

REPRESENTATION OF CONTESTED NARRATIVES IN THE
ANTHROPOLOGICAL MUSEUM: CASE STUDIES ON RAPA
NUI (EASTER ISLAND) AND THE NORTHERN PAIUTES
OF CENTRAL OREGON

by

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History is contentious by its nature. Researchers constantly question, challenge, and compete against each other in efforts to advance their own ideas, theories, and conclusions. History is also often unpleasant or disturbing. Humans have done – and continue to do – horrible things to one another. How are these difficult topics researched, written about, and represented to the public? The same event or time period can be interpreted numerous ways, with researchers examining different evidence and viewing the information through a variety of lenses. An event or period which one publication focuses on may be completely absent from another. These varying historical narratives are selectively incorporated into museums, where visitors come to learn and enjoy themselves. Museums mold the narratives in their exhibits through the selection of information they draw on, and the degree to which they address historical topics.

This project is an investigation of the selection or creation of narratives in small, local museums, drawing on two case studies: the history of the Northern Paiute tribe in

central Oregon museums, and the history of Rapa Nui represented in the Museo Padre Sebastián Englert (MAPSE) and around the island. The conclusions of the project reveal the relative absence of information relating to difficult and unpleasant topics in these cultures' histories, the sanitization of historical narrative, and the complex relationship between indigenous sovereignty, academia, modern indigenous communities, and the sociopolitical repercussions.

Acknowledgements

My education at the University of Oregon and the Clark Honors College has provided me with a wide base of knowledge regarding the practice, theory, and implications of anthropological research. One of the most interesting topics I have come across is the pivotal role of museums in the discipline of archaeology. I have always been fond of these institutions, recalling long days spent exploring them with my father. He made it a point for us to visit one wherever we went, whether it was the American Museum of Natural History or a small one-room exhibit on the side of a rural highway. I'm very thankful to my parents and family for supporting me through my education and fostering my academic pursuits. This project is the culmination of my education and academic formation, and everyone who has helped me along this path deserves a part of the credit.

For the bulk of my primary research, I spent three weeks in August 2014 on Rapa Nui with Dean Terry Hunt and two fellow honors college students as part of a CHC study abroad program. This effort focused on the MAPSE, and Director Francisco Torres was very accommodating and helpful during my investigations.

As part of the honors college colloquium “Decolonizing Research: The Northern Paiute History Project” with Kevin Hatfield and Jennifer O’Neal¹ in the Fall of 2014, I traveled to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation north of Bend, OR. We shared long discussions with tribal elders and community leaders about issues of historical narrative, modern representation, and the healing potential of historical

¹HC 444 instructors and second readers for the thesis.

research. We toured the Museum at Warm Springs, where I documented the exhibits and started investigating the narratives within. I visited the other central Oregon museums in one long day in November 2014, following the same procedure. I'd like to thank Director Kelly Cannon-Miller at the Deschutes Historical Society Museum, as well as Historian Steve Lent and Director Gordon Gillespie at the A.R. Bowman Museum, for their time and knowledge.

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²Dean Terry Hunt, Dr. Daphne Gallagher, Jennifer O'Neal, and Dr. Kevin Hatfield.

³Dean Hunt: Thesis Prospectus, HC Colloquium on Rapa Nui, Rapa Nui field research; Dr. Gallagher: World Archaeology, Ancient Cities, Environmental Archaeology, Anthropology Museum; Dr. Hatfield and Jennifer O'Neal: HC Colloquium Decolonizing Research: The Northern Paiute History Project

⁴Leah Schluter, Deborah Schluter, Carly Schmidt, Clay McKean, Jacob Monaco, Micaela Iveson, Michael Skrowonek, Sharon Bellusci, Alexis Taitel, and Max Zasuly.

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Introduction

“I seldom go into a natural history museum without feeling as if I were attending a funeral.”

-John Burroughs, American Naturalist (1873-1921)

Museums act as conduits of knowledge, transforming the complex work of professional anthropologists, archivists, and historians into –hopefully– understandable, educational, and interesting exhibits. They provide a functional outlet for academic research to reach the public, allowing people of all ages and educational backgrounds to gain knowledge and perspectives which would otherwise likely remain unknown to them in exclusive peer-reviewed journals or university archives.

With this important societal role comes the responsibility of representing the past. This is a difficult goal in a discipline that is characterized by subjectivity and conflicting narratives. Researchers can carry biases, whether they are subtle or overt, which can influence their understanding and interpretation of topics. In some cases, these biases were (and sometimes remain) institutionalized on a societal or geographical scale. For example, the concept of 'academic decolonization' combats historical research carried out under the influence of colonialist or bigoted attitudes and practices.⁵ In the introduction of *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World*, the authors assert that the goal of academic decolonization is “to rupture the present relationship between 'valid' knowledge and 'not valid' knowledge, and to

⁵ Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing museums: representing native America in national and tribal museums*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

introduce 'indigenous knowledges' as legitimate ways of knowing that are both dynamic and continuous. In so doing, we interrogate aspects of Western science that have had destructive effects on indigenous communities.”⁶ This type of research gives more credence or weight to indigenous or tribal history, frequently passed down through oral traditions throughout the culture's history. In more recent history, museums are increasingly incorporating indigenous knowledge into exhibits when their focus is local indigenous history. This is the case –at least to a certain extent– in the project's case studies, offering real-world evidence of changing museum practices and norms.

When museums prepare exhibits, they often incorporate external research on the objects on display or the historical topics at hand, usually in addition to the museum staff's own research. Museums incorporate research selectively, resulting in the creation of unique narratives. A narrative is created when historical facts or evidence is combined with interpretation variables. Among these interpretation variables are:

- Use of opposing evidence
- Differences in academic lens
- Ignorance of or lack of credible academic publication
- Omission:
 - Practical - “There's no room to include this information.”
 - Intentional- “We will not include this information for [x reason].”
 - Political- “[X group] will be offended/unhappy/disturbed if we include this information.”
- Fabrication, and poorly done research or science (least common)

Decisions regarding representation, interpretation, and evidence can influence the narrative the museum visitor takes away from their visit. This project investigates which

⁶ Budd Hall, George Jerry Sefa Dei, Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, *Indigenous knowledges in the Global Contexts: Multiple readings of our world*, University of Toronto Press, 2000, p. 5.

information and narratives are made available for visitors to learn from in the case studies.

The cultural groups at the center of my research are the indigenous Rapanui⁷ and the Northern Paiute tribe of central Oregon. While these groups are extremely dissimilar in geographical location, cultural practices, and archaeological and historical record, this project explores the numerous themes and patterns linking them together.

The first theme is the destructive or negative impact of historically 'dominant' cultures –Euroamerican settlers, the United States government, and military in the Northern Paiute case, and European navigators, colonists, and slave traders during Rapa Nui's history of contact with the 'Western' world.

Additionally, both cultures' histories have been sanitized in a large portion of academic literature and museum exhibits. The ugly, depressing, frightening, and disturbing aspects of their histories have largely been left out, creating alternative narratives, as though the history is viewed through 'rose-colored glasses.' In the creation of these narratives, museum researchers and exhibit designers must decide which evidence is more valid or authoritative, and therefore better suited for display.

In the context of this project –and highly simplified– it is the varying incorporation of 'Western' academic or scholarly research versus indigenous cultural knowledge and oral traditions. Of course these distinctions are not mutually exclusive, and both can exist in the same physical or academic space. They can add to each other, “fill in the blanks,” or co-construct a narrative which may be accepted by more people

⁷ The native population of Rapa Nui, more commonly known as Easter Island, or Isla de Pascua in Spanish.

than if the two sources of information were segregated. As every museum in the case studies will demonstrate⁸, there is an increased effort to blend or more evenly represent these historical lenses or perspectives through practices including collaboration with indigenous communities.

Another similarity between the cultural groups is that they have contested histories with multiple narratives in competition, all claiming to be 'correct' – or at least more correct than each other. The project focuses on narratives relating to the destruction⁹ of these groups' cultures and populations, mainly by Europeans and Euroamericans. These contested narratives are represented in various ways in the museums curating material culture or archives pertinent to the people in question. The collective input and influence of museum administrators, researchers, curators, and in some cases the descendent populations influences the narratives around which they will design their exhibits.

Methodology and Scope

This project examines the portrayal of cultural and historical narratives regarding the attempted destruction or weakening¹⁰ of the indigenous Rapanui and the Northern Paiute tribe of central Oregon in local anthropological museums. For the purposes of this thesis, these museums are considered “local” as they mainly contain artifacts and historical narratives with regional primary context. In some cases – such as in Deschutes and Crook counties in Oregon, and Rapa Nui of course – the museums are

⁸ To varying degrees

⁹ In the general sense of the word. Neither group was completely eradicated, but they both sustained major damage to culture and population.

¹⁰ Intentional or not

built in the exact areas that were once inhabited or utilized by the ancestors of the people or cultural group in question. These are not large-scale museums, such as the American Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, or the British Museum. Museums of their size and complexity can encompass nearly the entire globe and much of human history. Narrative in this category of museums is another extensive topic in itself, outside the scope of this project.

On Rapa Nui, my research consists of documentation and analysis of the Museo Padre Sebastián Englert (MAPSE), as well as the island as a whole, seen as an “open-air” museum. Which sources are cited directly or used as a basis for the exhibits? To what extent does the museum address the negative impacts of European exploration and colonization on the historical Rapanui?

The other set of case studies includes a selection of central Oregon's anthropological or historical museums: the Museum at Warm Springs, the Deschutes County Historical Society Museum (Bend), the High Desert Museum (Bend), and the Bowman Museum in Prineville, Oregon.

I document the historical narratives related to the attempted destruction of the Northern Paiute population and culture exhibited in each museum, and compare them to 'mainstream' literature, as well as Paiute-supported narratives. I deduce or describe which combination of narratives or research each museum has integrated into their exhibits. I also look into the general provenance of the collections related to the Northern Paiutes, and compare it to the narrative that accompanies them. Were the objects directly donated to the museum from community members¹¹, recovered through

¹¹ Northern Paiute or otherwise

archaeology, or acquired in the more distant past?

In addition to touring and documenting the museums, I interviewed their directors or curators about how they constructed and researched the exhibits.¹² I investigate my topic with an archaeological lens in addition to the historical. The material culture or artifacts on display in exhibits form an essential aspect of the museum narrative. The objects deemed important or relevant enough to help tell the story of a culture are also subjectively chosen. Why did this groundstone basalt *toki adze*¹³ get a spot in the display case but that human-bone fish hook did not? How does the artifact support what the interpretive material¹⁴ next to it claims? *Visa versa*? Decisions like these visually express the narrative the museum ascribes to, which is passed on to the visitor. The objects can reinforce what the interpretive material claims, providing tangible evidence to what it states or explains.

Contribution to the field and the importance of this research

The main underlying motive in the field of anthropology can be described as the desire of the researcher to understand people, whether in the past or in modern life. How do they, or did they, live? How are we connected to the past? What are similarities or differences between cultures separated by time and space? Museums present a unique opportunity to share with the public the tangible and intangible cultural material and

¹² This type of interviewing does not meet the IRB definition for human subject research, given it only pertains to factual and not personal or opinion-based material.

¹³ A tool used for chopping or scraping. A common archaeological find on Rapa Nui, used in carving the *Moai*, the megalithic volcanic-stone statues which populate the island.

¹⁴ For the purposes of this project, written information explaining the artifact, its origin, and its relevance to the exhibit. Alternatively, a poster or sign informing a visitor about the nearby areas of archaeological interest, or explaining a feature/site.

history that would otherwise be less available for their consideration. Anthropological and historical museums are educational institutions, and one of their main functions is to help the local residents, as well as visitors, better understand the local history or the culture of the indigenous inhabitants of the area.

This is where archaeologists, historians, and museum professionals have an ethical and professional responsibility to the visiting public to use their collective expertise to design accurate and factual exhibits in collaboration with the group whose history is in consideration. My project investigates which museums (within the aforementioned scope) are doing their best to adhere to these standards, as well as those with overt biases, omissions, or inaccuracies.

There is a body of literature addressing the relatively new “indigenous museum” model, which gained traction in the late 20th century. This movement toward more of an indigenous lens in museums came in part from the academic 'decolonization' movement, meaning that museums are trying to overthrow the often biased or inaccurate information gleaned from historical 'colonial' periods and their modern legacies or influences.¹⁵ This information was (is) often skewed in a way that downplays historical wrongs by the 'dominant' culture, omitting key information. This lack of full- disclosure is the core issue of the project. Decolonizing research generally gives more credence to the culture or population that was historically colonized, reversing the academic bias.

The definition of “full-disclosure history” is contentious and problematic. It is

¹⁵ Lonetree, *Decolonizing museums*, 2012.

impossible to know every single person that lived, or event that occurred historically. In the context of this project, full-disclosure means including all relevant and factual information when researching an exhibit. This concept is at the crux of what defines something as a narrative – it is one of multiple versions, interpretations, or perspectives on the same time period, people, cultural group, event, et cetera.

Important information may be omitted by museums in a number of ways. What kinds of factors can impact museums' choices during the critical research and planning phase of exhibit development? The researchers may intentionally exclude it for fear of controversy or backlash. Perhaps they were not aware of extant or emerging research at the time the exhibit was constructed. Maybe the publications containing the information were not well publicized or circulated, and fell into obscurity. This project does not claim that all museums maliciously withhold or delete information. Instead, the practice of selectivity was most likely the determining factor. What narratives will go best with the other exhibits? How does the exhibit comply with the museum's intentions mission, or overall tone? History is often unpleasant. How the museums in my project choose to frame or explain unpleasant topics such as cultural conflict directly relates to the understanding visitors derive from them.

Section 1: A brief history of museum function

The first section serves as a short overview of the evolution of museums as institutions and how changes in their function influence how their visitors learn from them. What was their function in the past? How have changes in the discipline of anthropology changed their practices or intentions? In the basic sense, it can be argued that the concept of a 'museum' has existed as long as people have collected interesting objects. The general trend of museum function has been a transition from places to privately admire spoils of war, colonialism, or travel toward institutions of “research, education, and entertainment.”¹⁶

1.1- The early recorded museums- Greece, Kunstkammern, cabinets of curiosity, and other elite, private collections

The concept of 'museum' is by no means recent. One of the earliest records can be traced to ancient Greece (ca. 600BCE-600CE). In “Museum-history and Museums of History,” Smithsonian scholar George Brown Goode writes:

Museums, in the language of ancient Greece, were the homes of the muses. The first were in the groves of Parnassus and Helicon, and later they were temples in various parts of Hellas. Soon, however, the meaning of the word changed, and it was used to describe a place of study, or a school...The term, as applied to a great public institution, dropped out of use from the fourth to the seventeenth century.¹⁷

The semantic evolution of the word 'museum' has taken many turns, ranging from a more ceremonial space, to private collections, to one of learning and public access to

¹⁶ Boas, Franz, “Principles of Museum Administration,” *Science*, New Series, Vol. 25, No. 650 (Jun. 14, 1907):921-933.

¹⁷ Goode, George Brown. *Museum History and Museums of History* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1889), 253.

collections.

By the sixteenth century, Europe's societal elites were amassing collections of what they considered curiosities from strange 'new' places and people as a result of exploration and colonization. These 'cabinets of curiosity' or *kunstkammern* were private collections assembled by rich merchants, nobles, and world travelers who desired to own natural history pieces along with “artificial curiosities, objects made by people from distant, exotic places.”¹⁸ To better define objects as curiosities, Kenny's *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany*, explores how “to call an object 'curious' was to say both something about the way in which a human subject had crafted it and something about the way in which it was an object of human attention.”¹⁹ The objects in these collections ranged from preserved animals, geological samples, 'primitive' art, ethnographic material, weapons, and so on. Amy Lonetree provides some background on these “cabinets of curiosity,” which “preceded the development of professional anthropology collections in North America.”²⁰

Unlike the public institutions which would come later, these collections were strictly for private viewing by whoever had come to possess them, as well as anyone they were trying to impress. For this reason, these collections had almost no value for the majority of the people nearby, as they would likely never see them. For the elites who were allowed access, their value was more in entertainment than education. The

¹⁸ Lonetree, Amy, *Decolonizing museums: representing native America in national and tribal museums*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 15.

¹⁹ Neil Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany*, (Oxford, University Press, 2004), 169.

²⁰ Lonetree, *Decolonizing museums*.

practice of material appropriation was exemplary of a sense of European colonial attitude– the belief that they could take what they wanted (cultural materials, land, people, et cetera) from the cultures they encountered on their travels or during colonial enterprises. Silvia Spitta explains the practice, and its notable contribution to how the concept of museum has changed through time:

Haphazardly assembled in what to us today look like messy and illogical collections, those exotic objects were displayed for their wonder-inducing powers, yet they put an entire period's epistemological “table” into disarray. This process ultimately restructured the West's knowledge systems and led to the emergence of European museums (or art, science, and natural history)... Indeed, European *wunderkammern* – the focus of the chapter – make visible the extent to which the arrival of strange and marvelous objects from the Americas brought about the European epistemological sea changes that has shaped our time.²¹

As globalization increased, interactions between populations and cultures necessitated the adaptation of methods for understanding each other, such as the museum.

1.2-The rise of European and American public ethnographic museums, and their eventual shift to an anthropological focus

This tradition of cultural material appropriation evolved into the early ethnographic museums of Europe and the United States. Their general perspectives and methodologies remained heavily Eurocentric, and largely without regard to their subjects' cultural rights. For example, the prevalent attitude existed that objects were better off in a display case than being used by the community of origin. This practice of collecting and curating collections of cultural material from populations deemed at risk of extinction or dissolution is known as “salvage” ethnography/ anthropology/

²¹Silvia Spitta, *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas*. (University of Texas Press, 2009), p.7.

archaeology.²²

According to Anthony Shelton, the relatively modern anthropological museums were “constructed in two waves: the first dating between 1849 and 1884; the second, following shortly after, from 1890 to 1931.”²³ From the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (later the Musée de l'Homme) in Paris to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, indigenous populations' cultural property, even human remains, were exhibited for the curiosity of the masses and researched for academic ends. Going to the museum to learn about 'savages' or 'primitives' was a societal and academic norm during the early 19th to early 20th century. Of course, all information and narratives in these exhibits were 'colonial' and Eurocentric, constructed without consulting the indigenous communities they addressed. The exhibits were typically organized typologically²⁴, either collectively or by culture group. The objects were rarely given context apart from their function, and were displayed in arbitrary ways. In light of the previous section, these exhibits could be characterized as public 'cabinets of curiosity,' as they were not focused on education so much as awe or entertainment.

Early 20th century pioneers of anthropological museology in the United States, such as Franz Boas, challenged contemporary convention, and argued for exhibit styles which would more accurately represent their subjects while fulfilling the necessary societal roles a museum proposed to maintain. In a letter to *Science*, Boas argued that

²² Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, methods, and practice* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012), 553.

²³ Anthony Shelton, “Museums and Anthropologies: Practices and Narratives,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies I*, ed. Sharon McDonald, (Blackwell Publishing: UC Irvine, 2006).

²⁴ Based on function, e.g., all war clubs on one wall and all ritual masks on another, regardless of cultural origin.

“Museums may serve three objects. They may be institutions designed to furnish healthy entertainment, they may be intended for instruction, and they may be intended for the promotion of research.”²⁵ Boas considered the average museum patron less than inclined to actively learn at museums, instead coming “to admire, to be impressed by something great and wonderful...to have seen it.”²⁶ If the museum was to succeed in teaching their visitors about their topics, they must make an “effort to concentrate attention, and on the unity of the idea expressed in each exhibit.” Essentially, he theorized that learning only occurred for the average visitor if they were adequately interested and engaged by a monofocal and simplified exhibition.

