2020

**Manifestations: Displays of Internal Beliefs and Perspectives**

Manuel Ferreira

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Manifestations: Displays of Internal Beliefs and Perspectives

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

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Master of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis aims at better understanding and sharing the internal beliefs, influences, and insights of specific Field Museum staff in regard to exhibitions and the future of the Field Museum. It is people that make up museums and create exhibitions, and their beliefs not only influence and guide them, but also their institution and what they develop. Grounded in museum anthropology, and framed by new and critical museology, entanglement, contact zones, museum as method, and a queer mezclando (mixing) perspective, this research employs museum ethnography as a way of exploring relations and meanings among museum staff, beliefs, and manifestations. In the chapters to follow, I describe and share the internal beliefs of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff on the future of the museum and the manifestations of these beliefs in exhibitions, as well as what this relationship may tell us about contemporary museum anthropology.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I grew up going to museums in Milwaukee and Chicago with my family. As a gay, Brown, Latinx\(^1\) and Chicanx man, I would try my best to translate what was being said in the exhibits. I would try to translate the text and information into my and my family’s experiences and lives. Through this I started learning to look at details in museums and what they might mean. What is being said, what is not being said, why is the lighting the way it is, who made this, where are the people, why are there people here, where is my family, where am I? Most of the time I was left feeling invisible.

The Repatriation Director at the Field Museum of Natural History (Field Museum), Helen Robbins, once sat down and talked with me about invisibility and representation. Remembering Ellen DeGeneres coming out, she explained how she used to be happy to have stereotypes because at least we, queer people, existed, even as stereotypes. In her view, at least we are not invisible, because the worst thing is to be invisible, but she also believes that there must be more nuanced, complex representations of people and communities (Personal Communication, July 22, 2019). Field Museum researcher and co-curator Meranda Roberts, a Northern Paiute and Chicanx women, believes museums are powerful for people of color and that if more of us were in charge

\(^1\) I use *Latinx* as a gender-neutral identifier to center and make space for people in our communities who do not identify within the Latino/a binary. An -x ending is also used with other identifiers, such as Chicanx, throughout this thesis. Additionally, it should be noted that an -e ending could also be used to make gendered identifiers gender-neutral.
museums could be a transformative experience for youth (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

This is one of many reasons it is important to critically look at museums and exhibitions. It is not enough, nor was it ever enough, to have invisibility and stereotypes. Since museums have the power to define and put the world on display, it is our responsibility to critically and actively think about what is being communicated and established in our institutions. This thesis is concerned with the relationship between the internal beliefs and perspectives of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff on the future of the museum and the manifestations of these beliefs and perspectives in exhibitions, as well as what this relationship might tell us about contemporary museum anthropology. The research on which this thesis is based was guided by the three following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the internal beliefs and perspectives of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff on the future of the museum and the manifestations of these beliefs and perspectives?

2. What frameworks do the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff ground themselves in, and does this connect to their internal beliefs and perspectives?

3. How do the manifestations of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff’s internal beliefs affect the museum’s exhibitions?

The Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois, was chosen as the site of research because of its colonial history, cultural exhibitions, and work in co-curation and co-governance by
some staff. Initially, the scope of this research was limited to the Pacific Department, but was later expanded to include the Native North American and Exhibition Departments upon realizing the interconnectedness of the three departments and their work.

This research, and the focus on internal beliefs and manifestations, was inspired by Philipp Schorch and Conal McCarthy’s edited book, *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship* (2019). In *Curatopia*, engaging with Māori language, worldviews, and histories with museological institutions, the museum is reimagined as a waka (canoe). In this perspective, the museum as a canoe, or ship, is evoked to explore the ways in which curatorial and museum practices can be turned around to face the future, as the crew of the waka navigate the ocean before them (Schorch, McCarthy, and Dürr 2019). If curatorial and museum practices can be turned around to face the future, what internal beliefs and manifestations are (not) guiding and showing this turn?

The purpose of this thesis is to better understand the beliefs, influences, and insights of specific people, at a single institution, at a moment in time in regard to exhibitions and the future of where they work. This is important for us to explore because it is people that make up museums, create exhibitions, and develop programs. Their beliefs may not only influence and guide them, but also what they develop. With exhibitions being one of the most public faces of a museum, it is crucial for us to consider what beliefs are being manifested through them. This is especially the case with long standing exhibitions at institutions that may reinforce or contradict the beliefs and manifestations of contemporary staff and exhibitions.

For the purpose of this thesis and research, I use the term *internal belief*, and its variants, to describe the personal perspectives, views, interpretations, goals, desires,
emotions, etc. that someone may hold. I am not concerned with whether or not these internal beliefs are ‘true.’ Instead, I accept them as they are since they are very much true for those who hold and are influenced by them. Additionally, the term *manifestation*, and its variants, describes the tangible or intangible expressions of internal beliefs external to those who hold them.

This thesis and research is grounded in museum anthropology. While museum anthropology can be interpreted in multiple ways due to the diversity of work done in the field, it can be understood as anthropology practiced *in* museums and the anthropology *of* museums. Anthropology in museums has been practiced as long as anthropologists have been in museums and can be described as the application of anthropological research methods, theories, insights, documentation, study, representation, and care of tangible and intangible culture (Kreps 2019). The anthropology of museums began emerging in the 1980s alongside postmodern and postcolonial critiques, as well as the critiques by those that have been the subjects of anthropological and colonial study and collecting. The anthropology of museums can be broadly described as the study, research, and examination of the social organizations, structures, and roles of museums—investigating and understanding museums as cultural artifacts (Ames 1992; Kreps 2019).

My intention is not to present a single, unchanging truth about the Field Museum and its staff. Rather, my goal is to provide and make space for the beliefs, perspectives, emotions, and stories shared with me by Field Museum staff, as well as my momentary interpretations. I expect all of this to be fluid, dynamic, contradictory, and used in a variety of ways as times and views change. I do not see it as my position to take my experiences and everything that has been shared with me and present them as a single,
truthful narrative. Instead, I see my position as one of learning and listening, allowing my experiences and what has been shared with me to live and change, embracing the in between.

This thesis explores the founding and history of the Field Museum, placing the institution within its larger colonial and museological history, as well as literature covering the anthropology of museums, representation in museums, and decolonizing of museums. The purpose of this exploration is not only to provide a base for the rest of the thesis, but also to introduce some of the scholars that have influenced me throughout this process.

The theoretical frameworks that influence my interpretations and research are new and critical museology, entanglement, contact zones, museum as method, and queer mezclando (mixing) perspective. New museology reflects the dissatisfaction with conventional interpretations of the museum and its functions, and is especially concerned with community development and social progress, democratization of museum practices, and bottom-up, participatory approaches (Kreps 2003). Critical museology sees museums as artifacts of society, placing them within their social, political, historical, and economic contexts (Ames 1992; Kreps 2003). Additionally, critical museology positions museums as a discourse, a social practice that impacts the construction of knowledge and the way we behave (Marstine 2011).

Entanglement is a way of theorizing and articulating the interconnectedness of complex, heterogeneous systems in a manner that maintains distinction between differences and acknowledges moments when they become interwoven, while also recognizing power asymmetries and being perceptive to forms of resistance, conflict, and
innovation (Thomas 1991; 2016; 2019). Contact zones are the spaces of colonial encounters, spaces in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict (Clifford 1997, 192). A contact perspective of museums emphasizes how subjects are established in and by relation to one another.

Museum as method refers to the activity of knowing in the museum space through moments of discovery, captioning, and juxtaposition. Discovery, for museum staff and audience alike, involves finding things that were not lost, identifying things that were known to others, and the disclosure of what was hidden or repressed. Captioning refers to the literal composition of a line of text that may accompany an image or object, as well as its description and contextualization within the larger museum space. Juxtaposition happens in museums because nothing is ever truly alone, being juxtaposed to the physical environment and other forms of tangible and intangible culture (Thomas 2016; 2019).

Queer mezclando perspective is a perspective I have been cultivating, which grew out of the dissatisfaction and invisibility I feel with the academics I have been exposed to throughout my education. Additionally, through my research I have come to have a deeper understanding of the importance of diversity in museums. This includes making space for, sharing authority with, and changing the system to work with people that have been historically and contemporaneously erased and misrepresented. This also includes educational, socioeconomic, and other forms of diversity. A recent survey by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in partnership with Ithaka S+R, the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) states that Hispanic
or Latinx people make up about 5% of curators and educators, and 3% of museum leadership and conservators, in U.S. art museums (Westermann, Schonfeld, and Sweeney 2019, 9–12). This survey also does not take into account any queer identities among U.S. museum staff. That is why I turned to my larger communities—Mexican American, Chicanx, Latin American, and queer communities. Queer mezclando perspective is a critical perspective that embraces and lives in the in between. It rejects notions of purity, coherence, and linear causality, as well as dichotomous, all-encompassing perspectives as they can often be reductionist views that obscure rather than embrace complexities. It acknowledges fluid, dynamic, contradictory systems, experiences, and existences that do not hold people or anything to timeless, defeatist, and homogenous identities. It avoids collecting information under the guise of seeking a single, unchanging truth, and is always synthesizing in an organic fashion that allows for the mixing of ambiguity, subjectivity, and objectivity. My desire is for this perspective and the way I embody it to change as I move through life, meet new people, encounter new scholars, and experience things I never expected.

As previously mentioned, I ground this research and its design in museum anthropology. The anthropology of museums employs the methods of cultural anthropology, primarily ethnography (Kreps 2019). Museum ethnography, like any form of ethnography, is a way of exploring social relations and cultural meanings at a particular time and in a particular place or places (Bouquet 2012). This research is methodologically mixed in the sense that I am guided by the theoretical frameworks discussed above, as well as by presenting individual’s interpretations and insights in their own words as much as possible. However, since it was not my explicit intent to conduct
research in a queer-museum anthropology, queer-phenomenological, or any other methodological mixture, I do not wish to position this research as anything other than museum anthropology.

This research explores the differing explicit and implicit frameworks—ethical, professional, cultural—that ground and influence the ways in which anthropology and exhibition staff conduct their work, and suggests that employees connect and disconnect with these frameworks in ways that are unique to them and their departments. An example of this from another institution is that of moʻokūʻauhau (genealogy) at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum. In a museum setting moʻokūʻauhau is a Native Hawaiian curatorial framework and practice that informs how aliʻi (royal; chief; noble) collections are cared for by Native Hawaiians and non-Native Hawaiian collections managers. Through the activation of a moʻokūʻauhau consciousness, in various forms, collections managers draw on personal experiences in working with elders and cultural mentors, as well as familial and ancestral knowledge, to care for collections with an emphasis on the importance of safeguarding mana (spiritual energy) embedded within aliʻi objects (Kapuni-Reynolds 2017).

Excerpts of various Field Museum staff discussing their internal beliefs of where they ideally and realistically see the Field Museum going in the future are shared in this thesis. These beliefs manifest in a variety of ways and are expressed through interactions between people throughout the Field Museum’s history. This research shows that these manifestations include forms of colonization, decolonizing perspectives, forms of erasure, collections access, appropriate practices in collections, co-curation, and co-governance, as well as the manifestation of silos and siloing in the museum’s structure.
and communication. Additionally, this thesis suggests that exhibitions act as time capsules, chronicling the changes in internal beliefs that have occurred. As a form of time travel they manifest past beliefs today, while also placing us in their historical contexts.

This research explores and discovers that the Field Museum and the work being done at the institution are always in a process of change. At different points in time the museum becomes a leader and falls behind, with beliefs and manifestations becoming dominant, receding, and emerging through forms of contact and entangled histories. The internal beliefs and manifestations shared in this thesis reflect this process among specific Field Museum staff at a specific point in time and how exhibitions can chronicle this change in one of the museum’s most public faces.
CHAPTER TWO: THE FOUNDING OF THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

By the 1890’s, Chicago was mostly rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1871, and was growing in population and national reputation as a hub of manufacturing, trade, transportation, and culture. Mayor DeWitt C. Creiger, looking to further establish the city’s reputation after the success and splendor of the 1878 Centennial Exposition in Paris, established a committee to persuade Congress that Chicago should be the host of the next World’s Fair. In 1890, they agreed, and preparations began (Carlson 2018).
The Field Museum is the legacy of the World’s Columbian Exposition, hosted by Chicago in 1893 as a six month celebration for the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ arrival in the ‘New World’ (Field Museum 2011b). Professor Frederic Ward Putman, then curator of the Peabody Museum at Harvard, was involved with the Fair from the beginning as the head of the Department of Ethnology, and was the first to call for a museum to be formed as a result of the exposition (Field Museum 2011b; 2011c). He called for a museum because such a collection would aid in further establishing Chicago as a major U.S. city, which would allow for a greater ability to stake claims of regional prominence and provide education and excitement for those unable to travel (Carlson 2018; Kratz and Karp 2006). To aid in building the collection, Putman recruited Franz Boas, the ‘father’ of American anthropology, and George Dorsey to collect and research objects from across North America and the world (Carlson 2018). It was this position that began Boas’ American career (Conn 2010, 29).

Three years before the fair, in 1890, Putman presented his plan for a museum to the Committee on Permanent Organization, but they were unable to fund this endeavor; however, in 1891, Putman presented his plan again, but this time to the Commercial Club of Chicago, in hope of gaining support from Chicago’s wealthy businessmen. It was at this meeting that Putman gained the attention and support of Edward E. Ayer (Field Museum 2011c).

Edward E. Ayer, a Chicago businessman and collector of Native American artifacts, took pride in his city and was determined to secure the museum’s future. To accomplish this, he had to gain the support of Marshall Field, the wealthiest man in Chicago. Upon convincing Field, a $1 million contribution was made to ensure the
success and permanence of the Columbian Museum of Chicago located at the Palace of Fine Arts in Jackson Park, where Ayer became the first president (Field Museum 2011b; 2011c). This project offered Field the opportunity to invest his money and name, a chance to build a lasting legacy that few have (Carlson 2018; Duncan 1995). In 1905 the museum’s name was changed to Field Museum of Natural History (Field Museum) in honor of Marshall Field, and later, in 1921, the museum was moved to its current location in Grant Park after an $8 million donation by Field at the time of his death (Field Museum 2011a, 2011b, 2011c).

The design of the Field Museum’s building exudes a sense of monumentality and control, which is intentional. The Field Museum, with its neoclassical architecture and design, looks over the city and fights its neighboring institutions for attention. The power of the museum’s imposing architecture, and the perceived infallibility of its professional voices, approximate rituals of religious experiences, making the museum a kind of ‘civic ritual’ (Duncan 1995). The Field Museum’s daunting architecture surrounds its exhibitions of non-European peoples. This can be read as architectural design for implicitly indicating the museum’s intended audience as generally those of European descent (Carlson 2018), as well as a symbol of a paternalistic, colonial mindset that seeks to hold other cultures and peoples within its walls.

The Field Museum also posits itself as a site of history, with the Stanley Field Hall (Main Hall) having witnessed the display of two canoes from Panama brought to the museum by British adventurer, Francis Brenton in 1966; the erection of the Hall’s two totem poles from British Columbia in 1968; the visitation of then President Richard Nixon in 1970; the blockbuster exhibition, Treasures of King Tutankhamen in 1977; the
unveiling of Sue the Tyrannosaurus Rex in 2000; memorial service days after the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001; cultural visits, such as the visitation of Haida dancers in 2003; the Women in Science luncheon in 2015; and, much more (Field Museum, n.d.). Just outside the Field Museum’s walls there have been recent protests including the March 2017 *March for Science* and the September 2019 Climate Strikes. Since museums are cultural and historical legitimizers, aiding in dictating what and who is believed to be true for majority power holders (Ambrose 2012; Ames 1992; Handler 1993), it is crucial to question whose history is happening and being represented here, and whose is being manipulated and erased.

The Field Museum’s history, as a result of its birth from the World’s Columbian Exposition at the hands of Chicago’s elite, is entangled in colonial and elitist legacies. The museum’s entanglement in these legacies was perpetuated by a colonial and salvage mindset of collecting (Field Museum 2011b). This is also tied to ideas of White, Western superiority and domination through the collecting and display of the natural world and the human ‘other.’ Additionally, the history of anthropology is imbedded in museums with late 19th and early 20th-century theory development being rooted in the research and analysis of artifacts. This is especially the case in American anthropology with notable figures, such as Franz Boas and his academic descendants, beginning or spending their careers in museums (Conn 2010; Kreps 2019).
However, the Field Museum, like many other museums, has slowly changed over time—ebbing and flowing with shifts in power, ideologies, trends, and people—fostering world-class exhibitions, research, and programming that, according to Carlson (2018, 21), seek to balance or negate prior processes and ideologies. Additionally, the Field Museum states,

We’re always working to discover new things: species to study, mysteries to solve, problems to tackle, challenges to ponder. Past, present, and future, our work has always been driven by a love for our planet—and the 7.5 billion people who call it home (Field Museum 2011b).
In the end, the Field Museum’s change and process of redressing, like other museums, can never truly be finished, as colonialism and structural inequalities are built into their walls, and can only be partially neutralized (Clifford 1997; Lonetree 2012)
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Anthropology of Museums

Nearly all cultures keep items of special value and meaning, with culturally appropriate structures and practices for storing, caring for, and displaying them (Kreps 2003). However, this thesis will focus predominantly on the Western museum model, as the Field Museum is the central subject of inquiry and is a quintessential example of a Western museum. The beginnings of Western-style museums as we know them start in 16th-century Europe with cabinets of curiosity, or Wunderkammer, which were private collections of the rich who desired to own and display natural history pieces and art, as well as ‘artificial curiosities’ made by people from exotic places. The intent was to stimulate admiration, wonder, and reflection on the exploits, special knowledge, or status of the collection and collector (Ames 1992; Lonetree 2012).

By the 19th century, a natural history approach took hold in museums, which is intimately linked with the development of the field of anthropology and the professionalization of museum staff. The colonial collecting done during this time saw museums and archives as resting places, repositories for precious legacies, curiosities, and facts of successful conversion missions. They were taken and traded, believed to be kept in trust for science, religion, the nation, and civilization and humanity (Thomas
1991; Ames 1992; Lonetree 2012). This often, but not always, led to further persecution and erasure of the cultures and peoples they collected.

By the 20th century, museums and professional curators were expected to acquire, research, and manage collections, preservation, and exhibitions (Schorch, McCarthy, and Dürr 2019). These displays presented the material culture of Native peoples as specimens, parts of nature. Thus, their material culture was curated and presented according to similarity in form, evolutionary stage of development, or geographical origin (Ames 1992; Lonetree 2012). This perspective assumed a vantage point at the cutting edge of development, and a place at the center of a world system for Western peoples and majority power holders (Clifford 2019). This created an environment where guests look at art, architecture, design, and collections they are told represent the nation and their superiority (Levitt 2015).

Since WWII, there has been large growth in museums around the world, and through a long history of colonialism, Western domination, and institutions such as UNESCO and ICOM defining museums on an international scale, Western-style museums have become the foreground of museological diversity (Kreps 2003; 2011; Macdonald 2006). However, the Western museum model is not uniformly reproduced around the world, with many museums operating differently from place to place (Kreps 2003; 2006). Starting in the 1980s, with the rise of postmodern and postcolonial theory, the unquestioned status, practices, and thoughts around museums came under fire (Macdonald 2006). Museums as an imaginative, globally and locally translated form, are no longer solely anchored to their European origins, which, through the forces of decolonization and globalization, decenter the West (Clifford 2019). In this perspective,
the decentering of the West is not a means of leaving behind the legacies of colonization or capitalism, which can never be fully eliminated from inherently colonial institutions (Lonetree 2012), but a means of making space for other stories to be taken seriously alongside the typically dominant narratives of Westernization, modernization, progress, and development (Clifford 2019). In fact, if we accept that museum histories, theories, and practices are socially constructed, then they can also be deconstructed and reconstructed (Kahanu, Nepia, and Schorch 2019).

It must not be forgotten that Indigenous activism and activism by historically marginalized peoples have played a major role in reshaping museology and anthropology (Davalos 2001; Lonetree 2012). Since the mid-20th century there has been an emergence of activism amongst Indigenous peoples and minority groups. This resulted from an increased awareness of the importance of cultural heritage and the desire for free expression and civil rights. After WWII, upheaval and change in the relationships between European nations and those they dominated and exploited brought attention to political issues in Africa, Asia, and the Americas where people were fighting for their political autonomy and independence. The desire and drive to bring an end to colonial rule and exploitation in these countries was echoed by the further political involvement of Indigenous and minority groups in Western nations. During the 1950s and 1960s, the United States witnessed civil rights movements from Black, Mexican American/Chicanx, and Native American groups to name a few, with demonstrations and protests as people fought against inequality, inequity, and racism inherent in every sector of society (Simpson 2001). These movements sparked more, as these communities and many others, such as immigrant, LGBTQIA2S+, Asian American, and feminist groups, continue to
fight for our rights. Acknowledging this activism and shift in museology and anthropology, Steven Conn writes,

At just about this moment, anthropology’s subjects decided they had had enough, and in a variety of ways and at a variety of levels they called into question the fundamental assumptions of cultural and social anthropology. These might be crudely summarized under three related headings: the challenge to ethnographic authority, the rejection of the “‘otherness’” implicit in notions of the “‘primitive,’” and the exploration of the relationship between anthropology and colonialism (2010, 33).

At the turn of the 21st century, more people are going to museums and more scholars are writing about museums than ever before (Conn 2010). The purposes of museums have expanded to range from education to entertainment, from exploring the life of one person to exploring the world, and everything in between. They are starting to be seen as complex social places of civic and public engagement, which, in order to stay relevant, must provide the most good in society (Anderson 2004; Alivizatou 2012). The challenge to stay relevant is external and internal: external, such as local, regional, and global politics and issues; internal, such as the institutional capabilities and interdepartmental relations and jealousy (Low 1942; Anderson 2004).

A resulting shift of particular interest from the movements in the latter half of the 20th century is the view of museums as places of relations—among objects, collections, people, institutes, and the intangible—not simply object repositories (Handler 1993). In the vein of museum relationality, Nicholas Thomas (2016, 71-74) argues, hundreds of thousands, even millions, of specimens, artifacts, and art do not make a collection or museum anymore than a physical territory with a population constitutes a nation.
nation is a complex institutional and political entity, as well as an imagined and contested community—a form of governance and a narrative. Collections and museums are made up of complex associations, connections, and representations. Additionally, Thomas (2016) argues that many of these relations are latent and potential, like a relationship between oneself and an unknown cousin. It could be said that the relationship might as well not exist. However, the relationship does exist and retains the capacity to be discovered and activated, like the relations between museums and the communities from which their collections come.

Museums are social arenas, places in which social relationships are oriented in terms of collections of objects that are made meaningful by these relationships (Handler 1993). On a larger level, museums and their relations do not develop and change in a vacuum. While there are similarities between museums, Western and non-Western, their form and standards vary from place to place based on their unique, legitimate social, political, and economic histories and pressures on local, regional, national, and international levels (Ambrose 2012; Gurian 2006; Kreps 2008). Furthering this view, James Clifford (2019, 109) argues that museums are structured around two senses of temporality: 1) ‘the times,’ as in their historical moment of context; 2) ‘times’ plural, a sense of being in multiple, overlapping, sometimes conflicting times. They are artifacts of society that can inform us about the way certain powerholders see, organize, and represent the world and other people (Ames 1992).

Larger public museums may express and legitimize the established or official values and images of a society directly or indirectly: directly by promoting and affirming the dominant values, and indirectly by subordinating or rejecting differing values (Ames
In other words, museums put the world on display. What is included in collections and displays, and who creates them sends messages about which groups and beliefs belong through the power to define self and other (Levitt 2015). In a cyclical form, museums exist within a context, but also create contexts (Macdonald 2006).

Nicholas Thomas (1991), employs entanglement in an anthropological lens, which aids in understanding the complex relations in and around museums. Entanglement is a way of theorizing and articulating the interconnectedness of complex, heterogeneous systems in a manner that maintains distinction between differences and acknowledges moments when they become interwoven, while also recognizing power asymmetries and being perceptive to forms of resistance, conflict, and innovation. An important aspect of Thomas’ entanglement view is the changeability of objects between alienable and inalienable. This view could also be extended to non-materials. The alienation of something is its disassociation from producers, former users, and/or prior context. Inalienability incorporates the sense of inseparability from producers, former users, and/or context, as well as singular relations between people and something. It is this inalienability and alienability that creates explicit and latent relations between complex, diverse systems of items, collections, peoples, institutions, ideologies, and so on through collecting, exhibitions, partnerships, and other museum functions.

In the context of Western museums, objects were collected as curiosities, which is not grounded in methodology or theory, but intrigue, passion, and fascination; in the name of science, salvaging and organizing the world and its people; and, as artifacts of religious conversion, materially expressing and displaying the work of missionaries (Thomas 1991). Collections are being seen less as timeless, universally valued treasure
troves, and more as historically contingent assemblages of values and meaning (Handler 1992). Collecting and all its facets—assembling, preservation, and display—has been fundamental to the idea of Western museums, and is a way of performing relations between self and others (animate and inanimate) (Macdonald 2006). In this sense, museums embody the values of possessive individualism in two ways: 1) they create individuated identities of places, cultures, ethnic groups, historical periods, artists, etc. by displaying items and properties that are believed to prove the existence of these entities; 2) they are themselves individuated institutions whose existence and survival depends on the fetishization of collections and properties (Handler 1993).

The peoples being collected (from), mainly Indigenous and cultural minority communities, were not helpless, naïve victims in these collecting encounters, there was agency, authority, and a desire to trade and give gifts (Thomas 1991). However, this does not negate the coercion, theft, exploitation, manipulation, and violence that did occur at the hand of the collectors. More contemporarily, co-collecting, a collecting relationship between museum professionals, artists, and communities, lays on a spectrum running from the informal and organic to the organized and strategic (Mallon 2019). Co-collecting enables the sharing of authority, as well as the responsibility and opportunity to collect with communities museums are supposed to represent. Sean Mallon (2019), acknowledges the expertise curators and other museum professionals have, but they are not experts in everything. He believes co-collecting encourages the sharing and reworking of museum roles and urges curators and other museum professionals to not fear this, because in decentering their traditional roles they can re-center museums as places relevant to communities.
James Clifford, in his 1997 book, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, borrows the term ‘contact zone’ from Mary Louise Pratt and describes it as a space of colonial encounters, a space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict (1997, 192). An important aspect of the ‘contact zone’ definition that must not be forgotten is that relations are not equal. Without an understanding of contact zones as places of colonial encounter involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict—places where minority and Indigenous groups must articulate, perform, and translate within a Western-majority setting (Clifford 2013)—the perpetuation of institutional asymmetries is sustained (Boast 2011; Phillips 2015).

Articulation refers to a broad range of connections and disconnection—political, social, economic, cultural, etc.—that are negotiated, but often on terms dictated by the more powerful, and includes the possibilities of de-articulation (resistance) and rearticulation (groups connecting with each other). Performance is the act of persons and groups performing themselves, in a self-marketing style, as authentic cultural subjects for both outsiders and insiders. Translation refers to when something (concepts, ideologies, beliefs, etc.) are brought from one group to another, but in altered forms with local differences (Clifford 2013, 45-49).

In recent years ‘contact zone’ has come to be more or less synonymous with inclusionist, collaborative programs despite warnings of its inherent asymmetry (Boast 2011). Additionally, Clifford states, “Contact work in a museum thus goes beyond consultation and sensitivity, though these are very important. It becomes active
collaboration and a sharing of authority” (Clifford 1997, 210). This shared authority is key in balancing institutional asymmetries. Boast takes the criticism of colonial influence a step further in arguing that contact zones are a site in and for the majority (Boast 2011). The superficial understanding of contact zones as a places for collaboration without consideration of the power dynamics involved has led to a system that pacifies the minority with small, momentary victories, while the majority ultimately wins—a system that masks fundamental asymmetries and appropriations (Boast 2011).

It has been acknowledged that museums can and must reinvent themselves as socially relevant institutions for the 21st century. They can and should encourage empathy, curiosity, tolerance, creativity, and critical thinking (Levitt 2015)—essentially, various forms of social justice (Gonzales 2020). Elena Gonzales (2020), sees the importance of curatorial work, and by extension museum work, for social justice being broken down into several main points. It is one way museums can contribute to the social and environmental sustainability. As some of society’s primary modes of education, museums play a significant role in teaching guests to examine problems, find solutions, act pro-socially, and engage in a respectful, inclusive behavior rooted in an understanding of history and cultural diversity. Additionally, social justice through museum work, such as exhibitions, is one way to boost the sustainability and relevance of museums. As Cameron (1972, 201) said, “Society will no longer tolerate institutions that either in fact or in appearance serve a minority audience of the élite.”

According to Gonzales (2020, 19), museums that work for social justice tend to have stances toward their visitors that break down into roughly two categories. The first is a strident model, which aims at teaching the visitor humility and tolerance. The second
model is one of hospitality, creating a comfortable place that welcomes the visitor, which focuses on building empathy. However, it must be admitted that some react negatively to the term ‘empathy’ as a catalyst for museum work. Gonzales (2020, 15) explains, with the aid of Linda Norris and Julieta Cuéllar of the Global Networks Team for the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (SOC), that empathy is not as significant of a framing tool outside the United States. This perspective comes from the sense that this is an elitist framework that only White, majoritarian institutions need to foster empathy because marginalized populations or those dealing with violence are already living these experiences. For regional networks of SOC, such as the African network and the Latin American and Caribbean network, the focus for sites and their local communities is achieving retributive justice. In these contexts, the term ‘empathy’ has the possibility of connoting a lack of experience with hardship.

Retributive justice, an umbrella term in social justice studies, is about the redressing of wrongs. Another form of justice is distributive justice, which is about the equitable distribution of risks and rewards in society. In the context of museums that do social justice work, retributive justice includes mitigating prejudice and transitional justice efforts to commemorate and prevent atrocities such as genocide. Distributive justice includes the equitable distribution of historical recognition, inclusion in dominant national identities, and the guarantee of civil and human rights (Gonzales 2020, 2). An example of this would be curators assisting communities in their efforts to address the legacies of historical, unresolved grief by speaking the hard truths of colonialism; thus, creating spaces for healing and understanding (Lonetree 2012).
It is important to note that a growing perspective is to view the museum as process—viewing museum work, especially collaborative and social justice work with communities is fundamentally processual in nature (Silverman 2015). Meaning products are not placed over process, and acknowledging that collaboration, work, and relations with communities and others in a museum’s complex relational networks is never over. They are on-going processes.

Museums, recognizing the originators, users, and audiences of the collections they hold, have shifted toward a perspective of respecting and making space for Indigenous, cultural minority, and insider practices and knowledge (Ames 1992; Lonetree 2012). Some, such as Nash, Colwell-Chanthaphonh, and Holen (2011), see museums as having a duty to do community work. This is of course not universal. Onciul (2019) identifies four different curatorial figures, which can be extended to museums as a whole: foe, facilitator, friend, and forsaken. As a foe, curators and museums are adversaries tied to their colonial and elitist practices, views, and legacies. As a facilitator, curators and museums enable the building of new relationships between communities and museums, bringing together their diverse, entangled networks of human and non-human actors through the recognition of diverse forms of expertise, ways of being and knowing, and methods of caring for tangible and intangible culture. As a friend, the long-term relationships in these complex networks develop and turn into friendships, with all the complexities of personal obligations and changing professional roles. Finally, as the forsaken, curators and museums are tossed aside, their role and expertise no longer recognized or needed. In this line of thought, some, such as Ruth Phillips (2015), question whether or not the shifts in museums signal a new era of social agency and
activism for museums, or if it makes museums a space where symbolic restitution is made for the injustices of colonialism in place of more concrete forms of social, economic, and political reparation.

In confronting these issues, some communities have made their own culturally specific museums. Culturally specific museums confront the established power asymmetries and the need to create and sustain spaces not found in other museums. These institutions see the lack of care in preserving and telling the tangible and intangible culture and stories of minority groups in larger museums; thus, they took on this role (Kurin 1997). As part of their existence, they contribute to refuting the arguments and narratives of the great imperial museums, they tell their own versions of their histories, mythologies, and stories and blend the significance of these categories in ways that do not give privilege to Western, majority epistemologies (Gonzales 2020). However, some see culturally specific museums as exclusionary, encouraging separateness, inequality, and a lack of national identity. Additionally, some question whether or not the efforts put into culturally specific museums should be channeled toward changing the mainstream if change is truly desired (Kurin 1997). These are privileged, majority perspectives that do not recognize that these institutions are still inclusive—discussing other cultures and peoples—the difference is that the power dynamics are shifted. They show a lack of understanding and respect for historically marginalized and oppressed peoples to represent themselves, nor do these perspectives comprehend the difficulty of working against a mainstream majority that itself is against the minority. Rather than change the mainstream by fighting against already established institutions, culturally specific museums create a new place for their communities. Furthermore, the notion that
culturally specific museums will detract from a larger patriotic identity is another falsity. As Kurin (1997, 106) argues, “Having various museums dedicated to art—one portraiture, another to contemporary art, yet another to photography, and yet another to sculpture—does not detract from an appreciation, treatment, or understanding of, say, American art.” Culturally specific museums can contribute to a larger public knowledge and understanding about the human and national experience—bridging differences rather than exacerbating them.

