AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Genna F. Reeves-DeArmond for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Design and Human Environment presented on September 13, 2012.

Title: Understanding Historical Events through Dress and Costume Displays in Titanic Museum Attractions

Abstract approved:

__________________________________________________________________

Elaine L. Pedersen

The sinking of the RMS Titanic has achieved a difficult feat – it has remained culturally relevant. The dedication of the general public to understanding Titanic is evident in many avenues of popular and consumer culture. For those individuals who did not get enough of the 1997 Titanic movie, there are numerous Titanic museums and attractions to visit. What interests me as a scholar of historic dress is that the 1997 film is often used as a lens through which the historical events are interpreted and understood. More specifically the character of Rose (from the 1997 Titanic movie) has been translated from a film character to a living history character. Rose has become an integral part of the marketing and exhibiting techniques at some Titanic museum attractions. The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character in the context of that event.

Four permanent Titanic museum attractions were selected as sites of study: museum attractions in Branson, Missouri; Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; Orlando, Florida;
and Las Vegas, Nevada. A total of 32 participants were included. Both museum attraction visitors and staff participated in this study; twenty-nine participants were classified as visitors and three participants were classified as staff.

Phenomenological and inductive approaches were undertaken. Qualitative (personal phenomenology, phenomenological interviews, and brief participant observation) data collection techniques were employed. Both descriptive and experiential phenomenological and narrative approaches were combined to analyze the resulting data. I utilized a descriptive phenomenological method outlined by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), and I made modifications to the procedure to fit the unique needs of my data.

Data collection occurred in two phases at each location. In phase one, I participated in personal phenomenology during a visit to each museum attraction. In phase two, I collected data with participants. Data collection with visitor participants occurred in three stages: (1) pre-museum attraction visit interview, (2) the participant visited a Titanic museum attraction, and (3) post-museum attraction visit interview. I collected data with each staff participant during one interview.

The findings of this study revealed that there are many perspectives from which to tell the story of Titanic and help museum attraction visitors learn the history of the ill-fated ship. I found that Rose did not factor into the decision of the participants to visit a Titanic museum attraction. If a participant learned from or about Rose, she did not factor into the learning or personal meaning-making process until he or she was inside the museum attraction. It was more common for participants to relate to the historical events of Titanic through the movie as a whole, as opposed to the specific character of Rose.
The scenario of including a Rose living history interpreter as part of the lived experience of a museum visit elicited a wide range of reactions from participants. It was more common for participants to oppose the presence of a Rose living history interpreter than favor her presence.

Several participants reported instances when they drew a spontaneous connection to the movie or were reminded of the movie in their own mind. Several participants used the movie as a foundation to build further historical understanding about Titanic. Some participants used the movie as a source of comparison to explore or confirm the accuracy of the movie. The primary difference in the museum attraction experience for visitors who had not seen the movie was that they encountered difficulty in relating and paying attention to any content or reference to the movie.

A general phenomenological structure was formed from the data. As part of this study, I sought to further expand the body of literature that applies visual rhetorical theory and semiotic theory to dress and costume. A discussion of the resulting theoretical implications is included. An outcome of the phenomenological data collection and analysis was a list of recommendations for future practice specifically related to the display of dress and costume in both Titanic museum attractions and museums in general. I conclude with recommendations for future research and a reflective summary.
Understanding Historical Events through Dress and Costume Displays in Titanic Museum Attractions

by
Genna F. Reeves-DeArmond

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APPROVED:

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

__________________________________________________________________________
Genna F. Reeves-DeArmond, Author
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I have had a passion for both Titanic and learning for as long as I can remember. How fitting that this project, the culmination of my college education, includes two of my greatest passions. It has been my personal and professional goal to earn a Ph.D. I now understand that it takes a village to complete a dissertation in order to earn that degree. There are several people to which I need to express my gratitude for this dream becoming a reality.

To my family, there is simply no way that I could have done this without you. You have always supported my love of learning and, though the Ph.D. process isn’t always easy or understandable, you have been there to witness my journey. You have celebrated my joys and helped me through tough times. To my mom, thank you for staying positive and always being a phone call or plane ride away for both fun and assistance. To my dad, thank you for your encouragement and editing assistance -- the final focus and title of this work is thanks to you! To my sister, thank you for helping me to focus and reminding me that it’s necessary to take breaks that allowed me to “breathe and reboot.”

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to the men, women, and children who experienced Titanic – as passengers and crew, different social classes, different cultures, survivors and victims – in 1912. We remember you and your lived experience as part of Titanic’s legacy. In particular, this dedication is extended to the hundreds of people who lost their lives on the morning of April 15th, 1912. As an individual who is dedicated to keeping this legacy alive, I see great importance in remembering this historical event (including your stories and contributions during and following the tragedy). I am a steward of your history. We are all stewards of your history.

“We are all passengers on the Titanic.”
-Jack Foster, Irish Philosopher

I also dedicate this research, my labor of love, to four amazing women in my life that I love: my mom, Margaret Reeves; my sister, Heather Prudhomme; my late grandmother, Dorothy “Mimi” Simi; my mother-in-law, Susan DeArmond – three generations of wise, caring, and successful women who have always shared my love of clothing and encouraged me to follow my dreams.

“I love you forever,
I like you for always,
As long as I’m living (and forever),
My grandma you’ll be.”
-Robert Munsch
“The Titanic disaster begs for resolution -- and always resists it” (Biel, 1996, p. 234).

On any given night it is not uncommon for me to receive a phone call or text message, from someone who knows me quite well, to inform me that the film *Titanic* is on television. I have seen this film dozens of times, and still I do not tire of it. Nor do I tire of my vast collection of Titanic books, documentaries, and other mementos. I have always had a profound interest in history, but the Titanic has incited a particular fascination for me. I am part of a group of individuals known as “Titaniacs,” a term born out of popular culture that refers to Titanic addicts with a desire to learn more about the historical events of Titanic and to engage in historical mimicry related to Titanic (both the historical event and the film)\(^1\) (Gill, 1998; Goodale, 1998; Underwood & Van Boven, 1998).

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\(^1\) Biel (1996) also discusses Titanic enthusiasts with a description of a group called the Titanic Enthusiasts of America (TEA). The TEA was later renamed as the Titanic Historical Society (THS). Biel conducted an informal ethnography of the TEA membership, citing that the overwhelming majority (almost 90%) are male and white (p. 177). I, as a Titanic enthusiast (not affiliated with the TEA [THS]), fit only the descriptor of white. Though, I suspect that those who identity as “Titaniacs,” a term commonly associated with individuals who are interested in both the historical event and the 1997 Titanic film, are more likely to be female. Kramer (1999) and Lubin (1999) discuss the film’s audience demographics and, in particular, the prevalence of a female audience. One similarity between the two groups is that TEA members were reported to regard an earlier Titanic film, *A Night to Remember* (1958) as “the bible”, similar to how “Titaniacs” regard the 1997 film *Titanic*. And, interestingly enough, many TEA members report their passion for Titanic beginning after the viewing of a Titanic-related film, such as *A Night to Remember*. 
It is the year 2012 and, because of many other people like me, the 1912 sinking of the RMS Titanic remains at the forefront of mass cultural memory. It is clear that Titanic has stood the test of time, still shrouded in intrigue and mystery an astounding 100 years later (Barker, 2000; Biel, 1996; Heyer, 1995). As John Joslyn, founder and co-owner of the Titanic Museum Attractions in Branson, Missouri and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee explains, “Titanic has universal appeal that transcends class, nationality, and sex…Titanic itself has a real mystique…People believed that whatever they did couldn’t be stopped and suddenly God reached down and stopped it” (Schneider, 1999, p. G2). In this vein, some scholars contend that the popularity of Titanic is largely based upon its ability to make individuals consider larger social issues, such as those discussed by Schneider (1999) and Lubin (1999).

The sinking of the RMS Titanic has achieved a difficult feat -- it has remained culturally relevant\(^2\) (Barker, 2000; Bergfelder & Street, 2004; Biel, 1996; Gill, 1998; Heyer, 1995; Zani, 2003). But, how has this happened and why? Though interest in the historical event has waxed and waned over the years, it expanded to a mass cultural phenomenon in 1997 when James Cameron’s *Titanic* film was released in theaters worldwide (Barker, 2000; Bergfelder & Street, 2004; Gill, 1998; Goodale, 1998; Gregg, 2000, p. 662; Harper, 1997; Lubin, 1999; Sandler & Studlar, 1999; Silva, 1998; Svetkey, 1998). This epic movie tells the events of the tragic sinking from the perspective of fictional survivor, Rose, who narrates the film in a modern day framing device (Barker,

\(^2\) Biel (1996) describes the cultural relevancy of the *Titanic* disaster as “cultural currency” (p. 226).
2000; Lubin, 1999). The film went on to become one of the highest grossing films of all time (Barker, 2000; Lubin, 1999; Sandler & Studlar, 1999).

Following the release of the film, Titanic (both the figure of Titanic and the sinking of Titanic) has become so closely associated with popular culture that the phenomenon has given rise to what is called “Titanomania,” a frenzy of activity -- generated by Titanic enthusiasts -- in support of becoming further educated about the historical events and engaging with the blockbuster film (Gill, 1998; Goodale, 1998; Levin, 1998; Lubin, 1999; Simpson, 1999; Underwood & Van Boven, 1998). The massive public interest generated by the film has been compared to participating in a religious or spiritual experience and hopping on a bandwagon (Ansen, 1998; Biel, 1996, p. 178; Gill, 1998; Kilgannon, 2012; Lyden, 2003). In fact, a Newsweek article published in 1998, shortly after the film’s theatrical release, described it as a “communal experience” for the general public (Schoemer, 1998, p. 64). For those who were not sure about their level of spiritual devotion to the doomed ocean liner, Teen People published a Titanic special issue in May 1998 (5 months after the film’s release!) with a list of the “Top 10 signs you’re obsessed with Titanic” (Gordon, 1998) and a quiz titled, “Are you a Titanic maniac?” (Vaccaro, Shultz, & Buchan, 1998).

Titanic fever has continued to reach dizzying heights during 2012 with a variety of opportunities to both celebrate and memorialize the 100th anniversary of the sinking. The centennial gave rise to the re-release of the 1997 Titanic movie in 3-D, National Geographic documentaries, memorial events, theme dinners, re-enactments, and the opening of new Titanic museums and exhibitions across the world (Elliott, 2012; Hale,
In a new book published in early 2012, Heyer (2012) explains,

In 1995 an earlier addition of this book appeared in response to renewed interest in the sinking resulting from the discovery of the wreck during the previous decade. By the turn of the millennium, however, I thought closure would finally be brought to one of the defining events of the twentieth century. I assumed that the public and the media’s almost century-long fascination would have ebbed, finally putting an end to my role as a chronicler of the phenomenon. I should have known better. Much has happened since. I was warned at the time that one of the consequences of any writerly engagement with the Titanic is that she will never let go (p. ix).

The dedication of the general public to understanding Titanic is evident in many avenues of popular and consumer culture (Bergfelder & Street, 2004; Biel, 1996; Elliott, 2012; Gregg, 2000, pp. 662-663; Hampson, 2012; Harper, 1997; Heyer, 1995, 2012). Bergfelder and Street (2004) explain that “Titanic has inspired a great wealth of representations across different art forms and media, and across a multitude of different national and cultural contexts” (p. 1). Titanic has become a social entity; something to see, experience, and be entertained by -- at the movies, on stage, on television, in books (including children’s literature [see Spedden, 1994]), on CDs, reproduction collectables, and in numerous other products sold in stores and on the internet. The historical event has been commodified in order to allow tourists and Titanic enthusiasts to relive the tragedy and its historical significance over and over again via many outlets (Adams, 2004; Bergfelder & Street, 2004; Biel, 1996, pp. 200, 226-234; Elliott, 2012; Hampson, 2012; Harper, 1997; Kabel, 2006; Kilgannon, 2012; Kramer, 2004; Munich & Spiegel, 1999; Sachs, 1992; Smith, 1999). This commodification is eloquently described by Biel (1996):

In the marketplace this translates into the notion that with the right amount of modification and repackaging, what had sold before will continue to sell. The
Titanic generates interest because it generates interest. It is an icon because it is an icon. In this way a good story can prolong itself indefinitely (pp. 226-227).

The film characters themselves have even been commodified. A May 1998 issue of *Teen People* magazine included an article titled, “A Perfect Rose,” detailing how to achieve the character’s appearance through skin care, make-up, and hair tips (Blonska, 1998). Costumes worn by the film characters are reproduced and sold on the internet. Both Franklin Mint and Mattel sold dolls in the likeness of Rose DeWitt Bukater. Thousands of tourists flock to Halifax, Nova Scotia each year to visit the final resting place for 150 Titanic victims, the largest concentration in the world. Tourists snap pictures and flock to a grave inscribed “J Dawson,” in reference to the character of Jack Dawson in the film. This grave is actually for John Dawson, who shoveled coal into the massive boilers and went down with the ship. This grave garners more flowers and notes than any other at that grave site (Felde, 2004). And, for those who didn’t get enough of the movie, the musical, the books, and the documentaries, there are the numerous Titanic museums and attractions to visit. While there is no comprehensive list in existence of all existing Titanic tourism sites, I know of at least twenty permanent Titanic museums worldwide, with around a dozen rotating exhibits that travel internationally. Of the permanent museums worldwide of which I have knowledge, I explored four Titanic museum attractions in the United States in the present study.

There has been a noticeable emergence of Titanic museums, attractions, and traveling exhibitions in the aftermath of the film release (Adams, 2004; Howard, 1997; Kabel, 2006; Kitchings, 2005; McKenzie, 1998; Schneider, 1999; Szadkowski, 2007; The Mariners’ Museum; 1998; Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition, 2011; Titanic: The
Experience, 2010a; Titanic Attraction, 2011). The hallmark of these venues is usually an interactive experience, including the integration of the fictional character Rose via displays of historic dress artifacts and film costume and interpreters wearing representational dress and film costume to bring the narrative of the actual historical event to life. Gapps (2009) explains that this combination of elements represents “memes” of history (i.e., the multi-sensory elements of an exhibit with which visitors engage) that help to confirm or mediate the experience of an authentic past. The use of representational dress to contribute to this interactive experience is a powerful reference to film iconography and non-verbal communication (Lyden, 2003). Bird (1996) speaks to power of this reference when she refers to media representations of Native American Indians, including their appearance, as the “dominant cultural fabrication” (p. 7). This conceptualization also fits the character of Rose, a character that has come to represent a Titanic passenger persona. Media representations shape our perceptions of experiences. The media has allowed the image of Rose’s dress to infiltrate mass culture at an increased speed. But, it is important to recognize that film itself, especially films about historical events, is a type of reality but, by in large, a representative reality that is not actually the history itself. However, film can lead to the development of representational dress, which is used to represent dress worn by a specific person or persons during a particular historical event or moment.

To invoke the significance of non-verbal communication is also to draw an important relationship between visual rhetoric, heritage culture theory, and the theoretical framework of Semiotics. Semiotic thought, in particular, posits that visuals are a
language of signs, symbols, and iconography that non-verbally communicates meanings about individuals and groups (Chandler, 2007). That is, the onlooker or audience is allowed to place the visual (in this case, a costume) in a context that can be understood and “decoded” (Street, 2001; Williams, 2009). The generalized meaning of visual imagery conveyed within a museum exhibition demonstrates that history and culture, in general, hold a meaningful set of signs.

What interests me as a scholar of historic dress is that the 1997 Titanic film is used as a lens through which the historical events are interpreted and understood. More specifically, Rose has been translated from a film character to a living history character. In addition, a costumed character of Rose is an integral part of the marketing and exhibiting techniques at three permanent Titanic attractions, all of which are included in this study. She, along with the film as a separate entity, serves as a mascot of sorts, a means by which visitors find the story of the Titanic entertaining and relatable. She has become a symbol of the historical event and so invites interpretations from the perspective of semiotic theory. But theatrical films are often fictionalized, and Rose is a fictional character so her place in a historical exhibit also invites examination. The purpose of this research was to explore the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character. I believe that my study will create a new niche in research on historic dress by combining interdisciplinary elements of symbolic communication systems, visual rhetoric, philosophy of aesthetics, and institutional critique in the museum-based setting.
Theoretical Orientation: Visual Rhetoric

The development of theory related visual rhetoric represents an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship. Visual rhetoric is also a field of study and method or principle of visual design (Ma, 2008). Though not a conventional theory with which to examine dress and costume, visual rhetoric is a valid perspective with which to interpret the persuasive influences projected by visual objects and imagery.

The theory of visual rhetoric states that visual imagery can be used as a symbol to communicate and “may formulate, sustain, or modify attention, perceptions, attitudes, or behavior” (Sloan, Gregg, Nilsen, Rein, Simons, Stelzner, & Zacharias, 1971, p. 220). In essence, visual rhetoric is characterized by the strategic use of symbols (in visual and tactile forms) to modify and influence another person’s actions and behaviors (Ehninger, 1972; Foss, 2005; Kenney & Scott, 2003). For this reason, visual rhetoric is often used in advertisements and other promotional materials. An artifact serves as tangible evidence of a creative act and, thus, serves as the primary data source for a visual rhetor or rhetorician/rhetorical critic.

Visual imagery provides increased comprehensive understanding of the human experience -- an experience that is not always available through the study of discourse. In contrast to visual imagery, discursive language has a defined set of meanings and units (i.e., grammar and syntax) and, therefore, can only refer to a limited range of observation and thought (Foss, 2005).

---

3 A visual rhetor can be defined as an effective communicator that communicates a visual rhetorical message and “anyone engaged in preparing or presenting [visual] rhetorical discourse (Herrick, 2009, p. 285).

4 A rhetorical critic can be defined as a scholar who assesses how rhetorical messages are used, including their level of effectiveness, to persuade, inform, and entertain an individual (Foss, 2009).
Visual rhetoric is a relatively new theoretical perspective within the realm of rhetorical criticism, therefore this discussion is comprised of a broad overview to provide context for its possible applications. While rhetoric itself dates back to Ancient Greece, visual rhetoric was not recognized as valid scholarship until the 1970s. Kenneth Burke is considered one of the “founding fathers” of this perspective; he advanced the perspective that symbolism could take on forms other than language and speech. In 1972, scholarship was published that expanded the definition of a symbol to include visual elements (Foss, 2005; Ott & Dickinson, 2009).

Though introductory visual rhetoric scholarship published in the 1970s was a major advancement for the theoretical perspective, further acknowledgement of its significance was met with objection by several scholars (Ott & Dickinson, 2009). One such objection was expressed by David Zarefsky (1992), who suggested that visual images “stand in for a more complex reality” (p. 412). This objection is rooted in the idea that discursive language has a defined set of meanings and units (i.e., grammar and syntax) that offer a more complex range of observation and thought.

Another objection included the notion that the processing of visual imagery is less deliberate than verbal discourse; that is, verbal discourse requires more critical thought in order to process meaning (Jamieson, 1992). I will argue in opposition of the ideas presented by Zarefsky (1992) and Jamieson (1992) who assert that visual imagery stands in for a more complex reality. Perhaps these scholars are referring to the fact that the meaning associated with visual imagery is more implicit than explicit.
One of my fundamental positions, as the researcher, is that meaning associated with visual imagery is more complex than discourse because it can have generalized meanings that are agreed upon, but it can also have more specialized and nuanced meanings and, in fact, be more prone to such meanings (cf., Jamieson, 1992; Zarefsky, 1992). Despite opposition, visual rhetoric has grown as a perspective, particularly since the mid-20th century, and writers/scholars of visual rhetoric recognize a range of human experience (Foss, 2005); a range that can be lacking in discourse. There has been substantial work done in the realm of visual rhetoric. The following is a brief and interdisciplinary overview of some of research that has been completed:

- “To Veil the Threat of Terror”: Afghan Women and the Clash of Civilizations in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terrorism (Cloud, 2008)
- Mediating Hillary Rodham Clinton: Television News Practices and Image-Making in the Postmodern Age (Parry-Giles, 2008)
- Benjamin Franklin’s Pictorial Representations of the British Colonies in America: A study in Rhetorical Iconology (Olson, 2008)

Kenney and Scott (2003) explain that the popularity of visual rhetoric has increased because visual communication (e.g., film, television, magazines, and advertisements) increased during the second half of the 20th century. Ongoing efforts to expand the comprehensiveness of rhetorical theory have also fueled the popularity of visual rhetoric. In this way, the growth of visuality has defined visual rhetoric as an interdisciplinary theory and field of research. With my study I sought to further expand
the body of literature that applies rhetorical theory, through a particular visual medium: dress and costume in film.

When studying visual imagery, it is common for a rhetor to focus upon the assessment of the nature of the image. When studying the *nature of the image*, the rhetor looks at two components – presented elements and suggested elements. The study of presented elements involves the observation of physical features. It is the study of suggested elements that moves beyond the confines of discursive language. The study of suggested elements involves the analysis of themes, ideas, concepts, and allusions that may be inferred by a viewer from the presented elements (Foss, 2005). In this vein, Kanengieter (1990) provides the example of gold leafing found on Baroque buildings that may suggest wealth and privilege.

The two components (i.e., presented elements and suggested elements) help to shed light on the many similarities that can be drawn between visual rhetoric and other concepts and modes of thought being invoked for the present study (e.g., semiotic theory, material culture research method and paradigm, tourism, and commoditization). An explicit connection between visual rhetoric and semiotic thought has been established in the literature with Lester Olson’s (2008) work entitled, “Benjamin Franklin’s Pictorial Representations of the British Colonies in America: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology.” Barry Brummett, one of the few rhetorical scholars to look at fashion and style, has examined the ways in which style and fashion contribute to the commodification and capital of garments through a rhetorical lens (Brummett, 2008). While the main foci of

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5 Other common assessments include the function of the image and the nature of the image (Foss, 2005).
Brummett’s work (i.e., rhetorical thought applied to fashion and style) are not within the scope of the present study, he creates a link between rhetoric and commoditization, which is a fundamental concept in the study of tourism and this study.

A popular subject area of visual rhetoric that has become fashionable in recent years is public memorialization and sites of tragedy (Blair, Jeppeson, & Pucci, 1991; Prelli, 2006). The emotions that are drawn upon at such sites can dictate how individuals view and describe a particular image. Emotive strategies, such as narratives, can be used to create a personal connection between visitors and the individuals being depicted. The emotive spectacle (i.e., central focus on the love story of Jack and Rose) has been cited as one of the main reasons for the blockbuster success of the 1997 film (e.g., Gill, 1998; Goodale, 1998; Kramer, 1999, 2004; Schoemer, 1998; Silva, 1998). This is particularly pertinent to the present study because the RMS Titanic is largely associated with tragedy, and I have observed, as the researcher, that there are two layers of emotion being established with the use of film costume in the museum setting: (1) those related to the historical event and (2) those related to the narrative and characters that are presented in a film about the historical event. This observation is informed by literature addressing the emotive response of viewers to narrative film, audience spectatorship, and reception theory (e.g., Barbatsis, 2005; Brummett, 2006; Caplan, 2006; Currie, 1995; Goldie, 2000; Porter, 1992; Schimd & Kaufmann, 2006).

A subset of visual rhetoric is the rhetoric of display (Herrick, 2009; Prelli, 2006). The element of display has been explored as a deliberate source of revealing and concealing visual imagery and/or objects for an intended audience. For example, some
museums in the “Old South” of the United States are directed toward Caucasian audiences. Therefore, visual rhetorical display is used to express the values and attitudes of this particular audience (Gallagher, 2006). As highlighted in this example, visual rhetoric is especially applicable to the display of objects and information in the historical museum setting because there are a variety of ways in which history can be conveyed. Scholarship has begun to address the visual rhetoric of Titanic exhibitions. Jorgensen-Earp (2006) explains the dominant rhetorical messages that have been generated by treating the Titanic wreckage as a grave site and displaying salvaged artifacts. The present study is an extension of Jorgensen-Earp’s (2006) work that specifically aims to analyze the reception of and dominant messages being disseminated via dress and costume within Titanic exhibitions and museum attractions. In this vein, my study is also informed by Liggett (2002), who has already begun to identify the varied ways in which the meaning of Rose’s costume can be consolidated for audience/visitor viewing and reception.

Visual rhetoric can be used to explain the influences on dress and costume. It can account for the ways in which images come to possess meaning. As a dress historian, I recognize the notion that images (particularly fashion) do not exist in a vacuum. Images are not engaged in the absence of historical influence and perspective. The meaning of an image is dependent upon time and place. Thus, as a dress historian the following question must be asked: In what embodied context has one encountered the image and why does this matter?
Theoretical Orientation: Semiotics

In the context of the present study, a discussion of visual rhetoric is logically followed by a discussion of semiotics. Drawing upon the work of Eco (1976), Feldman (1995) and Zulick (2004), Ma (2008) explains the direct relationship between visual rhetoric and semiotics:

If rhetoric embeds qualities in a visual communication to create intended meanings, how then do those meanings...eventually grow out of one’s interpretation of visual rhetoric...? How could we know the signification of the visuals? This leads to the semiotic dimensions of visual communication. Semiotics and rhetoric share roots in the traditions of classical rhetoric; both involve the study of any medium as a sign system. ... What is indicated is that when a sign stands in for an object, a representation, or a symbol, the representation or symbol is possibly rhetorical.

Hence, my research inquiry is informed by semiotic theory, which posits that dress is a language of signs, symbols, and iconography that communicates meanings about individuals and groups (Barthes, 1990; Brummett, 2006; Chandler, 2007). Semiotics arose from the works of Saussure (1857-1913) and Peirce (1839-1914) at the beginning of the 20th century (Crow, 2003). Roland Barthes and Daniel Chandler have also become influential figures in the development of semiotics, and their work will be emphasized. It is important to study from the perspective of semiotic theory because it can assist us to become more aware of the mediating role of signs and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing social realities. It can make us less likely to take reality for granted as something which is wholly independent of human interpretation (Chandler, 2007, pp. 10-11).

Roland Barthes contributed heavily to the application of semiotic thought to fashion/dress studies (see Barthes, 1990). Barthes, expanding upon the work of Saussure, was the first theorist/linguist to apply semiotic thought to visuals and objects (Kawamura, 2011).
Dress can be studied through semiotic analysis because it enables us to make ourselves understood with rapid comprehension by the onlooker; that is, it allows the onlooker to place the individual in a context that can be understood and “decoded.”

The semiotic concepts of primary importance to the present study are as follows: (a) the icon, (b) synecdoche, (c) metonymy, and (d) index. The icon is a symbol that is recognized through its resemblance to another object (Brummett, 2006; Chandler, 2007; Cumming, 2004). An example of iconic meaning can be found in the celebration of the holiday Halloween, which incorporates dress as an icon. On this holiday, children dress up to resemble certain characters and individuals, both fantastical and realistic, to “trick or treat” at nearby homes. In this context, children become the icon. Upon opening the door, the homeowner will often identify the icon being represented by the child based upon visual cues that resemble known characters and individuals (Brummett, 2006, p. 10).

The symbolic meaning associated with the icon is particularly important to movie costumes, since costumes help to provide context for the story being told in the film (and, in the case of Titanic, context for the historical event as well) (Street, 2001). In the case of the film, Rose’s clothing and images of her clothing are particularly important carriers of meaning. In this study I analyzed the meaning that is derived from Rose’s clothing and images of her clothing by museum attraction visitors. In accordance with other scholars (e.g., Liggett, 2002; Street, 2001), I contend that these meanings have become fixed over time, which has likely enabled the 1997 Titanic film and Rose to become symbols of how we perceive and relate to Titanic. I also contend, in accordance with Brummett (2006, p.
that it is possible for iconic meaning to be individualized; that is, the viewing of the 1997 *Titanic* film may cause individuals to recall memories or events specific to their lived experience.

One theoretical concept that has not been previously explored in depth in the literature is the representation of dress as synecdoche, defined as “the substitution of part for whole” (Lanham, 1969, p. 97). Chandler (2007) uses the common American expression of “two heads are better than one” as an example of synecdoche (p. 132). The concept of synecdoche is also applicable in the context of film. Jakobson and Halle (1956, p. 92) cite the example of photographic and filmic media close-ups. The 1997 *Titanic* film introduces the character of Rose with a close-up framing device that incorporates a wide-brimmed hat as an instrument for revealing the character. Synecdoche may be applicable if visitors regard Rose and her dress as a part that represents the greater whole of Titanic and its history. That is, visitors may treat Rose as a composite representation of all (female) passengers aboard the ship. This theoretical concept is particularly promising in this context because it represents an intersection between visual rhetorical theory and semiotic theory. The presence and use of synecdoche was investigated in this study and will be discussed in the results.

Another theoretical concept that has not been previously explored in depth in the literature is the representation of dress as metonymy, defined as “the evocation of the whole by a connection” (Wilden, 1987, p. 198). Chandler (2007) elaborates upon this definition: “[metonymy is] a figure of speech that involves using one signified to stand for another signified which is directly related to it or closely associated with it in some
way, notably the substitution of effect for cause\(^6\) (Chandler, 2007, pp. 253-254). An example of metonymy is the use of the word “crown” in substitution for “royalty.” Metonymy can also be employed by describing an individual’s clothing and/or appearance to characterize the individual. In this way, it is “the rhetorical strategy of describing something indirectly by referring to things around it” (Nordquist, 2011, para. 2).

Metonymy is described by some scholars as performing similar functions to synecdoche and assuming meaning commonly associated with the index meaning system (e.g., “the sign and the meaning are linked by way of cause or association” [Brummett, 2006, p. 9]). An example of indexical meaning can be found in a set of closely connected characters in a film or television show; each character is likely to make an individual think of the other associated characters. Word association games also shed light on the indexical meaning held by individuals (Brummett, 2006, pp. 9-10). The concepts of metonymy, indexical meaning, and synecdoche are interrelated and have subtle similarities that can make them difficult to individually distinguish. Berger (2000) offers some guidelines for distinguishing between these concepts. Metonymy is related to indexical meaning because they both involve “communicating by association” (p. 41). In addition to being characterized by associative communication, metonymy can also be regarded as a way of making sense of information “by making connections between things we know about and other things” (Berger, 2000, p. 41). Berger (2000) describes

\(^6\) Though substitution of effect for cause is the most common use of metonymy, Chandler (2007) also lists other possible substitutions: object for user, substance for form, place for event, place for person, place for institution, and institution for people (p. 130). See page 130 of Chandler (2007) for examples of each type of substitution.
synecdoche as “a subcategory of metonymy in which a part is used to stand in for the whole and vice versa” (p. 41). Thus, in my study I provide an introductory elucidation of how these concepts can be distinguished from one another, particularly in the realm of material culture (e.g., dress and costume).

Several scholars have recognized semiotics as an apt theoretical orientation with which to study the varied disciplines that encompass the present study; including museum studies, dress and costume, tourism, the historical events of the RMS Titanic, and the representation of the RMS Titanic in cinema (Barnard, 1996; Barthes, 1990; Barthes, 2006; Bruner, 1989; Cohen, 1988; Culler, 1981; Kawamura, 2011; Lehmann, 2000; Leiper, 1990; Liggett, 2002; Lurie, 2000 [1981]; Wang, 1997). Scholars have used semiotics to study similar areas in the past. Ulrich Lehmann (2000) wrote a scholarly article presenting the semiotic analysis of a character in an Alfred Hitchcock film. Jonathan Culler (1981) wrote a seminal article entitled, “Semiotics of Tourism,” in which he explains how tourists and tourist attractions are implicated in the semiotic system. Erik Cohen (1988) wrote a scholarly article entitled, “Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism,” in which he uses a Gestalt-like reasoning to argue that metonymic elements (i.e., parts) symbolize the authenticity of a cultural product associated with tourism (i.e., the whole). While the present study does not directly address authenticity as part of the research inquiry, Cohen’s work clearly shows how metonymy can be applied to the many facets of tourism. Relative to the present study I find specific significance in the work of Lori Liggett (2002), who wrote a book chapter entitled, “Maiden Voyage: From
Edwardian Girl to Millennial Woman in *Titanic.*” Liggett directly identifies semiotic elements (e.g., signifier and synecdoche) within the 1997 *Titanic* film:

> It is through the transformative body of Rose, while the character of Rose is a signifier, calling into question the ideology of an era, that the historical significance of the tragedy and the intricacies of the event are perceived. If, unlike [Marilyn] Monroe, Rose never existed in history, as a character she does embody a hybrid of individuals aboard the ship. By film’s end, she is an historical construction of the culture in which the tragedy took place and, perhaps even more intriguing, of our own present: a synecdoche. (p. 188)

I sought to expand with the present study the body of literature by adding further support for the use of semiotic thought in analyzing the interdisciplinary work related to dress and costume.

**Purpose of the Study**

A major premise of the present study is that an understanding of historical dress can be enhanced from the perspective of theatrical and film costume because, consistent with theories of material culture, it affords an additional dimension of understanding of the role of dress within society (Cumming, 2004). This is so because theatrical and film costume is, according to Cumming, characterized as a mass-cultural phenomenon that assists in the construction of persona and identity. The portrayal of historical personas extends beyond a one-dimensional view of history and allows the viewer to engage in the multi-sensory complexities of a lived experience (Ordon, 2008; Runyard, 1996).

The unique nature of Titanic attractions also raises questions about the difference between museums and other museum-inspired venues (e.g., museum attractions). In particular, this includes the impact of tourism and other leisure activities on the museum institution, as well as why individuals visit museums and the role of dress and costume in
attracting museum visitors. Museums serve a unique multi-purpose function: the fulfillment of education, social interaction, and entertainment in one location (Foley & McPherson, 2000; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Urry, 1993). Tourism has contributed to the visitor expectation that entertainment and recreation will be included in a museum (Foley & McPherson, 2000), including those museums devoted to Titanic (Harper, 1997; Szadkowski, 2007). This multiple purpose function can be executed in a variety of ways, including the incorporation of dress and costume. Museums have been found to benefit from the popularity of notable celebrities and characters by displaying parts of their wardrobe and/or the film costumes commonly associated with the character (Ordon, 2008; Taylor, 2004). Titanic museum exhibits and attractions foster tourism (Kabel, 2006; Schneider, 1999), and film costume is often used in the context of artifact display and living history (Marr, 2007).

The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event. I used an interpretive research design that incorporated a phenomenological approach (e.g., phenomenological interviews, phenomenological reduction, and Personal Meaning Mapping) to explore the current curatorial and visitor engagement practices used by Titanic museum attractions. I used a research design that lent further understanding to how period film costume, extant dress, and representational dress are understood and perceived by museum visitors.
Titanic museum attractions have been covered in the popular media since their opening, but academic insights regarding their incorporation of the Rose movie character and dress and costume displays are minimal. In addition, relatively little is known about specific exhibition techniques being used or certain objects that are being displayed in Titanic museum attractions. My work fills this void by conducting an interdisciplinary microanalysis regarding the role of dress and costume in Titanic museum attractions. I believe it was important to approach this study from an interdisciplinary perspective because tourism itself is a complex mix of disciplines such as political science, education, ecology, culture, anthropology, and economics (Kitchings, 2005). The same can be said about the study of historic dress and costume which draws upon research and theory from disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and history (Reeves-DeArmond, Ogle, & Tremblay, 2011).

I examined the experiences of visitors and staff at Titanic museum attractions using the following main question: How do visitors to and staff of Titanic museum attractions describe their experiences in the museum, especially with regard to the display of dress and costume? Subquestions include:

1. Why do visitors choose to visit the Titanic museum attraction? And, does the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into exhibitions (especially via costume, living history, and display) factor into this decision?

2. Do Titanic museum attraction visitors use the 1997 film Titanic to relate to the historical event of Titanic? If so, what role is played by Rose and her dress/appearance in this relation?
3. Does the museum attraction experience differ for visitors who are not fans of/who have not seen the film? Do these visitors feel a personal connection with Rose and her appearance?

At the start of this study I did not think that I would have access to museum attraction staff. However, I was able to make contact with several staff members via a social networking website (e.g., Facebook) and during my personal phenomenological visits. I conducted interviews with three staff members. As a result, my analysis was enhanced by data that addressed the three original sub-questions (listed above) and the addition of staff members’ insights from the perspective of interaction with visitors in the museum attraction setting. The lived experiences of museum attraction staff were explored in the context of the following informal research questions, which together comprise research question four:

- What is the staff member’s perception and experience with how visitors use dress artifacts and costume displays, the movie, and the Rose character to understand Titanic?
- How do Titanic museum attraction staff members engage with education, outreach, and curatorial decision-making related to dress artifacts and costume displays?
- How do Titanic museum attraction staff members interact with visitors?

**Assumption**

Visual rhetoric was an important theoretical component and analytical tool of the present study, particularly in the analysis of the meaning that a museum patron derives
from the content of an exhibit. As the researcher, I assume that all content of a museum exhibit is unavoidably selective and therefore rhetorical (Corrin, 2004, Ma, 2008). It is important to consider what the exhibit staff is trying to convey by exposing patrons to the selected visual imagery (Bal, 1996; Herrick, 2009; Prelli, 2006).

**Definition of Terms**


**Costume:** Complete dress or apparel that “indicates the ‘out-of-everyday’ social role or activity” (Roach & Eicher, 1992, p. 3). Examples of complete dress that indicate an ‘out-of-everyday- social role or activity include film and theater, festivals, ceremonies, and rituals. Costume also includes all outer garments and accessories worn at one time and characteristic of any country, period, class, or calling (Picken, 1999, p. 83). Costume “is the outward and visible sign of the inner spirit which informs any given period or nationality” in an out-of-everyday social role or activity (Barton, 1961, p. v).

**Character:** A fictional analogue of a human agent (Smith, 1995, p. 17) that depends upon not only a general concept of human agency in appearance, thought and action, but also on conceptions of social roles specific to a culture (Smith, 1995, p. 21).

**Costume Drama:** A costume drama, also known as a period drama, is a period piece (also known as a period film) in which elaborate costumes, sets, and properties are featured in order to capture the ambiance of a particular era. The term is usually used in
the context of film and television. The implication is that the audience is attracted as much by lavish costumes as by the content (Macmillan Dictionary Online, 2011, para. 1).

**Film Costume:** Costume worn by an actor or actress to make him or her look like a specified character in a way that conforms to the narrative being depicted in a film. Film costume “presents living people [in context and narrative-specific costume to an audience] -- people, moreover, who must be made quickly understandable to an audience; men and women whose appearance must reflect their characters as revealed in word and actions” (Barton, 1961, p. viii).

**Heritage:** “The representation of the past for popular contemporary consumption” (Terry-Chandler, 2000, p. 68); “the evocation of an imagined past as viewed through the present” (Terry-Chandler, 2000, p. 70).

**Indexical Meaning:** The index is a component of the symbolic system that refers to a type of symbolic meaning that “indicates something” between the sign and object (Chandler, 2007, p. 42); that is, the sign and object “are linked by way of cause or association (Brummett, 2006, p. 9). “One thing is always or often found with another thing, and so one gets you to think of the other. … [For example,] smoke is an index of fire; if you see smoke, it causes you to think of fire because you know that one thing is associated with (caused by, in this case), the other” (Brummett, 2006, p. 9).

**Living history:** Individuals or groups that engage in exhibition and performance practices (i.e., the simulation of life in another time and possibly place) to interpret the life of the past and evoke a different historical time from the present for the public or for recreation. As interpretation and play, living history is concerned with creating accounts
of the past that provide a realistic and authentic experience. These practices strive to create an authentic experience through the use of authenticated artifacts, such as costumes, from a first or third person interpretation. Living history provides a context – showing how artifacts, the activities of a site, and social life fit together.


**Memes:** The multi-sensory elements of an exhibit with which visitors engage that confirm or mediate the experience of an authentic past (Gapps, 2009, p. 403; Schwartz, 1996, pp. 273-275).

**Metonymy:** A metonym is “a figure of speech that involves using one signified to stand for another signified which is directly related to it or closely associated with it in some way, notably the substitution of effect for cause” (Chandler, 2007, pp. 253-254). It can include the functions ascribed by some to synecdoche, making the two concepts synonymous to some scholars (Chandler, 2007, p. 254).

**Near Environment:** Dress, textiles, interiors, and built structures.

**Popular Culture:** The culture of mass appeal. A creation is popular when it is created to respond to the experiences and values of the majority, when it is produced in such a way that the majority have easy access to it, and when it can be understood and interpreted by that majority without the aid of special knowledge or experience (Bell, 1982, p. 443).

**Representational Dress:** Historic dress, functioning as costume, which has been designed and constructed based on research so that it characterizes authentic apparel (i.e., dress artifacts and depictions of dress in primary sources) worn by a specific person, or
persons in a particular place and/or period of time. The characterization of authenticity involves being as close to the original design as possible or similar to the original design. Levels of historic authenticity may vary due to the following criteria:

1. skill level of the representational dress designer,
2. requirement of a garment to fulfill needs for which it was proposed,
3. the availability of supplies, materials, and tools,
4. the amount of time and budget allowed for dress completion (Dowd, 1993, pp. 9-10),
5. desire for authenticity.

**Style:** A combination of silhouette, construction, fabric, and details that distinguishes an object from other objects in the same category (Welters & Lillethun, 2011, p. xxv).

**Synecdoche:** A figure of speech involving the substitution of part for whole, genus for species or vice versa. Some theorists do not distinguish it from metonymy (Chandler, 2007, p. 262; Lanham, 1969, p. 97); a part representing the whole (Jakobson & Halle, 1956, p. 92).

**Tourist Attraction:** A tourist attraction is a named site with a specific human or natural feature which is the focus of visitor and management attention (Pearce, 1991, p. 46).

**Visitor Engagement:** Exhibition and display techniques that incorporate interactive, multi-sensory, and participatory experiences for visitors in the museum setting.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event. I explored the current curatorial and visitor engagement practices used by Titanic museum attractions that contributed to further understanding of how period film costume, extant dress, and representational dress are understood and perceived by museum visitors. This chapter contains an overview of scholarly literature on the topics of interest to this study. I begin with a list of my research questions and an overview of western society and culture of 1912, including the dress and fashion of 1912 and an overview of the historical events surrounding the famed RMS Titanic. I continue with an examination of the relationship between museums and tourism, museums and memorialization, and the learning experience of visitors in the museum setting. Next, I present an overview of James Cameron’s 1997 Titanic film, including information about the costuming of the film. The contextual discussion of the film is followed by an overview of the sites at which I collected data, Titanic museum attractions. I conclude with a summary of the literature review.

Western Society and Culture of 1912

The year 1912 is situated in a decade, the 1910s, that was dominated by change and reform in all aspects of life (Blanke, 2002). Blanke (2002) explains that “the second
decade of the twentieth century was regarded by many contemporaries as a watershed between the old and new” (p. xiv). The previous decade, known as the Edwardian era, was characterized by the enforcement of “proper” values, opulence, and emphasis on the upper class and social life. In contrast, the social and economic changes of the 1910s can be synthesized into the following themes: progressivism, social reform for disenfranchised groups with a history of underrepresentation (including women’s rights), changing technology, rapid commercialization and urbanization, and developments in entertainment/leisure.

Progressivism was a social and political movement that acknowledged the many abuses of power that contributed to discrimination and prejudice and sought “social cohesion” (i.e., “the tendency of Americans to see ourselves collectively, as a nation and a people, rather than as competitive individuals struggling against each other for survival” [Blanke, 2002, p. 4]) (Blanke, 2002; Peterson, Hewitt, Vaughan, Kellogg, & Payne, 2008, pp. 4-5; Whalan, 2010). Progressivism also saw emerging technologies as an asset that could improve society. A variety of reforms were undertaken that represented these views including the improvement of workplace environments and working conditions, wages, health conditions, and allowing the voices of minority groups to be heard (Blanke, 2002, p. 4; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007, p. 31; Whalan, 2010, pp.

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7 This title reflects that the influence of King Edward, an influential dignitary in the British empire, has some overlap with the Victorian era (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007; Herman, 1998; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). Tortora and Eubank (2010) explain that this period is characterized by opulence and grandeur because Prince Edward emphasized social life and fashion when he ascended the throne; such characteristics had been absent during the time that his mother Queen Victoria, ruled and had been in mourning over the death of her husband. The British people hoped that Prince Edward’s accession to the throne would revitalize politics and life in general; this hope was fulfilled, and as a result, lavish style and affluence came to define the period.
Whalan (2010) describes the results of progressive reform as contributing to “an increasingly complex urban, industrial, bureaucratic and corporate society” (p. 5). Disenfranchised groups with a history of underrepresentation “struggled to find equality in America” (Blanke, 2002, p. 9) including African Americans, the middle class, women and children, and immigrants). African Americans experienced segregation, but African American culture continued to evolve and, on some levels, was recognized as a distinct culture with a rich history (e.g., the acceptance of African American music in mass culture [Blanke, 2002, pp.177-180]) (Blanke, 2002; Peterson et al., 2008). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1909 and continued to gain momentum throughout the 1910s (Blanke, 2002, pp. 9-10).

An ongoing class war that carried over from the previous decade raged on, with progressives fighting for the emergence of a new middle class (Blanke, 2002; Whalan, 2010). The upper class, only a small part of the population, continued to engage in conspicuous consumption and many leisure activities. A surge in educated individuals with professional careers, as well as activism resulting from the Progressive movement, began to comprise the middle class (Blanke, 2002; Peterson et al., 2008). There was, however, still a large population living in poverty that included immigrants.

The United States was forced to come to terms with a collective multiethnic identity because immigration was at an all-time high (Barratt, 2010; Blanke, 2002; Peterson et al., 2008; Tortora & Eubank, 2010, p. 418). Though the urban environment was favored by immigrants because it offered more opportunities to escape the poverty and persecution experienced in their home countries, often working-class immigrants
suffered low wages and unsanitary conditions at work and in the home (Blanke, 2002; Peterson et al., 2008).

Women’s rights in the United States were at the forefront of tensions regarding underrepresented groups. By the start of the 1910s women were becoming increasingly visible in the workforce and public activities (e.g., sporting events, volunteering for charities, and driving cars) (Bradfield, 1981, p. 292; Peterson et al., 2008, pp. 10-11; Tortora & Eubank, 2010, pp. 422-423). Activism for women’s rights and the women’s suffrage movement developed in this decade. Women were granted the right to vote at the end of the decade (June 4, 1919) (Blanke, 2002; Peterson et al., 2008; Tortora & Eubank, 2010; Whalan, 2010). Children did not experience a childhood as they do today. Instead, children were expected to earn a wage, often under horrible conditions, to support the family rather than spend time getting an education (Blanke, 2002, pp. 26-30; Peterson et al., 2008, p. 13).

Technology was viewed as a means to achieve efficiency and a higher quality of life (Barratt, 2010; Blanke, 2002; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007; Peterson et al., 2008). A dependence on technological devices used in everyday life emerged (Peterson et al., 2008, p. 10; Tortora & Eubank, 2010, p. 418). Major technological contributions were made to transportation systems (e.g., the automobile and ocean liners), communication devices (e.g., the telephone), built structures (e.g. renovated Grand Central Station and Panama Canal), and mass production (e.g., manufacturing that enabled the purchase of ready-to-wear clothing) (Adams, 2004, p. 9; Barratt, 2010; Blanke, 2002; Byrd, 1986, p. 9; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007, p. 34; Tortora & Eubank, 2010, pp. 423-424; Whalan,
Luxurious travel in state-of-the-art ocean liners, such as the RMS Titanic, used technology to combine safety, convenience, comfort, efficiency, and division of classes (Adams, 2004; Blanke, 2002, pp. 241-248).

Rapid commercialization and increased consumer consumption were also a hallmark of the 1910s. Whalan (2010) explains the shift in economic structure as “a change from a production-based economy to a consumerist one” (p. 3). The industrial revolution that began in the previous century was a key catalyst in this economic shift. The shift in economic structure contributed to the development of mass culture in information sources (e.g., magazines and film). One of the benefits of mass culture development was that “popular culture provided a common vocabulary allowing very different members of society to converse” (Blanke, 2002, p. xviii). The shift in economic structure contributed to a new emphasis on leisure and consumption, rather than work, as the primary sources of self-fulfillment (Blanke, 2002, p. 4).

Urbanization resulted from “Americans [who were] continuing to move from the countryside to the city” (Blanke, 2002, p. 5). Urban areas were largely inhabited by working-class people; sixty percent of urban housing tenants were immigrants and their children by the end of the decade. Immigrants were in favor of urban areas because they were trying to escape rural poverty (Blanke, 2002, p. 6). While rural communities continued to prosper as a result of technological improvements and ongoing productivity, urban communities allowed for the creation of more cohesive communities that were inhabited by working-class and middle-class individuals (including those individuals who were newly educated and working in professional careers) with employment in the area
(Blanke, 2002; Peterson et al., 2008). Urbanization led to increased opportunities for entertainment and leisure, education, and technological enhancements to everyday life (e.g., electricity and the automobile) (Blanke, 2002; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). Entertainment districts were built in urban areas, and the cinema became one of the most popular leisure activities for individuals of all classes (Peterson et al., 2008, p. 60).

**Dress and Fashion of 1912**

Dress and fashion of the 1910s served as visual cues of the society and culture that was unfolding during the decade and thus contextualization of appearance and meaning is important. Through the study of dress and costume of any given period one can gain an understanding of the collective values associated with a given cultural moment, the technological and economic patterns associated with that point in time and space, and the varied experiences of individuals who lived in that moment and who interacted with those objects (Gunn, 1991; Pannabecker, 1990; Paoletti, 1982, 1984; Pedersen, 1991; Prown, 1982; Rowold, 1991).

The dress typical of 1912 and the film’s costumes are rooted in a type of historical perspective referred to as material culture. Material culture refers to the artifacts of a society and/or culture that are adaptations to the social and physical environment (Prown, 1982; Schlereth, 1990). More specifically, the study of material culture is the examination of forms, uses, and meanings of objects, images, and environments in everyday life. This means that an artifact is interpreted within its environmental, cultural, and historical contexts (Prown, 1982). The cultural insight model is a theoretical framework similar to material culture and is used in liberal arts disciplines (e.g.,
disciplines such as philosophy and art). Danto (2003) explains that, according to this model, “art helps us understand the cultures to which it belongs, and in the particular case of American art, it helps Americans understand their own culture and hence themselves” (p. 106).

The year 1912 is situated in a period of fashion (1908-1914) known as “the Empire Revival” (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007; Peterson et al., 2008; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). Just as many other aspects of material culture were dominated by change and reform during the 1910s, so was dress and fashion. Empire Revival dress for women deviated from Edwardian period dress in several ways. It is a departure from the previous S-shaped silhouette achieved through corsets, full coverage of the body, a monobosom, a gored or pleated skirt, and elaborately decorative elements (e.g., layers of petticoats, trims, ruffles, lace edging) (Byrd, 1986, p. 10; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007, p. 14; O’Hara, 1986, p. 98). Farrell-Beck and Parsons (2007) describe specific changes in women’s dress during the Empire Revival period and shortly thereafter:

• 1908-1911: Narrow shapes,
• 1912-1913: Dresses shifted to drapy silhouettes, and
• 1914-1916: Dresses shifted to fuller and slightly shorter skirts. (p. 41)

A notable fashion designer of the period was Paul Poiret, a French couture designer known for dramatic designs that incorporated Asian and Persian influence. Poiret also assisted in freeing women from constricting undergarments, such as the corset, by abandoning the S-shape silhouette for a more linear silhouette in his designs. Even though Poiret advocated for a departure from constricting undergarments the hobble
skirt, for which he is known, was quite restrictive. Another fashion designer of the period was Lady Duff Gordon (known as a Lucile), and a famous passenger of the Titanic. She was known for her use of lace, semi-transparent fabrics, and romantic draping (Evans, 2011, p. 13; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007, pp. 36-37). Lady Duff Gordon named each of the garments that she created (e.g., “Give Me Your Heart”); this was a new approach to marketing that captured the attention of fashion journalists and clients (Evans, 2011, p. 13).

Women generally wore fewer undergarments than previously during the Empire Revival period, though corsets were still worn by many. Other undergarments included knickers or drawers and a chemise, and possibly the newly-introduced brassiere that was meant to liberate women from the corset (Blanke, 2002, pp. 98-99; Evans, 2011, pp. 17-18; Peterson et al., 2008, pp. 186-187; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). The corset was generally worn over the knickers and chemise combination (Evans, 2011, p. 18).

Women typically wore one-piece dresses that were heavily adorned, but blouses paired with skirts and tailor-made suits also gained popularity (Evans, 2011, p. 23; Tortora & Eubank, 2010, p. 432). Skirts and dresses exhibited a more natural and less sculpted look; they became narrowed, straighter and more closely fitted to the body (Blanke, 2002; Bradfield, 1981, pp. 325-326; Peterson et al., 2008, pp. 181-182; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). Farrell-Beck and Parsons (2007) describe the dress styles of 1909 as “a sheath-like shape in dresses…, from shoulder to hemline the look was lean” (p. 41). The high collar of the Edwardian period was replaced by a V neck (sometimes accompanied by a modesty inset), as well as round and square necklines (Peterson et al., 2008, p. 182).
Sleeves also reflected the transition to a tighter fit (Blanke, 2002; Tortora & Eubank, 2010), typically “ending below the elbow or at the wrist, with cuffs of contrasting colors” (Tortora & Eubank, 2010, p. 432).

The empire styling became prevalent around 1911. The waistline was elevated to just below the bust in order to imitate the empire waistline of the Directoire and Empire periods (1790-1815)8 (Byrd, 1986, p. 10; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007; Peterson et al., 2008, p. 181; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). Some styles carried over from the Edwardian period such as the tailor-made which was a fitted suit comprised of a long jacket and skirt. The simplification of women’s dress was reflected in the tailor-made and other garments (e.g., shirtwaist blouses), which began to reflect the tailoring of men’s dress (Byrd, 1986, p. 10, 36; Peterson et al., 2008, p. 184; Tortora & Eubank, 2010, p. 433). However, simplification did not characterize all dress; frills and lace still adorned many pieces of dress.

Women were expected to wear hats, as it was a part of social etiquette (Evans, 2011, p. 32). Women wore very large hats, in both brim and height, that were known as “picture hats” (Evans, 2011; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). Hats were also heavily adorned with materials such as feathers and beads (Blanke, 2002; Evans, 2011; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007; Scarborough, 2009; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). Women also wore

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8 O’Hara (1986) describes the Directoire period as a period in history “when French designers revived early Greek and Roman dress” (p. 92). Tortora and Eubank (2010) elaborate upon this statement with the following information: “The revival of interest in the arts of Classical antiquity that had begun in the second half of the 18th century continued during the Empire period. This interest accelerated as a result of the military campaigns of Napoleon in Italy, where Roman ruins abounded, and because of the political emphasis on the revival of the republican ideals of ancient Greece and Rome. … The renewal of interest in the arts and philosophy of the ancient world paralleled the revival of many Classical elements in the new costume style for women that was based on an interpretation of the styles worn by women of Greece of the Golden Age” (p. 313).
coordinating accessories (e.g., gloves, jewelry, purses, and shoes) with each outfit (Blanke, 2002, pp. 95, 98-99).

The social class and monetary wealth of a woman also dictated the dress she wore, including its quality and quantity. Wealthy women had the means to purchase authentic designer garments that reflected the latest styles and changed their outfits multiple times in a day, while most other women did not. Wealthy women were expected to accessorize each outfit to showcase material wealth; this practice was also enjoyed by wealthy women, who often “sought ways to flaunt their material good fortune conspicuously through their clothing and accessories” (Blanke, 2002, p. 95). Changes in fashionable dress styles became more frequent during the 1910s, and it required a considerable amount of money to be seen in the latest styles and authentic dress produced by the top fashion designers of the time period (Blanke, 2002; Byrd, 1986; Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). Large hats were worn by most women, regardless of socioeconomic status (Blanke, 2002, p. 99). The rise of popular magazines, the ready-to-wear clothing industry, and mail-order catalogs made it possible for women of lesser means to begin to wear copies of the latest styles in the latter part of the decade (Blanke, 2002, p. 103; Byrd, 1986, p. 9).

Social life was directly connected to women’s dress during 1912 (Blanke, 2002; Evans, 2011). Women of higher social classes changed outfits around three to four times a day to reflect changes in performed tasks and social activity throughout the day (Blanke, 2002, p. 97). Evans (2011) explains that there were “complex dress codes adhered to on these occasions” (p. 14). Dress was differentiated by event and the time of
day at which it was worn. For example, women would change out of their day wear and into evening wear to attend dinner. A suit (such as the tailor-made suit) or dress might be worn during the day (Evans, 2011). Even though evening dress was known for its formality, there was also a range of formality in day wear. Day wear could be formal or casual, depending upon the activity. Formality occurred in day wear with the use of silk, velvet, satin, lace, embroidery, chiffon, and tulle (E. Pedersen, personal communication, July 11, 2012; Evans, 2011; Kyoto Costume Institute, 2002; Long, Steele, & Adams, 1998; Thieme, 1993).

Eveningwear showcased “low necklines, pleats, satin, silk, taffeta, extensive costume and real jewelry, elaborate beadwork, feathers, furs, and anything else that might catch the eye” (Blanke, 2002, p. 97). The work of Bradfield (1981), Byrd (1986), Evans (2011), Peterson et al. (2008), and Tortora and Eubank (2010) support this description of women’s eveningwear. Bradfield (1981), Byrd (1986), Evans (2011), and Peterson et al. (2008) add that evening dress often included a transparent overlay of beaded netting. The reason for this grand display of dress is that “the evening gown was the most public form of fashion for women” (Blanke, 2002, p. 98).

The wearing of the tea dress (or tea gown, as it is sometimes known) also reflected the importance of a social schedule dictated by changes in dress (Evans, 2011, Blanke, 2002; O’Hara, 1986; Tortora & Eubank, 2010). The tea dress was worn in the afternoon between daywear and eveningwear, signaling a time in the day meant for informal activity and relaxation. It was made of light and airy fabrics that allowed for a brief freedom from the corset. These details regarding the connection between dress and
social life speak to the material culture of 1912 because they highlight the rigid social
class distinctions and opulence that defined the time period and are exhibited by dress.
One could say that the dress itself provides clues as to the social and cultural norms and
expectations.

The RMS Titanic: A Historical Overview

In order to fully understand the background and content of Titanic museum
attractions, it is first important to establish the historical events that are represented
therein. The RMS Titanic set sail for her maiden voyage from Southampton, England to
New York City on April 10, 1912. Carrying 2,200 people on board, including a diverse
cross-section of Edwardian society, ranging from millionaires to immigrants, Titanic was
billed as the largest ship in the world. Some of the ship’s famous passengers include
Molly Brown (or, as she came to be known, “the unsinkable” Molly Brown), Madeleine
and John Jacob Astor, Isidor and Ida Straus, Sir Cosmo and Lady Duff Gordon, Benjamin
Guggenheim, and J. Bruce Ismay (Adams, 2004; Archbold, 1998; Marr, 2007; Rogers,

The RMS Titanic was part of a fleet of ships owned by the White Star Line and
built at the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast, Ireland (Adams, 2004; Barratt, 2010).
It was conceived in an era when science and technology were used to increase comfort
and efficiency (Barratt, 2010). The Titanic was touted in advertisements as an
“unsinkable” ship that would transport passengers “in high style and at great speed to
their final destinations” (Blanke, 2002, p. 241). Ocean liners, such as the Titanic, were
also commissioned in an attempt to win the first military arms race of the twentieth
century (Barratt, 2010). It was well known for attention to state-of-the art accommodations for second and third class passengers (though third class cabins were still cramped and included fewer amenities), as well as elegant suites with ornate artwork in first class accommodations (Adams, 2004, pp. 9, 18-19, 26-31; Barratt, 2010).

The luxury of the trip was interrupted when tragedy struck in the late hours of April 14, 1912. A combination of weather conditions, insufficient communication, and unusually high speed contributed to the tragedy (Barratt, 2010). Around midnight, the officer in the lookout tower spotted an iceberg straight ahead. First Officer William Murdoch ordered the ship to be steered away from the iceberg but did not clear it. The iceberg scraped the hull of the ship and damaged rivets, allowing water to begin spilling into the boiler room and lower compartments that were located beneath third class accommodations (Adams, 2004; Archbold, 1998; Barratt, 2010; Marr, 2007).

The ship sank in the early hours of April 15, 1912, but there were two-and-a-half hours between the iceberg collision and the sinking. Once Captain Smith was informed of the ship’s impending doom attention was turned to safely removing passengers. It is at this time that a problematic oversight became painfully apparent: the ship carried only twenty lifeboats (a maximum capacity of 1,178 passengers), and lifeboat accommodation was needed for all 2,200 passengers. As word traveled around the ship, panic erupted and lifeboats were lowered and began to depart, sometimes only half full (Adams, 2004). The water was filling the ship at a rapid rate, and this weight caused the deck to slope and the stern to rise out of the water at a 45-degree angle. Most of the 1,500 passengers remaining on board climbed toward the stern, desperate to survive. Shortly thereafter, the
hull tore in two, and the bow plunged back into the sea. Both halves of the ship bobbed in the water before sinking to the ocean floor at 2:20 a.m. Many passengers, who were floating in nearby lifeboats, were left to watch the horror of hundreds of people left struggling to survive in the ocean (Adams, 2004; Archbold, 1998; Barratt, 2010; Marr, 2007; The Mariners’ Museum, 1998). “Fearing they would be swamped, those in the lifeboats refused to pick up the more than 1,000 people who were freezing in the water around them” (The Mariners’ Museum, 1998, p. 98). Most died of hypothermia caused by a water temperature at a frigid 28 degrees Fahrenheit (Barratt, 2010; Marr, 2007). The RMS Carpathia arrived to begin rescuing passengers aboard lifeboats around 4:10 a.m. Only 711 of the Titanic’s more than 2,200 passengers and crew had survived. While some first class passengers were lost, the majority of those who perished were third class passengers (Adams, 2004; Barratt, 2010). The “unsinkable” ship had done the unthinkable – it had sunk and left a wave of catastrophe and heartbreak in its wake (Adams, 2004; Archbold, 1998; Barratt, 2010; Marr, 2007; The Mariners’ Museum, 1998).

The Relationship between Museums and Tourism

The topics of the present study necessitate an examination of the relationship between museums and tourism. Museology scholarship has an interdisciplinary expanse. Many scholars have and continue to raise questions across disciplines (e.g., sociology, tourism, economics, museum studies) about the difference between museums and attractions and the complex relationship between museums and tourism (Bradburne, 2001; Bruner, 1993a; Cohen, 1985, 1988; Editorial Staff, 1991; Foley & McPherson,

**A Hybrid Entertainment and Education-Based Approach to the Museum, Consumerism, and Visitor Engagement**

Tourism has contributed to the visitor expectation that entertainment and recreation will be included in a museum. Scholars have even acknowledged that it is increasingly difficult to decipher the difference between educational, recreational, and commercial orientations (Foley & McPherson, 2000; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Urry, 1993). Drawing upon the work of Bruner (1993b), Harrison (1997) highlights this difficulty with a list of commonalities: “museums and tourism have several things in common. These include the production and exhibition of culture, a dependence on an audience, their construction and invention of what they display, and that they are both the result of travel” (Harrison, 1997, p. 23).

Several scholars have noted a more recent tendency for museum exhibits (including those related to dress and costume) to be fueled by entertainment and consumerism (Bradburne, 2001; Capstick, 1985; Cohen, 1985, 1988; Cumming, 2004; Foley & McPherson, 2000; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Magelssen, 2007; Ordon, 2008; Pearce, 1991; Taylor, 2004; Tobelem, 1997; Weil, 1997). In addition, some scholars have specifically advocated for the importance of further studying attractions and their contribution to tourism (Gunn, 1972, 1979, 1980; Leiper, 1990; Lew 1987;
Prentice, 1993). Entertainment-based exhibition themes often include the use of visitor engagement elements.

While commercially-oriented entertainment has been both discussed and criticized in the literature (Bradburne, 2001; Capstick, 1985; Cohen, 1985, 1988; Editorial Staff, 1991; Foley & McPherson, 2000; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Leiper, 1990; Magelssen, 2007; Pearce, 1991; Tobelem, 1997; Weil, 1997), visitor engagement (i.e., interactive, multi-sensory, and participatory experiences) in an exhibit has been recognized as a potentially successful technique for exhibition (Bradburne, 2001; Capstick, 1985; Cohen, 1988; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Ordon, 2008; Pearce, 1991; Taylor, 2004; Weil, 1997). It is important to maintain an ongoing discussion of entertainment-oriented approaches to exhibition in museums and interactive displays because it is a trend that continues to prove popular with visitors (Capstick, 1985; Kotler, 2001; Ordon, 2008; Pearce, 1991; Runyard, 1996). Falk (1998), Kotler (2001), and Kotler and Kotler (2000) present the findings of audience research, which show that social and recreational experiences have gained superiority over educational and intellectual ones in the museum setting. In recent years, visitors have actually come to expect recreational, social, and multi-sensory experiences (Editorial Staff, 1991; Harrison, 1997; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Pearce, 1991). One such reason is the recent generations that make up the current American public have become acclimated to the use of mass media and sophisticated techniques of display (Goodale, 1998). And, as I have addressed

While most of the articles that were consulted for this section of the literature review were published in academic journals based in countries abroad (particularly England and Great Britain) and are not specifically about dress and costume, the research contained herein offers opportunities to consider the various relationships between museums and tourism.
in the present study, this change in orientation can cause fundamental changes in museum interpretation and the reception of such changes by visitors.

The implementation of an entertainment-oriented approach is in direct opposition to the traditional standards to which collections-based museums are held, and some scholars are fearful of the consequences that might result from museums being overburdened with tourists (Cannon-Brooks; 1991; Capstick, 1985; Editorial Staff, 1991; Foley & McPherson, 2000; Harrison, 1997; Zolberg, 1994). A former Director of London’s British Museum, Sir David M. Wilson made the following statement that expresses such standards: “Museums are about the material they contain. The first duty of the museum curator is to look after that material….His second duty is to make that material available to whoever wants to see it (Wilson, 1991, p. 11). It is this type of standard that contributes to the current identity crisis being experienced by museums across the world. Foley and McPherson (2000) express this identity crisis as a set of dueling ideologies – the “professional/[traditional]” and “commercial/managerialist” ideologies (p. 165).

It is becoming increasingly important for museums to adopt a consumerism perspective (Foley & McPherson, 2000); one element of this perspective involves the recognition of museum visitors as not only patrons but also as consumers (Foley & McPherson, 2000; Kotler, 2001). From an economic standpoint museums must engage in proactive audience development in order to effectively compete with other providers of leisure-based, entertainment-based, cultural, and educational activities (Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Tobelem, 1997; Weil, 1997). However, Foley and McPherson
(2000) contend that education and leisure do not have to lie in conceptual opposition of each other; rather, they can be reconciled for practical application within the museum setting. Bradburne (2001) and Weil (1997) present another point to consider: “new museology”\(^{10}\) has made it possible for museums to define themselves and create a meaning and mission that is entirely separate from traditional museum standards.

With this in mind, it is crucial to address how tourist attractions have been discussed in the literature. Pearce (1991) presents the following operational definition: “A tourist attraction is a named site with a specific human or natural feature which is the focus of visitor and management attention” (p. 46). While attractions might seem like superficial leisure to some (see Magelssen, 2007), Pearce (1991) states that they are of significance because they “provide major symbols and images for the presentation of destinations to the public” (p. 47). If it can be said that attractions themselves can serve as a symbol, it follows that the content of a museum (e.g., artifacts and other objects) can serve as symbols and/or signs of components of the larger events and/or themes being represented by the attraction.

Dress and costume (and, film costume, in particular) can be classified as a means of visitor engagement. Techniques that enable visitor engagement have been recognized as potentially successful for exhibition because they encourage active, as opposed to passive, spectatorship (Cranton, 2011; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000). In the

\(^{10}\) “According to new museology, the ‘new’ museum is defined by its socially relevant objectives and basic principles. Its work as an educational institution is directed toward making a population aware of its identity, strengthening that identity, and instilling confidence in a population's potential for development. … However, the objective of the ‘new’ museum goes beyond the formation of identity. The ‘new’ museum wants to make a concrete contribution to coping with everyday life by pointing out problems and possible solutions” (Hauenschild, 1988, Section 2: Elements of New Museology).
context of Titanic attractions, the integration of dress and costume, via film costume and representational dress, are used as a specific technique of visitor engagement known as living history. This technique is closely associated with performativity (Magelssen, 2007; Turner, 2010), used to both educate about the past and help visitors to experience it on a multi-sensory level (Erisman, 1998; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Turner, 2010). An additional dimension of visitor engagement and spectatorship can be added to living history and dress and costume displays by using film costumes seen in popular films to frame the past (i.e., the lived experiences of individuals who lived in a previous time period) with an element of fiction. In this way, “history [can be] mediated by popular culture” (Turner, 2010, p. 30).

In the context of extant dress, film costume, and representational dress display within the museum setting the literature shows that many museums have been found to benefit from the popularity of notable celebrities and characters by displaying parts of their wardrobe and/or the film costumes commonly associated with the character (Ordon, 2008; Mendez, 2006; Postrel, 2007; Taylor, 2004). Evidence of this practice, in association with a broader range of events and artifacts, has also been cited in the museology literature (Bradburne, 2001; Cohen, 1988; Editorial Staff, 1991; Harrison, 1997). Capstick (1985) explains that visitor “enjoyment [was found to occur in] direct relation to their recognition of familiar or well-known objects” (p. 366). Dress and costume when used to this end can be considered representational dress and are a powerful reference to film iconography and non-verbal communication (Lyden, 2003). It is possible that audiences now have expectations about what they expect to see in a
Titanic museum/attraction based upon the depiction of events and individuals in Cameron’s film. The use of dress and costume in the museum setting can often be found in “blockbuster” exhibitions (i.e., a temporary exhibit comprised of museum holdings or haute couture designer private collections that presents a popular theme on a grand scale [Bradburne, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000]). Ironically, Bradburne (2001) equates patronage of a “blockbuster” exhibition to a trip to the cinema, citing the similarity that visitors wait to visit until an exhibit that peaks their interest has arrived. Because such exhibits are associated with popular interest, it is possible that predictable Hollywood images, such as film characters, will be integrated to both maintain and increase interest (Harrison, 1997). It has been found that this is the case in at least one “blockbuster” exhibition presented at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri (Branson Church Groups, 2009).

**Heritage in Museums and Tourism**

In her article, “Museums and Tourism,” Capstick (1985) explains that the increase in tourism has led to a parallel increased interest in heritage. A recent study conducted by Mandala Research, LLC confirms this parallel interest, stating that 78% of U.S. citizens take part in heritage activities when traveling for leisure, which equates to 118.3 million adults per year contributing to the heritage\(^{11}\) tourism market (Mandala Research, LLC, 2009). The increased interest in heritage also extends to academia. The Taylor and Francis Group published the inaugural issue of a journal entitled *The International Journal for Heritage Studies* in 1994 (Taylor and Francis Group, 2011b). Published six

\(^{11}\) Heritage can be defined as, “the representation of the past for popular contemporary consumption” (Terry-Chandler, 2000, p. 68).
times per year, this journal encourages scholars and readers to “debate over the nature
and meaning of heritage as well as its links to memory, identities and place” (Taylor and
Francis Group, 2011a).

Scholars have even explored issues related to the present study in their own
professional work and publications. Terry-Chandler (2000) wrote an article entitled,
“Vanished Circumstance: Titanic, Heritage and Film” that specifically addressed the
relationship between heritage and the Titanic, both the historical events and its
blockbuster success.

**Museums and Memorialization**

Despite variations in presentation, all Titanic exhibitions and products have one
thing in common: bringing attention to a profound loss of life and the frailty of the human
condition. These ideas highlight a dichotomy of survival and death, which are likely to
incite personal reflection and collective mourning from visitors. It is common for Titanic
museum attractions to have a memorial room; a manifestation of these ideas (i.e., non-
material) in built (i.e., material) form (Marr, 2007; Williams, 2007). The memorial room
is only one example of how memorialization can be expressed; a variety of techniques
with which to memorialize an event or person has been undertaken by museums. Thus, it
is important to explore the memorialization function of the museum. The work of
Williams (2007) is central to this exploration and largely informs this section of the
literature review because he describes the memorial museum as a booming trend in the
recent past, the present, and future of our cultural landscape.
Memorial is defined as “something that keeps remembrance alive” and “something that commemorates” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011a). As an author of scholarly literature, Williams (2007) presents a definition that uses similar concepts: “memorial [is] an umbrella term for anything that serves in remembrance of a person or event” (p. 7). It is interesting to note that my review of literature recovered few precise definitions or groups of concepts that might comprise a definition for a memorial museum. Sherman (1995), for example, argues that the very nature of museums requires them to include textual elements, whereas memorial visitors can derive meaning from a memorial with only visual elements. Williams (2007) was found to be the only scholar who presented an explicit definition: “a specific kind of museum dedicated to a historic event commemorating mass suffering of some kind” (p. 8). Connectedly, Williams provides the following mission statement for memorial museums: “to illuminate, commemorate, and educate about a particular, bounded, and vivid historic event” (p. 25). Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities was written by Williams (2007), with the purpose of highlighting the blurred distinction between traditional museums and memorials. In so doing, Williams presents the category of “memorial museum” to add to traditional museological categories (i.e., an institutional genre). While Williams primarily analyzed museums devoted to global atrocities (i.e., war and genocide), I believe his ideas have much to offer in the context of this study.

More common than a definition of what constitutes a memorial museum, several scholars have indirectly identified what it means to be part of this museological genre by highlighting the purpose of memorials and memorial museums (Edgette, 2006; Gregson,
In a discussion of Titanic memorials, Gregson (2008) asserts that memorials are generally meant to unify and reinforce certain societal values. Similarly, Hamilton and Ashton (2000) argue that memorials serve the purpose of representing a cultural or ethnic group, particularly the elite members of such a group.

Beyond identifying the purpose(s) of memorial museums, scholars have examined the organization of their content. Memorial museums are often organized in a narrative format; that is, they tell the story of the event and/or persons being memorialized. The presentation of a narrative (i.e., story or story-telling) fulfills the human need to achieve understanding through a carefully-constructed framework. Narratives are one of the main frameworks within which visitors construct meaning. They are often formed in popular culture and then translated into the memorial museum setting (Koselleck, 1985). A feeling of “intimacy [or] detachment” is assigned to a historical event by the visitor, depending upon the degree to which the visitor can relate to it (Williams, 2007, p. 158).

An emotive spectacle that incorporates a narrative, one which creates a personal connection between visitors and “experiencing subjects,” may be used to elicit a greater emotional response from the visitor.

The formation of a connection to individuals who actively participated in a historical event is a successful technique and is described by Novick (1999) and

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12 In the context of this study, “emotive spectacle” is defined as an exhibition or demonstration that is either meant to elicit an emotional reaction from the viewer and/or emphasize the drama of a phenomenon. An example of such a phenomenon would be a museum exhibit.

13 Williams (2007) both defines and contextualizes the concept of experiencing subjects: “Using the relics, writings, and artwork of those who suffered (the recording of biographical data of victims and survivors is a particular priority), it tells the story of the Holocaust by emphasizing Jews as experiencing subjects rather than objects in Nazi hands” (pp. 6-7).
Flanzbaum (1999) as a humanistic approach to museum exhibition. The use of such techniques is not surprising, given that visitors have been shown to both expect and exhibit social behavior and interaction within the museum setting (Editorial Staff, 1991; Harrison, 1997; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Pearce, 1991). To extend the notion of social behavior, Williams (2007, p. 165) also suggests that the general public has deemed memorial museums a socially appropriate place to both reflect upon and remember tragic events.

**Titanic Memorialization**

Almost one hundred years after the sinking of the Titanic, the unsinkable spirit of artifact collectors, enthusiasts, and historians endures. Sachs (1992) notes that “even before the sinking, the Titanic was the most famous ship since the Ark. But after she slipped beneath the waves at 2:20 am, the liner known as the ‘millionaire’s special’ captured the world’s imagination” (p. 69). The power of the RMS Titanic is evident when one considers the strong hold that it has on public memory (Bergfelder & Street, 2004; Edgette, 2006; Gregson, 2008). Gregson (2008) asserts that this “is a testament to the place this event holds in modern discourse” and, as a result, “Titanic has developed something of a currency in tragedy” (p. 269). I think that this currency in tragedy is precious and worthy of research because it allows another individual to essentially bear witness to a significant socio-cultural event in history, despite the fact that all who bear witness are doing so with historic “postmemory”¹⁴ (Williams, 2007). Edgette (2006)

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¹⁴ Historic “postmemory” is a concept discussed by Williams (2007, p. 179). It can be defined as the relation between time and memory when an individual does not create a memory of an event at the time that it occurs. For example, children born after the events of the *RMS Titanic* have historic “postmemory,” but will still be taught to understand what happened on that historic night.
supports the notion that those individuals with “postmemory” can sincerely memorialize
by “revising, reassessing, and further clarifying old and new information related to the
disaster” (p. 139).

An important part of the testament to Titanic’s hold on modern culture is the
variety of ways in which the near environment has been used to pay tribute to the Titanic,
its survivors, and those lost at sea (Adams, 2004, p. 64-65; Bergfelder & Street, 2004;
Edgette, 2006). In the scholarly article, entitled, “RMS Titanic: Memorialized in Popular
Literature and Culture,” Edgette (2006) provides a detailed overview of the many Titanic
memorials in existence. Among them are instant non-fiction books,¹ five postcard
photographs from aboard the ship, sheet music, song lyrics, children’s books (see
Spedden, 1994), first-person accounts of the sinking, feature films, grave markers, and
poems. By Edgette’s count, over 250 books have been written about Titanic and over 20
films have been produced. Barratt (2010) confirms this count in his recent book, Lost
significant research to the body of Titanic memorial knowledge with a 32-year project
undertaken to identify Titanic memorials worldwide. The project concluded that 1,028
memorials are in existence, ranging from statues to built structures to actual grave
markers. One reason for the large number of Titanic memorials is an occurrence of
“statumania” (i.e., a marked increase in the production of memorial and monument
structures due to a societal passion for remembrance). The advent of “new museology”

¹ Instant books are defined as “[a book] produced quickly to appear in bookstores as soon as possible after
(for instance) a newsworthy event to which it is relevant” (PG Graphics, 2005, p. 13). This definition also
has influenced the rise of free-standing museum attractions that house artifacts and provide visitors with an authentic experience of what it was like to sail on the Titanic in 1912.

**The Influence of Mass Media on Memorialization**

Because the present study is, in part, focused upon film costume related to the 1997 film *Titanic*, a discussion of memorials should not be divested from the influence of mass media. The interdisciplinary field of collective memory has acknowledged that memory formation is influenced by a variety of outside phenomena, including mass media sources (Halbwachs, 1967; Torgovnick, 2005; Williams, 2007, Wodak, 2006). In this vein, Williams (2007) summarizes this profound influence with the following statement: “historical consciousness is strongly influenced by cultural projects and products that serve to remember for us” (p. 158). Wahlberg (2008) states that “sites of memory such as the museum…bring attention to the film itself as a historical object. The practice of photography and film represents not only a culture of production, reproduction, distribution, and public exhibition but also a culture of preservation and classification” (p. 42).

A theoretical concept that is especially relevant to the present study is “screen memory,” introduced by Sturken (1997) and defined as the manner in which “societies use mnemonic aids – photographs, television, film, memorials, and museums – to block out other memories, ideas, and images that are too difficult to represent” (Williams, 2007, pp. 177-178). In addition, Williams explains that “over time, the mnemonic device can come to dominate the shape of the memory, as the distinction between the screen and
one’s original recollection becomes indiscernible” (p. 178). Beed (1999), Edgette (2006), and Felde (2004) echo the same concern, offering the following grave marker-related example as evidence of the public’s inability to differentiate fact from fiction. The thousands of tourists who flock to Halifax, Nova Scotia each year to visit the graves of Titanic victims is presented in Chapter One and is an example of the public’s inability to separate fact from fiction.

Barratt (2010, p. viii) presents another similar concern, acknowledging that the Titanic is now defined by images of the characters from the 1997 film. This is succeeded by a scholarly caution: “There is danger in combining historical fact with fictional characters to create drama, for it becomes much harder to separate myth from reality in the public’s mind” (Barratt, 2010, p. viii). This caution stems from the novel of Mitchell (2004), who writes the following about the actual past and the virtual past:

The workings of the actual past and the virtual past may be illustrated by an event well known to collective history such as the sinking of the Titanic. The disaster as it actually occurred descends into obscurity as its eyewitnesses die off, documents perish and the wreck of the ship dissolves in its Atlantic grave. Yet a virtual sinking of the Titanic, created from reworked memories, papers, hearsay, fiction – in short, belief – grows ever “truer.” The actual past is brittle, ever-dimming and ever more problematic to access and reconstruct: in contrast, the virtual past is malleable, ever-brightening and ever more difficult to circumvent/expose as fraudulent (p. 389).

Considering that the last living survivor of the Titanic, Millvina Dean passed away on May 31, 2009 (Rourke, 2009) and the Titanic continues to shine like a bright star in the realm of popular culture, concerns about discernment between fact and fiction (i.e., actual past and virtual past) are relevant. What may be especially problematic and feared by
scholars is the acceptance by the general public that the virtual past is an official
historical narrative (Williams, 2007, p. 166).

A final idea, proposed by Sturken (1997), is discussed by Williams (2007) in the
context of the media influence on collective memory processes:

For Sturken, creative processes of re-enactment (such as making films and
theater), and of the use of spaces like memorials and museums (which can involve
debate and protest as much as dutiful visitation) are crucial. Although these forms
of commemoration might alter the meaning of events, they allow a way for people
to “try out” new interpretations, which, Sturken continues, can only be positive in
the way it keeps an event alive” (Williams, 2007, p. 173).

Dress and Costume as Memorial

Dress has been researched from the historiographical perspective of being worn
for the purposes of mourning and memorial (e.g., Bedikian, 2008; Douglas, 2003; Gray,
2009; Paoletti & Wehrle, 1990; Pokorski, 2002; Taylor, 1983; Warner, 1986; Whitfield,
2008). Scholars have also acknowledged dress and textiles as a viable and popular form
of memorial and indicator of collective memory in modern culture (Carocci, 2010;
Carroll, 2010; Coleman, 2008; Fee, 2006; Gambardella, 2011; Goodnow, 2005; Hipple,
2000). An argument made by Edgette (2006), presented earlier in this section of the
literature review, can also be applied here. To review, Edgette argues that
memorialization is possible through the acts of revisitation, reassessment, clarifying old
information, and adding new information to the body of knowledge that aids
understanding of a phenomenon. According to Edgette’s argument, all historic dress and
textile literature, in addition to all other historic research, could be considered a form of
memorialization.
The museums and memorialization section of the literature review has, thus far, focused upon the material and non-material ways in which an event or person can be publicly remembered. It is common for memorials to take a material form, using objects and materials in the near environment for their composition and/or construction, because they provide a powerful visual testimony (Kraft, 2005; Williams, 2007, p. 33). While built structures are among the most prevalent of material-based memorials, clothing and textiles have been acknowledged as relevant components of material-based memorials in the literature (Chandler, 2001; Klein, 2000; Phillips, 2004; Williams, 2007). For example, Williams (2007) discusses the connotation often attached to clothing and accessories in the memorial museum setting:

The opportunity to interact physically with perpetrators’ weapons at the Siem Reap War Museum goes against the general norm of other memorial museums, where the objects of primary focus are those with a warm, human presence (shoes, jewelry, coats) rather than those that feel foreign to our sense of bodily comfort and emotional attachment (p. 32).

Klein (2000) has suggested that objects directly related to personhood (also referred to as selfhood in the literature, for example a style of clothing or a diary) increase the symbolic presence of the objects within a museum; that is, visitors are able to find meaning in the objects on both a personal and broader social level. Williams (2007), drawing upon the work of Phillips (2004), described the content, which includes dress, at the Hiroshima Peace Museum as part of a brief case study: “Displayed at the Peace Museum are recovered items demonstrating the unearthly effects of the atomic blast, including tattered school uniforms, lunchboxes, shoes, spectacles, toys, radios, and other ephemera” (Williams, 2007, p. 38).
The use of dress and costume as a part of a memorial makes it subject to a variety of rhetorical strategies and framing devices. Williams (2007), drawing upon the work of Chandler (2001), observed that standardized imagery (e.g., dirty and torn dress piled in the corner of a concentration camp cell) has been applied to the display of dress within the memorial museum setting. In this case, the pile of clothing is suggestive of the lives that were lost. Dress and costume can also be displayed in the context of a living memorial; one such technique involves the use of living history characters.

**Museum Learning and Experience**

According to McGrath (1989), the museum setting can be used as a classroom for individualized and specialized study. The comparison of a museum to a classroom implies that learning takes place. Education has been identified as one of the primary goals of the museum. In this way, learning is both a process and a product (Chang, 2006). A variety of scholars, across disciplines, have confirmed that the museum institution is an effective educational tool and discuss the processes and conditions under which learning take place (e.g., Chang, 2006; Falk & Dierking, 1995, 2000; Hein, 1998, 1999; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, 1994, 1999a; Masberg & Silverman, 1996; Matthewson-Mitchell, 2008; McGrath, 1989; Perry, 1992). Yet, this is a complex endeavor because learning is entangled in expectations and conditions of entertainment and leisure, individualized construction of meaning, intent to increase personal knowledge, and social behavior.

What makes people learn and how do people learn in the museum setting? According to Perry (1992), there are six factors that lead to successful learning in the museum environment:
A list of attributes detailing what is learned as a result of a museum visit has also been collected and reported:

1. Museums make content and ideas accessible, facilitating intellectual connections and bringing together disparate facts, ideas and feelings.
2. Museums affect values and attitudes, for example facilitating comfort with cultural differences or developing environmental ethics.
3. Museums promote cultural, community and family identity.
4. Museums foster visitor interest and curiosity, inspiring self-confidence and motivation to pursue future learning and life choices.
5. Museums affect how visitors think and approach their worlds, in contrast to what they think.

(Falk & Dierking, 1995, pp. 20-21)

The Paradigmatic Shift of Learning in Museums

Over the past few decades, the museum institution has undergone a significant paradigmatic shift from a focus on collections to a focus on communication, meeting visitor demands and expectations, which have become largely associated with entertainment and leisure (i.e., recreational, social, and multi-sensory experiences) (Chang, 2006; Editorial Staff, 1991; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Harrison, 1997; Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 1999a; Kotler, 2001; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Lumley, 1988, p. 15; Pearce, 1991). Family units, in particular, visit museums for purposes of entertainment and leisure (Hein, 1998, p. 146).

Burcaw (1980) asserts that this shift had to take place because “traditional history, and in particular, the traditional methods of portraying history in indoor museums, is
dead; that is, dull and uninteresting, requiring too much intellectual effort and imagination on the part of the visitor” (p. 6). While it may appear that techniques, such as multi-sensory experiences, are primarily meant for entertainment purposes, there is also a crucial learning component involved. Hooper-Greenhill (1999b) explains that museum learning is frequently focused on objects … objects can be particularly stimulating in relation to learning processes when handled and studied closely … objects can act to ground abstract experiences, can enable recall of knowledge, and can arouse curiosity (p. 21).

Museums are concerned with how to best serve the public and how to strike a balance between education and leisure in an environment that is stimulating for the visitor (Chang, 2006; Hein, 1998, pp. 3, 7; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999b; Kotler & Kotler, 1998). The following mission of the museum institution, presented by the American Association of Museums (1969) 40 years ago, is evidence of this need for balance: “the advancement and diffusion of knowledge, and the enhancement of that awareness which affords pleasure and delight” (p. 1). It is important to maintain a dialogue about this balance because visitor engagement techniques that incorporate entertainment and leisure have been found to increase understanding of the exhibition subject and remain popular with visitors (Capstick, 1985; Cranton, 2011; DiBlaso & DiBlaso, 1984; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999a, 1999b; Kotler, 2001; Pearce, 1991; Prentice, 1993).

Because entertainment and leisure have become so heavily associated with museums, visitors may not perceive them to be sites of learning (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999b, p. 19). However, “museum visitor studies” has become an established discipline of scholarly work (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999c p. 140). Visitor behavior has been studied from a variety of perspectives and using a variety of methods, including quantitative and
qualitative approaches (Gillman, 1916; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999b, p. 6; Hein, 1998, p. 50; Melton, Feldman, & Mason, 1936[1988]; Robinson, 1928; Wittlin, 1949). Qualitative approaches are a growing trend because they allow deeper meaning to emerge, which is important because contemporary museum literature has placed a central focus on how visitors make meaning (i.e., “the process of making sense of experience, of explaining or interpreting the world to ourselves and others in museums” [Hooper-Greenhill, 1999b, p. 12]) in the museum setting (Hein, 1998, p. 100; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999b; Roberts, 1997; Silverman, 1995).

**Meaning-Making and the Constructivist Approach**

The constructivist approach (Fosnot, 1996a, 1996b) has been adopted in the literature as a framework with which to understand the museum learning process. In this approach, the two main ideas are as follows: it is posited that (a) knowledge is constructed by individuals and is, therefore, contained in each individual’s mind and (b) the learner must actively participate in the activities being presented or with the objects being displayed in order to form knowledge. A museum exhibit is said to invoke a constructivist approach if an event or phenomenon is presented from a variety of perspectives (i.e., different voices are represented, socially and culturally), and the learner is given a variety of hands-on opportunities to actively work through the information or experience until a conclusion is reached (Hein, 1998, pp. 34-35; 1999).

Constructivism has been linked to education and learning theory through discovery learning (i.e., “a learning opportunity for visitor’s to construct knowledge” [Hein, 1998, p. 35]). Critical pedagogy, developed by Giroux (1992), is also named in the
literature, described as “[a pedagogy] concerned with the way that students actually construct meaning, what the categories of meaning are, and what beliefs and values students bring to their encounters” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999b, p. 22). It is important to note that critical pedagogy was not developed with the museum setting in mind (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999d p. 35).

Because constructivism is concerned with the construction of meaning, it is also important to include a brief discussion of hermeneutic theory. This theory, also known as a philosophical movement, is associated with the mental processes by which meaning is made and how individuals relate to the object or information in question (Hein, 1998; Fosnot, 1996a, 1996b). Hooper-Greenhill (1999e) presents the following example that is related to the present study:

What happens when we encounter a painting and want to try to understand it? What is the process of trying to make meaning … A first glance at the Ditchley painting presents an overall impression of a woman in a white dress who looks as though she lived in the past. As human beings, we tend at a basic level of species recognition to be attracted to faces, and it is the face that we focus on next. This is followed by a scan of the image as a whole, looking at both the figure and the background. At this stage, we try to recognize some aspect of the painting in more detail, to try to make a connection with something that we already know and feel confident about. This might relate to any aspect of the work. It might include elements of the image in the painting, such as the woman herself, the historical style or period, or parts of the background of the painting (p. 46).

It is the knowledge and recognition of dress and costume associated with a historical style or period that is of particular interest in the present study.