However, Boas considered the risks and responsibilities of education through museums and other “popular” avenues, where:

In the mass of lectures intended to popularize knowledge, in popular books, and not less in popular museums, intelligibility is too often obtained by slurring over unknown and obscure points which tend to make the public believe that without any effort, by listening for a brief hour or less to the exposition of a problem, they have mastered it. This I consider one of the serious dangers of of popular presentation of science...Therefore every kind of inaccuracy should be most carefully avoided, and attempts to make all problems appear childishly simple by the elimination of everything that is obscure should not be tolerated.²⁷

He worried that oversimplification of complex scientific, historical, and cultural topics could result in a 'pseudo-education' where people felt educated, but did not actually learn anything, or what they learned was incorrect. This concern is still relevant to modern museums, and is at the core of my project: the possibility that some modern

²⁵ Franz Boas, “Some Principles of Museum Administration,” *Science*, Vol. 24, No. 650, (1907):921.

²⁶ Boas, “Some Principles of Museum Administration,” 922.

²⁷ Boas, “Some Principles of Museum Administration,” 922-23.

historical museums misinform their visitors, or offer incomplete information – possibly influenced by agendas or biases.

1.3- The shift in museum function has been influenced by major methodological or paradigm changes in archaeology as a discipline

Accompanying, and likely facilitating the evolution of museum function, was the broader development of archaeology as an academic discipline. Generally, the trend demonstrated increasing complexity, ranging from early haphazard collection and identification of artifacts to more modern approaches based heavily in empirical science and theory. The function of museums mirrored this trend, as they shifted from simply collections of objects to research-based institutions dedicated to translating that research into exhibits for public education and entertainment. The first period of archaeology is categorized by Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn as the “speculative phase,”²⁸ spanning from the vague origins²⁹ of the discipline into the mid-nineteenth century. Characterized by often informal excavation and survey of more obvious evidence of past human presence (such as ruins), the field was in a formative stage with no true professionals, standardization, or centralization.³⁰

Advances in natural sciences like evolutionary biology and geology merged with archaeology and established the principles of human antiquity and prehistory, weakening –in the scientific community anyway– the previously held notion of a short

²⁸ Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, methods, and practice* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012), 22.

²⁹ 'Archaeology' has arguably existed since people first grew curious about the objects and remains of past generations, which is assuredly impossible to determine.

³⁰ Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 22.

time-span of human existence.³¹ With the incorporation of these new discoveries, archaeology increased its spatial and temporal breadth and became a better established academic field. However, Robert Dunnell argues that:

There is little evidence that evolution, particularly Darwinian evolution, was accorded a significant theoretical role. The *results* of archaeological research might be given an evolutionary interpretation and seen as evidence of evolutions, but evolution did not provide the basis for constructing archaeological units or inferences until late in the nineteenth century and then only in a rather oblique way.³²

While the effect of advances in evolutionary science on archaeology may be unclear or in doubt for this earlier period, it has surely played a large role through the 20th and 21st centuries.

Next, the “classificatory-historical period,” as described by Renfrew and Bahn, ran from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1950s, with researchers focusing on typology and seriation of material culture, as well as establishing larger chronologies of cultures and historical populations.³³

“New” or “processual” archaeology in the 1960s incited change in how researchers explained their findings, emphasizing “sociocultural causality” instead of simple or vague explanations such as “migrations and influences” as effectors of cultural evolution. Scholars including Lewis Binford encouraged explanations based on both evidence and logic in a more scientific framework.³⁴ Museums function as repositories for not only exhibit-worthy objects, but also the facilities and technology

³¹ Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 26.

³² R. C. Dunnell, “Evolutionary Theory and Archaeology,” *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*, Vol. 3 (1980), 52.

³³ Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 32.

³⁴ Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 40-41.

used in scientifically analyzing them.

“Postprocessual/Postmodern archaeology” in the 1980's onward introduced even more complexity into the field, arguing for a focus on the 'cognitive-processual' approach, “which seeks more actively to include the consideration of symbolic and cognitive aspects of early societies into the program of research.”³⁵ Currently, the field is composed of a diverse array of archaeological lenses composed of aspects from their predecessors coupled with modern advances.

Technological advances continue to increase the range, depth, and accuracy of their inquiries, which researchers in the 1800s could only dream of. There is an increasing use of non-invasive technologies, saving time and destruction of the landscape and potential archaeological material. From satellite imagery to find areas of interest, ground penetrating RADAR to excavate more accurately, to the use of CAT, MRI, X-Ray, and PET scans to investigate objects or remains without dissection. Many larger museums possess such technology, and may serve as in-house research centers for archaeologists and other scientists to study the museums' collections. An artifact or object can be studied without being destroyed, preserving it for future exhibits.

These evolving archaeological approaches influenced the way material culture from excavations was displayed and interpreted, and in turn, how visitors learned from them. The same object shown to archaeologists from each of the phases would likely be described or explained in a different way, which would be reflected in its exhibition in the museum setting, whatever that might have been for the given period. Visitors

³⁵ Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology*, 47.

interpreted the 'academic' explanations –sometimes later proven to be completely false – and took away their own understanding of the subject matter. This transaction is an essential aspect of my project. The increasing use of analytical technology and scientific processes has also acted to embolden researchers, giving them more confidence in their theories and conclusions. The information gleaned from such research is generally perceived as more valid or reliable than previous research, creating new narratives.

1.4- The rise of the modern indigenous or tribal museum in recent decades

The impetus for change in museum methodologies and practices came in the late 20th century. Landmark legislation, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, strengthened the legal rights of indigenous communities in the United States in regaining their material culture and raising public awareness.³⁶ Botched exhibits portraying tribal history caused public and academic outcry, and incited museum professionals and tribal community members to work towards solutions. One such exhibit was “*The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, a 1988 exhibition at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, held in conjunction with the 1988 Winter Olympics.”³⁷ The exhibit was fraught with errors, and accused of cultural insensitivity and political bumbling, as “...the exhibition's major sponsor, Shell Oil, was drilling oil wells on the land the Canadian government seized from the Lubicon [Lake Cree Indian Nation].”³⁸ Along with other similar instances, the

³⁶ The National Park Service website, “Archaeology Program,” “The Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Reproduced from *Archaeological Method and Theory: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Linda Ellis, Garland Publishing Co., New York and London, 2000.

³⁷ Anna Laura Jones, “Exploding Canons: The Anthropology of Museums,” in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 22 (1993), 209.

³⁸ Jones, Anna Laura, “Exploding Canons: The Anthropology of Museums,” 209.

museum world and tribal communities recognized the need for more agency, involvement, and control by tribal communities over their own histories.

In *Decolonizing Museums*, Amy Lonetree explores the origins and efficacy of 'tribal' or 'indigenous' museums. Although her book focuses on three case studies around the country, she prefaces them with an overview of the history and themes of the subject. Since the advent of the preliminary indigenous museums in the late 20th century, Lonetree asserts that “today collaboration is becoming more the norm than the exception, and institutions across the country seek to work closely with 'source communities' on exhibitions focusing on their history and culture.”³⁹ Her general stance is that “A decolonizing museum practice must involve assisting our [tribal] communities in addressing the legacies of historical unresolved grief.”⁴⁰ That is to say museums have a responsibility to the public –and even more to the people they represent– to portray an accurate and complete historical narrative which does not shy away from the 'hard truths' of colonial history. This principle applies to both indigenous and non-indigenous model museums, but is more common in indigenous institutions. Among the museum case studies in my project, only the Museum at Warm Springs falls under the designation of tribal or indigenous museum status.

³⁹ Lonetree, *Decolonizing museums*, 43.

⁴⁰ Lonetree, *Decolonizing museums*, 5.

Section II: Contested narratives on Rapa Nui

2.1- Introduction

This section reviews the main historical perspectives regarding the Rapanui before investigating how those narratives are variably represented in the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert, as well as open interpretive areas around the island. The literature selections are based on the authors whose narratives conflict sharply with the other. Of course there are a myriad of authors and perspectives, but limiting those variables will lend clarity and focus to my project. In many cases, there is direct rebuttal between authors. In their on-going publishing, they cite each other and claim that their evidence is superior to their adversary's, and therefore upholds their hypotheses to a greater extent. The project's question is whose narrative is portrayed in the museum?

2.2- The 'conventional' archaeological and historical narratives of “ecocide”⁴¹ and societal collapse on Rapa Nui have recently been challenged

Within the scope of this project, the main contest is between the 'conventional' narrative and the more recent rebuttals challenging it. The researchers, authors, and supporters of the 'conventional' narrative –compiled and popularized by Jared Diamond's *Collapse*⁴² – are being challenged and arguably disproven by the research of Terry Hunt, Carl Lipo, and their collaborators. At the center of all the commotion and debate are the key questions: When was the island colonized? What caused their

⁴¹ Diamond's term (2005), meaning the destruction of a population's ecosystem by the population themselves, leading to societal “collapse.”

⁴² 2005

demographic collapse?⁴³ Who or what was to blame for the near complete deforestation of island? How was their society organized politically or religiously?

These questions have been asked by researchers since the since the island's 'discovery' by the Dutch captain Jacob Roggeveen and his crew on Easter day, April 5, 1722, who gave it the name “Easter” as a result.⁴⁴ 'Discovery' is in quotes, as the island was actually discovered by the ancestors of the Rapanui. When and how their ancestors colonized the island is a major source of contention amongst the researchers and academics.

2.2.1- Settlement

The conventional narrative begins with the origins of the settlers, where “Linguistic evidence, such as the retention of the Proto-Polynesian velar-nasal⁴⁵ clearly indicates that the group which colonized Easter must have departed from central East Polynesia early.”⁴⁶ The majority of modern scholars are on the same page regarding the original colonists' geographic origins.

Tracking the evolution of Rapa Nui's historical and archaeological narratives, Thor Heyerdahl's 1948 publication *Kon-Tiki* claimed “a blond/red-haired, blue-eyed, dynastic ‘race’ of masons and miners migrated around the world civilising the dark-skinned ‘races’ ...from the Middle East to North Africa, thence to South America, then

⁴³ Hunt, Terry, “Rethinking Easter Island's ecological catastrophe,” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 34 (2007): 485-502.

⁴⁴ Jared Diamond, “Twilight at Easter,” in *Collapse: how societies choose to fail or succeed* (New York: Viking, 2005), 80.

⁴⁵ A linguistic term for the pronunciation of the “ng” sound, as in “sing.”

⁴⁶ Patrick Kirch, “Easter Island,” in *Polynesian Chieftdoms*, (Cambridge University Press; Cambridge, 1984), 266.

out into Polynesia.”⁴⁷ His undoubtedly racially-fueled theory argued the ancient Polynesians were unable to construct such monuments, and it must have been done by a 'superior race' who had arrived before them. He was familiar with the megalithic traditions of Polynesia, and he argued they had diffused west from South America, and not east from Southeast Asia and Near Oceania: “...only the Peruvians had travelled to Easter Island. Heyerdahl’s archaeological evidence relies on the similarity between some Polynesian and ancient Peruvian art styles, wherein the statues and megalithic structures of eastern Polynesia, Easter Island, and the Marquesas resemble those found in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia.”⁴⁸ Heyerdahl's evidence for these “White Indians' ” presence was confused or misguided at best, fabricated at worst. Modern researchers largely discount much of Thor Heyerdahl's work regarding Rapa Nui, although some of his research was useful in forming a 'snapshot' of the island as it existed during his investigations in the mid-20th century. His studies of Rapa Nui specifically are detailed in *Aku Aku: The Secret of Easter Island*.⁴⁹

While Heyerdahl's popularized 1947 adventure drifting across the Pacific Ocean to the Tuamotus was exciting and impressive, it did not provide valid scientific archaeological evidence for his claims: “As a scientific experiment, the Kon-Tiki voyage did not prove intentional migration from Peru, and therefore offered no support for Heyerdahl’s theory of the deliberate settlement of Polynesia from Peru.”⁵⁰ The theory has been effectively rejected in academic discussion, but may persist in lay

⁴⁷ Graham E. L. Holton, “Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki Theory and the Denial of the Indigenous Past,” in *Anthropological Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (July 2004), 163.

⁴⁸ Holton, “Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki Theory,” 171.

⁴⁹ Heyerdahl, Thor, *Aku-Aku: The Secret of Easter Island*, (Rand McNally and Co.: Chicago, 1958).

⁵⁰ Holton, “Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki Theory,” 166.

'science.' There was recently a dramatized version of *Kon-Tiki* in 2012.⁵¹ It would be interesting to know how much of the modern audience considered the 'experiment' grounds for academic conclusions. The original documentary in 1950 was widely distributed and viewed, as it was an adventurous and romantic display of 'archaeology.' Heyerdahl's publications are still popularly read today, even after the majority of their academic content has been discredited by modern researchers.⁵²

2.2.2- The time-frame of Rapa Nui's settlement continues to be the subject of debate

Jared Diamond – an author who synthesizes research done by archaeologists and other researchers – including Jo Anne Van Tilburg⁵³, Paul Bahn⁵⁴, and Peter Flenley⁵⁵, Patrick Kirch⁵⁶ – argued that “[while there is] considerable uncertainty...what appear to be the most reliable... radiocarbon dates of AD 900” were “obtained on wood charcoal and on bones of porpoises.”⁵⁷ Both materials are considered unreliable for radiocarbon dating.

Diamond's camp supports the 'long chronology' time-frame, according to Wilmshurst, Hunt, Lipo, and Anderson's publication⁵⁸, meaning they argue the evidence points to earlier colonization of Eastern Polynesia throughout the first millennium CE,

⁵¹ International Movie Database website, “Kon-Tiki,” <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1613750/>

⁵² A cursory search on Amazon or GoodReads yields recent reviews, praising how interesting and exciting the books (*Kon-Tiki*, *Aku-Aku*) are.

⁵³ 1994, 2005, 2007

⁵⁴ 2003

⁵⁵ Peter Flenley, *Easter Island, Earth Island*, 1992

⁵⁶ 2000

⁵⁷ Diamond, *Collapse*, 89.

⁵⁸ Janet Wilmshurst, Terry L. Hunt, Carl Lipo, Atholl Anderson, “High-precision radiocarbon dating shows recent and rapid initial human colonization of East Polynesia” in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2011).

depending on the island. The “short chronology” authors, namely the authors mentioned above, claim some of the previous researchers' earlier dates are not reliable due to errors in selection of material to radiocarbon date, namely the wood that could have originated elsewhere or died long before it was burned, giving it “inbuilt age” as well as marine life (coral, shells, mammal bones) which can act as reservoirs for old carbon suspended in the ocean:

In a meta-analysis of 1,434 radiocarbon dates from the region, reliable short-lived samples reveal that the colonization of East Polynesia occurred in two distinct phases: earliest in the Society Islands A.D.~1025–1120, four centuries later than previously assumed; then after 70–265 y, dispersal continued in one major pulse to all remaining islands [including Rapa Nui] A.D. ~1190–1290. We show that previously supported longer chronologies have relied upon radiocarbon- dated materials with large sources of error, making them unsuitable for precise dating of recent events.⁵⁹

The short chronologists argue that their analysis of the evidence (radiocarbon samples) is more scientifically accurate, and therefore yields a more valid claim – that Rapanui seafarers colonized the island around 1200CE.

2.2.3- Ecocide or “collapse”

On a basic level, the proponents of various forms of the narrative acknowledge the existence of the factors, chiefly: preexisting environmental conditions, actions of the historic Rapanui, and European impacts –intentional and not. Where they differ is how much weight they attribute to each factor. The challenges of historical (and modern) life on the island include overly-porous, nutrient-poor volcanic soil, constant wind, lack of

⁵⁹ Wilmshurst, Hunt, Lipo, Anderson, “High-precision radiocarbon dating,” 1073.

surface water, relative lack of biodiversity, and relatively subtropical climate.⁶⁰ In *Collapse*, Diamond claims “Easter's isolation makes it the clearest example of a society that destroyed itself by over-exploiting its own resources.”⁶¹ However, a few lines previously, he stated that they were “living in one of the most fragile environments, at the highest risk for deforestation, of any Pacific people.”⁶² Similarly in an article in *Science*, he highlights the island's “fragile environment”: “Thus, Easter became deforested not because its inhabitants were uniquely improvident, nor because its European visitors were uniquely evil, but because Easter Islanders had the misfortune to inhabit one of the Pacific's most fragile environments.”⁶³ By this reasoning, the adverse effects of the islanders' use of trees were magnified by the island's inherent ecological instability.

So which narrative do Diamond's publications support overall? In *Collapse*, he describes the 'civil war' between different Rapanui clans over scarce resources and self-destruction upheld by the conventional narrative, where “The further consequences start with starvation, a population crash, and a descent into cannibalism... Oral traditions of the islanders are obsessed with cannibalism.”⁶⁴ So where does he really place the blame? It seems he thinks it was a combination of the factors, but different publications – including Diamond's 2007 article in *Science*, and *Collapse* -- could be interpreted as placing the majority of the blame on the Rapanui's alleged indiscretion or improvidence

⁶⁰ Diamond, *Collapse*, 83.

⁶¹ Diamond, *Collapse*, 118.

⁶² Diamond, *Collapse*, 118.

⁶³ Diamond, Jared, “Easter Island revisited,” *Science* (2007): 1693.

⁶⁴ Diamond, *Collapse*, 109.

in regard to managing their resources, versus blaming their inadequate or challenging environment.

While his articles in various journals may be less direct in their implications, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*⁶⁵ is a collection of case studies demonstrating how societies' 'unrestricted' or 'unwise' populations precipitated their own demise. The narrative he has popularized paints the Rapanui as an irresponsible people, lacking foresight, while almost absolving the European 'explorers' and Latin American slave-raiders of their impacts, only sparing about a page of the chapter to explain them. This asymmetric distribution of blame is typical in the 'colonial' style history. The intruding population finds a way to blame the effects of their negative actions on the 'colonized.' One of the tenants of decolonizing methodology is finding evidence for who was truly at fault, and rectifying false accusations that have become engrained in the conventional narratives, on Rapa Nui and elsewhere.

Within the last ten or so years, Hunt, Lipo, Anderson, and Wilmshurst have researched and published their account of the island's history in peer-reviewed articles such as *Science*⁶⁶, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*⁶⁷, *Journal of Archaeological Science*⁶⁸, *Nature*⁶⁹, a *National Geographic* cover story⁷⁰, as well as Hunt and Lipo's book, *The Statues That Walked*.⁷¹ Throughout this list of publications,

⁶⁵ Inverse emphasis added.

⁶⁶ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, "Late Colonization of Easter Island," *Science*, 2006.

⁶⁷ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, "High-precision radiocarbon dating shows recent and rapid initial human colonization of East Polynesia," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2010.=

⁶⁸ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, "Rethinking Easter Island's ecological catastrophe," 2006.

⁶⁹ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, "Easter Island Statues walked out of quarry," *Nature*, 2012.

⁷⁰ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, "Easter Island: Walking With Giants," *National Geographic*, 2012.

⁷¹ Hunt and Lipo, *Statues*, 2012.

their takeaway message is that Rapa Nui's history is actually one of success, only interrupted by the interference of Europeans and later other foreigners. The authors “hope that the history of Rapa Nui can be an inspiring vision of human ingenuity in facing such challenges and of human resilience.”⁷² This is in direct opposition to the 'conventional narrative' popularized by Diamond, and relieves the Rapanui of the blame cast by 'ecocide,' instead placing it on the impacts of European and South American disease, violence, and greed on an already fragile environment.

The disastrous consequences of European voyages have been explored in the literature prior to *The Statues That Walked*, at least to some degree. Diamond spends about half of a page in his chapter on Rapa Nui in *Collapse* describing the destruction brought by the Europeans and later, the South Americans (mainly Chileans and Peruvians):

They must be assumed to have [additional] introduced European diseases and thereby to have killed many previously unexposed islanders, though our first mention of such an epidemic is of smallpox around 1836. Again as on other Pacific islands, “black-birding” the kidnapping of islanders...climaxed in 1862-63, the grimmest year of Easter's history, when two dozen Peruvian ships abducted about 1,500 people (half of the surviving population) and sold them at auction to work in Peru's guano mines and other menial jobs...By 1872 there were only 111 islanders left on Easter...In 1888 the Chilean government annexed Easter, which effectively became a sheep ranch managed by a Chile- based Scottish company...A revolt by the islanders in 1914 was ended by the arrival of a Chilean Warship.⁷³

The majority of Diamond's chapter focuses on establishing arguments for why the ecological collapse was the islanders' fault, such as questioning “Why were Easter

⁷² Hunt and Lipo, *Statues*, 180.

