Introduction: After the return

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Abstract: As a topic, repatriation has ignited debates for years amongst scholars, local communities, and collecting institutions. The digital age has intensified and changed these discussions in ways that are sometimes unpredictable. One such shift is away from legal definitions and assumptions about repatriation to more inclusive notions of digital return and community stewardship. There are ever more stakeholders involved in the circulation of culture, often collaborating in innovative ways to manage, preserve, use and re-use digitally returned materials in mutually beneficial and meaningful ways. The articles in this special issue explore this critical field and extend the emerging discussion.

[Keywords: *Archives,* Collaboration*, Community Scholars, Cultural Conservation,* Cultural Property*, Descriptive Linguistics, Digital Media, Experimentation, Heritage, Indigenous Peoples, Intellectual Property, Material Culture, Museums, Patrimony, Preservation, Repatriation, Technology.* Keywords in italics are derived from the American Folklore Society Ethnographic Thesaurus, a standard nomenclature for the ethnographic disciplines.]

Before the Return: The Germ of an Idea

This special issue of *Museum Anthropology Review* grows out of a workshop, *After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge* that we convened at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) in Washington, DC on January 19-21, 2012. With support from the National Science Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution's Understanding the American Experience and World Cultures Consortia, this workshop brought together twenty-eight participants for two and half days of sustained and open debate.[1]

The idea for *After the Return* grew out of discussions that began two years previous. At the American Anthropological Association (AAA) meetings held in New Orleans in November 2010, Kimberly Christen organized a paper session under the same name. Her aim with the original panel—a session sponsored by the AAA's Executive Program Committee—had been to extrapolate from her own work in Central Australia and the Pacific Northwest and to begin to understand how digital repatriation differed from the physical repatriation of objects. In addition, she was increasingly interested to explore how digital tools—including the Mukurtu software that she and colleagues had been developing—could become part of wider debates about the cultural narratives of technology, heritage, and ownership.[2] These interests productively meshed with both Mark Turin and Joshua A. Bell's ongoing work. Turin has been working since 2000 to digitize, archive and circulate ethnographic materials from the Himalaya region through the

Digital Himalaya Project. Emerging from similar concerns but with global interests in 2009 Turin formed of the World Oral Literature Project.[3] Bell has been active in establishing and running the Smithsonian's Recovering Voices Initiative, which aims to promote the documentation and revitalization of the world's endangered languages and knowledge through connecting communities to collections.[4]

Following the success of the session at the New Orleans meeting, and inspired by the lively discussions that followed, we realized that the question of what happens to digital materials after they are returned to communities (however such communities are conceived, bounded, and lived) deserved deeper and more focused discussion and debate. Each of the projects in which we had been involved—whether in the Australian Outback, the Himalaya, or in Papua New Guinea—brought with them specific challenges and questions that could not be reduced to simple transcultural tendencies. Yet, at the same time, each intervention had common threads that revolved around the circulation routes for—and the social and political implications of—digital objects and their networks of production, consumption, and circulation.

Workshop group at the National Museum of Natural History, January 19, 2012. Photograph by Joshua A. Bell, © 2012.

All three of us have learned through our respective fieldwork, and during interactions in and around museums and digital explorations, that giving and receiving are rarely mono-directional or linear, and have to be thought of as reciprocal and cyclical ongoing processes (Bell 2008, 2010; Christen 2005, 2009; Turin 2007, 2011). Indigenous communities, museums, archives, and libraries, as well as individuals and family groups, are increasingly using digital materials in

sophisticated and intersecting ways (e.g., Boast, Bravo, and Srinivasan 2007; Geismar and Mohn 2011; Salmond 2012). This use productively builds on, and is in dialogue with, the complex ways that communities have been using, and continue to use, visual media to assert their sovereignty, challenge the terms and nature of representation, and create new intercultural dynamics (cf. Ginsburg 1991; Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod and Larkin 2002; Wilson and Stewart 2008). At the same time, the institutions and scholars engaged in processes of return and repatriation—whether these are digital or physical objects—continue to grapple with ever more complex notions of circulation and the ethical dilemmas and institutional barriers with which they were associated (e.g., Peers and Brown 2003; Meskell and Pels 2005; Hennessy 2012; Philips 2012). Collectively, this work grapples with what has been termed the "relational" aspect of museums, their collections and objects (Gosden, Larson and Petch 2007), or what Tim Ingold (2007) has termed "meshworks." In recognizing the ongoing process of giving, institutions and scholars are increasingly highlighting the ways in which objects are embedded in a nexus of social relations, the meanings of which are contextual and temporally bound. Expanding on this work, and using the term "object diasporas" in the context of heritage materials from Sierra Leone, Paul Basu (2011) has pointed to the ways in which work that addresses the relationality inherent in displays, objects, and collections, can help to reanimate these otherwise dormant connections in the creation of new relationships.