In all museums, culturally specific museums included, positions are taken that reflect their own subjectivity (Gonzales 2020). The position taken by an institution may obfuscate and erase the positions taken by those working in them. Thus, when a museum claims a position and staff members are also allowed to claim their positions, the museum takes a step toward rupturing the false notion of objectivity (Gonzales 2020). It is the individual positions and morality of staff that build and change over time to create institutional moralities across the museum sector (Marstine 2011). Like in other fields, museum professionals may have nobler ambitions than their institutions and circumstances allow them to do at the time (Ames 1992; Sandahl 2019).

**Representation and Museums**

Museums are not museums without exhibitions. Exhibitions are the most prominent and public of all museum offerings, and they are the center of the museum experience for millions of guests. Compared to other sources of education and entertainment experiences, such as films and books, exhibitions are more like theme parks since their multiformity allows visitors to interact with them and other guests in an almost endless variety of ways (McLean 1999).
Once the sole duty of the curator, the creation of exhibitions is now the job of many. In fact, curatorial work is no longer limited to curators either. Designers, educators, exhibition developers, and many other roles within museums have taken on duties that are seen as curatorial—research and looking through the collections, thinking about visitors’ responses, and creating interpretive strategies (Gonzales 2020). Exhibitions are often developed and created by teams. John Terrell (1991) argues that exhibitions are created by many talented people with different and complementary skills, and that the secret to a good exhibition is not a chic management model, rather the secret is more about compromise and cooperation. However, compromise, cooperation, and other duties can be hindered by interdepartmental jealousy when someone thinks another is encroaching on their professional territory (Low 1942). Curators and content specialists were traditionally considered the only ones capable of researching and developing exhibitions. In a chain reaction model of exhibition development, the curator or researcher chooses and develops the exhibition concept, this is then passed to the exhibition designer who designs and installs the exhibition, and then passed on to the educator who creates public programming for the exhibition (Anderson 2004).

As different museum professionals take more control over exhibitions, and as the view that the customer is always right starts applying more and more to museums (Ames 1992), some are becoming worried about museum-based science. At the Field Museum, back in 1991, more and more resources are being put into creating fun, visitor-friendly, interactive exhibitions—a Disneyesque style of museums that focuses more on entertainment than education—to boost attendance (Terrell 1991). This has long been a concern for museums, and Franz Boas (1907) as argued that every kind of inaccuracy
should be avoided and attempts to simplify and eliminate anything that is obscure should not be tolerated in museums.

The representations of peoples, cultures, and institutions do not simply happen. They are mediated, negotiated, and brokered through complex processes with challenges and constraints imposed by those involved (Kurin 1997). Museums are cannibalistic in appropriating the culture of other people for their own study and interpretation (Ames 1992). Items made and used by people are abstracted from their human uses and purposes, acquiring names, ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, and an inanimate status if alive, while people around the world are objectified by those with the power to define (Kurin 1997; Thomas 1997). However, according to Ames (1992), what some call appropriation, others see as inspiration. Some view museum displays and collections as a form of cultural imprisonment, others see them as a way of preserving heritage for future generations.

Museums, and exhibitions, are not neutral. They enact social relations of power and are inherently political, even if their staff and developers do not claim to be political (Lindauer 2007). Patterns in decision making in governance policies, hiring practices, and collection and interpretation programs send messages to staff, visitors, communities, and partners as to what is considered to be worthwhile (Sullivan 1994). As previously mentioned, museums play a role in providing an understanding of identity and sense of belonging (Ambrose 2012). Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 17) uses the metaphor of a map to highlight this point. What is included on the map is affirmed as significant, while to be off the map is to be of no significance. Thus, to be recognized by the museum and its narratives is to be marked as real, given a position, and accorded an existence and
importance; to be unrecognized by the museum and its narratives is to be obsolete and unknown. This metaphor, while illuminating, must be used in a critical fashion that acknowledges that some museums have a particular scope, and that even when recognized by the museum and its narratives it may be on the terms and definitions of the institution.

In constructing the world, museums have imposed theories of collectivity and social boundaries on peoples and places that fell under Western control. This results in collective labels for items and places in museums that would not always be recognized by the peoples who created them and lived there (Handler 1992). In settler colonial countries, the evocation of empty land, savages, and dying peoples was used to define and claim land, while dispossessing the people who have lived there and establishing and celebrating their own narratives and investments (Thomas 1999). This depiction of the world occurs in museums, as well as art, propaganda, politics, policies, entertainment, and education outside the museum walls. Grounded in notions of Western elitism and progress, non-Western peoples have been depicted as timeless, anonymous, and primitive, closer to raw, deep, dark, death-obsessed, sexual, and fearful drives and emotions (Price 1989; Errington 1998; Hill 2000). This has been a critique of many exhibitions, as they have failed to show non-Western peoples as dynamic, living, and changing (Simpson 2001).

Different pedagogies of curation affect the way in which exhibitions are formed and construct narratives. Witcomb (2019) identifies four pedagogies—looking, reading, listening, and feeling. In a pedagogy of looking, the lack of curatorial methodology for sourcing provenanced personal objects leads to a collecting practice that locates
representative objects that can then be used to illustrate already established narratives. A pedagogy of looking produces a notion of the past that is framed as distinct from present and as separate because those inhabiting the past are types rather than individuals with whom relationships can be developed. A pedagogy of reading is a non-immersive, two-dimensional environment, dominated by graphic panels with images and text. Typically based on archival research, this approach is more likely to reflect official, dominant narratives unless there is an explicit attempt to counteract such narratives. A lack of personal stories and the use of the institutional voice in a pedagogy of reading can make it hard to establish close relations. A pedagogy of listening, usually achieved through audiovisual technology in the museum, typically uses personal stories to drive the larger narrative. A pedagogy of feeling attempts to make the subjectivity of the visitor the ground of inquiry. The objective is not just to represent diversity, but also to make the space between self and other, us and them, the subject of review. Visitors are required to engage with the aims of the display through their own identities and collective memories in order to rethink relations between themselves and others. The hope is that through a pedagogy of feeling visitors can cultivate relationships with others and engage in more emotional, ethical, sympathetic dialogue inside and outside the museum.

Many museums are changing and confronting the issues of representation in their exhibitions, governing policies, hiring practices, and collections. However, some fall into the trap of uncritical imperialism. This is typically seen as ignoring or glossing over the colonial legacies and narratives in question. Some emphasize or celebrate contemporary multiculturalism and diversity while simultaneously presenting it as a new phenomenon and suggesting that the past was a simpler time. There is also the issue of multicultural
tokenism, which makes space for inclusivity on a superficial level, and corporate multiculturalism, which acts to popularize ideas of diversity while perpetuating structural inequalities. Some present a simplified myth of seamless, easy progression toward diversity that obscures the complexity and understanding needed to create deep, far-reaching change (Littler 2008).

According to Ames (1992), people, including curators and other scholars, cannot adequately represent the views of others by themselves, and should no longer attempt to do so. However, they can provide better opportunities for people to represent themselves through collaboration, co-curation, programs and exhibitions, and other forms of empowerment. Sharing authority acknowledges that communication and sharing knowledge is reciprocal and non-hierarchical, rather than a one-directional flow (Kanatani 2015). Collaborating and sharing authority can be difficult for museums to embrace across administration, operational, and public functions since it challenges the museum to cede authority and erodes the system that has privileged majority powerholders for so long (Kanatani 2015; Phillips 2015). Onciul (2019), believes that through collaboration and authority sharing, museums can gain access to community knowledge, deepening their current understanding and interpretation of collections; and, communities can shape their representation in museums. This is seen as a way of improving representation, increasing the integrity and validity of exhibitions, and indicating community approval. However, this is not an automatic result, but dependent on how the relationships and power negotiations unfold. If museums, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to listen to the people they engage and partner with, do not share authority with them, or refuse to act on community advice, then the exhibitions created
may have no more validity, integrity, or community approval than those that exclude the community.

Arnstein (1969) describes an eight rung ladder of participation from manipulation to citizen control, which can be applied to museum work. The first two rungs of the ladder are 1) manipulation and 2) therapy, which can be described as forms of non-participation that substitute genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to educate or cure partners. Rungs 3) Informing, 4) consultation, and 5) placation are all levels of tokenism. When they are extended by powerholders as the total extent of participation, partners may be heard and hear, but lack the power to ensure that their views will be listened to and respected. The last three rungs, 6) Partnership, 7) Delegated Power, and 8) Citizen control, are levels of citizen power in which partners are able to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional powerholders, and, at the highest most rung, obtain majority or full managerial power.

According to Varutti (2013, 73), there are three directions to think of collaborations and power sharing. 1) Who are the actors of museum training and development? Who are they, what is their background, and how do their skills, competence, and cultural sensitivities relate to communities? 2) What are the modalities of work? Are they mono-directional, consultative, participative, collaborative, which rung of Arnstein’s ladder of participation is being evoked? 3) How is knowledge being passed on or shared? Are the principles, approaches, techniques of museum professionals considered universal, or are they adapted to and respectful of traditions, views, beliefs, and conditions of the communities?
Some peoples, such as Māori and Hawaiian people, are introducing culturally specific ways of knowing and being into the museum space to better represent themselves and care for their intangible and tangible culture. The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum is a space where Native Hawaiians and Western practices and peoples have come into contact, establishing and negotiating ongoing relations. Since its establishment, and arguably even before that, the Bishop Museum has been a place of entanglement—specifically through its possession and care of inalienable aliʻi (royal; chief; noble) collections. Aliʻi collections are tied to the moʻokūʻauhau (genealogy) of Hawaiʻi’s aliʻi and are the collective inheritance of Native Hawaiians. The moʻokūʻauhau of aliʻi stretch back thousands of generations to cosmological beginnings with genealogical specialists, known as kūʻauhau, responsible for ensuring the accuracy and transmission of moʻokūʻauhau aliʻi (chiefly genealogies) from generation to generation, and caretakers, known as kahu aliʻi, whose responsibilities include the preparation, storage, and transportation of aliʻi possessions (Kapuni-Reynolds 2017). Moʻokūʻauhau, furthermore, goes beyond biological genealogy with different modalities: intellectual genealogy, which traces how specific knowledge has been generated, learned, and passed on; conceptual genealogy, which refers to genealogies of power, and the capacity to affect change; aesthetic genealogy, which informs and guides artistic, intellectual expression; and, institutional genealogy, which emphasizes the importance of tracing back the lineage of a place (Kapuni-Reynolds 2017). In a museum setting, moʻokūʻauhau is a Native Hawaiian curatorial framework and practice that informs how aliʻi collections are cared for by Native Hawaiians and non-Native Hawaiian collections managers. Through the activation of a moʻokūʻauhau consciousness, in all of its forms, collections managers at
the Bishop Museum draw on personal experiences in working with elders and cultural mentors, as well as familial and ancestral knowledge, in order to care for collections with an emphasis on the importance of safeguarding mana (spiritual energy) embedded within aliʻi objects (Kapuni-Reynolds 2017).

*Mana taonga* is a contemporary Māori articulation of customary concepts informing and guiding museum practices that recognize living relationships among objects, people, and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) (Schorch, McCarthy, and Hakiwai 2016). Both mana and taonga can be difficult to define and fit into Western categorization, as they are incompatible with Western paradigms. In attempting to understand the terms, mana can be seen as spiritual power, prestige, authority, influence, and control, while taonga broadly refers to treasures of Māori cultural and natural heritage (Schorch, McCarthy, and Hakiwai 2016). Another Māori concept is that of the kaitiaki (stewardship), intersects Western and Māori concepts, worldviews, and practices, such as whakapapa (genealogy) (McCarthy, Hakiwai, and Schorch 2019). Four main concepts of the kaitiaki are as follows: 1) referring to oneself as kaitiaki, which suggests a tiaki (caring) dimension to the role. Kaitiaki also suggests a spiritual element and cultural responsibility to the position. 2) Those identifying as kaitiaki generally refer to the objects they care for as taonga (treasure). 3) There is an evoking of Mātauranga Māori—a dynamic and evolving system of knowledge used by tangata whenua (people of the land) to explain, interpret, and understand the world in which they live. It is framed by whakapapa and whanaungatanga (kinship connections) between all things and is evidenced through korero (narratives and history). 4) There is an inclusion of tikanga taonga (traditional Māori protocols and practices for managing ancestral treasures).
Decolonizing Museums

Within the postcolonial movement, decolonization has become a common term in museological and anthropological literature since the 1980s. However, the terms decolonization and postcolonial must be problematized since colonial and settler-colonial institutions and policies can never be completely rid of their colonial legacies; thus, they are never truly de- or post-colonial. Further problematizing the term, decolonization is a term developed by those within inherently colonial institutions, like museums. This can be perceived as the perpetuation of Indigenous and other historically marginalized peoples being forced to work within the structures of the majority power holders. Furthermore, decolonization is a complicated term, understood and conceptualized differently by different people, that attempts to encapsulate a variety of processes and practices. As Christina Kreps (2019, 53) clarifies, “The point is that decolonizing processes, like indigenization, are context-specific in time, place, and institutional setting.”

Amy Lonetree (2012) explains that for many the decolonizing process of museums begins with acknowledging the historical and colonial legacies of museums, anthropology, and European imperialism on colonized peoples, as well as how museums have functioned within the dominant and oppressive power structures informed by these legacies. Furthermore, decolonization tends to acknowledge the existence of multiple histories, stories, understandings, ways of being, and manners of caring for tangible and intangible culture. This is the case with James Clifford (1988; 1997; 2013), who understands decolonization as the problematization of authenticity and the authority of Western practices and histories; the recognition and inclusion of multiple voices and
histories; and, collaboration, self-representation, and self-determination. Kreps provides her own concise definition of decolonization, writing,

[Decolonization is a] process of acknowledging the historical, colonial contingencies under which collections were acquired, revealing Eurocentric ideologies and biases in the Western museum concept, discourse and practice; acknowledging and including diverse voices and multiple perspectives; and transforming museums through sustained critical analysis and concrete actions (2011, 72).

Lonetree (2012) also emphasizes the importance of decolonizing museum practice for Native Americans as a way of redressing historical trauma and injustices caused by colonialism. To Lonetree (2012, 5), given that the Native American holocaust remains unaddressed in Native and non-Native communities, truth telling is the most important aspect of decolonizing museum practice in the 21st century, however painful, because the process assists in healing, promotes community well-being, empowerment, and nation building.

As seen, decolonization is easily problematized and hard to neatly define. However, my research will use the term when addressing what can be described as decolonizing processes and practices, until a more appropriate term comes to the forefront. Perhaps there is no single word that can capture such complexities.
CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

New Museology and Critical Museology

Alongside the increase and diversification of museums since the end of WWII, there has been a rise, particularly since the 1960s-1980s, in new perspectives on museums and critical commentary on their many parts (Kreps 2003; Macdonald 2006). New museology poses questions regarding what, how, and in whose interests knowledge is produced and disseminated in museums (Lindauer 2007). New museology reflects the dissatisfaction with conventional interpretations of the museum and its functions. It is especially concerned with community development and social progress, democratization of museum practices, and bottom-up, participatory approaches (Kreps 2003). In regard to cultural heritage, new museology, being more people-oriented, has helped to expand the term to include intangible heritage that includes knowledge, beliefs, and practices (Alivizatou 2012).

This critical lens in the museum field is commonly referred to as critical museology. The objective of critical museology is to not simply criticize museums, but to see them as artifacts of society, placing them within their social, political, historical, and economic contexts (Ames 1992; Kreps 2003). Additionally, critical museology positions museums as a discourse, a social practice that impacts the construction of knowledge and the way we behave (Marstine 2011). An awareness of the social and political
responsibility of museum work is essential so that museum practice does not become autonomous, self-interested, and conservative (McCarthy 2015). However, some critics claim that academic and critical writing on museums produces little that is directly useful to those who work in or use museums. Others argue that university museum studies courses that emphasize theory may be a poor preparation for the workplace (McCarthy 2015). Nevertheless, theory is not simply applied to practice in a one-directional manner—theory underpins practice and practice informs theory (McCarthy 2011).

Critical museology is not only an intellectual tool for better understanding museums and the complex contexts in which they are embedded, but is also crucial for developing new exhibition styles, telling untold stories, rearticulating knowledge systems for public dissemination, reimagining organizational and management structures, and repurposing museums and galleries in line with multicultural and intercultural states and communities. As a field of study, critical museology interrogates the imaginaries, narratives, discourses, agencies, visual and optical regimes, and their articulations and integrations within diverse structures articulated through public and private museums, heritage sites, gardens, memorials, exhibition halls, cultural centers, and art galleries (Shelton 2013). Anthony Shelton (2013) identifies four epistemological positions of critical museology: 1) history does not exist independent of human perception and cognition, and is constructed by society; 2) a critical and reflexive understanding of collecting that does not reduce collecting motivations to a fundamental psychological predisposition; 3) a move from an objectivist to a subjectivist concept of knowledge; 4) museums are fundamentally more heterotopic than the societies in which they operate and are therefore potentially disruptive of them.
Entanglement

In his 1991 book, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, Nicholas Thomas employs ‘entanglement’ in an anthropological lens to challenge dominant ideas of exchange in cross-cultural, colonial interactions. Entanglement, in a Thomasian sense, is a way of theorizing and articulating the interconnectedness of complex, heterogeneous systems in a manner that maintains distinction between differences and acknowledges moments when they become interwoven, while also recognizing power asymmetries and being perceptive to forms of resistance, conflict, and innovation (1991; 2016; 2019). Rather than seeing cross-cultural exchange in colonial-era Pacific as one-sided domination and exploitation of passive, naïve Pacific Islanders by White Westerners, Thomas argues that these early phases of trade were actually grounded in local cultural and political agendas (1991). Accordingly, Thomas rejects the notion that the Pacific Islanders in these encounters immediately threw themselves at White Western commodities because of their ‘irresistible magnetism.’ He writes,

The theme of these histories is that the irresistible magnetism of white commodities compels their adoption and imposes a choice irrespective of the cost to culture and autonomy. This view takes the properties of artifacts and introduced items as self-evident: it is assumed that the advantages of new items are immediately manifest to natives. In reality, however, technology is dependent upon cultural knowledge: even relatively specialized tools do not have specific purposes inscribed in them, and purposes and uses are variously relevant and recognized (1991, 87).

An additional rejection by Thomas is the view that Melanesian, Polynesian, or any other society as purely communal or ‘gift’ economies, in a stereotypical Maussian
sense, because it suppresses entanglement with other systems. An important aspect of Thomas’ entanglement view is the changeability of material objects between alienable and inalienable. This view could also be extended to non-materials. The alienation of a ‘thing’ is its disassociation from producers, former users, and/or prior context. Inalienability incorporates the sense of inseparability from producers, former users, and/or context, as well as singular relations between people and ‘things’ (1991).

Three cases discussed by Thomas regarding Pacific Islander-White Westerner entanglement include Niue and Marquesan people. To visiting sailors, Niue Islanders were very specific in their exchange preferences and their reluctance to accept gifts from the sailors. What was lost on the sailors was the distinction between alienable and inalienable goods. Niue did not want to become entangled with and indebted to the sailors, they avoided trading inalienable goods and gifts that would lead to further entanglement.

Thomas explains,

The use of these [alienable] things as trade goods might be seen as a solution to a difficult problem which the Niue people encountered: they had a strong interest in articles which could only be got through exchange with the whites, but for some reason they wanted to avoid the social relationship which was almost always an indissociable part of exchange—or the purpose of it—within their own system. The innovation that overcame this paradox was the disposal of things which were not exchange items, which carry no debt or burden of friendship. They made free, unsocial [alienable] commodities out of precisely the things they would not have exchanged among themselves (1991, 91).

This is further explored in the case of the Marquesan chief, Keatonui. Keatonui would not accept any presents offered to him by Europeans. “Keatonui could not deal with the

A case of object mutability from alienable to inalienable that led to entanglement between Pacific Islanders and White Westerners comes from the Marquesas. In 1813, Captain David Porter of the U.S. Navy constructed a base by the large bay of Taiohae, where he met chief Keatonui (the same chief named above). The difference this time was the intrusion of guns and military force, not toward Keatonui, but Keatonui’s enemies. Keatonui convinced Porter to fight against the Hapa’a in a valley several miles east of Taiohae and the people living in the Taipi valley. Porter easily defeated both groups, and his victories were incredible in the eyes of Keatonui and others. This occurrence led to a process of entanglement seen through the shift of guns from alienable to inalienable in the Marquesas. Thomas writes,

Earlier, islanders concerned to obtain articles without entangling themselves socially with foreigners had refused to accept gifts as anything other than commodities. Now, articles of trade dispensed as commodities were reconstituted as inalienable gifts from foreigners by Marquesans. This was the sense in which an old gun was not merely useful but singular: the artifact embodied the narrative of Porter’s alliance with the Taiohae people, and its possession stood for the continuing association between them and American power (1991, 99).

In a museum setting, and postmodern and postcolonial context, entanglement can provide a framework for promoting and heightening comprehension of decolonization through its focus on the alienable, inalienable, and interconnectedness of complex, diverse systems—systems of objects, collections, peoples, institutions, ideologies, and so on—in a manner that maintains distinction between differences and acknowledges
instances when they become interwoven. Furthermore, entanglement also recognizes power asymmetries and forms of resistance, conflict, and innovation between parties.

An example of entanglement being explored in museums is through The Relational Museum project at the Pitt Rivers Museum. The project, which ran from 2002 to 2006, looked at the Pitt Rivers Museum’s collections from 1884 to 1945 to track the relationships between people and items in historical contexts. It was grounded in the idea that museum objects are connected to a mass of relations, ranging from the people who originally made and used them to all the parties involved in their trade and transfer, as well as the museum staff and visitors making up the museum community (Gosden 2007; Geismar 2009).

**Contact Zones**

James Clifford, in his 1997 book, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century, borrows the term “contact zone” from Mary Louise Pratt and describes it as follows:

[Contact zones are] the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict (1997, 192).

A contact perspective of museums emphasizes how subjects are established in and by relation to one another. An important aspect of the ‘contact zone’ definition that must not be forgotten is that relations are not equal. Clifford elaborates, “When museums are seen as contact zones, their organizing structure as a collection becomes an ongoing historical,
political, moral relationship—a power-charged set of exchanges, of push and pull” (1997, 192).

Without an understanding of contact zones as places of colonial encounter involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict—places where minority and Indigenous groups must articulate, perform, and translate within a Western-majority setting (Clifford 2013)—the perpetuation of institutional asymmetries is sustained (Boast 2011; Phillips 2015). Articulation refers to a broad range of connections and disconnections—political, social, economic, cultural, etc.—that are negotiated, but often on terms dictated by the more powerful, and includes the possibilities of de-articulation (resistance) and rearticulation (groups connecting with each other). Performance is the act of persons and groups performing themselves, in a self-marketing style, as authentic cultural subjects for both outsiders and insiders. Translation refers to when something (concepts, ideologies, beliefs, etc.) are brought from one group to another, but in altered forms with local differences (Clifford 2013).

An elaboration on contact zone is the engagement zone, which emphasizes the importance of inter- and cross-cultural relations, the sharing of on- and off-stage culture, and the potential risks, costs, and benefits for participants entering into complex and unpredictable engagements (Onciul 2013). Engagement often produces results, such as collaborative exhibitions, programming, collection loans, repatriation, community participation, and changes to museum practice and beliefs (2013).

In recent years ‘contact zone’ has come to be more or less synonymous with inclusionist, collaborative programs despite warnings of its inherent asymmetry (Boast 2011). Clifford (1997), in his description of contact zones stated the presence of colonial
connotations, coercion, inequality, and conflict. Additionally, contact work in a museum goes beyond consultation and sensitivity, although these are very important. It becomes an active collaboration and a sharing of authority (Clifford 1997). This shared authority is key in balancing the institutional asymmetries. The superficial understanding of ‘contact zone’ as a place for collaboration without consideration of the power dynamics involved has led to a system that pacifies the minority with small, momentary victories, while the majority ultimately wins—a system that masks fundamental asymmetries and appropriations (Boast 2011).

A proper understanding of museums as contact zones, and as engagement zones, in a postmodern and postcolonial context, with all its colonial and unbalanced connotations, can lead to further and deeper comprehension of decolonizing. Shifting museum methods, practices, and perspectives of museums in a direction that recognizes and addresses institutionalized colonial and asymmetric issues, as well as providing space for multiple voices and truths.

**Museum as Method**

Museum as method, as conceptualized by Nicholas Thomas (2016; 2019), refers to the activity of knowing in the museum space through moments of discovery, captioning, and juxtaposition—all factors that contribute to a museum’s potential legitimizing and influencing power. Discovery, for museum staff and audience alike, involves finding things that were not lost, identifying things that were known to others, and the disclosure of what was hidden or repressed. Captioning refers to the literal composition of a line of text that may accompany an image or object, as well as its description and contextualization within the larger museum space. Juxtaposition happens
in museums because nothing is ever truly alone, being juxtaposed to the physical
environment and other forms of tangible and intangible culture.

Museum as method can be seen in Peter Mason’s (2012) study on the influence of
space on the perception of moai outside of Rapa Nui. Through the study, Mason engages
with the sense of space, specifically museums, having potential to legitimize and
influence public perception and consumption of culture. Sense of space can be
understood in Thomas’ terms of discovery, captioning, and juxtaposition. Diverse
meanings and interpretations of moai are discovered by viewers in spaces where the moai
are captioned and juxtaposed differently. Relating this to the Field Museum’s exhibitions,
museum as method will be used to aid in the interpretation of the exhibitions’ different
meanings within the terms of discovery, captioning, and juxtaposition.

**Queer Mezclando Perspective**

I am a gay, Brown, Latinx and Chicanx man of Mexican descent on my father’s
side and an unknown European assortment on my mother’s. I grew up in the Midwest of
the United States, living in two different households with two different cultures. I grew
up feeling lost in my identity, not feeling like I belong, or could claim some sort of
membership, to any part. Over time, I learned to embrace the many beautiful, confusing
parts of who I am. Additionally, I grew dissatisfied with a lot of the museum theory and
practice I have been exposed to in my academic and museum careers has been from an
older, White academics. I am grateful for my education, however, this left me feeling
invisible in the field and the institutions I have studied and worked in.

This is exactly why I am cultivating a queer mezclando (mixing) perspective, a
perspective that embraces and lives in the in between—like many of us. I ground the
development of this framework in Chicanx\textsuperscript{2} Studies, Chicanx feminism, and mestize museology\textsuperscript{3}. I understand this grounding, and the experiences that guide me, are not universal, but I hope that the framework described will create space for people to build and cultivate more perspectives.

The concepts of 	extit{mestizaje}, Mexicanness, 	extit{indigenismo}, \textit{Latinidad}, and national identity significantly influence contemporary representational practices for many Mexican Americans (Gonzales 2020). Karen Mary Davalos (2001) explains that Mexican culture was invented out of the imagined and biological union between Spanish 	extit{conquistadores} and Indigenous peoples, which also erased and stigmatized Black identities.

Structural domination has fragmented the Mexican population in North America. We have repeatedly experienced forms of displacement, at least since the United States’ annexation of half of Mexico’s northern frontier with the signings of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) and the Gadsden Purchase (1853). The new geopolitical border separated family from family, created economic fragmentation as Mexicans lost land and property to ‘Americans,’ and politically displaced Mexicans as ‘Americans’ denied us rights of citizenship guaranteed in the treaty (Davalos 2001). In California, the process of Proletarianization displaced Mexican peasants, small farmers, and artisans and

\textsuperscript{2} While typically referred to as Chicano Studies, I use the Chicanx as a gender-neutral identifier. However, I do use gendered identifiers throughout this section to highlight exclusionary practices, as seen in the history of Chicano Studies.

\textsuperscript{3} Originally called 	extit{mestizo museology} by Elena Gonzales (2020), I use 	extit{mestize} as a gender-neutral identifier similar to Latinx or Chicanx. I decided to use -\textit{e} as the gender-neutral ending, rather than -\textit{x}, as it is easier to say in this instance.
transformed them into wage earners between 1898 and 1930 (Camarillo 1979). In the Great Lakes region, as early as 1918, corporations systematically recruited Mexican laborers for work in sugar beet fields (Valdés 1991). This displacement, like many others, was gendered, with single men typically being hired, leaving behind women and families in Mexico (Davalos 2001). Urban industries in the Midwest also started recruiting male Mexican laborers at this time. Railroad companies brought some of Chicago's first Mexican immigrants when, in 1916, they hired 206 men from the Texas-Mexico border to work as laborers (Kerr 1975). Additionally, labor shortages in WWI and restrictive immigration laws during the 1920s resulted in the practice of hiring Mexican immigrants as scabs during labor unrest in meat packing, railroad, and steel companies (Valdés 1991).

The displacement of Mexican-origin people continues at local, regional, and national levels, as targets of urban renewal programs, so-called amnesty laws, welfare reforms, nationalist and racist ideologies, and deportation and incarceration that remove people from their homes and neighborhoods (Davalos 2001). Davalos (2001) explains that Mexicans in the United States live in diaspora by experiencing both the absence and the presence of homeland—simultaneously part of the land but not part of the nation.

More than fifty years ago Chicanx scholars tried convincing anthropologists that research on Mexican Americans was lacking in quality and quantity. Critiques of research practices and theories stressed how White scholars (mis)represent Mexican Americans, suppress informants’ voices, construct Mexicans as ‘others,’ legitimize their own ethnographic authority, and perpetuate the myth of objectivity. In general, Chicanx scholars recognized the politics of research and rejected a totalizing theory that
depicted Mexican American culture as timeless, fatalistic, and homogeneous (Davalos 2001).

Davalos (2001) argues that it is important to understand the effects of the Chicanx social and civil rights movements of the 1960s-1970s on the direction of Chicanx Studies, especially when exploring representational practices among people of Mexican descent. Similar to the social and civil rights movements led by other communities during this period, El Movimiento chicano—organized by students, farm laborers, third-party electorates, and pro-immigrant activists—was mainly concerned with equality and eliminating discrimination.

*El Plan de Santa Bárbara* is the blueprint for Chicano Studies and was created by students, faculty, administrators, and community delegates during a conference on Chicano higher education in California in 1969. The document is largely a collection of recommendations, and while it lacks substantive curricula and methodological plans, it did specify the ideological framework of Chicano Studies. *El Plan* focuses scholarship on critiquing racism and assimilation, and lays out the goal of developing scholars that do critical research on American society while simultaneously contributing to the shaping of the Chicanx consciousness. Davalos (2001) argues that the ideological framework of Chicano Studies challenged the American myths of the ‘melting pot’ and ‘bootstraps,’ as they can be recognized as racist justifications of the status quo, and offered cultural identity as the source for collective action. However, it did not recognize the diverse interpretations of cultural identity.

As Davalos (2001) explains, *El Plan* is culturally nationalist in scope, imagining a disciplinary subject based on distinct boundaries between cultural groups, particularly
between ‘Anglo-Americans’ and ‘Chicanos.’ In this nationalist model, Chicano Studies was broadly defined as the study of the Chicano experience, with culture being central to that experience. Chicano Studies assumed that by teaching students about cultural traditions, it would in turn unify the ‘Chicano community’. However, *El Plan de Santa Bárbara* does not consider conditions and experiences of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Some Chicanxs have expressed how their gender and sexuality were brought into conflict with a singular image of culture and community; *El Plan* reduced human conduct to binaries, took on a masculine and heterosexual identity, and defined culture as a totality, which fails to consider how culture is fluid, dynamic, and contradictory (Davalos 2001).

Returning to *mestizaje* and *mestize*, historical uses of the terms did not recognize its hybrid character, predominantly because they were based on notions of racial purity and authenticity that were constructs of the dominant sector of society. Notions of *mestizaje* and Indigenous heritage for students and activists of the *El Movimiento chicano* were seen as an alternative to European and Anglo-American influences. Intended as an alternative and oppositional stance to assimilation, the neo-Indigenous emphasis is ironically similar to the distortion of Indigenous peoples by the dominant sector of society, as they both rely on a notion of timelessness (Davalos 2001).

While these constructs of *mestizaje* dismissed gender and sexuality, and ultimately served to deny the experiences of Black and Indigenous people, more recent understandings of *mestizaje* by Chicanx feminists aid in clarifying representational practices (Davalos 2001). Gloria Anzaldúa (2012) conceptualizes *mestizaje* as invoking hybridity through continuous resistance against colonial and assimilating governments
and fixed identities, genders, sexualities, and languages. Additionally, mestize, in Anzaldúa’s view, is not exclusive to the encounters between Spanish conquistadores and Indigenous peoples in Mesoamerica, but applies to all forms of contact. Building from this, there is a second, new mestizaje between European Americans and Mexican Americans (Davalos 2001; Anzaldúa 2012).