⁷³ Diamond, *Collapse*, 112.

Islanders unique, or nearly so, in destroying every tree?...this question lies behind the reluctance of Easter Islanders themselves and of some scientists to accept that the islanders caused the deforestation.”⁷⁴ So even though he acknowledges European impacts, he places the blame squarely on the Rapanui's alleged indiscretion or lack of foresight.

In contrast, Hunt and Lipo go into much further detail concerning the ill effects of the Europeans in *The Statues That Walked*, a chapter titled “The Collapse.” The chapter explains Louis Pasteur's 'Germ Theory'⁷⁵ and its implications for the Rapanui, being so isolated from the rest of the world and therefore lacking immunity to “Old World” diseases carried by the Europeans. At least the disease transmission was not obviously intentional, given that “hasty departures made the impact of epidemic or lingering diseases effectively invisible to Europeans, who were largely unaware of disease causes and consequences on the island.”⁷⁶ Further visits from the Spanish in 1770 again brought down the recovering population, as “from the six days on the island and the explicit sexual encounters we can be certain that venereal disease gained a foothold. Epidemic disease must also have followed the Spanish visit.”⁷⁷

While Diamond claims caves on the island were used as shelter from the civil wars of the conventional narrative, Hunt and Lipo note how the islanders “took to hiding in family caves, some concealed for protection” in response to Peruvian slave

⁷⁴ Diamond, *Collapse*, 115.

⁷⁵ Louis Pasteur, “The Germ Theory and its applications to medicine and surgery,” 1878.

⁷⁶ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, *The Statues That Walked* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 157.

⁷⁷ Hunt and Lipo, *The Statues That Walked*, 159.

raids in the 1860s.⁷⁸ It is not that either claim invalidates the other, instead it is more a question of which narrative the use of the cave supports. Diamond's supports the narrative of ecocide and self-destruction, in which the Rapanui were driven to war by lack of resources lost to over-consumption. Hunt and Lipo cite the use of the caves as protection against the onslaught of the Europeans, as a key aspect of their narrative is the foreigners' role in the island's 'collapse.'

2.2.4- The conventional narrative has persisted due to the nature of academic publication and popular readership

As with many academic disciplines, some of the top authors –by volume or name recognition– try to maintain a monopoly over the history, assuming the validity of their version while defending against opposing arguments. There are obvious motives, including fame, book sales, or the satisfaction of being right: academia does not operate outside of basic human rational or nature. Almost assuredly, if a source is known popularly as a 'legitimate' historical account –such as *Collapse* – it will be read and cited more by people outside of anthropology than less popular sources, regardless of their relative accuracy or merit.

This is the mechanism of persistence in academia. Generally, the better known an author is, the more perceived credibility they have when they continue publishing. That is why Diamond, a popular Pulitzer Prize-winning author, is regarded as a major archaeological and historical author, even though he is a geography professor at UCLA. While he works with and cites archaeologists – including Jo Anne Van Tilburg, Paul

⁷⁸ Hunt and Lipo, *The Statues That Walked*, 159.

Bahn, and John Flenley – he does not have a specific academic background in the field. Current 'formal' academic culture places value in specialization as a means of achieving legitimacy. In this regard, Diamond is an academic generalist, as he is not an expert on most of the specific topics he writes about. There are certainly parallels between archaeology and geography, but arguably not enough for him to be able to make well-founded analyses on aggregated research. Romanticized and simplified popular history sells books, even if it does not pass the test of academic or scientific credibility or validity. In this way, authors such as Diamond have a large influence on what the average reader learns and trusts.

This is not to say that Hunt and Lipo are not popular authors. Their research, including a cover story with *National Geographic*⁷⁹, numerous articles in scholarly journals, and their book *The Statues That Walked*, has reached a wide audience, and is currently influencing a shift away from the conventional narrative.

2.2.5- Narratives in other forms of popular culture – “Ancient Aliens,” Erich von Daniken, *Rapa Nui* (1994), *BBC Horizon*

Besides popular history books like *Collapse*, the public is exposed to the 'history' of Rapa Nui through many other outlets. Educational television and movies are similar to museums in that they relay scientific and academic information to the public, and that they are prone to the same pitfalls.⁸⁰ Shows on the History Channel, such as “Ancient Aliens,” have made pseudo-scientific arguments for the possibility of alien intervention on the island. Author Erich von Daniken “put forth his hypothesis that,

⁷⁹ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, “Easter Island: Walking With Giants,” *National Geographic*, 2012.

⁸⁰ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo, “Easter Island: Walking With Giants,” *National Geographic*, 2012.

thousands of years ago, space travelers from other planets visited Earth [including Rapa Nui specifically], where they taught humans about technology and influenced ancient religions. He is regarded by many as the father of ancient alien theory.”⁸¹ This argument is similar to Thor Heyerdahl's, as both authors doubted the ability of the indigenous Rapanui to reach the level of civilization they did. Von Daniken's work is an extreme example of the fictionalization of Rapa Nui history, rejected academically, but likely accepted by at least some of its audience.

Kevin Costner's 1994 film *Rapa Nui* is essentially an artistic representation of the 'conventional narrative' which was, at the time, the most accepted account of the island's history. Kevin Costner has no formal archaeological or historical training. Logically, he would look to the most widely accepted narrative at the time to make a film based as much as possible in historical 'fact.' It includes dramatic scenes of civil warfare, cannibalism, “The Birdman” competition, one method of *Moai*⁸² moving, societal division based on whether one was a “Long-ear” or a “short-ear,” and the appearance of a giant mythological iceberg on which the king leaves the island. The film does not depict European contact.

In a purportedly more academic tone, the BBC series *Horizon* made a documentary titled “The Mystery of Easter Island” in 2003. The episode interprets scientific evidence to make claims which fit into the conventional narrative of ecocide, self-destruction, cannibalism, and so on. A few of the island's well-known researchers,

⁸¹ History Channel website, “Ancient Aliens.”

⁸² Megalithic statues of Rapa Nui.

including Charlie Love, Jo Anne Van Tilburg, John Flenley, David Steadman, and Doug Owlsly present information reaffirming the conventional narrative. In regard to the fallen Moai that once stood upright upon the island's myriad *ahu*⁸³, Charlie Love claims that the Rapanui must have “[Pulled] it apart with a vengeance...there had to have been some kind of violence involved.” After describing the mata'a obsidian tools as “weapons,” the narration shifts to the examination of a single skull in the Smithsonian's Rapa Nui collection with evidence of trauma, where Owlsly “realized he was looking at the evidence of a people at war with themselves.”⁸⁴ Additionally, the interviewees argue that “Easter Island's fall came to be seen as a terrible ecological warning from history.”

However, the documentary gives some weight to the opposing argument by interviewing Paul Rainbird, another Rapa Nui specialist. Rainbird, through studying the primary European accounts, notes that “In Roggeveen's journals... he talks of the people themselves, they were healthy, they were fit, there is no sign at all of the collapse we're supposed to believe happened. And indeed if that collapse was through warfare there was no sign whatsoever of warlike behavior. Indeed he noted that there were no weapons to be seen.”⁸⁵ The narrative then explains “early records told of how the cult of the Birdman had worked to save the islanders” after the 'ecological collapse' by controlling the distribution of the resources. Paul Rainbird argues that “Whatever may have happened in the past on the island, whatever the islanders did to themselves, totally pales into insignificance compared to the impact that was going to come through

⁸³ Megalithic ceremonial platform on which the *moai* were placed upon completion.

⁸⁴ BBC *Horizon*, “The Mystery of Easter Island,” film, 2003.

⁸⁵ BBC *Horizon*, “The Mystery of Easter Island,” film, 2003.

Western contact.”⁸⁶ Even Jo Anne Van Tilburg –a proponent of and contributor to the 'conventional narrative' – adds that “They triumphed over adversity, they did the best they could with the tools at their disposal.”⁸⁷ This *Horizon* documentary takes a middle road of sorts, blaming the Rapanui for the ecological destruction of the island while also blaming European impacts for their serious demographic collapse.

With the history of Rapa Nui up for interpretation in the popular media, one would hope audiences would be able to discern between strictly academic information and academic information interpreted for popular consumption or entertainment (not that education cannot be entertaining). But realistically, a large portion of the audience will take the information at face value, and become misinformed. Another issue is that while such shows may have represented mainstream academic positions at the time they were produced, they become outdated when advances or new theories emerge in a cyclical fashion. The popular media is similar to museums in the context of this project, as it is a source of historical information –and occasionally misinformation– to the public.

2.3- Rapa Nui history is represented for tourists and Rapanui to learn from at the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert (MAPSE)

2.3.1- MAPSE operations, procedures, and policies

2.3.1a-Introduction

During my research trip (27 July – 17 August, 2014) on Rapa Nui and at the

⁸⁶ BBC *Horizon*, “The Mystery of Easter Island”, film, 2003.

⁸⁷ BBC *Horizon*, “The Mystery of Easter Island”, film, 2003.

MAPSE, my methodology was to act as a meticulous visitor, reading and documenting all of the exhibited cultural material, and interpretive materials in the galleries and at the open-air sites around the island. Even though it is geographically small, the volume of history, archaeology, and culture the island contains is unfathomable. My main contact was Francisco Torres, the museum's director. He was kind enough to answer (objective) questions about the museum and give me an insider's tour. He has been the Director of the MAPSE for fourteen years, guiding it through changing social, cultural, and political circumstances on the island.

2.3.1b- Bureaucratic and governmental direction and funding

The MAPSE operates under the Chilean Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos (DIBAM). In my understanding, it is analogous to the Smithsonian Institution in the United States, as a federally administered agency for matters of art, libraries, history, and museums. MAPSE's annual allotted operational budget is 13 million Chilean Pesos, or about US\$20,800, which they use for new equipment, maintenance, and projects.⁸⁸ Additional funds come from grants –usually to complete specific projects – and donations. The MAPSE encourages patrons to directly donate objects they want to assess or donate funds to a specific project, or else the money goes into a collective fund administered by DIBAM which disburses to 26 museums throughout Chile. DIBAM and Consejo Nacional de Monumentos (Chilean National Monuments Council) have the ultimate decision-making power in the majority of situations affecting MAPSE. While MAPSE's leaders can come up with plans or goals among

⁸⁸ I assume this does not include funds for staff salaries, and that they are paid separately through the Chilean government – I did not ask specifically.

themselves, most will need approval from CNM and DIBAM. According to Torres, the CNM does not have indigenous representation from the indigenous Rapanui, nor any other indigenous group in Chile. About half of the MAPSE's small staff are Rapanui, the other half are mostly Chilean. The MAPSE does not classify as an 'indigenous museum' because it is not completely operated and controlled by Rapanui.

2.3.1c- Facilities and visitors

The museum is small, consisting of one main exhibit room (with a foyer) for a total area of roughly 300 square meters. The collections storage is roughly 200 square meters' with some additional work space. The buildings next to the collection storage include office space, as well as the William Mulloy Library.⁸⁹



Exterior view of the MAPSE

⁸⁹ Author photo, August 2014

Despite the museum's small size, it has many functions. The collections are open to public, says Torres: “Yes, members of the public may request a tour of our facilities, including the storage areas. However, they are not allowed to remove anything from the building.”⁹⁰ In 2013, the museum had approximately 25,000 visitors, mainly from Chile, France, US, and Japan. The high tourist season is January and February, when the summer weather and the *Tapati* Rapanui cultural festival draw in visitors from around the world. Tourism is the foundation of the island's economy, but it can also be a source of hardship and frustration.

2.3.1d- Collections and research activities

Research access to the museum's collections is encouraged: “Most of the collection has no information attached,” and the museum does not have a large, full-time research staff to do that kind of work. This is a mutually beneficial situation, where the external researchers get the access they need for their projects while the museum gets archaeological consulting or information which will (potentially) help inform exhibits. Due to governmental restrictions on cultural material leaving the island, researchers leave their excavated archaeological material in boxes organized by name.⁹¹ Due to time constraints from budgets, grants, and permits, most of the material is simply sorted and stored without being thoroughly analyzed by the research teams while they're on the island. There are roughly 15,000 objects divided into 30 collections based on the lead researcher of each excavation. Large amount (1,000+) stone objects, like obsidian *mata'a* tools, *Toki* groundstone adzes, grinding stones, petroglyphic slabs from

⁹⁰ Francisco Torres (MAPSE Director) interview by the author, August 7, 2014.

⁹¹ It was interesting seeing the boxes marked with all the authors' names I had become familiar with from preliminary research.

Orongo, et cetera. Of the entire collection, only 78 – roughly 0.52 percent – are displayed in the exhibit. The larger, more dilapidated stone objects, like a heavily worn small *moai*-like figure, are kept outside under the eave of the roof behind the office section of the museum, out of visitors' sight.

There is a large number of human remains from the island: around 1000 individuals⁹² from *ahus*, caves, and coastal erosion-revealed burials. Archaeologist George Gill's "1981 Easter Island Anthropological Expedition," including excavation and restoration of Ahu Anakena, accounts for a large percent of this figure.⁹³ The human remains take up most of one aisle in storage, but none are exhibited out of respect for the dead.

2.3.1e- Exhibit history and future plans

The current exhibit was installed in 1999 and refurbished in 2012. When asked about plans for renovation, Torres replied there is "Not enough funding currently, but it will be part of the total overhaul of the museum we have planned in the future. We want room to display our collection pertaining to the historic period of the island, since a lot more is factually known and recorded about it, relative to the prehistoric."⁹⁴ This will require at least twice the available space, and most likely be constructed as a completely new building if this plan comes to fruition. This addition to the current exhibit content might go into further detail about issues of European impacts and historical hardships faced by the Rapanui from outside forces.

⁹² It was interesting seeing the boxes marked with all the authors' names I had become familiar with from preliminary research.

⁹³ George Gill, Sonia Haoa, and Douglas Owsley, "Easter Island Origins: Implications of Osteological Findings." *Rapa Nui Journal*, Vol. 11 (2), June 1997.

⁹⁴ Francisco Torres (MAPSE Director) interview by the author, August 7, 2014.

2.3.1f- The MAPSE uses its relatively limited resources to provide a valuable service to the Rapanui, researchers, and tourists

The MAPSE acts as a community center for the Rapanui, a place where they can come to learn about the academic research done by non-native as well as local researchers. It is a place where anyone can learn about the island's history and cultural traditions. The curious may request a tour of the collections to see the material not on display. Torres is trying to get more of the island's permanent residents interested in what the museum offers, making it more of a cultural community center than a tourist destination. For example, there was an advertisement for the “Día del patrimonio cultural,”⁹⁵ or “Te'ono o te kaina” in Rapanui, highlighting cultural events held during the month of May at the museum. The Mulloy library is a free community resource for information on the island, as well as providing the service of internet connection, which is hard to find on the island. The museum is a tourist attraction and creates revenue in that way. It is a resource to external researchers as a place to examine and store archaeological collections, as well as to collaborate in research with Rapanui on occasion.

2.4- Observations of MAPSE's portrayed historical narratives of Rapa Nui

This section investigates which researchers, sources, and narratives are represented in the current exhibits at the MAPSE in regard to specific contested subtopics. To set the scene, the MAPSE is a small building built with the same volcanic tuff as the *moai*. It's located in the northern area of Hanga Roa, the island's town. As

⁹⁵ Cultural Patrimony Day

one enters the foyer, historic photos of the island line the walls, and the visitor counter is directly ahead. A television plays a slideshow of current photos of the island. Stray dogs enter the hall to escape the heat and get some attention from tourists. The museum is one large room with standing, printed posters forming rows and guiding the visitor through the exhibit sequentially. Display cases contain the smaller objects, while larger ones –such as the only female *Moai* on the island– are in the open. Overall, the exhibit is driven by interpretive material, less so than objects.

The exhibit is called “Los Ancestros de Rapa Nui: Formación y Desarrollo de una Cultura Única,” in English “The Ancestors of Rapa Nui; Formation and Development of a Unique Culture.” It covers essentially the entire chronology of the island's history, but does not cover the last century or so as much as those prior. As mentioned previously, Torres plans to eventually renovate or rebuild the museum to provide a more complete historical perspective.

Within the introductory panels, the exhibit designers address the topic of source.⁹⁶ In a poster titled “Our Sources/Nuestras Fuentes,” they write:

Considering the different sources of information available, some contradictory, this exhibition is supported by: Archaeological evidence; Observations and stories collected by navigators, travelers, and missionaries who have been in the Island since its discovery in 1722; Scientific theories; Current accounts from the people of the community. From these sources, the museum presents different aspects of life in the Island before its contact with the rest of the world. However, no museum could recreate physically everything that happened in Rapa Nui. Therefore, your imagination is needed to complete our vision of the development of this society.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ The following sub-headings will address the treatment or representation of specific controversial topics in the island's history. This section will focus on describing how the exhibit incorporates the arguments or opposing narratives discussed above.

⁹⁷ Wall text, “Our Sources,” MAPSE, July 30, 2014.

This is essentially a disclaimer; the museum is conceding that given the nature of archaeology and history, there is no way to know with 100 percent certainty or accuracy what happened. This idea of unattainable objectivity is central in the concept of narrative, as narratives are produced by forming combinations of objective material, such as scientific data, with subjective interpretation. They also acknowledge the contradictory nature of the evidence coming from different researchers, hinting at the competition to provide the 'best' answers. It is important for museums representing contentious histories to be transparent about these issues, and the MAPSE does a good job of it. Even better, they would have a bibliography-type display, where every researcher, publication, community member or historical document would be cited.

This disclaimer instructs the visitors to use their 'imagination' to enhance their experience. This is a way of encouraging an interpretive atmosphere, where the visitors are not strictly 'instructed' in the material. Instead, they are presented with the evidence – at least that which the museum decides to present – and expected to take away their own conclusions.

2.4.1- Initial colonization and settlement

There are essentially two camps in regard to the topic of colonization and time-frame: the long and the short chronologists. The long chronologists argue for an earlier date of initial colonization, and consequently an extended length of occupation. MAPSE takes the middle route, and does not side with either narrative. Instead, they give essentially equal weight to each of them. Their interpretive poster on the subject says “according to the reliable information, two moments are proposed as possible for the

island's colonization; around 800AD or about 1200AD.”⁹⁸ They treat both camps as “reliable” sources, and refer to their findings as proposals instead of conclusions. From the mythological or oral tradition aspect, the first wave of colonizers was led by Hotu Matu'a, who “According to legend...arrived to Rapa Nui in two ships.”⁹⁹ The combination of sources from academic research and oral tradition helps the museum to present a well-rounded perspective to the visitors.

The method of colonization is fairly well-established or agreed-upon academically. The exhibit describes the three varieties of water craft used by historic Polynesian seafarers as “Double Balancing (a single hull with two outriggers), simple balancing (a single hull with one outrigger), and the double canoe (catamaran-like, with sails). In describing the construction of these vessels, the exhibit proposes that “The construction of a canoe was a religious even, directed by priests and surrounded by ceremonies.”¹⁰⁰ The importance of shipbuilding is obvious, as the Polynesians relied on their knowledge to expand throughout the Pacific.

2.4.2- *Moai* building, moving, and meaning

The *Moai* are arguably the largest topic of interest to most visitors, eager to learn more about the ‘Easter Island heads,’ and a good portion of the exhibit focuses on their history: “*Moai* served a dual purpose: Provided a visible presence of the ancestors of each lineage, and demonstrated the power and capacity of organization of a lineage/kin group” (translated).The two academic camps in the scope of the project would likely agree on both of these claims. Eric Smith and Rebecca Bleige Bird explain

⁹⁸ Wall text, “The Ancestors of Rapa Nui: Formation and Development of a Unique Culture,” MAPSE.

⁹⁹ Wall text, “They looked to Motu Nui,” MAPSE.

