ANTHROPOLOGY MUSEUMS AND THE SEARCH FOR SOCIAL RELEVANCY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the recent trend in the museum world of increasing the relevancy of museums exhibits toward the public. It focuses on Anthropology museums and their relationship with the history of the discipline of anthropology and its core theories. Through a literature review and case study examination, I identify key challenges that museums with anthropological content face in trying to increase their significance and impact. By addressing these challenges, this thesis also evaluates the strategies museums have used in the recent past for their relative success and effectiveness. Particular emphasis is placed on the Arizona State Museum’s *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* as a case study, as I was personally involved in the exhibition’s process and can therefore share deeper insights into the functioning of that exhibit.
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Statement of Relevance

This thesis uses a broad background in Anthropology based on the four sub-fields traditionally recognized in United States anthropology (American Anthropological Association 2012) and studied in the University of Arizona’s School of Anthropology. These are sociocultural, biological/physical, archaeology, and linguistic anthropology. However, this thesis concentrates on the sub-fields of cultural anthropology and archaeology in its analysis of the history of ethnographical (relating to cultural anthropology) and archaeological collections and their relationship to colonialism and the practices of anthropology museums today. It also focuses on the lesser-known sub-field of museum anthropology. My intention is to examine the public side of anthropology through museums and convey what the museum world at large can learn from modern anthropology’s concerns about morality and ethics in their practices.

The many facets of anthropology and the fundamental theories behind them have much to offer public education on the pressing social, cultural, environmental, and public health issues the world community faces today. Anthropology museums are an excellent place to address these issues, with any institution founded on anthropology drawing on humanity’s interactions with our environment. However, anthropological principals and ethics can also inform the practices of other types of museums, such as art museums and natural history museums, in their aspiration to become progressive,
socially just public spaces. This thesis will draw upon the theories, history, and ethics of anthropology and examine the challenges that anthropology faces within a museum context with the goal of clarifying why anthropology is an excellent academic discipline through which to increase public awareness about current social problems, specifically within the museum institution.

**Methodology**

The conception of this thesis evolved through my internship with Lisa Falk, the Director of Education at the Arizona State Museum. She was the head curator for an exhibit entitled *Through the Eyes of the Eagle: Illustrating Healthy Living* and supervised related programming. It was her suggestion to base my thesis on this exhibit, examining its emphasis on social justice and increasing awareness about diabetes. Diabetes is a debilitating epidemic in the United States, especially in Native American communities (*Arizona State Museum* 2011). Combining my internship experience with my senior thesis appealed to me because it gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in the museum world in a practical and academic sense. I also enjoyed the idea of researching the potential for museums to make a lasting impact, and possible improvement, on people’s lives.
Originally I was planning on studying the *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit through the lenses of public health, biological anthropology, and applied anthropology. I soon discovered that the idea of museums addressing social problems is a relatively new one, and that there was limited literature on socially relevant museum exhibits in general let alone anthropology exhibits involving public health concerns. I decided to expand my inquiry to research socially relevant exhibits beyond public health, and research the history and development of museum anthropology rather than create a connection between applied anthropology and the museum setting. Still, using anthropology to educate about social issues could justifiably be considered “applying” anthropology.

My literature review emphasizes recent trends in the disciplines of museum anthropology and the museum world at large. I will compare the general trends in the museum world towards making museums more relevant to today’s society with specific examples of anthropological museums or organizations creating socially relevant exhibits and programming using anthropological theories and topics. Through this literature review I will illuminate the strengths of the field of anthropology as a leader in the museum world, and what museums of all types can learn from the history of anthropology and its recent commitment to ethical practices. I start with a discussion of the foundations of anthropology, then more specifically museum anthropology, and its unique history and role in combating colonialist attitudes towards race and ethnicity.
Then I discuss the foundations of social relevancy and responsibility in museum studies, with an emphasis on collaboration. I conclude the literature review with a section addressing public health in museums, concentrating on the recent *Let’s Move!* Initiative established by First Lady Michele Obama and the projects around the country inspired by it, including Arizona State Museum’s *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit. I will point out the most important arguments from the readings and which techniques and policies are most important to creating an exhibit that comments on a subject pertinent to people’s daily lives. Finally I will bring the two realms together and discuss social relevancy within the anthropology museum and anthropological ideas applied to various museum settings, leading into my case studies of some exhibits, institutions, and projects that have attempted this.

My largest and most comprehensive case study will be on the *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* (hereafter abbreviated TEE) exhibit at Arizona State Museum (hereafter abbreviated ASM). This case study will combine personal experience, research, visitor studies, and media concerning the exhibit. I will relate my experience and introduction to visitor studies, in which I collected and analyzed survey data concerning the exhibit during my internship. I will discuss my methodology in conducting the surveys in the section about the exhibit. At the end of the case study on TEE I will evaluate the relative success of the TEE exhibit in engaging and educating its audience about a crucial societal issue, comparing it to the other case studies and the exhibits mentioned in the
literature review. The other case studies are meant to be less comprehensive examinations of other socially relevant exhibits with anthropological content. The goal of these case studies is to compare the techniques, successes, and failures of these projects to the TEE exhibit and provide an introduction to the approaches various institutions have taken to create these exhibits. To gather information on these other projects I relied on their official websites, media in the form of reviews and press releases, contact with professionals involved with the project, and visitor studies evaluations if available.

The conclusion of my thesis will tie together the literature review and case studies in the hopes of determining some of the most successful ways in which to engage museum visitors in socially relevant topics. It will highlight the central challenges facing socially relevant exhibits and some of their solutions, summarizing the successes and disappointments of the exhibits discussed in this thesis. This thesis is meant to be a starting point for museums to increase their import in an increasingly progressive society, with the hope that more will be written about this subject and that museums will continue to innovatively address issues of high importance to humanity.

**Literature Review**

*The development of museum anthropology*
The term “museum anthropology” has two interpretations: one definition being the practices of museums that specialize in the field of anthropology and the study of those practices, another being the study of museums as cultural institutions using anthropological theory and perspectives. Both these definitions apply to my thesis. The first definition relates to my examination of exhibits in anthropology museums that address current social issues, in that I will use this definition to show how anthropology as a field of inquiry, with its emphasis on open-mindedness, ethics, and diversity is an excellent approach to teaching museum visitors about social justice concerns.

The second definition applies to my research through my examination of various museum institutions in their efforts to increase their social relevancy, and through which methods these institutions successfully serve their visitors and the museum’s culture group. In reference to the second definition, my experiences at the Arizona State Museum can be compared to the fieldwork conducted by cultural anthropologists. In this case, ASM is the cultural entity that I immersed myself in to better understand its inner workings, with the goal of discovering how this institution interacts with its environment, or in other words, its visitors and society at large. In other words, the second definition places the museum in the role of the culture being studied.

Museum anthropology as a sub-field has its roots in the early anthropology of the United States and Europe, before the U.S. adopted the four-field approach. As
Western nations carved the so-called “primitive” world into networks of colonies to create their empires, the first ethnological collections made their way into museums. In the United States, 19th century scientists and museum scholars incorporated these incoming ethnological collections into natural history museums, due the perspective that anthropology, at that time thought of exclusively as the study on Non-Western cultures, was related to the theory of natural selection and evolution. As Enid Schildkrout, Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History, describes it, "Ethnographic objects were seen as evidence of the gradual progression of human beings from ‘savagery’ to civilization" (2012), civilization being the domain of the self-described “superior” peoples of the Imperial powers. In the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century, the first museums in the U.S. devoted to the new field of anthropology were founded, including the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and the Hearst Museum of Anthropology. The World’s Fair tradition during this time also influenced the field of museum anthropology and created some of the earliest interactions between anthropology and the public. The foundational anthropologist Franz Boas, a key figure in the changing role of museums in the field of anthropology, participated in the development of the ethnological display at the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 (Schildkrout 2012).
Boas established a strong connection between anthropological study and ethnological collections during his time at the Field Museum in Chicago and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. He set a precedent for the display of ethnographic collections by advocating for a culture-based organizational approach instead of the evolutionary approach used for natural history specimens. The perceived importance of museums and their collections to the developing field of anthropology decreased during the better part of the 20th century, and cultural anthropologists stopped collecting as many material objects as they focused on field work. However, socio-political changes such as the civil rights movements and decolonization movements of the 1960's put new spotlight on the now-dated ethnographic exhibits (Schildkrout 2012).

The way these exhibits were portraying Non-Western cultures and the circumstances of their acquisition came into question, leading to reforms such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). NAGPRA is a Federal law enacted in 1990 that "...provides a process for museums and Federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items -- human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony -- to lineal descendants, and culturally affiliated Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations" (National Park Service 2012). Criticisms of the dated museum practices concerning anthropological collections have encouraged anthropologists and other professionals to re-examine the
role of anthropology in museums and the public sector at large, as is evident in the following review of recent developments in museum anthropology. This re-examination of the relationship between anthropology and its ethics concerning exhibits is occurring mostly in post-colonial First World countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. Most of the exhibits discussed in this literature review are from one of the above countries. It may also be true that the above countries had more scholars writing about the progressive and socially relevant exhibits in their nations, and that some of the efforts in Second and Third World countries have as yet been overlooked.

Anthropology, museums, and colonialism

Creating a post-colonialist institution continues to be a major concern of museums in general, but has special relevance in the field of anthropology. Anthropology and colonialism have a long relationship, as the field of anthropology originated during the age of Imperialism. In her article Anthropology and Colonialism, Diane Lewis (1973) addresses the increased external and internal critique of anthropology that began in the early 1960’s. At the time the article was written, she was a Professor of Anthropology at San Francisco State College. She describes this critique as a result of “the failure of anthropologists to come to terms with and accept
responsibility for the political implications of their work” (Lewis 1973:581). Although Lewis is very critical of the foundations of anthropology in her article, it is clear that she writes from a place of concern about the future of anthropology as a discipline and its role in people’s lives. She notes that in 1969 the American Anthropological Association founded a Committee on Ethics in response to the criticism facing anthropology, and that although she focuses on the relationship between anthropology and colonialism, her criticisms apply to other social sciences as well. Due to its focus on human culture, anthropology has received the brunt of criticisms about its colonialist underpinnings (Lewis 1973:581). As members of their own imperialist dominant cultures, anthropologists could not help but enable the continuing subjugation and prejudice towards Non-Western peoples and help create the concept of “Other” for Western society (Lewis 1973:582).

Lewis quotes the famous anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss as saying that anthropology inherently must be practiced through an outsider (the anthropologist) looking into a culture that is not his or her own. Throughout the rest of the article Lewis expresses that she fundamentally disagrees with this opinion and that one way to best counter the negative influences of colonialism in anthropology is to conduct research increasingly from the perspective of an insider. Her key argument against only conducting research through outsiders is that anthropologists as outsiders have a strong tendency to only record the differences they note between their subject cultures and
their own culture. This dynamic contributes to the concept of the West versus the “Other” and is largely responsible for the negative reputation of anthropology concerning colonialism (Lewis 1973:583). Lewis (1973:586) calls for a dramatic transformation of anthropology, one that includes a wide range of perspectives on any given culture group. Interestingly, Lewis’s complaints about anthropological practices are common complaints about museums in today’s society as well, in that critiques of museum institutions are calling for exhibits based on collaboration with many organizations and displays that express the opinions of many voices instead of the sole academic voice of the lead curator (Schildkrout 2012). Lewis concludes, “The position taken here is that anthropology, because of its unfortunate colonialist history, has a serious responsibility to its former subjects” (Lewis 1973:590). This responsibility is visible in recent developments in museum anthropology, including the American Anthropological Association’s RACE Project discussed later and laws such as NAGPRA that are sprouting up around the post-imperialist world.

Some of the earliest venues for a public form of anthropology were the World’s Fairs that swept across the Western world in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These fairs were some the earliest venues at which to view ethnographical and archaeological collections, and unfortunately have developed quite a reputation for racism with regard to their presentation and treatment of Non-Western peoples. Perhaps the most
infamous of these fairs in this sense is the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893.

Two notable figures in the world of anthropology, Frederick Ward Putnam and Franz Boas, were in charge of the ethnographic and archaeological collections and displays at the Chicago World’s Fair. In his essay *The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893*, Hinsley (1991) notes their experience in trying to adapt anthropology to public displays and their reluctant compromises with the investors and directors of the fair. The interests of Boas and Putnam versus the interests of the financiers wanting to make money through exotic entertainment sadly combined to give anthropology a strong association with colonialism, ethnocentrism, and the commodification of peoples and culture.

After the Paris Expositions of 1867 and 1889 set the precedent for archaeological and ethnographical collections displayed to the public and for “ethnographic villages,” respectively, “all subsequent fairs embodied these two aspects: displays of industrial achievement and promise for the regional or national metropolis, and exhibits of primitive ‘others’ collected from peripheral territories or colonies” (Hinsley 1991:345). The views of Putnam and Boas certainly contributed to the creation of the ideal of “Great America” versus the “primitive other.” Although these gentlemen were genuinely interested in the preservation of culture and progress of science, their relationship to the people they studied was one of idealized, romanticized nostalgia. In
keeping with the title of the fair, the Columbian Exposition to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s footfall in America, Putnam and Boas encouraged the indigenous peoples participating in the ethnographic villages surrounding the official Anthropology Building to dress and perform rituals that had not been part of their culture for sometimes near a century (Hinsley 1991:346-7). Boas and Putnam were no doubt flawed in their approach to anthropology from the standpoint of current practices, but their efforts were intended for the education of the public and the continuation of anthropological research. This cannot be said for the investors and directors of the fair, who combined supposed ethnography with shameless entertainment and moneymaking in the Midway Plaisance.

Putnam was the official leader of the ethnographic villages in the Midway in addition to the more formal Anthropology Building, however Sol Bloom was the one largely responsible for the actual undertaking of the Plaisance. Putnam and Boas slowly saw their dream of public anthropology being eroded, as cultures in the Midway were now a source of profit rather than education and research. As people were made into commodities, their humanity was further lost, cementing the already prevalent view of non-Western peoples as lesser beings. A publication associated with the fair, “Portrait Types of the Midway Plaisance,” stereotyped the different cultures on display into distinct categories, such as the “noble savage” and the “exotic dancer” (Hinsley
One performer, “Little Egypt”, made the “Street in Cairo” area very popular through her erotic belly dancing shows (Hinsley 1991:356).

