

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

A Comparative Analysis of Three Southern Alberta Archaeological Sites' Signage examining the
Promotion of Sustainable Practices

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AN HONOURS THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS)

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA AND FILM

CALGARY, ALBERTA

April, 2018

1. Abstract

Alberta's archaeological sites are facing increased tourism and deterioration of site artefacts due to increased visitation. New methods of communicating the need for conservation have been implemented to address this concern. Hyperrealistic representation, as one of the results of this intervention creates an array of concerns for the maintenance of historical value at archaeotourism sites, as archaeological evidence is often supplanted by reasonable facsimiles of materials. This paper examines the creation of hyperrealistic representation at three representative sites in Alberta, provides examples of the consequences of this approach, and concludes with suggestions for corrections or extensions to the current model. The three sites examined, Bodo, Writing-On-Stone, and Head-Smashed-In from municipal, provincial, and international management illustrate this trend and allows us to identify the false assumption that hyperrealistic representation promotes site sustainability. The primary objective of this paper is to provide actionable suggestions to anyone working in the archaeotourism context of Alberta; however, anyone who works in archaeology, tourism, or sustainability worldwide, who may not consider the detriments of this approach to communicating value, could benefit from this research.

Keywords: Alberta Archaeology, Sustainability, Archaeo-tourism, Bodo, Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump, Writing-On-Stone

2. Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 peoples of Alberta within which the sites this thesis is based on exist.

I would like to thank my mother Dr. Janice Thomas for her support and understanding, as well as Gurmandeep Kaur Sahota for obvious reasons.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Dr. Richard Hawkins for his help and guidance, as well as Dr. Barbara Schneider for her perseverance and energy during seminars.

3. List of Abbreviations

HI – Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo-Jump Archaeological Site

WOS – Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park

BODO – Bodo Archaeological site

GOA – Government of Alberta

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

OUV - Outstanding Universal Value

AP – Alberta Provincial Parks

MDP – Municipal District of Provost Number 52

PC – Photographic content

WC – Written content

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4. Introduction

In the rolling hills of Southern Alberta, one can expect to see small towns, abundant farmland, and if you're lucky, maybe an archaeological site or two. The natural landscapes and archaeological sites of Alberta have long inspired photographers and visitors from all over the world. With the rise of social media and digital tourism promotion, Alberta is rapidly becoming a thriving tourism destination, with tourism revenues reaching 8.1 billion dollars in 2015 according to Stats Canada. The stated goal is to reach 10 billion in tourism revenues by 2020 (Travel Alberta, n.d.). The added strain of this tourist activity poses a huge challenge to sustainability of our archaeological sites.

By their nature, archaeological sites are both finite sources of history and heritage for the world, as well as unique and exciting tourism opportunities for the masses. This dual nature reveals the crux of the problem; for archaeological sites to continue to serve as cultural and historical resources, they must be maintained and preserved, but, in order to support this work, these sites require high volumes of tourism interest and the associated economic benefits. While archaeological sites have always had this problem, they operate under continuous pressure to maintain and increase traffic, and many sites already experience millions of visitors a year. A timely example of this challenge is the Canada 150 offer of free admission to our national parks for 2017, which allowed record numbers of people to visit the parks and the associated archaeological sites. All of this traffic adds to the sustainability messaging requirements, as tourists are not always as sustainability aware as they could or should be.

The increasing tourism volume and need to maintain and present the sites in a sustainable manner creates a need for such sites to increase and improve their messaging about this

important topic. A first step in generating a better understanding of commonly occurring practices is to examine a selection of sites to compare and contrast their presentation of archaeological evidence. This forms the purpose for this thesis.

All methods of representation provide a perceived value; however, it is often easy for archaeo-tourism representation to push the boundary between the real and the idea of the real, or, hyperreality. While this may seem confusing, it is something that we do quite readily in everyday life. A simple way of looking at it is this; if you have an artefact in a room, you have an exhibit; if you add signs to tell people what it is, cases to protect it, and show it to the public it is still an exhibit. If you curate the space, have visitors flow through in a certain way with spotlights pointing out the artefacts and maybe a few drawings of its utility, you still have an exhibit. The moment you stray from the focus on the artefact, maybe through a replica, interspersing contemporary examples, or removing the artefact entirely, you have an example of the hyperreal. The fake that *is* the real. In the field of museum curation, the Sonora Desert Museum (Luke 1997) provides a classic example of a presentation of the hyperreal in its description of the Sonora Desert ecology. The collection of transplanted materials creates a spectacle of the museum's content that becomes the focal point of the visitor experience. The representation of the fake as the real has a lot of benefits for archaeo-tourism sites. The presentation of a fake (replica, description, etc) in the place of the real reduces the amount of wear on sites through visitation while allowing them to build upon the narrative of their site. After all, ancient artefacts rarely change but interpretive signs, trails, or centres can easily fit the interests and trends of the time.

In Alberta's wealth of archeological sites there is no shortage of examples of efforts to support sustainable use through intervention from which I could pick to review. For the purposes

of this study, three sites were chosen for their varying organization, management, and presentational style. Alberta archaeological sites employ various levels of hyperreal representation from the most simplistic substitutions, or curated experience, to the development of a substitute experience in the place of site. Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump (HI) is Alberta's oldest archaeological site, and a spot-on example of the substitute experience. As an international tourism destination, it has a need for the creation of representation that supports the maintenance of the site. The presentation of HI must respond to large numbers of visitor traffic, social and governmental pressures for presentation standards, and international conservation concerns. It responds to these pressures in its presentation by creating a separated experience from the site and artefacts themselves, and in doing so attempt to create a hyperreal experience of the site.

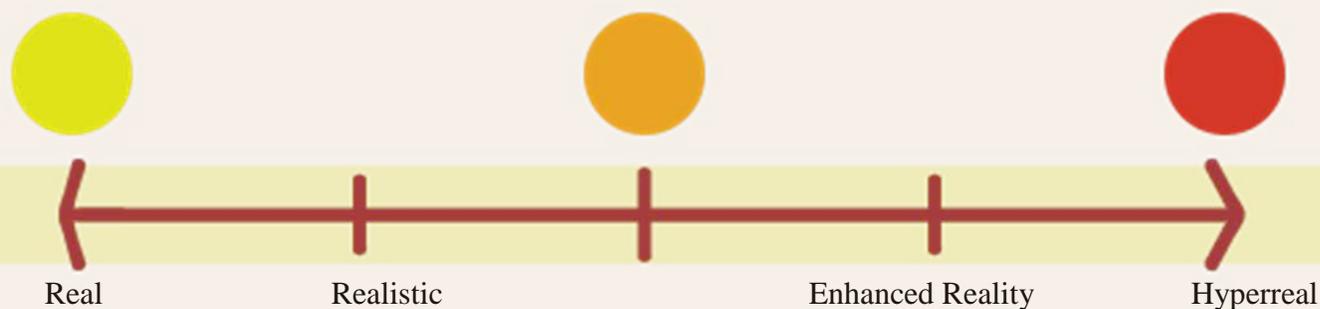


Figure 1 The continuum of hyperreality

The other two sites fall further down the continuum of hyperreal representation. While neither have the world-wide recognition of HI, Writing-On-Stone (WOS) and BODO archaeological sites, both must address similar issues and stakeholder concerns. The difference between these two sites comes from their management structure. WOS, as an Alberta provincial park (AP), has much of the same management as HI. BODO, as an independent community archaeological site, has a very different set of management priorities. Nestled in the Municipal District of Provost (MDP), BODO is a community organization dedicated to the presentation and

promotion of the archaeological site, for the purposes of community building and driving tourism revenue development in the area. While HI and BODO have vastly different budgets, both develop hyperreal representation extensively for the purposes of driving visitation and preserving the materials of their site. WOS, which one might expect to follow HI's approach as both sites are managed by the Government of Alberta (GOA), takes a distinctive turn in its representation of the site.

For archaeological sites to continue to serve as cultural and historical resources, they must be maintained and preserved, but in order to support this work, these sites require high volumes of tourism interest to generate the associated economic benefits, and cost effective methods to preserve the continued use of these archaeo-tourism sites. This leads me to ask,

What are the implications for sustainability and resilience, when curated representation strays into hyperreal representation?

Specifically, I want to understand the consequences of current representations, in sites with a variety of stakeholders (including local peoples, parks staff, and tour providers), and how this choice of representation effects the communication of sustainability messages through hyperreal representation at archaeology sites in various locales in Alberta.

The trend of hyperreal representation at archaeological sites will allow me to make greater interpretation of the materials and examples in a local context, ranging from the hyperrealistic to the truly hyperreal, and will allow me to make a few claims of the value of this approach. While I don't comment, in this thesis, on the development of narratives of value at Alberta archaeological sites, the trend of hyperreal representation will be shown to have both negative and positive effects that ultimately challenge the value of a site. I hypothesize that the

representations from these different stakeholders, while not conflicting, will be different enough to illustrate how hyperrealistic elements can detrimentally affect the authenticity and social value of each site.

Through a brief literature review of sustainability, archaeo-tourism, and hyperreality, we explore the main theoretical constructs to ensure a common understanding of these main ideas in this paper. Moving next to the three case studies explored in this thesis, I describe how I provide background on each site and on how I studied and compiled each case study. Through a comparative case study using photographic evidence, I provide an analysis of the use of the hyperreal in each site and a discussion of the impact on each site this seems to have. Finally, I conclude with some closing insights on the impact of the hyperreal on site value and illustrate how this approach can actually greatly reduce the sustainability of archaeological sites into the future.

5. Literature Review

Even as early as the 1970s in Alberta, there was a growing awareness that technology and sustainability would need to be harnessed in new ways to improve social life. “Wisdom harnessed with technology can go a long way in creating a better social order, a world in which creation can survive and enjoy life to the fullest.” (Snow 1977:153) This quote illustrates a historic evaluation of the need for technological temperance and sustainable practices from local Albertan peoples in the 1970’s. While this example was referring to the development of land from an environmental standpoint, the same can be said for the development of these sites. The need to utilize archaeo-tourism sites in a way that allows them to be continuously visited indefinitely requires the careful and considered use of representation that respects the authenticity of the site.