Critically engaging with these issues, the Digital Return workshop was thus born out of our collective desire to initiate a wider discussion with a diverse group of practitioners and community members who had been engaged in similar projects for many years. As we prepared the invitation lists, it became clear that informal knowledge networks that shared good practice, ideas and techniques were already a feature of this well-integrated scholarly community, and we should note that many of the presenters whose work we feature in this special issue were already in close communication with one another before they came together in Washington, DC. Rarely, however, had they all been gathered in one room for frank discussions on the challenges involved in pursuing such work. We were excited, then, to provide a framework that would nurture further interaction, and to facilitate critical debate about the very idea of digital return in all of its problematic manifestations, from the linguistic to the legal.

Returning What, Exactly?

Over the last two decades, as legal, social, and political changes have forced dialogue, negotiation, and debate about the return of objects and human remains to Indigenous communities, the term repatriation has become a central concern for anthropologists, museum professionals, and members of Indigenous communities. The diversity of Indigenous colonial histories and contemporary legal and social climates in settler nations has produced a varied landscape of practices that can be termed repatriation (Ames 1992; Brown 2003; Clifford 1997; Coombe 1998; Mihesuah 2000; Peers and Brown 2003).

In the United States, the passage of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) fundamentally altered the scope of relations—and power—between Native American nations and communities, scholars, and collecting institutions (Merrill, Ladd, and Ferguson 1993; Fine-Dare 2002). In Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, various legal

frameworks and localized social programs brought transnational attention to the physical return of Indigenous persons and objects as a form of social justice (Bell and Paterson 2009; Tapsell 1997; Turnball and Pickering 2010). To this end, Jennifer Kramer has argued that, "physical repatriation is assumed to be a restorative and beneficial solution to the historical problem of cultural objects having been removed from native communities and native possession…but ownership shifts and is contested" (2004:169). Return, then, is never a clear-cut act with a single known outcome. Framing the field of repatriation further, anthropologist and workshop participant, Aaron Glass suggests that:

> There is a huge diversity of terms used in the discourses of object return, all of which address the undoing of some past deed through use of the common prefix 're': repatriation, restitution, reparation, restoration, recover, reinstatement, re-emplacement, reunification, reconstitution, revitalization, recapture, rejuvenation, revival, remuneration, rehabilitation, relief…Obviously, the terms invoke various factors in the process–the original context of removal, the nature of social relations, the context for return…. [Glass 2004:118]

Over the last twenty years, scholars have shown that within the context of NAGPRA, the process of return through physical repatriation has cemented the notion of living objects as part of a present Indigenous modernity. "As objects come to represent the past", Glass notes, "they also become expressions of revitalized cultural identity. This is very clear in Native discourse surrounding repatriation, where language of NAGPRA suggests that 'sacred objects' will be used in ceremony and that 'cultural patrimony' will be displayed in tribal museums (where appropriate)" (2004:126). Legal scholar Rosemary Coombe, who was also present at the Digital Return workshop, argues that,

> NAGPRA in 1990 was but one of many acknowledgements of the rights of descendant communities that practitioners have come to recognize. Requests for the return of artifacts, historic photographs, and ethnographic information have become common. Ethical issues of accountability and professional responsibility now go beyond issues of stewardship…. to encompass responsibilities for the welfare and empowerment of those descendant communities…. [Coombe 2009:399]

Such discussions have led many to reflect on how objects, once housed in museums disconnected from Native communities, can ignite varied responses including the rejuvenation and re-imagination of traditions and cultural practices when returned (Peers and Brown 2003; Turnbull and Pickering 2010). Twenty years of NAGPRA negotiations have shown that much of the worry over the draining of national museum collections was misplaced. Instead, what has emerged is a sustained set of negotiations between Native nations and national collecting institutions. As James Clifford (2004:18) notes, repatriation helps to establish "indigenous control over cultural artifacts and thus the possibility of engaging with scientific research on something like equal terms." These engagements, however messy, have been and remain profoundly important in creating the grounds for collaborative histories to emerge and for shifts in museum display and management practices and understandings to follow, along with an appreciation of Indigenous ontologies (Field 2008; Phillips 2012; Sully 2007). Within this

transformed terrain of renewed and newly forged relationships, digital repatriation has become (as the technology increasingly permits) a critical site for differential practices of return of Native materials to their communities of origin

While physical return was, and remains, appropriate and necessary for some objects, many Native nations and Indigenous communities around the world could not house, did not have proper storage facilities for, or internal politics precluded the safe return of, physical objects. In such scenarios, digital repatriation has emerged as an alternative to physical repatriation akin to and in tandem with what has been termed visual repatriation—the practice of sharing copies of visual materials in archives and museums (Brown and Peers 2006; Fienup-Riordan 2005). As a distinct practice in its own right, digital repatriation encompasses many types of return, and requires work to define new areas of cultural needs, and to forge alternative sets of practices around the distinct features of digital objects. As Coombe demonstrates, "Although repatriation of objects is one course of action, recognizing guardianship may actually facilitate the keeping of cultural properties in public museums and enhance their use and display" (2009:401).