While hermeneutic theory is primarily concerned with knowledge contained in the individual mind, scholars have discussed how a group might engage in the meaning-making process. Humans frequently engage in social behavior and, as such, belong to an
“interpretive community” (Belsey, 1980; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999e). Interaction with the world around us, as well as past experiences, assist in the ways in which we acquire and interpret knowledge. Another contributing factor is the historical moment in which we live. What we know and how we know it speaks to the collective body of knowledge and associated interpretive perspective(s) required to exist in a particular cultural or social group. Hooper-Greenhill (1999d) explains that “it is within interpretive communities that the meaning-making of an individual is tested, revised, supported, and developed” (p. 50).

**Personalized Meaning-Making in the Museum**

Museum visitors can be categorized, characterized, and described in a variety of ways. Research has helped scholars to understand how these characteristics contribute to the learning experience. For example, though not specifically addressing museum visitors, Knowles (1978) pinpointed four major characteristics of learners:

1. They are highly independent and self-directed in their choices of learning opportunities. Further, they teach themselves much of what they learn.
2. Their backgrounds and experiences provide rich resources for learning.
3. Phases of social development often motivate their choices of learning activities (young parent, upward-moving professional, retiree, etc.).
4. They choose learning opportunities that address a specific problem or that permit the information or skill to be used immediately.

(pp. 184-185)

A fundamental notion expressed in contemporary museum learning and experience literature is that “visitors come to museums with their own agendas and construct their own meanings within museums” (Chang, 2006, p. 170); that is, “museum experience is often personal and individual rather than standard and generic” (Chang,
We bring our own experiences and knowledge to the museum setting and, as a result, construct meaning in individualized ways (Chang, 2006; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Hein, 1998; Knowles, 1978; Matthewson-Mitchell, 2008).

Several scholars (e.g., Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2000; Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999b, 1999e; Roberts, 1997) have explored how visitors construct meaning and increase personal understanding in the museum setting. Because the museum is a highly individualized experience for the visitor, Falk and Dierking (2000) assert that it is an environment in which free-choice learning takes place. Free-choice learning is defined as “learning [that] is facilitated when individuals can exercise choice over what and when they learn and feel in control of their own learning” (Chang, 2006, p. 179). It is principally differentiated from other types of learning by the ability to exercise choice and control (i.e., as opposed to the classroom setting within a traditional school). The choice component of the definition, in particular, is supported by the literature that suggests museums are viewed as a source of entertainment and leisure (Capstick, 1985; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Masberg & Silverman, 1996; Pearce, 1991; Prentice, 1993). Hein (1998) discusses a similar designation: “the terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ are reserved for a description of settings and the presence or absence of a formal curriculum … schools provide primarily formal education … museums, even when overtly engaged in education, usually offer informal education” (p. 7).

The opportunity to choose how one spends his or her time means that value can be placed on such choices. Learning can be fun, and the two concepts are often linked in the minds of museum visitors. Previous researchers suggest that there is a relationship
between the value placed on learning and how leisure time is spent for the museum visitor (Chang, 2006; Hood, 1983). More specifically, Hood (1983) found that individuals who visit museums on a regular basis place a high value on both learning and engaging in leisure activities that can be deemed as worthwhile. A common expectation of the museum visitor is to have a “desirable leisure experience” (Chang, 2006, p. 173).

Because the museum experience is often undertaken for purposes of educative leisure, it is not surprising to discover that museum visitors are more likely to engage with an exhibit and its content if it can be personally connected to their own lives (Chang, 2006; Cranton, 2011; DiBlaso & DiBlaso, 1984; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Gunther, 1999, p. 121; Hein, 1998). Cranton (2011) explicates this finding by stating that a personal connection to historical narratives allows visitors to become more educated about themselves and the world around them. In essence, museum visits come with an intrinsic reward of becoming more self aware and reaching heightened levels of awareness (Hein, 1998, p. 152).

DiBlaso and DiBlaso (1984) and Cranton (2011) contend that narrative (i.e., storytelling) is an important component of effective learning in the museum setting that allows visitors to find a personal connection. For these scholars, it is narrative that successfully achieves a balance between the traditional presentation of museum information and modes of visitor engagement that often provide entertainment. The narrative must also, ideally, be primarily communicated through visuals. With regard to the present study, it is the narrative associated with the Titanic, especially as
communicated through feature film, and how it mediates the construction of meaning that is of interest.

Chang (2006) and DiBlaso and DiBlaso (1984) also argue that, in order for effective learning to take place, the museum visitor must be able to personally connect with the narrative. Falk and Dierking (1992), Hein (1998), and Serell (1996) support this argument, suggesting that time is a useful measurement of effective learning. For example, Serell (1996) found that visitors spend less time with an exhibit or gain less understanding if a personal connection is lacking. Though, Hein (1998, p. 135) notes that one of the complexities of museum learning, which carries an inherent limitation, is infrequency of visits and visits with a short duration.

**Characterization in the Learning Experience**

One technique commonly used to create a personal connection to the visitor (i.e., to humanize the experience) is characterization. There are a variety of ways in which this technique can be manifested, but ultimately, it involves the introduction of a persona to the visitor with characteristics and attributes appropriate for representation of a certain historical place and/or time. The invocation of characters has been used in the full spectrum of learning environments, from the museum to the classroom (Anderson, 1982; Cranton, 2011; LaBonty, 1998, Mercurio, 1999). The most common example of character invocation in the museum is living history characters and interpreters (Anderson, 1982; Cranton, 2011).

LaBonty (1998) and Mercurio (1999) conducted a character journal unit in the classroom, in which elementary school-age children adopted a persona of a real-life
Titanic passenger and, in the midst of gathering facts from a variety of sources, wrote first-person journal entries that reflected the lived experience of the chosen passenger. Mercurio (1999) acknowledges that the character journal unit that she conducted was timely, taking place within a year of the 1997 film release, and that her students were motivated by its popularity. The goal, Mercurio (1999) explained, was that “each person aboard that ship had a story to tell, and [her] mission was to hear all of them” in context of literacy education (p. 216). The use of the character journal unit, though executed in the classroom setting, lends support for the use of a humanistic and constructivist approach in the museum setting that promotes visitors to personally connect with exhibit content. Participant journals have also been used as a method to study visitor meaning-making in the museum setting but not in the same context of characterization (Hein, 1998, p. 119).

Pertinent to the present study, period dress became a defining component of the character journal experiences led by LaBonty (1998) and Mercurio (1999). In both instances, as part of the research experience, students consulted a variety of sources (e.g., Marsh, 1997) that described period dress and the costumes of the 1997 film. Students were asked to decide what their passenger would pack for their journey on the Titanic; dress and accessories were chosen based upon considerations of social class, age, and so forth. Journal entries about dinners were filled with descriptions of luxurious and embellished wardrobes. The character journal unit culminated in a day where the students dressed up in period costume and shared their journals with the class. To this end, the use of dress can assist in contextualizing the multi-sensory lived experience of ordinary
people who lived at a certain time in history, as well as the facilitation of critical thinking and observation skills of the near environment (Ordon, 2008; Shuh, 1999).

**The Role of Novelty, Familiarity, Resonance, and Wonder in the Museum Learning Experience**

A frequently asked question in museum studies literature is as follows: Why do visitors choose to visit a museum? One reason is the novel experience that a museum can offer (Cranton, 2011, p. 7; Gunther, 1999, p. 118). Hein (1998, p. 14) argues that novel museum experiences can result in learning for the visitor. Museums are particularly adept at providing novel experiences for visitors because the content often counters the daily lived experience of the visitor (Festinger, 1957/1962; Hein, 1998). Early scholarly work by Dewey (1938) presented the idea that educative experiences must be characterized as challenging and stimulating (i.e., not routine).

Concepts that echo novelty and familiarity can be found in the work of Greenblatt (2004): Resonance and wonder. The experience of resonance (i.e., an item displayed to appeal to what we, as an audience, know) exists in contrast to the experience of wonder (i.e., a sense of amazement, revelation and the exotic invoked by museum content). The intention of employing these concepts is that what the visitor observes will stick with him or her and resonate with the context of social and personal history. Museums can build wonder through visitor engagement techniques (e.g., by letting the visitors get up close and personal with living history interpreters) (Cranton, 2011; Duensing, 1999).

Another conceptualization of novelty and familiarity can be found in the work of Corrin (1994), who invokes the concepts of expected versus unexpected (i.e., objects that don’t form a cohesive contextual unit which may break down the assumptions of the
visitor) in the context of exhibition layout and display techniques. The concepts of wonder and the unexpected can be strongly and effectively coupled by creating a sense of chaos before presenting order. Cranton (2011) explains that living history museums provide an educative sense of wonder (also referred to as “edutainment” in her work) that is meant to arouse appreciation for the lived experience and near environment of the people, place, and time period being depicted.

Part of the effectiveness of incorporating these concepts into layout and display techniques is related to the museum visitor’s tendency to find a way to neatly fit the textual and visual information into a preexisting mental schema. Sotto (1994) supports this explanation, stating that, “to learn something new, experience and action are necessary to build the mental model [or schemata]” (pp. 32-33). Hooper-Greenhill (1999c) and Sotto (1994) also explain that abstract concepts are understood through references to preexisting mental schema. In this way, the museum content draws upon the visitor’s collective memory, as a culture or individual, or refers to revered cultural icons that are easily recognizable.

However, it is important to achieve a balance between novelty and familiarity to avoid causing the visitor to feel disoriented. The “Museum Learning and Experience” section of the literature review has established that learning is enhanced when visitors can create a personal connection to the museum content. The concept of familiarity stems from the constructivist approach and emphasizes the presence of what Hein (1998) calls “intellectual comfort,” that is, the ability to associate the content of the museum exhibit with prior knowledge, with what is already known” by the visitor (p. 161). Hein (1998)
explains the function of familiarity from a visitor perspective: “Even if I feel relaxed, comfortable, and in control in a physical setting, I cannot access an exhibition that provides me with no clues to what is known to me already” (p. 161). Familiarity is fostered through material objects that the visitor can recognize and the integration of secondary information (e.g., activities performed with such objects) that create an explicit link between the older material culture and everyday material culture of the visitor (Hein, 1998, pp. 152, 160-164). This approach has been successfully integrated into several museum exhibits (e.g., Akbar, 1995; Cotton & Wood, 1996).

**James Cameron’s *Titanic* Film: An Overview**

*Titanic* is a 1997 American costume drama film about the sinking of the RMS Titanic in 1912. This epic movie tells the events of the tragic sinking from the perspective of fictional survivor, Rose, who narrates the film in a modern day framing device (Barker, 2000; Chumo, 1999; Lubin, 1999). The plot is focused upon the fictional love story between Rose DeWitt Bukater (a first class passenger) and Jack Dawson (a third class passenger), with historically accurate characters interspersed, to tell the story of the infamous sailing and sinking of the ship (Barker, 2000; Lubin, 1999; Marsh, 1997).

The film was shot over a seven-month period. It was released in movie theaters across the United States on December 19, 1997. It quickly became an international hit in the weeks following its theatrical release and set box office records. The film was still number one at the box office after a month in theaters and, for a time, was recognized as the most successful film in history (Kramer, 2004; Lubin, 1999; Svetkey, 1998; Tresniowski, 1998). It was also nominated for 14 Academy Awards and won eleven in
1998 (Kramer, 2004; Rogers, O’Neill, & Scott Gregory, 1998). Film critics and journalists credit its success with the combination of attention to historical detail, special effects, and melodramatic romance (Adams, 2004; Goodale, 1998; Lubin, 1999; Sandler & Studlar, 1999; Svetkey, 1998; Wells, Blonska, & Lynch, 1998). Goodale (1998) offers the theory that Titanic’s success can be explained by its status as “the first big historical epic of the TV generation” (p. B3).

The conception of the film began as a dream for James Cameron, the director of the film. He had been fascinated with the story for years and decided it was a story that needed to be told to audiences everywhere. Cameron decided that the first step to making a film about a historical event was to research the event itself. He did something that very few people would have a chance to do in their lifetime: he dove down two miles into the ocean to see the Titanic wreckage. Cameron also talked to survivors to obtain personal stories and accounts in order to gain factual information that would be woven into the movie plot (Marsh, 1997). It was his attention to detail that raised the film’s cost to a staggering $200 million – the most expensive film ever made, to date (Goodale, 1998; Svetkey, 1998). Cameron, himself, explicitly expressed the importance of living history to his film:

The tragedy has assumed an almost mythic quality in our collective imagination, but the passage of time has robbed it of its human face. Its status in our culture has become that of a morality tale, referred to more often as a metaphor in political cartoons than as an actual event. I set out to make a film that would bring the event to life, to humanize it; not a docudrama, but an experience in living history. I wanted to place the audience on the ship, in its final hours, to live out the tragic event in all its horribly fascinating glory (Marsh, 1997, pp. v-vi).
Period Film Costuming Considerations

Drawing upon the work of Cumming (2004), historical dress and costume can be further illuminated from the perspective of theatrical and film costume because, consistent with material culture, theatrical and film costume “can afford an extra dimension to the understanding of dress [within a] society” (p. 114). The additional dimension of understanding provided by theatrical and film costume is especially useful because theatrical and film costume is, according to Cumming (2004, p. 114), characterized as a mass-cultural phenomenon that assists in the construction of persona and identity through characters that perform a role and not a role that is restricted to the elite upper classes. Costumes convince the audience that the performer is a certain character.

Cumming (2004, p. 115) introduces the idea of “distinctive clothing” as a non-verbal explanation of the performer’s role and its proximity to fashionable dress of a specified place and time. The viewer is then left to perceive the costume and the performer’s role and approximate it to previously understood roles and appearances (including those in contemporary life). This approximation often occurs in the context of social stratification; that is, the viewer knows that certain appearances are reserved for distinctly different social strata. The concept of “distinctive clothing” supports the role of iconography in distinguishing social class via costume representation. This approximation also occurs based on the symbolic classification of the character, such as if the character is “good” or “bad.” In this case, colors can be used to denote a certain symbolic reference, such as white for “good” and black for “bad” (La Motte, 2004).
Cumming (2004, p. 115) even makes specific reference to a “visual code” that provides cues about cultural norms and how we can approximate the character’s appearance to a lived experience away from the film or stage (p. 115). Such a visual code has the potential to be examined through semiotic theory.

When creating a visual code, costume designers consider the following components: (a) drama and its characters, (b) historical setting, (c) the budget, (d) the collaboration, (e) the designer as an artist, and (e) available materials and supplies (Cumming, 2004; Dowd, 1993; La Motte, 2004). It is important to point out that costume is just that -- an approximation to a lived experience. Because costume is part of the entertainment experience that often must balance the illustration of both a dramatic and historical story, it is often, by its very nature, an exaggeration and stylized representation (La Motte, 2004). Cumming (2004) also states that representational dress must be used in many instances because, depending upon the time period and/or event being depicted, it is impossible to wear the dress of individuals who lived in a previous time period.

When making a period film, La Motte explains that it is generally important to develop a research process that ensures authenticity to some degree. After all, the dress of the characters helps to tell the story as much as the words they speak, especially when providing a historical account (La Motte, 2004). Authenticity can be characterized as a detailed and accurate portrayal of an identity from a specific historical time and place and is a reflection of developing historical knowledge (Strauss, 2001; Turner, 1990). Handler and Saxton (1988) describe authenticity in quantitative terms, suggesting that it is a “token isomorph” (p. 243); that is, authenticity should be a representation of a lived
experience that is identical with a lived experience from a place and time in the past. The suggestion of an isomorph calls into question the ability of one to even achieve such authenticity because our own contemporary experiences are varied and will be inherently embedded in the process of conceptualization of the character (Handler & Saxton, 1988; Strauss, 2001). One of the main criticisms of costume designers is that they often stray too far away from strict historical authenticity; it is thought by some that movement away from historical knowledge is being “too creative” (Gapps, 2004; La Motte, 2004).

It is also important to note that the primary purpose of film is not (always) to tell a strictly accurate account of history; that is, film has many purposes that serve a collaborative function (e.g., entertainment, education, and so forth) (La Motte, 2004; Terry-Chandler, 2000). Terry-Chandler (2000) makes this distinction by invoking the notions of “historical imagination” (p. 67) and “heritage film, [which can] be defined as the representation of the past for popular contemporary consumption” (p. 68).

**Costuming of James Cameron’s *Titanic* Film**

One of the film’s 14 Academy Award nominations was in the “Best Costume” category (Goodale, 1998). This was a well-earned nomination, considering that the costumes essentially played a starring role in the film. That is, they were largely responsible for bringing a historical moment to life.

In a movie companion book by Marsh (1997) that chronicles the making of the film, Deborah Scott, the costumer designer for the film, explained that James Cameron was very dedicated to realism in all aspects of the film, including the costumes, she shares a story that illuminates this dedication:
We filled a whole wall of the office with photographs of Titanic’s passengers, and we’d look at them very analytically: ‘So Jock Hume was wearing that, and Lady Duff Gordon might have been wearing that.’ And while I was standing there, with all these faces staring back at me, I suddenly thought, ‘We’re not looking at research here. We’re looking at the real people who were on that ship, who lived that moment.’ It was eerie. It becomes more than just making a movie – you want to live up to history (p. 38).

This passage supports the relevance of material culture and the value of interactive museum attractions/exhibits containing dress, as well as academic exploration of the role that dress plays in such venues.

To illustrate the importance of material culture and the relationship that it creates between historical dress and film costume, consider the following thick descriptions provided by Deborah Scott in a newspaper article by Herman (1998) that details a revival of dress styles from the 1900s and 1910s:

The moment Rose DeWitt Bukater lifts her heavily beaded evening gown and steps her embroidered satin slipper on the railing of a doomed ocean liner, she starts a movie’s action and brings to Technicolor life an emerging fashion trend…When she steps on that railing, you see the dress, you see the shoes. It gives you a chance to see in detail the opulence of the [Edwardian] period (p. C12)

and

Kate Winslet’s wardrobe gave viewers a larger-than-life immersion in the feel of the period’s clothes - the rustling of the silk skirts, the texture of the embroidery, the sheerness of the lace and the twinkling of the glass bead fringe (p. C13).

To further invoke Cameron’s “living history” intention for the film, Deborah Scott highlights the cultural meaning behind the film’s costumes and the real-life apparel that inspired them:

What it says about the period that produced these detailed works of art – and the lives of the people who spend hundreds of hours sewing them – is incredible. And
when you realize that there were sometimes five or six complete changes of
clothes each day it becomes even more staggering (Marsh, 1997, p. 38).

Given the complex meaning between dress and social life, it is no wonder that the
task of costuming the film was as large as the ship itself. The producers of *Titanic* spared
no expense to get an authentic look. Scott had a $3.5 million budget for the film, which
required nine months of pre-production preparation, 45 costumers, two manufacturing
operations, and enough rental costumes to dress as many as 2,000 extras (Marsh, 1997).
Deborah Scott notes that this elaborate and authentic clothing contributes to the appeal of
the film for a wide range of viewers and enthusiasts (Herman, 1998).

The costumes were intricately produced by over 30 costume designers. They
searched the world for vintage and period-inspired dresses and restored some of the
garments that were found. The dress that Rose wore to the first class dinner for which
Jack was in attendance was a fully restored 1912 dress. Some characters changed
costume about six times, and the lead characters changed around eight or nine times.
Most of the costumes they made from scratch were from the designs of John Galliano.
What was challenging for the costume designers is that the clothing of the 1912 time
period was extremely detailed and accessorized. People who belonged to the upper social
classes wore very intricate garments, complete with embellishment and accessories.
Many of the principal characters belonged to the upper social classes. Over 2,000
costumes (including coordinating accessories) were created to be worn by the entire cast.
Along with the principle actors and actresses, over 200 extras were hired. These extras
had to go to a special training program which costumed them and taught them etiquette of
that time period (Marsh, 1997).
Titanic Museum Attractions: An Overview

For those individuals who did not get enough of the movie, the musical, the books, and the documentaries, there are numerous Titanic museums and attractions to visit. There are a variety of both permanent and traveling Titanic museum attractions and exhibits. Because the present study draws upon the tourism and heritage-related literature, it is important to note that most Titanic museum attractions are located in entertainment-based cities (e.g., cities commonly associated with tourism and tourist attractions).

Many Titanic exhibitions travel around the country to science museums and entertainment venues. RMS Titanic, Inc. is a publicly traded, for-profit company that owns the rights to the wreckage and pays for salvage costs with profits from traveling exhibition admissions and books (Harper, 1997). One long-running traveling exhibit is housed at the Luxor Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada (Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition, 2011). The RMS Titanic Inc. webpage markets “Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition” with the following remarks:

Educational, emotional and appropriate for all ages, Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition takes visitors on a journey through the life of Titanic. Along the way visitors will learn countless stories of heroism and humanity that pay honor to the indomitable force of the human spirit in the face of tragedy (RMS Titanic, Inc., 2011)

and

Actual artifacts, recovered from two and one half miles below the surface of the North Atlantic, tell the story behind the legendary Titanic’s short journey from construction and destruction to eventual recovery. Walk her decks, peer into her cabins, and meet her passengers and crew (Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition, 2011).
There are currently four permanent attractions in Orlando, Florida; Branson, Missouri; Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; and Las Vegas, Nevada.

The self-professed interactive museum, Titanic: The Experience is located in Orlando, Florida and was the first of the permanent attractions to open its doors to the public. It is currently owned and operated by WLM, Inc. (Titanic: The Experience, 2010a) but was conceived under the direction of Magicworks Entertainment (Schneider, 1999, p. G2). It is described as a seven million-dollar attraction with a 20,000 square-foot facility, near Walt Disney World, Sea World, and Universal Studios, has guided tours led by trained actors in period dress portraying actual Titanic notables, … full scale recreations of her Grand Staircase, Verandah Café and more, … authentic artifacts and historical treasures, … [an] immersive dive area and the Captain’s Bridge (Titanic: The Experience, 2010b, para. 1).

As stated on the webpage, “hundreds of thousands of visitors each year come to stroll through full-scale recreations of famous Titanic rooms…[and to view] over 400 artifacts and historic treasures” (Titanic: The Experience, 2010b, paras. 2-3). At one time there were boasts on the same webpage that many of the artifacts and objects were on display for the very first time, including original movie memorabilia from such films as A Night to Remember, The Search for Titanic, and a costume worn by Leonardo DiCaprio in the Oscar-winning motion picture Titanic. Adult tickets are $21.95 and children’s tickets are $12.95. The facility is also available for booking large group events, such as corporate retreats and weddings. A recent addition is the Titanic Dinner Event is a Titanic

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16 The webpage contained this information at the time that I wrote my research proposal. At the time that I wrote my results this information had been taken down but these objects are still on display in the museum attraction.
dinner party, complete with costumed characters and crew members, promising authentic food and accommodations from 1912 (Titanic: The Experience, 2010b, para. 1 and 3).

The Titanic Museum Attraction of Branson, Missouri is owned and operated by John Joslyn and Mary Kellogg-Joslyn of Cedar Bay Entertainment LLC. John Joslyn co-led an expedition to the Titanic wreckage in 1987, with the goals of retrieving artifacts and exploring the wreckage, and subsequently co-produced a Titanic television special about the expedition. He has stated that it was his lifelong dream to open a Titanic museum attraction (Kabel, 2006; Marr, 2007). It opened in April 2006 and is housed in a facility that is built to the likeness of the grand ship. The museum attraction regards all visitors as “passengers” and places central importance on providing them with an authentically interactive experience (Allman-Baldwin, 2007; Marr, 2007; Szadkowski, 2007; Titanic Attraction, 2011; Titanic Branson, 2011a, 2011b). Visitors are able to view over 400 artifacts accumulated directly from the ship’s wreckage and surviving passengers. Many artifacts are on loan from private collectors (Titanic: The Experience, 2010b; Titanic Branson, 2011c). Extant dress is among the items recovered from the ship’s wreckage and is restored and preserved for display and/or collections storage (Adams, 2004, pp. 56-57). Also special attention is paid to historic learning for children, with an area of age-appropriate activities for children to become immersed in the ship’s amenities and sinking (Allman-Baldwin, 2007; Marr, 2007; Titanic Branson, 2011b). The official website highlights the following activities:

As visitors touch a real iceberg, walk the Grand Staircase and third class hallways, reach their hands into 28-degree water, and try to stand on the sloping decks, they learn what it was like on the RMS Titanic by experiencing it first-hand (Titanic Branson, 2011a).
The attraction in Branson also partners with the Titanic Historical Society, Inc., which “is the first and largest global organization dedicated to preserving the history of RMS Titanic and the White Star Line” (Titanic Branson, 2011a). The information provided by the museum attraction on the website does not explain the specific details of the partnerships or tasks on which the two collaborate. Adult tickets are around $23 and children’s tickets are around $11 (Titanic Branson, 2011d). Like the Orlando location, the Branson attraction is also available for booking large group events. It also hosts many extracurricular celebrations and events related to Titanic history or with a Titanic theme, such as Titanic’s church youth nights, Titanic’s fourth annual woodcarving event, the second annual Titanic firehouse and charity chili cook-off, and the Titanic Christmas and winter celebration. Costumed characters and crew members are in attendance at all special events (Titanic Branson, 2011e).

The Titanic Museum Attraction of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee is the newest permanent attraction. It opened on April 8, 2010. It is owned and operated by the same corporate enterprise that resides over The Titanic Museum Attraction of Branson, Missouri. The exterior, as well as the layout and content of the interior exhibits, are roughly the same, and this museum attraction places the same central importance on providing visitors with an authentically interactive experience (Titanic Attraction, 2011; Titanic Pigeon Forge, 2011a, 2011b). Adult tickets are around $23 and children’s tickets are around $12 (Titanic Pigeon Forge, 2011c). Like the other two permanent museum attractions, the Pigeon Forge attraction is also available for booking large group events and hosts extracurricular events (Titanic Pigeon Forge, 2011d).
Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition is located in the Luxor Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas Nevada (Borbe, n.d.; Luxor Las Vegas, 2012). Like Titanic: The Experience, it is owned and operated by RMS Titanic, Inc. (Geller, 2009). It features more than 300 artifacts and replicas of various areas on the Titanic, as well as personal stories about passengers (Borbe, n.d.). This museum, though located in an entertainment setting, follows a more traditional museum approach. It features fewer interactive experiences than the other three locations. Adult tickets are around $32, and children’s tickets are around $24 (Luxor Las Vegas, 2012). Interestingly enough, a review on one Las Vegas promotional website states, “If you loved the 1997 movie ‘Titanic,’ then the Titanic exhibit at the Luxor will blow you away” (Borbe, n.d.).

A common theme running through the four permanent attractions is the extensive interactive experiences that they offer. That is, visitors can expect to receive total immersion in history when experiences of the actual passengers are reproduced through full-scale replicas of the infamous grand staircase, viewing real Titanic artifacts, touching the frozen surface of an iceberg, touring first-class estate rooms, and encountering costumed crew who provide tours of the various exhibits and create a personalized atmosphere (Allman-Baldwin, 2007; Marr, 2007; Szadkowski, 2007). Gapps (2009) explains that this combination of elements represent the “memes” of history (i.e., the multi-sensory elements of an exhibit with which visitors engage) and help to confirm or mediate the experience of an authentic past.
The Role of Living History in Titanic Museum Attractions

Using costumed crew members and the fictional character of Rose is an applied example of living history, which is where people portray (or interpret) the role of actual or typical historic persons through dress, mannerisms, speech, and so forth to illuminate a specific time period or event (Toler, 2007). Dress is used to contextualize history because it displays tangible evidence of a particular lifestyle that occurred in a defined place and time (Gapps, 2009; Ordon, 2008). Runyard (1996) explains that “living history is meant to provide a niche between theatre and orthodox museums. [Showcasing the lived experience of a historical persona provides] more opportunities to give insights into human nature and represent a range of views” (p. 33). The portrayal of historical personas extends beyond a one-dimensional view of history and allows the viewer to engage in the multi-sensory complexities of a lived experience (Ordon, 2008; Runyard, 1996).

There is clear evidence of living history being used in the permanent Titanic museum attractions. The Orlando museum prides itself on having exceptionally trained actors in period costume portray famous Titanic notables such as Captain Smith and Molly Brown, sharing stories of her passengers and crew during an hour-long guided journey aboard the most famous ship in history” (Titanic: The Experience, 2010b, para. 3).

The Branson and Pigeon Forge attractions also use living history characters to enhance the interactive experience (Allman-Baldwin, 2007).

The museum attraction developers and business partners of the Titanic museum attractions in Branson, Pigeon Forge, and Orlando were aware of explicit connections between the film and the historical events of Titanic and were hoping a connection would be made between the two by potential visitors (Harper, 1997; Howard, 1997; McKenzie,
John Joslyn, then a business partner in the budding Orlando venture, stated that “it took the momentum generated by the hit film to get the project off the ground” (Schneider, 1999, p. G2). There is also clear evidence of the museum attractions explicitly making a connection between history and Hollywood for visitors. The Orlando museum attraction website mentions the display of an outfit worn by Jack Dawson (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) in James Cameron’s *Titanic* film (Titanic: The Experience, 2010b). The Branson location opened a limited-time exhibit titled, “Titanic: The Movie Exhibit” in March 2008 (Branson Church Groups, 2009). This exhibit, in particular, created an explicit connection between history, film, and popular culture with a primary focus on film memorabilia; the “headliners” of this exhibit include costumes and accessories worn by the actors and actresses in James Cameron’s film. The same exhibit, also a limited-time engagement, was installed at the Pigeon Forge location in early 2012 to commemorate the re-release of the film in 3D. But, the influence of the film doesn’t stop there.

My August 2009 visit to the Branson Titanic attraction and a review of promotional materials found that a costumed character of Rose is an integral part of the marketing and operational techniques at the Branson and Pigeon Forge attractions. It is important to note that the costumed interpreter in a living history venue is assuming either the identity of a real or hypothetical character; that is, the interpreter may address the question of who may have existed during a given time period. Even if a living history persona is not grounded in strict historical evidence, it can still help the audience to bridge the gap between the historical lived experience and the representation of the
historical lived experience that is achieved with contemporary bias in mind (Gapps, 2009).

While the museum attractions have been the subject of description and commentary in the popular media since their opening (and even before), relatively little is known about the academic insights regarding their incorporation of extant dress, representational dress, and film costume that can be gathered from their content and operation. My literature review yielded only two studies that have, at least in part, addressed Titanic museum attractions and exhibits (Jorgensen-Earp, 2006; Kitchings, 2005). In addition, it is more common for the Titanic museum attractions to be studied as a whole, as opposed to conducting a microanalysis of certain exhibition techniques or certain objects that are being displayed. In the book, *Rhetorics of Display*, Jorgensen-Earp (2006) examined the display of recovered artifacts and other visuals that were used to form a narrative in “Titanic: The Exhibition.” Jorgensen-Earp’s examination revealed competing rhetorical messages about the appropriateness of salvaging artifacts from a debris field that was also the gravesite of many people. It was also found that elaborate staging and interactive exhibition techniques were necessary to reanimate and

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17 Kitchings (2005) conducted a study in which “a tourist model used in Tourism Development [was used] to present a Functional Model for museums to follow when working to become tourist destinations as part of larger community revitalization plans. The presented Functional Model...both [defined] the groups present in a singular museum ecosystem, and how these groups should develop as the museum expands. The paper...then [evaluates] this Model against three museums that recently finished implementing strategic plans” (p. 1). A Titanic exhibit that incorporates artifacts is examined in the context of its implementation into one of the three museums being studied. The Mystic Aquarium hosted a Titanic exhibit in partnership with Dr. Robert Ballard and his Institute for Exploration. Dr. Ballard is known for his numerous underwater expeditions to the Titanic wreckage. Kitchings discusses the potential impact of the Titanic exhibit on Mystic Aquarium tourism.
contextualize the artifacts. In addition, artifacts recovered from the wreckage were treated in a spirit of sacred commemoration within the exhibition.

**Living History as Discussed in Scholarly Literature versus Living History as Used by Museum Attractions**

Living history is an interpretive activity, first used by lay historians and museum interpreters in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to simulate life in another time and place to interpret the life of the past and evoke a different historical time from the present for the public or for recreation (Anderson, 1982, 1984, 1985; Cranton, 2011; Hunt, 2004; Magelssen, 2007; Roth, 1998; Runyard, 1996). The acknowledgement of living history in academic literature slowly followed, gaining traction in the 1970s.

Because initial interest in living history began with recreational applications, it is first important to review its origins and history. Interest in living history was initiated by folklorists in Europe in the nineteenth century who wanted to learn about folk culture, including the everyday lived experiences of the folk. This interest was expressed at a time when folk museums (i.e., “government-supported institutions whose purpose was to collect, study, preserve, and interpret regional culture as it evolved in the many local provinces” [Anderson, 1982, p. 291]) were being introduced to the public and quickly gaining popularity (Anderson, 1982). A similar mission to that of the museum institution of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, a focus upon collection, preservation, and documentation of material folk culture was adopted by early folk museums of the nineteenth century in Europe. In contrast, the folk museums that arose in

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18 Folk culture can be defined as “the culture of the people.” It is culture produced by lived experiences and is comprised of a bottom-up organization. Folk culture is an organic expression of the working class (D. McMurray, personal communication, January 4, 2011).
North America in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century were focused more upon the cultural meaning and use of extant near environment objects. It was during the first decades of the twentieth century that there was an increase in outdoor historic sites and museums that focused upon the built environment and that were modeled on European folk museums (Anderson, 1982; Hunt, 2004). Living history farms were established in the 1960s. Academic scholarship related to living history and folk life began in the early decades of the twentieth century with French historians (e.g., the Annales School of Fernand Braudel) (Anderson, 1982).

Increased recognition and positive reception of living history led to the founding of the Association for Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) in 1970. Academic scholarship first emerged from the membership of ALHFAM in the early 1970s (e.g., Enbanks, 1977; Kelsey, 1976; Schlebecker, 1968; Zook, 1971). While membership originally reflected only a niche in the living history movement, it expanded in 1980 to include a variety of practitioners and scholars who study and participate in the living history movement (Anderson, 1982).

Scholars from a variety of disciplines (e.g., anthropology, archaeology, education, folklore, museum studies, performance, and social history) have continued to engage in a dialogue about the function and practice of living history (Anderson, 1982; Hunt, 2004). A fundamental issue associated with living history is the educational versus entertainment goals of the museum institution (Cranton, 2011; Hunt, 2004; Magelssen, 2007; Pitman, 1999; Runyard, 1996). Hunt (2004) contends that “heritage [has been] reduced to commodity which is ‘consumed’ by an audience that pays to observe and
experience its contemporary representation and interpretation … as a form of entertainment” (p. 388). Many scholars have reported that visitor engagement techniques, such as living history, are consistently popular with visitors and are preferred over more traditional exhibition techniques (e.g., Capstick, 1985; Cranton, 2011; Kotler, 2001; Pearce, 1991; Runyard, 1996).

Deetz (1981) argues that the re-creation of a historical and cultural environment, complete with first person interpreters, allows for a successful interpretation of social and cultural history. Anderson (1982) further explains the position of Deetz:

In short, Deetz contended that living museums should re-create, within the limits of their boundaries and resources, facsimiles of entire cultures – not just the houses, fences, fields, and other appendages of the cultural, man-made landscape, but the social context as well: people going about their everyday lives, working, playing, praying, celebrating, and so on. With museums like this, any of the popular new social history themes could be interpreted: cultural ecology, enculturation, family, sex roles, function of material culture, and aging, to name a few (p. 298).

The issue of accuracy is central to criticisms of living history (Magelssen, 2007). Magelssen (2007), drawing upon the work of Novick (1988), argues that accuracy is not possible in the living history setting because it is a socially constructed concept. Living history sites are thought to provide a disservice to visitors because they “[perpetuate] the notion in visitors’ minds that accuracy is, indeed, possible” (Magelssen, 2007, p. 45). Scholars have also criticized living history because it is too idealistic a notion that the extensive resources needed to provide an accurate interpretation for visitors can be acquired, as many institutions do not have access to the resources, both practical and financial, that are needed (Magelssen, 2007; Runyard, 1996). Living history is also criticized as a discipline based upon a presentation of “subjective” and “incomplete
evidence” that is used to present “only accounts of the past and not the past itself” (Kelsey, 1976, p. 22). Ronsheim (1974) argues that “the past is dead, and cannot be brought back to life” (p. 62). The work of Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1997) echoes this argument.

With this overview of the living history discipline in mind, it is useful to consider the similarities and differences between living history discourse in academic literature and its practical application in Titanic museum attractions. Scholars have identified one of the primary characteristics of living history as the use of costumed interpreters (Anderson, 1982, 1984, 1985; Cranton, 2011; Magelssen, 2007; Runyard, 1996). Three of the four permanent Titanic museum attractions included in the present study do engage in this technique. A departure from the literature exists in an apparent blurring of entertainment and education, not only are historical characters used, but fictional characters from the 1997 Titanic film, such as Rose, are also brought to life in two of the locations.

Scholars have identified another primary characteristic of living history as the simulation of life in a re-created near environment that resembles another time, and possibly place (Anderson, 1982, 1984, 1985; Cranton, 2011; McGrath, 1989; Runyard, 1996). Titanic museum attractions engage in a hybrid of exhibition techniques that includes traditional artifact display and interactive exhibits that encourage visitor engagement. The content of the four Titanic museum attractions does not reflect an environment that is simulated in totality; that is, it is not a museum environment where the primary exhibition technique includes costumed interpreters who portray period life
of a specific era by acting as if they are really living in a different time and place to demonstrate older lifestyles to modern audiences (McGrath, 1989). Simulated environments are interspersed within artifact exhibits and other interactive exhibits. Some built environments are re-created (e.g., first class and third class accommodations) but are mostly meant to be used in a capacity of display. Other built environments do simulate certain aspects of the Titanic’s history, such as temperatures experienced by passengers on the night of the sinking.

Scholars have identified a generally narrow range of social class and multiethnic representation such as “lower classes, ethnic ‘minorities’, and women” (Magelssen, 2007, p. 82) within the living history setting (Lowenthal, 1996; Magelssen, 2007). Lowenthal (1996) argues that a dominant representation of white, upper-class individuals encourages the adoption of an “us” versus “them” dichotomy with regard to who owns the heritage being depicted. This issue is further complicated by the possibility that racial and social stereotypes will be perpetuated and that visitors may feel discomfort when encountering glaring examples of social injustice. The issue is also complicated by the visitor preference to encounter notable personalities that are often associated with upper-class grandeur and opulence. It is an opportunity to encounter the upper-class lifestyle that may not be part of the lived experience for many visitors (Magelssen, 2007). Titanic museum attractions primarily feature living history characters that depict notable personalities, both passengers and crew members. If a character is not identified as a crew member, it is very likely that he or she is associated with the upper-class. There are representations of maids, but even they are identified as “first class maids.”
Living history has come to be associated with theme park-like pageantry ("spectacular display", "[for] mere show" or promotion [Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, 2011b]) by critics in the academic literature (Magelssen, 2007). Sites that engage in pageantry are criticized by scholars for straying from historical accuracy (Magelssen, 2007). Magelssen explains that it is commonly thought by critics (e.g., Kelsey, 1976; Ronsheim, 1974; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1997) that, despite a perceived impossibility to achieve total replication of a historical time period with precision, steps should always be taken to strive for accuracy. Pageantry can be used as a tool to draw in more visitors, often in the form of celebrations or activities that do not directly relate to the historical moment being depicted at the living history site (Magelssen, 2007, p. 77). The practice of Titanic museum attractions is directly related to this critical discourse, in that they host many celebrations and events that are only loosely related to Titanic history or bear a Titanic theme. While costume characters and crew members are in attendance at these events, the history of Titanic may or may not be directly referenced.

Another interesting example of a potentially weakening commitment to accuracy is related to the use of technology. The Branson and Pigeon Forge museum attractions have taken living history to a “technological level.” They have a living history character, named Jaynee, blog on their website. Jaynee is a first class maid and appears in many of the promotional materials as well (see Titanic Branson, 2011c). A technological approach to living history goes beyond the scope of 1910s lived reality because this level of technology did not exist during this time period.
Academic literature has identified a theme in the presentation of living history: the use of narrative, often with the use of a timeline (Magelssen, 2007). Magelssen (2007) explains that living history sites "impose order upon the events and objects of display, so that meaning is produced" (p. 40). The use of narrative will often incorporate traditional storytelling elements of a story with a beginning, middle (with a climax), and end (Magelssen, 2007; Ranciere, 1994). Titanic museum attractions use traditional storytelling elements to communicate the history of the Titanic, beginning with the building of the ship in the 1900s and ending with the recovery of the ship’s remains in the 1980s, in a chronological format. Living history and interactive elements are inserted at various points in the chronology of the museum attraction to illuminate certain historical themes and interpretations.

**Chapter Summary**

In the present study I sought to understand the meaning-making process when dress is used in the museum setting, in conjunction with historical personas and characters, as a means of contextualizing the multi-sensory lived experience of ordinary people who lived during a certain event or historical moment. It has been found that dress has been used in this capacity in at least one “blockbuster” exhibition presented at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri (Branson Church Groups, 2009). I conducted an exploration of the use of film characters, recognizable via costume, in the museum setting and their impact on visitor motivations and experiences.

While dress and costume are displayed in Titanic museum attractions, they have not been analyzed to the extent of dress in other museums, memorial and otherwise. An
underlying aim of the present study was to (a) explore the under-analyzed role of dress and costume in the meaning-making process of the memorial museum setting (and explore, if in fact, the Titanic museum attractions identify as having a memorial function) and (b) examine how the meaning-making process is influenced by the media (namely, film). I argue that dress, costume, and film costume have the potential to be considered a form of memorialization. Of interest to me, as the researcher, is the possibility that characters and/or historical personas serve as a type of preexisting schema.

Bradburne (2001) and Weil (1997) present the notion that “new museology” has made it possible for museums to define themselves and create a meaning and mission that is entirely separate from traditional museum standards. This idea is of particular importance to the present study, in which hybrid museum attractions devoted to the Titanic were studied. The work of Cohen (1988) and Pearce (2001) also informed my study from the perspective of museum studies by providing support for the notion that museum attraction content can be studied from the perspective of semiotics and symbology. My project extends the aforementioned literature by analyzing the semiotic elements of dress and costume associated with a notable film character when displayed within Titanic museum attractions and various methods by which visitors are prompted to engage with them.

Fifteen years after the release of James Cameron’s film (in addition to several other films that have been made over the years), it may be difficult for visitors to separate history from Hollywood. In line with Terry-Chandler’s definition of heritage, I explored how film costume is used as a tool to aid in the representation of the past for popular
contemporary consumption and how film costume might be instrumental in the consideration of dress and costume in the heritage literature.

I agree with the relationship between creative processes of re-enactment and memorials, as posited by Sturken (1997). In this vein, the 1997 film *Titanic* can be considered a memorial in its own rite, as can the costumes worn in the film. However, I also share the concerns associated with actual past versus the virtual past and, thus, find it important to explore the relationship between the film, its costumes, and the actual past/virtual past dichotomy.

The consideration of dress in this context led to the observation that Rose serves as a mascot of sorts, a means by which visitors find Titanic entertaining and easy to relate to. She has been cast as a heroine of survival, in love and the face of tragedy and life. She has become an official symbol of the historical event. But, Rose is a fictional character, so her place in a historical artifact exhibit was an invitation for examination too.
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event. I explored the current curatorial and visitor engagement practices used by Titanic museum attractions that lend further understanding to how period film costume, extant dress, and representational dress are understood and perceived by museum visitors. For the purpose of the present study, phenomenological and inductive approaches were undertaken. This chapter includes a description of the research design, procedure including sampling and data collection, and data analysis methods used in this study. I also address measures taken to ensure trustworthiness, credibility and reliability, and ethical considerations taken for this study. I conclude with an overview of how the results and discussion are presented in subsequent chapters.

Research Questions

According to Creswell (1998) researchers should reduce their phenomenological studies to one central question with several subquestions. I examined the experiences of visitors and staff at Titanic Museum Attractions using the following main question: How do visitors to and staff of Titanic museum attractions describe their experiences in the museum, especially with regard to the display of dress and costume? The subquestions were:
1. Why do visitors choose to visit the Titanic museum attraction? And, does the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into exhibitions (especially via costume, living history, and display) factor into this decision?

2. Do Titanic museum attraction visitors use the 1997 film *Titanic* to relate to the historical event of Titanic? If so, what role is played by Rose and her dress/appearance in this relation?

3. Does the museum attraction experience differ for visitors who are not fans of/who have not seen the film? Do these visitors feel a personal connection with Rose and her appearance?

At the start of this study I did not think that I would have access to museum attraction staff. I was able to make contact with several staff members via a social networking website (e.g., Facebook) and during my personal phenomenological visits. I conducted interviews with three staff members. As a result, my analysis was enhanced by data that addressed the three original sub-questions (listed above) and the addition of staff members’ insights from the perspective of interaction with visitors in the museum attraction setting. The lived experiences of museum attraction staff were explored in the context of the following informal research questions, which together comprise research question four:

- What is the staff member’s perception and experience with how visitors use dress artifacts and costume displays, the movie, and the Rose character to understand Titanic?
• How do Titanic museum attraction staff members engage with education, outreach, and curatorial decision-making related to dress artifacts and costume displays?

• How do Titanic museum attraction staff members interact with visitors?

**Research Design and Approach**

The present study used an interpretive research design (see Creswell, 2003, pp. 8-9). Via my research design I focused on a holistic understanding of the subjective perceptions and interpretations of individuals. I took a discovery orientation to the collection and analysis of data. In this vein, I sought to “make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world” (Creswell, 2003, p. 9). This approach is associated with (social) constructivist knowledge claims. Qualitative (personal phenomenology, phenomenological interviews, and brief participant observation) data collection techniques were employed. Both descriptive and experiential phenomenological and narrative approaches were combined to analyze the resulting data (see Berry, 2007; Dahlberg, Drew, & Nystrom, 2001; Giorgi, 1975, 1985, 1997, 2000; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Kidd & Kidd, n.d.; Todres, 2005)

Phenomenology is a particularly fitting research approach for this study because the allure of both the historical event and the film *Titanic* is the ability to create a feeling of sentimentality between the characters and the audience. Sentimentality is largely based upon personal feelings resulting from a perceived personal connection with characters

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19 Creswell (2003) explains that “stating a knowledge claim means that researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry. These claims might [also] be called paradigms, philosophical assumptions, epistemologies, and ontologies” (p. 6).
Phenomenology was used, in part, to examine how visitors perceive and experience this personal connection in the museum setting.

Scholars using qualitative data continue to demonstrate innovation in data collection methods that encourage the examination of data in new and creative ways (Creswell, 2007). Creswell explicitly advocates for the use of innovative data collection methods. In this spirit I utilized phenomenological interviews (including phenomenological reduction), personal phenomenology and narratives to study dress and costume displays in the museum attraction setting, which is a method that has not been used to explore this subject.

Given the literature available there appeared to be a need to identify how museum attraction visitors learn and form personal meaning from dress and costume displays. Phenomenology, in combination with a narrative approach during data analysis, is a method that met the needs of understanding this phenomenon. The focus of this study is to gain an understanding of how museum attraction visitors learn and form personal meaning from dress and costume displays. I sought to gain understanding from the individual experiences of museum attraction visitors and staff who planned such displays and observed visitors. This allowed me to consider all dimensions of this experience from an insider point of view. I sought to understand both the individual and shared meanings of visitor experiences.

**Phenomenological Approach**

Phenomenology has emerged as an interdisciplinary philosophical movement and research method used to seek understanding of lived human experiences and perceptions.
(Creswell, 2003; Flood, 2010; van Manen, 1990). Creswell (2003) explains that “understanding the ‘lived experiences’ marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method” (p. 15). It has been associated with a discovery orientation and constructivism, two theoretical perspectives discussed in the literature review (Crotty, 1998; Fosnot, 1996a, 1996b; Hein, 1998, p. 35, 1999; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999a; Spiegelberg, 1960; van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000; Witcomb, 2006). Phenomenology is rooted in the philosophical writings of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) who believed that science needed to restore its connection to people and the deeper human issues (Morrissette, 1999). Creswell (2007) expands on the origins of phenomenological research by quoting Stewart and Mickunas (1990) who emphasize that by returning to the traditional tasks of philosophy, research is strengthened because it works to suspend all judgments about what is real (the biases and presuppositions of researchers) and rather allows reality to be defined by the research participants’ own unique experience of it, thus collapsing the subject-object dichotomy. Reality, from a phenomenological perspective then is “only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual” (p. 59).

Phenomenological methods are scientific because they are methodical, systematic, critical, general, and potentially intersubjective (Wertz, 2005). However, the intent of phenomenological research is not to test a hypothesis but rather to ask a question and allow the data surrounding the phenomenon to speak for themselves (Morrissette, 1999). Ultimately, the purpose of this unique research design is to produce “clear, precise and systematic descriptions of the meaning” of the phenomenon being examined (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 45). Creswell (2007) expands upon the research design, stating
that the researcher uses the data to “[develop] a composite description of the essence of
the experience for all of the individuals” (p. 58). The researcher is concerned with the
“what” and “how” of the lived experiences described by participants (Moustakas, 1994).

Using this research approach associated with the interpretivist and social
constructivist paradigms (Creswell, 2007; Flood, 2010; Parahoo, 1997) researchers
analyze how meaning is made, described, and assigned to a specific phenomenon (Flood,
2010; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Omery, 1983). The central question of phenomenological
research is articulated by van Manen (1990): What is the nature of the lived experience?

While the above questions form the basic philosophical and methodological
structure of phenomenology, varying philosophical perspectives and assumptions have
given rise to an array of approaches to phenomenological research. Hermeneutical
phenomenology, experiential phenomenology, and transcendental phenomenology are the
most common approaches. Descriptive phenomenology has also emerged as a common
that hermeneutics goes beyond description of core concepts and essences to look for
meanings embedded in common practices, “what people experience rather than what they
consciously know” (p. 9). In contrast, transcendental phenomenology is more descriptive
in nature, focusing upon reporting the specific details of how a participant experiences a
phenomenon in the form of a textural description (Colaizzi, 1973; Creswell, 2007; Keen,

I utilized a combination of descriptive and experiential phenomenological
approaches for data collection and analysis in this study. Amedeo Giorgi (see Giorgi,
1975, 1985, 1997, 2000; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003) is credited with advancing the
descriptive phenomenological approach from Husserlian phenomenology (Todres, 2005). The philosophical foundation of descriptive phenomenology is comprised of two concepts: life-world and essences (Todres, 2005, p. 104). The life-world concept refers to the flow of experiential happenings which provide the ‘thereness’ of what appears prior to categorizing it into ‘packages’. It is the life-world that is the source of all experiential qualities. Distinctions such as hot, far and the number three all refer to a life-world of happenings without which any thought or construct would have no ‘about’ (Todres, 2005, p. 104).

Dahlberg, Drew, and Nystrom (2001, p. 97) explain that use of the life-world concept dictates that researchers must be open to all possibilities of how the phenomenon is experienced. Openness to all possibilities of the lived experience involves consideration of both the participants’ and the researchers’ own lived experience. The process of phenomenological reduction assists in cultivating a sense of openness because it helps to identify and “bracket” the meanings that the researcher already associates with a phenomenon.

The concept of essence refers to invariant structures that can be intuited within an experienced world of meaning. Such essences are neither objective or subjective but refer to an intelligible order that is intuited in the way things are given to consciousness. So, for example, there are some invariant features that make ‘anger’ what it is, and some invariant features that make the experience of ‘red’ what it is. Such experiential phenomena are recognized again and again in spite of their unique variations and contexts. Essences thus refer to the qualities that give an experiential phenomenon its distinctiveness and coherence; the qualities that make something what it is as it appears relationally to consciousness. The meanings of an essential structure can be clarified and expressed in different ways depending on the purpose of one’s inquiries. Essences have sometimes been referred to as the relational structure of an experiential phenomenon or the general thematic structure (Todres, 2005, p. 105).
Descriptive and experiential phenomenologies share a similar philosophical foundation because both are rooted in the concept of “life-world.” Experiential phenomenology utilizes a similar data collection and analysis procedure to that of descriptive phenomenology. In addition, experiential phenomenology is referred to as the “phenomenology of practice” because it focuses upon the practical use and application of findings using this phenomenological method (van Manen, 2011, para 1).

Giorgi presented the following components as the key features of the descriptive phenomenological approach to research:

- The researcher gathers detailed concrete descriptions of specific experience from others.
- The researcher adopts the intuition of the phenomenological reduction in order to intuit the intelligibility of what is given in the experience.
- The researcher seeks the most invariant meanings for a context. (Todres, 2005, p. 107)

Given the focus on description in phenomenology, causal explanations of the experience are avoided in order to produce what Moustakas (1994), Sadala and Adorno Rde (2002), Todres (2005) and van Manen (1990) call the essence of a phenomenon’s meaning.

Recognizing the innate presence of the subjective element in all research, phenomenologists believe that in preparation for the study, each researcher has an obligation to address potential biases and assumptions thereby producing the most reliable data possible and minimizing the impact that biases will have on objective thought. The researcher must engage in this process, known as the “Epoche,” throughout the research (see Figure 3.1). The “Epoche” is associated with reflexivity and is intended to encourage phenomenological researchers to consider and analyze their own lived
experiences, beliefs, presuppositions, and ideas that, while likely providing a passion for their research interests, can also skew their perceptions of the study at hand. It is especially important to begin this process prior to the start of data collection. The “Epoche” is the overarching concept that informs the process of bracketing. The researcher engages in “bracketing” (Finlay, 2009; Wertz, 2005) by actively setting aside assumptions and objective knowledge about the phenomenon in an effort to “unpack” the subjective meaning of the phenomenon. A conceptual map of the Epoche process is available in Figure 3.1.

“Bracketing” can be achieved through two significant steps: self-examination and phenomenological reduction. Self-examination includes solitary reflection resulting in a
personal disclosure statement prior to the start of the research. My personal disclosure statement is included in the “Role of the Researcher/ Personal Disclosure” section of this chapter. Phenomenological reduction is a data collection method used to achieve “bracketing” through the researcher submitting herself to the data collection protocol and then analyzing the data in a way that allows the researcher to reflect upon the experience. The purpose of this process is to free the researcher of preconceived notions about the phenomenon (McGlasson, 2011, p. 53) The use of this data collection method is supported by Dahlberg, Drew, and Nystrom (2001), who stated that “bracketing…does not mean that the event or object that has been set aside is lost” (p. 60).

**Phenomenological reduction (personal phenomenology).** While the primary goal of phenomenological research “is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it” (Creswell, 2007, p. 131), the role of the researcher is also central. In addition to the acknowledgement that the researcher assumes the role of the research instrument in qualitative research, scholars have discussed data collection methods such as researcher reflection and journaling (or memoing). These data collection methods are used as a means to address assumptions and biases through “bracketing” (Finlay, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Wertz, 2005).

Creswell (2007) suggests that one of the common characteristics of qualitative research is that data is most often collected in the field where the phenomenon is being experienced. As can be seen in the work of Burton (2007), Ma (2008), and McGlasson (2011), the researcher can enter the field and become immersed in the experiential research process through direct participation in the research protocol. This participation
becomes part of the data set and contributes to the emergence of meaningful themes. The researcher becomes immersed in the experiential research process through phenomenological reduction, a technique designed to aid the researcher in becoming aware of the preconceptions he or she holds about the phenomena being studied. As such, the phenomena becomes “bracketed” or suspended so that it can be experienced from a fresh perspective. For the researcher herself to produce lived-experience descriptions through phenomenological reduction, van Manen (1990) suggests:

- You need to describe the experience as you live[d] through it avoiding as much as possible causal explanations, generalizations, or abstract interpretations.
- Describe the experience from the inside as it were; almost like a state of mind: the feelings, the mood, the emotions, etc.
- Focus on a particular example or incident of the object of the experience: describe specific events, an adventure, a happening, a particular experience.
- Try to focus on an example of the experience which stands out for its vividness, or as it was the first time.
- Attend to how the body feels, how things smell[ed], how they sound[ed], etc.
- Avoid trying to beautify your account with fancy phrases or flowery terminology. (pp. 66-67)

Phenomenological reduction (which I refer to as personal phenomenology in this study), is closely related to autoethnography, a method in which the researcher uses autobiographical personal narrative to explore personal experiences. However, there are some key differences. The focus of autoethnography is upon the researcher’s subjective experience, a single case, rather than the lived experience of others that account for multiple cases in phenomenological reduction. Findings are typically written in the first
person and highlight the emotional experience of the researcher, with the text presented as an episodic story (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 2000).

Polkinghorne (1989) advocates for the gathering of multiple depictions of how a phenomenon is experienced outside the realm of the research project (e.g., novelists, poets, and painters). With the use of personal phenomenological observations, I extended the traditional role of the researcher in phenomenological scholarship by gathering multiple depictions, as well as points of view, inside the context of the present study. These were the varied points of view obtained from myself and each individual participant. In this way, the addition of personal observations on my part added a unique dimension of interaction and understanding between the researcher and participants, particularly during the phenomenological interview process, because it allowed for interview prompts that evoked a shared lived experience. In this vein, Polkinghorne also acknowledges that self-reflection on the part of the researcher is important.

**Phenomenological interviews.** The phenomenological interview is characterized by a conversational approach that makes use of open-ended questions to understand participants’ lived experience of a phenomenon. This may involve single or multiple interviews with each participant (Creswell, 2007; Polkinghorne, 1989). Participants are typically sampled using a purposive or criterion technique because the primary criterion for selection is that each of the participants has experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989; Wertz, 2005). Polkinghorne (1989) advises that between five and twenty-five participants be interviewed.
Polkinghorne (1989) differentiates the phenomenological research interview from the survey or questionnaire interview in that the latter is considered a stimulus-response interaction where the interviewer’s question is the stimulus and the subject’s answer is the response. “The phenomenological interview, in contrast, is conceived of as a discourse or conversation. It involves an interpersonal engagement in which subjects are encouraged to share with a researcher the details of their experience” (p. 49). According to Creswell (2007), the phenomenological interview is centered on two questions: “What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon” (p. 61)?

Dahlberg, Drew, and Nystrom (2001, pp. 154-156) and Kvale (1983, pp. 174-179) built upon these guidelines for the phenomenological interview process with specifics about the descriptive phenomenological interview. It is important that the interview address the participant’s life-world in a way that allows both the researcher and participant to more fully understand the phenomenon. Ideally, the interview can be deemed a success if the participant gives verbal indication that their knowledge or understanding of the phenomenon had been increased or allowed them to adopt a new perspective about the phenomenon. The interview questions must be directed toward the participant’s unique experience of the phenomenon and allow the participant to reflect upon the lived experience of the phenomenon (Dahlberg, Drew, & Nystrom, 2001). Kvale (1983) stated that it is important to remain focused on the life-world of the participant and the themes that emerge regarding how the participant uses his or her life-world to understand and experience the phenomenon (p. 174).
Role of the Researcher/Personal Disclosure Statement

Moustakas (1994) specifically states that the research question should be rooted in autobiographical meanings and values and should have social implications. He elaborates by stating, “in phenomenological research, the question grows out of an intense interest in a particular problem or topic. The researcher’s excitement and curiosity inspire the search. Personal history brings the core of the problem into focus” (p. 104). Regarding this proposed study, I, in addition to being a doctoral candidate in historic and cultural aspects of dress and textiles, am also an avid Titanic enthusiast and connoisseur of museums. Accordingly, I was not only uniquely motivated by personal interest but was also uniquely qualified to conduct this particular study. However, as mentioned previously, phenomenological research strives to identify the true essence of the phenomenon being studied and the meaning attributed to it by those who are experiencing it.

The first step in this study was to begin the process of Epoche. The idea of this process is for the researcher to become aware of the preconceptions he or she holds about the phenomena being studied. As such, the phenomena becomes “bracketed” or suspended so that it can be experienced from a fresh perspective. There are two steps involved in “bracketing:” self-examination (e.g., a personal disclosure statement) and phenomenological reduction (i.e., personal phenomenological experience). The remainder of this section represents the first step in “bracketing:” the presentation of my personal disclosure statement. The completion of this first step in the Epoche process
allowed my personal phenomenological experience during the second step to emerge from a fresh perspective.

It is my role, as the researcher, to describe the lived experiences of the participants and examine their meaning-making processes in the museum setting. I bring to this work a life-long interest in the Titanic, both the historical events and the 1997 film. My interest has extended to trips, during which I have visited several Titanic exhibits and attractions. Most pertinent to this study, I visited the Orlando, Florida museum attraction in 2006 and the Branson, Missouri museum attraction in 2009. Though I have visited these venues before, a fairly lengthy period of time has lapsed between then and the present study. My visits to the Pigeon Forge, Tennessee and Las Vegas, Nevada attractions were my first. I have also visited a traveling Titanic exhibition in Denver, Colorado, as well as several exhibitions that have integrated information and/or artifacts related to Titanic (e.g., in aquariums, science museums, and the Ripley’s Believe It or Not franchise).

I also bring to this work a long-standing interest in history, dress, and costume (i.e., film costume and theater costume). This interest has been manifested in employment. I have worked in a few positions related to history, dress, and costume: the Santa Fe Opera of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and two graduate student academic appointments that have run concurrent to seeking two graduate degrees (i.e., master’s and doctorate). I am currently a doctoral candidate at Oregon State University. I have worked in an academic capacity for five years as a graduate teaching assistant which included assisting in a historic and cultural dress and textiles collection at Colorado State...
University and Oregon State University. I have also completed some work in a curatorial capacity; planning, staging, and overseeing dress and costume-related exhibits.

Consumption of mass media is a major component of my life. I enjoy internet use, as well as watching television and period films. I greatly value learning, especially via visual means. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, writing, activities that record personal history (e.g., scrapbooking), attending classes, and visiting museums. I favor the use of visitor engagement techniques in the museum setting. I am an introspective person who subscribes to the constructivist mode of thought and like to understand how an exhibit is put together. I am also an emotional person who is prone to sentimentality and personal connections with movie and television characters. It is easy for me to see parts of myself in certain characters and become too attached to them for reasons of similar interests or life experiences, as one might become attached to a friend. There is also a strong emotional connection that I feel to movie and television characters. Because their life experiences are so vividly displayed with the addition of environmental cues (i.e., sound effects, lighting, music), it is easy to experience a stronger emotional connection with them because it is as if they are displaying their emotions and experiences just for me, as one might experience with a close friend. That is, it is an intimate connection between and sharing of two lives through a seemingly impersonal outlet. I find deep personal meaning in Titanic, both the historical events and the film. I often expect that others will share a similar level of fascination with the subject but am aware that this is not often the case.
Sampling: Strategy, Rationale, and Process

It is important to note that the definition of sampling, according to Neuman (2006), includes a small group drawn from a larger group that can be generalized to a broader population. However, Creswell (2007) and Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) explain that qualitative research is not intended to be generalizable because it seeks to highlight specific phenomena and/or points of view. There is an ongoing scholarly debate regarding the generalizability of the phenomenological approach (cf., Creswell, 2007); some scholars contend that the findings can be generalized if certain procedures are followed.

Sites of Study: Titanic Museum Attractions

While many Titanic exhibitions travel around the country to science museums and entertainment venues, permanent Titanic museum attractions were the only focus of this study. Participants were selected from the sites listed below. There are currently four permanent attractions.

- Titanic: The Experience (Orlando, Florida)
- Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction (Branson, Missouri)
- Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction (Pigeon Forge, Tennessee)
- Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition (Las Vegas, Nevada)

It is important to note that these attractions appear in tourism-based cities. These four attractions were chosen for the study because they (a) engage visitors in historic learning via visitor engagement (i.e., costumed crew members who provide tours of the various exhibits and create a personalized atmosphere) and (b) often utilize explicit references to
both *Titanic* film characters and assorted *Titanic* film memorabilia (e.g., [film] costumes and props).

**Human Subjects: Museum Attraction Visitor and Staff Participants**

Several qualitative sampling strategies are available for use in phenomenological research. Because I focused upon understanding the meaning-making process associated with the display of dress and costume in the museum attraction setting, museum attraction visitors comprised the population used for this study. I used a purposive and criterion sampling strategy. Purposive sampling is a nonrandom sampling technique that is beneficial in exploratory research and allows for the mindful selection of participants that can best inform the unique purpose of the study (Creswell, 2007, p. 118; Neuman, 2006). With regard to phenomenology, a purposive sample is primarily delineated by individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon. Criterion sampling is defined as a sampling technique designed to gather “all cases that meet some criterion; [it is] useful for quality assurance” (Creswell, 2007, p. 127). According to Creswell (2007), each participant of a phenomenological study must experience the phenomenon to be studied. Creswell (2007) adds that, in the context of phenomenology, purposive and criterion sampling can become hybridized because, among other criteria, the participants must represent a sample of people that has experienced the phenomenon being studied. Todres (2005) states that the use of a purposive sampling strategy is ideal for descriptive phenomenological data collection.

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20 Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition, located in Las Vegas, uses very few references to the movie in comparison with the other permanent museum attractions included in the study.
As discussed in the “Field Issues” section below, difficulty in recruiting participants with the above strategies necessitated a consultation with my doctoral committee about alternative sampling strategies. Prior to the collection of data my research design included the potential use of chain\textsuperscript{21} and/or opportunistic sampling if voluntary participants were difficult to locate, given that potential participants might refer family members and/or friends with whom they would be traveling for participation in the study (Patton, 1990). I did have to use this method but did so minimally because sampling within groups of family and friends had the potential to narrow the range of possible experiences used to derive the essence of the phenomenon.

I had the most difficulty enrolling visitor participants for a visit to the Pigeon Forge, Tennessee location. I asked already-enrolled participants if they knew of others who might like to participate. I also contacted faculty in textiles and clothing, history and philosophy related departments at Tennessee universities (e.g., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Maryville College) and asked if they would circulate my recruitment announcement among their students. Some faculty members agreed to circulate the announcement and interested college students contacted me via email.

A total of 32 participants were included in this study. A detailed description of the participants is included in the “Participant Summary” section of Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{21} Neuman (2006) offers a definition of chain sampling (i.e., snowball sampling): “a nonrandom sample in which the researcher begins with one case, and then based on information about interrelationships from that case, identifies other cases, and repeats the process again and again” (p. 223). Chain sampling may be combined with opportunistic sampling, a sampling technique designed to “follow new leads; taking advantage of the unexpected” (Creswell, 2007, p. 127).
Selection and Recruitment of Participants

Using a purposive and criterion sampling method, participants for this study were selected based upon two separate lists of criteria developed for museum attraction visitors and staff. Museum attraction visitors were selected based on six criteria. First, each participant must be planning to take a trip and/or visit one of the four qualifying Titanic museum attractions. Second, each participant must be visiting their chosen Titanic museum attraction for the first time. Third, each participant must be at least 18 years of age. Fourth, each participant must have access to the Internet, both before and after participation in the study. Fifth, each participant must be willing to spend approximately two hours, outside of the Titanic museum attraction visit, for pre-visit interview and post-visit interview activities. Sixth, each participant must be willing to review my results at the completion of the study to check for accuracy.22

Museum attraction staff were selected based on criteria. First, each participant must be a current staff member at one of the four qualifying Titanic museum attractions. Second, each participant must be identified as an artifact specialist or staff member who engages with education (e.g., tours), outreach (e.g., promotional and educational events), and/or curatorial decision-making related to dress artifacts and/or costume displays. Third, each participant must be willing to complete a 90-minute interview. Fourth, each

22 When I approached the visitor participants to participate in the member-checking process there was limited availability. Some participants did not respond to my attempts to make contact, and others began the member-checking process but never sent their comments to me. As a result, twelve of the twenty-nine visitor participants participated in the member-checking process.
participant must be willing to review my results at the completion of the study to check for accuracy.23

There were no gender restrictions for this study. Participants were not required to have seen the 1997 Titanic film. In fact, it was my hope that part of the sample included participants who had not seen the film for a more comprehensive analysis of the meaning-making process. This aspect of the present study is in line with a notion presented by Patton (1990), who recommended that qualitative research should include the search for a case that does not fit dominant patterns or is associated with alternative constructs. I initially acknowledged that the film’s blockbuster success minimized this possibility, but did have seven participants in the sample who had not seen the film.

Recruitment of visitor participants. Due to the extensive travel that was required for the completion of this study, I made every effort to solicit participants prior to their arrival in the city of their chosen Titanic museum attraction in order to maximize the efficiency of data collection time and resources. Participants were primarily recruited via online forums. The internet, particularly social networking and online discussion forums (e.g., discussion boards and blogs), is a useful and low cost instrument for recruiting participants for data collection. Internet resources provide quick access to numerous participants with similar interests, facilitating the recruitment process in an efficient and purposive manner (Eysenbach & Wyatt, 2002; Facebook, n.d.; Ip, Barnett, Tenerowicz, & Perry, 2010; Rhodes, Bowie, & Hergenrather, 2003; Sumerson, 2010).

23 When I approached the staff participants to participate in the member-checking process there was limited availability. Some participants did not respond to my attempts to make contact and others began the member-checking process but never sent their comments to me. As a result, one of the three staff participants participated in the member-checking process.
In addition to individual user profiles, Facebook is a social networking community that provides “Places” and “Attractions/Things To Do” pages that allow businesses and attractions to have an online social presence for potential visitors/customers and/or loyal visitors/customers. Such pages provide an outlet for potential visitors/customers and loyal visitors/customers to share and interact about their experiences at a specified business and/or attraction (Facebook, n.d.). In addition, being a member of this type of page means that the Facebook user explicitly identifies as a fan of the business or attraction. I am a member of several Titanic-related Facebook group pages but do not regularly participate in discussion or other member interaction at this time.

I identified internet sites forums that were explicitly affiliated with individuals who self-identified as Titanic enthusiasts or fans, as well as forums explicitly devoted to Titanic-related travel and museum attractions. These internet forums included Facebook group and attraction pages specifically related to Titanic museum attractions, the historical events of Titanic, the 1997 Titanic film, and tourism/travel agencies/companies in the cities that are home to Titanic museum attractions (i.e., Branson, Missouri; Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; Orlando, Florida; and Las Vegas, Nevada). A full list of the internet forums and sources to which the recruitment flier (see Appendix A) was posted can be found in Appendix B. The following internet forums are examples of chosen outlets for participant recruitment:
Upon receipt of IRB approval, recruitment fliers (see Appendix A) were posted to websites and forums deemed relevant and appropriate, including those examples listed above. When available, page or group moderators for each internet forum were identified and permission to post the recruitment announcement was sought by each page or group moderator. However, it is important to note that Facebook pages are often regarded as public forums and may or may not have a moderator, which meant that permission to post the recruitment announcement was not required in most instances. A public forum that does not have a moderator was likely to allow “open posting” by members at will. An image of the recruitment flier is available in Appendix A. The Participant Recruitment Announcements posted to Facebook pages were posted from a professional Facebook profile about me, as the student researcher, that was created for the purposes of this study. As a social networking community, Facebook also allows for the creation of “Education” pages to create an online presence for educational projects and issues, as

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25 http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Titanic-The-Experience/140998747784
26 http://www.facebook.com/#!/rmstitanicinc
27 At the time of participant recruitment the web address for the professional Facebook profile was as follows: http://www.facebook.com/genna.doctoralcandidate. At the completion of the study the web address was changed to reflect my new credentials: http://www.facebook.com/genna.rdphd. The professional Facebook profile can be still be accessed at the updated web address.
28 This professional Facebook profile was attached to the following email address that was created for the purposes of this research: titanic_museum_research@yahoo.com.
well as research. An “Education” page for this research, \(^{29}\) entitled “Research of Dress/Costume in Titanic Museum Attractions” was created and made visible to the public through my professional Facebook profile.

I contacted faculty in textiles and clothing, history, and philosophy related departments at Tennessee universities (e.g., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Maryville College) and asked if they would circulate my recruitment announcement among their students. Some faculty members agreed to circulate the announcement and interested college students contacted me via email.\(^{30}\)

Participants were notified in the recruitment announcement of the title of the study, qualifications for eligibility, details regarding what participation entailed, the required time commitment, the amount of monetary compensation (i.e., $40), the option of completing in-person or remote interviews, and contact information for the researchers. If participants could not complete the pre-visit and post-visit interviews in person, alternative options were made available over the phone and/or video chat (i.e., Skype). The recruitment announcement also stated that participants visiting as part of a group were all invited to enroll in the study, but each individual in the group would be interviewed individually. I made this stipulation to avoid any influence that the presence of another individual might have on the participant during the interview process.

Interested individuals were asked to contact me or my research advisor via email if interested. Upon receipt of an email from an interested individual, continued email


\(^{30}\) The recruitment of participants at universities in Tennessee was the result of field issues that were encountered once the recruitment process began. Please see the “Field Issues” section below for further information.
communication between me and the individual proceeded to formally determine if the individual fit the inclusion criteria. If inclusion criteria were met, a letter of interest (see Appendix C) was sent to the potential participant via email. The letter of interest included a written explanation of the study purpose and the procedure. Ethical considerations (i.e., reviewing the informed consent form) were also accomplished with initial contact via electronic message. A sample copy of the informed consent form was sent to the participant with the letter of invitation. As soon as the potential participant confirmed intended participation via email, he or she was regarded as a participant of the study. Continued communication provided updates on the participant’s travel plans and any other relevant research study details and/or questions that arose. This process continued until my travel plans aligned with at least two participants in each location. The consent form was signed by the participant right before beginning the interview. If the interview was conducted via phone or internet, the participant provided oral consent right before beginning the interview.

**Recruitment of staff participants.** As with the recruitment of visitor participants, the extensive travel associated with this study necessitated the identification of staff participants prior to making trips to the cities that are home to Titanic museum attractions. Participants were primarily recruited via identification of their employee status and contact information on the Titanic museum attraction official websites. Letters of interest (i.e., an introduction to the study and the opportunity to participate) (see Appendix C) were sent to individuals identified on official websites. However, recruitment strategies extended beyond this approach. One staff participant was identified
via her contact information on the official website. One staff participant responded to the recruitment announcement posted to a Titanic Facebook page and expressed an interest in contributing to the study. Finally, one staff participant was recruited while conducting my personal phenomenological visit to a Titanic Museum Attraction.

Participants were notified in the recruitment announcement of the title of the study, qualifications for eligibility, details regarding what participation entails, the required time commitment, the amount of monetary compensation (i.e., $40), the option of completing in-person or remote interviews, and contact information for the researchers. \(^{31}\) If participants could not complete the interview in person, alternative options were made available over the phone and/or video chat (i.e., Skype).

Upon receipt of an email from an interested staff member or receiving a response from an invitation to participate in the study via email, continued email communication between the student researcher and the staff member proceeded to confirm if the staff member fit the inclusion criteria. As soon as the potential staff participant confirmed intended participation via email or phone, he or she was regarded as a participant of the study. Continued communication provided updates on the participant’s schedule and any other relevant research study details and/or questions that arose. I made every effort to schedule my travel to each location in such a way that it would accommodate the schedules of both visitor participants and staff participants. The consent form was signed by the participant right before beginning the interview. If the interview was conducted via

\(^{31}\) I was the principle investigator for the study, but my research adviser was listed on all Internal Review Board documents.
Field Issues

Because unexpected issues can arise and should be anticipated with qualitative research, Creswell (2007) advises the researcher to anticipate “field issues” (i.e., “issues of data collection…which may be a problem, such as having inadequate data” [p. 119]). I experienced a few field issues that will be explained in this section. The main field issue that I both anticipated and experienced was a lack of volunteer participation during participant recruitment. I planned to schedule my travel to each location in accordance with the projected arrival dates of confirmed participants. A tentative set of travel dates was to be chosen for each location as soon as participants began to respond. Because data collection was scheduled for completion by February 20, 2012, it became clear that there would not be enough participants enrolled in the study by that date. Therefore, with the approval of my doctoral committee, I pushed the data collection deadline to March 20, 2012. I also addressed the difficulty in recruiting participants and coordinating an in-person research schedule by adding the option for participants to conduct interviews via phone or internet video chat.

Because the emergent nature of qualitative data collection requires flexibility (Creswell, 2007, p. 39), such conditions may require an alternative sampling strategy to be employed. I consulted my doctoral committee about the possibility of using alternative sampling strategies and selecting additional venues in which to seek participants. As mentioned, I asked already-enrolled participants if they knew of others who might like to
participate. I contacted faculty in textiles and clothing, history and philosophy related
departments at Tennessee universities (e.g., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and
Maryville College) and asked if they would circulate my recruitment announcement
among their students. Some faculty members agreed to circulate the announcement and
interested college students contacted me via email. This also helped to add more young adults to my sample population. With the approval of my doctoral committee, I increased the amount of monetary compensation from $25 to $40. I also recruited participants upon my arrival in each city. The addition of staff participants to the sample assisted in the mediation of field issues related to having too few (visitor) participants enrolled in the study.

Data Collection

For this study, as discussed, several sources of qualitative data were collected. Creswell (2007) states that phenomenologists study individuals “as the unit of analysis for data collection” (p. 143). IRB approval was obtained for all interviews, photography, and participant observation completed in conjunction with the data sources described below. The permanent locale of the four Titanic museum attractions required travel funded by myself. I stayed in each of the four locations for a minimum of three days and a maximum of seven days, totaling 21 days of research travel.

Research was conducted during on-site visits to each of the four qualifying Titanic museum attractions:

- Titanic: The Experience (Orlando, Florida)
- Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction (Branson, Missouri)
- Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction (Pigeon Forge, Tennessee)
- Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition (Las Vegas, Nevada)
Figure 3.2. A Flow Chart of the Data Collection Process
Data collection occurred in two phases at each location (see Figure 3.2). In phase one, a personal phenomenological (i.e., phenomenological reduction) approach to data collection occurred during my first contact with each Titanic museum attraction. In particular, I made candid and casual observations about the use and manner of representation related to Titanic representational period dress and film costume and characters (e.g., Rose). Observations about what I experienced as a visitor were made at the exterior and interior of each location. The majority of the data for this study came during phase two from in-depth phenomenological interviews with between four and thirteen museum visitor participants at each Titanic museum attraction, as well as three Titanic museum attraction staff members representing three of the four museum attraction sites, for a combined total of 32 interview participants and 63 interviews. A flow chart of the data collection process is available in Figure 3.2.

I collected data from two sources. The first was phenomenological reduction (also known as personal phenomenology), coupled with covert and informal participant observation (see Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, pp. 28-29). The second data source was in-depth interviews completed either remotely or in-person with both museum visitors and staff.

**Phenomenological Reduction (Personal Phenomenology)**

The process of phenomenological reduction (phase one of data collection) was undertaken with a personal (or auto) phenomenological approach to data collection during my initial contact with each of the four Titanic museum attractions. Having already completed the first step in the Epoche process via a “bracketing” method (i.e.,
the personal disclosure statement), I continued through to the second method of “bracketing:” Phenomenological reduction.

I purchased a ticket for entry into each of the Titanic museum attractions, ranging from $21 to $38 at each location. I made candid observations about content pertaining to the use and manner of representation of Titanic film costume and characters (e.g., Rose), as well as other miscellaneous content areas as a visitor within each museum attraction. While it was my goal to visit each museum attraction on my first day in each location and before beginning any participant interviews, this was not always possible due to scheduling constraints and transportation availability. It became necessary to conduct some interviews prior to my personal visit to the museum attraction in each location. It was important to meet the scheduling needs of the participants who had voluntarily agreed to take part in the study, and as a result, this concession was made in the procedure.

I spent as much time as I saw fit in each museum attraction (i.e., enough time to have a meaningful experience and record ample field notes regarding my experience). However, there were some instances when I became rushed due to time constraints related to scheduled interviews and transportation availability. Titanic Pigeon Forge (2011e) estimates that the average amount of time spent by a guest in the museum attraction is two hours. My goal was to remain in each Titanic museum attraction for around four hours, to allow for personal reflection and covert and informal participant observation (see Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, pp. 28-29). I was able to stay in each of the four museum attractions for a minimum of three hours and a maximum of six hours.
I made every effort to obtain permission for photo and video recording inside each attraction from the management, in order to enrich my data. This permission was not granted in any of the locations. As a substitute, I made detailed sketches of exhibit layouts and dress and costume artifacts and objects as much as time allowed. A selection of these sketches are presented in Chapter Six. I also wrote exhibit and artifact captions verbatim in lieu of photographing them. Following the personal phenomenological approach discussed by Burton (2007)\footnote{Using Pugin’s own church, St. Augustine’s Church in Ramsgate, England, as a focal point, Burton (2007) conducted research to (a) examine the structure for evidence of the architectural principles Pugin so passionately described in his writing; (b) to determine the major influences of culture and society on the design of the church; and, (c) to substantiate the presence of his creativity in the resultant structure. A phenomenological, or ‘experiential’ approach was among the multiple research methods employed.}, I gave myself “the freedom to make spontaneous judgments” as they arose (p. 52). I allowed my personal feelings and emotions regarding seeing the museum attraction content first hand “to come to the surface and be self-acknowledged” (p. 52). I did my best to set aside all of my prior knowledge about Titanic, temporarily, “while I permit[ed] the encounter to continue from a purely subjective approach” (p. 52).

Throughout the day, I recorded my first reactions and observations in a personal journal. I also recorded subsequent reactions and observations in my journal. The personal journal was kept separate from the research journal. These reactions and observations were all recorded via written notes and sketches. The intent of this data collection method was to subject myself to the same protocol that I used with my research participants. This data was later reviewed in its entirety by me; it was analyzed and examined separately and as part of the larger data set during the data analysis process. The separate examination of this data was used to write a reflection of my
experience with the method protocol, as well as my experience at each museum attraction. This reflection is reported in the results of this study. This data was also used as a means of “bracketing.”

Interviews

Phase two of data collection was comprised of participant interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted with 32 participants (between four and fifteen participants at each location) who actively decided to visit the Titanic museum attraction of their choice during phase two of data collection.

The focus of the interviews was upon “seeking rich description” (Schmidt & Little, 2007, p. 228) of specific instances in which dress and/or costume display were encountered in the museum setting, the contexts in which these encounters emerged, and the meaning associated with dress and/or costume display. These foci achieved one of the central purposes of the phenomenological approach: “the purpose is not to just gain opinion or impersonal description; but to encourage an explicit interpersonal dialogue where the respondents share details of their experience and explore their own experiencing” (Schmidt & Little, 2007, p. 228). It was important that I maintained an open-attitude and built rapport with the participants. With participants’ permission, interviews were audio recorded via a digital recorder. After interviews were completed, I retained the digital audio recordings and assigned the interview of each participant an identification code and pseudonym. Participants are referred to by their identification code in the interview transcripts and by their pseudonym in the results. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant by choosing a random first name from a list of Titanic
passengers, so as to honor and memorialize the historical event. From this point forward, I referred to the participants by their pseudonyms.

While Polkinghorne (1989) states that characteristically, phenomenological interviews are open-ended and unstructured, both Creswell (2007) and Moustakas (1994) encourage the use of an interview protocol or guide. I chose to use a combination of the two approaches by utilizing an interview protocol that includes several, standardized open-ended questions that were asked of all participants. However, the overall nature of the interviews remained flexible and allowed each participant to express themselves and elaborate in their own way.

Visitor interviews. Phase two of data collection, visitor interviews, consisted of three stages, differentiated by pre-visit data collection, the participants’ visit to the museum attraction, and post-visit data collection. Stage one consisted of three separate steps, stage two consisted of one step, and stage three consisted of two steps. Participants took part in three stages that culminated in the final interview process.

Stage one included three steps. The first step was a pre-interview briefing session of approximately 10 to 30 minutes on a day no more than one week before their Titanic museum attraction visit, during which they (a) reviewed and signed the informed consent form or, if doing a remote interview, provided oral consent after being read the Oral Consent Guide, (b) were instructed what to do for participation in the interview following their visit to the Titanic museum attraction, and (c) were given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
The second step of stage one involved engagement with a brainstorming worksheet (see Appendix H). The brainstorming worksheet was a mostly blank piece of paper containing four prompts: (1) dress, (2) costume, (3) Rose, and (4) Titanic. The prompts are conceptualized as words or phrases placed at the center of the piece of paper, with ample surrounding space provided for the participant’s responses (see Appendix H). The participant was asked to write down words, ideas, images, or phrases in response to the prompts as a means of putting them in a mindset in which they could relate to the phenomenon for the interview. There was no time limit for this brainstorming; the participant had as much time as he or she needed or wanted. The third step of stage one included a pre-visit interview. A full list of interview questions can be found in Appendices I and K.

The briefing session and all interview activities took place in a location approved by each hotel. Interviews were typically held in my hotel breakfast area, common room, or lobby. The sites of data collection were relatively free from distraction and interruption and convenient for the participant. There were some instances, due to space constraints and limited room availability, in which two people who had traveled to and visited the Titanic museum attraction together were in the same room at the hotel while interviewed were being conducted. However, this procedure was used minimally, and the interview was conducted on the opposite side of the room from the other individual not being interviewed. There were also instances in which interviews were conducted in a participant’s home, and other individuals were in a nearby room conversing and making considerable noise. I made every effort to close a door when possible and/or make sure
the other individuals in the house were being more quiet than might otherwise be appropriate, so as to minimize distractions for both the participant and myself.

Following the sharing of their responses about what the prompts “dress” and “costume” meant to them from their completed brainstorming worksheet, participants were informed during the pre-interview that dress is defined in the academic discipline of textiles and clothing as “intentional modifications of a person’s appearance; including clothing, accessories, makeup, jewelry, and surgical alternations” (Payne, Winakor, & Farrell-Beck, 1992, p. 1; Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992, pp. 1-2). The purpose of providing this information was to invite participants to notice and keep in mind objects other than garments that may be classified as dress in an effort to stimulate more in-depth discussion during the post-visit interview.

The second stage consisted of participants visiting their chosen Titanic museum attraction. Participants were instructed to spend as much time as they wished in the exhibit (i.e., enough time to have a meaningful experience); that is, there was no time constraint or time-associated recall involved. The only possible time constraint involved the travel plans of the participants; that is, there were cases in which participation in the study occurred near the participant’s planned departure date or other scheduled obligations.

There were some cases in which my visit to the museum attraction overlapped with that of participants. If I was present at the same time as a participant, I used it as an opportunity to make covert and casual observations about their interactions with and reactions to the museum attraction content.
Within one week following the visit, *stage three* of the data collection process began. The *third stage* consisted of two steps. The *first step* of stage three again involved engagement with the brainstorming worksheet that had been used during the pre-visit interview (see Appendix H). The participant was asked to write down additional words, ideas, images or phrases in response to the prompts as a means of recording their initial reactions to the museum attraction visit. There was no time limit for this brainstorming; the participant had as much time as he or she needed or wanted.

**Step two** was the in-depth interview that addressed the Titanic museum attraction experience of the participant. An open-ended and semi-structured approach was taken for the interview process, in order to guide topics of discussion and allow for free-flowing responses from participants. Munhall and Oiler Boyd (1993) categorize this interview format as reflective. According to Laverty (2003) and van Manen (1990), this is essential to the phenomenological interview. The Interview Protocols can be found in Appendices I and K.

I was able to conduct post-visit interviews with several participants directly after their visit to the museum attraction. I chose to stay in hotels close to each location, which made it easy for them to visit the museum attraction and then return to the common area in my hotel for the post-visit interview. When finished with their museum visit participants would call my cell phone, and we would meet back in the hotel’s common area for the interview. Most participants were able to conduct their post-visit interview within a week following their visit. In some cases the post-visit interview took place more than a week following the museum attraction visit due to scheduling complications.
The longest length of time between a participant’s museum attraction visit and his post-visit interview was Jack at a total of 56 days. The participant, once again, met with the researcher and revisited the ideas and thoughts recorded on the initial brainstorming worksheet. This review process was intended to serve as an opportunity for review of ideas and thoughts recorded during the pre-visit interview session. The completion of this review process was followed by an in-depth interview.

**Staff interviews.** When a staff participant arrived for or called in for their interview, introductions were made and the informed consent form was reviewed to confirm willingness to participate. The participant was then instructed how the interview process would work and was given the opportunity to ask questions about the study. Data collection occurred in one 90-minute interview with each of the staff participants. The interview consisted of open-ended questions and a discussion regarding the tasks that the participant completes as a museum attraction staff member, the exhibition design of and/or curatorial information about exhibitions that contain dress artifacts and costume displays, experiences the participant has had in interacting with museum attraction visitors, and the participant’s perspective on how museum visitors use dress artifacts and costume displays to understand the historical events surrounding Titanic.

Although the interview discussion had a general structure, I used the framing questions listed in the Interview Protocols to guide the interview discussion (see Appendices J and K). These questions were used to initiate the discussion and guide the dialogue. Participants were also urged to provide rich details with initial and follow-up questions. During interviews, additional questions as inspired by participant responses
were used to uncover additional pertinent information. After data collection was completed, I retained the audio recordings and assigned an identification code and pseudonym to the files of each participant.

**Compensation**

I did not have funding for this study. All compensation was offered through my personal funds. Participants were only compensated if they completed the first interview session, the visit to their chosen Titanic museum attraction, and the second interview session. No partial payment was given if they withdrew early from the study. Both visitor and staff participants were compensated $40 for their voluntary participation in the study. If a participant’s interviews were conducted in person, the $40 was given to him or her in cash following completion of the second interview session. If a participant’s interviews were conducted via phone or internet he or she was mailed a $40 Visa gift card that I purchased through Giftcard.com and Wal-Mart following completion of the second interview session.

One participant did not receive compensation for his participation; he was unreachable through the contact information he provided at the first interview session and was withdrawn from the study. Fifteen participants were paid in person with $40 in cash. Seven participants were paid with a $40 gift card sent via postal mail. Nine participants declined to accept payment, citing that the money would be better used for travel and completing the research.
Data Analysis

This section will focus upon the data analysis techniques used for the phenomenological data: personal phenomenology, phenomenological interviews, and narratives. When possible, data collection and initial analysis occurred simultaneously as an iterative and emergent process. The aim of the analysis was to see a pattern of meanings and, finally, the phenomenon’s general structure (described below).

Data analysis began as an iterative process with the review of my research journal notes (i.e., notes taken in response to pre-visit and post-visit interactions with participants and during all interviews) and my phenomenological reduction notes during the data collection process. The formal analysis of interviews began after the completion of transcription of the audio recorded interviews. Due to the high volume of transcription to be completed, I hired four transcriptionists to complete the transcription process. I consulted with each transcriptionist at the completion of each audio file’s transcription to ensure accuracy across all transcripts. I also compared the completed transcripts to the audio files for accuracy when I repeatedly listened to the audio during the data analysis process for an overview of the interview data set. Upon retrieval of the transcribed interviews, I began by comparing my phenomenological reduction data to that of the interviews to better acquaint myself with the data.

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using a version of the structured descriptive phenomenological method presented by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003). The following steps for data analysis reflect the description of the phenomenological method by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003, pp. 251-253): (1) read for a sense of the whole,
(2) determination of parts – establishing meaning units, (3) transformation of meaning units, and (4) the determination of the structure.

The sections that follow contain an explanation of each step’s use provided by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), as well as how it was undertaken in this study. Todres (2005) explains that the three central features of Giorgi’s approach to descriptive phenomenology can be undertaken in a variety of ways. To ensure that the data analysis procedure fit the specific needs of the data, the certain aspects of the data analysis procedure were modified, and these modifications will be discussed in the outline of the steps put forth by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) below.