¹⁰⁰ Wall text, “Ellos navegan los mejores botes en el mundo,” MAPSE.

how “These signals reveal information about underlying qualities of the signaling individuals or groups.”¹⁰¹ In this context, the *Moai* represented the skill, energy, and strength necessary to construct and move them, as well as representing their ancestors in a religious sense, where “Some have proposed that the *Moai* were commemorative images commissioned by the chief or his descendants. The mastery and size of each new figure demonstrated the prestige of the different clans.”¹⁰² The conflicting narratives provide different reasons for the current dilapidated state of the majority of the *Moai* and *ahus* around the island. The museum chose to put forward the explanation that “the toppled *Moai* are proof of the wars that occurred on Rapa Nui.”¹⁰³ This was the English translation printed beside the Spanish, but my own translation of the Spanish text is “Today, the toppled *Moai* are proof of the profound social and religious changes that occurred on Rapa Nui.”¹⁰⁴ This Spanish translation has a different tone than the English version on the panel, less incendiary or explicit, referring only to 'changes' (*cambios*) instead of 'war' (*guerra*).

The exhibit's explanation of the *Moai*'s destruction aligns with Diamond's narrative of collapse, which includes a civil war conflict over control of resources, which they depleted through indiscretion during the “ecocide” period. The narrative proposes the *Moai*, as symbols of the rival clans, would be targeted for destruction. On this topic, Patrick Kirch—one of Diamond's collaborators – claims: “...during the 16th to

¹⁰¹ Eric Smith and Rebecca Bleige Bird, *Moral Sentiments and Material Interests*, “Costly Signaling and Cooperative Behavior,” Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005.

¹⁰² Wall text, “The importance of the *Moai*,” MAPSE.

¹⁰³ Wall text, “The importance of the *Moai*,” MAPSE.

¹⁰⁴ Wall text, “The importance of the *Moai*,” MAPSE. Original Spanish: “Hoy, los *moai* derribados son prueba de los profundos cambios sociales y religiosos que ocurrieron en Rapa Nui.”

19th centuries was the cessation of new image *ahu* construction, and the deliberate destruction of the existing *ahu* and tipping over of the statues,” explained through rival attacks or 'class revolt.'¹⁰⁵

In regard to *Moai* transportation, a whole panel outlines the various proposed methods, including: Heyerdahl's horizontal log-sled dragging, William Mulloy's V-Shaped rocking leverage system, Charles Love's Vertical transport on log rollers, Pavel Pavel's vertical twisting shuffle, and Van Tilburg's horizontal log-sled dragging. The conventional narrative points to the *Moai* as a large draw on forest and wood resources, a main contributing factor to 'ecocide' in their arguments. Contrastingly, Hunt and Lipo frame the *Moai* as the work of a strong and capable culture, which met an untimely end due to external forces and the island's inherent flaws. Their main explanation for the *Moai*'s disrepair is earthquakes, as well as neglect after the ancestor-worshipping phase fell out of favor.¹⁰⁶ Hunt and Lipo's “walking” method,¹⁰⁷ which did not require tree trunks, is not displayed. It is likely that this section was renovated before their research reached high levels of publicity or attention.

2.4.3- Tangata manu- the Birdman Cult at Orongo, Rano Kau Crater – Narratives at MAPSE and the Orongo Visitor Center

One of the island's less well-known historical facets, the Tangata Manu, provides plenty of questions for researchers and museum visitors alike. The exhibit explains the premise and ritual of the religion: “The Birdman Cult (Tangata manu) was an annual cycle of ceremonial activities that finished with the election of a leader for the

¹⁰⁵ Kirch, “Easter Island,” in *Polynesian Chieftdoms*, (Cambridge University Press; Cambridge,1984),275.

¹⁰⁶ Hunt and Lipo, *Statues*, 153.

¹⁰⁷ As outlined in *The Statues That Walked*

next year. They had to obtain the first egg of the Tern. The chiefs of different lineages of the island compete through a Hopu (proxy).”¹⁰⁸ Diamond's camp claims the cult was formed out of the chaos of the 'collapse', after the previous *Moai*/ancestor centric religion was overthrown. Van Tilburg's research focuses on the *Moai*, and one in particular with Birdman-related inscriptions, which she claims “represents the transition from beliefs connected with *Moai* to Tangata Manu.”¹⁰⁹ These ideas are represented in the museum, where “The inside [internal] conflicts that followed the period of the carving of the *Moai*, probably signified the decline in the unifying power of the Ariki Mau (king). This situation led to a new system of organizing Rapa Nui society: Tangata Manu.”¹¹⁰ Hunt and Lipo do not cover the Tangata Manu cult in detail, only mentioning that a historical American Naval expedition documented and looted Orongo in 1886.¹¹¹

There is a small visitor center near the village of Orongo which documents the Tangata Manu movement more specifically, in addition to the history of the site itself. The visitor center's panels are in line with the information at the museum, namely that “from the XVI century, island society was leaving megalithism as political and religious expression, and replaced it with the cult to [the deity] Make-Make, closely related to fertility, spring, and migratory seabirds.”¹¹² The rocks around the village abound with reproduction-themed petroglyphs relating to the cultural practice of the Tangata Manu ceremony.

¹⁰⁸ Wall text, “Tangata Manu- the Birdman Cult,” MAPSE. August 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Wall text, “Tangata Manu- the Birdman Cult,” MAPSE. August 2014.

¹¹⁰ Wall text, “Tangata Manu- the Birdman Cult,” MAPSE. August 2014.

¹¹¹ Hunt and Lipo, *The Statues That Walked*, 171.

¹¹² Wall text, “What is its importance?” Orongo visitor center, August 2014.

2.4.4- “Collapse” narrative more broadly

What caused the indigenous population of Rapa Nui to decrease dramatically? As discussed in Section 2.1, the emerging evidence from researchers such as Hunt and Lipo point toward rats and European impacts as the primary causes, competing with the 'conventional narrative' of “ecocide” through irresponsibly depleting limited resources, leading to warfare and further self-destruction. Which narrative does the museum portray in their exhibit?

The exhibit uses many engravings and sketches by the various European 'explorers' from the early 18th century onward, until photography was prevalent. The Rapanui had the *Rongorongo* script, which they carved into wooden blocks and other materials. However, in typical colonizing procedure, “the natives repeatedly asserted that the missionaries had prohibited them from reading the tablets, and even had induced them to burn these objects as devil's work.”¹¹³ As a result, the cultural knowledge necessary for understanding or reading the script is lost. There are some specimens on display in the exhibit, but they cannot be translated. The oral tradition of the island was undoubtedly severely compromised during the demographic collapse, especially the Peruvian slave raiding of the 1860s.¹¹⁴ Today, there are many conflicting accounts in the oral tradition regarding certain historical events, periods, or practices, making it less likely to be considered dependable academic evidence. Historical European accounts and archaeology have been the main resources in constructing the

¹¹³ Werner Wolff, “The Mystery of the Easter Island Script: Probable causes of the disappearance of the hieroglyphic system,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 45, (1945).

¹¹⁴ Diamond, *Collapse*, 112.

narratives in the majority of the literature regarding the island's history.

These varying sources of evidence create an interesting dynamic in and amongst the indigenous and academic communities. In some cases, academic evidence is used to support oral traditions. Other times, the opposite is true. On Rapa Nui, an example of this relationship is the question of *moai* transportation. Some versions of the oral tradition described the *moai* as 'walking' to the *ahu* around the island.¹¹⁵ Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo's analysis of their form and design, archaeological evidence, and modern exploration of transport roads created a new narrative on the hotly debated topic, and simultaneously supported this form of the Rapanui oral tradition. Where some examples can be considered mutually respectful collaboration, other cases seem more usurious, where indigenous knowledge or scientific evidence is co-opted or made to fit the narrative of whoever is using it.

The conventional narrative, as described in Kirch (2000), is comprised of three phases: Population, Ahu Moai, and Huri Moai.¹¹⁶ The exhibit adopted these phases as the chronological structure it presents to the visitors. The panel describes the Ahu Moai phase as “The classic era, when Rapa Nui culture reached its peak with the construction of huge ceremonial centers and *Moai*. It began around 800 AD and ended around the 17th century.”¹¹⁷ They remain general about the date of colonization, consistent with similar information elsewhere in the exhibit, where “two moments are proposed as

¹¹⁵ Hunt and Lipo, *Statues*, 56.

¹¹⁶ Patrick Kirch, “Rapa Nui: 'Navel of the World,’” in *The Polynesian Chiefdoms*, 2000.

¹¹⁷ Wall text, “They looked to Motu Nui,” MAPSE, August 2014.

possible for the island's colonization: around 800 AD or about 1200 AD.”¹¹⁸

The exhibit leans toward the conventional narrative when describing the 'Huri *Moai*' phase, as they describe an “Era of conflict between the different lineages. *Moai* were toppled and the Tangata Manu ritual sprang up. This phase lasted from around the 17th century until the arrival of Catholic missionaries in 1864.”¹¹⁹ Later in the exhibit, a panel elaborates on the alleged inter-tribal conflict due to declining resources, where “The increasing need to demonstrate power and prestige through the *Moai* eventually led the clans to dispute resources like food and wood.”¹²⁰

The MAPSE's narrative was partly created by the sanitization of the island's often dark or sorrowful history. The exhibit generally fails to mention the numerous Europeans arrivals throughout that time frame, nor the diseases, environmental destruction, and violence some of them brought. Besides the missionaries mentioned in the “Huri *Moai* Phase” description, the most direct mention of Europeans was in reference to the Rapanui penchant for their hats, as described in *The Statues That Walked*. The panel shows an engraving “inspired by La Perouse's travel in 1786.” Here again, the translation is not quite correct. In Spanish: “Los navegantes europeos fueron victimas de las pasión que la gente Rapa Nui sentía por los sombreros,” which translates to “The European sailors were victims of the passion that the Rapa Nui felt for their hats.” However, the English translation they offer says “European travellers had a

¹¹⁸ Wall text, “They looked to Motu Nui,” MAPSE, August 2014. Similar to the text on the introductory panel cited previously.

¹¹⁹ Wall text, “They looked to Motu Nui,” MAPSE, August 2014.

¹²⁰ Wall text, “The importance of the *Moai*,” MAPSE, August 2014.

greater passion for hats than Rapa Nui people.”¹²¹ Again, an imprecise translation leads to a discrepancy between the two versions and likely misinterpretation by non-Spanish speakers. The Spanish version is more historically accurate; it is safe to assume it was originally written in Spanish by a native speaker, so this can likely be attributed to a confused translation.

2.4.5- Conclusions for MAPSE

After a thorough investigation of all interpretive material in the exhibit, only one section or panel directly details interactions between the Rapa Nui and Europeans. The expeditions are cited in the credits of the drawings and engravings shown on some panels, but they have no context beyond that. Why would the exhibit researchers and designers leave out such a major component of the island's history? Did the exhibit designers deem it too negative or too unpleasant? Maybe they did not want to offend sensitive European visitors? Does the museum want to project a more empowering narrative, in which the historical Rapa Nui did not face hardship from the outside world? Whatever the case, the museum does not fully disclose the history of the island, leaving their visitors without the complete set of information they need to take away a valid interpretation for themselves.

Museums are political in nature, in addition to their cultural and academic aspects. A poorly phrased section on a panel or addressing a 'tapu'¹²² topic might bring backlash and other consequences. As a subsidiary, the MAPSE's exhibits likely have to

¹²¹ Wall text, “The human body is beauty,” MAPSE, August 2014.

¹²² Polynesian term for 'taboo' essentially, meaning restricted or prohibited.

be approved by the larger governing body of Chile's DIBAM and CNM¹²³, as discussed in section 2.3.1b. It is clear that most museums cannot simply exhibit whatever they please. There are issues of bureaucracy, academic loyalties or pressure, differences of opinion, and arguably a lack of cultural fluency or comfort that contribute to this sense of restriction.

2.5- Interpretation unbound: open-air cultural/historical interpretive areas of Rapa Nui

2.5.1- Archaeological framework of “sitelessness”

To the average person, archaeology is likely seen as the search for 'sites,' where researchers will find all the information they need to make conclusions on whatever they are investigating. It is not quite so simple, as human activity is not constricted to singular spacial clusters. Robert Dunnell and William Dancey highlight this argument in their article “Siteless Survey” (1983):

For the archaeologist operating within a traditional framework, surface surveys are usually conceived of as a means of locating sites for excavation (e.g., Gould 1977:153; Hole and Heizer 1973:163; Ruppe 1966:133). Even in modern regional strategies that stress rigorous analysis of surface remains, the basic purpose is still selecting sites for excavation rather than providing the solution to the research problem (Binford 1964; Redman 1973, 1974). Consequently, there is a tendency to think of the sampling universe as a set of sites rather than as a bounded unit of space. In many traditional surveys, this leads to omission of the areas searched in favor of a map of the archaeological manifestations discovered.¹²⁴

¹²³ Francisco Torres did not respond to my email, sent in WK1 of the term, which leaves this point unevicenced.

¹²⁴ R. C. Dunnell and William Dancey, “The Siteless Survey: A Regional Scale Data Collection Strategy,” *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* Vol. 6 (1983): 268.

Essentially, historical populations inhabited entire areas, and were not restricted to specific “sites.” Some areas may have a greater concentration of archaeological material, but that does not mean scientific inquiry or attention should not be given to other lower-density areas. Instead, the concentrations exist along a spectrum. Additionally, the authors claim that “...that the surficial distribution of artifacts constitutes an appropriate source of archaeological data independent of subsurface remains.”¹²⁵ In this regard, the results of “siteless survey,” without excavation, are seen as significant and important information on their own in answering questions of environmental archaeology or the historical distribution of humans and their activities through a landscape or region.

“Sitelessness” applies to both of this project's case studies in different ways given their disparate geographical characteristics. The historical Rapanui were limited to the geographic boundaries of the island, not counting sea-going activities such as fishing. This relatively small space is therefore very densely filled with archaeological material and remains.

In this sense, Rapa Nui takes on the character of an “open-air” museum, as anywhere you visit could be considered archaeologically or culturally significant, even though this is a problematic term, allotting seemingly arbitrary importance and skewing representation. Regardless of the implications for archaeological study, these populations' traditional lands hold profound meaning for their heritage and culture. How do outsiders learn about them?

¹²⁵ R. C. Dunnell and William Dancey, “The Siteless Survey,” 270.

2.5.2- Bureaucratic and governmental management of the island

Rapa Nui (or Isla de Pascua) is legally and economically a territory of Chile. As such, it is for the most part under the direction of Chilean government. A number of governmental offices and administrative bodies control –directly or indirectly– most of the archaeological activity, tourist activity, and interpretive material on the island. CONAF, La Corporación Nacional Forestal (National Forest Corporation), is in charge of the majority of the island's public land. They are a private non-profit organization funded by the Chilean Ministry of Agriculture.¹²⁶ They control the areas of the island collectively referred to as the Parque Nacional Rapa Nui. The PNRN is not a contiguous park, it is composed of separate areas dispersed throughout the island, divided by modern infrastructure, homes, and private land. Their function is to manage and preserve the island's archaeological areas, provide educational materials, guided tours, and so on. In 1995, UNESCO named the park a World Heritage Site, giving it broader international and legal protection against development, looting, and other damages.¹²⁷ The ever-increasing tourism Rapa Nui receives likely increases damage to archaeological materials and areas.

El Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales de Chile (National Council of Monuments) is another government department administering Rapa Nui, or the “Provincia de Isla de Pascua.” They are a sub-organization under the Chilean Ministry of Education.¹²⁸ As their title suggests, they are 'responsible' for the “protection of the

¹²⁶ CONAF website, “Quienes somos,” accessed February 24, 2014.

¹²⁷ Plaque on site at Tahai Sector, author photo, August 2014.

¹²⁸ Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales de Chile website, “Isla de Pascua.”

archaeological monuments.”¹²⁹ CONAF, the PNRN, and the CMN all work in conjunction to administer and protect the island's vast amount of archaeological and cultural material from the tourists, the elements, and construction. Any archaeological research requires permits from these offices. They are also interested in keeping tourism profits high, which adds another reason to increase preservation efforts.

Chilean control of much of the island's territory and some of the bureaucratic aspects of its cultural and historical interpretation presents a complex and problematic reality. The indigenous Rapanui do not have full sovereignty in the political sense, since Chile annexed the island for political and economic reasons in the 1888. In 1965, there was “an insurrection that caused the Chilean government to return land to the Rapanui” and also resulted in full Chilean citizenship for the Rapanui.¹³⁰

However, this does not mean their issues were resolved. There are portions of the Rapanui population strongly protesting for complete independence and sovereignty, with political tensions running high. Rapa Nui has a complex relationship with Chile: its economy is extremely dependent on the mainland and the tourism made possible in large part by the Chilean government.¹³¹ This cultural-political drama is absent from the MAPSE, as the museum does not mention the Chilean annexation of the island nor any of the adverse effects that stemmed from it. The MAPSE maintains a focus on the integrity and continued cultural traditions on the island, while staying away from historical factors that have challenged or weakened them.

¹²⁹ Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales de Chile website, “Facultades, Funciones, Atribuciones.”

¹³⁰ Hunt and Lipo, *Statues*, 175.

¹³¹ Fisher, Matthew, “Trouble festering in paradise as Easter Island natives push for Independence from Chile,” *National Post*, 26 March, 2015.

2.5.3- How do visitors interact with the non-museum interpretive areas?

Tourists must purchase tickets to gain entry to the most commonly visited areas. A 5-day pass from CONAF/PNRN is US\$60 per person, available from the main office on the island as well as right off the plane at Mataverí Airport. These passes give visitors access to Orongo (“Birdman” Village) at Rano Kau, and Rano Raraku (*moai* quarry). The offices prepare and distribute pamphlets containing maps, safety warnings, basic overviews of the major tourist areas for visitors to consult throughout their trip. Non-park areas are free to enter and explore.

In terms of infrastructure, the areas requiring tickets are much more developed. CONAF and PNRN-constructed restrooms, paved parking lots, walking paths, and visitor centers at the major 'tourist attractions,' which is logical as these areas have the most demand for amenities. Outside of these areas, there is little in the way of infrastructure. A few notable exceptions are Puna Pau (The red scoria¹³² quarry), Anakena Beach, and Ahu Tongariki (the largest restored platform). These other popular areas do not require park passes, yet still have a fair amount of 'amenities' (e.g. paths, rock fences, informational kiosks, interpretive material). Many of the fallen *Moai* around the island –when close to the main roads and solitary– are fenced off with simple wooden posts.¹³³ In a few instances, the fences were broken, either intentionally by people or accidentally maybe by horses scratching themselves. Some of the restored *ahus*, such as Ahu Nau Nau at Anakena beach, are fenced off as well, but the majority

¹³² Stone from which the *pukao*, moai 'hats', are made.

¹³³ Author photo, August 2014.

have no barriers. Instead, there are small signs with various symbols or phrases, all with the basic message of “keep your distance.”¹³⁴



Moai fence



One of many iterations of the ‘stay back’ signage

¹³⁴ Author photo, August 2014.

The further away from infrastructure (read: improved roads and marked trails) one gets, the less protective measures or informational resources there are. For instance, the beginning of the *Moai* road is marked, and the first few *Moai* from that point on are fenced off. As one progresses further toward Rano Raraku, the trail becomes less clear, and more overgrown. Through this section, there are no longer boundary fences surrounding fallen *moai*. One of the best preserved fallen 'Road *moai*' that we saw was far into the *moai* road, where I imagine few tourists venture.¹³⁵

2.5.4- Interpretive material and educational resources available to visitors outside of MAPSE

Relatively little cultural, interpretive, historical, or archaeological information is available outside of the main tourist attracting areas like Rano Raraku and Orongo, where there are visitor centers. Rano Raraku's visitor center has a pavilion of sorts with many well-maintained informative panels, and rows of benches for guide presentations. These panels cover the basic, uncontested information regarding *moai* and the history of the area. For example, "Rano Raraku supplied the raw materials, was used as a workshop, and was the distribution center for the statues."¹³⁶ The panels do not address how the statues were transported. By staying general with the information, the panel can be considered fairly 'interpretive,' as it notes, "today each visitor may experience it his or her own way."¹³⁷

While some panels presented the basic historical/archaeological information, others addressed visitor rules and conduct. These panels emphasized conservation

¹³⁵ Hunt and Lipo, *Statues*, 84.

¹³⁶ Rano Raraku visitor center, informational panel, author photograph. August 11, 2014.