The combined nostalgia of Boas and Putnam and the interest in profit of the financiers created a public face of anthropology characterized by condescension and disrespect towards Non-Western peoples and their subsequent exploitation and segregation. Boas observed this occurring during his time working for the fair, and largely lost hope in public and museum anthropology. In 1916 Boas observed that “the number of people in our country who are willing and able to enter into the modes of thought of other nations is altogether too small...The American who is cognizant only of his own standpoint sets himself up as arbiter of the world” (Hinsley 1991:363). This is exactly what American scholars and museum professionals did throughout the first half of the 20th century. Many of the archaeological and ethnographical collections of the various World’s Fairs of the 19th and 20th centuries became the foundation for new museums focused on anthropology. This includes the founding of the San Diego Museum of Man out of the California Pacific Exposition and the Field Museum in Chicago out of the Columbian Exposition. To this day, many anthropological collections in the U.S. and other Western nations are based on materials collected during the colonial period, often taken without permission from the cultures who created them and commonly used to present a culture as a “primitive” evolutionarily-backward
version of American Whites (Schildkrout 2012). This is the biggest obstacle facing anthropology today.

The following articles analyze examples of how museums choose to confront their colonialist past. They examine museum exhibits under the lens of how they do or do not successfully address colonialism, whether these exhibits are still based on colonial principals, and how a museum would go about “decolonizing” itself. These are all issues that face the Arizona State Museum, as an institution founded in 1893 during the age of American imperialism that is today striving to be progressive and respectful towards the peoples it represents through research and exhibits. A question that I seek to answer is whether it possible to truly reverse the racism and prejudice of the past, or whether it is better to acknowledge it as a tragic fact of history and strive to better relationships between different cultural groups for the future.

In her essay “Colonial Legacy in African Museology: The Case of the Ghana National Museum”, Arianna Fogelman (2008:19) argues that the presence of a “colonial legacy” in a museum institution is much more complicated than previous scholars have indicated, and that the uses of a museum institution for colonized peoples may not be the same use that Western people derive from it. Fogelman (2008:24) holds a Masters Degree in Museum Studies from George Washington University and is pursuing a doctorate at Boston University exploring her interests in material cultural and heritage management. Fogelman reviews the current dialogue about museums and colonialism,
noting that in many museums in colonized countries, such as the Ghana National Museum, the collections of the museums are based upon imperialist agendas. Because of this and the fact that the majority of material objects were collected with the intention of promoting a view of colonized peoples as “primitive”, museum professionals are now emphasizing the need to make these museums more relatable to the people that they purport to represent. Fogelman (2008:19) addresses this issue through criticism directed towards the Ghana National Museum that it is persistently colonial. She argues that taking a more detailed look at the concept of “colonial legacy” in the Ghana National Museum reveals that the museum in fact has broken with its colonial past, but perhaps in a way unrecognized by critics.

One man, Charles Thurston Shaw, collected 40% of the objects currently in the Ghana National Museum’s collection. Shaw was a British archaeologist who amassed West African artifacts with little information about their origins, significance, or makers. The objects reflected more about the donor’s aesthetic preferences and travels than the cultures of the indigenous people who created them (Fogelman 2008:20). Interestingly, artifacts collected for the museum after Ghana’s Independence have tended to mimic objects in the original collection rather than diversify the collection (Fogelman 2008:20). This fact indicates continued colonialism in the museum for many scholars, but Fogelman defends the museum by pointing out that the museum lacks funding and it is largely just working within its means rather than purposefully continuing a “colonial
legacy”. The museum also purposefully continues to relate a “traditional” view of Ghana rather than an urban, contemporary one, because the “traditional” presentation of Ghana is more lucrative in the tourism industry that is increasingly important to the Ghanaian economy. By promoting “traditional” Ghana, the museum supports nationalism, a key political agenda for newly independent nations. Fogelman observes that critics of the Ghana National Museum are only viewing the museum’s practices from a Western point of view, and therefore cannot see that “the ‘universal’ museum concept has simply been altered to meet culturally specific needs” (Fogelman 2008:24), the “culturally specific needs” being the support of the tourism industry and nationalism. In reality, Fogelman argues that the Ghana National Museum is serving its local community in ways they deem appropriate, not continuing a “colonial legacy” as defined by foreign scholars. Although it is not clear from the article whether or not all Ghanaians approve of or feel empowered by the Ghana National Museum’s practices, ultimately Fogelman is correct that the absence of colonialism means the proactivity and self-determination of the formerly colonized peoples. The purpose of a museum is defined by how effectively it serves its community, and according to this purpose and Fogelman’s argument, the Ghana National Museum could be considered progressive.

Introducing the term “decolonization”, Amy Lonetree, a citizen of the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin and a scholar of Native American history and museum studies, quotes Taiaiake Alfred defining decolonization as “...a process of discovering the truth
in a world created out of lies. It is thinking through what we think we know to what is actually true but is obscured by knowledge derived from our experience as colonized peoples” (Lonetree 2009:326). This definition is problematic, as it clearly comes from the point of view of an “insider”, in this case a Native American. Throughout her essay, Lonetree follows Alfred’s example of presenting a distinctly Native American perspective on museums and so-called “decolonization”, using words like “we” and “our” in reference to the Native American community. This approach may be welcoming to other Native American readers, but alienates everyone else, and therefore most of Lonetree’s readership. As a result of this, her argument comes off as biased and accusatory, encouraging division through the process of defining “Us” as Native Americans and “Other” as the white majority in the museum profession. Through an analysis of Lonetree’s argument, I will clarify why I think her view of “decolonization” is problematic and not helpful for either Native Americans or the white majority looking into the future.

Lonetree centers her argument around a comparison between the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and the Ziibiwing Center, a tribal museum of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. In her analysis of the NMAI, Lonetree (2009:322-323) acknowledges its successful collaborative efforts with the varied Native American tribes it represents, but identifies a large hole in the museum’s message where colonialism and its effects are concerned. She cites a lack of
“truth-telling” and “remembering” as the reason why the museum lacks a clear and coherent understanding of colonialism, and disagrees with the labels previous critics have given the NMAI as a “decolonizing” museum or a “tribal museum writ large”. Lonetree (2009:326) believes that the “hard truths”, as she describes them frequently in the essay, must be acknowledged in any museum that deals with a minority that was repressed in the past or present. Therefore, she sees NMAI as primarily serving the “nation-state” and not Native American peoples. I would argue that it is obvious that NMAI is serving the nation and not only Native Americans, as it is a federal museum.

In a larger statement about museums, Lonetree (2009:326) acknowledges that the stereotype of the “Vanishing Indian”, in other words the idea that Native Americans are a thing of the past and lack a modern culture has successfully been removed from the museum setting, but direct analyses of colonization have yet to be presented in exhibits.

Lonetree (2009:327) contrasts her analysis of NMAI with an analysis of the Saginaw Chippewa’s Ziibiwing Center for Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways, ultimately communicating that the Ziibiwing Center is an example of a true “decolonizing museum” due to two of its themes: presenting an indigenous understanding of history and relating the “hard truths” of colonization. Adhering to the first theme, in their permanent exhibition *Diba jimooyung: Telling Our Story*, the presentation of the Saginaw Chippewa’s history is not chronological but presented through the “Seven Prophecies/Seven Fires” of the Anishinabe people (Lonetree 2009:328). Lonetree
(2009:329) clarifies that the information presented is still understandable to visitors despite the different understanding of history presented through the prophecies. A large part of the exhibition is made up of the Effects of Colonization Gallery, where the second theme identified by Lonetree (2009:329-332), the “hard truths”, is dominant. The focus of this section is to communicate the suffering and long-term damage that colonialism caused the Anishinabe people, as well as to educate about their contemporary society and culture, emphasizing their survival despite all the odds. Because of the extreme intensity of the Effects of Colonization Gallery, the museum staff decided to end with the Blood Memory Gallery, meant to be a healing and calming space after the sadness and suffering felt in the previous gallery. Blood Memory features art pieces by Saginaw Chippewa people to show how beauty was still created in the hardest of times (Lonetree 2009:333-334). The primary audience of the Ziibiwing Center is tribal members, but Lonetree asserts that the exhibition is also meant to educate non-native people. She cites Bonnie Ekdahl, the founding director of the museum, as saying that the primary goal of the museum is the “healing of our own community” (Lonetree 2009:335). But if the primary goal of the Ziibiwing Center is serving its own community, how can it be compared to a large-scale national museum whose audience is not exclusively Native Americans?

Lonetree’s essay highlights a major discussion point in terms of how a museum can successfully address emotional, controversial, and highly relevant societal issues.
How can museum professionals discuss the brutal colonization of the Native Americans by the American government in the most effective, ethical and impactful way possible? It depends on the goal, and with what kinds of emotions and thoughts a museum wants to foster in its visitors. I agree with Lonetree that the “hard truths” of our country should not be ignored, and that all Americans should be aware of the negative aspects of our history. However, Lonetree’s argument emphasizes the negative over the positive, the past over the future, and guilt over hope. It is pointless for non-native museum visitors to walk away feeling guilty about what their ancestors have done. Rather it would be more productive and more useful if native and non-native visitors could leave a museum inspired to repair their relationships and create a unified future that embraces the beauty and accomplishments of all people involved. The National Museum of the American Indian is, as its name relates, national, and is right in not alienating the majority of its audience by making its main focus the United States’ mistreatment of Native Americans throughout history. The goal of museums for the future should be to emphasize that Native Americans are not the “Us” or the “Other”, but fellow Americans. The tactics Lonetree condones and, as she describes, are practiced at the Ziibiwing center, further segregate rather than unite, a practice in the opposite direction of where civil rights and contemporary anthropology are heading.

The Gallery 33 at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery differs from Lonetree’s (2009) description of the Ziibiwing Center in that it emphasizes
multiculturalism and unity rather than emphasizing the independence and distinctness of an individual culture group. Jane Peirson Jones (1992), developer of the exhibit, wrote an essay detailing the experience of this exhibit in *The Colonial Legacy and the Community: The Gallery 33 Project*. *Gallery 33: A Meeting Ground of Cultures* is a permanent anthropology exhibit that opened in 1990, using the Birmingham’s ethnographical collection as a starting point. The collection, which had not been taken out of storage in 30 years, was comprised of items that were collected in the first 30 years of the 20th century by patrons who were undoubtedly part of the colonial process (Jones 1992:221).

The motivation behind the exhibit was partially to renew Birmingham’s image, as Birmingham is no longer the metal-manufacturing industrial town it once was. Focusing on the high influx of immigrants into the area from formally colonized territories, the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery wanted to use Gallery 33 to give an updated idea of the demographics of Birmingham (Jones 1992:222). Jones (1992:222) had 4 objectives for the exhibit: 1) to address locally specific multicultural issues, 2) to embrace the multidisciplinary potential of museums, 3) to address issues of public interest rather than adhere to traditional academic content, and 4) to be unique in concept and materials used. Early on in the project Jones (1992:222) recognized that the biggest challenge of the exhibit was how to create a progressive and socially relevant exhibit out of items collected during the heyday of the British Empire. This challenge is
overwhelmingly the experience of anthropology museums and ethnographical collections all over the world, due to the fact that most ethnographical collections were established during the Age of Imperialism. The museum hoped to draw a more diverse audience to reflect the diverse nature of Birmingham’s population, which now has at least 26 ethnic groups speaking 24 different languages (Jones 1992:223). Similar to the community meetings Lisa Falk set up in preparation for the *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit, Birmingham created an interdisciplinary advisory group that reported to Jones (1992:224), who in turn relayed ideas and information to the consultant designers. Jones (1992:225) and her advisory group wanted to create an exhibit that was “hands-on”, incorporating current anthropological thinking, containing multisensory experiences, whose conceptual approach was reinforced by the exhibit’s design, and creating a space unique in the Museum’s various exhibits.

Gallery 33 was laid out so that the perimeter of the exhibit had “visitor-friendly” display cases, such as “Eating and Drinking”, “Music”, and “Masks.” More thought-provoking material was featured in the center of the room with the display case “Societies”, which addressed theoretical questions circling around the case (Jones 1992:225). There were hands-on and interactive informational stations scattered throughout the exhibit space, an area for visitor comments and feedback, and a performance area that occupied 20% of the exhibit space (Jones 1992:228). One station, “The Archive”, allowed visitors to search through the Birmingham’s collections and
learn more about the history of an individual work. Finally, there is the display called “The Collectors”, whose significance will be discussed shortly (Jones 1992:229-230).

Throughout the exhibit, foreign and non-foreign, “Us” and “Other, are amalgamated and therefore unified into a rich tapestry representing Birmingham in the modern world. Jones explains the exhibits’ approach, emphasizing that “Objects and cultures from Britain are mixed with those from ‘foreign’ cultures and cover a long span of time” (1992:227) and that by mixing art, local history, and ethnographical objects, the exhibit “breach[es] the traditional (and racist) divide that exists in many museums between ethnographical material (often linked with natural history collections), on the one hand, and Western art and material culture, on the other” (1992:227). The “Decorated Body” display, for example, contains references to African hairstyling and British tattoos right next to each other (Jones 1992:227). Jones clarifies her goal in this approach, writing “I hope that the discordance created by these unfamiliar juxtapositions will attract the visitors’ attention and challenge their sense of order, their sense of the “Other”, and thus their sense of themselves” (1992:228). This emphasis on multiculturalism is the tactic chosen by Gallery 33 to “decolonize” its collection and its larger museum. In another innovative approach, the gallery also addresses its colonial legacy through the “Collectors” display case.

In response to the question “Why the emphasis on collectors?”, Jones responds that besides being an interesting story, the collection history of the objects is “the key to
the puzzle of how to relate ethnographic collections to present-day concerns” (1992:231). The contextual significance of an object is enhanced beyond its indigenous origins when its journey to Great Britain is considered. The cases “The Collectors” and “The Archives” have the combined effect of honestly educating the public about the museum’s collections, allowing visitors to see firsthand how racism and colonialism interacted with the collection of ethnographic materials. The museum avoids being accused of repressing the past, as Lonetree (2009) said of NMAI, by simply being honest about its own past. Visitors were continuously consulted and the museum welcomed dialogue about their approach. Visitor evaluations revealed interest in the collection history of the objects, but some people noted that that section was ethnocentric in the sense that people with Western backgrounds had more interest in the collectors section than people of other cultural backgrounds did. The museum also featured programs in the form of celebrations of various religious festivals (Jones 1992:236-238).

Jones (1992:238) recognizes a challenge in dealing with anthropological exhibits: that it is impossible to represent everyone with the restricted space, time, and budget of any given museum, and that the inclusion and exclusion of certain groups can create stereotypes. Jones (1992:238) admits that she see no way of avoiding this problem, besides being as diligent as possible in the selection process. This is a challenge to progressive anthropology exhibits looking into the future, and one that has sparked much of the criticism directed at ambitious exhibits.
One of the best ways to address our negative colonial legacy is to create a new public anthropology through museums that gives minority cultures back the power and authority they once had. One way to approach this is through tribal museums, as Lonetree (2009) and Hoerig (2010) suggest. The empowerment of previously colonized culture groups can also be accomplished through returning archaeological and ethnographic materials to their rightful owners (through NAGPRA) and allowing them to represent themselves in their own museums, whether in a tribal museum or “majority” museum. Another approach is to have large traditional institutions like the Field Museum partner with the cultures that they aim to represent in their exhibits, collaborating equally with minority cultures to represent them honorably and accurately. This approach is examined further in the following section.

Collaboration as a Pathway for Post-Colonial Institutions

Scholars have recently advocated collaboration between community cultural groups and museum institutions as a potential solution to museum anthropology’s colonialisist past. Many scholars have written on collaboration and its definition, common practices, and varying degrees of success. Collaboration developed in the last few decades along with terms such as the “new museology” and the “contact zone” (Boast 2011).
Robin Boast (2011:56) of the University of Cambridge recently reviewed the foundational literature on the concept of the “contact zone” in his article “Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited”, noting the term’s relationship with the ethical status of museums, emphasizing anthropology and archaeology museums that interact with indigenous peoples. Boast (2011) asserts that these museums are still inherently neocolonial, and explains this belief through the lens of the contact zone concept. He quotes Pratt’s definition of the contact zone, a “term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism or slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Boast 2011:57). Boast sees past literature on the contact zone, especially in reference to museums, as putting a positive spin on the concept rather than acknowledging its potential problems.

The “new museology” concept originated in the 1970’s and focused on making museums more relevant, accessible, and educational; emphasizing the public face of museums (Boast 2011:58). The concept was created partially as a response to the criticism of anthropology and museum institutions as still reflecting their colonial origins. Boast believes that the contact zone concept does not fully combat the problem of neocolonialism because it still characterizes museums as spaces where minority cultures are appropriated by the majority institution. A museum may practice
collaboration, but the culture groups it collaborates with do not experience full reciprocity in the exchange; that is to say that the museum institution derives more benefit from the relationship than the collaborating group (2011:63).

Boast uses the example of the Stanford Papuan Sculptural Garden as an example of this problem with the contact zone. Artists from Papua New Guinea were invited to Stanford University to create sculptural works onsite, and then when the project was done, return to their native country. Unfortunately the Papuan artists were expecting a more permanent and reciprocal relationship out of the project that never came to fruition. Boast points out that although there may have been innocent miscommunication on behalf of both the Papuans and the Palo Altans, in such circumstances, “dominance wins” (2011:63). This means that the museum as contact zone is not fully reciprocal and ultimately serves itself (2011:67). Boast believes that museums are presented as contact zones to mask much deeper neocolonial tendencies, yet he fails to explain what these deeper tendencies are. Ultimately Boast points out many problems with “the contact zone” as applied to museum studies, but he provides few examples and no solutions, making his argument lack potential for practical application in the museum setting. Nevertheless, his points should be kept in the minds of museum curators as they embark on cultural collaborations and try to address the questions “How will the ‘outside’ collaborator benefit?” and “Will this collaboration be of equal value to the outside collaborator as that of the museum?” These questions are
significant and highly relevant with regards to ASM’s *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit.

Karl Hoerig (2010), director of the Nohwike’ Bágowa Museum of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, introduces to this discussion the relationship between “tribal/native museums” and “majority/dominant museums”. A tribal or native museum is a museum largely run by members of a certain tribe, usually on reservation land. The term “majority museum” or “dominant museum” refers to any museum that not directly associated or managed by a distinct indigenous or other minority group.

Tribal museums are relatively new, coming out of increased concerns about civil rights and legislation reflecting those concerns. It is a struggle for many tribal groups to fund the construction of their own museum, but recently many have been established in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Hoerig (2010:62) notes that a pressing problem facing tribal and majority museum collaborations is that despite NAGPRA, tribal museums are still dependent on the generosity of majority museums to display objects that originally belonged to them. Hoerig sees this dynamic as “a reverberation of the colonialist underpinnings of (museum) anthropology” (2010:62). Majority museums have the objects but tribal museums have the people who can accurately interpret and explain the objects, creating a necessity for the two organizations to collaborate.

However Hoerig (2010:62) thinks that not only collaboration but also reciprocity, or
equal interactions and benefits for all involved, is required to truly counteract colonialism.

Hoerig (2010:63) uses the White Mountain Apache of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation as an example, noting that many white men took advantage of the White Mountain Apache in collecting ethnographical materials. One such collector was Charles Owen, who bought sacred objects from Apaches at very low prices, taking advantage of their abject poverty and starvation. Hoerig goes on to mention that many of the tactlessly collected objects gathered by Owen and similar men have ended up at the Arizona State Museum. In one way, however, the fact that majority institutions like ASM have acquired and hence preserved many objects is positive: many objects have been preserved that their indigenous makers would not have been able to preserve. Hoerig (2010:64-65) urges that museum professionals should take advantage of this positive result of past colonialism to now allow tribal museums to use these objects in their own exhibits and other representations of themselves.

Arizona State Museum and its main exhibit Paths of Life is referenced positively as showing “dramatic improvements in bringing to the fore native interpretive voices” (Hoerig 2010:65) and making headway towards Hoerig’s goal of reciprocity. As for tribal museums, Hoerig (2010:67) uses the term “decolonization” in his description of their purpose, but fails to explain that “decolonizing” means in his interpretation. As decolonization is a vague term with many interpretations, Hoerig’s argument would
have been served by an explanation. In a description of tribal museums as successfully “mold[ing] the concept of the museum to fit their needs,” Hoerig (2010:68) underlines the points made in Fogelman’s essay defending the Ghana National Museum. Both these authors emphasize that museums must be what their communities need them to be, which may not necessarily be based on traditional museum philosophy. Hoerig (2010:69) ends his argument with a discussion of his own museum in Fort Apache, explaining that much of the museum’s collections are on loan from the Arizona State Museum and other majority institutions.

In explaining how to serve tribal communities’ needs through the actions of non-native museums, Hoerig describes a relationship that is very closely enacted in ASM’s *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* project. Lisa Falk’s collaboration with Tohono O’odham Community Action (TOCA), a non-profit organization, on the TEE exhibit is an outstanding example of “nontribal museums [partnering] with tribal museums in subject communities throughout the exhibition process, from initial planning to installation, and importantly, to include exhibit elements that will be installed at tribal museums” (Hoerig 2010:71). Although TOCA is not a museum in and of itself, it collaborated with Falk throughout the exhibition process, curating a large part of the exhibit and participating in related programming. Then TOCA took its section of the exhibit and materials developed in relation to the exhibit (such as films, comic books, and school program activity manuals) to display on the Tohono O’odham Nation. On
first glance, TOCA and ASM’s relationship may not resemble the reciprocal relationship Hoerig has envisioned, but ASM’s collaboration with TOCA is a big step towards reciprocity. ASM has continued its relationship with TOCA and Terrol Dew Johnson, its co-founder, president, and CEO, past the Through the Eyes of the Eagle exhibit. ASM invited Johnson, an award-winning basket maker, to curate the contemporary section of ASM’s new exhibit Basketry Treasured and work with Lisa Falk on related programming (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk, Hannah Mills, May 4, 2012).

Lainie Shultz (2011:1) of the Australian National University provides another perspective on collaboration in her article “Collaborative Museology and the Visitor.” In this article she examines the relationship between the visitors and the collaborative efforts of museums in order to discover how transparent collaboration is to the public. Her driving question is: “How truly effective and impactful are the most honorable of collaborative efforts if the public is not aware of them?” After all, a museum successfully providing evidence of it’s post-colonial status and communicating that value to its visitors would be difficult if the visitors were not aware of collaboration, a key tool towards that end. Shultz defines museum collaboration as “the practice of working with communities in the production of knowledge through research and displays” (2011:1), and identifies two tasks museums must simultaneously complete to combat social exclusion: “It must be an agent of empowerment for marginalized communities by providing them access to resources and it must serve as intermediary
between local groups and mainstream society by acting as a point of contact and by disseminating information” (2011:1).

This “point of contact” that Shultz refers to is the same as the “contact zone” concept introduced by Boast’s article, although Shultz clearly views it as a positive interaction. Shultz sees this point of contact/museum and the collaboration behind it as lacking visibility to the visitors of museums and therefore losing a lot of its relevance. The point of collaboration is not only to give marginalized communities a voice but also to have visitors of museum exhibits understand that multiple perspectives are communicated and they are reading, watching, or listening to personal accounts of a cultural artifact or circumstance in addition to the scholarly theories of the lead curator. As Shultz found through her research at the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (UBC, MOA), collaboration was fully functional in the museum space, but visitors were not receiving the message intended by practicing collaboration because they were simply unaware of it.

Collaboration is seen as a form of social activism, yet if the public is not aware of the museum’s collaboration with marginalized groups the public will not take away the powerful knowledge of how various organizations can work together and positive relationships can be formed. By leading in collaboration, museums have the potential to influence other facets of society. For example, if a visitor visits a museum and is aware of collaborative practices in the making of the exhibits, that visitor may take that
understanding of collaboration and introduce it to his or her own place of employment.

In this way, museums are encouraging the forging of community ties past its own physical walls (2011:2).

Shultz conducted her research at MOA during “A Partnership of Peoples”, a renewal project which

...represents the next step in MOA’s own history of working with communities, developing those relationships so that the museum can become more welcoming, more useful, and more accessible, in particular by those whose cultures are represented by the museum’s collections. If MOA can disclose these relationships to its visitors, it has the potential to transform its collections in the eyes of the general public from relics of the past to items of significance to contemporary peoples, thereby signaling that not only do indigenous cultures still exist but also that the museum is actively engaged with the rest of society (2011:3).

Shultz’s directed her research towards measuring the actual impact the renewal project’s collaborative efforts had on visitor’s understanding of the museum and its values. Through interviews with visitors and staff members, Shultz discovered that most visitors were not aware of collaboration in the museum. She provides several explanations for this, including that visitors need human interaction to really grasp the relationships and interconnectedness that are the results of collaboration. The MOA had signs in the exhibit indicating collaboration, but these are easily skipped over in the hurry to see the bulk of the exhibit. Shultz also observed through her research that the public does not think about the people behind an exhibit, in other words the “authorship” of the exhibit, and therefore would not recognize collaborative efforts. Visitors do not make the connection between collaboration and self-representation,
again because they are not hearing enough individual voices in the exhibit. Shultz also observed that even through her dialogue and interviews of MOA staff and visitors, she increased their awareness of collaboration much more than the museum exhibit was able to.

Shultz reinforces her argument with a description of MOA’s *Proud to be a Musqueam* exhibit. This exhibit incorporated much more interaction, dialogue, and personal narrative than the *Partnership of Peoples* exhibit, making these qualities there focus. She concludes that although there are plenty of collaborative exhibits and emphasis on present-day cultures in recent exhibit, the lack of human interaction makes the collaborative aspects of these exhibits easy to gloss over. There needs to be a physical presence of the community members an exhibit discusses, through audio, video, and personal stories. Shultz (2011:9) emphasizes that museum programming is crucial to museum learning, and it provides the human interaction that she views as so necessary. ASM’s Lisa Falk also stresses the importance of programming to foster personal relationships between museum staff and community members, noting that it was through community meetings that she met many of her collaborative partners on the TEE exhibit, such as Terrel Dew Johnson and Agnes Attakai (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk to author, May 6, 2012).

*Addressing Public Health through Museums*
The idea of addressing public health concerns through anthropology museums is very recent, more recent than concerns over “decolonization” and efforts of collaboration. Although museums that specifically focus on public health, such as the Center for Disease Control museum, have been putting on exhibits about various health concerns since their creation, only recently have museums of a variety of types been attempting to educate on public health topics. This relates to the United States’ preoccupation with health over the last decade or so, brought about by increased awareness about obesity, diabetes, and other results of unhealthy lifestyles. One significant public health initiative that has involved many sectors in the U.S., including museums, is the Let’s Move Initiative, launched by First Lady Michelle Obama in 2010 (Let’s Move! Website 2012).

Let’s Move: America’s Move to Raise a Healthier Generation of Kids, as the title implies, has an overarching goal of solving the problem of obesity in the United States within a generation by focusing on the country’s children. President Obama produced a Presidential Memorandum that created a Task Force on Childhood Obesity to help with his wife’s initiative. The initiative is organized around five pillars:

1) creating a healthy start for children
2) empowering parents and caregivers
3) providing healthy food in schools
4) improving access to healthy, affordable foods

5) increasing physical activity *(Let’s Move! Website 2012)*

These pillars were designed based on the hard facts that in the past three decades childhood obesity has tripled in the U.S. Almost one third of children in America are obese, with closer to 40% of Hispanic and African American children as obese. In relation to TEE’s topic, the *Let’s Move* website states that if childhood obesity is not addressed, “1/3 of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives.”, in addition to other obesity-related health concerns *(Let’s Move! Website 2012)*. The website cites several causes for the obesity epidemic, including increased reliance on media for entertainment, less home-cooked meals, and physical education programs being cut from schools. Adhering to its statement that “everyone has a role to play in reducing childhood obesity” *(Let’s Move! Website 2012)*, the *Let’s Move* initiative created the offshoot *Let’s Move: Museums and Gardens*. This program has had a large impact on museums since its initiation: as of April 27th, 2012, already 545 institutions of the U.S. have joined the program. As of April 6th, 2012, four of them were museums of anthropology *(Institute of Museum and Library Services Website 2012)*.

The goal of *Let’s Move: Museums and Gardens* is to use museums’ and gardens’ resources to inform the public, especially parents and children, about healthy choices and to create environments that foster healthy interactions. On its webpage, the program asserts that “With their impressive reach and great potential for impact,
museums and gardens can launch community efforts to fight childhood obesity using interactive exhibits, outdoor spaces, gardens and programs that encourage families to eat healthy foods and increase physical activity” (Institute of Museum and Library Services Website 2012). Two examples of the project’s goals are to obtain 2,000 members by the end of the first year of the program, and shift food service at institutions to both provide healthy food options and educate visitors about them. Member institutions are asked to comply with as many of the following priorities as possible:

1) eat healthy, get active exhibits
2) learning about eating healthy and exercising through programs, such as school field trip programs and summer camps
3) healthy food service
4) using healthy food service to teach about healthy choices (Institute of Museum and Library Services Website 2012)

Examples of Let’s Move: Museums and Gardens institutions that are discussed in this thesis are Arizona State Museum, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, the CDC Museum, the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, and Arcadia at Woodlawn. ASM, through its Through the Eyes of the Eagle exhibit, managed to achieve all four priorities through its various components. By nature, the TEE exhibit was an “eat healthy, get active” exhibit, and communicated this through its school programs, the multicultural health fair A Healthy Celebration, and related
materials such as the *It’s Up 2 You!* comic book. Although ASM does not have permanent food service, priorities 3 and 4 were also achieved through offering healthy Native American food tastings and demonstrations at the opening of the exhibit, at the fair, and at a film screening. ASM is an example of how the *Let’s Move* program inspired many institutions to not only address childhood obesity, but branch out to address a myriad of public health issues that relate to their own subject, whether it be Native cultures, a historic figure, or natural history. Following are some examples of other projects inspired by the *Let’s Move* initiative, meant to communicate the ingenuity and flexibility of these varied museums in addressing highly relevant public health issues.

For its Sept/Oct 2011 issue, the magazine *Museum*, published by the American Association of Museums, had as its title “Food and Community: A Whole New Audience.” This issue was devoted to the new trend in museums of addressing public health, with references to the *Let’s Move: Museums and Gardens* initiative and a meeting in Pittsburgh called “Feeding the Spirit: A Symposium on Museum, Food, and Community” as its inspiration. Under “On the Move” (*Museum* 2011:13), the magazine describes two examples of museums addressing public health through their exhibits and programming.

At the Stearns History Museum in Minnesota museum professionals have created their own garden for the White House Children’s Garden Project. The museum incorporated the garden into its exhibits in creative ways. For an exhibit on Native
Americans, the garden was turned into a native plant and herb garden as an adjunct to the exhibit. For an exhibit on World War II, the garden was converted into a victory garden. The B.B. King Museum in Mississippi is offering a summer camp called “The Art of Living Smart”, which teaches nutrition, exercise, and other healthy habits through the arts. They hosted television’s Biggest Loser winner Patrick House, himself from the Mississippi Delta region, to talk to kids about being healthy (Museum 2011:13). These two examples introduce the idea that museums of any subject can somehow address public health and relate it back to their original subjects, in the above cases being history and the arts. The following of two articles, one in a popular publication and one from an academic one, provide further examples for how museums of many varieties have answered the call of the Let’s Move project and its implications.

In the article “Seeds of Change: Museums Tap Food Trends, Reap Rewards”, from the same food-themed issue of Museum that told of the above examples, Rina Rapuano (2011:32-40) introduces what several other museums are doing to address health. Rapuano is herself an assistant food and wine editor at Washingtonian magazine. Building on their permanent exhibit of Julia Child’s kitchen, the Smithsonian National Museum of American History is introducing a new section called “Bon appetit!”. Rapuano cites co-curator Paula Johnson’s reasoning for the new addition, Johnson explaining that there’s “just a tremendous interest in food, food-related topics and health in the general population. This is something that a lot of people are thinking
about and caring about, so it makes sense that museums are responding. It’s kind of a subject for everyone” (2011:33).

One key hurdle for museums wanting to address public health is proving to their supporters that it will tie in to the museum’s main subject matter or mission. This may seem simple for an institution such as Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, whose focus is already on plants, but in Rapuano’s citation of the Executive Director Richard Piacentini, he mentions that he had to justify Phipp’s involvement with healthy eating to one of the board members at the museum. He responded to the board member by saying that

“our mission statement—is to ‘inspire and educate visitors with the beauty and importance of plants.’ There is no more important intersection of plants and people that what occurs in the way we produce and eat food, and there is perhaps no greater impact on the environment than our health and the way this intersection currently takes place” (Rapuano 2011:34).

The biggest obstacle for museum professionals wanting to educate the public about public health issues is the need to justify the actions of a museum such as Phipps. Piacentini’s reasoning, however, is sound and is similar in many ways to the reasoning Lisa Falk provided when trying to gain support for the TEE exhibit.

Two other museums that are highlighted are the Jane Addams Hull House and Museum in Chicago and Woodlawn Plantation in Virginia. The Hull House has initiated food programs that relate to Addams’ original missions involving social justice. The program “Re-Thinking Soup” serves a different soup each meeting made
from the Hull House’s heirloom vegetable garden, and while at the meeting participants discuss food justice issues (Rapuano 2011:34-35). Woodlawn Plantation has partnered with a local restaurateur and given him some of their land to farm. The Plantation has also partnered with local schools, giving children the opportunity to garden and eat the fruits of their labor in school lunches (Rapuano 2011:37). Referring back to the museums she discusses, Rapuano notes that “Of course, with increased visitor engagement, heightened community involvement and a healthier public comes another welcome side effect—museums securing their relevance as they move into the future” (Rapuano 2011:38). Food and health will always be issues of interest and concern for the public, and luckily there are many ways to address these topics in relation to common museum subjects such as culture, natural history, or botanical gardens. As Rapuano asserts, it is distinctly to the advantage of the museum world to address popular subjects like food and health if they are to continue to be significant public spaces.

Jocelyn Dodd (2002), Research Manager in the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, worked for over ten years at the Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, which she discusses extensively in her essay Museums and the Health of the Community. This essay centers on the questions “Do museums and galleries really have a part to play in the health of the community?” and “What impact might they have and by what means can this be achieved?” (Dodd 2002:182). Through these questions Dodd
explains the actions and approaches of the museums discussed in this section in their quests to influence the health of their own communities.

The first exhibit she discusses is Our Bodies, Ourselves, a series of photographs that the artist Jo Spence took of herself during her experience of breast cancer and how radical breast surgery changed her body. Dodd (2002:182) notes that she has a personal connection with this exhibit in that her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She acknowledges that an art museum was, at least in 2002 when this essay was published, an unlikely place to observe a discussion of a medical condition, but that it was through this exhibit that she “saw the bold role that art can play in helping people to see the universality of disease and ill health, to open dialogues, fears, embarrassments; all realities in facing the dreads and fears of breast cancer” (Dodd 2002:183).

Dodd examines the definition of “health” in her search for a place for it in museum spaces. Health is a multi-dimensional concept, with slightly varied definitions in the realms of medical, economic, social disciplines. The World Health Organization defines health in this manner, as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well being and not merely the absence of a disease or infirmity” (Dodd 2002:183). Dodd sees Western societies as relying on medical diagnoses alone, without addressing the causes of health concerns. The causes of health issues are often rooted in economic or social inequalities, lack of awareness, or problematic customs. In justifying the museum as a space in which to address health, Dodd asserts that “people with more social contact
and more involvement in local activities seem to have better health” and “health of the community is no longer the sole responsibility of the medical profession” (Dodd 2002:184). These two statements point to public institutions, such as museums, as, at the very least, a partial solution to the lack of prevention in public health. Significantly, Dodd (2002:184) remarks that as of the publication of her essay, there were very few examples of museums addressing the health of their communities. No doubt since 2002, with the Let’s Move project and similar initiatives, there are many more examples of addressing health issues in the museum world.

Dodd (2002:185) focuses on her native England and former employer Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery in her discussion of significant exhibits and programming involving public health. She relates the Museum’s partnership with mental health professionals to provide programming and exhibits for mental health patients, a group very much excluded from mainstream society. The Museum put on an exhibit of mental health patient’s collected artwork, fostering confidence and independence for this oft-ignored community. The Museum allowed patients to participate in the planning of a Victorian garden party, giving them an opportunity to interact with history (Dodd 2002:185). The museum gained relevance through introducing a minority group to the public through these exhibits and programs, creating further unity and understanding in its local community.
Dodd (2002:186) also discusses an exhibit of high relevance to Nottingham’s local community, *Sexwise*, a sex education exhibit meant to combat the high rates of unwanted pregnancy, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. The Health Action Zone of Nottingham inspired this exhibit and its related education program. The exhibition used art to communicate sex education messages through collaborations between the artists Suzie Freeman and Dr. Liz Lee. One notable art piece was a ball gown decorated with thousands of contraceptive pills, meant to show the quantity of medication needed to prevent pregnancy over a lifetime. Resources and information about sex-related issues accompanied art pieces such as the ball gown. Also included was a powerful video, the result of collaborations between the museum, local schools, artists and health workers, discussing being “sexwise” from a teenage perspective. Visitor evaluations related to the exhibit revealed a change in teenagers’ perspectives about unwanted pregnancy from high concern about their parent’s reactions to actual fear of being a young and unprepared parent (Dodd 2002:186).

Dodd (2002:188) ends with a discussion of an exhibition at another art gallery, the Walsall Art Gallery, called *Brenda and Other Stories*. This exhibit used contemporary art to explore issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. Walsall’s approach; placing art, literature, and health information alongside each other; is similar to the approach of CDC’s *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* travelling exhibit discussed later. *Brenda and Other Stories* also addressed misconceptions about HIV and AIDS, as the American
Anthropological Association’s RACE exhibit did about race and racism and Arizona State Museum’s *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit did about diabetes. The *Brenda and Other Stories* exhibit “underlined the impact that the virus can have on all communities” (Dodd 2002:188), just as ASM’s exhibit emphasized the universality of diabetes. Powerfully, the visitor evaluations of this exhibit revealed that more local people sought HIV tests at the local clinic (Dodd 2002:188).

In 2002, Dodd accurately foreshadows the increasing interest in addressing public health in museums, observing “though there is an interest in the role that museums and other cultural institutions can have in relation to health, their actual impact and the means by which outcomes can be achieved are only just emerging” (Dodd 2002:188). However, noting the similarities in techniques and strategies between the exhibitions Dodd discusses and the RACE and *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit, perhaps the “means by which outcomes can be achieved” are clearer now in 2012 than they were ten years ago.

*Evaluation of the Literature*

The preceding literature review introduces some central issues in the relationship between anthropology, museums, and the creation of exhibits that address problems museum visitors confront in their daily lives. Anthropology’s long history
with colonialism has caused the discipline to reconsider the ethics surrounding its practices, as can be seen through legislation such as NAGPRA and the American Anthropological Association’s Committee on Ethics and Code of Ethics (American Anthropological Association 1998). Museum of all types, but especially ones that contain archaeological and ethnographical collections, can learn from these and other steps taken by the discipline of anthropology in trying to implement their own progressive exhibits and codes of ethics. Collaboration is one way to attempt to “decolonize” a museum, as it encourages an exhibit to represent more voices and perspectives than just the museum’s on any given topic. Due to recent developments such as a dramatic increase in obesity, diabetes, and AIDS, addressing public health through museums has become a priority and is encouraged through initiatives such as “Let’s Move: Museums and Gardens.” The case studies that follow integrate the topics discussed above in their own approaches to addressing socially relevant issues.

Case Studies

“RACE: Why Are We So Different?: A Project of the American Anthropological Association

Possibly the largest-scale anthropological exhibit devoted to a relevant social problem thus far in the United States is the RACE: Are We So Different? exhibit, part of
the overarching RACE Project created by the American Anthropological Association (AAA). The exhibit was a multi-year project that was always intended to be a traveling exhibit, and therefore created to adapt to various museum environments. It was created out of grants totaling over 4.5 million dollars from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Ford Foundation (American Anthropological Association 2009). According to “RACE: Are We So Different: A Public Education Program”, a document available through the project’s website, the primary goal of the exhibit/project is to help “…individuals understand the origins and manifestations of race and racism in everyday life, and come to their own conclusion that race is a dynamic and sometimes harmful human invention” (American Anthropological Association 2009).

The exhibit first opened at the Science Museum of Minnesota, which collaborated with the AAA to produce the traveling exhibit, in January 2007. The three main themes and sections of the exhibit are history, human variation, and lived experience (American Anthropological Association 2009). The original plans for the exhibit were for it to run in museums throughout the U.S. through 2011, however due to the popularity of the exhibit, the tour is being extended through 2014, and there are plans to create a replica, a condensed version of the exhibit, and a book of scholarly writings related to the exhibit (Jones, et. al. 2009:19). In addition, there is an interactive website associated with the exhibit and extensive educational materials available for teachers, families, and researchers (American Anthropological Association 2009).
RACE developed out of the AAA's 1998 Statement on Race and efforts in 1997 by AAA to aid the federal government in revising race and ethnicity categories. More than five years in development, it involved scholars from all four fields of anthropology and from other science and humanities disciplines *(American Anthropological Association 2009)*. An Advisory Board of 24 scholars oversaw its development and production, including Yolanda Moses as Advisory Board Chair and Mary Margaret Overby as Principal Investigator (Penn, et. al. 2008:148-149).

RACE's collaborative efforts are too extensive to fully account for in this thesis, as it is a large project and its developers continue to collaborate with national organizations such as the American Association of Museums (AAM) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as well as with smaller organizations in the locale where the exhibit travels. However, following are examples of the type of collaborative work the RACE exhibit is involved with in its various host communities.

When the RACE exhibit was at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History (MNH), the Smithsonian initiated a series of programming in several of its museums called “Let's Talk About Race At The Smithsonian.” These programs were created in order to facilitate discussions about race in the Washington D.C. community. One program allowed interns in the Youth Engagement Through Science (YES) internship program to be trained as facilitators for the RACE exhibit *(National Museum of Natural History Website)*. In another program, middle school and high school students from DC
Public Schools participated in “The Locker Project.” In a blog entry for the museum, David D. LaCroix (2011), Programming and Volunteer Training Coordinator in the Office of Education and Outreach at MNH, explains the details of the program. “The Locker Project” idea was taken from the Science Museum of Minnesota’s original presentation of the exhibit, but importantly focused on local D.C. students when RACE was hosted at the MNH. Students were asked to respond to the questions “What is race?”, “What does race mean to you?”, and “Has your life been affected by race?”, working together to create art installations inside lockers reflecting their answers. The resulting artworks were “collaborations of a very personal nature” (LaCroix 2011), giving the individual students a chance to communicate their own experiences and sentiments about race to their fellow community members, allowing visitors to gain a personal connection to a nation-wide exhibit.

The Museum of Life and Science in Durham, North Carolina initiated a social media experiment through Facebook called Experimonth RACE in addition to hosting the RACE exhibit. The experiment, which included dialogue, games, and activities over Facebook, was meant to encourage dialogue about race relations in the Triangle (a region of North Carolina including Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill). It was offered in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota and child psychologist April Harris-Britt and artist Dave Alsobrooks (Museum of Life and Science Website). One of the activities was called “Smart, Hot, Honest, or Not?”, in which people were invited “to
upload a photo of themselves to see how others rate their intelligence, attractiveness and trustworthiness as their own race and as a completely different race through the use of a facial morphing tool” (Museum of Life and Science Website). Through exploratory activities such as this one, the museum was able give its community a venue to discuss race-related issues. By using social media, the museum expanded the influence of the exhibit past its actual visitors to a much larger community group, some of whom may not have even heard of the exhibit.

The Boston Museum of Science offered an impressive array of public programs in relation to the RACE exhibit. One program was StoryCorps, a national oral history project that the Museum of Science invited to its debut of the exhibit. Members of the public were invited during Martin Luther King Day weekend to be interviewed about their experiences relating to race, and possibly have their interview broadcast on Public Radio or by the Museum. The Museum of Science also created an exhibit to accompany the RACE exhibit focusing on local discussions of race called Voices without Faces, Voices without Races: An Audio Journey. Similar to the StoryCorps project, this exhibit presents the collected sounds of 250 people from the Boston area with the goal of communicating the great diversity of the region and encouraging unity at the same time. The Museum of Science collaborated with the sound artist Halsey Burgund to collect the sounds, which represented a variety of Boston neighborhoods (Museum of Science Website: Programs Resources pdf).
The majority of the institutions that hosted the RACE exhibit added to the exhibit in some way, whether it be a accompanying exhibit, public programs, or media initiative. There is a common trend in these institutions to localize the issue of race in order to increase the relevancy of the RACE exhibit even more. Two more examples follow.

In conjunction with the Washington University, the Missouri History Museum added the “Human Race Machine” to the RACE exhibit, which allows visitors to see themselves as a different race. Described as “a powerful, yet subtle diversity tool” (Missouri History Museum “Human Race Machine” event brochure), the Machine is meant to reflect the 99.97% of our DNA that is identical, showing that “race” is not as differentiating as we might think. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History hosted a series of Town Hall meetings surrounding the subject of race in conjunction with the RACE exhibit, which invited scholars with specialties ranging from the humanities to science to law, to lead discussions about race (Cleveland Museum of Natural History Website).

The scope of the collaborative efforts resulting from the traveling RACE exhibit is an example for other institutions who want to adapt a travelling exhibit to their own community or create an travelling exhibit themselves. These collaborations and localizing efforts required the creativity of the larger RACE project, but would not have been possible without the desire of the individual museums to create a more personal,
local connection to the exhibit for their communities. As highlighted further on, Lisa Falk of the Arizona State Museum represented one such individual institution that hosted a traveling exhibit, the CDC’s *Through the Eyes of the Eagle*, and localized it. The efforts of Falk and the other individuals behind the examples discussed above asked and answered the question “Why is this important?” for their local communities and guaranteed the relevance of the travelling exhibit to its audience.

The RACE project conducted a visitor evaluation of its exhibit and its website through Randi Korn (2008) and Associates, Inc. Here I will discuss some of the results of the summative evaluation of the exhibit, which conducted evaluations at the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Charles W. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, Michigan. The summative evaluation was completed in 2007-2008, early on in the travelling exhibit’s run.

Korn (2008) and Associates, Inc. conducted their evaluations through four methods: Timing and Tracking (how long visitors stayed at a particular section), Rubric Scored Interviews, Exit Interviews, and Telephone interviews. The summary of their findings is mostly positive, but also includes analysis of some room for improvement in the exhibit. The biggest success of the exhibit was that “the exhibition had a statistically significant impact on the way visitors conceived the idea of race—more visitors who had seen the exhibition understood that race is a recent human invention that is not biological and that humans are much more genetically alike than different than did
visitors who had not seen the exhibition” (Korn 2008). The summative evaluation refers to the idea that “race is a recent human invention that is not biological” as “the big idea” of the exhibit. It’s success in being communicated to visitors is significant because it is a new understanding of race that replaced many of the visitor’s old conceptions, a feat that is difficult to achieve through a museum exhibit.

Other positive observations are that visitors spent a relatively long time in the exhibition (most visitors stayed 22 minutes on average) when compared to exhibits of a similar size. No individual exhibit component was neglected, implying that the exhibit served a broad range of visitors. The telephone interviews revealed that visitors could still talk about and remember specifics of the exhibit weeks later, including the main message. This implies that the educational approach of the exhibit was successful at relating information to visitors that would stay in their minds for the long term. Visitors spent the majority of their time in the exhibit at panels, usually the least popular parts of science exhibitions, and videos, whose popularity was explained by their relating people’s experiences with race and racism and “striking a personal chord” (Korn 2008). This contradicts the observations made in Penn et al.’s (2009) review and Godeanu-Kenworthy’s (2012), discussed below, that the text panels in the exhibit were overwhelming and “textbooky.” According to the evaluation, the panels were engaging and easy enough to understand, or else they would not have been the most popular aspect of the exhibit.
The aspect of the exhibit needing improvement, according to Korn (2008) and Associates, Inc’s evaluation, is the clarity of the ideas supporting the “big idea”, which are racism on a societal level (institutionalized racism) and how race and racism interact on a personal level to influence personal identity. This indicates that visitors continued to hold on to their ideas about race and racism and that the exhibit was not successful in replacing all preconceived notions about race and racism with new ideas. Although visitors grasped the “big idea”, they did not grasp the complexity of racism. Visitors also tended to understand the role of race and racism at the individual level but not at the societal level. The statistics show no change in pre- and post- interviewee understandings of institutionalized racism or racism and personal identity. Non-white and older identified visitors showed a more complex understanding of these ideas, which implies that lived experience is the most important variable and has the greatest impact on how a person conceives racism in America. Most white-identified and some non-white visitors, in both pre- and post- interviews, identified racism at the individual level, but only one fourth showed awareness of it at a societal level (Korn 2008).

The summative evaluation describes the shortcomings of the exhibit as not surprising, because it usually takes repeated exposure to a new idea to cause a change in thinking, especially if the topic is controversial (Korn 2008). However, it is clear from the evaluation that although the exhibit communicated some of its goal ideas to its visitors, visitors left the exhibit not understanding some crucial aspects of race and
racism. Hopefully the developers of the RACE exhibit were able to take some of the information from this evaluation and edit the exhibit to achieve more of the project’s long-term goals. It is definitely a success for anthropology museums that the exhibit increased the understanding of visitors about race and racism to any extent, and the efforts of the RACE project should be continued through exhibits addressing race in the future.

There has been a considerable amount of popular articles and press releases about the RACE project. Several articles in Anthropology News, published by the AAA, document the progress of the travelling exhibit as it made its way from the East to the West coast, as well as news articles from local newspapers in the locations the exhibit visited. In “Next Steps for a Public Anthropology of Race”, Yolanda Moses (Jones, et al. 2009) and her colleagues on the Advisory Board of the project highlight three key messages of the project: 1) that race is a human invention, 2) that race is about culture, not biology, and 3) that race and racism are embedded in institutions and everyday life (Jones, et. al. 2009). They note the high popularity of the exhibit and its proposed expansion through book, replica, and condensed version. The proposed “next steps” of the project involve partnership with K-12 teachers for expanded educational potential, including more anthropology sub-fields in the discussion of the key messages related above, planning how to keep up with the changing face of racism, and how to incorporate the RACE project into anthropology education at the college and university
level. The article ends with a significant question addressed to the anthropology community, inquiring “...what are the prospects for and impediments to the types of intra- and interdisciplinary commitments necessary for addressing today’s and tomorrow’s social problems?” (Jones, et. al. 2009). This is the exact question I ask, but honing in on the role the exhibits and public programs of museums addressing anthropology play in educating the public about pressing social concerns and engaging audiences in taking steps toward solutions. A critical look the RACE project lends to the formation of conclusions about which methods are successful and which are lacking when it come to addressing emotionally and politically charged topics in a museum setting.

In “Public Policy Implications of the RACE: Are We So Different? Project”, Moses (2010:24) notes that the Texas Department of Family Protective Services asked for access to the RACE project’s resources, illustrating how relevant the RACE exhibit is perceived. The Department, citing “racial disproportionality” and “structural racism” (Moses 2010:24) in the workings of their organization as the reason behind the request, is now using RACE Project materials in their training programs. The Department recognizes the anthropological framework of the exhibit and acknowledges that it should “...be examining all of their policies and practices by learning how to look through an anthropological lens” (Moses 2010:24). The fact that the RACE exhibit,
founded in anthropology, was able to have such an affect on a community organization
attests to the usability of anthropological theory and ethics.

Other news announcements document the exhibit’s visit to Capitol Hill and how
it was used to stimulate conversation between scholars, policy-makers, and media
experts during a symposium centered on the project. This symposium used the exhibit
as a springboard towards creating dialogue about diversity, future leadership in the
fight against racism, how to minimize racial disparities, and what role the media plays
in discussions of race and racism (Dozier 2010). When the exhibit visited Riverside,
California, the University of California Riverside graduate students presented their own
research about local concerns about race at the Riverside Metropolitan Museum, an
example of the application of a nationwide exhibit to a local audience (Moses 2010:25).
TEE succeeded at this as well through its incorporation of the Center for Disease
Control children’s books and related exhibit with display cases and media about the
Tohono O’odham and other tribal cultures.

A news article from the Charlotte Observer, “Museum’s RACE Scores With
Businesses” by Ron Stodghill (2011), relates an unexpected application of the exhibit.
When the exhibit visited Discovery Place in Charlotte, North Carolina, local businesses
created a surge of visitors for the museum by using the RACE exhibit for corporate
diversity training. Stodghill (2011) notes that possibly leaving the confines of the office
for diversity training allowed employees to feel more comfortable and open to talking
about race and racism in the workplace. This is an excellent example of the content of a museum extending past its physical walls and interacting with a larger community, serving that community in a practical and relevant manner.

Although there is an abundance of media about the RACE exhibit, there are few scholarly reviews. Generally the response to the RACE exhibit and project is favorable; it is considered a definite step in the right direction for combating racial prejudice and discrimination. The degree to which the exhibit achieved the goal of undermining race and racism and its approach is debated in the reviews written so far, with some criticisms repeated by the different reviewers.

A review essay published in Museum Anthropology gives a thorough critique of the RACE exhibit as it was in its original form at the Science Museum of Minnesota. The authors (Penn, et. al. 2008:146) emphasize the importance of the exhibit as an innovative form of public education, and applaud the success of the exhibit in encouraging inward reflection and dialogue among visitors as well as embracing and adapting to many local environments. The ultimate goal of the review is to offer suggestions to improve the exhibit throughout its touring period as well as influence the design and production of later exhibits discussing race. The authors evaluated the exhibit based on whether or not the exhibit satisfied the goal of the AAA RACE Project as stated here in a handout: "to help individuals of all ages better understand the origins and manifestations of race and racism in everyday life by investigating race and human variation through the
framework of science” (Penn, et. al. 2008:148). They also examined the role of the U.S. four-field approach to anthropology in the creation of the exhibit.

The review identifies three themes of the exhibit as reflected through the installations: the history of race as a concept, the continued experience of race in the U.S., and the science of human variation (Penn, et.al 2008:150). Overall, the reviewers (Penn, et.al. 2008:150) identify the format of the exhibit, broken up into sections, as possibly giving visitors more freedom in their experience of the exhibit, but with the consequence of lacking a clear message that builds upon itself through sequential panels/exhibit areas. The reviewers also felt that in its introductory area, the exhibit asks visitors directly what race is, but fails to communicate a clear definition of the term by the end of the exhibit. The reviewers identified the “continued experience of race” area as the most successful section of the exhibit, but relate significant flaws concerning the other two sections (see Figure 1 in Appendix A for a layout of the exhibit).

The focus of the “history of race as a concept” section of the exhibit is the history and development of African American slavery in the United States. Unfortunately by only addressing racism in the Untied States, and not Europe’s heavy influence on the U.S., the exhibit developers fail to recognize other factors in the creation of race, creating a cause/effect relationship between the origins of racism and black slavery. This, according to the reviewers (Penn, et. al. 2008:151), oversimplifies the issue of race. Focusing heavily on racism against African Americans also excludes the experiences of
other minorities in the U.S. who have been persecuted, including Native Americans, Latinos, Chinese, Japanese, and even the Irish in the 19th century. What the reviewers (Penn, et. al. 2008:151-152) term the “foundationalist approach” of identifying the origins of racism with black slavery in the 16th century limits what can be learned from the exhibit. The reviewers also note that there is an emphasis on discussion of race but not racism, the “cultural expression of fundamental social beliefs and values” (Penn, et. al. 2008:152) about race. This may be an attempt to discuss the issue while skirting the more brutal outcomes of the race concept as manifested through racist beliefs. The reviewers believe that attempting to “lessen the blow” of race, racism and their history was a serious mistake, because this is such an important issue (Penn, et. al. 2008:152).

The “geography/human variation” section of the exhibit was the smallest, yet contained a large amount of complex scientific information, which possibly was too difficult to comprehend for the average visitor. This section also contributed to the general observation by the reviewers (Penn, et. al. 2008:154) that the science of human variation was emphasized while the science disproving the ability to categorize people was left behind, to the detriment of the overall message of the exhibit. On a positive note, the reviewers (Penn, et. al. 2008:155) were very favorable towards the level of public engagement in the exhibit, one of the reviewers even participating in a “talking circle” in the exhibit and enjoying the experience. They also praise the informative and interactive website created for the RACE project. This review concludes that the major
flaws of the RACE exhibit in its original form were its oversimplification of the issue, the avoidance of the ugliest faces of racism, the misleading message of the history of race, the simplification of issues caused by the lack of relationships between the different sections of the exhibit, and the implication that racism is a “silent partner” of race. The reviewers (Penn, et. al. 2008:155) also express a desire for the travelling exhibit to be more broadly distributed across the country so as to make it accessible to more Americans.

Another review of the exhibit by Anthony L. Harvey (2011) of The In Towner also criticizes the emphasis on black slavery and black/white relations, largely leaving out discussion about other minorities affected by racism. Harvey also wrote that the topic of race was too broad for the space of the exhibit. However, Harvey describes the exhibit, in its form at the Smithsonian, as a “modest first step” and “well-meaning and valuable”, and approved of the exhibit’s discussion of property rights in relation to race and the section on “correcting misconceptions” (Harvey 2011). What this review lacks is clarity and any offering of solutions to the perceived problems of the exhibit. Saying the exhibit “attempts both too much and too little” (Harvey 2011) is confusing, contradictory, and unhelpful for either an exhibit developer trying to improve the exhibit or a person deciding whether or not to visit the exhibit. Harvey’s criticism of the emphasis on black slavery is significant, however, when read alongside the Museum Anthropology review essay.
In the journal *Imaginations*, Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy (2012) also wrote a review of the RACE exhibit as it was in its form at the Smithsonian. She shares the observation that the exhibit contains “no overarching curatorial narrative” (Godeanu-Kenworthy 2012) and that the exhibit developers avoided certain uncomfortable or controversial topics. She describes the text and graph-heavy presentation of the exhibit as “a three-dimensional textbook for college students” (Godeanu-Kenworthy 2012), implying that the presentation may be intimidating or boring for some visitors. She agrees that the exhibit does not fulfill its goal of discussing institutionalized racism because it focuses on the idea of race and relegates any of the disagreeable parts of American history to small reading cards. Godeanu-Kenworthy (2012) acknowledges the value of the exhibit to Americans, but observes that it may not be very relevant to people in other countries due to its focus on American history.

The above discussion of the RACE: *Are We So Different?* Exhibit and related programming illustrates some of the main points made in the literature review. The RACE exhibit clearly recognized the value of collaboration on a national and local level, giving avenue for members of a local community to discuss their opinions and experiences with race and racism. Issues of representation are brought up in the criticism of the exhibit, recalling Lonetree’s (2009) and Jones’s (1992) discussions of the necessities and difficulties of trying to represent all cultural groups and experiences equally and fairly. Avoiding the “hard truths” (Lonetree 2009) was also mentioned as
something the RACE exhibit was guilty of, underlining the challenge of creating an engaging and welcoming exhibit and addressing difficult topics at the same time. Despite the criticism, the commentators above unanimously recognized the value of a large-scale exhibit addressing race and racism, and praise the AAA for taking on such an important and controversial topic.

"Big Food": Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History

The most recently opened exhibit discussed in this thesis, *Big Food: Health, Culture, and the Evolution of Eating* has an approach and content with many parallels to ASM’s TEE exhibit. It opened February 11, 2012 and runs at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History until December 2, 2012. Because the exhibit is presented in a natural history museum, much of the focus is on biology and genetics, but it also discusses societal and cultural trends that affect obesity. One section of the exhibit discusses the evolutionary history of humans, drawing on physical anthropology with help from Yale’s Department of Anthropology (*Yale Peabody Museum* 2012). This section is very similar to the section of the TEE exhibit that discussed the history of physical activity and food consumption for Native Americans living in the Sonoran Desert. Both these exhibits emphasize that their respective health issues have occurred recently in human history. This approach sheds a positive light on the issue and allows for the exhibit to
communicate hope rather than doom, that humanity can return to a more natural and healthful lifestyle. It is crucial, in communicating about a serious issue, to emphasize that “it doesn’t have to be this way” and even further “we used to live better.”

In a video on its page about the exhibit, the museum website introduces the exhibit’s main themes: our evolutionary history, the current complex food environment, and the serious consequences of obesity. The video identifies “food deserts” as communities that lack access to affordable healthy food, and “food swamps” as densely packed urban fast food restaurants. These societal occurrences are cited as two of the reasons behind the obesity epidemic. Again emphasizing hope over doom, the video ends with a glimpse at Common Ground, a charter high school that has its students participate in an on-campus urban organic farm. This exhibit is a collaboration between the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, CARE: Community Alliance for Research and Engagement at the Yale School of Public Health, and the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity. The presenting sponsor is the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation (Yale Peabody Museum 2012).

In an interview for Connecticut Magazine, Lary Bloom (2012) discusses the new exhibit through a personal connection. He interviewed Dr. Eina Fishman, the chief medical director for the Connecticut division of Anthem Blue Cross and collaborator on the exhibit. Fishman describes her personal struggles with weight as she was simultaneously treating countless patients for obesity-related problems. She finally had
a realization while talking with her own daughter, in the hospital for a serious stomach disorder, about overcoming disease, and decided she needed to take better care of herself. Her success story led her to fundraising for and collaborating on the *Big Food* exhibit (Bloom 2012).

Bloom ends his discussion of Fishman and the exhibit by writing that he thinks the exhibit will impact visitors and inspire them to create their own unique versions of Fishman’s success story. He believes that the exhibit successfully balances between informational, harsh reality, and entertaining, and creates a definite learning environment through its highly interactive panels and stations. Although no critiques of this exhibit have been published yet, Bloom hints at one of the big challenges and likely areas for criticism: mastering the balance between making a dramatic statement about an issue and scaring visitors away. Bloom (2012) notes this through his discussion of how the exhibit team decided on a title, one that did not include scary words such as “obesity” or “epidemic.” This is a key obstacle for museum exhibits attempting to address highly charged topics, an obstacle that has clearly already been realized by the professionals behind the *Big Food, RACE*, and the *TEE* exhibit.

*Ramp it Up!: The Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian*
While Lisa Falk was developing her own exhibits and programming that included Native American skateboard culture, the Smithsonian launched a travelling exhibit called *Ramp it Up!: Skateboard Culture in Native America*. The focus of this exhibit is the actual culture behind skateboarding among Native Americans, including the history, community, artwork, photography, and filmmaking (*Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service* Website 2012). It also communicates the benefits of skateboarding culture on reservations today, including encouraging physical exercise and keeping youth away from harmful activities like drugs and alcohol (McCann 2009). ASM’s TEE exhibit takes the health benefits of skateboarding and applies it to diabetes, a serious public health concern for not only Native Americans but also increasingly all Americans. These exhibits not only debunk the common stereotype of the “Vanished Indian,” they also give a concrete example of Native Americans investing in the health and wellbeing of their own communities, organizing and sponsoring events around skateboarding that improve the health for their community and creating solidarity and pride in their identities as modern Native peoples.

Staff writer Ruth McCann’s (2009) article in *The Washington Post* details the Smithsonian’s NMAI’s “Native Skate Jam” public program, which was based on popular skate competitions offered within Native communities such as “All Nations Skate Jam” (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk to author, April 27, 2012). The atrium of the museum was converted into a temporary skate park, with visitors watching the
skateboarders from the levels above. The actual exhibit is made up of film presentations, images, skateboard decks designed by Native artists, and graffiti backdrop panels designed by Native artist Jak Fragua (McCann 2009). McCann relates that the initial proposal of an exhibit exploring skateboarding culture came under scrutiny due to its “non-academic” nature. However she describes the exhibit positively as “… a family-friendly story of American Indian skateboard culture as one that provides a physical and creative outlet that encourages an increased sense of American Indian identity and community while also discouraging crime and drug use” (McCann 2009). This exhibit, as ASM’s, was meant to increase awareness among visitors about the positive cultural and community activities that Native Americans engage in today. If that goal is not strictly “academic,” it at the very least strives to serve the cultures that these institutions represent and study. After all, if Native people are not accurately presented to the public, the public will not gain an in-depth understanding of scholar’s research about them, and scholarly research may even be mistakenly associated with prejudiced and stereotypical views of Native Americans. McCann’s quote of graphic artist Bunky Echo-Hawk illuminates this matter:

‘I think there’s a lot of preconceived notions out there about what Native American art is and what Native American culture is,’ Echo-Hawk said. ‘Like that we’re a people of the past, or that the only part of our culture that’s worthy of exhibition is our past. I think it’s awesome that they’re focusing on the skate culture, because it’s raw, it’s contemporary, it’s what we’re doing right now in this moment’ (McCann 2009).
Ramp it Up! communicates to visitors that Native Americans themselves are highly relevant in today’s society, taking the idea of social relevancy to a whole new level. The exhibit simultaneously combats the stereotype that Native Americans are vestiges of the past and relates the empowerment and proactivity that Native communities display through their skateboard culture. I admit that when I was introduced to TEE’s section on skateboarding I was surprised by its prominence in Native culture, for the same reasons that anyone might be surprised by it: because Native communities are thought of as separate from mainstream society and steeped in the past. Learning about Native skateboarding culture, although just one aspect of contemporary Native American culture, dramatically improved my understanding of Native Americans and their place in today’s world. Ramp it Up!, and on a smaller scale TEE’s section on skateboarding, have great potential to increase the relevancy of Native Americans as they are represented in museums, showing that they aren’t just people from the past who created beautiful pottery, but also people living today who create modern pottery and play modern sports.

Arizona State Museum’s Through the Eyes of the Eagle: Illustrating Healthy Living

The Arizona State Museum in Tucson, Arizona has a long history as a museum and research facility focusing on southwestern United States anthropology and
archaeology. It is the oldest and largest museum of anthropology in the Southwest, established in 1893 by the Arizona Territorial Legislature (Arizona State Museum Website). The museum’s slogan is “Celebrating the Enduring Cultures of the Southwest” and it’s mission statement is “The Arizona State Museum promotes understanding of and respect for the peoples and cultures of Arizona and surrounding regions through research, stewardship of collections, and public outreach” (Arizona State Museum Website 2010). In regards to the issues discussed in this thesis, “understanding of and respect for the peoples and cultures of Arizona” and “public outreach” are the key phrases with regards to the goals of the Through the Eyes of the Eagle exhibit. However Through the Eyes of the Eagle is not the first of Arizona State Museum’s exhibits to be recognized for its progressive nature in handling anthropological topics.

ASM made a large leap towards progressive museum anthropology when it created the Paths of Life exhibit. This exhibit was innovative at the time it was opened (November 1993) in how it portrayed Native American cultural groups. The exhibit represents 10 tribal groups of Arizona and Northern Mexico and fully embraces the collaboration brought to the forefront of museum studies at the time, with community members contributing “to object and photograph selection and the development of label text and other interpretive materials” (Hoerig 2010:66). ASM’s Paths of Life and the Museum of Arts and Culture in Santa Fe are recognized by Hoerig (2010:66) as
establishing a model for representing Native groups of their region and prioritizing community and tribal voices in the creation of exhibits and programming that was continued by other major institutions such as the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

ASM took *Paths of Life’s* accomplishments in the realm of progressive anthropology and collaboration to another level with its exhibit *Through the Eyes of the Eagle: Illustrating Healthy Living*, an exhibit exploring the national problem of diabetes through a Native American perspective. The leader and primary organizer of the exhibit was Lisa Falk, the Director of Education. I was involved with the *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* (TEE) exhibit and related programming August 2011-January 2012 as an intern under Falk. The basis of the exhibit was the original artwork from a set of children’s books funded by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), called the *Eagle Books*, written by Georgia Perez and illustrated by Patrick Rolo and Lisa A. Fifield (*Center for Disease Control Website* 2012).

The CDC published these books through its Division of Diabetes Translation’s Native Diabetes Wellness Program and in collaboration with the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee and the Indian Health service (*Center for Disease Control Website* 2012). There are four books in the series, each addressing diabetes prevention from a different angle. The first book, *Through the Eyes of the Eagle*, introduces the main characters, Mr. Eagle and Rain That Dances. Mr. Eagle reminds the boy of the healthy lifestyle of his ancestors and shows sadness at the unhealthy ways for today. In the
second book, *Knees Lifted High*, Mr. Eagle encourages physical activity. The third book, *A Plate Full of Color*, presents the idea of eating foods in a variety of colors as a way to eat healthy. The final book, *Tricky Treats*, aims at showing kids what kinds of foods may seem healthy but aren’t through Coyote, a common trickster character in Native American stories of the Southwest (Center for Disease Control Website 2012). According to the CDC website, “Over 2 million books have been distributed throughout Indian Country, the rest of U.S., and abroad” (Center for Disease Control Website 2012).

The CDC created a travelling exhibition surrounding these books using their original artwork. Some of the other locations the exhibit has visited or will visit are the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the CDCP’s Global Health Odyssey Museum, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (Center for Disease Control Website 2012). The requirements for institutions hosting the exhibit are to provide documentation to the CDC of two public programs in conjunction with the exhibit and the installation of a minimum of two of the books’ complete artwork and related panels (Center for Disease Control Website 2012). ASM’s exhibit only had the space for two of the books, but arranged for the other two books to be displayed at the Worlds of Words Library in the College of Education on the University of Arizona campus.

The Arizona State Museum’s relationship with the CDC travelling exhibit began when Lisa Falk saw the exhibit at the Smithsonian’s NMAI while visiting with her
family. She saw how relevant the subject matter of the books was to the Tucson community, with the nearby Tohono O’odham community reaching a diabetes rate of 50%, highest in the world of any culture group (Falk 2011). She returned to Tucson and brought the idea to the museum’s executive committee, which was interested in the idea but concerned about how these children’s books are relevant to the museum’s mission statements. Falk explained her reasoning in favor of the exhibit’s relevancy to the museum’s mission as “The museum holds O’odham cultural materials in its collections and many O’odham tradition bearers are dying younger because of the high numbers suffering from diabetes. For this reason it make sense for the museum to do something related to health as well” (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk to author, May 4, 2012). Falk then went to the larger Tucson community to ask how an exhibit of children’s book artwork could have impact on the community—Was it worth exhibiting, and if so, how? She first consulted with the Native Education Association to make certain that they thought her exhibit idea would benefit the Native American community. They embraced her idea, also commenting that they wanted to avoid having visitors walk away from the exhibit thinking that only native Americans are suffering from diabetes (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk to author, May 4, 2012). The feedback she received from the Native Education Association and other community organizations reinforced the relevance she perceived in the TEE exhibit for the museum.
and the community it serves, and also became a springboard for expansion of the exhibit and development of public programs and related publications.

It was clear after several consulting with several community organizations that the Tucson community wanted the exhibit to have visible local significance. The exhibit expanded the Eagle books’ foundation of exploring diabetes from a Native American perspective to including information about the Tohono O’odham, a Nation in the Tucson area. Importantly, Falk wanted this local significance to come out of a community collaborative effort, and so she organized planning meetings during which she met with representatives and professionals from a large variety of fields, including education, public health, the arts, literacy, Native communities, non-Native communities, and the university community. These meeting echo the advisory group organized by the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery for its creation of the Gallery 33 exhibit. These planning meetings generated considerable interest across Tucson in Falk’s early-stage ideas.

Some of the primary responses that came out of these planning meetings were that the community wanted to expand the exhibit beyond the Eagle books to tell a local story. This led Falk to approach Terrol Dew Johnson about his non-profit organization Tohono O’odham Community Action (TOCA) and collaborate with him on the exhibit. The public also wanted a youth-focused publication that had a Sonoran Desert backdrop, and that reached out to the teenage group rather than the younger children
that the Eagle books address. This eventually led to Falk's co-authorship with Native
comic book artist Ryan Huna Smith of It's Up 2 You!, a comic book intended for
adolescent audiences that is available in print and digital format, downloadable
through iTunes and on the Web at healthypima.org. Finally, the participants in Falk's
planning meetings made it clear that they would like to see a large public program
associated with the exhibit. This evolved into A Healthy Celebration, ASM's first
multicultural health fair. Other programmatic ideas included lectures, films, outreach,
school field trip programs, a T-shirt, and a visitor evaluation, all of which were
developed and produced during the run of the exhibit. The array of public
programming associated with the TEE exhibit was made possible by Falk's fundraising
efforts, which allowed additional staff to be hired for the exhibit's run, and through the
ongoing help and participation of community partners (See Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 in
Appendix B for a list of funders, collaborators, programs, and related products created).

Once these planning meetings were underway, in Falk's words "things built on
each other" and the "community synergy" occurring in Tucson's interest in this project
as well as changes occurring throughout the nation created a "spiral of collaboration,"
with more and more people and organizations becoming involved (Personal
Communication, Lisa Falk to author, March 23, 2012). The project not only created new
connections between ASM and other local institutions, but also was the stimulus for
many local organizations to come into contact and build their own independent
relationships. From start to finish, the project lasted from approximately January 2009 when Falk saw the CDC exhibit at the Smithsonian to January 2012 when the wrap-up meeting was held.

As connections were made, sections were added to the original display of CDC *Eagle Books* artwork. Falk invited people in various positions around the museum as well as outside sources to curate new sections. She got the idea of introducing skateboarding into the exhibit from the Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School, a Tohono O’odham school that focuses on healthy lifestyle. During Falk’s community planning session with Bill Rosenberg, principal of the school, he said to Falk that “my healthiest kids are skateboarders” (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk to author, May 4, 2012). The skateboarding display case features skateboards created by Native American artists (See Figure 1 in Appendix C). Interestingly Falk and the Smithsonian discovered the potential for an exhibit addressing native skateboard culture along the same time frame, although as discussed above, *Ramp it Up!* is a traveling exhibit whereas ASM gave back or stored the skateboards they displayed after the TEE exhibit.

Davison Koenig, the exhibitions specialist at ASM, who already had an interest in Native skateboard culture, worked on that section of the exhibit with Falk. One of his other notable contributions was the idea for a skateboard-shaped coffee table, designed and built by Rhod Lauffer, which held an array of educational supplementary materials for visitors to enjoy, including a resource binder, cookbooks, comics, and “healthy
pledge” bookmarks (See Figure 2 in Appendix C). Falk asked Dr. James Watson, curator of bioarchaeology, to curate a display case about the history of Native peoples’ diet in the Sonoran Desert and to offer his counter to the thrifty genotype theory. This case simultaneously informed visitors of the natural and healthy food items Native peoples such as the Tohono O’odham traditionally ate and how this traditional diet changed with the coming of the Spanish, Mexican, and American settlers (See Figure 3 in Appendix C). Andrew Higgins, an assistant curator of ethnology, curated the shoes display case, which contained ancient sandals from ASM’s collections to modern native-inspired tennis, running, and skate shoes. Together with Falk he researched photographs of Native American Athletes for inclusion in the text panels of the display to show Native Americans and shoes in action. The purpose of this case was to illustrate the presence of movement in native peoples lives throughout history, and how modern Native Americans are continuing physical activity through various sports (See Figure 4 in Appendix C).

TOCA curated a third of the exhibit. Its components are now being used for educational purposes in the Tohono O’odham community. This section discussed the O’odham’s struggle with diabetes and its origins in their community. Most importantly, this section emphasizes what TOCA is doing to fight the diabetes epidemic in their community through initiatives such as Young O’odham United Through Health (YOUTH), Young Generation of Farmers, and TOCA’s Desert Rain Café in Sells,
Arizona (See Figure 5 in Appendix C). This section of the exhibit has similarities to the tribal museums discussed by Hoerig (2010) and Lonetree (2009), but acts as a bridge between TOCA, a Native organization, and ASM, what Hoerig would call a “majority” institution. The arrangement that TOCA would curate the section of the exhibit about themselves and use it for their own purposes after the exhibit closed at ASM is what I would call a situation of true reciprocity as defined by Hoerig (2010) rather than a collaboration that didn’t equally serve both parties involved.

After the above components of the exhibit came together, Falk recognized that a key part of the exhibit was missing: a basic explanation of what diabetes is, what causes it, its dangers, and who can develop diabetes. Falk wanted to emphasize that diabetes is a risk for everyone, not just Native Americans, and that we all can learn from the proactive achievements of organizations like TOCA in fighting disease in our own communities (See Figure 6 in Appendix C). For this section Falk collaborated with the American Diabetes Association and the University of Arizona College of Public Health. Falk recognized that public health was not her field, and therefore consulted with these organizations to present accurate information about diabetes in the exhibit. Falk and co-author Ryan Huna Smith consulted with Agnes Attakai in the College of Public Health on their comic book as well. Attakai reviewed the information presented in the exhibit and in the comic book for accuracy and sensitivity to the issue.
There was also an interactive area for children to sit at a table and decorate their own shoe, their own skateboard, and engage in an activity based on the USDA’s MyPlate initiative. In the MyPlate activity, children would grab a plate divided into sections, according to the portions of each food group they should consume in every meal, and place cutouts of common foods into the appropriate section (See Figure 7 in Appendix C). Children got to interact with this area visiting with their parents as well as during school field trip tours.

The comic book received its own small gallery, with large colored panels of each page in the comic book hung around the room (see Figure 8 in Appendix C). In the center of the room were coloring and writing activities, with one side inviting children to decorate a shoe and one side inviting children to write their own healthy living comic book. The healthy pledge bookmarks were also available in this gallery along with postcards of the characters featured in the comic. Large cutouts of the character Samantha were placed in the museum so as to direct visitors from the main exhibit to the comic gallery. The last component of the TEE exhibit was a flat screen TV in the lobby of the museum where visitors could play the interactive skateboarding game Tony Hawk: Shred. Falk got this idea from the NMAI’s plans for a new family activity room. Amy Van Allen at NMAI shared with Falk the results of NMAI’s testing of the activity on children and shared a “how-to” label on how to play the game for ASM to use (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk to author, May 8, 2012).
One important goal of the exhibit in regards to diabetes which Falk expressed was that she “wanted people to walk out empowered, not depressed” (Personal Communication, Lisa Falk to author, March 23, 2012). As discussed earlier, this is a key struggle for exhibits that address important but difficult topics. Leaving visitors with empowerment and hope, and in the end a positive experience, will garner more positive reviews of the exhibit (and therefore more recommendations to go see it) and be much more likely to create positive change in an individual’s life and in a community. The TEE exhibit did a very good job with addressing the causes of the diabetes epidemic in Native American groups but in a way that did not encourage further division and resentment between one group and the “Other,” whether that other be the Native community or the White Anglo-Saxon community. The exhibit emphasized recognizing the positives of human cultures and using them to promote positive change and community unity through appreciation of the good in all cultural groups. I see a distinct difference between the language and approach used by TEE and the exhibit discussed by Amy Lonetree (2009) in her essay. One emphasizes unity and through that unity positive community change versus continued resentment and continued creation of “Us” and the “Other” on both sides. This distance between “Us” and “Other” is exactly what contemporary anthropology is trying to undo and what ASM is actively beginning to undermine. TEE’s approach alternatively resembles the approach of Gallery 33 (Dodd 2002).
TEE had the challenge of discussing specifically a Native American subject, due to the focus of ASM as an institution, but also emphasizing multiculturalism and unity. The goals were not flawlessly integrated. For example, the Diabetes Info section of the exhibit emphasized that diabetes affects all communities, yet the rest of the exhibit focuses on the problem of diabetes in Native communities. The health festival *A Healthy Celebration* was heavier on the multiculturalism side, but also featured an emphasis on Native foodstuffs. In contrast to Gallery 33 (Dodd 2002), which did not have to focus on a specific ethnic group, TEE had to focus on Native Americans because of its home institution. Therefore, communicating a message of multiculturalism and desegregation was more difficult in TEE’s context. Both goals were accomplished, but there is room for improvement in how they worked together.

I became involved in the TEE project in August of 2011. I had met with Lisa the previous April, when I discussed interning with her and also using TEE as a starting point for my Honors Thesis. Lisa had already decided that I would devote most of my intern hours to aiding the preparation efforts for the TEE exhibit and the health fair. I helped with a variety of tasks, from painting the exhibit walls to compiling emails for listservs. However, certain tasks consumed a greater part of my time and are the most significant with regards to the focus of this thesis. The tasks I will examine further are my role in the TEE school groups, preparation of a resource binder for the exhibit,
preparation for the health fair, and the visitor evaluations conducted in relation to the exhibit and the fair.

Lisa Falk and Annamarie Schaecher created the school group tours. Schaecher is a temporary education staff member who was hired specifically to lead school groups and design curriculum for the groups and for their teachers to use before and after their visit. She also contributed her filming skills to create one of the videos presented in the exhibit and video footage of the health fair. I assisted Schaecher in leading the school groups. Schaecher lead the part of the tour that focused on the primary exhibit, while I took half the group to do an activity outside or in the comic book gallery, depending on their age group. For the younger children, I facilitated an activity outside the museum on its front lawn.

This activity, a relay race involving balancing a pot of water on their head and walking or running as fast as they can without spilling the water, was based on a traditional Tohono O’odham game. Before and after the activity, I had the children check their pulse to show them how physical activity affects their bodies. I made sure to explain to the children about the cultural aspect of the activity, so that they would make the connection between the activity, the exhibit, and ASM as a whole. In this respect this activity was another manifestation of how ASM was able to educate the public about health while still adhering to its mission statement. For school groups with fifth graders and up, I lead them into the comic book gallery where they read the comic in groups
and completed a worksheet requiring them to think about the content of the comic book. When there was extra time left over before I had to switch groups with Schaecher, I led the kids out to the lobby where the Wii was set up so that they could take turns playing Tony Hawk: Shred.

I was tasked with preparing a resource binder for the skateboard coffee table/resource area of the TEE exhibit (see Figure ? in Appendix). I organized information under tabs for physical activity, local resources, nutrition, diabetes, skateboarding, and healthy recipes. The binder allowed visitors to learn more about a particular topic addressed in the exhibit and expand their knowledge of how these topics interact with their communities and their personal lives, therefore potentially expand the impact of the exhibit past the museum’s doors.

Leading up to the health fair on November 12, 2011, I worked extensively on arranging donations for the fair so that there would be prizes for participants to win. There were many ways for participants to win prizes: completing a “healthy passport”, completing an individual activity and getting a raffle ticket entered, and entering a grand raffle once their “healthy passport” was submitted. Some of the items to be won were water bottles, miniature bike repair kits, T-shirts, and backpacks filled with healthy treats. On the day of the fair, I worked at the “Passport Prizes” booth to collect “healthy passports” and administer prizes. I also was coordinating the administration of surveys for the fair. Before the fair Lisa Falk had emphasized that she did not want
people to simply walk up to a booth, grab a prize, and move on to the next booth. She wanted people to work for their prizes by completing activities related to physical activity or healthy eating to win prizes, hence the “healthy passports” and raffle tickets. I saw the success of Falk’s health fair model in action, with children and adults alike excitedly turning in their passports, picking out their prizes, and chatting about the activities they completed. Many of Falk’s community partners went on to base their own health fairs on her model, testifying to the success of the idea and the clear potential for growth.

Finally, the other project I spent the most of my time on was the collection and data analysis of visitor surveys. Falk put me in charge of survey collection to support my research for my thesis. Unfortunately, I had no prior knowledge of statistics or the best ways of going about visitor evaluation, so more than anything the project became a learning experience. The project was largely unsuccessful, but some of the data deemed fit for use was used in TEE’s final meeting and report. Below I will discuss the challenges I faced in the process and what I learned through my experience about visitor evaluation.

I started out drafting the surveys that would be used as follows:

*Pre-event (Health Fair) surveys:* drawn from the University of Arizona population, the Children’s PowWow event population, and the Tucson Meet Yourself population (an annual folklife festival in Tucson)
Post-event surveys: collected at the *A Healthy Celebration* event

Pre- and Post- exhibit surveys: collected before and after an individual’s viewing of the exhibit.

Falk created the surveys while I formatted and revised them. I had to administer the surveys by myself, with help from one or two family members on occasion. Due to the fact that I was the only one administering these surveys, the goal numbers 100-200 surveys were not achieved. Time and finances were no doubt a barrier to this goal, as no employees could be hired or paid to administer surveys for the TEE exhibit. The next problem was that I had no knowledge of the proper methods in the administration of surveys. I learned of these methods after I had finished collecting surveys, when a professional evaluator, Wendy Meluch, was brought in to train staff on evaluation in preparation for a new permanent exhibit to replace *Paths of Life*. For example, when administering surveys, one is supposed to pick visitors randomly, such as every third person. If visitors are in a group, survey administrators are only supposed to ask one person in the group to fill out a survey. Unfortunately, I was not able to do this because of the low rate of visitors coming in to the exhibit. Another mistake I made in administering the surveys was allowing visitors to walk around the exhibit with the pre-exhibit and post-exhibit survey still in hand. I realized eventually that people were recording answers to the survey’s questions directly from the exhibit panels. After I
realized this I began to ask for the surveys back while visitors were exploring the exhibit, but this undoubtedly skewed the data.

In analyzing the data, I also did not learn the proper way of examining and comparing pre- and post- surveys until the training with Meluch. When she visited, I consulted with her individually about the survey collection. She indicated that the pre- and post- event surveys would not yield any useful information, because their population groups were not controlled properly. An exception were the last questions of the post-event survey, which yielded data that was used in TEE’s final report. She indicated that the data from the pre- and post- exhibit surveys could be of use, but the way I had been analyzing the data was not the correct method (Personal Communication, Wendy Meluch with author, January 27, 2012). I was unable to complete the data analysis before the closing of the exhibit, but I again made the last few questions of the pre- and post- exhibit into graphs that were in turn analyzed and included in Falk’s final report.

The data that was gathered from the visitor evaluation was the following:

Concerning the exhibits and programs as compared with other similar exhibits and programs, overall about 42% of visitors felt they were more memorial, enjoyable, interesting, engaging, informative then other similar exhibits and programs and about 38% felt they were the same as other similar exhibits and programs. About 5% felt they were less then comparable exhibits and programs and about 15% did not answer the questions. The majority of people expressed that the exhibit and program made them think about and inspired them to focus more on being active, eating healthy, and making others aware of how to live healthily (Falk 2012).
This data indicates that there is definitely room for improvement the next time ASM embarks on creating a socially relevant exhibit. However, it is impressive that an exhibit about a health issue positively impacted 42% of its visitors. I think that part of the reason the exhibit did engage visitors was its interdisciplinary nature, relating cultural and health topics. The objects chosen for display also provided tangible material that elucidated the exhibit’s messages. Its interactive components, including the children’s interactive area and the Wii game, also served to address a serious health issue in as hopeful and positive a manner as possible.

**Conclusion**

Through my compilation of literature and case studies, I have noticed certain factors in the effectiveness of socially relevant exhibits manifest themselves. Some of these factors apply to the relative effectiveness of any exhibit; however, others are of particular importance to an exhibit addressing current social dilemmas. In any exhibit with contemporary, emotionally charged, controversial content, the risks for the hosting institution are unmistakably heightened. It is for this reason that many museums still avoid current social issue topics in their exhibits. The goal of this thesis is to begin tearing down the wall between museums and social relevancy by searching for practices that lead to successful socially relevant exhibits.
Finances are always an issue when it comes to the success of an exhibit. When comparing an institution like the Smithsonian’s NMAI to a small tribal museum, or the RACE exhibit to Arizona State Museum, it is important to remember that the larger institution with more funding has more opportunities available. With more money, exhibits can be larger, have more expert contributors, more collaborating organizations, and more elaborate programming. The RACE exhibit was able to hire Korn and Associates, Inc. to conduct its visitor studies, whereas Arizona State Museum had an unpaid, untrained intern conduct visitor evaluations. A tribal museum such as the Nohwike’ Bágowa Museum discussed by Hoerig (2010) must continuously borrow objects from “majority” museums, like Arizona State Museum, to put on exhibit about their own culture. Finances in the museum world create a hierarchy of sorts, with larger and better-endowed institutions often producing the more impressive exhibits. However, by building relationships with individuals and their community organizations, like Lisa Falk’s relationship with Terrol Dew Johnson, museums can overcome the financial barrier by adapting the philosophy “it takes a village to raise a child” to “it takes a network of community relationships to build a relevant and impactful exhibit.”

All the museums discussed in this thesis used collaboration to ensure the relevancy of their exhibit to their communities. Not only does collaboration replace colonialism in the museum as a foundational practice by allowing individuals to
represent themselves rather than be represented inaccurately by an authoritative voice, it also builds a network of relationships for a museum. This organizational networking increases the productivity of the museum by providing it with more support, whether that support be funding, advertising, or manpower. The museum does not solely benefit from these established relationships—complying with Hoerig's definition of "reciprocity", the relationships between museum and the community move beyond collaboration, and the community partners of the exhibit gain the museum as a supporter, advertiser, etc. ASM’s health fair used as a model for subsequent community health fairs is an example of how equal participation and equal benefit on either side can be achieved. However the relationships built as a result of collaboration must be preserved by the museum and looked back to again for future exhibits and programming. The example Boast provides of the New Guinean artists returning from Palo Alto and never hearing from Stanford again shows the results of not maintaining these relationships: true reciprocity is not achieved and the majority once again uses and disposes of the minority.

Another challenge faced by many of the museums in this thesis is how to reconcile a chosen social issue with the museum’s subject or mission. Sometimes this is not very challenging, as in the case of the AAA creating an exhibit about race, a subject highly integrated with cultural anthropological studies. Similarly it is not a stretch to see how an exhibit about the obesity epidemic is appropriate for a natural history
museum, as it involves discussion of scientific and medical issues. With ASM's TEE exhibit and Stearns History museum, however, the connections between their health-related exhibits and their overall subjects is not as clear. Both these institutions had to think innovatively and creatively to make their exhibits suit their larger missions.

Controversial, depressing, or guilt-inducing exhibits discussing current social issues must ride a fine line. Hard facts about social injustice, rates of illness, and even genocide form the core of these exhibits, yet if they relay these messages too aggressively, they might scare away visitors and therefore dramatically lessen the potential impact of the exhibit. In the case of a museum devoted to a tragic event, such as the Holocaust, visitors are walking into the museum already knowing what to expect. However, in museums that have broader subjects or subjects not related to social injustice, seeing the words “Genocide” or “Epidemic” in an exhibit title may cause visitors to avoid that exhibit, favoring the traditional art gallery or rooms of natural history specimens. Achieving the correct balance between relaying the honest facts and fostering hope and empowerment is still a challenge to museums looking to be socially relevant, but hopefully the examples I have provided will spark new ideas and approaches toward this end.

Looking into the future, museums must expand their influence beyond their physical walls if they are to continue to be a productive part of society. They must continue to entertain their visitors, but also have larger positive effects on a community
in order for them to continue to receive federal, state, or private funding. Museums must become centers of community, purveyors of progressive ideas, and supporters of healthy minds and bodies. Harkening back to the age in which museums were founded, they must contribute to an “enlightened citizenry,” not just in the sense of knowing all the Old Masters but also in the sense of caring for oneself, one’s family, and one’s larger community. Anthropology, as the study of humanity and a social and behavioral science, is a discipline that could both benefit from (in its goal to disassociate itself from colonialism and mitigate its effects) and contribute to achieving social relevancy in museums, whose theories could be applied to anthropology, natural history, and art museums alike in the quest for exhibits that influence the public in a more profound way.
References

American Anthropological Association


Arizona State Museum


Boast, Robin


Bloom, Lary


Cleveland Museum of Natural History

Dozier, Damon


Falk, Lisa (lead curator)


Fienup-Riordan, Anne


Fogelman, Arianna


Godeanu-Kenworthy, Oana


Harvey, Anthony L.

Hinsley, Curtis M.


Hoerig, Karl A.


Institute of Museum and Library Services


Jones, Jane Peirson


Jones, Joseph L., with Yolanda T. Moses and Alan H Goodman

Korn, Randi


LaCroix, David D.


Let’s Move!: America’s Move to Raise a Healthier Generation of Kids


Lewis, Diane


Lonetree, Amy


McCann, Ruth

Missouri History Museum


Moses, Yolanda


Museum Magazine


Museum of Life and Science


Museum of Science


National Museum of Natural History

National Park Service


Penn, Mischa, with Gregory Laden and Gilbert Tostevin


Rapuano, Rina


Schildkrout, Enid


Shultz, Lainie


Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service


Stodghill, Ron


Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History

Glossary of Acronyms Used

AAA: American Anthropological Association

AAM: American Association of Museums

ADA: American Diabetes Association

ASM: Arizona State Museum

CDC: Center for Disease Control

IMLS: Institute of Museum and Library Services

MNH: Museum of Natural History

NAGPRA: The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

NMAI: National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian Institution)

TEE: Through the Eyes of the Eagle exhibit (at Arizona State Museum)

TOCA: Tohono O’odham Community Action

UBC MOA: The University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology

Y.O.U.T.H: Young O’odham United Through Health
Appendix A

Materials related to the exhibit *RACE: Are We So Different?*

**Exhibition layout (5,000 ft.²)**

*Figure 1*: Layout of the *RACE: Are We So Different?* Exhibit, as it was at the Science Museum of Minnesota (Figure 1 from Penn, et al. 2008:14)
Appendix B

Lists of *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* funders, collaborators, programs, and related products created (Source: Lisa Falk, TEE Summary Report)

**Figure 1: Funders/In-Kind Support**

**Worth a total value of approx. $90,000**

- John and Sophie Ottens Foundation
- Pima County Health Department
- Arizona Humanities Council
- TPAC/Kresge Arts in Tucson
- Tohono O’odham Community Action
- Tucson Indian Center
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield of AZ
- Raytheon Employee Clubs
- ASM $2000 + employee salaries
- ASM School program fees $1,500
- Sunflower Farmers Market/Tanka bars and UA Meat Lab: in-kind donation of product and services,
- Community donations of prizes for health fair (healthy living passport and raffle)

**Figure 2: Collaborators**

**College of Education’s Worlds of Words Library** (WOW) at the UA College of Education

WOW exhibited the artwork from two of the *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* books.

**Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health**

Agnes Attakai at the College of Public Health served as a consultant for exhibit and comic book content. She also helped with outreach presentations and co-sponsored two related public lectures.

**American Diabetes Association, Tucson Chapter**

Alicia Eller of the American Diabetes Association lent her expertise to exhibit information.

**University of Arizona College of Agriculture**

The College of Agriculture’s Extension Office and Meat Lab presented nutrition
activities and food demonstrations, including cooking with buffalo meat, at the November 12 health fair and buffalo for tasting at Native Eyes.

**University of Arizona Foundation Center**
The UA Foundation Center provided invaluable fund-raising advice and direction.

**Native Education Alliance**
The Native Education Alliance, a group of Native American educators, provided contacts and insight for the exhibit, related programs, and K-12 fieldtrip programs.

**Pima County Health Department**
Pima County Health Department is hosting the digital comic book, *It’s Up 2 You!*, on their website at healthypima.org. In addition, through their Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant, PCHD generously covered the costs of advertising for the exhibit and the November 12 health fair and printing for exhibit and fair-related items as well as participated in the fair.

**Tucson Indian Center**
Tucson Indian Center organized a 5K fun run/walk in conjunction with the health fair. In addition, TIC’s youth group served as consultants on the *It’s Up 2 You!* storyline.

**University of Arizona Hanson Film Institute**
Arizona State Museum is a long-term partner with the UA Hanson Film Institute on its annual Native Eyes Film Showcase. This year’s showcase highlighted several films dealing with Native health and fitness issues: *Good Meat, Off the Rez*, and others.

**Tohono O’odham Community Action**
Terrol Dew Johnson, director of Tohono O’odham Community Action, curated a special section in the *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit. His section shows how the Tohono O’odham are revitalizing traditional farming and dietary practices. Members of the *Young O’odham United Through Health* program were also involved in exhibit curation and starred in a related video. They also participated in the health fair. TOCA’s restaurant Desert Rain provided food for the Opening Celebration and did a cooking demo at the health fair.

**Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School**
Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School provided O’odham translations and did the recordings for the digital comic book created by faculty member Ryan Huna Smith with
Falk. The school’s students also served as consultants on the *It’s Up 2 You!* storyline.

**Amphitheater School American Indian Club**
Students from the Amphitheater School American Indian Club served as consultants on the *It’s Up 2 You!* storyline.

**Pima County Public Library**
A teen group from the Pima County Public Library’s Quincie Douglas Library served as consultants on the *It’s Up 2 You!* storyline. Other PCPL branches hosted museum outreach programs during their story time programs. The comic exhibit will be on display at the Main PCPL branch in April 2012.

**Objective Coders**
University of Arizona students Tom Smallwood and Cody Jorgensen, who run their own I.T. development firm called Objective Coders, designed the digital version of *It’s Up 2 You!* and the mobile app.

**Figure 3: Programs**

- *Opening Celebration,* Friday, October 14, 5-7pm, Included: partners spoke, O’odham blessing, Ha:san (O’odham) singers, comic book signing, healthy traditional food by Desert Rain/TOCA with chef available to talk to attendees (130 attended)
- *A Healthy Celebration,* November 12, 8:00am-3:00pm, Health fair presented in collaboration with Tucson Indian Center: included: 5K fun run/walk, bike rodeo, skateboarding demos by 4wheelwarpony crew of Native American youth, multicultural dance performances, storytelling, movement teach-ins, nutrition activities, athletic clinics, farmers’ market and cooking demos, diabetes information, healthy community conversations, a healthy living passport with prizes and raffles. (62 activities/presentations, 1,200 attended/65 participated in 5K run)
- *K-12 school field trip programs* at ASM and many also visited Worlds of Words for a related program, 38 programs/960 students attended
- *Library/School outreach programs* for pre-school, 1st/2nd grade, family and teens (5 programs /133 attended)
- *Films at Native Eyes Film Showcase,* Nov 30-Dec 4: specifically Good Meat, Games of the North, Off the Rez. (265 attended these 3 films)
- *Teacher professional development* formed part of the Good Meat Native Eyes program (film, exhibit viewing with curators, collections viewing, buffalo meat tasting, special resource packet for teachers)
• Lectures (2) by Terrol Dew Johnson and Dr. James Watson as part of UA’s College of Public Health lunchtime series (60 attended)
• Outreach presentations: 2 at Raytheon and 5 at fairs (Red Road to Wellbriety Celebration, Native American Family Wellness Day, Children’s Social Pow Wow, Pima County Teacher Fair, Tucson Comic-Con)
• Post-project presentations (to come): Coffee with the Curators at ASM, Feb 2012; Tucson Festival of Books, March 2012; American Association of Museums Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, MN, May 2012; Western Association of Museums in Palm Springs, CA, October 2012 (proposed)

Figure 4: Related products created

• It’s Up 2 You! comic book, printed, website version, mobile app version
• It’s Up 2 You! traveling exhibit of comic book and related activities
• Y.O.U.T.H. in Health video, interviews with youth involved with Tohono O’odham Community Action programs (for exhibit and for healthypima.org website)
• A Healthy Celebration video (for healthypima.org website)
• Tohono O’odham Traditional Foods activity packet/pdf (for K-12 schools, on ASM website)
• Bibliography, annotated (on ASM website)
• Make a Pledge for Health bookmarks, distributed at events and in exhibit
Appendix C

Photographs of the *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* exhibit and related programming

(Courtesy of Arizona State Museum)

*Figure 1*: Skateboards made by Native American artists in the skateboarding display case

*Figure 2*: Skateboard-shaped resource table
Figure 3: “Evolution of Native diet in the Sonoran Desert” display case in foreground.

Figure 4: Native American shoes/Native American athletes display case
Figure 5: Top left: Y.O.U.T.H members putting together a display case; Top right: Video-viewing area in TOCA section; Bottom: TOCA section of exhibit
Figure 6: “What is Diabetes?” information area of exhibit

Figure 7: Children drawing in the Interactive area of the exhibit