**Step #1: Read for a Sense of the Whole**

Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) provide the following explanation of this step:

> When one has transcribed verbal data, then the data have to be read, of course. The only point to be established is that the entire description has to be read because the phenomenological perspective is a holistic one. One cannot begin an analysis of a description without knowing how it ends (pp. 251-252).

Step one was undertaken in the present study by both listening to the audio recordings of each interview multiple times and reading the typed transcripts of each interview multiple times.

**Step #2: Determination of parts – Establishing Meaning Units**

Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) provide the following explanation of this step:

> The ultimate outcome of a phenomenological analysis is to determine the meaning(s) of experience. As a consequence, most descriptions within a research context are too long to be capably handled in their entirety, parts have to be established to be able to achieve a more thorough analysis. The parts that are established are based on meaning discriminations, and the results are called meaning units (p. 252).
Step two was undertaken in this study by reading each transcript to identify the meaning units relevant to a particular frame of analysis. Frames of analysis are often also utilized in inductive approaches to qualitative data analysis (Hatch, 2002). Hatch (2002) provides the following explanation of frames of analysis:

Early reading of the data should be done with a key initial question in mind: What will be my frames of analysis? Once you have become familiar with the dimensions of your data set, you will have to make an important decision about how you will break your data into analyzable parts. I called analyzable parts ‘frames of analysis.’ As you read your data, you will see many possible ways to frame your analysis, and deciding how to do so will have major implications for how your analysis happens and how it turns out. Frames of analysis are essentially levels of specificity within which data will be examined (p. 163).

The division of meaning units by frames of analysis is a modification to this step, as it is outlined by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003). This modification is acceptable for use in the data analysis method I have chosen because Tesch (1990) states that it is common for researchers analyzing qualitative data to break parts of their data into more manageable pieces that reflect a single idea or theme (p. 116). In my case, I broke the interview data into parts that answered a specific research question or applied to a specific theme that emerged as relevant to the continued formation of the general structure of the phenomenon. I chose to make this modification because it provided an effective and efficient way to engage in the process of horizontalization. Using this process, I identified statements that appeared to hold meaning relevant to a particular research question or theme/topic. Relevant meaning units (i.e., statements from the transcripts)

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33 Horizontalization is defined as the data analysis process in which “data analysts go through the data (e.g., interview transcriptions) and highlight ‘significant statements,’ sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). This process results in a list of significant statements, all of which have equal worth. This list of significant statements is then further reduced to discard nonrepetitive and non-overlapping statements (Creswell, 2007, p. 159).
were copied and pasted into a table that was used to separate the individual responses of each participant to a specific question that related to either a specific research question or theme.

I recorded all relevant statements related to the frame of analysis, regardless of whether they were repetitive and overlapping. This was a modification of the method presented by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), as they suggested that only non-repetitive, non-overlapping units be recorded during this step. I made this modification because it allowed me to better keep track of the commonalities that existed across individual lived experiences (including the number of participants that shared a particular reaction or aspect of the experience), while still creating a thematic structure with which to further analyze the data. An example of data inserted in a meaning unit table representative of a single frame of analysis is presented in Table 3.1. I reviewed the list of meaning units for each frame of analysis and collapsed the repetitive and overlapping meanings into themes, as well as refined the theme labels so that they more closely described the categorized quotes.

**Step #3: Transformation of Meaning Units**

Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) provide the following explanation of this step:

The reader will notice that there is a progressive refinement of the original description with respect to its sense. At first one merely reads what the participant expressed. Then the next step produces meaning discriminations that are meant to be…relevant with respect to the phenomenon being researched. The third step, which is at the heart of the method and where it bottoms out, so to speak, expresses the [discipline-specific] meaning of the participant’s everyday language more directly with the help of free imaginative variation.\(^{34}\) The whole purpose of

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\(^{34}\) The task of Imaginative Variation is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from
Table 3.1

An Illustration of the Formation of Meaning Units and Transformed Meaning Units in a Meaning Unit Table Using Responses to an Interview Question (What influenced you to visit a Titanic museum attraction?) as a Frame of Analysis Related to a Sub-Question of Research Question One (Why do visitors choose to visit a Titanic museum attraction?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant name</th>
<th>Quote from interview transcript (Meaning Unit)</th>
<th>Transformed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camille</td>
<td>Um, actually my younger cousin visited the museum on a field trip… And he seemed to really connect with the museum and a couple things they did. I’m very interested in museums and he’s about 10-years-old. He got really excited about a couple things they did. So I wanted to participate in the museum experience as well.</td>
<td>I am visiting a Titanic Museum Attraction because… …someone close to me had a positive experience at the location that I am visiting. …I have a personal interest in museums. …I have heard positive reviews about the interactive elements in the museum from someone close to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serena</td>
<td>Even though I’ve been on a ship before, I want to see what the Titanic was all about, because the movie portrayed that there were a lot of wealthy people in it, so I want to see the artifacts, what they wore, I’m hoping that they have a replica of what the cabin looked like or what a ballroom looked like or something in there that has artifacts of or replica of the real Titanic. I’m interested in knowing what is in there, what it was all about. Maybe there is costumes of how the women dressed because I love elegance…</td>
<td>I am visiting a Titanic museum attraction because… …I am curious about the spectacle that has been created around Titanic over time and what the information and stories are underneath the spectacle. …I want to compare how the Titanic differs from other ships as a unique experience. …I want to compare the story and information presented in the movie and other sources I’ve consulted to what is presented in the museum. …I am curious about the content of the museums, especially near environment objects, artifacts, and replicas. …I want to experience the physical environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions….Describing the essential structures of a phenomenon is the major task of Imaginative Variation. In this there is a free play of fancy; any perspective is a possibility and is permitted to enter into consciousness….In Imaginative Variation the world disappears existence no longer is central, anything whatever becomes possible. The thrust is away from facts and measurable entities and toward meanings and essences; in this instant, institution is not empirical but purely imaginative in character.” (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 97-98).
Table 3.2

*An Illustration of the Formation of Meaning Units and Transformed Meaning Units in a Meaning Unit Table Using Responses to an Interview Question* (There are some Titanic museum attractions that have the movie character of Rose from James Cameron’s *Titanic* film walking around the museum and interacting with visitors. What is your opinion of or reaction to this scenario?) as a Frame of Analysis Related to a Sub-Question of Research Question One (Does the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into exhibitions [especially via costume, living history, and display] factor into this decision?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant name</th>
<th>Quote from interview transcript (Meaning unit)</th>
<th>Transformed meaning unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosalie</td>
<td>P: I don’t like that. I think it kind of… I think it kind of puts people into the movie more than the actual history of the Titanic. G: Okay. So for you the historical events and the movie need to be kept separate? P: Yes. G: At least for the most part? P: Yes.</td>
<td>I am not in favor of a Rose living history interpreter (LHI) in the museum. The presence of Rose would divert visitors’ attention to the movie and away from the history. I am in favor of keeping historical events and movies about the events separate in the museum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>P: Well, hmmm… I think it’d be interesting but I—uh, the interacting—I—don’t know. I think, I don’t know, I think I’d rather just see it, um, displayed rather than, but I don’t know, I— G: Do you think that she has a place in this museum? P: Yeah, I think so. G: And—and why do you think that… P: Well, probably because I’ve seen the movie, and… G: Ok. P: And—several times—and so I really place her [laughs] so I think that—you know, kinda, that’s just kinda burned into my head now, but, um…</td>
<td>The presence of a Rose LHI would be amusing, but I would be more in favor of having her present in a different format, such as the display of her movie costumes. I think a Rose LHI would be an acceptable element in the museum. I think my acceptance of a Rose LHI is influenced by my viewing of the movie and her likeness is easily conjured in my mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren</td>
<td>G: And so you just learned that Rose was not necessarily a real person, so what would be your opinion on that? P: It would be fine I think that movies always take liberties in presenting a story and that’s why they will always say, ‘this movie is based on the life of,’ as opposed to, this ‘presents the life of.’ And, uh, this may be a soft subject or not I don’t know, but um, Blindside, I don’t know if you saw that movie or read the book—</td>
<td>The inclusion of a Rose LHI would be okay with me because I am aware that movies are only based upon true events. Historical events are frequently dramatized in movies. To support this awareness and statement, I present the example of the movie, “The Blind Side.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the method is to discover and articulate the [discipline-specific] meanings being lived by the participant that reveal the nature of the phenomenon being researched. The original description is full of ‘everyday expressions’ and it is full of references to the participant’s world. The everyday expressions are often idiosyncratic but still rich with meaning. The meanings expressed by the participants have to be made...explicit with regard to the phenomenon that is being researched and not directly as revelatory of the participant in his or her personal existence (p. 252).

Step three was undertaken in *three parts*. In *part one*, I transformed the meaning units derived from pre-visit and post-visit interview data that were recorded in the meaning unit tables into more concise and easily accessible language (see third column in Table 3.1 for an example of transformed meaning units and Table 3.2). Visitor and staff meaning units were recorded in separate tables. Staff meaning units are presented in a separate section of the results and meant to inform and support the presentation of visitor meaning units, as well as show two sets of meaning units about the same topics from two different perspectives of the lived experience. In *part two*, I transformed the post-visit interview data of each participant into a narrative that accurately reflected their experience.

I followed the narrative formation process and structure used by Berry (2007). The detailed narrative of each visitor participant was shaped from interview data and written thematically, arranged in six sections: (1) general reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit, (2) description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume; (3) interactions with and reactions to living history

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35 Berry (2007) conducted research “to explore, through their own voices, the higher education experiences of selected urban American Indian females in California community colleges” (p. 14). A narrative inquiry research design was employed to explore the lived experience of the participants.
interpreters, (4) personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content, (5) what the participant knew and what the participant learned, and (6) suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display improvement.36 At the conclusion of each narrative I offered my reflections on the interview process, drawing upon notes from my research journal, and any participant observations I made specific to the participant, if applicable.

Visitor and staff narratives were written separately and included different sections of discussion. The detailed narrative of each staff participant was shaped from interview data and written thematically, arranged in four sections: (1) past and present dress and costume displays, (2) curatorial and educational outreach tasks, (3) the use of living history interpreters, and (4) reflections on visitors relating to the movie through museum attraction content. At the conclusion of each narrative I offered my reflections on the interview process, drawing upon notes from my research journal, and any participant observations I made specific to the participant, if applicable.

The narratives are a combination of their words being reproduced and transformed as meaning units that would further contribute to the formation of the general phenomenological structure. After writing each narrative I chose quotes from

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36 I added the questions about exhibit change/creation to the interview protocol (i.e., the questions that formed the frame of analysis for section six of the individual narratives) after data collection began because I noticed that the responses to the question about the evaluation of the museum attraction during the first few interviews included suggestions for change. I noticed that participants became very creative about the changes that they would make, adding generous amounts of detail. In some cases this also jogged their memory of further dress and costume content in the museum attraction. I began by adding the question about where they would add more dress and costume for greater impact. Many participants got excited about using their creativity to design a hypothetical exhibit in a way that would enhance their experience or learning in hindsight.
each individual narrative and corresponding interview to represent the various meanings that had emerged and assigned them to a larger theme for which they would add support in the written results and discussion. When discussed in the text, these quotes serve as evidence of a participant’s reaction to the lived experience. The larger themes that resulted from the narratives are representative of both visitor and staff meaning units. The presentation of supporting quotes from the interview transcripts is divided into two separate sections, so as to keep the two distinct perspectives of the lived experience separate but in close proximity for comparison.

The narrative approach to meaning unit transformation is a modification to this step, as it is outlined by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003). I chose to make this modification because narratives represent the authentic voice of the participant, while allowing for the organization of transformed meaning units into sections that move the analysis of the thematic structure forward. Dahlberg, Drew, and Nystrom (2001) state that narratives are a legitimate way to clearly and authentically depict a participant’s lived experience (p. 149). Because it is the result of a dialogue, the narrative of an interview is directly influenced by the researcher. I acknowledge that the individual narrative derived from each post-visit interview was directly influenced by me, as the researcher. As such, they can be described as “collaboratively produced narratives, a mutual product of researcher and informant” (Dahlberg, Drew, and Nystrom, 2001, p. 154). Narratives also assisted in helping me to more fully connect to the factors that informed the learning and personal meaning-making process (e.g., background and personal interests) during the analysis process.
In *part three*, I also transformed my personal phenomenological notes into individual narratives for each of my visits to the four museum attractions. I rendered some of the museum layout sketches from my personal phenomenological notes using computer software.

**Step #4: The Determination of the Structure**

Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) provide the following explanation of this step:

The [fourth] step of the analysis ends with a series of transformed meaning units—that is, meaning units that were originally in the language of the participant are now expressed with heightened…sensitivity with respect to the phenomenon under study. One then practices imaginative variation on these transformed meaning units to see what is truly essential about them and then one carefully describes the most invariant connected meanings belonging to the experience, and that is the general structure (p. 253).

The general structure developed in step four of this study offers a generality across cases while acknowledging individual variations.

Using free imaginative variation, the transformed meaning units were gathered together in a search for the constituents of the participants’ lived experiences that were essential to the phenomenon. Through a process of moving between transformed meaning units in the narratives and meaning unit tables and the original meaning units in the transcripts, the essential features, labeled as “constituents,” started to emerge. These constituents were organized into themes to represent commonalities that occurred across the lived experiences of the participants and gathered together to form the general structure of the phenomenon. The reader will see that the identified features do not

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37 Constituents is the label used in this study for what Husserl would label “essences.” As Barker (2010) stated, “‘Constituent’, something making up part of a whole, or a component, leads to different expectations than ‘essence’, a term used by Husserl, and facilitates recognition of the difference between philosophical phenomenology and scientific [i.e., social science] phenomenology” (Barker, 2010, p. 154).
appear with clearly defined boundaries within the general structure. There is a blurring of
the boundaries of the features as they come together to form the whole of the general
structure.

**Ethical Considerations**

The Oregon State Human Subjects policy was followed, and approval was
obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the study began (see
Appendix L). I successfully completed the online tutorial for the Course in the Protection
of Human Research Subjects (CITI) and thoroughly reviewed the Human Research
Handbook provided by Oregon State University before the study began.

I obtained the necessary consent forms from each participant. I informed the
participants of their involvement in a research study and the purpose of the study. This
was accomplished with initial contact via email and at the beginning of each interview.
The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time
without consequence or decline to answer any interview question.

Written informed consent forms were used and obtained whenever possible (see
Appendices D and E). Participants who could not participate in person had the option to
complete pre-visit and post-visit interviews via phone or internet video chat (e.g., Skype).
In this case, the informed consent process became verbal. The participant was read the
Oral Consent Guide (see Appendices F and G) prior to the pre-visit interview via phone
or internet video chat. After the Oral Consent Guide was read to the participant, I asked
the participant the following three questions for the purposes of definitive confirmation:

- Do you have any questions about this research?
• Do you agree to participate?
• May I audio record our discussion?

And, if verbal consent was provided, alternative documentation of consent consisted of documenting in field notes that the subject was fully informed gave consent. A note was also made in the field notes that the approve consent procedure was followed.

During the data collection process, I communicated to the participants that every effort would be made to protect their confidentiality. To accomplish this, I randomly assigned pseudonyms for each participant. After each interview was transcribed, I provided each participant with a copy of his or her interview transcript, as well as the interpretations of the data, to check for accuracy. To further address this issue, I informed all participants that data pertaining to the study would be maintained in a secure location. Any tapes and transcripts will be accessible only to the transcribers (temporarily) and me (Seidman, 1991).

**Trustworthiness, Credibility, and Reliability**

Measures of trustworthiness and credibility are discussed in the context of work presented by Creswell (2007) and Lincoln and Guba (1985). Because in collecting qualitative data the researcher is the research instrument, personal disclosure was undertaken to minimize the impact that biases will have on objective thought. Triangulation was another source of credibility; different sources and methods assisted in producing corroborating results that allowed for further elucidation of themes and patterns. The phenomenological approach is based upon revealing the lived experience and meaning-making process for the individuals involved. Thus, thick and rich
descriptions were drawn from phenomenological interviews. An iterative process of coding was undertaken to allow new concepts and themes to emerge throughout data collection and analysis.

Member checking involves seeking the feedback of participants on the accuracy of the findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). I engaged in member checking both during and after the interview process. During the interview I restated and/or summarized information and then questioned the participant to determine and/or confirm accuracy. Member checks were also conducted after the interviews with the participants’ consent by contacting them via email. Thirteen participants agreed to participate in the member checking process. Participants were emailed both a typed transcript of their interview and an electronic copy of the findings (including their individual narrative) when the data analysis process was drawing to a close. The typed transcripts were shared with participants, showing which excerpts from the interviews had been marked as significant statements and/or themes to seek validation and concurrence from the participants. Participants were asked to read, analyze, and comment on the findings. The ultimate goal of post-interview member checking was to affirm that the summaries accurately reflected the experiences of the participants. Participants were given the option to provide their responses via either email or phone. Multiple coders were not used; member checking was used in its place (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reliability was established through the digital recording and transcription of interviews. The measures of trustworthiness, validity, and credibility discussed in this section were relatively simple and cost-effective techniques to ensure the credibility of the research.
Overview of Results and Discussion

My results and discussion which follow this chapter are divided into several parts. The reader will see a noticeable repetition in the information presented, however each part represents a step in the descriptive phenomenological data analysis process and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the lived experience of the Titanic museum attraction visitor. Each part begins with a brief statement about its contribution to the further understanding of the visitors’ lived experience.

Chapter Four is comprised a participant summary and the presentation of data that answers research question one. Chapter Five contains a selection of individual narratives (for both visitor and staff participants) that were used in the data analysis process of transforming meaning units and consolidating the data into manageable parts. Chapter Six is comprised of the presentation of data that answers research questions two and three. The data that answers research question four is presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six in sections devoted to staff member responses. Chapter Seven contains the phenomenological structure of this study that brings together the patterns and meanings found in the data to form an understanding of the general features of the phenomenon. This is a step beyond the traditional presentation of qualitative results. This chapter also contains a discussion of the constituents that form the phenomenological structure.

Chapter Eight is composed of the personal phenomenological narratives of my visits to each of the four Titanic museum attractions. These narratives assist in adding further explanation of the museum attraction content and contextualization of the observations and reflections of the participants. The concluding chapter contains an
analysis that situates the phenomenological structure and supporting results in the theoretical frameworks of visual rhetoric and semiotics. The lived experiences of the participants and my analysis of the data inform the recommended practices for dress and costume displays also presented in this chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS:
PARTICIPANT SUMMARY AND RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event. Because the present study was introductory in nature, I used an interpretive research design that incorporates descriptive phenomenological and inductive approaches to explore the current curatorial and visitor engagement practices used by Titanic museum attractions and artifact exhibitions. The use of semi-structured interviews, phenomenological reduction, and brief participant observation allowed me to further understand how period film costume, extant dress, and representational dress are understood and perceived by museum visitors. To determine their experiences, each participant was asked to visit an approved Titanic museum attraction of their choice and provided responses to two in-depth interviews (pre-visit and post-visit).

Participant Summary

A total of 32 participants were included in this study. Four permanent Titanic museum attractions were selected as sites of study. Thirteen individuals participated at the Branson, Missouri location. Seven individuals participated at the Orlando, Florida location. Five individuals participated at the Pigeon Forge, Tennessee location. Four individuals participated at the Las Vegas, Nevada location (see Table 4.1). One participant was deemed to have withdrawn from the study after completing the pre-visit
Table 4.1

*An Overview of Research Participants and their Demographic Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Assigned Alias)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Participant Classification</th>
<th>Location of Participation</th>
<th>Seen 1997 “Titanic” Film?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Neil” Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Tia” Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Serena” Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Darren” Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Craig” Male</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Marshall” Male</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dorothy” Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Daisy” Female</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ella” Female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Bradley” Male</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Judith” Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lila” Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Allan” Male</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Arthur” Male</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Museum Staff</td>
<td>Branson</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Barbara” Female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Museum Staff</td>
<td>Branson, Pigeon Forge</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Elizabeth” Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Alice” Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Jane” Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Nora” Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Simone” Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Caroline” Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Victor” Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Jessie” Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Pigeon Forge</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interview and museum visit because of his non-response to subsequent emails and phone calls. The participant, known as “Erik,” began participation at the Las Vegas, Nevada location. His demographic information is included in this chapter and his pre-interview data was included in the data set that was analyzed to answer research question one. Due to time and resource limitations, a substitute participant was not recruited.

**Demographic Information**

Participants were classified according to two categories: museum attraction visitors and museum attraction staff. A total of 29 museum attraction visitors and a total of 3 museum attraction staff participated in the study. All four museum attraction locations are represented by the 29 museum attraction visitors. Museum staff was affiliated with three of the locations: Branson, Missouri; Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; and Las Vegas, Nevada. Demographic information related to gender and age were self-reported and collected for participants classified as museum attraction visitors. Of the total museum attraction visitors, 12 self-identified as male and 17 self-identified as female (see Table 4.1). The only demographic information that was self-reported and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Museum Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camille</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Pigeon Forge</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Pigeon Forge</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Pigeon Forge</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Pigeon Forge</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juliet</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Museum Visitor</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Museum Staff</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
collected for participants classified as museum attraction staff was gender. Of the total museum attraction staff, one self-identified as male and two self-identified as female.

The self-reported age range of the museum attraction visitors was 21 to 85 years old. The average age of the museum attraction visitors was 41.79; the average age of males was 41.33, and the average age of females was 42.12 (see Table 4.1). Within the sample there were a total of seven couples who participated. In this context a couple is defined as a male and female who self-identified as either married or in a dating/romantic relationship. The couple pairings were as follows: Dorothy and Marshall, Darren and Serena, Lila and Allan, Caroline and Victor, Henry and Jessie, Neil and Tia, and Ella and Bradley.

Titanic Film Viewing and Museum Visitation Practices

The museum visitors sample included individuals who had and had not seen the 1997 Titanic film. Twenty-two visitors said they had viewed the film at least once. Seven visitors said they had never viewed the film. Ten participants self-identified as Titanic enthusiasts, while nineteen participants said they would not classify themselves as Titanic enthusiasts. Of the self-identified Titanic enthusiasts, seven were male and three were female. Of the participants who would not classify themselves as Titanic enthusiasts, five were male and 14 were female (see Table 4.2).

Museum visitor participants were also asked about their museum visitation practices with regard to the following information: if they had previously visited any other museums, what types/genres of museums they had visited, what their favorite type of museum was to visit, frequency of museum visits (most often reported as the average
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Assigned Alias)</th>
<th>Visited Museums Before?</th>
<th>Types of Museums Visited</th>
<th>Favorite Type/Content Presentation of Museum</th>
<th>Frequency of Museum Visits (per year, on average)</th>
<th>Visited Museums That Displayed Dress/Costume Before?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neil</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Art, museums that showcase important artifacts</td>
<td>4 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Presidential libraries</td>
<td>1 Visit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serena</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>1-2 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>History, science and technology</td>
<td>1 Visit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Natural history</td>
<td>1-3 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Overall enjoy all museums equally, dominant presentation of visuals</td>
<td>2 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Natural history most enjoyable, but overall enjoy all</td>
<td>1 Visit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>Preferences</td>
<td>Visits Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ella</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mostly history</td>
<td>DNA This was her first museum visit in 25 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Science 1 Visit Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, history</td>
<td>Art 1-2 Visits Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lila</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, history</td>
<td>Variety Not often (self-described); Four visits since move to Branson area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Overall enjoy all museums equally Frequent visits when traveling for my job, but no visits in quite awhile (self-described) Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Historic houses 3-4 Visits, but can vary Yes, but usually the exhibits only contain dress reproductions or props</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, history, science/biology</td>
<td>Interactive museums; Biography-based museums 2 Visits DNA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Visit</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, science</td>
<td>Interactive museums; Science and industry</td>
<td>2 Visits</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Yes, last visit was many years ago during my childhood</td>
<td>Natural history, science</td>
<td>DNA (self-described); Last museum visit was years ago</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Not sure, never been consciously aware of it as a display before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simone</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3 Visits</td>
<td>Yes, at history museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Art (and sculpture art in particular)</td>
<td>2 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>1-2 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Natural history</td>
<td>2-3 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camille</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, history, science</td>
<td>Medical museums</td>
<td>4 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, history, science</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>2-3 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, history, natural history</td>
<td>History, specifically historical tragedies</td>
<td>3 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Overall enjoy all museums equally</td>
<td>2-3 Visits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
number of visits in a year), and if they had previously visited museums containing dress and costume displays. Information regarding the museum visitation practices of each participant is presented in Table 4.2. Twenty-seven participants reported having visited several museums prior to their Titanic museum attraction visit. Two participants (Peter and Nora) stated that this was their first visit to a museum in around fifteen years and, as a result, don’t consider themselves to have previously visited museums because they have not visited any during their adult life.

Participants were asked if they had visited museums, at any time in their life, prior to their Titanic museum attraction visit. Twenty-six participants indicated that they had
visited museums before. Of those twenty-six participants, eleven were male and fifteen were female. Three participants (Ella, Nora, and Peter) indicated that, while they had visited museums before, it had been between 15 and 25 years since their last museum visit. The types and genres of museums that have been visited were also reported by participants. Sixteen participants indicated that they had visited a variety of museums,\(^{38}\) nine participants had visited history museums, eight participants had visited art museums, six participants had visited science and technology/industry museums, two participants had visited natural history museums, and one participant did not respond to the question.

Data regarding favorite types or genres of museums highlighted the expansively unique preferences of the participants. Five participants reported their favorite type or genre of museum as art, six participants reported history as their favorite, four participants reported science and technology/industry, three participants reported natural history, and four participants indicated that they overall enjoy all museums equally and enjoy visiting a variety of museums. This data also revealed that participants had very specific subject matter that they enjoyed viewing in a museum. The following subjects and specific museum genres were reported: Presidential libraries, historic houses, biography-based museums, medical museums, and historical tragedies (e.g., Titanic and the Holocaust). Five responses indicated that it was not the subject matter being presented that attracted them but how the subject matter was being presented in the museum. Three participants stated that their favorite type of museum is one that has dominant showcases

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\(^{38}\) In this context, the term “variety” is used to refer to a broad range of museum subjects and genres; including but not limited to art, history, natural history, science and technology, and children’s museum.
of visuals and uses artifacts to tell a story. Two participants stated that they favored interactive museums.

The frequency of museum visits was reported based on the estimated number of museum visits that each participant made, on average, in a year. Six participants estimated one visit per year, three participants estimated one to two visits per year, four participants estimated two visits per year, three participants estimated two to three visits per year, two participants estimated three visits per year, one participant estimated three to four visits per year, and two participants estimated four visits per year. Four museum visits per year was the highest estimated frequency reported. Two participants did not answer the question because, upon being asked the question, they began talking about other topics that had spontaneously arisen in their minds. Four participants stated that their Titanic museum attraction visit was the first museum visit they had made in several years. Three participants, opting not to report the numerical frequency of their museum visits, stated that it was “rare” to visit a museum or that it “did not happen often.”

Participants were asked if they had visited museums, at any time in their life, prior to their Titanic museum attraction visit that displayed dress and costume. Twenty-three participants indicated that they had seen dress and costume displays in the museum setting prior to this visit. Of those twenty-three participants, ten were male and thirteen were female. Two participants indicated that they had not seen dress and costume displays in the museum setting prior to this visit. Of those two participants, one was male and one was female. One participant expressed that she was not sure because it was not
an element of the museum setting that she had consciously noticed in previous visits.

Three participants did not answer the question.

**Titanic Museum Attraction Staff Participant Summary**

A total of three Titanic museum attraction staff participated in the study: Arthur, Barbara, and Molly. Museum staff were affiliated with the locations in Branson, Missouri; Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; and Las Vegas, Nevada. Arthur is employed as a Cast Member at the Branson, Missouri location. He began work at this location when it opened in 2006. He did not acquire the job because of a profound interest in Titanic, though does find the subject matter interesting. He describes it as a job opportunity that “fell in to his lap.” According to Arthur, his tasks as a Cast Member include being present within the museum during hours of operation and interacting with at least “75% of the people that come through on any given day” and to maintain a “positive and fluid experience for the guests.” This interaction includes giving scripted speeches about specific historical facts or stories and answering questions. In short, he is the face of the museum attraction for visitors.

Arthur has a military-based educational background in business and customer service. His job does not require working with artifacts housed in the museum attraction from a curatorial standpoint because those responsibilities are delegated to a curator. Arthur’s only interaction with artifacts comes if a display needs to be changed out in the face of severe time constraints. He rarely works at special events or educational outreach programs outside of the museum attraction.
Barbara is co-owner, along with her husband, of the Titanic Museum Attraction locations in Branson and Pigeon Forge. They opened the Branson location together in 2006 and then opened a sister museum in Pigeon Forge in 2010. She has built a successful career in the entertainment industry, working for Disney and producing hit television shows. Due to her marketing background, she assists with advertising development for both museum attractions. Because Barbara is a co-owner of the museum attractions, she is heavily involved in all aspects of operation. She describes herself as being “passionate” about the subject and her job. Barbara actively works to acquire new objects and artifacts for display, which includes speaking to and maintaining positive relationships with collectors and miscellaneous museum institutions and historical societies. In addition, she ensures that all information is accurate and up-to-date via a fact-checking process with the Titanic Historical Society because new discoveries and research endeavors are being undertaken all the time. In fact, she explained that one of the biggest challenges of her job is that “new information comes to light all the time.”

Even more detail-oriented tasks, such as handling guest requests and complaints and “working in the ship [a reference to the museum proper]” are undertaken by Barbara.

As is highlighted in her staff participant summary above, Barbara has combined her entertainment background to bring a historical event to life. She confided that the process of combining these tasks was initially intimidating:

In fact when I got into this, you know, everybody looked at me like, ‘Well what does she know about Titanic? She’s from entertainment.’ And so, I had great trepidation about disseminating information on our ship because I was the new kid on the block. I had 14 months where I didn’t sleep or eat…trying to get this museum up and running.
Barbara prides herself not only on the success of these two museum attractions, but also on “introducing [a new] concept [for museums]: a museum with an added value to areas of the country that don’t have major museums.”

Molly is employed as an Artifact Specialist at Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition in Las Vegas. She has been employed at this location for a year and a half and was led to obtain the job because of her personal interest in history, her interest lies in 20th century history in particular. She is currently attending college and studying to become a secondary social studies teacher. According to Molly, her tasks as an Artifact Specialist include being available to answer questions in the museum proper and providing visitors with historical stories and anecdotes throughout their visit. She is also responsible for what she described as “policing duties,” referring to the reminders that visitors must be given on a regular basis to abide by the rules of the exhibition (e.g., having visitors turn off cell phones, reminding visitors not to take pictures because they are not allowed, keeping children quiet and behaving appropriately around the artifacts, picking up trash, and so forth). With regard to artifacts, Molly does not have direct contact with them but is responsible for checking artifact lighting, display case temperature, humidity, and light sensors on a regular basis. She explained that other tasks involving more direct contact with artifacts are handled by the collections department and curators employed by R.M.S. Titanic Inc. She describes the mission of the Las Vegas location as educational and is actively involved in tour groups for schools and other groups of children.

Additional information about the background of participants is presented and discussed in various sections of the results chapters to add context to a particular finding.
An individual narrative for each staff member is presented in Chapter Five and assisted in the answering research question four.

**Research Question #1**

In order to better understand the lived experience of the Titanic Museum Attraction visitor, it was important to explore the factors that influenced their museum attraction visit. Therefore, the first research question was as follows: *Why do visitors choose to visit the Titanic museum attraction? And, does the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into exhibitions (especially via costume, living history, and display) factor into this decision?* In order to categorize the vast responses that contributed to answering this research question, this section is divided into two categories. Titanic museum attraction visitor and staff responses are presented in two different sections for both categories. The categories were developed through the use of interview questions as frames of analysis and are:

- Reason(s) for visiting a Titanic museum attraction and
- Personal Opinion of Rose character as living history interpreter in the Titanic museum attraction setting.

**Reason(s) for Visiting a Titanic Museum Attraction**

Category one addresses the first part of the research question. Titanic Museum Attraction visitors were asked the following question during the pre-interview: *What influenced you to visit a Titanic museum attraction?* Titanic museum attraction staff members were also asked about their knowledge of the factors that influence a guest’s visit to the Titanic museum attraction at which they are employed.
Visitor responses. The reasons and influences described by visitor participants for visiting a Titanic museum attraction were varied and multifaceted. Only one participant (Daisy) cited a single motivation for her visit. Four emergent themes were identified from the individual utterances of participants: (1) personal interest; (2) intent to cognitively/mentally engage with the topic; (3) social value and influence; and (4) curiosity. Category one also includes a discussion of factors that have deterred a visit to a Titanic museum attraction.

- Theme #1: Personal interest. Participants described the reason for their visit as influenced by a personal interest. Many of the personal interest statements were focused upon a desire to learn more about a topic or object of personal interest. Several different interests were explicitly named and were (1) history, (2) Titanic, (3) museums, (4) dress, costume, and fashion; (5) research participation in my project, and (6) specific elements presented at a particular Titanic museum attraction.

Eight participants expressed a personal interest in history, including certain time periods and events in history. Elizabeth stated an interest in women’s history. Juliet explained that she is particularly interested in the history of the time between the 1800s and World War II. Erik enjoys learning about the history of old ships, a category in which Titanic fits. Eleven participants stated that their visit was primarily influenced by a personal interest in Titanic, the specific event in history upon which Titanic museum attractions focus. Of those who expressed a personal interest in Titanic five were male and six were female.
Participant responses revealed three distinct factors that contributed to a personal interest in museums: (1) having access to specific museum content, (2) the content of certain types of museums, and (3) the ability of museums to support a preferred learning style. A description of the factors that contributed to a participant’s personal interest in museums can be seen in the following examples. As a description of her personal interest in museums, Caroline stated,

Well, I think it will be very cool to see actual things from it and the recreations, cool to see, um...just to actually see some of the things that I’ve actually seen in the pictures and in the movie, you know...recreated in the movie.

Craig also expressed that part of the appeal of museums, in general, is being able to view artifacts from a certain historical event or time period. Elizabeth explained that her interest in museums is specific to certain types of museums, particularly non-profit museums and those that present content related to women’s history “because so many museums are focused a theme of “great men, great deeds.”

Jane has a personal interest in museums because she views them as a unique learning tool that caters to her preferred learning style:

I can’t, like, when they teach you history it's all a bunch of words...it’s just words. It’s, it’s words and numbers and just flat base knowledge. I need to see physical, you know, I’m one of those see and touch learners, I’m not a, the words teach me everything [learner]. I can’t, so to see, like, the artifacts and see what they wore or see what they used to brush their hair with and, or see how they decorated a cabin then, gives you a perspective compared to what we do now.

In addition, two participants (Elizabeth and Camille) discussed that their personal interest in museums is connected to their employment or volunteer work at museums.

Three participants stated that their visit was influenced by a personal interest in dress, costume, and fashion. Dorothy elaborated upon this personal interest discussing
dress, costume, and fashion: “I just look forward to seeing just what they have to offer. I look forward to seeing the costumes, seeing what they were wearing at the time this happened because I enjoy clothing and fashion.” Serena explained that, in her mind, dress is connected to the essence of the time period: “Maybe there [are] costumes of how the women dressed because I love elegance and just to see how they were dressed at that time.” Lastly, ten individuals cited participation in this research study as a primary influence for their museum visit. For six participants the research study participation served as a catalyst that motivated them to visit their chosen Titanic Museum Attraction.

A personal interest in specific elements of the museum persuaded Tia and Camille to visit the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations, respectively. Tia responded positively to a promotional campaign that featured the new Titanic Museum Attraction mascots for the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations. The new mascots, aptly named Molly and Carter (after actual Titanic passengers), are two Cavalier King Charles spaniel dogs that pay tribute to the dogs that were aboard the ship (see Figure 4.1). They are displayed in a kennel set up for visitor viewing during the day, which is in a gallery of the museum dedicated to information about the dogs that were aboard the ship (see Figure 4.2). They are taken outside of their kennel at various times throughout the day to interact with visitors (Titanic Branson, 2012a). The dogs, as Tia described, peaked her interest in this specific location. In fact, she had heard ahead of time that the dogs would not be present at the Branson location on the day of her visit and expressed disappointment regarding their absence. Camille was persuaded to visit because she received information from a family member that the museum attraction contained interactive exhibits. Because she

generally favors interactive exhibits in the museum setting, the presence of such exhibits was enticing for her. A more detailed description of her response is presented in the section pertaining to theme three.

The film/fictional character of Rose as an influential factor in the decision to visit a Titanic museum attraction was noticeably absent. None of the participants mentioned Rose as an influential factor. The movie in which she appeared was mentioned several times, but she was never explicitly named. The canine mascots were the only mention of an entity that represented the museum as a whole. It is important to note that the 1997 movie was only mentioned in the context of its relation to the historical events. Only one participant (Alice) mentioned the movie outside of this relational context. She stated that her self-identification as a fan of the movie influenced her visit. While the movie was an influential factor, it played a greater role in the intent to cognitively engage with the topic via comparison to the historical events. Thus, further description of results related to the movie as an influential factor are presented in the section pertaining to theme two.

- Theme #2: Intent to cognitively/mentally engage with the topic. Participants making a visit to a Titanic museum attraction were doing so with the intent to cognitively or mentally engage with the subject matter. Cognitive engagement was found to occur with three functions and, thus, these functions comprise relevant sub-themes: (1) to learn, (2) to reflect, and (3) to compare.

Participants reported *intent to learn* more general information about the historical events of Titanic, including the personal/human stories of the passengers and crew, and the timeline and events of the sinking. Ella explained that her intention was to refresh her
knowledge about the historical events of Titanic, which represents an extension of obtaining further general knowledge. Two participants expressed another extension of obtaining further general knowledge. Alice and Tia explained that, through their personal interest in Titanic, they had built a foundation of knowledge about the subject as children and wished to further build upon that knowledge base now that they are adults. Tia, in particular, had a very personal connection to a book from which she obtained her first knowledge about Titanic:

I think a lot about Robert Ballard because that was my first exposure to it, reading about how he discovered the ship and everything, under water. There was a book that I got, like, at a 3rd grade book fair that I carried around with me all the time. So, that is, when I think of Titanic, that’s actually what my first kind of relation is, is that book, is the discovery of the ship. It was the images [in the book]. I still even have the book, I haven’t looked at it recently but…it was more of an interesting book because it was for an elementary school child.

Marshall and Darren explained that their intent to cognitively engage with Titanic via learning is motivated by what are perceived as positive outcomes. Marshall described Titanic as an influential event in history and, because of that heightened status, it is enjoyable to be a part of that collective learning experience with others in the museum setting. Darren expressed intent to cognitively engage due to the immense popularity of learning about Titanic: “It was such a big story then. It was such a major event that I wanted to know more about it.” Marshall expressed a similar sentiment, but added that it is important to be careful of exactly what information is consumed because of its popularity. More specifically, he said, it is important to learn the story and events of Titanic beyond the sensationalized media reports and depictions because the media can “make [the history of Titanic] to be much more than what it was” and “sometimes [it is]
blown way out of proportion.” For Marshall, cognitive engagement means being a responsible and informed consumer of history.

Participants also reported *intent to reflect* upon the historical events surrounding Titanic. Ella mentioned a desire to recall and reflect upon the events, but did not elaborate upon what the process of reflection meant or included for her. In addition to museums being a learning tool that caters to her specific learning style (as discussed in theme one), Jane also values the information contained in museums as a means to guide self-reflection and uses the analogy of a puzzle to explain the heightened awareness that accompanies such reflection:

I do like to see, it does teach you, like, going to a museum, you learn things, like now we say history repeats itself. If you don’t go to the museums or actually learn the history you don’t even really fit with the times because you’re so, like, there’s the now, there’s the past, and there’s the present. If you live in the now, you don’t have any history to base off what’s gonna happen, and where we’re going and how it all works together. If you base on the past, you’re definitely not in the now, but if you put it together you’re in the present. And that’s how I see the puzzle and fit that puzzle together.

For Jane, visiting museums can be described as a sort of duty that members of humanity must fulfill in order to reach an acceptable level of historical awareness. Historical and self-reflection are also of utmost importance to Victor, who viewed the upcoming visit to a Titanic museum attraction as an opportunity to actively engage in the construction of alternative outcomes for the doomed ocean liner in his mind:

I am interested in what happened. I’m interested in the story of the ship itself and in the story of everything that happened leading up to the…cause and effect…the rescue efforts and all that, and I sit back and I think “okay, what could have been done differently?” Just like they thought afterwards to do those accident investigations and all that. I like to think about that stuff and I would love to go myself, even if I wasn’t going with my wife I probably would end up going
sometime, just to look around, to figure, or to find, to satisfy my own curiosity of what exactly happened.

Victor considers how curiosity and self-reflection can lead to piecing together the details of the historical events of Titanic, as well as how learning the details of the historical events can lead to more questions.

Finally, participants reported intent to compare the historical events surrounding Titanic to another category by which they are intrigued. Serena explained that she has been on ships and cruise vacations before and wished to compare how the Titanic differs from other ships as a unique experience. Jane’s desire to compare categories of information was also connected to her intent to reflect. She expressed that it is enjoyable for her to compare similarities and differences among time periods and the social and cultural changes that have taken place over time. This comparison also includes comparison of previous time periods to the present day. Jane wished to experience the essence of the 1910s time period and the components of the lived experience of that time period, which differ greatly from today:

I can’t, like, when they teach you history it’s all a bunch of words…it’s just words. It’s, its words and numbers and just flat base knowledge. I need to see physical…you know, I, I’m one of those see and touch learners, I’m not a, the words teach me everything…I can’t, so to see, like, the artifacts and see what they wore or see what they used to brush their hair with and, or see how they decorated a cabin then, gives you a perspective compared to what we do now.

Four participants explicitly stated that they wanted to compare the story and information presented in the movie to what is presented in the museum. Caroline, in particular felt that this cognitive exercise would assist her in measuring the authenticity of the movie.
• Theme #3: Social and leisure value. For many participants it was the influence of individuals in their social group, especially their immediate social group (e.g., spouses, siblings, and so forth), that led to their Titanic museum attraction visit. Five participants stated that their visit was the direct result of a personal relationship with an individual who has a personal interest in Titanic. Four of these participants (Allan, Marshall, Neil, Victor) are male and three of these male participants (Allan, Neil, and Victor) are referring to their significant other or spouse, all of whom participated in the study. Connectedly, five participants stated that they have a personal relationship with an individual who is interested in visiting the particular Titanic Museum Attraction location. Two of these five participants expressed that the interest in the particular Titanic Museum Attraction location was mutual. Two participants (Peter and Erik) stated that their visit was a direct result of a personal relationship with a Titanic museum attraction employee. One of these participants (Peter) even expressed that the Titanic museum attraction employee had personally encouraged the visit.

The Titanic museum attractions included in this study also garnered positive reviews from individuals in the participants’ social groups, which peaked a sense of interest and curiosity that influenced the visit. Camille and Jessie explained that they knew individuals who had a positive experience at the Pigeon Forge location and gave it positive reviews, so they wanted to experience it for themselves. Camille, in particular, was personally influenced by the positive experience of her young cousin, which highlighted the museum as an active, as opposed to a passive, experience:

Actually my younger cousin visited the museum on a field trip. And he seemed to really connect with the museum and a couple things they did. I’m very interested
in museums and he’s about 10 years old. He got really excited about a couple things they did. So I wanted to participate in the museum experience as well. They have an exhibit where you get to interact a lot. Like, you can put your hand into freezing cold water and also at the beginning of the museum they give you either the name of the passenger or some kind of thing and at the end of your visit you can find out whether you would have lived or died. He really enjoyed that.

Camille’s explanation of the specific factors that influenced her visit also highlight an overlap with the theme of personal interest because she expresses a personal interest in museums and is in favor of interactive elements being presented in the museum setting.

Three participants stated that the social value of the museum attraction visit came from its inclusion in leisure time during a vacation. Juliet, Rosalie, and Erik explained that they were visiting the Las Vegas area on vacation and were looking for fun and interesting things to do during their leisure time. It is also important to note that both Marshall and Darren derived social satisfaction from learning about an influential event in history as a collective learning experience in the presence of others.

• Theme #4: Curiosity. Seven participants stated that their Titanic museum attraction visit was prompted by curiosity. Sources of curiosity were categorized according to the following sub-themes: (1) content of the museum and (2) the spectacle that has been created around Titanic. Curiosity about the content of a Titanic museum attraction was raised in response to considerations of what the museum might use to tell the story of Titanic, as well as after viewing the exterior appearance of the museum.

Six participants (Caroline, Dorothy, Lila, Serena, Simone, and Victor) stated that their curiosity about the museum was related directly to its content. Three participants identified specific aspects of the museum content that incited curiosity. These specific
content areas were focused upon objects that might be found in the museum. Caroline was interested in seeing artifacts and replicas of various objects from the ship. More specifically, she was interested in seeing dimensional objects that, up until then, she had only viewed in pictures. Serena was also interested in seeing artifacts and replicas but also expressed an interest in experiencing the physical environment of the ship through full-scale replicas of rooms aboard the ship. Dorothy was interested in seeing the dress and costume contained in the museum.

Three participants (Henry, Jessie, and Lila) stated that their curiosity about the museum was heightened after viewing its exterior appearance. Participants who referenced the exterior appearance of the museum attraction were referring to that of the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations. The exteriors at both locations are similar – roughly 30,000-square-foot buildings built as half-scale reconstructions of the Titanic’s forward half (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4). Lila explained that, in the process of moving to a town neighboring Branson, she went on a sight-seeing excursion that included taking photos of the Titanic Museum Attraction’s exterior. In this way, the exterior had a sort of peek-a-boo effect because, Lila explains, “we saw the outside and we never got to go inside”.

The pageantry exhibited by the building’s exterior represents a connection between the two sub-themes. Henry and Jessie explained that the exterior appearance itself contributes to the spectacle that surrounds the events of Titanic and ignites curiosity. Henry stated that he has driven past the Pigeon Forge location several times, and it is obviously a spectacle that cannot be visually missed, which raised his curiosity about what might be contained inside. Jessie expressed that the visual presentation of the
Figure 4.3. A view of the Titanic Museum Attraction exterior in Branson, Missouri. Photograph by author.

Figure 4.4. A view of the Titanic Museum Attraction exterior in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Photograph by Richard DeArmond.
exterior was “cool-looking,” but concerning because this visual alone (e.g., if driving through the town of Pigeon Forge) coupled with the surrounding attractions could give the public and potential visitors the wrong impression about the content or intended tone of the museum. Jessie provided further detail to support her response: “I mean, it’s cool-looking, but I think, I mean it’s right next to, like, a upside down house [referring to the WonderWorks attraction], which is like, a arcade, it’s like a big mansion upside down…” (see Figure 4.5). In addition to the exterior, Henry also stated that, when paired with the consideration of the exterior, certain presentation elements enacted at the museum contribute to an increased spectacle. For example, Henry recalls that Regis Philbin was present for the grand opening of the Pigeon Forge location and expressed that this celebrity connection seemed “completely random” because it was not clear how Regis Philbin was linked to Titanic in a way that would justify his appearance.

Factors that deter a Titanic museum attraction visit. The comments of Henry and Jessie in response to what influenced their Titanic museum attraction Visit evolved into a discussion that explored the opposite of influential factors contributing to the museum attraction visit: factors that deter a visit or cause reluctance to visit. Both Jessie and Henry have a unique perspective as individuals who grew up near Pigeon Forge and have experienced it as locals observant of tourism and tourist practices. To further explore this unique perspective, I asked them more specific questions about the factors that deterred their Titanic museum attraction visit up until this point.
Jessie and Henry highlighted the township location of the Titanic Museum Attraction as a main factor of deterrence. For example, when asked what influenced her to visit a Titanic museum attraction, Jessie stated,

I mean, ‘cause I would have eventually gone, I think, but just I don’t really do a lot of attractions that are in Gatlinburg necessarily just because they’re kind of cheesy…I think that some of the places [in Pigeon Forge] are kind of scams, well not scams, but you know like, like not really worth what they’re charging…It’s kind of a ridiculous like mini Las Vegas. I don’t know, it’s like, it’s like really cheesy and like all the attractions in Gatlinburg, so…and I think if that had been separate, like, in a separate city and away from, separated from that, I think it would have been more legit, I guess, more historically legit.
Henry expressed a similar sentiment: “I guess because it’s associated with Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, I kind of, like, associate it with being tacky.”

The hesitation expressed by Jessie points to a specific attribute of the township location that caused concern. The Titanic Museum Attraction location in Pigeon Forge is surrounded by other tourist attractions and Pigeon Forge, itself, is an attraction-based tourist town. The concern regarding this attribute is also reflected in Jessie’s description (above) to the specific attraction that is located next to the Titanic Museum Attraction (see Figure 4.5). Because of the emphasis on attractions in Pigeon Forge, Jessie experienced confusion and uncertainty regarding the historical legitimacy of the museum: “Is this actually going to be real, like a real museum, or, you know, just some attraction that people walk on a ship, I don’t know.” In addition to concern over the historical legitimacy of the museum, Henry expressed worry about the possible tone of the museum based upon the first impression that is formed by the exterior and surrounding attractions:

[It] is kind of weird because, you know, Titanic is pretty, like, morbid and, like, what happened with it, but yet it’s kind of, like you, know, next to Ripley’s Believe it or Not, that sort of thing. So, I think that’s kind of weird.

I saw a parallel between the lived experience of negotiating a visit to the Titanic Museum Attraction based on the exterior appearance for these two participants and my own lived experience of this negotiation at the Las Vegas location. Before entering the Las Vegas museum I felt a lack reverence for the topic in my near environment. I felt a very strong sense of tourism being associated with the museum even before arriving at The Luxor Hotel. There were many advertisements around Las Vegas that were outside of the hotel (e.g., on cabs and billboards). I felt unsettled by how light-hearted the
atmosphere seemed to be. It became hard and almost seemingly strenuous to take it seriously in the context of its surrounding environment. I was worried that it would be a very hokey museum.

Upon viewing the exterior of the museum for the first time, I felt that the exterior made it look like a legitimate museum and, as a result, it almost seemed out of place. This observation echoes that of Jessie, who thought that a different physical location (e.g., town and surrounding venues) would benefit the impressions that potential visitors have to the museum. The Titanic artifact exhibition is paired with Bodies: The Exhibition and are side by side (see Figure 4.6). I traveled to Las Vegas with two friends and when we purchased tickets to enter the exhibition it felt more like we were going to see a show because Las Vegas entertainment is largely comprised of live shows. This made me wonder if there is a place for it in Las Vegas at all or a place where it would be better appreciated. I felt overcome with worry that it was not being appreciated enough. This thought also brought the movie to mind. I was honestly surprised that the movie was not being used for advertising since the association with entertainment is so strong in Las Vegas, and the movie is a form of visual entertainment. I witnessed people drinking and lighting cigarettes around it, which felt like an intentional degradation of the subject. It seemed that visitors, potential visitors, and standers by alike had a severe lack of respect for the exhibition. I felt offended and uneasy about the fact that it was being treated as pure entertainment. The exterior of the Las Vegas museum also makes use of a visual to

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39 Bodies: The Exhibition is managed by Premier Exhibitions, Inc. The exhibition travels to various locations and showcases preserved human bodies dissected to display bodily systems. You can learn more about Bodies: The Exhibition at the following web address: http://www.bodiesetheexhibition.com/.
create a context for the size of the ship, but it does so with a two-dimensional image of one end of the ship (see Figure 4.6). The image is hoisted high above the ground, so as to capture the height of the ship and give the viewer a “larger than life” feeling. It is a spectacle in its own way but is definitely a more traditional display technique. For me, it was the surrounding commotion and environment that emphasized attraction-based entertainment and hinted at a possible lack of legitimacy.

**Staff responses.** Barbara identified the specific demographic of individuals who are targeted by visitors in their marketing endeavors: women, ages 25 to 54 who have children. She has also noticed that, since integrating the movie more directly into the museum attraction content, there has been an increase in young girls who visit the
museum. In fact, a younger population has been visiting more frequently because the 100-year commemoration events are introducing (or re-introducing, in some cases) Titanic to a new generation. This realization has prompted the development of marketing efforts toward young adults around the age of 20. Barbara has also identified through her own research that people visit the museum attractions to learn more about the personal lives of the passengers. It is this connection that makes Titanic relevant for them. She is aware that visitors enjoy seeing artifacts and the addition of personal stories and biographical information about the artifacts brings Titanic to life. Barbara knows that it is critical to have up-to-date information regarding why people visit the museum attractions; she gathers and tracks this information by doing “secret shopping” and reviewing visitor comments posted to travel websites such as Trip Advisor.

Arthur provided insights that expanded upon those provided by Barbara. He did not speak to the target audience of the Titanic Museum Attractions but did describe some of the characteristics of people who visit and some of the reasons that people visit. First, he has noticed over time that individuals, for the most part, remain fully engaged with the interactive elements of the museum and become excited to participate:

The third class corridor, and so that they can actually see, um, and experience what it been—would be like to walk down the third class corridor on the Titanic…Walking the Grand Staircase…the first class room upstairs, same thing…That or possibly the boarding passes…

This participation includes interacting with living history interpreters to learn more information. People also visit to learn more of the details surrounding Titanic and the passengers that were aboard the ship.
A unique aspect of their venues that draws visitors in, Arthur explained, is the combination of traditional museum displays and interactive elements more commonly associated with attractions. There are school groups and other youth organizations that visit the museum for an educational experience. He also stated that there is a general influx of visitors every time a new gallery is installed. Visitors who are interested in the specific topic of a new gallery are especially apt to visit because of its relation to their personal interest. He views the mission of the museum attractions as “educating [people about] what is literally one of the greatest non-wartime maritime tragedies in history.” It is important for the museum attractions to humanize the historical events of Titanic. Though, Arthur does acknowledge that it is difficult to pinpoint a specific demographic of individuals who visit and what their individuals reasons are for visiting because the museum attraction content covers the history of Titanic from so many angles that the experience will be different for everyone.

Molly did not provide explicit information about the demographic that Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition aims to attract but did offer some insights about the type of people that visit and the reasons that they visit. One of the challenges related to pinpointing the demographics of the individuals that visit her location, Molly explained, is that Las Vegas is an equal-opportunity tourist destination. Because people visit from a variety of places for a variety of reasons, it is difficult to create any type of guest profile. A significant challenge for Molly is interacting with those guests who do not take the subject matter seriously. Some individuals seem to be visiting because it is one of many attractions to visit in Las Vegas, and more specifically, in the Luxor hotel in their leisure
The cavalier attitude of these individuals becomes an extension of the reason for their visit (i.e., an attraction to visit during leisure time) and often comes across as disrespectful to Molly. She explained,

I get so defensive [of Titanic and the passengers]. People will find out that their passenger died and they will laugh and go ‘Oh, man. That sucks.’ And I have so many customers complain about me to [my manager] and I really don’t care. They tell me I need to lighten up. I tell them, ‘you do realize some died a horrible miserable death, right?’ And they’re like ‘Yeah.’ And I’m like, ‘so why is this funny to you?’ And then they just kind of stare at me like I just all of the sudden sprouted horns or something. I had one women get in my… well, because her husband was laughing and I said like, ‘Sir, this was a real individual.’ And he was like ‘Yeah.’ And I said, ‘then it’s really not just that funny.’ And then he walked away then his wife came flying back, got in my face, called me a condescending bitch. But I take a lot of it like so personally because these people [suffered]. This really was a horrible tragedy. Could you imagine being in the North Atlantic and you know at this point that you are going to die and it’s just a matter or time? It’s just not a humorous situation.

In addition to not taking the subject matter seriously, there are individuals who treat their vacation as an excuse to be publically intoxicated and irresponsible. She has seen some individuals come in to the artifact exhibition and pass out on benches after drinking too much. She attributes this to the party mindset of Las Vegas:

But I do think it has something to do with Vegas and the party mindset. Vegas has [that saying:] ‘What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” This city, which I blame them for advertisements that you can do whatever you want. That’s why we have situations. People taking pictures. People acting up.

Despite some negative experiences, Molly does have positive experiences with guests too. It is common for her to see families visiting together, including younger children, and youth organizations: “Different school groups will come in [and] I’ve done events with the girl scouts.” She mentioned that there are individuals who will visit the artifact exhibition in full period costume; sometimes whole families participate in this
activity together. Molly feels that the mission of the artifact exhibition is “to educate people” who visit. One of the ways that this education can happen is through comparison to the movie. She was able to highlight several examples in which the movie is used as a comparative learning tool. These examples will be discussed in the general phenomenological structure in Chapter Eight.

**Personal Opinion of Rose Character as Living History Interpreter in the Titanic Museum Attraction Setting**

Visitor participants were asked an additional research question that addressed the hypothetical use of the Rose character as a living history interpreter in the museum setting: *There are some Titanic Museum Attractions that have the movie character of Rose from James Cameron’s Titanic film, walking around the museum and interacting with visitors. What is your opinion of or reaction to this scenario?* Participants were also given the contextual information that Rose is placed in the museum setting wearing a reproduction costume from the movie (most often the Boarding Suit that the character wore in her first scenes in the movie). Titanic museum attraction employees were also asked about if and how the Rose character is presented in the museum setting.

**Visitor responses.** As mentioned in the previous section, the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into the museum setting (especially via costume, living history, and display) does not factor into the decision to visit a Titanic museum attraction. Because the character of Rose was not explicitly mentioned in any participant responses to the interview question regarding what influenced a visit to a Titanic museum attraction, a follow-up question was added to explicitly explore how the presence of a Rose living history character would potentially affect the lived experience of the visitors
in the museum setting. Because phenomenology is concerned with the actual lived experience of individuals, it is important that I acknowledge that these data are representative of the participant’s feelings, emotional reactions, and interpretations of a possible lived experience.

This question was added to the interview protocol as time allowed and participants were willing to answer the question. Eleven participants did not answer this question, including the participant who withdrew from the study following the pre-interview.

The scenario of including a Rose living history interpreter as part of the lived experience of a museum visit elicited a wide range of reactions from participants. It was more common for participants to oppose the presence of a Rose living history interpreter than favor her presence. Ten participants (Peter, Caroline, Marshall, Juliet, Jane, Craig, Ivan, Henry, Alice, and Rosalie) were not in favor of a Rose living history interpreter. I identified the most salient arguments regarding how and why the presence of a Rose living history interpreter would contribute to a negative lived experience during a museum visit.

- The presence of Rose would not be entertaining or appealing to me.

Juliet was not interested in witnessing deviations or dramatizations of history in the museum setting. Alice felt that Rose would not be an entertaining aspect of the lived experience of the museum attraction visit. Marshall simply stated, “Yeah that wouldn’t have done anything for me…at all, nothing.” Marshall strongly believed that, unless a
living history interpreter enhances a visitor’s understanding of history than there is “no useful benefit for a personal to portray a fictional character.”

- I acknowledge that Rose’s original and intended context of interpretation is within a movie, and it is more satisfying to view Rose in her original and intended context by watching the movie.

I noticed that Peter’s very blunt reaction to this scenario highlighted a unique aspect related to the potential lived experience of having a Rose living history interpreter in a Titanic museum attraction: the character’s original and intended context of interpretation. Upon expressing that he wasn’t “a fan” of Rose’s presence, he elaborated with the following reasoning:

If you want to see Rose the DVD is like $5.99 at your local Best Buy. You know? And instead of putting [money] toward [visiting the museum and viewing] that tour guide who is probably dressed and has a horrible accent, why don’t we just go buy a DVD. … If you want to see Rose you can rent the movie.

While Peter’s reasoning contains assumptions about the quality of the living history interpreter’s portrayal of the character, he is also acknowledging that there is a range of how well her portrayal could be done and acceptability of her would depend upon where she fell on this spectrum. This notion is discussed in greater detail in other arguments presented in this section.

Further explanation of Peter’s reasoning revealed that his reaction to the scenario involved considerations of a Rose living history interpreter’s legitimacy in the museum setting. He felt that the character of Rose is legitimate in the movie because it is her original and intended context. Peter expressed that the historical and emotional impact of the Rose character lies in her embodiment of her “movie environment.” She is a character
that was inspired by actual events but was not part of any of these events.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore, her removal from that environment negates her legitimacy in the museum setting. Peter added that the inclusion of Rose would be disorienting and aimless because she is a fictional character that has been removed from her original context (i.e., a movie) and placed in a foreign context (i.e., a museum about a historical event that the movie in which she was a main character was depicted) that results in fragmentation of the character. That is, it is more difficult to cognitively and emotionally engage with her when she is not presented in her original context as a whole because the physical environment of the movie in which she played is an essential part of her essence.

- Rose was only a fictional character; that is, she was not an actual passenger on the ship in 1912. I think it would detract from the museum experience to have Rose present because she was fictional.

The most common concern expressed by participants who opposed the presence of a Rose living history interpreter was her status as a fictional character. There were some participants (Daisy, Darren, Juliet, Nora, Peter, and Serena) who discovered that Rose was not an actual passenger aboard the ship in 1912 during their museum attraction visit. Juliet simply stated, “I think that that’s not okay because Rose is not a factual person from the ship.” Jessie had a similar reaction: “I think [it would be] cheesy [to show Rose] just because Rose wasn’t a real person.” A few participants (Ivan, Henry,

\textsuperscript{40} Some participants learned during their visit that the character of Rose was created by James Cameron as a composite of a few different female Titanic passengers. See Chapter Six for a more detailed discussion of this finding.
Jessie, and Peter) asked me, with the purpose of confirming her fictional status, if Rose was an actual passenger prior to sharing their reactions to this scenario.

Jessie and Peter explained the basis of their reaction by providing examples of actual passengers who would be more appropriate to include in the museum attraction. Jessie stated,

She wasn’t real. The captain is different just because like when we were in the room with him, there were pictures of the Captain there and he was a real person. Rose I would think…because that’s a direct reference to the movie and the captain wouldn’t necessarily be a direct reference to the movie and the museum.

Peter expressed a similar sentiment, using both Captain Smith and another passenger as an example:

And I feel like if Rose was, in fact, a pivotal character in the Titanic, and has a story and background in the Titanic and is a true person then that’s fine but if not then I feel like it takes away. You know if you have someone like a Molly Brown character on there then that’s alright because Molly Brown was really on the ship. Or you have someone dressed as a Captain maybe, okay, alright, you can say ‘hey, the captain’s on board.’ Somebody is legitimate. Then you can see it from I guess someone who is taught to understand the events in that manner. But to have just some random character from a fictional film, a fictional character from the film, I think is degrading.

The inconsistency exhibited by Rose’s presence also included considerations by some participants of the relationship between a museum’s duty to strive for historical accuracy and Rose’s status as a fictional character. Reactions and feelings related to this argument are discussed below.

- My attention would be diverted away from the historical content of the museum and more toward the movie.

While it is common for museum content to be expansive, some participants felt that the inclusion of a Rose living history interpreter would make the museum attraction
content too expansive. Jessie identified negative feelings that she would be likely to experience if Rose were present. The presence of Rose would cause her to feel flustered and detached from the historical events with which she was trying to actively engage because she would feel forced to split her attention between the historical events and the movie. Rosalie had a similar reaction: “I think it kind of puts people in to the movie more than the actual history of the Titanic.”

Daisy explained that, because Rose is one component of a bigger picture (i.e., one character in a movie), her presence would cause immediate thought of the movie and probably even more than the actual historical events (“I would say, maybe it might not fit in with it because then again, you would just be thinking of…the movie…more than the actual ship itself”). Dorothy found it important to mentally distinguish between the movie and historical events. Dorothy also felt that, upon seeing a Rose living history interpreter, it would be inevitable for the movie to become an automatic reference in people’s minds: “Well, because I think many people have seen the movie…” The reactions of Daisy and Dorothy highlight the awareness that Titanic can be viewed through different lenses of interpretation; that is, a visitor can increase his or her understanding of Titanic through the historical events or through the events as they were depicted in the movie. Because Rose is visually enacting the historical events in the movie, it may be easier or seem more natural to draw upon the movie-based lens of interpretation in a visitor’s mind.

- The Titanic museum attraction already presents visitors with a person-centered connection to follow throughout the entire museum visit via the boarding pass
Serena highlighted another reason for opposition of a Rose living history interpreter in the museum attraction setting that relates to the diversion of attention. She felt that the addition of Rose distracts from that learning process and away from learning about actual passengers that were aboard the ship in 1912. In addition, the inclusion of Rose adds one more element to make sense of and to which attention must be paid. For Serena this would be cognitively overwhelming and a possible source of confusion when trying to retain and recall historical information.

Peter had a similar reaction to that of Serena, stating that, unless Rose was an actual passenger on the ship in 1912, she is taking away from a true historical education for visitors:

And I feel like, if Rose was in fact a pivotal character in the titanic, and has a story and background in the titanic and is a true person then that's fine but if not then I feel like it takes away.

Part of this historical education, for Peter, involves learning about actual passengers that were aboard the ship and learning from them via their possessions and stories that are contained in the museum attraction (“You know if you have someone like a Molly Brown character on there then that's alright. Because Molly Brown was really on the ship”). From Peter’s reaction it became clear that ownership of education is important to him and he desired to retain control of his education. Even when guided by the structured content of a museum attraction, Peter wanted to be able to choose what information and objects to focus upon. Serena felt that it would be best for her to have the focus of the content
Figure 4.7. An example of the front of the boarding pass that is given to each visitor upon Entry at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.
Figure 4.8. An example of the back of the boarding pass that is given to each visitor upon entry at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

Welcome to Titanic! It’s so nice you came. I’m Bess Allison, but you may call me Bessie like my friends. My husband, Hudson, our two children and I are returning to Canada following a business trip/holiday to England. Several of Hudson’s employees are traveling with us. To set the record straight, my dear husband is from old Canadian money, and I’m originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

While we were in England, we had our 11-month-old boy, Trevor, baptized in an historic Methodist rectory. It was a deeply spiritual event for us all. We traveled on to Scotland and bought some beautiful horses for our family farm. Once onboard Titanic, we were able to unwind and relax in the security of our lovely first-class quarters.

If we hadn’t been lulled into such numbing complacency, we might have heeded the warning calls coming from outside our cabin door. As it was, a tragic mistake was made that would forever change my dear family’s destiny.

Find out the fate of the entire Allison family in the Memorial Room.

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predetermined by the museum attraction staff to avoid the feelings of overwhelm that might accompany having to make those choices.

- The presence of Rose in a museum with an educational mission would not be congruent with this mission or related historical content. 

For some participants (Alice, Caroline, Daisy, Henry, Jane, Jessie, and Juliet), the potential presence of Rose was inappropriate because she was not aligned with the historical mission and content of the museum attraction. Caroline, Daisy and Peter identified the Titanic Museum Attraction that they each visited as an educational museum attraction with a factual mission, making the presence of Rose inconsistent with those foundational intentions of the dissemination of historical knowledge. Peter and Caroline asserted their position based upon their interpretation of what a museum should be (i.e., a place meant for historical education and artifact display). Similarly, Jane and Jessie felt strongly that if there is an element that is not a part of the historical events as they happened in 1912 then it does not belong in a museum about the historical events that happened in 1912. Jessie added that it is especially inconsistent to make direct references to any part of a movie (including a fictional character) in a place dedicated to the historical events.

The inconsistency brought about by Rose’s presence included considerations of the relationship between a museum’s duty to strive for historical accuracy and Rose’s status as a fictional character for some participants (Alice, Caroline, Henry, Jane, Juliet). Henry stated that, “for me it’s weird because she didn’t exist.” Alice also expressed that if Rose were included in a museum with a historical focus it would be the worst decision
that could be made because she was not an actual passenger on the ship in 1912. For Alice, Rose’s presence represents the polar opposite of historical accuracy. Juliet drew a connection between the historical knowledge that she might obtain in the museum and the possible presence of Rose. She stated that the presence of Rose would alter the knowledge acquired at the museum, adding in traces of inaccuracies (e.g., a fictional movie character) may actually negate the museum attraction visit and do a disservice to museum attraction visitors.

- A Rose living history interpreter would be inherently different than the conception of Rose that is presented in the movie, and these differences would be problematic for me.

Caroline, Craig and Selena acknowledged that part of the concern related to removing Rose from her original and intended context (i.e., the movie) and placing her in a foreign context (i.e., a museum attraction setting) is that parts of her, related to both physical appearance and personality, are lost. Serena dissected how this would affect her cognitive conception of the Rose character:

Her demeanor, her, the way she spoke, the way she carried herself would have had a lasting impression on me, and it would have given me, I would have drawn my own conclusion on that person versus the character of Rose. [I already feel like I have Rose down in my mind]⁴¹ and I don’t want anybody to change it. And I think that’s how I saw that today. I don’t want – I want – let my imagination do that for me. Instead of me, okay, you know, the real person wouldn’t have behaved like that or wouldn’t have done that – or, that kind of stuff.

From this reaction it is clear that Serena does not want to engage in anything that will alter the conception of Rose that already exists in her mind. Part of her rejection of a

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⁴¹ Brackets are included in quotations to correct grammar in a way that assists the reader in understanding the meaning of the participant’s statement with clarity.
Rose living history interpreter is related to her preference to avoid forced exposure to pre-assembled conceptions of a character. Serena also expressed that she would feel distracted by the urge to correct the aspects of the living history interpreter’s depiction of Rose that are not an authentic portrayal of the movie character.

Craig and Caroline also acknowledged that a living history interpreter’s portrayal of Rose is inherently different from the movie character because each individual actress will bring her own interpretation. In this vein, Craig was empathetic toward Serena’s concerns about the lived experience of interacting with a Rose living history interpreter because he himself found it difficult to determine if the presence of a Rose living history interpreter would add or detract value from his lived experience in the museum due to the personalized nature of visual imagery. He explained that the museum experience is different for everyone because everyone builds a visual or image of a character in their mind. He further explained that this perspective was informed by the analogy of seeing a movie versus reading a book because developing an image in one’s mind of something and then seeing it presented to you is completely different. Craig felt that if this personalized visual or image is violated or changed from how it was originally conceived in one’s mind, it could produce negative emotions or disorientation – the same type of disorientation that Serena was expressing a desire to avoid with the presence of Rose.

Caroline interpreted the inherent differences between the Rose movie character and how a living history interpreter might portray her through her background in the entertainment industry. She expressed that she would have an aversion to a Rose living history interpreter because an authentic portrayal of Rose involves the acting of Kate
Winslet and her unique appearance. Without the original actress (and her likeness) to portray Rose, Caroline felt it would be completely different and feel somewhat removed. She presented an example regarding the portrayal of Harry Potter characters in a Universal Studios theme park to further explain her reaction:

They wouldn’t be Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio so that’s one of those things like, J.K. Rowling didn’t sell Harry Potter to Disney because they said they would have, you know, Harry Potter walking around and she said, ‘no, Daniel Radcliff is the only Harry Potter,’ and you would not let, Disney would have done that, you know, because they always have their characters [walking around]. That was one of the main reasons. People are like, ‘Why didn’t Disney try to get it, ‘cause it’s been such a big thing for Universal?’ And it’s like, they did, but she wouldn’t sell it to them ‘cause she said, ‘Nope. There would be no Harry Potter or Hermione walking around, you know, played by just some face character person.’ ‘Cause it would just be something totally different. It wouldn’t be the character that you had come to like. So I agree with that, so for several reasons I wouldn’t like a Jack or Rose.

- I would be suspicious to engage and/or interact with a Rose living history interpreter because her status as a fictional character automatically discredits her.

Ivan’s response underscored the relationship between the historical authenticity and the status of Rose as a fictional character because he felt that this status automatically discredits her, no matter how well she is portrayed by the actress (“Yeah, if she was saying the right things I would be suspicious because she’s from the movie”). Even if she is discussing historical information and true happenings (i.e., “the right things”), he would be suspicious of any information that she disseminated because she is a fictional movie character that is not necessarily an expert about Titanic history. He felt that the believability of a living history interpreter’s performance would be comprised if the performance was a portrayal of the Rose character.
Seven participants (Alice, Craig, Daisy, Darren, Dorothy, Jack, and Simone) voiced *opinions that showed favor or highlighted the benefits* of a Rose living history interpreter. I identified the most salient arguments regarding how and why the presence of a Rose living history interpreter would contribute to a positive lived experience during a museum visit.

- The presence of a Rose living history interpreter would help me to better relate to and personally connect with the historical content of the museum.

Simone was the only participant who voiced a strong preference for seeing a Rose living history interpreter in the museum attraction. She was visibly excited when the scenario was posed during her interview, immediately stating, “I would love it.” Not only did she show a preference for the inclusion of Rose, but she also surmised that a large number of visitors would “love it” too. She explained that the whole point of presenting Titanic’s history was to help people connect to the history and a visual really helps visitors to achieve a heightened understanding of history (“Because you actually get to see it. The whole point is people just connect to the story”). In fact, Simone explicitly stated that she felt she would be more likely to visit a Titanic museum attraction if a Rose living history interpreter was present; she was the only participant with this reaction. Dorothy also presented the notion that the inclusion of Rose would allow people to more deeply and personally relate to the museum content (“I think people in general could relate even better to that”). For Jack, Rose’s presence would assist in bridging the gap between the movie and historical events. He acknowledged that, in today’s entertainment-driven culture, it is difficult to alleviate the tension that exists between the
movie-history dichotomy. He further explained that movies and history exist and interact at varying degrees along a complex spectrum, making it difficult for museum visitors to negotiate how it is appropriate for movies and history to be combined. More specifically, Jack felt that the presence of Rose would add value to learning about actual passengers and crew that were aboard the ship and are currently portrayed by living history interpreters, such as Captain Smith. Alice identified a specific demographic of individuals who would be especially apt to benefit from a connection to the movie via Rose. She stated that the presence of Rose might appeal to a younger audience (i.e., children) because it would diversify the content of the museum and possibly better hold their attention.

Many people have seen the movie and equate it with being a positive experience, so a Rose living history interpreter would further add to an enjoyable experience in the museum. Dorothy equated the movie with an enjoyable experience and posited that, as an extension of the movie, a Rose living history interpreter would contribute to an enjoyable museum experience:

I think that people in general could relate even better to [a Rose living history interpreter] … because I think many people have seen the movie… well first they maybe knew of the tragedy and of the Titanic but then the movie came out and everybody enjoyed that. So when you go through that, you can’t help but think of the movie also.

For Dorothy, seeing one character (i.e., a single and integral element) of the movie evokes remembrance of a positive experience related to the movie as a whole and assists in creating a more positive connection to the historical events presented in a museum attraction that inspired the movie.
• I would be able to appreciate Rose as a feature of the museum setting because I understand that Rose was a fictional character used as a tool in a motion picture film to tell the story of Titanic from a different perspective.

Darren stated that he would be able to appreciate Rose as a feature of the museum setting because, even though he was now aware that she was not an actual passenger on the Titanic in 1912, she was based on a real person and was simply enhanced/changed to fit the mold of her fictional identity and circumstances. Darren elaborated upon how he understands his personal awareness of this phenomenon: “It would be fine. I think that movies always take liberties in presenting a story and that’s why they will always say, ‘this movie is based on the life of,’ as opposed to ‘this presents the life of’.” He explained that a Rose living history interpreter wouldn’t affect his lived experience in the museum attraction in a negative way because of this awareness. To support this awareness, he presented an example pertaining to another popular film, The Blind Side:

*Blind Side*, I don’t know if you saw that movie or read the book. I’ve seen Michael Oher on TV, and he says, ‘No, I knew how to play football, and they didn’t have to show me how [to play football, as they did in the movie].’ And so they made a number of changes to enhance the story that were at variance with fact. But the substance of it was true, that he was taken in and he was their family, and that was a good story. And I assume that all movies that are referencing actual events have some liberties taken with the truth, and so having a Rose character around wouldn’t bother me even though I now know that there was no such person.

• It would be entertaining to interact with an individual playing this character.

Daisy stated, “I think it would have been something interesting…I probably would have enjoyed it because I had seen the movie and could relate to her.” Jack stated,
I think it would be good. I think I would enjoy it to have maybe
different…because they have character that act like Captain Smith or things like
that. So, it’d be kind of fun interacting and having a Jack and Rose walk around.”

For Jack, a Rose living history interpreter would add novelty to the lived experience of
the museum attraction visit. Simone expressed that the presence of a Rose living history
interpreter would be engaging because it would provide a visual of Rose outside of her
original context in the movie; a dimensional visual that could be seen and experienced up
close and beyond the screen of a two-dimensional movie.

- If Rose is present in the museum attraction it is important that she contribute to
  my learning and understanding of Titanic, regardless of whether she was an actual
  passenger aboard the ship.

  Darren clearly stated that during his Titanic museum attraction visit he learned
  that Rose was not an actual passenger aboard the ship in 1912. However, if a Rose living
  history interpreter were present in the museum attraction wearing a costume from the
  movie, but speaking about historical information and telling fact-based stories, it would
  be okay with him. Simply put, his acceptance of this scenario is not dependent on the
  physical appearance and presence of Rose. It would be Darren’s expectation that she add
  additional value (i.e., value beyond the simple visual of a movie character and costume)
  to the lived experience within the museum experience via a verbal presence. That is, the
details of a Rose living history interpreter’s portrayal (i.e., her appearance) are less
important than the information she provides. Though, Darren acknowledged that this
would be accompanied by an assumption in his mind: “I assume what she says would be
factual.” Darren was quick to point out that the same information potentially being
presented by Rose could be presented by several different passenger personas. Each persona and actor/actress would have a different contribution. Marshall and Craig echoed this sentiment, stating that the acceptability of Rose’s presence is dependent upon how the living history interpreter presented herself beyond the embodied appearance of Rose. Craig acknowledged that there is a range of how well her portrayal could be done and acceptability of her presence would depend upon where she fell on this spectrum.

Though clear opinions were expressed both for and against the presence of a Rose living history interpreter, there were also participants who acknowledged issues that involve a range of acceptability and uncertainty. Some of these issues have been introduced in the arguments presented earlier in this section. Marshall thought that the inclusion of Rose would have different meanings if she was portrayed as the movie character versus somebody who represented, in dress and speech, an actual passenger from the ship in 1912:

Well, I guess it depends on how they would have portrayed themselves I—would they have portrayed her as a movie character, the movie character, or tried to pose her as somebody who represented—in dress and speech—and everything, somebody that would have actually been on the boat…?

Alice felt that acceptability of a Rose living history interpreter was dependent upon the mission of the museum; that is, if the museum was trying to focus more on the movie or more on the historical events of Titanic (“I would have to one, kind of guess as to what… and I guess it would kind of depend on the museum…Was the museum reaching for a very movie feel or a more of a historical feel?”). In the case of the Orlando museum attraction that she visited, her perception was that they were trying to achieve more of a movie focus so it would have been an amusing addition. As discussed above,
some participants (Craig, Darren, and Marshall) stressed that the acceptability of Rose’s presence was dependent upon how well the portrayal of the character was done, beyond her appearance.

Daisy was not sure that Rose’s presence would fit in at the museum or compliment the other museum attraction exhibits (“Well…it probably, uh, uh, I would say, maybe it might not fit in with it”). Nora’s source of uncertainty was the seemingly incompatible lenses of interpretation (i.e., movie events versus historical events) that Rose would force her to adopt. Because Rose is a fictional character, Nora felt it was unclear how she would contribute to the accuracy of the information in the museum attraction.

Despite the presence of negative and conflicted opinions regarding the presence of a Rose living history interpreter in the museum attraction setting, for some participants (Caroline, Craig, Daisy, Ivan, and Nora) the acceptability of her presence was simply a matter of where she was placed in the physical museum environment. Specific suggestions were offered regarding where her presence would be acceptable in the museum attraction. Craig felt that it would be okay to have Rose present in the museum attraction but in a different format (i.e., not a living history interpreter) (“Well, hmm… I think it’d be interesting but I—uh, the interacting I—I don’t know. I think, I don’t know, I think I’d rather just see it, um, displayed rather than…[participant trails off]”). He thought his lived experience in the museum attraction would be enhanced by having her present via the display of her movie costumes. Daisy, Ivan, and Nora felt that Rose would be acceptable in a room that is dedicated solely to the movie. As a participant who visited
a Titanic museum attraction with someone who had not seen the movie, Ivan explained that it would be more acceptable because than her presence and context are self-contained and more easily understood. He also suggested a way that Rose could be useful, beyond her appearance, to all visitors: placement in a room about the movie in which she could speak about various aspects of the movie (i.e., casting, costuming, special effects, and so forth) Ivan said, “But if she’s in the movie room talking about the movie then, yeah, that’s totally fine.”

Caroline and Daisy suggested that Rose might be most appropriate in a location that was physically separated from a Titanic museum attraction. For Caroline, the presence of Rose would be most appropriate at special events that were announced ahead of time. Her reasoning for this reaction was that then the general public, all of whom are potential museum attraction visitors with different backgrounds and preferences, can make an informed decision about wanting to see the character or not ("Yes, ‘cause then if people wanted to see that they could go to that event"). She further explained that if Rose is in the museum than visitors are not given a choice, per se, about seeing her and they are forced to acknowledge the movie whether that connected is desired or not. Caroline also mentioned that Rose would be appropriate at a movie anniversary or release event because than her presence lends a contextual human presence to the environment/event. Daisy stated that movie character depiction may be best placed in a special type of museum. While she did not explicitly name a specific type of museum as an example, she made it clear that Rose’s presence would be better suited for a different type of museum.
**Staff responses.** Barbara, Arthur, and Molly discussed the ways in which Rose is incorporated into their respective Titanic museum attractions of employment. As staff members, they have also witnessed how museum attraction visitors react to both the presence and absence of the Rose character.

The Branson and Pigeon Forge Titanic Museum Attractions co-owned by Barbara currently incorporate a Rose living history interpreter. Rose was not present during any of the participants’ museum attraction visits. For Barbara, the inclusion of Rose represents a lengthy planning process. She described the decision-making and integration process regarding the inclusion of a Rose living history interpreter to me. A Rose living history interpreter was introduced as a viable possibility in an early process of identifying additional marketing opportunities shortly after the Branson location opened its doors. Barbara explained that, according to their business model, marketing opportunities must align two objectives: (1) to peak the interest of those who have not been into a museum in such a way that it would create a desire to visit the Titanic Museum Attraction and (2) to constantly refresh the content of the museum attraction in order to maintain interest and appeal. The complicated nature of balancing these two objectives and making sure that they are met at all times, Barbara stated, requires advanced planning:

But back in… back when we opened in 2006 I immediately went into what we were going to do in 2008. And I realized it was 10 years ago in 2008 that Jim Cameron released his movie. And I thought to myself ‘Let’s do a movie tribute.’ Because that particular movie has its place in history also. Even though it’s pop culture.

The movie tribute exhibit was presented as the initial concept and further brainstorming led to the conception of a Rose living history interpreter:
So I wanted it all in one gallery so it doesn’t mix the real artifacts with the movie. So we qualify it so when they come in they know they are in a movie gallery. So when I began to think about it and again, I come from an entertainment background, I thought ‘Let’s create a character of Rose.’

Barbara’s first considerations of how to best present Rose to the museum attraction visitors include the actress/interpreter who might portray the famous character and her appearance:

‘And I wonder who that should be.’ And I’m thinking I have to go into a casting session and then the most famous costume is the hat with the blue dress on the entrance of seeing Titanic and she’s nonchalant about it. ‘Oh, yeah, I just got off of the other ship. It’s probably the same size.’ Jim created her… you know, she’s so wealthy that [this] doesn’t even bother her. But it created the vision of her with this enormous prestigious hat and the contour of the suit and the shoes so I wanted to recreate that [see Figure 4.9 for an image of the re-creation of Rose].

Though a Rose character presented numerous opportunities for marketing and visitor interaction, Barbara was keenly aware of and sensitive to the fact that Rose is a fictional character in a movie. Barbara felt that, because of her fictional status, the Rose character needed to be used in a responsible manner and her physical location in the museum attraction was to be pre-determined and closely monitored. She stated,

And my feeling is: that character has to stay… It can either be on the Grand Staircase or in the gallery [see Figure 4.10]. She cannot be anywhere else on the ship. Otherwise it creates a fake world in a real world, you might say. So, the rules are the rules.

In addition to having specific rules about where Rose can be located throughout the museum attraction, Barbara also explained that there are rules about when and how she
can be presented at a museum attraction and special events hosted by the museum attractions:\(^42\)

I would not use her down in Branson. I know I have some postcards down there but I don’t use any marketing of her down there. I only use her when I am promoting the movie. Now, the exception of the rule might be on private event, where we do princess tea parties and we’ll do like 800 little girls and they are

\(^42\) To my knowledge, visitors are not informed that Rose is fictional when she is present as a living history interpreter in the museum attraction. Some of the living history interpreters do inform visitors in the Grand Staircase Gallery that Rose was a fictional character and represents a composite of actual women that were aboard Titanic, but this information is generally only offered if a related question is asked by a visitor.
etiquette lessons. And how to socialize... kind of a mini Cotillion type of approach. We will surprise them that one of the most famous passengers aboard this ship that we would like to introduce you to. And she comes out and the little girls go ‘Oh my gosh. She’s so beautiful.’ And she talks to them about being proper and what it meant in 1912 to socialize as a young woman. They all dress up as princesses (see Figure 4.11).

The next step in the process involved hiring the woman who would portray Rose and planning the costumes that she would wear for the many visitors that file through the museum attraction everyday. Barbara corresponded with a woman she knew who resembled Kate Winslet and proceeded to make contact with a costumer in Los Angeles who could reproduce the costume the Boarding Suit costume. After photographing the woman in a campaign photo shoot and sending her to a 1912 etiquette training session, the marketing campaign was launched. There was a noticeable difference in the demographic of individuals who visited the museum attraction, which prompted Barbara to add another well-known character from the movie as a companion for Rose. Barbara described the change in demographic, as well as the use of two characters from the movie in the museum attraction:

And so we opened it. And what I saw was a change of who comes into the ship. I saw young girls that had seen the movie that wanted to see Rose. I also found a look-a-like for Leo. And in fact I took him to Regis and Cathy Lee and he was the runner-up on their contest. So, in his, he would start in third class… in the third class area. We would then have Rose at the top of the stairs. She never came down the stairs. She was always at the top of the stairs. And people on the Grand Staircase would say ‘Oh, there’s Rose, she wants to talk to you’ … discuss the most famous movie for Titanic, the Titanic movie that Jim Cameron did. And people would go upstairs and that’s when they would see Rose and they can’t believe it. What we found when we brought Leo in, and we never said he was aboard the ship, we put it on our marketing tool - just his picture. And everybody would think that Leo was coming. I never said that but this kid looks just exactly like him. So the girls would literally look all over the ship for this guy. And so, when he would move from third class he would change his costume and he would go upstairs and the elevator door would open and the girls would just go…[participant trails off]

As a former Disney marketing executive, Barbara knows the importance of catering to different audiences based upon their interests. In her experience, fostering and catering to renewed interests among the general public is as important as cultivating new
interests. Barbara explained how the Titanic Museum Attractions are responding to a renewed interest in Titanic among the younger population:

That group that I’m talking about is a group that doesn’t come in a lot. I will tell you, when Jim Cameron re-releases his movie April 4th … April 5th there will be a whole new generation that is introduced to Titanic. They have seen it on the small screen but they have not seen it on the big screen and that will make a big difference. So, from a marketing standpoint this year, we are tying it with all the movie theatres to promote our gallery.

Rose is also present in the display of a Franklin Mint doll and costume collection produced by Franklin Mint (see Figure 4.12).

![Figure 4.12. An advertisement for the Franklin Mint Rose, the Official Titanic Vinyl Portrait Doll. Magazine tear-out advertisement from Redbook, November 1999, personal collection of author.](image-url)
When asked if she thought that visitors to the Titanic Museum Attractions saw Rose as an icon following the release of the marketing campaign containing her likeness, she stated, “Yes, because she’s an icon to the movie. When they see her they think of the movie.”

Arthur has worked at the Branson Titanic Museum Attraction since its opening and also provided a lot of detailed information about how Rose is incorporated into the museum attraction setting. He felt that it was “really kind of cool” to watch visitors interact with the Rose and Jack characters but especially with the Rose character. He acknowledged that the Jack character did not resemble Leonardo DiCaprio as closely as the Rose character resembled Kate Winslet:

We had [laughs] we always had a hard time finding an effective Jack, I’ll put it that way. Because the—the guys that we had that looked anything like him, they were not face-to-face people. The guys that were face-to-face outgoing people looked nothing like him, so as far as, you know, the—the people coming through the museum were concerned, they were just—he was just a dude in a tux walking around with Rose.

The Rose character, on the other hand, had a lasting impression on Arthur and visitors to the museum attraction because of her striking resemblance to Kate Winslet’s portrayal of the character and her ability to assume the role:

Uh, now Randy, uh, she is the redhead that you—I’m sure you would have seen on some billboards, um, and she’s in a lot of, uh, [sniffs] um…a lot of the advertisements. So, but, um, she had the red curly hair and she could she could, um, she could project the attitude just perfectly so that you didn’t—I mean, you could just sense that, yes…this is a woman with a—living a first-class life, has the first-class breeding…but she wants out of it. And she just did a very good job of portraying that particular character, so, when the people—when people interacted with her, you—you know, you definitely got the sense that—that to a certain degree they knew, you know, they felt like they were interacting with Rose.
Though Arthur said that the Rose character has been generally well-received by individuals who visit the museum attraction, her portrayal requires special attention because she is a fictional character from the movie. His response to the question, *Do you think that having a Rose character contributed at any time to people assuming that she was a real passenger? Was there ever concern about that?* indicated that he was not aware of specific instances or concerns, beyond cast members and the Rose character being asked if she was an actual passenger aboard the ship in 1912 (“If there was, um, I’m not aware of it”).

Building upon the information provided by Barbara, Arthur explained that a Rose living history interpreter is present during the month of February for Sweetheart Month (see Figure 4.13) (“...we used to have a woman who would, um, portray Rose during the month of February”). According to a travel article released by Reserve Pigeon Forge Online (2012), “the attraction celebrates the romance and adventure that were in the air when the Titanic set sail on April 10, 1912. Fourteen couples traveling on Titanic were on their honeymoon, nine in first class. There were also young, brides-to-be sailing to America to start a new life there” (para. 1).

Molly explained that the gift shop is the only location in which Rose and the movie are explicitly referenced at the Las Vegas location:

At the end of the gift shop we have the movie playing on continuous replay, which I could probably repeat every word to that Celine Dion song. It makes me want to pull my hair out. But in the gift shop we have like a snow globe that has a Jack and Rose carving in it. But otherwise the exhibit itself is strictly with the ship and I feel like that makes people realize that it is way more beyond a movie. These people did lose their lives. This was a really big part of history and there are so many laws that were changed as far as maritime laws because of this that were not in place before hand.
I asked Molly if she was aware of any discussion within her company, R.M.S. Titanic Inc., about whether or not to include direct references to Rose or the movie within the exhibition. She stated that she wasn’t aware of any such discussions and further explained what she perceived to be the mission of the company:

They want it to be more of a museum. Based off just my observations with the company they want to establish it as the event. And not too much of the movie. James Cameron did a phenomenal job. For the most part a very, very accurate movie. There were things that he had to create a creative license on.