The essays in this volume demonstrate how repatriation and return practices have been altered by digital technologies that allow low-cost surrogates of cultural heritage materials to be distributed and shared among source communities. While scholars across many disciplines have focused on the ethical, legal, and political ramifications of physical repatriation, other forms of repatriation have largely been viewed as an extension of physical repatriation, or ignored altogether. We believe that the specificity of digital resources—the ease with which they can be copied, distributed, and revised, their ability to exist in multiple locations at once and their ephemeral nature—makes them distinct cultural objects that provide scholars with a rich platform for engaging with varied processes of cultural production and multiple routes for the circulation of knowledge. Indeed, if we accept Webb Keane's assertion that objects are bundles of different sensorial affects and relational properties that are historically constituted (Keane 2003), then new digital technologies help us not only see these properties but also lets them be constituted anew through the collaboration that they (i.e. digital technologies) help to engender. In this way digital returns not only decenter the authority of museums but in doing so remind us of the different ontologies in which objects are situated and by which they are understood (Edwards, Gosden, and Phillips 2006; Salmond 2012). Digital worlds do not reconcile these differences but instead bring them into dialogue—thus helping to realize a more symmetrical anthropology in which the partiality of knowledge is recognized (Latour 1993; Strathern 1991, 2005).

Digital repatriation can be a contentious term that generates reflex assumptions about the relationship between digital and material forms of cultural heritage materials. While it may be tempting to assume, at first glance, that the digital object—as a surrogate—somehow *replaces* the physical object, no standard definition, nor agreed-upon terminology, characterizes the multiple practices of collecting institutions, individuals, or local community groups surrounding the return of cultural and historical materials to Indigenous communities in a digital form (Cameron and Kenderdine 2007). Digital surrogates are not always intended to replace, or be synonymous with, the physical materials that they may represent. Instead, digital (or digitized) cultural materials may also provide an alternative form of—and dynamic life for—certain physical objects (see Geismar this volume). Such newly digitized and repatriated materials may be the impetus for linguistic or cultural revival, spur contention and disagreement, prompt new

cultural forms or popular products, incite new collaborations, and engender new types of performances and artistic creations (see Hollinger et al. this volume; Reddy and Sonneborn this volume).

As this collection asserts, one of the most promising and dynamic sites for anthropological collaboration with Indigenous communities has been in the field and practice of digital repatriation. Over the last twenty years, collecting institutions—museums, libraries and archives and individual scholars—have heeded calls by Indigenous peoples to integrate Indigenous curatorial models and understandings into mainstream museum and archive practices, from cataloging to display modes (e.g., Christen 2011; Crowell et al. 2010; Karp et al. 2006; Philips 2012). With the growth of new digital technologies, anthropologists, museum professionals, and Indigenous communities have collaborated to produce new models for the creation, circulation and reproduction of knowledge and cultural materials. The more recent development of Web 2.0 technologies grounded in user-generated content and bottom-up exhibition and display techniques has produced a dynamic platform for sharing materials. Web-based photo-sharing platforms and, more recently, online publishing tools, allow people to take advantage of low-cost or no-cost technologies to create exhibits and circulate physical objects in their digital form. The [Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures](#) (GRASAC) coalition is a model in this regard, creating a third space outside of specific institutions for new networks to emerge between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal scholars and communities to collaborate in the construction of knowledge around museum collections. Other examples include the innovative work of Clare Harris's team at the Pitt Rivers Museum on [The Tibet Album](#) project, the work spearheaded by Basu with colleagues at the Sierra Leone National Museum for the [Sierra Leone Heritage Project](#) and the [Reciprocal Research Network](#) (see Rowley *this volume*; Hennesy et al. *this volume*).