*Mestizaje, always synthesizing, is a force of movement, combination, and transformation that is employed to deconstruct the dominant power holder’s attachment to purity, coherence, and linear causality (Davalos 2001). The Chicanx feminist perspective validates identities not recognized in Chicano cultural nationalism, or Mexican nationalism. Refusing binary distinctions, as they obscure the complexities of reality, this understanding of mestizaje allows for the exploration of representation as sites of convergence between asymmetrical powers (Davalos 2001; Anzaldúa 2012; Gonzales 2020). Davalos works in organic theories that highlight this point. Organic theories, as she explains, avoids the containment of representational practices by refusing to gather facts and objects under the guise of seeking truth in the sense of national, imperialistic positivist social science. Furthermore, this means neither denying nor endorsing ambiguity, subjectivity, and objectivity—creating ambiguous objectivities and unambiguous subjectivities (Davalos 2001).

Gonzales (2020) provides a look at the employment of mestizaje at the National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA), Chicago, Illinois—a mestize museology. She explains how mestize museology at the NMMA consists of everything from choices of color, vocabulary, and sound to the organization of the annual cycle of exhibitions. There is a mixture of the professional, clean atmosphere typically associated with museums and
the colors, sounds, and smells of Mexican culture. Language is important in mestizo museology at the NMMA, with an emphasis on creating a colloquial and welcoming voice, in Spanish and English. Furthermore, the NMMA uses terms that give more power to the Mexican population. ‘Pre-Columbian’ or ‘pre-colonial’ is replaced with ‘pre-Cuauhtémoc’ to place an Indigenous leader as the cultural referent; ‘Latino,’ ‘Latina,’ and ‘Latinx’ replace ‘Hispanic’ to not call people by the name of their conquerors. These terms are in the mainstream lexicon, but the NMMA blends and changes their meanings through their context and intentional changes in definitions. For instance, ‘traditional’ often designates something as primitive when used by Anglo culture, while the NMMA uses it to refer to longevity and cultural survival in the face of domination.

Finally, I want to bring in critiques of Latinidad as a panethnicity. A critique is that Latino, Latina, and Latinx evoke a sense of panethnic identity that homogenize distinctions among various groups; however, some argue that a common thread of identity can be found through our larger international contexts, histories, and experiences (Caminero-Santangelo 2013). The process of creating a panethnic Latinx identity from outside and inside diverse Latinx communities has deep, complex histories, and deserves more time than can be given here. Arlene Dávila defines this development as ‘Latinization,’ which is the “process through which ‘Latinos’ or ‘Hispanics’ are conceived and represented as sharing a common identity” (2012, 16). A similar term is ‘tropicalization;’ to tropicalize is to trope, “to imbue a particular space, geography, group, or nation with a set of traits, images, and values” (Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman 1997, 8). Additionally, Jonathan Rosa reminds us,
The ethnoracial status of Latinx identity is widely debated in both scholarly and popular discourses, often from the perspective of spectrum-based racial logics that problematically imagine Latinxs as an intermediary “brown” population located between Blackness at one end and Whiteness at the other, or as a phenotypically heterogeneous group that is better understood ethnically (i.e., stereotypically defined culturally or nationally) than racially (i.e., stereotypically defined physically). The former logic is anchored in white supremacist histories of Indigenous erasure and anti-Blackness through which some groups and bodies come to be positioned as desirable for their perceived mixed-race status and proximity to Whiteness; the latter logic is anchored in white supremacist colonial management schemas that homogenize and differentiate populations in varying ways . . . Insofar as Latinx identities are produced as part of a US settler colonial history and broader histories of European colonialism, we must continually attend to the ways that these forms of coloniality shape perceptions of Latinx bodies in relation to an imagined phenotypic spectrum from Blackness to Whiteness, and Latinx communicative practices in relation to an imagined linguistic spectrum from Spanish to English (2019, 3–4).

Inspired by the work, critiques, and histories of diverse Chicanox and Latinx scholars and communities my queer mezclando perspective is a critical perspective that embraces and lives in the in between. It rejects notions of purity, coherence, and linear causality, as well as dichotomous, all-encompassing perspectives as they can often be reductionist views that obscure rather than embrace complexities. It acknowledges fluid, dynamic, contradictory systems, experiences, and existences that do not hold people or anything to timeless, defeatist, and homogenous identities. Additionally, it avoids collecting information under the guise of seeking a single, unchanging truth; rather, it is always synthesizing in an organic fashion that allows for the mixing of ambiguity, subjectivity, and objectivity. My desire is for this perspective and the way others and I embody, engage, and embrace it to change as we move through our lives, meet new people, encounter new scholars, and experience things we never expected.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Questions

The following research questions, which framed my exploration at the Field Museum, were initially created to guide research design and further developed through conversations with Field Museum staff. The primary research question is:

What is the relationship between the internal beliefs and perspectives of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff on the future of the museum and the manifestations of these beliefs and perspectives?

This primary question and the focus on internal beliefs and manifestations was inspired by Philipp Schorch and Conal McCarthy’s edited book, Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship (2019). In Curatopia, engaging with Māori language, worldviews, and histories with museological institutions, the museum is reimagined as waka (canoe). In this perspective, the museum as a canoe, or ship, is evoked to explore the ways in which curatorial and museum practices can be turned around to face the future, as the crew of the waka navigate the ocean before them (Schorch, McCarthy, and Dürr 2019). If curatorial and museum practices can be turned around to face the future, what internal beliefs and manifestations are (not) guiding and showing this turn?
Two sub-questions help to further guide this research:

1. What frameworks do the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff ground themselves in, and does this connect to their internal beliefs and perspectives?

2. How do the manifestations of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff’s internal beliefs affect the museum’s exhibitions?

Since museums are places of relations and have influence on the legitimization of cultures and peoples in the public’s mind (Ames 1992; Handler 1993; Hooper-Greenhill 2000; Lonetree 2012; Clifford 2013; Thomas 2016), all of these questions are grounded in representation and relationships in the Field Museum’s exhibitions, processes, practices, and goals.

Site Selection

The site for this research is the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, Illinois, with a specific focus on the museum’s Pacific, Native North American, and Exhibition Departments. The Field Museum was chosen as the research site because of its colonial history, exhibitions, and work in co-curation and co-governance by some staff. Initially, the scope of this research was limited to the Pacific Department, but was later expanded to include the Native North American and Exhibition Departments upon
realizing the interconnectedness of the three departments and their work. On average, my visits to the Field Museum took place between the hours of 8:30am through 5:00pm on weekdays (Monday-Friday) in July 2019.

**Methodology and Qualitative Research Methods**

*Museum Anthropology*

This research is grounded in museum anthropology, and while museum anthropology can be interpreted in multiple ways due to the diversity of work done in the field it can be understood as anthropology practiced *in* museums and the anthropology *of* museums. Anthropology in museums has been practiced as long as anthropologists have been in museums and can be described as the application of anthropological research methods, theories, insights, documentation, study, representation, and care of tangible and intangible culture (Kreps 2019). The anthropology of museums began emerging in the 1980s alongside the postmodern and postcolonial critiques, as well as the critiques by those that have been the subjects of anthropological and colonial study and collecting. The anthropology of museums can be broadly described as the study, research, and examination of the social organizations, structures, and roles of museums—investigating and understanding museums as cultural artifacts (Ames 1992; Kreps 2019).

The anthropology of museums employs the methods of cultural anthropology, primarily ethnography (Kreps 2019). Museum ethnography, like any form of ethnography, is a way of exploring social relations and cultural meanings at a particular time and in a particular place or places (Bouquet 2012). In the case of this research, the social relations and cultural meaning being explored are those of the anthropology and
exhibition staff at the Field Museum. According to Bouquet, there are three common, but non-exhaustive, points of departure in museum ethnography: collections and collection-making, exhibitions and exhibition-making, and museum-audience interaction (2012). My research is positioned within the latter two of these points of departure, and utilizes participant observation, semistructured and informal interviews, and exhibition analysis as methods for data collection.

**Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Time and Dates</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Phrase I   | Week 1 (Personal Communication, July 1-7) | • Participant observation  
               |                                                                 | • Exhibition analysis |
| Phrase II  | Week 2 (Personal Communication, July 8-14) | • Participant observation  
               |                                                                 | • Exhibition analysis  
               |                                                                 | • Informal, unstructured, and semistructured interviews |
| Phrase III | Week 3-5 (Personal Communication, July 15-31) | • Participant observation  
               |                                                                 | • Informal, unstructured, and semistructured interviews |

This timeline depicts the three phrases this research was broken up into, the dates of each phrase, and the related methods. I use *phrases* as a musical analogy to frame the
timeline because musical phrases can be self-contained while also eliding, or overlapping, each other, which is often the reality of the research process.

The goal of phrase I in the timeline was to establish relations and begin communication, which was continued through phrases II and III, and to start collecting data for exhibition analysis. In phrase II, interviews and interview scheduling began, while data collection for exhibition analysis was wrapping up. Phrase III is dedicated primarily to interviews with data collection for exhibition analysis having been completed by the beginning of this phrase.

*Participant Observation*

According to H. Russell Bernard (2011, 275), participant observation involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives. This perspective on participant observation does not sit well with me. In my opinion it has an air of manipulation and one-sidedness. Bernard (2011, 275) admits his definition of participant observation sounds crass and believes that by confronting the truth about participant observation—its deception and impression management—one can conduct themselves ethically in fieldwork.

In my research, I do use participant observation, but the focus is on relationship building so that there is mutual comfortability, understanding, and sharing. In my research, participant observation was conducted during all three phrases in the Field Museum’s Pacific, Native North American, and Exhibition Departments. Participant observation occurred outside the museum too, but was focused exclusively on
relationship building—no notes were taken on these moments as to not betray the trust of those that let me into their lives.

Interviews

Informal, unstructured, and semistructured interviews, occurring during Phrases II and III, are used to gather data all research questions. In addition to data collection, these interviews are driven by the goal of relationship building and establishing communication.

Informal interviewing is characterized by a total lack of structure or control, focusing on remembering and recording notes from conversations had throughout the day (Bernard 2011, 171). In this research, informal interviewing occurred on a daily basis alongside participant observation, had no maximum or minimum length or participants, and was not limited to those in the Pacific, Native North American, and Exhibition Departments. Unstructured interviewing is defined by its grounding on a clear plan, which is kept constantly in mind, but also by its minimal control over people’s responses (Bernard 2011, 172). The purpose of unstructured interviews in this research was to collect data from those who did not want to participate in semistructured interviews, as well as to collected additional data from people after their semistructured interviews. Like informal interviewing, unstructured interviewing had no length restrictions, but unlike informal interviewing, it was limited to those in the Pacific, Native North American, and Exhibition Departments.

Semistructured interviewing, characterized by the use of an interview guide (Appendix B) and the discretion to follow leads throughout the interview. Additionally, semistructured interviewing works well when interviewing people accustomed to
efficient uses of their time because it demonstrates control over the desired goals of the interviews, but leaves room for the interviewer and respondents to pursue new leads (Bernard 2011, 173). When I first arrived at the Field Museum, I had a prepared list of those I planned to interview—mainly those in the Pacific Department, and a few in the Native North American Department. From there, chain referral, or snowball, sampling was used to expand the pool of possible interviewees and contacts in the Pacific, Native North American, and Exhibition Departments.

When initially starting fieldwork, the desired goal was to have eight to ten semistructured interviews, limited to about one hour in length, which was later expanded to fourteen to sixteen semistructured interviews after a week of participant observation. At the end of my time at the Field Museum, I had completed sixteen semistructured interviews across the three departments. Each of these interviews were held in the Field Museum—offices, conference rooms, laboratories, exhibition halls, café—where the interviewee felt comfortable. The interviews were also recorded, only after the respondent gave their consent. Later the interviews were transcribed using the automated transcription service on rev.com, which were then reviewed alongside the interview recordings for errors. Once completed, the transcriptions were then sent, via email, to their respective interviewees for reviews, redactions, desired non-attributions, and other clarifications before moving on to analysis.

Exhibition Analysis

Exhibition analysis is an interpretive and comparative method for critically analyzing museum exhibitions (Hooper-Greenhill 2000; Kreps 2003). Particularly, I am
interested in a constructivist approach, where people interpret exhibitions through their own personal meanings and make sense through their own learning experiences. This is mediated not only by museum collections and the way they are exhibited, but also by one’s cultures, personal experiences, and other conditions (Hein and Alexander 1998; Hooper-Greenhill 1999; Hein 2006). While the focus of a constructivist approach tends to be on visitors, I am more interested in how museum staff and collaborators construct their personal meanings in the development, creation, and engagement of exhibitions.

In my research, the data collection for exhibition analysis occurred during Phrases I and II, with the goal of gathering data for the main research question and the second sub-question. The data gathered for exhibition analysis was organized and conducted through the use of a document (Appendix C) that ensured the systematic collection of the following: the names, identifiers, locations, related texts, and photos of items/belongings; the location, full text, voices, tenses, languages, and photos of all labels and bodies of text; the layout and structure of the exhibit space, such as colors, design elements, lighting style, mount style, and item/belonging proximities; multimedia and sound elements; and, notes from unobtrusive visitor observations.

Data for exhibition analysis was collected from six of the Field Museum’s cultural exhibitions. The first exhibit space is the co-curated gallery space in the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific, which at the time of research housed I-Kiribati, Filipinx, and Fijian exhibit cases that were created through co-curated and co-governance processes. The second exhibit space is the Polynesian exhibit cases in Regenstein Halls of the Pacific, where items and belongings from various Polynesian cultures are displayed alongside one another in categories of spiritual power, ancient Polynesia, music and dance, food,
fishing, war, tapa, and status. The third exhibit space is Ruatopupuke II, a wharenui (meeting house) from Tokomaru Bay, Aotearoa New Zealand, and his surrounding marae. Fourth is the Marshall Island atoll exhibit in *Traveling the Pacific,* an immersive, interactive exhibit where visitor walk through a replicated atoll. Fifth is *Looking at Ourselves,* located in *The Gary C. Comer Family Gallery* at the time of research, which is an exhibition of Malvina Hoffman’s bronze statues and the Field Museum’s 1933 exhibition, *The Races of Mankind.* The sixth exhibit is *Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains* in the *Native North American Hall,* one of the last exhibit cases being deinstalled for the hall’s renovation at the time of research. Each cultural exhibition was chosen due to its relation to those interviewed in Pacific, Native North American, and Exhibition Departments. While not all of these exhibits and exhibitions are discussed later, they all provide a means for comparing the Field Museum’s cultural exhibitions over time, as well as the relation between internal beliefs and aims of staff and the manifestations of their beliefs and aims in one of the museum’s public faces.

*Field Notes*

During fieldwork, I produced three types of field notes: jottings, logs, and diaries. Jottings refer to the notes made throughout the course of the research process that record important information, which may include notes taken during interviews, walkthroughs, conversations, daily activities, and other relevant information shared with me during the course of my fieldwork (Bernard 2011, 313-314). Jottings within my field journal—later transferred to a Microsoft Word document—were used to produce method, bio, and
descriptive notes, which allowed for further organization as well as preliminary data analysis.

Logs were used for tracking what I planned to do and what I actually did on a daily basis (Bernard 2011, 295). The log I created during my fieldwork is kept alongside my jottings, and primarily kept track of whom I wanted to talk with and interview, what days our conversations were scheduled, and whether or not they took place. It also allowed me to go back into my journal and refer to the context in which the conversations and interviews where scheduled and took place.

Diary notes, which were also transferred to a Microsoft Word document, allowed me to personally and subjectively reflect on what happened from day to day (Bernard 2011, 294). The diary provided me with a space to express and come to terms with emotions and concerns I experienced while conducting fieldwork in a healthy and constructive manner. An example of this is a series of entries that chronicle my emotions and thoughts on being a gay, Brown, Latinx man at the Field Museum and the lack of representation of LGBTQIA2S+ and Latinx people in the museum’s exhibitions.
CHAPTER SIX: SELF-DESCRIBED FUNCTIONS

The functions and structures of museums vary over time and from institution to institution, including—non-exhaustively—collections, conservation, curation, exhibitions, education, entertainment, programming, research, outreach and community engagement, and repatriation. This section is organized according to the Regenstein Conservator of Pacific Anthropology’s view on the Field Museum’s functions. This is not an institution wide perspective on functions, but that of a single individual. By organizing the chapter this way I hope to of course highlight the self-described functions of certain positions, but also show that an individual’s perception of a museum’s structure can be insightful.

The conservator, J.P. Brown, stated (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019), “I'm thinking you can’t have fewer than three fundamental properties in the design of a dynamic system, something that's actually working. I'd say that the functions of a museum are preservation, interpretation, and presentation.” In his view preservation is “keeping the stuff in one piece,” maintaining the physical, and spiritual, integrity and health of the collections. He goes on to clarify the difference between interpretation and presentation. Interpretation, in his perspective, is the function of acquiring new knowledge, recording old knowledge, and preserving said knowledge about the collections, while presentation is the outward expression of the museum.
It must be acknowledged that the three functions making up this dynamic system are fluid and non-rigid. They gain and lose attention over one another within the Field Museum’s system, and blend, elide in ways that defy rigid categorization. Furthermore, Brown’s way of visualizing the museum’s functions are valid and helpful within the scope of this research, but may not be generalizable to how all Field Museum employees organize the museum’s functions.

**Preservation**

Based on discussions with anthropology collections staff, situated in the Science and Education Collections of the Integrative Research Center, at the Field Museum, their duties encompass, but are not limited to, the care, preservation, and housing of the museum’s anthropology collections and documents; organizing access to collections for researchers, community members and groups, tours, and other museum staff; and, outreach and field collecting. The general structure of the anthropology collections staff are based on collections manager, collections assistant, intern, and volunteer positions, which are part of a Collections and Administration Team (CAT). A CAT is a system where there are curators or researchers with collections staff that make joint decisions regarding collections. This can be interpreted as a method of breaking down institutional hierarchies between collections and curatorial staff by flattening communication and expanding participation in decision-making (Murawski 2018). However, many of the staff I talked with shared that they still feel, experience, and fight against the Field Museum’s institutionalized hierarchy. Additionally, while these CATs create paths of communication within departments (e.g. Pacific Anthropology, Native North American Anthropology), there are still issues of communication between departments.
At the time of research, there were three permanent collections managers and two permanent collections assistants for the anthropology collections that span roughly 1.5 million to 2 million items. The anthropology collections staff work with other collections staff from non-anthropology departments and communicate their needs and views. One collections staff member (Personal Communication, July, 2019) discussed such an instance regarding a meeting about database reconfigurations. They explained that the anthropology collections are organized into seven regions: North America, Central America, South America, Asia, Africa, Europe, and Pacific. However, there was a decision that Central America could not be used anymore, and that Pacific would be called Oceania. It was communicated to the other museum staff that there are people in the Pacific that do not like the term Oceania since it was placed upon them by others. With the acknowledgment that this is not a universal view held throughout the Pacific, it was still decided that this change would not work for the anthropology collections. In the end, it was decided that anthropology could keep using Pacific while the natural sciences use Oceania. However, this creates a disconnection between anthropology and non-anthropology collections, which are not separate according to this collections employee. It also introduces complexities when working with Pacific Islander communities as they look at incongruences within the museum’s collections websites and see different terms being used by different departments.

The Regenstein Conservator of Pacific Anthropology, J.P. Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019), whose position is not actually limited solely to Pacific collections, described his role as advising people on the consequences of their actions regarding the future preservation of the collections. He explains that the Field Museum is
not an art museum, which means that they do not collect a single gorgeous example of something. Rather, the museum collects the everyday in his view, items that are meant to live out a functional life and be replaced. In general, he explained, that the items in the collections are not new, but have been used. Therefore, he and other conservators do not typically clean something to the point where it appears new because that erases evidence of its life before the museum. Thus, they are in a solution space that involves not making things appear new, while also trying to figure out the rate of deterioration and how to slow it down, or whether or not intervention is worth attempting since it can pose a threat to the item.

**Interpretation**

The Field Museum’s curators, specifically those that were interviewed and fall into the scope of my research within the anthropology departments, are at the forefront in the function of interpretation. However, this functional authority is also shared with the Exhibition Department’s Exhibition Developers, which will be discussed next. The role of the curator, as described by one of the interviewed curators (Personal Communication, July, 2019), is one that is responsible for making decisions about the collections, research, and leading the curation and research of items for exhibitions. In addition to the curators, there are internal temporary co-curators for specific projects, such as the *Native North American Hall* renovation, who have described their work as doing research,
developing content for exhibitions, and building relationships (Personal Communication, July, 2019).\(^4\)

**Presentation**

Exhibitions are the most prominent and public of all museum functions (McLean 1999). The Field Museum is not only unique in the sense that it has an internal Exhibition Department, but it also has full-time Exhibition Developers, and director, dedicated to the development of exhibitions and the stories they tell. Exhibitions staff explained that the existence of this department is the result of Michael Spock, brought to the museum in 1986 by then museum president Sandy Boyd. Spock came from the Children’s Museum in Boston with an exhibition style that focused on visitor experiences, immersion, and experiential learning. Additionally, he invented the position of museum Exhibition Developer, and shifted the power of creating and developing exhibitions from curators to them (Falk 1987; Honan 1990; Kendall 1994). Spock was instrumental, according to one curator interviewed (Personal Communication, July, 2019), in creating two institutions under one roof—the public museum and the research institute—further separating curators from the development of exhibitions at the time.\(^5\)

\(^4\) It can be interpreted that these curators are fulfilling the curatorial figure of facilitator. They focus their work on facilitating new relationships between communities and the Field Museum, bringing together diverse, entangled networks of human and non-human actors through the recognition of diverse forms of expertise, being, and knowing (Onciul 2019). However, this is not the case across the entirety of the Field Museum, with some being foe, forsaken, and friend by individuals inside and outside the museum’s walls.

\(^5\) This shift in power is not unique to the Field Museum, with many museum positions—designers, educators, collections staff, artists, exhibit developers, and others—performing duties, such as research, looking through collections, and creating interpretive strategies, which were once thought of as strictly curatorial (Anderson 2004; Gonzales 2020).
The Director of Exhibitions (Personal Communication, July, 2019) described the scope of the department as programming and developing the museum’s temporary exhibitions for the two ticketed halls and the smaller galleries. About 50% of the temporary exhibitions are produced in-house. The other 50% are booked from the outside, which are coordinated to be compatible with the museum’s collections and research. These exhibitions are a mix of cultural and natural sciences. Additionally, the Exhibition Department produces traveling exhibitions, with about six to eight traveling at any given time.

The creation of an exhibition can follow various project models, which are adapted and changed from institution to institution, department to department, and project to project. David Dean (1994, 8–18) describes one project model with four phases: 1) the conceptual phase, which focuses on collecting ideas, comparing ideas with audience needs and the museum’s mission, and selecting projects to develop; 2) the developmental phase, which involves setting exhibition goals, writing a storyline, designing and constructing the physical exhibition, creating an educational plan, and researching and promoting promotional plans; 3) the functional phase in which the exhibition is opened to the public, educational programs are implemented, visitor research is conducted, and the exhibition is eventually taken down; and 4) the assessment phase, which involves assessing the exhibition and the development process.

Polly McKenna-Cress and Janet Kamien (2013, 262–300) provide a similar, but different, eight-phase development process: 1) a planning phase that focuses on grant
proposals, funding, and initial planning documents; 2) a concept development phase, which concentrates on background research, exhibition outlines, concept testing, the creation of visual diagrams and schedules, and drafting overall budget; 3) a schematic design phase that refines the exhibition’s mission, big idea, goals, and objectives, as well as producing content organization (objects and narrative, interpretive plan, conceptual diagrams) and a draft of the walkthrough experience; 4) a design development phase, which aims at defining and refining all areas of the exhibition; 5) a construction documents phase that creates and manages the final designs for the exhibition’s fabricators; 6) a fabrication phase, which is the physical construction and installation of the exhibition; 7) a phase similar to Dean’s functional phase that involves the opening, evaluations, revisions, and documentation of the exhibitions; and 8) a closing phase, which involves the exhibitions de-installation.

The development process for exhibitions at the Field Museum has been a living document for the past 20 years. As laid out by the Director of Exhibition Development, Matt Matcuk (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019), the first phase of the process is the proposal phase, which includes raising money. This is followed by the development phase, which is followed by the design phase, and ends with a design review and goes into the full production phase. Every exhibition and each of its pieces goes through this process one phase at a time.

The Exhibition Developers do a majority of the writing, conceptualizing, and development for the museum’s exhibitions, working with content experts and collaborators inside and outside the Field Museum. One developer described their position as professional storytelling (Personal Communication, July, 2019). An important
part of the role is to take the information that content experts, whether they are curators, scientists, or community members, think is important for the exhibition and suggest ways or collaborate with them to figure out ways of organizing the exhibition and presenting the information to the visitors. Working with community members outside of the museum in the development of exhibitions is relatively new for many of the Exhibition Developers and is becoming more common within their department as they work on more community-based exhibitions. This is requiring them to come up with different tools, methods, and processes, such as relationship and trust building. Internally, they create documents and work with various forms of media, interactive materials, and designers throughout the exhibition process.

The development process at the Field Museum adapts and changes as needed, but tends to follow a similar course. Susan Golland, one of the Exhibition Developers, walked me through her view on the process in one of our discussions.

Usually what happens is when an exhibit is green lit, that’s when it’s approved and past the initial discussion phase—all the initial discussions about the topic, who we’ll be working with, who the advisors or curators are will all be decided—an exhibit developer will get assigned to it. That’s when my role would begin on the project. At that point there’s a topic and we know who the experts will be, but we don’t know a whole lot of other stuff.

At that point I would start talking with the expert. Usually, there are these big meetings, forums, where there are really broad discussions that involve a curator,
and maybe a small group of other people. We start talking about general ideas, what they think the exhibit should be about, what the important themes are. I’ve worked with curators before who have sketched things out and we work with that, and other people have a little bit less of an idea. We do different exercises with them at the beginning that will try to help all of us understand what’s important, things like post-it notes where you write down all of your ideas and start sorting them, or activities where you try to figure out which thing is more important for a person. Your goal is to create some kind of conceptual plan for the exhibit . . . At the same time we try to think of what our main idea, big idea statement or several statements are, something that focuses all of us.

That’s where things often feel very loose and uncertain, which is kind of hard because the moment a project gets started everybody wants details so they can start working. You have to get through this very vague process . . . once you start solidifying that, then things start falling into place. We’re making all of these documents—make a bubble plan, make a big idea statement, write down goals for the visitor’s experience. All of it comes out in conversations with the curator. After we do that we’ll usually start going on collections tours. That involves the curator. If we’re talking about stuff from the museum, we’ll go down and talk with the curator and a collections manager. We look at the collections. Usually, those are very busy and kind of overwhelming because people are narrating as they’re looking through stuff. The developers are trying to record as much information as possible. You’re taking pictures, making notes, and you’re trying
to capture all of this stuff. From there, you start to sort of say, ‘If this is what you would like to feature in the exhibit, how is it fitting into this plan . . . ?’ You’re working from broader, and trying to narrow the focus and refine as you go. As you start getting an initial idea about what some of the things are that go in the exhibit, we do this visual grouping that shows how things fit together.

We just keep refining from there. There’s so much back and forth because you’re doing a million other things, like media. Eventually, you turn your list of everything going into the exhibit into an outline for yourself of what all the elements will be and what you are going to write about. You’re always working with a curator as you do this.

Once you have an outline, the developers would write all of the labels in batches or all together and the curator would review them. There are usually a lot of conversations that happen, going back and forth about certain things. Eventually, you land on a final label copy or final script.

Then everything moves to production. Developers, our role drops off a little bit once things move into production, but then there are things like proofing, placement, and adjustments. It’s sort of the minor adjustment phase. Basically, you’re watching things as they get moved through production, and then everything gets installed. We do a double check and then the exhibit opens (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).
Community Engagement Coordinator

There is one Community Engagement Coordinator at the Field Museum, Debra Yepa-Pappan, a Jemez Pueblo-Korean woman. The coordinator position transcends and cuts across all three of the functions that organize this chapter. The position is a temporary one connected to the Native North American Hall renovation, and is a role dedicated to creating relationships, building relationships, and mending old relationships with Native people in relation to and beyond exhibitions. Yepa-Pappan (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019) shared with me that she uses her position in the Field Museum to create a welcoming environment for visiting Native people. She provides a friendly, familiar face to people through various means, such as waiting for them at the entrance of the museum before they arrive; buying people lunch and coffee; sitting, listening, providing space for emotion, and having a conversation with them; and, trying to personalize their visits to the museum. She also works closely with collections staff to make sure Native people have the opportunity to go into the collections and connect with their cultural heritage. If needed, she helps them navigate the process of requesting access to the collections when they visit, so that they can look at and research something closely. Being on the inside of the institution, she keeps the gates open for Native people to access and reclaim space.
CHAPTER SEVEN: FRAMEWORKS AT THE FIELD MUSEUM

The differing explicit and implicit frameworks—ethical, professional, cultural—ground and influence the ways in which the Field Museum staff act and interact across departments. In a contact zone perspective the following frameworks can be understood as forms of articulation, performance, and translation (Clifford 1997). Additionally, Miriam Clavir (2002), through her research, making space for Indigenous people to explain their views and beliefs around museology and the preservation of material culture, summarizes,

The overwhelming impression given by First Nations statements about the preservation of material culture is that preservation of objects is connected to regaining identity, respect, and cultural well-being through practicing traditions and redressing historic power imbalances. Preservation of objects is defined as integral to maintaining the life of the community. In addition, objects housed in urban museums may remain in the museum or may be repatriated; however, in both cases the objects should be contextualized in such a way that First Nations are able to make decisions about them (2002, 95).

The Pacific anthropology department’s work is conducted by both staff and visiting researchers. The department’s website claims that, for almost 50 years, it has been challenging naïve ideas and old prejudices about Pacific Islanders, their origins, histories, customs, and contemporary lives through a commitment to educating the public, changing academic minds, and celebrating the people and cultures of the Pacific (“Pacific Anthropology at the Field Museum” n.d.). A large component of the Pacific...
anthropology department’s work is outreach through cultural heritage visits. Their perspective is that collections are most useful in context, with staff frequently traveling to places from which the Field Museum collects. Each trip may involve collecting, learning about what the museum already has, and sharing historical items with descendent communities. The goal is to build and sustain long-lasting relationships with artists and other community members to enrich understandings of the museum’s collections, and to fulfill the department’s ethical responsibility to make their collections more accessible (“Pacific Anthropology at the Field Museum” n.d.).

The Field Museum has one of the most extensive Pacific anthropology collections in North America due to large contributions from collectors, such as A.W.F. Fuller, A.B. Lewis, F.C. Cole, and G.A. Dorsey, as well as smaller donations and contemporary collecting (“Pacific Anthropology at the Field Museum” n.d.). The A.W.F. Fuller collection contains nearly 7,000 items from Melanesia, Polynesia, and Australia; the A.B. Lewis collection has over 12,000 items, with a focus on Melanesia and coastal Papua New Guinea, collected during Lewis’ fieldwork from traders and local contacts; the F.C. Cole collection is made up of approximately 5,000 items from Cole’s Philippines expedition, as well as over 400 related photographs; the G.A. Dorsey collection contains approximately 4,000 items from Australia and New Guinea; and, contemporary collecting is done in partnership with artists, craftspeople, and makers of the objects and belongings, with a focus on developing and deepening relationships (“Pacific Anthropology at the Field Museum” n.d.). The Pacific anthropology department emphasizes the importance of researching, collecting, and caring for items in a responsible and appropriate manner that
builds relationships and partnerships between museums, communities, and other institutions (“Pacific Anthropology at the Field Museum” n.d.).

The Pacific anthropology department’s community engagement has four main aspects: Chicago’s marae and Ruatępupuke II (pronouns: he, him, his); co-curation; outreach; online community. Ruatępupuke II is a 19th century wharenui (meeting house) from Tokomaru Bay in Aotearoa New Zealand located on the second floor of the Field Museum. Ruatępupuke II’s marae (the meeting house’s surrounding area) is, in Māori terms, a turangawaewae (place to stand) where people may stand proud, speak, and be heard knowing that they will be received with respect and open-mindedness.

The Pacific anthropology department keeps Ruatępupuke II and the marae warm through a partnership with people from Tokomaru Bay, welcoming visitors into the marae and Ruatępupuke II, spreading understanding, exhibiting Māori treasures close to them, and bringing Māori artists and scholars to work on them when necessary (J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007; “Pacific Anthropology at the Field Museum” n.d.). Their form of co-curation and co-governance is based on two Māori concepts: taonga tuku iho (heritage treasures) and kaitiaki (stewardship) (“Co-Curation | Field Museum | PacificAnthropology.Org” n.d.).

_Taonga tuku iho_ and _kaitiaki_ are terms and concepts that can be difficult to translate into English and a Western mindset. Nevertheless, _taonga_ broadly refers to treasures of Māori cultural and natural heritage, while _kaitiaki_ can be understood as guardianship and stewardship. _Kaitiaki_ is the focus of how the Regenstein Pacific Anthropology team ground themselves as it was more prevalent in discussions with the team and provides a base for comparison against other Field Museum departments.
It should be noted that my time at the Field Museum was limited and what was shared with me were personal, momentary thoughts and insights. *Kaitiaki* and one’s relationship to it is complex. What was shared with me, and what I share here, only scratches the surface.