To understand the representation at these three sites, I first define how I utilize important terms and the scope in which I use them as part of the discussion. Sustainability, archaeo-tourism, and hyperreality are identified as key frames that make up hyperreal representation and provide the background for the development of hyperreal representation. Each of these terms are diversely defined and, as a result, referring to them broadly in the investigation of our sites would only further obfuscate how these sites address the dual nature of visitation and conservation. Clarifying these terms initially provides frames for the review of sites' signage and allows us to better locate and differentiate between the approaches of representation taken by each site. The goal of this review is to understand the role that hyperreal representation has in archaeo-tourism sites and, ultimately, to what degree this can contribute to the sustainability or resilience of sites in Alberta.

5.1 Sustainability

The United Nations has defined sustainable development as "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (WCED 1987) and outlined three pillars, or elements, of sustainability including, environment, economy, and equity. This definition provides an outline of what is considered the sustainability triple bottom line and a broad overarching framework from which many more detailed definitions have arisen in different fields. While sustainability may appear to be solely a concept of international development (AtKisson, 2010), many other disciplines have included sustainability concepts and derivatives (Cascio, 2009). These further definitions have developed the concept to more specific purposes and provide a clearer understanding of sustainability in practice. Today, sustainability is a concern in a large and growing number of fields.

Amongst this spread of sustainability concepts to other disciplines, there are several areas of study that incorporate ideas about sustainability that are related to this research including developmental studies, business, and the burgeoning study of sustainability. It is interesting to note that the nebulous nature of sustainability's definition is at the forefront of the most cited research articles relating to sustainability across disciplines and time. Mebratu (1998), Leiserowitz, et al (2006), and Costanza, & Patten, (1995) all approach sustainability from different disciplines but have equal difficulty defining sustainability in a meaningful way. Discussion of the concept of sustainability is clearly not without conflict. There is active debate over the usage of sustainability as a term, as some consider it a hollow buzzword too general to be useful (Portney, 2015) with several negative connotations (Cascio 2009) around its use. Scoones (2007) suggested that the term sustainability may soon be left behind for concepts that have stemmed from sustainability, such as resilience. While sustainability and resilience may seem interchangeable, the focus of resilience on resisting exterior stressors instead of actively promoting a holistic respect for growth in all dimensions, makes sustainability a better indicator of the success of hyperreal elements as all sustainable elements are resilient, but, not all resiliency elements are entirely sustainable. These derivatives and extensions of thought however all attempt to address the need for consideration of the longevity and continued use of resources. Thus, any use of the concept of sustainability must take time to define how it will be used before any meaningful work can be done. For the purposes of this study, three sources (Scoones, 2007; AtKisson, 2010; and Portney, 2015) will be discussed in more detail because of their attempts to address sustainability's ambiguous nature and provide a workable framework for application of its concepts.

Atkisson (2013) presents sustainability as a universal term for the equitable development of mankind that everyone has a role in promoting. This universal approach attempts to avoid the sometimes-conflicting notions of sustainability such as economic development and environmental protection. His all-inclusive approach further breaks down the UN's definition to include a sustainability compass (AtKisson, 2010) with the north position representing nature, west representing wellness, south representing society, and east representing economics. The use of a compass metaphor illustrates the ways in which each aspect of sustainability is connected but not every aspect of sustainability is represented in each situation. This approach creates a framework for many different groups, individuals, and industries to fit within one of the aspects of sustainability.

While Portney (2015) approaches sustainability from a similar direction, basing his definition on the 1987 Sustainable Development Declaration by the United Nations, he attempts to further break down the definition by creating a set of sub-classifications for sustainability. This more directly addresses the conflicting nature of sustainability by stating that,

“the various conceptions of sustainability carry with them significant implications, many of which conflict with one another and with social and political values that do not readily accommodate any conception of sustainability.” (Portney, 2015:57).

Portney's perspective is that the difficulty in defining sustainability and the resulting resistance to using the term could be combatted by addressing sustainability as it relates to three areas that are least obviously connected to sustainability focussing on consumption, governments, and the private sector. This perspective allows us to describe the manner with which different sectors address sustainable approaches. It is also this indirect approach that makes it less wholistic than

AtKisson's (2013) and limits our ability to discuss possible motivations beyond the purely economic.

From the resilience school of thought, Cascio's (2009) perspective views resilience as an ability to react to change effectively which sees traditional perspectives of sustainability as focussing on an unachievable static goal rather than responding to current situations. Cascio's eight principles of resilience promote, "...diversity, redundancy, decentralization, collaboration, transparency, fail gracefully, flexibility, and foresight. Ultimately, resilience emphasizes increasing the ability to withstand crises" (Cascio, 2009: 92). The resilience perspective hopes to shed the negative connotations of sustainability and provide a more concrete objective for people to band together to achieve.

This initial review of sustainability shows us how broadly sustainability can be defined and suggests the resulting negative or divisive connotations that can be ascribed to each aspect. Each of these theorists exhibit a different perspective of the value of sustainability and the approaches to understanding such a muddled term. While each approach has its merits in the discussion of sustainability messaging and representation, the context of the chosen sites, and diverse stakeholders, I will be focussing on the framework put forward by AtKisson (2010) which allows me to classify sustainable elements more broadly.

The most obvious detractor of sustainability has been its uncertain nature and the ability of products or services to latch onto it. As a concept used in product or service presentation without accurately understanding the impact, sustainability essentially creates, "...greenwashing, which is the strategic disclosure of positive sustainability information about a company's performance whilst omitting negative information..." (Villarino, & Font, 2015:327-328). This helps frame our

study of sustainability to include an understanding of its limitations as well as several of the negative aspects, to be better able to recognize these in the sites studied.

The usage of sustainability across many industries and disciplines has spurred its codification in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2015) which touch on all aspects of life. These goals were agreed upon by over 193 countries (UN 2015) and include topics such as gender equality, ending hunger, and responsible consumption and production. What makes these goals so exceptional is that they are meant for all countries and individuals, drawing on individual action as a source of cumulative change. This framework can be directly applied to the research being done here as it addresses “the responsible consumption and production” (UN 2015) of archaeo-tourism experiences as well as the “peace, justice, and strong institutions” (UN 2015) in the maintenance of world heritage in Alberta. With a worldwide focus on these concepts, and the goals of creating a sustainable world so clearly defined, this research is appropriately timed to leverage the increased interest in sustainability and may have broader application to contribute to more sustainable development of Alberta’s heritage sites. Archaeo-tourism sites in Alberta provide a microcosm to see how easily segmented sustainability is presented to visitors. Therefore, we need to understand the concept of archaeo-tourism and its role in the promotion of sustainability at heritage sites.

5.2 Archaeo-tourism

Archaeo-tourism is a phenomenon in the field of cultural tourism (McGettigan, & Rozenkiewicz, 2013) that addresses an interest in commodifying archaeological sites and experiences for tourists. It has risen to prominence as a primary method for governments and regional associations to raise money to support, conserve and preserve archeological sites. It is quite literally the fusion of archeological preservation and tourist attraction to continue

presenting archaeological information to the public indefinitely. This forces conservationists and marketers to work together to address the sustainability of the site. The growth of archeo-tourism has given rise to many interesting and important methods of representation at archaeological sites, museums, and cultural sites which has in turn created new controversies and challenges to our methods of sustaining these sites. In order to understand the representation put out at each site, we need to explore the values underlying archaeo-tourism, monetizing physical historic sites, and utilizing cultural resources for collective gain.

The value of archaeological sites as societal, historical, and economic resources has been identified by many different schools of thought and industries. Each group, government, private and regional organization, hopes to define the value of archaeological sites in a way that develops economic growth and maintains interest in their conservation. The UN's supervising body for historic places and landscapes, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has recognized this interest and developed a system to describe the value of individual sites through their "Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)" (2016) as defined below.

"Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole. "(UNESCO 2016: 19)

Using the UNESCO definition above, governmental organizations ascribe value to archaeological sites by agreeing what will qualify a site as universally valuable. The international profile of UNESCO sites also increases the amount of interest by tourists and, as a result, UNESCO sites have far greater reach with international audiences. This value, and world-wide

attention, is then able to be translated into increased economic value and a recognition of archaeological sites as a commodity that can be sold, and, like any commodity, consumed. The cache of UNESCO World Heritage site designation represents a recognition of the value archaeological sites represent economically and socially, and these values have bled into many schools of thought including archaeology.

The development of archaeological sites is motivated by several different end goals. McCafferty (2010) illustrates this point perfectly by pointing to the nature of sustainable development, in this case of local development of archaeological resources, as an economic driver and a cultural resource. As McCafferty points out,

“...Archaeo-tourism generates enormous income, and from the perspective of sustainability these revenues can be re-invested to finance further discoveries, expanded museum exhibitions, and public outreach – all of which serve to further increase the market for archaeo-tourism while employing local people. This is sustainable development!” (2010, 12-13)

This quote illustrates that the message of sustainability is still not fully developed among archaeologists and, as a result, a unified approach is hard to create. While archaeologist’s may see their profession as a necessity with far reaching consequences to everyday life, many others believe it is a luxury (Atalay 2012). A balanced approach to representation, that considers a wealth of perspectives beyond those of solely archaeological or tourism perspectives, is necessary for long term success.

Attempts have been made to bridge this gap, with tourism professionals and archaeologists meeting to help develop more robust sustainability communication. One example of such efforts, documented by Walker (2013), reports of bringing together over 20 internationally diverse authors to share their experience, and identify what have been the most effective practices.

“One way of developing the interest and appreciation of the public in all things archaeological is to provide them with access to archaeological materials in a manner that is simultaneously engaging and educational.” (Walker, 2013: 27)

This recognition by archaeologists of the raised profile of tourism is an important change. Sustainability messages coming from both parties is a reality of the landscape for both professions. Ensuring they support each other, and engage with the public in a consistent manner, is an important effort. This book provided a foundation for current sustainability partnerships between archaeologists and tourism professionals as well as directly pointing to the necessity of visitor engagement. As McGettigan, & Rozenkiewicz (2013) point out *“... visitor experiences at the ancient sites is affected equally by the core heritage and the tourist facilities available on-site,”* (118) Thus, it is not only the archaeological aspects but the facilitating built environment that contributes to a visitors experience of the site. An important point to note from this perspective is that visitors *“... can be compared to consumers whose contentment is strongly dependent on the quality of services they purchase.”* (McGettigan, & Rozenkiewicz, 2013). Thus, archaeo-tourism sites must not only serve the interests of stakeholders but also capture and retain the interest of visitors through presentation.

One facet of this work is the development of tools for satisfying these sustainability concerns. Often these methods include interpretation and selective presentation or representation, whereby,

“...(educators) recreate aspects of the ‘field’ in visual and audio format with the aim of adding meaning and context to the topic being discussed. Some refer to these learning tools as ‘virtual fieldtrips’...” (Walker, 2013: 215)

This development of tools for sustainable tourism shows a clear connection to a workable definition of hyperreality. *“In a mediated context, an artificially created copy that is perceived as*

somehow more real than the real thing, or too real to be real: modelled on reality but with an exaggerated intensity...” (Chandler & Munday, 2011) is used to stand in for the presentation of real archaeological sites. This method of narrative presentation for the curation of an experience helps meet the requirements of all stakeholders, as archaeological materials are protected through substitution while visitors feel they are getting an interactive or authentic experience, and the reduction of site interaction allows the sites to be monetized indefinitely.

Substitute representation becomes more and more of a viable tool for sustainable tourism as the visiting of authentic or original sites becomes less and less viable due to the wear of human visitation. As this utilization of substitute representation grows in popularity at archaeo-tourism sites, there is a need to explore this conservation consequence in greater detail when implemented to see if it is used in a way that supports the conservation of a site. The concern with a substitute representation is in the creation of a hyperreal representation where the site itself is irrelevant to the experience of the site. Phrased another way, it is the point where hyperreality is imposed to help sustain the presentation of archaeo-tourism sites to an extent that begins reducing the cultural, social, and economic value of said sites by substitution. To address this issue, I must further look into the concept of hyperreality for an understanding of the distinctions between representation and hyperreal representation of sites. This review will allow us to review the three sites chosen for examples of hyperreal representation and the likely results on a site’s continued sustainability and resilience.

5.3 Hyperreality

While the two previous frames directly address the current discussion around sustainability and archaeo-tourism, this third frame, hyperreality, has more to do with the type of representation at sites being examined in order to address the sustainability concerns of

archeologists while reaping the rewards of archaeo-tourism. Which brings into question the concerns brought forth in Umberto Eco's (1986) definition of hyperreality, which commented,

"This is the reason for this journey into hyperreality, in search of instances where the American imagination thing and, to attain it. must fabricate boundaries between game and illusion are blurred, the art museum is contaminated by the freak show, and falsehood is enjoyed in a situation of "fullness," of horror vacui" (Eco, U. 1986: 8).

While this comment was directed specifically at tourism attractions in the United states, it could be equally said to follow the trends of many comparable archeological tourism sites today. The concern, of course, is that we may be damaging the social value of sites where experience is placed above accuracy. There are many approaches to hyperreal representation. Eco describes the two he identified as salient to his examination:

"...the hallucination (referring to hyperreality) serves to level the various historical periods and erase the distinction between historical reality and fantasy; in the case of the works of art what is culturally, if not psychologically, hallucinatory is the confusion between copy and original...since the theatricality is explicit, the hallucination operates in making the visitors takes part in the scene and thus become participants in that commercial fair that is apparently an element of the fiction but in fact represents the substantial aim of the whole imitative machine." (Eco, 1986: 42)

For Eco, hyperrealistic representation did not need to be total theater to be working on visitors, however, *"...once the total fake is admitted, in order to be enjoyed it must seem totally real."* (Eco 1986: 43) Hyperrealistic representation than exists along a spectrum from simple confusion of the fake and the real, to a complete substitution through active subversion. It can take the form of any elements that contribute either intentionally or unintentionally to the creation of an experience separate from the actual content of the site. This broad classification allows for the interpretation of elements beyond their representative function to discern if they perform a function for the development of a hyperrealistic representation.

As an early theoretical precursor to hyperreality, Northrop Frye's (2002) definition of metaphor, "...where you're really saying this is that, you're turning your back on logic and reason completely, because logically two things can never be the same thing and still remain two things" (Frye, 2002:16). This definition leads into hyperreality as originally defined by Eco (1986) who commented on the representation of the fake in place of the real in popular culture, wherein the representation of a produced experience is perceived as more real than the actual artefact it is representing. As Eco (1986) describes his travels through the United States, he commented on the reconstructed, and finished, Greek villa housing in the Getty museum in Florida, "...the public, flung from the realer-than-real-reconstruction to the authentic, could lose its bearings and consider the exterior real and the interior a great assemblage of modern copies" (Eco, 1986). This illustrates the issue with hyperrealistic representation at archaeotourism sites; any representative intervention introduced to support the touristic experience of the site may misattribute the identity of the archaeological site with the touristic representation of the site. Hyperreal representation can then be defined as any form of intervention that promotes confusion with the artefact itself and creates a fantasy of authenticity through its utility.

Barthes also touches on the academic tertiary of hyperreality through the description of photography, "Photography transformed subject into object, and even, one might say, into a museum object..." (Barthes, 1980: 13) as such, photography is a great comparable example to hyperreality. This shows the nature of photography supporting, through analogy, hyperrealistic representation and the sociological understanding of the creation of representations as good as the real thing. This initial review of the image provides three very different ways to review the photographs taken. The linguistic messages consist of the words used within a photograph as

well as the connotations relating to the chosen text. The example Barthes (1977) uses is that of a sign “Panzani” in a pasta advertisement for the way that it invokes a feeling of “Italianicity” consisting of both the words themselves and the connotations behind it. The metaphorical messages according to Barthes (1977) provide easy access to the image through shared values. Barthes example of the pasta advertisement focusses on, “...two euphoric values: that of the freshness of the products and that of the essentially domestic preparation for which they are destined” (Barthes 1977: 34). The final category is the purely informational, wherein the object acts without a coded message, literally as the object it is. This thin but definite distinction creates two categorizations of items within a photograph. Those that were placed within the image (or the context within the image) to evoke in viewers a particular feeling, thought or action related culturally with that item, i.e., the metaphorical; and those that simply represent the object themselves, i.e., the literal.

Barthes continued this thought in *Camera Lucida* (1980) while discussing how the This of photography shows this necessity, “By nature, the Photograph has something tautological about it: a pipe, here, is always and intractably a pipe” (Barthes 1980: 5). Without understanding the intention of the photographer, the photographic record lacks a depth that would leave the metaphorical aspects of a photograph purely speculative. This perspective helps to describe the necessity of photography to our study as I am not studying the photographs, but rather, creating for study an immutable artefact or snapshot in time for which we can study the site experience of each place. This connection to photography helps us to frame hyperreality as a way of creating a representation, or fake that supplants the real object. Where Barthes was referring to a realistic recreation of value through the photograph, Eco’s (1986) definition of hyperreality focusses on the creation of a physical space to the same end.

Bourdieu's sociological review of photography (1990) proposes that, while bound to social rules and perceptions, photography provides an aspect of hyperrealism that addresses the realism of photographs through the intention of the person taking the picture.

"... Only in the name of a naïve realism can one see as realistic a representation of the real which owes its objective appearance not to its agreement with the very reality of things... but rather to conformity with rules which define its syntax within its social use, to the social definition of the objective vision of the world; in conferring upon photography a guarantee of realism, society is merely confirming itself in the tautological certainty that an image which is true to its representation of objectivity is really objective. " (Bourdieu 1990 pg. 77)

This sociological perspective mirrors hyperreality through the development of conventions that recreate the societal expectation of the experience of that photograph. In this way, the study of touristic elements that contain hyperrealistic representations benefit from Bourdieu's (1990) discussion of realism and the tertiary of hyperreality. In this analogous relationship, the realism of photography is created in a similar sense to hyperrealistic elements in that the objectivity of the photograph (artefact) is assumed to be real as long as it conforms to societal expectations of its presentation.

From natural landscapes (P. W., 2001) and museums (Luke, 1997), to archaeological sites (Alberti, Jones & Pollard, 2013), there has been a lot of discussion around the value and consequences of hyperrealistic representation at historic sites. These concerns are predicated around the idea that hyperrealism is employed, and actively effects the way people experience sites. While there is no clear pathway to effective hyperreal representation, we can see that attempts have been made following the guiding examples of hyperreal representation as described by Eco (1986). Using this simplistic demarcation, we can look at hyperreal representation as any form of communication that creates a separate identity, through confusion or theatricality, around the interventions surrounding archaeological sites and the sites

themselves. The intent of this simplistic frame is to allow for examination of different approaches to hyperrealistic representations as well as to consider differences in budgets in our target sites.

As we can see, hyperreality is a current trend in the communication of archaeo-tourism sustainability. This phenomenon, while recognized internationally, has not yet been documented in Alberta, and so this exploration of these sites fills a regional hole in our understanding of the implementation of hyperreality for archaeo-tourism. Exploring what is currently being done within three different contexts can help us to shape the best approach to promoting sustainability at sites in Alberta. This literature review provides the base for which we can review the photographic record of the site visits through a semiotic theoretical framework outlined below.

6. Theoretical Framework for Analysing the Hyperreality of Archaeotourism

The literature reviewed above provides a very broad base of understanding for the context of this research but does not address how this phenomenon can be analysed in a specific context and, in particular, for this paper, in an Alberta context. As the need for solutions to visitor-wear on archaeological sites grows across the world, many look to solely digital solutions. It is often forgotten that signage and visitor experience are the most basic points of connection to visitors, and that they can even communicate hyperreality through their framing of events. Eco (1986) described the phenomenon while traveling through some of the United States largest attractions without the aid of digital immersion. This base example illustrates that one need not be completely fooled through immersive digital experience to come to the point of believing the experience of a place — even a fake — is as good as the real. Bearing in mind hyperreality, I view metaphor as any form of the promotion of *something as something else*

(Frye, 2002), in the most literal sense, considering visual, written, and implied appeals to authenticity.

Data for this study includes 433 photos and 6 print materials, collected during three site visits, with examples from HIS, WOS and BODO. This dataset provides a cross section of the Alberta context to illustrate what elements of hyperreal representation are utilized to promote sustainable use. These site examples, from different managing structures of their creation of a site experience, help us to see if this consequence of hyperrealism, successfully supports the sustainability and resilience of sites.

A semiotic analysis (Barthes, 1977) of photos containing directional signs, descriptive signs, physical landscape modifications, video, and text materials of these sites help to limit the scale of review while also creating a photographic record as the artefact for the study of this thesis. As Barthes himself points out, "...above all if – the image is in a certain manner the *limit* of meaning, it permits the consideration of a veritable ontology of the process of signification" (Barthes, 1977: 32). Barthes provides the grist of the semiotic analysis with his description of the three messages of a photograph (1977) breaking down the content of photographs into the linguistic, the coded iconic (further referred to as the metaphorical), and non-coded iconic (the literal) messages. While Barthes (1977) was focussing on advertisements specifically, this process can be transcribed to our sites as our photographic record contains largely the same elements. Barthes' (1977) initial review of the messages of the image addresses most of the categories salient for this research, however in the photographs of signs and symbols, Bourdieu's (1990) intentional frame is useful in helping to capture the visitor experience of a site.

This allows me to review not only the images in our photographic record but also the intention for which they were taken. The theoretical frame then provides us with a lens into the metaphor behind elements displayed in the photographic record. With each photo coded for the linguistic, metaphoric or literal representation of hyperreality, we can begin to analyze the representation of each site. With the personal intention of each photograph understood, there is a greater breadth of commentary that can be had beyond the photograph itself. A similar example of this research method comes from the field of Urban Studies as Krase & Shortell (2011) explain the method, “Photographs are taken as the researcher travels through a neighborhood (site), systematically photographing public spaces without regard to particular content or aesthetics” (2011: 372). This shows the “researcher-taken” photographic record method of site classification that allows for an experience-based understanding of the site.

Utilizing Barthes (1977) three frames, Bourdieu’s (1990) intentional frame, and Krase & Shortell’s (2011) method of semiotic analysis, we can begin to see how hyperreality shapes the experience of these sites and, by extension, how hyperreal elements are used to affect the visitor experience. For the purposes of my study, the photograph is not the artefact being discussed but the objects and implied interactions with the sites displayed in the photographic image. By examining the visitor experience through photographic content (PC) and written content (WC) from the individual context of each site, we can see the pros and cons of different approaches to hyperreal representation. By looking across the three cases and the nature of the hyperreal representation in each case, we can make some clear distinctions between which approaches address the issue of sustainability in these sites and to what extent hyperreal representation promotes the sustainability and resilience of these sites.

7. Methodology: Coding the visitor experience of hyperreality

While governments recognize the need to codify historical value and protect heritage sites for the future, no clear hierarchy has been developed for the implementation of these endeavors. In Alberta, this lack of hierarchy is evident in the three levels of site management examined including, municipal, provincial, and international governance. BODO is a municipally-run archaeological site and museum managed by the MDP. WOS is an archaeological site managed by AP. Lastly, HI is an archaeological site managed by the GOA, private groups, and international oversight in the form of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. Each site was also discovered at different times, with HI being the first archaeological site excavated in Alberta and BODO representing a far more recent discovery due to fuel resource development. It can be assumed that each site's approach to the presentation of their archaeological artefacts comes from different perspectives, values, and approaches to conservation that may influence differences in the effectiveness of their interventions.

To explore the dimensions of these three sites, I collected and categorized photographic content (PC) and written content (WC) from each site; that explores the site experience of each place. Each case study involved a two-day site visit in the summer of 2017 for three-hour site visits at each site. The visitor experience was interpreted as the movement through sites based on interaction with signage. All signs, indicators, and aspects of the experience of visiting the site were photographed in the hopes of categorizing the types of hyperreal representation each site used in their promotion of sustainable usage of sites. The artefacts examined included 433 total photos, 196 from WOS, 87 from HI, 148 from BODO, 6 examples of written materials, and personal reflections on the visitor experience of the sites. These materials are examined comparatively as a semiotic case study of three sites based on site visits, collected artefacts, photos and researcher observations. This provides us with a broad base to understand and

identify hyperreal representation. The presence of hyperreal concepts as identified in the coding procedure will then be assessed with respect to the individual and archaeological content of the site to infer how hyperreal representations affect the sustainable use of the site.

The distinction between metaphorical and literal hyperreal representation can be shown in the coding itself which took the form of written observations recorded in the coding structure example presented in Table 1.

Coms Honours Thesis Coding					
Artefact number	Site	Linguistic	Metaphorical	Literal	Personal Intentional aspect
PC55	Writing-on-stone	"Fragile Area" perfunctory signage placed in the center of an unsanctioned trail to discourage further usage.	The signage and the under spoken fence are paired to encourage respectful use of the trail and create a connection between conservation and not straying from the trail.	Background context imagery of the unsanctioned trail. The placement of the signage acts as a physical barrier to the trail.	this photo provides further context for the style of signage and the way that movement along the path is enforced.

Table 1 Coding structure example

For example, the use of signs to physically block unsanctioned trails is a prime example of the ways experience is developed at these sites. While the written content may support the development of hyperreal concepts through its message, the placement of the sign might have a metaphorical element supporting hyperrealistic representation through the directing of visitors to experience the site along a certain path, or, in a particular way. The coded photographic content would be recorded in such a way to include all of those aspects, as well as, wherever possible the intention behind the photo, or the reason that this element stuck out to the visitor. These

metaphorical objects are then categorized with either a PC number or WC number and the coded information is compiled into a single document.

The sites, for the purposes of this study, are categorized as anything falling within public access, not limited to the archaeological site itself, but, holistically including all aspects essential to the experience of the site, including the areas that visitors are directed to attend to gain access to the archaeological site. So, for this selection of sites, the interpretive centres of BODO and WOS are included but HI is not due to the separate nature of that interpretive centre. The analysis of this collected data involved the identification of thematic trends and recurring elements of hyperreality from the descriptions provided in the coding. For clarity of narrative, and to limit the scope of this study, site photos will be analysed in order of the site from least to most hyperreal; WOS, BODO, and HI. In this way, we can see the development of hyperreal representation through site-specific methods of conservation, to be able to make some claims about their effectiveness and contribute to the development of generalized best practices for hyperreal representation in an Alberta context.

8. Analysis: The Visit and the View; the Alberta experience

The experience of any place is affected by the unavoidable touch of human presence, often marked by a simplistic and often-overlooked method of communication; the sign. Signage is ever-present in our daily lives, so much so, that we often forget how many signs we interact with in any given day, let alone the role that they play in directing and ordering our lives. In the context of heritage sites, signs are often uni-directional and guide visitors through how to interact with the site they are visiting. As I looked for signs of hyperreality at the study sites, I followed the

experience that one would have by interacting with site signage. Which means we start, in most cases, with the welcome sign (Figures 1-3).



Figure 3 PC 195 welcome signage WOS



Figure 4 PC197 welcome signage HI.



Figure 5 PC 285 welcome Signage BODO.

Signs provide a lot of context to the places they are associated with; they often contain information about the site, the affiliation with authorities, and the stylistic cues that prep visitors for the sites they are about to see. WOS (Figure 1) utilizes a sign of the same style of other Alberta Parks as a codified connection with all other such parks and sets the tone for what visitors can expect from their visit. HI (Figure 2) utilizes an enormous metal sign that doesn't follow the conventional size or shape of other signs, creating a feeling of large scale importance

which, when paired with the metaphor of the buffalo motif and perforated pattern edge, draw the viewer to experience a perception of an epic worldwide importance that the site will contain.

BODO's (Figure 3) sign, in contrast to the previous two, has a largely commercial aspect, identifying the groups operating the site as well as providing contact information, all of which, while largely perfunctory, prepares the viewer for a privatized archeological experience that combines community values with purely promotional material.

Stylistically, these signs each have a metaphorical identity and literal background that plays a role in the development of the hyperreal experience of a site. In the same sense that people judge books by their covers, perceptions of sites can be largely framed through their first interaction with a site sign. WOS is an Alberta Park and as such has elements that stress conservation, exploration, and outdoor recreation. HI's larger than life sign implies authentic aboriginal experience, epic world-wide importance, and legitimacy through association to UNESCO. On BODO's sign, which might be seen as advertisement-driven, the company name itself, Buffalo Adventures, shows the different presentation of the site as experience oriented leading visitors to develop a perception that this site is about the experience of the site and the enjoyment of archaeological authenticity. All three welcome signs, as we will see, play an important role in the presentation of each site and, while we perhaps shouldn't judge a site by its sign, in this case, the initial sign provides important information about the nature of the site and the experience inherent to each. The framing of each sign foreshadows the intentional approaches each site uses to create a hyperreal experience in their context.

8.1 Trekking Writing-On-Stone

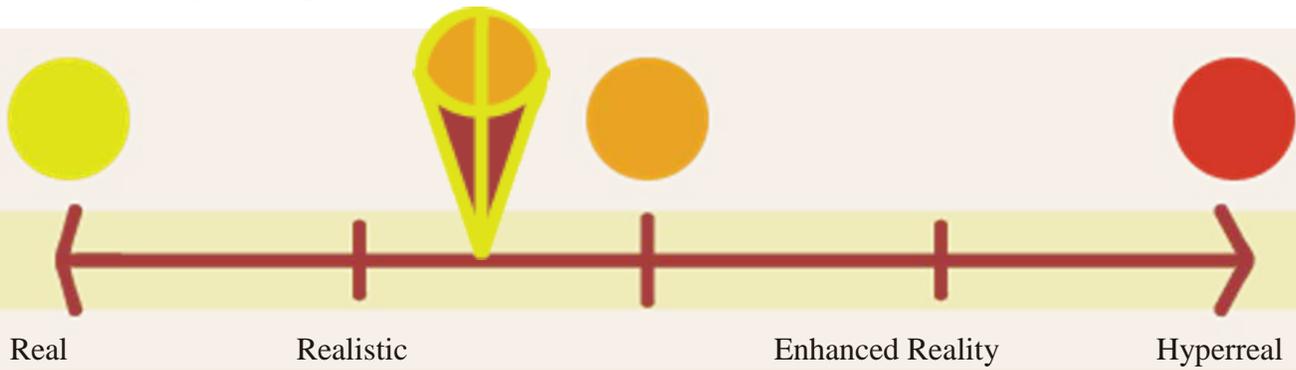


Figure 6 The continuum of hyperreality; Writing-On-Stone



Figure 7 PC 4 introductory plaque in English, French, and local languages.

Beyond the initial signage and introductory plaque (figure 4), WOS features an interpretive centre and an interpretive trail culminating at the *battle scene* wall carving. This initial signage provides our first look at the development of a hyperreal experience. The written plaque emblazoned with governmental crests implies a formalized acceptance of the value of this site. The additional images pulled from the petroglyphs help to solidify an appeal to an archaeological past. In context, situated over the picturesque milk river valley, it elicits a feeling of connection to the artefacts about to be experienced. This photo includes more of the local

climate and grasslands. You can see a clear connection between the view from this sign and the site itself. In this way, if you look at the way information and aspects of the site are presented, and the prescribed experience intended for visitors, individuals can visit and experience WOS without ever visiting the namesake rock carving. This intentional presentation largely contributes to the hyperreal experience of the site, as visitors are led to experience certain aspects that perhaps do not represent the archaeological character of the site but do contribute to the experience being cultivated. This example shows what we can classify as the hyperreal; experiences unrelated to the site, inferred through context, that creates an experience as good, or better, than the site itself.

Starting at the interpretive centre, the development of a narrative of discovery and conservation can be seen through a collection of written content available outside of the interpretive centre. WC4, WC5, and WC6 each contain elements of metaphorical and transplanted themes that contribute to the development of the hyperreal experience of the site. These pamphlets include sketches of the pictograms, in context images of the site, and maps prescribing the route individuals should take through the site. This written content creates a narrative for the site that pairs written descriptions of the importance of the site with messages of the importance of protecting the site. “It is believed that everything in the valley contains a spirit and is very much alive. When enjoying the park please be as respectful as you would be when visiting anyone's home.” (WC4) and, “Remember an archaeological site is a non-renewable cultural resource. It is every one's responsibility to help to protect and care for these sites.” (WC4). By making these descriptive pamphlets, of three varying sizes, available at one of the first points of contact for visitors, it makes it possible for visitors to experience the site without

having access to the interpretive centre. This ensures that anyone visiting, at any time, has the opportunity to experience the site in the way the interpretive trail was intended.



Figure 8 PC6 signage explaining the sustainability of the interpretive centre.

In the interpretive centre itself signs help continue to set the stage for the site experience as PC5, PC6, and PC7 attest. Each utilizes metaphorical imagery, in the form of iconic background images of traditional aboriginal scenes, local plants and sketches of petroglyphs, to create the perception of authentic experiences of sites, while the written language attests to the sustainability of the interpretive centre. LEED certification, and a gift shop banner that points directly to the sustainability of products, creates an experience of the site that respects conservation while developing a completely separate experience of the site. It is quickly apparent to visitors why these messages are necessary as the hoodoos adjacent to the interpretive centre are riddled with graffiti such as, “NE KELLER” (PC27), "HN + Z" enclosed in a heart (PC30). Figure 6 shows the extent of graffiti in the soft sandstone directly beside the visitor centre.



Figure 9 PC31 heavily graffitied section of hoodoo along the path.

Throughout the site I see further signage describing the preferred visitor interaction with the site and the conservation interventions this site uses. Throughout the site there were three distinct types of signage photographed: recently placed descriptive signage; directional signage; and, older descriptive signage. Recently placed descriptive signage shows some clear appeals to hyperreality that carries through the rest of the site.



Figure 10 PC11 example of site signage and format.

The signs of this type, as Figure 7 exemplifies, show the clearest examples of hyperrealistic representation and the possibility of hyperrealism supporting sustainability at archaeological sites. The pairing of information regarding transplanted concepts with messages of conservation (PC11, PC55, PC56), exploration (PC12, PC46, PC54, PC62, PC65, PC67, PC78, PC84, PC93, PC134, PC138 etc), and traditional aboriginal knowledge (PC9-PC12,

PC121, etc), develop a sense of the great importance of respect and conservation of this site; and this is all happening over a kilometre away from the archaeological evidence referenced.



Figure 11 PC98 a clear example of call out numbers directly in front of what it relates to.

The use of call out numbers (PC46, PC54, PC62, PC65, PC67, PC78, PC84, PC93, PC134, PC138) corresponding to the self-guided trail brochure (WC6) shows one of the ways hyperreality is imbued into the experience. As visitors move through the interpretive trail, they *find* numbered callout signs that refer to written descriptions of what you are seeing. In the case of Figure 8, the sign refers visitors to the trail brochure which includes an artist rendering of the pictograms pictured above and a description using language that includes conservation and traditional knowledge messages. In this way, visitors are invited to project their experience of the written description onto the artefact pictured without ever gaining access to the artefact itself.

This approach has two clear benefits; by providing a written and visual description of this rock face, visitors develop for themselves an experience of seeing this site that without the callout would likely go unnoticed; and secondly, the signs simply point out that something nearby is of note, the experience of that artefact comes from the written accompaniment. The signs themselves are very low impact inviting visitors to read what they are about. By gamifying the trail to the site itself, it encourages the experience of tracking down each sign-focussing on

the experience of the site-rather than the strictly archaeological aspects. While WC6 could have simply given a laundry list of the aspects of the trail worth viewing this modular nature, keeps visitors entertained and searching for the next sign.



Figure 12 PC70 signage and low wooden fence used to block unsanctioned trail.



Figure 13 PC47 stairs carved into the hoodoos to allow easy access to the trail.



Figure 14 PC66 a bench used to block unsanctioned trails.

Directional signs also play a role in this development of a proscribed visitor experience. While visitors are encouraged to "take a hike, and discover for yourself the history and beauty of Writing-on-Stone /Aisinapi" (PC12), the trail itself is largely unidirectional, leading from the start of the trail to the battle scene. The pathway is proscribed with small unassuming interventions to keep visitors moving along the path. Strategic signage (Figure 9), benches (Figure 11), and accessibility interventions (Figure 9) work to remind visitors through written or visual cues that they are following a path while stating the directionality as little as possible so that visitors can still feel that they are exploring the trail while being directed down the path. Even the choice of language in the few trail blocking signs continues the illusion: "Fragile area" triggering for individuals the previous appeals to conservation that a simple "do not enter" sign would not evoke.



Figure 15 PC182 an older style sign showing the stylistic differences.

Older directional signage makes it clear that appeals to the hyperreal are a recent development. Wherever there is older signage, visitors can find directional information (PC72), maps (PC182), and purely informational text (PC160). These signs, as Figure 12 shows, are often obtrusive and highly factual. Breaking up the landscape, they interrupt the flow of the experience with information that doesn't support the development of an inner explorational narrative. Where newer signs using words like explore and discover imply a personal responsibility for the conservation of this site, older signs simply provide details for access. It is

important to note that the older signs are also located closer to the battle scene which removes the highly experiential aspect of the interpretive trail. Anywhere that the older signs are found, they are accompanied by manicured gravel paths, handrails, and easy access to the road (PC154, PC162, PC182, etc). The appearance of these signs, and the clear change to the more experiential newer signs, shows a definitive shift in the site's representation, between the installation of both types of signs, to appeal to a hyperreal presentation of the site.



Figure 16 PC168 the signage at the end of the interpretive trail



Figure 17 PC113 the battle scene experience with protective fencing.

The nature of WOS is such that hyperreal representation is imbued into all aspects of the experience of the site. It is only after finishing the interpretive trail-1 km of moderately difficult trail-that visitors are able to see the *battle scene* itself. Coincidentally, this is where a large proportion of the hyperreal elements are not present. With the caged-off area and governmental warning signs leaving no room for interpretation, we can see that the interpretive trail itself was largely used to create a hyperrealistic experience of exploration through the hoodoos to tire out visitors before they reach the actual battle scene, the RCMP fort archaeological site, or hoodoo archaeological site across the river, and create an experience of a section of the site to discourage visitors from exploring beyond the hyperrealistic experience of the interpretive trail.

In terms of sustainability, the creation of a hyperreal experience through the interpretive centre and trail, implies an authentic archaeological experience without opening several sections

of the site that may contain more sensitive archaeological areas. The sacrificial nature of this approach relies on the development of a narrative that makes the section experienced, the most valuable in terms of an archaeo-touristic experience. The continued motif of *the battle scene* pictogram (PC4, PC5, PC121, PC180) cements in the mind of visitors the historic value of *the battle scene* in the narrative of the interpretive trail. The interpretive trail, as a whole, acts as an achievement-based experience that uses hyperreal elements to create an impression of achievement, which winds through lesser archaeological elements in the form of hoodoos and call out signs to culminate at the *battle scene*.

8.2 Education in the Hyperreal Bodo

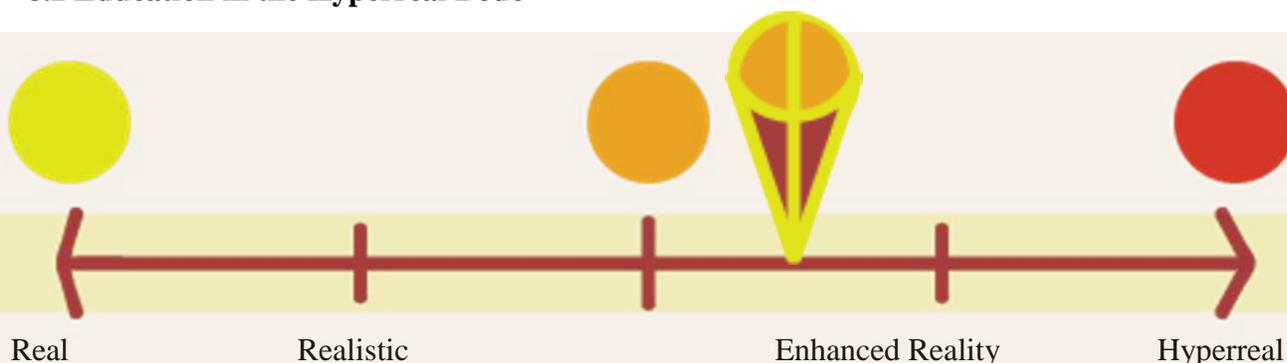


Figure 18 The continuum of hyperreality; BODO

Unlike the previous entries, BODO is neither a Provincially run site, or a site designated to have OUV, but rather a municipally run archaeological society out of the MDP that relies heavily on the traffic of rural tourists and the support of dedicated volunteers. One might expect that BODO would represent the least likely site to utilize hyperreal representation due to a lack of resources, and the idea that displaying artefacts in context is the most direct and easy option, but in fact this lack of resources and the need to maintain the interest of visitors may contribute to the site's hyperreal representation overall.

Upon entering the hamlet of Bodo you are struck with the scale of town, with less than 20 houses and stores within view of the interpretive centre. You might miss the BODO

archaeological society signage (Figure 15) if you're not careful. The interpretive centre itself has taken residence in the old Bodo elementary school. It is here that everyone's experience of BODO begins, and the hyperreal elements are first apparent.



Figure 19 PC 433 Signage for the BODO interpretive centre.

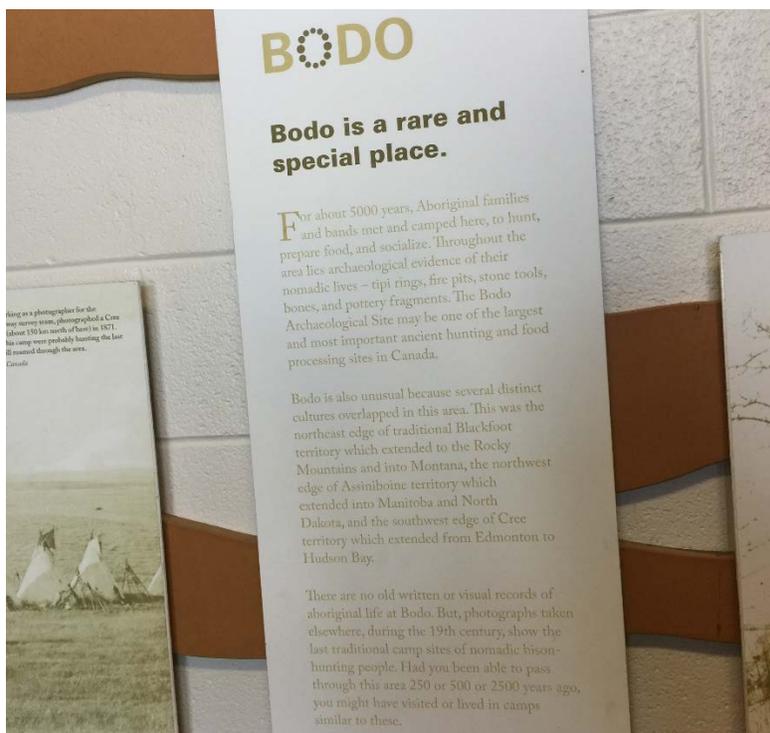


Figure 20 PC287 the introductory signage for the interpretive centre.

With a hallway full of introductory signage, we can see the way that BODO develops its identity of value, in a similar but distinct way to the two other sites. First, by expounding on their own unique history, then through connections to other sites, and transposed elements to create an identity for the site.

“BODO is a rare and special place. For about 5000 years, Aboriginal families and bands met and camped here, to hunt, prepare food, and socialize... There are no old written or visual records of aboriginal life at Bodo. But, Photographs taken elsewhere, during the 19th century, show the last traditional camp sites of nomadic bison-hunting people. Had you been able to pass through this area 250 or 500 or 2500 years ago, you might have visited or lived in camps similar to these.”(PC 287)

This creates clear connections between the images used from other locations, to build a mental image of the lived experience of BODO that is based on examples and connection to other parts of Alberta. Examples of transposed concepts are apparent throughout this section of the interpretive centre (PC287, PC288, PC289, PC290, PC291, PC292, PC293) with everything from connections to the more well-known WOS (PC288), to thinly veiled attachments to historical areas and times (PC289). This even includes a dramatic hunting scene (PC292) whose only connection to this context was that the artist had passed through this area at one point. Examples like these might not constitute Hyperreal representation on their own, but when paired with the transplanted images used to build a mental image of the site, the development of an experience of the site is clearer.

The use of careful language placed next to out of context pictures, “...He could have hunted near Bodo.” (PC300), “Their fathers and grandfathers might have hunted near Bodo.” (PC301), or “By the time of this photo, these women would have no reason to visit Bodo.” (Figure 26 PC302) show this clear appeal to hyperreal representation. All of these elements build to a few final signs that solidify the value of the site for visitors and the need for preservation.

Statements such as, “Sites such as Bodo are now protected by provincial law and only authorized experts are allowed to excavate or collect artifacts.” (PC304), round out the presentation of these transposed images as justification for the value of the site when connected with other sites in Alberta.



Figure 21 PC302 photo of Cree women unrelated to BODO site.

This concept illustrates the ways in which hyperreality is layered in this approach. Not only are concepts transplanted here for the building of a cohesive identity of BODO as a site but also the second layer of those transplanted concepts as the photos themselves are highly staged and as Barthes describes the process,

“...in order to take the first portraits the subject had to assume long poses under a glass roof in bright sunlight; to become an object made one suffer as much as surgical operation; then a device was invented, a kind of prosthesis invisible to the lens, which supported and maintained the body in its passage to immobility:

this headrest was the pedestal of the statue I would become, the corset of my imaginary essence.” (Barthes, 1977: 13)

With that in mind, we can see a dual level of hyperrealistic representation where the examples being used to promote the authenticity of the site are themselves realistic fakes. The nature of photography at the time was restrictive to natural presentation and created a necessity of posing for the development of photos.



Figure 22 PC313 example of the lab station set up at BODO.



Figure 23 PC315 Sample rock types for all over Alberta.



Figure 24 PC319 Sample Bison bones for interpretive purposes.

What follows is a mix of an educational lab and hyperreal representation of the value of BODO as an archaeological site. With workstations and examples of commonly found objects scattered throughout the space it is really hard to tell what is a BODO artefact and what is a transplanted example of something that might be found here. (PC316) The liberal use of pictures of the dig interspersed with teaching tools (PC348, PC360) and actual recreations of prototypical artefacts(PC340) blurring the line substantially between what is archaeological evidence and what is a teaching tool for students.



Figure 25 PC357 A pseudo Tipi space created for the screening of a BODO specific archaeological documentary.

This confusion is deepened by the advertisements for “Adult Dig-it Camps” (PC359) and the constant affirmation that this site is important and valuable. PC357 (Figure 30) shows one

such affirmation, as a space of the interpretive centre is dedicated to viewing their BODO documentary. While it is apparent that these appeals are necessary for continuing traffic and visitation, the constant sales of replicas and recreations (PC 346) makes the experience of BODO seem easily purchased. The last aspect of the interpretive centre that is important to note, is the juxtaposition of the opportunity to practice Atlatl throwing(PC379) and the provision of an Instagram frame(PC336) with which to share your experience of the site.



Figure 26 PC383 the bus that transports visitors to the site itself.

It is at this point that I will note that I haven't once mentioned the physical site itself, and that is simply because it isn't near the interpretive centre that so emphatically creates a magical experience of the site itself. Only after visitors have had a chance to peruse the interpretive centre can they pay to visit the site. This involves a short bus ride (Figure 31 - PC383) to a nearby grazing field. It is here that visitors actually get to see the artefacts they have been told about at the interpretive centre and given opportunities to connect the materials seen here to the examples shown at the interpretive centre. Several test pits are open to visitors, and here they are allowed to see artefacts in context with where they were found (See Figure 32).



Figure 27 PC406 Bison remains from the site in situ.

The opportunity to see the archaeological site itself is largely underwhelming after the breadth of interactive elements presented in the interpretive centre. The site itself, lacking any hyperreal representation of the digs through transplanted concepts or images, was far less impressive after the interpretive centre. Many of the highlighted points, including PC406, (Figure 32) somewhat referential to the previous experience of holding bison bones in the interpretive centre. The few interventions there were in the site served only to connect visitors further to the interpretive centre transplanted elements. In this way, the real was largely unnecessary, and seemed almost referential, to the experience of the Bodo Interpretive Centre.

Due to the huge number of transplanted concepts presented in the interpretive centre, the BODO archaeological site need not be visited for the experience of the site. In this way BODO exhibits far more hyperreal representation than WOS, with almost enough removal of the actual site to be directly compared to HI. Whether this is simply because of the limited nature of archaeological resources, or the current increased interest in archaeotourism is unclear. In no

way is this disparaging the work being done by the archaeological society at BODO. They continue to run an interesting archaeological experience while limited by funding, location, and resources. However, as long as there are these constraints on sites such as BODO, this need for hyperreal representation is likely inescapable in archaeotourism sites to varying extents. As we've seen at these sites the development of hyperreal representation can be made up of many different techniques but ultimately creates the same result; the substitution of the site for the curated presentation of a site.

8.3 Imagining Head-Smashed-In

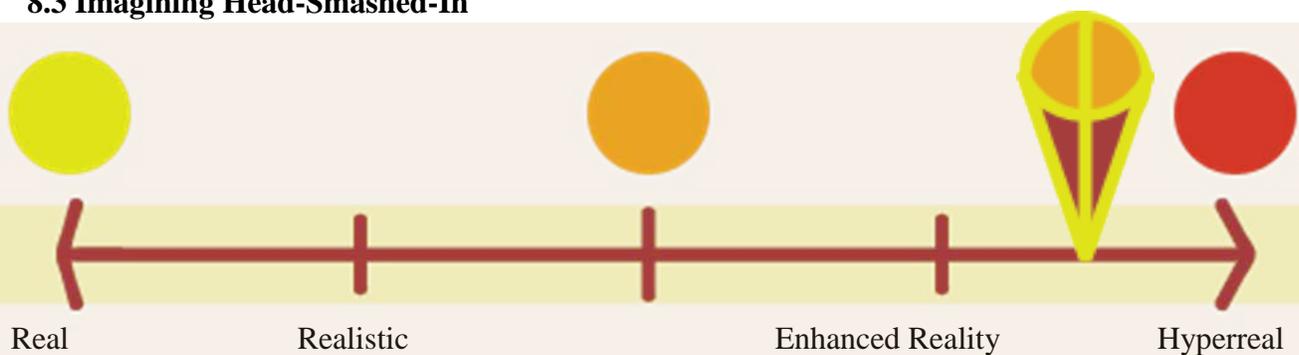


Figure 28 The continuum of hyperreality; Head-Smashed-In



Figure 29 PC 210 examples of Governmental and international displays of authenticity.

Along the continuum of hyperreal representation, WOS utilizes a moderate number of hyperreal elements when compared to the experience of visiting HI. Starting in the parking lot the elements of hyperreal representation are apparent. As you walk towards the entrance of the interpretive centre you are repeatedly struck by signs that expound on the value of the site. References to UNESCO World Heritage status (PC200, PC202, PC204) and Provincial government protections (PC210, PC211, PC212) front end and help to build the hyperreal experience, by framing every piece of signage as part of a larger authority and of international importance. While not directly adding to the hyperreal experience of the site, the repetition of the importance of this site, as well as the connections to authority, help to support elements of hyperreality developed further inside the site.

At the interpretive centre we can see the complete acceptance of hyperreal representation. The interpretive centre (PC 206) is recessed into the hill that makes up the site itself. The centre itself appears to be designed to be as unobtrusive to the landscape as possible, with local plant life covering the top and surrounding areas as well as a low concrete entrance. Upon closer inspection, however, the directed nature of the paved paths and barbed wire fencing leading from the parking lot to the interpretive centre tell a different story. The interpretive centre in the hill contains the bulk of the experience of visiting HI without providing the substance. Before entering, one can see a single separated sign relating to the interpretive trail.



Figure 30 PC 208 Interpretive Trail Map

This sign (PC 208) welcomes visitors in three languages and invites them to, “Walk beneath the cliffs where first nations hunters butchered buffalo. Pass through the campsite where successful hunts were celebrated.” (PC 208). It also includes the all-important notice, “Lower Trail Guide available in the gift shop.” (PC208). Here we see the complete split into the hyperreal. This singular sign using traditional iconography, and an idealized representation of the trail, invite participants to create for themselves a connection to a historic and valuable past without seeing it. If visitors don’t read this sign they might not even notice that there was a site beyond the interpretive centre. All of the materials surrounding this sign point to the curated presentation available within the interpretive centre, except for this sign which invites participants to walk, and imagine, the amazing feats that happened at this site, along a very clearly defined path.

This initial push creates for visitors an understanding of the space as both full of rich history and a place where amazing things happened. Without straying into the interpretive centre the path itself provides the clearest example of hyperreality discussed so far.



Figure 31 PC 220 image of the physical content of the site at HI.

HI is unique in our discussion in that the entirety of the Archaeological site (Barring the physical cliff itself) is buried beneath the trail (Figure 17). Visitors walk a very clearly marked path in several loops below the cliff stopping to read periodical signs and to imagine and create the historical significance for themselves. At no point along the trail are artefacts of any kind displayed for visitors to see. The trail, which is heavily gravelled and well maintained, is the only point of contact for visitor to the site itself which exists to varying degrees feet below them. This hyperreal representation allows the visitor to create, based on their own perception of the space and what little descriptors are provided, the value of the site on which they stand.



Figures 32, 33, 34 PC239, PC244, PC266 pictures of interpretive signage.

The images and signage used perpetuate this continuation of accepted importance through imagination, allowing visitors to confuse the field on which they stand with the artefacts beneath their feet. The signs use statements, such as “Here the dramatic hunt came to an end... Imagine the sights and sounds...” (PC237) or, “Thousands of years of hunting are hidden just under your feet...” and most blatantly, “Were these tools dropped by people passing through? was the buffalo jump actually being used 9000 years ago? The answer may never be uncovered.” (PC264), to create and promote a perception of this site as important and also something that you can connect directly to. The signs themselves are heavily stylized with traditional images and a few images of archaeologists working in an excavation. This limited information provides just enough information for the visitor to build a personal construct of the importance and value of the site.



Figures 35, 36, and 37 PC248. PC254, PC259



For those seeking more information, Figures 30, 31, and 32 show the site callout signs, similar to the ones in WOS, offer a more detailed experience of the site. This information however can only be accessed from within the interpretive centre. Once reinforced by the information contained within the interpretive centre visitors will be more accepting of the walk through the long grass that claims to be the site of HI. For many reasons, this is likely out of necessity, however the point remains that the space presented as the site of the HI is actually several feet above the site itself.

This collection of signs and trails are limited, to allow the visitor to interpret as much from the experience as they can which creates a problem of representation. If a visitor does not enter the interpretive centre, they are limited to the signs and symbols that are provided in the interpretive trail to develop a narrative of the value of this site. As we've seen this is done through the connections to governmental authority, invitations to imagine the space in use and descriptions of the process by which the site is historically relevant. All of these elements are limited and provide only the information necessary to understand the basics of the site, to keep the illusion of the site intact. This highly interpreted form of representation relies on the presenter (in this case the HI management) to provide accurate and salient information in a balanced way, or risk creating an identity for the site that is separate from the archaeological evidence.

This creation of a separate visitor experience of HI over the actual site itself presents a question. In the case of a site like this, exposing its artefacts to the elements and visitors would greatly increase their deterioration, but, by having them completely covered when does the value of the site lessen? Is it 10 feet? Or 20 from the artefacts themselves? If it is never, why would we

not simply build a replica several kilometres away. In the case of HI, the experience would be largely the same with any number of spaces in providing a similar experience to the interpretive trail. If the authenticity of the site is limited by distance, then at what point does creating a separate, highly imagined experience reduce the overall value of the site, by creating a highly interpreted lens? A trip into the development of a rural site provides us with a clearer view to this line of reasoning.

8.4 Discussion

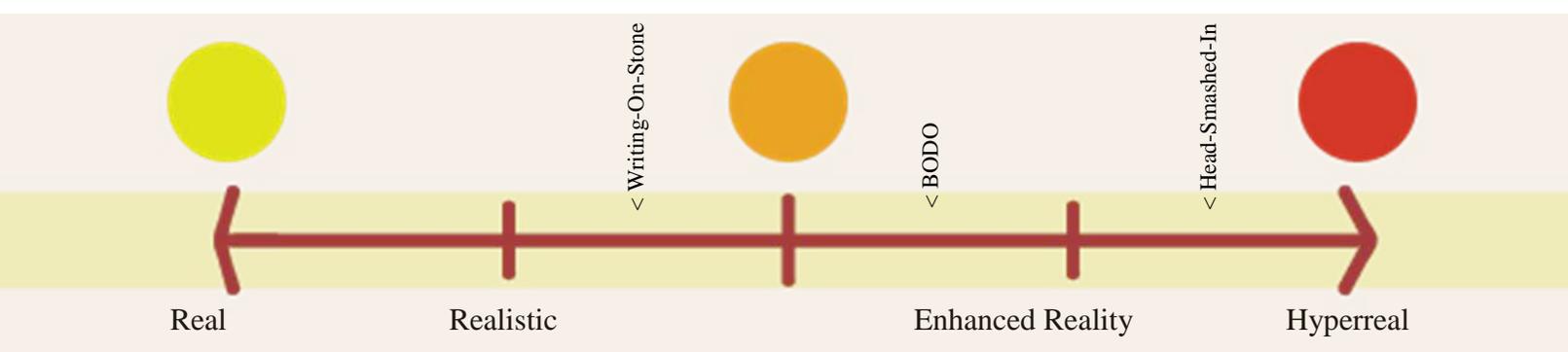


Figure 38 The continuum of hyperreality; site comparison

So, what are the implications for sustainability and resilience, when curated representation strays into hyperreal representation?

Whether HI's purely illusory site experience, WOS' substitution strategy, or BODO's multifaceted approach, the creation of hyperreal representation appears to be a common consequence of the presentation and preservation of these sites. Without making a value claim as to whether hyperreal representation is specifically positive or negative, we can identify several trends in the presentation of these sites. This allows for suggestions to be made as to the effectiveness of these options and the subsequent decisions that need to be made in their implementation to ensure the best possible result for the sustainability of each site. All three of our chosen sites provide us with a different approach to their curated presentation that is unique

in its implementation but negligibly different in their result; often as hyperrealistic representation.

WOS' use of an interpretive trail as the focus of their conservation interventions shows a very limited development of the site and a resultant low level of hyperrealistic representation. Through the creation of a trail experience, in the signage and information visitors are intended to be exposed to, visitors are limited in the number of sites that they can access personally. This limitation acts almost as a sacrificial process, giving visitors the ability to explore the hoodoo trail, and encouraging them not to injure any of the archaeological evidence there, which helps them to protect the areas of active archaeology across the river and past the Battle Scene terminus of the trail. The evidence that this trail and its signs were recently redeveloped and now include more elements of hyperreal representation (concepts of exploration, indigenous perspectives, and an individual imperative to preserve the site) shows that this trend toward more mediated presentation, and that the resulting hyperrealistic representation, is a trend in the maintenance of the sustainability of archaeo-tourism sites.

The level of wear noted in the interpretive trail of WOS is far greater than that of either BODO or HI and a key part of this is that the site itself is open to the public — albeit fenced off. Strangely, WOS, as the example with the least evidence of hyperreal representation, shows the main benefit of its use most clearly. Curated archaeotourism sites' subsequent creation of hyperreal content creates a renewable experience of the site that can handle far greater volume of visitation than the artefacts themselves. Any archaeological materials exposed to visitors will be worn down by their use. WOS, with the least amount of interventions, has the most visible examples of visitor destruction in the form of vandalism and visitation wear. It is important to note that WOS is also pursuing World Heritage Site status (UNESCO 2018) and that this pursuit

may have contributed to the development of some of these features that border on the hyperreal, as the preservation and presentation of information is of paramount importance to UNESCO classification.

WOS is also unique in the pairing of messages of adventure and exploration with the need to be conscientious users of the space. This duality in the presentation of WOS, as something that visitors discover and something that is the responsibility of the individual to protect, both try to instill a feeling of personal responsibility and result in a hyperreal experience of the trail. Either way, in a purely physical sense, WOS illustrates the necessity of developing and communicating a sustainable experience of the site, as otherwise the presentation of archaeological materials in any form for visitors will result in their deterioration.

On the other end of the spectrum, HI exists with a visitor experience that doesn't expose any of the archaeological features of the site and instead presents a grass covered field and a ridge as the fantastic archaeological evidence that exists right beneath your feet. In terms of the physical longevity of the site, this approach is the most effective for preserving the physical objects. However, this complete reliance on substitution makes the sites existence beneath the soil unimportant to the experience of the site and as a result creates the closest example to hyperreal representation. With that in mind, there are quite a few factors that make HI a site in which hyperreal representation is concerning. As a current UNESCO World Heritage site, there is an imperative to preserve the artefacts of the site for future generations. The use of substitution ensures this physical sustainability but there is a secondary result in that the use of call out signs, similar to WOS, allows for the editing of representation to update sites to the interests of visitors over time. This editability of archaeological presentation allows for the information presented, and in the case of HI, the entirety of the visitor experience, to be greatly changed through

framing over time. This means that the interpretive interventions used to protect archaeological sites such as HI can colour the experience of the site to the point that visitation may dictate the representation of archaeological evidence which, in turn, means that different generations may get a different HI depending on the representation of the time.

It is also important to note in this example, that with complete hyperreal representation, the existence of the site beneath the interpretive trail and centre is irrelevant to the site experience itself and while this may help to preserve the site physically, it may not be the most effective option. If the site beneath doesn't matter to the visitor experience, would it not be more sustainable to remove the visitor centre and trail to a comparable venue away from the archaeological materials themselves? As I've noted in the earlier section, this may create more of a problem for the sustainability of the site itself, as if we can create visitor experiences that are more real to visitors than a site buried beneath it, or near by, then why do we need the site at all? When does the separation of site and interpretation make both less valuable?

BODO itself straddles a similar line with the creation of an interpretive centre that simultaneously works to create value for the archaeological site itself and ends up creating a separate experience that makes the real site referential to that initial hyperrealistic experience. To make visiting BODO a more attractive experience, they have created an amazing educational resource that acts as the experience of the site itself. While visitors can still go to the site of BODO, the interpretive centre is itself far more of a factor in the experience than the archaeological evidence.

In this instance, it is hard to see how hyperreal representation helps the sustainability of the physical site itself, as visitors still interact with the site. However, as an economic and social driver, the use of substitution builds, and maintains, the interest of both locals and visitors. The

social benefits of a community archaeological interpretive centre help the sustainability of the site by creating an imperative for presentation and preservation that wouldn't exist without community support. This imperative is nowhere better exemplified than in one of the signs for the BODO interpretive centre, "Settlers... arriving in the Wainright area in 1906... descendants of those who persevered still live and farm around the Bodo area." (PC304). The development of the social connection and narratives of ownership to the site helps to promote and maintain the site itself. BODO's hyperreal representation may then be better classified as a by-product of developing resilience rather than sustainability. The development of hyperreal representation at the interpretive centre is a part of the response to creating a community around the site. By making the connection to other sites in Alberta, providing representative examples, and building an experience around a central interpretive centre, they are able to reduce the detrimental effects of visitation on their archaeological material in response to the economic and social constraints placed on them.

Ultimately, all three sites, through different means, develop hyperreal representation as a result of maintaining and curating representation of the value of their sites and artefacts. The concept of value itself, although not discussed within the scope of this research, plays an important role in the preservation of these sites. While BODO, WOS, and HI all rely on their presentation of value to continue people's interest in visiting, it also creates a system of ranking the historical value of a site against another. The development of hyperreal representations of sites presents several problems for the preservation of sites. As HI shows, at a certain level, hyperreal representation protects the sites and materials more than the presentation of the artefacts themselves ever could. The level to which hyperreal representation should be allowed to occur, however, is still debatable. Where HI's site curation creates what may as well be a

separate experience, other examples through various methods, develop a balance between the presentation and representation of the site and the subsequent amount of hyperrealistic representation created. The question is whether the result of this attempt is to enhance reality of the site while promoting the preservation of the site, or whether it is to create an actual hyperreality that removes the visitor from the reality of the site which runs the risk of detaching the visitor from the issue of the sustainability of sites. This balance however cannot be considered a truly sustainable aspect of site representation due to the myriad of concerns created by hyperrealism as we have seen.

9. Conclusions and Future Work

Through this thesis, I have set out to show that the use of curated representation that creates hyperrealistic elements do not support sustainable usage of archaeological sites. To do this, I visited three representative sites in Alberta to photograph the site experience and then examine the subject of these photographs for examples of hyperrealistic representation and evidence of its affects. This, in turn, was used to review the approaches taken by three different management systems to see what the actual effects of these hyperrealistic interventions were on the sustainability of site visits. All of this then contributes to the analysis of these sites for their contribution to the sustainability of the site overall and the conclusions put forth below.

Hyperrealistic representation is a concept that is easily created through archaeo-tourism site curation but one that carries with it a disturbing duality in relation to the sustainability of each site. All three sites exhibited some form of hyperrealistic representation in its presentation that could be said to promote the sustainable or resilient use of each site to some extent. While AtKisson's (2013) compass definition may support this claim with the economic and environmental sustainability of these sites, the social and wellness aspects for this approach are

underrepresented. From Portney's (2013) definition, we can see that while consumption, governments, and the private sector are important considerations for the development of site representation, it doesn't create a complete picture through the development of hyperreal representation without considering a cultural sustainability aspect. Even Cascio's (2009) approach to resilience neglects the future projection necessary with representation of this kind, and, while these sites are largely resilient to current factors, they cannot be defined as sustainable at their core. The UN's baseline definition of sustainability shows hyperrealistic representations failings most clearly as the "*...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (WCED 1987) and representation that utilizes hyperrealistic representation fails to assure this future frame by maintaining the reality of the sites archaeological evidence.

The creation of hyperrealism as defined by Eco (1986) precludes a sustainable presentation, as the imagination that is required to create a realistic fake, or alternative experience, is limited by the time in which it was created. While removing visitor access to sites is an important factor to the preservation of the physical objects themselves, socially and culturally it creates a fake that will age far more noticeably and at a more rapid rate than the artefacts themselves. The development of narrative — a story of the experience of a site — limits its ability to remain true to the artefact and the authenticity of the site that is being touted almost unanimously across sites. The addition of hyperreal elements dates the site to the time of their installation and largely removes the authentic aspect of the site itself. Much like an archaeological zoo, hyperrealistic representation as Frye (2002) argued, creates a metaphor of the fake. By stating, through hyperrealistic intervention, that the fake is the real; we have created a caged bear in a zoo. This representation in the moment claims to be based on the conservation of

the animal (site) but in actuality is a curated visitor experience obsessed with continuing visitor interest.

For archaeo-tourism, this presents a problem as archaeology in its most basic form is not a spectator experience. The interest in travel to archaeological sites has necessitated the utilization of approaches such as hyperrealistic intervention but hasn't addressed this gap in ideologies noted most clearly by McGettigan, & Rozenkiewicz (2013) in that visitors to these sites are considered consumers and rely on their visitor experience to help them to decide their interest in returning. The result, of course, being the reduced viability of archaeo-tourism sites over time. Hyperrealism's replacement of authenticity at sites relies on the reliability of the curation of the site and visible links to authority to maintain consumer interest. As anyone who has visited an outdated or ill-curated museum can tell you, this reliance is misplaced. The replacement of the real, and recognition of the fake experience of these sites, while created as a part of the conservation and protection intervention for the site, may reduce their viability due to the removal of authentic identity of the site. Or, more likely, the continued revision of visitor experience to capture the attention of new generations will erode the authenticity and integrity of the history of the site due to responding to consumer interest.

Hyperrealistic representation, while a great addition to a touristic experience, does not contribute to the sustainability of these sites. This fatalistic view of the creation of hyperrealistic representation, currently utilized in Alberta, provides the opportunity to make a few claims as to the resulting best practices for sites. While hyperrealistic representation does not support the sustainability of sites in Alberta I do not claim that it cannot. If sites can leverage interest in hyperreal experiences of the site at the sites themselves, could we not promote, as Walker (2013) suggests, digital fakes that do not rely on the location of the site to maintain their authenticity? In

this way, we can showcase human history in an adaptive way that does not rely on the sites themselves; leaving them to the maintenance of their cultural and historic value. Barring this removal of value from location, another consideration is in the complete removal of hyperrealistic representation from the visitor experience. By prioritizing whatever method creates the longest physical sustainability of the sites with less consideration for the visitor experience, it is easier to ensure the greatest sustainability of the social, cultural, and economic value of these sites as a whole into the future. This approach would greatly reduce the archaeotourism revenue for each site but on the geological time scale could maintain a reduced economic scale for a far longer timeframe.

Really, this study is inadequate to categorize all of the ways in which hyperreal representation is created by archaeo-tourism sites in Alberta, and while I have attempted to showcase some of the attempts to create hyperreal representation for the promotion or detriment of sustainability, it is in no way exhaustive. Even for the sites reviewed, the use of photography creates a snapshot in time that provides context only for current trends at that moment in time. Whether hyperreal representation continues to be used for the preservation of archaeological materials remains to be seen, but this thesis has opened the door to new areas of discussion in a local context. For future research, it would be important to look at the way value narratives are created by archaeotourism sites, whose value assertions these representations are respecting, and how have colonial perspectives altered this narrative to match international standards. A more rigorous look into the alternatives to hyperreal representation would also be a benefit as the solutions I have outlined do not represent the entirety of available options.

While hyperrealism may not be the best option for signage at sites, an in-depth life cycle assessment of the best practices for sustainable presentation, examining what wording or choices

of information will have the greatest longevity for each site would greatly increase their sustainability. Most importantly, is the need to interrogate what values assessments make BODO more or less historically valuable than WOS or HI, beyond the claims that each site makes? Future research should look to systems in place in Alberta to develop this value and the ways this discourse of value contributes to the continued longevity of the archaeotourism sites themselves. While sites have waited hundreds or thousands of years for their rediscovery or commercial representation, we do not have the same time frame with which to get this right. The time to act is now, or, we will become the artefacts of history; remembered for our inability to maintain and express historical value appropriately for future generations.

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