¹³⁷ Rano Raraku visitor center, informational panel, author photograph. August 11, 2014.

efforts, with titles like “Visitors: How can you stop cumulative impact?”¹³⁸ The same panel goes on to explain how cumulative impact “results from individually minor, but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. The long term result is heritage destruction.”¹³⁹ Rapa Nui's huge tourism statistics and projections are not great indications for the future preservation of the archaeology, even if most people do not act destructively.

The Orongo Visitor Center, as discussed in 3.2c, is more like a small museum. Only, there are no objects exhibited; it consists entirely of text and photos relating to the archaeology and more recent history of the 'Birdman village.' The exhibit highlights the Tangata Manu ceremony, the prevalent petroglyphic art of the area, and historical damages to the buildings by 'explorers.' The exhibit presents a message of conservation similar to Rano Raraku: “Visitors who do not respect the rules of heritage protection also threaten this place today.”¹⁴⁰ There is a well-marked and strict path through the village, where some of the circular stone houses have been restored and others left in their original state.¹⁴¹ Some had been destroyed by US sailors from the USS Mohican in 1886 under Paymaster William Thomson who were 'excavating.'¹⁴² The sheer cliffs on either side of the village make it harder for people to go too far off of the prescribed path.

¹³⁸ Rano Raraku visitor center, informational panel, author photograph. August 11, 2014.

¹³⁹ Rano Raraku visitor center, informational panel, author photograph. August 11, 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Orongo Visitor Center, informational panel, author photograph, August 10, 2014.

¹⁴¹ Author photo, Orongo, August 2014

¹⁴² Orongo Visitor Center, informational panel, author photograph, August 10, 2014.



Orongo ceremonial village, restored stone houses

Most places outside of the main tourist attractions only have simple plaques identifying the area or *ahu's* name. Generally, the restored *ahus* have more interpretive material in the form of signs and plaques. *Ahus* in their undisturbed or original states typically only have a sign with the place name and small boundary markers as discussed above. There were quite a few examples of locations with interpretive panels or signs that had deteriorated to the point of illegibility. Examples include a set of three blank wooden panels at Tahai and another pair on the western coast near Te Pahu, where there are many caves.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Author photo, Tahai, August 2014



Informational signage at Tahai

A few possible reasons come to mind for the current state of the informational material. Of course, the constant sea spray, rain, wind, and sunshine on the island will deteriorate most surfaces given enough time. I did not inquire as to when the signs in question were constructed. Perhaps it is an issue of bureaucratic inefficiency in the government ministries and organizations involved: Where will the funding come from? Who will write, design, and construct the displays? On a speculative note, this may be deliberate neglect on the part of PNRN and CONAF in an effort to reduce damage caused by tourist traffic to these areas. Additionally, some areas –such as those with a high concentration of caves – could be dangerous to tourists. If there is no information available concerning the interesting aspects of an area, a tourist may be less likely to visit said area, instead sticking to the publicized, well-marked areas.

2.5.5- Restricted access on Rapa Nui

Some areas of the island are only open to Rapanui due to their cultural privilege,

patrimony, and ancestral or historical connections. An example of this 'cultural boundary' is the interior lake and meadow of Rano Raraku crater.¹⁴⁴



Anyone with a park pass can hike a trail to the rim of the crater and see the area, but after this, access is limited to Rapanui. While we were there, the rangers spotted a small group of people across the lake. They had walked through the marsh and hills of the lake's edge to get there –likely looking at the *moai* inside the crater (the upper right portion of the photo) – and this was considered trespassing. Much whistling and yelling from the rangers attracted their attention, and they sheepishly came back to the approved area. However, it turned out that it was a couple of tourists guided by a Rapanui man. Upon learning this, the rangers were placated, and the group was free to

¹⁴⁴ Author photo, Rano Raraku August 2014

go.¹⁴⁵ This is an example of the freedom possessed by the Rapanui, as it is, after all, their cultural right to access their ancestral territory. However, from a devil's advocate perspective, the Rapanui guide abused his cultural privilege by bringing non-Rapanui guests into the culturally “off-limits” area. While we were doing our field work, Dr. Hunt was conscientious of not getting too close to *ahus* or *moai*, and was concerned the islanders would not be pleased with our photographic drone investigations if they saw us in 'culturally restricted' areas. It is apparent that these historical and cultural landscapes are tricky to navigate.

2.5.6- Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawai'i

The Bishop Museum is a popular institution detailing the history of Hawai'i and many other Polynesian islands including Rapa Nui. During a visit in December of 2014, I documented the portion of the exhibit pertaining to Rapa Nui, which included Dr. Hunt's narrative as well as the 'conventional' narrative. An interactive tablet-like display contained further information on specific aspects of the hall. The Rapa Nui tab contained a variety of topics from *moai*, to settlement, to 'collapse.' One slide stuck out as perpetuating the 'conventional' narrative's emphasis on civil conflict, where “At some point in history, the Rapanui people toppled all of the *moai*.”¹⁴⁶ The slide does not cite a source or evidence for this claim. A few slides later, Jo Anne Van Tilburg is profiled as “an expert on the *moai* statues of Rapa Nui [who] has worked on the island for over 3

¹⁴⁵ Orongo Visitor Center, informational panel, author photograph, August 10, 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Interactive computer display, “Rapa Nui- Research.” Bernice Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, December 17, 2014.

decades.”¹⁴⁷ There is a replica of a *moai*'s head in the museum's courtyard, gifted to the museum by Japan after it was made for the 1970 Osaka World's Fair.¹⁴⁸

However, there was also evidence in favor of the emerging narrative. A panel discusses the mata'a, “Tanged obsidian objects...hafted to wooden handles [which] have traditionally been interpreted as weapons, but they may have been used for gardening activities and carving wood based on analyses of residue, and use and wear patterns.” This interpretation of the mata'a undermines the claims that they were used in civil conflict resulting from the 'ecocide' perpetrated by the Rapanui. The addition of a quote from Terry Hunt adds more clout to the emerging narrative he and Carl Lipo have developed: “Rapa Nui had these incredible accomplishments, all with very few resources and in total isolation. The problems came with the germs and slave trading. In a sense Easter Island is this incredible tale of success that only failed with the beginnings of globalization.”¹⁴⁹

The Bishop Museum portrays a narrative somewhere in the middle by presenting evidence from the representatives of each side, and offering both interpretations on topics such as what the Mata'a tools were used for. The prominent presentation of Dr. Hunt's quote tips the scale in favor of the emerging narrative, framing the island's historical misfortunes as out of the islanders' control.

¹⁴⁷ Interactive computer display, “Rapa Nui- Research.” Bernice Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, December 17, 2014.

¹⁴⁸ *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, “Bishop Museum *moai* isn't the real deal,” June 18, 2001.

¹⁴⁹ Wall text, Rapa Nui panel, quote from Terry Hunt (2012). Pacific Hall, Bernice Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, December 2014.

2.5.7- Conclusion for Rapa Nui historical narratives in museums and interpretive areas

The MAPSE's exhibits offer very little to no information about the negative impacts of Europeans – and later mainland South Americans – on the prosperity, sovereignty, and existence of the indigenous Rapanui. This sanitization of the historical narrative excludes major aspects of the island's past, crucial to understanding the nature of its interaction with the external world as well as its own evolution or cultural progression – its historical gestalt. While the museum does a great job of incorporating into the narrative indigenous oral traditions and cultural knowledge from modern indigenous Rapanui community members, as well as scholarly academic research, it lacks these critical points. While the museum and interpretive material is technically under Chilean control, there are Rapanui community members actively involved in researching and representing their history to the public. However, under the control of Chile, the Rapanui do not have complete sovereignty, including issues of cultural interpretation and representation.

Outside of the MAPSE and the Orongo Visitor Center, there is very limited interpretive material available to curious tourists or Rapanui investigating their culture and history. The most visited sites have infrastructure such as constructed paths, some signs, and barriers protecting the archaeological features, but educational information is fairly rare. The higher-profile the area, the more likely there will be interpretive material. Anywhere a CONAF park ticket is required, there is a high concentration of information. Perhaps the CNM and CONAF believe that most visitors or Rapanui who are interested in learning about the island's history and archaeology will be content with

what is available at the MAPSE and Orongo Visitor Center, on in the map pamphlets CONAF distributes. Perhaps it is an issue of resources: would it cost too much to revamp the signage and increase the amount of information it conveyed? Maybe the bureaucratic hoops are too small to jump through, or there are other higher-priority concerns to attend to first. In any case, tourists are out of luck if they were hoping for comprehensive educational material around the island, outside of the MAPSE and certain visitor areas.

Section III- Northern Paiutes in central Oregon- Historical obfuscation and misinformation

3.1- Variable narratives in the academic literature concerning the Northern Paiute in central Oregon

3.1.1- James Gardner's *Oregon Apocalypse* vs. Andrew Gale Ontko's *Thunder over the Ochoco*

By volume, the archaeological and historiographical literature on the Northern Paiutes is relatively much smaller than that of Rapa Nui. However, it is still a very contentious history for the authors involved and the modern members of the Northern Paiute tribe. In parallel to Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo as authors of 'emerging' or 'contrary' narratives is James Gardner. He is a local Oregon history researcher and lawyer, author of *Oregon Apocalypse: The Hidden History of the Northern Paiute*, which will soon be published. Gardner claims that the true history of the Northern Paiute tribe has been obfuscated and misrepresented by previous authors, downplaying and outright ignoring the historical wrongs – arguably atrocities – against them which worsened with the increased Euroamerican settlement of central Oregon in the 1860s and 1870s.

His research and narrative strongly conflict with those of Andrew Gale Ontko. Writing *Thunder over the Ochoco* between 1960-1993, Ontko glossed over these ugly aspects of their history, focusing instead on the 'colonial' pioneers' perspectives. For the purposes of this project, Ontko's work is considered the 'conventional' narrative of Northern Paiute history, being challenged by authors including James Gardner.

For clarification, Ontko is deceased, making this debate slightly one-sided as far as rebuttal of new material goes. However, some living authors still lean upon their

predecessors' research and perpetuate some of its core components in their own work, and the series is still popular with readers. This is the consequence of narrative continuity or persistence, in which new authors base their own work on their predecessors' potentially erroneous work, as it is, in their opinion, correct.

3.1.1a- Gale Ontko's pioneer-centric accounts in *Thunder over the Ochoco*

Thunder over the Ochoco is one of the most popular and widely-known books on the history of Oregon's tribes and pioneer colonization. For an example of its prevalence, it serves as the sole reference for the Wikipedia entry on Paiute Chief Pony Blanket (Egan).¹⁵⁰ It is also one of the most contentious series amongst modern Oregonian historians. Gale Ontko was a life-long resident of Oregon, mainly in the Prineville area of Crook County, where much of the history he wrote about transpired. He did not receive a post-graduate degree in history or anthropology, but studied primary historical sources extensively. According to Steve Lent, the historian at the Bowman museum, Ontko worked for the Oregon Bureau of Land Management for his career, but always had an interest in writing about local history. His series *Thunder over the Ochoco* looks at the history of the pioneers and tribes in the region from the late 18th through early 20th centuries. It was written over multiple decades, and consists of five volumes organized chronologically. Lent says Ontko never intended the series to be a commercial success. In fact, the last two volumes were published posthumously. Even after three or four printings, Ontko and his family never saw any serious financial gain, as most of the profit went to the publishers.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Wikipedia, "Egan (Paiute)." Accessed March 2015.

¹⁵¹ Steve Lent (Bowman Museum historian) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

This is not to say the series is not widely read, or that a portion of his audience takes his writing as a strictly factual account of Oregon history. Many casual Oregon history enthusiasts may consider it the most authoritative work to date on the subject of Oregon's pioneer and Native American history. While it is objectively true that Ontko did a vast amount of primary source research over the course of his writing, modern academic researchers, including Gardner, disagree with his interpretation of these primary accounts as well as his pioneer-centric narrative.

In the foreword of *Rain of Tears*, the fourth installment of the series, Jim and Peggy Iler, a local couple acquainted with the author, insist that “Mr. Ontko has no interest whatever in politics or agendas of political correctness.”¹⁵² From Ontko's perspective, his approach was objective, relying largely on primary documents from the 18th through 20th centuries. His writing does not directly disparage or condemn the Northern Paiutes, or any of the other Oregon tribes. However, he may have overlooked the fact that he was using almost exclusively Euroamerican documents, only including tribal perspectives where they were recorded by the settlers or government.

In regard to Northern Paiute history, Ontko makes a number of claims that are simply incorrect, contradicting more academic research as well as –more importantly – the cultural and historical knowledge of the modern Northern Paiutes themselves. One of the most notable mistakes is the author's confusion regarding the cultural or ancestral relationships between various tribes in the region. On numerous occasions, Ontko

¹⁵² Andrew Gale Ontko, *Thunder over the Ochoco: Volume IV Rain of Tears* (Bend: Maverick Publications. 1993), xi.

makes claims concerning the lineage or origins of the Northern Paiutes, as well as how they were (are) related to other tribes in the area:

Of equal interest, the only Indians known as “piutes” or “pahutes” were distributed as follows: 2000 in Nevada, 4000 in Wyoming, 528 in Utah. None resided in Oregon, giving further proof that the Snakes were not considered to be Paiutes except in the minds of Sarah Winnemucca and a few civilian employees in the indian service. The Western Shoshoni were always listed as Snakes while the Eastern Shoshoni were called Shoshoni.¹⁵³

Sarah [Winnemucca], desperately portraying Bad Face as the absolute leader of the Paiute tribes, vehemently denied his Snake heritage and established for all time her father's role as a Shoshoni statesman. She did everything in her power to assure the whites that Bad Face was a peace-loving man...Bad Face refused to fit the mold.¹⁵⁴

By mid-1877, [Bureau of Indian Affairs agent] Superintendent Rinehart finally observed what had missed the attention of almost every white man since the settlement of Oregon territory in 1811. The Paiutes were not the same people as the Snakes!¹⁵⁵

These passages illustrate Ontko's confusion as to how the “Snakes,” “Northern Paiutes,” “Paiutes,” and “Shoshoni” tribes/terms are related, or not related. It makes sense given Ontko was working almost exclusively with military and pioneer primary documents, he could be inheriting their confusion and incorporating it into his research. These statements are contradictory to James Gardner's assertions, that “Snake” was a derogatory term used against the Northern Paiutes which they came to be known as, not the name of a separate band or tribe.

Not surprisingly, the Columbia River tribes portrayed the Northern Paiutes as “Snake Indians” and the “Rattle Snake” people – and those portraits were not flattering, but hateful and fearful, pejorative and prejudicial. These perceptions

¹⁵³ Ontko, *Thunder over the Ochoco*, 116.

¹⁵⁴ Ontko, *Thunder over the Ochoco*, 73.

¹⁵⁵ Ontko, *Thunder over the Ochoco*, 145.

and labels “stuck” with Lewis and Clark, and with subsequent reports and maps, explorers and settlers.¹⁵⁶

Also, Ontko does not distinguish between the “Paiutes” and the “Northern Paiutes” in his treatment of the topic. This leads to confusion, as the Northern Paiutes are a distinct group within the larger designation of the 'Paiute.' This larger group also includes the Owens Valley Paiute and Southern Paiute groups, which historically ranged throughout the central and southern areas of the Great Basin. The Northern Paiute are specifically located in central and eastern Oregon, northern Nevada, as well as western Idaho and northern California to some extent.¹⁵⁷

Currently, the main concentrations of Northern Paiute population are at the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Burns Paiute Reservations in Oregon. Within the 'Northern Paiute' umbrella there were historically twenty or so bands, normally named for what they ate or where they were based, and located more specifically within the larger Northern Paiute territory. Ontko fails to make these distinctions, instead oversimplifying by grouping them all under the single designation of “Snakes.” Again, this is likely due to his focus on non-native primary documents which would limit the knowledge of such details.

Another issue Ontko's opponents point out is his pioneer-centric narrative. Generally, the history is presented from the perspective of the pioneers, settlers, military and government officials. While Northern Paiute or other tribal perspectives are present, they are mainly based on secondary accounts. There are more famous actors -such as Sarah Winnemucca, Chiefs Has No Horse, Bad Face, and Pony Blanket- who are

¹⁵⁶ James Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The hidden history of the Northern Paiute* (in press, 2014), 87.

¹⁵⁷ James Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse: The hidden history of the Northern Paiute* (in press, 2014), 87.

quoted throughout, but the majority of citations come from military and government records, correspondence, and primary historical accounts.¹⁵⁸ Ontko notes that “John Faulner, who had opened a general store and taken over as postmaster at Paulina in 1877, had all of his property confiscated by the Indians.”¹⁵⁹ While this may be factually true, it is presented in a way that paints the settler as the victim of 'Indian depredation,' a common narrative used to justify the genocidal militaristic actions of the settlers and government.

An additional example of Ontko's pioneer-centric approach is his use of the anglicized translations of the Paiute chiefs' names mentioned above instead of their names in their original languages, including Paiute, Salish, and Chinook Jargon.

On the subject of the extermination of men, women, and children by Warm Springs 'scouts' during the “Snake” War, Lent proposes that there is “Not enough of a scholarly base on the subject,”¹⁶⁰ and supports Gardner's research goals. The Museum at Warm Springs has downplayed these more negative aspects of the Northern Paiute history during this period as it remains a sensitive subject for the modern tribes who live together at Warm Springs. The Northern Paiutes were historically seen as inferior by the other tribes because of what they ate (mainly foraging for roots i.e “Digger Indians”), and the fact they were late to adopt the use of horses relative to surrounding tribes.^{161 162}

Of course, Ontko's use of these records makes sense, as they are far more

¹⁵⁸ Sarah Winnemucca remains a notable exception, as she was fluent in spoken and written English in addition to her native tribal languages, and therefore recorded primary accounts from her perspective.

¹⁵⁹ Ontko, *Thunder over the Ochoco*, 169.

¹⁶⁰ Steve Lent (Historian of Bowman Museum), interview with the author. November 20, 2014.

¹⁶¹ Steve Lent (Historian of Bowman Museum), interview with the author. November 20, 2014.

¹⁶² Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 105.

abundant in places like state and national archives. The historical tribal populations' lack of English literacy, coupled with a focus on the oral tradition, created a very one-sided written historical record for future researchers to consult. In more recent times, indigenous or decolonizing research is bringing the other set of narratives into focus, evening out the field to some degree. This research relies on the knowledge of tribal community members, and values or legitimizes their perspectives when historically, researchers largely ignored them.

Ontko's use of documents from military and government correspondence, documents, and the like, along with pioneer accounts, makes for a pioneer-centric narrative. There is little written record from the Northern Paiutes, unless they were quoted in the government or pioneer documents. This is why traditional knowledge and the oral tradition are so important in informing museums and other forms of research. Without it, the evidence is extremely unilateral, and consequently incomplete.

3.1.1b- James Gardner's Paiute-centric historical perspective in *Oregon Apocalypse*

James Gardner's research and writing is on the 'edge of knowledge,' as he would say, of research regarding the Northern Paiutes, meaning his work surpasses prior boundaries in terms of evidence, narrative, and interpretation. What sets Gardner apart from previous authors, including Ontko, is how far he goes into painstaking detail concerning the genocidal efforts of the US military, government, and neighboring tribes against Northern Paiutes in the mid-to-late 19th century. His historical lens was adjusted to focus on the Paiute narratives, often revisiting similar sources as previous authors, yet yielding different, Paiute-centered conclusions. This passage provides a general overview of Gardner's main arguments throughout the book:

[General] Crook took advantage of the military roads, forts and camps now all over Eastern Oregon, affording the Army a permanent and powerful military presence throughout Paiute country. At same time Crook would conduct year round assaults—including harsh winter campaigns—and pursue genocidal warfare, night hunting and assaults and “scorched earth” campaigns against the Oregon Paiutes. He also drew on and took advantage of the ancient hatred and savvy skills of three Indian commando groups—the Warm Springs Commandos under McKay and Darragh; the Umatilla Commandos; and the Fort Hall Shoshone-Snake Commandos under Archie McIntosh. It was a formidable killing machine, bent on exterminating or conquering the Paiutes.¹⁶³

Further, there is an exposition of the little-discussed historical inter-tribal slave trading network in which the Northern Paiutes were highly targeted by neighboring tribes. Gardner argues this historical maltreatment served as an indication of motive or reasoning for certain tribes' future anti-Northern Paiute actions in coordination with the United States Military:

The Paiutes of Oregon lived in a tough region and were surrounded by formidable ancient tribal enemies, and as a result experienced centuries of inter-tribal slave raids and warfare. Even in the remote reaches of pre-history powerful tribes around the Northern Great Basin held profoundly prejudicial and hostile attitudes toward the Northern Paiutes, and subjected them to virtually continuous incursions and slave raids—to the point that the Northern Paiutes and the Northern Great Basin became a principal source of slaves being supplied to the major Indian slave trade of the Pacific Northwest.¹⁶⁴

Gardner's research is not directly included in the local central Oregon museums, given it is currently in the process of publication. He collected and stitched together all of the sources that comprise this narrative, which previously existed mostly independent of each other. The question is why have so few researchers looked at the same sources in the same way as Gardner? Why have none of the museums, which frequently cite

¹⁶³ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 436.