McCarthy, Hakiwai, and Schorch (2019) in *The Figure of the Kaitiaki: Learning from Māori Curatorship Past and Present* state that four main concepts of *kaitiaki* are as follows: 1) referring to oneself as *kaitiaki*, which suggests a *tiaki* (caring) dimension to the role. *Kaitiaki* also suggests a spiritual element and cultural responsibility to the position. 2) *Kaitiaki* generally refer to the objects they care for as *taonga* (treasure). 3) There is an evoking of *mātauranga Māori*—a dynamic and evolving system of knowledge used by *tangata whenua* (people of the land) to explain, interpret, and understand the world in which they live. It is framed by *whakapapa* and *whanaungatanga* (kinship connections) between all things and is evidenced through *korero* (narratives and history). 4) There is an inclusion of *tikanga taonga* (traditional Māori protocols and practices for managing ancestral treasures) (McCarthy, Hakiwai, and Schorch 2019). All four of these concepts are inalienable from Māori culture and further entangle practitioners of *kaitiaki* beyond the *taonga* their museum may hold.

The concept of *kaitiaki* is (not) articulated, performed, and translated in various ways among members of the Regenstein team. When asked whether or not she grounds herself in the concept of *kaitiaki*, the Pacific Anthropology Collections Assistant, Julia Kennedy (Personal Communication, July 22, 2019), said that she does not feel the need to adopt another culture's concept in order to do something ethically. She clarified that she would care for the collections in respectful ways whether she knew about the idea of
kaitiaki or not, and that one doesn't have to be a Pacific Islander to find their concepts compelling. Referring to the four kaitiaki concepts, none of them are explicitly performed by Kennedy. Instead, the co-curation and collaboration done by her is translated and explained as feeling like the ethical way things should be done.

The Regenstein Conservator, J.P. Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019), explained that learning about kaitiaki has been helpful, especially when engaging with taonga, kaitiaki taonga. However, he said that a problem with kaitiaki taonga is correct Māori protocol, relating to the third and fourth kaitiaki concepts listed above, which the museum cannot provide. The performance of kaitiaki by Brown is a tentative one, as he is nervous about insisting that he can care for the taonga in the museum’s collections in any valid Māori way. Thus, the role of kaitiaki is translated by Brown as “trying to be respectful of Māori protocol,” and performed to the extent that he and the rest of the Regenstein team are caretakers of taonga.

The Regenstein Pacific Curator, John Terrell (Personal Communication, July, 2019), when asked about his use of the term kaitiaki, responded by explaining on the one hand they are the caretakers of Ruatapupuke II, but on the other hand they are not Māori. Kaitiaki is translated and performed as the caretaking of taonga to the extent that he and his team can enact. The curator explained that he is aware of the conversations revolving around the question if non-Māori people can be kaitiaki, but he believes that one does not have to be Māori to do the right thing.

These brief thoughts and insights cannot fully describe the relationship one has with being kaitiaki. However, what it does begin to illuminate is the various ways in which people articulate, translate, and perform a certain concept or framework they may
share. In this moment, they may differ in how they personally connect with and translate *kaitiaki*, but a clear commonality is that they view their work as being respectful toward and doing the right for collections and communities.

A temporary collections assistant working on the *Native North American Hall* renovation, Emily Starck (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019), was asked if she grounds herself in any ethical, professional, or cultural frameworks. She explained that in her view she and her co-workers are taking on an intersectional approach that acknowledges the intersecting identities, perspectives, and experiences of Native people. In a contact zone perspective, Starck and her co-workers are attempting to de-articulate from the colonial articulations—political, social, economic, cultural—established by the Field Museum and previous and current employees as a form of resistance. They are creating re-articulations that honor and empower Native peoples and experiences.

Meranda Roberts, a Numu (Northern Paiute) and Chicana researcher and co-curator, working on the renovation also de-articulates from the Field Museum’s colonial and asymmetrical articulations by re-articulating with and performing Indigenous methodologies and perspectives to privilege Native peoples, experiences, and voices. Translating this into a museum space, she explains,

I try to tell stories, like I would for an oral interview. If I don't get to talk about my community, I'm trying to use what a community has written about itself. Oral interviews, I've done that before, and that's what grounds a lot of my work. I don't want it to be a secondhand source from the 1940s. I want the Native voice to be in the front instead of the anthropologist. For me, to have to acknowledge an
anthropologist from the 1930s because that's what you do in academia doesn't sit well. It's time for Native people to have that same sort of recognition (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

The frameworks shared by Starck and Roberts are similar to the Regenstein team in that they are breaking from standards established by and privileging the societal and institutional majority powerholders that have attempted to suppress and marginalize Indigenous and differing experiences and perspectives (Clavir 2002; Lonetree 2012; Clifford 2019). However, these two examples are different in that they are articulating, performing, and translating their own, or their co-worker’s, cultural protocols, frameworks, and lived experiences.

The Exhibition Developers and the Director of Exhibition Development were asked if they ground themselves or see their department grounding itself in any cultural, professional, or personal protocols and ethical frameworks. The Director of Exhibition Development, Matt Matcuk, stated,

I think that most of what I'm about to say is expressed explicitly in materials that we give to collaborators and in presentations that we give when we first start working with people. We are here to create exhibitions that tell the stories people bring to us. Those stories are theirs. It's not our job to judge what is or isn't important. Our goal usually, in the past, has been to work with people outside the museum at a very high level, and to take those kinds of conversations and synthesize out various communication goals, experience goals, and to bring those
back and say, how is this? The stories are sort of co-created (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019).

In regard to the Native North American Hall renovation, Matcuk explained that they did not want to continue with that framework. He explained that he and his department did not want to be the ones creating anything. Everything that was going to be created was going to come from Native people. He said that they have tried to take the developers out of the process to a much greater degree than normal. Their new approach has been one of asking more questions, listening more, and going away and coming back with a more open mind. This may be the result of an increase in collaborative, community-based work that has led to new articulations through the awakening of latent relationships that have long entangled the Exhibition Department with the peoples they display.

An Exhibition Developer, when asked the same question, said that the Exhibition Department relies more on implicit understanding than explicitly stating values and a collective mission (Personal Communication, July, 2019). The Exhibition Developer explained that they and other developers have tried bringing this up in the department because they would like to have some organizing statements and missions that can be understood as overarching goals. They believe that the lack of this is causing people in the Exhibition Department to feel like there is no progress. As the developers work more with people and communities for collaborative exhibitions, this Exhibition Developer asks, “how do we want to approach this work as exhibition folk” (Personal Communication, July, 2019)? They said that this is a topic that should be talked about as a group.
CHAPTER EIGHT: INTERNAL BELIEFS AND MANIFESTATIONS AT THE FIELD MUSEUM

We sometimes talk about museums as personified entities while occasionally overlooking the people within these institutions whose internal beliefs affect museums. Their effect on the museum in turn affects them in a cyclical fashion (Ames 1992; Kreps 2003; Marstine 2011). This chapter is structured around excerpts of various Field Museum staff discussing internal beliefs of where they ideally and realistically see the Field Museum, and in some cases museums as a whole, going in the future. In some places, this is followed by quotes from the staff talking about why and if they care about what they do within the museum, as well as whether or not they like museums. If applicable, the manifestations of certain internal beliefs discussed by staff are expanded upon and looked at in the larger Field Museum context from the perspective of other staff and my interpretations. It was an intentional choice to include long quotes from interviews as a way of showing respect for people and their beliefs, insights, and interpretations.

Many of these manifestations can be placed with multiple staff, but were placed with one for the ease of comprehension. It should be stated that the structure of this chapter is not meant to create notions of mutual exclusivity, dichotomy, and separation. Many, if not all, of the beliefs and perspectives explored here meld and influence each other on the page, as well as at the Field Museum. It is the individual positions and
beliefs of staff that build and change over time to create institutional moralities across specific institutions and the wider museum sector (Marstine 2011). Additionally, it should be noted that what is presented in this chapter are momentary, personal beliefs, understandings, and interpretations. They are not meant to be overly generalized and reflect the Field Museum as a whole. In other words, it is someone’s story, but it is not the story.

The intention is not to present a single, unchanging truth about the Field Museum and its staff, but to provide and make space for the understandings, interpretations, and stories shared with me by Field Museum staff. I expect all of this to be fluid, dynamic, and contradictory, and there may be moments of consonance and dissonance—stability and instability.

**Researcher and Co-Curator**

When a researcher and co-curator in the Native North American Department, Meranda Roberts, a Numu (Northern Paiute) and Chicanx woman, was asked what she ideally sees the future of museums being, she discussed the importance of access to collections and telling hard truths that may make people uncomfortable. She started by saying,

I want museums as a whole, and I think some places are already there, to feel comfortable in saying the hard truths—saying the hard truths, not being afraid of the repercussions and acknowledging. I think this country has a very hard problem, most countries do, of acknowledging the really hard stuff that is still aggravating society today. And, that means being okay with embracing that
uncomfortableness and just putting it out there and then moving on. We'll keep going back and forth between how do we acknowledge and how to not acknowledge it. Let's just put it all out there and not just as a Band-Aid.

There is repatriation happening, museums give back the items that were stolen to Indigenous communities. It's a very slow process, but it's happening. In my mind it would be great to have a very fluid system where collections are more accessible to the everyday person. Here we can do heritage visits in the collection, just kind of show you around, but the more in depth you want, the more qualified you have to be. It's a very specific purpose and I don't agree with that. One of my big things, and something I'm writing about, is access to collections as a transformative experience because you're learning things that you probably didn't even realize you were going to learn (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).  

Roberts continued by giving more specific examples of her experiences with Apsáalooke artists and Kevin Red Star in collections storage. She says,

When I took all of the artists for the Apsáalooke show down there [collections] . . . they're talking Apsáalooke to each other and you're feeling a different energy down there and you're seeing the way people are interacting with pieces of culture.

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6 The telling of these hard truths has been shown to create spaces for healing and understanding through acknowledging and redressing the legacies of historical injustices, colonialism, and unresolved grief (Lonetree 2012).
that were sold off to make enough money to survive. That reconnection is super powerful to be a part of . . .

We had, an artist, Kevin Red Star, here. He is huge in the Native art movement world. He was saying how he had been painting shields wrong his entire life because he never actually saw one until then. Now he's changing his approach to the way that shields are painted because of his interaction here, because of his involvement.

You see things differently, you become a different person, and you realize collection access is so important because, on one hand, it's great that we have those things here so people can have the option, but, on the other hand, I wish we could have them back easily. I wish that more people in that sector of work would do more to promote taking collections out to communities, and stuff like that. There's a big fear of ownership, who actually owns this? So, I would like those transformative things to happen. It probably will not happen in my lifetime, maybe not even in your lifetime (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).  

\[\text{7 The question of ownership is not unique in this case. As Arapata Hakiwai (2007, 45) explains, “For many indigenous peoples, tensions often arise over issues of access and ownership because of dislocation, alienation, and displacement from their cultural treasures.” Some museums have been grappling and engaging with ownership through various means, such as the Field Museum’s Philippine partnership (Carlson 2018), the Native North American Hall renovation. Co-creative projects and partnerships have the potential to challenge institutional perceptions of ownership and control of content (Simon 2010, 272), as well as ownership of collections. This is due to the radical trust of all parties’ ability to perform complex tasks, work together, and respect one another’s rules and priorities, which may result in the restructuring of planning, decision-making,}\]

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Responding to where she realistically sees museums going in the future, Roberts talked about her desire for more radical approaches, as well as for people to invest more in Native programing, saying,

. . . We've had discussions about how I need to be comfortable with not creating change because it's not going to happen, because it took like 20 years to even get to this point . . . And, I am the stubborn person I am, why couldn't it happen if we were more radical? I take a more radical approach to things because I feel like I have nothing to lose.

So with that, I see, at least in some places, [the museum] realizing how beneficial it is to have a Native show and how beautiful it is and that it is worth investing their money in so that way they can do more. I think that we have to prove that we're worthy of their investment, unfortunately, then they'll put in the money. That's where I see them not trusting us so much with our knowledge, trusting that they'll get their return on the money that they are putting out . . . Money is great, but where’s that change happening? So, I realistically see museums realizing our and governing power. Additionally, the responsibility of the collection may shift from an exclusively internal museum process toward one that involves community stakeholders (Carlson 2018, 58). However, these partnerships may not lead to change in the legal ownership of the collection, meaning that a partner, community stakeholder, or co-curator’s ability to co-govern the collection is limited to the museum worker’s power to make their needs and desires heard (Carlson 2018, 59–60).
value and then putting it back in; but I see it still being more consultation than collaboration at this point (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

Roberts was asked why she does her work, why she cares, and if she cares. In response she told the following story,

There's a lot of hurt, there's intergenerational trauma, and I have that in my family on both sides—drug and alcohol problems. My family doesn't really understand who we are and I know where that comes from. My grandfather who lived on the reservation went to World War II and he was ashamed of his culture, but his grandfather—there was a lot of relocation or removal on that side. When my family from Mexico came here, my grandfather on that side was beaten for speaking Spanish and had to work as a farm laborer, and all these other things.

So, they were ashamed of themselves and ashamed of their cultures because they were being told that was the right way, and they didn't want us to experience that. They just didn't teach us anything. I think it created a void of not being able to ground us in anything. I see us caring about things, but I feel if we have more tradition and more things like that it would solidify us more instead of just having drugs and alcohol to bring us together and be able to be around each other. Ceremony could have done that.
If I do ever have kids, I don't want my kids to feel that way. I want them to feel like there's something that can ground them, they can turn to, that's healthier and that's more based in their ancestor work. Our ancestors are very powerful and I want them to know that, and I want them to feel that, and I want them to honor it and not be ashamed of it. I feel like I was lost for a long time. People always knew I was Native. But, my people are stubborn and strong and beautiful, and I want my kids to know that.

I do this work because I feel places like this see us still in that headdress, the stereotypical type of way. I get really passionate because there are things in the collection here that come from my community. There’s a cradleboard that's down there from the 19th century, you could tell it was used, a baby lived in this beautiful piece of work by a woman who made this specifically for her child from a Northern Paiute Tribe. Now, it's just here, her family couldn't use it anymore—her daughter, who probably would have taken it for herself when she got older for her kids—that all stopped. That's emotional.

There’s a Ghost Dance religion, I come from that community and my great-great-grandfather was a very powerful spiritual leader that was a part of that. There are Ghost Dance regalia in the collection. To be around that affects me in other ways than it does other people. I get agitated, I've cried a lot at work because I'm passionate.
So, when people are like, you can't do that or you shouldn't do that, they don't understand your family’s things are down there and you can't separate it. There's no separation from work and home for me. I try to understand their point of view, but I feel like people need to understand my point of view and see it's okay to be emotional, it's okay to be pissed off, uncomfortable. I think we all need to be more uncomfortable. I don't think you can Indigenize a place because that's what being an Indigenous person is. They’re over there always asking us to learn how to fit into this system—the system needs to start to work with us on how they can help us more. That's why I'm so passionate. All of that (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

Building off everything above, Roberts responded to the question, do you like museums, by discussing the power museums have and what they are doing with that power. She explains,

I do. I think that they are powerful for people of color. I think that if more of us were in charge that it would be a transformative experience for youth, and it wouldn't just be dinosaurs and bugs and all of this. I think museums, the museum here specifically, dumbs down its content, doesn't think of society as being as smart as it is, or is too worried that they're talking down. I don't like that, and don't feel comfortable with that. I do like museums, I like what they stand for, in terms of educating, because it's a different way for kids to get engaged and to see
things—they can see themselves reflected and there's a lot of power to all of these things.

But the pitfalls to that are you get a group of people in charge that aren't those kids who are going to have that transformative experience. I was doing something downstairs and this girl, I was talking about one of the shows, she was like, ‘Oh, you're Indian.’ And, I was like, yeah. She said, ‘I didn't know you guys existed anymore.’ I'm like, yeah, because their education system is failing. Apparently so are we. So, I don't like that we are okay with it being like that. We don't teach them otherwise here, they come here just so they can marvel at Sue and see all the pretty stuff. But, there's a real chance they're asking me these questions because obviously they're interested and we shouldn't hide from that. We should explore our own ignorance in a way. That's why I don't like museums. I like them and I love them, but I also don't like what they do with their power a lot of the time (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

Manifestations of Communication Silos

A majority of the people I talked with at the Field Museum acknowledged that they believe there to be a lack of sustained, meaningful communication between people and departments. The most common term used to describe this among the museum’s staff is ‘siloing,’ which refers to departments, teams, and people that work separately from one another in a distinct, insular manner. Another form of siloing that was brought up in several discussions with one staff member was ‘class siloing,’ which refers to siloing
based on the perceived prestige of one’s position and education in a hierarchical system. Silos are not unique to the Field Museum, with most museums relying on deeply ingrained, top-down structures that rely on territorial thinking, defined protocols, and traditional reporting structures based on academic degrees, power, silos, division, and oppression (Murawski 2018).

The Regenstein Pacific Conservator, J.P. Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019), when discussing siloing at the museum, said that this is a topic that is always brought up, but he does not know what people expect. He explained that academics are always complaining about people not being cross- or interdisciplinary, but that nobody who is cross- or interdisciplinary gets hired because they are not specialized enough in whatever the hiring department is searching for. He continued, saying that of course exhibition staff are going to talk to exhibition staff and anthropology staff are going to talk with anthropology staff, and that there will always be silos, it just depends on how the administrative structure is configured. He explained that when people complain about siloing it is typically because somebody else got the money they wanted, or because they want to be involved in something they did not know was happening, or they feel ignored. In a way, there may be interdepartmental jealousy because someone might think another is encroaching on their professional territory (Low 1942).

Meranda Roberts explained that she sees communication issues occurring along a generational gap as well (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019). She described how the younger generation of employees seem to work in a more fluid, less hierarchical manner, but are repeatedly told to act more in line with what the older, more traditional academics and staff desire. She said that it is okay to share feelings, call people out, and
still respect each other without having someone sitting at the head of the table with their ego growing and getting in the way.\(^8\)

One curator shared that everyone at the museum knows that siloing is prevalent, but the silos make it easier to accomplish tasks without talking to others. They shared that in their view people do not know if they agree on topics across departments and teams because the siloed structure of the museum keeps them from talking and listening to one another, and that there is no leadership to bring people together across the silos (Personal Communication, July, 2019). Another curator said that the effect of the silos varies, and that most communication happens around projects (Personal Communication, July, 2019). As Bernadette Lynch has observed, in project-oriented institutions the pressure to get things done can end up marginalizing communication and debate between people and departments (2011, 444).

This is only one part of the larger story, and, as one collections assistant shared (Personal Communication, July, 2019), there are people trying to change these siloed relationships. One example they brought up was that of the Exhibition Developer working with Regenstein team who makes a point to meet with them regularly to discuss and work on projects.\(^9\)

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\(^8\) There may be a resistance to change by the more traditional academics because the desire to transform the institution’s structure at the hands of a younger generation may be seen as dismissive of their knowledge, expertise, authority, and practices (Phillips 2015).

\(^9\) This communication pathway, and others like it, is temporary and subject to change with projects, staffing, and time. Nevertheless, manifestations of change in communication that seek ideas and input from staff and colleagues on a regular basis is one way of working toward disassembling silos, flattening hierarchies of communication, and expanding participation in decision-making (Murawski 2018).
Curator of North American Anthropology

When asked about where they see the Field Museum, and museums as a whole, ideally going in the future, the Curator of North American Anthropology, Alaka Wali, focused on thinking about museums ‘without the box’ and blurring definitions and categories, saying,

It's interesting because there was a column today in the New York Times by Tom Friedman and he's talking about the polarization in this country, Democrats, Republicans, etc. He cited somebody who said, it's not about thinking inside the box or outside the box. It's about thinking without the box. I really liked that metaphor, and I think museums have to think without the box. They should start thinking about total radical transformation of what is a museum . . . That's kind of what we've tried to do, experiment with blurring the lines between those things. I also think museums should start to blur the lines in terms of categories about, this is an art museum, this is a natural history museum, this is a science center (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019).

This experimentation can be seen with the inclusion of contemporary art by Maria Pinto, Bunky Echo-Hawk, Rhonda Holy Bear, and Chris Pappan in the front gallery of, and throughout, the Native North American Hall before its renovation.

Focusing in on anthropology collections in regard to blurring definitions and categories, specifically Western-model museums, Wali states,
I think there's a lot to be done in the future, especially for anthropology collections around the care and stewardship of those collections. Your mentor, Christina Kreps, has been a pioneer in helping us think about the fact that Western museology is grounded in a certain set of principles and ideas that are very Western, and that non-Western cultures, places, museums, have a very different approach to care and stewardship and what does it mean. Everything she's written is hugely influential in thinking about where museum practice should go when it comes to collections care and stewardship (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019).\textsuperscript{10}

When asked about the future of the Field Museum, Wali commented on the reality of economic constraints and how the museum is presented,

I think realistically museums are constrained by economic reality. Their economic embeddedness in a capitalist system constrains them to act in a very conservative way. Museums, in general, are always thinking about what we can do to bring more people in and generate more revenue. All that economic constraint affects

\textsuperscript{10} Kreps (2003; 2006) has shown that the Western museum model is not a universal given, rather cultures across time and space keep items of special value and meaning through culturally appropriate structures and practices of storing, caring for, and displaying. This, coupled with the acceptance that museums are socially constructed artifacts of their society (Ames 1992; Kahanu, Nepia, and Schorch 2019), means that the box we are thinking in, outside of, and around can be reshaped. However, if we acknowledge the explicit and latent relationships that entangle museums, their staff, and communities through the collecting of alienable and inalienable cultural materials (Thomas 1991), the entirety of the Western museum model box may not be totally disassembled due to its inherent colonial legacies.
self-presentation. If you look at the way we present ourselves in marketing, we've gone back to presenting ourselves as being about mummies and dinosaurs. That's what we're selling right now . . . it's so 19th-century to market ourselves that way, and we're not marketing ourselves as anything else largely (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019). 11

Responding to the questions, why do you do this work, why do you care, or do you care, Wali reflects on her social work in South America and the work being done around the Native North American Hall renovation. She states,

Yes, I do care very much; it’s been great to be here at the Field Museum. I never imagined that I would end up in a museum. What I like about it is that it has been a platform for me to do social change work. I feel like I've been able to do really significant, impactful work here at the Field Museum, especially around Indigenous communities in South America.

I'm very proud of the exhibits that I've been able to do with Bunky, and Rhonda, and Chris, and now this hall [renovation]. For me, it’s been very moving . . . you can't say it in a few words, but it's very moving to listen to stories, to hear experiences, to know that people trust you enough to share those experiences with

11 Economic constraints are a very real issue for museums, not only for keeping their doors open and donors happy, but also as local and regional agents. As Steven Conn (2010, 15–16) explains, “museums are also being asked to serve as economic engines in postindustrial cities hoping to replace manufacturing with culture.”
you. Especially moving has been going into collections with folks from Native communities. Sometimes it's very painful for them and hard for the rest of us. Other times, it's mind blowing because of the stories that they can tell with the tangible items, it just blows your mind. I don't know how to describe the experience because it’s so powerful. I feel very privileged that I’ve had that opportunity while here to do all this work and with all these people (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019).

Wali has been working at the Field Museum for nearly 25 years, and when asked if she likes museums and exhibitions, she replies,

I don't only want to focus on exhibits though. There's a lot more to museums than just the public part, the exhibit part. Some exhibits are great, they tell a great story. I’ve always said, as opposed to teaching at a university where you can only reach 20 students at a time, and of those, one sort of becomes enlightened because we are a professorship, here a million people go to the Field Museum every year. You have the chance to really, at least to some degree, affect how they see the world around them (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019).

Shifting from exhibits, Wali talks about what she thinks is most rewarding for her, stating,
For me, what's been really more rewarding than working on museum exhibits has been working directly with Chicago communities and communities in the Amazon. In the Amazon, we've worked with Indigenous communities on issues of land and livelihood, they're very subsistence, they're very sense of cultural identity. That's really critical in my view. Coming from a museum and doing that has been very effective. If I had come as a university professor, I don't think I would have been as effective, the NGOs don't have the same kind of neutrality and trust. So, we've been able to leverage our position here as a scientific institution in a way that has allowed us to both speak to the people in power and to work with communities to get their voices heard in ways that maybe they weren't being heard. I think museums have that potential. They're houses of the people, if you want them to be, while universities are still very elite and corporate (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019).

Wali’s work has shown how applied and museum anthropologists navigate academia and community work, and how their work can have great range and variety. Kreps (2019, 61) writes that “Wali has conducted ethnographic research on the impact of hydroelectric

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12 The idea of the role of the museum as an institution for social and community work has become more prevalent (Nash, Colwell-Chanthaphonh, and Holen 2011; Levitt 2015; Gonzales 2020). The importance of museum work for social justice can be condensed into several main points. It is one-way museums can contribute to social and environmental sustainability. As some of society’s primary modes of education, museums play a significant role in teaching guests to examine problems, find solutions, act prosocially, and engage in respectful, inclusive behavior rooted in an understanding of history and cultural diversity. Additionally, social justice through museum work, such as exhibitions, is one way to boost the sustainability and relevance of museums (Gonzales 2020).
dams on Indigenous populations in Panama; on infant mortality among African-Americans in Harlem, New York; and more recently, on creativity, art, and resilience in communities in Chicago.” As part of the Field Museum’s efforts to better engage with Chicago-area communities and organizations through art, activism, environmental conservation, and restoration, Wali established the Center for Cultural Understanding and Change at the museum in 1995.

Community Engagement Coordinator

When asked where she ideally sees the Field Museum going in the future, the Community Engagement Coordinator, Debra Yepa-Pappan, a Jemez Pueblo-Korean woman, discussing the need for more Native people in the institution. She states,

I would definitely like to see more Native people working here. I would love to see a dedicated team of Native people for the Native exhibition or anything Native related. Not to say that the non-Native people that are working on the project aren't understanding or helpful. How would it be if we had a whole team of Native people working on this project? Not to say that it would make it easier, but there would already be that understanding and that perspective. That first-person lens would already be there. I think that's a dream. I would love to see a full Native staff dedicated to this . . . As far as the entire museum, I wish there were a better understanding of Native people (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).
In response to where she realistically sees the Field Museum going in the future, Yepa-Pappan built on this topic and brought up Chris Pappan’s art being exhibited in the *Native North American Hall* and the temporary employment of many of the Native staff, saying,

I think we're moving forward. We can't move back. We shouldn't move back. That's how I felt with Chris' exhibition when it was intervening in the hall. One of my worries with that was that once the show was over, and this was before we knew that we were going to green light the project to renovate so soon, I kept thinking and saying like, ‘Gosh, Chris’ show was amazing in here and it's doing something so amazing. What's going to happen when it ends? Are we going to go backwards and just have the old, static, antiquated hall again? That wouldn't be right.’ I feel like the museum needs to figure out a way to keep moving forward and keep moving forward with not just the Native American exhibition, but they need to redo all these other cultural halls—the African Hall, the Ancient Americas, the Northwest Coast Hall—and they need to keep moving that forward and they need to sustain that.

One of my worries is that for now everyone involved with the renovation project, we’re all term employees. That means that once the project ends, when the exhibition opens in September or October of 2021, our jobs are done, we're done. That’s not going to be good for the museum, if they don't have Native people continuing on the work or they don't have community engagement continuing on after the exhibition opens. That’s a concern and a worry right now. They need to
find a way to make sure that they keep us on further than just the project (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).^{13}

Toward the end of our first discussion, I asked whether or not Yepa-Pappan liked museums and exhibitions. In reply, she discussed the purpose of museums, stating,

I have these internal conversations all the time about it. I think museums now, because they have all of these things, have a responsibility to the ancestors and relatives and to the living people of today. One thing that really bothers me a lot about museums is—you have to kind of go back to how museums started. Why did they start, what was their original purpose? The original purpose was to preserve cultures that they thought were no longer going to exist. Because of that, they stole so much from Native people and Native communities—pretty much took cultures away from people so that those people no longer had the opportunity to continue those practices. Those people now have to come to the museum to see what their ancestors made in the past so that they can revitalize those traditions and those ways. But, then the museum is patting its back, ‘Oh look, if we didn't save these for you, then you wouldn't have anything to come back to.’ But, the way that I see it is that if you didn't take this in the first place, they wouldn't have

^{13} When seeing the Field Museum as a contact zone, the worry of a reality where there are no Native people continuing to work or be engaged with after the new hall opens is a reality in which the contact zone has become a form of neo-colonialism. A reality that perpetuates a system that pacifies the minority with small, momentary victories, while nothing truly changes and the majority ultimately wins (Boast 2011).
to come back today to learn. How would these traditions and customs have evolved had people been able to keep them?

I think it's just this yearning of museums to try to hang on to the past and history, so much so that it's not even allowing itself to see the present and see the future. They're hoarders, they hoard things and keep things away from the light, away from people. There's a whole bulk of things in storage that will never see the light of day, and that's not right (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

**Manifestations of Colonization**

The Field Museum’s colonial legacy started before its founding with the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition through the collecting and display of both alienable and inalienable materials, entities, and people. Manifestations of this association with the fair, which is inseparable from colonial legacies, can be seen on a museum tour about the World’s Fair. On the tour I accompanied, we began by moving through The Ancient Americas Hall where the guide explained that anthropology was included as part of the World’s Fair because it used history and other cultures to demonstrate progress. Chicago’s Fair, like all others of the time, was ground in the notion of progress and use of non-Western cultures and peoples was to perpetuate the belief that White, Western, patriarchal peoples and cultures are at the apex of this progression (Errington 1998).

We then continued into the Northwest Coast & Artic Peoples Hall where the guide explained that over 2,000 items from the World’s Fair are on display at the museum, over 700 in the Northwest Coast & Artic Peoples Hall alone. The guide said
that they are marked with an 1893 sticker on their cases for people to identify them. However, they explained that very few objects’ are accurately marked, with several stickers being misleading, making it look like the entire case is from the World’s Fair.

Toward the end of the tour, when we were in the zoological halls, the guide said that the Fair was given the nickname ‘White City’ because of the white plaster used for buildings. However, as I see it, the nickname could also be the ‘White Man’s City,’ due to the need to show their dominance and progress over those they perceived as ‘others.’ Similarly, the Field Museum has acquired the nickname the ‘White Man’s Temple on the Hill’ among many of the staff with which I talked, due to its neo-classical architecture, colonial legacy, staffing demographics, and continued collecting and displaying of non-White, non-Western peoples and cultures.

Manifestations of Decolonizing Perspectives

There is a diversity of decolonizing work and views in the museum field, and the Field Museum is no different. Practices that can be read as decolonizing work, such as collaboration, co-curation, co-governance, repatriation, culturally appropriate collections practices, manifest throughout the Field Museum, but are not explicitly called or thought of as decolonizing. Most of the employees I talked with understand it as addressing and confronting the colonial legacies and structures of the museum (Personal Communication, July, 2019). However, some take issue with the term ‘decolonization’ itself. Several actually referred to it as a ‘bullshit’ word. A research scientist and co-curator (Personal Communication, July, 2019) sees it as White academic speech because he sees the changes that could be understood as decolonizing as forms of modernizing the museum and moving it out of academic fantasy to reality.
Several other employees across departments express the impossibility of decolonizing the museum because of its inherently colonial nature. Yepa-Pappan states,

We talk about decolonizing museums, decolonization and all of that. We have this conversation about how you can't ever decolonize a colonial institution, like the Field Museum. It's impossible. The only way to really decolonize is to give everything back and burn it down. That would be true decolonization. I think it would be great if we could give everything back and let Native people do with it what they want. There are a lot of Native tribes that are opening up their own museums to share their culture in their way and with their rules. . . We're still living, let us have agency with our own things. That's never going to happen. So, knowing that's never going to happen, then what do we do? We try to do the best that we can (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

Views on repatriation, a common topic in decolonizing conversations, vary just as much as decolonization at the Field Museum. While some believe everything should go back if the community wants them back, others think only select things should be repatriated. One collections staff member explained,

We're not afraid of repatriation, but it might not always be appropriate. The museum might not be the appropriate storehouse or place of residency for these objects, but in order to get to that point, you have to have open conversations, you
have to have the connections established, and you have to have a way to do that (Personal Communication, July, 2019).

**Repatriation Director**

Ideally, the Repatriation Director at the Field Museum, Helen Robbins, would like museums to have a more complex, critical view of diversity as they move into the future. Connecting this view specifically to Chicago, she explains,

I would want museums to think about diversity in a more complicated way. I think Indigenizing, okay, we also need to feminize, we also need to queer . . . When I was still involved in it [Native Hall renovation], before it got funded, what I was saying is that this hall has the opportunity to teach people not only about Native Americans, but about inequality, about history, about dealing with racial tension in Chicago, and the inequities in Chicago. There are ways we can as a museum inform the public.