This newly animated digital terrain poses both possibilities and problems for Indigenous peoples as they seek to manage, revive, circulate, and create new cultural heritage materials. While digital technologies allow for materials to be repatriated quickly, circulated widely, and annotated endlessly, these same technologies pose challenges to Indigenous communities who wish to maintain traditional cultural protocols for the viewing, circulation, and reproduction of these new cultural materials. Many Indigenous communities wish to maintain control over the circulation of certain types of knowledge and cultural materials based on their own cultural systems (Christen 2009; Hennessy 2009). Digital technologies and the Internet have combined to produce both the possibility for greater Indigenous access to material collections held in collecting institutions, as well as a new set of tensions for communities who wish to control these materials and thereby limit their access and circulation. Although many museums, archives, and libraries have been quick to acknowledge Indigenous knowledge models and provide digital surrogates for communities who request them, these institutions have not attempted to systematically track *how* or *if* these materials have subsequently been used, reused, altered, and reframed (see contributions by Leopold, O'Neal and Anderson and Christen in this volume).

It should be noted that in arguing for these transformations, we are critically aware that for many communities this set of technologies remains elusive (Ginsburg 2008). However, despite this divide in localities, there is no doubt that repatriation practices have been affected by digital technologies that allow low-cost surrogates of cultural heritage materials to be returned to host

communities. Yet the literature and scholarly work on physical repatriation misses many of the most interesting details and remains largely silent on the ways in which digital reproduction, distribution and preservation changes the ethical, political, and social landscape of not just repatriation, but knowledge production and revitalization. The specificity of digital resources— the ease with which they can be copied, distributed, and revised—and their location within distributed technological networks, makes them distinct cultural objects to be grappled with in their own right. Precisely because digitally repatriated materials can exist in multiple locations, the scope for digital repatriation projects for Indigenous communities and institutions alike moves from issues of *access* to *access and control*. Digital objects can co-exist in Indigenous archives and websites as well as in institutional databases (online or off). This co-existence often leads to concerns over who makes decisions about how the materials are accessed, circulated, and understood across multiple settings. It also produces a different set of variables for community use and reuse related to "traditional" practices and knowledge sets. Returning digital materials to Indigenous communities foregrounds the need to study the processes of repatriation in relation to access to—and control, circulation and revitalization of—knowledge (Christen 2011; Isaac 2008).

Until now, most of the research on digital repatriation has focused on the *act* of giving back; less attention has been paid to *how* these materials are *circulated* and *accessed* once they are home; that is, *what* happens once digital materials are returned? This set of questions leads to others: How are these materials controlled and circulated within the community? Do they serve different purposes for local communities and other interested parties? How does the mode of access—an institutional online catalogue versus an Indigenous web portal—impact the practices of knowledge creation or revitalization? How are these newly formed cultural materials used within local social and cultural systems? Can digitally repatriated objects facilitate new knowledge creation and the revitalization of endangered languages and cultural practices simultaneously? If so, how are they mobilized within these projects? Can these projects inform international debates concerning Indigenous traditional knowledge protection and the promotion of Indigenous intellectual property (IP) rights? These are just some of the contentious questions that the contributors to this special issue, and the participants of our workshop, sought to address.

If the Digital is So Good, Why Don't You Keep It?

We were privileged to have Jim Enote, the Director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center at Zuni, as the keynote speaker at the workshop. He is a farmer, an artist, and a cultural visionary.[5] In 2010, Enote received the Council of Museum Anthropology's inaugural Michael Ames Prize for Innovative Museum Anthropology in recognition of his pioneering work over many years, work that has included a number of projects with digital components (e.g., Srinivasan et al. 2010). Moving deftly from a narrative reflecting on his grandmother's humility about her global connections as an artist to the necessity of tribal control and ownership of cultural materials, Enote's keynote emphasized the generative possibilities of new media alongside the necessity of tribal involvement from the ground up. Despite his enthusiasm for the workshop, he was pointedly critical of the idea of digital repatriation, and noticeably more comfortable with the more neutral terminology of return. If digital surrogates were so good,

Enote reasoned, why didn't the institutions, researchers, and scholars keep them, and return the original, non-digitized, analog object to the community themselves? Indeed in his view:

> We are not talking about ownership really if we are just getting a copy. That is not the same thing. If it is truly repatriation we get the ownership of it. Do we have to say this was a gift from this museum or now that we have this image or recording do we have to say courtesy of? No, unless we own it then it is not truly repatriation.[6]

Enote continued, noting that his grandmother:

> would have been very excited to hear her own voice and I can imagine she would have started gesturing too. She would have heard that and started saying "yes this is that song." Receiving images, songs, materials all of this, it is opening… it is a different kind of threshold. I've seen when information comes back... whether images, songs or materials come back to a museum or library in a native community... it becomes a beacon, a catalyst for communities for reviving, for cultural change, for social change. It does all of these things, it has incredible power. But, I think also we should think about the power of giving. That there is responsibility in giving and moving information like this.