¹⁶⁴ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 74.

similar historical primary accounts, discussed the 'hard truths' he addresses?¹⁶⁵ A likely cause is the pioneer-centric narrative, which was historically prevalent, leading to a confirmation bias in which any anti-pioneer information was downplayed or disregarded. To combat this, Gardner references previous research done with a more tribal-centric focus, including Edward Johnson's *Walker River Paiutes: A Tribal History*.¹⁶⁶ He also used primary documents from settlers, military and government agents of the time in the chapter “Early Explorations of the Great Basin (1820-1855).”¹⁶⁷ Gardner collaborated with contemporary Northern Paiute tribal community members, most notably Wilson Wewa, a descendant of Paiute chief Weahwewa. Gaining insight from oral traditions and tribal knowledge further solidified Gardner's Paiute-centrism.

3.1.1c- Amy Lonetree's investigation of tribal museums in relation to Gardner's research

Lonetree and Gardner's academic opinions align, as both are supporters of a 'full disclosure' approach to tribal history. This approach is considered 'decolonizing,' as it works to undo the decades – centuries, in some cases – of inaccuracy, obfuscation, and ignorance regarding Native American history. Lonetree's perspectives on decolonization, narrative, and representation in the context of museums is a primary aspect of this project, providing a rubric for the museums therein.

¹⁶⁵ Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing museums: representing Native America in national and tribal museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), throughout.

¹⁶⁶ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 131.

¹⁶⁷ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 127.

3.2-Central Oregon museums' portrayal of the Northern Paiute narratives: Museum at Warm Springs, Deschutes County Historical Society, High Desert Museum, and the A. R. Bowman Museum

3.2.1-Introduction

3.2.1a- Research questions

The project addresses a number of sub-foci in its exploration of the topic. Primarily, the project investigates the extent to which the museums in question address Northern Paiute history. Even though the Paiutes have a vast historical presence in the northern Great Basin, their full history has – until recently – never been addressed academically. The main goal of the project is to explore how, if at all, the tribe's 'hidden history'¹⁶⁸ is represented in central Oregon museums.

Once the amount of information on the Northern Paiutes in the museums is understood, the next step is determining what perspective, narrative, sources, or framing the exhibits employ. Which aspects of Northern Paiute history are emphasized? Which aspects are downplayed, or non-existent? How are negative or disturbing aspects of their history framed, if at all? Which sources did the museums utilize in creating the exhibit? Was there any collaboration with members of the tribal communities –Paiute or otherwise– during the research, conceptualization, or construction of the exhibits? What bearing does the information in the exhibits have on tribal sovereignty? All of these questions play a part in the final 'product' the visitors will view and learn from. They are also pivotal in determining the degree to which the museum adheres to a decolonizing methodology.

¹⁶⁸ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 127.

3.2.1b- Methodology

An essential aspect of the research process is to understand the existing literature on the subject. Of course, the amount of literature concerning the Northern Paiutes in academic or popular circulation is too large to review comprehensively in the space of this project.¹⁶⁹ For this reason, I have only included select authors whose narratives conflict directly with each other, as detailed in Section 3.1. These authors are Andrew Gale Ontko with his series *Thunder over the Ochoco*, and James Gardner, who is currently preparing for publication *Oregon Apocalypse: The hidden history of the Northern Paiute*. Amy Lonetree's *Decolonizing Museums* will be helpful in addressing the undercurrents involved in the treatment of Native American history in museums more generally, as well as further clarifying the indigenous museum model.

A large part of the research for this project was 'field work'; actually visiting and documenting the museums in Bend, Warm Springs, and Prineville. These museums are 'local' in their scale, as they predominantly focus on the history of their immediate surroundings, the modern Deschutes and Crook counties. The High Desert museum is slightly different, as it has a geographically wider range, encompassing the majority of Oregon east of the Cascades.

Along with the site visits, interviews with museum directors and researchers were pivotal in gaining background information relating to exhibit planning and evolution, including background information on general operations. Additionally, class

¹⁶⁹ See: Berg, *The First Oregonians*, 2007; Allen, *The Role of moral outrage in the Northern Paiute wars of the mid-19th century*, 2006; Wheeler-Voegelin, *The Northern Paiute of Central Oregon: A chapter in treaty-making*, 1955; Hodgen and Purchase, *The Rocks are Ringing: Bannock- Paiute Indian war, Oregon, 1878*, 2002.

lectures and discussions with HC444 course partners Wilson Wewa, a Northern Paiute community leader at the Warm Springs Reservation, and James Gardner, a local author and historian, add to the depth of the project.

3.2.1c- Importance of research

The driving force behind this section of the project is to learn how Northern Paiute history is treated in museums and whether or not an overtly tribal perspective is included in the representation of their history and culture. When a group's history is presented for the visiting public to interpret and learn about, I believe the museum has the responsibility as an institution of learning to present factual, well-researched exhibits, while including the tribal communities' knowledge and perspective. This responsibility is a key aspect of 'decolonization' in the academic sphere.

The general population is not interested enough to do their own in-depth research on the topics presented in the museums in question. However, they might be interested enough to visit the local museums, making these institutions a primary conduit for knowledge relating to local history, including the Northern Paiutes'. In some cases, it could be the first and only exposure a visitor has to this significant aspect of Oregon's history. Whatever they learn or take away from their visit may heavily influence their long-term opinions on the topic.

3.2.2- Case Studies in central Oregon's local historical museums

3.2.2.1- Museum at Warm Springs, Warm Springs Reservation

3.2.2.1a- History and background

The museum was founded and developed by the Confederated Tribes of Warm

Springs, and opened in March of 1993.¹⁷⁰ Previously, no other museum in the region adequately or comprehensively covered the Warm Springs tribes' histories, and the museum was in part a response to this. Additionally, the museum serves as a community center, and a place to celebrate, preserve, and learn about their history and culture.

Going back to the discussion of Amy Lonetree's *Decolonizing Museums* in Section 1.1, museums exist along a spectrum measuring the level of tribal involvement and collaboration present in their operation. This spectrum is important in the scope of this project because it largely determines which perspective or narrative will be portrayed through the exhibits, and vice versa. The Museum at Warm Springs qualifies as an 'indigenous' or 'tribal' museum, as it is designed, curated, operated, and controlled by the tribal community of Warm Springs. This classification lies in contrast to all other approaches to museum administration, as none of them give one-hundred percent control to the tribes. This type of museum emphasizes tribal sovereignty, and it is a strong theme throughout the Museum at Warm Springs.

However, this is not to say that every tribe comprising the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is equally represented at the museum. Some of the exhibit sections regarding the Northern Paiute are in conflict with Gardner's research in *Oregon Apocalypse*.¹⁷¹ Specifically in contention are the loss of traditionally held territories,

¹⁷⁰ Museum at Warm Springs Visitor Website, "About us."

¹⁷¹ Since I was not able to interview Northern Paiute Tribal community members, I do not want to speculate about what their opinions on the museum are. I can only report my own findings and observations, and compare them to the published narratives. I believe Gardner and Ontko's publications represent opposite sides of the spectrum in regard to full-disclosure and Paiute-centric narrative.

and the US Government, Army, and neighboring tribes' drastic efforts in the attempted extermination of the Northern Paiutes.

3.2.2.1b- Research methods and community collaboration at the Museum at Warm Springs

As Warm Springs is an indigenous museum, it conducts research with a tribal perspective. The community members add their 'traditional knowledge,' lending to the insight achieved through non-native or 'Western' academic routes of research, such as primary historical document investigation. Given the breadth and depth of the information transferred by oral tradition, it is a pivotal source of knowledge in the indigenous museum. Many of the more recent aspects of tribal history, including Northern Paiute history, are within living memory on the reservations at Warm Springs and Burns, Oregon. If the information is not within the older community members' memories, it is from a few generations prior and passed down.

The living memories and community traditional knowledge informed many exhibits in the museum, providing primary perspectives from community leaders such as Wilson Wewa and Myra Johnson-Orange.¹⁷² In this sense, research and collaboration are one in the same for the Museum at Warm Springs, because the exhibits source the majority of their information from within the community.

3.2.2.1c- Collections

One major difference at the Museum at Warm Springs is that every object in the exhibits has a specific, well-defined tribal provenance. According to Eliza Elkins Jones' article in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, "The Warm Springs tribes have allocated

¹⁷² Warm Springs tribal community members and course partners for HC Northern Paiutes class

thousands of dollars each year to buy artifacts from members and families, resulting in a collection that is one of the most complete owned by an Indian tribe.”¹⁷³ Most items are donated from community members' personal collections, or made specifically for the exhibits using traditional craft knowledge. For example, the “Hide scraping tool, stone and tree root. 87.39.1. From Emily Waheneka, used by her grandfather in the early 1900s to scrape and soften fur pelts.”¹⁷⁴ Later on in the hall, a panel explains this practice: “These prized heirlooms have been kept safe within families for many generations. The Museum at Warm Springs exists to preserve and protect these tribal treasures.”¹⁷⁵ Many museums claim to act 'in trust,' but indigenous museums can maintain this claim to a further extent as the objects originate from the tribes and stay in their communal curation. There is also more agency, in that the tribal community has a voice in determining which aspects of their history or cultural objects the museum exhibits. This contrasts the other case studies' collections, as most of their materials were given to, taken by, or purchased by the donor from tribal communities before being loaned or 'gifted' to the museums.

3.2.2.1d- Exhibits

The Museum at Warm Springs is fairly large, and the exhibit hall takes a horseshoe shape with the entrance gallery and modern tribal art gallery forming the spine of the 'D' shape. The exhibit is organized chronologically, starting with prehistoric settlement and occupation running through modern life of tribal community members.

¹⁷³ Eliza Elkins Jones, “Spotlight on Affiliates: The Museum at Warm Springs,” in *Oregon Historical Quarterly* Vol. 106, No. 2 (Summer, 2005): 307-308.

¹⁷⁴ Object label. Museum at Warm Springs.

¹⁷⁵ Wall text. Museum at Warm Springs.

After an introductory video presentation, the exhibit begins with a section titled “Ancient heritage,” explaining the vast amount of time – roughly 8,000 years – tribal ancestors, including those of the Northern Paiutes, have inhabited the geographic area of modern Oregon and the rest of the Great Basin.¹⁷⁶ Emphasizing this vast temporal presence as well as the importance of the oral tradition, a video presentation “Songs of Our People” plays on loop early in the exhibit. It shows community members participating in traditional cultural practices including dances and songs. Some were adapted to modern circumstances – for example honoring US military veterans from the tribes. A strong message at the museum is the strength of the current community through the retention of cultural practices. According to the exhibit, much of this success is due to the elders, who “are living treasures who preserve and perpetuate [their] heritage.”¹⁷⁷

After this, the hall covers traditional life-ways, including crafts, subsistence, and various ceremonies. For example, the “Cougar skin, 78.2.4. From Larry Dick, Cougar skins and the head of a cougar are worn by dancers in the cougar dance.”¹⁷⁸ The text uses present tense, denoting the current or continuing nature of what is on display. Another interesting aspect of this section is the text's use of the first person. For example, a panel titled “First Kill: A family celebration” describes how “First food ceremonies...show our respect for the animals and plants we eat.”¹⁷⁹ This grammar shows how the perspective is from within the community, in contrast to the more distant

¹⁷⁶ Wall text, Museum at Warm Springs.

¹⁷⁷ Wall text, “Elders” section, Museum at Warm Springs.

¹⁷⁸ Object text, Museum at Warm Springs.

¹⁷⁹ Wall text, “First Kill,” Museum at Warm Springs.

third person.

Moving on to Euroamerican contact, the section “On the threshold of change” looks at “How US Indian policy led to the Treaty of 1855.” The panel “They signed the treaty” specifies that “140 Warm Springs and Wascos witnessed the Treaty of 1855.”¹⁸⁰ It leaves out the fact the Northern Paiute Chiefs Paulina and Weahwewa were excluded from representing their tribe at the signing ceremony.¹⁸¹ Similarly, a further panel claims that under the Treaty of 1855, “the confederated bands of the Wasco and Warm Springs ceded 10 million acres to the United States.”¹⁸² The panel fails to mention that much of the stolen land was traditionally/historically owned by the Northern Paiutes.

The tribe is addressed further on in “Paiute resistance and resettlement,” where “From 1825 almost to 1870, Paiute bands raided stock and fought settlers, other Indians, soldiers and scouts, in a persistent and continuous effort to keep control of their ancestral lands. They were finally defeated by General George Crook after a two-year US Army campaign, 1886-1888.”¹⁸³ Warm Springs is the only museum to go into this much detail concerning the military efforts against the Northern Paiutes. The full extent of this effort in “extermination,”¹⁸⁴ however, is not made clear. This description marks the Northern Paiutes as the aggressors, 'raiding' and 'fighting,' when according to Gardner's narrative, they were attacked, and acting in self-defense. The 'scouts' are not identified in this section, but rather in a separate section which focuses on Warm Springs members who have served in the military, and does not describe what that

¹⁸⁰ Wall text, “On the Threshold of change,” Museum at Warm Springs.

¹⁸¹ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 353.

¹⁸² Wall text, “On the threshold of change,” Museum at Warm Springs.

¹⁸³ Wall text, “Paiute Resistance and Resettlement,” Museum at Warm Springs.

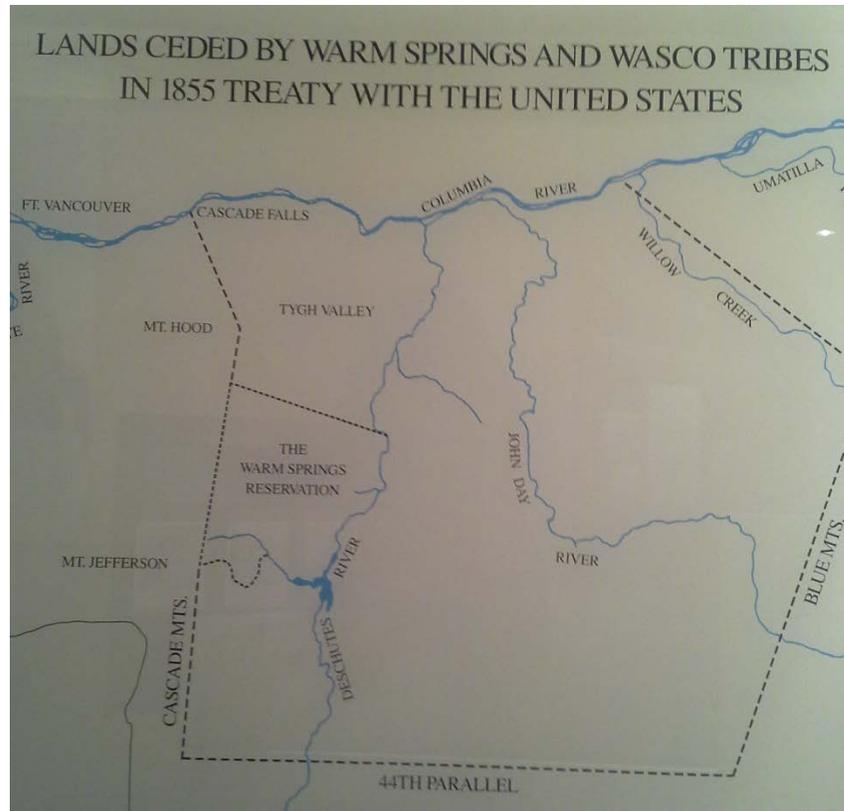
¹⁸⁴ Gardner's term.

entailed. This panel goes on to say “the Warm Springs and Wasco people decided to welcome the Paiutes [to the Warm Springs reservation], who began coming back in 1879.”¹⁸⁵ It would be interesting to know more since there had been historical conflicts between the tribes.

3.2.2.1e- Conclusions for Warm Springs

As a result of the generally contentious historical relationship between the Northern Paiute and the other Warm Springs tribes, the portrayal of their history may be skewed in the museum, downplaying conflicts or negative interactions between them. Notably missing from the exhibits – yet included in Gardner's research – is acknowledgment of territory taken from the Northern Paiutes (see photo of map), and the role of Warm Springs, Wasco, and other neighboring tribes' 'scouts' in the US government's extermination efforts.

¹⁸⁵ Wall text, “Paiute Resistance and Resettlement,” Museum at Warm Springs.



However, the museum does represent the modern Warm Springs Reservation community as culturally vibrant, celebrating their customs, celebrations, and sovereignty. This positive and forward-minded perspective is an important aspect of tribal museums, reminding their visiting public that they have a future as well as a history.

3.2.2.2- Deschutes County Historical Society Museum, Bend, OR

3.2.2.2a- History

The museum is housed in the former Reid School, which opened in 1914. The museum was dedicated in 1980 when the Deschutes historical society merged with the Pioneer Association. Formed in 1947, the Pioneer Association donated their collection

of local historical and cultural material to the new museum.¹⁸⁶ The building underwent major renovations around 2001, including adding some more detailed exhibits regarding central Oregon tribes. As a non-profit organization, it is not officially affiliated with Deschutes County. The county leases the Reid school building to the museum, but do not support them directly through county tax funds. It is mainly funded through grants and donations. The museum also owns nearly all of their collection, and is not actively accessioning new material, which saves money. They are able to keep the price of admission down to five dollars.¹⁸⁷

3.2.2.2b- Facilities

In the words of Director Kelly Cannon-Miller, “The building is our largest artifact.”¹⁸⁸ The ten classrooms of the three-story school are occupied with different historical focuses, mainly documenting historical-period pioneer life in Deschutes County. The top floor is used for storage of the unused collections, a computer lab, and a conservation 'corner.' Kelly's office is on the second floor. Collection preservation and conservation is challenging in such an old, unsuited building. The renovations in 2001 addressed this with improvements to the heating and cooling system, but it is still far from ideal.¹⁸⁹

3.2.2.2c- Collections

About one-third of the museum's fairly small inventory regarding local tribes is

¹⁸⁶ Deschutes Pioneers' Association website, April 2, 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

¹⁸⁸ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

¹⁸⁹ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

currently on exhibit. The museum places less emphasis on buying collections, as loans are cheaper and promote variety and exchange amongst small museums. Also, they likely do not have the facilities or staff to curate any more than they have. The space they do have is well-used, and the rest of exhibits have cases and walls full of objects.

3.2.2.2d- Exhibit history

Before renovations to the building and a shift in leadership in 2001, the museum's Native American exhibit mainly held framed collections of arrowheads and various ground-stone or flaked obsidian tools. The museum used a sizable grant to restore the building and construct the previous exhibit, which ran from 2001 through Fall of 2014.¹⁹⁰ The previous exhibit highlighted the Northern Paiute to a noticeable – albeit minimal – degree, but mainly in the prehistoric context. The cultural material in the exhibit consisted of archaeological artifacts excavated during field work operated by the University of Oregon in the 1980s. One of the large downstairs rooms, recently taken down for renovations, contained the majority of the museum's exhibits concerning central Oregon tribes, including the Northern Paiute. It briefly described Native American prehistory before quickly transitioning into the early Euroamerican fur-trapping period, and ultimately detailed the more widespread settlement of Deschutes County.¹⁹¹

The previous exhibit's narrative was very past-tense, based on Kelly' description, “presenting the classic 'pioneer' museum displays of arrowheads collected by

¹⁹⁰ At the time of my visit, the previous (2001-2014) exhibit had been taken down and the rooms were being renovated. The only remaining Oregon tribes-related display was the end of one of the upstairs hallways.