We're here to educate everybody and to deal with our class and race—race being not a real thing, but racism being very real in our everyday lives. That's what we need to be trying to do with this hall because it's not just about Native American people, in my view. It is of course about Native American people and how they're represented, but our job as an institution . . . is to take our opportunity like this new hall, and try and pull in people in different ways and get people to see and also say, ‘Oh yeah, our neighborhoods’ (Personal Communication, July 22, 2019).
Building on this topic of complexity in museums, Robbins brings in the topics of invisibility and stereotypes, stating,

The Field Museum and the Smithsonian and these old museums, they’re very different than museums that were created in the 1980s. They have different collections, different histories, different visions and missions. I worry that you won't get complexity or you get a very monolithic view—this is the Indian experience, or this is the Latino experience, or this is the gay experience.

On the upside, at least they exist, right? That's a good thing. I used to say that about Ellen [DeGeneres]. I remember when Ellen coming out was this huge thing, right? This was a freaking huge deal. I used to be just happy to have stereotypes because at least we existed, even as stereotypes. I know that's not very 21st-century, but back then it seemed like, well at least we exist. At least we're not invisible, because the worst thing is to be invisible. I bet you there are groups now that are invisible. Even if it's sort of an oversimplification, it’s good to have it there, but it would be really nice if it were more nuanced and had more opportunity for layered feeling and thinking (Personal Communication, July 22, 2019).^{14}

^{14} In this statement, Robbins places invisibility, or erasure, as one of the worst things for a person or people. Thus, to receive representation as even a stereotype is better than being invisible—something to be grateful for. Her thoughts echo those of many others who also believe this is no longer, nor was it ever, enough, with more complex, nuanced,
When asked why she does her work, why she cares, and if she cares, Robbins responded by saying,

. . . I really do care about it. I care that it might make a difference for people in a positive way. I love working with most of the people I work with outside of this building, and trying to make things better in a bigger sense. I think it does make a difference whether it's repatriation or working to care for the human remains that are here. I think it makes the difference, I hope it makes a difference. Then, apart from that, I intellectually find it very engaging because I'm always having to learn and try and learn and unlearn and relearn. It's very intellectually engaged, which makes it emotionally engaging. You can see sometimes real good, real positive outcomes (Personal Communication, July 22, 2019).

Manifestations of Erasure

As noted earlier in this thesis, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 17) uses the metaphor of a map to highlight the importance of representation. Hooper-Greenhill explains that to be included on the map is affirmed as significant, while to be off the map is to be of no significance. Thus, to be recognized by the museum and its narratives is to be marked as real, given a position, and accorded an existence of importance; to be unrecognized by the museum and its narratives is to be obsolete, erased, unknown. This

and layered feelings, thoughts, and representations being called for (Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman 1997; Davalos 2001; Lonetree 2012; Sandahl 2019).
metaphor must be used in a critical fashion that acknowledges that some museums have a particular scope, and that even when one is recognized by the museum it may be on the terms and definitions of the institution.

Erasure is typically talked about in regard to the representation of peoples and cultures in the exhibition halls (Hooper-Greenhill 1999; Ambrose 2012; Lonetree 2012); however, another form of erasure happens behind the scenes—emotional and divergent erasure. Over coffee one morning (Personal Communication, July, 2019), one employee told a story of how they expressed their issues and experiences with the Art Institute of Chicago regarding a recently acquired collection of Mimbres pottery and its postponed exhibition at a member’s event for the Field Museum. Even though they were explicitly asked to share their thoughts, they were subsequently taken aside on a later day and told not to criticize the Art Institute because it is the Field Museum’s sister institution. This employee went on to explain that they think the Field Museum does not provide or understand the need for a space where Native people can express their feelings and thoughts. Other Native, Brown, Black, and Queer staff echoed this feeling during my time at the museum (Personal Communication, July, 2019).15

Collections Assistant

When asked where they ideally see museums moving in the future, a temporary collections assistant at the Field Museum for the Native North American Hall renovation,

15 A museum’s avoidance of conflict may signal an aim to express cohesion and consensus, which can create an environment that denies the opportunity for emotions, divergence, and resistance to manifest (Lynch 2013, 3).
Emily Starck, discusses being seen and what that means in a way that is similar to and expands on Robbins’ thoughts. She states,

I just want museums to be a place where everyone feels seen and everyone feels important. Some of that might be say on the exhibit side of things, people from different cultures see themselves represented in a way that resonates with them—something that members of their own community designed to put out there to the world and not something some dude who read about it online once created into an exhibit.

I want museums to be a place where people from all different backgrounds feel comfortable coming to and learning from so that no one's like, ‘Oh that's rude stuff,’ ‘I don't want to deal with that,’ or ‘I'm not smart enough to go to a museum.’ Ideally all museums would be free. I think that's a big barrier to getting a lot of interested people in. I know museums have a big role in producing history, legitimizing it, so to speak, where if you see something in a museum, that is a real legitimate thing that exists. That effect has its pluses and minuses (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019).

Continuing this topic and shifting to her graduate school thesis and personal history, Starck says,
I want it to be a place where everyone can come and see themselves reflected and be able to be like, ‘Yeah, this is who I am. This is something that I’m proud of. This is my history and my children can learn from this.’ Part of my thesis interests back in grad School were studying women in museums and how I wish that there were more nuanced representations of women in the museums I was seeing. My partner and I, when we were growing up, you never see anything about bisexual or lesbian women in museums and just thinking about how cool that would have been as a child. You’re getting a bunch of conflicting messages about yourself and your community in the world, to just see that and be like, ‘Oh, this is a museum where all of history is being presented, we're part of history. That's really cool.’

It's really important. It seems like society is kind of going that way. I think as more of us now are employed in these institutions, more people of color, more LGBT people, more people from diverse backgrounds, I think we're going to start to see that change become more obvious and more public. I'm hopeful now. It'll be a lot of work, but I hope that little kids going forward will be able to look at stuff and engage with it and feel like it represents them and that it's interesting to them (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019).
When asked why she does her work, why she cares, and if she cares, Starck talks about social justice and historical wrongs (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019). Starck shares,

I care a lot. I guess, I’ve always wanted to be an anthropologist ever since I was a little kid. I grew up going to museums and always liked the immersive environments, so I selected my undergrad school specifically because it had a museum studies program and an anthropology program. For a long time, I was interested in other cultures and people, other ways of life and other periods of history, but as I got older I became very interested in the social justice aspects of anthropology and museum work. I began to recognize more and more about my own positionality, growing up as I did in a majority White, middle-class, Christian area of southeastern Wisconsin. That informed my own worldview, and getting to learn more about other worldviews from around the world and other priorities really helped me to develop a sense of myself as trying to be involved in the social justice aspects of anthropology and museum work.

Museums are a really important platform for reaching diverse sects of the public. There's some poll I looked at that said people trust museums more than libraries, textbooks—we're the most trusted source of information on a lot of society, culture, science, things like that. I care about this because I think we have a lot of

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16 This is similar to what was seen with Wali, with the role of museums as institutions for social and community work becoming more prevalent and desired (Nash, Colwell-Chanthaphonh, and Holen 2011; Levitt 2015; Gonzales 2020).
potential to do things right and to make a difference in society and that presenting things in a certain way shapes the way the public perceives those topics or cultures or identities and things. That's a huge responsibility and something that I don't take lightly. Since it's something I'm very committed to, I'm also very committed to understanding the fact that museums were involved in a lot of historical wrongs. This museum, being involved in the World's Fair and associated activities, there are a lot of things that the museum did at that time that they thought was okay that are not okay . . . I just want to do some good things considering this institution did so many bad things in its past (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019).

Building from these questions and the subjects of social justice in anthropology and museums, as well as the historical wrongs of the Field Museum and other museums, Starck was asked if she likes museums and exhibitions. She responds,

I always loved going to museums growing up, I still like going now. Having moved to Chicago, there are a lot of museums here and I go with my partner a lot and we have a lot of fun dissecting the exhibit styles and all that. There's definitely still part of me, that little kid, who's like, ‘Oh, sweet, a rainforest! Ah, man, tiger!’ The dinosaurs get me every time. But, there's also part of me that's still looking around being like, what messages are being sent here, who is here, and who is clearly not here. I think it's like having a family member where you're just like, I love you, but you can do better. I don't want to say it's a love-hate. I try
to be a discerning consumer of museums when I visit, and I try to see them for what they are, acknowledging some of the issues that we have had in the past and being really hopeful that we'll be able to move forward in a good way in the future (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019).\(^{17}\)

Manifestations of Taking a Stance

When museums claim positions and their staff are allowed to claim positions as well, they take a step in breaking the falsity of objectivity. However, when museums shy away from taking a position they play a role in sustaining dominant narratives directly and indirectly (Ames 1992; Gonzales 2020). A research scientist and co-curator (Personal Communication, July, 2019) explained that there can be pitfalls in pushing a social or political agenda because views and conditions of those issues can change in 20, 30, 60, or 100 years. After all, the colonial agenda that Western museums were founded on is still woven into their very essence.

Perhaps museums are not the places to make these stances and address these issues. However, the museum does take stances on topics some may see as transcending social and political boundaries, such as the climate crises, while others see everything as beings sociopolitical. One Exhibition Developer explained that she really likes it when

\(^{17}\) This view seems to reflect conflicting feelings several other Field Museum staff, and other museum professionals, I have talked with shared in regard to working at museums. There is simultaneously this feeling of being drawn toward museums for whatever personal reasons, while also feeling dissatisfied and pushed away by the colonial legacies and conventional interpretations and functions of museums. These feelings of push and pull reflect many museological movements, such as critical and new museology.
the museum takes stances about science and environment, but wishes that the same would be done for humans. They explained that they want the museum to beyond saying that the museum has this exhibit about ‘X’ thing. They want the museum to say the hard truths, such as the museum has all this material culture and it is not known where it came from, and being open with the general public and related communities about these issues (Personal Communication, July, 2019).

Nevertheless, several of the people I talked with at the Field Museum have concerns that the museum as a whole will follow a more performative, superficial level for addressing the sociopolitical issues that surround it, putting up a plaque, a flag, a small social media post, while not actively putting resources into their programming, staffing, or exhibitions to address them to a greater means within their capacity and power. This is not only a concern for some at the Field Museum, but others across the museum field. Ruth Phillips (2015), questions whether or not the shifts in museums signal a new era of social agency and activism for museums, or if these changes make museums a space where symbolic restitution is made for the injustices of colonialism in place of more concrete forms of social, economic, and political reparation.

**Head of Anthropology Collections**

The Head of Anthropology Collections, Jamie Kelly discusses hiring practices and bringing more diverse staff into the Field Museum when asked where he ideally and realistically sees the future of the museum going. He states,

I think there are some areas of the museum that do better than others. I think a lot of times museums, like other places, talk the talk, but don't follow through. I think
I see that starting to change. I'm hopeful and try not to be cynical . . . but that there's actually going to be legitimate change in terms of being a more inclusive institution and changing practices so that we have people from very diverse backgrounds coming here to work. I think that would be my hope for this institution . . .

I think that will serve us well to be able to do that. That would be my sort of ideal hope moving forward. It's a challenge because I've gone through a lot of job searches and a lot of people don't, of course, nor should they, self-identify their backgrounds necessarily. You do the best you can and try to see if you can get a diverse candidate pool. Often when you come to interview people, it's not as diverse as you would like necessarily. So, I think networking better, reaching out to others that have those connections to people that can improve that. I think trying to focus on internships that focus on students who come from a variety of different backgrounds to encourage that (Personal Communication, July 30, 2019).

When asked why he does his work at the Field Museum, why he cares, and if he cares, Kelly talks about his personal views on and conflict with his career and job as a caretaker at the Field Museum, saying,

I see myself as a caretaker right now, but it's very problematic. I do question my continuing in this profession, frankly, but I am so late in my career now that it
would be hard to course correct. If I could do it over again, I'd go into the natural sciences, work with being a caretaker of a natural environment rather than our cultural environment. That's probably fraught to some extent with inclusivity. I mean, I have a real genuine interest in other cultures, but should I be the one charged with taking care of other people's heritage when representatives of that heritage could be doing it just as well?

I should know more about my own heritage than I do about their cultures, and I don’t. It's just sort of a crisis of mine that I am figuring out. I'm still paying off student loans from graduate school. Do I just stop everything? I have two kids who are over the next eight years going to be going to college themselves.

So, right now, I'm doing it to be a caretaker of cultural heritage and I don’t think that’s going to change. Maybe I might seek a career change and get out of the Field and hope that somebody that replaces me will be someone of the heritage that we care for here at the museum, because we really don't care for a lot of European heritage, except ancient stuff (Personal Communication, July 30, 2019).18

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18 This perspective follows the thinking that people not from a source community cannot adequately represent the views of that community, and should no longer attempt to do so. However, people can provide better opportunities for others to represent themselves (Ames 1992). It also highlights many of the complex feelings and thoughts some museum professionals are experiencing, or have experienced for a long time, in regard to their positionality in the context of museological legacies, representation, and making space for people that have been historically excluded.
Following this, Kelly is asked if he likes museums, he responds,

I do like museums. I do like them a lot, despite all the baggage that they bring. I haven’t looked critically at the surveys, they continue to show that of cultural institutions, societal institutions, in the United States, museums are one of those still trusted institutions among the public. I don't know who that public is, is it mostly a White public or is it more diverse public? But, it's a place where people can connect with the world around them. There's a lot of value in that, I just think we need to do a better job about how we do that. There's still a lot of value to them. It's just, how do we navigate this sort of reckoning we're going through right now with our past? I think over the course of 20, 30 years we’ve slowly been coming more and more to grips with it (Personal Communication, July 30, 2019).

Manifestations in Collections

Access to collections plays a large role in community engagement with the Field Museum, the museum’s relevance to a community, and the building and sustaining of community-museum relationships. Many of the museum employees that were interviewed believe that access to collections is important and should not be complicated (Personal Communication, July, 2019). One collections worker posed the question: who decides appropriate access, elders, community members, the museum, curators, collections managers (Personal Communication, July, 2019)?
The Community Engagement Coordinator, Debra Yepa-Pappan, works closely with collections staff to make sure that people, specifically Native people, have the opportunity to go into collections storage and connect with their cultural heritage when they come to the Field Museum. She helps them navigate the process of making a request to visit collections and look at something closer, which can be intimidating if one has never dealt with a large colonial institution like the Field Museum. Yepa-Pappan (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019) believes, since she is already on the inside of the Field Museum, she needs to keep those gates open for Native people to have access to the space and reclaim it. This can be read as a form of de-articulation, or resistance, from the articulated pathways of access established by the Field Museum and as a rearticulation of new pathways.

In regard to collections access and interaction alongside the Native North American Hall renovation, Yepa-Pappan says,

Right now, we're working with a young hip-hop artist, Frank Waln, and he's been a friend of mine for at least eight years now. Several years ago, he was very critical of the Field Museum, what the Field Museum represented, and what it was about. There's a video of him talking about it and how his cultural heritage is here and how it got here and all of that. Since I've been here, I had been inviting him to come and visit, connecting him to those items down in collections so that he sees them really closely.
Having that interaction and engagement through me influenced him and it just really sparked him. It pushed him to learn how to play flutes—because he saw flutes. Now he's playing flute and he wants to create music. From another visit, he had the idea of wanting to activate the flutes in storage in some way—bring them back to life, play them. That led me to introduce him to our exhibition developers, then having him share that idea with them, them loving that idea and pitching it as a story for the exhibit hall. Now we're working with him as a co-curator to create the story. We still have those same opinions and criticisms about the museum, but I think now he's coming in with a different perspective. He's actually having a hand in changing that narrative, creating a new narrative.

I think with any Native people that come in and have that opportunity to do that, they're still cautious. We're always cautious because we've been shortchanged and tricked and schemed out of things our whole lives, for many generations. Even knowing that you've been able to make a lot of changes here, personally, I still feel like, how far is this really going to go, and how long is this really going to last? How much is the museum really going to be able to change? Will there be disappointment in some way at the end of it (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019)?

Manifestations of increased access, collaboration, and authority sharing, as seen with Frank Waln, aid in cultivating and mending relationships, as well as deepening understandings and interpretations of collections. A resistance to change and increase
access, collaboration, and authority sharing in museums, which can cause apprehension, as seen with Yepa-Pappan, often stems from an institutional fear of ceding authority and eroding systems that have privileged majority powerholders (Phillips 2015).

When Emily Starck, temporary collections assistant, was asked about culturally appropriate methods of collections care in the Native North American collections, she explains,

Here at the Field, the way that usually manifests is in the ways in which we house certain items. Some items, we call them culturally sensitive objects. We're still playing with that language a little bit . . . but, if we've identified an item as culturally sensitive, we will build a closed box for it; one that doesn't have any windows. Usually, we try to put those on top shelves so they're more sheltered from view. Sometimes we block off entire shelves, put muslin over those so they can't be viewed, or sometimes we seal off entire isles of compacting storage so that no one can go in there unless they're members of that particular tribal community or assisting with caring for those items on behalf of that community.

Some items we orient facing specific directions. Some things have to face east or west. Some items have gender handling restrictions, so they should only be handled by men or they should only be handled by women. Some things shouldn't be handled by menstruating women or pregnant women (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019).
Starck says that those gender restrictions create an interesting situation because legally an institution cannot tell an employee that they cannot do something because of their gender. However, these restrictions, or protocols, are important to the communities with which the museum is entangled, as well as for the care of the items and entities and wellbeing of staff. Thus, the protocols are communicated as being voluntary (Personal Communication, July 16, 2019).

**Regenstein Pacific Conservator**

When asked where he ideally and realistically sees the Field Museum, and museums as a whole, going in the future, the Regenstein Pacific Conservator, J.P. Brown, talks about working with local communities in Chicago, stating,

> I think one of the real weaknesses of the Field Museum is that it doesn't in fact do anthropology on local communities . . . It seems to me, there's a huge anthropology just out there on your doorstep that we’re not doing anything about. Part of the problem, it feels to me like the original mission of the museum was to bring all this stuff that you couldn't find in Illinois to Illinois. If you think about museums in that way, not as a kind of connoisseurship thing, but as an educational institution, they are kind of a 19th-century technology for doing that. I mean it's almost cheaper to fly to Africa than it is to come to the Field (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019).

Brown broadened the topic to include intangible heritage and transparency at the museum, saying,
I think our kind of museum is in a fairly interesting place at the moment because we're starting to recognize the idea of intangible heritage as something that needs to be preserved. What is the intangible heritage and how do you understand it, and who gets to say authoritatively? Can you tell anyone else once you've achieved this understanding? That brings you into a really interesting set of conflicts with the basic scientific premise, which is that all information should be shared, right? . . . It feels to me that whatever the current concern is, that's what people use to tell people they can't do stuff. Right now, the current concern is, how do we involve source communities with interpretation and care of their material? So, now everything, all the reasons for not doing things are encased in those terms (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019).

Focusing in on transparency, more specifically what Brown calls partial transparency, he states,

I think there's some interesting stuff about partial transparency. When people talk about transparency in museums, most of the time they're actually talking about dichroism, right? It's like some of the information can pass out this way to these people, but it's opaque too. That is the problem, how do you selectively create the transparency that you want in this moment? Things are always going to be somewhat opaque; you never really understand how an institution works.
The same is true with trying to figure out how we transparently talk to a source and descendant community about their stuff, because most of the time we don't really know anything. What we know is what was written down by the guy who collected it. Institutionally, it puts us in a position where we're not really very comfortable with not being the experts (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019).

Shifting the topic to why he does his work, why he cares, and if he cares, Brown shares,

I actually think it's really important that we keep this stuff going as long as we can, that we find out as much about it as we can. I think we're only just starting to understand how to record Indigenous knowledge . . . I think the other thing is some communities are ready to have this discussion and some aren’t, for whatever reason. They may just have other stuff going on, it's fine, but at some point they're going to care, right? So, the preservation function is making sure that stuff is there . . . so that when they are ready we can have a discussion (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019).

Manifestations of Co-Curation and Co-Governance

There are differing perspectives, approaches, and translations to co-curation at the Field Museum, which differ from co- or shared governance as well. These terms are complex and can be murky when they are used in the same institution, and even interchangeably by some. However, the distinction at the Field Museum, according to
collection and curation staff, seems to be that co-curation involves descendant or source communities in the decision-making process of representation in exhibitions, while co-governance expands that decision-making process and shared responsibility to include collections.

It is now well-understood that curators, scholars, and people in general cannot adequately represent the views of others by themselves (Ames 1992). However, museums can provide better opportunities for people to represent themselves through various forms of collaboration, co-curation, and co-governance. Sharing authority acknowledges that communication and sharing knowledge is reciprocal and non-hierarchical, rather than a one-directional flow (Kanatani 2015). Since museums are contact zones—spaces of colonial encounters with conditions of coercion inequality, and conflict (Clifford 1997)—sharing authority is not always non-hierarchical and multi-directional. This is because collaboration and authority sharing can be difficult for museums to embrace wholly since it challenges the institution to cede authority (Kanatani 2015; Phillips 2015).

As explained in Chapter Three, there are many definitions and approaches to participation, such as that given by Arnstein (1969) who describes an eight rung ladder of participation from manipulation to citizen control, which can be applied to museum work. The first two rungs of the ladder are 1) manipulation and 2) therapy, which can be described as forms of non-participation that substitute genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to educate or cure partners. Rungs 3) Informing, 4) consultation, and 5) placation are all levels of tokenism. When they are extended by powerholders as the total extent of participation, partners may be heard and hear, but lack the power to
ensure that their views will be listened to and respected. The last three rungs, 6) Partnership, 7) Delegated Power, and 8) Citizen control, are levels of citizen power in which partners are able to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional powerholders, and, at the highest most rung, obtain majority or full managerial power.

According to Varutti (2013, 73), there are three directions to think of collaborations and power sharing. 1) Who are the actors of museum training and development? Who are they, what is there background, and how do their skills, competence, and cultural sensitivities relate to communities? 2) What are the modalities of work? Are they mono-directional, consultative, participative, collaborative, which rung of Arnstein’s ladder of participation is being evoked? 3) How is knowledge being passed on or shared? Are the principles, approaches, techniques of museum professionals considered universal, or are they adapted to and respectful of traditions, views, beliefs, and conditions of the communities?

In the front gallery of the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific there is a space used for co-curated, rotating exhibits. At the time of research, there were three co-curated exhibits in the space: Kiribati, Fiji, and Philippines. The next exhibit being planned to go in this gallery is one that is co-curated with Marshallese students from Enid, Oklahoma, which is part of the Regenstein team’s outreach and relationship building with communities. Co-curating and co-governance, according to the Regenstein Collections Manager of Pacific Anthropology, Christopher Philipp, is often a result of contemporary collecting. According to Philipp, the contemporary collecting done by the Regenstein team is one of co-collecting (Personal Communication, July 25, 2019). Sean Mallon (2019), through research at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, interprets collecting
relationships between museum professionals and artists/communities laying on a spectrum running from informal and organic to organized and strategic. Co-collecting enables the sharing of authority, as well as the responsibility and opportunity to collect.

Philipp tells a story of co-collecting from Fiji:

Working with folks at the Fiji Museum, particularly a guy named Semi B. who was one of the collection assistants there, they invited me down to see their masi gallery, bark cloth gallery. When I went in, it wasn't exactly what I was expecting. It was a whole bunch of dresses essentially. That sparked a memory from a Tonga trip where I purchased a CD of a woman wearing a full bark cloth dress. That would be a really cool contemporary object for the museum to look to acquire in the future because it's something that people in the West can relate to. That was 2010, jump forward to 2015, I’m in this masi gallery.

. . . there was the first dress, that was 30 plus years ago now, it was on display there. That's a cool story I think. You think that’s a cool story that people in Chicago should know about? They were like, ‘Oh yeah, you should, you should get one.’ Semi went back, he came back and he's like, ‘The dress designer will be here in an hour.’

A bit later she showed up with portfolios in hand and she's like, ‘Which one do you want?’ I think I said something like, I'm not getting married. Semi and folks at the Fiji Museum they're like, ‘No, no, no, she's going to make you one before
you leave on Friday.’ She had this face, like what? She was asking, ‘Well, which one do you want?’ I don't know, if you're going to make one, I want you to just make one for the museum, not me directing it or anything like that. That's essentially what happened.

I called back to the Field, because I had funds to do that, but it's a larger purchase and it was like, ‘Do we really do it, do this now?’ I initially told them maybe when I come back in a year or two we can actually purchase one for the museum. They encouraged us in Fiji to take them back now. So, that was kind of a good example of co-curation in action. I tried not to collect them at first, then calling back, should we do this, and they’re like, ‘Go for it, if we have the funds.’ Then, as we did with the other trips, we come back with all these objects, show them at members' night, have a beautiful display (Personal Communication, July 25, 2019).

When looking at this story through the three directions laid out by Varutti (2013), this manifestation of co-curation and co-governance through the contact and entanglement of co-collecting appears to be one of respect and sharing between participants. However, we cannot be entirely sure since we were not there. The story leads me to believe that the collaboration and relationship rest somewhere in the sixth, seventh, and eight rungs of Arnstein’s ladder—partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. Additionally, the knowledge and authority being shared appear to be multi-directional and not strictly grounded in Western-model museum standards.
When asked what the process for co-curation and co-governance is like throughout the museum, Philipp said that it is slow moving and not present to the degree to which many anthropology staff want. He explained that it is hard to get people involved with conversations sometimes, and that part of it is in communities, like Fiji, and part of it is at the museum in general because the museum does not have a permanent position dedicated to community engagement and maintaining relationships. The presence of a permanent, integrated office dedicated to building and sustaining relationships, co-curation, and co-governance throughout the entire Field Museum is an aspect of this employee’s ideal future for the museum. Philipp continued by saying that once you open the door with a community you cannot close it (Personal Communication, July 25, 2019).

Manifestations through Ruatepupuke II

Ruatepupuke II and the relationship between Field Museum staff and the community of Tokomaru Bay in Aotearoa New Zealand are prominent manifestations of co-curation and co-governance at the Field Museum, and what is presented here is only a glimpse into this long-standing relationship. The current understanding of and engagement with Ruatepupuke II, and the on-going processes surrounding him, would not have been possible without community involvement (Onciul 2019). The relationships and connections are non-static and depend a great deal on personality, capacity, time, finances, effort, and more.

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19 This is tied to complexities related to people in communities and the museum dying, moving positions, changing. A grounding in an entanglement perspective means that these relationships will never be completely severed, moving on a spectrum of latency and explicitness.
A collections staff member (Personal Communication, July, 2019), when asked about their experience with Ruatapupuke II and the Tokomaru Bay community, talks about how co-curation is complicated. They went on to explain that it is about presence, who is or is not there, who is or is not here. The distance between Chicago and Tokomaru Bay adds its own difficulties. Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019) said that there is a problem with moving people around in sufficient numbers. He continued, explaining that building a consensus as a community is difficult when visitations either way do not happen regularly. However, the Regenstein team tries to visit Tokomaru Bay to talk with the family of Ruatapupuke II and sustain and build relationships as much as possible.

The collections staff member (Personal Communication, July, 2019) made it a point to say that those at the museum tasked with caring for Ruatapupuke II do not want to pretend to be Māori, which is why there is a line drawn between his physical and spiritual care. The ideal is to have Māori people, specifically the family of Ruatapupuke II, be responsible for maintaining and defending the spirituality of the house, while the Field Museum is responsible for the physical, cosmetic care. In following Māori practices, Brown explained that the Regenstein team really wants the whānau (extended family) in Tokomaru Bay to have the last word regarding Ruatapupuke II (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019). There is some difficulty in doing this in a museum context, especially long distance. Referring to the book Decolonizing Conservation (Sully 2007), which describes the conservation of Maori meeting houses outside Aotearoa New Zealand, Brown said that there have been different approaches as to how visitors should be allowed to interact with wharenuī. The whānau in Tokomaru Bay have been keen on
Ruatemata Puke II being treated respectfully and given a lot of love and touching (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019).

This creates some difficulties for Brown, as a conservator, who is responsible for the physical care and repair of Ruatemata Puke II. To allow for touching and physical interaction, an invisible protective coating is applied and periodically recoated in specific areas. When asked about the similarities and differences between past and current conservation plans for Ruatemata Puke II, Brown said a major improvement that occurred was Ruatemata Puke II’s move to his current location on the second floor of the museum in 1992 (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019). He later explained,

The move to the second floor took [Ruatemata Puke II] out of a low, crowded, dark space and put him in a more open, un-crowded, day-lit space where people could walk around him and get more sense of his overall shape and scale. And also it allowed us to put him back in a more correct layout. In particular, we were able to re-incorporate the posts, which had been dispersed to Te Papa, Wellington, and Peabody-Essex—to make him whole again. Ideally, Ruatemata Puke would be displayed outdoors, but the tōtara wood used in the carvings does not hold up very well outdoors. Even in Aotearoa, whare of his antiquity are usually kept indoors for preservation purposes (Personal Interview May 5, 2020).

Brown went on to say that the long-term plan for Ruatemata Puke II is to figure out how the elements of Māori culture that are expressed best at the wharenuī can be incorporated into the civic life of Chicago. Specifically, these elements are ones that
emphasize friendship and conflict reconciliation. However, he said that there is also an art historical point of view regarding Ruatepupuke II being one of the oldest surviving wharenui outside of Aotearoa New Zealand and wanting to make sure that as much of that information as possible can be preserved. For the near future, Brown hopes to address the tukutuku (ornamental lattice-work) panels and bring weavers from Tokomaru Bay to the museum to help care for them (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019).

Exhibition Development Director

The Exhibition Development Director, Matt Matcuk, when asked where he ideally and realistically sees the Field Museum going in the future, responded by discussing a move to create more non-object-based exhibitions. He states,

The first major change is that, and I can say this because we just finished writing up a five-year plan, is that the museum needs to create a larger percentage of non-object-based exhibitions. Right now, in all of our exhibitions, when we do experiences that are something other than looking at an object and reading the label we have a large set of criteria that have to be met. Do we not have an object that we could use to make this point? If we’re going to do something other than object-with-labels, will it be affordable? Do we have the expertise to do it? Is there room in the exhibition? Will it cause any damage to the object through off-gassing or vibration or light exposure? Does the idea call for it?

If the answer to all of these questions is “no,” then we'll do something other than an object-based experience. We'll do an immersive environment, an interactive,
video, a touchable, etc. That's a compromise. It's a compromise that worked, but it's not a compromise that is going to work forever. There are many people who do not want an experience of passively viewing and reading, and there is a way that we can provide exhibition experiences that are scientifically informed, deeply meaningful, educational, engaging, and true to our mission that don't incorporate objects. So, rather than trying to put more of non-object-based stuff into primarily object-based exhibitions, we’re saying let's create some exhibitions that aren’t object-based (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019).

When asked why he does his work, why he cares, and if he cares, Matcuk responds,

I've had careers that were not in any way contributing to the betterment of mankind: selling motorhomes or tequila or chainsaws. I was in the ad business. There is no inherent meaning there. Here, I know that at least I'm doing no evil, and I'm helping, I hope, to contribute in at least some small way to the betterment of mankind. I'm generating an appreciation for nature and science. I'm trying to

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20 Object-based exhibitions, like object-centered museums, are collections-based and concentrate on the material. The objects are the source of research, scholarship, and programming (Gurian 2006). The shift away from object-based exhibitions has been seen across the museum field. As Steven Conn (2010, 20) tells us, “the use of objects inside [museums] has changed significantly. In some cases, objects continue to play a central role in the function of the museum; in others, their role is clearly a reduced one; in still others, objects have virtually disappeared from galleries, replaced by other didactic devices—audio-visual, interactive technologies, and so on.” A part of this shift in the larger museum field may be the belief that objects can be seen as dull and inert in a media-saturated, hyper-consumer society (Conn 2010, 57).
generate an interest in and an appreciation of cultures that might be different than
the one that the visitor represents coming through the door. I'm trying to help
people have engaging, rewarding, meaningful experiences. That meaningful
component is the thing that is hard to find. That's why I work here (Personal
Communication, July 29, 2019).

Meaningful experiences in exhibitions, according to those interviewed, are experiences
that causes one to think about and feel something else in their larger world differently. In
this view, exhibitions are not meant to just teach, but inspire, not just intellectually
stimulate, but emotionally. Matcuk explains further,

When we say ‘meaningful’ in a museum exhibition setting, what we’re talking
about is an experience that visitors have that causes them to think about
something else in their larger world in a different way . . . They're thinking,
they’re questioning, they're looking at their world differently. That is a moment of
meaning. That's a transformative moment, what people call the ‘Aha Moment.’
Ideally we want our exhibitions to be nothing but a string of those moments. In
reality, they are not. What we have to continually remind ourselves is that our
goal is not to teach visitors, but to inspire them. I say that if someone walks out
the door and they don't know more than when they walked in, we haven't failed. If
they walk out not wanting to know more, we've failed. Our job is to inspire, to use
all of the tools available to the creators of three-dimensional experiences to
engage visitors so powerfully that they can't help but wonder (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019).