Though, Molly notes, the absence of direct references to Rose in the exhibition does not stop visitors from making those references on their own. She acknowledges that one of the key features that allowed so many people to personally connect with the movie was the romance that unfolded between the characters of Jack and Rose, thereby romanticizing the historical events. When asked how she saw people romanticizing the historical events within the exhibition, Molly stated,

Well, it all goes back to the movie with Jack and Rose. They’re people that come in here thinking that Jack and Rose are real and I’ve seen people cry when I told them they are not. And it’s really hard for me not to laugh. But a lot of it goes back to the movie and that faded love story and they see the Grand Staircase and they think ‘Oh, Jack was on the top and the old Rose has died and she’s walking to the top of the staircase.’ But I think history, even beyond the movie, I think history has romanticized it a lot more than what it was at that time and kind of glorified it throughout the years. People relate everything back to that movie.

**Chapter Summary**

In order to better understand the lived experience of the Titanic Museum Attraction visitor, I explored the factors that influenced their museum attraction visit with the following research question: *Why do visitors choose to visit the Titanic museum attraction? And, does the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into exhibitions (especially via costume, living history, and display) factor into this decision?*

I found that Rose did not factor into the decision of the participants to visit a Titanic museum attraction. None of the participants mentioned Rose as an influential factor. Taken together, the reasons and influences described by visitor participants for visiting a Titanic museum attraction were varied and multifaceted. Four emergent themes were identified from the individual utterances of participants: (1) personal interest, (2) intent to cognitively/mentally engage with the topic, (3) social value and influence, and
(4) curiosity. The responses of some participants led to a discussion that explored factors that deter a visit or cause reluctance to visit. Titanic museum attraction staff discussed the demographic of individuals who visit their museum attractions.

Visitor participants were asked an additional research question that addressed the hypothetical use of the Rose character as a living history interpreter in the museum setting: *There are some Titanic Museum Attractions that have the movie character of Rose from James Cameron’s Titanic film, walking around the museum and interacting with visitors. What is your opinion of or reaction to this scenario?*

It was more common for participants to oppose the presence of a Rose living history interpreter than to favor her presence. Ten participants were not in favor of a Rose living history interpreter. I identified the most salient arguments regarding how and why the presence of a Rose living history interpreter would contribute to a negative lived experience during a museum visit:

- The presence of Rose would not be entertaining or appealing to me.
- I acknowledge that Rose’s original and intended context of interpretation is within a movie, and it is more satisfying to view Rose in her original and intended context by watching the movie.
- Rose was only a fictional character; that is, she was not an actual passenger on the ship in 1912. I think it would detract from the museum experience because she was fictional.

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43 This question was added to the interview protocol as time allowed and participants were willing to answer the question. Eleven participants did not answer this question, including the participant who withdrew from the study following the pre-interview.
• My attention would be diverted away from the historical content of the museum and more toward the movie.

• The Titanic museum attraction already presents visitors with a person-centered connection to follow throughout the entire museum visit via the boarding pass distributed prior to entry.

• The presence of Rose in a museum with an educational mission would not be congruent with this mission or related historical content.

• A Rose living history interpreter would be inherently different than the character conception of Rose that is presented in the movie, and these differences would be problematic for me.

• I would be suspicious to engage and/or interact with a Rose living history interpreter because her status as a fictional character automatically discredits her.

Seven participants voiced opinions that showed favor or highlighted the benefits of a Rose living history interpreter. I identified the most salient arguments regarding how and why the presence of a Rose living history interpreter would contribute to a positive lived experience during a museum visit:

• The presence of a Rose living history interpreter would help me to better relate to and personally connect with the historical content of the museum.

• I would be able to appreciate Rose as a feature of the museum setting because I understand that Rose was a fictional character used as a tool in a motion picture film to tell the story of Titanic from a different perspective.

• It would be entertaining to interact with an individual playing this character.
• If Rose is present in the museum attraction it is just important that she contribute to my learning and understanding of Titanic, regardless of whether she was an actual passenger aboard the ship.

Three participants expressed uncertainty regarding what the contribution of a Rose living history interpreter would be in the museum attraction setting. Specific suggestions were offered regarding where her presence would be acceptable in the museum attraction.

The Titanic museum attraction staff participants discussed the ways in which Rose is incorporated into their respective Titanic museum attractions of employment. As staff members, they have also witnessed how museum attraction visitors react to both the presence and absence of the Rose character.
CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS:
SELECTION OF INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES

This chapter features a selection of detailed narrative accounts of both visitor and staff participants’ lived experience in a Titanic museum attraction, shaped from interview data and participant observation. Each narrative representing a single visitor participant’s lived experience is presented thematically, arranged in six sections: (1) general reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit, (2) description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume; (3) interactions with and reactions to living history interpreters, (4) personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content, (5) what the participant knew and what the participant learned, and (6) suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display improvement. The thematic

44 This chapter only contains a selection of individual narratives (eight total; two narratives from experiences at the Branson location, one at the Orlando location, one at the Las Vegas location, one at the Pigeon Forge location, and three staff narratives) to provide an overview of the data. If you wish to read the full set of participant narratives, the complete set of narratives can be obtained from the author by contacting her at gennareeves@yahoo.com.

45 Chapter four is comprised of the presentation of data collected from conducting two sets of interviews with all the museum attraction visitor participants, 28 visitor participants in total. Thirteen visitors participated at the Branson, Missouri location. Seven visitors participated at the Orlando, Florida location. Five visitors participated at the Pigeon Forge, Tennessee location. Three visitors participated at the Las Vegas, Nevada location (see Table 4.1 in Chapter Four). Data was collected for a total of 29 museum attraction visitors.

46 I added the questions about exhibit change/creation to the interview protocol (i.e., the questions that formed the frame of analysis for section seven of the individual narratives) after data collection began because I noticed that the responses to the question about the evaluation of the museum attraction during the first few interviews included suggestions for change. I noticed that participants became very creative about the changes that they would make, adding generous amounts of detail. In some cases this also jogged their memory of further dress and costume content in the museum attraction. I began by adding the question about where they would add more dress and costume for greater impact. Many participants got
sections that comprise the staff participant narratives vary but generally include the following sections: (1) dress and costume displays, (2) curatorial and educational outreach tasks, (3) living history interpreters, and (4) personal relationship to Titanic. At the conclusion of each narrative I offer participant observations and my reflections on the interview process and on shaping each narrative, where applicable. I conclude with a summary of the chapter.

The voices of the participants are an integral part of the narratives; they were invited to describe their lived experiences and reactions to museum attraction content and were assured that I would attempt to portray their authentic selves through their own voices. I have reproduced their words faithfully from the interview recordings and typed transcripts, upon occasion combining sentences on the same topic. The completed narratives were sent to each participant for review, specifically to correct inaccuracies and to assess the narrative for authenticity. These museum attraction visitor participants were not treated as “informants” or “secret shoppers” assessing museum quality; rather, they were asked to relate their own unique stories.

An examination of the themes is not intended to invite comparisons; it is intended to demonstrate that many of these experiences are common experiences for museum attraction visitors. Inevitably there were similarities in their stories, and those similarities are presented as emergent themes in later sections of this chapter. After writing each narrative (all thirty-one), I returned to each one individually to code for themes. I then excited about using their creativity to design a hypothetical exhibit in a way that would enhance their experience or learning in hindsight.
sought out which themes were overwhelmingly important in each narrative and identified six themes that emerged as significant to the lived experience in the museum attraction.

**Individual Visitor Narratives**

**Visitors to the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri**

**Narrative 1: Ella**

*General reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit.* Throughout the visit it was the personal stories of passengers that attracted Ella to certain displays. Ella could not say off hand what her favorite part of the museum attraction was because she enjoyed the whole museum. The room that stuck out to her the most was the first room that she entered, located just off the lobby, because she felt a sense of anticipation in the room (see Figure 5.1). The anticipation arose from the knowledge that she was going to see what really happened with regard to the historical events. Ella did not remember any direct references to the movie in the museum attraction. She felt that because she did not remember any such reference that there probably were not any because they would have stood out more to her, having not seen the movie.

Ella lives with Bradley in rural Missouri, and they do not watch movies or TV very often. At present, they also do not own a television, VCR, or DVD player. Ella thought that she was interested in fashion at one time in her life, probably when she was younger. She does not remember a specific outfit that was her favorite because she had several favorite outfits in her wardrobe. This was Ella’s first visit to a museum that contained dress and costume displays.
Description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume. Ella remembers seeing a blue dress displayed on a mannequin [the “Lucile” reproduction dress display] (see Figure 5.2). She liked the way that the dress was displayed on a mannequin because it gave an idea of how the dress would look on a woman’s body and thought that the dress looked nice. Besides the blue dress, Ella did not remember any other clothing or accessories that were displayed. The dress and costume that was displayed in the museum attraction was of interest to Ella. She thought it was interesting. She also felt that the dress and costume displays helped her to learn more about what was worn during the
Figure 5.2. “Lucile” Lady Duff-Gordon reproduction dress display. The dress was reproduced from an original designer’s sketch (shown in the lower left corner). Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. Image from postcard purchased by author in gift shop.
time period. Ella did not mention a specific favorite dress or costume display, only that she liked the Lucile dress display.

After visiting the museum attraction, Ella thought that dress and costume was displayed because the subject matter of the museum dictates what time period and events are depicted. Dress and costume are displayed as a tool to provide context for the time period and events. The dress on display is a showcase of the dress code, as she referred to it, during a specific time period and provides information about the specific garments that were worn. Ella felt that it was important to see what was worn during this specific time period and expressed that she would be more likely to visit a museum that displays dress and costume.

**Interactions with and reactions to living history interpreters.** Ella remembers that there was one woman living history interpreter who talked to her and the other people with whom she was visiting the museum attraction. She thought that this woman did a good job because she told them what she did at the museum. This added value to the experience for Ella. She did not recall any details about the dress of the living history interpreter.

**Personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content.** Ella can personally relate to the passenger on her boarding pass, Helen Candee, because they were both married. This was the only way she felt she could relate to this particular passenger.

**What the participant knew and what the participant learned.** Prior to her museum attraction visit, Ella only knew the basic details about the Titanic and its sinking.
She thought that her visit to the Titanic Museum Attraction helped her to understand and learn more about Titanic. During her visit, Ella learned about actual passengers that were aboard the ship. She learned about a specific passenger named Helen Candee because this is the passenger that was on her boarding pass. Ella remembered her last name first, and then her first name and age (about 50 to 53). It was her personal opinion that she was a pretty interesting woman. She could not remember if her picture was present in the museum attraction. She recalled seeing artifacts related to Helen Candee but could not remember exact details about them. She also learned that women wore long and heavily-embellished dresses during this time period and felt it was good to see this because it shows a stark contrast to the clothing of today. Ella thought that it might be interesting to try on period clothes from this time period but not to wear them for a lengthy period of time because they are not currently in style.

Ella thought that actually looking at the dress and costume displays in the museum attraction, particularly the blue dress display, specifically helped her to learn more about Titanic. It helped her to understand what was worn at that time in history.

**Suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display improvement.** Ella did not have any suggestions for improvement. She thought that the museum attraction did a wonderful job and would recommend this museum attraction to other people. She appreciated having dress present, as it was her first time visiting a museum that contained dress and costume displays.

**Participant observations and reflections.** Ella was timid about participating in the study because she has significant hearing and memory loss, with the possible early onset
of Alzheimer’s disease. She was afraid to tell me her age at the end of the pre-visit interview and feared not having the right answers during the interview because it was related to historical events and facts. However, she seemed to discover a new and alternative connection that she could make to history, beyond facts and figures, because she was clearly attracted more to the stories of the people. Some of the main facts that she remembered were related to the biographical details of actual passengers aboard the ship. She exhibited a personal attachment to the passenger on her boarding pass, Helen Candee and consistently referred to the information on the boarding pass. Upon entering the Interactive Gallery, I was standing near Ella and heard her say, “Where am I?,” referring to the possible presentation of photos and artifacts related to the passenger on her boarding pass. I told her, having extensive knowledge of the museum attraction content and layout, “you have a whole case for you.” She immediately smiled very big and exclaimed, “Oh my!” She went directly to the display case to view the artifacts and read the text, remaining visibly excited about her find. This was one of the moments of my participant observation that truly stands out among all others. She exuded pure joy.

At the end of her post-visit interview she added that she thought it was just a wonderful museum. I could tell that it was a positive experience because I saw Ella really light up and engage with the content during her museum visit. I observed her connecting with the interactive quizzes presented in each gallery room, often discussing the possible answers and correct answer with her husband (Bradley). Ella liked to engage with some of the interactive elements, but both she and her husband bypassed the opportunity to experience the work of those shoveling coal in to the boilers (see Figure 5.3). They
stopped to watch actual film footage of the ship from 1912 in a theater gallery. She appeared to enjoy experiencing the museum attraction content with another person; they stayed by each other’s side for the duration of their visit. Ella and her husband were especially drawn to the display of a purse in The Shipyard Gallery, that displayed information about the construction of Titanic (see Figure 5.4). They read the text the accompanying text in detail, in addition to carefully studying the physical attributes of the

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47 I recognized the odd placement of a purse artifact in the Shipyard Gallery during my personal phenomenological visit and took notes about this issue. Further information about this purse and its placement in the Shipyard Gallery can be found in the “Branson” section of Chapter Six.
purse in its display case. Ella did not mention this dress artifact display during her post-
interview.

Figure 5.4. The Ship Building and Layout Gallery at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri. The arrow in the lower right corner is pointing to the purse display that is discussed in the text. Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. From Marr, R. (2007). *Titanic: World’s largest museum attraction (A collector’s guide)* (pp. 22-23). Branson, MO: Missouri Life Publications.

Narrative 2: Allan

*General reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit.* Allan’s museum attraction visit brought a heightened awareness of the tragedy that the ship and its passengers experienced; the content brought this tragedy to life. What stood out the most to Allan was what a good job the museum attraction did in explaining what happened, in detail, and he was presented with small
details that he would not otherwise think about. He also really enjoyed seeing the full-scale replicas of rooms on the ship; these replicated physical environments helped him to learn more about the details of Titanic. Interactive elements of the museum attraction were especially enjoyable. The interactive trivia quizzes placed throughout the museum attraction were also interesting, and he liked to test his knowledge (see Figure 5.5). He and his wife, Lila, were surprised that the Morse code machine buttons had to be pushed so hard to make the machine work. What Allan appreciated about the interactive elements was their ability to take him out of the traditional museum experience. Instead of simply viewing objects and saying, “Oh look, there is [a certain object],” he was able to connect with the information being presented.

For Allan, the photos on display provided the most rich and meaningful content. The photos were the most valuable because they told the best story. He was surprised that the photos on display were reproduced with such high quality and that the cameras of the time could pick up on this type of small detail. Allan clearly remembered that the passenger described on his boarding pass was named Patrick Bradley.

Allan had not seen the 1997 movie, and he only remembered one direct connection that was made between it and the historical events within the museum attraction content. There was a video playing in the Discovery Gallery that was hosted by the actor who played Captain Smith in the movie. He did hear a number of visitors ask questions about Rose to living history interpreters and their response was, “no, she’s not a real person, but was actually based on some actress.” Despite not being familiar with the movie or the specific character of Rose he did find this information interesting. Further discussion prompted him to remember that one of the interactive trivia quizzes presented the names “Leonardo DiCaprio” and “James Cameron” as possible answers.

Allan did not feel that he was more likely to watch the movie after visiting the museum attraction. In fact, he said that he felt less likely to watch the movie because it romanticizes a tragic event in history, and although there might be truth in it, it is not the truth as a whole. The movie is focused around the love story of two fictional characters created just for the movie. At this point in the post-interview Allan created a sarcastic narrative about what he would perceive a movie scene between Jack and Rose to look like. He said that romanticizing the historical events in such a way that the history is actually overshadowed disgusts him. Further, seeing the presentation of a fictional story
makes the viewer consider possibilities outside the realm of historical events and thus makes the movie dangerous to use as a learning tool. Romanticizing the historical events does not truly reflect the chaos, fear, and ugly side of human nature that must have been present among the passengers during the sinking.

Allan has had a successful career as an engineer for major airlines. He does not consider himself interested in popular or celebrity culture. He paid attention to celebrities when he was younger, but he longer chooses to do so. He does not perceive celebrities as special because other people have had the same or similar lived experiences that do not get press because they are not as wealthy. He is more interested in the lived experiences of “ordinary” people. Allan has seen other movies (e.g., *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* when he was young) and numerous documentaries about Titanic.

**Description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume.** Allan’s first mention of dress displays was in a statement that he noticed the dress of the passengers in photo displays. He remembered a photo of a woman boarding the ship, and it was almost life size. The enlarged size allowed him to take notice of the woman’s boots. He shared that they were not high-heeled but just very basic and functional boots. This led to a discussion about what makes a photo interesting: that he can notice things that are interesting but may not necessarily be the focal point. The focal point of the previously-mentioned photo was the boarding process of the ship, but he was able to gather information that led to the conclusion that the woman was not wearing high-fashion boots to board the ship. Allan was somewhat surprised that the women were not decked out in
high fashion clothing. This realization went against what he would have previously guessed. Allan spoke of the costumes worn by the living history interpreters first when explicitly asked to describe the dress and costume displays in the museum attraction. Information about the dress of the living history interpreters and his description of these costumes is described in the “Living History Interpreters” section below.

In terms of extant dress objects, he remembered seeing one “fashion” on display that was designed by one of the passengers (see Figure 5.2). The dress was blue and silver, and there was information on a text panel that stated she was the first fashion designer to put slits in a dress (see Figures 5.6 and 5.7) and his immediate response was, “ok…so what?” The primary reason that Allan did not find interest in this display is because he is not interested in people that are seemingly ahead of their time (i.e., avant garde). The reason that the reproduction “Lucile” dress existed in the first place is because the designer was trying to achieve a shock value or gain publicity for doing something new and different. Allan believes the fashion of today is not functional; one of the reasons that runway fashion is not purchased and worn by the masses is because it is, generally speaking, too uncomfortable for daily wear. Allan proceeded to compare runway fashion to a spacesuit, drawing attention to the meticulous functionality of every design detail. In his words, “when you see something [on a spacesuit] and you say to yourself, ‘well, why is that there?’ there is a specific answer for why it’s there.” Allan was more interested in the functionality of the dress items that he viewed.

The key concept for him was function, as opposed to fashion; that is, functional dress items were of interest to him but fashionable dress items were not. More
specifically, the boots that he had previously mentioned seeing in a photo and reading that those who were riveting on the ship had no ear or eye protection was interesting. He specifically looked for ear and eye protection because he is especially protective of his own ears and eyes. From this statement he discussed that there was a noticeable absence of safety gear that was integrated into an outfit. He mentioned one specific photo to further illustrate this observation. There was a photo of some men standing on a pipe not wearing any visible safety gear. In today’s construction environment men are hooked up to ten different ropes to ensure that they do not fall. The absence of such safety gear signaled a difference in the attitude and physical capability of the men between then and
now. He acknowledged that there were likely accidents related to a lack of safety measures, but it was not the mass tragedy that one might assume when looking at the rigid safety standards of today. Allan perceived the men in the photo as professionals who knew what they were doing and were likely more cautious because of the absence of safety gear.

Allan summed up what he noticed most about dress and costume displays in the following way: It was a matter of what he did not see that was interesting. He noticed that the men were dressed in a basic work uniform of a shirt and trousers, but he went beyond these dress items to analyze the things that he perceived to be missing. Though, even aspects of what might be perceived as a “basic work uniform” were mindfully chosen for use in manual labor. For example, he observed that the men were wearing thick clothes, gloves, and boots. Details like this also made it clear that these men were of a different social class than other men depicted in photos. There was one photo of Mr. Marconi and he was wearing a suit and bowler hat and Allan thought, “Ok, well, he’s a rich guy.”

Allan actively engaged with the dress by asking himself questions silently in his mind. He determined if a dress item (extant or depicted in a photo) was interesting by asking himself why it was being worn. He would actively pursue further information and engage with the dress item if it included characteristics such as the following: insignia, rank, worn for comfort or protection. He felt that very few people were dressing just to look good. This statement led into a discussion about a specific photo in which a woman was pictured handing passengers souvenir bread as they exited the ship. He could clearly see that she was a baker, and if he were to a draw a picture of what a baker looked like at
that time, an image similar to this woman is what he would draw. He did have some expectations about what people belonging to the various social classes would look like.

Allan did not feel that the display of women’s dress and men’s dress were equally important because women were always dressing for fashion so women’s dress might not be representative of all women or certain types of woman. It is more important to see comparisons of dress worn among the various social classes than just representations of high fashion worn by first class passengers. He felt that men’s dress had changed more than women’s dress during this time period because they were out working and women primarily stayed in the home.

The viewing of dress and costume displays did not specifically enhance Allan’s visit. As explained above, there were only certain types of dress that he found interesting, and he preferred to look at the dress being depicted in photos. Allan’s favorite dress or costume display was the photos of the riveters laboring on the ship’s construction because he was empathetic and sympathetic with the manual labor that they were doing. He recalled one specific photo in which there was a man with a mustache and he was holding a shovel in his hand, wearing a vest, long sleeve shirt, and hat.

After visiting the museum, Allan did not think that the museum attraction was specifically trying to show visitors what people wore during the time period. He included the living history interpreters in this conclusion because he thought that they were primarily dressed in period costume to indicate that they were employees. He thought that the focus was not on the living history interpreter’s costume but on the authority that this person had in the museum attraction setting. He thought that the purpose of displaying
the "Lucile" reproduction dress (see Figures 5.2, 5.6, and 5.7) was to appeal to the female demographic of visitors and those interested in fashion because it was considered a fashionable dress for the time period. And, because the dress was different from the styles worn today, it added novelty to the museum attraction content.

**Interactions with and reactions to living history interpreters.** Allan said there was only one female living history interpreter that spoke to him and his tour group, but male interpreters were present and in ship’s officer uniforms. He thought that the female interpreters were more forthcoming in their explanation of the museum attraction content and offered to help him and other visitors with way finding or by providing additional information. The women were dressed in the uniform of a "helper" (i.e., maid) aboard the ship.

Allan enjoyed speaking with the living history interpreters because he was impressed with the amount of knowledge that they were able to provide without hesitation. He acknowledged that they had probably been asked many of the same questions previously by other visitors. There was one female living history interpreter, in particular, that Allan remembered because she would take the boarding pass (see Figures 4.7 and 4.8 in Chapter Four) of each visitor and add additional biographical information, beyond what was presented on the card. For Allan the experience would not have been disappointing if no one had spoken to him, but it ended up being one of the most interesting parts of the visit because they were able to provide additional information about the ship and the passengers. In fact, he remembered what the female interpreter was wearing because she was so helpful to him.
Allan did not feel that the costumes worn by the interpreters added anything to the experience. However, he did appreciate that, with just a glance, he could identify the individuals that worked at the museum attraction and approach them with questions. He appreciated this function of their costumes because there are plenty of times that he has had to go around asking random individuals in a location for help and they reply, “I do not work here.” For Allan, having the interpreters dressed in period costume was helpful on multiple levels; it showcased the dress of the time period and provided a visual cue that employees were present to provide assistance. Though seeing living history interpreters wearing costumes representative of the various social classes did not enhance the experience, it was, as mentioned helpful. For him, it was more important that they be able to provide accurate information in an engaging manner than be dressed in accurate period costume.

**Personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content.** Fashion displays did not interest Allan very much because he was primarily interested in the engineering and functional aspects of the ship. When looking at the dress in photos, he specifically looked for ear and eye protection because he is especially protective of his own ears and eyes. Allan became aware of misinformation that circulates about the historical events of Titanic, and he was disappointed that some of this misinformation is still widely accepted as a truism.

Allan said that when he looked at the full-scale replica of the third class room he compared it to his own experiences; he stated that he had slept in areas smaller than these rooms. Allan has visited numerous museums around the world and is
not in favor of seeing the same type of artifact over and over. He repeatedly mentioned that there were museums in China that displayed one Ming vase after another, and this bored him. After awhile he just began to think, “Hmm, there’s another Ming vase.” He had a similar experience in the Titanic Museum Attraction with the same type of artifact being displayed in a way that felt repetitive and monotonous. Allan expressed a similar sentiment when discussing the display of numerous hand-written postcards because, after awhile, the similar messages in the writing start to blend together and make less of an impact.

He recalled having a toy Morse code machine as a child, and it had a similar setup to the reproduction machine in the museum attraction. The toy was nothing like the real machine. Allan could also relate to Titanic through his adult life. He personally identified with the men that worked below deck and the amount of work that was required of them to keep the ship running. He stated that it is easy to hear information about manual labor but to actually see what it required (e.g., shoveling coal for hours on end in extreme heat conditions), especially in photos, has a much greater impact. Because he has done manual labor and these men did not have modern conveniences (e.g., frequent showers and laundry facilities), he is sympathetic and empathetic toward others who do it. He said that he could see that the men were physically covered in sweat and coal dust. This information led Allan to construct a mini-narrative that the men were not happy about their conditions because they were working for a dollar per day. He recalled a certain photo of the men standing near the boiler; the sheer size of the boiler made their work seem even more strenuous.
Allan’s emotions were uniquely connected to his background and interests. He felt sadness and a loss of control in response to the tragedy of Titanic because of his prior work as an engineer for major airlines and in the customer service industry. He understands that there can be a huge difference between the parameters that are provided for how an object must be built and how the building actually takes place. In the middle of this discussion he abruptly transitioned to the errors in judgment made by many people aboard. It should not have happened the way that it did, and it was stupid for lifeboats to be sent out half full. He said that he just wants to shake his head and hope that he would never act the same way if put in a similar situation.

*What the participant knew and what the participant learned.* Allan had some previous knowledge about Titanic, and the museum attraction content made the subject more interesting than he had expected. He acknowledged that he probably had a deeper fascination with Titanic than the average visitor prior to visiting because he has watched a lot of television programs on the subject. His visit helped him learn more about Titanic by filling in a lot of the details and trivia that are not often included in a generic telling of the historical events. For Allan, his visit served more as confirmation of information he already knew, but he did learn a lot of new details about the historical events. He knew the general story of the ship, and the museum attraction content helped to fill in the details. Allan expressed an appreciation that the museum attraction had genuinely portrayed the tragedy of Titanic and captured the essence of the tragedy, allowing visitors to more fully understand its history.
He took the opportunity to compare the information he had learned on television to the museum attraction content. He remembered that one of the living history interpreters said that the third class passengers were treated better than they had been on any other ship before, and he recalled seeing a television show about Titanic that mentioned these same passengers were locked below deck during the sinking. Further, he thought he recalled that, on this program, an underwater dive to the wreckage was being showcased, and the purpose of the dive was to look for any locked gates below deck that would confirm this story, and they did not find any locked gates. He did not recall any evidence or information in the museum attraction that confirmed this assertion. It was also important to him that he share where he learned this information in the museum attraction: it was not posted on any of the text panels, and he heard one of the living history characters telling another visitor about it.

A significant amount of information that he learned was centered around the giant mistakes that led to and were made during the sinking. He described the tragedy as encompassing bad decisions made during the voyage and before the launch. He also learned about the survival statistics for each of the social classes. He recalled that the second class actually had the fewest survivors. Despite not being familiar with the movie, he did learn that Rose was a fictional character that was based on an actual passenger.

*Suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display improvement.* Allan did not remember seeing a crew member’s uniform in its entirety and would have liked to see this, along with a text panel that described the identification of the officers and their insignia. He thought it important to not only show an officer, but
to differentiate a first officer from a second officer and so forth. After all, he said, it was this uniform and the insignia on it that gave that man the authority to do his job. Similarly, he noticed that the male living history interpreters were wearing a ship officer’s uniform that contained some insignia-like stripes on the sleeves. Allan suggested that they explicitly explain what these stripes were meant to communicate.

Allan also provided a very specific display suggestion centered around a photo of the riveters and other manual laborers:

> When you saw those rivet guns were actually hung by cables and the guys would rivet on this side and there’d be a bucking bar on the other side that someone else would hold and you could show a photo like that and you could say, you know, notice what they didn’t have, you know, no ear protection, no eye protection, no nothing… [participant trails off] …you show a photograph of people working and show what they did have and what they didn’t have.

Along with the scenario, he provided possible headings for text panels near this photo:

> “Did they have steel toed boots on?” “What were they required to wear?” “Nobody has a hard hat on.” The information about the hats could be expanded upon by explaining that they all just wore regular hats, as all men did, and then state when hard hats actually became required. Allan felt that providing information in this context would help visitors to more deeply understand how fortunate they are to have some of the safety gear that has been developed.

> For him, no one is more in need of this appreciation for safety regulations than young children. He said that children often assume that this safety gear was always around and is just a pain to wear. Using explicit text to show that the men worked without modern safety gear would be a testament to their fortitude and ability to get the job done. Showcasing this aspect of Titanic’s history would also help visitors to understand how
tough it was to make a living in that time period if one was a member of the lower classes. He does not feel that the general population has sincere appreciation for the lived experience of manual laborers because it is hard to imagine a time when the service industry was not available.

Allan also thought it would be beneficial to see examples of dress worn by people of the various social classes in a comparison format. It could be presented as “here’s your typical rich guy and what he does for a living” and “here’s your typical poor guy and what he does for a living.” He also provided the example of showcasing a man wearing a watch fob and another man wearing no accessories at all, then providing information that would contextualize these visual differences.

Another suggestion he made was to update the Discovery Gallery to reflect current events and findings about Titanic. Because Titanic continues to fascinate the general public it is the museum attraction’s responsibility to continually update their displays to reflect current events.

**Participant observations and reflections.** The time I spent with Allan while working on this research project was fulfilling and incredibly insightful. I must admit that I was intimidated by him at first because he had a quiet and serious demeanor. When I initially went to his home to conduct the pre-visit interview he questioned the relevance of my degree and this study. He explained that he had come from a scientific background and did not understand my academic discipline or the relevance of the research. Allan ended up as one of the most intriguing participants because he had a unique point of view about the importance of functional dress. He was visibly more upbeat and positive during
the post-visit interview. He was very talkative and provided a wealth of information. At the end of this interview he said that he was happy that he had participated in the study and thoroughly enjoyed his museum attraction experience. It was touching to see someone go from not understanding the relevance of the study to finding a deeper connection with the subject matter. Allan had a very different perspective from other participants because of his clear focus on functional dress during his museum attraction visit. It was his unique approach to viewing dress items (i.e., looking for what was not there) that informed many of his responses.

I was fortunate to be able to observe Allan during his museum attraction visit. Allan used his museum visit as an opportunity to validate previous information that he had learned about Titanic. I watched him closely interact with the female living history interpreter and play with the interactive trivia quizzes. I was only able to observe him in the first couple of galleries because he moved ahead of me at a time when I was making observations about the experiences of other participants.

Allan paid close attention to the postcards on display during his visit. He saw the human stories of Titanic from a much different perspective than other participants. For him, it was more interesting to see the front image on the postcard rather than the handwriting because it gave a better sense of what the visual aesthetic and values were during the time period. He wanted to see the actual postcard image to get an idea of what people used and sent during this time and showcasing this side of the postcard would provide information about the personal preference of the passenger who was sending it.
Fashion versus function was a key theme during Allan’s post-visit interview. He had specific suggestions for what he would like to see in the museum attraction with regard to dress displays (e.g., detailed description of ship officers’ insignia) but also stated that he might be part of a minority of people interested in seeing that information and the museum cannot realistically cater to everyone.

The costumes that he remembered most vividly were those related to interaction or a personal relation. While Allan did not find interest or significant meaning in the “Lucile” reproduction dress display, he did remember her contribution to the women’s movement from the text panel that accompanied the dress. In a way, he was recalling a function of the garment because its design and presence assisted in this social movement.

**Visitors to Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida**

**Narrative 1: Simone**

*General reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit.* What stood out the most for Simone during her visit was being in the ice room, an interactive room built to resemble the outer deck of the Titanic on the night that the ship sank. The room is as cold as it would have been outside on that night, and there is a “real” iceberg (i.e., a large piece of ice that is intended to serve as a simulation of an iceberg) to touch. It was the total re-creation of the environment (e.g., the feeling of being outside, darkness, fake stars, and the temperature change) that made a big impact for her. She got a sense of just how cold it was that night and the story that went along with it. She also clearly remembered the bedrooms where she could see the
differences in accommodations between the wealthy passengers and those who were not wealthy.

Simone recalls that there were some direct references to the 1997 movie within the museum attraction. Her tour guide actually went out of his way to point out the infamous buggy where Jack and Rose consummate their love in the movie; everyone in her tour group giggled. Simone did think of the movie as soon as she saw the buggy, even before the tour guide mentioned its theatrical relevance. Though, she pointed out that this buggy probably was not just a figment of Hollywood imagination. She stated that she was pretty sure they were using and transporting those buggies around because we often travel with a full car today so it would make sense that the wealthy passengers would essentially bring their entire house along with them. There was a sense of relief for Simone that the movie was not a bigger part of the museum attraction. She was glad that she was not “beaten over the head” with references to the movie because she was there to experience the historical events as they happened in 1912. But, it is still necessary to let the fantasy (of the movie) shine through a little bit.

Simone also made spontaneous references to the film in her own mind. As soon as she reached the Grand Staircase room she wanted to run on the stairs. She also thought of the end scenes of the movie when she saw the life vest artifact toward the end of the museum attraction. She did point out that the Heart of the Ocean necklace featured in the

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48 Titanic: The Experience does not allow visitors to walk on the full-scale replica of the Grand Staircase. The staircase is housed in a replica room where visitors can walk around, but the actual staircase is roped off to keep visitors from walking on it. The Titanic Museum Attractions in Branson and Pigeon Forge do allow this and Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition only allows visitors to momentarily step beyond the ropes and on to the staircase for a souvenir photograph by a professional photographer (see Figure 5.8 for an example of the souvenir photos that are taken).
movie was noticeably absent in the gift shop. She was confused because she saw a Heart of the Ocean replica necklace displayed in the gift shop, but there were no such necklaces available for purchase. She wanted to purchase the necklace and, in fact, may return to the gift shop to do so in the future.

Simone has an educational and professional background in business, marketing, and fashion merchandising. At the time of her interviews she was trying to start her own party planning business and succeeded in getting her business running in the summer of 2012. Simone has a special interest in clothing that has a dressy appearance and/or contains lace as part of the fabrication; she can identify with some of the dress displayed in the museum attraction because of this style preference.
Description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume. Simone explained that the museum attraction content included a lot of personal items and small stories about each item. Items were displayed in a glass display case placed atop a wooden stand. The display of each item was usually accompanied by a brief text panel explaining who it likely had belonged to and details of that person’s life story. This helped her learning process during the visit because it allowed her to follow along with a story that was attached to an object, instead of just appreciating the visual of an item and saying, “oh, that’s cute.”

The dress and costume displayed in the museum were of interest to Simone. It was interesting because several of the items had actually belonged to a passenger at one time, or there was a presentation of a replica that showed what a particular object might have looked like. The dress and costume displays helped to humanize the content of the museum attraction as a whole. Simone felt that the viewing of dress and costume displays affected her understanding of Titanic and helped her to learn more about it. These displays helped her to get an idea of how the status of a passenger’s personal finances (i.e., social class) dictated the amount of dress that was taken aboard.

She noticed that the wealthy passengers brought more little items, such as accessories, that were intended to create an ensemble. This information provided a unique extension of the stories being told on text panels because it provided personal information about some people through visuals. Simone acknowledged that it was probably easier for her to connect to dress displays in this museum attraction because she had heard the story
of Titanic so many times and so it becomes easier to focus on the details that comprise
the more general story during a visit to a museum focused on such subject matter.

Simone’s favorite dress and costume displays were those that included garments
with a more fancy, frilly and dressed-up appearance. It was the garments that made her
have an “oohing” and “aaahing” reaction. There was one garment, in particular, that
cought her eye; it was lacy, and she thought it was cute. It appeared to be a dress that was
displayed on a dress form (see Figure 5.9). The recollection of this garment also led to
her remembering that she thought she saw a children’s garment with some lace on it.

Figure 5.9. A close-up view of the dress that was displayed on a dress form in the full-scale replica of the
first class stateroom. Photograph by author.
After visiting the museum attraction, Simone said she thought that they would display dress and costume because it helps to humanize the history of Titanic. These displays helped her to realize how dramatic the situation was and it was good to get a sense of that through dress.

**Interactions with and reactions to living history interpreters.** Simone had direct contact with a living history interpreter who was portraying a third class man because she took the guided tour with about four other people and he was the tour guide. She found his performance to be engaging. She noticed the costume that he was wearing and described it as basic dress for a man that was not necessarily middle class but a man who was probably more of a work hand on the deck. Further description revealed that the man’s clothing was primarily comprised of a cream color, and possibly suspenders. She could not remember if he had a hat on, but it was possible. The costume was well-done and sufficiently detailed, in her opinion. The performance was also effective because he incorporated an accent. For Simone, this meant that he had the whole package as a living history interpreter. She noticed that a few of the other living history interpreters in the museum were wearing hats too, and most of the other male living history interpreters were wearing similar clothing. There were times when the similar clothing confused her because she was not sure if she was approaching her own tour guide or another tour guide.

**Personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content.** Simone did not feel that any part of her museum attraction visit reminded her of specific memories in her life or that she could personally relate to
the content. She treated it more as a brand new experience and wanted to immerse herself in the content as deeply as possible.

Simone was in awe at what she was viewing and experiencing in the museum attraction. She repeatedly used the phrases, “wow” and “whoa” to describe her reactions to a specific part of the visit. She expressed that she felt overcome with sadness in the ice room because the story of the sinking became more real for her. This emotion was also coupled with the stories that the living history interpreter who was portraying a third class man was telling in this area of the museum attraction.

Simone thought that, in general, the museum attraction did a good job of representing the different social classes. When viewing content related to the subject of social class, Simone was overcome by a feeling that it was very unfortunate how the lower class people were treated. Her tour guide contributed to this emotional reaction by telling stories to the group. She noticed that other visitors in her tour group also had emotional reactions. They were not happy with what they were hearing and expressed disappointment to the living history interpreter and each other about the way that the situation was handled.

Simone felt anticipation throughout her visit because of the boarding pass activity. She liked the way that the activity was set up so that she did not know what the fate of her passenger would be. She liked having the anticipation of searching the wall and the mystery of not know where her passenger’s name would be found.

*What the participant knew and what the participant learned.* Simone felt that her visit to the museum attraction definitely affected her understanding of Titanic and
helped her to learn more about it. She immediately gave the example of the learning that took place regarding passenger Molly Brown. As a participant who has viewed the film and considers herself a fan, Simone remembered that the character in the movie was an older woman who was wealthy and considered “new money” at that time. It was during her visit that she found out the movie character was, in fact, a real person and that she actually played a key role in saving some people. She remembered that the movie had shared a bit about that, but it was a bigger event than she had previously realized. Because Simone found this particular passenger so interesting, she was more likely to seek out information about Molly Brown in the near future. Simone thought that the museum attraction did a good job of helping people learn by bringing the Titanic to life. She learned a lot of information from the tour guide, in particular. This was one of the elements that really had an impact on her.

Suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display

*improvement.* Simone thought it would be engaging to add an area where visitors could touch samples of fabric that would have been used to construct clothing in that time period. This might be most effective by the display of an artifact or replica garment that used the fabrics being offered. Another similar suggestion was to include a dress-up area in which visitors can try on replica and reproduction dress from the time period. This interactive activity could be paired with a photo booth to take pictures while wearing the dress and possibly allow for visitors to pose for photos on the Grand Staircase.

Simone also described an area in the beginning of the museum attraction where it is boring because there is a concentration of model boats and movie posters. She
suggested that this area be revised to include a few parting words or artifacts that would help to bring the museum attraction experience full-circle. She wanted the awe and excitement of her visit to continue all the way out the exit door. She thought that maybe it would have been cool if, because visitors have been inside the interior of the ship during the visit, they make it feel as though visitors are getting off of the ship upon exit. It was disappointing for her that the grandeur of Titanic experienced during her visit was abruptly dropped; the fantasy was broken for her after the ice room.

In general, Simone felt that the display of dress and costume should be more interactive. She acknowledged that the display of dress on a mannequin is cost-efficient; even that would be better than nothing. The addition of dress in the tea/dining room would be nice. Simone also suggested a display of how clothing was stored and transported during the voyage. This would help to showcase the many layers of clothing that were worn and the multiple outfit changes that took place during each day. Along the same lines, it would be interesting to have a peek-a-boo booth where visitors can watch a woman dressing from her undergarments to her full outer garments to get a sense of the dressing process. It is especially important to her to have a human presence in the full-scale replica rooms via dress displays.

Interactivity with dress could also be achieved through the use of living history interpreters who are simply present in the environment and interacting with other interpreters, but not the visitors. The visitors could then observe their behavior and conversations to get a better sense of the lived experience in 1912. Simone also noticed that there were no female living history interpreters present during her visit, and she
suggested that both males and females be present. Also, living history interpreters should each be dressed differently to showcase the visual differences in dress among the social classes. While it is nice to see the dress of a third class passenger, it is also important to show some of the glamour and elegance embodied by women’s dress during the time period. She also noticed that there were no representations of crew member dress, with the exception of a couple small photos. Simone thought that there should be a booklet containing close-up pictures of each artifact and their accompanying text to use as a guide in the event that information is missed during a tour.

**Participant observations and reflections.** Simone framed many of her reactions to the museum attraction content in the form of suggestions for improvement, even before this interview protocol question was asked. She was one of the few participants who was extremely enthusiastic about having seen the movie and still being an avid fan of the movie. Simone had mentioned the presentation of children’s clothing in the museum attraction, but I do not recall any such display or objects. It is quite rare to see children’s dress in Titanic exhibits and museums.

**Visitors to the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee**

**Narrative 1: Camille**

*General reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit.* What stood out the most for Camille about her visit was the variety of ways in which she could learn about the subject. There were opportunities to learn by looking at visuals, reading, and participating in interactive activities. Camille had a memorable experience in the Grand Staircase room because she was able to walk
on it, and one of the docents was pointing out the physical details of the staircase. It was the act of seeing and touching the staircase that gave Camille the feeling that Titanic was real and that maybe this is something that would have been similar to the actual experience aboard the ship. The docent also explained that there was linoleum on the Titanic, and at that time it was considered an upscale material. For some reason, Camille said, that fact just stuck with her.

There was a specific artifact that made an impression on Camille as well. It was a ladies’ trunk that would have been used for clothing storage (see Figure 5.10). She also mentioned that it was an artifact that stood out to the person she visited with as well. It stood out to her because it was one of the first objects that she saw when walking into the museum proper, and a docent was present to talk about the details of the trunk. She did not recall any details about what the docent had shared, beyond it being used to store women’s clothing.

Camille has worked as a museum docent, and this informed her visit. She does not wear period costume to work on a regular basis, but it is worn for some special events. She generally does not speak to museum docents during a museum visit, and she uses them only if needed. She has not seen the 1997 movie. Camille prefers to view artifacts in the museum setting, as opposed to replicas.

**Description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume.** Camille first encountered dress artifacts in the first gallery, where a women’s trunk for clothing
storage was displayed (see Figure 5.10). Another location with a concentration of dress
display was the movie tribute gallery. She did not pay much attention to the movie room.
She noticed the movie costumes but viewed them with a certain sense of skepticism about
their authenticity. Though she had not seen the movie, Camille enjoyed looking at the
display case of hats that the female actresses wore in the movie (see Figure 5.11). This
was of interest to her because of the aesthetics of the hats. There was text accompanying
each hat to describe when it was worn in the movie and which actress wore it. The main source of enjoyment was looking at the hats as a visual. The text describing when it was worn and who wore it did not do much for her because she did not understand the references.

The thing that struck Camille about the dress and costume display was that they did not have any dress artifacts from the ship. They had one dress that was made from a design sketch of the one of the female passengers aboard the ship because she was a well-known fashion designer [“Lucile” Lady Duff-Gordon]. The museum attraction had a dress reproduced to resemble a dimensional version of what was depicted in the sketch (see Figure 5.2). This was one of the first clothing objects that she encountered and then the rest that she saw were mostly costumes from the movie and the outfits that the docents were wearing. The “Lucile” reproduction dress was Camille’s favorite dress display. Because the reproduction dress (which was displayed on a dress form) produced from a sketch was designed by one of the people on the ship she wondered if this woman was an avant-garde person because this dress seemed a little over the top. But, her mind also wandered to another question related to skepticism about the reproduction process of the dress: “Well do you really know what the dress would have been?”

The dress and costume displayed in the museum attraction was definitely of interest for Camille. She also felt that the dress and costume displays helped her to learn more about Titanic. They provided an opportunity to learn through the presentation of narratives, as opposed to learning facts in a book. The presence of dress added a different dimension to an object that might be seen in a book.
Regardless of any design and construction issues and questions that arose, she still felt that the dress provided a sincere personal connection to that passenger. She felt a personal connection because the dress was the fashion designer’s own design, and the museum attraction made a tribute to her with the use of her artistic sketch. The text that accompanied the dress explained why it was a certain length, what kind of fabric would have been used, and other details related to its physical characteristics. Camille felt that the dress inherently represents an interpretation of the sketch because the museum attraction had it made by another designer in another time period. However, the detailed information about the designer paired with an extant dress object had a big impact.

The fact that this dress was contained in a free-standing display was appealing to Camille. She described that it was sectioned off with the use of a railing so she could not get right up to the dress, but the open nature of the display layout allowed her to walk around it and see all sides of the dress (see Figure 5.12). It also helped that the dress was displayed in a full-scale replica room where the dress would have been worn (see Figure 5.13). Camille described the dress being in an appropriate physical environment as giving it a more textural feeling while viewing it. The museum attraction’s decision to place the dress in this replica environment made it more appealing.

Camille also noticed that a lot of other people were similarly interested in this dress. Other individuals were walking around the dress to view it from many different angles and reading the large amount of text that accompanied it. She categorized it as a popular display in the museum attraction.
Figure 5.12. The full-scale replica of the first class stateroom was sectioned off with the use of a railing but still retained an “open air” quality at the Pigeon Forge location. The arrow in the upper right corner is pointing to the area in the room where the “Lucile” reproduction dress display was seen by visitor participants at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. From Titanic Pigeon Forge. (2012). Titanic Pigeon Forge press – Interior photos. Retrieved August 3, 2012, from http://www.titanicpigeonforge.com/media/images/titanic-interior/titanic-pigeon-forge-interior09sm.jpg.

After her visit, Camille thought that the museum attraction makes use of dress and costume displays because these are ordinary objects that are a huge part of everyday life. Dress has a lot of value in terms of being able to assess an individual’s social status and personality, so displaying it in a museum provided her with a personal connection to the wearer. It caused her to think about who would have worn the garment and who would have designed it. It almost forced Camille to create a narrative in her head about the potential wearer when viewing a piece of clothing.

**Interactions with and reactions to living history interpreters.** Interaction with the living history interpreters, or docents, was minimal for Camille. At the beginning of the visit, in the lobby area, a living history interpreter depicting the Captain lined the entering group up and recited a scripted speech. She felt that the speech lasted way too long and seemed too rehearsed. She did interact with one of them but only briefly. She was more appreciative of their presence rather than a direct contribution that they made to her experience in the museum attraction. She did notice that a lot of the other visitors were talking to them and asking questions; she just chose not to directly interact with them.

Camille noticed that the female docents were wearing maid’s costumes, and the male docents were wearing ship crewman blazers (see Figure 5.14). She felt that the blazers worn by the men were okay, but the women’s costumes detracted from the experience. It was not so much the appearance of the costume but the role of maid being played by the women. She was a little insulted that all of the women were depicted as maids, as opposed to other non-serving roles. For Camille, the costumes did not seem completely authentic. She acknowledged that they seemed to have tried to achieve

authenticity, but the fabric just seemed like a basic cotton for the maid’s costume, and she envisioned the use of a heavier fabric.

Personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content. Camille personally related her museum docent work to her visit. She really enjoyed being around the docents. Being an artist, Camille found a personal connection in looking at the fashion designer’s sketches and then being able to view the finished product of the dress. She can appreciate the process of idea of bringing a sketch in to existence as an actual product.
It was an unexpectedly entertaining museum attraction visit for Camille because she had assumed that it would be another run-of-the-mill cheesy Pigeon Forge attraction. Following her visit, Camille felt that it had proven itself as a legitimate museum and, if talking to others who might consider a visit, she would actually defend it as a valid museum. There was an element of surprise when she first saw the docents because she did not expect to experience this element. Camille was surprised that there was so much content dedicated to the movie within the museum attraction. She felt that this made sense, given the popularity of the movie but still found it odd because it was just a movie. The museum attraction experience was a bit different for her because she had not seen the movie. She did not find herself mentally or emotionally connecting with the movie in the same way that other visitors appeared to be. She did not feel left out in any part of the museum until she reached the movie room. She noticed that other people were able to recognize most of the things in the room; in contrast, she barely knew the main characters.

*What the participant knew and what the participant learned.* Camille felt that her museum attraction visit did help her to learn more about Titanic, but she also stated that a lot of the information was a refresher from the things that she had read about the subject as a kid. Having never seen the movie, she also learned more about the movie than she had known before. She visited with another person who had seen the movie so he was actively involved in her learning, taking time to point things out to her and explain their relevance. It was neat for her to play with the interactive quizzes that contained questions about who was cast in the movie and the considerations that were
taken for casting. As a result of what she learned in the movie tribute gallery and her visit experience as a whole, Camille felt like she would be more likely to watch the movie now. She learned the most about the people that were aboard the ship. There were a lot of little vignettes scattered around the museum attraction that explained the life stories of various passengers.

**Suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display improvement.** Camille enjoyed the presence of the docents but felt that their performances were a little heavy handed and could incorporate more improvisation. It was important for Camille to see a greater quantity of dress displays. It would be practical to insert more dimensional dress objects into areas where specific passengers are discussed; this would help to accent the information and other visuals being presented. She also would have liked to see a little more diversity in the representation of passengers portrayed by the docents; it would be helpful if there were other roles for women beyond a maid. It was also suggested that more dress be placed in full-scale replica environments for greater impact. She hesitantly made this suggestion because it would not be appropriate for dress artifacts, only reproductions. It is more important to protect the clothing and preservation issues should always come first over what might be considered a more ideal display technique. The presentation of dress in different replica environments would also help to address the noticeably-absent information regarding how the dress of each social class differed.

Camille also suggested that dress displays containing multiple objects should be given more space; that is, the objects should be more spread out within the space. It was
difficult to examine the hats in the movie tribute gallery from all angles because they were too crowded in the display case. Because the movie tribute gallery is not a permanent gallery, she suggested keeping the movie costumes as a permanent display but certain other objects (e.g., the jacket that the director wore) were extraneous. The movie costumes at least provide a context for the time period. The movie costumes should not be removed because than the content would be comprised of even fewer dress and costume objects. It is important to maintain some dimensional dress displays because, while pictures do still provide information about dress, they do not allow her to connect with the display in quite the same way.

She also noted that dimensional artifacts (e.g., items of clothing) offer the best information about dress but other kinds of objects can be used. A photo or replica could also provide information, but if a photo is not of a high quality than it is better to use a replica. It is important to take into account the condition of what is being viewed to determine how useful it can be to the visitor. Camille acknowledged that photos can be a source of information about dress and suggested that photos be displayed with a text plaque explaining what was being worn in the photograph and brief background information about the individual or scenario taking place in the photo.

**Participant observations and reflections.** Camille was the only participant who had not seen the movie to be exposed to an explicit Titanic movie display or gallery. She said that she felt more likely to watch the movie now that she had visited a Titanic museum attraction.
Visitors to Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition in Las Vegas, Nevada

Narrative 1: Peter

*General reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit.* Peter’s initial reaction following his visit was that he got a better sense of how elegant and massive the ship really was. He thought that the size of the ship meant that the interior would have a bare and industrious appearance, but he was surprised to learn the extent of the interior’s elegance. He expressed a similar sentiment when he explained the great impact that viewing “the big piece” had on him. It was impressive to see this recovered object in a museum, and it increased his awareness of what a big deal Titanic was during this time period. He compared the Titanic as an impressive feat of engineering to the invention of the steamboat and how the steamboat is dwarfed in comparison. Peter was quick to notice the differences among the first class and third class cabins aboard the ship.

What stood out the most for Peter during his visit was just how expensive it was to book passage on the Titanic. He had figured that a lot of people gained passage through ways that were similar to Jack’s poker victory in the movie that resulted in a boarding ticket. Peter also thought of the movie when he viewed the full-scale replica of the Grand Staircase. For him, watching the movie ahead of time gave him a mental image of what the ship looked like. But, he acknowledged, that it is necessary to go beyond the visuals in the movie to really understand Titanic. Peter stated that he saw some direct connections between the movie and the historical events in the artifact exhibition content. He felt like he was constantly making spontaneous mental connections to the movie.
throughout his visit. Everything from a photo of Captain Smith to “the big piece” brought the movie to his mind. It was some of the interactive activities that led Peter to make spontaneous mental connections to the movie in his mind. For example, touching the real iceberg brought a heightened awareness to the fact that this caused the death of many people, and he recalled related scenes in the movie. He thought of the movie when viewing the list of names in the Memorial Gallery because the final scenes of the movie when deceased passengers are floating in the water were images that stuck with him. The spontaneous mental connections that he made to the movie were effortless because, though dramatized, many of the events that happened in the film actually happened to real people. For example, Jack may not have been an actual passenger, but a comparable passenger in his circumstances probably would have met the same fate. For this reason, the connection between the movie and the historical events was reinforced. Seeing the replica environments made him feel as though he was a movie extra or character. He stated that he thought the full-scale replica of the Grand Staircase was modeled after the film staircase.

Peter used his inner city upbringing to relate to the third class passengers aboard the ship and, in particular, their reasons for seeking passage on the Titanic to get to the United States. He also made use of analogies related to his current status as a law school student and football fan who both owns and wears reproduction football jerseys to draw analogies to illustrate his reactions to the display of dress and costume. Peter has not visited a museum in about 15 years and stated that he does not have much leisure time at present because he is a self-identified workaholic.
Description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume. When asked to describe the display of dress and costume, Peter immediately began drawing connections to the movie. Peter first mentioned that dress could be seen in various photos of different people that were actual passengers on the ship throughout the museum attraction. The display of dress was most prominent for him in photos. He noticed that, without even reading a caption, it was possible for him to identify the social class to which the people in the photo belonged. A gentleman who was wearing a suit and had a big moustache resembling that of actor Tom Selleck\(^{49}\) was clearly part of first class. Peter also noticed the clothing of men who were dressed as if they were poor. He described their clothing as wrinkled, ruffled, dirty, ill-fitting, and plain. These characteristics were indicative of the clothing that individuals of the lower class could afford. For Peter, the ill-fitting clothing of the lower class appeared in stark contrast to the finely tailored suits of the upper class. Peter said that the third class passengers did not choose to dress in this manner; rather, they were assigned to this style of dress by society.

First class clothing is also differentiated by the level of embellishment and number of accessories that accompany it; Peter explained that the social class difference is easy to discern when two men are wearing a suit (i.e., the standard garments for men during that time period) and only one man has accessorized his outfit with a monocle. The photos that show what the passengers were wearing serve as a visual cue of the

\(^{49}\) Tom Selleck is an American actor and producer best known for his work in the television series, “Magnum P.I.” You can learn more about Tom Selleck and his acting career at the following website: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000633/. 
social class to which they belonged. Peter further explained how the level of embellishment on a garment can be used to discern social class by drawing a comparison to the first class china that he saw in a display case during his visit. He saw both plates that were plain white and those that had extra features, such as a gold rim. It was obvious to him that these plates would be used by different classes of people.

Peter also viewed dress artifacts in the museum attraction and felt that social class of the wearer could be determined by looking at details that serve to adorn and embellish a dress artifact. For example, men wore bow ties and ascots. The fabric used to construct a garment also provided information about social class. He thought that third class clothing looked like it was primarily made of cotton and first class clothing showed greater fabric variations, with the use of wools and silks. The use of a high-end fabric meant that the garment was more valuable and fashionable. For Peter, third class passengers were not fashionable; rather, they dressed with function in mind.

Peter would prefer to see a photo that displays period dress rather than an artifact because a photo preserves both the dress and the time period, as opposed to an artifact that is displayed in isolation. An artifact may provide more visual detail, but a photo truly is worth a thousand words. He acknowledged that an artifact is more novel than a photo. It is easy to access pretty much an image that is desired on the internet nowadays, and he would go to a museum to see artifacts that he could not see elsewhere.

The dress and costume displays in the artifact exhibition were of interest to Peter. He felt that the dress and costume displays did not help him learn so much as reinforce information that he already knew, such as the social class dichotomy. He was aware that
there were social class divisions aboard the ship, but that information came to life when he saw that “x” number of people survived or perished and examples of what they might have been wearing. Peter enjoyed viewing a lot of the first class outfits. He especially enjoyed viewing the dress worn by first class men. These outfits were enjoyable to view because he could easily compare them to men’s wear of today, and it showcased the formality in dress that he hopes to attain in the professional setting upon finishing law school.

After visiting the artifact exhibition, Peter drew a parallel between information he obtained in law school and why the artifact exhibition would display dress and costume. He explained that one of the things he was taught in law school was that if one looks at something but for this, would this have happened? In other words, if he were to take everyone out of their clothes and just have them appearing nude he would not be able to gather much information about them. Peter used this analogy to assert that it is important to display dress and costume because information about a passenger’s background and social status can be gleaned from their dress. Dress also helps him to identify with the way that a passenger identified themselves. Without dress, he felt that the social status of at least fifty percent of the passengers could not be easily identified through visuals alone. The absence of dress would be a huge disservice to museum attraction visitors.

Dress is an integral part of telling a story, including the stories associated with historical events. Rose, the character played by Kate Winslet is accentuated by the nice dresses and vibrant colors that she wears. Jack, the character played by Leonardo DiCaprio, is accentuated by his faded brown pants and the generally worn out appearance
of his clothing. To take these foundational elements of the movie and change them would tell a whole different story. For Peter, the outfits are part of the story.

**Interactions with and reactions to living history interpreters.** Peter did not have interactions with or reactions to living history interpreters because Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition does not incorporate living history interpreters in to the exhibition. He was not in favor of the use of living history interpreters in the museum setting.

**Personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content.** Peter stated that he could personally relate to the third class passengers. He explained that they were coming from a variety of circumstances and trying to make a better life for themselves. He saw a parallel in their determination to better their circumstances and his childhood. Peter was not raised in a nice part of Los Angeles and his dad made sure that they moved out of the inner city. He is currently pursuing an education to ensure that he does not have to return to the inner city of Los Angeles. Peter drew a parallel between his decision to pursue an education as a way out of less-than-ideal circumstances and third class passengers who were traveling to America in search of a better life and new beginnings.

Peter also recognized that it is not possible to better one’s circumstances overnight; it requires that a person pay his or her dues in a variety of ways. He strongly identified with the third class passengers because they were working to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and out of poor conditions. For the third class passengers, sailing on the Titanic was not about spending a lot of money to experience an extravagant
vacation; it was about delayed gratification. Passage on the Titanic was taken with a very specific purpose.

Peter equated the first class dress for men to a fine tailored Italian suit that a wealthy man might wear today. He envisioned wearing a suit similar to those he saw the wealthy male passengers wearing in the photos as a lawyer in a courtroom one day, after he finishes law school. While he does not own a suit like this right now, reaching this level of formality through dress is one of Peter’s aspirations.

Peter was emotionally moved when viewing the full-scale replica of a third class cabin. He felt sad that this was the room designated for third class passengers who were considered “have-nots.” For him, it seemed impossible that this cabin was available in such close proximity to the elaborate and luxurious accommodations for first class passengers. When discussing a display about Captain Edward Smith, Peter called him a “complacent jackass,” expressing anger toward the decisions he made which resulted in the sinking. He tried to get inside the minds of third class passengers and had his own questions about how other passengers may have perceived their dress. In particular, he wondered if third class passengers were conscious of judgments about their dress. He seemed to express sympathy and empathy for the third class passengers (i.e., “the have-nots”) who might be in a room surrounded by first class passengers (i.e., “the haves”) and get the feeling that they are being judged as unkempt or a “schmuck” for even attempting to be part of their world.

**What the participant knew and what the participant learned.** Peter’s previous knowledge about Titanic was primarily related to the size and power of the ship itself. He
felt that his visit to the artifact exhibition helped him to learn more about Titanic. As an individual who has seen the film, he is aware that movies retranslate certain details and, as a result, the content of the museum attraction helped Titanic to feel more real to him. Peter acknowledged that Hollywood will incorporate historical accuracy into a movie, but still tell a story the way they choose to tell it, which often involves manipulating the audience’s feelings and environments. He provided the example of the film, Pearl Harbor, which he felt was a horrible movie and not at all historically accurate. During his visit he learned just how expensive it was to purchase passage on the ship. This was especially interesting to him because he connected the price to how much it might cost today, taking inflation into account. He also pointed out that, in hindsight, passengers were paying for their own demise and that made the sinking even more unfortunate.

*Suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display improvement.* Peter suggested that the artifact exhibition include a more explicit and intentional display of dress by itself. His suggestion was informed by the fact that he made connections on his own between dress being depicted in photos and information such as social class. He acknowledged that many visitors to the artifact exhibition probably do not absorb the majority of information, and the more explicit and concise the information is, the better. He also suggested that social class distinctions be emphasized in displays of dress and costume. Another suggestion was that dress objects be placed in the replica physical environments (e.g., first and third class cabins) to provide contextual information about who might have stayed in that room.
Participant observations and reflections. I did not observe Peter during his museum attraction visit. He expressed surprise that he was able to make deeper and more personal connections to Titanic. He had a very outgoing, charismatic, sarcastic, and playful personality. I felt that he was a difficult person to read much of the time. I often got the feeling that he was not taking the interview seriously and was in a hurry to just get it over with, but his verbal responses were thoughtful and seemed to indicate otherwise. He was able to provide the unique perspective of being a young boy at the time of the movie’s release, which was different than the age that I was at the time of the release. I often think of others as having been around the same age at the time of the release because that is the age and stage of life in which I first experienced it.

Peter stated that he thought the full-scale replica of the Grand Staircase was modeled after the film staircase, but this was not an accurate statement. The replica was modeled after the original Grand Staircase aboard the ship. He also said that he saw direct connections made between the movie and the historical events in the artifact exhibition content during his visit. This was also inaccurate; there were no direct connections that I saw.

I noticed that one of the ways that Peter made sense of the historical events was by creating narratives around some of the artifacts that he viewed. For example, when describing a well-dressed and wealthy man’s purpose for being on the ship, Peter outlined a story in which the man was probably just hanging out on the ship for fun and enjoying time with his mistress. This man did not have to care about being moral because he is well-dressed and wealthy. The suggestions that Peter provided for the improvement of
dress and costume display were also informed by narrative; he thought that dress objects should be placed in the environments in which they were to be worn because then it would be understood that this type of person [whatever the physical environment might “say” about him or her] dressed in this way.

**Individual Staff Narratives**

The reader will notice variations in the topic headings in the staff narratives. These topic headings represent the variations in topics that were covered in the staff interviews. Molly and Arthur have more topic headings because I was able to conduct longer interviews with them and, thus, cover a wider range of topics.

**Narrative 1: Barbara**

*Dress and costume displays.* Barbara explained that she works with a variety of collectors and institutions to create dress and costume displays. She began by mentioning two of the more notable artifacts that she has been able to borrow from the New York Institute of Fashion and Design:

We have worked with the fashion institute there and we were able to get a cane to put on display, Lucy Lady Duff Gordon’s dress that is owned by a gentleman in England who has put it in preservation at the New York Fashion Institute. And we had that in our museum for two years in Branson and now it has been put to bed, probably not to been seen for quite some time to preserve it. It actually belonged to one of the passengers. He name was Lucy Lady Duff Gordon. She was the most famous fashion designer in the world and to be able to obtain this dress was truly a remarkable experience for our guests to see this dress.

She proceeded to explain her lending relationship with the New York Institute of Fashion and Design, her decision to use a dress artifact to feature a specific Titanic passenger, and the process that she undertook to secure the loan of the Lady Duff-Gordon dress mentioned above. For Barbara, it was important to use gallery space as an opportunity to
teach visitors about specific passengers that were aboard the ship. She began by research- ing Lady Duff-Gordon and then realized that it might be possible to find one of her fashion designs that could be included in the exhibit to enhance the biographical information:

I started working on Titanic and my instincts were to focus on the passengers. Prior exhibits have focused on the artifacts. And my instincts told me that people are interested in the stories of the passengers and that had not been accomplished at any of the touring exhibits. They has just merely shown artifacts and identifies what those artifacts were. When I came into the project and we decided to build Branson, uh… I come from an entertainment background so my instincts were, make those artifacts come to life. So as I began researching the passengers, one of them that I was always intrigued with was Lady Duff Gordon. And as I began to identify who she was and what she was all about, my instincts told me, at that point 95 years ago… I mean, there had to be something around from her. That wasn’t that long ago.

Locating a Lady Duff-Gordon design that could be displayed in the Titanic Museum Attraction turned out to be a very difficult task. Barbara eventually turned to social media outlets to find a design, which led her to a group of students at the New York Institute of Fashion and Design:

So, as I actually began researching it, and I can tell you I spent five months trying to track down… and thank god the internet existed or I would not have found it. And what was happened was I was researching the internet and where do I go to find a dress and everything, somehow, in December of that year after spending five months, I jumped out of my chair because I realized in the social media world there were a group of young ladies discussing Lady Duff Gordon and I happened to get in to that chat. They were students that the New York Institute of Design… fashion design. And they were talking about how they were going to put an exhibit together. I immediately phoned the institute and, of course, all government facilities and private institutes of that sort, and I say that with much respect… they don’t get back to you. It’s this bureaucracy that exists, as it does within our government… and nobody ever returns anybody’s call. So I spent a month trying to get someone to call me back. And finally I said I’m going to New York. So I go to New York and I was persistent with meeting the head person there. And I said ‘I really want to talk about Lady Duff Gordon and what you’re doing and is there anything that you have?’ And she said… she disclosed the pink dress that they
had [see Figure 5.15 for an image of the pink dress]. And at that time I thought I had hit the mother load because all I could think about was how I have got to get this dress, I have got to show it on display.

Barbara had identified the perfect dress for her planned Lady Duff-Gordon display, but she encountered unexpected issues related to the ownership and lending of the extant artifact:

Come to find out… They showed me the dress, they showed me what the student’s were studying and everything and that a gentleman over in England owned the dress and I would need to get permission from him to show the dress. So I connected with him, we agreed on a loan price and we agreed on the terms in which it could be shown. And it was put… it was agreed upon that it would be special lighting, that it would be put behind glass so that nobody could touch it. And I brought in the Fashion Institute curator to bring the dress in. I flew her in and she spent 3 days prepping that dress before it went on display to the public.

After months of research and planning, Barbara opened the display to the public for two years (see Figure 5.15):

And it was on display for two years and because of how fragile it is- and I would have loved to have shown it again in honor of the 100th anniversary of her maiden voyage- but the owner was very protective of the item and just felt it could not go back on display at this time.

Barbara acknowledged that the dress was not specifically associated with the dress of 1912, but of greater importance was the fact that one of Lady Duff-Gordon’s designs was on display in her museum attraction and it was chosen because of its ability to contextualize information about Lady Duff-Gordon’s life:

It is tea-length so it would not have probably been a 1912 dress. As I recall… I don’t want to say it was a 1914 dress but the fact that there was a dress that actually she made with her company, I thought told her story better. And as you experience in Branson, as you walked out of the museum, you did not probably talk about the artifacts as much as you probably talk about the passengers associated with the artifacts.
Figure 5.15. The “Lucile” Lady Duff-Gordon pink dress that was on display in the Branson Titanic Museum Attraction for two years. Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. From Marr, R. (2007). Titanic: World’s largest museum attraction (A collector’s guide) (p. 56). Branson, MO: Missouri Life Publications.
The success of the Lady Duff-Gordon display led to the development of a temporary gallery dedicated to Molly Brown. Barbara explained how this gallery came to fruition:

This is a great story. I have…When we christened—which Titanic was never christened by her company—I got permission from the historical society to christened the ship in Branson, because historically they never christened any of their ships. I had her great granddaughter here and we kept in contact over the years and she lived in Kansas City and she had items of her great grandmother and when she moved to Wyoming she called me and said ‘Look, I really don’t want to move this stuff anymore. I think it belongs to you guys.’ And when you’re working with collectors and family members, they really don’t want to give up these items, but they want them on display. So we agree on a fee and we pay individuals…We pay over a million dollars a year for various artifacts. So collectors, who would have never made any money off their investment make money and that’s the business side of this business. They are able to cover and make up what they pay. So when she contacted me and I thought to myself, I have got to have all this stuff. I’m sitting with my curator because he gets involved, he identifies all the stuff. He puts it all in a spread sheet. And so we’re talking and I said ‘Oh gosh. We really… I almost think we have enough items here that we should put up… give her a gallery. We’ll add one more showcase to fill it.’

Barbara learned of a personal connection that Molly Brown’s great granddaughter had to a movie about her famous great grandmother and realized that it added an additional dimension to the human stories that comprise the history of Titanic:

And so we began talking and we spent 3 days going through all the various article they we were going to spread out between Branson and Pigeon Forge and this is the last day and we’re all kind of tired and he casually says to me ‘Oh, by the way, Helen didn’t really know she was related to Margaret Brown until she was 12 or 13 years old.’ And I said ‘What? What’s the story on that?’ And he told me: well, she was sitting in the movie, The Unsinkable Molly Brown with Debbie Reynolds and she… she was sitting in the movie with her brothers and sisters and her mother… She said it was strange because her mother never took her to the movie but for some reason they had to see this movie. So she’s sitting there and it’s the scene where they’re singing Belly-up to the Bar. And she looks to her daughter and says ‘You should know that the character she’s playing, you are actually related to.’ Which began her quest about finding all about who this person way.
It became clear to Barbara that she needed to include a movie costume from a movie about Molly Brown after learning of this personal connection that Molly Brown’s great granddaughter had to the movie:

And so I say to our curator ‘Oh my god. You know, Debbie Reynolds is selling the dress from the movie. We’ve got to get that dress’ Now that the connection is there we have got to tell that story because- hold that thought- Todd Fisher who was Elizabeth Taylor’s and Danny Fisher’s son who I know, manages Debbie Reynolds costumes. She put the all on the auction block. She just couldn’t make any money and it costs a ton of money to preserve all these costumes.

Barbara faced some obstacles in acquiring the Debbie Reynolds movie costume, but eventually was able to do so:50

So I called Todd and I say ‘I just found this story and I have to have your mother’s dress from The Unsinkable Molly Brown.’ And he told me I can’t do anything now because it’s on the auction block and in the mean time years ago he wanted us to take the whole collection and I just didn’t want to mix a movie at that point when it didn’t even make any sense. Because most people probably wouldn’t even know who Debbie Reynolds was when they’re coming in through the museum. So, but now I have a connection. So I say to my curator: you got to get the number, we got to bid on it. So we get the dress, $10,000 later we get the dress. And so I wanted that dress to complete the story.

In this passage Barbara highlights the important role that dress can have in completing a story and assisting in the formation of a narrative. She also highlights the importance of creating a contextual environment in which the dress will be displayed. That is, visitors must be given enough information that they can easily understand the placement and relevance of the costume. In designing the display for the Debbie Reynolds costume, Barbara acknowledged the importance of providing context for its presence:

50 An image of the Debbie Reynolds costume being discussed by Barbara that is on display at the Branson Titanic Museum Attraction can be seen in an article about the Molly Brown Gallery at the following web address: http://www.bransontrilakesnews.com/entertainment/article_9208f430-59b3-11e1-a13e-001871e3ce6c.html.
So we brought the dress in and we found the poster and created the whole vignette to tell the story. Otherwise, there would be no purpose to have that collection. But the dress is incredible. She had to be… I believe she had to be 31 years old and she had a waistline of about 18 inches.

The discussion of specific dress and costume displays that have been planned and executed by Barbara led to a discussion about what she perceives to be the purpose of displaying such objects in her museum attractions. She explained that the purpose was to continue to tell the individual stories of the passengers through objects with which they were familiar and intimate. In explaining her point of view, she drew comparisons to other dress and costume exhibits that she had seen:

I think if some of the costumers that do these displays which are beautiful, that I have gone and seen, you know, the Armani… all the individual dresses that go on display… I think, and this is my personal opinion, this is the dress… and I’ll say when they did the Jackie Onassis touring exhibit, remember that one? Or when they did Lady Di’s exhibit they just say this is the dress she wore with John Travolta. Well, I would have taken it a step further. And I would have found out the experience, what she found out… because all of that is published and you need to take it because people can’t remember.

To further illustrate her point, Barbara presented another example that was related to the planning of the gallery dedicated to Molly Brown:

And I’m going to give you another example. When she, Helen [Molly Brown’s great granddaughter], gave us or loaned us the secretary’s desk that Margaret owned, most museums would just say “This is a secretary’s desk that Margaret Brown owned.” My feeling was where was it? What does she remember about it? So as we began to research it, we traced it back to that particular secretary’s desk was in Rhode Island, Newport, Rhode Island. And as Helen says, it was a small cottage of 40 rooms. That’s what I remember and I also remember the other things that were in that room. So when you look at that display I have her direct quotes about that. Because theoretically, when you look at it, it just looks like nothing special about it. But I wanted a picture of the house. What did it look like in Rhode Island? I wanted a quote from Helen- which having a quote from a descendant helps. And combining that brought that artifact to life. It is now a complete story. So, when we develop these stories I spend so much time pushing:
where is the story? Where is the providence? Where did it come from? How did we get it?

Barbara showed a clear understanding of how to create a comprehensive exhibit to tell a story and bring the artifacts to life. For her, it is the provenance of an artifact (including dress artifacts) that imbues it with enhanced meaning. An artifact presented by itself is ordinary, but an artifact presented with a story is extraordinary. For example, she explained,

It’s not the fact that we have Madeline Astor’s life jacket [see Figure 5.16] on display tied to the only… the life vest tied to the only actual passenger. It’s the story of how it got here and where was the path of that. So, that’s what I’m always reaching for when we display an artifact. I don’t want to just display and artifact. I want to tell the story. If I can find the story I’m going to tell the story.

**Curatorial tasks.** Though Barbara is heavily involved in all aspects of operation, she does outsource the installation of exhibits and handling of artifacts to a curator:

I have a curator who has been with just us for ten years. He handles all of the artifacts. I don’t handle the artifacts. He handles the artifacts. We are not… nobody is allowed to open any of the cases unless he is here. And we always require two people standing there when a case is open because I never want… and it’s to protect everybody… that nobody would every be accused of moving something or taking something. And it’s to protect everybody in that room. That’s kind of a company policy.

Artifacts are stored in a privately owned storage space that is located underground in Branson.

**Living history interpreters.** Barbara had very specific reasons for wanting to include living history interpreters in her museum attraction and, more specifically, a central living history interpreter who would represent the museum attraction in promotional materials:

Yes, my feeling was that you had to identify who your audience was so you could market this. And my feeling was that the hard surface of the ship and the technical part of the ship was what men would like. But I also know coming into a tourist destination, which we had determined through research, that intervals not only want to vacation today but they also was to have experiences as a family together. So when I determined that, I determined that we should create an icon for the ship. And as you probably saw- billboards, ads, print, television- everything is tied to a first class maid who represents us. And she does everything for us. And I felt that that was a more tangible person verses a hard-surfaced ship. And when you’re coming to a tourist destination, women make the decision where to go.

The first class maid is named Jaynee and, along with helping visitors to form a personal connection with the human stories of Titanic, she is the museum attraction spokesperson (see Figure 5.17):

She handles all the media requests, all the television, radio. She has become our icon. So when people see her or hear her voice… the consistency of the marketing
of it. So when they hear the horn, when they hear her voice they know it’s a Titanic spot.

It was clear that Barbara’s intention was to present Jaynee as the icon of the museum attraction, but I asked her if she also saw Rose as an icon since the release of promotional materials that included her likeness (see Figure 5.18). She responded, “Yes because she’s an icon to the movie. When [visitors] see her they think of the movie.” Further information about the inclusion of a Rose living history interpreter in Barbara’s museum attractions can be found in Chapter Four.

No matter which persona is being portrayed by a living history interpreter in the museum attraction proper, Barbara has high expectations for her staff (who are known as “cast members” within the organization of the company) because they interact with museum attraction guests on a regular basis. There are training events and motivational activities that she uses to ensure that they provide a high-quality experience for visitors:

I handle operations. Every department reports to me. And because I have a marketing background all advertising I develop. I have fantastic operations people. All crew members go through a seven day college Titanic course where they have to take a test before they go on the floor. And they are given 1912 etiquette lessons. And the greatest complement I can get is when I have a crew member or a staff member say ‘You know, I went to x, y and z and what they did, we would never do at Titanic.’ And we would all say ‘And what is that?’ And they would go ‘We would never stand there and talk to each other while a guest is in the room.’ They would never complain about ‘Gee, it’s a crappy day for me’ in front of a desk. And we have a sign on the back of our doors before they enter each day and that it: ‘You are now entering 1912.’ So, our job is to make this an experience that they would never forget. We have a big management team and we have trained everybody that coaches. You never beat up a crew member. You always look at yourself and think: did I explain this correctly? And you honestly feel like you have explained it, then give them a chance and explain it again. But you never beat up these people. It’s a coaching concept.
Figure 5.17. Jaynee the First Class Maid is the face and spokesperson of the Titanic Museum Attractions in Branson and Pigeon Forge. From Branson Best Read Guide. (2009). Back cover.
Figure 5.18. An example of the Rose character being used in Pigeon Forge Titanic Museum Attraction advertisements and promotional materials. From Smokey Mountains Best Read Guide. (2012, Winter). Center fold-out advertisement (pp. 38-40).
I asked Barbara if she had ever considered using living history interpreters that represented the personas of different social classes or specific passengers. She responded by first explaining the necessity of having this option for staff members who have been working there for a long period of time to ensure the maintenance of their job satisfaction:

Well, that’s interesting that you bring that up. I started it this year, last weekend, down in Branson. You know, part of the objective of running a company and keeping your crew members as long as you can have them because you have invested so much, is creating creative outlets for these individuals. So therefore you look at Branson that is going on seven years… And I have a lot of crew members that have been with me for seven years. They get antsy saying the same speech even though you move them from area to area. The experience can, at some point say, hey, it’s not enough for me.

Barbara recalled an experience of this nature with one staff member who primarily worked as a living history interpreter and how she worked with him to maintain his interest in the job:

And I have a gentleman who was a performer and he’s been with us for seven years and he said to my manager “You know, I’ve never stayed this long at any place and maybe it’s time for me to go.” And she and I were talking and I said look, I know what he wants to do. He wants to play a character by the name of George Brewerton who was a card shark about this ship. And all passengers were warned that there are card sharks about it ship. That’s the character that he would like to play. I give him that opportunity.

According to Barbara, the introduction of a new living history persona in the museum attraction proper requires careful planning and attention to detail:

I want him to work with our cast member that manages scripts, manages how they handle that character in different positions. So she works with each one of them about a day making sure that they do what they are supposed to do in all their different positions. So they spend a day identifying… because you know we have certain positions that have got to be filled, you know. So she worked with him and he’s a card player and he knows magic. And so we worked with him. So I’m
anxious to get back down with him this weekend so I can see it. But I’m told it went really well this weekend.

See Figures 5.19 and 5.20 for images of living history characters currently being used at the Titanic Museum Attractions co-owned by Barbara. One of the important elements of training a living history interpreter to portray a new persona, Barbara explained, is creating a comprehensive persona through the wearing of a costume and mannerisms that would align with the costume:


So, there’s two objectives. One, he’s got the whole outfit. The top hat and everything. And then he’s got the knowledge of how to do the cards. So based on his positions that’s where we put him- with the cards. So that particular character, and it’s a fun character because you know, if someone was handed that boarding card and I happened to be on the ship that day I would say “Oh, all passengers were warned about you on this ship.” You’ll find out later what’s going on. Another crew member would tell him. So we all have lines what we say on the boarding passes to keep the guests intrigued as to who they are.

Another part of staff training is knowledge of how to “play the part” to different types of visitors. Barbara stated that staff members are trained to “always play to the child first, the mom second, and the dad third.” She proceeded to explain the reasoning for this training approach:

Always. That is kind of a rule because if the child… and you were told how to bend down to talk to a child…They become engaged with you and now mom’s shoulders could be a little relieved because she realizes there is going to be something for this child.

The “child first” approach to visitor interaction is especially useful in the Dog Kennel Gallery at the Branson location, where living history interpreters provide children with interactive activities to maintain their interest:

We say to this child sometimes, not all crew members do it but some: How many dogs? I need you to find out how many dogs. You thought you were on vacation but I’m going you an assignment on this ship. We need you to find out how many dogs were aboard and you are going to find the answer to that down in third class. Once you get that answer, some did survive and find out how many survived. And the most asked question is: well how did they survive?

At this point in the interview it occurred to me that the dogs are also used in an iconic manner in promotional materials, similar to that of first class maid Jaynee. I asked Barbara if she could speak to this specific function that is fulfilled by the dogs. She began by explaining how she acquired the dogs:
Well, they were in the cabins with their passengers and when they left they took the dogs with them. So, then as I began playing that in my head we were working on [the displays for the year] 2010 in 2008 [because displays are planned two years in advance]. I said ‘I think we need to build a dog kennel. And I think we need our own mascots and they will become your brand- introducing a new element.’ So we went to a breeder for the dogs. They trained them for a year. They were brought in for a photo session and then went back for a photo session. Then our trainers worked with the trainer and were trained. USDA comes in and they approve what you are doing. Um, the home they go to every night has to be approved by the USDA. It has to be checked. Then you have to log every house what these dogs are doing. So we hire three handlers and I said we should have two dogs so they have a companion.

She then spoke to the promotional role of the dogs, as well as the interest that visitors find in the dogs:

So we were about to take two dogs then my strategy for marketing was that I wanted them to come alive and talk. So we did a whole ad campaign where the dogs talk. And so we did that whole campaign. And when they… before we even opened the dog kennel, one of my marketing people was walking her dog in Springfield which is an hour drive from Branson. And as she’s walking she sees the dog just like our dogs and she bait’s the guy and say ‘What kind of a dog is that?’ and he says ‘Oh, it’s just like the Titanic dogs.’ She called me and I said that is a marketing person’s dream. Before I even have these dogs I’ve been able to infiltrate that the dogs, and what they are, are coming.

**Narrative 2: Arthur**

**Dress and costume displays.** Arthur described the dress objects that are currently on display in the museum attraction: “There is the Lady Lucy Duff-Gordon dress [see Figure 5.2], there is one dress in the Molly Brown gallery right now…soon to be two, we hope, sometime soon. Umm…a couple of life vests [see Figure 5.16]…I doubt—we pretty much, it—so I would have—I would have to be able to look.” He said that the exhibitions change at least once a year, sometimes more often:

Uh, every January we close down for four days during the month and during those four days, um, for the most part there’s something going on in the museum ninety-six hours straight. From the time that we close to the public, um, the
evening before the first day closed... even before the first day we were closed until, uh, there've been times when we’re letting people in the front door the morning four days later and they’re finishing something up—upstairs. Um, so we do that every January. And then on occasion, sometimes things do, uh, change throughout the year where we’ll get a new artifact in and it’ll require a little bit of rearranging. Maybe of, uh, something inside a particular display or rearranging an entire room to make room for that particular artifact. Uh, for example, this year, uh, during the month of, uh, during January close-down we changed, uh, the Dining Gallery to the Molly Brown Gallery.

Arthur explained that dress and costume displays are usually installed with the intent of a long-term public showing.

Arthur described a previous dress and costume display that was dedicated to the movie:

We—that was the movie gallery about James Cameron’s *Titanic* movie...Had hats from the movie [see Figure 5.11] and a couple of outfits that Kate Winslet wore [see Figure 5.21], and those, uh, things, uh, with the exception of occasionally being, um, having the display dusted and such didn’t move for two years.

Using the movie gallery as an example, Arthur explained that the turnover of exhibitions in various galleries is what increases visits to the museum attraction and refreshes the type of visitor that enters the museum attraction:

Anytime that we put in a new exhibit, um, there—there is an influx of individ—of people there who may or may not have come to the museum otherwise, um...Specifically because now we’ve got this, um, movie gall—this gall—gallery that’s devoted to the movie or, uh, this year it’s gonna be, you know, the gallery that’s devoted to Molly Brown. Um, so, there’s always, you know, an—an uptick in indiv—people who are interested in that particular subject, but whether it actually affects the overall um—um, an overall increase in the overall in the, uh, the attendance in general...I guess you could say I really—I don’t notice anything. I don’t know if it would do—that it does anything different. Now, that obviously is gonna be something that is kind of subjective. You know, and on...on the subject of that particular—a new gallery, or a new display, you know, for the cases of the Movie Gallery and the Molly Brown Gallery, uh, Molly Brown being this year, I wouldn’t be surprised if it does bring in a few more
people than normal—that otherwise wouldn’t have come. But, you know that I can’t really predict it—I don’t know enough about it.

Arthur felt that the value of displaying dress and costume objects lies in their ability to showcase a different time and culture than we currently live in. He explained, “You know, people were more, uh, they were more formal and much more concerned with outward appearances, et cetera.” For Arthur, the presence of dress and costume

displays contribute more to education than entertainment because they provide a visual reference to what it was like to live in this time period:

You know, we can—we can sit, we can stand there, and we can verbally describe, uh, the officer’s uniforms which are the—the outfits that the men wear in the museum, or the maid’s uniforms which are what the women wear in the museum. Or the dresses and—and such, you know, we—we can describe that stuff to our heart’s content but actually being able to see it, um, sometimes that—you know, that takes it over the top, you know, you really understand: ‘Ok I get it now’.

The life vest artifacts are some of the primary artifacts over which visitors “oooh and ahhhh”:

People—when they come into, um, when they come into the Memorial Gallery and they see that life jacket hanging there in the center of the room [see Figure 5.16], they’re reminded of the one that they encountered in the Timeline Room, the one in the Timeline Room actually has an audio, uh, has a staff talking about it on the audio player and that’s where they are told that people were actually knocked out—knocked unconscious in, well—knocked unconscious by their, um, by their own life vests. They jumped into the water and, um, in some cases, you know, being the—the being knocked unconscious when they hit the water’s what killed them, etcetera, and they can actually see the thing and take a good up close and personal look at it, because it’s right there in the center of the room. You can walk all the way around it and you’re literally just inches from it, you can study it up close. That, I think is why the life vest has—has some of the most profound impact.

Based upon his description of the life vest display, Arthur can see the importance of a visitor being able to physically walk around a dress artifact and examine it up close. He compared the display technique of the life vests to the display of the “Lucile” reproduction dress:

Um, it’s not any reason that we have in the museum right now, uh, closest to that would be, uh, the Lady Duff Gordon dress that is now been moved, uh, from behind the glass in the Dining Gallery to, um, it’s mounted on a mannequin who is sitting in the first-class, um, the first-class room at the top of the Grand Staircase. It’s on a mannequin in that room, and while you can go all the way around it, you can, I mean, you can see it from the front, you can see it from—from the side and further up the hall. Looking back at it, you can see it from the
back, although the mannequin is sitting, but, um, there is a, you know, you can get a better look at it than it just hanging on a mannequin in the— behind the glass.

The photographs also draw a lot of attention and dialogue from and among visitors. Arthur also mentioned that there are differences in the way that men and women respond and relate to dress objects:

As a generaliza—I would definitely say that the women are more interested in the—in, um, in the dresses and women make more comments about our, um, the costumes or uniforms… whichever term that you want to use—that we wear. As cast members, uh, we definitely get more comments on—on women than men, um, where the men are generally concerned, it’s old Navy sea dogs in seeing two stripes on my arm and calling me, ‘Hey, lieutenant!’ and things along those nat—things—things along that line. Ok, so… But as far as men, uh, you know, and taking a good long look, and taking in the detail of any of the dresses that we have on display, I—that doesn’t happen very often. Mostly those that are—that are interested are women.

See further reflections about the costume that Arthur wears on the job in the “Living History Interpreters” section below.

Arthur has witnessed visibly emotional reactions by visitors toward the dress and costume displays:

When, uh, we had the Movie Gallery, the hats that were on display—we had on display a bunch of hats. Um, that actresses actually wore in the movie that seemed to be one of the—one of the, um…I guess you’d call it a chug point. In the—in that particular gallery because that would be where people were—where people were backed up, I mean, they were—they were taking their time to take in the detail of the hats and there were, um, there was quite often, uh well…there’s really no other way to say it, so, um, an older lady… Who maybe had grown up close to that time when women still wore the hats and—and the— the fancy clothing and such. I mean, you—you could tell that that was that that was taking them back. Like, ‘I remember my mother used to wear a hat like that’, and things like that. We heard that quite a bit…And sometimes it was a joyful recollection and sometimes it wasn’t.

According to Arthur there has never been a whole gallery dedicated to dress and/or costume in the museum attraction:
Uh, not a room devoted to dresses, no. Just the—just the—the behind the glass display in the dining gallery that, uh, had, um, Lady Duff-Gordon, um, a Lady Duff-Gordon design and when we first opened we had two actual Lady Duff-Gordon dresses. Luc—Lucille Limited dresses, but they—they have been since, uh, retired and put back into storage and such, um, but never has there been an entire room just devoted to clothing, no.

In the midst of this discussion Arthur mentioned that the museum attraction does own the “Lucile” reproduction dress that is on display, but acknowledged that “it’s not from the era, it’s just representative of the era, uh, based on design.”

Curatorial and educational outreach tasks. According to Arthur, his tasks as a Cast Member include being present within the museum during hours of operation and interacting with at least “75% of the people that come through on any given day” and to maintain a “positive and fluid experience for the guests.” This interaction includes giving scripted speeches about specific historical facts or stories and answering questions. In short, he is the face of the museum attraction for visitors. There are times when Arthur gives personal tours for VIP visitors. He proceeded to explain why he enjoys giving personal tours:

It, uh, it gives you, uh, it gives you the chance to focus on one particular, you know, on that individual or that group and just give them an even more personal experience than they already would get normally, anyway.

When Arthur gives a tour he focuses on “the spirit of the times and one of the greatest maritime tragedies in history and trying to shed light on the positive outcomes in addition to the admittedly negative ones.”

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51 Arthur’s quotation is referring to the dramatic changes that occurred in the fashion silhouette for women in the three years post-Titanic. The skirts became fuller and shorter and the natural waistline began its descent, ultimately disappearing in the early 1920s. The “Lucile” tea gown on display is a good representation of the earlier romantic mid-decade style. The waistline is at the natural waist and the length of the skirt is about eight inches off the ground. However, it is representative of a fashionable dress style and silhouette in the three years post-Titanic.
He rarely works at special events or educational outreach programs outside of the museum attraction. In terms of outreach, Arthur identified Jamie [the first class maid “character” who functions as the face or icon of the museum attraction in promotional materials] (see Figure 5.17) as the primary individual who engages in educational outreach: “During the school year, she goes out and she does teacher of the month and they’ll—they’ll go visit schools, uh, at least once a month, sometimes more than that…”

His job does not require working with artifacts housed in the museum attraction from a curatorial standpoint because those responsibilities are delegated to a curator. The curator works for the museum attraction on an on-call basis and does work specifically for both the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations [because they are sister museums]. The curator’s responsibilities also include visiting collectors and maintain positive relationships that ensure future lending opportunities. Arthur’s only interaction with artifacts comes if a display needs to be changed out in the face of severe time constraints.

Arthur did mention that dress objects, in particular, are fragile and treated with extra caution:

Those, uh, those—they are very, very touchy with them—very particular. About handling of that stuff ‘cause in most cases, you know, it is, uh, aged materials and they have to be handled with a certain way so they have the spec—they have the, um, I guess you call them fashion specialists they come in and take care of those.

Beyond these observations, Arthur was not aware of any additional curatorial information related to dress objects.

Arthur also spoke about the prescribed procedure of opening a display case when making changes to an exhibit or gallery:
I mean, everything—any time that we open up the case and handle the item that’s in that case, regardless of what it is, it’s—it’s all white glove … White cotton gloves. Nothing—nothing ever touches your skin, uh, straight on because oils in your skin can damage the—the materials whether it’s a fabric or a paper or something along those lines, everything that—any time we open up the case, hands that go into the case are white gloved hands.

He added that the display “cases don’t get opened without a very good reason.”

Arthur was not aware of a collections manual or any document that describes for employees the standardized procedures for handling, preserving, and displaying artifacts.

**Living history interpreters.** Arthur is more of a guide or “cast member,” than he is a living history interpreter. He also classifies the other costumed staff members that wander around the museum to interact with visitors as “cast members,” and not living history interpreters. But, he added, the museum attraction currently makes limited use of living history interpreters in varying and limited capacities. Arthur wears a male ship officer’s costume (see Figure 5.14). He said that both men and women ask detail-oriented questions about his costume. He had some thoughts about why visitors are drawn to the cast member costumes:

Well, the men, uh, the guys our—our suits, um, our uniforms that we wear… very sharp—very sharp-looking, and that—it’s something that you don’t see… throughout Branson, for one. Um, you know, it’s—it’s most of the places that you’ll see, uh, the—the men staff have got, you know, vest, cummerbunds, bow ties on a white shirt and black pants, uh, it’s not very many places that you go in town that you’ll see a guy in an actual jacket, tie, you know, long tie and—and suit, you know, a three piece suit.

There are some times during the year when cast members will portray certain individuals that were aboard the ship in 1912. He has seen portrayals of Molly Brown, Father Brown (see Figure 5.20), and Henry Noss. Arthur said that he is currently being considered to play the role of Henry Noss, but his portrayal is somewhat limited because
he does not do an Irish accent very well. Arthur would be interested in portraying a Titanic passenger to visitors as long as it was the right role for him. He sees living history interpretation as another form of storytelling, which he already views as a major portion of his job as a cast member that is often stationed in the museum attraction proper to interact with guests about the content.

Arthur mentioned that they used to have a woman who would portray the movie character Rose as a living history interpreter during the month of February [for the museum attraction’s Sweetheart Month promotion] (see Figure 4.13 in Chapter Four), but she is no longer working in this capacity because she moved away.

Reflections on emotional reactions to content by visitors and visitor behavior in the museum attraction. Arthur feels that visiting the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson helps visitors to learn more about Titanic and further understand it as a historical event. He describes learning in the museum attraction as a continual process for staff as well:

Every time a—you know, a—um, from the museum-going experience standpoint, every time you come through the museum you can come to—you can come see us four, three or four days in a row and you’ll see something that you didn’t see any of the other times that you went through, just because there’s so much to see there. And any time you do see one, you know, something new that inevitably is gonna raise questions—and when those questions, when we answer those questions it increases your understanding of—of what happened with them.

Arthur said that visitors are most drawn to the full-scale replicas of rooms that would have been on the ship:

The third class corridor, and so that they can actually see, um, and experience what it been—would be like to walk down the third class corridor on the Titanic. Walking the Grand Staircase, your surroundings there, seeing the, uh, the majesty and the intricacy of the—of the woodwork and just the—the scale that they—that
they did these things on, and they did—that they did it all by hand. So the first class, uh, first class room upstairs, same thing. I would venture to say that that is what people react to the most.

The Grand Staircase Gallery, in particular, is a place in the museum attraction where women have had visibly strong emotional reactions to the content:

I have seen [laughs] I’ve—I’ve seen people first, then I’ve seen, well, women—for the most part where this is concerned—burst into tears just stepping into the Grand Staircase. You know that—that’s the beginning of the Grand Staircase, uh…on a daily basis there are people that are just like, ‘oh my gosh, look at this!’ You know, just…you can tell that they walk in and they’re stunned at the—the majesty of the—of the set. I mean, it—it, you know… you’ve seen it; it’s an amazing piece of work. And people really, um, they’re really touched by that, um, when they’re in third class and you explain to them how crowded third class was and how hard it was to find your way around, I mean…that—all that really hits home and, um, especially when, you know, someone from third class, uh, someone who has a third class boarding pass is standing there in third class and you’re telling them: ‘This is where you stayed’. And you get them to put themselves there, uh, you can—I mean, you—you can see it really starts to bring—bring things home for them, they really start to understand.

Visitors also respond positively to the boarding passes that are handed out to each visitor just before entering the museum attraction (see Figures 4.7 and 4.8 in Chapter Four):

That or possibly the boarding passes and being—being told, you know, their stories that they get to pretend to be somebody and get some, you know, somebody else in their per—in their group—a hard time about being a third class individual when they’re a first class individual, or member of the crew, et cetera… [participant trails off]

**Personal relationship to Titanic.** When Titanic comes to mind, Arthur has the following thoughts:

I guess the simplest way to put it is the Titanic is a great—one of the greatest examples of how man’s arrogance can—can get us into trouble and cause a great tragedy, but at the same time [pause] we’re able to learn from it. Not always…and not always effectively do we learn these lessons. Uh, but it just, you know, it—it’s one of those things that goes to show you that some of life’s greatest lessons are also the most difficult to—to swallow.
Arthur described the personal meaning that he derives from Titanic by describing the post-sinking lived experiences of a notable Titanic passenger:

Um, the stories that I tell about various characters, or—not characters, but passengers—on the museum—on the—on the Titanic, rather—I tend to give that individual, um, the benefit of the doubt because there, I mean, there—there were people on board which all the stories that you hear and all the stories that are personalized or that are publicized about them, you know, spin them in—shed them in a…them in a really negative light. Sir Cosmo Duff-Gordon comes to mind in particular. He was chastised throughout the rest of his life, a-uh, over the allegations that he bribed the crew to lower the lifeboat early. And then he bribed the crew not to go back and, um, part of that stems from also, the quote—a quote that is shown in the museum at the very beginning, and they don’t show the entire quote, uh, the entire statement that he made, but what is on display in the museum leads you to believe that he wasn’t even concerned with anybody else all he was con—it never even occurred to him to—‘that I could, that I would bother to help somebody else’. It never occurred, um, and that quote in itself shines him in a relatively negative light, and when I tell his story I kinda put not really, uh, a positive spin to it but, you know, I—I make it known that we don’t know all of the details of that particular situation. All of the details that we do know are hearsay. Because he would nev—he would never talk about it. He never once, uh, came out and answered the allegations that—you, this is what happened, this is why I’m in the situation that I’m in. Somebody would ask him a question about the Titanic, he’d turn around and walk away from him. He never defended—he would—he never defended himself. You know, uh, in—in that particular case I tend to give these people the benefit of the doubt and show them as human beings you know, fallible.

A strong interest in Titanic did not play a role in Arthur pursuing his current job. Though, he admitted that one has to have a certain level of enthusiasm for Titanic to do his job. He does not have an above-average curiosity about the Titanic. Arthur acknowledges that his life has become infiltrated by Titanic since his job began and it is even noticeable to his family:

Um, since…uh, my wife hates it [laughs]. Well, we’ll be watching TV or—or, you know, just a—a television show and there’ll be a reference to, uh, some kind of Titanic theme, and she’ll just look over at me and grin, and she goes: ‘I can’t even get away with it when—I can’t even get away from it even when you’re off’
the clock!’ ‘...Watching TV and Titanic is everywhere, what is with this?’ It—it’s kind of a running joke between us.

Arthur has seen the 1997 movie and still enjoys watching it on occasion.

**Suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display**

Arthur has been employed at the Branson museum attraction for several years, and I asked him if, after seeing a lot of exhibits come and go, there was anywhere in the museum attraction where he felt dress or costume could be added to make a bigger impact for visitors. He said,

…in the third-class room, uh, having, uh, a mannequin in there dressed up like your typical third-class individual would be...whether it’s a man, or a woman, or a man and a woman for that matter, but that would be really tight in that particular, um, in that particular display. That third-class room, and, unfortunately throughout the third-class, uh, corridor there’s really no place that we could do that.

**Participant observations and reflections.** I encountered Arthur for the first time in the first gallery. He was stationed in that gallery at that time to provide information and a scripted tour for incoming visitors. I felt self-conscious taking so many notes because it was my first museum attraction visit for this research study, so I approached him to explain what I was doing. He said it was fine – that people take notes in the museum attraction all the time, even if it is not for a school project. I later encountered him in the Grand Staircase Gallery. Before entering, I overheard him discussing similarities and differences between the history of Titanic and the movie with another visitor so I approached him. We had a lengthy discussion, and I invited him to be a part of my research project. He said he was interested so I gave him my card and an Informed
Consent document. He said he would call me to set up an interview. He became formally enrolled in the study a short time later.

**Narrative 3: Molly**

*Dress and costume displays.* Molly described some of the dress objects that are on display and how they are contextualized by being displayed with photos from the era that showcase the same or similar objects being worn or used:

We have rings. Clothing, jewelry, shoes, hats. We have a pair of pants and socks. There’s different types of jewelry and what not… I guess I think of it [luggage and bags] more as an accessory, because we have one…two leather bags. The Gladstone bag [see Figure 5.22] and the alligator bag. And we have two necklaces, two rings, a little pin, we have a pair of pants, a pair of socks, a pair of shoes. We have the pictures so it very much sets the time. They have got that period which I think the dress is very specific to that era.

*Figure 5.22.* The Gladstone bag that was recovered from the Titanic wreckage. It is currently on display at Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition in Las Vegas, Nevada. From Geller, J.B. (2009). *Titanic: The artifact exhibition* (p. 33). Atlanta, GA: RMS Titanic, Inc.
Molly acknowledged that, though dress artifacts can be difficult to prepare for display and properly maintain for long-term preservation (see “Curatorial and Educational Outreach Tasks” section below), they also add a rich source of information from which visitors can learn about Titanic and the time period in general:

…with the dress items, I think it gives it a more person touch. And I think people can make a connection with them more than just a candy dish. A pair of pants… I mean, somebody wore those pants. We have a pair of shoes. I mean, this guy wore those shoes and he died. It’s kind of like a prophecy of be careful what you wish for. So, there are some cool things about working with the dress. Probably because I can connect to more than…

and

The more you can take historical events and get to know people and get up close even if it is through inch thick glass…You just make them see… you just can create that personal bond and connection. You know, what would have happened if Titanic hadn’t sunk?

Molly said that it is the concept of ownership of a dress object that helps visitors to make a personal connection: “But I feel like it’s just that personal… just knowing that someone wore those clothes. That could have been some women’s’ wedding ring. I think that really puts that into perspective.”

I asked Molly about the frequency with which dress displays are changed in the Las Vegas location. She said,

I feel like they might have taken one of our necklaces out. But for the most part, the stuff here is pretty permanent. And actually there are Edgar Samuel Andrew’s shoes. I think those are a new thing that came in a few months ago.

She explained that, because Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition is such a high tourist destination that it is not of foremost concern to have a high turnover of objects on display and displays:
Versus, say, if this were in, I don’t know, another city that would be more of a local thing then they might trade them out a little bit more. And a lot of times the only reason they trade them out is because things need to come back for the conservation process.

Molly also felt it was important to mention that the turnover of displays is often a spontaneous process:

Molly: But a lot of times, we don’t even know when things are going to be traded out. It just happens. It might be like a day notice or “We are coming in today to trade stuff out.”

Interviewer: And someone just shows up to do that.

Molly: Yeah. It’s weird. The company is a little… secretive is a bad word because sometimes secretive can have a negative connotation but I think they are careful with it just because of all the emotion and sentiment that goes around this. They don’t really like to broadcast like ‘Oh, we’re shipping artifacts.’ because… There could be crazy pirate stuff going on.

Interviewer: Yeah, people want there hands on it.
Molly: Yeah. It’s just a very touchy situation.

Molly talked about the personal and emotional reactions that can result from viewing some of the dress artifacts in the artifact exhibition. She mentioned one dress artifact in particular: “The shoes… Samuel Edgar Andrew’s shoes [see Figure 5.23]… I think that might be one of the items that pulls the most.” Though Molly believes that the shoes elicit emotional reactions from visitors, she is not sure to what extent the visitor connects with the artifact itself or the story that is associated with the wearer/owner:

And I don’t know if it has to do with his story, because he did not want to be on the Titanic. [Molly began speaking as though she were Samuel Edgar Andrew] ‘I was supposed to be on a different ship, they switched me over and I know I should be excited.’ [Molly speaks as herself again] He wrote this to a letter to Argentina. And, but, you know, he was ‘I know I should be excited but I’m not. I wish that Titanic were lying at the bottom of the ocean.’ I kind of like… I know that’s not like a direct quote. And then he perished. And people read that and the shoes that this man wore… it just really puts it in…
She proceeded to describe the story behind a cook’s cap artifact that is on display in the artifact exhibition (see Figure 5.24):

Also there’s a cook’s cap. And the guy that had it, his last name was Hine. He was the third baker on the ship and he wrote his name on his hat. He didn’t survive but his hat did. And he happened to write his name on it. Little things like that… that’s what I love about this museum.

I asked what artifacts or displays were most popular among visitors. She explained,

I mean, the personal effects are going to be the number one… The jewelry I think it one of the biggest draws. I think that the personal effects is what really draws people to…[participant trails off].

Molly explained that there are visitors who come dressed in period dress to, in effect, add themselves to the display and further contextualize the history:
And we have people that come in full costume and if I can find it [referring to a photo of visitors dressed in period costume]... I think it’s up in the office. There was a family that came in decked out in costume. So we get people who come [visit] in costumes sometimes.

Molly thought that it would be fun to come to work dressed in period attire for her own entertainment.

Curatorial and educational outreach tasks. Molly is responsible for what she described as “policing duties,” referring to the reminders that visitors must be given on a regular basis to abide by the rules of the exhibition (e.g., having visitors turn off cell phones, reminding visitors not to take pictures because they are not allowed, keeping children quiet and behaving appropriately around the artifacts, picking up trash, and so forth). She described some of these duties in further detail:

Which sadly we spend the majority of our time doing. Like ‘Turn off your cell phone, don’t take the pictures, keep your kids quiet, keep the noise level down.’ I’ve even had as far as ‘Don’t do shots out of a bottle in the exhibit.’ So a lot of it
is just making sure that everything is… picking up trash that other people have thrown on the ground or just making sure that everything runs smoothly.

She is responsible for the general maintenance of the exhibition proper, which includes making sure that the space around artifact display cases is kept clean.

With regard to artifacts, Molly does not have direct contact with them but is responsible for checking artifact lighting, display case temperature, humidity, and light sensors on a regular basis. She explained that other tasks involving more direct contact with artifacts are handled by the collections department and curators employed by RMS Titanic Inc.:

Because we really don’t have direct contact with them. They’re all in airtight sealed… except for the big pieces that are out in the open. So, we don’t actually have any direct contact with them. Well, the collections department from the RMS Titanic comes in and they do it over night so I’ve never actually seen the process. So they might come in at midnight then when we come in everything is switched around. I’d like to see the process at some point mostly because I would like to hold one of the rings or something like that. It’s so sparkly and pretty.

In terms of conservation and preservation tasks specifically related to dress and costume displays, Molly explained,

Um, well, we have to… Everyday we monitor the temperature and humidity. We are lucky in this environment in Vegas because we have a very dry climate. It does get very, very hot but it’s dry and that’s the most important thing with preserving these artifacts… is to keep the moisture away from them.

She provided further detail about the scientific aspects of conservation and preservation related to dress artifacts (i.e., crystal formation on metals, heat, and lighting):

When you go through the museum you see a lot of metal that has these green crystals which are salt and no matter what they do, they will never be able to get those salts out. They will always… There is a hot water heater… When I started they didn’t have any of the green crystals and now the whole top room is pretty covered in them. So we have to check temperature and humidity. The light… light also… Fridays I go around with this light meter… I have to do everything like
five times because it never really works properly. If the light is too intense, that
can disintegrate it. We used to have a leather apron that one of the guys that
would shovel coals into the boilers wore and they had to take that out and send it
back to the conservators because we have work with conservators all over the
world… They kind of… not really repair it, but just kind of strengthen it a little
bit. At night a lot of the case are because of the house lights that come up are just
too harsh on them. Because the lighting overall is pretty dim in there. There’s a
lot of filters on it. Even if it’s bright there are filters. To kind of cut it. I’m trying
to think what else we do with the… Just checking humidity and light. I mean one
of the reasons that we don’t allow pictures in there is because of the light because
people don’t realize how intense the flashes are from cameras. And over time that
could take that pair of pants we have in there and just make it brittle and start to
fall a part. So, that is one of the main reasons why we don’t allow photos in there.

Molly said that working with dress artifacts is different than working with other
types of artifacts because

[dress artifacts] are a lot more sensitive than a metal hot water heater or a glass
candy dish. They’re a lot more temperamental. The fabric fabrics can disintegrate,
they can fall apart. So, you do have to take a little bit of extra care with them.

When I asked Molly about exhibit design and set-up she explained that she does
not directly deal with this process on a regular basis, but did offer information about how
dress artifacts are treated in preparation for display and the other departments of RMS
Titanic Inc. that directly deal with exhibit design and set-up:

Molly: I know that all the cases are sealed. They aren’t necessarily climate
controlled. They don’t have any like, individual air units or dehumidifiers or
anything like that but they are seal at specific temperatures. You just have to be
more careful with them all the way around because they are… the clothing, the
fabric are more fragile items. But that’s something that would be for the
collections department. How they do it because unfortunately I’ve never been
here… I know they all have the white gloves and there’s to be no oils, no salts,
everything ha to be done so carefully to place them in there because they are so
fragile.

Interviewer: Okay. And the collections department is off sight?
Molly: Yeah. Our company is based out of Atlanta, Georgia. It’s a subsidiary of the RMS Titanic, Inc. That’s kind of like who runs us. But, yeah, the conservators are all over the world depending on what their specialty is.

Molly also described how the display cases are assembled and prepared for the display of precious artifacts:

I know that they painted the cases. A lot of the cases they used to be black and most of them are a creamish color. And we used to have black felt or velvet on the bottom and now it’s like a cream felt or velvet. But I would say maybe since I’ve been here, there have been three or four that have been done. I don’t know.

As an extension of our discussion about specific conversation and preservation processes, Molly offered a detailed explanation of the two-year-long process that ensues when an artifact is recovered from the ocean, preserved, and prepared for display:

So pretty much what happens is they bring this stuff up and they put it… they have to re-stabilize it like pitch black rooms, salt water… They actually bring up salt water from that area to re-stabilize it. The minute these things get unstable… even the metal will start to break apart. Once they stabilize it in the salt water in the pitch black room then they slowly start to introduce light to it. Once it’s stabilized in the light then they slowly start to add fresh water to it to try to get the harsh salts and all the of salt water. So, once it’s stabilized in the light, in the salt water… I’m sorry, in the fresh water, then they will slowly start to oxidize it. So it could be like a two year process just to get something in a case to where it’s stable. Some things take a little bit longer. Some things might take a little bit less. Like a glass candy dish might not take that long, but a pair of socks, some leather shoes… that’s going to take a lot longer to go through.

Molly also added a detailed explanation of legalities associated with Titanic artifacts that are displayed in exhibits and museums during her interview. This explanation appears, in its entirety, in Appendix M.

The condition of an artifact often dictates how often (and for how long) it can be exhibited: “The most things that are changed out frequently… The paper items, just
because they are most fragile.” Such decisions are made by the collections department, Molly explained.

Molly stated that she often leads tours of the artifact exhibition. Tours may be provided for VIPs, celebrities, and educational tour groups (e.g., school field trips and Girl Scout troops).

Molly will sometimes add her own narratives for visitors to relate to when leading tours of the artifact exhibition (see “Living History Interpreters” section below for further information about tours):

I always joke around. You know men, if you ever doubt for one second that diamonds are not a woman’s best friend, that was sitting in the ocean for seventy five years, just to let you know. And the women are always like… the men are always like ‘Now I have to go get her a diamond ring. Thank you.’

The majority of the jewelry artifacts displayed in the exhibition proper are available for purchase as replicas in the gift shop.

**Living history interpreters.** Molly explained that living history interpreters are not currently used at the Las Vegas location, and it is a self-guided tour. Even though she is supposed to circulate around the exhibition, she will sometimes make an exception and guide tours: “If I get a group of people that are really interested in it, even though we are supposed to circulate around the exhibit, I’ll stay with them throughout it because it makes me so happy to see people like ‘This is so cool!’”

According to Molly, the staff members that circulate around the exhibition do not wear period costume; rather, they wear the equivalent of business casual dress (e.g., a conservative blouse or polo shirt and slacks or a skirt of appropriate length). There is one select time of the year that a tour guide might wear period dress: “On Halloween
sometimes they do these haunted history tours. So we’ll have people in period costume.”

She said that the artifact exhibition has received positive feedback from visitors in response to tour guides in period dress. While she thinks period costumes would be a “cool thing to add,” she also recognizes that they are an additional monetary expense because period costumes have to be constructed and continually maintained.

Molly was particularly in favor of having costumed living history interpreters portraying actual passengers that were aboard the ship in 1912:

You know, if you had someone dressed up as Fredrick Fleet telling his story on the promenade deck. Or… and everybody knows the Unsinkable Molly Brown. She was as loud and boisterous and ballsy as Kathy Bates portrayed her to be. And if they had her hanging out in the staircase I think that would add a lot of interest.

The discussion of having a living history interpreter portray Frederick Fleet led Molly to speculate about whether “ghost Frederick” [the ghost of Frederick Fleet who is believed by many to be present in various artifact exhibitions and museums] would appreciate an actor portraying him. Upon further discussion, it became clear that Molly was well-versed in the stories related to Titanic exhibitions and museums being haunted.

Molly: There is weird stuff that goes on in there so I really don’t know if ghost Fredrick would… It sounds crazy.

Interviewer: Is this the one that the Ghost Hunters\textsuperscript{52} episode was filmed?

Molly: No. That was in Atlanta. That was a temporary exhibit at the aquarium. And I actually asked the general manager about that. I said, ‘[Name of general

\textsuperscript{52} Ghost Hunters is a television show that follows a group of paranormal researchers as they investigate haunted built structures all across the United States. One episode of the show was titled “Titanic Terror” (season five, episode six). The paranormal researchers investigated a Titanic exhibit at the Georgia Aquarium. You can find more information about this show and the “Titanic Terror” episode at the following websites: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0426697/ and http://www.syfy.com/ghosthunters/episodes/season/s05/episode/e506/titanic_terror.
manager]53, I heard Ghost Hunters wants to come here, why haven’t they come?’ and she said ‘I don’t know.’ However, I don’t think I could work here afterwards because I’ve experienced like crazy things that are completely unexplainable in there. Yeah, Fredrick is probably our most active… spirit that is in there. But it’s a protective sense. He’s trying to protect people from the iceberg that’s in the next room. I get defensive because people will say it’s his fault. And it happened like yesterday. This girl was like ‘Man, what an idiot.’ And I was like ‘Excuse me?’ And I got really defensive because in my mind I’m like ‘Oh, my god, Fredrick is going to get really pissed off then he’s going to do something. The door is going to fly open. Oh, my god.’ And so I told her and of course she got attitude with me.

Reflections on emotional reactions to content by visitors and visitor behavior in the artifact exhibition. Molly explained that she has witnessed a variety of reactions to the artifact exhibition by visitors. She has noticed that visitor reactions change as they move through the exhibition: “People start out laughing and joking but by the time they get to the end… there is a mood change.”

Molly has a great deal of respect for history, and, as a result, feels very protective about how it is understood and revered by the public:

Yeah, it’s so… I get such a respect for history. I am such a World War Two history nerd. It’s more a social aspect then battle movements. Even just the … how many spoon they had on the Titanic. It’s the social aspect to it. And I get so defensive to it.

She explained some specific instances in which she has had to explicitly defend and protect Titanic’s history to visitors while leading tours:

Molly: People will find out that their passenger died and they will laugh and go ‘Oh, man. That sucks.’ And I have so many customers complain about me to this and I really don’t care. They tell me I need to lighten up. They tell me… you do realize some died a horrible miserable death, right? And they’re like ‘Yeah.’ And I’m like, ‘So why is this funny to you?’ And then they just kind of stare at me like I just all of the sudden sprouted horns or something.

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53 Molly stated the first name of the general manager in this quotation, but it was omitted in this presentation of the findings to protect the general manager’s confidentiality.
Interviewer: And they complain about you?

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: Do they ever say anything back to you when you say that to them?

Molly: I had one women get in my… well, because her husband was laughing and I saw like, ‘Sir, this was a real individual.’ And he was like ‘Yeah.’ And I said, ‘then it’s really not just that funny.’ And then he walked away then his wife came flying back, got in my face, called me a condescending bitch. But I take a lot of it like so personally because these people…This really was a horrible…Could you imagine being in the North Atlantic and you know at this point that you are going to die and it’s just a matter of time? It’s just not a humorous situation.

Molly feels that the artifact exhibition’s Las Vegas residence (i.e., a tourism-based city) contributes to the cavalier, entertainment-fueled attitude that is often showcased by visitors. This attitude is also revealed in actions that she has observed:

We get people that are just wasted. I mean they just come in like bombed and they’ll fall asleep on benches and it’s also a lot because they come in just because they want something to do. And it’s not cheap. It’s $25 a person. And those will just like race through. They’ll be laughing, they’ll be joking. They just won’t take it seriously whatsoever. They just wanted something to do or their friends dragged them along. I think they… I like it because so many people can see it. But I don’t think it gets the respect that it deserves in Vegas. Versus if it was in Washington DC in the Smithsonian or something…or the museums in New York.

The location of the artifact exhibition in Las Vegas, Molly feels, somewhat encourages visitors to adopt one of the famous adages associated with the fun a person has while visiting Las Vegas:

But I do think it has something to do with Vegas and the party mindset. Also it has something to do with...Vegas has that ‘What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.’ This city, which I blame them for advertisements that you can do whatever you want. That’s why we have situations. People taking pictures. People acting up. I have been called everything in the book by…This happened to me a couple weeks ago this women was screaming at me, ‘let me in please!’ Because I told her to erase her photos.

and
I mean I watch people… when I have caught people touching the big piece… oh…And that room echoes and I’m like ‘What the hell are you doing? Get out of here!’ I’ll start like yelling at them and whatnot.

Molly has noticed that other visitors assist in helping her to keep behavior appropriate and respectful in the exhibition proper:

People love to tattle on each other. Honestly, the adults are no different then the third graders that I work with. So, yeah, it’s like ‘they were taking pictures.’ Even if they don’t say it they kind of give you this work. So yeah, I’ve had customers tattle on each other and they get in fights over it. But other customer’s definitely do get irritated you know. ‘Shhh!’ or ‘you’re not supposed to be taking pictures.’ It’s monitoring that the customers do for us…Which is great… Because honestly, you’re not in the mood sometimes to do that. Sometimes it’s just don’t take pictures… Stop taking pictures. It’s not really that difficult.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter Five I presented the research findings from interviews with research participants (both museum attraction visitors and staff) in a narrative format. At the conclusion of each narrative I offer participant observations and my reflections on the interview process and on shaping each narrative, where applicable.

The chapter began with a selection of narratives that described the visitor participants’ lived experience at each of the four museum attraction locations. The visitor narratives were presented thematically and arranged in six sections: (1) general reactions to the museum attraction visit and the background/interests that informed the visit, (2) description of and reactions to dress and costume display(s), favorite dress or costume display, and reasons for display of dress and costume; (3) interactions with and reactions to living history interpreters, (4) personal relations made to museum attraction content and emotional reactions to museum attraction content, (5) what the participant knew and
what the participant learned, and (6) suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display improvement.

The chapter continued with the presentation of staff narratives. Due to variations in the topics covered during each staff interview, each narrative contains a different combination of the following thematic sections: (1) dress and costume displays, (2) curatorial and educational outreach tasks, (3) living history interpreters, (4) personal relationship to Titanic, (5) reflections on emotional reactions to content by visitors and visitor behavior in the museum attraction, and (6) suggestions for Titanic museum attraction dress and costume display.
CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS:
RESEARCH QUESTIONS TWO AND THREE

The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event. This chapter is comprised of a presentation of the research findings that answer research questions two and three. The presentation of the results for research question two illustrate how the movie and character of Rose were used to relate to the historical event of Titanic. The presentation of the results for research question three reveal specific variations in the lived experience of the museum attraction visit for participants who both have and have not seen the 1997 film. The experiences of both Titanic museum attraction visitor and staff are reported for each research question. I conclude with a summary of the chapter.

Research Question #2

The second research question was as follows: Do Titanic museum attraction visitors use the 1997 film Titanic and/or the character of Rose and her dress to relate to the historical event of Titanic? Titanic museum attraction visitor and staff responses are presented in two different sections. In order to categorize the vast responses that contributed to answering this research question, this section is divided into three categories. The categories were developed through the use of interview questions as frames of analysis and are:
The use of the movie to relate to the historical events of Titanic,

The use of Rose to relate to the historical events of Titanic, and

The use of the movie to relate to dress and costume displays in the museum attraction.

The Use of the Movie to Relate to the Historical Events of Titanic

Visitor responses. While the participants did not relate to Rose, they did relate to the historical events of Titanic through the movie as a whole. Three emergent themes were identified from the individual utterances of participants: (1) spontaneous mental connections between the movie and historical events when viewing certain museum attraction content, (2) use of the movie as a foundation to build further historical understanding and/or contextualize current understanding, and (3) the use of the movie as a source of comparison to explore or confirm its accuracy.

- Theme #1: Spontaneous mental connections between the movie and historical events when viewing certain museum attraction content

   It was common for participants to report instances when they drew a spontaneous connection to the movie or were reminded of the movie in their own mind. Daisy described the process of making these personal connections to the movie in her own mind as an “instantaneous reaction” when viewing certain displays. Rosalie described a similar experience when she entered the corridor that led to the full-scale replica of the first class stateroom (see Figure 6.1):

   There was this part where you entered the part of the exhibition that takes you into the hallway of the ship where you would enter your stateroom. I… it was so funny that as soon as I walked in there I automatically recognized that this was exactly what it looked like in the movie [see Figure 6.1] and then looking at the
third class stateroom [see Figure 6.2]. I also identified with that being exactly what the movie portrayed.


Alice also alluded to the experience of an instantaneous reaction, explaining that it was a cognitive process that she did not always have control over:

Alice: There… I wouldn’t say directly to the movie but there were places where I flip-flopped from. The room with the dishes… And I felt like that particular room flopped back and forth between history and the movie because the dishes themselves reminded me more of the movie. But they kept talking about the logo in the middle and things like that. And how each dish was for a certain purpose or a certain class and that kept drawing me back into history. It’s like I wanted to reference the movie but the facts were just kept putting me more into a historical mode. So I thought that was cool to reference it in one way but to be pulled to a different one. I felt like that was very effective.

Interviewer: Okay. So the visuals kind of pushed toward the movie but the text kind of helped to ground that.

Alice: Yes.

Judith simply explained that, as she walked through the various replicated physical environments, she imagined who might be present in each environment and what they might be wearing:

I mean, probably being from the movie and knowing, and having seen the clothes that they wore in the movie. Then, you know, you could go back and think about, you know as you’re walking through the hall, you know, and you could think about that, then, a lot easier, being in that, in those types of costumes and walking around the ship.

Participants found themselves making spontaneous connections to the movie when viewing the following displays and/or galleries: the life vest artifact (Caroline and Simone) (see Figure 5.16 in Chapter Five), the Grand Staircase Gallery (Dorothy, Ivan, Jack, Judith, Peter, and Victor), the interactive sloping decks (Craig, Neil, and Tia), a comparison of photos of real passengers and the actors and actresses that played them in the movie (Nora and Caroline), full-scale replicas of third and first class cabins and corridors (Caroline, Daisy, Henry, Jack, Marshall, Nora, and Rosalie), pictures of the
gymnasium on board the ship (Caroline), the Outer Deck Gallery (Jessie, Juliet), the full-scale replica lifeboat (Neil), and the Captain’s Bridge Gallery (Craig, Ivan, Nora).54

Only one of these displays – the life jacket artifact – was specifically related to dress. Two participants related the life jacket (also referred to as a life vest) to the movie (see Figure 5.16 in Chapter Five). Caroline thought of the movie when she saw the life jacket artifact because it brought to mind a specific movie scene: “Um, when I saw the life jacket I thought of, of that because they, you know, they were all tying them on each other.” Simone also made a spontaneous reference to the movie when she viewed the life vest artifact toward the end of the museum attraction: “When we saw the, uh, the life vest, I remembered them with the life vest issue [in the movie]. Who’s going to get one? Is some guy trying to take one of a child?”

There were other displays that caused participants to visualize scenes from the movie in their minds and, in so doing, visualize the appearance of the characters. For example, Judith especially enjoyed walking on the Grand Staircase (see Figure 6.3), and it led her to visualize one specific scene in the movie:

It was a lot of fun to be on the replica of the grand staircase…You could definitely…[participant trails off]…then you think about the movie, and you think about the end of the movie where he’s up on the top waiting for her to come up, you know, and this kind of thing and, um, yea, it was, it was a nice relationship then, too, having seen the replica in the movie.

54 This list of displays and galleries to which participants made a spontaneous mental connection is not exhaustive. There were other displays and galleries to which connections were made, but this list is representative of the most common responses.
There were some occasions when participants related to the movie by overlapping
the movie with the historical events to simultaneously consider both representations of
Titanic. In so doing, the participants experienced a blurring of the museum attraction
content and movie environment and objects. For Tia, this meant treating the full-scale
replica environments presented in the museum attraction as movie sets. While Tia did
simultaneously consider both the movie and historical representations, she also expressed
that it was nice to see a dress artifact that was removed from the movie environment:
[The live vests] were represented-ed in the movie [see Figure 5.16 in Chapter Five]. So like, I kind of already knew what the life vest, the bulkiness and what it looked like. So on that aspect, it was kind of neat to see it, you know, the artifact aspect, but it was not like, ‘oh, that’s one of the life vests,’ before I even read the plaque, just because the visual of the movie already established that identity in me.

For Tia, viewing the actual life vest worn by a passenger was somewhat anti-climatic because the visual of it that was presented in the movie had already established its appearance. It was not as if it was being seen for the first time; that is, it was not a novel experience for Tia to see the life vest. For this reason, it was difficult to consider this museum attraction content without overlapping the movie and the historical events to inform the personal meaning-making process.

Alice felt that the replica physical environments contained in Titanic: The Experience were a sometimes not-so-subtle nod to the movie because they reminded her of the movie on several occasions. Though she relate to some of the content by overlapping the movie with the historical events, she also made a clear distinction between areas of the museum that felt real and others that simply felt fake and theatrical. Some of the replica environments felt fake in a way that made her feel as though she was on a movie set by default:

And then as I continued to go through there was some room that to me looked very well done. I don’t done how real they were but there was a bedroom… That scene looked very realistic to me. I don’t know if it was or not it just felt more real. But then they had a different room, like a communication room where they had like a telegraph machine and stuff like that… And that little room… That felt very fake. That felt very done up. It didn’t feel like that would have been anything that really truly existed on that boat. I felt like some areas they tried to make very real and some areas were just already very theatrical. And if it’s not relating to a real situation, especially something like the Titanic where it’s been so media dropped and it’s been marketing and it’s had movies about it then when it’s not
feeling real, it automatically feels like a movie… it automatically feels fake in that way.

Alice thought that it was nice to see the replica physical environments, but it is important for the museum attraction to define whether it wishes for visitors to draw a connection to the movie or the actual ship from these displays because it is so easy for the two to become overlapped in her mind.

- Theme #2: Use of the movie as a foundation to build further historical understanding and/or contextualize current understanding

Several participants (Alice, Caroline, Dorothy, Jack, Jessie, Judith, Lila, and Victor) used the movie as a foundation to build further historical understanding about Titanic or brainstormed ways in which it could assist in building such a foundation for visitors. Alice suggested that the museum attraction make a more common thread of information about the differences among the social classes throughout the museum attraction content and thought that this could be achieved through dress displays, using Leonardo DiCaprio’s costume (see Figure 6.4) in particular:

And maybe they aren’t real people but give me a mannequin in a dress with that. I think they could have used that to relate the importance of or the elite of the individual that were on these boats. As far as the class was concerned or placed. I also think that it would have benefited to have some of the lower class. The only…we hear… we heard a lot about the different kinds of things and especially with this museum referencing the movie so much… they had the Leonardo DiCaprio character. His character is not of the high class but he was one of the main characters. But he was one of the main characters. But you don’t see any of that. In fact the only place you saw any of that was in the front before you even enter into the museum fully… was one of his costumes during the movie. So I felt like if they are going to reference it there they should have pulled it through the museum. They really should have explored or enhanced the fact that there were different classes aboard. I mean, throughout the displays of the ship, and the breakdown of the ship and the blueprint of the ship they had the class ranks as to who was sleeping where and who had rooms where. But then they don’t really
Figure 6.4. The costume worn by the character Jack (played by actor Leonardo DiCaprio) in the 1997 _Titanic_ movie. This costume is on display at Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida. This costume is similar to the one displayed during my visit and the visit of participants, but includes a vest instead of suspenders. Photograph by author.

Figure 6.5. The wardrobe trunk that is displayed in the full-scale replica of a first class stateroom at Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida. Photograph by author.
reference these people of these lower classes. I think they definitely could have
done a much better job with that.

Caroline’s favorite dress display was a trunk in the full-scale replica of the first class
stateroom (see Figure 6.5). She explained that she enjoyed seeing the contents of the
trunk because it helped her to further understand the historical events through the process
of packing and storing clothing:

It was the, the content of the trunk and just how different that is from what we
have now. Um, and starting to understand—it was nice to see the inside of it like
that and understanding, um, like from watching the movie how they would have
to have all these men carrying these, these really heavy trunks. That’s because all
of the stuff was in there and there were drawers and… [The rest of the statement
was inaudible]. So it was nice to see what was actually inside something like that.

For Juliet, using the movie as a foundation to build further historical understanding meant
correcting some of the preconceptions that she had formed from watching the movie,
especially related to Captain Smith:

I thought before I went to the exhibit… I thought that the captain kind of knew
that the conditions weren’t that great and didn’t really care anyways. He just kind
of wanted to get the ship to New York and push on with it. I didn’t realize… I
thought it was interesting that the captain told the crew to pay attention … just be
real careful and so I thought… I had always kind of pictured the captain as more
of a jerk and I don’t know if maybe that comes from the movie, I can’t remember
but I just pictured him as somebody that didn’t really care so much and just
wanted to keep on the timeline. So I saw a different side of him through this
exhibit that I appreciated.

Henry also referenced the movie to critically reflect upon how the movie portrayed the
cultural composition of the passengers and alter his foundation of knowledge:

One thing I didn’t know what how many Swedish people were on it. I seems like,
I always thought, like from the movie, that it was always a bunch of English
people. I didn’t expect there to be so…I guess going through all the exhibits there
were a lot of examples of Swedish people. And the looking at the end there is a
big list of all the passengers and there’s lots and lots of Johanssen’s…with the
‘sen’. Yeah, it was surprising.
Jack suggested that the movie gallery currently on display at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge should be kept as a permanent exhibit because the movie and historical events inform one another:

I would keep it as a permanent exhibit. Because the movie and the tragedy at this point kind of go hand in hand. Most people know some kind of Titanic either based off the actual historical events or based off the movie. And a lot of people only know about Titanic because of the movie. So I think it is an integral part of the museum experience.

Several of the things that Tia saw in the museum attraction helped her to contextualize or make more sense of what she had seen in the movie. One display that served this function was the interactive sloping decks in the Interactive Gallery (see Figure 6.6):

Like a lot of the pictures, like of how the deck looked, like they had the deck chair, like remembering how that looked. When you looked at the room, of course the staircase, kind of going through the hallways, too, you know this kind of feels like it. Oh, this kind of feels like it. And then of course at the very end with the slantiness. You know you remember Rose trying to grab onto it and, you know, and that was, standing there you were like, wow. And to me I was like, I remember when they made the movie and you heard so much about it and they basically were submerged into that for so long it was like, wow that would be pretty tough as an actor to be slanted for such a long time.

For Tia, it was the movie as a whole and the recollection of Rose’s actions in a particular physical environment that were combined. Jack explained that the spontaneous mental connections that he made to the movie were effortless because, though dramatized, many of the events that happened in the film actually happened to real people.

Simone recalled that the living history interpreter who led her tour group through the museum attraction made a reference to the movie when they reached the gallery that contained a replica of the below-deck storage space. He drew everyone’s attention to the
car that was made famous in the movie by Jack and Rose, but Simone used it as an opportunity to consider how the car actually fit into the historical events by relating it to the travel practices of people today:

Well, he did go out of his way to point to the buggy, so everybody was giggling about that one. I’m pretty sure there were buggies, just like we traveled with our cars and whatever, so I’m sure they brought the whole house on the boat, so yea I can believe that there would be buggies, and that did stick out to me (laughs).

• Theme #3: The use of the movie as a source of comparison to explore or confirm its accuracy
Some participants used the movie as a source of comparison to explore or confirm the accuracy of the movie. Victor thought that the living history interpreter’s costume was accurate period dress, based upon his viewing of the movie and other documentaries:

It seemed like, for as much as I know, ‘course that’s going to be based on Titanic the movie, any documentaries I may have seen from that time period, but it seemed like they were pretty successful with that.

Jessie made a mental note that the movie costumes looked similar to the dress that she was viewing in photos during her visit:

But I made a... I remember making a note when they... when we were in the movie [gallery] that it was... that the clothing was similar… obviously based on that time period but that wasn’t actually from [the time period].

**Staff responses.** Barbara was fully aware that visitors would draw connections to the movie in her museum attractions (the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations), and she views these connections as an opportunity to provide visitors with historical information. She was able to identify the most frequently asked question:

The most asked question before you even put the movie gallery in because a lot of questions are asked up there- was the movie... did the movie tell the facts correctly? They don’t actually say it like that but I know what they are saying. Yes. The facts within Jim’s picture are basically all correct.

When asked if there are currently any direct connections made between the movie and the historical events within the museum attraction proper at the Branson location, Arthur said,

Uh, between the movie and the museum itself…? Not anymore. I really, I can’t—I can’t think of anything. We used to have Mr. Cameron’s one-to-twenty scale model of the—the bough of the ship as it sits on the bottom of the ocean. Which was used at the beginning of the movie as part of one of the segue shots, um, and then obviously there was a connection when we had the—the Movie Gallery and, um, the hats and those dresses and a couple of other displays on in the entire gallery, you know, that would have been a solid connection to, uh, to the movie
from the museum, but right now there aren’t any direct connections other than the subject matter. Not that not that I can really see.

The presence of the movie gallery led visitors to refer to the movie more frequently while in the museum attraction:

They def—the—the Movie Gallery definitely, uh, contributed to—to more questions about [coughs] [sniffs] um, the movie itself as to how real was the movie in comparison to, um, to what actually happened...how much of it was real, how much of it, uh, do you think was fake, was Hollywood, uh, did they do a good job of—of telling the real story and keeping it true to life, um, heard that a lot... A lot more than we do now, but I do still on a regular basis have somebody ...have people walking up to me and asking me, um, if the mov—if—if the movie was—was realistic.

Arthur uses his interaction with visitors in the museum attraction proper as an opportunity to directly connect the historical events of Titanic to the movie as a means of learning:

Yeah, I mean, uh, there—there are a lot of times when someone asked me, um, in particular, they’re asking me, you know, how much of the movie was real, um, I’ll just go to start talk—I’ll go to talking about, ‘well when Jack and Rose were heading into the first class dining gallery, everybody that she mentions and every story that she tells him about each of those individuals... that’s historical fact, and it is...’ And various other things, moments in the movie that are actual re-enactments of things that were actually going on—on, um, on the Titanic so there’s—there’s no um...as—as long as you’re being honest and you’re, you know, you’re—you’re truthful and not misleading, there’s no shying—we don’t shy away from—from the movie at all really.

Though, Arthur said that he generally does not bring the movie up unless the visitors wish to discuss it because

it allows me to—to focus on the Titanic and the people that were actually on board the ship as to, um, playing the ship and what happened off of the movie and showing the difference there, et cetera.
He would rather keep a separation between the historical events and movie, but also acknowledges that creating connections between the two can be educational for some visitors:

I have absolutely no problem bringing up the movie if someone asks me, um, asks me a question. Maybe not even, uh, a question about the movie itself but if mentioning the movie in the way things were the way things were done in the movie versus the way things were done on the ship if that makes it easier to answer the question, or if I get a sense that that individual would have an easier time understanding a reference to the movie versus, uh, something on the ship then I will put it out there, yes. Uh, it—I tend to, um, kind of fly by wire on a—a person by person basis. And try to relate to—to people as best I sense that they would understand the answer that I’m giving them.

Arthur described how having the frame of reference can help visitors to understand the museum attraction content better:

it’s hard to answer without being condescending, um…I think it—it depends…it depends on the reading that I get from them, you know, the—the…I guess that—the vibe that I get off on individual. Uh, and sometimes I am, um, proven dramatically, um, wrong, um, but if I get a sense that the individual’s gonna, you know, understand a reference to the movie or story about things in the movie versus a story about the, um, the ship itself. Sometimes people that, uh, um, not the smart—not the brightest colors in the crayon box…you know, some—sometimes they deal with the movie reference better than a historical reference because a movie reference, uh, is something that they’ve seen something that they’ve— you know, that they’ve experienced for themselves in—even though it’s on TV, uh, but it’s not something that they just hap—you know, that they’re forced to imagine and try to put themselves in that spot they can see the detail and everything around them, et cetera.

Molly first mentioned the movie in the context of discussing that she perceived the mission of the museum as educating the general public about Titanic and the disappointment that she sometimes feels when visitors only see Titanic as a movie:

And one thing that I kind of have a hard time with amongst a lot of things is that people see this as a movie. They do not see it as a real event. People walk into our full replica of the Grand Staircase and say ‘It’s just like the movie.’ And I’m like,
‘Well actually guys, just remember that the movie was based off of this.’ And so everything they associate with the movie…

And

and I think bringing in more things in the movie, that would hinder it. That would cloud their judgment. But I think they do… when they see a piece of the ship… And we read people’s comments and some people get it and some people… ‘Where’s Jack? Where’s Rose?’ ‘Really?! You just spent an hour of your time in here and all you can think of is I’ll never let go?’

For Molly, the mission of Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition is directly connected to the movie:

So I think the mission of this museum is to really show people the human side not the Hollywood side. Be able to get so close to these artifacts. And I think this that a lot of the costume items… the pants, the rings, that makes it personal.

Molly prides the exhibition for its ability to distance the historical events of Titanic and the movie in the exhibition proper because of the reactions that she has noticed visitors have toward its content, as well as the reactions that she hopes they will have:

The exhibit itself is strictly with the ship and I feel like that makes people realize that it is way more beyond a movie. These people did lose their lives. This was a really big part of history and there are so many laws that were changed as far as maritime laws because of this that were not in place before hand.

Though the movie is not directly referenced in the exhibition proper, there are direct mentions in the gift shop, both in displays and the merchandise available for purchase:

At the end of the gift shift we have the movie playing on continuous replay. Which I could probably repeat every word to that Celine Dion song. It makes me want to pull my hair out. But in the gift shop we have like a snow globe that has a Jack and Rose carving in it.

I asked Molly if she had any reflections that she wanted to share about the comprehension of Titanic as a historical event by kids in the artifact exhibition and she .

She stated,
I think that we’re lucky in the sense that a lot of kids have seen the movie. There is a school version which leaves out the sketching scene and the scene in the car. Do you know what I mean? The little more risqué scenes. And actually a lot of movie that have the same thing where they have it edited down. So, school aged kids can watch it. So, I think that we’re fortunate enough in this situation where so many of these kids have scene this movie. Or a lot of elementary schools in fourth or fifth grade will have a Titanic section. And so they come in there’s already kind of like that connection made and so the comprehension increases a little bit more. It’s just… there’s just some.. Everybody always is kind of interested about it. It’s an event that transcends so many different cultures and time. The movie kind of romanticized it a lot but I think the kids comprehend this a lot more just because of all the media and the movies that there are out there.

As Molly explained, it is difficult for some visitors to treat the artifact exhibition as a source of education rather than entertainment because

a lot of people don’t see that because they don’t associate it with an event that actually happened in 1912. They associated it with movie directed by James Cameron starring Leo and Kate Winslet. So I really think it… it very much depends on the person that’s in there.

This may be why the full-scale replica Grand Staircase is one of the most popular elements of the artifact exhibition content:

I think if you were to sit people and ask what there favorite things are as they left the exhibit, which you may want to do, is the staircase. I think that’s what people will be stuck with when they leave over any of artifacts. It is the staircase because of the movie. I think we did a really good job with the sound effects and reproducing like a third class hallway even though it’s twice as wide thanks to the AVAs [Audio Visual and Acoustics].

I asked Molly if she was aware of any discussion within the RMS Titanic Inc. company about whether or not to include any direct references to the movie in the artifact exhibition. She responded,

It’s on continuous replay in our gift shop. If the company has had that discussion, I don’t know. They want it to be more of a museum. Based off just my observations with the company they want to establish it as the event. And not too much of the movie. James Cameron did a phenomenal job. For the most part a
very, very accurate movie. There were things that he had to create a creative license on. But I personally feel that they need to have that separation.

Despite her preference to keep the movie separated from the movie, Molly does find that making references to the movie during guided tours can help visitors to understand Titanic more deeply or from a new perspective.

It think it’s great entertainment and it’s a great educational tool to get people interested in it. But I think that you have to have the movie and the reality. Because it bothers you when people strictly associate the events with the movie…I like relating things. Like, Lady Duff Gordon. Remember the women who designed dirty lingerie and was scandalous? This is her. This is old money versus new money. And look at Margaret Brown from the movie. And she was a first class passenger. So I think it’s easier to build that connection if they have seen that movie. I thin they go hand in hand. So you see the movie and you build on top of it.

In order to determine which explanatory approach is best for the tour group, she will often ask the group, “Has everyone seen the movie?” at the start of the tour. In her experience, the majority of visitors have seen the movie: “nine and a half times out of ten they have. Even like little, little, little kids.”

Molly also spoke about how she has observed visitors drawing connections to the movie during their visits:

I mean, the staircase is the number one thing. It’s kind of fun to just hide in a corner and just watch people’s reaction. Because their eyes just light up. So I think that’s the main way they connect to the movie. Or when you see ‘Oh, my god. These actors that played them in the movie they looked a lot like…just like the captain. Oh, my god that looks like John Jacob Astor.’ That’s one of the eeriest… the actors look so similar to the characters.

Molly has not received comments from visitors expressing disappointment that the movie was not covered in the artifact exhibition:

Nu-huh. We did have one woman a couple weeks ago… I swear to god if the company does this they will get my notice immediately. She felt that we should
have that Celine Dion song playing throughout the entire exhibit on continuous replay. I would jump off a cliff. That would be horrible. She’s just kind of crazy in general. But bringing the movie in more? No. I think maybe people go into it thinking it’s a show. And I say ‘No, no, no. It’s a museum.’ And they say ‘Oh, okay.’ Because everything in Vegas is a show. Because I’ve never had anyone express disappointment in the fact that there was not more from the movie in there.

The Use of Rose to Relate to the Historical Events of Titanic

Visitor responses. As stated in the previous section, it was rare for participants to use Rose to relate to the historical events of Titanic. Participants were able to relate to Rose through both of the stages of life in which she was presented in the movie: “old Rose” and “young Rose.” Victor related to “old Rose” through the audio of an actual Titanic survivor that was playing in the Social Class Distinction Gallery:

I would have to say it was in the room where you heard the, um, voice of the lady who, you could tell that she was, she was older when she gave it, but, it was when she was saying have you heard the [inaudible], staircase [inaudible] grand. Just, the way that you’re actually hearing the voice of somebody that was there, I think that gave me a little bit of that feeling that it’s surreal. This is somebody who was there, this was the voice of somebody that was there, she sounded a lot like the older Rose, so it almost gave, gave some credence to that, but at the same time it’s it was just, sit back and listen to her, listen to what she was saying and you just, wow.

Dorothy made a connection between Rose and seeing the contents of the Grand Staircase Gallery (see Figure 6.3):

Dorothy: Well, when I first learned about the Titanic, especially, it was because I saw the movie, and that was a main part, and to find out that this museum does hold weddings in there and that coincides the most with the movie with that…

Interviewer: …‘Cause Jack and Rose were in love?

55 In the movie, the events of Titanic’s tragic sinking are told from the perspective of fictional survivor, Rose (also known as “old Rose”), who narrates the film as an elderly woman in a modern day framing device. “Old Rose” tells of her personal experiences aboard Titanic as a 17-year-old young woman (“young Rose”).
Dorothy: Yeah.

For Tia, something related to Rose was missing in the museum attraction: “I wanted [to see] the red dress [that Rose wore at the start of the movie] [see Figure 5.21 in Chapter Five for an image of the red dress].” As a fan of the movie, Nora expected to see a more authentic representation of Rose during her visit:

Like there were…there were two outfits in the, um, in the gift shop and one of them was supposed to be what the captain wore and the other one was the red dress that Rose wore in the movie when she was contemplating jumping off the back…of the ship and they were poorly done. Like my first impression when I saw it was ‘Oh my gosh! It looks like a Halloween costume, it looks terrible, it doesn’t even, um, look like it did in the movie’ and I didn’t really pay attention to the captain’s outfit. I just kind of focused on hers and it was [giggles] not good.

When Craig was discussing the “Lucile” reproduction dress display, he thought that the dress was possibly worn by Rose in the movie: “I, well…the—was it Rose’s dress? Well, I mean, I really I don’t remember that particular dress.”

Some participants (Allan and Serena) related to Rose by learning that she was not an actual passenger aboard the ship in 1912. Serena learned that, though she was not real, Rose was representative of an actual passenger. Even after learning this information she still felt a connection to Rose:

Serena: I learned there was no Rose. And…she was a young girl and she was there sailing with her mother. They were very wealthy on first class, but she would hang out with the folks on third class because she was desperate for normal life, really. And her mother didn’t like that, but she’d take off, so she would have the maid or whoever was traveling with them, I guess some maid or caretaker spying on the daughter, and so I found that very interesting, and so I’m thinking, maybe that was, that would have been on the bow of the Titanic, as Rose.

Interviewer: Okay. And does that change your perception of Rose in any way? Knowing that she’s not real?

Serena: No. No.
Interviewer: Ok. You still like her as a character?

Serena: Yes.

Interviewer: You can admire her for what she is?

Serena: Yes. Because I admire that kid, that, uh, that she, maybe she was disobeying her, her, parent, her mother because she was going wherever her mother didn’t really want her to go. But maybe her mother, kind of, like, uh, back in her mind was ok with it, to allow her daughter to do something that she was enjoying. But I admired this young girl, teenage girl, to just say, I don’t want to be with the elite, or the wealthy people. I want to go see what the other folks do. So she takes off to be with, not second glass, but third class folks. And I admired her for that.

Staff responses. Barbara said that one of the most frequently asked questions by visitors is, “Was Jack and Rose real?” Barbara has been witness to some intense emotional reactions to this question’s answer:

And I will look at them and say- if I happen to be down there and everyone has been given the same note- ‘Do you really want to know the answer to that?’ because sometimes they get upset…that you’ve now disclosed that those are not real people. He took a composite and he had to put a thread through the story to tell the facts. Otherwise it’s another documentary. And this is an entertainment movie. So that’s the most asked question: Is Jack and Rose real? And more complicated, there is a J. Dawson in Halifax that was a crew member. Some people think that Jack Dawson was buried in Halifax. He wasn’t. He wasn’t. He was a crew member.

According to Arthur, the movie character of Rose is a popular subject for questions. Arthur said that he thinks of Rose as “a personification of a lot of young first-class women at the time.” When I first met Arthur on the Grand Staircase during my Branson visit he explained to me that Rose is, in fact, loosely based on a real passenger, “so [he is] told.” He offered the following reflections about how he handles the situation when a visitor asks questions about the movie characters Jack and Rose or mentions them in the museum attraction:
Um, it depends on the individual as to—as to how I [laughs] deliver the bad news to them. Um, some of them—some of them are more more enthusiastic about it than others and you can tell, uh, that you’re—that you’re about to break somebody’s heart, um, and others are…the way they ask, you know, they’re just joking around so I’ll joke around—I’ll joke around right back with them, uh but we—we get people, uh, [sniffs] forever wanting to find Jack or Rose on the Memorial Wall and ‘why aren’t they listed up there?’

and

[Beyond the Grand Staircase, Jack and Rose are often mentioned] in the Interactive Gallery on the sloping decks [see Figure 6.6]… Every once in a while you’ll get somebody who, um, on the—the shallow the—the…not the—not—not steep one but the shallower one on the sloping decks that, uh, a couple will get up there and they’ll—they’ll pretend they’re Jack and Rose and the whole ‘I’m flying’ moment. And she’ll stand in front of him and put her arms out and such…let’s see…there’s really no telling where in the museum that you’re gonna be asked where, you know, where it concerns about Jack, you know, where they’re asking about Jack and Rose.

After Molly discussed the ways in which Titanic’s history is romanticized in the movie, I asked her to reflect upon the ways in which visitors have romanticized Titanic’s history during their artifact exhibition visit:

Well, it all goes back to the movie with Jack and Rose. They’re people that come in here thinking that Jack and Rose are real and I’ve seen people cry when I told them they are not. And it’s really hard for me not to laugh. But a lot of it goes back to the movie and that faded love story and they see the Grand Staircase and they think ‘Oh, Jack was on the top and the old Rose has died and she’s walking to the top of the staircase.’ But I think history, even beyond the movie, I think history has romanticized it a lot more than what it was at that time…kind of glorified it throughout the years. People relate everything back to that movie and…yeah. I personally have decided that before I leave this job I am going to get a cardboard cutout of Leonardo DiCaprio and hide it at the staircase just for my own entertainment value and watch all the women just lose it. But I guess that it’s just… I think the movie, the whole romance of this. Even like…There’s this romantic sense of even like the sinking, the Strauss’. ‘I will not be parted from my husband. So we will not be parted, we will live together.’ So, did they actually go back to their stateroom as the water was rushing? No, nobody knows what they really did. James Cameron had to take that creative license. But that whole…the whole tragedy about it. Everything has been romanticized about it. There’s really not one specific thing, there’s just everything.
Molly said that visitors frequently make connections that are directly related to the movie characters of Jack and Rose:

I think a lot of people, even though they know that Jack and Rose aren’t real, they are still hung up on it. And a lot of questions I get: ‘Now was there really, like, the Heart of the Ocean. Was there really this?’ And I think maybe the exhibit doesn’t live up to their expectation because of the movie. I feel like the movie set the bar for it. I don’t know. But a lot of people will… like I said the staircase is the number one thing.

I asked Molly if she ever discusses the actual passenger(s) that were aboard the ship in 1912 that the movie character of Rose was based upon with visitors. This question sparked the following conversation:

Molly: Are you talking about the Kate Phillips?

Interviewer: What was her name?

Molly: Kate and her partner was Worley, Henry Worley.

Interviewer: She was a movie start. Why am I not thinking of her name now? Dorothy Gibson.

Molly: I have never heard people relate Rose to her. There was a woman. Kate Florence Philips and she went by Kate Marshal.

Interviewer: Oh. That’s a new one for me.

Molly: She worked for a guy named Henry Worley, I believe. He went by… I can’t remember his little alias that he used. He was married, left his wife for Kate and they were coming for America. Rumor has it that he did buy her a sapphire necklace. Was it La Coeur de la Mer? Did it have those whole ties to Napoleon? No. But, that’s what I’ve always heard. I have never heard them say anything about Dorothy Gibson.

Interviewer: At the Branson tour that I took… because they lead guided tours with costumed interpreters there pretty regularly. That’s one of the things I noticed that they would say when people asked about Rose. Or they would point it out when we were on the Grand Staircase. They would say ‘Did you know that Rose is actually based upon…’
Molly: But that’s what I’m saying though is that, I don’t know. I feel like people want to grasp at straws to find some sort of realness in the story but I have never once heard that or even read anywhere that Rose is based on Dorothy Gibson. I have heard the rumbles about this Kate Phillips. Just because he was leaving his wife. And she perished and he survived. I’ve never heard Dorothy Winifred Gibson… I’ve never heard that one…But yeah, I’ve never heard Dorothy Gibson with that.

The living history interpreters at the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations explicitly inform visitors that Rose is based upon actual passenger Dorothy Gibson.

**The Use of the Movie to Relate to Dress and Costume Displays in the Museum Attraction**

*Visitor responses.* There were some specific instances when participants used dress and costume displays to relate to the museum attraction content and the historical events of Titanic. When asked to describe dress and costume displays in the museum attraction, Henry recalled that, prior to the movie gallery, there was not much mention of period dress at all. Judith expressed a similar sentiment, explaining that, in the absence of more plentiful dress displays at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, she visualized the movie costumes in her mind as a reference.

Henry felt that it was important to go beyond the movie costumes and first class dress to present explicit information and visuals about what third class dress would look like:

Henry: I guess maybe, like they didn’t really focus on the dress other than in the upper class. Well, I mean, they had, like, a sample of one of Leonardo’s outfits. But it was mostly, like, extravagant dresses that Rose wore or Miss Molly Brown. But before the movie part there wasn’t very much at all that mentioned clothes.

Interviewer: Ok, so would it be your suggestion to kind of add more mention of it in the text because there wasn’t a mention of it?
Henry: Yeah. I mean I think just maybe mentioning more of how they dressed in the third class.

Interviewer: Ok, so comparing across the classes?

Henry: Yeah.

Alice also took notice of the imbalanced representation of third class dress at the museum attraction that she visited (Titanic: The Experience in Orlando). She recalled that the only extant representation of third class dress was the movie costume worn by Leonardo DiCaprio on display in the lobby (see Figure 6.4):

As far as the class was concerned or placed. I also think that it would have benefited to have some of the lower class. The only…we hear… we heard a lot about the different kinds of things and especially with this museum referencing the movie so much… they had the Leonardo DiCaprio character. His character is not of the high class but he was one of the main characters. But he was one of the main characters. But you don’t see any of that. In fact the only place you saw any of that was in the front before you even enter into the museum fully… was one of his costumes during the movie. So I felt like if they are going to reference it there they should have pulled it through the museum. They really should have explored or enhanced the fact that there were different classes aboard. I mean, throughout the displays of the ship, and the breakdown of the ship and the blueprint of the ship they had the class ranks as to who was sleeping where and who had rooms where. But then they don’t really reference these people of these lower classes. I think they definitely could have done a much better job with that. They even had some of those people on the cards- the boarding passes they were having out. But then they don’t reference them anywhere throughout the museum.

The three dress displays that were most memorable for the participants were (1) the dress and costume items presented in the “Titanic: The Movie Experience” Gallery at the Pigeon Forge location, (2) the dress and costume items presented in the lobby and gift shop at the Orlando location, and (3) the “Lucile” reproduction dress display to which visitors were exposed at both the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations
(see Figures 5.2, 5.6, and 5.7 in Chapter Five).\textsuperscript{56} It is important to note that these were the most memorable \textit{extant} dress and costume displays. There were a number of participants who discussed the value of noticing dress of the time period in photos.

Most of the dress displays that Henry recalled were in the movie gallery. There was a display case full of Rose’s hats (see Figure 5.11 in Chapter Five), some of Jack’s clothes, and Rose’s jacket (see Figure 5.21 in Chapter Five). Another display contained James Cameron’s set jacket worn while filming the movie. They even had a “Heart of the Ocean” replica necklace on display worth $275,000 dollars (see Figure 6.7).


\textsuperscript{56} Though the “Lucile” reproduction dress display was seen at both the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations, it was displayed in different galleries at each location. In Branson the reproduction dress was displayed in the First Class Dining Salon Gallery in its own display case. In Pigeon Forge it was displayed within the full-scale replica of the first class sitting room.
Henry also recalled the specific display of a Rose doll collection (see Figure 4.12 in Chapter Four) in a gallery dedicated entirely to the movie and was the only participant to discuss this display during the post-visit interview:

Henry: They also had a collection of dolls that were used, I guess, as preparing sample clothing for the movie.

Interviewer: Okay. I actually own that doll! Did they have all of the outfits for it? Or at least a lot of them?

Henry: Oh, like in the gift shop?

Interviewer: Or even just in… ‘Cause it was in the museum right, the doll? Or was it in the gift shop?

Henry: Well, it was in both. But I think that the one, or well at least I was under the impression that the one that was in the museum was the one that they used for creating the costumes that were used in the movie. For a lot of outfits.

In the absence of signage, Henry assumed that the miniature dresses belonging to the Rose doll were used as sample clothing for the movie character prior to actually making each garment for Kate Winslet’s use.

Alice had a negative reaction to some of the costumes (especially movie costumes) that were on display at the Orlando museum attraction:

Alice: The ones in the front room were the actual costumes that they had used during the filming in the movie. And it was the one that Leonardo DiCaprio was wearing very first in the movie before everyone had boarded. And then the ones in the costume shop… one was a nice dress and one was a Captain’s uniform, I want to say. I could be wrong on that. But I do remember them.

Interviewer: And do you feel like you paid less attention to them because they really weren’t in the museum?

Alice: Yes. I paid less attention to them for a couple of reasons. One, because they really weren’t in the museum and two, they were specifically marketed and displayed. And they said they were in the movie. They were fake and that made
me feel like they weren’t even real representations. They were just, you know, something we are going to put out to relate to, I guess.

Alice was not impressed by the display of Leonardo DiCaprio’s movie costume in the lobby because it was paired next to a women’s outfit that was non-descript (see Figure 6.8); there was no text to explain if the women’s outfit was worn in the movie or worn during the time period.57

Figure 6.8. The non-descript women’s ensemble that was displayed next to Leonardo DiCaprio’s movie costume in the lobby of Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida. Photograph by Richard DeArmond.

57 The women’s outfit that Alice was referring to in the lobby was not worn in the movie, nor was it an artifact. Based upon the set-up of the display, I ascertained that it was meant to be a display of representational dress. I experienced the same confusion about this women’s outfit, which is covered the “Titanic: The Experience” section of Chapter 6.
Jessie also spoke of her reactions to the “Lucile” reproduction dress display (see Figures 5.2, 5.6, and 5.7 in Chapter Five) the context of its relationship to the movie:

Jessie: I think that’s why I found the… Well, now I can’t remember if that dress was made just for the museum from the drawing or if it was… But I found that to be more realistic because it was based on a drawing from someone who was from that time period… not from the movie. The movie clothing was based on… obviously someone from this time period basing it from back then. So that’s a closer thing to an artifact then a replica.

Interviewer: Okay. So there’s some type of continuum about who it’s produced by and what it looks like and the context of it.

Jessie: Yeah.

The “Lucile” reproduction dress display was successful for Jessie because it was based upon an actual design from the time period. Another important aspect of this display for Jessie was that the dress was designed aboard the Titanic or the designer had it on board and made it after the sinking. 58 Jessie also acknowledged that it is probably difficult to recover and preserve actual dress artifacts from the wreckage, so most dress displays will be comprised of movie costumes or reproductions.

Jack appreciated that there was a mixture of dress-related artifacts and movie costumes on display. He thought it was interesting to see the monetary value of artifacts and movie reproduction items because it showed the appreciation and depreciation process in action:

Um, it’s just really interesting how things appreciate or depreciate depending on the circumstances. I mean, if they were able to recover those pairs of shoes from the pictures of the shoes they took at the bottom of the ocean… Those are

58 This statement made by Jessie was inaccurate. There was no indication in the information that accompanied the “Lucile” reproduction dress that Lady Duff-Gordon had designed the dress while aboard Titanic or had the sketch on board and made it after the sinking. The dress actually reflects a silhouette that was popular about three years after the sinking of Titanic.
valuable. They were probably a third class member’s shoes that at the time cost him, I don’t know, nickels. Something that was extremely cheap but given the circumstance and the tragedy and kind of everything behind it those shoes could go for millions of dollars. And it’s kind of interesting how things like that.. How if… you know, the Heart of the Ocean [see Figure 6.7], which isn’t part of the actual tragedy but how it’s made now, if it wasn’t for the movie or if it wasn’t for theatrical purposes then maybe it would only cost you the price of the diamonds. You know, $125,000. But because it’s a replica from the movie and it’s something behind it and there’s a following then you could probably sell it for the half a million that they paid for it. So… and how other hats and things, all of these pieces of clothing that, you know, would one day find their way to Goodwill or find there way to a garbage can, but because of the tragedy and the implications behind it are invaluable now. It’s hard to put a price tag on these things.

**Staff responses.** The Heart of the Ocean (see Figure 6.7), Arthur explained, is the subject of many questions that he receives from visitors:

People are forever asking me about…asking us about Heart of the Ocean. So, ‘was that real?’ ‘was that really on the Titanic?’ and, um, [sniff] we basically tell them that you—that ‘no that was just a figment of James Cameron’s imagination’. It was his way of—oh, excuse me—his way of, I guess, paying an homage to just the collective the collected—the collective jeweled wealth on board the ship because you can have some of the wealthiest men and women on the planet all there in one spot. For those few days.

I told Arthur that I had noticed the mascot dogs, Molly and Carter wearing the “Heart of the Ocean necklace in some photos in the museum attraction proper (see Figure 4.1 in Chapter Four). I asked if he knew about any discussions that were made to have the movie necklace as part of their appearance and he said that he was “not privy to that.”

The majority of the jewelry artifacts displayed in the exhibition proper, Molly explained, are available for purchase as replicas in the gift shop, “ranging from really cheap knockoffs to… we actually have really nice replicas of a lot of the jewelry.” For Molly, despite having a wide variety of replica jewelry to choose from for purchase in the
gift shop, it is sadly the Heart of the Ocean that is the number one selling item among
visitors:

I think that people like the jewelry. I think we have… I don’t even know how
many different versions we have of that necklace now. There’s probably like six
or seven different versions of it. Like bracelets. They have like the earring
version. They have like six different versions of the necklace. Ridiculous.

Research Question #3

In order to better understand the lived experience of the Titanic museum attraction
visitor, it was important to explore variations in the experience for those who both have
and have not seen the 1997 film. Therefore, the third research question was as follows:

Does the museum attraction experience differ for visitors who are not fans of/who have
not seen the film? Do these visitors feel a personal connection with Rose and her
appearance?

Visitor responses. Participants who had not seen the movie did not personally
relate to Rose. In fact, many of them did not even know who the character of Rose was.
The primary difference in the museum attraction experience for visitors who had not seen
the movie was that they encountered difficulty in relating and paying attention to any
content or reference to the movie. Visitors who had not seen the movie did not make any
spontaneous mental connections to the movie during their visit. This disconnect with the
movie caused Camille to question the value of movie-related displays, while
acknowledging that she was in the minority of people that had not seen the movie:

I was surprised that there was so much dedicated to the movie in the museum. I
mean it—it makes sense because a lot of people have seen the movie. But I—I
just thought it was odd that so much space was dedicated to it ‘cause it—it was
just a movie…
Camille was referencing the movie gallery that was a part of the Titanic museum attraction that she visited. The Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge provided a unique opportunity to explore how visitors who have not seen the film responded to a move-related display. Pigeon Forge was the only museum attraction location that included an entire gallery devoted to the movie. Camille succinctly described that she saw a clear distinction between her experience in the movie gallery and visitors who had watched the movie:

Camille: For the most part…I didn’t really feel left out, except when I got into the movie room and everyone seemed to recognize the stuff, and I barely even know the main characters name, so…

Interviewer: Right. So, you prob—maybe spent less time in there?

Camille: Yeah.

Not having seen the movie affected the amount of time that Camille spent in the gallery, as well as her attention span: “I honestly didn’t pay attention that much to the movie room…” Though, her experience was different than that of other participants because she visited with another participant (Ivan) who had seen the movie. Ivan was actively involved in her learning and personal meaning-making processes, taking time point things out to her and explain their relevance and role in the movie.

Despite not having seen the movie, Camille found a personal interest in the hats displayed in the movie gallery. It was not so much the dress and/or costume display that was irrelevant for Camille, but the text that accompanied it.

Camille: I looked—they had a—a display case of, uh, a lot of the hats [see Figure 5.11 in Chapter Five] that the ladies wore… during the movie, and so I looked at that a lot.
Interviewer: Okay, so that was of interest to you?

P: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok, and was there something specific about the hats that interested you, or mostly just…kind of the aesthetics of them?

Camille: Uh…mostly the aesthetics of ‘em, I mean, they had little—they said when they were worn during the movie and who wore them. But, it didn’t do much for me…I didn’t understand.

Camille’s experience reflects the possibility that visitors who have not seen the movie can appreciate the display of movie costumes and find their own personal meaning in the display. Jessie, a participant who had seen the movie, pointed out that it is possible to enjoy both the movie gallery and the historical aspects of the museum; one does not have to choose between them. Jack (a participant who had seen the movie) expressed a similar sentiment by sharing an observation about the “simulated sinking” gate in the Third Class Corridor Gallery:

They had a exhibit where they actual had water flowing down the stairs kind of like the water was sinking. It was in an odd place in the exhibit. Kind of just… I know the exhibit had to do with the sinking but where it was placed in the museum was kind of odd. But that was really interesting. It played on both parts of the movie as well as the sinking because that was like the famous scene of the water rushing in through the gate and, I mean, I’m sure that’s how it was during the actual sinking but it kind of plays on both parts. It didn’t really have a sign or anything. It wasn’t really labeled… I mean everyone knows that it sank and everybody who has seen the movie knows that that was a still frame of it… looking at the well and watching the water come down. But it wasn’t labeled. It had Plexiglas and the staircase and the water came flowing down and it stopped and it was on a cycle of the water kind of coming down but it wasn’t really labeled or… I guess I mean you’d have to… If you had watched the movie, you knew what it was. If you didn’t it was just a staircase with water coming down you’d think it’s just the Titanic sinking. It could be taken either way.

Participants who had not seen the movie did not have the visual imagery or information that it provided about Titanic’s history to draw upon as a source of comparison
throughout their visit. In the absence of the movie as a possible reference or source of comparison, Elizabeth explored other ways in which she could personally relate to the content in the Captain’s Bridge Gallery:

And because I didn’t know the movie, I couldn’t relate to anything. Actually, I think I have seen that artifact [the telegraph machine] spoken of in like a PBS show. It kind of rang a bell that I had heard about that being frozen in that position. And actually that’s kind of interesting. When you only read about something of here about it…to actually see it, for me, it brings a whole much bigger impact that something actually exists.

The presentation of information about the movie was also problematic for Elizabeth, who had trouble relating to a reference that a living history interpreter made to the movie:

He does bring in the movie when you are standing on the…I’m trying to think…the wheel house or whatever, where the captain steers the…He does reference the movie there. He does ask there, has anybody seen, who has seen the movie. And some lady says, ‘Oh, everybody.’ and I was like ‘I didn’t.’ ‘Cause he said that, when he sent the telegraph to the lower parts of the ship it was still in the same position as when he sent the message. ‘Cause he said ‘Cause you see it in the movie’ and that didn’t really register to me.

Elizabeth’s experience also forced her to identify as a member of the minority of people who have not seen the movie, which challenged the assumption that was voiced by another visitor in her tour group.

In the end, Camille and Lila\textsuperscript{59} actually advocated for the display of the movie costumes because they are visually similar to dress of the time period and, thus, provide a context for the time period. Camille and I had a brief discussion about the display of

\textsuperscript{59} Camille advocated for the continued display of movie costumes because she visited the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge and was able to view the “Titanic: The Movie Experience” Gallery. Lila advocated for the display of movie costumes from the perspective of having not seen any during her visit.
movie costumes in the museum attraction and why they would be appropriate to keep as part of a gallery:

Camille: Not having seen the movie, I think my opinion is a little, uh, biased because, uh, it didn’t really—I didn’t really connect that much with it ‘cause certain things in there, like, the costumes I would suggest keeping, but they had, like, jackets that the director wore, something, uh, that— that did nothing for me. So that’s a good way that you could keep the—the costumes and that’d be fine.

Interviewer: And why do you think it would be okay to keep the costumes and not the other things?

Camille: Uh, ‘cause then they would have much less clothing and much less things to, uh, connect to ‘cause they—they had some small pictures but n-not that many of the dress that had been worn on the ship.

Interviewer: Ok, so—even though you didn’t see the movie, do you feel like you were able to connect with the dress, the—er—the costumes that they displayed from the movie in some way as kind of dress of the period?

Camille: Yeah…You know what? I was a little skeptical about it, but it—it—it still helped me connect.

Interviewer: Ok. So it—it was helpful in some way, maybe not to a completely accurate degree for you, but—

P: Yeah.

Lila used a comparison between the dress presented in the movie and in the museum attraction that informed one of her suggestions for the museum attraction content. She thought that it would be acceptable to display the movie costumes because they are similar to those worn during the time period.

Staff responses. Arthur does encounter visitors who have not seen the movie on occasion:

It—it’s not very often, but it does happen—it does happen from time to time. And, uh, various reasons are given, uh, you know, they—they’ll tell me, ‘oh, I just—I just I—I couldn’t watch something like that, you know, the—the sinking
of the ship it’s just…it’s just too real’. And then you get the whole, um, parents haven’t let their kids watch it because of some of the things that happen with Jack and Rose. The drawing and—and the car, et cetera and, uh, but it—yeah, it does happen from time to time that we get somebody who hasn’t actually seen the movie. They—they know all about the Titanic, uh, not up to the point of being an enthusiast or something like that, but they’re aware of, you know, what happened in the general, um, general history of it.

Molly explained that it can be more difficult to give tours of the artifact exhibition in Las Vegas who have not seen the movie:

I mean I’ve had situations where I’ve given tours to people who have never seen the movie and I don’t know. ‘You’ve never seen the movie? What?’ It’s crazy to me. And it’s harder. It’s harder for me to explain things to them.

In fact, Molly explained that she has to use different approaches to explain artifact exhibition content to visitors who have seen the movie and visitors who have not. For visitors who have not seen the movie,

I kind of go more in depth about a lot of things. So I’ll kind of do more background information. Like I’ll go, ‘This is the unsinkable Molly Brown. She, herself never went by the name Molly.’ They say in the movie ‘Oh, we called her Molly.’ That would have never happened. If someone has not seen the movie I’ll explain who she was and how she started out very, very poor and then her husband struck it rich. You know. So, I’ll kind of just do it a little bit more… It just saves me a little more time.

In order to determine which explanatory approach is best for the tour group, she will often ask the group, “Has everyone seen the movie?” at the start of the tour.

**Chapter Summary**

The presentation of the results for research question two illustrated how the movie and character of Rose were used to relate to the historical event of Titanic. The presentation of the results for research question three revealed specific variations in the lived experience of the museum attraction visit for participants who both have and have
not seen the 1997 film. The experiences of both Titanic museum attraction visitor and staff are reported for each research question.

The second research question was: Do Titanic museum attraction visitors use the 1997 film Titanic and/or the character of Rose and her dress to relate to the historical event of Titanic? The findings were organized into the three categories listed below:

- The use of the movie to relate to the historical events of Titanic,
- The use of Rose to relate to the historical events of Titanic, and
- The use of the movie to relate to dress and costume displays in the museum attraction.

It was more common for participants to relate to the historical events of Titanic through the movie as a whole, as opposed to the specific character of Rose. There were some specific instances when participants used dress and costume displays to relate to the museum attraction content and the historical events of Titanic. Titanic museum attraction staff participants were fully aware that visitors would draw connections to the movie in their respective museum attractions, and they view these connections as an opportunity to provide visitors with historical information.

The third research question was: Does the museum attraction experience differ for visitors who are not fans of/who have not seen the film? Do these visitors feel a personal connection with Rose and her appearance? Participants who had not seen the movie did not personally relate to Rose. In fact, many of them did not even know who the character of Rose was. The primary difference in the museum attraction experience for visitors who had not seen the movie compared to those who had seen the movie was that they
encountered difficulty in relating and paying attention to any content or reference to the movie. Instead of the movie as a possible reference or source of comparison, they explored other ways in which they could personally relate to the content. Titanic museum attraction staff participants explained that they have encountered visitors who have not seen the movie and described how they conduct guided tours for visitors who have not seen the movie.
The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a description of “‘what’ the participants experienced with the phenomenon and ‘how’ they experienced it (i.e., the context),” which “represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 159). The general phenomenological structure presented in the first section of this chapter is a composite summary of the participant experiences that were expressed in interviews. While the thoughts and experiences of this group of individuals cannot be effectively generalized across a broad population, it is my conclusion that the general phenomenological structure constitutes an authentic and effective summary of what it was like for the Titanic museum attraction visitors to learn and form personal meaning from dress and costume displays. In addition to the general phenomenological structure, I present an in-depth discussion of the specific participant experiences that formed each constituent. I conclude with a summary of the chapter.

The Phenomenological Structure of the Experience of Learning and Forming Personal Meaning from Dress and Costume Displays in Titanic Museum Attractions

For the museum attraction participant, who represents a variety of backgrounds and levels of interest in Titanic, the general phenomenological structure related to

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60 Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) state that “universalization often comes at the price of abstraction, but in psychology [or other social sciences], the content is as important as the form, and that means that context is also important, so the claim made by the scientific method [of phenomenology] is only ‘generality’” (p. 250).
learning and personal meaning formation in a Titanic museum attraction is comprised of five constituents:61

- Parts of a whole
- Alignment with background, interests, and personal relations
- Comparative learning and meaning formation
- Humanization and narrative
- Dress and costume as a visual language

A Titanic museum attraction is composed of several different display techniques and interactive elements that work together to comprise a whole. The museum attraction participant enjoys the “gestalt” aspect of the replica physical environments, and dress enhances this environment because it is perceived as part of the greater whole. When it comes to dress and costume displays, the museum attraction participant likes to examine the parts of the whole and the whole comprised of parts. When dress is presented in a physical environment consistent with the attributes of the wearer it is more deeply understood. The museum attraction participant chooses dress and costume displays to view based upon personal interests, background, and emotional reactions. Personal meaning with dress displays was formed by relating the dress or costume object or display to a personal interest. The museum attraction participant learns and forms

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61 Constituents is the label used in this study for what Husserl would label “essences.” As Barker (2010) stated, “‘Constituent’, something making up part of a whole, or a component, leads to different expectations than ‘essence’, a term used by Husserl, and facilitates recognition of the difference between philosophical phenomenology and scientific [i.e., social science] phenomenology” (Barker, 2010, p. 154).
personal meaning from dress and costume displays by making comparisons to contemporary dress, behaviors, and other aspects of society.

The dress and costume on display is of interest to the museum attraction participant because, as tangible objects, they are often accompanied by information and stories about the unique individuals that were passengers aboard the ship. Dress and costume objects that are accompanied by a personal connection to a passenger/the wearer add value to the museum attraction experience. The presence of dress and costume displays adds context to historical events and provide a unique glimpse into the lived experience of the passengers that were aboard Titanic. The additional context that is provided by the presence of dress and costume displays aids in telling the story of Titanic and allows the museum attraction participant to create internal narratives about the lived experiences of the passengers and how they might have interacted with the dress and costume objects.

Dress and costume is read as a visual language by the museum attraction participant. The museum attraction participant observes dress and costume and determines certain characteristics about the wearer by reading visual cues. The museum attraction participant’s literacy of a visual language and the language by which they read visual cues is dependent upon the extent to which they engage with popular culture and prior knowledge of the subject. Dress is understood by the museum attraction participant as part of the essence of a time period; without the display of dress and/or costume, it is not possible to accurately or comprehensively read the time period or the “whole” of a historical event. Dress and costume displays provide a unique human presence that, in
collaboration with other objects and displays, brings the Titanic to life for the museum attraction participant during the museum attraction visit.

**Discussion of the Phenomenological Structure Themes**

The constituents were organized into themes to represent commonalities that occurred across the lived experiences of the participants and gathered together to form the general structure of the phenomenon. The reader will see that the identified features do not appear with clearly defined boundaries within the general structure. There is a blurring of the boundaries of the features as they come together to form the whole of the general structure.

**Constituent 1: Dress and Costume as Parts of a Whole**

The display of dress and costume were significant to the learning and personal meaning making process of the participants because such displays represented parts of a whole. To begin, there were some more broad conceptions related to how the “parts of a whole” concept positively contributed learning and personal meaning formation in the museum attraction. The numerous displays, varied display techniques, and interactive elements used by the Titanic museum attractions worked together as parts of a whole to form an enjoyable experience for some visitors. Camille was one participant who expressed that the combination of these parts is what stood out to her the most about her museum attraction visit:

I guess the care they took to, um, let’s see…give you not only, I guess, a visual experience as reading things, but they also gave you more of a textural experience and a hands-on experience at the museum.
Another broad conception related to the “parts of a whole” concept is that the museum attraction content helped some visitors to learn about the different phases of Titanic’s existence (i.e., beyond the sinking; construction, before the sinking, and during the voyage). Dorothy was one participant who expressed that this was a positive outcome of her visit:

Dorothy: I learned more about the venture that was planned, where they left from and where they were going. I couldn’t have told you that before I went. I learned what lead up to it.

Interviewer: Okay, and that’s something that you didn’t know much about before?

Dorothy: Yes.

A reflection by Serena represented a hybridized combination of these two broad conceptions that have been discussed:

Serena: Just, everything that was on display, the films, the film clips, uh, uh all of that was very educational for me, uh, I learned about how, where it started sailing, where it was going, what happened, um, the, the facts about, again, who was on board, uh, the first class, second class, third class folks that, after the, I guess, first class, people only first class could go in that area, so it was like, segregated, so the wealthy were arrogant, there was a letter there about how the women, the women from the United States were arrogant. And I was not surprised by that, and I thought, how sad, first of all, but it was all the information that was given to me, I learned a lot about that. It’s almost like, like if that ship was destined to go through some kind of disaster because of all of the arrogance. I, I be using that word a lot, but that’s how I feel about it.

Interviewer: And so, what you learned really, kind of, brought that to light a lot more, the theme and the story?

Serena: Yeah, like these people on board, from the ones who built it to the ones who sailed it, to the ones who went there. They felt that it, everything, it was infallible—fallible, I guess.
Some participants had a positive reaction to learning more about the other phases of Titanic’s existence, and one participant (Victor) actually expressed that he wanted to extend his learning of Titanic’s existence after his museum visit:

Um, I actually am probably going to spend some of my day tomorrow while Caroline [his wife, who was another participant] is at work looking some of the stuff up online, looking up to get a little bit more information. I might even look up Mr. Ernst Ulrik Persson. Just because I had a little bit of information about him and find out what happened afterwards. I know he survived. I know he was there, I know he survived, and just learn a little more about the person they assigned to me…through handing me the card with his name on it. Saying that he was third class, told me that he was doing this, let me know what else happened in his life.

For Victor, it was important to continue piecing together the whole story of Titanic by obtaining further information about the passenger described on his boarding pass. He discovered that, for him, this passenger was an intriguing part of the whole history of Titanic. Jane had a similar reaction, but she spoke as a participant who felt that the information about passengers’ lives was lacking in the Orlando location; she wanted more information about what the passenger on her boarding pass went on to do after Titanic’s sinking.

Simone identified all of the subtle parts that go into the performance of a successful living history interpreter:

[The living history interpreter who guided my tour of the museum attraction] was really, really, really good. He was just, he just seemed like a regular guy, you know, from the way he was dressed, um, he seemed most like, just like, basic level, not necessarily middle class guy, whose probably more work hand on the deck or something. But…it was good, it was detailed. Costume, accent, the whole nine… [Participant trails off]

Craig also enjoyed the living history interpreter’s presentation, as a whole. He was especially amused by one male living history interpreter’s use of an Irish accent.
Dorothy said that the living history interpreters’ costumes did not directly enhance her experience, but she was able to identify the living history interpreters as being appropriately dressed for the time period being depicted. In this way, Dorothy acknowledged the living history interpreters’ dress as an element that provided subtle context for the environment as a whole (“they were at home in their surroundings”) because she knew that they would seem out of place if not dressed in period costumes. Jane, disappointed by the lack of dress displays at the Orlando location, expressed a similar sentiment when said that the dress displays were of some interest because it was better than having dress completely absent, as it adds a subtle context to the overall environment.

Dorothy also noticed the details that comprised the whole appearance (i.e., total look) of both the male and female living history interpreters:

Was she a maid or…? She had a long black overcoat on and a white collar and a hair band, and it kind of pouffed her hair up… kind of a hair comb… And it was kind of full. She had something that made it come out more. It was full and long.\(^6^{[6]}\) And as for the…as for the male who I also interacted with a little bit, he had a suit- a double breasted pea coat…um… And puffed slacks and shiny shoes. So yes, I did notice [see Figure 5.14 in Chapter Five].

Victor identified that a successful living history interpretation is comprised of several parts that work together, but he was speaking as a visitor who did not experience what he considered to be a successful living history interpretation:

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\(^6^{[6]}\) Dorothy’s detailed observation of the female living history interpreter’s dress represents an instance in which there is a blurring of the boundaries that form the constituents of the general phenomenological structure. Dorothy’s detailed observation also serves as evidence that supports Constituent Five (Dress as a Visual Language) because, in this passage from her post-visit interview, she identified the female living history interpreter as a maid by using prior knowledge she had received to “read” the living history interpreter’s period costume.
Honestly, the costume, um, I only saw a few people, few of the employees or cast members or whatever they call them, um, it was pretty believable with their costumes. Um, it would have been a little better if they’d tried to use the dialect, or whatever, of the day, but, say three of the people that we saw didn’t use dialect, but the last person, the very, very, very last person we saw there tried to keep with, tried to keep the character just right, so he kind of salvaged a little bit of it for them, but at the same time, the other ones that we saw were like, ‘oh yea, okay,’ and…I know that it’s not as important, seeing is good, but seeing the whole…The whole package is better. The dialect, the accents, stuff like that is part of the costume.

For Victor it is important to attend to all details, no matter how small, because he actively considered both the parts of the whole and the whole during his museum attraction visit:

Victor: I look at little details as well as big details.

Interviewer: So all of it kind of comes together to form a big picture?

Victor: Yes.

There were times during Victor’s museum attraction visit that the parts being displayed were not adequately representative of the whole:

…and they even said that the ladies had up to six outfits for, one for each of the restaurants as you would for their area. So only seeing one thing it kind of made you go, ok so that was one, but what else?

Other participants also mentioned parts of the whole that were noticeably absent in the museum attraction’s interpretation of the historical events of Titanic. Serena wanted to see children’s dress because children were an important category of passengers that she felt was overlooked in the museum attraction content:

More from—there was a little boy—well, there were children in that ship. But there was a picture—there’s only a picture of one child. The only one. And he’s wearing, you know, the costume of back then. They could have had a costume of that little boy somewhere, because somebody might have missed that picture.
Serena also wanted to see extant representations of men’s dress. For her, the visual language of dress is better understood when given the opportunity to observe and compare men’s and women’s dress together. With specific regard to dress displays, Serena wanted to see more than just accessories in display cases. It was important for her to see a whole outfit and the parts that comprise a whole outfit:

I would have loved to have been able to see more of that. Like I got to see the pearls [draped as accent décor in some of the display cases] [see Figure 7.1], I mean, you know, the pearls there, that was nice to see that, um, the, like there were plates there, you know. That was nice to see, so I would have liked to see more of the apparel they wore, whether it was the passenger or maybe even a crew member. That would have been nice to have seen something like that on display.

Figure 7.1. Strands of pearls were used as accent décor in display cases that contained artifacts and objects related to the upper class in the Branson and Pigeon Forge museum attractions. Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. Adapted from Marr, R. (2007). *Titanic: World’s largest museum attraction (A collector’s guide)* (p. 57). Branson, MO: Missouri Life Publications.
In contrast to participants whose experiences included making observations about the parts of a whole that were absent, Dorothy took the opportunity to look at the women’s dress being showcased in photos and dissect the parts of the whole (i.e., the total ensemble or look) that made it representative of period dress: “I did observe pictures and how… I did observe through photographs their dress and hairstyles.” Dorothy observed that the hairstyle was an integral part of the overall look of the women during this time period.

It was also common for participants to notice that parts were combined to form a whole in the full-scale replica rooms. Simone enjoyed the replica environments as a whole because she could appreciate all of the individual elements that worked together to make it a successful replica. Craig found meaning in the Captain’s Bridge Gallery at the Branson location because it combined the ship’s mechanics with a human presence (i.e., Captain Smith) to form a physical environment that gave him a seemingly authentic sense of what it would have been like to be aboard Titanic.

Serena interpreted an artifact as a whole that is comprised of parts, with multiple pieces of information to be gleaned from visitors:

I’m going like, oh, there’s this, uh, you know this plate this butter saucer, whatever it’s called. This tiny little thing, but it took my attention. It got my attention to look at it, to look at the design on it, to look at what is written, which was, uh, the ocean liner’s name, you know, little things like that, to me it’s a necessity. For, for, for people to enjoy…Having the information about the artifact tells me what it is, what it was about, where it was used and why. And then looking at the actual item, that’s, I enjoy that a lot. And then, moving on, again, and breaking it down, I enjoy that. It keeps my attention. It keeps me going to the next to see what’s behind the next door. Instead of more of the same.
Serena and Victor also raised a unique perspective related to the concept of “parts of a whole”: If one part is shown, so must another part (or the rest of the parts). For Serena, it was important to show a replica cabin for each social class because each social class contributes to the formation of a holistic understanding of the time period and Titanic:

They could have showed more, they showed the bed like, the, the state room, I guess, of a first class state room. I would have liked to see what a state room of the second and third class would have been like.

Similarly, Victor expressed that the museum attraction needed to include a representation of all social classes in some form (e.g., through a dress display or full-scale replica room) if even one social class is mentioned because the social class distinctions must be understood collectively and by individual class:

if they’re going to make statements into how dress was a very, or was a factor in dividing classes, have some sort of way to say this was first class—this was what was expected of first class to wear, this is what was expected of second class to wear, this is what was expected of third class.

Craig had an unexpected encounter with the concept of “parts of a whole” because he entered the museum attraction with a primary interest in learning about the mechanical and engineering aspects of the ship. He initially thought that the ship’s mechanics were more interesting but realized that people work with the mechanics and influence the way that mechanics are operated and engineered:

For me it was checking out the mechanical—the mechanicals of the ship and—and how…on how big a scale they made. H-how something like that of such huge proportions was made. And, and, the engine and— and—and just the—to me it—just the early days of—of mechanical-type stuff. And—and how it was built and just wondered how…what people were thinking and, you know, it was some—it was—it was real—it’s really something to me to—to learn that kind of stuff, how where we’ve come from, and…And, um, how it’s—how that stuff kind of progressed, so, I think that the mechanical…you know the—the that’s the part of it that enthuses me more than the people, I think it’s—But, you know, along with
that the people that, you know, like I said—that the kind of people that come up with that and stuff like that—that’s…it really makes me wonder.

As a result of his museum attraction visit, he concluded that mechanics and people (including the dress that those people wear) are parts of whole that assist in the efficient operation of the ship.

As a participant who had not seen the movie, Camille related to the “parts of a whole concept” by reflecting on what she learned about the movie:

Camille: Um [pause] I mean, I have a—a larger impression of the movie now because they incorporated the movie a lot into the museum, and haven’t seen the movie, so…

Interviewer: Ok, so it was kind of a big first exposure for you?

Camille: Yeah.

Because Camille had not seen the movie she was not able to use the movie as a source that could be dissected (i.e., considered scene by scene or on the basis of individual characters) to assist her in learning or forming personal meaning about Titanic. Before she could understand the details of the movie she needed to form a “larger” impression (i.e., impression of the movie as a whole) to understand its connection to the historical events.

**Constituent 2: Alignment with Background, Interests, and Personal Relations**

Some participants stated that they created personal meaning during their Titanic museum attraction visit by relating the content to their background and personal experiences. In some instances this was accompanied by an emotional reaction such as empathy. Peter felt a strong personal connection to the third class passengers because of his inner city upbringing:
Yeah I feel like the third class passengers. You know they are coming from something, they are trying, you know, they are trying to make a dollar out of 15 cents, you know. You know I wasn't raised in a nice part of Los Angeles. I'm trying to do what I'm doing now to get out of that station. Knock on wood my dad made it happen we moved out of the inner city. It was good. And now obviously now you know I'm pursuing an education, and I feel like in place of someone pursuing an education that was their way out. You are coming to America because you’re looking for a new start, a new beginning. And yeah you see it's pretty sad because you got, these are the have-nots and this is the room he has. And he has, it seems pretty impossible when you hear the numbers when you’re on the tour to go from this room on one side of the isle versus that room being a first class room. And it's like sometimes you know it feels like that. I feel like that sometimes. You know. And at the end of the day you have to keep things in perspective. You’re not going from this to this overnight. You have to put in your dues. And uh, I think people were trying. I think really I would say the vast majority of people who went on board of that ship were just looking for a new beginning, looking for a fresh start. You know.

Craig felt a similarly strong connection to those individuals who worked in manual labor on the ship:

Craig: I think it’s more a—I think a lot of the, you know, like, the checking out the people doing the grunge work—you might say—that I think a lot of that kind of...reminds me of some of the stuff that I did. Some of the pure labor, man, that—that, and, but it’s not really something that...really that I can put a, you know, put a finger on and write about I—it’s just, you know, just—

Interviewer: And when you think about that connection…what does that bring up for you in terms of emotions, or feelings, or thoughts?

Craig: I guess just the fact that—that for everything you see there’s always, you know, for all the nice things like that nice ship and stuff, there’s a lot of blood, sweat, and tears that went into building it and to keep it—to keep it going that, you know, a lot of times don’t really...people don’t realize, you know, that and I think that goes with, you know, mankind from the start just...ahhh, I mean it’s a different—it’s a—even though it’s a different day now, there’s still the [laughs] that behind the scenes stuff...That a lot of people don’t even know about. And give no, um, thought to but, uh, yeah stuff like that.

Craig entered the museum attraction with a personal interest in the building of the ship and the “behind the scenes” (i.e., construction and maintenance) work that was involved
in that process. For him, personally relating to the manual laborers brought awareness to something not often considered by the general public or taken for granted by those who do not have to do it. He was able to personally relate because he had done manual labor. Allan expressed a similar sentiment. Jack also related to the manual laborers aboard the ship:

   When I did construction and working hard and [I was thinking about] what they had to do to get the boat moving. So kind of the energy placed into the exhibit which was actually, you know, in real life too.

The dress and costume displays that were viewed by participants also correlated with their personal interest and personal definition of dress. Allan was interested in the manual labor of the men who built Titanic and shoveled coal beneath her decks. As a result, he was “more interested in the functionality of some of the things [he] saw.” It was also common for participants to designate their favorite dress display, in part, based on personal interests being represented in the museum attraction. Dorothy stated that her favorite dress display was the one that included the “Lucile” reproduction dress (see Figures 5.2, 5.6, and 5.7 in Chapter Five) because she has a personal interest in fashion and enjoyed learning that there was a fashion designer aboard the ship.

   Camille and Judith formed a personal connection to the museum attraction content because they are artists and have a background in art. As an artist, Camille appreciated seeing how a sketch was used as a type of “visual blueprint” to create a garment in the case of the “Lucile” reproduction dress:

   Camille: Since it was [‘Lucile’ Lady Duff-Gordon’s] design, and they made it—a tribute, this sketch and, um, I am an artist, and so seeing some of the sketches, you know, of—then you have a personal connection, then you see the actual product of the dress, and it was on a dress form and they talked about why it was
a certain length, and, you know, what kind of fabric would have been used, um, so... just having that amount of information, plus seeing, you know, an artif—actual product... Helped provide a personal expression...

Interviewer: Ok, and—ok, so, you mentioned that you are an artist so you can kind of appreciate the—the idea of bringing a sketch into an actual product, so was that kind of—part of your skepticism of how it was reproduced?

Camille: Yeah, it’s just, uh, since the museum had had the dress made themselves, you know, I—it’s an interpretation. It wasn’t the original passenger’s vision. It was probably changed a little bit.

Judith mentioned that she felt a personal connection between the “Lucile” fashion designs and her own art work because each individual design was given a name:

I said titling the pieces of her work, and I just think it would have been a hoot to hear her come up with the title for a dress. And I know from experience when you have to, when you enter shows, which is what we’re doing now, and, you’re showing a piece and you have to come up with a title for this. And, you can either just like, get real wacky with it, um, or it can be a little descriptive too, and, that’s kind of what I do with my work in order, then I know it instantly, what it was, to a point, you know? … But her titles for her pieces were, you know, pretty outrageous. That would be something that I would almost like to have a copy of that, and study that, it was like, ‘Look, she’s named her dress.’… What fun, to, uh, be wearing an outfit that has a title to it of, of, I can’t even recall some of them now, but, like, just going out and having fun … they were kind of outrageous. She was having fun, they were fun names. That’s, that’s what I was kind of having a hoot about, is they were fun names, you know...

Judith also appreciated the work that goes into translating a design from a sketch into a final product because of a personal interest in red carpet fashion:

Judith: [The “Lucile” dress was] on the mannequin. Uh-huh. Oh yea. It was a beautiful dress, and I thought that it really did look like her sketch. I of course being an artist look at those sketches and then look at what comes out, and a lot of times it doesn’t. And, yea, so I was impressed by that. I think I mentioned that to you or somebody that was standing right there at the time. And so it makes me think that she did achieve the look that she had in her sketches of these outfits, did actually, uh, were achieved, actually, you know, then, I would think. If, if they did that, that well. Um, but I told you that, you know, I’m always looking at the gowns and stuff at award ceremonies, and stuff, and seeing, and a lot of stuff they will have sketches. I got one up in the studio, and, now, and it was, uh, the
Chinese girl that won some years ago, and it was a Swarovski crystal black, black bodice thing and it went down, and she… The movie was about the geisha.

Interviewer: So part of, part of admiring that dress, and maybe the one in the exhibit, was the effort, and the planning, and the time, and materials that went into it?

Judith: Right, and looking at, um, uh, this woman’s, this designer’s outfits, you know if she—they were so involved, the outfits, and I mean the, like I said the backs and stuff were incredible. And, if, if the outfits did really look like that then that was great.

There were some participants (Allan, Bradley, Craig, and Marshall) who identified as engineers and/or having a personal interest in construction and mechanics. Allan remembered seeing one extant “fashion” on display that was designed by one of the passengers but was not personally interested in engaging with the display because it did not align with his personal interests:

Allan: Well, I remember seeing that one fashion, uh, lady that was on board. She, uh, she…uh…but—but—that, I mean, that was, you know, like they said she was the first one to…I guess put slits in a dress, and I don’t know…’ok…so what?’, and I mean it didn’t—the fashion portion of it didn’t really interest me that much. Like I said it was more in—I was more interested in—in the functionality of some of the things I—I saw.

Interviewer: Such as the boots that you mentioned?63

Allan: Such as the boots and—and, you know, those, uh, riveting—they had no ear protection, that was something. That was, uh, yeah, I, uh, specifically looked for that because I’m very protective of my ears, you know, working around here and—and I specifically looked for that and no eye protection, you know, they didn’t—Very few, very little, uh, safety... [Participant trailed off]

63 Allan’s first mention of dress displays was in a statement that he noticed the dress of the passengers in photo displays. He remembered a photo of a woman boarding the ship, and it was almost life size. The enlarged size allowed him to take notice of the woman’s boots. He shared that they were not high-heeled, but just very basic and functional boots. This led to a discussion about what makes a photo interesting: that he can notice things that are interesting but may not necessarily be the focal point. The focal point of the previously-mentioned photo was the boarding process of the ship, but he was able to gather information that led to the conclusion that the woman was not wearing high-fashion boots to board the ship.
Another reason that Allan did not find interest in this display was because he is not interested in people that are seemingly ahead of their time (i.e., avante garde). He explained that the reason that the reproduction “Lucile” dress existed in the first place is because the designer was trying to achieve a shock value or gain publicity for doing something new and different.

As mentioned above, Marshall identified a personal interest and background in engineering. He identified a photo of Captain Smith and other officers aboard the ship as his favorite display of dress because it was an ordinary photo of them, but it had the unique ability to bring the men to life as real people. This photo was appealing to Marshall because it showed the Naval uniforms of the time. It also evoked a personal relation for him because he remembered seeing his father’s Navy uniform when he was younger and used it as an opportunity to compare the appearance of his dad’s Navy uniform (i.e., a more contemporary Navy uniform) to those worn when Titanic set sail.\footnote{Marshall’s detailed observation of the photo showcasing Captain Smith and the other ship officers represents an instance in which there is a blurring of the boundaries that form the constituents of the general phenomenological structure. Marshall’s detailed observation also serves as evidence that supports Constituent Three (Comparative Learning and Meaning Formation) because he compares the Naval uniforms worn by Titanic officers to more contemporary Naval uniforms (i.e., the Naval uniform worn by his father).}

There were a variety of reflections in response to how the “Lucile” reproduction dress display aligned with personal background, interests, and emotional reactions. I found that Titanic was understood by drawing upon a combination of knowledge, personal interests, past experiences, and emotional reactions. Henry found that it was more difficult to relate to this dress display because he is a man and does not wear dresses. This dress display brought up an emotionally-charged personal meaning for
Craig, who felt that the dress (and the gallery in which it was displayed) exuded a sense of romance. Because of this association, he recalled that his ex-wife was a romantic, and it brought up feelings associated with a past relationship.

Caroline was also reminded of a past relationship when viewing the white dress that was displayed on a dress form in the first class replica stateroom (see Figure 5.9 in Chapter Five):

Caroline: The dress objects…the, uh, the white lacey one that was on the, you know, standing in the state room actually reminded me of a wedding dress that I bought for my first marriage that I didn’t wear. I actually bought three different dresses and one of them was that very, um, antique white lace looking thing. Which I then decided was not my style, but actually that, that dress like costume, made me think of that (laughs). So…

Interviewer: Okay, so you did see sort of a style similarity?

Caroline: Yes…I bought it and I was interested, you know I bought it from this elderly lady that was very excited that someone else was going to be wearing her dress and then I, you know I didn’t tell her, um, yea I just decided it wasn’t the style of what I wanted to wear. But I, you know, it’s, it was kind of a costume—like it was something that I would wear, you know, costume stuff. But I just decided that that wasn’t what I wanted for that. It’s hard to pick the right one.

Some participants also experienced a personal relation to dress displays that was associated with the aspirational qualities that they associated with the dress being showcased. Peter drew a personal connection to a first class men’s suit in a photo because he aspired to this formality in the professional setting (i.e., in the courtroom after law school). The “Lucile” reproduction dress display represented the aspiration to wear dresses on a more regular basis for Ella. She explained that she likes to wear dresses, but as she gets older dressing up is difficult and it takes a lot of effort. Ella sees her age and declining health as a barrier to dressing up.
Serena found a personal connection to the women who were mothers and wives aboard the ship and remained on the ship when it was sinking to stay with their children and/or husbands; she remembered reading stories of this nature in the museum attraction. She is not a mother but did personally relate to the women who embodied the role of a wife because she could relate to the sense of duty and sacrifice and sometimes must be enacted in a marriage:

Well I, I’m not a mother. But I identify as a wife, because I’ve always told my husband that, even as recently, that in our marriage I’ve always put him before me, even if, when the times are hard that I just, you know, that it’s hard, I still will put him first, before me.

Ella also personally related to the passenger described on her boarding pass as a wife.

**Constituent 3: Comparative Learning and Meaning Formation**

I found that it was common for visitors to learn and form personal meaning by making comparisons to contemporary dress, behaviors, and other aspects of society. Camille summed up some of the reasons why dress can be understood using a comparative approach to learning and meaning formation: “Dress and costume are just such an ordinary part of everyday life, but it’s something we put a lot of value on, um, as far as being able to assess, you know, someone’s status and someone’s personality.”

Social class is one of the main social characteristics that can be compared through dress, in part, because differences in dress among various social classes can be easily read and understood as a visual language. The distinct differences in dress among various social classes provide an opportunity for comparison.
Some participants engaged in comparative learning in the museum attraction by comparing the decorative accents or embellishments on dress objects and other types of objects. For example, Peter made a comparison between dishes and dress:

The artifacts I felt like you could identify which class they belonged to not by costume but by detail. And I think that's an analogous, ah, element in both you know the costumes and the artifacts. You know if something is, ah, chiseled along the outside very ornate very fancy, elegant they probably weren't eating the ah the chum that they were eating in third class off of it. But if you have a broken plate that is in the exhibit if you have a plate that is just plain white you know I'd say damn it's pretty good quality it lasted until now it's better than what my mom is buying. But at the same time it's pretty plain and when you look at it compared to the other one it doesn't look very nice. You know there is no gold rim on it. In third class you probably get a mug, and in first class you probably get a glass and it's under a plate and the plates have the chargers. And it's much more fancy. The amount of detail I guess that goes into the artifacts can be translated into the clothing as well. You know a gentleman wearing a suit that has a nice bow tie. And those are all extra elements too.

Similarly, Peter compared the styles and types of dress worn by various social classes to the type of cabin in which a passenger would have stayed and other objects that they would have used in during the maiden voyage:

And you see what the third class rooms looked like vs. the first class quarters. It was just significantly different. One is very, you know, your dark woods your mahoganies, your cherry wood, very dense, very expensive, very ornate people were paying for luxury...And then uh, and yeah I think as far as the environment and going back to the costumes in the environment, that was reinforced once again. You know? People who were in the third class quarters were dressed a certain way and that is what you saw in the film and the people in the first class quarters had these really nice really fancy you know flatware stemware plates you know everything. Everything was really fancy. It was first class all the way. And you saw that reinforced. And the dress was first class, everything. It seemed like it was very luxurious for those who could afford it.

There were also comparisons made between the dress worn by the first class and that worn by other social classes aboard the ship. Peter, in particular, made very astute observations about these differences during his artifact exhibition visit by looking at
primary source-photos. First, he noticed that a key difference between the dress of first class and third class passengers was the number of accessories or elements that comprised an outfit:

Everyone's just wearing a suit. You know. But if a guys rocking a monocle I'm not saying he's in third class most likely you know what I mean. You know a gentleman wearing a suit that has a nice bow tie. And those are all extra elements too. For the most part you don't buy a suit jacket and the entire outfit together, each part comes separate. Well, for the price of this guys bow tie I'm guessing that the third class passengers probably all bought their outfits together whole families bought together. You know what I mean? Bow ties and ascots and...lots of details.

Second, Peter noticed that the dress worn by the first and third passengers are constructed using different fabrics and materials:

And the material. Third class looks like looks to be cotton I can't imagine it being anything else just run of the mill cheap manufactured cotton. Where as you know the first class could be wearing wool, he could be wearing a silk jacket, something of a higher quality. Something more valuable at the time.

Lastly, Peter made a distinction between first and third class dress based upon the extent to which it appeared to be fashionable: “Whatever is fashionable. There is no fashion when you’re third class you wear whatever you can afford to put on your back.”

Some participants engaged in comparative learning in the museum attraction by making comparisons between the dress of today (i.e., a more contemporary time period) and the dress worn aboard Titanic. For example, Henry discussed the importance of displaying dress by comparing the dress of male laborers worn at the time that Titanic set sail and the dress that might be worn by male laborers today:

I guess it can help you to think about how laborers dressed. I mean, for the pictures it looks like they are wearing vests and ties and hats and stuff whereas today laborers in compromising positions would be wearing like t-shirts and jeans or, like, a uniform of some sort.
Jack compared the hats on display in the movie gallery to current social guidelines for the wear of hats:

The hats just look really funny to me. They are kind of like…I guess nowadays the only times you see hats like that is during like the derbies, the horse races. They still show… or maybe, you know, African American women wear these really elegant hats to church functions. You don’t see them very much and you often … you know, you see the jeweler and slacks and stuff like that but the hats have kind of taken a different role… more of a back seat.

Caroline drew a comparison between the time periods when she discussed the discontinued use of large trunks for transporting a woman’s wardrobe (see Figure 6.5 in Chapter Six):

[The one extant dress I saw] was in the one dressing room—or, not dressing, but, cabin, first class cabin, uh, state room, um, the manikin in the white, lacy dress, but also it was cool to see the, the trunk open. with other costumes and boots because we don’t travel like that anymore, like we, the trunks like that that actually have the drawers in them that get open and, so, that was very cool to see that. I liked that display.

Peter related to the dress worn by the first class men by comparing it to what he felt was an equivalent garment today:

If I was to compare [the men’s first class dress to] today’s standards looks like a fine tailored Italian suit. You know, made out of something real nice. Something I'd like to wear in a courtroom one day.65

Some participants engaged in comparative learning in the museum attraction by making comparisons between the movie costumes and appearance of people in the movie and the actual passengers that were aboard their ship and their dress. Craig compared the color palette of both men’s and women’s dress that he saw depicted in photos in the museum attraction to the costumes that were worn in the movie:

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65 Peter is referencing a courtroom because he is currently in law school, and the courtroom will someday become his professional work environment.
Well, um, that [the ‘Lucile’ reproduction dress] lacked in color, I mean— Like, I guess in the movie it was pretty extravagant colors and stuff like that. Am I thinkin’ right that in the movie’s, the outfits were much more colorful, and…? I know the men’s clothes were—they were more of the, you know, like the—the— the men’s clothes seemed like in the movie they were more like—the color of that dress, you know, more of a subtle grays and, um…

By presenting this example, Craig was trying to work through his doubt as to whether or not the “Lucile” reproduction dress was an authentic reproduction of period dress. He was using the movie costumes as the standard of authenticity to which the reproduction dress was compared. Simone and Nora both mentioned that they actively compared the photos of actual passengers to the photos of movie characters that were presented side-by-side in the Orlando museum attraction. For Simone, this comparison led to learning that the character of Molly Brown that was portrayed in the movie was, in fact, an actual passenger about the ship:

Uh, as far as the, the character that was in the movie, it was uh, it was a older women, was wealthy, kind of considered new money in the movie… And to actually find out she was, one, a real person, and two, that she actually played a key role in saving some people. Now in the movie they showed a little bit of that, but as far as she went, that was, that was pretty… It was way bigger…and I kind of like wish they would have went there a little more.

Craig made a comparison between the movie and the museum attraction content when he viewed a photo of Captain Smith. He recalled that the actor who played Captain Smith in the movie looked just like he had in real life:

And—and some of the pictures of the captain and—and, you know, maybe even there was a cap—picture of—wasn’t that the captain and his dog there at the very beginning? And I don’t know why, but, I mean the captain in the movie kinda resembled, uh, the real captain and—  [participant trails off]
Constituent 4: Humanization and Narrative

Some participants said that the dress and costume displays were of interest to them because they served the important function of humanizing the objects. Several participants expressed that their museum attraction visit helped them to learn about the passengers. Victor said, “well, now that I’ve visited I, I see all these pieces from people’s—what people used to have, whether they survived or not.” For Serena, it was the facts related to human lives that stuck with her after her visit had ended. Marshall identified the focus of the Branson museum attraction as “giving a lot of in-depth information on passengers and what their background was.” Ella said that her visit enabled her to learn about the actual people that were aboard the ship, and this was interesting for her to learn. Peter appreciated the focus upon the lives of passengers because it made the history of Titanic more “real” for him. He further explained that it was nice to engage with Titanic’s history in an environment where the movie was not present, nor were the many retranslations of the Titanic’s story that permeate the media.

For Simone, it was the combination of a dress object with background information about the wearer that humanized the dress objects:

Some of it was really just about what it was, uh, but they did give a little background as to who it probably belonged to and why, and, so you could actually follow along with what was going on instead of ‘oh, that’s cute.’ Anything, uh, that was left, you know, because, because it did belong to—or this replica of what belonged to somebody, it was just like, ‘Oh, wow.’ You know it just kind of humanize it a little more, ‘cause you’re like, ‘somebody wore that, somebody had that on.’

For Simone, the presence of biographical information about a passenger with an object or artifact enhanced her learning transforming it into more than just another example of a
certain type of object. Allan also stated that the biographical information of the passengers helped the objects to come to life by making them more than just another example of a certain type of object. Camille also felt that objects that add personal connection to a passenger add value to the museum attraction experience.

I found that the museum attractions’ focus upon the lives of the passengers provided a space in which the participants felt comfortable in forming narratives in their own mind related to the passengers in specific situations, and even narratives that involved putting themselves in the passenger’s position. Camille began to form a narrative in her mind when she viewed the “Lucile” reproduction dress because she felt a connection to the passenger:

I kinda—since it was a, like, a design of one of the people on the ship, I kinda wondered ‘well, is this woman kind of an avant-garde person, because this dress seems a little, uh, over the top’…

Peter created a narrative about why a well-dressed man would have been traveling first class on the ship:

Your wondering hey what's this guy do? Just by the way he's dressed, what's he do? Like honestly. He's dressed this way he's on this ship. I can't imagine he going for a fresh start he pretty much doesn't need it. So what's he doing on this ship. Is he pretty much here just to hanging out. He's got a lady, a mistress. What is it, what's behind this guy. He's dressed pretty damn nice.

Craig created a narrative about how the passenger described on his boarding pass (who was a card shark) was able to get on or was let on to a lifeboat when he should not technically have been on one with the “women and children first” rule in place:

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66 I saw a connection between Simone’s reflections and a comment made by Barbara: “An artifact presented by itself is ordinary, but an artifact presented with a story is extraordinary.”
67 See further explanation and a rhetorical analysis of the museum attractions’ focus upon the lives of Titanic passengers in the discussion of theory in Chapter Nine.
And it—does it really makes me think how somebody like that would even be, you know, be let on a boat. I mean, do—if the—if it is like it—like there you say it was, you know...You know, ships going down, ‘women and children f-only’ or, ‘first!’ and guys getting on the boat and then, I mean, how did they manage that? What did they have to do? Were they climbing down the bottom of the boat and hiding and hiding their faces?

Craig’s narrative (described above) illuminates a key element in how this constituent contributed to learning and personal meaning formation: the boarding pass handed to each visitor as they enter the museum attraction. Serena explained the significance of the boarding pass during her visit:

You know, just to start off with that, ‘cause I think after a while everybody probably just forgets about that part. You’re not a passenger you’re—you want to learn and look. But it’s nice to have that little card to find out about this individual. It keeps it kind of at the forefront of your mind because I look forward to the end to find out about…me (laughs).

Serena remembered that her passenger’s name was Margaret Flanding and she was a maid. Aside from the boarding pass, Craig also “saw” a human presence in the newspaper and magazine articles from the time period:

and also the newspaper, the actual newspaper, um, that, you know, you get different accounts and that really interests me, too. Because, you know, not all of them were on spot. And that, like, a bunch of ’em were not even close, so...And you get a sense of different personalities when reading the paper like that, and you know just the paper’s view or maybe the view of the person writing the article ,or, and—yeah, that’s real intriguing to me.

As the researcher, I found that the museum attractions’ focus upon the lives of the passengers also provided a space in which the participants felt comfortable in forming narratives that involved putting themselves in the passenger’s position. Marshall tried to understand the emotions that the passengers may have felt during the sinking:

68 See further explanation and a rhetorical analysis of the museum attractions’ focus upon the lives of Titanic passengers in the discussion of theory in Chapter Nine.
Marshall: Oh, I suppose the chief thing is at least when I see those things is [pause] the um actually trying to, trying to, [clears throat] trying to understand what the emotions of the people that were in a situation like that…When they knew that death was probable. What they would have been going through in their own emotions. How were they handling that…

Interviewer: So, you were trying to—would you say you were trying to step into their shoes a little bit?
Marshall: Yeah.

For Henry, the “Lucile” reproduction dress display was a direct source of learning about a specific passenger:

And then right before that there was one exhibit that was about, I think it was about a fashion designer who was on the ship. I forget her name. Um, I mean it wasn’t, like, anything super famous I’d heard of but apparently she was relatively well-known. I think that was the majority of the clothing.

Henry did not know that there was a fashion designer aboard Titanic and that, even though he had not previously heard of her, she was quite famous during that time period.

Jack had limited knowledge of Lady Duff-Gordon before his visit, but he learned more about her as a person and designer:

Well, yeah. I didn’t, you know… I had a brief understanding of Lady Duff but I didn’t know she was a designer and did all these pieces and it was really interesting to see her replica dress on a dress form and her sketches [see Figures 5.2, 5.6, and 5.7 in Chapter Five]. You know, it wasn’t necessarily a room dedicated to her but they integrated her and her designs into the first class lighting an railing and carpet and things like that. So, you walk into the room and it showed first class and as you walked over around a corner you see Lady Duff’s dress and it talks about her and it shows you how high class she was at the time. And how much she was revered and things like that. So, they integrated the dress and Lady Duff into a first class situation and status.

The focus upon passengers also helped Henry and Daisy to learn more about the different cultures and nationalities that were represented by the passengers aboard the ship.
Caroline expressed an awareness that some passengers receive more media attention than others and, as a result, it is common to hear about the same passengers over and over in various sources. Because of this, she thought that it was nice to become familiar with some of the passengers (and their personal effects) who are lesser known (i.e., do not receive media coverage as one of the “faces” of the Titanic disaster:

I liked that, that was good to see. Others besides the ones that you always hear about. Like this is what happened, you know, John Jacob Astor, and this is what happened to Guggenheim, so it was nice to see some other random people.

Jane thought that there was a noticeable absence of content on the boarding pass. She had heard that she would receive a boarding pass that contained information about an actual passenger, and she would be able to refer to it throughout her visit to learn more about that specific passenger. Instead, she found that the Orlando location provided minimal information about her passenger’s life and abrupt information about the passenger’s fate. The absence of further contextual information made it difficult for her to learn and personally relate to the museum attraction content.

**Constituent 5: Dress and Costume as a Visual Language**

As the researcher, I found that visitors regard dress and costume as a visual language that can be “read” to obtain further knowledge about and deepen their understanding of history. Some participants determined certain characteristics about the wearer (in the absence of additional information) by reading visual cues provided by the dress being worn. Peter explained how dress serves as a set of visual cues that can be read:

The whole thing is a visual cue. The photos and what they are wearing is a visual cue as to which party or not which party which class abroad the ship they would
identify as. The artifacts I felt like you could identify which class they belonged to not by costume but by detail.

Peter further explained that encouraging visitors to both learn to read and practice reading the visual language of dress is an asset to historical learning because a time period or historical event cannot be accurately read if dress is missing:

The costumes are super important what they are wearing, you know the way they are dressed allows you to identify with the way they identified themselves. So, and you know minus the how well kept the individuals were. You know. Which would probably be indicative minus the outfits, or the costumes I feel like you wouldn't really know. I think you would be up in the air about over 50% of the people. If they were not wearing . . . I think it does, you would do a huge disservice if you said the costumes didn't matter.

Following her visit, Jane felt that it is important for individuals to be “fluent” in the visual language of dress because it allows them to learn history more comprehensively by adding another way in which they can relate to the time period:

‘Cause, you know, ‘cause really—as you look through a learning—learning about history, and trying to relate from now to then, you have to look at what is accepted, what isn’t, why, and a lot of that is reflected in how people dress.

For Victor, dress is needed to clearly differentiate among the social classes of the time period because this was a noticeably absent element of dress display in the Orlando location. Because dress was defined for each social class by rigid social rules, it effectively provides a “visual definition” of period dress:

This [top hats for men] is something that [men] were expected to wear in that time. They even said coats and top hats were—the dress, they were in the dress code. You had to wear them when you went out into polite society or whatever. So I expected to see more illustrations so that you could kind of differentiate between this is what this person is expected to wear…

Marshall confirmed that there is value in the reflections of Jane and Peter because he noticed that the photos that he viewed during his museum attraction visit provided a
“visual definition” of period dress: “The vast majority of [dress was displayed in] pictures so, um, and there was a lot of ‘em that gave you a flavor for what the dress at the time was.”

Just as a verbal language must be taught and widely shared to be understood, so must the visual language of dress. Marshall explained that he would have liked to hear the living history interpreter who was portraying a first class maid explicitly explain the meaning of her dress and what it represented during the time period so that the visual language of her dress was shared and more widely understood by everyone in his tour group:

Marshall: You know it probably would have been nice if those living history people had introduced themselves as: ‘I am wearing—I am wearing a office—officers uniform that was of the—of the type that an off—some ex—officer of some x level would be wearing’, or the woman again said this is what the chambermaid would be wearing…That’s what I’m doing so they would explain what it—what it was they were wearing, so…

Interviewer: So you feel like they could have identified themselves a little better through that statement?

Marshall: Yes.

Marshall recognized that there was an assumption made on the part of the living history interpreter that the visitors would automatically be able to read the meaning of her dress as significant to a historical environment associated with Titanic.

Simone realized that she had previously received information that effectively taught her how to, at least partially, read the visual language of the dress worn in this time period. This knowledge enabled her to accurately read the visual language of dress being “spoken” by her tour guide’s costume:
Interviewer: And was [your tour guide] playing a specific person? Do you remember?

Simone: Um, he was just, he just seemed like a regular guy, you know, from the way he was dressed, um, he seemed most like, just like, basic level, not necessarily middle class guy, whose probably more work hand on the deck or something.69

Dorothy found the dress displays interesting because it confirmed that she had been taught to “read” the visual language of dress correctly for this time period:

Dorothy: Well, I liked the dress that they had displayed on the model [the dress form]. It was blue and it had layers and it had lace and some ruffles and some puff…poufs [see Figure 5.2 in Chapter Five]. Um, and on the living person: the lady. Same thing. I mean, it was just for that era. It was long and with some layers [see Figure 5.14 in Chapter Five].

Interviewer: Okay. And why do you think that those particular displays appealed to you? So why were they interesting to you?

Dorothy: Just because it was early 1900s and that’s how I pictured it to be or have seen various… in other museums that that was the dress back then and it was interesting to me.

Interviewer: Okay. So would you say that by seeing the dress in this museum that that kind of confirmed what the dress was like for you in that time period?

Dorothy: Yes.

Marshall also used prior knowledge to make an “educated reading” (i.e., educated guess) about the social class to which the passenger who might wear the “Lucile” reproduction dress belonged: “I guess it would have been a first class passenger.” Marshall’s educated guess was correct.

69 The same quote by Simone is presented in Constituent One to illustrate a different feature of the general phenomenological structure. This is an example of how the identified features do not appear with clearly defined boundaries within the general structure. There is a blurring of the boundaries of the features as they come together to form the whole of the general structure.
As a participant who had not seen the movie, Camille experienced firsthand what it is like to not be able to fluently read or speak the visual language of dress: “Uh, for the most part…I didn’t really feel left out, except when I got into the movie room….” She immediately noticed that visitors who had seen the movie were able to recognize and “read” the visual language of dress and costume objects presented in the movie gallery in ways that she could not: “Everyone seemed to recognize the stuff, and I barely even know the main characters name, so…[participant trails off].” Camille did find a way to interpret the visual language in her own way when she could not understand how to “read” the display of women’s hats worn in the movie:

Uh…mostly [I noticed] the aesthetics of ‘em, I mean, they had little—they said when they were worn during the movie and who wore them. Uh, [this information related to their use in the movie] didn’t do much for me…I didn’t understand.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a description of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it. The general phenomenological structure presented in the first section of this chapter was a composite summary of the participant experiences that were expressed in interviews. For the museum attraction visitor, who represents a variety of backgrounds and levels of interest in Titanic, the general phenomenological structure related to learning and personal meaning formation in a Titanic museum attraction is comprised of five constituents:

- Parts of a whole
- Alignment with background, interests, and personal relations

Camille visited the Pigeon Forge location which contained a gallery devoted to the movie.
Comparative learning and meaning formation

Humanization and narrative

Dress and costume as a visual language

I also presented an in-depth discussion of the specific participant experiences that formed each constituent. The display of dress and costume were significant to the learning and personal meaning making process of the participants because such displays represented parts of a whole. Some participants stated that they created personal meaning during their Titanic museum attraction visit by relating the content to their background and personal experiences. In some instances this was accompanied by an emotional reaction such as empathy. I found that it was common for visitors to learn and form personal meaning by making comparisons to contemporary dress, behaviors, and other aspects of society. Some participants said that the dress and costume displays were of interest to them because they served the important function of humanizing the objects. Several participants expressed that their museum attraction visit helped them to learn about the passengers. I found that visitors regard dress and costume as a visual language that can be “read” to obtain further knowledge about and deepen their understanding of history.
The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event. In addition to semi-structured interviews and participant observation, a personal (or auto) phenomenological approach was also taken during the data collection process. This chapter contains the personal phenomenological narratives of my visits to each of the four Titanic museum attractions. The reader will notice that there is some variation among the topic headings for each museum attraction visit. This is because some of the galleries and/or rooms (e.g., the gift shop and lobby) in a specific location contained content that was distinctly different from that in other locations.

After completing the first step in the Epoche process via a “bracketing” method (i.e., the personal disclosure statement), I visited each of the four locations and made candid observations about general content and specific content pertaining to the use and manner of representation of Titanic film costume and characters (e.g., Rose) within each museum attraction. My visits also included making observations of other visitors around me as I was able; unless indicated, these visitors are not named nor formally enrolled in the research study. I spent an average of four hours in each museum attraction. I did my best to set aside all of my prior knowledge about Titanic. I recorded my reactions and observations to the content in a personal journal.
My Visit to the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri

Pre-Visit Reflections and Entrance

I arrived at the airport in Branson, Missouri on January 7, 2012. I took a shuttle to my hotel through the Grayline Shuttle service. During the drive I had a friendly conversation with the driver. She asked what my visit to Branson was for and I explained my research project. She became very excited and said that her daughter works at the Titanic Museum Attraction and would probably love to help out.

It struck me that, once on the topic of Titanic, the driver exclaimed, “Those people [that work there] know so much about the Titanic!” It seemed as if the locals treat them as authorities on the subject. For me, this raised the following questions: Is this how visitors also regard them and the museum as a whole? What about it makes them an authority? The type of display format? The objects displayed?

I arrived at the Titanic Museum Attraction at 11 a.m. to conduct my personal phenomenological visit on January 9, 2012. I was disappointed to learn that there were no photos allowed inside the museum attraction. Upon entering the lobby I purchased my ticket and made immediate contact with the airport shuttle driver’s daughter and the manager on duty at the ticket counter.\footnote{The airport shuttle driver’s daughter said that she was not interested in participating in my research, but I could leave some information with a manager. The manager on duty came to the front ticket counter and I provided him with information about my study as well. He did not seem interested in listening to any information about my research but took my card, Informed Consent document, and recruitment flier. He stated that he would ask around to see if anyone was interested. The airport shuttle driver’s daughter said that the living history interpreter who plays Jamie might be interested. The manager also said that I would need to clear this work with the manager, and I explained to him that I already received clearance.}
Introduction Gallery

The doorway into the first gallery was overwhelming. Surrounding the door frame was a real iceberg to touch, a text panel providing information about life in 1912, and information on the last living passenger. I thought that this was an odd location for the real iceberg; it felt like a gimmick to simply get me inside. Most visitors either lingered by these displays momentarily or took a quick glance and moved forward into the first gallery.

The first gallery was darkly lit and the walls were lined with glass panels in which a photographic-like image of the head of some passengers were etched, along with a quote that each passenger was known for (see Figure 5.1 in Chapter Five). These backdrops made the passengers seem larger than life. The quotes on the glass panels brought immediate focus to the people involved with Titanic. The majority of the room is occupied by a long and intricate model of the Titanic (see Figure 5.1). The presence of the model makes me think that the room is automatically geared toward kids. It feels like a formal setting, as if I am in the study of a wealthy person.

Dog Kennel Gallery

As I move into the next room I notice that the wall facades change as the theme of the room changes. The Dog Kennel Gallery has brick walls (see Figure 4.2 in Chapter Four). I am approached by a crew member in this room. I am not that fond of dogs, so this gallery does not capture my interest beyond a quick glance at the photos and text panels. The dogs were not present in the kennel at that time. I noticed that the dogs are
wearing the Heart of the Ocean necklace\textsuperscript{72} from the movie in some of the pictures that adorn the walls (see Figure 4.1). I felt uncomfortable seeing the dogs wearing this necklace because the point of the exhibit is to pay tribute to the dogs that were aboard Titanic, and the inclusion of a distinct movie component seems to do exactly the opposite by mocking them. The necklace was a cute addition that may help people connect to the information about the dogs because it did cause me to recall the movie when I saw it. However, I do not think that the presence of the necklace is necessary in this location of the museum attraction or in this context. One photo, in particular, is an oil painting of the dogs and it has a romantic feel to it.

**Shipyard Gallery**

I entered the next gallery to find a primary theme of the ship design and construction process. The room made wonderful use of large photo backdrops that were used like wallpaper to set a context. There were sounds playing from the speakers that made it feel like I was in the shipyard. The sounds made the room come to life and changed the feeling in the room. One display contained a drafting table, map of the maiden voyage, and drafting table tools. The drafting tools were placed in front of a backdrop photo to provide a visual of the environment in which they would be used. It was not clear to me whether the draft table tools were replicas or artifacts.

\textsuperscript{72}“Part of the [movie’s] story included an amazing piece of jewelry, ‘Le Courer de la Mere’ - Heart of the Ocean. An immense, heart shaped blue diamond pendant that was given to ‘Rose’ from her fiancéé, ‘Cal’, during the course of this amazing movie. This heart shaped necklace symbolized undying love and inspired the theme song of the movie, ‘My Heart Will Go On’, immortalized by the singing acumen of Celine Dion” (Titanic Branson, 2012b, para. 1). The blog entry that this explanatory passage appeared in on the Branson Titanic Museum Attraction website also explains the real necklace aboard the ship upon which the “Heart of the Ocean” necklace was based.
The gallery also contained publicity brochures that were distributed prior to Titanic’s maiden voyage to inform the public of her amenities. As I wandered around this gallery I thought it interesting that publicity brochures for the ship from the time period were being displayed in a place that was publicizing the event as history; it showed the passage of time and the continued ability of publicity to captivate the general public. The text panels in this room also discussed the different cultures and nationalities that were represented among the passengers. I walked by the Grapes Tavern façade. It was apparent that, where possible, photos accompanied artifact displays.

**Ship Building and Layout Gallery**

A floor plan of this gallery is provided in Figure 8.1. My eyes were immediately drawn to a purse displayed in the center of the room as I entered this gallery (see Figure 5.4 in Chapter Five). It was a beaded and netted purse laid flat atop a pedestal in a glass display case near the center of the room. It was the ornate quality of the bag (i.e., the shine of the beads and the intricate netting) that drew my attention to it. The purse also caught my eye because it was the only dress artifact presented in a gallery about the building and layout of the ship. The text panel that accompanied the purse in the display case read,

Purse of Velin Ohman. Age 22. Class: Third. Residence: Sweden. Destination: Chicago, IL. Collection of Craig Sopin. Velin Ohman made it into a collapsible boat, taking with her the purse displayed here. When boarding she didn’t notice that the ship carried only 20 lifeboats. To reach a lifeboat from third class, she

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73 The Grapes Pub was popular among crew and passengers. Many Titanic crew members and passengers quenched their thirst at this pub prior to boarding Titanic for her maiden voyage. It is still in operation today on Oxford Street in Southampton (Marr, 2007). You can learn more about The Grapes Pub at the following website: http://www.thegrapes southampton.co.uk/.
Figure 8.1. Floor plan of Ship Building and Layout Gallery at Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri. Rendering by Richard DeArmond.

would have had to navigate through a maze of passage ways, some blocked by gateways.

The placement of this purse in this gallery was terribly confusing. It seemed so out of place. Why and how was the decision made that this was the appropriate gallery in which to display this purse? From this artifact and other artifacts in the room I noticed that the headings on the text panel for each artifact often included a passenger name and then referred to the theme of the gallery. I would have given the placement the benefit of the doubt if the text drew a clear connection to the theme of the room, but it did not. Nonetheless, it peaked my interest in a room that might otherwise have been less
interesting to me. I do not have great interest in the building of the ship because I do not understand engineering and scientific concepts related to this process.

Also in this gallery was a detailed cut-away diorama that showed a view of the D deck (saloon and first class dining area), E deck (second class accommodations), F deck (third class dining and food preparation), and G deck (coal bunker and boiler rooms). There were even miniature people figures placed on each floor, which provided a human presence. I could see the dress on the boiler room miniature figures in the context of the boiler room environment. The diorama, as a whole, showed the division of social classes through physical environment.

The Building and Layout Gallery also featured text panels with lists of facts relevant to the layout and boarding of the ship. For example, I noticed that one text panel included the following list of quantities for certain textile items:

- Aprons – 4,000
- Blankets – 7,500
- Table clothes – 6,000
- Bed covers – 3,600
- Single sheets – 15,000
- Double sheets – 3,000
- Pillow cases – 15,000
- Table napkins – 45,000
- Bath towels – 7,500
- Fine towels – 25,000
- Lavatory towels – 8,000
- Miscellaneous items – 40,000.

This list allowed me to adopt a new perspective on the items that were aboard Titanic because I had not previously considered the amount of textiles (as opposed to dress) that was taken on the ship for utilitarian purposes. It reminded me of how easy it is to take the
textile-based items that I use on a daily basis for granted. Textiles were a precious part of
the cargo aboard the ship that kept everything running smoothly and comfortably.

As I prepared to exit this gallery I felt very nervous for what was ahead. It felt
strange to be reading about the lives of various passengers and having hindsight
information about their fate. I wanted to be able to use the information that I had to save
them. This makes the act of walking through the museum attraction, which is set up using
a chronological format, heartbreaking.

**Boiler Room Gallery**

This small gallery presented a replica of the boiler room environment, including
the use of dark lighting and the sound of coal being shoveled and workers yelling to each
other being played over the speakers as contextual audio. In one corner of the gallery
there was an interactive activity in which I was able to pick up a shovel that was
weighted to feel like a load of coal was on it and pretend to shovel it into the nearby
“glowing” furnace (which was backlit to give the illusion that the coals were hot) (see
Figure 5.3 in Chapter Five). The sign above this activity read, “Try to shovel coal into the
furnace.” I picked up the shovel and “scooped the coal into the furnace” twice to get a
sense of the weight. I knew from that brief activity that I would not have enjoyed being
down in the boiler room because I am not accustomed to that type of manual labor.

There was also a giant wall photo backdrop that showcased a group of men
working in the boiler room. Their clothes were filthy and covered with soot. The text
panel next to this wall mural referred to the name of the dress that the men were wearing
as “blackies” because of the color that the soot applied to it. This was a fact that I did not
previously know and learned during my visit. I also wondered, upon reading this, who coined this term. Was it the men themselves? Or was it people outside of their group, perhaps of another social class? As I pondered this idea I felt protective of the men and hoped that it was a phrase that they had coined for themselves so as to have ownership of their identity.

**Father Browne Photo Gallery**

The passage from the Boiler Room Gallery to the Father Browne Gallery was marked by an abrupt change in lighting. It went from very dark to very bright in a matter of seconds. The primary color of the room was a bright white, coupled with the black that dominated the black and white photos on display. The first sight of this gallery was overwhelming; it is comprised of wall-to-wall photos (see Figure 8.2). It was difficult to decide where to start because all of the photos seemed to blend together in my field of vision. I started by choosing a photo in the center of the room that showed two women boarding the ship (see Part 1 of Figure 8.2). It looked like a very romantic boarding experience, especially because the photo was so large, and I could clearly see the happy expressions on their faces. I felt excited and hopeful for their voyage. The music playing

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74 The photo album of Father Francis Browne, a Jesuit priest and renowned photographer from Ireland, contains some of the only known photos taken aboard *Titanic* at sea. The images include the only known photo of the ship’s wireless room, the last photo ever taken of the ship’s captain, and the ship’s anchor being raised from the water for the final time. The photos were taken by Browne as he traveled aboard *Titanic* from Southampton, England, to Cherbourg, France, to Queenstown, Ireland. When Father Browne died in 1960, his *Titanic* photos and more than 40,000 other notable images from his work were locked away in a metal trunk and forgotten until a chance discovery in 1986 (*Titanic* Pigeon Forge, 2012, para. 1, 3, and 5). You can learn more about the life and work of Father Francis Browne in the “Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction Collector’s Guide” (Marr, 2007).
in the room sounded like a track from the Titanic movie soundtrack but was not part of the soundtrack.

A unique display technique was used, whereby a photo presented in the gallery was used as a background wall mural and then smaller framed versions of all the photos were hung on the wall, over the wall mural. One wall mural, in particular, caught my eye because the photo was blown up such that the people in the photo were almost standing at my height (see Part 2 of Figure 8.2). I seemed to be standing at the level of the passengers. Even though it was not a realistic scale in which to be viewing the people, it
helped to make the dress in the photos more real because we seemed to be equals that had
transcended time and space. There were some instances in which I noticed a stark
contrast between two photos that were side-by-side; it was at these times that I really
noticed the differences in dress among the various social classes. For example, I noticed a
picture of first class women that was hanging next to a picture of third class Irish
immigrants. The immigrants’ dress was far more plain than that of the first class
passengers.

Third Class Corridor Gallery

A floor plan of this gallery is provided in Figure 8.3. The bright white aesthetic of
the Father Browne Gallery carried over into the Third Class Corridor Gallery. This
display area was a full-scale replica of the hallway that contained third class cabins
aboard the ship. The voices of “passengers talking in the corridor” were playing over the
speakers to add a human presence. Individual shadow box-like display cases were
attached to the walls (see Figure 8.4). The viewing of artifacts in this room felt similar to
the way in which art is viewed in a museum: walking along a wall to look at the work,
placed at eye level, and reading the caption. There were three display cases on the right
side of the corridor and one display case on the left side of the corridor. The left side also
contained the full-scale replica of the third class cabin (see Figure 8.5). I was trying to
figure out if there was a theme to what was being shown in the display cases, given their
presence in a replica environment. I perceived the intended context or theme as follows:
what might have been present or used in a third class cabin. There is a text panel that
Figure 8.3. Floor plan of Third Class Corridor Gallery at Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri. Rendering by Richard DeArmond.

Figure 8.4. An example of the shadow box-like display cases that were hung on the wall in the Third Class Corridor Gallery at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri. Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. Adapted from Marr, R. (2007). *Titanic: World’s largest museum attraction (A collector’s guide)* (p. 37). Branson, MO: Missouri Life Publications.
introduces third class passengers that may have stayed in a cabin that was like the replica. The prominent photo on this text panel featured a man and woman, but the dress looked too fancy to be on a third class passenger. While the information and photo provided context when combined, I found it confusing that the dress did not seem to match the information being presented.

One of the display cases featured the wedding ring of Carl Asplund. The ring artifact was accented with overhead lighting and propped up on a white pillow in the case. The display case, as a whole, was dedicated to the Asplund family. The text that accompanied the ring read, “Carl Asplund’s wedding ring – Retrieved when body was recovered. Carl and [his wife] Selma exchanged wedding rings in the United States in 1896.”

Another display case featured tunic buttons and a hat ribbon band. The text panel for the tunic buttons read, “Tunic buttons from the Titanic. Property of Frank J. Goldsmith, survivor.” The buttons were displayed in a small wooden picture frame within the larger display case. The display case, as a whole, was dedicated to the Goldsmith family – Frank, Victoria, and Emily. The text panel for the hat ribbon band stated that it was extremely rare and contained a letter that explained its provenance written by a Titanic survivor:

April 19, 1981. It was purchased on the Titanic by my mother (my Aunt75 – Mrs. James V. Drew [Mrs. Lulu Thorne Drew] at the time). Before she died she gave it to me. She had it in her pocket book when we were in lifeboat #11 and rescued by the Carpathia. It was worn, I believe, as a band around a sailor’s cap. Needless to say, I have kept it as a treasure. Signed, Marshall Drew, survivor of the disaster.

75There is a noticeable contradiction in the text of this letter. I recorded the text of the letter verbatim during my visit. It is not clear whether the passenger was the author’s mother or aunt.
The presentation of this letter personally struck me because it indicated what a survivor considered valuable. It was also interesting to me that he referred to something from the disaster as a treasure. I perceived the letter to both breathe life into Titanic and provide a sense of heritage related to those that survived the tragedy and had to own the tragedy of Titanic’s sinking as a part of their life story later in their lives.

The full-scale replica of the third class cabin was set back in the hallway, and I had to look through a doorway to view it. It was built to scale, so I was looking at the actual size and layout of the place where some third class passengers called home for a few days and where some of them unfortunately met their demise (see Figure 8.5). Viewing this physical environment gave me the feeling that I was on the ship, though I would have preferred to look over ropes that were restricting access rather than the half-door that was in the doorway to keep visitors out. It contained four beds (one bed stacked on top of another), luggage placed on the bed and on the floor near the edge of the bottom beds, and a sink station for washing. The beds were made and did not look as if they had been slept in. It was not clear if the luggage pieces were artifacts or replicas. I assumed that they were replicas because artifacts usually must be kept in temperature-controlled cases. It would have been nice if there was a text panel that mentioned the luggage; this would have added to its relevance in the room, beyond providing a partial human presence.

I turned the corner at the end of the third class corridor and found that it continued on for a bit longer. Fake door facades lined the hallway. I, as well as other visitors, tried to open them to get a peek at what was inside. Most doors did not open. There was a dog
kennel door that was small enough for young children to pull on. Though there were no dogs present, the door would partially open and barking noises could be heard.

The last length of the corridor also contained more individual shadow box-like display cases that were attached to the walls. One of these display cases contained a women’s watch (see Figure 8.6). The theme of the display case was women aboard the Titanic and provided information about passengers Catherine McGowan, Sarah Roth, Rose Abbott, and Amy Stanley. The accompanying text read, “1910 watch – This women’s watch is like one Rose, Catherine, Sarah, or Amy might have worn.” The watch was not an artifact, and I felt disappointed upon reading this information. The case did have the redeeming quality of showcasing pictures of the women in full length dresses and variations of dress. These pictures were more interesting to me than a watch that seemed like it could be easily acquired at an antique store.

Figure 8.6. The women’s watch from 1910 that was displayed in the Third Class Corridor Gallery at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri. Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. Adapted from Marr, R. (2007). Titanic: World’s largest museum attraction (A collector’s guide) (p. 41). Branson, MO: Missouri Life Publications.
The third class corridor ended with a larger display case that was set back in the wall, just as the full-scale replica rooms were presented. The display was a tribute to third officer Herbert J. Pitman (see Figure 8.7). In the upper left corner was a large photo of officer Pitman. His signal flags were hanging out from the right side of the wall. His masonry apron was displayed flat on a clear surface that was suspended from the ceiling with clear string. The bright colors of the artifacts really stood out against the white background of the corridor. I enjoyed seeing these artifacts because they were non-traditional dress and textile objects; that is, I would not typically think to look for these items when looking for dress artifacts in a museum.

As I made my way toward the exit of the Third Class Corridor Gallery, I overhead the living history interpreter in the next room, the Grand Staircase Gallery, explaining the accuracies in the 1997 movie to a visitor. I was not sure if she had asked a question or if that information was just being offered to her on her way through the gallery. I imagine that it is not uncommon for people to ask such questions in that gallery because that iconic sight seems very likely to conjure images of the movie in a visitor’s mind. The living history interpreter informed her that Rose was not a real passenger; rather, she was created as a composite of real passenger Dorothy Gibson and her mother. He said Jack was created as a typical third class, free-spirited guy.

**Grand Staircase Gallery**

I walked into the Grand Staircase Gallery with anticipation and excitement (see Figure 6.3 in Chapter Six). This is one of my favorite places in the whole world. Upon
Figure 8.7. This display was a tribute to third officer Herbert J. Pitman and featured some of his personal effects, including his signal flags (in the upper right corner). Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. Adapted from Titanic Branson. (2012). Titanic Branson press – Titanic Branson display photos. Retrieved August 3, 2012, from http://www.titanicbranson.com/media/images/titanic-branson-displays/titanicedisplay04sm.jpg.
entering I felt like nothing bad could happen in here and that it was a safe haven. It felt magical, romantic, and hopeful. An instrumental version of the song, “My Heart Will Go On” from the movie was playing over the speakers. The Grand Staircase is so appealing to me because it has an old world-quality to it. It is as if I was transported to another time. The chandelier hanging from the ceiling above my head made it feel even more magical and opulent; it was made of Waterford crystal. There were a couple of artifact cases in this room, but they mostly contained wood and other trimmings recovered from the actual Grand Staircase. I felt that the focus of this gallery was on the Grand Staircase as an artifact in its own rite.

Shortly after I entered I began talking with Arthur, the male crew member stationed at the bottom of the Grand Staircase who I had overhead talking to other visitors about the accuracy of the movie just minutes before.\(^{76}\) I just wanted to sit in this room all day. In this gallery I felt like Rose, not the passenger that was described on my boarding pass. I almost forgot that I had a passenger on my boarding pass that I was to be tracking throughout my visit. I ascended the staircase with awe, elation, and pride. I felt lucky to be in that place at that moment. I felt like I was personally a part of history. I stepped up the staircase and into the first class area. In this way, the museum attraction layout was faithful to the layout of the actual ship. From this thought it occurred to me

\(^{76}\) I encountered Arthur for the first time in the first gallery. He was stationed in that gallery at that time to provide information and a scripted tour for incoming visitors. I felt self-conscious taking so many notes because it was my first museum attraction visit for this research study, so I approached him to explain what I was doing. He said it was fine – that people take notes in the museum attraction all the time, even if it is not for a school project. I later encountered him in the Grand Staircase Gallery. Before entering, I overheard him discussing similarities and differences between the history of Titanic and the movie with another visitor so I approached him. We had a lengthy discussion, and I invited him to be a part of my research project. He said he was interested so I gave him my card and an Informed Consent document. He said he would call me to set up an interview. He became formally enrolled in the study a short time later.
that the Grand Staircase was more than a physical re-creation of one physical environment; this re-creation also informed passage into other areas of the ship. Being physically immersed in a replica environment was a truly unique and valuable educational experience.

I looked back down to the bottom of the staircase, in awe, as I reached the half-way platform. I had the biggest smile on my face. I thought of the movie at that moment because it was the location where Jack was standing when he asked Rose to go dancing below deck in the movie. I then proceeded up the rest of the staircase.

**First Class Corridor, Stateroom, and Dining Salon Galleries**

At the top of the Grand Staircase the environment is adorned with bold colors (e.g., reds and browns) and lush carpet. It is ornate and luxurious. I immediately look to my left and see the full-scale replica of the first class stateroom (see Figure 8.8). A display case in front of the ropes that restricted visitor access contained an original remnant of the green carpet that would have been used in the first class staterooms. I liked seeing the replica room, but it was somewhat underwhelming. There was no dress presented in the room. It seemed small and under-decorated. It contained a canopy bed, desk, and chair. The bed was made, and the desks had props sitting on the surface. But, despite these additions, the room felt empty, and I did not feel a human presence. It felt static and uninspiring. I did not spend much time lingering in front of it.

I proceeded down the first class corridor and noticed a hall of mirrors, to the sides of me and behind me that ended just before the entrance to the first-class dining salon. I stopped and looked at myself in these mirrors for several minutes. Seeing a reflection of
myself in this environment made the history of Titanic feel more real. I also thought that it felt like being on a movie set. It was mind-boggling to watch the hallway go on forever in back of me due to the reflective effect of the mirrors. I wanted to be able to run down that long hallway.

I entered the first-class dining salon (see Figure 8.9), which contained a variety of display cases about the first class passengers and their belongings. The room was very brightly lit and returned to a bright white color scheme. The walls had alternating white columns and mirrored columns. I did not recall seeing any signage that indicated the
theme of the room, but based on its appearance, I assumed it was supposed to be related to the first class passengers. The ambiance of the environment was established with the music that was playing over the speakers. I remembered the instrumental string music from a dinner scene in the movie but also knew that it was a popular musical arrangement during the time period. The music had a very first class tone to it. My interpretation of the room was informed by what I remembered from the movie.

The display cases contained china, dishes, silverware, an Egyptian talisman, a replica violin like the one that would have been played by a member of the band, a menu
cover, glass cruet, sheet music, and a recovered deck chair (see deck chair display in Figure 8.9). The artifacts in the display cases were accented with bright-colored cloth draped over each pedestal, strands of pearls, and mirrors. As I made my way around to the various display cases, I overheard one visitor ask another visitor if there were any dresses on display.

It just so happened that these visitors were about to come upon a dress display. One of the central displays was contained in an area at the back of the room. It was similar to the Herbert J. Pitman tribute display in the Third Class Corridor Gallery in that it was set back in the wall more than the other displays but was not its own separate gallery. The display was a tribute to “Lucile” Lady Duff-Gordon, a famous fashion designer during the time period who was also a first class passenger aboard the ship (see Figures 5.2, 5.6, and 5.7 in Chapter Five). The title caption for the display read, “’Lucile’ Lady Duff-Gordon: The Greatest Fashion-Creator of Her Time.” The display contained text panels with a biographical timeline and explanations of some of her more famous designs, original photos of some of her designs, a photo of the designer, and a reproduction dress (also known as a tea gown) that the museum attraction had made from one of her sketches specifically for this display. There was also a Sears Roebuck catalog on a pedestal to the left of the display viewing area that visitors could flip through to view her other design work. The text panels are set up on easels, and the photos are suspended from the ceiling with clear string. The back wall of the display area is covered in a large photo wall mural of the original Titanic first-class dining salon. The text that accompanied the Lucile Tea Gown read,
The fashionable tea gown you see here only existed as a sketch on the drawing board of world renowned couturier and Titanic first class passenger ‘Lucile’ Lady Duff-Gordon. Now this inspired original Lucile design, commissioned by Titanic Museum Attraction is here making its world exclusive debut.

The tea gown’s designer, Julie Keen provided the following designer notes of interest for the text panel:

The fashion silhouette change dramatically in the three years post-Titanic. The skirts became fuller and shorter and the natural waistline began its descent, ultimately disappearing in the early 1920s. The tea gown you see here is a good representation of the earlier romantic mid-decade style. The waistline is at the natural waist and the length of the skirt is about eight inches off the ground. This length would work for day as well as evening. This sketch is drawn to fashion proportions, about ten heads high while our dress mannequin is average human height, about eight heads high. To compensate for weightier physical proportions, a Styrofoam silhouette was fashioned and applied to the mannequin to create the ideal body size of the period. To maintain authenticity, all natural fibers, silks, beautiful imported laces, in this case from France, were used in the creation of this extraordinary ‘Lucile’ garment. This happens to be my favorite period so it is a pleasure working on interpreting the design. I am humbled to have the opportunity to make this dress from her beautiful sketch.

Another passage from a text panel explaining Lady Duff-Gordon’s design work was accompanied by a fashion illustration and read,

Her signature street suit, ‘Curate,’ based on eighteenth century English cleric’s Cossack. Trimmed with a white lace collar and cuffs and accessorized by a large, veiled hat, her black cloth suit was in effect a mourning costume. It helped to make a sympathetic impression on counsel and audience alike. Her attire in fact, drew almost as much publicity as her testimony.

I loved being able to see this dress up close, even though there was a glass partition in front of it. The light really picked up the flecks of sparkle in the silver and gold lace overlay. There was a mirror placed behind the dress so I could easily see what the back looked like. The dress was very elegant and definitely had a place in that gallery that was defined by luxury. I watched other visitors look intently at the tea gown and flip
through the Sears Roebuck catalog to view the designs up close. Of the visitors I observed, it was primarily women who found interest in the dress and lingered in front of the display for several minutes.

However, the silhouette of the dress was confusing because I took a moment to scan my memory and did not recall seeing this silhouette aboard the Titanic, either in period photos or the movie. It made me wonder why this design was chosen for reproduction over another. I understand taking action to construct a dress that never got to be physically made and the sentimentality that this process brings to the display. Perhaps it would have been better if a couple of different designs were reproduced and compared to show style variation. It is also confusing that the text panel discusses how dress looked in the three years post-Titanic. It seems that if information is being given about dress worn post-Titanic, it is also important to present information about dress worn pre-Titanic and at the time of the maiden voyage.

Marconi Room and Captain’s Bridge Galleries

The full-scale Marconi replica room was set back in a wall just before entering the Captain’s Bridge. The space in which it was contained looked and was shaped like a bay window. It contained replicas of the Marconi wireless system, as well as a reproduction of the uniform that the Marconi wireless operator would have worn. There was no information provided about the reproduction uniform, but I did feel that it assisted in providing context for the machinery and desk.

As I began to move forward, toward the Captain’s Bridge, I noticed that the museum attraction became darker and took on a more somber tone. I felt a sense of dread
and impending doom. I felt an internal resistance to proceed but also wanted to see what happened next in the story. I immediately noticed upon entering this gallery that there was audio playing over the speakers that said, “Let’s take her to sea.” Though it was a small gallery in comparison to the others in the museum attraction, it still contained a couple display cases. For example, there was a watertight door indicator panel on the wall. A replica of the ship’s steering wheel was in the center of the room, just in front of a large picture window that looked out into the next gallery – a reproduction of the outer deck on the night of the sinking. Standing at the wheel made me feel the weight of steering such a large ship. All I could think about was the huge responsibility that Captain Smith had when doing something as simple as touching and turning this wheel. I spent a couple moments looking out the forward-facing window from the inside. The space was quite open in this gallery, but it did not feel bare. I feel as though the Captain’s Bridge would not have been cluttered with a bunch of stuff on the actual ship, so this felt accurate. I exited out of the Captain’s Bridge to the right, through the door with a sign above that read, “Door to Promenade.”

Promenade Deck Gallery

Walking on the ship’s outer deck in this gallery felt like a memorial setting. I was looking out at the reproduced night sky and saw lights that were meant to imitate twinkling stars. This display was effective in taking my mindset from day to night. Standing on this deck, the story of Titanic felt very compelling. I could feel the climax of the story coming full speed ahead.
The air on the deck was crisp and cool; the temperature had been adjusted so that I could feel how cold it was out on this deck on the night of the sinking. The air felt so cold as I breathed it in. I could hear voices playing over the speaker that were saying, “Iceberg right ahead!” I could sense the panic in the voices, and it made me feel tense. The music also changed out on the deck and contributed to my feeling of panic and anxiety. I was alone out on the deck and felt slightly lonely and isolated.

There was only one text panel in the entire Promenade Deck Gallery and no display cases. The title of the text panel read, “Meet the Titanic Crew” and proceeded to explain biographical information about a number of crew members. I thought that this text was really out of place because there was nothing else out on the deck to provide context for that information. It may have been appropriate to draw attention to the Titanic’s crew at that moment, but it seemed less important to acknowledge their biographies and more important to focus upon the fact that the ship was about to hit an iceberg. I could see an iceberg and crashing waves painted on the wall in the distance; this was the scenario that the museum attraction had intended to create. As I prepared to leave this gallery I felt hesitation. I did not want to leave. It felt like an appropriate place for solitary reflection about myself and Titanic. I took a few additional moments on the deck and then proceeded forward.

**Theater Gallery**

The tour continued with what I identified as winding paths. There was an abundance of signs that read, “Tour Continues This Way.” I entered the theater and sat down to watch the only known footage of the ship from 1912 prior to the maiden voyage.
The footage shows the ship being built and provides information about specific passengers. The images of the ship are haunting, especially after having just come out of the Promenade Deck Gallery. Being in the reproduced physical environments and then seeing actual footage made Titanic feel even more real to me. There are two rows of benches on which visitors can sit in the theater. The tone of this gallery gave me the feeling that it was optional and perfectly acceptable to keep walking forward. There were not many visitors that lingered in the theater.

**Sinking Gallery**

A floor plan of this gallery is provided in Figure 8.10. As soon as I enter the Sinking Gallery I noticed a replica of the crow’s nest that would have been used to spot icebergs aboard the ship. It was so tall and made me feel insignificant in comparison. There were panels that contained quotes and passenger photos etched in glass, similar to those seen in the very first gallery. The etched glass element made it feel like a more formal setting, as if it was meant to be a memorial room. Projectors were used to flash passenger quotes about the sinking on to the wall; they would quickly appear and disappear in a flash. One of the quotes read, “The night it sank there was a great deal of merriment on board…soon we felt a slight jar. –Dorothy Gibson” I thought it was interesting that the presentation of this quote expressed how I felt about the recent changes that I had noticed in the museum attraction layout and way finding. For me, this quote related to the previous mood changes in the galleries that felt very sudden. The sheer volume of projected quotes brought a heightened awareness to the number of people that were faced with tragedy that night. The room is dark, and the displays are
Figure 8.10. Floor plan of the Sinking Gallery at Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri. Rendering by Richard DeArmond.

individually lit. I sensed a very somber tone in this room. There is a wall with multiple text panels that presents a timeline of the sinking. I found it odd that these panels were placed on the wall with the intent that they be read from right to left because this is not the orientation with which other materials are read in our culture. There was a reproduced piece of the hull on one wall that could be touched and I touched it.

There were two display cases in the middle of the room. One contained an actual passenger life vest (see Figure 5.16 in Chapter Five), and the other contained a watch recovered from a body (see Figure 8.11). The life vest was accompanied by a text panel
that read, “unidentified life jacket worn by passenger or crew member. This is one of only nine known Titanic life jackets in existence today.” This text struck me because of the use of the term “rare.” I wondered what connotation the museum attraction was trying to present with the usage of this term. Was this an implication that the life jacket is somehow better than other artifacts because it is rare? I also thought it was interesting that the life vest represented a functional dress artifact. So often I associate Titanic with the adornment and embellishment of the first class passengers. The life vest stands in stark contrast to this style because it is plain, bulky, and meant to achieve one purpose. The life vest represents function over fashion.

The watch artifact (see Figure 8.11) was accompanied by the following text:

Silver plated Waltham pocket watch. Titanic sank at 2:20 a.m. Fifteen minutes later the hands on this silver plated Waltham pocket watch were frozen in time. The watch was retrieved from an unidentified body recovered by the cable ship MacKay-Bennett.

The text panel also featured the following quote: “The Titanic tragedy is marked forever on the face of time.” My emotions became very serious and sullen in this gallery. I paused to soak in the history that was presented in this room. It felt so profound to be standing in the presence of dress artifacts that people had on their body when they died.

**Interactive Gallery**

A floor plan of this gallery is provided in Figure 8.12. I entered the Interactive Gallery to suddenly find a much different tone. There were still traditional text panels on the walls and display cases spread throughout the room, but the lighting had become bright once again and I was surrounded by interactive activities. The first wall I saw to
my left when I entered the room contained numerous pictures of passengers with a heading that read, “Titanic Passengers: The Legend and the Reality.” For me, this title implied that Titanic is larger than life. This gallery is located on the second floor of the museum attraction and has a balcony that overlooks the lobby.

The interactive activities began just after this presentation of photos. One activity allowed visitors to use a touch screen to learn how to send messages using Morse code and send an S.O.S. message. Another activity presented a bucket of 28-degree water in which visitors could immerse their hand to feel how cold the water would have been on the night of the sinking (see Figure 8.13). There was also a timer by the bucket so visitors

Figure 8.11. The Silver-plated Waltham watch artifact displayed in the Sinking Gallery at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Branson, Missouri. Photo Credit: Cedar Bay Entertainment. Image from postcard purchased by author in gift shop.
could test how long they were able to immerse their hand in the water. I did not use the timer, but noticed that I could not keep my hand in the water for longer than fifteen seconds.

The physical act of sinking was featured in yet another interactive activity where visitors were presented with three sloping decks (12-degree incline, 30-degree incline, and 45-degree incline) that represented the position of the ship and different points in the
sinking as one end of the ship lifted out of the water (see Figure 6.6 in Chapter Six). At first glance this activity appeared terribly tacky. I felt guilty walking on these sloping decks, but I was also intrigued and felt compelled to try it out. On the second deck with a 30-degree incline I felt an overwhelming sense of sadness and helplessness. On the third and final deck with a 45-degree incline I could feel my feet slipping out from under me as I attempted to walk up it. I was practically walking with my body tilted at a horizontal angle, and this was very unnerving. I could feel my abdominal muscles engage as I worked to pull myself up to the top and I did make it.
An artifact display case that was placed between the Morse code machine and the bucket of cold water contained an exquisite dress artifact with a touching story. The artifact was a cameo pendant that belonged to Helen Candee. The accompanying text read,

Helen Candee’s miniature pendant with a cameo of her mother. She carried this on Titanic. Today this artifact is valued at over $110,000. In January of 1912 Helen Candee was on an extended stay in Europe to complete research for a book on tapestries. In April she received word that her son had been seriously injured in a car crash. She booked her passage immediately on the next ship available – Titanic. The night of the sinking Candee met a fellow friend, architect Edward Kent, on the Grand Staircase. She became emotional and asked if he would take her mini pendant with a cameo of her mother painted by the famous American artist Ella Hergesheimer. She was saved in lifeboat no. 6. The body of Edward Kent was retrieved and in his jacket was the pendant. The Kent family returned the precious memento to Helen Candee.

I was very moved by this story and could identify with the trust and companionship that Helen Candee had found in Edward Kent. I did think that the statement of how much the pendant is now worth detracted from the impact of the story. It seemed random to place that information in the text.

In the back of the Interactive Gallery was a full-scale reproduction lifeboat. I had always pictured the Titanic lifeboats as small life rafts that might be seen on a boat today. My first thought was, “this lifeboat is huge!” It was much bigger than I expected. The sheer size triggered even more sadness inside of me because more people truly could have been saved on a lifeboat of this size. I walked along the empty lifeboat rows and it felt surreal. I tried to imagine what it would have been like to know that I had a seat aboard this wooden structure and so many others did not. It was somewhat unimaginable; my mind resisted the difficult consideration of that scenario. There were also interactive
pictures and buttons in the lifeboat where a visitor could sit down and press the button by a particular passenger’s photo to hear them (i.e., actors and actresses portraying the passengers via audio) recount their experience during the sinking. There is a quote presented by the lifeboat that read, “we place absolute confidence in Titanic, we believe the boat is unsinkable.” As a visitor in the museum attraction I was privy to information only obtained through hindsight, and this quote made me feel uncomfortable as a result.

**Memorial Gallery**

The Memorial Gallery was beautiful. Upon entering, I sensed that the tone in the room was not necessarily one of sorrow; rather, it was a sense of support and unity with all of the passengers, alive or deceased. I had now gone through the entire museum attraction and felt like I knew these people better than before. I knew that I could never fully understand what they went through, but the museum attraction experience helped me to know them as deeply as was possible.

On one wall were the etched glass memorial panels that contained the names of all Titanic passengers and whether they survived or perished. On another wall there was a blown-up image of the front cover of the New York Times newspaper from the day after the sinking. Standing in front of that newspaper image I felt like I was stepping into history. In the center of the room was a life vest in a display case that was hanging from the ceiling. The case had individualized overhead lighting to draw attention to it as a main feature of the room. It was haunting to see the outline of the human form with the life vest propped up in the case (but not on a dress form of any kind) and know that the person who might have been wearing it truly was gone.
Another area of the room was designated for the Rose Petal Tribute\textsuperscript{77} that the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations were conducting in honor of the centenary of Titanic in 2012. When visitors enter the room a living history interpreter is waiting by a case of rose petals and recites the following scripted speech:

At this moment, when you enter the memorial room you’re probably holding your boarding pass a little tighter. Because that boarding pass and that rose petal you are about to touch represent that passenger. And on that cold April 14\textsuperscript{th}/15\textsuperscript{th} night when they’re sitting on the ocean wondering will anybody find us, will anybody remember us, thanks to you and millions of people who have visited this museum, you have kept their memory alive. Now you honor us by being here. And if you’ll take that Rose petal and place it in the case there, that case will be closed on April 1\textsuperscript{st} and that case will be shipped out to the International Coast Guard where all your rose petals will be placed out at sea at the same time and the same place as the Titanic. So you, now, are a part of history. This will never happen in our lifetimes again and it is our honor that you are with us here today.\textsuperscript{78}

I made direct contact with the female living history interpreter, in this gallery.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{77} The Titanic Museum Attraction website (Titanic Attraction, 2012, para. 1-3) provides the following explanation of the Rose Petal Tribute on a press release posted to their official website: Often, guests have asked if they could somehow honor the passengers and crew of Titanic. Beginning in July 2011, the Titanic Museum Attractions started a special Rose Petal Memorial Tribute to the passengers and crew of Titanic. Each guest who has visited our ships in Branson, Mo and Pigeon Forge, Tn. has had the opportunity to place an actual rose petal into a memorial case in the Titanic Museum Attraction Memorial Gallery. Now, on April 10, 2012, the United States Coast Guard International Ice Patrol will set sail for the Titanic Wreck Site with our Rose Petals in tow. They plan to arrive on April 14, 2012. They will then carefully lay our Titanic Museum Attraction rose petals onto the surface of the Atlantic Ocean directly where Titanic sank 100 years ago. Don't miss this opportunity to join the Titanic Museum Attraction and its guests in this very special Titanic memorial tribute that ends on Sunday, April 1, 2012 at both of our Titanic Museum Attraction locations.

\textsuperscript{78} I did hear this scripted speech recited by a living history interpreter during my visit, but this transcript of the speech was provided by Barbara during her Titanic Museum Attraction staff interview.

\textsuperscript{79} I encountered the female living history interpreter, who was wearing a first class maid’s uniform costume in the Memorial Gallery. When I was the only visitor present in the room she saw I was taking notes and asked if I was a college student. I briefly explained my research project and proceeded to ask if the dress she wears in the museum as a living history interpreter ever changes. She explained their Summer Blues dress in great detail (see Figure 8.14), sharing that she loved to wear it because it had a full skirt and was a beautiful blue color. After further conversation, I invited her to participate in my research study. She said she would be interested, though she seemed a little hesitant at first. I gave her my card and said she could give me a call. I wandered around the room a bit more and when I was exiting to the next room she stopped me to stay, “I will call you.” I said “please do” with a smile. I never did hear from her, and she was never formally enrolled in the study.
Discovery Gallery

The final gallery of the museum attraction contained information and objects related to the discovery of the Titanic wreckage and the efforts to preserve artifacts. As I entered the gallery I noticed that, in the doorway, there was a dive suit from the underwater expeditions to the wreckage. This was another interesting example of a functional (and unconventional) dress object that I saw during my visit. There were photos on the walls of the artifact recovery process, as well as photos from the ocean dives to the wreckage. On the opposite wall there was a large display of passenger pictures in multiple rows with the heading, “Survivor’s Wall of Stories.” I liked that the museum attraction did not end only with how the ship has seemingly lived on under the water; that is, they did not stop telling the stories of passengers at the sinking. It was interesting to see how people went on with their lives, and it was a true testament to the strength that we have as humans. As I read these stories I wondered how many of the survivors thought about or talked about Titanic in the years that followed. If it were me, I do not think that I would have been able to stop talking about it.

There were three display cases in an aisle formation down the center of the room. They contained paper artifacts pertaining to the recovery of bodies and even photos of bodies that had been recovered after the sinking. I had never seen photos of recovered bodies from Titanic, and it was shocking. There were also letters from the White Star Line that informed the loved ones of victims that if they could not pay for body retrieval, the victim would be buried at sea by default. I was really angry when I read one of these letters; it reminded me that there are many people to whom money is the bottom line and
other considerations will never be made. I do not want to be like that.

The final text panel on the wall as I exited the gallery listed the names of Titanic artifact collectors whose pieces are currently on display in the museum attraction. I had encountered two wonderful crew members during my visit, but upon exiting down the Grand Staircase a different first class maid was stationed at the bottom. She seemed to
have a very negative demeanor. I felt myself not wanting to interact with her. I had a strong desire to walk away because all she could focus on were the negative aspects related to the sinking of Titanic and the poor treatment of third class passengers. That is not the focus that I wished to have at the end of my visit, and she took something away from my total experience with her demeanor and choice of parting words. Regardless, I had made my way through the museum attraction, going up the Grand Staircase and then back down again. My visit had literally come full circle.

**My Visit to Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida**

**Entrance**

I arrived at Titanic: The Experience at 12 p.m. to conduct my personal phenomenological visit on February 10, 2012. I have visited this location before, but that was six years ago. Since my last visit it has changed locations and management, making the experience very different this time. It seemed inevitable to go into my visit with expectations and a tendency to compare it to what I had seen before (including at this location and at other Titanic exhibits). I visited with one participant with the intention of making participant observations. I felt a bit rushed, but she moved ahead of me and did not pressure me to move any faster. Feeling rushed was something that I imposed on myself, especially because I had a tight interview schedule that day. We took the self-guided tour and went at our own pace.

I was underwhelmed by the exterior of the location (see Figure 8.15). It consisted of a large overhead sign above the door, a cheesy blue awning, and pictures and posters sloppily taped to the windows from the inside. Upon entering I felt completely
overwhelmed. A floor plan of the lobby is provided in Figure 8.16. The lobby contained a mini exhibit on the left half of the room and the ticket counter on the right side of the room. The cashier was not very friendly. He was dressed as a third class passenger, but it did not seem well done or accurate. I noticed that the ceiling of the room contained a full-scale replica of the Grand Staircase dome.

After paying I proceeded to the mini exhibit on the other side of the room. It contained a small-scale model of the ship’s wreckage and replica dishes but was dominated by items from the movie. One display case was specifically devoted to the movie and contained an autographed movie script, purses, a place setting and plate, Rose’s butterfly hair comb, a replica of the note that Rose puts in the safe for Cal to find in the movie, a lifeboat plaque, a production handbook, and a movie poster book (see Figure 8.17). I was underwhelmed by most of these items because I personally own many
Figure 8.16. Floor plan of the Lobby and Gift Shop at Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida. Rendering by Richard DeArmond.

Figure 8.17. A display case filled with movie props and movie-related items in the lobby of Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida. Photograph by author.
of them. They are easy to acquire and are not impressive in a museum setting. Perhaps
the items were also underwhelming because they are not as old as many of the artifacts
throughout the museum attraction. The purses in the case were non-descript, and I could
not tell if they were being presented as replicas or movie props. Though, it was great to
see the photos of Rose depicting her life after Jack up close because they can only be
seen from a distance at the end of the movie.

The mini exhibit also contained two outfits on dress forms, one male and one
female (see Figures 6.4 and 6.8 in Chapter Six). The woman was wearing a coat, blouse,
skirt, and hat (see Figure 6.8). The clothing was non-descript; it was not clear whether the
clothing was being presented as a reproduction, vintage, replica, artifact, or some other
type of classification. The man was wearing a shirt and pants with attached suspenders
(see Figure 6.4). The man did have accompanying text that read, “This is Leonardo
DiCaprio’s boarding costume from James Cameron’s Oscar award-winning motion
picture, Titanic.” The placement of these two outfits together was confusing for two
reasons: it wasn’t clear why a movie costume was placed next to another outfit and the
relevance or classification of the woman’s outfit was not identified. It seemed that, in
order for these two outfits to work together, there needed to be further text explaining
their relevance. Also, the woman was standing more in the foreground than the man. I
found this odd as well, considering that it was non-descript and placed next to a movie
costume about which I would think the museum attraction would want to place more
emphasis.
The lobby had already established an internal feeling of confusion for me, and I hoped that the rest of the content would not do the same. The door to the museum attraction proper was camouflaged behind a curtain without signage, and it took a few minutes for an employee to notice that we needed assistance with finding the entrance.

**Shipyard Gallery**

The first official gallery in the museum attraction was devoted to the building and launch of Titanic. The first thing I noticed was that the content relied heavily on photos to tell the story. The gallery contained too much open space and it looked bare. I thought that maybe this was meant for the use of guided tours because then large groups of people could file in and move around the space more readily. It was obvious that flat displays were being relied upon because the space seemed too open and lacked dimension. As a result, it did not feel that there was enough content to justify the use of an entire room for this topic. The reliance on flat (i.e., two-dimensional) displays was apparent in the type of objects that were displayed. There were pictures of the ship’s boiler room and Thomas Andrews. Artifacts included rivets, screw shafts, a launch ticket, and a ship registry.

The physical environment was altered to look like a shipyard with brick walls, wooden floors, the display of engineering specs and industry publications and brochures. The gallery contained a replica of the ship’s propeller. I immediately noticed that the “ship launch” track from the movie soundtrack was playing over the speakers, which was intermingling with the sounds of ship horns and insect and bird noises. It was difficult to connect the audio to the environment because I could also hear the audio intended to be heard in the next gallery and it was distracting.
Launch Day Gallery

I felt extreme disappointment when I entered the next gallery. It was meant to give the visitor the feeling that they themselves were boarding the ship. I was unimpressed by how little thought seemed to have gone into this gallery. The physical space was not used well, and it just looked cheap. One wall of the room was painted to look like the side of the ship but gave no genuine sense of the size of the ship. I may as well have been standing next to a tug boat based on the height of the wall.

I heard the sounds of ship horns, people saying goodbye, and birds. Props were used along the walls and in the corners of the room (e.g., stacked wooden crates and luggage). A ticketing booth replica was placed near the gallery exit. Artifacts on display included a departure ticket, fuse plate for an electrical outlet, fire extinguisher, swimming bath tiles, coat hooks, a toilet flush handle, and a piece of the deck. This room contained more information about engineering and construction than the launch, which was the stated theme of the room. Though, the stated theme was only announced in a hidden corner of the room; I had to play hide-and-seek to find it.

This gallery was not believable for me. There was a clear attempt to make it interactive, but it still remained two-dimensional on a variety of levels. The pictures on the wall were very generic and did not add much to the environment. Instead, they seemed like filler for open space and bare walls. In addition, the title of the venue is “Titanic: The Experience,” but there is an extensive focus upon other ships that are then related to Titanic in some other way. Even some of the replicas are based on elements of
other ships, but this is not known unless the accompanying text is read. I often read the
text, but other visitors may not.

The room feels tragically manufactured. I had a lot of anticipation built up for this
visit and I felt extremely let down standing in this gallery. I felt no need to linger in the
space.

“A Seafaring Town” Gallery

The focus of the next gallery I entered was upon the town from which Titanic
departed for its maiden voyage. The entryway had a text panel that said, “Welcome to
Southampton and White Star Line’s ocean dock.” There were pictures and copies of
newspaper articles hanging on the walls. Again, the displays were dominated by two-
dimensional paper-based objects. One of the large murals was peeling and not
professionally mounted. There was a text panel describing nomadic ships that were
related to the Titanic in some way.\(^{80}\)

As a segue to the next gallery, there is a replica ship door propped on a pedestal in
the doorway. It is on a separate stand placed to the side so it does not even appear to be
attached to the wall. It is a tacky presentation and does not feel realistic. As a result, I do
not feel like I am on the ship. I realized at this point that it is the small details that make a
difference. I continue to feel let down by this museum attraction as I walk through. There
is too much open space. This makes me wonder what is missing or what else could fill
the space, rather than focusing upon what is currently in the space.

\(^{80}\) This reference to “nomadic ships” is written exactly as it appeared in my notes. After conducting further
research I learned that the text panel was referring to Titanic’s tender ship, the SS Nomadic. I think that my
notes were incorrect because I lost focus in this gallery because the display techniques were not tailored to
my learning style, and the topic was not one of personal interest.
**First Class Galleries**

I walk through the ship door and into a first class corridor. There is a façade of doors along the wall. There is light shining through from the other side, but I tried to open the doors and cannot. The corridor is enhanced by period light fixtures and carpet. It is very brightly lit. There is a plant on a period furniture stand in the corner. Though I have prior knowledge of what a first class corridor looks like, there is no signage to inform other visitors of the relevance of this re-created environment. This was confusing. I turned a corner and the corridor abruptly ends and leads into a new gallery. The corridor’s ending is signaled by the abrupt ending of the lavish carpet and beginning of dark wooden floors.

The next gallery contains a mish mash of displays that seem to be most representative of the first class passengers and their accommodations, though this is not explicitly stated. The room feels cluttered, and the focus is not clear. One wall is adorned with an enlarged photo mural of the first class dining area. This is repeated in several areas; there is a clear reliance on large scale photos to re-create the physical environment. The room also contains a tower of three television monitors that are showing the same video in unison. It appears to be original footage of the ship from 1912, but there is no signage to confirm this guess. I did not find it to be a very exciting video clip and felt no need to linger and watch it to the end.

A full-scale replica of the Marconi Wireless Room is set back in one of the walls and roped off to restrict visitor access. The Marconi replica room is brightly lit, which accents all of the dark-colored features. There were several display cases in this gallery.
One case contained playing cards and currency. Another case contained floor tiles.

Another case displayed a recovered wooden deck chair that is draped with a reproduction White Star Line blanket; this blanket happens to be sold in the gift shop. Another case displayed receipts, jewelry, a hotel card, and a Turkish Bath card. Another case displayed stationary, card table felt, postcards, calling cards, and a gilded lead grill. Another case contained a passenger list, lifeboat plaque, and postcards. The postcard artifacts were given context with a text panel that explained the act of sending a postcard was a social requirement and, therefore, a good way to indicate the ways of life during the time period.

Numerous display cases contained multiple items, which seemed to crowd the space within the case. I find this practice unfortunate, given that there are several areas where I think there is far too much open space that could be filled. The artifacts could be more spread out. Because dress artifacts were concentrated in the display cases of this room, some of the display cases are described in detail below.

The display case that contained jewelry included the following text for context:

Many items of jewelry found at the wreck site of Titanic have been reproduced, among them are these cuff links and bracelet. The original bracelet is believed to belong to 3rd class passenger Amy Stanley, shown here [refers to photo of Amy Stanley in the display case]. She was immigrating from Wallingford, England to New Haven, Connecticut. The cloisonné pin\textsuperscript{81} is original to Titanic’s time and could be purchased in the ship’s barber shop.

I found it interesting that this replica item seemed to blend in so well with the artifacts in other display cases. As I approached the case I assumed that it was a real artifact until I

\textsuperscript{81} Cloisonné is defined as “inlaid, usually with enamel, in spaces divided off for design. Originally done on precious metals; now abundant, chiefly on brass-buttons, necklaces, bracelets, bric-a-brac, etc.” (Picken, 1985, p. 64).
read the text. It was difficult to determine how to classify each dress object due to poor or missing signage.

Another display case in this gallery was also devoted to dress objects. The case contained a parasol, copy of a Good Housekeeping magazine, bracelet, necklace, buckles, earrings, broach, small drawstring bag, postcards, copy of a *Cosmopolitan* magazine from 1912, women’s boots, black gloves draped over a pedestal, and copy of *The Ladies World* magazine (see Figure 8.18 for a visual of the display case layout). The display case contained several text panels. One text panel read,
Buckles, parasol, and purse: The metal buckles are made to slip over the tongue of a ladies’ shoes. The parasol has a red satin underside and is fringed in black lace to better shade the eyes. The purse is handmade and looks to belong to a child. Items like these gloves and other vintage pieces were often seen aboard the Titanic.

From this text it was not clear whether the items were all replicas or partially composed of artifacts and replicas. The way in which the sentence about the gloves is written indicates that, at the very least, the gloves are a replica or vintage piece. Another text panel in this display case read provided information about fashion during the time period:

Life in 1912: Bowler hats and granny boots were the ‘in’ things to wear in society. Fashion magazines were emerging with the coming of such inventions as the catwalk (courtesy of 1st class passenger, Lady Duff Gordon). Cameos, velvet, and gold dominated ladies’ jewelry. Postcards were the way to correspond during travels and events, such as these from the ‘Hands Across the Sea’ series to benefit Titanic victims and their families.

I was glad that the text provided an explanation for the presence of the postcards because, when I first approached the display case, it was unclear why postcards were included. I was also confused at the mention of bowler hats in a display case about women’s dress. It was my understanding that bowler hats were worn exclusively by men during this time period.

There was a display case that featured playing cards, a passenger’s list, a matchbook and ashtray, and a clothes hanger, and uniform buttons. The caption for the clothes hanger and buttons read, “This clothes hanger is an original from the White Star Line. It was found in most staterooms. The five vintage White Star Line buttons could be found on cuffs and jackets of the staff.” It occurred to me, in viewing this case, that the museum attraction was making an assumption that the visitor knew what they meant by “vintage.” I must admit that I did not understand the meaning that they intended.
Another display case contained hair brush backs, cuff links and buttons, a desk watch and watch chain, and a razor blade with its matching case. The accompanying text read,

Titanic’s first class ladies placed great importance on looking their best. These toiletry items may have helped one of the Titanic’s female passengers prepare for a gala evening. Some women brought six different ensembles, one for each of the shipboard dinners. One brush back and the hand mirror are made of a synthetic material that resembled ivory.

The text pertaining to the desk watch and chain, also in this display case, read,

In 1912, pocket watches were the standard timepiece for most people. Although designed as a pocket watch, this is actually a stem-wind desk watch with round beveled... [research notes that finished this sentence were illegible]. The delicate design and length of the watch chain with pearls suggests it was used by a lady.

The attribution of this watch’s use to a lady genuinely surprised me. While I thought it looked feminine, I did not think that ladies used pocket watches during this time period. It changed my perspective about how both men and women used objects. The text pertaining to the cufflinks, studs, and buttons, also in this display case, read,

Men’s attire in 1912 relied upon buttons and cufflinks to complete their appropriate attire. This purple enameled set of gold cuff links and studs were part of a set of three intended to resemble amethysts, emeralds, and sapphires. The synthetic four-hole button and silver vest or waistcoat button, as well as the copper cufflink show the range of design and materials used on different types of clothing.

These items further altered my perspective about how both men and women use objects because the previous description of the pocket watch showcased the use of a

82 An assumption that is often made by visitors to a museum is that all information being presented is correct. One cannot assume that all information being presented is correct. I am skeptical about the accuracy of the information presented about this watch.
traditionally-masculine dress item by a woman, and this text described the use of traditionally-feminine materials (e.g., synthetic precious stones) for men’s wear. In the far right corner of the room was the full-scale replica of a first class stateroom (see Figure 8.18). It was set back from the main wall and roped off to restrict visitor access. It is designed as a sitting area for the occupant and contained a couch, fireplace, wardrobe trunk that is open to reveal its content, and a small table with two chairs. There is a dress form placed between the couch and fireplace on which was a simple white dress with some lace trimming. The dress form is pushed slightly behind the

Figure 8.19. The full-scale replica of a first class stateroom at Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida. Photograph by author.

83 I am referencing “traditionally-masculine” and “traditionally-feminine” characteristics of dress from my perspective as a woman living in the year 2012.
couch, making it difficult to see the dress. The dress seems far too plain to be in a first class stateroom and, thus, out of place.

The wardrobe trunk is open wide, showcasing the content of open drawers. It almost looked as if someone had been rummaging through the drawers because various items are hanging out or draped across the surface. In particular, there are gloves draped out of the drawer and a bodice is on a hanger across a pole in one half of the trunk. I cannot see the bodice because there was a sheer veil covering this part of the trunk. It is a shame that the bodice cannot be seen because it looked relevant to the time period, whereas the sheer veil is irrelevant and does not provide any useful information. It seems that the veil is draped strategically so that I cannot see anything underneath; almost as if to cover up inaccurate objects placed in the environment. There was a rack of shoes in one half of the trunk and shoes placed in front of the trunk on the floor. The shoes outside of the trunk were clearly not from the time period; they had a very pronounced pointed-toe feature and looked like shoes that a woman might wear with a power suit in the 1980s. There was another pair of black boots placed in front of the rest of the shoes on the rack in the trunk.

I felt mentally exhausted and overwhelmed as I prepared to exit this gallery. There was a looming feeling that I had missed something because there were so many things to see. I actually looked forward to entering a less crowded gallery and had to take a moment to regroup before I continued.
**Dining Room Gallery**

The artifacts in the recreation of the dining area included wine bottles, champagne bottles, dining menus, silverware, and the dishes that were used for different social classes. There was audio playing over the speakers of people talking, so as to add a human presence to the room. After exiting the previous gallery, I found it difficult to recover from my mental exhaustion. One element that helped me to re-engage with the content was seeing myself in the mirrored panels on the wall. It was the first time during this whole visit that I felt remotely connected to the ship. Though, it was still only a partial feeling of being present on the ship. In this way, the mirrors were a successful display technique. I did not spend much time in this gallery.

**Social Class Distinction Gallery**

As I entered this gallery I felt very confused. I had no idea what the theme of the room was supposed to be. Just after entering I came upon a small display of Captain Smith on a side wall. The display was informed by the following text:

**Captain’s Uniform.** This original White Star Line uniform jacket and replica hat depict the typical day to day attire worn by Captain Smith in the winter. These bars on the chest are abbreviated versions of his medals. Officers would wear black during winter months and white during the summer.

I loved the amount of detail that this text provided about the Captain’s uniform, but unfortunately it was only referencing a big gaping hole where the uniform should have been standing. There was no uniform present and no signage to indicate that it had been taken out or would return.

This gallery was one of the few places that there were pictures of passengers presented. Though, the presentation of the photos seemed random. Even in this gallery
that was said to be focused on social class, there was a continued focus upon construction artifacts. These objects should not have been in this room. Also on display in this room were photos of the different accommodations for various social classes, advertisements for the ship, blue prints, and postcards. There was only one photo representing second class accommodations. The third class cabin was not pictured in this room either, nor was there a full-scale replica of a third class cabin throughout the entire museum attraction.

One very unique element in this room was the audio of a Titanic passenger playing over the speakers. Edith Brown Haisman was a Titanic survivor and talked about how lush the carpet looked when she boarded and how extravagant the accommodations were. It was surreal and moving to hear the voice of a passenger, but also annoying because I remained in this room for an extended period of time and the same audio track (composed of only a couple of sentences of speech) was playing over and over.

**Grand Staircase Gallery**

Though the Grand Staircase was roped off to restrict visitor access, it was magnificent. The first word that popped into my head when entering the room was “gorgeous.” The instrumental version of the song, “My Heart Will Go On” from the movie soundtrack was playing over the speakers. Looking at the staircase gave me a sense of peace. I was speechless. It felt magical, as if I was being transported to another time. I wanted to walk on it to more fully experience the environment. I could picture the movie character Jack Dawson standing at the top of the staircase. This room held more meaning for me than many of the other galleries because of the movie. The use of the soundtrack seemed to pre-define the tone of the room as loving and romantic.
There were artifacts present in the room, but they definitely took a backseat to the staircase itself. One display case contained pieces of the original chandelier hanging above the Grand Staircase and, though pretty, seemed less impressive than the reproduction and easy to bypass. There were also some photos of the original Grand Staircase from 1912 in the room. I overheard one visitor say to another person in his group, “Is the angel [at the bottom of the staircase banister] designed authentically?”

**Below the Decks Gallery**

After exiting the Grand Staircase Gallery I turned a corner and found myself in the third class corridor. I was initially confused because it was not clear whether I was to have come up or down the Grand Staircase, even though I was not allowed to walk on it. Also, the content began at the beginning of the corridor with first class accommodations, and it was not made clear that it was starting atop the ship and working its way down the decks. Not having a sense of where I was supposed to be in the layout of the ship was disorienting.

I got my bearings back and realized that the experience became more interactive at that point. I could hear boiler room sounds playing over the speakers, and I walked the length of the third class corridor. At the end of the corridor there was a third class gate, closed and locked, in front of a doorway that contained a stairwell presumably leading to the upper decks. I immediately thought of the movie. Even the key that Jack and Rose are attempting to retrieve in one scene of the movie is placed on a stairwell step. I reached into the gate to recreate that moment by reaching for the key (see Figure 8.20). It felt like
a light-hearted moment, an act of using the re-created environment to make a joke. It felt okay to do that because it was a moment related to the movie and not the actual events.

I continued down the corridor and turned a corner to see a replica of the ship’s storage area, where there was a half-scale model of a car from the time period that was being taken along as cargo on the ship. I again thought immediately of the movie, to the scene when Jack and Rose consummate their love. I reached up to the back window of the car and slid my hand down to recreate that movie moment (see Figure 8.21).

Figure 8.20. A view of me interacting with the locked gate in the third class corridor at Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida. I was re-creating a moment from the 1997 Titanic movie. Photograph by Richard DeArmond.
As we made our way to the next room I felt myself fully immersed in the events of the sinking and knew that I was being plunged into the disaster. The door to the next gallery was a recreation of an open water-tight seal gate with an original photo of the gate on the adjacent wall. It is at this point in the museum attraction I notice that there are fewer defined rooms and more winding hallways.

**Boiler Room Gallery**

As I walk into the Boiler Room Gallery I notice that one wall has a replica of a boiler with an open door that reveals glowing coal. The artifacts displayed in this gallery include coal from the ship, a thermometer backing, a mud box lid, and a speaking tube. There were also original photos of the boilers, coupled with engineering plans for this area of the ship. This gallery again relied on two-dimensional photo and paper-based artifact displays. The room was overall dark with red accent lighting. I noticed that it was
cold in this room, but it would have been hot down in the real boiler rooms. I know that
the air conditioning may have been necessary to keep visitors comfortable in the Florida
heat, but it would have been added to the interactivity if they went the extra mile and
recreated the temperature of the room as well.

Captain’s Bridge and Outer Deck Galleries

I entered the Captain’s Bridge, and it felt cold in the room. There was a window
meant to peer out into the oceanic expanse, but it was frosted so as to make it impossible
to see through it. I could not see anything through the window, and it took away from my
experience in the room. Objects on display included a watertight door indicator panel and
a main engine room telegraph. The room was mostly dark, with overhead lighting
directly above the telegraph artifact.

The Captain’s Bridge led directly out into the Outer Deck. I immediately felt cold
when I walked on to the deck. It took me back to that time period through physical
sensation. I could hear the sounds of the orchestra playing, people talking, and waves
crashing over the speakers. Shimmering lights imitated the presence of water and waves
beyond the deck. I saw myself in a mirror on the deck and felt both sad and lonely. I felt a
sense of impending doom and took a moment to linger in this room and reflect. I was
primarily reminded of the movie in this room because of the audio. Because of this
connection to the audio, I’m conflicted about whether it is better to have the audio or not
in this room.
Memorial Gallery

I entered the Memorial Gallery and felt that something was missing. I had gone from the deck to seeing if the passengers had lived or died. There was a problem with the way finding because a trio of doors that contained entrance to another room were not clearly marked and, as a result, I bypassed these doors and the other possible gallery.

I immediately noticed the life vest artifact in a display case at the center of the room. The overhead light for the case drew my attention to it. When I approached the case I saw that there was no accompanying signage. The light indicated the visitor should pay attention to the life vest, but it was not clear what I was supposed to be paying attention to in the absence of text. Also, it was not made clear if it was an artifact or a replica. I felt safe in assuming that it was an artifact but was not sure if that was accurate.

The main feature of the Memorial Gallery was the set of glass panels hanging on a wall that contained the names of all Titanic passengers and crew with a notation regarding whether they survived or perished. The walls were painted black and the room was mostly dark; the light emanating from behind the glass panels provided the light in the room. There was a row of chairs near the glass panels on which visitors could sit. It felt as though the museum attraction expected visitors to socialize in this area. It was a very plain memorial. I did not get a sense of memorial in this room.

The sinking was not covered in depth, and this made the remainder of the visit confusing. There was only a text panel affixed to a side wall that explained the sinking timeline after the memorial name panels. Also, this text panel focused more upon the Carpathia’s role in the rescue efforts following the sinking than the sinking that the
Titanic experienced. It was not clear why the choice was made to overlook the sinking. The absence of information about the sinking almost made everything up to this point in the visit seem insignificant and fragmented. My understanding of Titanic was altered because it was difficult to piece together the “parts of the whole” with such an influential part missing. I felt disoriented by this absence.

Further reliance on two-dimensional paper-based artifacts occurred in this room: newspaper clippings and other media coverage of the sinking that was printed in 1912 adorned the walls. Some of these clippings were difficult to read because the room was too dark. The darkness contributed to my feeling of disorientation at times in this room. I also felt flustered in this room because another participant had called and left a phone message about possibly cancelling her interview for later that day. It was difficult to stay focused after this event.

**Final Gallery**

The last area of the museum attraction contained several different categories of artifacts and information. Two significant dress artifacts were presented in display cases. The first was a watch that was laid flat in a case. The accompanying text read, “Jack Steward, Annie Caton. The watch was owned by stewardess Annie Caton. Since she escaped Titanic with it in her pocket, she had it engraved on the back ‘RMS Titanic Annie Caton’.” The case also contained photos of Annie Caton and her order to transfer from the Titanic.

The second dress artifact was the mourning pin of Mary Newell. The accompanying text read,
Mary Newell, wife of 1st class passenger and ‘kingpin’ banker Arthur Newell, did not voyage on Titanic. However, her daughters and husband did. When Carpathia docked, it is said she screamed and nearly fainted when she saw that her husband was not with her girls. She slept with his watch under her pillow every night, never allowed Titanic to be mentioned in her presence, and never took off this Edwardian mourning pin until the day she died in 1957 at the age of 103.

The pin was surrounded by a postcard autographed by survivors.

There was also an area that had a very industrial and bare appearance. It contained a large piece of the ship’s hull. A television screen showed a video of the wreckage under the sea. A text panel provided an explanation of how artifacts are conserved.

**Gift Shop**

The final room signaled the end of the museum attraction, and it led directly out into the gift shop (see Figure 8.15). The gift shop was fairly large but did not contain a lot of merchandise. I noticed that, on a very high pedestal near a merchandise display of Heart of the Ocean replica necklaces there were two dressed mannequins. The female mannequin was dressed in a reproduction of the red jump dress that Rose wears when attempting to jump off the back of the ship in the movie. It was a horrible reproduction of the movie costume, and it would have been better to display nothing. The red jump dress served no purpose beyond connecting the Heart of the Ocean necklaces to the movie. The male mannequin was wearing what appeared to be a ship officer’s uniform. It was also a poor reproduction; the sewing errors on the sleeves were sloppy and painfully obvious. The dress on both mannequins looked cheap and ill-fitting. Neither mannequin had accompanying text to describe what it was or why it was placed there. There were no

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The gift shop is discussed in the context of this museum attraction visit because it contained a display of reproduction movie costumes, along with Heart of the Ocean-themed merchandise that was available for purchase.
female movie costumes throughout the entire museum attraction except in the gift shop. At the end of my visit I felt ready to push through, finish viewing everything and leave.

**Post-Visit Reflections**

I tried to observe other participants in the museum attraction, but there were not many people present at that time. There was severe disorganization from the very start of the museum attraction, and it was mentally exhausting to keep track of what was going on. I felt like I had checked out of the experience part of the way through the visit because I felt let down. I assigned more of a negative emotional tone to the visit.

I was not impressed with the staff when we entered. They seemed rude, as if we were bothering them. There was the option of a guided tour by a costumed living history interpreter, but I chose to do the self-guided tour. I did not make direct contact with any of the living history interpreters. I did make direct contact with the museum attraction staff just after completing my visit. I was not sure if I should or wanted to because they did not have pleasant attitudes, but two new employees were at the ticket counter when I exited the museum attraction and I decided to approach them.

I made direct contact with the general manager, who stated that she is directly employed by Premier Exhibitions. She explained to me that they used to be affiliated with the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations but are no longer. This location was recently acquired by RMS Titanic Inc. They are now directly affiliated with the Las Vegas location, which is also operated by Premier Exhibitions. They now occupy a smaller space than before. I was very aware of this change and did not think that the space was managed well in this new location. There is far too much open space.
I overheard the general manager telling other visitors that during the upcoming weekend they would be hosting a Jack and Rose look-alike contest in honor of Valentine’s Day. Prizes would be awarded, and photo opportunities would be offered on the Grand Staircase. She also told the other visitors that many of her costumed interpreters work elsewhere at nearby entertainment venues in the same capacity, such as Disney World and Universal Studios.

My Visit to the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

Entrance and Lobby

I arrived at the Titanic Museum Attraction at 11 a.m. to conduct my personal phenomenological visit on March 20, 2012. Upon arrival, we were given a boarding pass and then led to a queue line outside the main doors, where a first class maid living history interpreter spoke about miscellaneous facts, what we would find inside the museum attraction, and the audio tour that was available for purchase. When the group was led into the main lobby, we were lined up in rows to purchase tickets. The main lobby contains an enlarged image showing how the Titanic compares in size to other well-known built structures, such as the Empire State Building. I noticed that the Titanic’s size is focused upon from the start. In comparison to the entry process and lobby area in Branson, it is more simple in Pigeon Forge.85

While we were waiting in line to purchase tickets, a male living history interpreter asked “How many first, second, and third class passengers do we have on board with us.

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85 I made comparisons between the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations because they are sister museums that owned and operated by the same individuals. In addition, they contain almost-identical layouts and gallery contents. While the Las Vegas and Orlando locations are both owned and operated by the same company (RMS Titanic, Inc.), but do not contain similar layouts and gallery contents.
today?” Everyone raised their hands accordingly. He also explained that Titanic had the best third class conditions of any ship built thus far, which changed my views of the third class before entering the museum attraction. I felt that I was given a new perspective from which to learn. One of the female living history interpreters then greeted our group and explained that female crew members aboard the ship dressed similar to her appearance that day (see Figure 5.14 in Chapter Five). She added, “Most survived, so if you see one in the museum attraction hold on tight!” This interaction was helpful in keeping the group organized and entertained while waiting to purchase tickets. A young child, when his family was paying for tickets, asked the first class maid interpreter, “what is a steward?” She told him that it was along the lines of a maid. I noticed that this initial interaction put the group at ease and made them feel as if they could ask any questions they might have. It was a positive experience to watch a young child feel comfortable asking his question to a stranger; it seemed to signal a level of established comfort.

First Gallery

After purchasing tickets, we were led into the first gallery. A male crew member gathered the group around the maiden voyage map on the wall and explained the voyage route in detail. He gave everyone a few minutes in the gallery before doing so and then provided additional time for browsing afterward. This gallery seemed to be about orienting visitors with the basic design and layout of the ship.

The artifact that immediately caught my eye was located in the center of the room in a large glass case atop a pedestal. It was a large women’s trunk used for clothing transport and storage (see Figure 5.10). My first thought was, “Wow! This is so large. It
looks like it can hold so much.” There was no accompanying text, but I did approach the male crew member to ask if he could provide more information about it. He said that a review of the contents upon its retrieval from the ocean indicated that it had belonged to a third class passenger, though they don’t know exactly who. It has a monetary value of $10,000. The lid of the trunk had a complex set of strings woven underneath, to be guarded when closed, that was used to hold women’s hat feathers. The trunk was a wicker basket covered in leather. The leather is obviously cracking, but is still remarkably strong. There were still White Star Line stickers intact on the outer surface; they are in pieces and beginning to peel away.

The first gallery also contained a detailed cut-away diorama, referred to as the Ship of Dreams Model that contained miniature mockups of the A, B, C, and D decks (see Figure 8.22). It looked like a dollhouse, and I felt like I was being given an exclusive sneak peek into the inner workings of the ship. There were even miniature people placed on each floor, which provided a human presence. This happened to be an inadvertent display of dress in a mini-scale replica of the physical environment because each

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86 The Titanic Museum Attraction Collector’s Guide (Marr, 2007) provides information about the trunk beyond what was said by the living history interpreter. “The salvage ship Mackay-Bennett recovered 306 bodies and many other items, including this trunk, from the floating debris field of the Titanic. The crew didn’t find much inside: a small purse, a bracelet, and a blue blouse. The blouse showed much wear and had been altered many times, suggesting that the owner was a frugal third-class immigrant. It remains a mystery as to whether the woman who once prided these few possessions lived or died. Her meager belongings are now worth more than thirty-two thousand dollars [and are owned by the Cedar Bay Entertainment Company]” (Marr, 2007, p. 41).

87 I made note of monetary values in museum attractions that utilized this display technique. The Pigeon Forge location was the location that most prominently displayed the monetary value of artifacts and objects as part of the supplementary text panel in various display cases. A monetary value was listed in at least one display case in each gallery. A monetary value was not provided for all artifacts; rather, they were dispersed throughout the museum attraction. I made note of them when I came across them during my visit.
miniature figure was dressed. Though, it was not clear if the dress was meant to be differentiated by social class on each deck.

This model was absolutely amazing; my first thought upon viewing it was that it was breathtaking. The attention to detail, right down to the miniature Louis Vuitton luggage stacked in the first class room, was flawless. There was a family viewing the model at the same time I was, and one of the family members asked, “Is this where they stayed in the movie?” pointing to the veranda area where Rose and Cal had breakfast in

the movie. While this model was exquisite, it was only showing luxury levels, which was confusing for me at first. I thought that a diorama like this should show a true cross-section of the ship, which for me would mean showing the accommodations for all social classes.

This room also contained four sprawling wall murals that covered the entire surface of each wall. They were photos from the time period of people in their physical environments, so it was big enough that I felt like I was walking in the streets and really boarding the ship. Along with enlarged photos the gallery included three-dimensional props that were placed in the corners and along the parameters of the room (e.g., stuffed mail bags and suitcases), which created a more realistic environment because those are items still in use today. I related to the fact that I use a suitcase to travel still today.

The first gallery also had an interesting display technique where a light-up diagram was placed on the wall or in a horizontal table-like position, and visitors could press various buttons on the diagram to light up a certain part of the image and text. Some of the text on these diagrams was very person-focused. For example, one text panel said, “If you are holding the boarding pass of Francis Mullet, you likely discussed politics and business in [the first class smoking] room with friends.” The boarding pass was already interactive, but this activity provided explicit opportunities to draw attention to my boarding pass.

“Designing the Dream” Gallery

Upon entering the second gallery, titled “Designing the Dream,” I noticed that the shape of the room was not conventional and I loved it; the room was half square and half
oval. The change in the shape of the physical environment put me in a different mindset to receive new and different information in this room. This gallery contained large wall images of Thomas Andrews and Captain Edward Smith. Captain Smith was pictured with his dog. This felt random to me at first, but then I viewed the personal photo of Thomas Andrews on the opposite end of room, in which he is posing with his wife and child, and I realized that maybe that photo of Captain Smith was chosen to humanize him.

The primary display focused upon ship blue prints and construction tools. There was a narrow display case in the middle of the room containing a lamp, first class menu holder, dishes, and a bed warmer. There were also several high-quality photos of passengers in which their dress could clearly be seen. The people in one particular photo looked so happy, and I felt a sense of promise for them. I wished that I had known them. As I was preparing to leave this gallery I overheard two pre-teen boys rushing through to the next gallery, and one said to the other, “I wonder if we’ll find Kate Winslet’s little sketch in here,” referring to the nude sketch of Rose that Jack draws in the movie.

**Shipyard Gallery**

The third gallery was focused upon the shipyard in which Titanic was built and the construction process. There was very little content that matched the theme of the room. A photo wall panel of the construction yard was all consuming and made me feel like I was standing in the construction yard. From this photo I also got a better sense of the size of the ship. The display cases contained dishes, silverware, dinner menus, and rare photos and artifacts belonging to John Jacob Astor and Madeleine Astor. The text panels for several of the artifacts included a statement of their current monetary value.
For example, a very rare first class dinner menu card is valued at $45,000. There was also a very rare Titanic carpet section from a stateroom on C deck that was said to be valued at $30,000. I wondered what the point was of stating the monetary value. What value does this add for the visitor? I was not sure if it added value for me. And, how are these monetary values determined? The room also contained sound effects of those you might hear in a shipyard – whistles blowing, coal burning, and people yelling.

One display case that contained first class objects (e.g., dishes, forks, and so forth) incorporated pearls as a decorative element draped around the artifacts. I saw one young girl looking at these pearls and say to another person in her group, “That’s Rose’s sister’s necklace.” The other person replied, “Did it say that somewhere or something?” and the girl said, “No, but I can just tell that’s hers.” Another woman pointed to the photo of Madeline Astor in a display case and said “Is it her cameo collection I own?” I am guessing that this woman was referring to some type of fashion jewelry collection that bears Madeleine Astor’s name, though I do not know for sure.

**Construction and Launch Gallery**

I entered the next gallery and the theme was not clear at all. It seemed to encompass the themes of the previous two galleries with miscellaneous displays and photos. There was a continuation of the Ship of Dreams Model on one wall of the room. It specifically depicted the third class areas, which were the F, G, and Orlop decks (see Figure 8.22). This model was, again, breathtaking, but I wondered why the two Ship of Dreams Models were not placed side by side for comparison. I would have liked to be able to compare the two physical environments. While I was examining the third class
diorama, one visitor that was standing next to me turned to another person in her group and asked, “Did you see the car [that was in the diorama]?,” in reference to the car in which Jack and Rose consummated their love in the movie (see Figure 8.21).

One display case contained examples of different brochures that were used to advertise passage on Titanic’s maiden voyage to the different social classes. Other displays included a piece of the Grand Staircase wood, a templar sword owned by Christopher Mills, and various paper artifacts (e.g., Vinolia soap advertisements, letters, postcards). The shape of the room was, again, unconventional and a v-shaped partition that separated this gallery and the one before it added dimension to the room. It also seemed that the v-shape assisted in moving the visitors forward in time, as if to point toward progression. In this gallery I got the sense that the information was real and accessible because it had a more down-to-earth and laid back tone. I thought that might have something to do with the fact that it was devoted to the lower classes and was not related to rigid high society.

This gallery also contained a replica of the Grapes Pub storefront display along one part of a wall. The exhibit layout was particularly creative because the window of the storefront was used as a display case for other artifacts. The accompanying text for the Grapes storefront display made specific reference to the movie:

An important early scene of James Cameron’s movie Titanic renewed interest in the link between the Grapes Pub and Titanic. In what might be considered an homage to this historic South England Pub, the Grapes is where we meet leading man Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio) and sidekick Fabrizio (Danny Nucci) in the final round of a high stakes poker game. With two Titanic third class tickets in the kitty, the four players are seen sweating the outcome. Before spreading his cards, Jack says, ‘Alright. Moment of truth. Somebody’s life’s about to change.’
His lucky hand lands him and Fabrizio aboard the Titanic just in the nick of time, blissfully unaware of the many lives this maiden voyage is about to change.

I thought that this text drew a nice balance between the movie and history. It conjured an image of the movie in my mind and then tied it back to history.

The gallery continued into a second room that displayed more of the same types of artifacts and objects. It was the other side of the v-shaped wall in the previous room that contained the Grapes Pub façade; this wall served as a divider for a continuation of the gallery. The photo wall mural to the far left showed further completion of the ship’s construction. I could see a visual timeline from these wall murals. Also on this wall was a photo display dedicated to Thomas Millar. In one photo he was pictured with his surviving granddaughter. I felt more connected to this photo because she was present; she added a feminine presence that made the image more relatable for me. Another photo wall mural showed a group of men standing next to the boiler. It was a display technique used to showcase the massive size of the boiler and emphasize the size of the ship as a whole. I also got a sense of human frailty when viewing this photo. A set of photos on a different wall were introduced with the heading, “Meet the Titanic Crew.”

One display case contained an engineering certificate and discharge book. Another case included postcards and a postal facing slip. The postcards were retrieved from Oscar Woody’s body. I felt that this information made the postcards more valuable because an individual had personally attached meaning to them by having them on his person at the time his body was recovered. Another display case contained dishes and

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88 A postal facing slip was a form placed on top of individual bundles of mail to indicate their destination in preparation for mailing and timely delivery. A postal facing slip retrieved from Titanic was auctioned at Christie’s and can be viewed at the following website: http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=5093801.
silverware recovered from the wreckage. The last display case featured a ledger\textsuperscript{89} valued at $7,500.

The back wall of the gallery contained a Ken Marschall\textsuperscript{90} painting of Titanic inside a faux window. I felt like I was looking through a window of time when looking at this painting. I wanted to tell the ship to turn around and come back, as if the window gave me power to use the knowledge I had acquired through hindsight. I noticed that even a painting done in a contemporary time period elicited strong emotion, not just photographs from the time period.

The wall across from the Ken Marschall painting contained large photos of Bruce Ismay and Lord William James Pirrie, who assisted in the design and building of the ship. The photos of the men had them posed in positions where they were not looking directly at the visitor. The people involved with the ship felt less distant and more approachable when presented in a larger format. I also liked seeing the enlarged photos of the builders because it increased my appreciation for their hard work. The more I viewed the large photo displays the more curious I became about how the museum attraction was able to get these photos to enlarge with such a good quality.

\textsuperscript{89} The nature/content of the ledger was not a detail that I recorded in my notes.

\textsuperscript{90} A description of Ken Marschall and his artwork is presented at his official website (The Art of Ken Marschall Online, 2012, para. 1):

Ken Marschall is best known as the world's foremost creator of Titanic artwork. Accomplished in photo-realistic rendering of anything from architecture to nature, it is Ken's splendid, evocative Titanic paintings that are his legacy. His minutely detailed portrayals of famous liners, naval vessels, airships and shipwrecks are admired for their realism, drama, historical accuracy, use of light and color, subtlety of detail and smoothness of line. Renowned for bringing Titanic back to life with his paintbrush, Ken's haunting portraits of the celebrated liner, often copied by others, are iconic images that have become part of Titanic's history itself.

You can learn more about Ken Marschall by visiting the follow website: http://kenmarschall.com/
The final area of this gallery contained an interactive coal shoveling activity. The activity includes a fake furnace with a full-size shovel that is weighted with metal on the end, so as to enable the visitor to feel the weight that would be repeatedly lifted when working in the boiler rooms. Near the activity there was a text panel that read, “Can you imagine doing this job for ten hours in 100-degree temperatures?” I appreciate this question because it was difficult for me to envision doing manual labor, given that I do not have much experience with it. It helped to re-focus my thoughts at a time when I was having difficulty wrangling them to form meaning. The question asked me to consider what the real environment might have been like, beyond simply testing it as a visitor. I shoveled the coal.

My experience in this room was a bit more detached than previous galleries thus far because it did not contain subject matter of immediate interest to me. I had to consciously work to remain focused. I noticed that I was being very picky about what to look at based on my personal interests but still continued to be mindful to pick up important basic details related to the story of Titanic.

There were also some interesting facts presented in this gallery that I had not previously known. For example, one text panel explained that there sub-events happening on the ship that were overshadowed by the sinking. A visitor who was standing near me as I read this panel leaned over to another person in her group and said, “I didn’t know there was a fire on board.” This gallery felt a bit overwhelming because it stretched into two rooms, and I felt a sense of relief when it was time to move into the next gallery.
**Father Browne Photo Gallery**

The first photo that I saw upon entering the Father Browne Gallery (see Figure 8.2) captured a first class woman and her maid, boarding the ship. The first class woman was well dressed and the maid looked fairly well dressed too. This photo stood out to me because I could tell the difference in the social standing of the two women based on the size and shape of their hats; the first class woman wore a hat that was taller and more ornate with ribbons. Other women could be seen standing in the background of the first class woman and her maid in the photo. The women in the background were wearing similar hats and helped to make the dress of the maid in the foreground stand out. I was able to differentiate the dress of the first class woman and her maid by comparing it to the other women who were in near proximity. I also noticed that the orientation of the photo matters because these women were pictured vertically, which allowed their full outfit to be viewed.

As I worked my way through the gallery and observed the many photos, I thought that the first class dress that I was viewing looked more simple than I had expected. One possible reason for the women’s seemingly simple dress was that the photos were taken during the boarding process. It is likely that an outfit change would have taken place later in the day for attendance at a social event. The more simple clothing I was viewing may have been for reasons of comfort and utility. I could personally relate to this idea because I prefer to travel in comfortable clothing myself. The individual photos in the gallery provided a very unique view of Titanic’s history. It was the gallery taken as a whole that was the most moving; the many lives captured on film forever felt like a touching tribute.
As I proceeded through the gallery I overheard one visitor say to another, “It feels surreal to see the last photos of most of these people.”

Though the content of the gallery was overwhelming, I was able to identify a favorite photo. The photo showed a lot of people standing in a horizontal line and every single person is wearing a hat. It really stood out to me because it showed what was popular during the time period in a way that made the practice of wearing a hat seem mundane and ordinary. Yet, the sheer volume of the hats stood out and made it seem extraordinary. Another photo that caught my eye also included a showcase of a popular dress trend. The photo presented a group of men that were all dressed the same and waiting to board the ship. It reminded me of the 1950s when men were known for dressing alike. In particular, it reminded me of a scene in the movie, “Revolutionary Road.”91 The movie is set in the 1950s and at the start the main character (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) is boarding a train to work and he is immersed in a sea of men that are dressed exactly the same and off to work at similar jobs to support their families. I was able to make sense of the dress in the photos by drawing a parallel to dress in another time period. This comparison helped me to more deeply relate to the dress.

Another interesting photo featured a lifejacket inspection during the boarding of the ship. All of the people in the photo were wearing lifejackets. It struck me that, because of the presence of this photo, the life jacket can be seen in life and death in this museum attraction. It was interesting that this object appeared to have a life and lived

91 Based on the novel by Richard Yates, “Revolutionary Road” is a movie about a young couple living in a Connecticut suburb during the mid-1950s who are struggling to reconcile that they gave up on personal dreams to start a family and live the perfect “America Dream”-inspired life in the suburbs. You can learn more about this movie at the following website: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0959337/.
experience. Also, it was a functional dress item that is not always noticed or considered as an object worn on the body. It is almost as if the life jacket is taken for granted in a way that people see right through it, with a kind of x-ray vision, when viewing the photo.

One of the quotes that adorned the wall of the Father Browne gallery caught my eye:

Early in 1913, Frank Browne started lecturing on his Titanic experience. Later that year the White Star Line told him that it would ‘appreciate if any lecture you deliver’ you will abstain from any reference to the Titanic, as you will understand that we do not wish the memory of this calamity should be perpetuated.’

This aspect of life certainly had not changed in the 100 years that have passed. It is still common for individuals to shove a tragedy or negative event under the rug in order to preserve a reputation. It is also common for companies to attempt to protect their reputations and assets in the face of scandal and (possible) wrong-doing.

Another interesting photo featured some of the first class ladies buying lace prior to boarding the ship. I thought this photo was priceless because it showed the joining of different social classes and cultures through the use and production of a textile.

**Third Class Gallery**

The entrance to the Third Class Gallery transported me into the third class corridor below the decks. The corridor was lined with door facades. Shadow box-like display cases were hung in intervals along the right side of the wall. The display cases were framed in the upper area of the door facades. I felt that the message of this display technique was “the opening of a door to the past.” A text panel at the start of the hallway explained that this was the actually size of a third class hallway, and there were a variety of nationalities that made use of these accommodations. There was upbeat Irish music
playing over the speakers. I proceeded to look at the display cases along the walls first. Each display case had its own theme.

The first display case was focused upon passenger Sarah Roth. The case contained dishes, brochures distributed prior to the maiden voyage, and a third class menu. The accompanying text panel in the display case said that the menu is now valued at $189,000 because it was in her “handbag when she made a valiant dash to safety.” The second display case was focused upon passenger Selena Rogers Cook. The case contained a 12x12-inch linen handkerchief that was pressed between two pieces of glass for protection. The text that accompanied the handkerchief read, “This dainty linen handkerchief was tucked away in Selena’s purse when she sailed alone aboard Titanic.” The accompanying text read, “Selena Cook would never have imagined that her small, inexpensive leather change purse would be appraised one day at $20,000. After all, it only held one 1907 farthing coin.” Lastly, the case contained a tortoiseshell comb. The accompanying text read, “This prized tortoiseshell comb was among the personal effects Selena carried with her when forced to abandon ship.” The case also contained a leather change purse. I thought it was interesting to see these items because they were little pieces of who Selena Cook was as a person and what she found important. I saw them as little pieces that helped to make up the whole of Selena Cook. The final display case was focused upon women aboard the Titanic. It contained the family bible, covered in leather, of Elizabeth Nye. While I was examining the contents of the display cases I overheard another visitor say, “This is a beautiful museum!”
As I walked further down the hall I came upon the interactive element that had immediately caught my attention when I entered. It was a doorway covered by a reproduction third glass gate that was closed and locked and appeared to lead into a hallway that contained faux stairs (presumably leading to the upper decks). The display was enclosed by a glass divider. On timed intervals it would release high-pressure water at a high speed to imitate the flow of water in this area of the ship during the sinking. I immediately thought of the movie when I saw this display, which is one of the reasons that I was initially drawn to it. I thought of the scene in the movie when Jack and Rose must retrieve a steward’s keys from underwater to open a locked gate below deck before the water rises to a dangerous height. I watched the water cycle through the stairwell a couple of times and felt despair and anxiety looking through the gate because the water filled the space remarkably fast. It gave me anxiety because I wanted to help Jack and Rose, as well as all of the actual passengers, break free.

As I turned the corner and continued down the third class corridor I came upon a text panel mounted on the wall that explained second class accommodations. I was confused because I thought that this gallery was meant exclusively for the display of information about third class passengers. The presentation of this information was confusing because it was not congruent with the theme of the physical environment. A bit further down there was a small display about the dogs that were on board Titanic. The Branson location had included a dog display that was independent of an association with social class, so the location of this display felt misplaced because there were dogs on board that were associated with all of the social classes. I felt like this placement left an
opportunity open for visitors to assume that all dogs were associated with third class. There was a dog kennel door in the corner of the hallway that was short enough for younger visitors to open. The door could be opened and inside was a stuffed dog. Barking sounds could also be heard coming from the kennel door. I did not personally open the door.

As I approached the end of the third class corridor I encountered two more shadowbox-like display cases that were mounted on the wall. Just as the display cases that had come before them, these cases had individual themes that informed the contents. The first display case was focused upon the children that were aboard Titanic and contained the heading, “Titanic Tots.” The contents acknowledged children as part of the maiden voyage and subsequent tragedy and identified two children, in particular as “the orphans of the storm.” The second display case was focused upon the religious heroes of Titanic. The contents identified one religious hero, in particular: Reverend John Harper. The case included a letter written by Reverend Harper, and I personally identified with the following excerpt: “That which Jesus keeps for us in his own bright upper fold is not lost – it is but a link of heaven and home.” I was able make a deep personal connection to this quote and feel a deeper connection to the entire museum attraction because, though I do not consider myself religious, I have had several loved ones die and take comfort in the fact that there is part of them still present and accessible to me. This quote was both profound and comforting.

92 “The French toddlers, Edmond and Michel Navratil, were traveling with their father Michel Navratil, Sr. under the assumed name ‘Hoffman.’ Navratil had spirited the boys away from France to escape his unhappy marriage. He saw to it that his sons survived in the arms of strangers but lost his own life in the disaster. Dubbed the ‘Titanic Waifs,’ the identity of the boys was unknown until their mother read of their plight in the French press and sailed to New York to claim them” (Geller, 2009, p. 21).
Directly across from the final two display cases was the full-scale replica of the third class cabin (see Figure 8.23). The room was set back from the hallway and could be seen by looking through the cutout of a door façade. It contained four beds, two beds stacked on top of each other like bunk beds. There was also a mirror and washing station. Several items were added to the room to provide a human presence and further context. There were drinking glasses placed atop the washing station, a suitcase on the top bed on the left side of the room, and black boots on the floor next to the bottom bed on the right side of the room. I could not tell whether the boots were meant to be worn by men or women. I overheard one visitor say to another, “Those shoes freak me out,” alluding to the discomfort that was felt by a human presence. The voice of “Katherine McGowan”
(obviously recorded by an actress portraying the passenger) was playing over the
speakers in the room. To hear her speak it was necessary to get up close and sort of lean
into the room. The audio added further human presence, though I wondered why
women’s clothes and shoes are not explicitly visible if there is a women’s voice playing
in the room. A text panel on a wall to the side of the viewing window read, “These cabins
with limited amenities seem plain to us but in 1912 they set a new standard of comfort for
third class passengers.” I appreciated that this text drew a connection to present
expectations for travel accommodations and those of 1912. Even I had a difficult time
wrapping my head around the idea that these accommodations were considered
acceptable and felt sorry for those who would have to reside in them. Viewing this replica
environment made me realize how it impossible it can seem to place myself in a different
time and space because I could not imagine these accommodations being comfortable in
any way. At the end of the third class corridor there was a dead end and stopping point
for visitors. The sign pointing to the left read, “Tour continues this way” and the sign
pointing to the right read, “Restrooms.” I took the opportunity to take a momentary break
and use the restroom and then continued on with my visit.

**Grand Staircase Gallery**

I entered the Grand Staircase Gallery and immediately made contact with a first
class maid living history interpreter. I noticed that her head band was fastened with
Velcro (see Figure 5.14 in Chapter Five). I took notice of the Velcro closure because
Velcro would not have been used on dress items in this time period. As a result, the
Velcro stood out as an element that did not fit in the replicated physical environment. I
moved into the central area of the gallery and looked up at the beautiful dome. The living history interpreter said that the skylight was made of milk glass. As more people entered the gallery she gathered everyone around her to provide more information. She said that the pineapples on the banister were the international symbol of “welcome.” I did not know this before and found it surprising because I thought that the pineapples would be associated with Hawaii. This information also made me personally relate to my best friend, who is deeply immersed in Hawaiian culture. I made a mental note to share this fact with him. She also said that it was the intent of White Star Line to impress all of their guests and that was the reason behind choosing linoleum for the floor material, which was considering a luxurious material in that time period. She also announced that, at the Grand Staircase, visitors are half way through the museum attraction. I overheard one visitor say to another, “This is so luxurious, I just feel awe.” I could relate to what this visitor was expressing because I define happy places for myself, places that make me feel happy and comfortable, and this is definitely one of them. I could have sat in this room all day because I was really impressed and felt important. Even the everyday, ordinary person walking down the staircase appears important simply because they are on the staircase. In fact, I felt disappointed when I saw other visitors walking on the Grand Staircase and they were not dressed up; I felt that they should be living up to the grandeur of the staircase or step off of it. They seemed to ruin the mood or the fantasy a bit.

An instrumental version of the song, “My Heart Will Go On” from the movie soundtrack was playing over the speakers in this gallery. Hearing the music made my visualization of the movie more vivid. This sensory element immediately caused me to
think of the movie, but I also thought of the movie without a prompt. I could clearly visualize Jack at the top of the staircase at the end of the movie. Then I thought of Rose coming down the stairs for dinner. It felt romantic. I felt a desire to renew my wedding vows in this room because it married my passion of history, learning, love, and life.

Of all the galleries, I spent the most time in this gallery sitting on a bench. I watched the living history interpreter recite her scripted speech to several tour groups. She provided a verbatim speech to help guide visitors in what they were looking at in the gallery. The living history interpreter spoke with me during a break in the crowds. She stated that she wears the first class maid costume to work everyday, unless she is outside and can wear a crew jacket and slacks. I asked her if people inquire about Jack and Rose the most in this gallery. She said that Jack and Rose were not actually on the ship, but their personalities were present and that is why they were used to bring Titanic to life in the movie. I noticed that her shoes were not authentic. They were orthopedic athletic shoes, but this made sense because she was an older woman. The shoes could not be seen unless she picked up her dress to walk up the steps.

**First Class Galleries**

I walked up the Grand Staircase and noticed that, at the top, there were additional benches for visitor seating that were covered in velvet. I could tell that the use of this fabric signaled my presence in the first class corridor. I immediately saw the full-scale replica of the first class sitting room to my right. It was surrounded by railing (see Figure 5.12 in Chapter Five). It looked simply immaculate and was the best re-creation of a first class cabin that I had ever seen. The room resembled the sitting room in the movie where
Rose was drawn by Jack.\textsuperscript{93} This replica room is dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. Straus, two of the most famous passengers aboard the ship.\textsuperscript{94}

The room contained a mirror, fireplace, and sitting area in front of the fireplace with two arm chairs at the far end of the room (see Figure 5.13). In the corner there was a desk with a jewelry box placed atop it and a chair. A necklace was draped on the jewelry box. In the opposite corner there was a reproduction of a dress designed by “Lucile” Lady Duff-Gordon. It was the same dress that I saw at the Branson location. The end of the room closest to the top of the Grand Staircase contained a small table, two chairs, and a top hat placed on top of the table. The dress items (e.g., jewelry box, draped necklace, and top hat) were not identified in any text panels and appeared to be used for the purpose of adding a human presence. I thought that the mixture of artifacts and reproductions might be confusing for the average visitor. The room is dark and very elegant. The carpet is luxurious and visibly plush. The walls were adorned with fine wood carvings, the likes of which I would never expect to see in today’s home furnishings.

\textsuperscript{93} The Titanic Museum Attraction intentionally re-created the “first class cabin parlour recreating the scene where Leonardo DiCaprio drew Kate Winslet's portrait in James Cameron's film” (Smith, 2012, para. 2).

\textsuperscript{94} Isador Straus was the “co-owner of New York’s Macy’s Department Store” and was traveling on the Titanic with his wife, Ida (Geller, 2009, p. 17). “Isador Straus, 67, immigrated to America from Germany as a child in 1845. After 1865, Straus moved to New York to organize a new family earthenware business, L. Straus & Son. As business flourished, Isador and his brother, Nathan, operated the china and glassware department at R.H. Macy & Company department store. By 1888, the two brothers were co-owners of Macy’s, which they moved to a larger building at 34th Street and Broadway in 1902 – making it the first large store north of 23rd Street. Following a trip to Germany with their granddaughter Beatrice, Isador and Ida, 63, booked first-class passage on Titanic. They were accompanied by Isador’s manservant John Farthing and Ida’s maid, Ellen Bird. A devoted couple, they decided to remain on Titanic [when it became clear that the ship was going to sink] – ‘We have lived together for many years. Where you go, I go’” (RMS Titanic, Inc., 2012, p. 23). “When only women and children were being allowed into the lifeboats, Ida chose to stay with her husband on the sinking vessel rather than part from him after forty years of marriage” (Geller, 2009, p. 17).
There were some small display cases that were affixed to the top of the railing that formed the parameter of the room. One case contained recovered wood paneling from the Titanic smoking room. Another case contained a ring that belonged to Mr. Isidor Straus. The accompanying text read,

The family was notified on April 26, 1912 that Isidor’s body had been recovered. Isidor’s body was returned to New York on May 3. Maurice Rothschild acted as the family agent, arranging all details of identification and transfer of Isidor’s remains.

I overheard one visitor say to another, “Look at his gold ring – he’s so rich and it’s just a plain gold ring.” Another portion of text about Isidor Straus identified him as the founder of Macy’s department store. The display also featured the Straus’ wedding photo, which I found very touching because I have always associated these two passengers with romance. I think it is especially common to associate them with romance following the movie, in which they are depicted going down with the ship together in a pivotal scene during the sinking. Viewing the photo was also precious because it showed their life before Titanic.

The reproduction “Lucile” Lady Duff-Gordon sketch (see Figure 5.2) was placed in a far corner of the room, next to the railing so that visitors could view it up close. I overheard an audio tour device being used by another visitor and it stated, “Take a moment to study the dress and compare it to the original sketch.” I found it interesting that the audio was instructing the visitor how to interact with the dress and that this guidance was only available if the audio device was purchased for use during the tour. The dress display contained the dress on a dress form, a text panel explaining the
importance of Lady Duff-Gordon and her life, a photo of her, and a display panel affixed to the railing.

The text on the railing display panel for Lady Duff-Gordon read, “Lucile – Lady Duff-Gordon – The Greatest Fashion-Creator of Her Time. ‘Lucile’ was the first to use models, first to do away with corsets, and the first to introduce slits in skirts.”\footnote{It is more common for fashion designers Paul Poiret and Charles Frederick Worth to be credited with these advancements in fashion for women. ‘Lucile’ Lady Duff-Gordon may have contributed to these advancements but is not widely regarded as the primary innovator of these advancements.} The text that accompanied the reproduction Lucile Tea Gown read,

The fashionable tea gown you see here only existed as a sketch on the drawing board of world renowned couturier and Titanic first class passenger, ‘Lucile’ Lady Duff Gordon. Now this inspired original ‘Lucile’ design, commissioned by the Titanic Museum Attraction, is here, making its world exclusive debut.

The dress was placed adjacent to the fireplace and slightly turned inward so that the back and sides of the dress could also be viewed from various points along the railing. I overheard one visitor say to another, “This is what I designed – all this and this dress,” referring to her assignment as Lady Duff-Gordon on her boarding pass.

I exited the corridor containing the first class stateroom replica and proceeded to the replica of the main first class hallway. I walked the length of the hallway several time because this area was not crowded at that time. I found myself wanting to linger in front of the mirrors that lined the hallway. I saw myself in the physical environment and it was captivating and slightly disorienting. I felt like I was having an “out of time” experience.

“Titanic: The Movie Experience” Gallery

The first class corridor led directly into the “Titanic: The Movie Experience” Gallery. A floor plan of this gallery is provided in Figure 8.24. I was excited to enter this
gallery because I felt at home in it as a fan of the movie. This was the only museum attraction I visited for this research study that contained a gallery dedicated specifically to the movie.\textsuperscript{96} The introductory text panel stated that the museum attraction takes the stance that the movie deserves display space because it is a tribute to Titanic. There were a lot of very large and tall display cases in this gallery and, as a result, the physical space felt like a maze. The space was dominated by a large and tall rectangular display case that almost spanned the length of the room. I was not sure what I was going to find around

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure8.24.png}
\caption{Floor plan of the “Titanic: The Movie Experience” Gallery at the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Rendering by Richard DeArmond.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{96} Titanic: The Experience in Orlando, Florida did contain items related to the movie in the mini-gallery located in the lobby, but these items were intermingled with artifacts and other miscellaneous items to give an overview of the Titanic history prior to entering the museum attraction proper.
each corner, and it was difficult to choose a starting point because there was not a clear one. The first visual that I saw upon entering was a poster for the movie.

The first display case that I looked at was along the wall just to the left of the gallery entrance. It contained a costume used in the movie; the costume was a first class steward’s jacket worn by a cast member. The jacket was displayed on a torso form so its fit on the body could be seen. There was one aspect of the display that particularly caught my eye and that was the seemingly purposeful placement of its storage hangtag peeking out of the side pocket. I wondered if this was done as a reminder that it was a movie costume.

On the right side of the large center display case were reproduction Academy Award statues that represented the eleven awards that Titanic won at the 1998 Oscars ceremony; there was one statue for each award. This display was completely unnecessary and underwhelming because the grandeur of the display (e.g., large display case and bright overhead lighting) made me assume that I was looking at the actual Academy Award statues that had been won. I was disappointed to read the text panel and learn that they were reproductions. They did not need such a grand display and seemed like nothing more than filler. I would have preferred to see none of the statues instead of reproductions.

On the left side of the large center display was the complete Franklin Mint Rose Du Witt Bukater doll collection (see Figure 4.12 in Chapter Four). The display case featured the doll wearing a small-scale reproduction movie costume on the top shelf and two rows beneath it that showcased the rest of the small-scale reproduction movie
costumes made especially for this doll on mini dress forms. There were thirteen costumes in total. I personally own this doll collection and felt pride in owning something that was deemed valuable enough to be in a museum. I am actually missing five of the costumes that go with the doll because they are rare and expensive now that the doll has been retired. It was nice to see the costumes up close that were missing from my collection because I am not sure if I will ever own them. One thing that struck me as odd about this display is that there was no accompanying text. The visitor was left to make assumptions about the relevance and significance of the doll. The museum attraction’s acquisition of the doll collection would have been interesting to read about in this display case.

There were also a series of smaller display cases. One case contained a clap board from the filming of the movie, a Titanic movie engineer worker’s costume that was laid flat, and a Titanic movie jacket worn by director James Cameron during filming on a torso dress form. I thought it was interesting that the dress display also included items worn during the making of the movie. Another case showcased an official Titanic movie crew baseball-style cap and a Titanic movie crew production jacket presented to each

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97 It is common for one of the Franklin Mint Rose doll costumes to sell for $200 or more on the popular buy-and-sell website, Ebay.

98 In my interview with Titanic Museum Attraction staff member, Barbara, she explained the acquisition of the Rose doll collection:

…and from… great story… From the Franklin Mint that was done which does not exist… of all the costumes Rose wore… is not available anymore. However I had a woman contact me about 4 years ago and said “I have the entire collection and I don’t want it anymore. It’s still sitting in boxes. I think it should be given to you guys. So I just put it in my office and I’m telling you I have an immaculate home but at the office I am an office hoarder. So I just put it up on my shelf and then when we started to develop what that room was going to look like, I thought, you know what, I have the entire collection of costume from the mint collection. We need to put that on display. So with our designer we created the Franklin Mint acknowledgment of this collection. There are some items that are still available but very few. You cannot get the entire collection if you were a doll collection.
actor at the completion of filming. Entrance signs to various decks of Titanic, a miniature
dock bench used to film close-up shots of the ship’s exterior, china, a life jacket costume,
a smoking room panel, and lifeboat name plates were displayed as movie props in
another display case across the room.

The next display I viewed was, by far, the most interesting in the whole gallery:
costumes worn by the actors and actresses in the movie. The accompanying text panel
read,

*Official costumes form the Titanic movie: Kate Winslet’s sinking dress (White
Star Memories/David Scott Beddard Collection), pink coat (Emmett James
Collection), life jacket (White Star Memories/John White Collection), Leonardo
DiCaprio’s third class outfit (White Star Memories/David Scott Beddard
Collection).*

Each costume was presented on a dress form and presented in the following order in a
display case that was set back in the wall, from left to right: Rose’s pink coat (see Figure
5.21), Jack’s third class outfit (see Figure 6.4), Rose’s sinking dress, and the life vest.

There was a mirror placed in between the pink coat and Jack’s outfit so that visitors could
see the backs of the costumes with ease. There were large photos of Jack and Rose
suspended from the ceiling and hanging between Jack’s costume and Rose’s sinking
dress, slightly behind the dress forms (see Figure 5.21). The life vest was also set back
from the rest of the dress forms on the far right of the display. I thought it was interesting
that the life vest was presented as a costume. As I thought about it more, the life vest was
a key element of costuming for this movie and, though it appeared ordinary, actually
played a pivotal role in the movie and historical event. I was really surprised that the
fabric used for Rose’s sinking dress was so thin. It did not look that thin to me in the
movie. Even behind a glass barrier there was a slight breeze that was moving the fabric so gracefully.

I lingered in front of the movie costume display for around twenty minutes and overheard some very interesting conversation among other visitors. One small boy was viewing the display with his mother and asked her, “Do you think that would fit me?,” referring to Jack’s outfit. One man said to another man, “Yea, it’s official – an official reproduction.” For this man, it was not believable that these were the actual costumes worn by the actors and actresses in the movie. Another visitor expressed a similar sentiment: “It says ‘official’ – not that they were the actual ones.” Another boy pointed to Jack’s costume and asked, “Was that Jack’s?”

There were several other costume displays in this room, beyond the movie costumes worn by the actors and actresses. Some visitors honed in on the photo stills from the movie and commented on dress from that perspective. A young girl pointed out her favorite dress and said, “they even get gloves” and “look at the jewelry – even down to the necklaces.” The same young girl then pointed to the red jump dress that Rose wears at the start of the movie and said, “look! That’s what Molly Brown wore!” An alarm immediately went off in my head when I heard her say this because it was not what Molly Brown wore, not even in the movie.

This gallery also featured the display of a Heart of the Ocean necklace commissioned by the museum attraction so visitors could get up close and personal with
the iconic piece of jewelry (see Figure 6.7). The necklace is displayed in its own case with brilliant overhead lighting that accentuates the sparkle of the sapphire and diamonds. One young girl viewing this case asked her mother, “Is that the one from the sea?”

The final dress display of this gallery contained an assortment of women’s hats that were worn by various characters in the movie (see Figure 5.11). The background photo in the case was an enlarged close-up image of Rose wearing her boarding hat. There were eleven hats in the case, sitting on stands that were staggered at different heights. Each was accompanied by a small text panel that stated who wore it in the movie and the scene in which it was worn. I was feeling extremely overwhelmed by the time I reached this part of the gallery and, as a result, did not record many notes about it. I did, however, overhear a young girl say to her mom, “Do you think they would sell me a hat?”

The most profound moment that I experienced during all of my Titanic museum attraction visits occurred in this gallery. As I was exiting I overheard someone exclaim, “Jenna!” I looked to my right and saw a young girl running to catch up with the rest of her family. They paused in front of the movie costumes display and spoke to each other about what a big fan Jenna was of the movie. I had to do a double-take because she looked so much like me when I was younger. It was a surreal experience and so fitting to

99 For additional information regarding the origins of the Heart of Ocean necklace used in the movie, please read the “Captain’s Bridge Gallery” section of this visit. Additional information about the origins of the Heart of the Ocean necklace can be found in the following online blog post: http://www.titanicbranson.com/titanicblog/?p=433.
100 For additional information regarding the movie hat display, please read the “Captain’s Bridge Gallery” section of this visit.
see another little Titanic costume fan in the room at the time that I was conducting a research project on the subject.

I felt incredibly overwhelmed by all of the displays in this room, especially the dress and costume displays. It was difficult to absorb all of the visuals and information being thrown at me, and I had to exit without recording all of the necessary text panels in my notes to avoid becoming overly anxious. There was a small Molly Brown display as I exited the “Titanic: The Movie Experience” Gallery. The display was focused upon the life of Margaret “Molly” Brown, the actual passenger that sailed aboard the Titanic. There were photos of the actual Molly Brown (i.e., not the movie character played by Kathy Bates) suspended from the ceiling and a pedestal in front of the hanging photos on which an album was placed. The album contained photos of the Brown family and Molly Brown’s dress was visible.

**Captain’s Bridge Gallery**

The first thing that I noticed upon entering this gallery was the permanent display of photos that showcased the crew uniforms. There was a formal photo of the crew that had been taken before the launch. Each of the men had such a serious facial expression in the photo, and I could see the numerous metals that adorned their jackets. It was exciting to witness an explicit visual of their accomplishments, hanging right there on their jacket for the world to see. The Captain’s Bridge Gallery is a full-scale replica of the area where Captain Smith controlled the ship. My first thought was that it was such a small room to contain so much power. Of all the lavish and exquisite rooms on the ship it was this one where so many important decisions were made. There was a display case in this gallery
that contained a pair of eyeglasses, but there was no accompanying text so I assumed that they were placed in there as a prop to support the presentation of a telescope. I noticed that it was harder to initially pay attention in this gallery because it was devoted to technical details about the ship. I primarily found a connection because of the human presence of those who had controlled the ship in this room.

There was a large rectangular window at the front of the bridge where I could see out into the night sky. I saw what it was like to look out the window from an officer’s perspective. The full-scale room replica allowed me to take the perspective of the Captain and other officers. It was frightening how little I could see out the window. All I could see was the starry night sky; there was nothing in the distance. The environment was so cold. I was nervous about proceeding to the next gallery, which re-created the outer deck on the night of the sinking.

There was a male living history interpreter in the Captain’s Bridge Gallery, dressed in a crew member’s uniform, stationed in this gallery. I felt a pit in my stomach as I listened to the living history interpreter explain the events that led to the sinking. For example, he shared that the Titanic had exactly 37 seconds to avoid the iceberg head on.

I actually had extensive contact with the male living interpreter stationed in this gallery. He integrated recent historical findings about Titanic into his speech, such as the theory that there was an interplay between the position of the moon and the iceberg that caused the sinking. Several visitors proceeded past this gallery and into the next gallery because there was a living history interpreter giving a lengthy speech. When there was a break in the crowd, I spoke to the living history interpreter about my research project, and
he showed immediate interest sharing that the museum attraction owners had to obtain a gaming license to display the hats worn in the movie because they contain real feathers. The hats are actually on loan for an extended period of time (i.e., two years) because the owners of the museum attraction are personal friends of James Cameron. I noticed that visitors began to linger a bit longer in this room or stop and blatantly listen when this conversation began.

I think that the living history interpreter noticed the change in interest and visitor retention that resulted from our conversation because he continued to share information that was relevant to my research project. He shared that the Heart of the Ocean necklace was not real but was based on a real necklace made of emerald that belonged to passenger Eleanor Widener and was worth $750,000. The necklace is said to still be in a safe at the bottom of the ocean in the Titanic wreckage. According to the living history interpreter, James Cameron was aware that this necklace would never be recovered, so he used it as the basis for the Heart of the Ocean in his movie. He added that, following the sinking, Eleanor Widener was responsible for instituting the mandate that all candidates who applied for graduation at Harvard must pass a swimming test before officially graduating. Another fast fact he offered was that women were not allowed to expose their ankles when out in public; they had better be married if doing so. This discussion really captivated the other visitors in the room. I think this was the case because we were now talking about events from real people’s lives and connecting it to dress.

\[1\] It was not immediately apparent if the living history interpreter was well-versed in the history of dress. I was not sure if I could consider him a credible source for such information.
The living history interpreter singled me out at the end of the discussion and asked the other visitors, “Does anyone else have any other questions that might help this young lady out with her research?” He added that the lesser-known Titanic movie, “A Night to Remember” is even more historically accurate than the movie made by James Cameron. One member of the crowd began interacting with the living history interpreter, asking questions and offering information about Lady Duff-Gordon. He said that it was his first time at the museum attraction, and he happened to be visiting because he was a descendent of the fashion designer and wanted to see how the museum attraction honored her memory. He was able to recite many facts about her work, such as that she wanted her designs to flatter the female figure, and she was accused of being immoral. I could sense his pride in being at the museum attraction. As the crowd began to disperse and move forward with their visit the living history interpreter stated, “Like 9/11, it is up to the next generation to tell the story long after I’m gone.”

**Outer Deck Gallery**

As I made my way into the Outer Deck Gallery (see Figure 8.25). I immediately noticed that there was a “real” iceberg (i.e., a large piece of ice meant to simulate the iceberg that caused the Titanic to sink) to my right (see Part 1 of Figure 8.25). I thought this was a fitting placement because the iceberg actually hit the side of the ship and made Morse code-like gashes along the bottom. There was scary and tension-filled music playing from the speakers; the music was signaling to me that the collision with the
iceberg was looming. This museum attraction also contained the interactive activity of immersing your hand in water to feel the temperature, but it was much different than it had been in Branson. Instead of one bucket of water, it was placed in a shallow tub along the top of the deck railing (see Part 2 of Figure 8.25). I liked this display technique more than the simple bucket of water and thought that its placement was more appropriate and effective. Feeling the temperature of the water had a greater impact out on the deck. Out
in the distance of the deck railing there was a painting on the wall of the tip of the ship hitting the iceberg.

Theater and Sinking Galleries

I lingered briefly in the Theater Gallery, which was the exactly the same as it was in the Branson museum attraction. There were more visitors than I had anticipated that stayed to watch the footage.

I entered the Sinking Gallery and immediately noticed that the text panels outlining the timeline of the sinking were meant to be read from left to right, unlike in Branson. Though the sinking can be understood from a chronological perspective, I appreciate that they also related it back to the experience of the survivors. It was not simply a presentation of technical details. I know that I would have been less invested in the content of the gallery if it had been. I found interest by noticing the dress in some of the photos on the wall. I noticed that the hats worn by women in the photos verified that the movie hats in the “Titanic: The Movie Experience” Gallery (see Figure 5.11) had been authentically created. There were also passenger quotes related to the sinking being projected on the wall. The fact that they changed and moved was very engaging. I found myself lingering to wait and see the next quote.

In this gallery my main thought was that having possession of hindsight was heartbreaking. This was especially true when I read the following quote made by a passenger: “Don’t worry, you’ll be back on board for breakfast.” There was another wall mural painted by Ken Marschall in this gallery. It was a giant image of water flooding the Grand Staircase through the ceiling dome. The image stopped me in my tracks, and I had
to stop and look at it for a few minutes. It was very striking and haunting. There is a bench placed in front of this mural for visitor seating, and there were some visitors sitting on the bench when I was viewing the mural. The position of seated passengers sort of placed them in the scene of the sinking when I stepped back to look at the image. It was weird to see people in this scene who looked so calm. Another large image on an opposite wall showed the ship being consumed by water and starting to slip below the ocean surface. The ship looked so helpless sitting in the water, continuing the slow wait to die.

One key difference that I noticed between the layout of this museum attraction and the Branson location was the placement of the interactive sloping decks. In this museum attraction they are presented in the Sinking Gallery, as opposed to the Interactive Gallery in Branson. I appreciated that they had a more somber vibe in this location. They were presented less as a play area but were still appropriately interactive. I again climbed up all three sloping decks and felt my abdominal muscles engage on the climb up the third deck. There were some children who were treating the decks as a slide. I felt that the museum attraction had done a good job of setting a respectful tone for the activity, but it was the visitors who had ruined it.

Another similar instance of the alteration of an established respectful tone occurred at the full-scale replica of the lifeboat. I felt really mad when I saw two girls climbing all over the lifeboat and running around it. These actions were disrespectful to me. There was a touch screen monitor with a heading that read, “The Titanic has struck an iceberg. Touch screen to send distress signal.” Visitors could also practice common
boating knots on strands of rope in another interactive display. The boat knots did not seem to have any text that directly connected it to the sinking.

One unique feature of this museum attraction was a special area specifically designed for kids. There was one activity that consisted of a small Captain’s wheel which was positioned in front of a computer monitor and the caption read, “Can you miss the iceberg and save Titanic? Turn the wheel to begin.” I lingered by this activity for several minutes and saw a little girl actually save the ship, recalling that the living history interpreter in the Captain’s Bridge Gallery had said there was a mere 37 seconds to turn the ship. If a child “saves the Titanic,” the computer displays a message that says, “You saved all 1,523 passengers aboard Titanic.” I found it interesting that the message was phrased in this way; it did not say that the Titanic had been saved but that the people had been saved. I actually watched an adult try to do it (though the living history interpreters asked adults not to step into this area), and I noticed that I was holding my breath while waiting to see if she could save the ship.

The gallery did contain a few display cases. One of the display cases in the gallery contained a stuffed Titanic Black mourning bear. It was created as a more contemporary commemorative stuffed animal to honor Titanic’s history. Another case contained a stop watch. The accompanying text read,

Alfred Crawford, 41, was a bedroom steward on B-deck and one of four men in Lifeboat No. 8. As a surviving crew member, he testified at the United States inquiry into Titanic. The watch you see on display was given to Mr. Crawford by the Countess of Rothes for his assistance to her in the lifeboat. Note the back of the watch and how it’s beautifully engraved.

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102 The text panel for the stuffed Titanic mourning bear stated that it was from the collection of Chuck and Cathy Steffes, and the bear could be purchased at the following website: www.bearlyamemory.com.
This was one of many display cases in which there was a mirror propped up so that the back or sides of the object could also be appreciated by the visitor. There was another dress artifact in a different display case. The accompanying text read,

Malkolm Johnson – Yellow Metal Watch Chain. Malkolm Johnson was born in Sweden, lived and worked in Minneapolis and owned a successful construction business. His reason for going home to Sweden from the United States was that he wished to buy his childhood home in Bjorkaryd. He was scheduled to return to America on a different boat, however due to the coal strike he changed his plans and booked Titanic. Johnson died in the sinking. All of his belongings were sent to his family back in Sweden where they remained for 97 years.

I was surprised that this gallery occupied a large space and seemed to cover more diverse subject matter than the equivalent gallery at the Branson location. A unique object on display that went beyond what I expected to see was a wood gaming table made from Titanic wood recovered from the underwater debris field. I liked seeing this table because it gave new life to the wreckage. The tragedy had been transformed into something new and positive. The creation of the table was also an intentional creation, whereas the sinking left all of the passengers helpless.

Memorial Gallery

The Memorial Gallery (see Figure 8.26) looked very similar to the one in the Branson location. The display case in the center of the room contained the life vest worn by Madeleine Astor. The accompanying text stated that it is the only life vest in existence that can be linked to a specific individual. This dress artifact had a unique quality of being linked to a specific person; that linkage gave it life. I participated in the Rose Petal Tribute, just as I had in Branson. I overheard the female living history interpreter
stationed in this gallery telling another visitor that there were already 500,000 rose petals between the two locations. When I looked at the photos on the wall I could see both my reflection and the reflection of the wall of names in the background. This was a somewhat haunting experience. The Titanic’s demise became even more real to me at that moment.

**Discovery Gallery**

The quote that appeared by the entry to the Discovery Gallery read, “The deep sea is earth’s biggest museum yet there is no lock on the door.” I had a positive response to this quote. This gallery contained text panels explaining the current state of the wreckage...
and artifact recovery and preservation efforts, artifact display cases, and a model of the underwater debris field.

One of the display cases contained a first class master key and ring used by Edmond Stone. Another case contained a recovered deck chair valued at $100,000. There was a small display dedicated to the preservation of artifacts. The display contains photos of various pieces of jewelry that had been recovered thus far. The accompanying text read,

> Failure to properly conserve artifacts will ultimately result in their destruction. If an artifact cannot be properly preserved, there is no point in recovering it. Steel or iron objects will literally turn into dust if not properly preserved. Partial preservation will only prolong the objects inevitable destruction.

The central feature of the Discovery Gallery was the model of the underwater debris field. It was below a balcony-like railing that visitors could stand in front of to view how the ship currently sits in the ocean. The model was positioned on an incline so that it sloped upward, away from the visitor’s view. It was definitely a spectacle in its own right and gave an accurate sense of the vastness of the ocean. There was very epic music playing in the room that I felt was meant to draw the visitor over to the debris field model. The music set the tone of the room as well. Above the debris field there was a projector screen on which dive footage and interviews with Titanic historians (including the museum co-owner, who has conducted his own dives to the Titanic wreckage) were being played. I tried to focus on both the video and the debris field, which proved difficult. Seeing both elements and having to look upward and downward, respectively, to view them left me with a sense that there is both life up above and down below.
The Discovery Gallery is the final gallery in the museum attraction and ends with the following text that is accompanied by a vibrant Ken Marschall painting of Titanic sailing the open sea in daylight:

Epilogue. Had the Titanic completed her maiden voyage as scheduled, she would have come into a triumphant welcome such as the one Ken Marschall imagines here. Instead, the Titanic survivors who arrived on Thursday, April 18, aboard the Carpathia disembarked into a world that seemed to have changed in some profound way. – Rick Archbold.

The gallery concludes with a text panel that thanks the many donors, curators, collectors, and collaborators that helped to make the museum attraction a reality. I proceeded down the Grand Staircase and exited the museum attraction.

My Visit to Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition in Las Vegas, Nevada

Pre-Entrance Reflections

I felt a very strong sense of tourism being associated with the museum even before arriving at The Luxor Hotel. There were many advertisements for the artifact exhibition around Las Vegas that were outside of the hotel (e.g., on cabs and billboards). I felt unsettled by how light-hearted the atmosphere seemed to be. It became hard and almost seemingly strenuous to take it seriously in the context of its surrounding environment. I was worried that it would be a very hokey museum.

I arrived at Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition at 1 p.m. to conduct my personal phenomenological visit on February 19, 2012. Upon viewing the exterior of the museum for the first time, I felt that the exterior made it look like a legitimate museum and, as a

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103 I do not include pre-entrance reflections for each location. The pre-entrance reflections were especially relevant to this location because mentions of Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition saturated advertisements and other visual displays all over Las Vegas in a way that did not occur in other locations.
result, it almost seemed out of place. The Titanic artifact exhibition is paired with Bodies: The Exhibition\textsuperscript{104}, and they are side by side (see Figure 4.6 in Chapter Four). It seemed a little morbid to have an exhibit of dissected bodies next to a memorial-like artifact exhibition for a mass tragedy.

I traveled to Las Vegas with two friends, and when we purchased tickets to enter the exhibition it felt more like we were going to see a show because Las Vegas entertainment is largely comprised of live shows. This made me wonder if there is a place for it in Las Vegas at all or a place where it would be better appreciated. I felt overcome with worry that it was not being appreciated enough. This thought also brought the movie to mind. I was honestly surprised that the movie was not being used for advertising since the association with entertainment is so strong in Las Vegas, and the movie is a form of visual entertainment.

\textbf{Entrance}

Before entering I felt a lack reverence for the topic in my near environment. I witnessed people drinking and lighting cigarettes around it, which felt like an intentional degradation of the subject. It seemed that visitors, potential visitors, and standers by alike had a severe lack of respect for the exhibition. I felt offended and uneasy about the fact that it was being treated as pure entertainment.

The exterior of the Las Vegas museum makes use of a massive visual to create a context for the size of the ship, but it does so with a two-dimensional image of one end of

\textsuperscript{104} Bodies: The Exhibition is managed by Premier Exhibitions, Inc. The exhibition travels to various locations and showcases preserved human bodies dissected to display bodily systems. You can learn more about Bodies: The Exhibition at the following website: http://www.bodiesexhibition.com/.
the ship (see Figure 4.6). The image was hoisted high above the ground, so as to capture the height and sheer size of the ship and give the viewer a “larger than life” feeling. It was a spectacle in its own way and was definitely a more traditional display technique. For me, it was the surrounding commotion and environment that emphasized attraction-based entertainment and hinted at a possible lack of legitimacy. Looking up at the massive visual above the entrance reminded me of the scene in the movie when one end of the ship is fully lifted out of the water. This association provided a feeling of what the sinking must have been like. I noticed that there are people at the very bottom of the photo, which further confirmed the size of the ship.

As I entered the exhibition I walked through a rope queue and was given a boarding pass. As I moved further through the queue I stopped at a checkpoint where an employee had me stand in front of a green screen for a souvenir photo that I would be able to view at the end of my visit. I then approached the doorway to the exhibition proper. The entry doorway is very mysterious and created interest. It is a solid dark color and through the doorway a single quote appears on the wall: “Titanic was conceived in 1907 and met with disaster in 1912; a brief existence fraught with the drama of a Greek tragedy.” The atmosphere around it made me want to take it less seriously; I felt an inner conflict about how to regard my impending entrance. To the left there was a tall panel containing a collage of passenger photos and a text passage that read,

The story of Titanic has been told and retold, but never more poignantly and passionately than by the artifacts presented in this exhibition. Respectfully recovered and painstakingly conserved, these objects, more than any word or image tell the story of RMS Titanic and her 2,228 passengers and crew whose lives she changed forever.
I loved the entrance because I felt like I could connect with the passengers, who felt like representatives of the ship and the keepers of the history, right away. I was immediately acquainted with the people involved and began to feel the impact, almost like a weight on my shoulders, of this human tragedy.

**Launch Day Gallery**

It was clear upon entrance that each room had a theme for different phases in Titanic’s history. I noticed right away that the soundtrack from the Riverdance dance show[^105] was playing on the speakers. This room set the stage for being in that time period – a time of optimism, progress, and technological advancement. There were pictures of the individuals that were involved in the planning and building of the ship, including J. Bruce Ismay and Thomas Andrews. Display cases were filled with artifacts including wrenches, rivets, and a water boiler. As I looked at these objects and the blueprints of the ship it was hard to believe that such an intricate design could be torn away so instantly. I had a hard time staying in the moment, staying in the mindset of learning about the birth of Titanic. My mind wanted to wander to the sinking.

There was a video screen playing a video of the Titanic, but there is nothing present to indicate if it was real footage from 1912. I was left to assume that it was authentic footage. There was an effective use of enlarged photos as wall murals; they are so large that they almost appear as a kind of wall paper.

[^105]: Riverdance is a theatrical dance show that tells the story of the Irish culture and Irish immigration to America through traditional Irish step dancing. You can learn more about Riverdance at the following website: [http://www.riverdance.com/](http://www.riverdance.com/).
Day of Departure Gallery

The next gallery focused upon the preparation for Titanic to depart on her maiden voyage. One wall of the room was painted to look like the side of the ship and there were numerous props (e.g., wooden crates and stuffed mail bags) to create an atmosphere of departure. The room also contained a plaque describing the life and accomplishments of Captain Edward Smith. I walked across a gang plank with a slight vertical incline to enter the adjoining departure gallery. I literally felt like I was boarding the ship, and it made me feel excited and hopeful.

The adjoining gallery room was filled with the sounds of ship whistles and birds chirping. There was a long narrow display case that contained a Gladstone Bag (see Figure 5.22). I was amazed at the quality of the leather; it still appeared so strong. I immediately wanted to picture someone holding the bag. I noticed that other visitors gravitated to the Gladstone Bag, in comparison to the other objects in the display case and the gallery as a whole. The display case also contained a paper artifact known as a safety envelope.\textsuperscript{106} The display of the safety envelope made me sad and seemed ironic, considering that this person could not protect themselves in the end.

Third Class Gallery

The full-scale replica of the third class corridor (see Figure 6.2) was filled with the sounds of vibrations in the walls and the clanking of pipes. The story of Frederick Goodwin and his family was presented at the start of the corridor; this set the stage of

\textsuperscript{106} When I looked at the safety envelope in the display case, the accompanying text seemed to indicate that it had held the money and important documents of a Titanic passenger. I did not write down the verbatim text that accompanied this artifact, so this is my assumption.
who would have been in this environment. As I traveled down the corridor I reached the full-scale replica of the third class cabin, which was set back in the hallway. There was a text panel on the wall to the right that provided context for the experience of third class passengers on the ship. For example, the text stated that this cabin would have been occupied by four strangers who spoke different languages. It also discussed that third class passengers experienced harsh conditions but then highlighted how the Titanic provided better conditions than previous ships.

In front of the ropes that guarded the replica room there was a display case that contained a coat hook, floor tile, and door knob. The beds in the cabin were made with White Star Line blankets. The blankets looked “off” to me, perhaps because they appeared too modern. After I had this thought I felt conflicted about the paradox of displaying items that are old and new in the same exhibit within museums. Is one or the other more appropriate or more authentic? The blankets were, in fact, available for purchase in the gift shop. And is it more or less appropriate to include items in an exhibit that are available for purchase in the gift shop? I felt a sense of sadness while looking in this room because it brought awareness to the many people that may have lost their lives in this very type of cabin.

As I was examining the content of the third class cabin I observed another female visitor reach over the ropes into the room and touch the bed and blankets. At the end of the third class corridor there was a sign that read, “1st and 2nd class passengers only beyond this point.” Even though there were no passengers present, this sign provided an implied human presence.
Upper Class Corridor Gallery

The environment then changed to an upper class corridor. This change was made apparent through a change in music, lighting, and even the carpet. I noticed these stark changes in the physical environment. There were photos of passengers on the wall, along with quotes from passengers. The following quote was painted on the wall: “Everything has been done with regards to the furniture and fittings to make first class accommodations more than equal to that provided in the finest hotels on shore.” One of the display cases contained a plate artifact. As I looked at this plate I felt lucky to be in that place at that moment, seeing how the pattern was still half present but also fading off the plate and disappearing. It was humbling to see such an artifact before some of its physical features had faded.

Grand Staircase Gallery

My next stop was the Grand Staircase Gallery. It contained a full-scale replica of the Grand Staircase, display cases containing artifacts, text panels on the wall describing passengers and social class issues, and reproduction period furniture. One of the text panels on the wall stated, “Titanic’s staircase was a favorite meeting place for first class passengers.” I sat in this room on a bench, to the side, just taking in the essence of the room. I enjoyed sitting on the furniture; this helped to give me a little break from the mental stimulation of looking at displays and helped the experience to feel more tactile and real. One woman stopped to ask me what I was writing about, and we spoke briefly about my research. At the gallery’s exit there was a sign that said, “To Cabins” with an
arrow. I appreciated this sign because it provided a historic context for the physical environment and also assisted with way finding in the exhibition.

**Social Class Gallery**

Entry into the next gallery was a continuation of the lavish physical environment presented in the Grand Staircase Gallery. The room was primarily filled with four large artifact display cases and contained a full-scale first class cabin sitting room replica (see Figure 6.1) that was set back in the wall. One wall had a long, tall and narrow display case coupled with a “Lucile” Lady Duff-Gordon quote painted on the wall. On another wall read the quote, “Fancy strawberries in April, and in mid ocean. The whole thing is positively uncanny. Why, you would think you were on the Ritz.”

The long, tall and narrow display case was used to showcase the differences in various social class accommodations through the use of a visual comparison of artifacts (see Figure 8.27). It looked like a giant shadow box that someone would use to display their trophies or precious mementos. This was a very successful display for me, especially because each artifact was accompanied by a photo of the room in which it would have been used. In the photo the object could be seen. This display was very unexpected for me because it was the first display case of its kind in any of the museum attraction I had visited. It was unique because it primarily displayed first and second class artifacts; the second class is often overlooked in museum attractions.

In a case to the right of the aforementioned display case was a cigarette case artifact. It was laid flat. The accompanying text read, “This leather case was recovered
with a selection of Egyptian cigarettes inside. Smoking and chewing tobacco were considered fashionable among men of Victorian society but frowned upon for women.”

Upon reading this text I automatically thought of the movie, which surprised me because it seemed like an unlikely place for my mind to draw a connection to the movie. I thought of one of the first scenes aboard the ship when Rose is dining with her family and other Titanic notables, and she is seen smoking a cigarette, which her fiancé Cal quickly puts out. I also observed in this room that several of the elementary school-age visitors seemed to know more facts about the ship than the adults. I heard them regurgitating fact
after fact about the social class differences and the physical layout of the ship. It was amazing to hear that they had enthusiasm for the subject, and I was surprised at the amount of information they could recall and then pass on to others in their group. They almost seemed to fill the role of a mini tour guide.

The first class cabin replica was roped off to restrict visitor access and set up to look like a bedroom that also contained a sitting area (see Figure 6.1). The room was decorated with bright red hues and looked very romantic. The furniture included an arm chair, a table with four chairs seated around it, a bed, and a sitting desk. Several dress objects were placed throughout the room, which gave the room a human presence and make it look as if the room had been used. The way that the objects were draped suggested that someone had been in the room interacting with them. A men’s coat was draped over the arm chair, and shoes were placed in front of the chair, at the base. A mirror and strand of pearls were sitting atop the desk. A hat box was standing at the foot of the bed. A dress and white gloves were draped on the end of the bed. A small black beaded handbag was laying on the bed, near the headboard. White women’s boots were placed on the floor next to the bed. I was disappointed that I could not see the dress draped on the bed. While it added a sense of action to the room, I would have rather seen it on a dress form. The dress, by itself did not appear life-like. By putting the dress on a dress form it would have breathed life into the story of Titanic.

“The Disaster” Gallery

I passed into the next gallery and noticed a theme of disaster and the damage to the ship during the sinking. There was an artifact display case that contained a porthole
that, though cracked, still had the glass intact. Looking at this artifact made me think of being under pressure. I felt that this object embodied the act of cracking under pressure, which is one of my greatest fears. I felt personally connected to that artifact.

Another display case contained several dress artifacts: a cotton drawstring bag, pair of socks, and a pair of men’s pants. The grey pants were folded so that I could see the closure and lining (which was white). The text that accompanied the pants provided general information about clothing of the time period and provenance:

Pants with chevron pattern. During the early 1900s, the sacque suit, which has been popular since the mid 1800s constituted appropriate day dress for gentlemen. Edwardian etiquette commanded successive changes of clothing for gentlemen during the day. This suit consisted of a jacket, pants, and a vest, as well as other clothing.

Upon reading this text I immediately thought, “What other clothing would the suit have been worn with?”

Another dress artifact in this gallery was an alligator skin bag that belonged to Marion Meanwell (see Figure 8.28). The bag contained stuffing that propped it open so visitors could see the inside of the bag, which I thought was a unique display technique. The text that accompanied the bag shared biographical information about the owner:

This small alligator bag belonged to Marion Ogden Meanwell. It contained a manifest sheet and inspection card, bank receipts, and toiletry items, among other possessions. Marion Meanwell’s life was forever changed by the coal strike of 1912. A 63-year-old British passenger traveling aboard in second class, Marion Meanwell was immigrating to America aboard Titanic. An insurance certificate found in her luggage indicated that she planned to make the transatlantic voyage to New York aboard the steamer, Majestic. However, due to the coal strike, the Majestic was delayed in Southampton and Mrs. Meanwell was transferred to Titanic. Marion Meanwell did not survive the disaster.
I felt so helpless reading Marion’s story. In that moment the bag represented the truly ordinary parts of life and those things that we cannot predict. Every move we make is a risk, and this bag stood as physical proof of the frail human condition.

I was thrilled to see that this gallery contained another dress artifact. In a display case was a perfume card, perfume bottles, labels, and fragments of a perfume case that belonged to Adolphe Saalfelt (see Figure 8.29). This artifact truly transcended time and space, because the accompanying text indicated that, if you put your nose up close, you could still smell the perfume. This was, by far, the most unique sensory engagement that I had ever experienced with a dress artifact. The smell was not reproduced or manufactured to create a museum experience; rather, it had survived and persevered to this day. I was speechless in the presence of this display case.
The quote on the wall that led me into the next gallery read,

News of Titanic’s sinking reached the world in fragments. International reports stated the steamship Virginian had reached Titanic in time, saving the ship and all aboard. Soon, however, the horrific truth was known. Titanic was gone. 705 saved, 1523 lost.

Another quote on the wall provided a passenger’s reaction to the sinking: “Our legacy from the wreck, our debt to those who were lost with her, is to see as far in us lies, that such things are impossible ever again. -Laurence Beesley, 2\textsuperscript{nd} class passenger”

The sinking had not been previously covered in any explicit way during my walk through the exhibition, and I felt confused that it was being addressed so abruptly. However, I did appreciate that the quote by Laurence Beesley brought focus to the experience of the
passengers beyond telling the chronology of the events. Next to the Laurence Beesley quote was an enlarged image of the famous young paperboy who was distributing newspapers on the day after the Titanic sank. He seemed to be looking right at me, and his sorrow was emanating from the wall.

I entered the Memorial Gallery with the expectation that it would be similar to those in other Titanic museum attractions. It was a pretty narrow gallery, resembling a wide hallway, as if it were intended that passengers pause briefly in this space and then keep moving. Despite feeling a bit hurried by the physical layout, there was a row of chairs along the back wall where visitors were invited to sit for reflection. I took a moment to sit in one of the chairs and reflect upon the change in emotion that occurred in this room, though it was difficult because the room was quite crowded. There were panels mounted on the wall that contained the names of all Titanic passengers, with a notation regarding whether they survived or perished in the sinking. The panels did not contain the passenger names etched in crystal or glass, which was disappointing because it seemed less formal and appropriate. Other Titanic museum attractions do use crystal or glass panels for the memorial room display (see Figure 8.25).

The other end of the Memorial Gallery had a very simple display of three display cases evenly spread out along the wall with a caption that read, “Belongings of…” One of the display cases contained a Gillette razor, razor box, blade, wrapper, shaving brush and mug, ceramic toiletry bar and brush back with the inscription, “royale invoire france.” The accompanying text read,

Titanic’s first class ladies placed great importance on looking their best. This toiletry item may have helped one of Titanic’s female passengers prepare for a
gala evening. Some women brought six different ensembles, one for each of the shipboard dinners. Another display case contained a shoe horn and brush.

The placement of these objects seemed odd and misinformed. Though the items provided deeper understanding of the passengers whose names were simply listed on the memorial panels, they were also discussing life aboard the ship in an area devoted to its demise. This seemed contradictory for me.

Also, this is the area of the exhibition that began to seem confusing because the gallery themes became less defined and appeared to be chronologically out of order. A quote that appeared on the wall read, “My feeling was so strong that I would never reach America in that ship. –Edith Russell, 1st class passenger” This quote at least helped to guide and transition into the next room.

**Miscellaneous Artifacts Gallery**

I entered the next room to find pure darkness and white text that was back lit on the walls. I immediately felt tense because I felt the mood in the room change to a more serious tone. The room contained text and quotations on the wall, as well as one central display case that contained a bottle stopper, champagne bottles, flower vase, carafe, and Perrier bottle. The display cases were lit in a very dramatic way. The text that accompanied the mineral water read, “Mineral waters were as popular 100 years ago as they are today. Perrier was offered onboard Titanic.” My first thought when I saw this display case was “Hey! I drink that!,” referring to the Perrier carbonated water. Another

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107 To my knowledge women were not shaving at this time in history. If they were I highly doubt that they would have been using a Gillette razor and/or shaving brush.
visitor standing near said, “Wow! It’s still the same today!” As I was preparing to exit this room I heard a young boy say to his parent, “Is this the part where they die and stuff?” I made my way to the gallery exit that had a sign over head: “To deck.”

**Outer Deck Gallery**

I walked out on to a full-scale replica of the deck, presumed to be on the night of the sinking. My first reaction was that it was not a believable environment because it was not cold. The temperature did not change, as it had in other deck replicas at other Titanic museum attractions. There were not artifacts present in the room, but there were amazing star and sound effects. The windows that were meant to look inward to the ship were frosted and I could not see in. It made me wonder what was going on in that other room, even though I knew I was in a museum and it was probably just another gallery. There was one text panel about Frederick Fleet.¹⁰⁸ I did not spend much time in this space and then proceeded to the next gallery.

**The Sinking Gallery**

Entry into this gallery revealed a similarly serious and somber tone, but it contained more artifacts and other displays. I immediately heard eerie noises. I actually felt somewhat confused about how to act in this room and what the tone was meant to be because people were bustling around the many displays, and there were interactive elements present. I think that the designer of the artifact exhibition was trying to establish a serious tone in this gallery, but it may have been at odds with the interactive

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¹⁰⁸ Frederick Fleet was a crew member aboard Titanic. His job was to be the lookout for icebergs and other oceanic debris. He was the crew member who first spotted the infamous iceberg with which Titanic collided. He was 24 years old when Titanic set sail and did survive the sinking.
iceberg that kids were treating as a game and around which they were becoming loud. The room deserved silence. Because I was busy taking notes and observing the exhibition content I was asked by several people in this room what I was doing. Apparently my behavior was not congruent with their expectations for behavior in this room either.

To the left of the entrance, in the corner of the room, there was a set of three televisions that were playing a Discovery Channel recreation of the ship breaking in half and crashing to the bottom of the ocean. All three televisions were showing the same images in unison. A cloth banner hanging from the ceiling read, “Iceberg right ahead!” Other cloth banners were hanging on the walls throughout the room and contained quotes from passengers about their experience of the sinking. I liked that they used textiles as a way to uniquely display textual information, almost making it appear as its own display and artifact because the cloth contains the words of an actual lived experience.

A “real” iceberg (i.e., a large piece of ice meant to simulate the iceberg with which Titanic collided) was present in the room to touch so that visitors could feel the sensation of the ice and the temperature on the night of the sinking. I noticed that there were handprints in the ice. I did not see handprints visible on any of the icebergs at other Titanic museum attractions.; it felt creepy to me because the iceberg was presented as a source of death for so many people. I did not want to touch one of the handprints. I wanted to put my hand in a “blank slate” on the surface of the iceberg; a space that was uniquely my own.

One display case in the room contained coal from the ship and a leather apron. The text that accompanied the leather apron read,
This leather apron was recovered from inside a leather bag that also contained several wooden tool handles. The apron is made of one complete piece of leather. Additional pieces of leather were stitched on to reinforce the area where a leather strap and buckle are attached.

The leather looked so worn, which I thought of as well-used. I got a sincere sense of the hard work that this person did because of the wear and tear visible on the leather. It occurred to me that this person was probably underappreciated for all of his hard work. The apron was draped over a type of fluffy material or pillow that looked as if it had been laid with ease; this provided a nice contrast to the stiff quality that leather can have.

Two other passenger quotes that were presented on the wall caught my eye. They read,

Women and children first, someone was shouting these last few words over and over again…they meant my own safety but they also meant the greatest loss I’ve ever suffered – the life of my husband. – Charlotte Collyer, 2nd class passenger

and “It was a severe shock, just like thunder, the roar of thunder. – William Beauchamp, fireman on duty”

Another display case contained a hook and pulley. This conjured a scene of the movie in my mind. I could picture the scene where they are frantically lowering lifeboats. Another artifact presented was sheet music. I noticed that the front cover of the sheet music had a picture of a woman in period dress on the front. The accompanying text read, “Over 20 booklets of sheet music were found among the personal effects of Howard Irwin, including this one titled, ‘Kiss me my honey kiss me.’” I felt a human presence in this room, almost an other-worldly human presence. I felt scared and anxious, as if I might see a ghost. I could not help but think that these people had been forcibly separated
from their prized possessions, and they might want to be close to them again, even in death.

**Individual Display Cases Gallery**

The next gallery was another long and narrow hallway-like area with a very simple display of five display cases on tall pedestals that were evenly spread out along the wall. The opposite wall was painted black and was blank. This area was pitch black; only the individual display cases were brightly lit. Each display case contained a single artifact. It was completely silent and a bit chilly in the room. I could hear the sounds of water dripping over the speakers. It made me feel protective of the artifacts because it was clear that their importance was being emphasized and contact with water would ruin them. No matter how a visitor had been acting before this point, each of them seemed to read the tone of the room and proceeded by the display cases with reverence.

None of the display cases contained textual information beyond a statement identifying what the object was. The first display case contained spectacles that looked to be in pristine condition. The second display case contained a cook’s cap (see Figure 5.24). The third display case contained a first class candy dish. The fourth display case contained a necklace made of gold nuggets. The fifth display case contained a leather case and knife. As I walked in front of each display case it felt like a memorial. It felt as if these people might be present as ghosts or being summoned. I was also amazed at how well preserved the artifacts were. It seemed as if they could be in use today.
Wreckage Discovery and Preservation Gallery

The next gallery contained models, artifacts and information related to the discovery of Titanic’s wreckage. The introductory text read,

The wreck of RMS Titanic was discovered 2.5 miles beneath the surface of the North Atlantic, in freezing waters where the pressure exceeds 6,000 pounds per square inch. It is surrounded by a debris field that is filled with fragments of the ship and many personal belongings of her passengers and crew.

The central focus of the room was a large 3D model of what the wreckage currently looks like at the bottom of the ocean. It made my heart feel heavy. The wreckage appeared to me as the equivalent of a tombstone. There was a television playing a video that explained the wreckage recovery. Several artifacts were presented in display cases including dishes and a piece of a deck bench. The most unique artifact display was also in this room: a set of dishes that were displayed wedged in the sand, exactly as they had fallen when the ship hit the ocean floor. It is accompanied by a picture of how they were found in the ocean. I really liked this display because it gave me a sense of something that I will never be able to see. I recognize that I will most likely never see the Titanic wreckage with my own eyes so this exhibition has given me a unique visual gift. It was awe-inspiring. The display technique of pairing photos of an artifact’s recovery with the artifact was used in other cases too, and I felt it made a profound impact on me as a visitor.

This gallery also allowed me to focus on the ship from a different perspective than the life and death of Titanic: the re-birth of Titanic. Several text panels and photos emphasized the importance of properly conserving what is left of Titanic. One quote read,
The ship is being slowly consumed by metal-eating bacteria. This is why we must recover what we can now from the site. In a few years, perhaps a decade or two, it will simply be gone. –Stephanie Pennee, Titanic conservator

“The Big Piece” Gallery

The pride of the artifact exhibition was in the next gallery. With a very industrial display appearance, a huge piece of the ship is hoisted in the air and hanging from cranes. It is the biggest piece of the ship to be recovered to date. It is so large that it is the central focus of the room. In addition, the room is otherwise empty so this helps to make it look larger than life. I felt insignificant standing next to it. It was a very grand display that was fitting for this ship’s memorial. I walked the length of it, along the ropes that restricted visitor access, to imagine the size of the ship based upon its size. It was still possible to see the cracked windows and broken glass still attached. I was amazed that a text panel described exactly which cabins these windows were attached to. I could picture a person looking out of the windows after reading that text.

Epilogue Gallery

The Epilogue Gallery provided miscellaneous artifacts and pieces of information in the spirit of what felt like a tribute and a summary of the exhibition. One display contained a leather case with a spirit level. The accompanying text read, “This leather case contains a spirit level, possibly for use by a carpenter or machinist.” Another case held the 25th anniversary medal and strap belonging to Howard Irwin. Laced shoes were found among the effects of Edgar Andrew and displayed. I observed people looking at these shoes very closely, almost in disbelief that they are in such good condition. I was
personally amazed by their pristine condition; though, I could tell that they had been worn, and this helped to add a human presence.

Another display case contained a men’s cotton shirt collar. The accompanying text read,

Shirt collars and cuffs of this period were almost always white in color and made of a different fabric than the shirt to which they were attached. Collars and cuffs were fastened to the shirt by studs and were heavily starched to a hard, cardboard-like consistency. Because collars and cuff accumulated more dirt and became more worn than the rest of the shirt, replacing these individual elements prevented the need to replace or even frequently launder the entire garment.

The heavy concentration of dress artifacts in this gallery led to my formation of the opinion that the placement of dress artifacts in this museum was bad. It seemed too random. It could have been placed in other areas to add more context to another display or gallery.

The back of this room was where the artifact exhibition exit was located. It ended with the same photo collage of passengers that were present at the start. I thought that this was a good endnote and very fitting for the subject matter. As I reached this area I started to feel disoriented about the timeline expressed through the exhibition layout. It started out great but then it became more random. I did not feel that the sinking was well-covered in this exhibition. I wondered if this was on purpose. Is it because they were trying to focus on other aspects of Titanic?

The quote that appears on the back wall of the Epilogue Gallery before exiting read, “We are all passengers on the Titanic. –Jack Foster, Irish philosopher” I appreciated the presentation of this seemingly upbeat quote because it brought a sense of unity between the passengers and those who visit. It made the events of Titanic relatable. In
fact, it was reading this quote that helped me feel more deeply connected to everyone in
the room, all of the visitors that I did not know are people with which I now shared a
common bond. It provided a fresh perspective from which to view history.

**Reflective Summary**

My favorite museum attraction visit was the one I made to the Pigeon Forge location. It had the most comprehensive mixture of artifacts, interactive elements, and dress and costume displays (including a whole gallery dedicated to the movie).

My least favorite museum attraction visit was the one I made to the Orlando location. The artifacts were sparse making me question what the purpose was for even having this location open to the public. The overall presentation of the museum attraction translated as cheap and disorganized.

I thought that the Pigeon Forge location contained the most effective dress and costume displays. The dress of the time period was clearly visible in the photos displayed in various galleries, and there was a nice selection of movie costumes (including hats) that could be viewed up close. The Branson location was the runner-up for most effective dress and costume displays. It was nice to see the same “Lucile” reproduction dress displayed at both the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations using two different display techniques. I was surprised at the number of dress artifacts that the Las Vegas incorporated into the exhibition; this was a nice surprise.

I thought that the Orlando location had the least effective dress and costume displays. It was confusing to see a movie costume displayed next to a non-descript
women’s outfit. In addition, the dress objects displayed in the replica first class stateroom were difficult to see and, in some cases, inaccurate for the time period.

Both the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations made excellent use of costumed living history interpreters. They were nicely dressed and personable at both locations.
CHAPTER NINE

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to conduct an introductory exploration of the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event. The concept for this study arose from my personal fascination with Titanic and historic dress. I wanted to explore how museum visitors used historic dress artifacts and costume displays to learn about Titanic in the museum attraction setting. I found that the most authentic way to capture the experiences of museum visitors was for them to describe both their visit and the information and meaning that they found in dress and costume throughout the museum attraction.

In this study I asked Titanic museum attraction visitors about their experiences related to learning about Titanic, with special attention paid to their learning from dress artifacts and costume displays, using narrative accounts of their museum visit. The narrative of each participant is a powerful reminder that the content of museum attractions is uniquely understood by each individual. I personally interviewed each participant and, in a way, shared in the experiences that they took away from their visit. It is my hope that this study honors the experiences of the participants in an authentic way.
Summary of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that there are many perspectives from which to tell the story of Titanic and help museum attraction visitors learn the history of the ill-fated ship. I set out to explore what is the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event. This initially included the assumption that museum attraction visitors were responding to advertisements in which Rose and her film costumes were featured.

Research Question #1

In order to better understand the lived experience of the Titanic Museum Attraction visitor, I explored the factors that influenced their museum attraction visit with the following research question: Why do visitors choose to visit the Titanic museum attraction? And, does the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into exhibitions (especially via costume, living history, and display) factor into this decision?

I found that Rose did not factor into the decision of the participants to visit a Titanic museum attraction. If a participant learned from or about Rose, she did not factor into the learning or personal meaning-making process until he or she was inside the museum attraction. The film/fictional character of Rose as an influential factor in the decision to visit a Titanic museum attraction was noticeably absent. None of the participants mentioned Rose as an influential factor. The movie in which she appeared was mentioned several times, but she was never explicitly named. The canine mascots were the only mention of an entity that represented the museum as a whole.
Taken together, the reasons and influences described by visitor participants for visiting a Titanic museum attraction were varied and multifaceted. Four emergent themes were identified from the individual utterances of participants: (1) personal interest, (2) intent to cognitively/mentally engage with the topic, (3) social value and influence, and (4) curiosity.

Participants described the reason for their visit as influenced by a personal interest. Eight participants expressed a personal interest in history, including certain time periods and events in history. Eleven participants stated that their visit was primarily influenced by a personal interest in Titanic, the specific event in history upon which Titanic museum attractions focus. Eight participants stated that their visit was influenced by a personal interest in museums. Three participants stated that their visit was influenced by a personal interest in dress, costume, and fashion. One participant was influenced by her positive reaction to a promotional campaign for the museum attraction that contained the two dog mascots. One participant was persuaded to visit because she received information from a family member that the museum attraction contained interactive exhibits and she favors such exhibits.

Participants making a visit to a Titanic museum attraction were doing so with the intent to cognitively or mentally engage with the subject matter. Cognitive engagement was found to occur with three functions and, thus, these functions comprise relevant sub-themes: (1) to learn, (2) to reflect, and (3) to compare.

Participants reported intent to learn more general information about the historical events of Titanic, the personal/human stories of the passengers and crew, and the timeline
and events of the sinking. Participants also reported *intent to reflect* upon the historical events surrounding Titanic. Finally, participants reported *intent to compare* the historical events surrounding Titanic to another category by which they are intrigued. The act of comparison included comparison of previous time periods to the present day. Four participants explicitly stated that they wanted to compare the story and information presented in the movie to what is presented in the museum.

For many participants it was the influence of individuals in their social group, especially their immediate social group (e.g., spouses, siblings, and so forth), that led to their Titanic museum attraction visit. Five participants stated that their visit was the direct result of a personal relationship with an individual who has a personal interest in Titanic. Four of these participants are male and three of these male participants are referring to their significant other or spouse, all of whom participated in the study. Five participants stated that they have a personal relationship with an individual who is interested in visiting the particular Titanic Museum Attraction location. Two of these five participants expressed that the interest in the particular Titanic Museum Attraction location was mutual. Two participants stated that their visit was a direct result of a personal relationship with a Titanic museum attraction employee. The Titanic museum attractions included in this study also garnered positive reviews from individuals in the participants’ social groups, which peaked a sense of interest and curiosity that influenced the visit.

Seven participants stated that their Titanic museum attraction visit was prompted by curiosity. Sources of curiosity were categorized according to the following sub-themes: (1) content of the museum and (2) the spectacle that has been created around
Titanic. Curiosity about the content of a Titanic museum attraction was raised in response to considerations of what the museum might use to tell the story of Titanic, and the exterior appearance of the museum aroused their curiosity.

Six participants stated that their curiosity about the museum was related directly to its content. Three participants identified specific aspects of the museum content that incited curiosity. These specific content areas were focused upon objects (e.g., artifacts and replicas) that might be found in the museum. Three participants stated that their curiosity about the museum was heightened after viewing its exterior appearance. Participants who referenced the exterior appearance of the museum attraction were referring to that of the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations. The pageantry exhibited by the building’s exterior represents a connection between the two sub-themes. Two participants explained that the exterior appearance itself contributes to the spectacle that surrounds the events of Titanic and ignites curiosity.

The responses of some participants led to a discussion that explored factors that deter a visit or cause reluctance to visit. Two participants highlighted the township location of the Titanic Museum Attraction in Pigeon Forge as a main factor of deterrence because it is an attraction-based tourist destination. Attractions in locations like Pigeon Forge and Branson are considered “hokey” and “tacky.” Because of the emphasis on attractions in Pigeon Forge, one participant experienced confusion and uncertainty regarding the historical legitimacy of the museum. I recorded the same confusion and uncertainty regarding the Las Vegas location in my personal phenomenological notes.
Titanic museum attraction staff discussed the demographic of individuals who visit their museum attractions. One staff participant identified the specific demographic of individuals who are targeted by visitors in their marketing endeavors: women, ages 25 to 54 who have children. She has also noticed that, since integrating the movie more directly into the museum attraction content, there has been an increase in young girls who visit the museum. In fact, a younger population has been visiting more frequently because the 100-year commemoration events are introducing (or re-introducing, in some cases) Titanic to a new generation.

Another staff participant described some of the characteristics of people who visit and some of the reasons that people visit. First, he has noticed over time that individuals, for the most part, remain fully engaged with the interactive elements of the museum and become excited to participate. This participation includes interacting with living history interpreters to learn more information. People also visit to learn more of the details surrounding Titanic and the passengers that were aboard the ship. A unique aspect of their venues that draws visitors in is the combination of traditional museum displays and interactive elements more commonly associated with attractions. There are school groups and other youth organizations that visit the museum for an educational experience.

Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition experiences challenges related to pinpointing the demographics of the individuals that visit because Las Vegas is an equal-opportunity tourist destination. Because people visit from a variety of places for a variety of reasons, it is difficult to create any type of guest profile. A significant challenge for artifact
exhibition staff is interacting with those guests who do not take the subject matter seriously.

Visitor participants were asked an additional research question that addressed the hypothetical use of the Rose character as a living history interpreter in the museum setting: _There are some Titanic Museum Attractions that have the movie character of Rose from James Cameron’s Titanic film, walking around the museum and interacting with visitors. What is your opinion of or reaction to this scenario?_ As mentioned earlier in this summary, the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into the museum setting (especially via costume, living history, and display) does not factor into the decision to visit a Titanic museum attraction. Because the character of Rose was not explicitly mentioned in any participant responses to the interview question regarding what influenced a visit to a Titanic museum attraction, a follow-up question was added to explicitly explore how the presence of a Rose living history character would potentially affect the lived experience of the visitors in the museum setting. The scenario of including a Rose living history interpreter as part of the lived experience of a museum visit elicited a wide range of reactions from participants.

It was more common for participants to oppose the presence of a Rose living history interpreter than favor her presence. Ten participants\(^{109}\) were _not in favor_ of a Rose living history interpreter. I identified the most salient arguments regarding how and why

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\(^{109}\) This question was added to the interview protocol as time allowed and participants were willing to answer the question. Eleven participants did not answer this question, including the participant who withdrew from the study following the pre-interview.
the presence of a Rose living history interpreter would contribute to a negative lived experience during a museum visit:

- The presence of Rose would not be entertaining or appealing to me.
- I acknowledge that Rose’s original and intended context of interpretation is within a movie, and it is more satisfying to view Rose in her original and intended context by watching the movie.
- Rose was only a fictional character; that is, she was not an actual passenger on the ship in 1912. I think it would detract from the museum experience because she was fictional.
- My attention would be diverted away from the historical content of the museum and more toward the movie.
- The Titanic museum attraction already presents visitors with a person-centered connection to follow throughout the entire museum visit via the boarding pass distributed prior to entry.
- The presence of Rose in a museum with an educational mission would not be congruent with this mission or related historical content.
- A Rose living history interpreter would be inherently different than the character conception of Rose that is presented in the movie, and these differences would be problematic for me.
- I would be suspicious to engage and/or interact with a Rose living history interpreter because her status as a fictional character automatically discredits her.
Seven participants voiced *opinions that showed favor or highlighted the benefits* of a Rose living history interpreter. I identified the most salient arguments regarding how and why the presence of a Rose living history interpreter would contribute to a positive lived experience during a museum visit:

- The presence of a Rose living history interpreter would help me to better relate to and personally connect with the historical content of the museum.
- I would be able to appreciate Rose as a feature of the museum setting because I understand that Rose was a fictional character used as a tool in a motion picture film to tell the story of Titanic from a different perspective.
- It would be entertaining to interact with an individual playing this character.
- If Rose is present in the museum attraction it is just important that she contribute to my learning and understanding of Titanic, regardless of whether she was an actual passenger aboard the ship.

Three participants expressed uncertainty regarding what the contribution of a Rose living history interpreter would be in the museum attraction setting. These participants experienced uncertainty regarding whether the presence of Rose would enhance the museum experience or help them gain anything additional beyond the content that is already being presented. Despite the presence of negative and conflicted opinions regarding the presence of a Rose living history interpreter in the museum attraction setting, for some participants the acceptability of her presence was simply a matter of where she was placed in the physical museum environment. Specific
suggestions were offered regarding where her presence would be acceptable in the museum attraction.

The Titanic museum attraction staff participants discussed the ways in which Rose is incorporated into their respective Titanic Museum Attractions of employment. As staff members, they have also witnessed how museum attraction visitors react to both the presence and absence of the Rose character. The Branson and Pigeon Forge Titanic Museum Attractions currently incorporate a Rose living history interpreter. Rose was not present during any of the participant’s museum attraction visits. Though a Rose character presented numerous opportunities for marketing and visitor interaction, one staff participant was keenly aware of and sensitive to the fact that Rose is a fictional character in a movie. She felt that, because of her fictional status, the Rose character needed to be used in a responsible manner, and her physical location needed to be pre-determined and closely monitored. Another staff participant explained that the Rose living history interpreter used at the Branson location has a lasting impression on visitors because of her striking resemblance to Kate Winslet’s portrayal of the character and her ability to assume the role. The staff participant at the Las Vegas location said that the gift shop is the only location in which Rose and the movie are explicitly referenced at the Las Vegas location.

Research Question #2

The second research question was as follows: Do Titanic museum attraction visitors use the 1997 film Titanic and/or the character of Rose and her dress to relate to the historical event of Titanic? The presentation of the results for research question two
illustrate how the movie and character of Rose were used to relate to the historical event of Titanic. In order to categorize the vast responses that contributed to answering this research question, this section is divided into three categories. The categories were developed through the use of interview questions as frames of analysis and are:

- The use of the movie to relate to the historical events of Titanic,
- The use of Rose to relate to the historical events of Titanic, and
- The use of the movie to relate to dress and costume displays in the museum attraction.

It was more common for participants to relate to the historical events of Titanic through the movie as a whole, as opposed to the specific character of Rose. Three emergent themes were identified from the individual utterances of participants:

1. spontaneous mental connections between the movie and historical events when viewing certain museum attraction content,  
2. use of the movie as a foundation to build further historical understanding and/or contextualize current understanding, and  
3. the use of the movie as a source of comparison to explore or confirm its accuracy.

It was common for participants to report instances when they drew a spontaneous connection to the movie or were reminded of the movie in their own mind. Several participants used the movie as a foundation to build further historical understanding about Titanic or brainstormed ways in which it could assist in building such a foundation for visitors. Some participants used the movie as a source of comparison to explore or confirm the accuracy of the movie.

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110 Twenty-two of the twenty-nine visitor participants reported that they had viewed the movie at least once.
Titanic museum attraction staff participants were fully aware that visitors would draw connections to the movie in their respective museum attractions, and they view these connections as an opportunity to provide visitors with historical information. One staff member said that he does not mention the movie unless visitors bring it up, and another staff member likes to use the movie as a tool to draw comparisons to the artifact exhibition content.

As stated earlier in this summary, it was rare for participants to use Rose to relate to the historical events of Titanic. Participants were able to relate to Rose through both of the stages of life in which she was presented in the movie: “old Rose” and “young Rose.” Some participants related to Rose by learning that she was not an actual passenger aboard the ship in 1912. Though she was not real, Rose was representative of an actual passenger.

The staff participants said that one of the most frequently asked questions by visitors is, “Was Jack and Rose real?” They have been witness to some intense emotional reactions when visitors hear the answer to this question because visitors form a personal bond with these characters.

There were some specific instances when participants used dress and costume displays to relate to the museum attraction content and the historical events of Titanic. Some participants felt that it was important to go beyond the movie costumes and first class dress to present explicit information and visuals about what third class dress would look like.

The three dress displays that were most memorable for the participants were
(1) the dress and costume items presented in the “Titanic: The Movie Experience”
Gallery at the Pigeon Forge location, (2) the dress and costume items presented in the
lobby and gift shop at the Orlando location, and (3) the “Lucile” reproduction dress
display to which visitors were exposed at both the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations.\textsuperscript{111}
It is important to note that these were the most memorable \textit{extant} dress and costume
displays. There were a number of participants who discussed the value of noticing dress
of the time period in photos. Staff participants discussed the popularity of the Heart of the
Ocean necklace and its availability for purchase in the museum attraction gift shops.

\textbf{Research Question \#3}

The third research question was as follows: \textit{Does the museum attraction experience differ for visitors who are not fans of/who have not seen the film? Do these visitors feel a personal connection with Rose and her appearance?} The presentation of the results for research question three revealed specific variations in the lived experience of the museum attraction visit for participants who both have and have not seen the 1997 film. Participants who had not seen the movie did not personally relate to Rose.\textsuperscript{112} In fact, many of them did not even know who the character of Rose was. The primary difference in the museum attraction experience for visitors who had not seen the movie was that they encountered difficulty in relating and paying attention to any content or reference to the movie. Visitors who had not seen the movie did not make any spontaneous mental connections to the movie during their visit. Despite not having seen the movie, one

\textsuperscript{111} Though the “Lucile” reproduction dress display was seen at both the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations, it was displayed in different galleries at each location. In Branson the reproduction dress was displayed in the First Class Dining Salon Gallery in its own display case. In Pigeon Forge it was displayed within the full-scale replica of the first class sitting room.

\textsuperscript{112} Seven of the twenty-nine total visitor participants reported that they had not seen the movie.
participant found a personal interest in the hats displayed in the movie gallery. The experience of this participant reflects the possibility that visitors who have not seen the movie can appreciate the display of movie costumes and find their own personal meaning in the display. Participants who had not seen the movie did not have the visual imagery or information that it provided about Titanic’s history to draw upon as a source of comparison throughout their visit. In the absence of the movie as a possible reference or source of comparison, they explored other ways in which they could personally relate to the content. One participant was forced to identify as a member of the minority of people who have not seen the movie, which challenged the assumption that was voiced by another visitor in her tour group. Two participants who had not seen the movie actually advocated for the display of the movie costumes because they are visually similar to dress of the time period and, thus, provide a context for the time period.

**General Phenomenological Structure**

It is my conclusion that the general phenomenological structure constitutes an authentic and effective summary of what it was like for the Titanic museum attraction visitors with whom I spoke to learn and form personal meaning from dress and costume displays. For the museum attraction visitors with whom I spoke and who represented a variety of backgrounds and levels of interest in Titanic, the general phenomenological structure related to learning and personal meaning formation in a Titanic museum attraction is comprised of five constituents.\footnote{Constituents is the label used in this study for what Husserl would label “essences.” As Barker (2010) stated, “‘Constituent’, something making up part of a whole, or a component, leads to different expectations than ‘essence’, a term used by Husserl, and facilitates recognition of the difference between philosophical phenomenology and scientific [i.e., social science] phenomenology” (Barker, 2010, p. 154).}
The displays of dress and costume were significant to the learning and personal
meaning making process of the participants because such displays represented parts of a
whole. Some participants stated that they created personal meaning during their Titanic
museum attraction visit by relating the content to their background and personal
experiences. In some instances this was accompanied by an emotional reaction such as
empathy.

I found that it was common for these visitors to learn and form personal meaning
by making comparisons to contemporary dress, behaviors, and other aspects of society.
Some participants engaged in comparative learning in the museum attraction by
comparing the decorative accents or embellishments on dress objects and other types of
objects. There were also comparisons made between the dress worn by the first class and
that worn by other social classes aboard the ship. Some participants engaged in
comparative learning in the museum attraction by making comparisons between the dress
of today (i.e., a more contemporary time period) and the dress worn aboard Titanic. Some
participants engaged in comparative learning in the museum attraction by making
comparisons between the movie costumes and appearance of people in the movie and the
actual passengers that were aboard their ship and their dress.
Some participants said that the dress and costume displays were of interest to them because they served the important function of humanizing the objects. Several participants expressed that their museum attraction visit helped them to learn about the passengers, which contributed to the formation of the visual rhetorical narratives that is presented later in this chapter. For some participants, the presence of biographical information about a passenger with an object or artifact enhanced her learning transforming it into more than just another example of a certain type of object. I found that the museum attractions’ focus upon the lives of the passengers\textsuperscript{114} provided a space in which the participants felt comfortable in forming narratives in their own mind related to the passengers in specific situations, and even narratives that involved putting themselves in the passenger’s position. One participant expressed an awareness that some passengers receive more media attention than others, and as a result, it is common to hear about the same passengers over and over in various sources. Because of this, she thought that it was nice to become familiar with some of the passengers (and their personal effects) who are lesser known.

I found that visitors regard dress and costume as a visual language that can be “read” to obtain further knowledge about and deepen their understanding of history. Some participant determined certain characteristics about the wearer (in the absence of additional information) by reading visual cues provided by the dress being worn. One participant realized that she had previously received information that effectively taught her how to, at least partially, read the visual language of the dress worn in this time

\textsuperscript{114} See further explanation and a rhetorical analysis of the museum attractions’ focus upon the lives of Titanic passengers in the discussion of theory in this chapter.
period. A participant who had not seen the movie experienced firsthand what it is like to not be able to fluently read or speak the visual language of dress.

**Other Findings**

Visuals, including dress, help visitors to understand the time period beyond simply reading the equivalent information. I was surprised that visitors were more likely to take notice of dress in photos than in extant object displays. This finding was not anticipated, but I believe the interest in the photographs was related to a lack of extant dress displays. Participants expressed an interest in seeing the differences in how passengers dressed (e.g. differences in embellishment, accessories, fabrics, and so forth). In order to use a comparative approach in the museum attraction setting, there must be adequate representations of each social class with which to make comparisons. A representation of all social classes would contribute to a more holistic approach to dress and costume displays. In general, participants felt that the museum attractions were too saturated with either first or third class dress representations; there did not seem to be much of a balance. Participants were genuinely interested in seeing the dress worn by third class passengers because they were part of the diverse population aboard the ship and represent a unique lived experience. The ideal display strategy for dress and costume objects appears to be a combination of photos and extant objects. Dress can be displayed in such a way that it is understood as either a static object or an object “in action” or “in use.” Participants also had a difficult time relating to the repeated presentation of only paper-based artifacts (e.g., photos and written primary sources).
Application of Visual Rhetoric and Semiotics: Theoretical Reflections and Implications

As part of my study, I sought to further expand the body of literature that applies rhetorical theory, through a particular medium: dress and costume in film. One of my fundamental positions, as the researcher, was that meaning associated with visual imagery is more complex than discourse because it can have generalized meanings that are agreed upon, but it can also have more specialized and nuanced meanings (cf., Jamieson, 1992; Zarefsky, 1992). Following the completion of this research I stand by this fundamental position that I began with because the components of the general phenomenological structure support this claim. The visual imagery portrayed by dress and costume displays is more complex than discourse because it has both generalized and nuanced meaning for museum attraction visitors. The general phenomenological structure revealed that the visitors with whom I interacted actually chose dress and costume displays to view based upon a selection of distinct meanings that are unique to each visitor (e.g., personal interests, background, and emotional reactions). Personal meaning was also formed by relating the dress or costume object or display to a personal interest. The participants learned and formed personal meaning from dress and costume displays by making comparisons to contemporary dress, behaviors, and other aspects of society.

Rhetorical Narrative Strategy for the Display of Dress and Costume

Museum displays are an invitation to explore the self and others. Drawing upon the work of Burke (1969), Prelli (2006) explains Rhetorics of display, like all rhetoric, incorporate resources of identification and of its inescapable counterpart, division. It does not matter whether they display is intended for us as the addressed audience. Opportunities for identification and
division arise regardless of who becomes audience to the display. It is not surprising, then, that we encounter displays nearly on a daily basis that somehow engage with our sense of belonging and identity, with our sense of social relationships, and with our sense of history. We might find that a display affirms our identity, magnifies our interests, and celebrates our values, but it also might generate feelings of being ignored, belittled, debased, or diminished. And, as often is the case, it might leave us ambivalent, disengaged, or indifferent. Insofar as displays manifest some particular, situated ordering of desires, their rhetorical dimension invites us to do some attitudinizing of our own, whether through expression of identification, alienation, or some intermediate inclination to identify with the subject matter (p. 16).

Based on the lived experiences reported by participants, I concluded that the Titanic museum attractions included in this study constructed a clear narrative in the context of memorialization as visual testimony: “The Composition of a Life Lived.” The narrative was constructed in such a way that museum attraction content honored the lives that were lived by the passengers of Titanic by filling in and recounting the details of their unique lived experiences. The details of the passenger’s unique lived experiences included information about their dress. The overall focus in all of the museum attractions was centered upon telling the life stories of the passengers and providing more information about the elements, including the dress objects that they wore and used, that comprised the lives that they lived. Visitors were seemingly presented with the notion that they were being given access to the intimate details of the passengers’ lives and the question, “What does it mean to live?”

The entrance to the Branson and Las Vegas museum attractions preview and legitimize this narrative by providing visitors with a quick introduction to the central theme of the content contained within. In my personal phenomenology I observed that the

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115 The rhetorical narrative is referred to in the singular form because it is the narrative that was identified as being woven into the content presented in all of the Titanic museum attractions.
walls of the first gallery in the Branson museum attraction were lined with glass panels in which a photographic-like image of the head of some passengers were etched, along with a quote for which each passenger was known. These backdrops made the passengers seem larger than life. The quotes on the glass panels brought immediate focus to the people involved with Titanic. In my personal phenomenology I observed that the Las Vegas location made explicit reference to this theme right away. Upon crossing through the entrance doorway, there was a tall panel to the left containing a collage of passenger photos and a text passage that read,

> The story of Titanic has been told and retold, but never more poignantly and passionately than by the artifacts presented in this exhibition. Respectfully recovered and painstakingly conserved, these objects, more than any word or image tell the story of RMS Titanic and her 2,228 passengers and crew whose lives she changed forever.

> I loved the entrance because I felt like I could connect with the passengers, who felt like representatives of the ship and the keepers of the history, right away. I was immediately acquainted with the people involved and began to feel the impact, almost like a weight on my shoulders, of this human tragedy. The content of the museum attractions exposed visitors to dress objects that were part of important decisions, rites of passage, ordinary events, hard work, and other scenarios that are not part of the generic telling of the Titanic story but are nonetheless important to the history. I observed that, at the end of the Las Vegas artifact exhibition, the collage of passenger photos was again presented and a quote on the back wall read, “We are all passengers on the Titanic. –Jack Foster, Irish philosopher” Having viewed different parts of a life lived; visitors were
given the message that their newly-acquired understanding of the unique lived experiences of Titanic passengers imbued them with ownership of this heritage.

The concepts of resonance and wonder\textsuperscript{116} provide support for the rhetorical narrative of “The Composition of a Life Lived” that was used in the display of dress and costume. There were a few participants who identified the feeling of familiarity with museum attraction content related to dress and costume. Simone felt that it was easier to connect to dress in the museum attraction because she was already somewhat familiar with the story surrounding Titanic. For her, the visit served the function of filling in more detail to the general outline of the story as she knew it. She entered the museum attraction with knowledge of Titanic, and it was the sense of resonance established by this knowledge that allowed her to deeply connect with the dress. The dress was part of the details provided during the museum attraction visit that increased her understanding of Titanic. In this way, resonance enhanced the rhetorical display strategy of dress and costume.

Other participants expressed that museums are responsible for providing a novel experience which can be interpreted as wonder. Jane said that she needs to have interactive elements in the museum setting because it solidifies her memory of the experience and the knowledge that she acquired during her visit in her mind. She visits museums to get an experience that she cannot get from books or other sources. By in large, Jane’s visit to Titanic: The Experience did not provide an experience or

\textsuperscript{116} To review, the experience of resonance (i.e., an item displayed to appeal to what we, as an audience, know or are familiar with) exists in contrast to the experience of wonder (i.e., a sense of amazement, revelation and the exotic invoked by museum content) (Greenblatt, 2004).
information that differed from other sources, and she perceived this as a negative outcome of her visit. The presence of too much resonance is especially relevant to museums and museum attractions today because visitors can obtain a lot of information and pictures from the internet with the click of a mouse. For Peter, it is enjoyable to view both artifacts and photos of dress objects but artifacts provide a greater sense of wonder because he can access many images on the internet. In this way, artifacts represent novelty for Peter and, thus, a more successful display strategy. Peter explained that he goes to museums to see artifacts, and he cannot do that elsewhere. Visual rhetorical display strategies, such as resonance and wonder, are of interest to scholars such as Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp, who examines the messages that are conveyed by various display techniques.

Theoretical Connection to the Work of Cheryl Jorgensen-Earp

The theoretical foundation for this study was partially informed by the work of Jorgensen-Earp (2006), who examined the display of recovered artifacts and other visuals that were used to form a narrative in Titanic: The Exhibition. Jorgensen-Earp’s found competing rhetorical messages about the appropriateness of salvaging artifacts from a debris field that was also the gravesite of many people. She also found that elaborate staging and interactive exhibition techniques were necessary to reanimate and contextualize the artifacts. In addition, artifacts recovered from the wreckage were treated in a spirit of sacred commemoration within the exhibition.

The museum attractions made use of a visual rhetorical strategy that includes the “juxtaposition of the ersatz and the real” (Jorgensen-Earp, 2006, p. 51). Jorgensen-Earp
found that the Titanic exhibition she analyzed made use of this strategy, and she provides a description of it: “The need to give the artifacts context leads to a continuing interplay between the real and the false, between the artifactual and the artificial, between 1912 reality and imaginative reconstruction” (p. 51).

This strategy was apparent in the Titanic exhibition that she analyzed when it was discovered that the video playing in one of the galleries was actually showing the construction of the Olympic sister ship, not the Titanic. The exact same strategy was found to be problematic by Caroline, who took issue with the use of artifacts from the Olympic being used to represent the Titanic in the Orlando museum attraction. Though the artifacts were largely representative of those that would have come from Titanic and it was nice to see actual artifacts, she still felt that this was misleading.

The strategy of ersatz and real was also used in the “Lucile” reproduction dress display. Daisy and Marshall commented on the stark contrast between the style of the “Lucile” reproduction dress and the clothing styles for women depicted in other areas of the museum attraction. Daisy said that she did not recall that specific style being shown in the movie, and Marshall said that the style appeared more contemporary than the dress depicted in photos throughout the museum attraction. Barbara acknowledged in her interview that the “Lucile” reproduction dress was not a style worn in 1912. I observed in my personal phenomenology that the text panel for the “Lucile” reproduction dress stated that it was a style worn three years after Titanic sank. This was not a successful rhetorical strategy because it caused confusion for visitors regarding the style of dress that was actually worn at the time that Titanic set sail on her maiden voyage. The style variation in
those three years was significant enough that participants casually noticed during their visit and, thus, the use of the ersatz and real strategy to showcase dress and style variation can be detrimental to a visitor’s learning in the museum attraction. This strategy requires careful consideration and planning.

A response provided by Lila regarding the display of movie costumes highlighted a visitor’s perception of the ersatz and real visual strategy. For Lila, it was acceptable to show movie costumes in the museum attraction because they are similar to those worn during the time period, and she illustrated her point by comparing the display of movie costumes to the display of objects associated with the Olympic ship:

I don’t I think that, um, unless it is—the costumes are very, very similar like you take the, um, the sister ship was made at the time. Showing those pictures back and forth is great because it’s so similar. And if you had the dress in the movie that was very similar—those that were similar—that would be fine, but other than that I think it would take away because people would assume that that’s the dress it was.

Simone expressed a similar sentiment, stating that movie costumes were acceptable to include in displays because they resembled what belonged to someone. It is the element of resemblance that makes this rhetorical message so powerful. The display of dress and costume can be further understood and more effectively utilized by combining the visual rhetorical approach with semiotic thought for analysis. I turn to the work of Lori Liggett to frame the application of semiotic concepts to my findings.

**Theoretical Connection to the Work of Lori Liggett**

The theoretical foundation for this study was also partially informed by the work of Liggett (2002), who had already begun to identify the varied ways in which the meaning of Rose’s costume can be consolidated for audience/visitor viewing and
reception at the time that I embarked on this research endeavor. Visual rhetoric and semiotics can be combined to account for the ways in which images come to possess meaning, including through the semiotic concept of synecdoche. I originally sought to explore the role of film costume iconography in learning about a historical event and the development of a personal connection with an iconic character and his/her appearance in the context of that event, assuming that Rose would fit neatly and exclusively into the semiotic concept of the icon. In the context of Titanic museum attraction displays and living history interpreters, I found that the character of Rose and her dress are more closely aligned with the semiotic concept of synecdoche than the semiotic concept of the icon.

One of the questions that Liggett poses is the following: “Is Rose real? Undoubtedly the film character is a fiction, but could she possibly represent real women who existed during the time of the Titanic disaster” (p. 185)? The results of this study offer a response to Liggett’s question because it seems that the Titanic Museum Attractions in Branson and Pigeon Forge actually intend for the character of Rose to be interpreted as a synecdoche and inform visitors of how this semiotic concept can be applied on a regular basis. I reached this conclusion because, while the museum attractions do not actually use this semiotic language, they use Rose as a tool to educate visitors about the actual passenger aboard the ship that she may have represented. That is, the museum attractions have Rose serving the function of synecdoche without explicitly

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117 Synecdoche is defined as “the substitution of part for whole” (Lanham, 1969, p. 97). Chandler (2007) uses the common American expression of “two heads are better than one” as an example of synecdoche (p. 132).
labeling it as such. Several participants reported learning that Rose was not an actual passenger aboard the ship in 1912, but she was created by James Cameron as a composite representation of Titanic passengers. In this way, components of the semiotic meaning system (such as synecdoche) can be used to inform display and presentation techniques in the museum attraction setting. Though, my interviews with the museum attraction staff revealed that there was some variance about the specific passengers that Rose represented.  

Rose can also be considered a form of synecdoche in the context of her presence as a living history interpreter at the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations. It is more common for the living history interpreters at these locations to portray first class maids and crew members. Rose is one of the only personas that are representative of a passenger, as opposed to a crew member. The absence of the other passenger portrayals, coupled with the information that is shared about Rose being representative of specific passengers, makes her an example of synecdoche. The results of this study provide support for Liggett’s argument that “Rose is… intended to represent a generation of Western women undergoing tumultuous cultural changes in 1912” (2006, p. 188). A unique extension of Liggett’s work to note that is provided by the present study is that it

118 Arthur and other living history interpreters at the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations said that Rose is a representation of real passenger Dorothy Gibson. Molly, who works at the Las Vegas location, said that Rose is a representation of Kate Florence Phillips (who went by Kate Marshall).

119 The official websites for the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations provide photos of other passengers (e.g., Thomas Andrews, Molly Brown, Captain Smith, and Father Browne) that have been used in the museum attraction proper. However, I got the sense that these personas are not used often because they are only present in this single section of the websites. I never saw them or heard them referenced during my museum attraction visits either.
supports the argument made by Liggett, while at the same time acknowledging that Rose can represent a generation of women even when taken out of the context of the movie.

Rose is also a form of synecdoche because participants said that her movie costumes were representative of the time period. Jessie provided a unique perspective that pinpoints Rose as a form of synecdoche because she acknowledged that it is probably difficult to recover and preserve actual dress artifacts from the wreckage, so most dress displays will be comprised of movie costumes or reproductions. In this way, the use of Rose’s movie costumes in a museum attraction display is an example of how synecdoche can be practically applied in a way that effectively provides visitors with information about dress of the time period in the absence of artifacts. The work of Liggett and the findings of this study present strong evidence to suggest that Rose is a form of synecdoche on many levels. The evidence suggesting that Rose is a form of synecdoche and the identification of the “parts of a whole” constituent in the general phenomenological structure represent an intersection between phenomenology and semiotics. Both the “parts of the whole” constituent and the semiotic concept of synecdoche are concerned with the relationship between the concepts of “parts” and “whole.” The “parts of a whole” constituent supports the application of semiotic theory to the findings of this study.

**Recommendations for Future Practice**

Chapters Four and Five contain the narratives, interview and participant observation-based research findings, and themes identified in the data. An outcome of the narratives and themes is a list of recommendations for future practice in both Titanic
museum attractions and museums in general. This section includes a list of suggested practices that grew out of the narratives as possible ways to enhance the learning and personal meaning-making processes in the museum attraction setting with regard to dress and costume displays. Though these suggestions are made in the context of Titanic museum attractions, these practices could also be useful to museum and historical society practitioners for implementation in their respective institutions. This list includes both general suggestions and location-specific suggestions.

**General Suggestions**

- Participants suggested increased quantities and/or the addition of certain types of dress objects in the museum attraction setting. It is important to increase the number of dress displays because dress is a visual learning tool and provides a context for understanding the overall culture of the time period. Dress also provides the presence of a person and a sense of tribute. Some participants wanted to see more extant dress objects because they can be examined in detail and provide a sensory experience. Dress artifacts, in particular, provide a more direct connection to the time period. The use of photos to display dress was suggested because it shows the dress object being worn and/or used in the context of the time period. The addition of dress objects in replica environments would add a human presence and sense of action to the environment.
  - Increased quantity of dress and costume displays, in general.
- The addition of dress artifacts in museum attractions where costumes dominate this type of display.
- The integration of dress objects into more areas of the museum attraction, either in galleries or as a supplement to another display to which they are relevant.
- The addition of dress objects in replica rooms/physical environments.

- The consistent inclusion of an explanatory text panel with dress and costume displays. It is especially important to explicitly identify the dress object as an artifact, replica, reproduction, or other related classifications to ensure that the context of the dress object is accurately understood. The addition of crew member uniforms, even if this means the introduction of reproduction or representational dress.

- When possible, display dress objects on mannequins instead of laid flat on a surface or, in the case of dress objects displayed in a trunk, draped on or folded in a drawer. Allowing the visitors to see a dress object displayed on a mannequin allows them to envision how the dress object would look when worn on the human body. Because visitors were able to make connections to individual passengers, seeing dress objects as they would be worn on the human body would allow them to more deeply connect with these individuals.
• Increase the number of dress objects that are displayed on mannequins, even if this means the introduction of reproduction or representational dress. Allowing the visitors to see a mannequin that is completely dressed allows them to more deeply engage with the display by considering all of the parts that comprise a whole ensemble on the human body.

• The addition of interactive displays related to dress objects, such as the opportunity to feel a fabric swatch or try on reproduction or representational dress. This addition would expand the sensory experience that dress objects already provide and help the visitor to more deeply relate to the dress object. Interactive elements, such as those that include touch, also cater to the learning styles of many visitors and help them to retain what they have seen and experienced.

• Display a combination of photos and extant dress. Participants identified this as the ideal dress and costume display. By combining these objects for display, it provides an opportunity to serve the different learning styles and display preferences of visitors.

• Have the living history interpreters provide a verbal explanation of their dress to (interested) visitors in the spirit of educating visitors in the visuals language of dress.
  
  o This practice would also assist in an effort to make sure that visitors are given an equal opportunity to understand the visual
language of dress and costume, regardless of the knowledge with which they enter the museum attraction.

- This practice would also ease the nerves of visitors who feel it is inappropriate to stare at or visually examine the living history interpreter’s dress for several moments.

- Create a sense of wonder in dress displays by positioning some of them by artifacts with which they would interact. For example, a mannequin dressed in clothing to be worn while promenading the deck could be positioned by a recovered deck chair artifact.

- Create a sense of wonder by using employees/living history interpreters to showcase the act of dressing in period dress. For example, include an area where visitors can view a woman being laced into a corset, putting on the necessary layers of her dress, and adorning herself with accessories.

- Create displays that showcase variety and variation in dress.

  - Show a balance of first, second and third class dress and explain the differences. Because the museum attraction helps visitors to create a personal connection to the passengers, it is important that visitors understand what was actually worn by them (especially in the absence of dress artifacts that can be attributed to a specific passenger).
Show and explicitly explain what would be worn for certain situations or occasions (e.g., dinner and walking the promenade deck), as well as certain times of day.

Show and explicitly explain the dress of both passengers and crew members.

Show and differentiate between what was fashionable during the time period and what passengers of various social classes and backgrounds actually wore.

**Location-Specific Suggestions**

Several of the location-specific suggestions made by visitors were directed toward the Orlando and Las Vegas locations. In particular, I noticed that Orlando visitors made suggestions for practices that have already been implemented at the Branson and Pigeon Forge locations.

- **Orlando:** Move the dress displayed on a mannequin in the replica first class stateroom into the forefront of the room. The inclusion of dress and costume objects at the forefront of the display area should also be practiced for similar displays in the future. The visual proximity of the dress object to the visitor can assist in bringing the visitor mentally closer to the wearer, as well as the human aspect of the story of Titanic.

- **Orlando:** Allow the costumed living history interpreters to interact with visitors beyond the guided tour. Visitors would benefit from them being
stationed in select galleries and providing additional information about the artifacts being presented.

- Las Vegas: Develop signage or text panels to accompany some of the photos that explicitly identify and explain dress in a way that provides visitors with guidance so that they are not left to make this connection on their own.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

I found that the integration of the film/fictional character of Rose into the museum setting (especially via costume, living history, and display) does not factor into the decision to visit a Titanic museum attraction. Because the character of Rose was not explicitly mentioned in any participant responses to the interview question regarding what influenced a visit to a Titanic museum attraction, I added a follow-up question to explicitly explore how the presence of a Rose living history character would potentially affect the lived experience of the visitors in the museum setting. I acknowledge that this data is representative of the participant’s feelings, emotional reactions, and interpretations of a possible lived experience. Future research could explore the feelings, emotional reactions, and interpretations of visitors to an actual lived experience with a Rose living history interpreter. The findings related to the actual lived experience could be compared to those related to the possible lived experience in this study to see if the visitors have a reaction similar or equal to the reaction that they predicted or anticipated in this study.

In the future researchers could focus more heavily upon participant observation in the museum attraction, so as to capture more candid responses to dress and costume
displays. The present study could be expanded upon in future research by including more participants in the sample who visit a museum attraction with a gallery dedicated to the movie. I noticed some of the reactions of children to dress and costume displays in the museum attractions. In the future researchers could address the differences in how children and adults relate to dress and costume displays.

I found that visitors made detailed observations about the dress displayed in photos, especially in the absence of extant dress objects. Because photos inherently combine dress and the physical environment in which it is worn, the viewer can decide what to focus upon in the photo and take away from it. Future research could examine what museum attraction visitors take notice of in photos that depict historic dress. The findings could be compared to the themes contained in the phenomenological structure of this study to see if they align or show similarities. This might help to determine the content of the signage that is needed to help visitors make sense of dress in photos.

In this study only Titanic museum attractions in the United States and visitors who reside in the United States were part of my study. In the future researchers could examine the lived experience of visitors to international Titanic museums and museum attractions.

Lastly, I have identified a number of suggestions for the improvement of dress and costume displays used for history and presentation in museums and museum attractions in this chapter. In the future researchers could examine the efficacy of these practices or compare and contrast some of the suggested practices.
Reflective Summary

I initially engaged in phenomenological inquiry for this study because I felt that it was the best possible method with which to explore the lived experience of museum attraction visitors. Now that I have completed this study I still believe that it was the best choice, but the study did not reach completion without a number of challenges related to the phenomenological method. Phenomenology can best be described as a “trial and error” method. There are few guides that explicitly prescribe how to gather, analyze, and present phenomenological data. I think that the lack of prescribed data collection and analysis guides are in the nature of most qualitative analysis, but it is especially pronounced in phenomenology. And, it is important to note, I had the benefit of conducting a phenomenological study in a time when this issue has been addressed by scholars in the literature (see Barker, 2010; Dahlberg, Drew, & Nystrom, 2001; Devenish, 2002; Sadala & Adorno, 2002; Todres, 2005). I consulted already-published scholarly articles and dissertations by other students who had been through a similar process.

At the start of this study I was thrilled to make use of a method that did not have strict parameters, but I quickly found myself flailing in a sea of unknown factors. I realized that I essentially needed to create my own “research method recipe” and choose the ingredients that best fit my data. It was rather nerve-wracking to feel an utter lack of guidance when I consulted the literature and discovered that many scholars present an outline for the steps involved in using the phenomenological method and then add the disclaimer that there really are no “hard and fast” rules because phenomenology is done
differently by each and every researcher. There is also a certain element of loneliness that arose when analyzing interview data on my own because I was the holder of the transcripts and, therefore, solely responsible for interpreting the data. In this way, each individual qualitative study is isolated by the individual(s) conducting the research.

I felt very protective of the data and wanted to find the best possible way to analyze it because it was important to me that the participants’ lived experiences were accurately represented. At one point I made a decision to combine a phenomenological data analysis procedure outlined in a scholarly article with domain analysis, which is a data analysis procedure grounded in the ethnographic approach to qualitative research. Upon further review, I changed my mind and settled upon the descriptive phenomenological approach to data collection and analysis. There were times when I felt like an incompetent scholar because of this flip-flopping, but I am now a more confident scholar because I waded through the process of making informed decisions related to my method.

Despite experiencing frustrations and challenges with my method, I had a very positive experience with this research. Aside from the fact that the subject is one which I am passionate about, I had the privilege of meeting some wonderful participants who challenged my thinking and expanded the range of possible lived experiences that I thought could occur with regard to dress and costume-based learning and personal meaning formation. I realized that the great joy of research is the “Ah-ha” moments that encourage personal and professional growth.
As I stated above I have a distinct passion for my topic of study. It is a passion that is part of who I am, and because of that, it becomes easy to make assumptions about the level of interest that other people find in Titanic. My passion and confidence in the subject helped me to build a rapport with my participants. However, there were times when I found myself starting to ask a research question in a leading manner because asking the question in that way would lead the participant to speak favorably of Titanic or agree with my line of thinking on the subject. My passion is also what helped me to complete this study because phenomenology is a very tedious process, and I was fortunate to intimately engage with data on a subject that was near and dear to my heart. I also value the element of surprise that resulted from hearing a participant response that was completely different than any thought I had ever had about the subject. In this way, the study helped me to see Titanic and historic dress from new perspectives from which I was previously unaware, having been an enthusiast of these subjects for so long.

I noticed that when I began recruiting research participants it was difficult for non-academics to understand the purpose of my study. The purpose statement was most confusing for them. It was especially difficult for those with backgrounds in the “hard sciences” to understand the relevance of the study. I was initially very frustrated with the communication barrier that seemed to exist between me and possible participants.

Several participants expressed anxiety over what they had to contribute to the study. There was great concern over not having the right answers; that is, they were worried about their interview responses being wrong and appearing to be dumb or exposed as someone with a lesser intellect. For participants that completed the museum
attraction visit together, it was common for them to get together following their post-visit interviews and compare the answers that they had provided to the interview questions.

One participant, in particular, broke into tears when discussing her anxiety about her upcoming interview [the pre-visit interview]. She said that she had never felt “book smart” and felt dumb compared to most other people. She felt that her responses would reveal this in a formal way that was being recorded. I assured her that there was no right or wrong answer, and every response is valuable. I also said that each person notices different things and has different strengths. I felt incredibly sad for her because I wanted it to be a fun experience for everyone involved. I think that she began to feel better after we talked and she was much less anxious during her pre-visit interview than she had been when this discussion began. I wondered whether the anxiety came from the act of participation in a research study, in general, or if it resulted from the study being focused upon learning.

Another participant had a similar response when, at the start of the pre-interview she said, “oh no, now you’re going to see how dumb I am.” It was interesting that the people who showed the most concern over their intellect had very insightful answers that contributed greatly to the success of this research project. Perhaps it was overwhelming because they did not know what to expect with the research process, having never participated in a formal research study. I thank them for their bravery and willingness to take the research journey with me.

I noticed that participants often had more to say following their interviews, but wanted to make sure that the audio recorder was turned off before speaking. They spoke
more candidly at these times. They used it as a time to correct misinformation they had, check facts they were second guessing from their museum attraction visit, or ask my opinion about the museum attraction. I was truly surprised by the number of participants who sought my opinion about the museum attraction content. There were times when I was hesitant to share my opinions because I did not want to somehow alter their unique lived experience in the museum attraction. It seemed that they did not want to experience being wrong about history, particularly when a movie is involved and when being recorded.

Having completed this study I feel that it is acceptable for a researcher to share his or her opinions with participants about a museum experience but only if asked. Upon further reflection I realized that talking about such subjects was a source of rapport-building with the participant because there was now a distinct shared experience among the two of us. It is important that these opinions are shared in the context of being an equal with the participant, and not as “the researcher” or “an expert.” My further reflections at the conclusion of this study have led me to go back and forth on what my recommendations would be for participants who wanted to speak “off the record” for fear of being wrong about history. On the one hand, it is important to be sensitive to the participant’s feelings of self-worth and intelligence, but speaking after the audio recorder is turned off also presents an opportunity to dialogue about the participant’s experience in a way that constructively resolves misinformation.

I have concluded that it would be best and most constructive to offer/allow the participant time and space to speak “off the record” following their formal post-visit
I believe that this practice would assist in the elicitation of further candid comments and questions about museum attraction content, while giving the participant the opportunity to interact with the researcher as an equal, as opposed to “an expert” to whom they may be stating correct or incorrect information about history. Without the use of an audio recorder it is then necessary to take notes, either during the post-audio recording conversation or directly following it. The note taking process still presents a challenge as it may make the participant feel anxious about what is being written. One aspect of the process that was helpful to this particular issue was the use of phone interviews for post-visit interviews with participants. When I conducted post-visit interviews via phone, it was easy to transition from the formal post-visit interview to an explanation of what would come next in the research process. Because a participant cannot see the researcher during a phone interview, it is less intrusive to take notes during the post-audio recording conversation and is less likely to affect their feelings of self-worth and intelligence.

I also learned a valuable lesson about being flexible while conducting a qualitative research study and “letting the data speak to me.” I added questions about exhibit change/creation to the interview protocol because I noticed that the responses to the question about the evaluation of the museum attraction during the first few interviews included suggestions for change. I noticed that participants became very creative about the changes that they would make, adding generous amounts of detail. In some cases this also jogged their memory of further dress and costume content in the museum attraction. I began by adding the question about where they would add more dress and costume for
greater impact. Many participants got excited about using their creativity to design a hypothetical exhibit in a way that would enhance their experience or learning in hindsight. The data that resulted from the addition of these questions added to the relevance of this study, as well as the possible practical applications that could result from the study.

**Epilogue**

This research study has been a personal and professional journey. I was able to honor my passions, develop as a professional, and uncover new dimensions for furthering my understanding of Titanic and historic dress. I saw both similarities and differences between me and my participants. But, underneath it all, I found one, unifying truth in one of the quotes so prominently displayed on the Las Vegas Titanic museum attraction wall: We truly are all passengers on the Titanic.¹²⁰ We are all on a journey…a quest for knowledge and understanding. We seek to understand life, love, society, and history. In that way we can identify with each other and those who came before us by bearing witness to the lived experiences that capture our personal journeys. Thank you to the people that have embraced my personal journey and allowed me to bear witness to their own personal journey.

¹²⁰ This quote appears on the back wall of the Epilogue Gallery before exiting the Las Vegas artifact exhibition and read, “We are all passengers on the Titanic. –Jack Foster, Irish philosopher.” See my personal phenomenological notes for the Las Vegas location in the Chapter Eight for a more detailed discussion of this quote.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Recruitment Flier
SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY FOR MY PH.D. DISSERTATION:

An Exploration of How Museum Visitors Use Dress Artifacts and Costume Displays to Understand a Historical Event and Create Personal Meaning in the Museum Attraction Setting: The Case of Titanic Museum Attractions

YOU WILL BE COMPENSATED $40 FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

VOLUNTEERS WILL BE ASKED TO:

1) Participate in a 30-minute pre-visit interview**
2) Visit one of the four Titanic Museum Attractions
   (Qualifying locations in Branson, MO; Pigeon Forge, TN; Las Vegas, NV; and Orlando, FL)
3) Participate in a one-hour post-visit interview**

**If you cannot complete the pre- and post- interviews in person, alternative options are available over the phone and/or online (via Skype)

ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE:

1) Must be 18 years of age or older
2) Must be your first visit to your chosen Titanic Museum Attraction
3) Your visit and corresponding interviews must be completed by March 20, 2012
4) The estimate time required to complete the process is the 1-to-2 hour museum visit and up to 2 hours total for the pre- and post interviews

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION AND/OR TO ENROLL IN THE STUDY:

Genna Reeves-DeArmond
Design and Human Environment
reevesg@onid.oregonstate.edu

Dr. Elaine Pedersen
Design and Human Environment
pedersee@oregonstate.edu
APPENDIX B

Complete List of Online Recruitment Forums and Sources
The recruitment flier and/or recruitment information was posted to the following websites:

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APPENDIX C

Letter of Interest Sent to Potential/Interested Participants
LETTER OF INITIAL CONTACT WITH POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

January 3, 2012

Hello,

My name is Genna Reeves and I am a Ph.D. student at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon. The purpose of this letter is to extend a formal invitation to determine if you meet the criteria to participate in our study and to provide you with more information about the study, in hopes of answering any preliminary questions that you may have.

Thank you for inquiring about and/or being willing to learn more about our research. For this study, I hope to interview at least 30 individuals in order to explore the role of dress artifacts and costume displays in learning about a historic event (in this case, specifically Titanic) in the museum environment. Specifically, we want to analyze how museum visitors understand and perceive a historic event through the display of dress artifacts and costume displays. We simply want to know what you observed and learned in the museum attraction. We will also explore how the media and popular culture contribute to how museum visitors use dress artifacts and costume displays to learn about a historical event and make personal meaning in the museum attraction setting. Specifically, we want to explore how both being an/or not being a fan of the 1997 “Titanic” film contributes to your museum attraction experience. More specifically, to qualify for participation in this study you must meet the following conditions:

• 18 years or older,
• Planning to visit a qualifying Titanic Museum Attraction by February 20, 2012 (Qualifying locations include Titanic: The Experience of Orlando, Florida; Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction of Branson, Missouri; Titanic; World’s Largest Museum Attraction of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition of Las Vegas, Nevada),
• Have internet access both before and after your visit,
• Visiting your chosen Titanic Museum Attraction for the first time, and
• Willing to complete a one to two hour museum visit and commit to up to two hours total for the pre- and post-visit interviews.

**You are not required to have seen the 1997 Titanic film to participate in this study.

Participation in the study involves visiting one of the four qualifying Titanic Museum Attractions (see list above) and being interviewed (both a pre-visit and post-visit interview). The estimated time required to complete the process is a one-to-two hour museum attraction visit and up to two hours total for the pre- and post-visit interviews. The pre-visit interview must take place within a week prior to the Titanic Museum Attraction visit and the post-visit interview must take place within a week after the Titanic Museum Attraction visit. If you cannot complete the pre— and post— interviews in person, alternative options are available over the phone and/or online (via Skype).

For your participation in this study you will be compensated with $40 in cash from us. The $40 will be given to you in person or mailed to you, following completion of the second interview session. No partial payment will be given if you withdraw early from the study.
Participation in this study is voluntary; you will always have the option of not answering any questions that might make you feel uncomfortable or withdrawing from the interview at any point. We plan to audio record the interview sessions and transcribe the recorded interviews following the interview sessions. Audio recording is a required part of the data collection. If you do not wish to be audio recorded then you may decline to participate in the study.

The results from this research will be used for the Ph.D. research of Genna Reeves. The results may also be used for research publications. Your identity and identifying information will be kept strictly confidential. In order to protect participants’ identities I will change their names when writing the results.

It is important that the results are trustworthy, that is, that they match your experiences. Therefore, I will provide an opportunity for you to review my results after the interviews have been completed to check for accuracy and that my perceptions of your responses are accurate. This opportunity is completely voluntary.

Kindly respond with your intent to accept or decline participation in the study via email as soon as possible, as well as any questions you might have about the study. In order to facilitate the process, we have included a copy of the Informed Consent Document, which explains your rights and responsibilities in the study. Should you have any difficulty accessing the documents that you have been emailed/provided, please contact Genna Reeves (reevesg@onid.orst.edu) for assistance.

If you have further questions about this study, please let us know. We can also speak further on the phone, before you commit to participating in the study, if this would assist you in making a decision. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact:

Elaine Pedersen
224 Milam Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 737-0984
pederson@oregonstate.edu

Genna Reeves
037 Milam Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 737-0991
reevesg@onid.orst.edu

We appreciate your interest and look forward to communicating with you further.

Sincerely,

Genna Reeves, Doctoral Candidate
Elaine Pedersen, Ph.D.
Department of Design and Human Environment
Oregon State University
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Document

(Titanic Museum Attraction Visitor)
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
Titanic Museum Attraction Visitor

Project Title: An Exploration of How Museum Visitors Use Dress Artifacts and Costume Displays to Understand a Historical Event and Create Personal Meaning in the Museum Attraction Setting: The Case of Titanic Museum Attractions

Principal Investigator: Elaino Pederson, Ph.D.
Design and Human Environment
Oregon State University

Co-Investigator: Genna Reeves, Doctoral Candidate, M.S.
Design and Human Environment
Oregon State University

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this study is to understand how dress artifacts and costume displays impact learning about a historic event in the museum environment.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?
This consent form gives you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask any questions about the research, possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to participate in this study.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You are being invited to take part in this study because you are 18 years of age or older and plan to visit a qualifying Titanic Museum Attraction (Titanic: The Experience of Orlando, Florida; Titanic: World's Largest Museum Attraction of Branson, Missouri; Titanic: World's Largest Museum Attraction of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition of Las Vegas, Nevada). You must be visiting your chosen Titanic Museum Attraction for the first time.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You will be asked to take part in a 60-minute pre-interview, visit a qualifying Titanic Museum Attraction of your choice, and then take part in a 60-minute post-interview. Both interviews will include participation in an interactive written activity. The estimated time required to complete the process is a one-to-two hour museum attraction visit and up to two hours total for the pre- and post-visit interviews. The pre-visit interview must take place within a week prior to the Titanic Museum Attraction visit, and the post-visit interview must...
take place within a week after the Titanic Museum Attraction visit. (If you cannot complete the pre- and post- interviews in person, alternative options are available over the phone and/or online [via Skype].)

Audio Recording: The researchers plan to audio record the interview session. If you do not wish to be audio recorded then you should not participate in the study.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS STUDY?
There are minimal risks associated with your participation in the study.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?
There is no direct benefit to you by participating in this study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?
You will receive $40 for your participation in the study. If your interview is done in person you will be paid in cash. If your interview is done over the phone or via the internet you will be mailed a $40 gift card.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION I GIVE?
The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Your identity will be kept confidential, and findings will not be linked you. To help protect your confidentiality, we will used pseudonyms and keep all files in a secure and locked location. The interview tapes will be transcribed and only the principal investigator and the student researcher will have access to identifiable data. If the results of this project are published your identity will not be made public.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE TO BE IN THE STUDY?
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. You are free to skip any questions you prefer not to answer during the interview and interactive activity. If you choose to withdraw from this project before it ends, the researchers may keep information collected from you and this information may be included in study reports.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
If you have any questions about this research project, please contact:
Elaine Pedersen  
Genna Reeves  
224 Milam Hall  
937 Milam Hall  
Oregon State University  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, OR 97331  
Corvallis, OR 97331  
(541) 737-0984  
(541) 737-0991  
pedersoe@OregonState.edu  
reevsg@onid.orst.edu
If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant’s Name (printed): ____________________________________________

__________________________________________  _____________
Signature of Participant                       Date
APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Document

(Titanic Museum Attraction Staff)
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
Titanic Museum Attraction Employee/Staff Member

Project Title: An Exploration of How Museum Visitors Use Dress Artifacts and Costume Displays to Understand a Historical Event and Create Personal Meaning in the Museum Attraction Setting: The Case of Titanic Museum Attractions

Principal Investigator: Elaine Pedersen, Ph.D.
Design and Human Environment
Oregon State University

Co-Investigator: Genna Reeves, Doctoral Candidate, M.S.
Design and Human Environment
Oregon State University

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this study is to understand how dress artifacts and costume displays impact learning about a historic event in the museum environment.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?
This consent form gives you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask any questions about the research, possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to participate in this study.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You are being invited to take part in this study because you are an employee at a museum that is displaying the Titanic Museum Attraction and have been identified as an artifact specialist or who is involved with education, outreach, and/or curatorial decision-making related to dress artifacts and/or costume displays.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You will be asked to take part in a 90-minute interview.

Audio Recording: The researchers plan to audio record the interview session. If you do not wish to be audio recorded then you should not participate in the study.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS STUDY?
There are minimal risks associated with your participation in the study.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?
There is no direct benefit to you by participating in this study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?
You will receive $40 for your participation in the study. If your interview is done in person you will be paid in cash. If your interview is done over the phone or via the internet you will be mailed a $40 gift.
WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION I GIVE?
The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Your identity will be kept confidential, and findings will not be linked to you. To help protect your confidentiality, we will use pseudonyms and keep all files in a secure and locked location. The interview tapes will be transcribed and only the principal investigator and the student researcher will have access to identifiable data. If the results of this project are published your identity will not be made public.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE TO BE IN THE STUDY?
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. You are free to skip any questions you prefer not to answer during the interview and interactive activity. If you choose to withdraw from this project before it ends, the researchers may keep information collected from you and this information may be included in study reports.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
If you have any questions about this research project, please contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Elaine Pedersen | 224 Mill Hall  
|                 | Oregon State University  
|                 | Corvallis, OR 97331  
|                 | (541) 737-0984  
|                 | pedersoe@oregonstate.edu  |
| Gena Reeves     | 637 Mill Hall  
|                 | Oregon State University  
|                 | Corvallis, OR 97331  
|                 | (541) 737-0991  
|                 | reaveg@onid.orst.edu  |

If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant’s Name (printed) __________________________ __________________________

Signature of Participant __________________________ Date __________________________
APPENDIX F

Oral Consent Guide

(Titanic Museum Attraction Visitor)
ORAL CONSENT GUIDE

Titanic Museum Attraction Visitor

Introduction: Hello, my name is Geuna Reeves. I am a graduate student at Oregon State University in the Department of Design and Human Environment. I study historic and cultural dress and textiles and am working on my Ph.D. degree. I am currently undertaking research that will be used in my Ph.D. dissertation.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand how dress artifacts and costume displays impact learning about a historic event in the museum environment.

You are being invited to take part in this study because you are 18 years of age or older and plan to visit a qualifying Titanic Museum Attraction (Titanic: The Experience of Orlando, Florida; Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction of Branson, Missouri; Titanic: World’s Largest Museum Attraction of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition of Las Vegas, Nevada). You must be visiting your chosen Titanic Museum Attraction for the first time.

Activities and Method of Participation: You will be asked to take part in a 60-minute interview prior to your museum visit, visit a qualifying Titanic Museum Attraction of your choice, and then take part in a 60-minute interview following your visit. Both interviews will include participation in an interactive written activity. The estimated time required to complete the process is a one-to-two hour museum attraction visit and up to two hours total for the pre- and post-visit interviews. The pre-visit interview must take place within a week prior to the Titanic Museum Attraction visit, and the post-visit interview must take place within a week after the Titanic Museum Attraction visit. If you cannot complete the pre- and post- interviews in person, alternative options are available over the phone and/or online [via Skype]. I will collect your completed interactive activity upon completion; in person, via a pre-paid envelope, or a scanned electronic image.

[Participants will be emailed a Letter of Initial Contact that describes the activities/research process in more detail prior to being read this Verbal Consent Guide. See Letter of Initial Contact for Potential Participants]

Risks: There are minimal risks associated with your participation in the study.

Benefits: There is no direct benefit to you by participating in this study. The information you share with me will be of great value in helping me to complete this research.

Voluntary Participation: Participation is voluntary. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. You can, of course, decline to answer any question during the interview and interactive activity, as well as stopping your participation at any time, without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
Monetary Compensation: You will receive $40 for your participation in the study. If your interview is done in person you will be paid in cash. If your interview is done over the phone or via the internet you will be mailed a $40 gift card.

Time Commitment: Participation in this study, including the interviews and museum visit, will take about four total hours of your time. This includes a one-to-two hour museum attraction visit and up to two hours total for the pre- and post-visit interviews. The pre-visit interview must take place within a week prior to the Titanic Museum Attraction visit and the post-visit interview must take place within a week after the Titanic Museum Attraction visit.

Participant Identifiers: The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Your identity will be kept confidential, and findings will not be linked to you. To help protect your confidentiality, we will use pseudonyms and keep all files in a secure and locked location. The interview tapes will be transcribed and only the principal investigator and the student researcher will have access to identifiable data. If the results of this project are published your identity will not be made public.

Audio Recording the Interaction: The researchers plan to audio record the interview session. If you do not wish to be audio recorded then you should not participate in the study.

Contact Information: If you have any additional questions concerning this research or your participation in it, please feel free to contact me, any dissertation supervisor or our university research office at any time using the contact information I emailed you.

[The respondent will be emailed contact information, prior to being read this Verbal Consent Script, containing the names, institutional affiliation, and contact information of the researchers and Oregon State University IRB office. See “Sample Contact Information Card.”]

Ask If Potential Participant Has Questions:
Do you have any questions about this research?
Do you agree to participate?
May I record our discussion?

Transition to Start of Interview:
If so, let’s begin...
APPENDIX G

Oral Consent Guide

(Titanic Museum Attraction Staff)
ORAL CONSENT GUIDE
Titanic Museum Attraction: Employee/Staff Member

Introduction: Hello, my name is Genna Reeves. I am a graduate student at Oregon State University in the Department of Design and Human Environment. I study historic and cultural dress and textiles and am working on my Ph.D. degree. I am currently undertaking research that will be used in my Ph.D. dissertation.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand how dress artifacts and costume displays impact learning about a historic event in the museum environment.

You are being invited to take part in this study because you are an employee at a museum that is displaying the Titanic Museum Attraction and have been identified as an artifact specialist or who is involved with education, outreach, and/or curatorial decision-making related to dress artifacts and/or costume displays.

Activities and Method of Participation: You will be asked to take part in a 90-minute interview.

Risks: There are minimal risks associated with your participation in the study. The risk level is no greater than minimal risk encountered in daily life.

Benefits: There is no direct benefit to you by participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation: Participation is voluntary. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. You can, of course, decline to answer any question during the interview and interactive activity, as well as stopping your participation at any time, without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Monetary Compensation: You will receive $40 for your participation in the study. If your interview is done in person you will be paid in cash. If your interview is done over the phone or via the internet you will be mailed a $40 gift card.

Time Commitment: Participation in this study will take about two hours of your time, maximum. This includes being informed of your rights and responsibilities as a participant and a 90-minute interview.
Participant Identifiers: The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential. I will not link your name to anything you say, either in the transcript of this interview or in the text of my dissertation or any other publications. Even though the interview sessions will be audio recorded, no direct identifiers will be recorded and pseudonyms (i.e., a fictional name to conceal your identity) will be assigned to you and your associated responses.

Audio Recording: The researchers plan to audio record the interview session. If you do not wish to be audio recorded then you should not participate in the study.

Contact Information: If you have any additional questions concerning this research or your participation in it, please feel free to contact me, my dissertation supervisor or our university research office at any time using the contact information I emailed you.

[The respondent will be emailed contact information, prior to being read this Verbal Consent Script, containing the names, institutional affiliation, and contact information of the researchers and Oregon State University IRB office. See “Sample Contact Information Card.”]

Ask If Potential Participant Has Questions:
Do you have any questions about this research?
Do you agree to participate?
May I record our discussion?

Transition to Start of Interview:
If so, let’s begin…
APPENDIX H

Blank Brainstorming Worksheet

(Given to Visitor Participants at the Start of Interviews)
Titanic

Costume

Rose

Dress
APPENDIX I

Interview Protocol

(Titanic Museum Attraction Visitor)
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Titanic Museum Attraction Visitor

**Asked before Titanic Museum Attraction visit:**

When you think about Titanic, what comes to mind?

Does the Titanic have personal meaning for you? Describe.

What influenced you to visit a Titanic Museum Attraction?

Do you consider yourself a Titanic enthusiast?

Have you seen the 1997 *Titanic* film?

If you saw the film, when you think about the character of Rose what comes to mind?

If you haven’t seen the 1997 Titanic film, do you know who the character of Rose is?

- If so, how have you encountered this character outside of the film viewing? Please provide examples and descriptions (e.g., promotional advertisements, television, other museums, conversation with friends and family, etc.).

- If so, what is your perception, what comes to mind, related to the character of Rose?

Describe what the word “costume” means to you.

Describe what the word “dress” means to you.

When you think about the costumes from the 1997 *Titanic* film what comes to mind?

Do you think that the Titanic Museum Attraction will display dress and costume? Why or why not?

Would you please tell me your age?

**Asked after Titanic Museum Attraction visit:**

Now that you have visited the museum attraction, when you think about Titanic, what comes to mind?

What stands out to you about your visit to the Titanic Museum Attraction?
Did your visit to the Titanic Museum Attraction affect your understanding of the Titanic? (That is, do you feel that your visit contributed to learning more about the Titanic?) If yes, how? Why or why not? If no, why?

Does any part of the Titanic Museum Attraction remind you of or take you back to a specific memory or moment in your life?

Describe how dress and costume was displayed in the Titanic Museum Attraction.

Is the dress and costume displayed in the Titanic Museum Attraction of interest to you? Does it evoke any personal meaning for you? Describe.

Did your viewing of dress and costume displays in the Titanic Museum Attraction affect your understanding of the Titanic? (That is, do you feel that this museum attraction content contributed to learning more about the Titanic?) If so, describe how you feel that viewing the dress and costume displays affected your understanding of the Titanic.

Describe for me the dress and/or costume display that you liked the most.

What specifically about this particular dress and costume display appealed to you?

Why do you think that the Titanic Museum Attraction displays dress and costume?

Is there a link between the 1997 Titanic film and the historical events in the Titanic Museum Attraction? Describe any links that you see.

Have you visited any other museums and/or museum attractions before? If so, what kinds of other museums and/or museum attractions have you visited (i.e., art, history, children’s, science, natural history, etc.)?

If yes, do you visit museums and/or museum attractions often?

How would you evaluate and compare this visit to other museum and/or museum attraction visits you’ve made in the past?

Have you visited any museums and/or museum attractions containing exhibits of dress and/or costume before?

Is there anything else about your experience with dress and costume displays in the Titanic Museum Attraction that you would like to add?
APPENDIX J

Interview Protocol

(Titanic Museum Attraction Staff)
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Titanic Museum Attraction Museum Staff/Member/Employee

What is your job title?

How long have you been in this role?

What were your education and work experiences that led you to take on this role?

What are your responsibilities as an employee of the Titanic Museum Attraction?

Do your responsibilities include working directly with artifacts and curatorial work?

-If so, do your responsibilities include working directly with dress artifacts and costume displays? If so, describe how dress and costume are displayed in the Titanic Museum Attraction.

-If you work with dress artifacts, how does working with dress artifacts differ from other types of artifacts, in terms of curatorial decision-making, preservation, exhibition set-up, and so forth?

-Describe what the word “costume” means to you.

-Describe what the word “dress” means to you.

Do your responsibilities include an educational and/or or outreach component, such as giving tours of the museum attraction?

-If so, please describe the educational and/or outreach activities that you lead and/or participate in.

Approximately how many hours per week do you devote to educational and/or outreach activities?

Approximately how many dress artifacts and/or costume displays are currently being displayed in your Titanic Museum Attraction?

With regard to exhibit space, how many times per year do exhibitions change?

-Do you find that exhibitions with dress artifacts and/or costume displays rotate more frequently than exhibitions that do not contain dress artifacts and/or costume displays?
What is the mission/vision of the Titanic Museum Attraction?

Do you have a collections manual or document that describes standardized procedures for handling, preserving, and/or displaying dress artifacts and/or costume displays?

What do you perceive to be the value of having a Titanic Museum Attraction available to the public?

What do you perceive to be the value of displaying dress artifacts and costume displays, specifically, in the Titanic Museum Attraction exhibitions?

Do you perceive the Titanic Museum Attraction to serve a more educational purpose or a more entertainment/leisure-based purpose?

- How does the presence of dress artifacts and/or costume displays contribute to this purpose?

What types of artifacts, either specific artifacts or broad categories of artifacts, do you find museum attraction visitors most drawn to?

When you think about Titanic, what comes to mind?

Does the Titanic have personal meaning for you? Describe.

Do you consider yourself a Titanic enthusiast?

Have you seen the 1997 Titanic film?

If you saw the film, when you think about the character of Rose what comes to mind?

If you haven’t seen the 1997 Titanic film, do you know who the character of Rose is?

- If so, how have you encountered this character outside of the film viewing? Please provide examples and descriptions (e.g., promotional advertisements, television, other museums, conversation with friends and family, etc.).

- What is your perception, what comes to mind, related to the character of Rose?

When you think about the costumes from the 1997 Titanic film what comes to mind?

What stands out to you the most about the contents of the Titanic Museum Attraction?
Do you think that a visit to the Titanic Museum Attraction affects a museum visitor’s understanding of the Titanic? (That is, do you feel that the visit contributes to learning more about the Titanic?) If yes, how? Why or why not? If no, why?

Does any part of the Titanic Museum Attraction remind you of or take you back to a specific memory or moment in your life?

Is the dress and costume displayed in the Titanic Museum Attraction of interest to museum visitors? (That is, do you find that they are objects/artifacts that museum visitors specifically gravitate to for viewing and/or discuss them with others in their visiting party?)

What specifically about dress artifacts and costume displays appeals to visitors?

Can you provide any examples of instances in which you have been engaged in educational or outreach activities and you witnessed a museum visitor describing or expressing that the Titanic Museum Attraction content evoked personal meaning for him or her? Describe.

-If yes, were any of these examples specifically related to dress artifacts and costume displays?

Is there an explicit link between the 1997 Titanic film and the historical events in the Titanic Museum Attraction? Describe any links that are present throughout the museum attraction.

Can you provide any examples of instances in which you have witnessed a museum visitor describing or expressing an implicit link between the 1997 Titanic film and the historical events in the Titanic Museum Attraction? Describe any links that you can recall.

Have you visited any other Titanic Museum Attractions before?

-If so, how would you compare the display of dress artifacts and costumes in your Titanic Museum Attraction to those in other Titanic Museum Attraction(s) that you have visited?

Is there anything else about your experience with dress and costume displays in the Titanic Museum Attraction that you would like to add?
APPENDIX K

Additional Questions Added to Original Interview Protocol

(During Interviews)
ADDITIONS TO ORIGINAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Titanic Museum Attraction Visitor

Pre-Visit Interview

Do you think that the Titanic museum attraction will create a direct connection to the movie and/or reference the movie within the museum attraction?

What are your expectations for your visit?

What do you think that you will see? What do you think that you will not see?

Do you have a preference for viewing an artifact versus a replica in the museum setting? (Clarifying Explanation: An artifact being an object in/from that time period and a replica being an object made in the present to imitate/look like/resemble an object from that time period.)

(If the participant had seen the 1997 movie) Did you see the movie in a movie theater when it first came out in late 1997/early 1998?

Is it a movie that you still consider enjoyable to watch? For example, do you enjoy watching the movie when it is shown on television?

Have you been exposed to any promotional materials about the Titanic museum attraction that you plan to visit? Examples of promotional materials include billboards, fliers, brochures, commercials, and so forth.

(After a participant had given a response related to what he or she recorded on the brainstorming worksheet) And does that cover everything that you have written on your brainstorming worksheet as well?

(If a participant only described non-physical features about the Rose character) Is there anything that stands out to you, which you remember, about her appearance?

Post-Visit Interview

Some Titanic museum attractions have living history interpreters of the Rose movie character walking around the museum and interacting with guests. What is your opinion of this?

What is your favorite type of museum to visit?
Even if the Titanic museum attraction that you visited did not create a direct link between the movie and the historical events, were there places in the museum or times when you were viewing certain parts of the museum attraction content where you found your mind wandering to the movie and making that connection spontaneously for you?

If so, please describe those instances.

(If the participant indicated that he or she had seen dress and/or costume displays in the museum setting before) How would you evaluate and compare this visit to other exhibits of dress and/or costume that you have seen in the past?

How would you describe the Titanic museum attraction that you visited to someone else who was considering a visit?

Would you recommend the Titanic museum attraction that you visited to others?

Why or why not?

If you could suggest specific changes to the dress and/or costume displays that you saw, what would you tell the museum attraction staff?

Suppose that you were talked to guest curate an exhibit at the Titanic museum attraction that you visited. Where would you put more dress and/or costume in the museum attraction?

For example, it could be by a specific artifact or in a specific display/room.

What were your experiences and/or interactions with any costumed living history interpreters during your visit to a Titanic museum attraction?

(If costumed living history interpreters were present in the Titanic museum attraction visited) Did you notice or look closely at the clothing worn by the costumed living history interpreters?

Most Titanic museum attractions are classified as a “museum attraction.” Based on your definition of a museum and your definition of an attraction, do you consider the Titanic museum attraction that you visited to be more a museum, more an attraction, or somewhere in the middle?

How do you define a museum?

How do you define an attraction?
What is the value of looking at dress in photos versus looking at dress objects?

Do you have a preference between seeing (a) photos versus artifacts and (b) artifacts versus replicas?

Does your answer to these scenarios change when only considering dress objects, as opposed to the collection of objects, as a whole, presented in the museum attraction?
APPENDIX L

Notice IRB Approval/Exemption
# NOTIFICATION OF EXEMPTION

January 31, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator:</th>
<th>Dr. Elaine Pedersen</th>
<th>Department:</th>
<th>Design and Human Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Team Members:</td>
<td>Genna Reeves</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Number:</td>
<td>5093</td>
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The above referenced study was reviewed by the OSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and determined to be exempt from full board review.

**Expiration Date: 10/19/2016**

The exemption is valid for 5 years from the date of approval.

Annual renewals will not be required. If the research extends beyond the expiration date, the investigator must request a new exemption. Investigators should submit a final report to the IRB if the project is completed prior to the 5 year term.

Documents included in this review:
- [x] Protocol
- [x] Consent forms
- [x] Assent forms
- [x] Grant/contract

Comments:

Principal Investigator responsibilities:

- Amendments to this study must be submitted to the IRB for review prior to initiating the change. Ammendments may include, but are not limited to, changes in funding, personnel, target enrollment, study population, study instruments, consent documents, recruitment material, sites of research, etc.
- All study team members should be kept informed of the status of the research.
- Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others must be submitted to the IRB within three calendar days.
- The Principal Investigator is required to securely store all study related documents on the OSU campus for a minimum of three years post study termination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at [IRB@oregonstate.edu](mailto:IRB@oregonstate.edu) or by phone at (541) 737-8006.

IRB Form v. 12/2016
APPENDIX M

Molly’s Discussion of the Legalities Associated with Titanic Artifacts Displayed in Exhibits and Museums during her Interview
MOLLY’S DISCUSSION OF THE LEGALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH TITANIC ARTIFACTS DISPLAYED IN EXHIBITS AND MUSEUMS DURING HER INTERVIEW

**Interviewer:** So can you talk at this point about the legalities involved in the exhibits and museums.

**Molly:** Okay. In 1934 the White Star Line and the Cunard line merged. The Cunard Line owned the ship that rescued the survivors. They merged. White Star really had a hard time recovering from this Titanic situation. So, a few years later, we merged. At that time they never listed Titanic as an asset. So, flash forward a bunch of years later, 1985, Dr. Robert Ballard comes across it when he’s on an exhibition out for two Russian submarines from World War One. Instantly all of … everybody wants a part of it. England wanted it. White Star Line is a British company. Ireland wanted it because it was based out of Belfast, Ireland. Canada wanted it because they brought about 140 bodies back to Nova Scotia and they were buried there. The United States wanted it simply because we want everything.

**Interviewer:** Everything. Right.

**Molly:** I mean there… yeah. So from 1985... The first artifacts are brought up in 1987. So from 1985 to 1994... So you have like nine years. There’s a lot of debate. Who had possession of it? Now basic salvage right didn’t really apply. And I don’t know why they didn’t apply. I don’t know if Dr. Ballard just didn’t want it or because it was so high profile that it wouldn’t be fair, I don’t really know why. But they knew they had to regulate it. It cost millions and millions and millions and million of dollars for the equipment to go down there. There were artifacts being brought up. There were artifacts being bought and sold and traded and auctioned off and so in 1994, through the international Maritime Courts based out of Boston, our company, RMS Titanic, Inc., which is a subsidiary of Premier Exhibitions, was granted salver and possession. Easy way to remember is legal guardian. We are the ships legal guardian. So now if anybody wants to go down there they have to come to us first. Now, I’ve seen something for $66,000 you can go down there.

**Interviewer:** Yes. Mmhmm.

**Molly:** And I need to search that. I haven’t had time to yet. Like, how is our company going for this?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.
**Molly:** I have opinions but I’m being taped right now so I won’t express them. But, we are the only ones that can bring up artifacts. Nobody else can. So the artifacts that are in Branson and in Pigeon Forge… I believe they are the same company that does those two. Those are all pre- 1994 unless they came to our company and we loaned them to them. About… a little over a year ago we were given sole ownership of the artifacts, again, through the International Maritime courts in Boston. So, say the Smithsonian wants to do a Titanic exhibit. So, they come to us and they say they want to do an exhibit, this is what we have, this is what we want. Then they negotiate and they pay out the butt for insurance. And all that kind of stuff. So we are the protectors of that ship. If anybody goes down and brings up artifacts they’re in big trouble. There are items that are auctioned off.

**Interviewer:** Right. They just had one recently.

**Molly:** Yeah. Sometimes our company will go in and get them just to make sure they are protected and preserved. A lot of people with almost 100 year old artifacts that were in the ocean for seventy five years.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Molly:** They have to be protected.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So that’s how we do what we do. We are the ships guardian. As far as personal effects… like say your great-great-grandma was on the ship and all of the sudden her suitcase appeared and there’s all these personal items and you’re like “Well, I want that. That’s my families” Now, you would think, I would guess, that that would be legally yours. Not the case. After the ship sunk there was an insurance company who subsequently went broke, who paid out insurance settlements. I think the highest was like $106,000.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Molly:** So anybody that had insurance and had documented proof that they lost something… it could have been… There was some feather store in New York that was waiting for Peacock feathers. So, you know, people shipped stuff… It was like the UPS of the time. So people maybe they lost like a dress that they were waiting for from England or loss of life or loss of survivors or possessions. If they had proof they were given an insurance settlement. So same way is if your car gets stolen and a couple months go by and your insurance company gives you a payout but then your car resurfaces, you don’t get that car back. So, that’s why, when we get these personal items we get to keep them. Now if a family we to ever be able to prove their relative was not compensated… I don’t know what would happen then. It’s never happened.
**Interviewer:** I can imagine.

**Molly:** It would take a lot of proof. And I’m sure that the insurance papers are very well documented. But that is how this exhibit does what it does.

**Interviewer:** So, what… can you speak to what the relationship right now with the Pigeon Forge and Branson museums? Like how you interact with them at this point?

**Molly:** I don’t know how much interaction there is. A lot of their artifacts are from pre-1994 from what I understand. Our company owns the rest… There’s like Pigeon Forge and the rest of them and they travel and they tour and they go all over the place. They could be in Sydney, London, Calgary and Winnipeg, New York and New Mexico or the Detroit area where my parents live. And so… We have over 300 artifacts in the warehouse. So they travel all over the place which is great because a lot of people can see it.

**Interviewer:** Right. And the traveling exhibitions are also under your company, correct?

**Molly:** Yes.