¹⁹¹ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20,2014.

homesteaders.”¹⁹² It framed central Oregon Northern Paiute and tribal history as a largely 'pre-contact' period, as though the populations were no longer present or active in the area after its colonization by Euroamericans in the early-to-mid 19th century. Kelly refers to this narrative as the “dead Indian room”¹⁹³ of the museum, in which tribal history is cut short with the arrival of the settlers, and the scant information mainly entails the generic presentation of some arrowheads and possibly replica crafts. One can imagine this is likely a common theme in small-scale local historical museums throughout the country. The only more historical issue the old exhibit addressed were the 'raids' by and 'death' (murder) of Northern Paiute Chief Paulina in the late 1800s by settlers and the US military, accompanied by a large painted version of his photographic portrait.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20,2014.

¹⁹³ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20,2014.

¹⁹⁴ Author photo, painted reproduction of Chief Paulina’s photographic portrait at the Deschutes County museums. Did not record artist’s name.



Painting based on historical photo portrait of Chief Paulina

The remaining exhibit that was still in place during my visit—separate from the main tribal room which was empty and under reconstruction at the time— occupies the dead-end of the second floor hallway, and is about 3x4m in dimension. There are a few glass cases, containing a mix of replicas and authentic archaeological material. There is plenty of information on small wall panels, but it is not very interpretive —instead it is more matter-of-fact. This type of information is more common in strictly artifact-based exhibits, as the information typically include facts like provenance, researchers, dating results, and what the object was likely used for.

For example, there is a glass case full of stone tools, including “a cache of 34 ancient spear points” from the Lava Island Rock Shelter site, “excavated by

archaeologists during the summer of 1981.”¹⁹⁵ There is a mix of prehistoric and historic materials, but since it is more archaeologically based, the focus is on the prehistoric. The case mentions that “the first group of Native Americans to occupy Lava Island Rock Shelter moved into this area around 1000 years ago and were probably Northern Paiute. They, like their predecessors the Elko people, were skilled desert foragers.”¹⁹⁶ This chronology is somewhat confusing, as the Northern Paiutes and their ancestors have been in the area much longer than 1000 years, perhaps not this area specifically?¹⁹⁷ In collaboration with the UO archaeological field school in 1993-4, the exhibit displays some materials and interpretations, including a painting with a recreated scene of “what a morning might have been like for the residents of Bowling Dune in the Fort Rock Basin 4,000 years ago.”¹⁹⁸

A small plaque discusses the Warm Springs Reservation, noting that it “is made up of three different tribes: the Wasco, Warm Springs, and Paiutes. The tribes first began moving onto the reservation in 1855. The cultures and lifestyles of the different tribes were forced to change...In 1937, the three tribes created a constitution...”¹⁹⁹ The display avoids any mention of the historic animosity between the tribes of Warm Springs Reservation. There is no mention of historical slave trading practices or the use of Warm Springs 'scouts' –or “exterminators” or “commandos” as Gardner refers to them –by the US Army in their efforts to destroy the Northern Paiutes.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Object text, Deschutes County historical museum, November 20, 2014.

¹⁹⁶ Object text, Deschutes County historical museum, November 20, 2014.

¹⁹⁷ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 41.

¹⁹⁸ Object text, Deschutes County historical museum, November 20, 2014.

¹⁹⁹ Wall text, Deschutes County historical museum, November 20, 2014.

²⁰⁰ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 436.

3.2.2.2e- Ontko

While Gale Ontko's research was not directly incorporated into the museum's interpretive material, Kelly noted that many visitors mention *Thunder over the Ochoco*, reaffirming the extent of Ontko's influence on local history buffs. She shared her knowledge of his efforts in map collecting and research during the process of writing the series.²⁰¹ There seems to be a trend among the museum directors in the project against viewing Ontko as a reliable source. Perhaps this is an indication that the museums are shifting toward a larger emphasis on tribal perspectives.

3.2.2.2f- Museum evolution and future directions

According to Kelly, “County level historical societies are pioneer-driven,” and as a result, they typically do not represent a full chronology. Museums have contingencies, including supporters and the visiting public. They also have to please their boards, donors, and others. This can influence the narratives they represent. “Many think central Oregon history is young, but only by Euroamerican standards. There is a vast prehistoric presence.”²⁰² This long time-frame was suggested in the Deschutes' previous tribal exhibits. The more problematic aspect of the old exhibit was its lack of narrative or information *after* contact with Oregon's first Euroamerican settlers, and this is being remedied by the museum's recent renovations.

During her seven years as director, Kelly Cannon-Miller has worked to incorporate a stronger Native American perspective. This includes the renovated local

²⁰¹ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

²⁰² Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

tribes exhibit coming this winter, along with increased programming, such as a lecture series. Previously, the museum was low on interpretive material, it was “just rooms full of stuff.”²⁰³ According to Kelly, the difference between interpretive and non-interpretive information is being told what to think on a topic versus being led to one's own conclusion.

3.2.2.3- The A. R. Bowman Memorial Museum in Prineville, Oregon

3.2.2.3a- Introduction

The Bowman was previously known by modern local historians for exhibiting a mainly pioneer-centric narrative/perspective.²⁰⁴ However, a new, albeit tiny, exhibit was installed in 2011 which directly addresses the Northern Paiute. The exhibit is different than the Warm Springs and Deschutes County museums in how it handles certain subjects, such as relations between settlers and Paiute ancestors. Interviews with Director Gordon Gillespie and Historian Steve Lent helped me understand the evolution of the exhibit, and the research, sources and collaboration that went into it. It mainly presents aspects of Northern Paiute culture and tradition, emphasizing the modern presence or livelihood of the tribe. While it does not tell the 'full' story, the Bowman serves as another example of progress toward a more equitable or Paiute-centric representation of local history.

3.2.2.3b- Facilities and history

The historic Crook County Bank building was re-purposed into the museum in

²⁰³ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

²⁰⁴ Kelly Cannon-Miller (Deschutes County historical museum director) interview by the author, November 20, 2014.

1971, serving as the repository for the Crook County Historical Society's collections. In 2008, the Crook County History Center was constructed in the building adjacent to the bank, greatly increasing available exhibit space.²⁰⁵ For the purposes of the project, they will be referred to jointly as the Bowman Museum. I did not see the collections area, and did not ask too much about their other facilities, but I assume they are minimal.

3.2.2.3c- Northern Paiute-related exhibits

The new exhibit, “Living Traditions,” was designed and constructed in 2012. A 2x3m corner in the new building was dedicated to the local tribes, mainly the Northern Paiute (see next photo). The exhibit is text- and photo-driven, as the only objects are contained in a small plexiglass case, about ten or so. They are historical items donated through the community or through the museum's staff. Only a few are directly from the tribal community. For example, a small buckskin jacket was traded with a board member's father earlier in the 20th century.²⁰⁶ The tule mats, *wapas* root-basket, and woven blankets are replicas. The cradle board was made by Rosie Tom, of the Northern Paiutes at Warm Springs reservation.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Crook County History Center website, “About.”

²⁰⁶ Object text, “Native Artistry”, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

²⁰⁷ Object text, “Native Artistry”, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.



Bowman Museum, Northern Paiute exhibit. Photo by author, November 2014

The interpretive material focuses on the settlement of central Oregon, traditional ways of life (the seasonal round and crafts), and the modern presence of the tribes. There is an interactive area called “Tribal Voices” where visitors can hear tribal community members talk about topics including traditional crafts, subsistence, and language. Minerva Soucie's book *The First Oregonians* is quoted in the section “We Have Always Been Here”: “With our Paiute language and cultural teachings intact, we

can continue to live as our ancestors did, but in a new world that requires us to learn and adapt.”²⁰⁸

There are no citations directly attributed to Gale Ontko in this section. His specific research is also absent in the older parts of the museum, which focuses on daily pioneer life and eventually the development of Prineville as a city. The “Time of Great Change” section addresses the forced removal of tribes from their traditional territories: “In 1855, area tribes were removed from their ancestral land and placed on the Warm Springs reservation. The Treaty of 1855 forced the Warm Springs and Wasco tribes to give up more than 10 million acres.”²⁰⁹ The US government's theft of Northern Paiute territory is not mentioned. As Gardner explains, the Paiutes did not consent to the 'purchase' of their ancestral territory:

Thus [Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Oregon territory, Joel] Palmer believed that this provision of the Treaty authorized participating tribes to sign for and receive the benefits of uninvited or non-participating tribes —such as the Paiutes —just as it would allow a concurring tribal chief to replace a dissenting tribal chief, with the former being authorized to sign the Treaty, sell tribal lands and extinguish tribal claims.²¹⁰

After this brief and incomplete synopsis of 100+ years of conflict, the text moves on to more positive subjects, claiming “Despite the upheaval brought about by settlers, longstanding relationships existed between Native Americans and settlers. Some Indian families worked seasonally on potato crops, returning year after year and often exchanging gifts with ranchers.”²¹¹ This claim glosses over the fact that their traditional

²⁰⁸ Wall text, “We have always been here”, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

²⁰⁹ Wall text, “Time of great change”, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

²¹⁰ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 268.

²¹¹ Wall text, “Time of great change”, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

root gathering areas had been taken up by the same ranchers, which was likely the cause of their need to work on the farms.

The map outlining the “ceded” lands only includes the northern section of central Oregon. This conflicts with Gardner's description, as it does not include the full extent of traditionally held Northern Paiute territories. Maybe it focused on the Wasco and Warm Springs tribes' territories –as they are mentioned more frequently elsewhere in the exhibit– but it does mention that “The Northern Paiutes ranged throughout central and eastern Oregon.”²¹²

The closest the exhibit gets to exhibiting the 'hidden history' is a quote from Northern Paiute Chief Egan in the 1860s-70s: “Did the Big Father say, go and kill us all off, so you can have our land?...His white children have come and taken all our mountains, and all our valleys, and all our rivers.”²¹³ The quote stands alone, leaving it open to visitor interpretation within the larger framework of the “Living Traditions” exhibit and the rest of the museum. The specific events of the military's effort of extermination are of course absent, other than what is hinted at by Chief Egan's quote.

A binder with laminated pages went into a more chronological account of the various treaties and the individual generals, politicians, and chiefs involved in the history, described in small paragraphs with large pictures for quick perusal. The most relevant was: “In 1878, after a few Northern Paiutes participated in the Bannock War in Southern Idaho, the Malhuer reservation was dissolved and the Northern Paiutes were removed to other reservations, including the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

²¹² Wall text, “We have always been here,” Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

²¹³ Wall text, “Time of great change,” Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014

[reservation].”²¹⁴ In keeping with the theme of the exhibit's title “We Are Still Here,” and the continuation of local tribal sovereignty, the binder included a page describing how in “1992, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs declared the sovereign authority to control all persons, land, water, resources, and activities within the reservation.”²¹⁵ Placing an emphasis on increasing tribal-determination and self-governance lends a positive tone to this section.

The rest of the new exhibit area deals with the more pioneer-centric history of Crook County. The adjacent section documents the conflict between cow and sheep ranchers for grazing land. “Pressure on the open range” details the inter-settler conflict regarding livestock use of grazing lands, but ignores the extent to which the tribes - including Northern Paiute- were negatively impacted by the destruction of their traditional foraging territories.

One of the more overt mentions of negative Northern Paiute history was a map hung in the hallway between two exhibits, labeled “Map Showing the Routes travelled by the Command of Major Steen US against the Snake Indians in 1860.”²¹⁶ The map was not accompanied by any explanatory text, or given any extra context other than “Steen's Wagon Road map – one of the first detailed maps of western Oregon,” even though it is labeled as a war map.

The stairwell leading to the upstairs exhibits had some Native American materials, five or so framed sets of arrowheads, some not even from the immediate area. This presentation is consistent with the “dead Indian room” theme noted by Kelly

²¹⁴ Binder in N. Paiute exhibit, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

²¹⁵ Binder in N. Paiute exhibit, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

²¹⁶ Binder in N. Paiute exhibit, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

Cannon-Miller at Deschutes Historical Society. One small, typewritten label highlighting the Northern Paiute counteracted this theme to some extent:

At the time of Euro-American contact, the principal native group in the Crook county area was the Northern Paiute. The Northern Paiute organized into bands based on a loose association of family groups...By 1876, Indians in central Oregon for the most part were dead, on reservations, or dispossessed of their land...These tribes are preserving their living cultures in today's modern world and passing them on to future generations.²¹⁷

This panel made sure the visitor knows the tribes are still culturally viable and thriving populations in the area. Chief Paulina of the Northern Paiutes is given a small portrait and biography in the upstairs exhibit, documenting the development of local place-names: "Native American Leader Paulina- he led a band of nomadic raiders that became involved in a battle with the Oregon First Calvary in Rabbit Valley in 1864. The town of Paulina is named after him."²¹⁸ The text fails to note how long he and his warriors successfully held off the US Army, led by General Crook during this time. Even given the label's brevity, the phrasing "became involved in a battle with" makes it seem as though it was serendipitous or impromptu, when General Crook had been hunting the Northern Paiutes systematically as a part of the state and country's genocidal efforts against them. The label's term for the Paiutes, "raiders," is disparaging and invokes a negative connotation of a group who attacks on the offensive, who terrorizes. Depending on one's perspective, they were defending their territory and tribe from violent, unwelcome intrusion. Also omitted is how Chief Paulina was killed by John Clark and Howard Maupin, a fact which local modern descendants of those families in

²¹⁷ Wall text, older section of the Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

²¹⁸ Wall text, upstairs/older exhibit, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

the area are still proud of today.²¹⁹

3.2.2.3d- The remainder of the Bowman's exhibits

Approximately 85-90 percent of the museum covers non-tribal topics. The other large room of the new addition was dedicated to Crook County's strong history in logging, forestry, and wood products. In this room, there was a computer with access to a database concerning the topics portrayed in the exhibits. Searching through it, there were only settler biographies, along with notable primary residents and later important figures in Crook County. No mention of the Northern Paiutes, any other tribes, or notable historical figures. While this is an interesting tool from the interpretive materials perspective, it is limited in scope to the pioneer narrative.²²⁰

In the downstairs portion of the bank (the older portion of the Bowman), there was a case full of antique firearms. One rifle was labeled “Springfield .45 rifle- 1873 model, used in Indian wars.”²²¹ It did not specify who it was used by – it could have been either settlers or Native Americans, as they used similar types of firearms. The rest of the upstairs focuses on the development of Prineville from a small settlement or outpost to the city is now, of course through a non-Native perspective. Topics range from home decorations, fashion, medical professionals, non-native veterans of Prineville, a recreated general store scene, and a saddlery.

3.2.2.3e- Research, sources, and collaboration

Gillespie and Lent consulted with an unnamed BLM archaeologist during the research phase of planning “Living Traditions.” However there is virtually no

²¹⁹ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 456.

²²⁰ Interactive computer station, Logging section, Bowman Museum, November 20, 2014.

²²¹ Object text, Bowman Museum. November 20, 2014.

archaeological information in the exhibit, so it was not obvious what their role was. Gordon emphasized the Bowman's consultation with two committees from the Warm Springs tribes, including interviews with tribal members for the “Tribal Voices” section of the exhibit. Minerva Soucie, a Burns Paiute author, was quoted in the exhibit, as detailed previously.²²²

3.2.2.3f- Online representation of Northern Paiute history on the Bowman Museum's website

The website offers short history articles related to the museum's scope. One particular article, “Bannock Indian War of 1878 Caused Panic in Local Settlers,” highlights the role of the Northern Paiutes in causing 'the panic', where:

The Bannock were joined by Paiutes under the leadership of Chief Egan. The combined forces began a bloody path of destruction that ranged from the Steens Mountains to the John Day valley...it was the last great show of resentment by the Bannock and Paiute against the white man who had deprived them of their country.²²³

It goes on to describe how Northern Paiute Chief Egan was decapitated by the rival Umatilla tribe. The article victimizes the settlers, and does not mention their actions, nor those of the US Army, against the Paiutes. In this regard, the narrative is similar to Ontko's, as it focuses on the 'Indian depredations' against the settlers.

3.2.2.3g- Ontko's influence at the Bowman

As stated previously, Ontko claimed in *Thunder Over the Ochoco* the Northern Paiute were part of the Shoshoni tribe, and not their own tribe or cultural group. Steve

²²² Gordon Gillespie (Director of Bowman Museum), interview with the author. November 20, 2014.

²²³ Crook County History Center Website, “Local Stories,” “Bannock Indian War of 1878 Caused Panic in Local Settlers.” August 4, 2014.

Lent says that Ontko was popular amongst local Shoshoni populations, likely for favorably portraying them in the series. Ontko was Lent's superior when he was working at the Bureau of Land Management, and Lent was therefore helpful in gaining background information on the deceased author. Ontko's claims are not directly or visibly incorporated into the museum, but the same pioneer-centric narrative he utilized is evident in the older portion of the exhibits. His books, along with a wide variety of authors on the subject, are available in the gift shop. Many visitors are familiar with his work, and come to the museum with preconceived notions based on it.²²⁴

3.2.2.3h- Steve Lent

Speaking in support of Gardner's emerging research, Lent asserts “It is a neglected part of our [central Oregon] history.”²²⁵ However, it has yet to be incorporated into the local museums on a larger scale as it is an emerging and contentious history, with authors like Gardner in the forefront. The topics and historical material Gardner addresses are minimized, and mostly approached from the pioneer perspective. There is hope for reevaluation after this information is more widely distributed and publicized – as Lent notes, “There is a current trend toward better understanding of Native American hardships.”²²⁶

The focus of the new exhibit is on the preservation of traditional life-ways, placing an emphasis on 'living culture.' This is an improvement over the older upstairs exhibits, following the “dead Indian room” profile, mentioned by Kelly Cannon-

²²⁴ Steve Lent (Historian of Bowman Museum), interview with the author. November 20, 2014.

²²⁵ Steve Lent (Historian of Bowman Museum), interview with the author. November 20, 2014.

²²⁶ Steve Lent (Historian of Bowman Museum), interview with the author. November 20, 2014.

Miller.3.2.2.3i- Conclusion for the Bowman

Highlighting modern efforts to maintain traditional life-ways, languages, and tribal sovereignty, the exhibit maintains a more positive perspective on Northern Paiute history. While what is portrayed is accurate, it is far from full-disclosure, as Lonetree and Gardner support. The 'conflicts' are only hinted at and glossed over. However, the museum has made a good-faith effort in tribal collaboration, consultation, and approval. The Warm Springs committee who collaborated with the Bowman staff on the more recent section of the museum approved the new exhibit: is this level of collaboration sufficient? Perhaps they do not wish to see every detail of their history portrayed, and would prefer to focus on the continuation of their traditions into the modern day. If this is the case, the Bowman acted as an understanding and compliant institution, which values the input and rights of their tribal community collaborators.

3.2.2.4- High Desert Museum, Bend, OR

3.2.2.4a-Introduction

The High Desert is more of a 'natural history' museum, but it does have separate exhibits focused on central Oregon tribes and settlers. The Northern Paiutes are only mentioned in a prehistoric context, while there is more emphasis on the tribes of the Columbia River Plateau. The remainder of the museum explores topics such as geology, and plant and animal biology/ecology.

3.2.2.4b-History and background

Opened in 1982, the museum covers a wide range of topics regarding central Oregon. This project's focus lies on the exhibits "By Hand, Through Memory" in the

“Hall of Plateau Indians”²²⁷ and “Spirit of the West” in the “Hall of Exploration and Settlement.” Since the High Desert is the largest and best-funded of the museums in the project, it makes sense that they were able to design and realize such a large project, including separate halls focused on the 'settlers' and the 'indians.'

3.2.2.4c- Analysis of the relevant exhibits

Outside of “By Hand, Through Memory,” there was a panel outlining the current tribal reservations throughout the Northwest. Entering the hall, “The Columbia River and its Native People” places all of the tribes' historic territories on a current political map of the state. “Paiute” territory is considered the northeastern quarter of Oregon, shared with the Wasco, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Walla Walla tribes. The map does not have any date associated with this distribution, which is confusing, as these borders and designations shifted frequently throughout history.²²⁸

“By hand, through memory”

As a preface to the hall, a plaque describes how “When American settlers moved into the region in the 19th century, Indians were confined to reservations by the US government and forced to adapt to the changing times. This is the story of how the Plateau people maintained their cultural identity by blending ancient and modern ways.”²²⁹ By 'changing times' they mean dispossession of land, destruction of cultural patrimony and traditions, and extermination of populations. Such euphemistic phrasing is helpful in making the exhibit more palatable for visitors. The hall focuses more specifically on the Columbia River Plateau tribes, a designation which does not include

²²⁷ The hall was completed/dedicated in September 1999.

²²⁸ Map, “By Hand, Through Memory,” The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

²²⁹ Wall text, “By Hand, Through Memory,” The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

the Northern Paiute bands.

“Resistance and Reality” addresses the 'changes' and 'adaptations' the local tribal populations faced upon the arrival of fur trappers, and later homesteaders: “Many did not believe agreements with the United States were possible...Others struggled to retain their independence by active resistance.”²³⁰ The object accompanying the label is a “trade tomahawk from the early 1800s,” characterizing the efforts of resistance. Written next to it:

Between 1847 and 1879, some Plateau tribes fought against the United States in the hope they could stop the tide of change...By 1890, warfare and spiritual resistance failed to halt the settlement of the Plateau. Realizing now that they could never return fully to the ancient ways, Plateau Indians charted a new course of cultural survival.²³¹

While the exhibit skims over the specific wars in the mid to late 19th century, it does go into more detail on the tribes' further hardships on the reservations. One key cause of these hardships was the General Allotment or Dawes Act of 1887, which officially banned tribal language and culture in efforts to forcibly assimilate them into American society.

From this point on, the exhibit turns more toward the tribes' life-ways and cultural traditions, but none were specifically Paiute. In a display entitled “Trade and social exchange,” the panel explains how “Plateau people enriched themselves by bartering dried salmon, roots, beadwork, obsidian, and later guns and horses. Each year, they gathered at specific places along the river to trade, gamble, meet with friends and

²³⁰ Wall text, “By Hand, Through Memory,” The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

²³¹ Wall text, “By Hand, Through Memory,” The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

kin, and arrange marriages.”²³² They fail to mention that among the trade 'goods' were people from neighboring tribes, namely the Northern Paiutes, who were raided for inter-tribal slave trading.²³³

The exhibit maintains a positive perspective when addressing the efforts of tribes to maintain their cultural practices and values, despite encroaching pressures from settlers and the US Government: “Despite the changes brought about by reservation life, many Plateau Indians refused to forget their languages, stories, and ceremonies. They kept tribal culture alive by practicing and teaching time honored customs and beliefs to their children within the walls of reservation homes.”²³⁴ An emphasis on tribal sovereignty was apparent, with sections dedicated to modern cultural practices, cultural revitalization efforts, and the tribes' involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. These sections, again, did not include Northern Paiute information, instead focusing on the Columbia River and Plateau tribes.

At the end of the hall of “By Hand, Through Memory,” there are acknowledgments, including a list of consultants, donors, and museum staff. I did not recognize any names, but maybe there were Northern Paiutes among them. Wilson noted that the High Desert was very welcoming and interested in his traditional knowledge and skills as a tribal community consultant. The last panel uses a mythological metaphor to explain the Plateau peoples' adaptation:

²³² Wall text, “Trade and Social exchange”, “By Hand, Through Memory”, The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

²³³ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 74.

²³⁴ Wall text, “By Hand, Through Memory”, The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

Faced with pressures to conform or become living stereotypes, the Indians of the Columbia River Plateau became tricksters, like their traditional character Coyote. Instead of giving up their identity, they developed the ability to change their form so they could live between two very distinctive and always changing worlds.²³⁵

This analogy gives a positive portrayal of their adaptation, emphasizing that the tribes maintained, at least to some degree, their original cultural practices and sovereignty.

“Spirit of the West”

The more pioneer-centric hall focuses on the arrival and settlement of Euroamericans from the eastern United States under the influence of Manifest Destiny: “Thousands of years ago, more than one hundred Native American tribes inhabited the High Desert. During the early 1800s, newcomers began arriving- starting with the fur traders and continuing with homesteaders through the early 1900s. A diverse array of immigrants added their stories to the region's history.”²³⁶ Again, the exhibit uses euphemistic phrasing to avoid the 'hard truths' of 19th century Oregon history.

The only location in the museum where the Northern Paiute are specifically highlighted is the first panel of the hall, titled “The First People.” It explains how the Northern Paiute lived across the southern half of the High Desert Region: “These hardy and nomadic people ranged throughout an arid landscape from eastern California and southeastern Oregon, most of Nevada and into Southern Idaho. They migrated with the seasons to harvest the region's resources: fish, game, edible plants, and roots.”²³⁷ Accompanying this panel is a diorama with a typified camp with a small wickiup in mid-construction, and a reed boat. All information pertaining to the 19th century

²³⁵ Wall text, “By Hand, Through Memory”, The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

²³⁶ Wall text, “Spirit of the West”, The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

²³⁷ Wall text, “Spirit of the West”, The High Desert Museum. November 20, 2014.

conflicts, wars, or military campaigns is in “By hand, through memory,” and not in the settler-centric “Spirit of the West.”

After this short section, the narrative jumps right into its Euroamerican settlement focus, detailing the arrival of the first fur trappers and traders in the early 19th century. From then on, there is no mention of the local tribes. The specific wars of the period- like the Bannock, Modoc, or the 'Snake' -are not mentioned, possibly misleading the visitor as to the amount and nature of conflict during this period.

The rest of the hall goes into detail about 'life on the frontier' in central Oregon, from various occupations (mining, logging, et cetera) to a scaled down main-drag including two 'pioneers', older men who strike up a conversation with visitors in character, but they are unlikely to talk to the public about the contentious history of the local tribes.²³⁸

3.2.2.5- Conclusion for central Oregon museums

Over the course of this project, the history of the Northern Paiutes is shown to be at times honored, obfuscated, omitted, neglected, or – less frequently – simply incorrect. The Museum at Warm Springs addresses the history to the greatest extent, but does not provide full disclosure of the horrors of some aspects of the Northern Paiutes' past. This selective narrative is still an aspect of decolonizing research, as it demonstrates the tribes' sovereignty and control over the portrayal of their history. The Deschutes County Historical Society Museum has previously offered little in the way of explaining the tumultuous relationship between the tribe, the settlers, and their

²³⁸ I told them I was researching tribal narratives in local museums, and they responded with something along the lines of “Oh, you're looking for trouble- they don't like white folks snooping in their business.”

neighboring tribes, instead focusing on prehistoric roots of the modern tribes. However, they are redesigning their tribal exhibit with plans to portray the tribal narrative more accurately and fully. The Bowman Museum has just recently added a small exhibit focusing on the Northern Paiute. While its contents are factually correct, it largely glosses over the more negative aspects of the history, namely the enormous efforts of the US military and their 'scouts' in destroying the tribe. Besides the Museum at Warm Springs, the High Desert Museum has the largest and most impressive exhibit on local tribal history, but it too downplays historic wrongs against the Paiutes. It only mentions them directly in the context of "The first people," where their ancient occupation of central Oregon is noted, but more recent history is not portrayed.

Of course, this is a complex issue, and does not have an objective 'answer.' This project proposes that the ideal exists where there is a combination of tribal community collaboration, exterior academic inquiry, and a large quantity of mutual respect and cultural sensitivity. As Amy Lonetree explains, "We are not just looking at interesting pieces. In the presence of objects from the past, we are privileged to stand as witnesses to living entities that remain intimately and inextricably tied to their descendant communities."²³⁹ Hopefully, the complete and accurate nature of the Northern Paiutes' past will eventually have a future in central Oregon's museums.

3.3- Open to Interpretation: How site or open-air 'museums' represent cultural material differently from conventional museums in Oregon

3.3.1- 'Sitelessness' in central Oregon

Before being forced onto reservations, the Paiutes were a mostly nomadic

²³⁹ Lonetree, *Decolonizing museums*, xv.

people living in a vast territory. At one point, their territory spread across the majority of the Great Basin in Oregon and Northern Nevada. Paiute bands did not usually establish permanent occupational infrastructure. Instead, they would alternate between seasonal camps based on weather patterns, foraging availability, and hunting game migration.²⁴⁰ This way of life created a spatially diffused “cultural landscape” and archaeological record, mainly characterized by lower-density distributions. While there may not be the same monumental or permanent features in Oregon as on Rapa Nui, there is still physical evidence of their existence, such as circular stone foundations for Wickiups, and archaeological material.²⁴¹

3.3.2- Informal exhibit at the Warm Springs grocery market

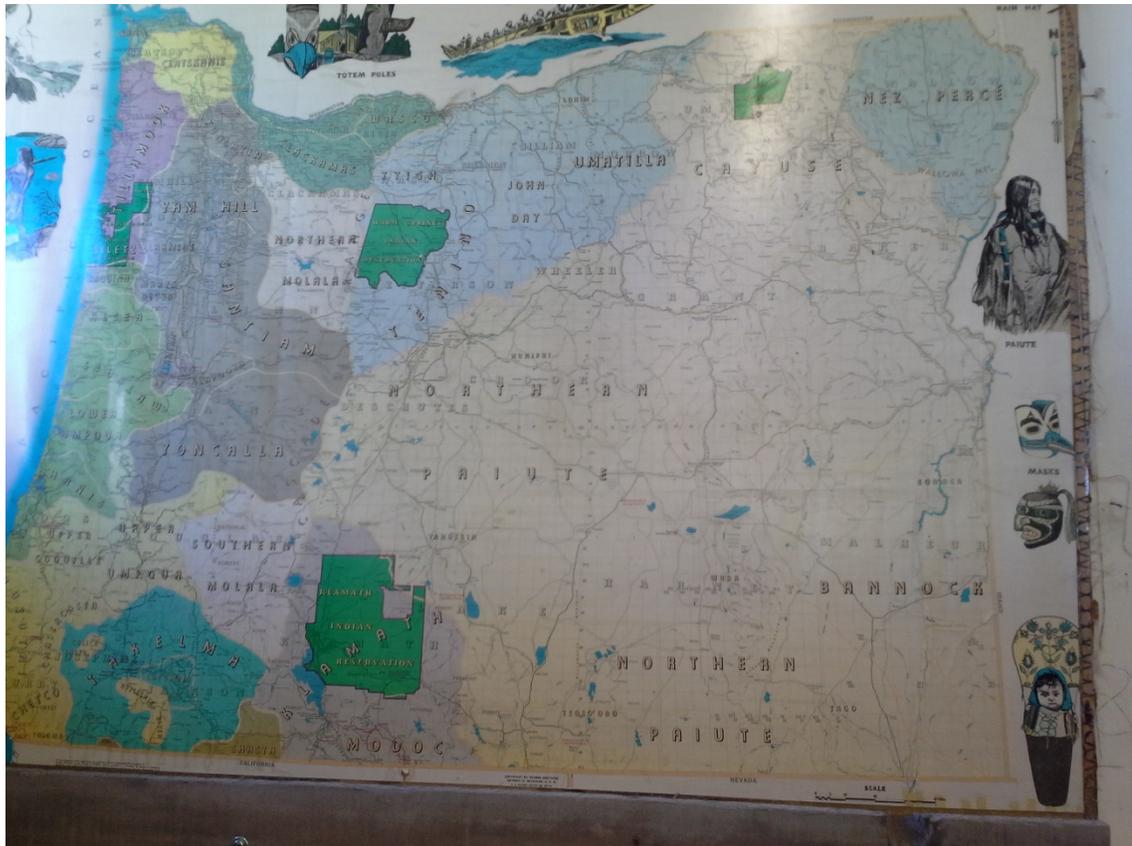
At the end of the HC444 class visit to Warm Springs, we stopped at the reservation's market before driving home. This outing turned into an educational or research opportunity, as the store 'curates' a small collection of historical artifacts, documents, original maps detailing various territorial losses/changes throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and more recent objects such as 'Western' or rodeo-style clothing, dolls, and photos. We spent a good amount of time looking for information pertaining to what we were learning in class and on the trip, trying to make connections.

The 'exhibit' included virtually no interpretive information other than occasional simple identification labels and dates. In this regard, is this 'exhibit' more like a cabinet of curiosity than a museum? The largest map, hanging on the wall, shows a wide area of

²⁴⁰ Gardner, *Oregon Apocalypse*, 68.

²⁴¹ A traditional Tule reed shelter, similar in shape to the Plains Indians' teepees.

central Oregon as the territory of the Northern Paiutes.²⁴² This is in contrast to the Museums at Warm Springs, which demarcated a much smaller area closer to the reservation. This is an expression of narrative; how different maps can represent different claims, in this case historical territories.



Large wall map at Warm Springs grocery store informal ‘museum’

3.3.3- Restricted access at Warm Springs

Conversely, some areas at Warm Springs were off-limits to non-tribal members. Some areas are held as highly sacred by the Northern Paiutes and the other tribes at the

²⁴² See next photo. Photo by author, October 2014

reservation, and therefore access to them is restricted out of respect. Tribal sites like burial grounds are also protected through Oregon law, specifically ORS 97.740-97.760 which “makes it illegal to willfully remove mutilate, deface, injure or destroy... cairns, burial locations, human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects having ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to a native Indian group or culture. Violations are a Class C felony and may result in possible civil penalties.”²⁴³ Problems like these are likely rare, given the relatively low density and visibility of Northern Paiute archaeological or historical materials. It can be tricky for visitors to navigate the cultural landscape when there are so many factors and variables to be aware of. This reveals an additional function of museums: they are a 'safe' space for outsiders to explore other cultures, without the risks associated with lay research or investigation.

²⁴³ Oregon Department of Forestry Website, “Protecting and Preserving Oregon's archaeological and cultural resources.”

Section IV- Summary and themes

Throughout their history, museums have evolved from places to store objects stolen from other cultures to places of academic, scientific, and cultural inquiry, entertainment, and education. Changes in anthropology and archaeology as disciplines have influenced museums to serve as outlets of academic discovery and knowledge to the public. More recently, the rise of the tribal or indigenous model of museums has created new opportunities for cultural groups to represent themselves and their own narratives, whereas they had previously predominantly been represented by cultural 'outsiders.'

With the creation of this distinction of indigenous versus non-indigenous museums comes the question of which group or narrative should be given more credibility. This is one of the central themes of the project, visible in all of the case studies. As Amy Lonetree states in *Decolonizing Museums*, “Shying away from speaking the hard truths leads to tragically missed opportunities. The good that museums could do for addressing and healing historical grief and trauma and for putting Native peoples on a positive, self-empowering path can be squandered all too easily.”²⁴⁴

Amy Lonetree's fear is evident in the museums the project focuses on. In central Oregon, the Northern Paiutes were only sometimes consulted in the construction or research phases of the museums. The other tribes of Oregon were on the whole more broadly represented. For example, the Columbia River plateau tribes were the focus at the High Desert Museum, and Wasco and Warm Springs information outpaced

²⁴⁴ Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 171.

Northern Paiute topics at the Museum at Warm Springs.

This cycle of narrative persistence can make it difficult for emerging narratives to make their way to mainstream academia. Publications that challenge long-standing theories and conclusions may get brief attention for the sake of controversy, but many are soon forgotten. It takes strong evidence and excellent presentation to go up against conventional narratives, in the context of this project and in academia as a whole. Especially disadvantaged in this uphill battle are indigenous narratives. Although they are increasingly incorporated into modern academic historical narratives, they must overcome the long-held biases against them regarding their validity and impact on history as a discipline. At the center of this issue is tribal sovereignty, not so much in the political sense, but instead, the academic sense. How much control over museum content do the modern members of the tribes have?

While respect for indigenous authority have grown in recent decades, indigenous narratives through oral traditions and traditional knowledge were previously widely disregarded, discredited, and ignored by 'Western' academia, creating a situation in which Rapanui and Northern Paiute histories were essentially overwritten by 'Western' academics. In the cycle of museum knowledge, much of the information incorporated into museums came from such 'Western' or 'outsider' research and publications, in addition to continuing internal research and –more recently– indigenous collaboration.

An additional theme is the absence of the historical transgressions perpetrated against the Rapanui and Northern Paiutes from the museums in the project, leaving the “historical grief and trauma” Lonetree mentions unresolved and unaddressed. The

MAPSE barely mentions European contact, and the later travesties that arose from such contact, including but not limited to the spread of Old World diseases, slave raiding, forced labor, land theft, and cultural genocide. Central Oregon's local museums address the resettlement of the state by Euroamericans as though it were a largely amicable period characterized by the euphemistic concept of “adaptation,” failing to mention or largely downplaying the scale and nature of inter-cultural conflict and –in the case of the Northern Paiutes – genocidal efforts made against the original inhabitants.

This is not to say the museums' staff and researchers aren't aware of these subjects. The information exists in the form of primary documents, academic literature, and indigenous oral traditions. More likely, museums avoided such material in order to decrease the controversy and political issues that surround such history in our modern society. Reaching back to the creation of narrative, the objective evidence, in the form of primary accounts and records mostly, are made subjective through “interpretation variables,” including intentional omission based on political concerns. Perhaps the museums worries that a 'full-disclosure' approach to history would alienate certain demographics of their audience. For instance, if a museum touts itself as a 'family-friendly' activity, images of graphic violence and primary documents expressing explicit racism may not go over so well with families.

On the other side of the coin, collaboration with tribal communities may result in the omission of certain periods of history or events, in the interest of maintaining a positive tone or narrative. Not all tribes, or all members of indigenous communities. Are on board with portraying the “historical grief and trauma”²⁴⁵ Lonetree refers to in the

²⁴⁵ Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 171.

indigenous museums they curate. Instead, they may choose to focus on the strength of their modern culture and community, historical successes, or fairly neutral topics such as crafts or traditional life-ways. This method was evident in all the museums in the project. They all spent plenty of time on subjects like traditional life-ways, changes in religion or culture, craft traditions, et cetera, instead of exhibiting the “historical grief and trauma.”²⁴⁶

Political and cultural sovereignty are other key factors in the representation of narrative. While not always apparent in the museums themselves, the undercurrent of political tension is always present given the nature of these groups' histories. Modern Rapanui protest Chilean control and possession of much of the island, and Chilean bureaucratic institutions such as the DBAM and CONAF control, in large part, the expression and research of their cultural history. The Confederated Tribes at Warm Springs have achieved political sovereignty from the United States, a fact that they proudly exhibit at the Museum at Warm Springs. However, academic sovereignty is a less tangible or concrete concept. Tribal academic and cultural sovereignty can be thought of as much control indigenous groups –including the Northern Paiutes– have over the representation, publication, and interpretation of their culture and history in academia. This concept of academic sovereignty is only truly evident in indigenous museums, and even then, it's not always so simple. For example, at the Museum at Warm Springs, the Wasco and Warm Springs tribes are represented differently than the Northern Paiutes, with the Northern Paiutes maintaining arguably less sovereignty over the representation of their history than the other tribes.

²⁴⁶ Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 171.

The narrative a museum selects is an essential consideration in assessing the academic and educational value of the exhibit. It is also ethically important to accurately and fully portray the involved groups' histories in a way they determine appropriate. As history generally cannot be known with full certainty, there will always be room to adjust the narrative they present.

Since museums and interpretive cultural areas function in an educational capacity, they can potentially (and often do) misrepresent their subjects to the visiting public, thereby propagating and promoting historically inaccurate or incomplete information, as Franz Boas warned in the early 20th century. Visitors depend upon these institutions – whether they are 5000 miles from home or just down the road– to educate them on the subjects they claim to be specialists in, and this responsibility should not be taken lightly. More importantly, museums have a responsibility to respectfully and collaboratively incorporate the historical narratives, perspectives, knowledge and cultural materials of the indigenous communities they represent.

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