Expanding on this, when asked if he likes museums and exhibitions after nearly 25 years at the Field Museum, Matcuk says,

I want to answer that in about seven ways. The first answer is sort of. Second answer is yes, I love them. The third answer is yes, I love exhibitions, but I don't like most of them because I'm critical of them and see things that I think could have been done better . . . There are many great exhibitions out there, and more and more of them every day as the museum world changes. But, I’m impatient. When I see bad writing for example, in an exhibition, I usually feel that there is no excuse for that. That is a disservice to the visitor. Someone wasn't doing their job right. But, usually that’s because they were not allowed to, not because they couldn't. So, yes, I still love museums and exhibitions. Although I tend to not read much when I go in them, and I think I'm like most visitors in that way (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019).

Manifestations of Structural Change

A major change to the Field Museum’s structure and resources occurred with the arrival of Michael Spock in the 1980s from the Children’s Museum in Boston. He helped to build and run the museum’s Exhibition Department, eventually became the museum’s Vice-President, and was tasked with making the museum a more relatable, enjoyable,
popular, and accessible place (Falk 1987; Honan 1990; Kendall 1994; Exhibition Staff July 2019).

According to the Director of Exhibitions (Personal Communication, July, 2019) and Matt Matcuk (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019), Spock was a revolutionary who brought a visitor-centered, interactive exhibition style to the museum, invented the position of museum Exhibition Developer, and shifted the power of exhibition development away from curators to them. This shift is part of the larger process of what has typically been considered curatorial power being spread across other museum professions (Gonzales 2020), and resulted in a client-centered Field Museum that prioritized the audience (Gurian 2006).

This led to strained relations between the Exhibition Department and other departments. Looking at credit panels from exhibitions created around the time of Spock—the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific, Traveling the Pacific, Africa Hall—there are no curators listed. When Spock left the museum, according to Matcuk (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019), the curators used it as a chance to take back the power to create and develop exhibitions. The pendulum of this power has been swinging back and forth from curators to developers for 40 years. Now, Matcuk sees staff trying to bring that pendulum to the middle and bring an end to that contentious relationship.

The Director of Exhibitions (Personal Communication, July, 2019), recognizing that they hold a lot of respect for Spock, acknowledges that a lot of what Spock did at the time was not fully thought through or properly executed. For example, Traveling the Pacific is a Spockian exhibition that, according to the Director, makes no sense from the museum’s current vantage point. The exhibition is visitor-centered, which was a new idea
at the time; however as interpreted by several exhibition staff (Personal Communication, July, 2019), the Spockian, visitor-centered shows tended to age quickly and feel childish and goofy.

Another example of this is the introduction of human evolution in *Life Over Time*, the predecessor of *Evolving Planet*, which had Michael Spock leading its development. At the point in the exhibition when human evolution was introduced there was a painting of a group of hominoids lifting a birthday cake with their faces cut out so a visitor could take a picture. The idea, according Matcuk (Personal Communication, July 29, 2019), was “happy birthday human beings!” He went on to say that this was wrong for a lot of reasons: it is not a birthday; it is ridiculous to have a cut out painting with hominids holding cake. However, as he explained, it is easy for us to make fun at and criticize now, but what Spock was trying to do was engage visitors and help them wrap their minds around the fact that this moment is huge in our history.

Reflecting on the changes that have occurred over several generations, the Director of Exhibitions (Personal Communication, July, 2019) believes the Exhibition Department has learned a lot in regard to understanding visitors, using collections, telling stories, and collaborating and interpreting with the museum’s scientists.

**Exhibition Developer I**

Susan Golland, an Exhibition Developer, when asked where she ideally sees museums in the future, discussed the potential of museums to create meaningful experiences, explaining,
I think there's a lot of potential in museums to create really meaningful experiences where there's a lot of potential for people to have personal growth. I'm more interested in that, rather than saying, ‘I hope museums can teach people more about octopuses or something.’ I just think there's some bigger concepts that museums can be really good places for people to examine that.

There was this exhibit I read about, and I did not get to go to. It was virtual reality, I don’t think it was augmented reality, and it was called *Carne y Arena*. You would go into this room and it was an experience of you crossing the border from Mexico into the United States. It was made by a filmmaker. You go into a room and it's cold, you put on these glasses, you're in this giant ring, you take off your shoes, you're walking in sand, it's like you're crossing the border at nighttime, and there's some facilitators around you to make sure you don't walk outside of this zone. Then this helicopter comes in and there's this whole raid that happens and it's very intense.

It sounded like this experience that you're totally taken out of your own existence and into this other person's existence. You're with a group of other people, and I believe those people are actually people who crossed, so they use real people and you're right there among them. This experience then ends, and then there's this sort of space where you can take a moment and decompress and then you can learn the stories of the people who traveled, who were with you in the video,
which are real stories. It just sounded like this humbling, this moment of being able to provide people with this experience of what this is like for people.

That kind of experience seems like you don't have to teach people facts. You're using these gut feelings and being in the moment of that experience in order to really change a person's perspective, and to have this really meaningful moment. I think museums can do that in all different kinds of ways. I think those kinds of experiences make me very excited and very hopeful about what a museum can do. I think it's about using your collections and what you have as inspiration. Maybe we don't need regular exhibits; maybe they're totally different. I think if you want people to learn, for example about what it's like to discover something, do you really need to tell them about the process of discovering a specific thing, or how do you create discovery? Maybe there's some really creative ways to do it.

I love thinking through that kind of thing. Like, how do we take our resources and rethink them, and focus on some of these bigger human feelings that we want people to feel? Then you can feel it with the people you're there with. It's about making you sort of this more aware person. I like thinking about those bigger things. I love thinking about how we can make better relationships for people. How can a museum bring in a family and have them grow together in some way? I think that would make you a better person and make you a better world citizen (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).
When responding to where she realistically sees museums moving in the future, Golland talked about the slow nature of museums and their lack of flexibility, saying,

Museums change really slowly. I don't think that they can think very fast because they're designed to maintain the status quo because they have so much stuff and they feel like they need to keep that stuff carefully. It's not that I don't think museums will change, I just think they're so slow to change. Museums don't have a lot of money all the time to try new things or practice being more agile. I guess when I think about the worst end of things, like when I look at the historical museum that I used to work at, they're doing well right now, but I really worry they're going to make themselves obsolete because they're focused on history in a specific way. When people die out, I don't think they're going to have a membership base anymore. I think some places won't survive because they can't find ways to be flexible (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).

Building from these responses, Golland, when asked why she does her work, why she cares, and if she cares, spoke about creating experiences for people, explaining,

I do care. I think I care too much sometimes. I enjoy learning all the time and I like being able to learn by doing, by making an exhibit, it's my preference, rather than learning in a formal academic classroom setting. I enjoy that part for myself, and I enjoy the process of making something, being a little piece of that. I'm very much a maker of things and doer of projects, and I love physical things. They help
me in my life to remember stories. I use things as a way of remembering people and things, which is why I collect a lot of stuff.

I also love creating experiences for people. I love creating a little world for people. I think that being on an exhibits team is doing that in a public space. I love that there's so much possibility in that, and there's a challenge to that. I think there are really creative, wonderful people here. There's a great sense of being inspired by the work people are doing. There're so many reasons I think this is something that definitely fits my personality in a lot of ways. I always want people that have good experiences, like wherever they are, I feel like a host. I think creating good museum experiences—I want this person to have a good experience, whatever it is. That's so important to me. If they're confused about where to go or something in an exhibit, I would feel like I've failed. I want people to feel successful (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).

Having worked in museums since she was in middle school, Golland, after being asked if she likes museums, reflected on her change in perspective, saying,

It's harder for me to like them now, I admit for sure. Especially, working on this Native American Hall project has really changed the way I think about the Field Museum. I think at this moment it has been stressful to work on that project. I feel a little less excited about museums. Going into museums in my spare time does not sound refreshing at this point. But, I think my relationship with museums is a
very long-term kind of relationship. I would say on the whole, I still have so much hope and I still really like museums. I think maybe the kind of museum I want to see right at this exact moment would be something that feels a little more human, something that feels more personal. Big, giant institutions feel hard, but I still like museums. I just have more complicated feelings about them now. When you have complicated feelings about something, you can't go 100% in any direction (Personal Communication, July 23, 2019).

**Exhibition Developer II**

When asked where she ideally sees the Field Museum and museums in general going in the future, Tori Lee, an Exhibition Developer, started by talking about new ways of organizing the museum, stating,

Well, I know where I want the Field Museum to go. I don't know about museums in general. This is something I've wanted to work on since I've been here. I think the old model of having halls dedicated to specific cultures and specific places, that model has to go away because that's a colonial model of how to organize museums. I think it would be great if we had new ways of organizing. I do not have the answers to this, but like new ways of organizing content, ways that aren't so separated. I also want the Field Museum to concentrate on things that aren't far away. I mean, it's exoticizing when you only have exhibits about people of color, about people who lived far away from where you are (Personal Communication, July 26, 2019).
She expanded on this topic, focusing in on making the Field Museum feel more like a community museum, explaining,

I would want the Field Museum to become a place where it can feel more like our community museum. It's very hard to do in such a big place, but why aren't we talking about what makes up Chicago culture or the people here. Why can't we look at culture in different ways that aren't just founded by like race and geography? I mean, Chicago culture is bounded by geography, but like, that aren't just bound by Pacific, European, African. I would like it to feel more like a museum for people who live right next to the museum, that reflects who we are as Chicagoans, reflects this area, reflects all kinds of stuff like that. I want people to feel like this is their museum and feel like they can come here and learn new things, but see themselves, connect with each other, feel comfortable here

(Personal Communication, July 26, 2019).

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21 For the Field Museum to become a community museum the institution would have to focus on the well-being of its communities and develop out of the communities’ desires for self-expression (Gurian 2006). Field Museum employees may be able to break down barriers and create space for there to be more of a focus on community well-being and self-expression, but they are nevertheless situated in an institution with colonial legacies and agendas that established a restricted place.

22 The primary focus of the Exhibition Department at the Field Museum, like most other exhibition departments over the past few decades, has been to put visitors first, and to make the content and museum accessible and welcoming for any kind of audience. However, this aim has not fully been achieved with many people feeling unwelcome at the museum, not (properly) represented in the museum, or having a long history of colonial relations with museological institutions (Hooper-Greenhill 2000; Lonetree 2012). Additionally, as one Exhibition Developer explains (Personal Communication,
After being asked where she realistically sees the Field Museum moving in the future, Lee offered the following observations and thoughts:

I see real change happening at the Field Museum. I am not under the impression that all the things that we want will happen, or will happen quickly. That's not how the museum operates. It's going to be slow going. But, I think that this exhibition [Native North American Hall renovation] in particular—not to discount what [the Pacific Department] has done or anyone else because I think those forms of co-curation have all built up to this. We did not jump from a 60-year-old Native hall to this super co-curated exhibit without the steps John and Alaka have taken for co-curation and have proven that they work. All of that work has led to this moment where we're doing this exhibit, and I can see it changing people. I see it changing my boss, I see it changing me, I see it changing the Director of Exhibitions.

In exhibits, I think this project has fundamentally changed how we think about exhibits. So, I feel optimistic about the future of at least exhibits, doing things that are more collaborative for the long term. What I'm worried about is that what July, 2019), the purpose of community-based exhibitions is not always about the visitor. The stories told in community-based exhibitions, especially those from historically oppressed and marginalized communities may be unexpected and uncomfortable for a museum and its typical audience. People, and museums, need to learn to be comfortable in their discomfort. When that discomfort comes from the stories being told by those that have typically been silenced, the discomfort should be personally interrogated.
we've tried to do with the Native hall is we've tried to create a framework that forces people to change. We've created all these rotating elements that require co-curation. We're trying to create push change from the bottom up by saying, 'here's what we think it should be, now you all have to adapt and change in order to make this a realistic thing.' But, if people don't adapt, it can fail, it could stay static, it could stay dead. I don't think we'll do stuff without talking to people, but money runs out, things, people don't get hired, people leave. I am legitimately worried about the sustainability of some of the things that we're trying to do. That won't happen without the administration completely buying into this as a thing that the Field Museum needs to do to undergo a fundamental change.

I think all of us who directly work on the project are onboard, but I don't think that at this point the administration really understands that this project isn't just a new hall. I don't think they quite understand that's not what we're trying to do here, that the exhibit is only one small part of what we're trying to do here. We're trying to change the system. We're trying to change these fundamental structures of what the museum has been forever. This museum is this beast and it's a million departments and a million people and even if everyone wanted to change in their hearts, it just takes a long time and you have to fumble your way through it. We're not doing everything perfect in this collaboration process. We're not doing every step the way we should, we're probably going to leave people out of this process that are going to be mad at us. We probably could have talked to different people or more people, that's going to happen.
But, we are trying to push to make it happen forever and hoping it will work. So realistically, I think the Native hall will change and hopefully that will continue. This whole push for the Africa hall to happen and be a more collaborative process, what that looks like, I have no idea. I am terrified to work on that project if I'm still here, even though that's one thing that I care about really changing. I care about all of it, but that I care the most about. Are we going to Change? I don't know. Are we still going to do temporary exhibits that aren't always collaborative? What do you do with the quote-unquote dead cultures? What do you do with ancient Greeks and Romans and Egyptians and stuff like that? How do we change how we think about those cultures, too (Personal Communication, July 26, 2019)?

When asked why she does her work, why she cares, and if she cares, Lee started by saying,

Why do I do this work? I work in museums because I did not want to go into academia. I felt like I didn't understand how to focus in anthropology. I didn't know how to throw a dart at a board and pick a part of the world to study because it felt weird to me. I felt like the anthropologists that I knew—I did not want to be part of that community. I didn't want to do something that no one could connect to, or like my mom couldn't connect to, or my family couldn't connect to. So, museums are a place that I saw that I could still learn about other cultures and
how humans interact with each other. I can learn about science, but it was for everyone, I could make it accessible to everyone. I am doing the work that we're doing now because I believe that it is good. The Field Museum and museums are symbols to people, they're not just places that you go on vacation. They're symbols of what is true, of what is correct, of who is the authority (Personal Communication, July 26, 2019).

Continuing with the topic of museums as symbols, she stated,

They are symbols of knowledge, of wisdom, and people respect museums and they feel like the museum is true. If you can change what’s inside of the museum to reflect more about what you think society should reflect, then more people will see that and say, ‘Oh, this thing is now true.’ If they come to an exhibit where they see Native people who are thriving and who are doing incredible things and who are living in Chicago, it suddenly is now true to them. I think that museums have a lot of power. Sometimes, I think about all my friends who are working in the government or legal organizations or other direct service organizations and feel like that's the work, that's the real work. But, I think that museums really have the power to change culture. I really, truly believe that. I think some people think museums are frivolous or for entertainment or something else. That's all true. But, I do think that they have the power to influence people to change, or to make people think differently about each other and themselves. People remember experiences that they have in museums. So, if I can influence this one pocket of
culture, I feel like I can create change. I mean, maybe that's too grand of an ambition that people are going to come here and they're going to be changed forever. Because I don't think that's always true. Some people just cruise through here, it doesn't make an impact on a lot of people I think. But, I think if there's a few people that we can kind of influence in some way, I think that means something (Personal Communication, July 26, 2019).

Building on all of the previous questions, Lee, after being asked if she likes museums and exhibitions, states,

I think the more you spend time in museums and exhibits, it becomes harder to like museums and exhibits . . . That's something we’ve really had to grapple with and sometimes I think it's very hard to go to an exhibit and just have fun in it anymore. It's just like anything else that any professional does, but it kind of ruins it for me. I'm constantly thinking about what they could do better, or what they didn't do or whatever. But, I still love them . . . the real reason I work in museums is because I love museums, because they're fun, and because they always inspired me and made me curious and filled with wonder. I get that all the time here, and I want that for other people. There’re museums I don't like, but as a whole, I still like museums (Personal Communication, July 26, 2019).
Manifestations of Staff Diversity and Representation

Several of the Field Museum staff I talk with across departments believe the museum has an issue of marketing its diversity while also having a problem with segregation, access, and superficial, performative modes of diversification (Personal Communication, July, 2019). Perhaps one of the most obvious cases of this while I was at the Field Museum was the hiring of Native staff for temporary positions that focus on and last until the end of the Native Hall renovation.

Meranda Roberts explained that she is working to get people to understand the importance of the Native perspective, Brown perspective, and different mentalities. She said the Field Museum is academically driven and that there also needs to be space for more Indigenous methodologies and community-oriented research and work (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019). One Exhibition Developer said that they use their position within the museum to create a space where other people of color can have a chance to share their stories and voices as genuinely as possible (Personal Communication, July, 2019).

In regard to marketing diversity, the same Exhibition Developer explained that there appears to be a desire to change as an institution, at least in the Exhibition Department. They mentioned that people remind them that their concerns are valid, but that change is slow and that what one does not see is the change that has happened over the course of the last 50 years. However, they state,

As far as museums in general go, like this museum, I always feel like there's a tinge of hiring people of color and women of color to do particular work. It's good
that you're hiring them and it's good that they're getting to do the work that they should be doing. But, it's to [the museum’s] advantage to say that [it] hired X amount of Brown people in the last year. You look at them in our staff photo, you know what I mean? I don't know if it's always intentional to do that, it's a suspicion I always have and always will have, I think (Personal Communication, July, 2019).

This is furthered by another Exhibition Developer, Tori Lee, who states,

I don’t want what we’re doing really well in one area, the Native Hall, to detract from the fundamental issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion that the Field Museum is failing at overall . . . We [have very few] Black curators or scientists, or Latino and Latina curators and scientists. We are a diverse staff, but most everyone of color works on the ground floor. Those issues, I don’t want any of this work that we’re doing to detract from those issues (Personal Communication, July 26, 2019).

As previously shared, the Head of Anthropology Collections, Jamie Kelly, discussed that an aspect of his ideal and realistic futures for the Field Museum includes diversifying staff and changing hiring practices. He explained that he perceives many

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23 This refers to positions in security, admissions, the café, the gift shop, etc. that are typically situated on the first and second public floors of the museum. Curators, conservators, collections staff, exhibition staff, museum leadership, scientists, etc. are situated on less public basement, third, and fourth floors.
museums and other institutions “talking the talk,” but not following through.

Additionally, he stated,

> It's a challenge because I've gone through a lot of job searches and a lot of people don't, nor should they, self-identify their backgrounds necessarily. You do the best you can and try to see if you can get a diverse candidate pool. Often when you come to interview people, it's not as diverse as you would like necessarily (Personal Communication, July 30, 2019).

Kelly thinks networking, outreach to those with connections, and focusing on internships geared toward students who come from a variety of different backgrounds may encourage this shift (Personal Communication, July 30, 2019).

A recent survey by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in partnership with Ithaka S+R, the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) brings into focus some key demographics in regard to ‘intellectual leadership’ positions in U.S. art museums. Intellectual leadership positions include museum leadership, education, curatorial, and conservation. The survey focused on these subsets because they are recognized as potential pathways for directorship (Westermann, Schonfeld, and Sweeney 2019). While this survey primarily focused on art museums, it is still helpful in illuminating U.S. museum demographics.

The survey tells us that in 2018 61% of museum employees were female and 39% were male. However, this does not take into account transgender or non-binary people.

The intellectual leadership positions breakdown as follows: conservators, 75% female,
25% male; curators, 73% female, 27% male; education, 79% female, 21% male; museum leadership (including executive positions), 62% female, 38% male (Figure 8.1) (Westermann, Schonfeld, and Sweeney 2019, 7–8). In regard to race and ethnicity, the survey tells us that in 2018 28% of museum employees identified as a person of color and 72% identified as White. Staff hiring has incrementally grown in the past years, with 35% of new hires identifying as a person of color in 2018. The demographic breakdown of new hires in 2018 by race and ethnicity are as follows: White, 70% curators and educators, 88% museum leadership and conservators; Black or African American, 11% curators and educators, 4% museum leadership and conservators; Asian, 7% curators and educators, 3% museum leadership and conservators; Hispanic or Latinx, 5% curators and educators, 3% museum leadership and conservators; two or more races, 6% curators and educators, 2% museum leadership and conservators; American Indian or Alaskan Native, less than 1% overall; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, less than 1% overall (Figure 8.2) (Westermann, Schonfeld, and Sweeney 2019, 9–12).
Figure 8.1. Westermann, Schonfeld, and Sweeney (2019) Gender/Sex Demographics of Intellectual Leadership in U.S. Art Museums

Figure 8.2. Westermann, Schonfeld, and Sweeney (2019) Ethnicity/Race Demographics of Intellectual Leadership New Hires in U.S. Art Museums
CHAPTER NINE: MANIFESTATIONS IN THE FIELD MUSEUM’S EXHIBITIONS

This section will focus on several of the Field Museum’s cultural exhibitions. I will be using the term *phrases* as a musical analogy to frame these exhibition styles as building off, communicating, and referencing each other. Phrases in music may also elide, or overlap, each other, which is exactly what these exhibition styles do as they contribute to a larger process, or composition. The differing exhibition styles at the Field Museum can be organized into three phrases. It should be noted that these phrases are generalizations of large periods of time, and I do not want to dismiss any of the innovation and variance that did occur during these periods of time. Additionally, these phrases were developed through the analysis of cultural exhibitions at the museum during the time of research and historical trends of exhibitions as discussed by scholars such as Ames, Conn, Errington, Lonetree, and Price. Archival research will need to be done to further develop these phrases and better understand what was being done contemporaneously and before the exhibitions discussed.

All three of these phrases share space within the walls of the Field Museum, and similar to many other museological institutions, exhibitions act as time capsules, chronicling the changes that have occurred. However, they can also contribute to the spread of outdated or problematic ideologies, interpretations of cultures, representations of peoples, and display styles through the museum’s current public face (Ames 1992;
They exist in two senses of temporality; they exist in a historical moment of context, as well as multiple, overlapping, sometimes conflicting times (Clifford 2019, 109). In other words, as a form of time travel they manifest past beliefs today, while also placing us in their historical contexts.

The exhibitions discussed here will be looked at through an understanding of museum as method. As conceptualized by Nicholas Thomas (2016; 2019), museum as method refers to the activity of knowing in the museum space through moments of discovery, captioning, and juxtaposition—all activities that contribute to a museum’s potential legitimizing and influencing power. Discovery, for museum staff and audience alike, involves finding things that were not lost, identifying things that were known to others, and the disclosure of what was hidden or repressed. Captioning refers to the literal composition of a line of text that may accompany an image or object, as well as its description and contextualization within the larger museum space. Juxtaposition happens in museums because nothing is ever truly alone, being juxtaposed to the physical environment and other forms of tangible and intangible culture.

I believe it is also important to state that the interpretations done here are from a single person at a particular point in time. Interpretations and views from others may be similar or different to what is presented here. I do not believe that makes either my interpretations or yours correct or incorrect; rather, this highlights the complex, diverse, and personal meanings people create in exhibition spaces. This diversity of thought, interpretation, and meaning making should not be avoided, but embraced and explored.
Figure 9.1. Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains in the Native North American Hall at the Field Museum (Photograph by Manuel Ferreira, July 2019)

The Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains case, created nearly 70 years ago, in the Native North American Hall before its renovation is a manifestation of the Field Museum’s Phrase 1 of exhibitions (c. 1950s-1970s). Exhibitions during this time presented the material culture of Native peoples as specimens, a part of nature to be collected and displayed. Thus, Native American material culture was curated and presented according to similarity in form, evolutionary stage of development, or geographical origin (Ames 1992; Lonetree 2012).
Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains is a manifestation of the time’s colonial perspectives and agendas. In the early and mid-20th century, museums and professional curators were expected to acquire, research, and manage collections, as well as preserve and exhibit them (Schorch, McCarthy, and Dürr 2019). While different curatorial pedagogies were used in the creation of exhibitions during this time, Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains predominantly uses a pedagogy of looking. In a pedagogy of looking, the lack of curatorial methodology for sourcing the provenance of personal objects leads to a collecting practice that locates representative objects that can then be used to illustrate already established narratives. A pedagogy of looking produces a notion of the past that is framed as distinct from present and as separate because those inhabiting the past are types rather than individuals with whom relationships can be developed (Witcomb 2019).

In analyzing Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains using Thomas’ museum as method what is discovered is the falsity that Native people, specifically the Plains Tribes displayed—Arapaho, Cree, Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne, Assiniboine, Kiowa, and Comanche—do not exist. They are gone, static, anonymous remnants of the past (Errington 1998; Hill 2000; Lonetree 2012). This discovery is guided through the perspective of an academic, outsider’s perspective (Lonetree 2012), that reflected and upheld what the curator of the exhibit believed they already ‘knew’ of Native peoples.
DECORATIVE ART

INDIANS OF THE PLAINS

The Plains Indians frequently decorated objects of every-day use with simple geometric designs. Such art was primarily the work of women.

Clothing and other useful articles, made of soft skins, were decorated with beadwork and embroidery of dyed porcupine quills whereas storage bags and other objects of rawhide were ornamented with painted designs in many colors.

Realistic art was chiefly the work of men and usually had religious significance. Such art appears on tipi covers, shields, and war records.

The captioning aids in the generalization of the peoples and cultures displayed into one larger anonymous mass. It also relegates the Tribes to the past through the consistent use of the past tense. Furthermore, through words such as ‘simple’ and ‘realistic,’ the captioning perpetuates the primitivization of these Tribes and their artwork while also creating a dichotomy between women and men. Both of these views are grounded in a patriarchal, White, Western ideology of progress and superiority over those put on display (Errington 1998; Lonetree 2012).
Decorative Arts: Indians of the Plains does not exist by itself. It shares a space with similar exhibit cases about Native North Americans, which together juxtapose and create an environment that spreads the falsity that Native peoples can be taxonomically categorized according to Western constructs. This view is heightened when it is in a museum that juxtaposes the peoples it puts on display against extinct and extant animals and plants (Lonetree 2012). With the introduction of contemporary Native artists and their work—Maria Pinto, Bunky Echo-Hawk, Rhanda Holy Bear, Chris Pappan—into the exhibition hall the notion of Native peoples being static, anonymous, and in the past is disrupted (Hill 2000; Lonetree 2012). The display style itself is being juxtaposed, not just the peoples and items on display.
With the various renovations and creations of exhibitions that have occurred at the Field Museum since the creation of *Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains* and its hall—*Ancient America, African Hall, Travelling the Pacific, Pacific Spirits, Evolving Planet*, to name a few—one can juxtapose the display to changing times. Before the hall’s renovation, the display and its hall may have appeared to have been forgotten by the institution, while staying in the minds of the communities being exhibited and the visitors discovering what the exhibit has to teach them.

**Phrase 2**

Phrase 2 (c. 1980s-2000s) is characterized by the arrival of Michael Spock to the Field Museum from the Children’s Museum in Boston. He brought with him an exhibition style that focused on visitor experiences, immersion, and experiential learning. Additionally, he invented the position of museum Exhibition Developer, and shifted the power of creating and developing exhibitions from curators to largely educators and designers. This shift is part of the larger process of what has typically been considered curatorial power being spread across other museum professions (Gonzales 2020), and resulted in a client-centered Field Museum that prioritized audience over content (Gurian 2006). The exhibitions created during this time are manifestations of the institution’s structural change and shift toward client-centered exhibitions. While influential during the time they were created, they can also be seen as another version of exoticism or othering because they make a caricature of culture, people, and places due to a focus on easy accessibility and palatability.
Traveling the Pacific is a Spockian exhibition. The hall opened in November 1989, and was led by then Senior Exhibition Developer, Phyllis Rabineau. When it first opened the exhibition took visitors through exhibits to learn about the geological, biological and evolutionary forces in Hawaii, the Fiji Islands, Tahiti, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea (Honan 1990). This has now changed due to minor renovations and the installation of the Regenstein Pacific Conservation Laboratory, which has left behind vestigial elements of the now-gone gallery on canoes, paddles, and movement across the Pacific.
William H. Honan, then New York Times’ Chief Cultural Correspondent, describes the hall as it was shortly after its opening:

When “Traveling the Pacific" opened last November, visitors passed from one exhibit to another within more than 11,000 square feet of floor space to learn about the geological, biological and evolutionary forces at work in such far-flung places as Hawaii, the Fiji Islands, Tahiti, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. The exhibition begins with a gigantic floor map of the Pacific Ocean, which covers nearly one-third of the earth's surface. To get a feel for the immensity of this region, visitors place their feet on a scale-drawn mileage that allows them to measure the distance between islands by placing one foot in front of the other.

Next, comes a gallery with a huge simulation - with light and sound - of a fiery lava flow that recently oozed across a highway in Hawaii. Visitors hear a Hawaiian chant and an old woman, speaking in English, telling the myth of Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes. Then comes the much-debated atoll - a sweeping painted backdrop, 60 feet long, with part of a coral beach and vegetation in the foreground. The sounds of pounding waves, bird cries, land crabs skittering across the coral beach and the rustle of palm fronds fill the room. There is a cool breeze, the scent of ripe fruit and flowers and a seemingly endless expanse of blue ocean.

Nearby, a series of models demonstrates how islands are created by volcanic action. Farther on, an exhibit explains how plants and animals are carried across oceans by wind, tidal currents and birds. Rabineau's controversial outrigger canoe rests prominently on the lagoon side of the atoll.

There are many other exhibits to explore - a Tahitian market and a Papua New Guinea village, for example - all with a strong emphasis on visitor participation. In one, visitors stand in front of a computer and, imagining they are setting out from Samoa in an outrigger canoe, select their destination, course, season, crew and provisions. The computer then tells them whether they chose wisely and planned a safe voyage or came to grief for lack of water or poor navigational skills (1990).
The atoll was, and still is much debated because it does not express the strength of the Field Museum’s collection. The Regenstein Pacific Curator, John Terrell, explained that there are only 1,750 catalogue entries from Micronesia, where there are atolls, while there are 36,000 items in the museum’s Melanesian collection. Melanesia, according to Terrell, only receives a tokenistic representation in Traveling the Pacific. Additionally, Terrell explained that most people in the Pacific do not live on atolls, and that the exhibition hall reinforces stereotypes of the Pacific through the atoll and then reverses course to tell visitors what the ‘Pacific is really like’ (Honan 1990).
The Marshall Island atoll will be the focus here because it provides an opportunity for comparison against a co-curated exhibit that was being developed at the time of research. The gallery space is an immersive environment that takes you across an atoll through large dioramas with eye-spy games, an outrigger canoe, Marshall Island inspired architecture, interactives and text on how to find food and water in such a ‘harsh environment,’ a dead tree replica, wood, and a soundscape of waves.

Figure 9.5. Interactives in Marshallese Atoll Exhibit Space in Traveling the Pacific at the Field Museum (Photograph by Manuel Ferreira, July 2019)

The discovery, captioning, and juxtaposition of this exhibit can be read through the manifestations of audience appeal as a result of structural change, colonialism, and erasure. As a Spockian exhibit, the Marshallese atoll is designed to be visitor-centered
and prioritize the audience’s experience over content (Gurian 2006). Through the exhibit what is discovered is the stereotype of a harsh paradise—little water, little food, little land, and harsh weather all within the guise of a tropical paradise. With little to no focus on people and lived experiences on the Marshall Islands—outside of some text panels and news clippings that briefly discuss the atomic bomb testing on the islands—there is the discovery that people do not and cannot live here. They are erased. Those that do live on the islands and atolls are then seen to be simultaneously closer to nature while also not being as ‘advanced,’ fitting into the colonial narrative of Western elitism and progression (Errington 1998; Lonetree 2012).

The captioning within the gallery space supports these discoveries and aids in the manifestations of colonialism and erasure through the perpetuation of the ‘harsh paradise’ set in a voyeuristic perspective. Without laying out the entire exhibit script, several text panels that highlight the exhibit’s perspective are ‘A Harsh Paradise,’ an enlarged postcard, ‘Bomb Testing,’ and ‘Rising Waters.’

‘A Harsh Paradise’ reads,

A Harsh Paradise

A small island is a vulnerable place

You’re looking out to sea from a small coral islet called an atoll. Before you follow the trail to the other side of the island, take a look around you. Notice the harsh conditions that any living thing—plant, animal or human—must face here.

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Isolated in the vast ocean, this island is miles from its nearest neighbor. Winds, waves and the spray of the salty sea pummel its shore. Because the island rises only a few feet above sea level, a bad storm can scrub it nearly clean of life. Only the toughest plants and animals can survive in these brutal conditions.

This is coupled with another text panel of the same name on the other side of the gallery, which reads,

**A Harsh Paradise**

Small islands offer little comfort.

Maybe you think it would be great to live on a small coral island like this one. Before you quit your job, think again—life on a picture perfect postcard beach is no vacation.

The sun blazes in the still, humid shelter of a lagoon. There’s no steady supply of fresh water: even the wettest atolls can go months with little rain. There’s no real soil either, only sand or chunks of coral. Few plant and animal species can survive in these harsh conditions, so people must turn to the sea for food.
Figure 9.6. Postcard in Marshallese Atoll Exhibit Space in Traveling the Pacific at the Field Museum (Photograph by Manuel Ferreira, July 2019)

The postcard, placed in the middle of the gallery space, states,

Life here is no picture postcard!

