptions of 'beauty' and 'adornment'.



Following on from learning about the handling collection, the children enacted 'Pai', a story from Olusola.



This featured 'Zanfa', a very handsome young man, who was to choose a wife. All the pretty young women from the village spent the day preparing to see him, bathing in the river and prettifying themselves. There was one plain girl who was not allowed in their gang and was laughed at. Through her kindness she won the love of Zanfa in the end, showing that beauty also comes from within.

Finally, before lunch, the pupils were asked to describe their initial responses and thoughts about the Mende mask they had seen:  
**dull colour... wrinkles... small eyes... large forehead... fat is ugly... can't see the lips... small face... see beauty differently...**

They also were asked what words conveyed beauty to them:

**style... pretty... looks... eyes and hair... clothes... attractive... fashion... personality... bright colours... looking good... make-up... jewellery... and one boy said what is on the inside not only on the outside....**

**Mirrors reflect what's on the outside not on the inside**

**Effect is not always the best**

**No show-off will get attention**

**Don't think your the best**

**Everyone's not perfect, everyone's the same**

The pupils then wrote a combined acrostic poem using the word 'MENDE' (shown above).

**Plate 9.2. A web page from the Inspiration Africa! project**

**Possible directions for future research**

This research project has built upon the pioneering museum work of Gaby Porter (1991, 1992, 1994a/b, 1996) and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (1993, 1994a/b, 1996, 1997, 1998). These writers have considered the problems of knowledge, interpretation and identity in museums. Porter's curatorial work counters the museums disparaging view of women, and the absence of our diverse life experiences. Specifically Porter's efforts to re-present a fuller picture of women in museums has been extended, by focussing on collaborative work with Black women, teachers and students.

Porter's writing has also pointed to the importance of working at the museums frontiers; to look outside the institution as well as within. In terms of theory she has carefully studied a body of feminist criticism, and demonstrated the usefulness of this thought to her work in the north of England. I have attempted to extend the range of feminist texts highlighted by Porter into the realms of Black women's writing, and I have applied this thought to my own location in south London.

That this research study is geographically limited to a socially deprived area of south London is a weakness of the research, since it may be regarded as site specific and of limited application in other field-sites. In answer to this criticism it is argued firstly, that this limitation is also a strength since the research team and I have been able to maintain a close contact, and study a particular field-site in considerable depth. Secondly, as noted in chapter 1, I am a part-time researcher, working together with a small team of teacher/lecturers. Despite the limitations of time and finance the key-informants and I have made a detailed investigation into our situated practice, and we are able to make some pertinent comments for future research projects.

For example, alongside the theoretical privileging of feminism which this thesis shares with Porter's work, the key-informants have found the feminist input into methodological concerns most pertinent to an ethical requirement for equality. The ethnographic action-research approach informed by feminist-hermeneutic dialogue which the project team-leaders adopted was a suitable approach for busy professionals; the circular process of

collaborative research, reflection and practice was sympathetic to the demands and everyday procedures normally employed as part of professional teaching. The methodology permitted the team-leaders to “think-with and think-further”, without restrictions to any very complicated processes which would detract from the complex tasks of educational practice (Gadamer 1997: 11; Croll 1986). Therefore these methodological techniques are recommended to future educational researchers at the museum frontiers.

Future research questions which build upon this thesis could usefully extend the ethnographic action-research approach to other inner city locations, or even to rural areas where the school population might be predominantly mono-cultural. The emphasis on the school/university partnerships could also profitably be expanded to community venues in urban and rural regions. An enlarged research team with more generous funding could greatly increase the number of detailed case studies, and examine other ways in which new voices and visibilities might be raised at the museum frontiers.

Subsequent research projects might explore a broader area of the museum collections; attention could profitably be focussed on art, history, science, or another museum of ethnography. It would also be interesting for future researchers to involve more people inside the museum, since this research was limited to the education department and educational programming. Valuable research might extend collaboration to museum staff across departments such as: exhibitions, collections, conservation, front of house and gardens. This cross departmental work would develop a more open and critical culture within the museum. It would open the museum from the inside, to greater possibilities for meaning-making and creative action.

By increasing the possibilities for personal meaning-making and creative action the thesis has demonstrated that museum interests are not necessarily peripheral to the lived experiences and enthusiasms of museum visitors. This research study has shown the importance of opening the museum to new voices, by sharing ideas and developing collaborative programmes, an effective challenge to discrimination can be made. The thesis has shown that the museum need not be identified with a wide range of practices

## **9      Conclusion: embracing a liberatory practice at the museum frontiers**

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that silence and erase the multifaceted identities of a certain audience. In conclusion the thesis extends an invitation to future researchers, to continue the work of breaking this silence.



## **Appendix 1**

## **Appendix 1.1. Schedule of questionnaires and interviews**

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### **Schedule of dialogical project teacher questionnaires:**

**Dates:** Dialogical meetings held after INSET to finalise content (6.00 - 7.30 pm)<sup>1</sup>

30 Letters sent with questionnaires 7th June 1996

25 responses received by 30th September 1996

**Locations:** Education Centre Horniman Museum

**Participants:** 25 teachers/lecturers

### **Schedule of student interviews:**

#### **A) Pilot project (chapter 4). Locations and dates:**

1) BL School	Project planning	30th September 1994
2) Horniman Museum	Project work	7th October 1994
3) BL school	Project evaluation	14th October 1994

#### **Participants:**

Class teacher (TPR)

LLAP teacher (TCV)

25 year 2 students

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<sup>1</sup> INSET are usually held after a busy school day, from 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm, and on the last Monday, Wednesday and /or Thursday of each month during school term-time. The number of INSET sessions has increased from 8 during the 1993 -1994 academic year, to 49 during the 1995 -1996 academic year. The committed research group of 25 teachers regularly attend courses, or just call in after the sessions to discuss project work

## **Appendix 1.1. Schedule of questionnaires and interviews**

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### **B) Benin project (chapter 6). Locations and dates:**

1)	Horniman Museum	Project planning	14th July 1995
2)	Horniman Museum	Project planning	8th September 1995
3)	Horniman Museum	Project work	15th September 1995
4)	PS school	Project work	12th January 1995
5)	PS school	Interviews	19th January 1996
6)	PS school	Interviews	26th January 1996
7)	Horniman Museum	Exhibition of work	June - July 1996

#### **Participants:**

Art teachers (TFD/TCC)

Artist (AC)

25 year 11 students

### **C) Carnival project (chapter 7). Locations and dates:**

1)	Horniman Museum	Project planning	4th August 1996
2)	Horniman Museum	Project work	6th October 1995
3)	PS school	Interviews	1st March 1996
4)	PS school	Interviews	8th March 1996
5)	Horniman Museum	Exhibition of work	July - August 1997

#### **Participants:**

Art teachers (TCC/TRC)

25 year 10 student



**Horniman Museum Education Centre and Trinity College**  
**Accredited course**  
*Introducing Multi-Cultural Musical Traditions*  
**To Key Stage 1 and 2 Groups**



This course will set musical traditions across a number of cultures into a framework that will provide the primary teacher with a practical programme of work for cross-curricular activities at National Curriculum Key Stages 1 and 2.

The course will consist of 10 taught components and 10 components of personal study led by a team of tutors from the Museum and the Teachers Advisory Services. The tutors will include Pauline Adams, Viv Golding, Chris Harrison, Robert Kwami and Amoafi Kwabong.

The personal study element of the course will be negotiated with the tutors and will involve the practical side of making worksheets and organising a School visit to the Museum. The taught courses will provide students with the opportunity of using instruments from the Horniman Museum Handling Collection to work on rhythm making, musical structures and notations. On successful completion of the course students will gain 1 module towards the Diploma in Music Education awarded by Trinity College. The cost of the whole course is £50.00

**Wednesday 29th October. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Introduction to the Horniman Museum Collection

**Wednesday 5th November. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Playing & using a range of instruments

**Wednesday 12th November. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Composition Workshop 1.

**Wednesday 4th March 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Cross-Curricular Links Part 1.

**Wednesday 11th March. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Composition Workshop 2.

**Wednesday 18th March. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Musical Structures.

**Wednesday 10th June. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Cross-Curricular Links Part 2.

**Wednesday 17th June. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

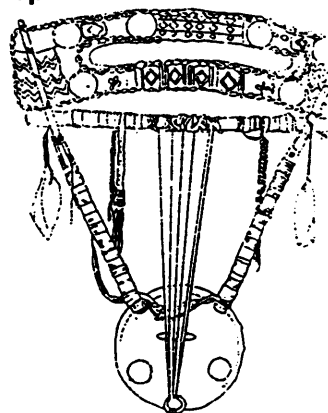
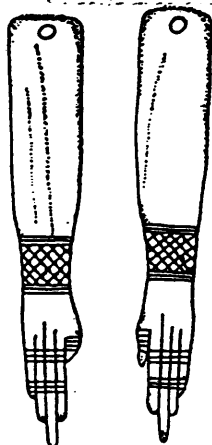
Listening and Appraising.

**Wednesday 24th June. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Resources for the Primary classroom.

**Wednesday 1st July. 4.30 - 6.00pm.**

Evaluation.



Name of School.....

Contact person.....

School phone no.....

School address.....

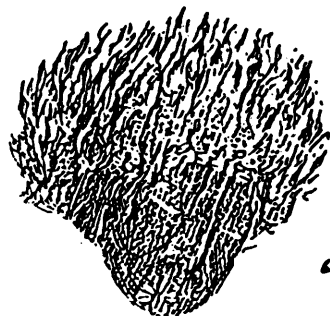
No. of places required..... Total amount paid.....

Please return this slip and payment to Viv Golding at: The Horniman Museum.  
 100 London Road. SE23 3PQ. Cheques are payable to: Horniman Museum.

Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust  
 A charitable company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 2456993. A Registered Charity.  
 Registered office: as above

**Flyer for INSET programme**

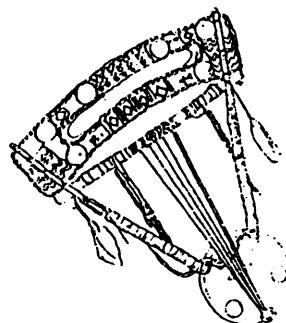
## Horniman Museum Education Centre



### *Celebrate Africa '95*

#### **COME TO "IMAGES OF AFRICA" A WRITING WORKSHOP**

LED BY JOAN ANIM-ADDU



The Horniman Museum displays traditional and contemporary art and craft objects from many parts of Africa. This workshop will focus on the artefacts in the Museum and the Handling Collection using them as a starting point and an inspiration for writing.

The course will be relevant to all adults interested in seeking ways to express ideas about our present day place in the multicultural society and how this is intimately related to our history and culture.

Our aim is to increase awareness and understanding of different possibilities for living in society. We believe such work to be of benefit to all peoples

**Tuesday October. 31st. 6.00 - 8.00pm.**

**The workshop is free**

Please complete the slip below and return it to:  
Viv Golding. Assistant Keeper of Education Services  
The Education Centre. Horniman Museum. 100 London Road. SE23 3PQ.

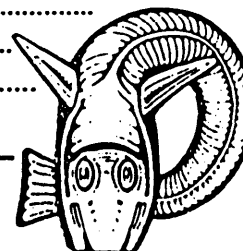
Name .....

Address.....

Phone no.....

Number of places required.....

**Flyer for CWWA workshop**



## **Appendix 2**

## Appendix 2.1.



### Evaluation sheet

To evaluate the service we are offering we should be grateful if you could complete the following questions and return the sheet to the Education Department or the Reception.

Name of person who gave the talk.....

Name of school / college / group.....

Subject of talk..... Date.....

Age group.....

Please give marks out of 5 ( 1= poor > 5 = excellent ) for the following aspects of the talk:-

- A) Language.....
- B) Artefacts.....
- C) Content.....
- D) Duration.....
- E) National Curriculum relevance.

Do you have any further suggestions to improve the :-

A) Talk.

B) Facilities.

Any other comments:-

If you would like the opportunity to display work produced as a result of your visit to the Horniman Museum please complete the line below.

School telephone number.....

Thankyou for your co-operation.

Viv Golding      David Judd

Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust  
A charitable company limited by guarantee Registered in England No. 2456993 A Registered Charity  
Registered office as above

**Teacher evaluation form for the face to face schools service**

## **Appendix 2.2. Proforma of teachers dialogical project questionnaire**

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6**

**Part A**

This sheet will be marked with a personal identification number & detached from the rest of the questionnaire so that your answers will be anonymous, honest!

There are no right answers to these question sheets. We are interested in finding out what you think and feel when looking at art and craft objects from around the world in museums as well as how you translate your ideas into project work for your students.

**Many questions just require a tick**

1) Name .....

2) School .....

3) Sex ..... 4) Nationality .....

Qualifications:

5) B.A. Education ..... 6) B.A. Art .....

7) M.A. degree ..... 8) Other .....

9) Specialism: Art/Craft ..... 10) Other .....

Continuing training: 11) INSET..... 12) Other.....

Key Stages taught at the museum:

13) K.S1 ..... 14) KS2 ..... 15) KS3 ..... 16) KS4 ..... 17) Other .....

Subject of museum project:

18) Masks..... 19) Masks & Puppets ..... 20) Puppets .....21) Benin .....

22) West African roots of Carnival ..... 23) Other .....

Duration of project:

24) 1 month ..... 25) 6 weeks ..... 26) 1 term ..... 27) Other .....

How many times have you organised this project:

28) First ..... 29) Other .....

How did you assess success:

30) Quality of work produced .....

Exam/end of Key Stage results: 31) Excellent ..... 32) Good ..... 33) Poor .....

34) Student evaluation ..... 35) Students increased self esteem .....

36) Racist beliefs challenged .....37) Other .....

Did you exhibit the work?

38) At school ..... 39) In the Museum .....



## **Appendix 2.2. Proforma of teachers dialogical project questionnaire**

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**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part B**

1. What do you understand by the word 'art?'

.....

.....

2. What do you understand by the word 'craft?'

.....

.....

3. What do you understand by the words 'aesthetic experience?'

.....

.....

4. What do you understand by the words 'multicultural curriculum?'

.....

.....

5 How did you come to choose your museum based topic?

.....

.....

6. What types of projects have you organised before this project?

.....

.....

7. What is your preferred sort/s of art? Why?

.....

.....

.....

8. Does your preferred sort/s of art say anything of importance to you? What?

.....

.....

9. Can art/s communicate any important messages to your students? What?

.....

.....

10. How many times did you visit a museum/gallery last year with your school group?

.....

.....

11. Any other comments?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## **Appendix 2.2. Proforma of teachers dialogical project questionnaire**

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

## Part C

**The following questions will try to find out about your personal responses, the thoughts & feelings you have with works of art from around the world. We want to know what has helped you understand these works. We are also interested to know what ideas have been important to you in developing your own project work.**

**Please mark the following questions 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.**

**1 = Strongly disagree.**

**5 = Strongly agree**

1. The museum talk with slides/video helped my students understand the project work .....
2. The museum visit where students handled the objects helped them understand the project work .....
3. The drawing session in the education centre helped my students understand the project work .....
4. Drawing in the museum helped students understand the project work .....
5. Reading museum labels helped students understand the project work .....
6. The video/slides helped students do better work .....
7. Handling the objects helped students do better work .....
8. Drawing objects in the museum helped students do better work... ..
9. Drawing objects in the Education Room helped students do better work .....
10. Students ideas about work from other cultures changed during the project.....
11. Art from other cultures demonstrates the skills & talents of those people .....
12. Art from around the world points to differences & similarities between peoples .....
13. Art from other cultures shows us how similar peoples all over the world are .....
14. Art from other cultures shows us how different peoples all over the world are .....
15. My project presented a challenge to racism .....
- 16 Any other comments .....

## **Appendix 2.2. Proforma of teachers dialogical project questionnaire**

### **School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

### **Part D**

We are interested in perceptions concerning personal responses to art from around the world. We want some more details about the thoughts & feelings you believe your students have when looking at art/s in museums/galleries & when making their own art inspired by these experiences.

1. Describe how your students ideas about the project work changed during the project. Before the start of the project students ideas about the work were

.....  
.....

2. Now students ideas about the work are

.....  
.....

3. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand past artists was

.....  
.....

4. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand present day artists was

.....  
.....

5. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand themselves as artists was

.....  
.....

6. The part / parts of the project that helped students gain confidence in their abilities as artists was

.....  
.....

7. I would like to return to the Horniman museum with students because

.....  
.....

8. I think that the museum should continue to display the historical art/s from around the world because

.....  
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9. I think that the museum should display present day art/s from around the world because

.....  
.....

10. I think that museum displays can challenge racism because

.....  
.....

11. Any other comments

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## **Appendix 2.2. Proforma of teachers dialogical project questionnaire**

### **School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

### **Part E**

We want to know how far you agree with the ideas below.  
Please mark the questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

**5 = Strongly agree**

**1 = Strongly disagree**

1. The art object must have qualities created by the human artist  
.....
2. Works of art give us a feeling of order, of everything coming together in a new or different way  
.....
3. Works of art say something important about the time when the art was made  
.....
4. The more information I have about a work of art the more interesting it is for me  
.....
5. I can appreciate a work of art simply visually; knowledge and feelings can get in the way of my experience  
.....
6. Art must be made by people because saying something about people and their experiences is a really important part of my experience with art  
.....
7. I don't need to be shown a new way of seeing the world through art to have a powerful experience with a work of art  
.....
8. Art objects often seem to reach out and grab me, the experience I have with them is really moving  
.....
9. The technical quality of the work, the look and finish of the materials is really important for me to have a good experience of it  
.....
10. The works of art I like most do not give me emotional responses  
.....
11. Looking at art my experiences are different from looking at other things  
.....
12. A great work of art helps the person looking at it to share something about the feelings of people from another time and place  
.....
13. Formal qualities, things like balance and harmony, are often irrelevant to the quality of the work of art  
.....
14. Knowledge of the historical background often adds to my experience and appreciation of the object  
.....

## **Appendix 2.2. Proforma of teachers dialogical project questionnaire**

15. Looking at art objects helps me to connect different ideas and feelings

.....

16. Looking at art objects helps me to think about things in a new way

.....

17. Making art objects helps to connect different ideas and feelings

.....

18. Making art objects helps to think about things in a new way

.....

19. Looking at art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life

.....

20. Making art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life

.....

21. Describe some of your thoughts and feelings with a favourite work of art. Your answer can be in sentences or just single words.

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22. Any other comments?

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[NB. Section A was not numbered on the original questionnaire. I numbered the questions during collation of the data]

**Thank you very much for your time**

**Appendix 2.3. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part A**

T01A1	Name:	.	.	.	.	RL
T01A2	School:	.	.	.	.	E. Comprehensive
T01A3	Sex:	.	.	.	.	Male
T01A4	Nationality:	.	.	.	.	British
T01A5	Qualifications: B.A. Education					
T01A6	Qualifications: B .A. Art:	.	.	.	.	Tick
T01A7	Qualifications: M.A. degree:					
T01A8	Qualifications: Other:	.	.	.	.	Tick (PGCE)
T01A9	Specialism: Art/Craft .	.	.	.	.	ART
T01A10	Specialism: Other:					
T01A11	Continuing training: INSET .	.	.	.	.	Tick
T01A12	Other:					
T01A13	Key Stages taught at the museum: K.S1					
T01A14	KS2					
T01A15	KS3 .	.	.	.	.	.Tick
T01A16	KS4					
T01A17	Other					
T01A18	Subject of museum project: Masks:	.	.	.	.	.Tick
T01A19	Subject of museum project: Masks & Puppets					
T01A20	Subject of museum project: Puppets					
T01A21	Subject of museum project: Benin					
T01A22	Subject of museum project: West African roots of Carnival					
T01A23	Subject of museum project: Other					
T01A24	Duration of project: 1 month					
T01A25	Duration of project: 6 weeks:					
T01A26	Duration of project: 1 term: .	.	.	.	.	.Tick
T01A27	Other:					
T01A28	How many times have you organised this project:					
	First:					
T01A29	How many times have you organised this project:					
	Other: .	.	.	.	.	5
T01A30	How did you assess success:					
	Quality of work produced:	.	.	.	.	Generally Good
T01A31	How did you assess success:					
	Exam/end of Key Stage results: Excellent					
T01A32	Exam/end of Key Stage results: Good					Tick
T01A33	Exam/end of Key Stage results: Poor					
T01A34	Student evaluation: .	.	.	.	.	Tick
T01A35	Students increased self esteem:	.	.	.	.	Tick
T01A36	Racist beliefs challenged:	.	.	.	.	Tick
T01A37	Other:					
T01A38	Did you exhibit the work at school? .	.	.	.	.	Tick
T01A39	In the Museum? .	.	.	.	.	Tick

**Appendix 2.3. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

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**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part B**

**T01B1. What do you understand by the word 'art?'**

Any object or Phenomenon generated by man for other than 'functional' purposes.

**T01B2. What do you understand by the word 'craft?'**

Any process which generates Artefacts with a specific function. (pottery, weaving, crochet etc) these can also be seen as art.

**T01B3. What do you understand by the words 'aesthetic experience?'**

An experience of the senses relating to the perception of elements such as balance, harmony, discord dynamics ( colour, form, shape, design)

**T01B4. What do you understand by the words 'multicultural curriculum?'**

The integration of the works and traditions of different cultures into the ENTIRE curriculum of the school.

**T01B5 How did you come to choose your museum based topic?**

Group discussion and agreement on an interesting design project applicable to 2D and 3D work

**T01B6. What types of projects have you organised before this project?**

Cubist, study of western art, design work

**T01B7. What is your preferred sort/s of art? Why?**

Drawing - immediacy any of result, communication, effect.

**T01B8. Does your preferred sort/s of art say anything of importance to you? What?**

It says that it is important to have a special talent to communicate on a visual level

**T01B9. Can art/s communicate any important messages to your students? What?**

Feeling, emotion, mood, compassion, understanding of people, empathy, value of history

**Appendix 2.3. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

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T01B10. How many times did you visit a museum/gallery last year with your school group?

6

T01B11. Any other comments?

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part C**

**1 = Strongly disagree.**

**5 = Strongly agree**

T01C1. The museum talk with slides/video helped my students understand the project work

5

T01C2. The museum visit where students handled the objects helped them understand the project work

5

T01C3. The drawing session in the education centre helped my students understand the project work

5

T01C4. Drawing in the museum helped students understand the project work

4

T01C5. Reading museum labels helped students understand the project work

4

T01C6. The video/slides helped students do better work

3

T01C7. Handling the objects helped students do better work

5

T01C8. Drawing objects in the museum helped students do better work

5



**Appendix 2.3. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

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T01C9. Drawing objects in the Education Room helped students do better work

5

T01C10. Students ideas about work from other cultures changed during the project

?

T01C11. Art from other cultures demonstrates the skills & talents of those people

5

T01C12. Art from around the world points to differences & similarities between peoples

5

T01C13. Art from other cultures shows us how similar peoples all over the world are

5

T01C14. Art from other cultures shows us how different peoples all over the world are

5

T01C15. My project presented a challenge to racism

5

T01CT16 Any other comments

All the above are positive any understanding of other races is a challenge to racism, which feeds on ignorance and complacency.

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part D**

T01D1. Describe how your students ideas about the project work changed during the project

Before the start of the project students ideas about the work were Non-existent

T01D2. Now students ideas about the work are

That the work of other cultures relates to their own, gives it context, informs their work.

**Appendix 2.3. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

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T01D3. The part/parts of the project that helped students better understand past artists was

The handing and drawing of real objects.

T01D4. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand present day artists was

[Blank]

T01D5. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand themselves as artists was

The construction of their own masks

T01D6. The part / parts of the project that helped students gain confidence in their abilities as artists was

Sketch-book work, construction work.

T01D7. I would like to return to the Horniman museum with students because

It provides an excellent ongoing service to pupils covering cultural / ethnic / religious education

T01D8. I think that the museum should continue to display the historical art/s from around the world because

Society needs context / understanding of its past / origins in order to inform its present behaviour.

T01D9. I think that the museum should display present day art/s from around the world because

It completes a 'continuum' presenting a rounded picture of 'mans' achievements.

T01D10. I think that museum displays can challenge racism because

Already Answered

T01D11. Any other comments

Under OFSTED regulations schools must provide cultural, spiritual, moral and social guidance / education to all pupils. You certainly help with social, spiritual and cultural education.

**Appendix 2.3. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

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**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part E**

T01E1. The art object must have qualities created by the human artist

5

T01E2. Works of art give us a feeling of order, of everything coming together in a new or different way

5

T01E3. Works of art say something important about the time when the art was made

2

T01E4. The more information I have about a work of art the more interesting it is for me

5

T01E5. I can appreciate a work of art simply visually; knowledge and feelings can get in the way of my experience

1

T01E6. Art must be made by people because saying something about people and their experiences is a really important part of my experience with art

5

T01E7. I don't need to be shown a new way of seeing the world through art to have a powerful experience with a work of art

5

T01E8. Art objects often seem to reach out and grab me, the experience I have with them is really moving

5

T01E9. The technical quality of the work, the look and finish of the materials is really important for me to have a good experience of it

1

T01E10. The works of art I like most do not give me emotional responses

1

**Appendix 2.3. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

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T01E11. Looking at art my experiences are different from looking at other thing

1

T01E12. A great work of art helps the person looking at it to share something about the feelings of people from another time and place

5

T01E13. Formal qualities, things like balance and harmony, are often irrelevant to the quality of the work of art

5

T01E14. Knowledge of the historical background often adds to my experience and appreciation of the object

5

T01E15. Looking at art objects helps me to connect different ideas and feelings

5

T01E16. Looking at art objects helps me to think about things in a new way

5

T01E17. Making art objects helps to connect different ideas and feelings

5

T01E18. Making art objects helps to think about things in a new way

5

T01E19. Looking at art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life

5

T01E20. Making art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life

5

**Appendix 2.3: Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Secondary/college colleagues**

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T01E21. Describe some of your thoughts and feelings with a favourite work of art. Your answer can be in sentences or just single words.

Turner's 'Death on pale horse' (Tate) The nature of 'visions' - concept of death  
universality of imagery (death/skeleton) The power of the Artist to 'create'  
Alternative realities - The use of colour, and light/shade to invoke feeling, horror,  
fear, disgust.

T01E22. Any other comments?

## **Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary**

### **colleagues**

#### **School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

#### **Part A**

T24A1	Name:	.	.	.	.	BS
T24A2	School:	.	.	.	.	St. B
T24A3	Sex:	.	.	.	.	Male
T24A4	Nationality:	.	.	.	.	English
T24A5	Qualifications: B.A. Education:	.	.	.	.	Primary (hons) tick
T24A6	Qualifications: B.A. Art					
T24A7	Qualifications: M.A. degree					
T24A8	Qualifications: Other					
T24A9	Specialism: Art/Craft					
T24A10	Specialism: Other	.	.	.	.	RE / English / Drama
T24A11	Continuing training: INSET:	.	.	.	.	Tick
T24A12	Other					
T24A13	Key Stages taught at the museum: K.S1					Tick
T24A14	Key Stages taught at the museum: K.S2					Tick
T24A15	Key Stages taught at the museum: K.S3					
T24A16	Key Stages taught at the museum: K.S4					
T24A17	Other					
T24A18	Subject of museum project: Masks					
T24A19	Subject of museum project: Masks & Puppets					
T24A20	Subject of museum project: Puppets					
T24A21	Subject of museum project: Benin					Tick
T24A22	Subject of museum project: Carnival					
T24A23	Subject of museum project: Other	.	.	.	.	Sound, Clothes, Water
T24AT24	Duration of project: 1 month					
T24A25	Duration of project: 6 weeks					Tick
T24A26	Duration of project: 1 term					
T24A27	Duration of project: Other					
T24A28	How many times have you organised this project:					
	First:					Tick
T24A29	Other:					
T24A30	How did you assess success :					
	Quality of work produced:					Very good
T24B31	How did you assess success:					
	Exam/end of Key Stage results Excellent					Tick
T24B32	Exam/end of Key Stage results Good					
T24B33	Exam/end of Key Stage results Poor					
T24B34	Student evaluation					
	They said they enjoyed the project including the visit to the museum very much and generally were pleased with the work that they had produced					
T24B35	Students increased self esteem					Tick
	Particularly in this art and design work					
T24B36	Racist beliefs challenged					
	Hard to say as they didn't seem to exist towards Benin beforehand					
	Stereotypical views of Africa as all third world situation - famine and homelessness or just mud huts challenged					
T24B37	Other					
T24B38	Did you exhibit the work at school?					Tick
T24A39	In the Museum?					Tick

**Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary colleagues**

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**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part B**

T24B1. What do you understand by the word 'art?'

the creation of something through any material and / or medium in which both the process and product can reflect the artist's view and / or feelings and / or interpretation of something

T24B2. What do you understand by the word 'craft?' -

As above but more likely to produce a final product in 3D. Can also mean a skill that someone has.

T24B3. What do you understand by the words 'aesthetic experience?'

a feeling of pleasure that one gets from being with some form of art or craft - either / both during the creating of it or / and from the finished product. it really is a feeling that involves the spiritual side of a person.

T24B4. What do you understand by the words 'multicultural curriculum?'

a programme of study that is inclusive of all cultures. accessible to all cultures and is positive towards the different cultures of society celebrating the richness and diversity of all and enabling the different cultures to learn from each other

T24B5 How did you come to choose your museum based topic?

Benin linked in with our school class topic of change including the Victorians and we also particularly wanted a multicultural and noneuropean dimension to our art and craft work for this particular half term so as to give the children a broad and balanced curriculum across the year.

T24B6. What types of projects have you organised before this project?

cross-curricula projects stemming from a variety of curriculum areas (as indicated in part a)

T24B7. What is your preferred sort/s of art? Why? -

Paintings - particularly of open spaces and with water or of familiar places. also of other natural spaces such as sunrises and sunsets. this is probably because i love looking at these different scenes in real life and find them very peaceful and meditative for the natural scenes. familiar places because they evoke / hold memories. paintings because they usually seem so natural and its amazing how the artist creates and conveys a painting. the more you look at them often the more you see.

T24B8. Does your preferred sort/s of art say anything of importance to you? What?

yes that these are important aspects of the world around me and they reinforce how we should / need to take time to appreciate them and reflect upon them. they also help the spiritual side of me.

T24B9. Can art/s communicate any important messages to your students? What?

yes how one can express their ideas feelings emotions in a way that is never wrong and which can often be appreciated by others. also a greater awareness of the world around them leading to a better understanding of it and themselves.

**Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary colleagues**

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T24B10. How many times did you visit a museum/gallery last year with your school group?

3

T24B11. Any other comments?

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part C**

**1 = Strongly disagree.**

**5 = Strongly agree**

T24C1. The museum talk with slides/video helped my students understand the project work

4.5

T24C2. The museum visit where students handled the objects helped them understand the project work

5

T24C3. The drawing session in the education centre helped my students understand the project work

4

T24C4. Drawing in the museum helped students understand the project work

4

T24C5. Reading museum labels helped students understand the project work

2

T24C6. The video/slides helped students do better work

3

T24C7. Handling the objects helped students do better work

5

T24C8. Drawing objects in the museum helped students do better work

5

T24C9. Drawing objects in the Education Room helped students do better work

5



**Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary colleagues**

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T24C10. Students ideas about work from other cultures changed during the project

4

T24C11. Art from other cultures demonstrates the skills & talents of those people

5

T24C12. Art from around the world points to differences & similarities between peoples

5

T24C13. Art from other cultures shows us how similar peoples all over the world are

4

T24C14. Art from other cultures shows us how different peoples all over the world are

5

T24C15. My project presented a challenge to racism

5

T24C16 Any other comments

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part D**

T24D1. Describe how your students ideas about the project work changed during the project. Before the start of the project students ideas about the work were

they didn't necessarily think it would be so interesting - they did not have many preformed ideas because they had never come across this kind of art and craft before

T24D2. Now students ideas about the work are

much the richer for looking at closely this kind of art and craft work from other cultures. they are enthusiastic towards it and more ready to approach new work ie new (forms of) art that they have not come across before. their ideas about work from different cultures such as Benin are not so narrow.

T24D3. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand past artists was

learning a little background information about the country and kind of artists both before looking at, and from the different artwork.

#### **Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary colleagues**

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T24D4. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand present day artists was

looking at more modern-day artwork of a similar type done by people of the same culture today, and making comparisons between past and present.

T24D5. The part / parts of the project that helped students better understand themselves as artists was

the practical work in which the children could experiment and explore some of the different techniques used by Benin artists themselves.

T24D6. The part / parts of the project that helped students gain confidence in their abilities as artists was

as in no. 5. particularly in not having to make 'carbon-copies' of the Benin artwork/craftwork but rather by using the same techniques and working in the same style as the Benin people, in a variety of materials and media and developing their work in a variety of (wider) forms. also the reinforcement that everyone of the children's interpretations of the Benin work was right. there was no wrong response.

T24D7. I would like to return to the Horniman museum with students because

it would be good to either take the work on Benin a step further with more studying of the Benin artefacts. (it would be interesting to use the artefacts at this different stage in the children's work) or we could study another area of multicultural art / the national curriculum.

T24D8. I think that the museum should continue to display the historical art/s from around the world because

it shows how we have arrived at where we are today, in the in the world, artistically, and also in many other aspects. the story of different cultures are made accessible and brought to our culture to enrich us. along with enabling people of a particular culture living here to feel "at home" with art/s from their cultures having it/therm positively reinforced in Britain shows

T24D9. I think that the museum should display present day art/s from around the world because

in addition to no. 8 answer, many more people than otherwise possible can benefit and be much the richer from having the experience of witnessing art/s from around the world.

T24D10. I think that museum displays can challenge racism because

they can celebrate the gifts and skills by people of all races and nations, opening up the eyes of all groups of people in our society, showing how everyone ha something to contribute to the rich tapestry of our world. the displays can lead to better understanding of each other and the cultures that they are a part of.

## **Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary colleagues**

T24D11. Any other comments

for all this to happen and to have the utmost benefit the art/s need to be accessible to everyone. free admission helps this, (ie. everyone being able to afford to come to look at them) a central location served by public transport and facilities being provided at the place of viewing, ie toilets and baby changing rooms. (this might seem of less importance compared with actually having the art/s available for show. but providing these facilities all contribute to attracting a wider and inclusive audience) disabled access is also important of course. the backup surrounding the art/s on display is also important ie labels with appropriate information and schools talk/s workshops etc. handouts etc to

**School Teachers. Multicultural Project work 1995 - 6.**

**Part E**

T24E1. The art object must have qualities created by the human artist

blob - 1

T24E2. Works of art give us a feeling of order, of everything coming together in a new or different way

3

T24E3. Works of art say something important about the time when the art was made

5

T24E4. The more information I have about a work of art the more interesting it is for me

blob-3

T24E5. I can appreciate a work of art simply visually; knowledge and feelings can get in the way of my experience

2

T24E6. Art must be made by people because saying something about people and their experiences is a really important part of my experience with art

2

T24E7. I don't need to be shown a new way of seeing the world through art to have a powerful experience with a work of art

2 blob 4

**Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary colleagues**

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T24E8. Art objects often seem to reach out and grab me, the experience I have with them is really moving

blob 3

T24E9. The technical quality of the work, the look and finish of the materials is really important for me to have a good experience of it

4

T24E10. The works of art I like most do not give me emotional responses

1

T24E11. Looking at art my experiences are different from looking at other things

2

T24E12. A great work of art helps the person looking at it to share something about the feelings of people from another time and place

4

T24E13. Formal qualities, things like balance and harmony, are often irrelevant to the quality of the work of art

4

T24E14. Knowledge of the historical background often adds to my experience and appreciation of the object

4

T24E15. Looking at art objects helps me to connect different ideas and feelings

3

T24E16. Looking at art objects helps me to think about things in a new way

5

T24E17. Making art objects helps to connect different ideas and feelings - blob

4

T24E18. Making art objects helps to think about things in a new way

4

T24E19. Looking at art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life

4

**Appendix 2.4. Representative sample of completed questionnaires. Primary colleagues**

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T24E20. Making art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life

blob 4

T24E21. Describe some of your thoughts and feelings with a favourite work of art. Your answer can be in sentences or just single words.

as i look at a favourite work of art i find a whole train of thoughts and feelings come. i become immersed in these. some are directly linked and related to the actual art. others further down the line are more personally linked. my favourite work of art represents peace and calmness. yet i can hear the delicate and quiet sounds contained within it. the more i look at it the more i see myself actually becoming soaked up into the work of art as do my thoughts one leading on from the other, during my time with the work of art my thoughts include ones about the artist(s) who has /have created the work and about the circumstances in which they must have worked, including what they are representing. the whole experience of being with a favourite work of art is inward and spiritual and individual.

T24E22. Any other comments?

i have learnt how to develop and use various works of art with children. over the last few years, to develop their observation skills. art appreciation and artistic abilities and found this has developed mine too. i am amazed at how much art work with children can be brought out of a particular piece of art and how it can be extended and developed with them. i have also come to realise how important it is to talk with children at different times and stages throughout the art process, about what they see, are thinking, feeling and doing. the later being when they are making their own art response to a piece of art and craft, and also reminding them to look closely and take care of their work. i have so often found the quality of the children`s responses including their own work significantly higher when they shared interpretations and viewpoints and ideas with each other.

## Appendix 3

## **Appendix 3.1**

---

### **Introduction to the C and E sections of the Dialogical Project questionnaire**

The teacher-colleagues and I built a number of the dialogical project research questions on Csikszentmihalyi's four 'categories', which were shown to affect the aesthetic experience of professionals who work in art museums (Csikszentmihalyi 1991). Csikszentmihalyi's categories of aesthetic experience emerged from the data he gathered from art museum professionals. Csikszentmihalyi's categories are:

*Communication*

*Knowledge*

*Perception*

*Emotion*

In the C and E sections of the dialogical project questionnaire the research team of teacher key-informants asked questions which echoed Csikszentmihalyi's in certain respects, although some of his categories were adapted to fit the precise need for information in the context of the British school system. His Likert system of gathering responses were also followed in these sections.

### **The C section of the teachers' questionnaire**

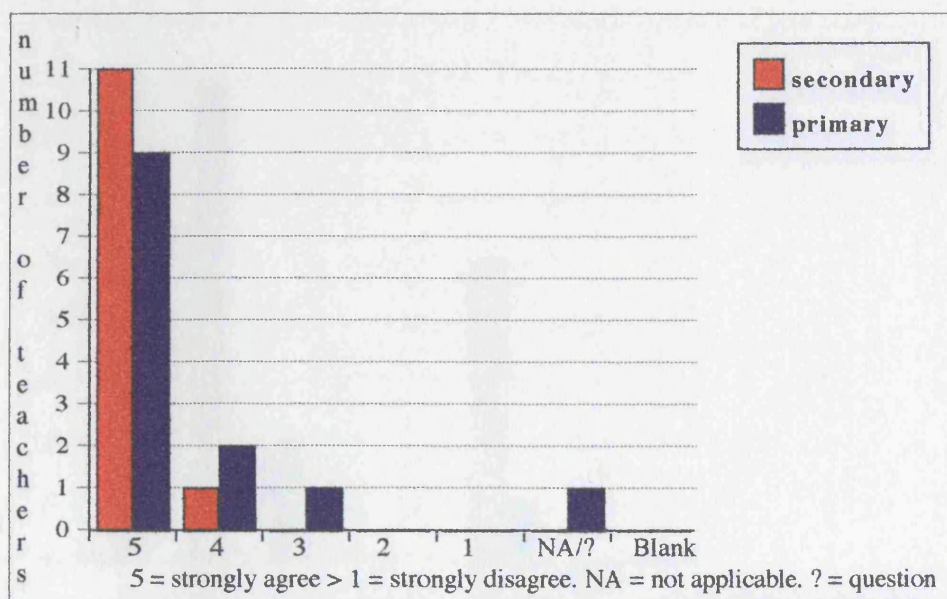
I have analysed and displayed some of the results of the questionnaire in the form of bar charts in chapter 6. I provide the remaining responses for part C of the questionnaire at the figures 3.1 to 3.11 in this appendix.

In Part C of our teachers' questionnaire questions were posed which examine the students' perspective:

Questions C1 - C5 examine elements which aid the development of students' *understanding*

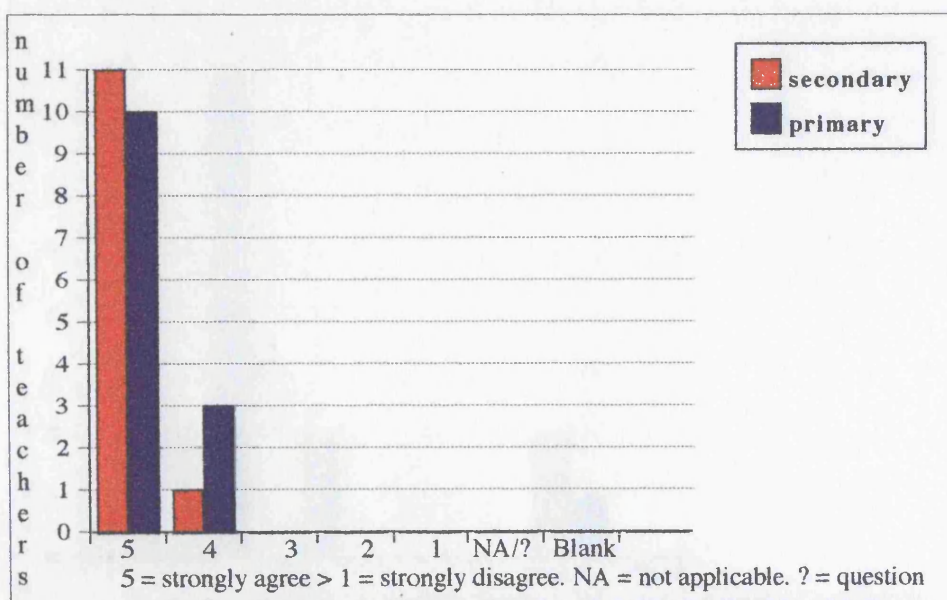
Questions C6 - C9 examine elements which aid the development of students' *achievement*

Questions C10 - C15 examine elements which aid the development of students' *thought* or ideas about themselves and other people. For example, questions were posed about cultural difference and similarity which may challenge the racist ideas that were discussed in chapter 6.



**Figure 3.1. The museum talk aids students' understanding**

Figure 3.1 shows teachers' responses to question C1, 'The museum talk with slides and video helped my students understand the project work.' One-hundred percent of all teachers agree or strongly agree with this statement.

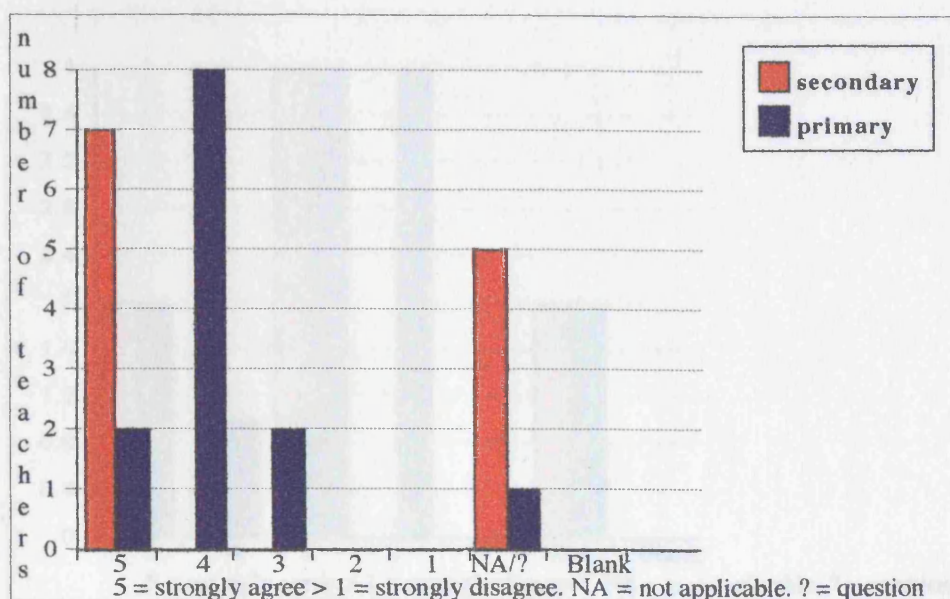


**Figure 3.2. Handling objects aids students' understanding**

Figure 3.2 shows teacher responses to question C2, 'The museum visit where students handled the objects helped them understand the project work.' One-hundred percent of all teachers agree or strongly agree with this statement.

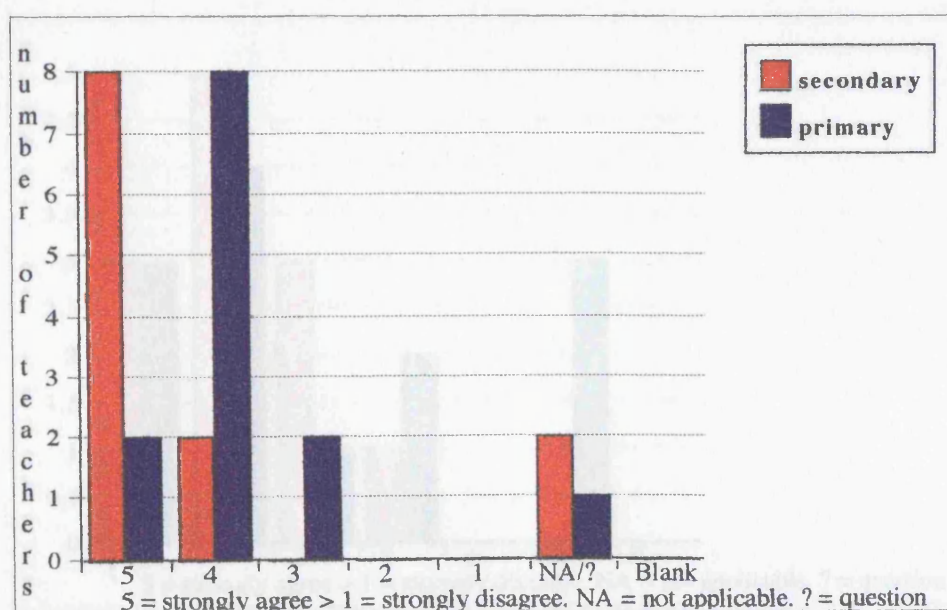


## Appendix 3.2



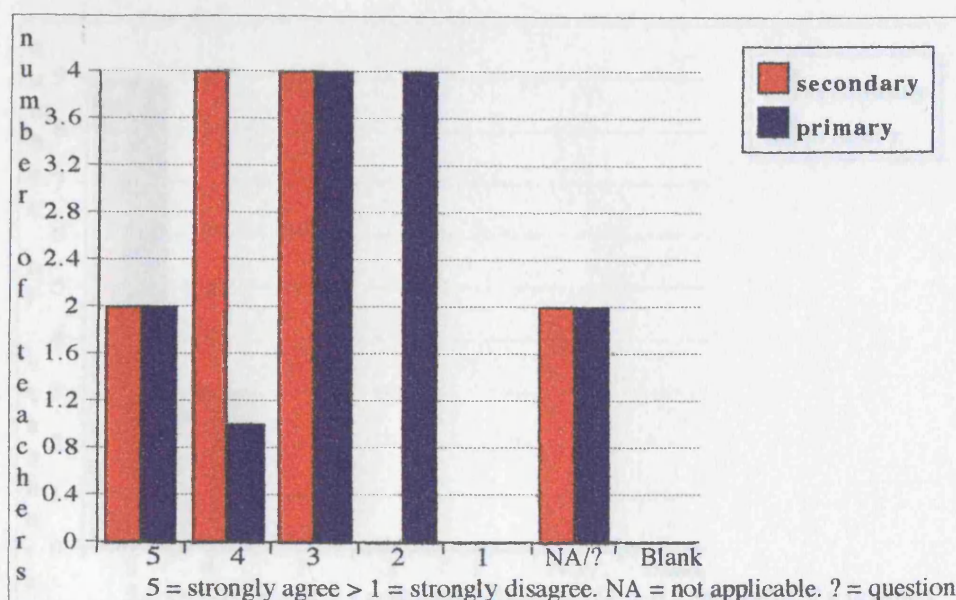
**Figure 3.3. Drawing in the Education Centre aids students' understanding**

Figure 3.3 shows teachers responses to the question C3, 'The drawing session in the education centre helped my students understand the project work.' Fifty eight percent of secondary teachers and seventy-seven percent of secondary/college teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



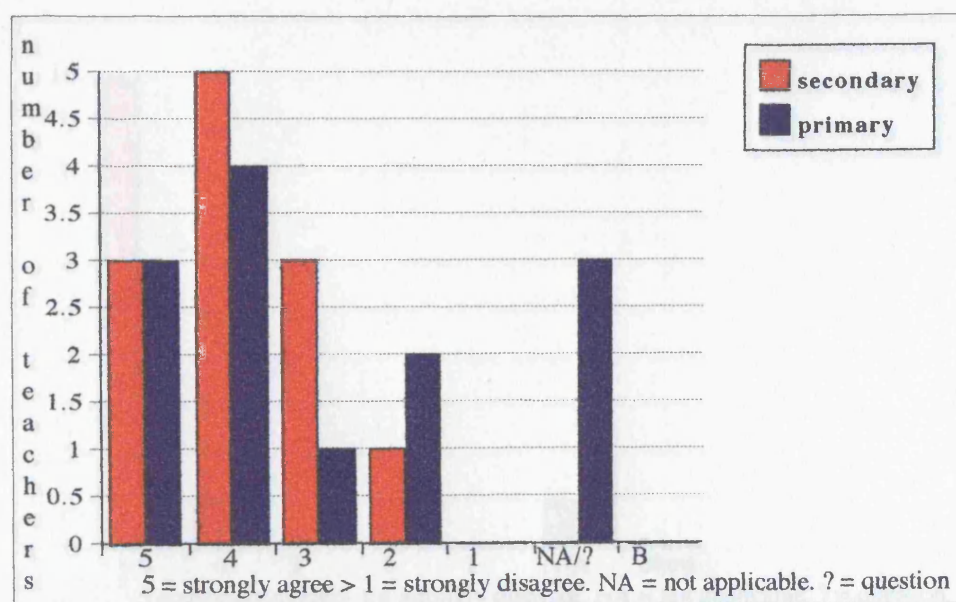
**Figure 3.4. Drawing in the museum aids students' understanding**

Figure 3.4 shows teachers' responses to the question C4, 'Drawing in the museum helped students understand the project work.' Eighty-three percent of Secondary/college teachers and seventy-seven percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.5. Reading museum labels aids students' understanding.**

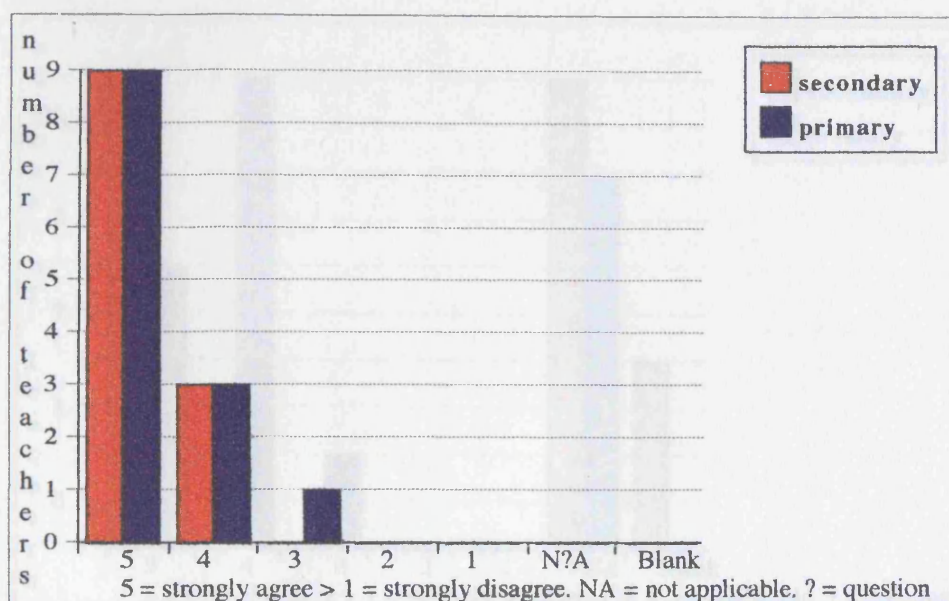
Figure 3.5 shows teacher responses to question C5 'Reading museum labels helped students understand the project work.' Forty-six percent of primary teachers disagreed with this statement or thought it inapplicable to their students, while fifty percent of secondary/college teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.6. Video/slides improves students' achievement**

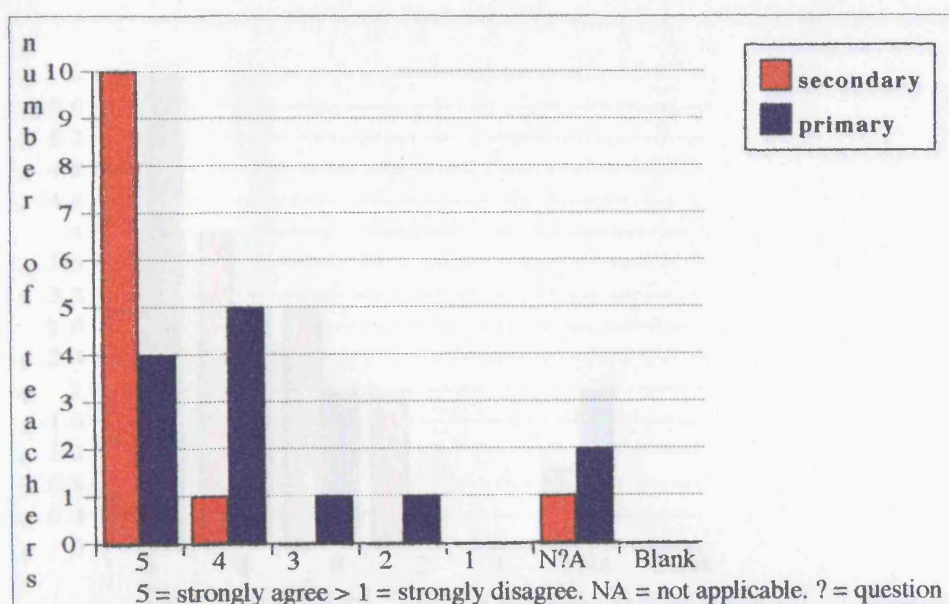
Figure 3.6 shows teachers' responses to question C6, 'The video/slides helped students do better work.' Agreement for secondary colleagues. Sixty-seven percent of secondary/college teachers and fifty-four percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.





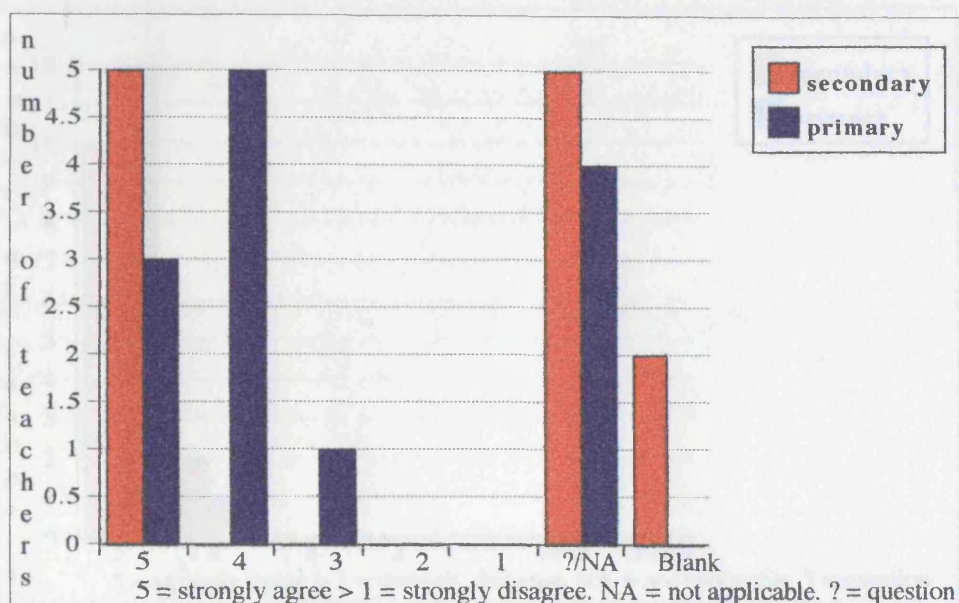
**Figure 3.7. Handling objects improves students' achievement**

Figure 3.7 shows teachers' responses to question C7, 'Handling the objects helped students do better work.' One-hundred percent of primary and secondary teacher colleagues agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



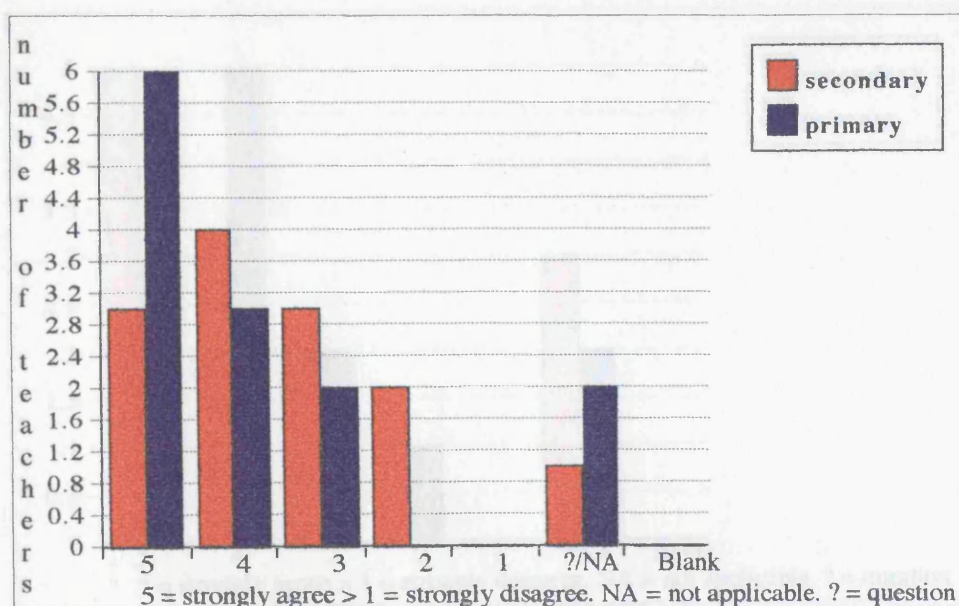
**Figure 3.8. Drawing objects in the museum improves students' achievement**

Figure 3.8 shows teachers' responses to question C8 'Drawing objects in the museum helped students do better work.' Ninety two percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-nine percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.9. Drawing objects in the Education Centre improves students' achievement**

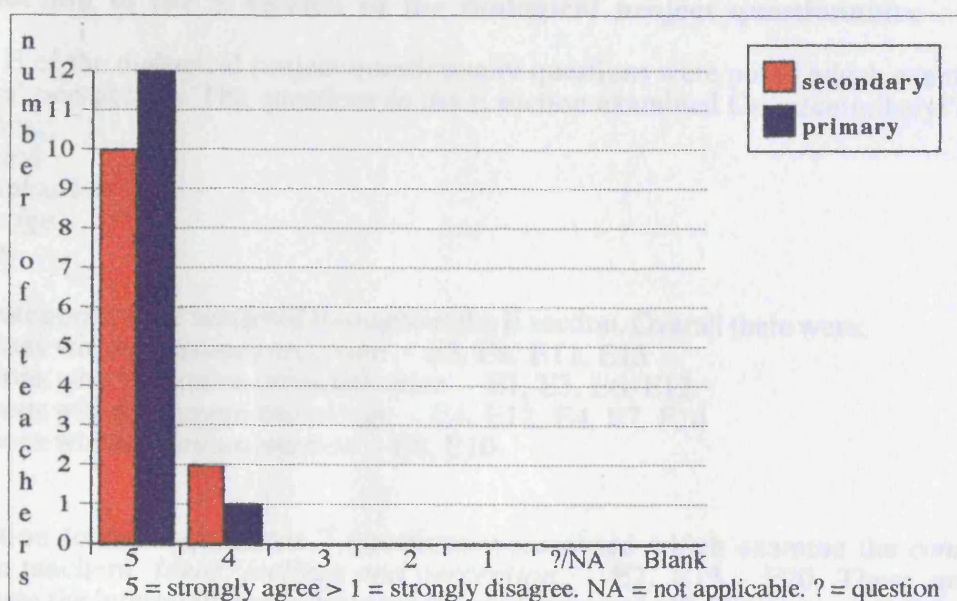
Figure 3.9 shows teachers' responses to question C9 'Drawing objects in the Education Room helped students do better work.' Forty-two percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-two percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.10. Students' ideas on other cultures changed during the project**

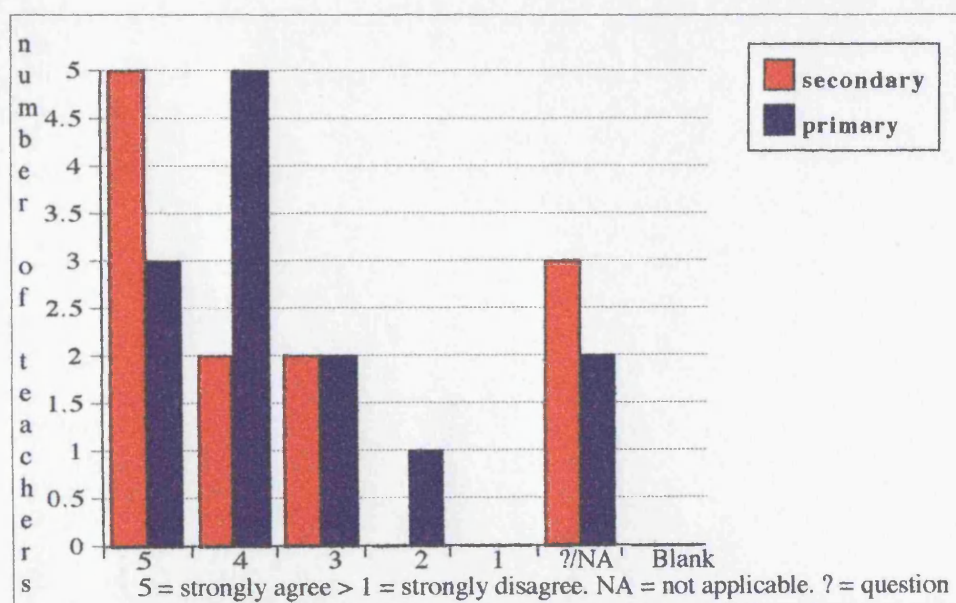
Figure 3.10 shows teachers responses to question C10 'Students ideas about work from other cultures changed during the project.' Fifty-eight percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-nine percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.





**Figure 3.11. Art from other cultures shows the skills and talents of those people**

Figure 3.11 shows teachers' responses to question C11 'Art from other cultures demonstrates the skills & talents of those people.' (There was one-hundred percent agreement from all teachers).



**Figure 3.12. My museum project presented a challenge to racism**

Figure 3.12 shows teachers' responses to question C15, 'My project presented a challenge to racism.' Fifty-eight percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-two percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.

### Appendix 3.3

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#### Introduction to the E section of the dialogical project questionnaire

In Part E of the dialogical project questionnaire questions were posed which examined the teachers' perspective. The questions in the E section examined Csikszentmihalyi's (1991) categories:

*Perception*

*Communication*

*Knowledge*

*Emotion*

These categories were scattered throughout the E section. Overall there were:

4 questions which examine *perception* - E5, E9, E11, E13

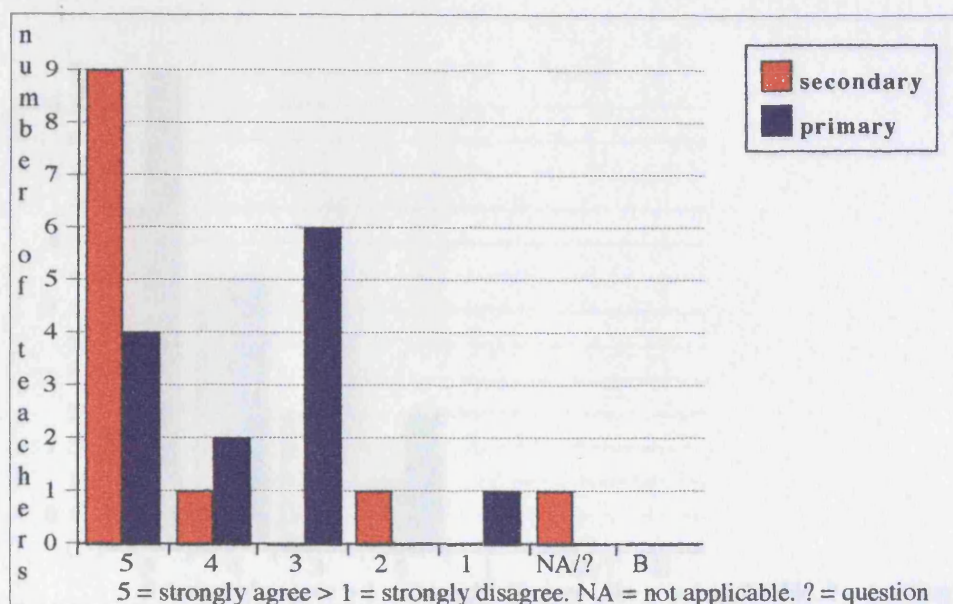
4 questions which examine *communication* - E1, E3, E6, E12

5 questions which examine *knowledge* - E4, E12, E4, E7, E14

2 questions which examine *emotion* - E8, E10

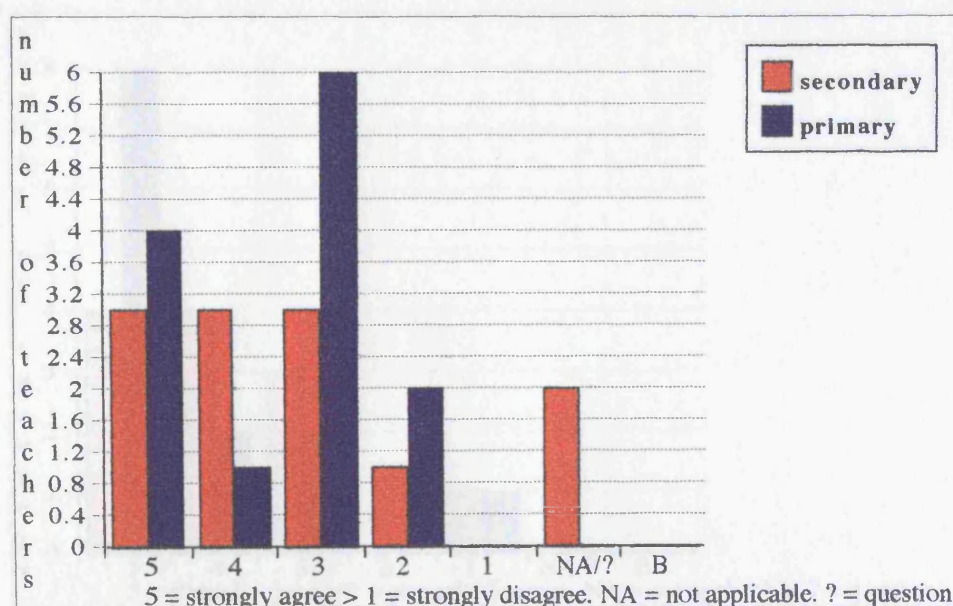
In addition to these questions 7 questions were posed which examine the *connections* between teachers' *ideas, feelings and perception* - E2, E15 - E20. These questions investigate the interrelationship between the cognitive and affective aspects of the aesthetic experience.

The E and C questions stand as teacher testament to a collaborative investigation at the museum-school frontiers. The investigation aimed to explore the critical success factors of an antiracist-multicultural museum-school curriculum.



**Figure 3.13. Art objects must have qualities created by a human artist**

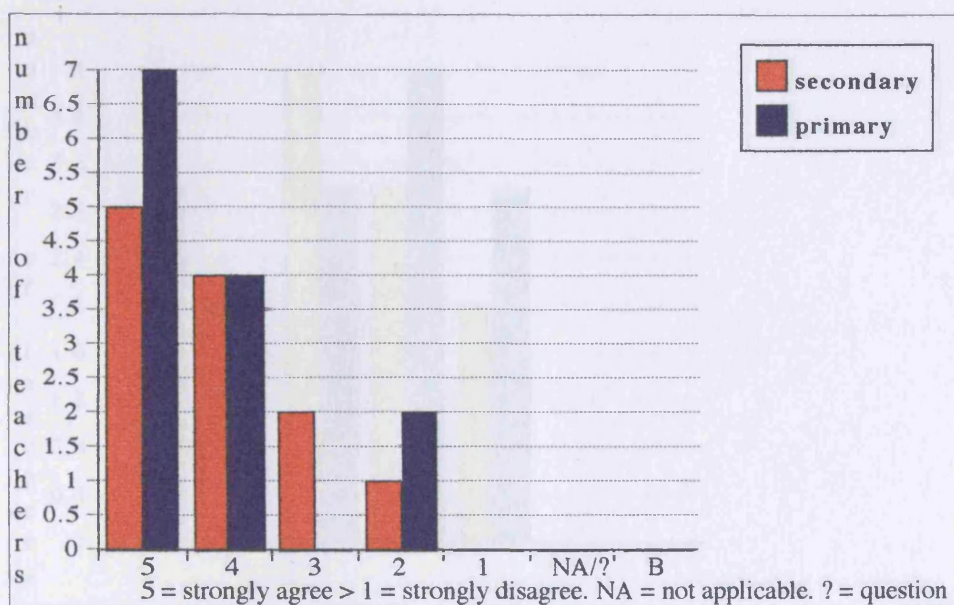
Figure 3.13 shows teachers' responses to question E1, 'The art object must have qualities created by the human artist.' Ninety-three percent of secondary/college teachers and forty-six percent of primary teachers agree or strongly agree with this statement



**Figure 3.14. Art objects give us a feeling of order**

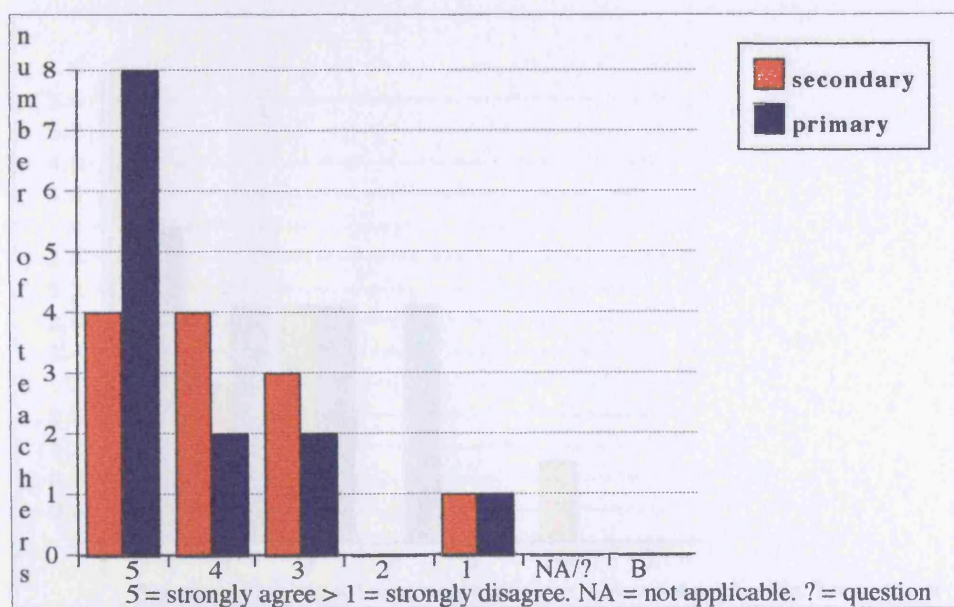
Figure 3.14 shows teachers' responses to question E2 'Works of art give us a feeling of order, of everything coming together in a new or different way.' Fifty percent of secondary/college teachers and thirty-eight percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement





**Figure 3.15. Art says something important about the time when it was made**

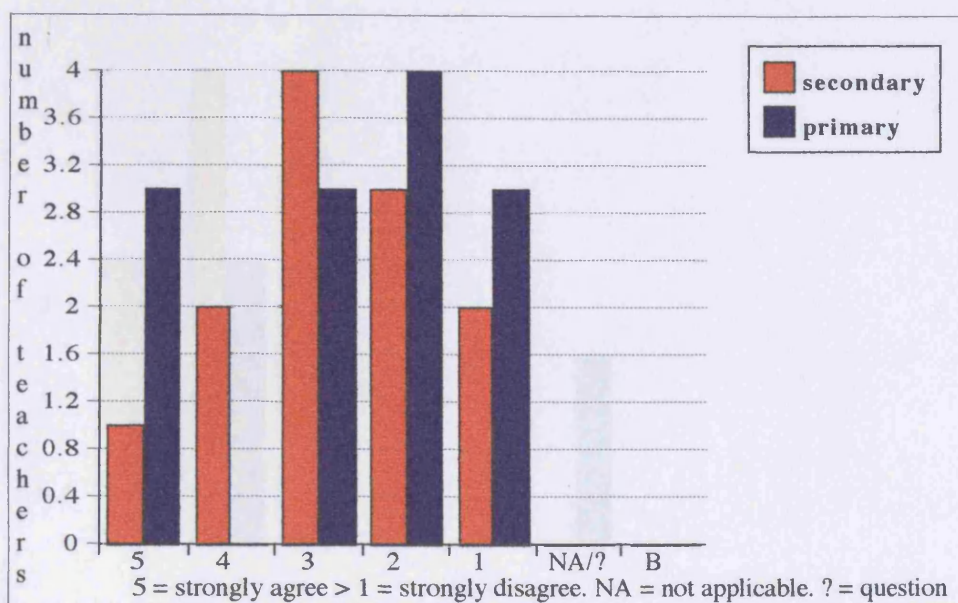
Figure E 15 shows teachers responses to the question E3, 'art says something important about the time when it was made.' Seventy-five percent of secondary/college and eighty-five percent of primary teacher agreed or agreed strongly with this statement



**Figure 3.16. More information makes art more interesting**

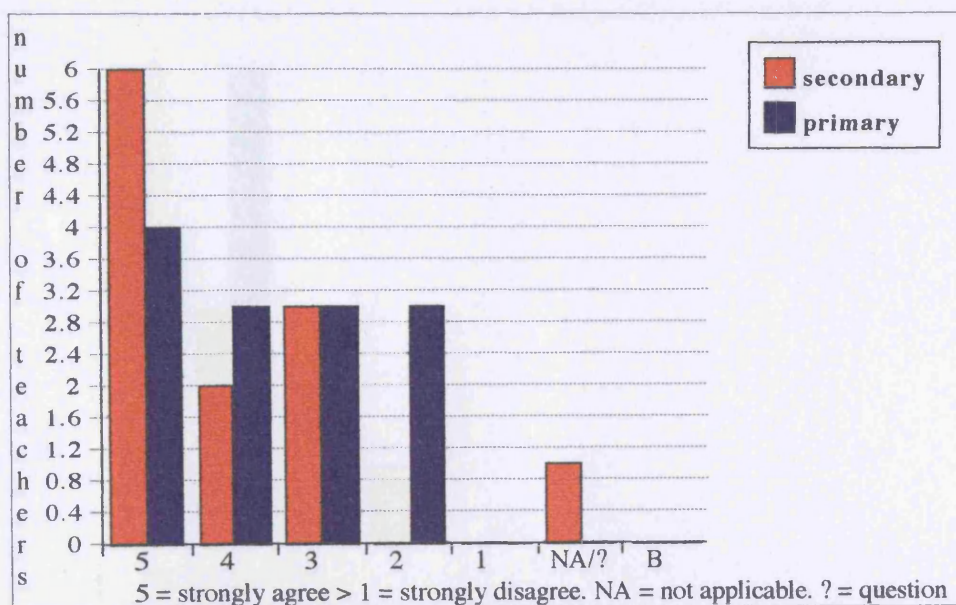
Figure 3.16 shows teachers' responses to question E4, 'The more information I have about a work of art the more interesting it is for me.' Sixty-seven percent of secondary/college teachers and seventy-seven percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.





**Figure 3.17. Art can be experienced simply visually**

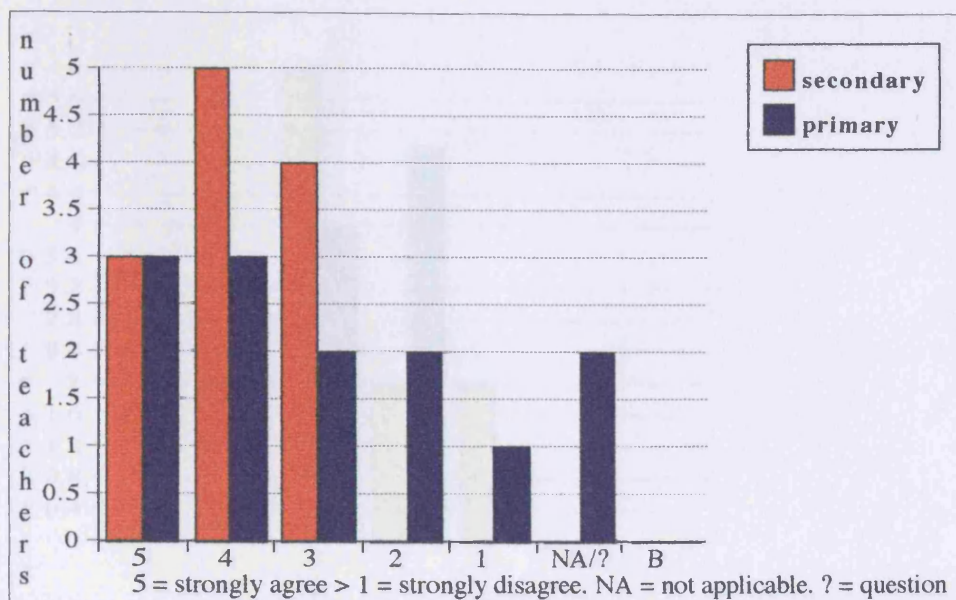
Figure 3.17 shows teachers' responses to question E5, 'I can appreciate a work of art simply visually; knowledge and feelings can get in the way of my experience.' Forty-two percent of secondary/college teachers and fifty-four percent of primary teachers disagree or disagreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.18. Art must be made by people**

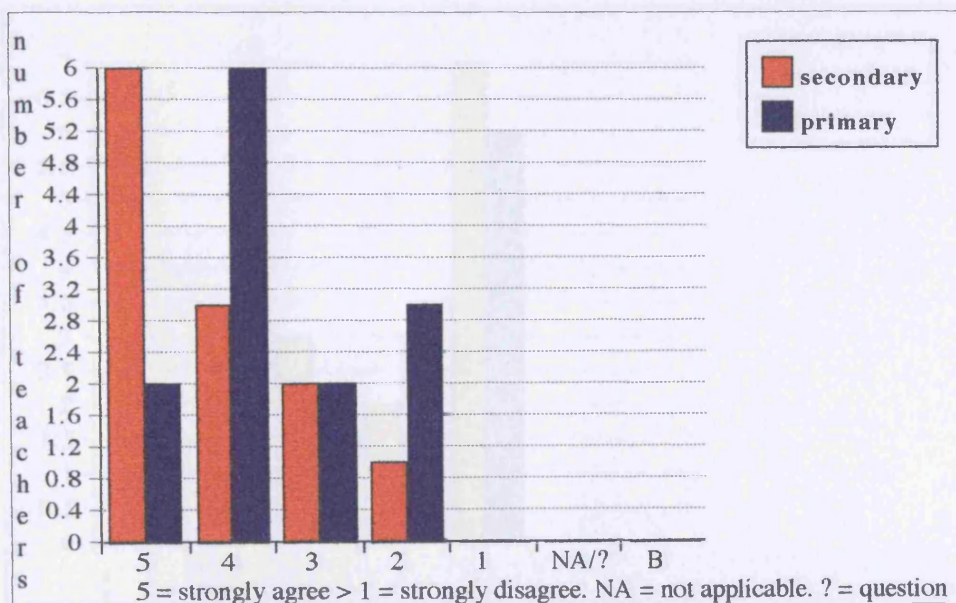
Figure 3.18 shows teachers' responses to question E6, 'Art must be made by people because saying something about people and their experiences is a really important part of my experience with art.' Sixty-seven percent of secondary/college and fifty-four percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.

### Appendix 3.4



**Figure 3.19. Art works don't need to show us new ways of seeing the world to give us powerful experiences**

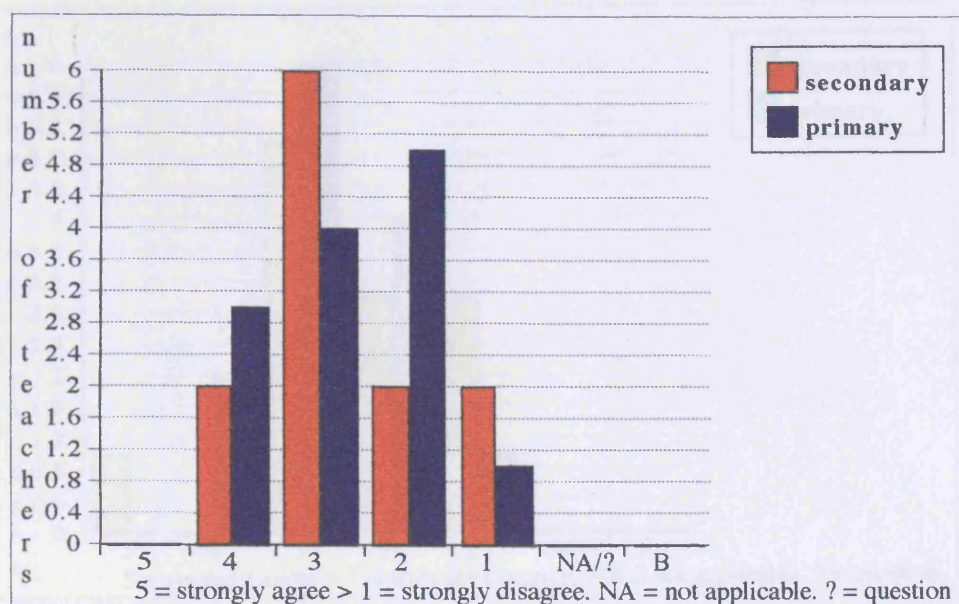
Figure 3.19 shows teachers' responses to question E7, 'I don't need to be shown a new way of seeing the world through art to have a powerful experience with a work of art.' Sixty-seven percent of secondary/college and forty-six percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.20. The experience of art is moving.**

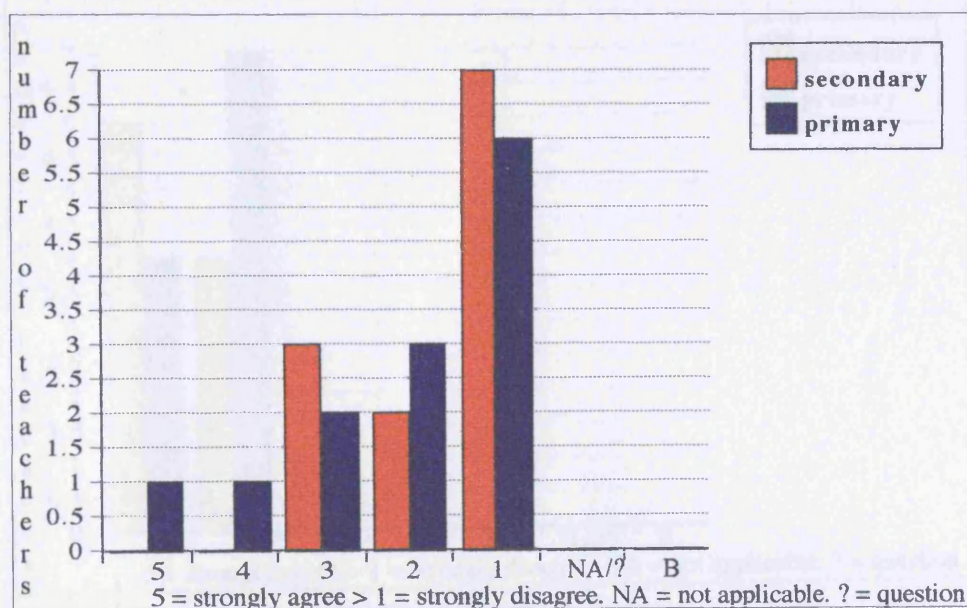
Figure 3.20 shows teachers' responses to question E8, 'Art objects often seem to reach out and grab me, the experience I have with them is really moving.' Seventy-five percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-two percent of primary teacher agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.





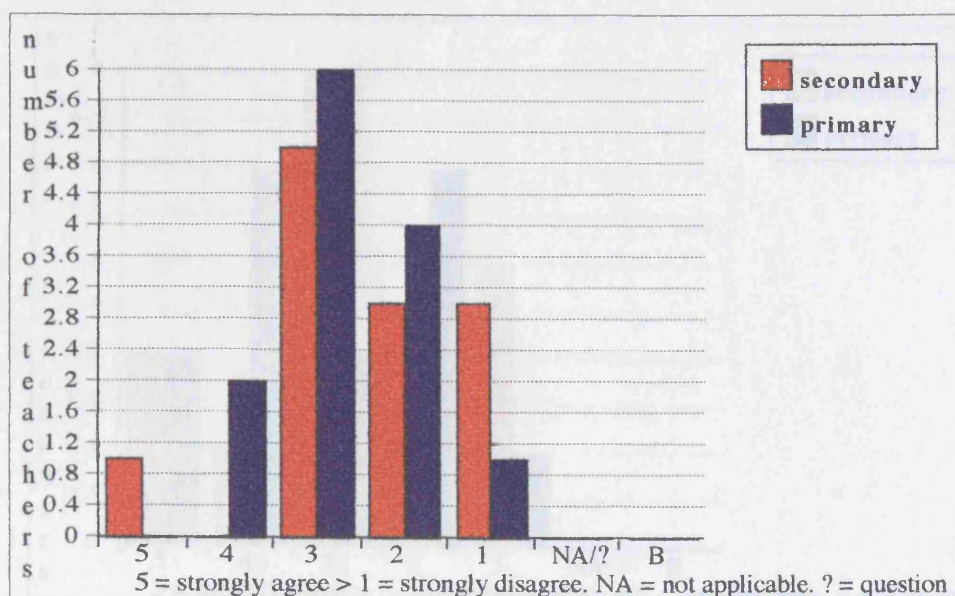
**Figure 3.21. The technical qualities of art are important for aesthetic experiences**

Figure 3.21 shows teachers' responses to question E9, 'The technical quality of the work, the look and finish of the materials is really important for me to have a good experience of it.' Thirty-three percent of secondary/college and forty-six percent of primary teachers disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement.



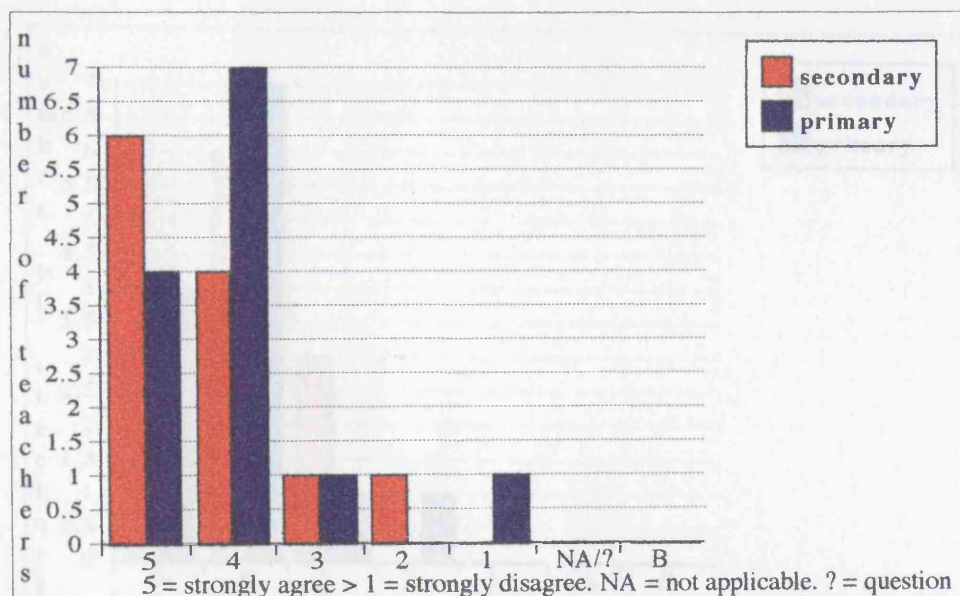
**Figure 3.22. Works of art do not give us emotional responses**

Figure 3.22 shows teachers' responses to question E10 'The works of art I like most do not give me emotional responses.' Seventy-five percent of primary teachers and sixty-nine percent of secondary/college teacher disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.23. Looking at art is different from looking at other things**

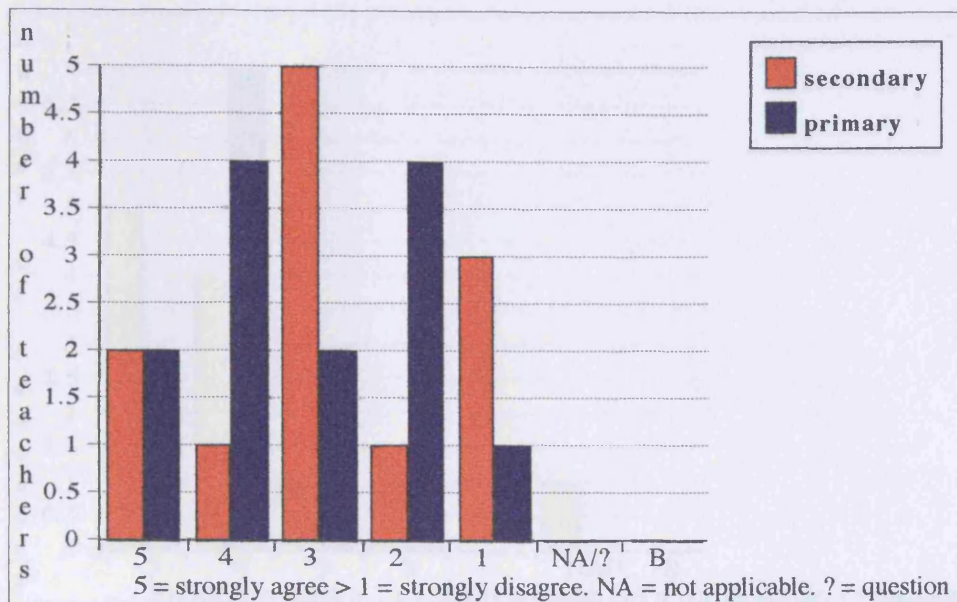
Figure 3.23 shows teachers responses to question E11, 'Looking at art my experiences are different from looking at other things.' Fifty percent of secondary/college teachers and thirty-eight percent of primary teachers disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.24. Looking at art helps us share the feelings of other people**

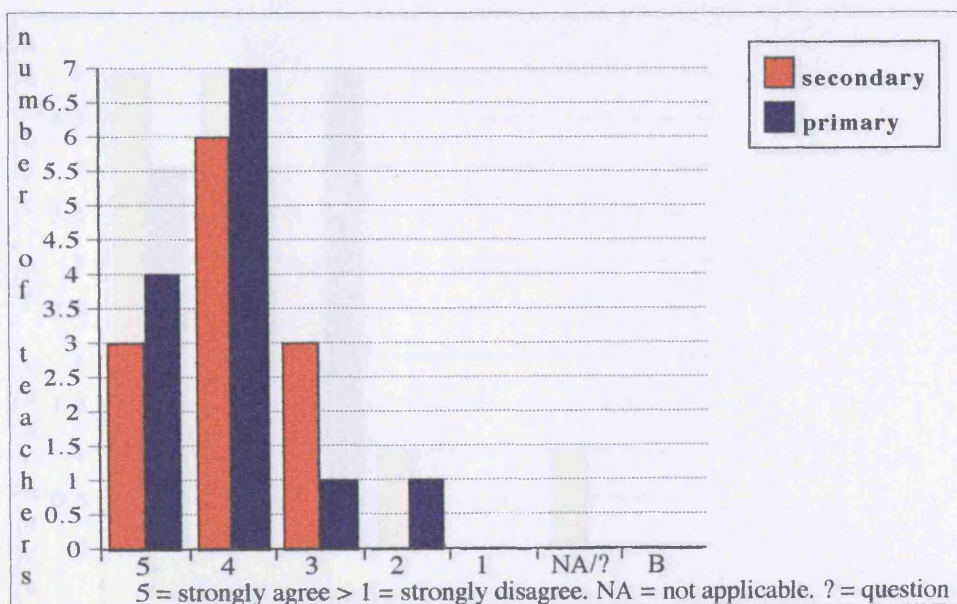
Figure 3.24 shows teachers' responses to question E12, 'A great work of art helps the person looking at it to share something about the feelings of people from another time and place.' Eighty-three percent of secondary/college teachers and eighty-five percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.





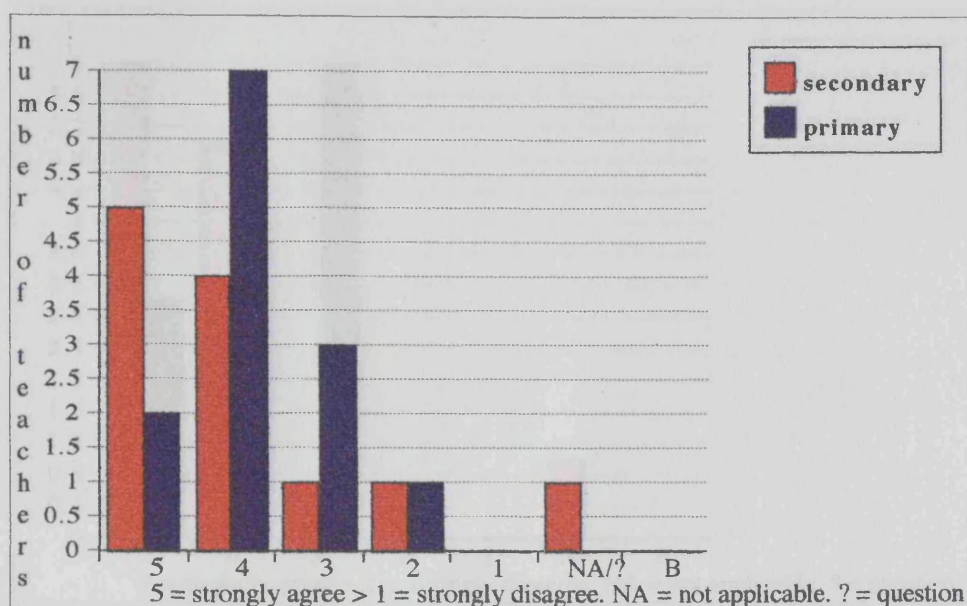
**Figure 3.25. The formal properties of art are often irrelevant to their quality**

Figure 3.25 shows teachers' responses to question E13, 'The formal qualities of balance and harmony are often irrelevant to the quality of the work of art.' Thirty-three percent of secondary/college teachers and thirty-five percent of primary teachers disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement.



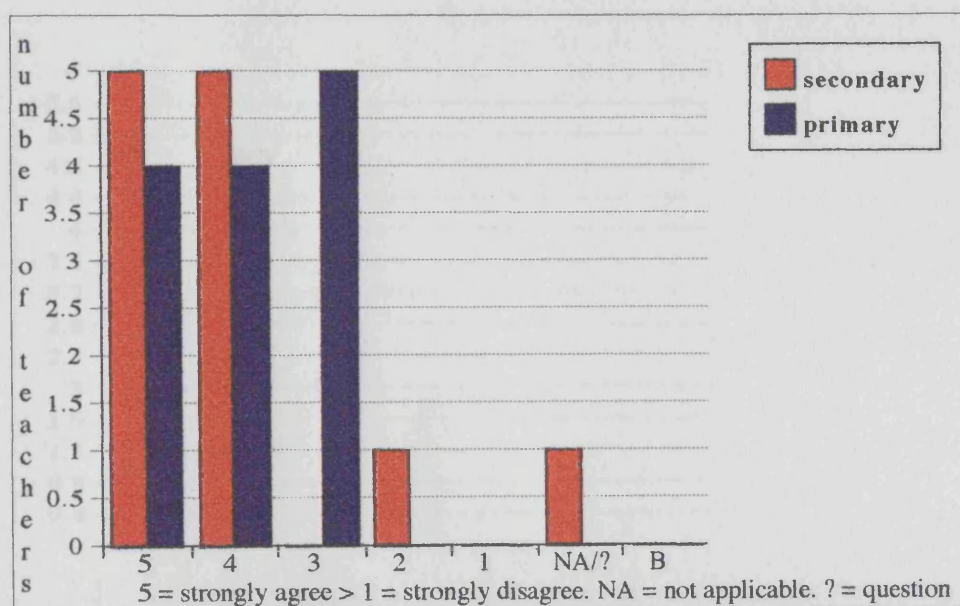
**Figure 3.26. Historical knowledge aids the aesthetic experience**

Figure 3.26 shows teachers' responses to question E14, 'Knowledge of the historical background often adds to my experience and appreciation of the object.' Seventy-five percent of secondary/college teachers and eighty-five percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.27. Looking at art helps us connect different ideas and feelings**

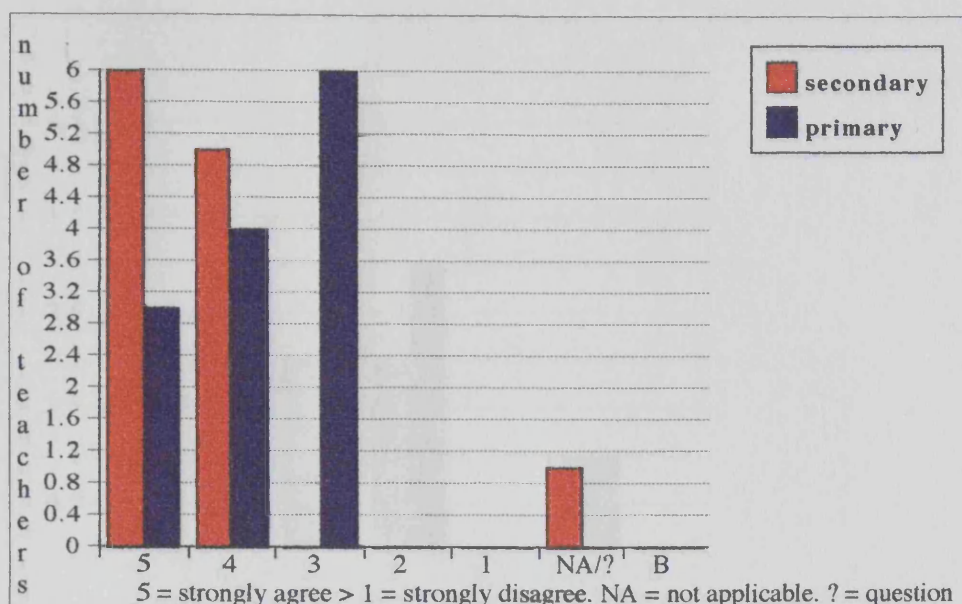
Figure 3.27 shows teachers' responses to question E15, 'Looking at art objects helps me to connect different ideas and feelings.' Seventy-five percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-nine percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.28. Looking at art helps us think in new ways**

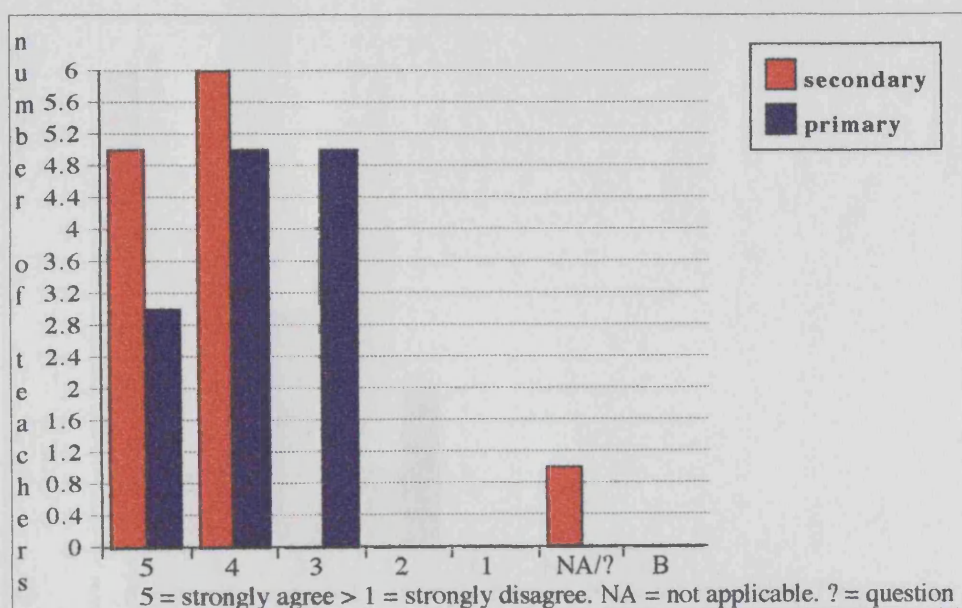
Figure 3.28 shows teachers' responses to question E16, 'Looking at art objects helps me to think about things in a new way.' Eighty-three percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-two percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.





**Figure 3.29. Making art helps us connect different ideas and feelings**

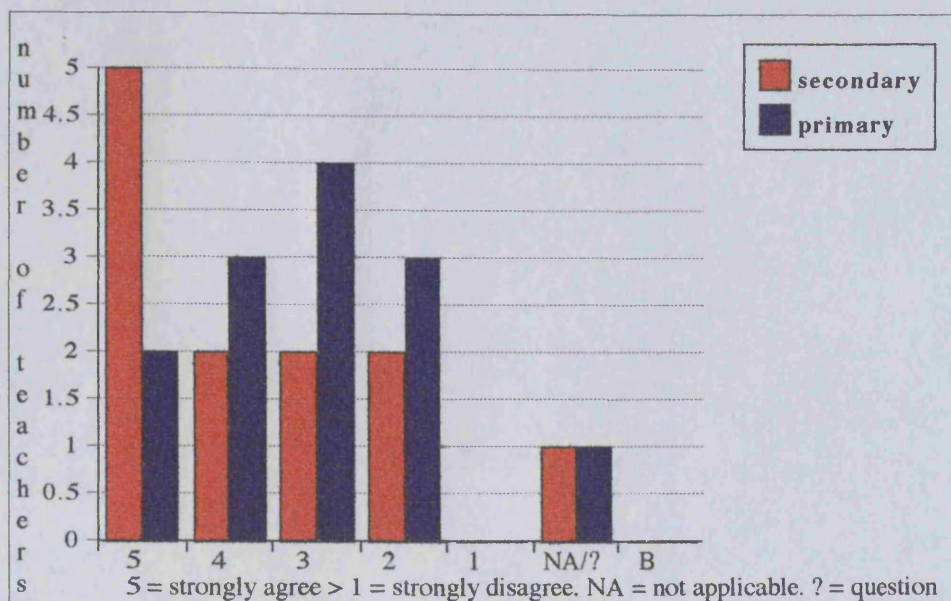
Figure 3.29 shows teachers responses to question E17, 'Making art objects helps to connect different ideas and feelings.' Ninety-two percent of secondary/college teachers and fifty-four percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.30. Making art objects helps us to think in new ways**

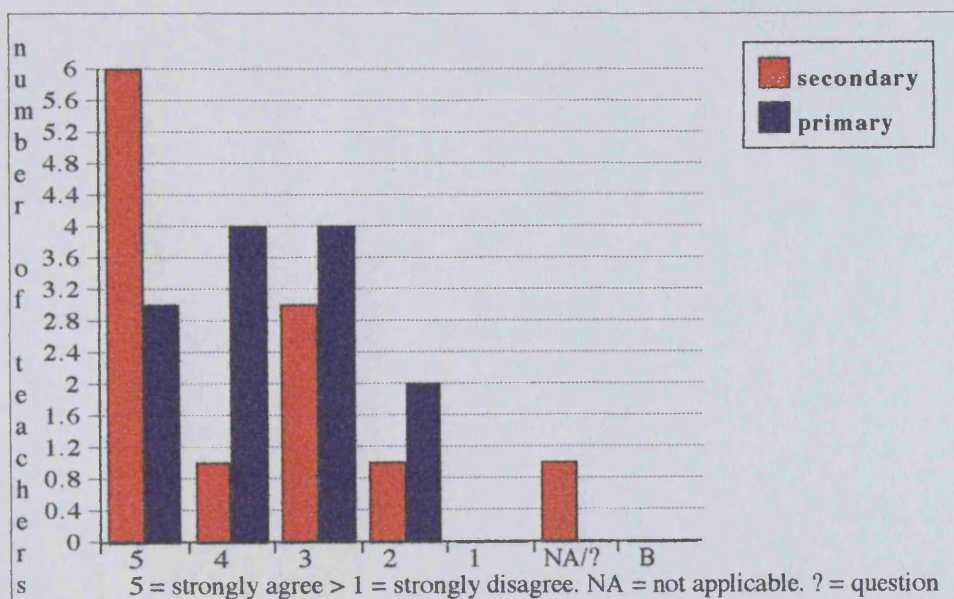
Figure 3.30 shows teachers' responses to question E18, 'Making art objects helps to think about things in a new way.' Ninety-two percent of secondary/college teachers and sixty-two percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.

## Appendix 3.4



**Figure 3.31. Looking at art gives us different ideas and possibilities**

Figure 3.31 shows teachers' responses to question E19, 'Looking at art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life.' Fifty-eight percent of secondary/college teachers and thirty-eight percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



**Figure 3.32. Making art gives us different ideas and possibilities**

Figure 3.32 shows teachers' responses to question E20, 'making art objects helps to give me different ideas about myself, different possibilities for my life.' Fifty-eight percent of secondary/college teachers and fifty-four percent of primary teachers agreed or agreed strongly with this statement.



## **Appendix 4**

**Appendix 4.1. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 1 primary school students**

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Pilot Project discussed in chapter 4 (3 fully transcribed tapes of 30 - 90 minutes each)

BL School.	Year 2P
PR.	Class teacher
CV.	LLAP coordinator.
Viv Golding.	Horniman Museum.

Code:

Plain text	= Children & viv's conversation
...	= Gap in transcript or inaudible
Italics	= Classroom talk, giggles etc
	= Interruption from another child not immediately engaged in the main dialogue about the objects with me. These speeches are in quotation marks.
	= My impressions and memories listening to the tape, written immediately after transcription
Word in capitals	= Raised voice
Word underlined	= Emphasis

The following taken from the transcript of our third session.

My main line of questioning here was intended to be as open as possible. I tried to put the same question to each child, simply, "what's your name, and what thing did you like best at the Museum yesterday?"

**Appendix 4.1. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 1 primary school students**

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**Student number 3**

viv: O.K. What's your name

Amy: Amy, hummm.

viv: O.K. Amy

*Amy sounds breathless and whispers Amy in a small petrified voice.*

This is my favourite clothes because it's got nice patterns on, and it's got, it's got, sort of a little bit of lines, and patterns and, and all different kinds and patterns and that,

*Amy looks closely at the cloth and begins to sound a bit more confident as she warms to the task of describing.*

and i like the colours because you get a line, wiv a little seam through, then to the little squares, and then they do different colours, down the end.

viv: That's right and do you know how this pattern was done Amy?

Amy: It was, sort of sewed by . . .

viv: That's right yeah.

Amy: Er cotton

*A door squeaks and the sounds of children's voices from the adjacent class room are let in.*

viv: That's right and do you remember how this pattern was done?

Amy: Oh yeah, by, by one of these,

child: Casey . . .

child: *No Emma your not supposed to go in.*

teacher: . . . and then. . . .

Amy: By one of these, ummm, wood shapes.

viv: That's right. Well done.

**Appendix 4.1. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 1 primary school students**

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**Student number 4**

Casey: umm, when i get home, i'm gonna do umm, you know when, when we went

viv: What's your name first of all, tell me your name.

*Casey is very interested to speak about the art work he intends to make at home. As a comparatively novice interviewer I am a little anxious about how I can draw him back to the museum experience. In my later interviews I am more confident and appreciative of the holistic museum experience.*

Casey: Casey.

viv: Casey, O.K. Casey.

Casey: You know when we went to the horn, umm, you came to our class to tell us about what it would be like when we came here.

*Casey is looking at the artefacts while delivering this speech. I think he has unconsciously captured in words the museum experience which is rooted in the observation of objects.*

viv: Yeah.

Casey: Do you know what i'm gonna do today?

viv: No, what are you gonna do?

Casey: You know when you said you can fold the paper up and then cut shapes,

viv: Yeah

Casey: and then paint,

viv: Yeah

Casey: to make nice little shapes on paper.

viv: Stencils? Yeah, to make stencils?

Casey: Yeah wiv paint, and paint onto paper so it makes a nice little pretty pattern. I wanna do that when i get home.

viv: Are you, who's gonna do that with you?

Casey: Umm, nobody.

viv: Your gonna do it on yer own.

Casey: Yeah.

**Appendix 4.1. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 1 primary school students**

---

viv: Oh great

Casey: An if my friend wants to come in my house they can help me if they like.

viv: Won't you have a grown up to help you, you will won't you?

Casey: no my mum doesn't, she's too busy.

viv: Not really interest . .

Casey: She's too busy.

viv: Oh well, well done you. Now tell me why you like this beautiful dress here form Nigeria.

Casey: Umm. This?

viv: Yeah that was your favourite one wasn't it.

Casey: Cos nice little purple . . .

viv: Hum humm.

Casey: and the way the pattern goes and it makes this beautiful shape.

viv: Hum humm

Casey: well

viv: Do you know how that patterns been done?

Casey: No

viv: Its been sewn on a sewing machine that one.

Casey: My mums gonna get a very big sewing machine, the same as my nan

viv: You'll probably be able to use that as well wont you.

child: *My mums got two sewing machines.*

Casey: and i like the necking pattern,

viv: That sewn one again.

Casey: and this big bit.

viv: Ah do you remember how that one was done, that big target shape.

Casey: Humm. Painted?

viv: Yeah that's

Casey: Oh stencil thing.

viv: No it, your quite right it was like painted. It was tied up, its called tie dye and then it was dipped in different sorts of dye.

Casey: There's something else i'm gonna do at home i'm gonna cut a shape out, paint on one side and then fold over and make pattern the same side so its

**Appendix 4.1. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 1 primary school students**

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the same pattern on each side.

viv: I know you make like a butterfly then don't you

Casey: Yeah.

Click. *Sound of tape being turned off.*

*Casey spent some time after the tape recording describing the activities which he was looking forward to carrying out at home. His understanding and appreciation of the museum object is constantly personalised through home references', to his family and his deep interest in making art.*

*It is interesting that my 'voice' reverts to a stronger cockney accent when talking with Casey than it did when speaking with Amy! Perhaps I am striving to make Casey feel relaxed and elicit more responses, after my interview with Amy where dialogue was difficult and verbal responses were not so forthcoming?*

#### Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students

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Carnival Arts Project discussed in chapter 7. (3 fully transcribed tapes of 90 minutes each)

PS School.	Year 10 GCSE (ps on the tapes)
TRC & TCC.	Class teachers (rc and cc on the tapes)
Viv Golding.	Horniman Museum (v on the tapes).

#### Code:

I used no capital letters when transcribing because the pressure of time)

Plain text	= Student & viv's conversation
. . .	= Gap in transcript or inaudible
Italics	= Interruptions, background noises etc
	= My impressions and memories listening to the tape, written immediately after transcription, and included immediately below the interaction.
Word in capitals	= Raised voice
Word underlined	= Emphasis

In the light of action research methodology the aim of these interviews is to establish the critical success factors of our collaborative project-work on Carnival Arts. In particular we are interested to investigate the elements of our project which should be amended in order to improve the learning of future student's. We are careful to make the interviewing a therapeutic process, and to raise the student's sense of achievement.

Towards this end we shall interrogate:

the links with African masks that emerged in the students own Caribbean mask-making  
the elements of the project which students feel should be repeated with future groups  
because they found them most interesting and enjoyable  
the costume and musical drama aspects of the project which students were not able to  
complete on this occasion because of time factors

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

student number 2. tape code: ps carn tape 1 (a2)

*door squeaks open*

t i've found some, found some paper, so if any one else is looking for some there's some on the table

v on the table out there

t jameroqui monday

a ok

t please

a ok i'll try to remember

t you had a nice green top on the other night i nearly stopped you

a me

t yeah

t2 where's he gone

a you saw me

t yeah

a where

t2 oh its

*t2 notices we are recording and makes a speedy exit . t doesn't realise the tape is on and continues her conversation, which shows her warm and close relationship with this student*

shakespeare road

a ok

t running

a right

v are you going to take his photograph, in the carnival mask

a yeah i done it already

t no, i done it already!

v oh its something different, jameroqui, monday

t no no jameroqui is he's promised to lend me a tape, cd, & he's been promising it to me for a fortnight



**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

- v hoo hoo
- a is it on record miss
- v it is, on record yeah
- a even when she's talking yeah
- v even when she's talking yeah hee hee
- a ok!
- v ok now i just wanted to ask you a bit about the carnival project i know its a long time ago when you did it, but you know when you came up to the museum
- a yeah
- v & when you came back to school we wanted to find out about what you thought about it really. so first of all did you enjoy coming to the museum
- we decided to investigate the education and enjoyment link that emerged from the questionnaires and so i probe for this connection here*
- a yeah, yeah it was alright it was sort of like different type of, um, you know
- v umm
- a different types of art & stuff
- v umm
- a so basically that helped me, in making my models
- v umm & did you know about that type, type of art before
- i am probing for how the the museum sessions really 'helped' a's model making. i am wondering if it is the way in which the team try to re-value the 'difference' in the 'different types of art and stuff' that is inspiring for this young african-caribbean lad.*
- a not really
- v or was it new for you
- a it was kinda new but as i said it helped
- v umm
- a it helped
- i think we will try to establish how 'it helped' by looking at the elements of the project work*
- v & did you do some drawings when you were there, of the african masks
- a yeah i done some sketches, of the masks
- v ok

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

a can't remember the names of them but i remember doing sketches,

v umm

a must a done at least 4 sketches

v that's good & did you do a piece of paste resist, the textile work, when you were up there, or did you do that back at school

a umm i can't remember you know, yeah, maybe

v i think you came twice

a umm i remember doing something with sticks

v ah that was the structure wasn't it

a yeah

v you started to make your carnival mask there

a yeah, what in those umm, what are they called

v willow?

a the willows yeah

v some people call them withies

a oh, yeah those sticks, i remember wetting them

*andrew reverts to his more familiar term 'sticks.' He is a low ability student who can achieve in his art lessons and is expected to attain a b grade gcse. the secondary school members of my research team are concerned about the proposed changes to the gcse art curriculum, which will demand students of his ability range complete a more 'academic' element to their course-work. we might profitably pay some attention to our 'key words' strategy and formulate some evaluation guide-line sheets for all our students. this would specially benefit 'non-academic' students and students speaking english as a second language.*

v yeah

a bending them into shape

v & they would break!

a yeah if you don't . . . push them too much

v hee heee, so tell me about your carnival mask then, what does that look like

a well its basically, it looks like a animal, mask right

v woh

a well its basically is a animal mask in a way, because

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

v umm

a right it comes over your head, right around, & its got like 2 horns going up

v yeah

a an its got like a cape kinda thing, that goes round, its like, its like hair

v yeah

a it kinda comes down here, you know like those african women that have that little frock & it comes down

*this seems to be a clear link with the african 'animal' masks and their accompanying costume which a saw in the museum*

v yeah?

a i think that's as far as i got, i never managed to make that other actual outfit

v i don't think anybody did did they, they never got time to make the outfit, that's another thing mrs c wondered, would you have liked to have done the costume, to have gone with it, or would it have taken too long do you think, how did you feel about that

*i used the teachers name here and have abbreviated it in the transcript*

a well, if i had the chance i would probably attempt it

v yeah i guess it's just the time isn't it

a yeah, yeah

v & what you did i think is the most important bit isn't it, having the, the face structure

a yeah

v what i think was interesting is how lots of people had those bits hanging down, that you were telling me about, to cover the face

a alright

v because that's what a lot of african, mask wearer's do just to cover their face, with raffia

a umm

*a is non-committal on this point!*

v what did you use to did you use for yours, did you use tissue paper or

a you mean, for the actual thing hanging down

v yeah

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

a with the bit that

*gestures hanging down in front of face*

v yeah

*nod's*

a it was like it was like tcp, plastic, something like that

*a's tcp probably refers to pvc*

v oh plastic one's

a it was yellow, with the bits just hanging down

*gestures hanging down in front of face*

a just covered, it didn't, it didn't really cover my face, it just covered, up to my eyebrows

v umm

a & then covered, it just came down like that

*gestures hanging down in front of face*

v umm

a straight down like that, like um, like hair

v umm

a i used tcp plastic on that, that was the things that covered the side of the head, & the top i used umm, i think it was paper

v umm

a yeah wet paper, i think we put on top of each other, what was it called again

v was it tissue paper

a i don't think it . . . it was something that we had to wet in water, its its similar to that

v like it . . . gummed paper then do you think?

a yeah & then i had bit of card paper on it as well an a wire umm, wire um what do you call it, um frame

v & do you think the people that are doing like yr 10 now, would that be a a good project for them to do, is that

a yeah probably

v something that you enjoyed doing

a yeah

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

v for them to do, yeah, i think they'll find it interesting

v umm, . . . have you been to any other museums, or our museum since

*i am interested in whether a has developed a long-term interest in museum visiting, will he become a museum visitor?*

a umm, yeah, yeah i have actually, i can't remember the name of the museum now, hee

v hee

a went there the other day

v did you go to the tate

*i remember a student teacher (bs) took this group to the tate*

a yeah that was it, the naum gabo

*this is an impressive recall of a difficult name, although the tate visit was a recent memory*

v that's amazing isn't it, that sculpture

a yeah

v are you making one of those sculptures here, a face

a well we attempting to, out those, ah, i don't know what they're called

v oh those polystyrene blocks is it

a yeah & it had all like shadow & stuff to give an effect

v yeah did yours work ok

a yeah it was alright, but i never managed to spray it though

v will you when you get time

a well the project over now

v is it

a yeah

v oh crickey

a yeah see that's why we doing this umm

v the computer work

a yeah

v oh

a i think the other group has gone down to, do naum garbo now, 'cos my groups finished

v & you did the tree project

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

a umm yeah yeah

v i liked your piece of work there its really good, so you've done loads of things  
really have't you

*the active part of the broad museum-art curriculum at this school seems to motivate  
students. perhaps it also provides a stronger seed in the student's memory*

a umm

v umm, in just a couple of years & what about when you finish, when your exams  
are over & everything what are you gonna do then

a do you mean like leaving school

v when you leave school yeah

a what do i hope to do

v yeah

a i hope to go to college

v umm

a do like betec national diploma, in popular music

v umm, yeah lots of you this year are gonna do like performing arts type things

a umm

v 3 of you that i've spoken to are gonna do

a umm, like darryl

v darryl that's right yeah

a yeah he's going, he's going brits college as well

v oh is that where your going as well

a yeah i was thinking of going there, & that college that you told me about

v goldsmiths

a goldsmiths

v yeah goldsmiths is good

a or something

v yeah, oh i do hope you get into into the, the brit school, yes, that'll be good,  
& you'll have some people you know

a yeah i gotta another friend, that went there, from the 9th year, he's younger than  
me he's a 10th year

v yeah

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

- a but he's still going there
- v umm
- a he does sound engineering
- v umm
- a he just told me like, its a good college
- v umm
- a i don't want to go straight to work, when i leave school
- v there's plenty of time for that isn't there
- a yeah
- v yeah , do you think you'll keep up with your art
- a what, since, you mean really when i
- v when you leave
- a i don't i don't i don't know, i'm not really into art, that much
- v it's really a pity isn't it, for people like you, & darryl, if umm, the idea of carnival, & the idea of african mask & masquerade, is um, its more like a performance really, & there's music & dance & singing
- a umm
- v & all sorts of things involved, and for somebody like you whose interested in music & stuff it would have been really good, perhaps, if we could have put some music into the um, the performance,
- a right
- v would you have enjoyed that, with some drumming doing some drumming for the for the carnival procession or
- a i would, hee, i wouldn't mind
- v or would you have felt a bit shy
- a no i wouldn't, i'm not shy anyway
- v yeah
- a depends anyway, at multicultural evenings, you can't
- v yes
- a you came
- v yes, brilliant wasn't it
- a did you see when i was on the drum

**Appendix 4.2. Representative sample of transcripts from taped interviews with key stage 4 GCSE secondary school students**

---

- v     yeah, yeah
- a     yeah & on the piano, i wasn't really scared or shy
- v     yeah
- a     used to it i suppose
- v     you have to be for being a performer i suppose, so that would have been a good thing to do wouldn't it
- a     humm humm
- v     if the music dept could have, could have, been involved, taken part in the project
- a     yeah
- v     that's something we could try for another year i guess, to really involve the music dept, & maybe the drama department as well
- a     yeah
- v     & then maybe you'd have more time to do the, the project
- a     umm
- v     anyway, i better not take up to much more of your time,
- a     ok
- v     & i hope you continue to come to the museums anyway hee hee
- a     alright then
- v     ok all the very best of luck to you
- a     alright, nice speaking to you
- v     umm
- a     OK



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