Enote's welcome provocation about aspects of repatriation—what the process truly constitutes—and the responsibilities of giving and circulating knowledge stayed with us throughout our two days of discussions, and served as powerful inspiration for many of the presentations that followed. In fact, we organized the workshop around the notion of return specifically to signal it as an umbrella under which many different forms of practices—repatriation being just one—could be clustered, each of which had specific impacts and value for different contexts. Enote's keynote address served to remind us that there are many types of return and they are all inevitably embedded in the relationships and histories of the past and at the same time point to possibilities for the future. His desire to push us past the notion of repatriation as the return of digital copies underscores the need to unpack all the circulation routes of digital materials—as they become digital and move into multiple spheres of interaction. We encourage all readers of this special issue to take a moment to absorb the message of Enote's keynote address. Recorded on digital video by Smithsonian staff, his prescient and insightful observations can be watched online for free by visiting the Digital Return website: http://digitalreturn.wsu.edu/workshop/.

Bringing out the Themes

To address the issues outlined above, the workshop was organized along four overlapping thematic lines.[7]

(1) *Collaborations and Communications* highlighted the issue of forging the partnerships—face-to-face as well as with and through technology—that are needed to facilitate the return of cultural and linguistic materials. Collaborators addressed the challenges and successes of their joint projects and relationships. Panelists Guha Shankar and Cordelia Hooee; Kate Hennessy,

Mervin Joe, and Stephen Loring; Peter Brand, Heekuus (Victoria C. Wells) and Cha chom se nup (Earl J. Smith) (all in this volume) spoke frankly about what it takes to form and sustain such relationships, as well as what factors can impede long-lasting partnerships. For Heekuus, who hails from the Ehattesaht community in Canada, the terms repatriation and return were to be encouraged, as both the words themselves and the practices that they refer to convey and entail respect. She saw the political act of return as connecting to types of repatriation she had observed in her community and other First Nations Aboriginal communities. All of these collaborations have been forged at the crossroads of digital technologies, national and local repatriation movements, the desire for cultural and linguistic revitalization, and the on-going creation of culture and cultural practices within Indigenous communities.

(2) *Returned and Received* focused on how digital materials are received when multiple stakeholders are involved. Glass, Jane Anderson (this volume) and Surajit Sarkar (this volume) referred to their respective projects to probe the interaction between and within Indigenous communities, nation-states, collecting institutions, and local and regional communities as they relate to the return and reception of digital materials. Each of these stakeholders interact with and have specific claims to the preservation and circulation of such cultural materials and the attendant knowledge embedded within them, and this panel of the workshop addressed the intended and unintended consequences of returning materials.

(3) *Access and Accountability* dealt with the forms of access to and relationships with digital and material objects that occur during archival processes. Susan Rowley (this volume), Crowell, and Robert Leopold (this volume) discussed the practical matters that arise during large scale digitization projects with Indigenous communities as well as the ways in which digital technologies can bridge some circulation divides that emerge during this process. Each looked at both macro and micro levels to explore how the digital return of materials could take into account the sensibilities and cultural needs of Indigenous communities while also working within and through large institutions. The presenters also described how both sides were altered through the resulting collaborations.

(4) *Circulation and Transformations* looked broadly at the transformation of knowledge as a result of the circulation between communities and institutions. Lise Dobrin (this volume), Gary Holton (this volume), Haidy Geismar (this volume), and Coombe discussed how endangered languages, cultural materials, intellectual property, and ephemera intermingle in divergent ways through the process of return. Although transformation can happen with any type of engagement, these presentations examined the particulars of return practices that presuppose complex political, social, historical, and legal situations involving the return of cultural and linguistic materials. Through their concrete case studies, these presentations addressed the process by which research findings at once resonate with local interests but may also become politically contested.

These panel presentations were broken up each day with shorter presentations that focused on how the work undertaken at the Smithsonian Institution was reconnecting Indigenous communities with cultural and linguistic materials through both physical and digital repatriation and return projects. On the first day, Jennifer O'Neal (this volume), Head Archivist at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and Günter Waibel, Director of the

Smithsonian Digitization Program (see Hollinger et al. this volume) spoke eloquently on these issues. The second day featured a presentation by Jake Homiak, Director of Collections and Archives Program for NMNH's Department of Anthropology. Reflecting on the responsibilities of caring for NMNH's vast and varied collections in multiple media, Homiak highlighted projects that are working to capitalize on the collections to engage communities more widely in the mutual production of knowledge.

While such engagement happens at a rudimentary level every time the NMNH has visitors, whether through modifying catalogue data or physically amending the storage of materials as needed, it also emerges through more systematic projects. This is exemplified by the work spearheaded by Crowell, Director of the Arctic Studies Center in Anchorage which has resulted in the Sharing Knowledge Project, and a linked exhibition and catalog—*Living Our Cultures, Sharing our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska* (Crowell et al. 2010). Reflecting on a decade-long series of collaborations with communities in Alaska that contributed to the exhibition and a companion website, in his presentation Crowell demonstrated the effectiveness of bringing communities into conversations with collections, and addressed the challenges involved in recording, transcribing, and then presenting such knowledge to local and global audiences.

Mervin Joe Skyping from Inuvik with Kate Hennessy during their workshop presentation at the National Museum of Natural History, January 19, 2012. Photograph by Joshua A. Bell, © 2012.

Glass, in another presentation unfortunately not present in this volume, touched upon similar issues but in the context of his ongoing work to connect Northwest Coast collections to

communities. Specifically he reflected on the collaborations that informed his exhibit *Objects of Exchange: Social and Material Transformation on the Late Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* at the Bard Graduate Center (Glass 2011), and a current project to reassemble and connect the various materials that informed Franz Boas' 1897 monograph *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*, which are now dispersed between different institutions, and reanimate the various collaborations elided by Boas and the medium of a book.[8] Inspired in part by his participation in the workshop, and reflecting on the Boas monograph project, Glass (n.d.) suggests the use of "e-patriation" as an alternative to digital repatriation. He argues that the term is useful because of how,

> it privileges the political nature of both the act and the status of the receiving social unit, whether technically a sovereign "nation" or not; it highlights the unique materiality of the items being transferred while not delimiting the nature of their specific content…suggesting instead a novel circulation of forms (which are themselves "novel" in an important sense); and it side-steps the tricky question of legal ownership of the original physical materials (which such transfers generally do in practice).

Under the theme of *Collaborations and Communications*, Rowley provides an account of the last five years of creating and maintaining the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN). Involving 19 institutions to date, the RRN is a unique and compelling model of intra- and inter- university and museum collaboration with First Nations communities of Canada and now more widely with Indigenous communities. Emphasizing the technical support needed across institutions, Rowley candidly details the long-term goals of network integration that are necessary to support larger projects. Rowley's paper reveals the extensive work that this remarkable series of collaborations entails, and in so doing, underscores an ongoing issue found throughout the papers: digital collaborations only succeed when they are built on solid, ongoing social relations. In other words, the digital does not replace the social, but can rather help to reinforce and enable capacities that were otherwise not obtainable. Rowley teases out the various complexities involved in the language of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) involved in the RRN, and the obligations that they entail and demand.

In their contribution, Hennessy, Joe, and Loring (with co-authors Natasha Lyons, Charles Arnold, Albert Elias, and James Pokiak) elaborate on their collaboration to research and document the Smithsonian's MacFarlane Collection as part of the Inuvialuit Living History Project. Emerging out of the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN), the group is creating a digital "living archive" to explore the divergent but ultimately connected histories that these materials contain and give rise to. Drawing on the work of Jürgen Habermas (1996), they argue that the digital site creates a "communicative space" through which collections are recontextualized by and for a community. A key aspect of the project's methodology is the way that it explicitly involves members of different generations to facilitate the construction of the digital collections and support the flow of knowledge among the project team. This paper provides an important complement to Rowley's, demonstrating the practicalities involved in collaborations structured by the RRN through a specific case study.

Rounding out this section, Hooee and Shankar present their respective perspectives as librarians at the Zuni Public Library and the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center in relation to the return of the Doris Duke Zuni Storytelling collection. They also dwell upon the necessity of tribal involvement in the process of return, but highlight the many institutional and tribal roadblocks that can lie in the way of such projects. In particular, their paper emphasizes the need for open channels of communication and multi-leveled approaches to digital return projects. They also remind us of the ways in which these collaborations unfold over time.

Under the rubric of *Returned and Received*, Leopold draws on his experience as former Director of the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives and follows a set of digital objects—in this case digitized Cherokee manuscripts collected by James Mooney—and examines the impact and complications of such knowledge repatriation for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Taking as his starting point the gap between archival intentions and the needs of communities, Leopold examines how the dynamics of collecting play out in unusual and unexpected ways when materials are returned. Leopold's narrative is a remarkable account of the different expectations and realities of such collaborations.

Echoing issues raised by Leopold and others, Cha chom se nup (Earl J. Smith), Heekuus, and Brand discuss their working partnership using the First Voices language tool suite. With practical advice and examples of technological necessities and cultural needs, they showcase how tribal involvement leads to flourishing language programs on the ground in First Nations communities. In their multi-vocal account, they demonstrate how trust, respect, and mutual recognition lie at the heart of this project, and indeed have to permeate all effective digital collaborations.

Rounding out this selection, Jennifer O'Neal, formerly Head Archivist of the NMAI, enumerates issues involved in the digitization and circulation of the museum's rich holdings. In her contribution to this volume, she addresses the complications that emerge when working to integrate diverse materials in George Gustav Heye's founding collection as part of making them more accessible, alongside the need to navigate their messy trajectories and legacies in relation to the expectations of Indigenous communities (Carpenter 2005).

In the next section, *Access and Accountability*, Anderson and Christen chart out the conceptual and practical difficulties that Indigenous peoples and communities have with current IP law. Specifically, they elaborate on their collaboration to create and distribute an innovate network of Traditional Knowledge Licenses and Labels. These are delivered through an accessible and informative digital platform, Local Contexts, that is designed to address the complex IP needs of Indigenous peoples, communities, and collectives wishing to manage, maintain, and preserve their digital cultural heritage. Their contribution raises important points in relation to how IP regimes can be used to allow Indigenous communities to manage their materials—and those out of their physical control—in the ongoing struggle for legal, political, and social recognition within the digital domain.

Sita Reddy and Atesh Sonneborn, of the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, —both of whom attended the January workshop—provide a thought-provoking counter-example in their discussion of the ethics and practices of the return of sound recordings by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Taking their cue from Enote's keynote and Coombe's endnote, they

explore how music is an ideal medium to think with—both in terms of digital technology's capacity to share, but also in terms of what is truly being shared in and through digital surrogates. Emerging from their four case studies of music from the Abayuda, the Bosavi, Western Desert Aborigines and Kiowa Peyotists, it is clear that when such projects are undertaken ethically—with the aim of ceding control over use—the return of music works to serve Indigenous social and political ends just as much as they do transform archives and institutions.

For the section *Circulation and Transformations*, Holton and Dobrin collaborated to reflect on techniques and opportunities in digital language documentation projects in Alaska and Papua New Guinea, in particular how generational shifts have transformed community attention to language. In each case, such shifts have reawakened community interest in documentary materials and the relationships drawn on and created by the respective projects. Through their reflections on their separate but parallel experiences, they remind us how such collaborative work is processual, and how the continued access and transformative nature of the work is extended by the digital in various ways.

Broadening the geographic scope of this collection, Sarkar gives a compelling account of six years of performances in the Catapult Arts Caravan in Northeast and Central India. A unique opportunity for community members to comment in public on visual and audio explorations of heritage, the Caravan invites community commentaries to become part of the public spectacle. Sarkar outlines how these contexts provide critical outlets for public discourse, criticism, and reconciliation within the community. Sarkar's contribution points to important aspects of digital return in the Global South, where differently configured Indigenous and political realities affect the circulation of objects and ideas.

Eric Hollinger, Edwell John, Jr., Harold Jacobs, Lora Collins, Carolyn Thome, Jonathan Zastrow, Adam Metallo, Günter Waibel, and Vince Rossi chronicle a collaboration between the Smithsonian and the Tlingit community of Southeast Alaska's through new 3D digital technologies. Describing the imaging and 3D rendering of Tlingit sacred objects, they chart out new ways that museums can become repositories for digital renderings, which can then be reactivated as needed by tribes. While this collaboration points to an important new dimension in institutional and tribal relationships, and is one with wide ramifications, the project also challenges what a reproduction is and what it is not. Through such technologies, museums can develop more dynamic relationships with communities, becoming both institutions from which objects are returned through repatriation, as well as collaborative stewards of digital renderings of cultural heritage. This work continues the longstanding copying of techniques and forms that was a hallmark of early work at the Smithsonian (Isaac 2011), and raises important questions about how institutions can and should use their digital resources collaboratively.

In a concluding commentary, Geismar provokes us to think about how the digital is the new analog, by which she means the horizon by which all media is now understood and against which it is measured. Drawing on the notion of remediation and translation, Geismar usefully places the digital in the historical context of a wider media world (Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, and Larkin 2002). By exploring how the digital usefully remixes elements found in analog media, Geismar reminds us of what it is that the digital does and does not do.

Together, we hope that these papers contribute a new set of theoretical insights into the processes and practices of knowledge creation and cultural and linguistic revitalization in relation to digital materials. From linguistic anthropologists working to document and potentially revitalize endangered languages to archaeologists seeking ways to encourage local input on, and knowledge about, heritage sites, a wide array of anthropologists, linguists, folklorists, and others are using digital repatriation (broadly conceived) as a means to engage local communities, document traditional knowledge, expand the scientific record, and enhance ethnographic knowledge of community practices, languages, and social processes, past and present.

By emphasizing the *practices* that emerge from digital return, this collection of original articles helps to document the many, varied ways in which digital repatriation works (or does not work), while also theorizing the terrain of repatriation by documenting the day-to-day uses that grow out of its implementation. Rather than merely asking *if* such materials should be repatriated, these papers focus on materials that have already been digitally returned in an attempt to lay bare the *types* of cultural, linguistic, and social work these objects can engage in after they are returned. If digitally returned materials have unexpected uses and create new knowledge, how do we understand the role of giving back and receiving in relation to material culture? How can we re-conceptualize the ethical questions of return when digital surrogates rather than the objects themselves are at stake?

These contributions offer a way into these questions by providing specific details and historic analysis of long-term projects. By emphasizing the applied nature of digital return, they highlight the processes of labor and partnership that are part of the digital. In that way, they undo the mystified nature of much digital analysis and point to the types of knowledge circulation that form a tableau of interaction. Rather than fall back on the metaphors of the super highway, or web 2.0 notions of user-generated content, or more recent calls for a focus on 'big data,' these chapters emphasize a digital terrain that is enmeshed with the everyday practical and often-times messy and contradictory fields of relation, respect, and reciprocity that cannot be reduced to a singular metaphor. As we continue to engage with types of return, we open up the possibilities for knowledge creation by the very act of entering into lasting relationships. Digital return is structured on the one hand by the digital that allows for multiplicity, and on the other, by the ongoing practice of return, acts that are predicated on ethical relationships and understanding.

Notes

2. Mukurtu is a free and open source digital archive platform for managing and sharing digital heritage. It has been built for indigenous communities, archives, libraries and museums with the specific needs of indigenous communities in mind. Information on Mukurtu can be found at: http://www.mukurtu.org, accessed May 5, 2013.

3. Designed by Alan Macfarlane and Turin, the Digital Himalya Project is co-located at Cambridge and Yale universities, and is home to a large archive of ethnographic film, audio, journals and maps from or about the Himalayan region. Situated at Cambridge and Yale, the World Oral Literature Project provides small grants to help collect oral literature, hosts training workshops for grant recipients, and seeks to disseminate the results of such work by publishing a new open access series and developing new media platforms. Find Digital Himalaya at: http://www.digitalhimalaya.com/, accessed May 5, 2013. Information on the World Oral Literature Project is available at: http://www.oralliterature.org/, accessed May 5, 2013.

4. Begun in 2009, Recovering Voices consists of a partnership between the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History (NMNH), the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH). Collectively, staff are working to understand and address issues of language and knowledge loss at the national and global level. Drawing upon the Smithsonian's scholarly expertise, comprehensive collections, public outreach capacity and convening power, Recovering Voices is working to establish a synergistic methodological platform for conducting interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research to build effective collaborations with communities facing threats to their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Information on the Recovering Voices Initiative can be found online at: http://anthropology.si.edu/recovering_voices/, accessed May 5, 2013.

5. Enote is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Grand Canyon Trust, a Senior Advisor for Mountain Cultures at the Mountain Institute, a New Mexico Community Luminaria, an E. F. Shumacher Society Fellow, and a board member of the Jessie Smith Noyse Foundation.

6. From conference remarks made by Enote on January 18, 2012. For fuller context for his comments, see: http://digitalreturn.wsu.edu/workshop/, accessed May 22, 2013.

7. Please visit the Digital Return website for further details of the workshop and the presentations.

8. For the further information on the Boas project, see: http://digitalreturn.wsu.edu/presentation/the-distributed-text-a-critical-digital-edition-of-franz-boass-1897-monograph/, accessed May 22, 2013.

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Joshua A. Bell is a Curator in the Department of Anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, and serves as Director of the Recovering Voices Program. Through ethnographic fieldwork and research in museums and archives, he examines the shifting local and global network of relationships between persons, artifacts, and the environment in New Guinea and the United States. In addition to his curatorial work and public outreach, he has published many scholarly articles, including the edited volume with Alison K. Brown and Robert J. Gordon, Recreating First Contact: Expeditions, Anthropology and Popular Culture *(Washington: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2013).*

Kimberly Christen is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, the Associate Director of the Digital Technology and Culture Program, and the Director of Digital Projects at the Plateau Center for American Indian Studies at Washington State University. Her work explores the intersections of cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, intellectual property rights, the ethics of openness, and the use of digital technologies in and by Indigenous communities globally. She is the author of many works, including Aboriginal Business: Alliances in a Remote Australian Town *(Santa Fe, NM: School of Advanced Research, 2009). She is the Project Director for Mukurtu and Project Co-Director for Local Contexts.*

Mark Turin is Program Director of the Yale Himalaya Initiative and Director of the World Oral Literature and Digital Himalaya projects. Currently based at Yale, his research focuses on language endangerment and global cultural diversity, in particular in the Himalayan region. Turin is the author or coauthor of four books, the editor of seven volumes, the editor of a new series on oral literature with the Cambridge-based Open Book Publishers and the co-editor of the journal HIMALAYA.