It’s hot.

Drinking water is scarce.

And a typhoon blew my house down!

I’ve got a newfound respect for the
People—and plants and animals—that
Can “make a living” here…
Set in a corner with a bulletin board is ‘Bomb Testing,’ which states,

Bomb Testing

The Pacific was once a nuclear testing ground

For many years, the United States, France and England tested nuclear weapons by exploding some 250 of them on Pacific atolls. They often used deserted atolls, but
sometimes evacuated people from their island homes to test bombs. The tests destroyed some islands and left others dangerously radioactive.

Islanders are still suffering the effects

Lingering radiation from nuclear tests has caused many Pacific islanders to suffer radiation sickness, cancer, miscarriages, birth defects, leukemia, and possible genetic damage. U.S. servicemen were also exposed. The U.S. has spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to compensate victims and decontaminate the islands.

This is mirrored on the other side of the bulletin board with ‘Rising Waters,’ which reads,

Rising Waters

Global warming may threaten atolls

How would global warming affect atolls? If the earth warms up, a lot of the ice at the North and South Poles will melt. If this happens, the seas will rise and cover parts of many atolls. And scientists think that if the Pacific Ocean itself gets warmer, it will fuel bigger, more frequent storms.

Atoll dwellers are uniting to fight global warming
The thousands of people who live on Pacific atolls are worried about global warming. Together, they’re studying ways to keep rising seas from destroying their crops and homes. They’re also urging nations like the United States to burn less oil and coal—fuels thought to contribute to global warming—and help find solutions to the problem.

The discovery and captioning of the Marshallese atoll gallery is juxtaposed to the rest of Traveling the Pacific and the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific, as well as the lived experiences of Marshallese students the museum is working with on a co-curated exhibition. Pacific Spirits, now referred to as, is another Spockian era exhibition that takes more of an encyclopedic style and focus on the Pacific. Moving from the Main Hall into the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific, visitors pass through a rotating co-curation gallery—with a static case on A.B. Lewis, a past Field Museum curator of anthropology that traveled to Melanesia in 1909 to collect and documents Melanesian life ‘before European influence’—and into galleries that focus on the Gulf of Papua, New Ireland, New Britain, Melanesia, Vanuatu, and Polynesia. Overall, the hall is relatively dark and cool with colors that tend to be blues, greens, and earth tones; incorporates Pacific inspired architecture; changing soundscapes that include rattles, drums, singing, chanting, Māori haka, laughing, sounds of the ocean; and, other ‘environmental elements’ of sand, gravel, leaves, money, and trash in exhibit cases.

One collections staff member spoke about the connections between the rotating co-curated exhibits, Traveling the Pacific, the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific, and Ruatapupuke II, saying that they are “broken.” They explained that Pacific Spirits is dark
and made through the lens of A.B. Lewis (a colonial viewpoint), no longer has no story, and had some Māori and Hawaiian elements added in at the end. There is a hope to make more of the hall co-curated and placed in rotation. However, the collections staff member wondered how they would get more dedicated staffing and funds for these projects. They said they do not have the answer, but if they do nothing the museum is doing a disservice to those communities (Personal Communication, July, 2019). As Bryony Onciul argues (2019), if museum staff fail to listen to, share authority with, or refuse to act on the advice of the people they engage and partner with, the exhibitions they create may have no more validity, integrity, or community approval than those that exclude the community.
Figure 9.8. Papua New Guinea Exhibit Space in Regenstein Halls of the Pacific at the Field Museum (Photograph by Manuel Ferreira, July 2019)

The Regenstein Pacific Conservator, J.P. Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019), when asked about the connections between the rotating co-curated exhibits, *Traveling the Pacific*, and the *Regenstein Halls of the Pacific*, explained that in his view the *Regenstein Halls of the Pacific* emphasizes the creepy and dramatic, while *Traveling the Pacific* focuses more on the natural world of the Pacific. He also sees the changes that have been made to the *Regenstein Halls of the Pacific*—inclusion of videos, new photos, illuminated text columns—in the recent years as being clearly painted onto older exhibits and not as actual change.
A co-curated exhibition with students in the Enid, Oklahoma, Marshall Islander community was being developed while I was at the Field Museum and is situated in a possible Phrase 3 of exhibitions (c. late 2000s-present), which will be looked at next. Despite not having a physical exhibit juxtaposing against the Marshallese atoll gallery in *Traveling the Pacific*, the lived experiences of the students throw into relief and contradict what is expressed through the gallery. Additionally, the collaborative method in the development of the new exhibition is a manifestation of decolonizing approaches and perspectives and the belief that there is a need for co-curation and communication with communities. This can be seen in contrast to the manifestation of the Spockian visitor-centered exhibition style.
One Exhibition Developer working on the co-curated exhibition explains,

. . . It was always in the back of our heads to do a larger collaborative project with the Marshallese community in Enid, and it finally got the green light from exhibits and got the green light from [the Regenstein Pacific Curator.

We were able to put it together and I tried to find individuals or community organizations to reach out to. None of them ever responded. So, I reached out to the school district and they put me in touch with the ESL coordinator at the high school that works mostly with Marshallese students. We put together this visit where I first went to their Marshallese night at the high school to announce the project. They picked out six students to come here, they came with the students, and we got Terry, who’s the Micronesian Coalition chair in Oklahoma to come, too.

They visited for two and a half days and we did an intensive collection visit. The kids picked out pieces. They did exhibit design exercises, and the Learning Department helped facilitate. Then . . . we had taken the students' plans and synthesized them into exhibit documents and concepts. We presented it back to them. It's like, “Here's what we heard you say. What do you think?” We shared it with other students, we shared it with other community members. Now we’re back trying to get the writing going, designing, and filling in some holes in the artifact list (Personal Communication, July, 2019).
Another developer working on the Marshallese co-curated exhibition expanded on the process and some of the reactions student’s had to the Marshallese atoll in *Travelling the Pacific* (Personal Communication, July, 2019). They explained that when the students and their chaperones came to the museum they explored the exhibition halls and were provided the space to react to them and provide solutions for change. The Marshallese atoll became an area of focus for them because of the constant references to the islands as a ‘harsh paradise,’ boats, and environment with little mention of the people who live there. The developer shared that this was poignant coming from the students, especially from some of the young men in the group because, as the developer explained, part of growing up Marshallese is learning to build canoes from your father. One young man, according to the developer, had a strong emotional reaction to this because his father passed away from cancer caused by the radiation poisoning from the nuclear bomb testing on local atolls by the U.S., France, and England. The student explained to the developer that this is the reaction the exhibit space gets from him, but what is written here has nothing to do with his story, or anyone else’s.
Phrase 3

During the later 2000s to the beginning of the 2020s, the Field Museum has been seeing the start of a third phrase of exhibitions. It is difficult to define this phrase by its cultural exhibitions, since there are not many, or they are still being developed. However, the thoughts of those in the Exhibition Department, those within the museum that have the power to determine what an exhibition will be, and the early patterns they are establishing, provide a glimpse into what this phrase may become.

A theme that has emerged through my interviews with people in the Exhibition Department has been *meaningful experiences*. Meaningful experiences in exhibitions, according to those interviewed (Personal Communication, July, 2019), are experiences
that causes one to think about and feel something else in their larger world differently. In this view, exhibitions are not meant to just teach, but inspire, not just intellectually stimulate, but emotionally.

The visitor-driven framework introduced to the Field during the Michael Spock era (Phrase 2) is also being challenged. The Exhibition Department’s number one priority has been the visitor, making content accessible to their audience. However, the purpose of community-based exhibitions, which the Exhibition Department is engaging with more, is not always about visitors. The stories that co-curators, particularly those from marginalized and oppressed communities, may not be what the museum’s typical audience want or expect to hear. It may make them uncomfortable. If a museum wants to bring in and welcome people not in their typical audience pool, they need to be okay with this. People need to learn to be comfortable in discomfort, and so do museums.

Collaboration in the forms of co-curation and co-governance take different forms in the Field Museum’s anthropology departments, and the Exhibition Department is starting to become more engaged with, discover, these processes, such as with the Native North American Hall renovation and the rotating exhibits in the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific. Rotating exhibits are one aspect that may grow in Phrase 3. Not just the inclusion of rotating parts in cultural exhibitions, but an explicit focus on rotating entire exhibition halls. Many permanent cultural exhibitions, exude a sense of being stuck in time (Hill 2000; Lonetree 2012), and, as one Exhibition Developer explained (Personal Communication, July, 2019), it is even more expensive now to redo everything as opposed to having a little bit of money set aside each year to keep it refreshed. The co-curated exhibits in the front gallery of Pacific Spirits have the potential to be nimble and
experiment in co-curation, co-governance, and rotation. However, they have to contend with their larger counterparts, such as *Inside Ancient Egypt*, for attention and resources within the museum.

The issue of invisibility—not seeing oneself or one’s group represented or heard—is prevalent in the Field Museum’s exhibitions. Chicago has a large Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana, Indigenous, and a diverse Latin American population with a deep, rich history. Despite having contemporary items in the collections, the museum only displayed our ancient heritage in *Ancient Americas* at the time of research. This creates a sense of discontinuity and erasure of our presence and influence in the world and Chicago (Hill 2000; Hooper-Greenhill 2000). This is also an issue when representing LGBTQIA2S+ people. According to the exhibition halls, we do not exist in any form, we are not on the map, we are invisible (Hooper-Greenhill 2000). The closest the museum has been to discussing any queer identities is with Sue the T. Rex, who uses gender-neutral pronouns in their social media. Why not make space for LGBTQIA2S+ people to tell our stories and histories? We have existed throughout history and across the world, in every culture the Field Museum displays.

This is also the case with the representation and visibility of Chicago’s Black community, or any Black community outside of the *African Hall* made during Phrase 2. One Exhibition Developer, Tori Lee (Personal Communication, July 26, 2019), explained how she and a coworker, at the time of research, are trying to develop some programming for Black history month, since the museum does not do anything. They decided to do an exhibit on Carl Cotton, a Black taxidermist who worked at the museum from the 1940s to
the 1970s. Lee explained that the museum knows about Cotton, but truly knows nothing about him besides some of the dioramas and projects he has worked on.

There are concerns among much of the staff I talked with that many of the desired changes will be slow, or not happen at all (Personal Communication, July, 2019). There is a concern that the Field Museum will follow a more performative, superficial level of change. Performative in the sense of putting on a show of trying to make exhibits more accessible and people feel more welcome, while in reality regulating who can speak on and engage with collections and exhibitions.

There is also a concern about whether or not the rotation of exhibits will be sustainable. The Exhibition Developers and their collaborators involved in the Native Hall renovation are creating rotating elements that require co-curation. They are trying to push change from the bottom up, but if people, resources, and hiring and retention practices don’t adapt, it can fail and stay static (Ames 1992; Boast 2011; Lonetree 2012; Phillips 2015).

There is the issue of these rotating collaborative exhibits, and other changes, occurring in the context of exhibitions. They can be seen by some as just projects in the creation of a new hall, or temporary exhibit, rather than being part of an on-going process of fundamental structural change. A single hall or a single collaborative project or process—similar to the beliefs of some staff in regard to Indigenizing or decolonizing—are only one part of a much greater system of exhibitions, programs, and activities in the museum, which are juxtaposed to and may contradict newer missions, processes, purposes, and philosophies.
The explicit objectives and processes for addressing a lot of concerns museum staff and collaborators are having are uncertain. Many that have been interviewed have pointed out that there is a lack of communication between departments (Personal Communication, July, 2019), as seen in the manifestation of communication silos. Additionally, they pointed out that there is little to no sustained meaningful conversations related to ethics, philosophies, and missions for the future of the museum and its exhibitions outside of project-oriented meetings (Personal Communication, July, 2019). Bernadette Lynch reminds us,

> If we cannot bring ourselves to talk about the difficult issues, situations, interactions and relations we encounter, what more powerful way could there be to not only undermine our social justice and participation efforts with others, but to suppress change internally. Unless these external and internal relationships are aligned, the potential for the organisation to meet its social agenda is seriously undermined (2013, 1).

**Ruaterupuke II**

The Field Museum cares for the only wharenui (meeting house) in the Americas, Ruaterupuke II (pronouns: he, him, his) from Tokomaru Bay, Aotearoa New Zealand, which was built and first opened in 1881. Ruaterupuke II is one of four wharenui outside of Aotearoa New Zealand, and is a taonga (treasure) for not only the family most immediately associated with him, Te Whanaua-Ruataupare, but also for those bearing allegiance to the Ngāta Porou iwi (tribe) of the east coast of Te Ika-a-Māui (North Island) (J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007). Māori people see the structure of a wharenui in many ways, one of which is as a living body. The koruru at the apex of the front gables is Ruaterupuke II’s face (there are actually two faces within Ruaterupuke II’s koruru); the
maihi (gables) are his arms; the tāhuhu (ridge pole) is his spine; the heke (rafters) are his ribs; the kūwaha (door) is his mouth; the pou tokomanawa (central posts) are his heart.

Ruapehupuke is the legendary hero who brought whakairo (the art of wood carving) to the Māori people from the underwater wharenui of Tangaroa, the sea god. There was an earlier wharenui built at Tokomaru Bay to honor Ruapepupuke, but was dismantled in the 1820s for protection during a local war. The carvings of this wharenui were soaked in whale oil and placed in the bed of the Mangahauini River at Tokomaru, but as time passed the river moved. Some see this as the carvings being lost, others see them as being returned to the domain of Tangaroa (J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007).

The path Ruapepupuke II took to Chicago begins in the 1890s when he was sold to a local dealer, Mr. Hindmarsh. Ruapepupuke II was eventually sold to Johann Friedrich Gustav Umlauff, owner of the firm J.F.G. Umlauff of Hamburg, Germany. In 1905 George Dorsey, curator of anthropology for the then Field Columbian Museum (Field Museum) was traveling through Europe to purchase items for his institution. On July 22, Dorsey wrote to Frederick J.V. Skiff, then director of the Field Columbian Museum, asking for permission to acquire a list of ‘things’ from the firm of J.F.G. Umlauff of Hamburg. Item number 14 on this list was a ‘New Zealand house’ for 20,000 German marks (about US$5,000 then, about US$144,381 in 2019). However, as Umlauff was under the impression that Dorsey had already received, or would soon receive, permission from Skiff, Ruapepupuke II was sold to Dorsey and the museum on July 22 before he could hear back from Skiff (A Hakiwai and Terrell 1994; J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007).
In 1925, after arriving in Chicago, Ruatapupuke II was set up for display at the Field Museum for the first time. In the course of doing so, then director D.C. Davis wrote to director James McDonald of the then Dominion Museum (Te Papa Tongarewa) in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, to aid in gathering floor mats and roofing material for the new exhibition. McDonald asked Āpirana Turupa Ngata, member of the Parliament for the Eastern Māori District, to contact people on the east coast of North Island. Materials were eventually sent over to Chicago, and the mats that were made are still part of the Field Museum’s Māori collection. They have been consulted by weavers from Aotearoa New Zealand as records of traditional designs and weaving techniques (A Hakiwai and Terrell 1994; J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007).

In 1961, Ruatapupuke II was sealed off so he could be used as an exhibit case for a life-size display of a ‘typical family scene’ with Māori mats and mannequins dressed in cloaks before European contact. By 1972, the Field Museum was considering reopening Ruatapupuke II so museum visitors could walk through him. During this time, museum staff discovered for themselves that people at Tokomaru Bay were unhappy with Ruatapupuke II being sold to foreigners and that they were resistant to talking to anyone about him. Dr. Sidney Moko Mead was invited to the museum to assess Ruatapupuke II in 1974. Dr. Mead recommended a restoration to match the intended purpose and appearance of the wharenui in the 1860s. Dr. Mead was also in direct inquiry with people in Tokomaru Bay, as he had learned that the sale of Ruatapupuke II had created a division within the community that continued to inform life (A Hakiwai and Terrell 1994; J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007).
The traveling exhibition *Te Māori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections* arrived at the Field Museum for a three-month stay in 1986. *Te Māori* was a watershed exhibition and catalyst for critiquing Western curation and representation, acknowledging and engaging with Māori knowledge and protocols. An example of this is Māori ritual requiring that the welcoming museums have a ceremony at dawn, with the doors of the museum being left unlocked and no guards or museum staff permitted to be left inside. Instead, they had to enter the museum in a ritually prescribed manner (Mead 1986; Clavir 2002).

*Te Māori* was not originally scheduled to be at the Field Museum; however, highly complex negotiations and fundraising led to Chicago officially becoming the exhibition's fourth venue after New York, Saint Louis, and San Francisco. Hirini Moko Mead (1986, 105) explains that what Chicago had done, in a Māori sense, was complete *Te Māori* so that it covered the four tides, or cardinal directions. The Exhibition began in the east (*te tairawhiti*) with New York, went to the south (*te taitonga*) in Saint Louis, then the west (*te taihuaauru*) in San Francisco, and finish in the north (*te taitokerau*) with Chicago.

The exhibition’s Aotearoa New Zealand organizing committee, at the request of the Field Museum, invited two elders from Tokomaru Bay, Tai Pewhairangi and Ada Iranui Haig, to be part of the official Aotearoa New Zealand delegation for the *Te Māori* opening (A Hakiwai and Terrell 1994; J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007). Mead shares,
When the elders turned and faced Ruatapupuke, Iranui Haig of Tokomaru Bay began a series of karanga that devastated most of the women of the tira and a good many of the elders, Pakeha supporters, and Americans. There was wailing such as Ruatapupuke had not witnessed since the 1860s. Iranui’s great grief was genuine and so was that of many of our party who must have wondered how on earth such a house could have ended up so far away from home (1986, 110).

Shortly after the exhibition, at the invitation of these elders, John Terrell, Regenstein Curator of Pacific Anthropology, and a group of eighteen other Chicagoans visited Tokomaru Bay for the first time to discuss whether or not Ruatapupuke II should be repatriated or remain in Chicago. It was decided to leave and restore him in Chicago as a living Māori symbol in North America through collaboration with the museum (A Hakiwai and Terrell 1994; J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007).

In 1990, Terrell attended the Taonga Maori Conference in Aotearoa New Zealand, which addressed the care and conservation of taonga Māori (Māori treasures) by foreign museums. An essential element of this care and conservation is keeping the taonga warm through reestablishing links with Māori people where they have been broken; thus, helping to maintain the mauri (life force) of the taonga. From 1992 to 1993, Ruatapupuke II was extensively restored and moved to the Field Museum’s upper floor. This was done in collaboration with Arapata Hakiwai, the now Kaihautū (Māori leader) at Te Papa Tongarewa; Cliff Whiting, a Māori artist and leading preservation expert; and, the people of Tokomaru Bay, led by Piripi Aspinall and Ben Pewhairangi. Hone Ngati, a Māori carver, and Hinemoa Hillard, a Māori conservationist, did a bulk of the restoration work on the carved and painted elements of Ruatapupuke II. Upon finishing the move and restoration, Terrell led the second delegation of Chicagoans from the museum to
Tokomaru Bay to mark the momentous collaborative achievement. Terrell hosted a workshop in 2005—attended by representatives from Tokomaru Bay, Te Papa Tongarewa, Auckland University, and expatriate Māori community members—to further discuss the use of Ruatapu II and his marae (the area in front of a wharenui where formal greetings and discussions occur) as a place of multicultural encounters in Chicago. The following year, Terrell led the third delegation of Chicagoans to Tokomaru Bay to reconnect with people and continue discussions and recommendations that arose from the workshop. In 2007, a delegation of over 50 people from Tokomaru Bay visited Ruatapu II and the museum to honor the 125th anniversary of opening the wharenui in 1881. It was decided then to develop a multicultural marae, or turangawaiwai (a place to stand) for all the people of Chicago (A Hakiwai and Terrell 1994; J. E. Terrell, Wisse, and Philipp 2007).
According the Regenstein Collections Manager of Pacific Anthropology, Christopher Philipp, the interpretation of Ruatepupuke II has been one of the museum’s biggest problems. Philipp explained that there used to be a huge interpretive sign outside of Ruatepupuke II, which the descendant community found offensive because he is not just an object. The sign was taken away, but, according to the collections manager, little else was done. He explained that this has done a disservice to the exhibition space and Ruatepupuke II because people do not know what they are coming upon. There is, however, a greeting video of Mary Ann Bloom, the docent head of the museum, near Ruatepupuke II’s mouth to inform visitors (Personal Communication, July 25, 2019).
The Regenstein Pacific Conservator, J.P. Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019), when asked for his views of the display of Ruatapupuke II and visitor interaction, explained that he does not think he and his team are doing a good job of helping people understand Ruatapupuke II’s significance or Māori culture. The issue with Ruatapupuke II’s hall, according to Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019) and Philipp (Personal Communication, July, 2019), is that he sits alone, and visitors do not know what they are encountering until they have already decided to engage with him. Brown (Personal Communication, July 19, 2019) explained there have been conversations about putting a fence around the marae with a significant gateway, like in Aotearoa New Zealand, which would inform guests that they are actively entering into the space. However, grappling with concerns brought up when discussing kaitiaki, he said that leads to the question, how far should the museum be trying to reproduce Māori protocol, such as all guests asking permission to be welcomed on the marae.

The display of Ruatapupuke II is a manifestation of the histories and internal beliefs regarding colonization, decolonizing perspectives and practices, and co-curating and co-governance at the Field Museum that span all three of the phrases described. What is discovered through his exhibiting is Ruatapupuke II himself; however, without any overt captioning, he is initially discovered as a house, not as a living entity. Additionally, without talking to visitors it is difficult to tell if a meaningful experience was manifested when engaging with Ruatapupuke II, but it is also difficult to tell if one did not manifest.

There are a few signs around Ruatapupuke II that explains he is from Tokomaru Bay and honors a famous hero, as well as requests that visitors take their shoes off out of respect when entering him. Another sign provides more context and guides discovery
toward a more nuanced perspective of Ruatapupuke II and the marae as sacred spaces and their significance in Māori culture. The sign reads,

This Maori meeting house comes from Tokomaru Bay, New Zealand.

This wharenui (“FAH-reh-nu-ee,” or “large house”) was built in 1881 at Tokomaru Bay to honor a famous ancient hero named Ruatapupuke (“RU-ah-teh-Pu-pu-keh”). The clearing in front is called the marae (“MAH-rai”)—and like this house—is a sacred space. In 1905, The Field Museum purchased this house in Hamburg, Germany. Since 1986, the Museum has partnered with the descendants of the house’s original builders in New Zealand so it can be used for community meetings, public events, weddings, and other gatherings.

Inside of Ruatapupuke II there is a single interactive touchscreen inlaid into a table that contains a majority Ruatapupuke II’s captioning. The touchscreen has sections on Māori people; the role of wharenui and marae; a video of Mini Arihia Matahiki of Tokomaru Bay welcoming guests to Ruatapupuke II, which contrasts with the video of Mary Ann Bloom, a non-Māori woman, welcoming visitors outside of Ruatapupuke II; the ancestors, stories, body, and significance represented throughout Ruatapupuke II; and, a history of Ruatapupuke II and his contemporary life.
The section discussing Ruatapuke II’s history reads,

Coming to Chicago

This house has covered a lot of ground. In the 1890s, it was first sold to an English sheep rancher in New Zealand and then to a German antiquities dealer, J.F.G. Umlauff. In 1902, Umlauff displayed it in Hamburg, Germany. Then, in 1905, a Field Museum curator purchased the house and shipped it all the way to Chicago. The photo on the left shows the dismantled house in New Zealand. Not surprisingly, some parts—like the woven mats—were lost along the way.

Moving the house

To move this house from one location to the next, it’s been completely taken apart each time. After coming to the Museum in 1905, the house—named Ruatapuke—was first exhibited on the ground level, from 1924 until 1992. This video captures its move upstairs in 1992.

Tokomaru Bay’s meeting houses

Ruatapuke left Tokomaru Bay, New Zealand in the 1890s. Since then, the community has built four other marae and corresponding meeting houses for meetings and ceremonies.
This is followed by the section on his more contemporary life, which states,

This house lives in Chicago today

Today, Ruatopupuke serves as a symbol of cultural pride. Far from New Zealand, visitors learn about Maori culture and Maori people can visit their ancestors. Community groups across Chicago use Ruatopupuke for events that bring people together. The idea is to use the house the same way meeting houses are traditionally used across New Zealand. These were events from the Filipino-American community, dancers from Bukidnon, Philippines, and the Energy Action Network.

Tokomaru Bay and Chicago collaborate

In 1986, a delegation of Maori came to the museum for an exhibition opening and to visit Ruatopupuke. Two descendants of the house’s original builders—from Tokomaru Bay—were among the group (pictured). Since then, the house has been the focus of cultural exchanges between the Museum and Tokomaru Bay.

Tokomaru Bay and Chicago collaborate
In 2007, thirty-four members of the Tokomaru Bay community came to Chicago. They paid homage to their ancestors with ceremony and song, and celebrated the 125th anniversary of the house’s opening (pictured).

The Museum continues to collaborate with this community to preserve and interpret the house. We worked together to write what you’re reading now.

The captioning provided in the touchscreen helps in contextualizing Ruatapupuke II and explaining his significance. It is a manifestation of the co-curation and co-governance between the Field Museum and Tokomaru Bay. However, the discovery of this contextualization and the existence of the collaborative relationship between Field Museum staff and the Tokomaru Bay community relies on visitors engaging with the touchscreen and signage, as well as what parts they decide to read. Additionally, even if guests read through the sections on Ruatapupuke II’s history and contemporary life their discoveries through that lens do not take into account the –un-discussed complexities and tensions that arise from the dislocation and displacement of cultural treasures (Hakiwai 2007).
Co-Curated Gallery, Kiribati

Figure 9.12. Entrance to Regenstein Halls of the Pacific at Field Museum (Photograph by Manuel Ferreira, July 2019)

While at the Field Museum for this research, one of the exhibits in the rotating, co-curated gallery of the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific was on Kiribati. The exhibit shares the space with two others, one on a Fijian Bark cloth wedding dress, and another on the Philippines. The exhibit consists of a case in the round with *te taumangaria* (shark tooth weapon), *te taumangaria* (shark tooth weapon), *te uu* (eel trap), *te ibu* (bottle), *te ikuiku* (pounder), *te barantauti* (porcupine fish helmet), and *te tana* (armor). The text for the case is on a digital reel. The introductory text reads,
‘Most people here have never even heard of Kiribati,’ That’s what Abaua Johnson said when she visited the Field Museum in October 2018. Abua is a Chicagoan from Kiribati (Keer-a-BAS) and part of the group of Kiribati people who helped select the artifacts on display here, part of a process called ‘co-curation.’

The rest of the digital reel are sections are titled ‘What am I looking at?’, which looks at the items in the case; ‘Where is Kiribati?’, which shows a globe that highlights the location of the islands; ‘Go behind the scenes,’ a look at the co-curation though the lens of this exhibit; and, ‘Kiribati Today,’ a video by photographer Raimon Kataotao that shows life in Kiribati today. Additionally, on the wall next to the exhibit case are two photos by Kataotao. One is titled Protest, which depicts two women holding a sign that says, ‘Climate Change Justice Now / We are fighting, we are not / Sinking,’ in front of a group of other activists in Tarawa, Kiribati. The other is titled World War II Relics, and depicts eight children posing on a tank in Tarawa, Kiribati.
The Exhibition Developer who spearheaded the development of the exhibit, when asked about the exhibit process, states,

. . . I connected with someone in Ohio who is connected with the Kiribati diaspora in the US, but he’s not Kiribati himself. He connected me with some people, and we found one lone person from Kiribati living in Chicago. She came to visit the collection, picked out some pieces that she liked, but we didn't want it to be just her. So, she, Mike in Ohio, and I set up a Facebook group on our own and they invited people in their networks and [the group] expanded to be like 75 people.
Then [collections assistant] and I took pictures of the Kiribati items in the collection and posted them. The ones that started the most conversations are the ones that are in the case. We took pieces of that conversation into the interpretive materials with the permission and review of the people who had commented. That page became a fun experiment about what sort of social media engagement actually will get a response from people, what kinds of posts actually get them to say things and share things, and start conversations. We shared all the design files as they came in, because most of them were not in the U.S. (Personal Communication, July, 2019).

The process of the exhibit’s development and the exhibit itself are manifestations of co-curation and structural change.
What is discovered through the exhibit is Kiribati and the stories and lived experiences of I-Kiribati people through their voices and perspectives. While some of these discoveries may be gleamed from looking at and being in the space with the exhibit, it is best guided by the captioning of the exhibit through its digital reel. However, this does require people to engage with the reel.

There are four sections beyond the introductory text: ‘What am I looking at?’, ‘Where is Kiribati?’, ‘Go behind the scenes,’ and ‘Kiribati Today.’ The main body of ‘What am I looking at?’ introduces the reader through the size of the Field Museum’s Pacific collection, reading,
The Field Museum has more than 66,000 artifacts in its Pacific collections—one of the largest of its kind in the United States. What’s on display here is just a small sample of the approximately 800 artifacts from Kiribati in that collection. The Museum produced this display in collaboration with Kiribati people in the United States, Kiribati, and other countries.

‘Where is Kiribati?’ helps guests to discover where Kiribati is, which, according to Abaua Johnson, many people do not know. The text states,

The Republic of Kiribati is made up of 33 atolls, or ring-shaped islands made of coral. Despite only having 300 square miles of land, the country is spread across an expanse of the Pacific Ocean about the size of the continental United States: 1.3 million square miles.

The main body of ‘Go behind the scenes’ picks up on the last sentence of ‘What am I looking at?’ to inform the guest on the process of developing the exhibit. The section reads,

The Kiribati community estimates that there are around 300 Kiribati people living in the United States, mostly in Hawaii. The Field Museum created a Facebook group to start building a relationship and co-curating with Kiribati people, and welcomes them to visit the collection if they’re ever in Chicago.
Abua Johnson looks at mats that are part of the Museum’s Pacific collections. Johnson was born in Kiribati and now lives in Chicago with her husband, who she met while he was a Peace Corps volunteer.

The Museum is working more and more with community members to manage and interpret the historic collections, as well as develop exhibits. When a culture’s heritage is studied or displayed, it’s important to invite living members of that culture to the decision-making table.

The Kiribati display co-curators got to see the Kiribati collection up close, including one of several porcupine fish helmets, like the one on display here.

The final section, ‘Kiribati Today,’ exposes people to the people and life of Kiribati, as well as showing them that the museum, more specifically the staff who worked on this exhibit, are willing to make space for collaborators and take a stance regarding issues, such as climate change, that have become political. The body of text captioning this section’s video, says,

Today, there are around 114,000 people living in Kiribati, more than half of whom live in the capital city Tarawa. Most of the country sits around six feet above sea level. Rising sea levels due to climate change are threatening the country, and some projections say that Kiribati could be uninhabitable by 2100.
To show the world what may be lost, photographer Raimon Kataotao is documenting life in Kiribati today through his “Humans of Kiribati” project.

The Kiribati exhibit is juxtaposed against the other co-curated exhibits in its gallery space, as well as the other exhibitions throughout the museum, which both reinforce and contradict the internal beliefs that manifested it. This is especially the case with Traveling the Pacific and Pacific Spirits, which form the Regenstein Halls of the Pacific where the exhibit is located. Similar to all representations of peoples displayed in natural history museums, predominantly non-White, non-Western peoples, the Kiribati exhibit is juxtaposed against extinct and extant animals, plants, and peoples in an institution with a colonial legacy of placing the White West at the peak of progress (Price 1989; Ames 1992; Errington 1998; Lonetree 2012).

Native North American Hall Renovation

The story of the Native North American Hall renovation is long, complex, and unfinished; thus, the information described is only one part of the larger composition. Due to the renovation being unfinished at this time, an analysis through museum as method cannot be done. However, the following part of its story sheds some light on the manifestations of colonization, decolonizing perspectives, erasure, collections access, co-curation, structural change, and staff diversity occurring throughout the renovation process. As to not take up too much space in this unfolding story, extended quotes from interviews with the Curator of Native North American Anthropology, Alaka Wali, and the Community Engagement Coordinator, Debra Yepa-Pappan, are presented with no
additional interpretation. The aim is to share and respect momentary, personal parts of this larger, developing story from two people closely related to the renovation.

When asked how the renovation began, Wali, shared,

It started a long time ago, going back even to the early 2000s, even before that, I think 1997. I had just finished doing this other exhibition, which is no longer here at the museum. It was de-installed and my colleague Jonathan Haas, who was the curator of the *Native North American Hall*, put together a proposal on renovating the entire America's halls. We had a new president coming in for the Field Museum, John McCarter. He came in at the beginning of 1997, and Jonathan Haas felt that it was time to renovate these halls. A lot of the other cultural halls, like the Pacific Hall, the Africa Hall, had been renovated already under Sandy Boyd’s tenure, and yet the North American halls had not been touched. That includes the Northwest Coast Hall. There was a hall called Indians before Columbus. These were very anachronistic and old, and it was time to renovate them. So, he had put this proposal together to give to the new president of the Field Museum as a way of saying, ‘Hey, you know, you could do this. You, the new president can take on this major task.’

Jonathan had this vision for how it should be done, but ultimately he was only able to get the ancient part of these halls done . . . Because he was in archeologist, he was really wanting to tell that story in a very different way than what was there at that time. He led that effort and he focused his effort on telling a broader story.
of the Americas, not just this is Native North America, this is South America, but combining the two Americas to talk about how we understand the way that cultures interact in their environments, how do they change over time, and why does it look like something in one place and something else in some other place. He was interested in showcasing how archeologists understand the past, basically. Using the example of what we know about cultures and their historical trajectories in the Americas, he was very successful in doing that in the Ancient Americas exhibit. But, the museum did not really raise enough money, even to really complete that project the way he had wanted it to be . . .

In the end of 2012, by that time, McCarter was retiring and we had [Richard] Lariviere come in as president, Jonathan also retired from the Field Museum, and I had become curator of the North American ethnology collection in 2010 or 2011. I was making some collections, but I wasn't really focused on doing a lot with it at that time. When Jonathan retired, simultaneously to his retiring, my very close colleague, Debby Moskovitz, who I had worked with on a lot of the work in the Amazon that I did with Indigenous communities. She became vice president for all of science and education. All this upheaval and shake up and whatnot. It's too long a story . . .

So in that time period, sometime in 2013, I was talking with Debby about how do we think about the way in which the experiences we've had with Indigenous people in South America could also, somehow, resonate with the work with
Native North Americans. I was trying to think that through, and we realized then that we really did need to work on that hall because that was really the only hall that had not been redone. You know, of the culture halls. It had been there since the 1950s. It was this embarrassment. At the same time, I started thinking about and doing these co-curated exhibits.

The first one I did was with fashion designer Maria Pinto. I wanted to do something innovative with the collections altogether. Maria Pinto is a fashion designer here in Chicago. She was well known for having done a whole couture for Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, she was known for her couture designs. So, she came and did this program where she selected pieces from our collection and we talked, it was a public program kind of thing. Then we thought, why not turn this into an exhibit? So, she came and looked at 25 pieces from across our collections and paired them with her work, her couture collection. That was about how an artist presents our collections in a different light. How can one person's aesthetic vision allow us to see the things in our collection very differently than if me as the anthropologist talking about context, etc. Her exhibit was a small exhibit in the front gallery of that Native American Hall, and it was really successful. People loved it.

From there, I did another one, but this time with a Native contemporary artist, Bunky Echo-Hawk. He’s Pawnee and Yakima. He came and he selected pieces from our collection, paired them with his artwork and that was really successful.
So, while we were doing these sort of co-curated exhibits . . . Debby and I were talking about what do you do for the North American Hall and how would we redo it. I said whatever it is it has to be done in a collaborative way . . . She suggested that we put together a task force across the museum because the idea was that it wouldn't just be about redoing the exhibit, it would be about thinking about the collection, Native American collection, and how do we really steward that in a way that centers collaboration . . . all the different areas of the museum came together to really think about this issue what does it really mean to care for a collection, and do it in a collaborative way. What kind of resources will it take? What should we do?

We came up with a set of recommendations, including renovation of the hall, and we put a price tag on all those recommendations. Because the Native American collection is special because of NAGPRA and repatriation, we included the repatriation budget. The total price tag was something like $40 million, to really take care of it and to do outreach and collaborate with Native communities. The administration baulked at that price tag; they were so skeptical that they could raise that money. They were skeptical that anyone would be interested in Native American stuff. They were like, why would we do that if all that's going to happen is the tribes are gonna want everything back anyway? There was some of that kind of questioning going on . . . in the end, the only thing that the museum administration was willing to undertake was the renovation of the hall. That budget was something estimated to be around $17 million.
We started only focusing on renovating the hall . . . I said that I don't see why we need to do it like all these other permanent halls. The so-called permanent halls, you do them and then the material never changes except for rotations of objects because they can't be in light for conservation purposes. The content in effect never changes in those halls. That's okay if you're presenting stuff about dead people or dead things. If you are presenting living cultures, you can't do that. You can't present a static picture. I said we needed to have the flexibility to rotate this. That was one principle, the second was the principal about collaboration. From the beginning, we had to have input and advice from Native Americans themselves. We worked on how that would be structured. We have the Advisory Committee and then we're still working out other forms of collaboration.

[The Advisory Committee] are museum professionals, they’re scholars based in universities, and then there are some who are civic or active leaders, or they're both. I think . . . there's the assumption that there are no scholars, and that’s just so wrong, such a stereotype when right now there's such a huge amount of scholarship from Native Americans. They’re top-notch scholars working in publishing and writing and public intellectuals and museum folks working in some major museums as well. So, there was no reason that we couldn’t have an Advisory Committee that benefited from that kind of expertise (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019).
Yepa-Pappan, when asked about the process and start of the renovation from her perspective, shared,

A lot of the cases that were in this hall were initially installed in the 50s, some cases were part of the exhibition a little longer than that, so at least 70 years we had a lot of the same exhibit cases on display. One of the things that Alaka did when she became the curator was reaching out to Native artists, which that's something that's huge. She reached out to Bunky Echo-Hawk and gave him an exhibition here. It was in this—there's this little gallery space called the Weber Gallery. I think it's about, I want to say maybe it's about 1100 square feet of space and Bunky Echo-Hawk is a contemporary artist. He's from the Pawnee and Yakima Nations and his work is a very pop art, hip-hop influenced kind of art. His exhibition was the first contemporary Native art exhibition that was here at the museum. As the Bunky show was closing, I was working at the Title Seven American Indian Education Program here at Chicago public schools. I think actually it was when his show was still up. I had met with Alaka through my previous job and we partnered with Field Museum to help expand services to our students, to Native students in Chicago.

During a work trip, I came to the museum and I went down to collections for the first time. Talking with Alaka, I mentioned to her that my husband is a ledger artist and I asked her if there was ever a chance for him to be able to come to collections to see any of the ledger art that they have here. She said, ‘Yeah sure,’
so I brought my husband in maybe the following week or within a couple of weeks and he was able to meet Alaka, see the ledger art in the collections here. That kind of started that relationship for Chris and Alaka. Alaka purchased two of Chris's drawings for the permanent collection . . . that led to Chris being able to have an exhibition. At the same time, there was somebody working on an exhibition for Rhonda Holy Bear. She's a Lakota artist who creates, not really miniature, but they're small, replicas of historical figures. She creates them with such accuracy. She does a lot of beadwork and quillwork and a lot of traditional work to replicate these historical figures in these doll forums. So, both of those shows were approved around the same time. Then they started developing both exhibitions, working with both artists at the same time. Two artists in one small space would have been just too much . . .

It seemed clear that Rhonda’s work was a better fit for that gallery space, for the type of work that she had. That introduced the idea or gave the opportunity to Chris to intervene in this [Native North American] Hall here. He saw that as a huge challenge because his work is all two dimensional and he was thinking, ‘Well, where am I going to hang all of my work?’ What they did was they came up with some solutions. They created some temporary walls to create these kinds of little gallery spaces for Chris to hang his work. He also created these transparencies with his work so that those pieces went onto the cases . . . what happened was he created this intervention; he created this dialogue with the hall. He brought in music and contemporary music. He brought in a video that had
contemporary Native people in it. Those were playing here in the hall during the entire exhibition. What he was trying to do was humanize Native people because when you look at these older cases . . . the public really comes away with this idea that Native people don't exist anymore—Native people only existed in the past. There was no connection to anything present or any kind of future . . .

Having that kind of stark contrast made it really obvious how old and antiquated the exhibition was. Even prior to Chris’ exhibition opening, Alaka had reached out to both Chris and me and asked us to be part of this panel discussion to talk to the board of trustees to basically share with them why it's really important that we need to renovate this hall. So, we were part of those efforts to help make that change before Chris's exhibition went up. Once Chris's exhibition went up though, I think it really showed that this is something that's really important, that really needs to happen soon. We need to renovate this hall, we need to do something to better represent Native people, and we need to have Native people take part in that narrative and share their voices. We need to hear Native voices in the hall . . .

It really helped to accelerate those fundraising efforts. The museum was able to raise the funds in less than two years or about two years, which is record for the museum in any kind of fundraising effort . . .

We were coming here all the time because we were bringing our own guests and to see his work and to see the hall . . . That led to me convincing Alaka, which she says she didn't need to be convinced, that I should volunteer. She wanted to have
community outreach and engagement. I said, ‘Hey, I know people, I know the community, I have a contact, I have a network of Native artists and people from all over the country. Let me volunteer and I'll help with that.’ So, I volunteered in April 2017, and I was doing a lot of the same work that I'm doing now—bringing people in, introducing the museum to Native people, creating relationships, building relationships, fixing old relationships. I think the end of December 2017, or early January 2018, they green lit the project. We had enough funds to move forward with the renovation. Then they hired me right after that. I was the first hire on the project.

One of the first tasks that I had to do was to send the invitations to the Advisory Committee that had already been selected. These were people that were already selected by Alaka and Helen. I sent them, and a lot of them are people that I already knew so I was comfortable reaching out to them and saying, ‘Hey, we're starting this, here's an invitation to join our Advisory Committee.’ Our Advisory Committee is made up of all Native people. A lot of them from museum backgrounds, they have experience in curating Native exhibitions. They all have experience working with Native people. They are Native people. That was something that was really important. Then by mid-year we hired a new staff. We have more Native people on staff now than I think this museum maybe ever had.

I grew up in Chicago, so the Field Museum had always been a part of my life and I had always come through the Native exhibition and never had been satisfied
with it or happy with it. I was always embarrassed by it because it wasn't how I saw myself as a Native person. To now be a part of this project and to actually be a part of changing the narrative here is something that's just really exciting and important (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

When asked what the hope is for the future of the hall and collaboration, Wali, responded,

I can only speak for my perspective . . . just doing the hall isn't adequate. [We] do have to go back and think about the bigger issues of the collection, the long-term stewardship and access to that collection for Native peoples. How do you make that happen? How do you provide access to peoples that want access to their heritage, right? Going forward we're going to have to figure that out. What is it going to look like to have a greater access for Native American communities to their own heritage? Does that mean better digitization? What does that look like? If it means ongoing training and capacity building of young Native scholars, what does that look like? There's any number of possibilities, and there are very exciting opportunities for the Field Museum to engage with Native communities and Native scholars. So, we need to figure those things out and continue to encourage and develop that aspect of it. For the exhibition . . . We succeeded in saying it has to have this rotating element to it. That means there's always going to be collaboration around the representation of Native peoples in this museum, which is great (Personal Communication, July 24, 2019).
Yepa-Pappan, when asked the same question, said,

We’re redeveloping the entire hall. We're focusing on trying to tell stories and talk about contemporary Native people. We're still in that development phase . . . We've been going back and forth on, brainstorming ideas. What kind of stories do we want to tell? What things are important to tell? . . . Things that people don't know about Native people, but should know about Native people. We definitely want to talk about the legacy of the Field Museum and how the collections got here. We have to talk about it because not enough people know. Native people know, Native people know how their things got here, but the public, they don't know that the museum has 70,000 anthropological items in the Native American collection and not all of those were collected in ethical ways . . . we need to talk about that, but we don't want to focus on that either . . . it's part of that healing process.

We need to better the relationship between the museum and Native people because of the old exhibition hall and the way that things were exhibited. It really created a strain in the relationship between Native people and the museum . . . There’re so many Native people that are in museum studies or in anthropology that have written about the Field Museum and its awful practices and treatment toward Native people or Native cultures. With this new exhibition, what we're trying to do is make sure that the perspective is all from Native people . . . so that
we can share the vibrancy of Native people, the diversity of Native people. And, really just share Native knowledge.

We're also supposed to be having the opportunity to rotate some of the exhibitions so that we don't have the static exhibit hall again. Hopefully we'll have some exhibits that'll change out after two or three years. Then we'll have something completely new so that it's constantly something that's changing. Because, Native people, we're always changing, we're moving forward and so the exhibit has to move forward with us (Personal Communication, July 10, 2019).

The Field Museum is in the beginning of a new phrase in its exhibitions, a phrase that focuses on collaboration with communities and people outside the museum; meaningful, emotional experiences; and, the active rotation of exhibitions. This shift may possibly have been sparked by the increase in collaborative work and relationship building with people and organizations outside the museum’s walls. Not just professional partnerships, but relationships that turn into friendships as well (Onciul 2019). The complexities of collaboration and the reasons for it are no stranger to many Native peoples, marginalized peoples, and museum professionals (Davalos 2001; Simpson 2001; Lonetree 2012), but this is simply the beginning of a much larger, on-going process.
CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the relationship between the internal beliefs and perspectives of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff on the future of the museum and the manifestations of these beliefs and perspectives in exhibitions through individual’s perspectives, expressions of these insights, and interpretations of specific exhibitions.

As previously mentioned, the term internal belief, and its variants, is used to describe the personal perspectives, views, interpretations, goals, desires, emotions, etc. that someone may hold. I am not concerned with whether or not these internal beliefs are ‘true.’ Instead, I accept them as they are since they are very much true for those who hold and are influenced by them. Additionally, the term manifestation, and its variants, is used to describe the tangible or intangible expressions of internal beliefs external to those who hold them.

Internal Beliefs, Manifestations, and Frameworks

What frameworks do the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff ground themselves in, and does this connect to their internal beliefs and perspectives?
There are varying explicit and implicit ethical, professional, and cultural frameworks throughout the Field Museums’ Anthropology and Exhibition Departments. This research has shown that staff actively connect and disconnect with these frameworks in ways that are unique to them and their departments. In a contact zone perspective this can be understood as forms of articulation, performance, and translation (Clifford 1997). The brief thoughts and insights shared in this thesis in regard to the connection one has with an ethical, professional, or cultural framework cannot fully describe the relationships one has with them, nor how these relations have and will change. However, what has been shared does shed light on the anthropology in the Field Museum.

What was shared in regard to kaitiaki, Native North American Hall renovation, and the Exhibition Department suggests a de-articulation from and critical look at the older, conventional interpretations and functions of the Field Museum. Through this research it is discovered that the new articulations and re-articulations are occurring through the acknowledgement, inclusion, and practice of Indigenous concepts, methodologies, identities, perspectives, and experiences. However, explicit and implicit levels of acknowledgement, inclusion, and practice vary from person to person and between departments. Furthermore, they differ in that some staff are articulating, performing, and translating their own, or their co-worker’s, cultural protocols, frameworks, and lived experiences, while others are doing this in ways that privilege the protocols, frameworks, and experiences of those reflected in their collections and the communities with which they work.

While the frameworks (re-) articulated, performed, and translated by a few cannot be generalized to the entire Field Museum, they do connect with many of the internal
beliefs about the museum’s future shared. These beliefs include blurring categories and
definitions, social and community work, the need for more Native and historically
not/under represented people to be present and heard in the museum, and the importance
of being seen. The frameworks can also be situated within the manifestations of staff
diversity and representation and decolonizing perspectives seen at the Field Museum, as
well as across the museum field through a process of revealing Eurocentric ideologies
and biases, and acknowledging and including diverse voices and perspectives (Kreps
2011).

I believe that a variety of frameworks—ethical, professional, cultural—is healthy
for an institution, similar to how biological diversity is healthy for an ecosystem.
However, the various frameworks should be respectful, flexible, and willing to make
space for those that have historically, and contemporaneously, been erased, colonized,
ignored, and maligned. Additionally, an explicit and transparent understanding of one’s
own, departmental, and institutional framework(s) is crucial since individual positions
and morality of staff build and change over time to create institutional moralities across
the museum sector (Marstine 2011).

It is in this light of increasing diversity and flexibility that I cultivate and share
my queer mezclando perspective. As previously explained, queer mezclando perspective
is a critical perspective that embraces and lives in the in between. The perspective rejects
notions of purity and coherence, as well as dichotomous, all-encompassing perspectives
as they can often be reductionist views that obscure rather than embrace complexities. It
acknowledges fluid, dynamic, contradictory systems, experiences, and existences that do
not hold people or anything to timeless, defeatist, and homogenous identities. The
perspective also avoids collecting information with the aim of seeking a single, unchanging truth; rather, it is always synthesizing in an organic fashion that allows for the mixing of ambiguity, subjectivity, and objectivity

**Internal Beliefs, Manifestations, and Exhibitions**

How do the manifestations of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff’s internal beliefs affect the museum’s exhibitions?

The differing exhibition styles at the Field Museum can be organized into three phrases. I use the term *phrases* as a musical analogy to frame these exhibition styles as building off, communicating, and referencing each other. Phrases in music may also elide or overlap one another, exactly what these exhibition styles do as they contribute to a larger process, or composition. It should be noted that these phrases are generalizations of large periods of time, and I do not want to dismiss any of the innovation and variance that did occur during these time periods. Additionally, these phrase were developed through the analysis of cultural exhibitions at the museum during the time of research, and archival research will need to be done to further develop these phrases and better understand what was being done contemporaneously and before the exhibitions discussed.

All three of these phrases share space within the walls of the Field Museum, and similar to many other museological institutions, exhibitions act as time capsules, chronicling the changes that have occurred. However, they can also contribute to the spread of outdated or problematic ideologies, interpretations of cultures, representations
of peoples, and display styles through the museum’s current public face (Ames 1992; Gonzales 2020). They exist in two senses of temporality; they exist in a historical moment of context, as well as multiple, overlapping, sometimes conflicting times (Clifford 2019, 109). In other words, as a form of time travel they manifest past beliefs today, while also placing us in their historical contexts.

Exhibitions during the time of Phrase 1 (c. 1950s-1970s) presented the material culture of Native peoples as specimens, a part of nature to be collected and displayed. Thus, Native American material culture was curated and presented according to similarity in form, evolutionary stage of development, or geographical origin (Ames 1992; Lonetree 2012). This perspective assumed a vantage point at the end or cutting edge of development, and a place at the center of a world system for Western peoples and majority power holders (Clifford 2019). The *Decorative Art: Indians of the Plains* case (discussed in Chapter Nine), created nearly 70 years ago as part of the *Native North American Hall* before its renovation, is a manifestation of the time’s colonial perspectives and agendas. In the early and mid-20th century, museums and professional curators were expected to acquire, research, and manage collections, preservation, and exhibitions (Schorch, McCarthy, and Dürr 2019).

Phrase 2 (c. 1980s-2000s) of exhibitions at the Field Museum was sparked by the arrival of Michael Spock to the museum in the 1980s from the Children’s Museum in Boston. He brought with him an exhibition style that focused on visitor experiences, immersion, and experiential learning. Additionally, he introduced Exhibition Developers to the Field Museum and shifted the power of creating and developing exhibitions from curators to them. This affected exhibitions, such as the *Marshallese Atoll* in *Traveling the
Pacific (discussed in Chapter Nine), by spreading what has been typically considered curatorial power to other museum professionals and creating a client-centered focus the prioritized audience entertainment over content. The exhibitions created during this time are manifestations of the institution’s structural change and focus on client-centered exhibitions. They can also be seen as another version of exoticism or othering because they make a caricature of culture, people, and places due to a focus on easy accessibility and palatability.

During the latter 2000s to the beginning of the 2020s, we are starting to see the growth of what may be considered Phrase 3 of exhibitions at the Field Museum. It is difficult to define this phrase by its cultural exhibitions, since there are not many, or they are still being developed. However, the thoughts of those in the Exhibition Department, those within the museum that have the power to determine what an exhibition will be, and the early patterns they are establishing, provide a glimpse into what this phrase may become.

Characteristics and internal beliefs of Phrase 3 appear to be focusing on collaboration with communities and people outside the museum; meaningful experiences; and, the active rotation of exhibitions (discussed in Chapter Nine). This shift may possibly have been sparked by the increase in collaborative work and relationship building with people and organizations outside the museum’s walls. Not just professional partnerships, but relationships that turn into friendships as well (Onciul 2019).

Additionally, the visitor-driven framework introduced to the Field Museum during Phrase 2 is being challenged. The Exhibition Department’s number one priority has been the visitor, making content accessible to their audience. However, the purpose
of community-based exhibitions created through manifestations of co-curation and co-governance processes is not always about visitors. The stories that co-curators, particularly those from marginalized and oppressed communities, may not be what the museum’s typical audience wants or expects to hear. It may make them uncomfortable. If a museum wants to bring in and welcome people not in their typical audience pool, they need to be okay with this. People need to learn to be comfortable in discomfort, and so do museums.

Rotating exhibits are one aspect that may grow in Phrase 3. Not just the inclusion of rotating parts in cultural exhibitions, but an explicit focus on rotating entire exhibition halls. Many permanent cultural exhibitions, exude a sense of being stuck in time (Hill 2000; Lonetree 2012), and, as one Exhibition Developer explained (Personal Communication, July, 2019), it is even more expensive now to redo everything as opposed to having a little bit of money set aside each year to keep it refreshed. The co-curated exhibits in the front gallery of Regenstein Halls of the Pacific have the potential to be nimble and experiment in co-curation, co-governance, and rotation. However, they have to contend with their larger counterparts, such as Inside Ancient Egypt, for attention and resources within the museum.

There are concerns from several staff that many of the desired changes for the Field Museum will be slow, or not happen at all (Personal Communication, July, 2019). There is a concern that the museum will follow a more performative, superficial level of change. Performative in the sense of putting on a show of trying to make exhibits more accessible and people feel more welcome, while in reality regulating who can speak on and engage with collections and exhibitions. There may be a resistance to change because
it threatens not only the possibility of receiving donor money, but also the system that has privileged majority power holders (Phillips 2015). Additionally, there is a concern with many of these changes occurring in the context of exhibitions. This is because they can be seen by some as just projects in the creation of a new hall, or temporary exhibit, rather than part of an on-going process of fundamental structural change. A single hall, or a single collaborative project or process are only one part of a much greater system of exhibitions, programs, and activities in the museum, which are juxtaposed to and may contradict newer missions, processes, purposes, and philosophies.

The explicit objectives and processes for addressing a lot of concerns museum staff and collaborators are having are uncertain. Many that have been interviewed have pointed out that there is a lack of communication between departments (Personal Communication, July, 2019), as seen in the manifestation of communication silos. Additionally, they pointed out that there is little to no sustained meaningful conversations related to ethics, philosophies, and missions for the future of the museum and its exhibitions outside of project-oriented meetings. However, if we cannot bring ourselves or create space for us and others to talk about the beliefs and manifestations we have and encounter, we internally undermine the potential for change and adaptation (Lynch 2013). I believe that those within institutions can intentionally and unintentionally weaponize this by (not) allowing these discussions to take place, as well as by (not) making space for differing beliefs to manifest.
Internal Beliefs, Manifestations, and the Future of the Field Museum

What is the relationship between the internal beliefs and perspectives of the Field Museum’s Anthropology and Exhibition Department staff on the future of the museum and the manifestations of these beliefs and perspectives?

We sometimes talk about museums as personified entities while occasionally overlooking the people within these institutions whose internal beliefs affect museums. Their effect on the museum in turn affects them in a reciprocal, cyclical fashion. In regard to the ideal and realistic futures of the Field Museum seen by those interviewed, it is not possible to stitch them together to create a single ideal or realistic future for the Field Museum. Some of the beliefs regarding these futures contradict each other, while others support.

For me the purpose of listening to and learning about what Field Museum staff ideally and realistically see in the museum’s future is not to create a single vision. Instead, I want to highlight the complex, diverse beliefs relating to these futures because—whether or not they are deemed real and valid by others—they are true to those who hold and embody them, and manifest in a variety of real ways (discussed in Chapter Eight). Furthermore, I do not want to set up an ideal-realistic dichotomy, as that is reductionist and obscures complexities. I want to think of the ideal and realistic as being flexible, dynamic, complementary, and not mutually exclusive.

Through this research, it appears that the ideal futures of the Field Museum for the staff interviewed center around diversity and changing institutional hierarchies and
systems. These futures include an institution that hires, retains, respects, trusts, and makes space for Indigenous peoples, people of color, and people that have been excluded, oppressed, and misrepresented—a system that works for people, rather than forcing them to conform to a system that has repeatedly proven to some it is not trustworthy. Additionally, some want to see a museum that actively engages with and redresses historical and contemporary injustices and wrongs, a museum that is willing to tell the hard truths and take a stand. Others want the Field Museum to shed its current way of thinking and organizing itself to become a museum that thinks and acts ‘without the box’ and engages with complex, multilayered perspectives and histories. An ideal for some is to have the Field Museum working more with local communities to not only build and cultivate relationships, but to also broaden the museum’s audience. Another ideal possibility is for the Field Museum to have a department or staff dedicated to maintaining these local, and global, community-museum relations through co-curation and co-governance. In regard to exhibitions, some want to broaden what an exhibition can be, to do more community-based and co-curated exhibitions, and to go beyond invisibility and stereotypes in exhibitions to manifest a place where people feel seen and respected.

Some realistic futures described bring into focus some of the concerns and obstacles for staff, while also highlighting what some think is possible with their current capacity. Overall, when asked about what they think the realistic future of the Field Museum will be, those interviewed tended to share views that are distinct from their ideal views. However, for some their views of ideal and realistic futures were part of one another. This may be a result of how the interviews were structured, internal creations of ideal-realistic dichotomies by interviewees, or simply the future some see. Whatever the
causes may be, the realistic futures of the Field Museum described include an institution that is bound by monetary drives that seek to satisfy and comfort wealthy donors and to bring in as many guests as possible through modes of edutainment. Some see a future where the museum slowly starts working with local communities, increasing staff diversity, as well as broadening what exhibitions can be, similar to what is seen in ideal futures. However, other futures include a Field Museum that acts out a more performative, superficial level of change that is inflexible, continues to cause staff burnout, and upholds asymmetrical power dynamics.

This research shows that the beliefs around the Field Museum’s futures manifest in a variety of ways. These manifestations are not a one-to-one, linear result of specific beliefs and views. Instead, they are expressed through the complex, dynamic interactions between people and their internal beliefs, contemporaneously and throughout the Field Museum’s history. As seen, these manifestations include forms of colonization, as well as decolonizing perspectives. There is the erasure of people from narratives, as well as the erasure of their emotions and divergence. Additionally, various forms of interaction, access, culturally appropriate practices, co-governance, and care manifest in collections. There is also the manifestation of silos and siloing in the museum’s structure and communication, as well as people who work against them. Manifestations of shifts in exhibition style throughout the Field Museum’s history are evident, such as the shift to and from Michael Spock-style visitor-centered exhibitions, and are caused by and affect museum staff, collaborators, and visitors.

An interesting aspect to consider are the internal beliefs about why oneself does their work and why they care, which flows through all of the beliefs for the Field
Museum’s futures and manifestations. The reasons for why someone does their work and cares is unique to each person. Some do their work because they find it fun and have personal interests, while others may have simply needed a job. Some do their work and care about making change because their family and community’s culture and belongings have been collected and misrepresented by the museum. They and others want to make social change, hope to make a positive difference, and make space for Indigenous peoples, people of color, and people that have been excluded, oppressed, and misrepresented. Others care because they can create meaningful, transformative experiences that can reach a lot of people through their work in the museum. There are also others that do their work and care because they see themselves as caretakers of collections; preserving them for future generations inside and outside the museum; and, sharing, engaging, and learning with and from communities whose tangible and intangible culture make up the museum’s collections.

This research aids in our understanding of the Field Museum and the work being done by anthropology and exhibition department staff, like other museums and museum anthropology, as always being in a process of change. As the Field Museum and other museums change, they become leaders and fall behind, and different beliefs and manifestations become dominant, recede, and emerge through forms of contact and entangled histories. The diverse internal beliefs and manifestations shared in this thesis reflect this process among specific Field Museum staff at a specific point in time and how exhibitions can chronicle this change.
Future Research

Future research built off this work can take various paths. Given that all of my fieldwork done at the Field Museum fell within a single month, a natural step would be to extend the amount of time doing fieldwork. Longer periods of fieldwork would aid in building deeper relations with staff across departments, and allow for more time to listen, learn, and describe internal beliefs and their manifestations. Additionally, longer fieldwork would support more research methods that may provide different ways of engaging with what is being shared, such as providing space for Field Museum staff to help in mapping the relations between internal beliefs and manifestations throughout the research process.

With the differences in beliefs, reasons for doing work and caring, and relations to museums held and embodied by Field Museum staff in differing positions within the museum and their careers, another path for future research is to extend the timeline and narrow the field. Narrow the field to a few budding museum professionals, and extend the timeline to map their changing beliefs, reasons for doing their work and caring, and relations to museums as they navigate life, new experiences, and their careers. A sibling to this research may be oral histories and life stories of people in the museum field in regard to similar factors. Both of these may not only add to understanding and tracking change within and around museums, but also contribute a more personal, human, messy aspect to the histories of museums.

Archival research regarding exhibitions no longer at the Field Museum will need to be done to further develop the exhibition phrases described in this thesis. This will aid in better understand what was being done contemporaneously and before the exhibitions
discussed. Additionally, it may provide an opportunity to more precisely track changes across time with people, internal beliefs, and wider trends and issues occurring locally, regionally, and globally.

Finally, another future research possibility is to expand what has been explored in this research to include museum visitors, communities from which museums collect, and communities with which museums collaborate. In regard to the Field Museum, I believe it is definitely worth the time and effort to sit down, make space for, and actively listen to what visitors and communities believe the museum’s futures may be, why and if they care about the museum, and what they see in exhibitions. Coupling this with current and future research regarding Field Museum staff may create powerful and illuminating moments of consonance and dissonance that can be explored, interrogated, and embraced.

Do I Like Museums?

I grew up going to museums in Milwaukee and Chicago with my family. While there with my abuelos, and when I visit museums today, I try my best to translate what was and was not being said. I try to translate the text, but also the information into our experiences and our lives. Through this, I started learning to look at the details and what they might mean. What is being said, what is not being said, where are the people, why are people here, where is my family, where am I? Most of the time I was left feeling invisible and frustrated. My views and relations to museums are complex and have changed throughout my life, education, and experiences. Even as I write this now they are changing.
I don’t like museums
they are full of pain
broken promises
colonialism ingrained in foundations
stories, peoples, cultures
they steal, erase, misrepresent
our ancestors, families, friends
erecting their nations and narratives
their inaccessibility
behind
in front of
exhibition halls
potential
they may never realize
fearful to
become something else

I like museums
when they make space
to listen, to see us
realize our full glory
stories, peoples, cultures
we are storytellers
our ancestors, families, friends
reflecting back with pride
their accessibility
entertain
educate
reaching millions
potential
shed their old skins
relinquish their power
redress their crimes

encarnamos el cambio
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: LIST OF NAMED FIELD MUSEUM STAFF

J.P. Brown  
*Regenstein Pacific Conservator*

Susan Golland  
*Exhibition Developer*

Jamie Kelly  
*Head of Anthropology Collections; Collections Manager*

Julia Kennedy  
*Pacific Anthropology Collections Assistant*

Tori Lee  
*Exhibition Developer*

Matt Matcuk, Ph.D.  
*Exhibitions Development Director*

Christopher Philipp  
*Regenstein Collections Manager, Anthropology*

Helen Robbins, Ph.D.  
*Repatriation Director*

Meranda Roberts, Ph.D.  
*Researcher and Co-Curator*

Emily Starck  
*Collections Assistant*

John Terrell, Ph.D.  
*Regenstein Curator of Pacific Anthropology*

Alaka Wali, Ph.D.  
*Curator of North American Anthropology*

Debra Yepa-Pappan  
*Community Engagement Coordinator*
APPENDIX B: SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semistructured Interview Guide

1. What is your position and department, and what do you do in that position?
2. What projects are you currently working on? Past? Future? Process of projects?
3. What has your experience been working with community collaborators? Learning from? History of relationship? Future? Process?
4. Do you ground yourself in any cultural, professional, personal protocols/ethical frameworks?
5. What is your relationship and communication like with other departments in the museum?
6. Where are museums going:
   a. What do you ideally want museums, the Field Museum, to become as they move into the future?
   b. Where do you realistically see museums, the Field Museum, going as they move into the future?
   c. Do you see either of these trajectories manifesting in any of the processes, projects, practices, activities, and programs happening at the Field Museum?
7. Why do you do this work?
8. Do you like museums? Do you like exhibitions?
APPENDIX C: EXHIBITION ANALYSIS FORM

Exhibition Analysis Form

Exhibit(ion) Name:

Date:

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Items | Belongings:

| Name(s) & Identifier(s) | Location | Related Text in Exhibit | Photo Taken [Y/N] and Photo Number |

Text:

Name(s) & Identifier(s) of Case/Stand:

Text:

Who’s Voice(s):

Tense(s):

Language(s):

Location:

Photo Number(s):

Layout | Structure:

Photo Number(s):

Color(s):

Design Elements:
Lighting Style(s):

Mount Style(s):

Item/Belonging Proximity:

Other Notes:

Other Exhibit(ion) & Media and Sound Elements:

Unobtrusive Visitor Observation Notes: