SUBCULTURE & POPULAR CULTURE:

NEGOTIATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES IN 21ST CENTURY MUSEUMS

Andrea Hadsell

University of Oregon

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Approved by:

_____ May 30, 2017

Dr. Patricia Dewey-Lambert, faculty advisor

_____ May 30, 2017

Alice Parman, content advisor

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Arts and Administration Program

University of Oregon

Abstract

Museums, as social institutions, have a responsibility to communities to act as a public space where museum visitors can interact with source communities. To incorporate accurate representations of communities, museum professionals have worked to increase diversity in staffing, collections, and community interaction. This increase in diversity has changed the standards of museum practice, particularly for collaborating with source communities. However, these standards are often focused on museums of art, history, and anthropology. Other museums, such as popular culture museums, represent communities through exhibitions and programming without apparent collaboration with the source communities. Using the standards developed for collaborative environments in other museums, popular culture museums can benefit from creating a new collaborative environment that features a community as a whole rather than individuals.

Keywords: museum, interpretation, popular culture, source community, alternative community

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1: Introduction to Research

Museums have created a reputation for being cultural institutions that present and preserve information and objects for the public at large. Through exhibition and educational programming, museums tell stories found throughout history and across cultures. Using many genres, such as art, music, and history, cultures from around the world can be found within the walls of a museum. Over time, this has been met with positive and negative reactions from the cultures being represented as well as from the public. It is because of these reactions that the role of museums as cultural institutions has been analyzed and critiqued to work towards a relationship among museum, cultural community, and audience that accurately and fairly represents all groups within the relationship.

Since the introduction of Peter Vergo's *The New Museology* in 1989, discussion in the field of museum studies has shifted from the methods of museum operation to the museum's social purpose and role (Vergo, 1989; Macdonald, 2011). This shift in discourse allowed for the critique of representation in cultural institutions to question "the way in which 'voices' of certain groups were excluded from, or marginalized within, the public sphere" (Macdonald, 2011, p. 3). Instead of simply presenting information and objects as fact, museums were being tasked with representing cultures that exist within various points in history as being true to the community and part of the larger picture of society and the world. This responsibility has changed further to include working with marginalized communities as much as, and whenever, possible as collaborators (Clifford, 1997; Boast, 2011).

The academic and professional discourse of cultural representation in museums has

included discussions of working with communities as an irreplaceable resource, building a relationship, rather than putting the culture on display. This discourse has focused on several communities that have experienced being marginalized by a larger society in some form or another. These communities have been emphasized because of their marginalization by racial, social, political, and ideological differences from a larger, dominant culture. Because of these communities' experiences, the discourse of cultural representation in museums should continue to emphasize these communities. However, I propose that new alternative communities should be included in this discourse to bring new communities to the attention of museum audience members.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this capstone is to understand how museums negotiate cultural representation as it pertains to alternative communities that exist in close proximity to the larger dominant culture. In referencing museums that specialize in popular culture and subculture, we can gain knowledge of how museums can engage various audiences by displaying objects and narratives that are a part of the dominant culture in society but also tell the story of cultural groups as an alternative community. From a broader scope, this research can contribute to the beginnings of introducing these alternative communities that exist so closely to the dominant culture into the conversation of cultural representation in the museum field.

Problem Statement

The discourse surrounding cultural representation in museums is not new in academic and professional conversation. Internationally, this conversation has included topics such as museums as social institutions, the relationship between the museum and

source communities, and the communities that are heavily impacted by the way the cultural group is represented in museums. The majority of this discourse has focused on indigenous communities as well as diasporic communities, with a major emphasis on how these groups are represented through museum exhibition.

While the cultural communities emphasized in this discourse are vitally important and should continue to be emphasized, other cultural groups are being represented in museums that are not yet recognized as part of the discussion. I argue that new, alternative communities should be added to the discourse to continue and expand the current conversation of cultural representation in museums. By adding these alternative communities to the discourse, museums and their audiences have the opportunity to engage with these communities and audiences in new ways.

Research Questions

This research question inspired and contributed to the development of this capstone:

How do popular culture museums negotiate differences and similarities among dominant culture and alternative communities of culture groups represented in their exhibitions?

Sub-questions:

How are the culture groups represented being considered as alternative communities?

How do these museums engage audience members with these alternative communities?

How can these museums contribute to the conversation of cultural representation in museological institutions?

Conceptual Framework

In the process of addressing this research question and sub-questions, I have developed a framework to define and discuss the broad topic of cultural representation in museums and subcultures. This strategy of inquiry and research was conducted from a qualitative approach, with an extended literature review related to cultural representation in museums, and two capstone courses that provide a deeper understanding to museology and subcultures. The theoretical foundation for including alternative communities in the discourse of cultural representation was secured from the courses AAD 510: Museum Theory and ENG 586: New Media & Digital Cultures.

AAD 510: Museum Theory has informed my understanding of representation in museums and the social role these institutions have within communities. Using this understanding, the current conversation of cultural representation is expanded upon in relation to the communities that are currently emphasized in the discourse. ENG 586: New Media & Digital Cultures aided in creating a foundation for analyzing the community surrounding gaming culture. The community within gaming culture informs the many subcultures that arise in relation to each gaming genre.

In addition to the course material from these capstone courses, individual research on the punk subculture will inform the analysis of two case studies. These case studies are existing museums in the United States that engage audiences and communities through exhibition of subcultures that are acknowledged to be part of the popular culture. Through this analysis, a new topic of alternative community representation can be added to the current discourse of cultural representation.

Methodological Paradigm

The discussion of cultural representation in museums and the definition of subcultures as alternative communities will serve to elaborate the parallels between marginalized communities currently emphasized in the discourse and alternative communities within popular culture. Using case study examples, two popular culture museums in the United States will showcase the potential for representing alternative communities through exhibition and interactive experiences. As the alternative communities in this capstone exist in or parallel to popular culture, some cultural institutions or types of museums may choose to exhibit these communities with intent to provide educational interpretation. Therefore, in museums that regularly engage with popular culture collections, the exhibition and interpretation of alternative communities is supported by the institutional and educational missions of the museums rather than a small portion of the institution's mission.

My role as the researcher in this capstone is as an external information gatherer, with no correspondence or personal contact with the museums used as case studies. My research is based on the idea that fan culture, popular culture, and subcultures act as alternative communities no matter what their status is in the dominant culture. Therefore, it is my opinion that these alternative communities should be a part of the museological discussion of cultural representation. With this assumption, my role as a researcher is limited to being non-participatory, using a foundation of literature and publicly accessed information to provide an analytical perspective.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations:

This capstone will have limitations of supporting literature and research concerning alternative communities within museums. As museums can function with a variety of focuses in collections and exhibitions, many marginalized and alternative communities are often represented by individuals rather than a larger community. Museums, according to their institutional missions and collaboration with source communities, have a myriad of ways to showcase, interpret, and display of collections.

The alternative communities discussed in this capstone are not representative of all marginalized and alternative communities that can be found in dominant society. As each community has different experiences racially, socially, politically, and ideologically, there is a large portion of the academic and professional discourse that uses case-by-case examples to illustrate the interactions between communities and museums. Therefore, the marginalized communities that are emphasized in the current discourse of cultural representation are specific to the community and the relationship with a particular museum.

Additionally, most popular culture museums in the United States, including those used as case studies in this capstone, are located within large metropolitan areas and have collections that can be identified by the majority of audiences. There is a lack of academic and analytical research into these museums as educational and cultural institutions. Given the location of the museums, there is a strong possibility that these popular culture museums are more closely associated with the tourism industry for the city rather than

with the arts and culture sector.

Delimitations:

In my research for this capstone, case studies will focus specifically on those museums in the United States that are closely associated with popular culture. In choosing case studies of museums with majority popular culture collections, the source material of exhibitions will exemplify the alternative communities that I have chosen to highlight. The case studies will further be delimited by my inability, as the researcher, to physically visit the case study sites during the time frame of the research. Therefore, the source material for the case study analysis will be limited to publicly accessible information on the museums' websites and online reviews.

Definitions:

As this capstone focuses on museums and the communities that are represented through exhibition, the following definitions will define the scope of the research:

Museum: A cultural institution that represents communities on a global scale through the exhibition, interpretation, preservation, and stewardship of object-based collections (Gurian, 2006; Marstine, 2006).

Popular Culture: The activities and products that comprise the cultural experience of the general population. While the general population consists of many racial, social, political, and educational differences, popular culture is based in common experiences and can change over time (Martin, 1999; Urry, 1996).

Dominant Culture: The dominating cultural force within a social or political

boundary that contains multiple cultures. The dominant culture creates a standard for the society as a whole. Dominant culture is also considered mainstream and therefore creates marginalized and alternative communities that share a set of beliefs that do not align with the beliefs and values of the dominant culture (Younge, 2012).

Alternative Community: Group of people who identify with a shared set of beliefs and life experiences that exist parallel to and among a dominant culture. For the purposes of this capstone, alternative community is synonymous with subculture (Fine & Kleinman, 1989; Younge, 2012).

Source Community: Group of people who identify with a shared set of belief and life experiences that are showcased within museums. Source communities can be thought of as the community that is the source of information, objects, and voice of the interpretive material in an exhibition (Ames, 1992; Boast, 2011; Clifford, 1997; Karp, 1991).

Interpretation: The use of objects, narrative, and interactive devices within a museum to create meaningful, educational displays with a particular topic and takeaway message. Interpretive material in a museum exhibition can include exhibit labels, ancillary materials, and participatory activities for the audience to engage with the exhibition (Crew & Sims, 1991; Crooke, 2006; Palmer, 1989; Urry, 1996).

Negotiation: Bring forward through discussion. For the purposes of this capstone, the term negotiation is twofold. Museums as cultural institutions bring forward cultural materials and conversations through exhibition and interpretation, while this capstone brings forward a proposal of new communities to be added to the discourse of cultural representation (Karp, 1991; Morphy, 1986; Palmer, 1989; Vogel, 1991).

2: Cultural Representation in Museums

When considering the many facets of the academic discussion of cultural representation in museums as institutions, there are three major areas of discussion that are interconnected. Each has encountered positive and negative arguments but all have been consistent in the museological discourse. This discourse reflects the larger transition from the professionalization of museums and the methods of operating a museum to the social role of museums in communities in the *New Museology* (Vergo, 1989).

From the *mouseion* in Alexandria to the collections of the wealthy and powerful in the European Renaissance, museums served "not merely the baser function of the display of wealth or power or privilege, but also as places of study" (Vergo, 1989, p. 2). Over time, museums evolved from being the places of study for the wealthy and powerful to the institutions we know today that use collections and narrative to provide educational opportunities for the public (Vergo, 1989). And while museological studies have shifted from examining museum methods to museums as social institutions, there has also been an evolution to the examination of defining museums by the information they contain and how they represent that information. Elaine Gurian (2006) identifies five categories of museums that illustrate the most common ways in which museums present objects and information interact with their surrounding communities. These categories–– object-centered, client-centered, narrative, community, and national or government-run–– all incorporate an institutional function that the museum finds to be relative and important to their institutional mission (Gurian, 2006, pp. 49- 55).

A museum may blur the lines between the five categories while still carrying out the main institutional function of collecting and preserving objects and narratives that contribute to a community's collective memory (Gurian, 2006, p. 71). From the time of Vergo's *New Museology* in 1989 to the turn of this century, the perceived social role of the museum has evolved from a discussion limited to the programs, exhibitions, and research done at museums. The social role of museums now includes discussion of the many cultures that are within the exhibitions and members of diverse cultural groups who walk the halls of the museum as visitors (Gurian, 2006). A museum's social responsibility as a cultural institution is now deeply rooted in what the museum can do for its community and main audience. No longer are museum professionals simply asking what kind of exhibits they should produce next; they are expanding this question to include the overall impact on the community and the museum visitors (Sandell, 2005).

As the discourse about the social role of museums has expanded in recent decades, the three major areas of discussion in cultural representation have involved the diversity of administration, the diversity of collections, and the impact of a museum's programs and exhibitions within the community. These three categories appear to be distinct and separate from one another, but the combination of theory and practice in museums shows that there is overlap between the categories. Whether discussing these categories separately or as a cohesive whole, the components of cultural representation in museums illustrate the shift of museums from a place "of worship and awe to one of discourse and critical reflection" (Marstine, 2006, p. 5).

The incorporation of a diverse staff is new to theory regarding cultural representation in relation to the diversity of collections and community impact. This administrative push is due in large part to the shift influenced by Vergo's *New Museology* to promote the social role of the museum over its academic role. Previously, the academic role of museums created an elitist reputation difficult to combat, whether through staffing, collections, museum operations, or intended audience (Fleming, 2002). The idea of the "Great Museum Conspiracy" (Fleming, 2002, p. 213) formed from that restrictive and elite environment is being challenged today, as museums fight for relevancy as social institutions. Diversity in staffing shifts power from the "over-mighty curator-director" (Fleming, 2002, p. 219) to professional administrators, educators, and exhibition staff, contributing to the discussion of social diversity and inequality in staffing and museum audiences when representing a variety of cultures.

In the United Kingdom and the United States, professional initiatives are in place to encourage diverse staffing. The intent is to create a trickle-down effect for the museum's overall environment and thereby to influence collecting practices and intended audiences. As the diversity of museum administration is a major first step in the overall diversification of the museum, underrepresentation in the museum workforce has been analyzed in the United Kingdom and the United States in an effort to understand what changes can be implemented to ensure a more culturally diverse workforce (Sandell, 2000). Whether underrepresentation in the workforce is influenced by the existing corps of museum professionals, the regional demographics of the museum's location, or a lack of diversity in job applicants (Sandell, 2000), there has been a professional push within the last decade for a more inclusive professional environment (Nightingale & Mahal, 2012). Eithne Nightingale

and Chandan Mahal interviewed museum administrators and professionals who emphasized a holistic approach to diversity and inclusion in museum staff (2012, pp. 13-37). The many steps to achieve this holistic approach can be influenced by legislation (Nightingale & Mahal, 2012, p. 31) and by museum leadership in an effort to educate all staff members in a diverse environment while integrating new professional practices (Nightingale & Mahal, 2012, p. 17). The legislative manners that museums are most concerned with are the legal actions in place to create a minimum standard to address issues of race and ethnicity.

Initiatives toward diversifying museum staff influence the diversity of museum collections and audiences, but other issues of diversity are still being addressed such as socio-economic class and accessibility for those with disabilities (Nightingale & Mahal, 2012, p. 31). In an effort to incorporate "universal themes that cut across diverse identity categories and group experiences" into public programming, the overlap of diversity at the administrative level and collections appears (Nightingale & Mahal, 2012, p. 32), but the political impact of these practices are not always what are expected.

A major component of the political impact of museums is visitors' personal interaction with museum collections. This interaction may take place in source community collaboration, visitor relations, and collections practices. Collaboration and collections practices vary, but the common relationship that many institutions share is that between the museum staff and representatives from the source communities (Herle, 1997). This relationship presents the opportunity to challenge the role of the museum as a cultural authority over the objects in collections rooms (Herle, 1997). This opportunity may yield

either a positive or negative political impact as the institution interprets the cultures on display for public audiences.

A common exhibition practice of displaying objects within glass cases alongside text panels describing the object's cultural context is frequently critiqued in the discourse of cultural representation. Some scholars, such as Henrietta Riegel (1996), argue that this separation between the objects and the visitor is only one of the many ways that the visitor is denied "shared communication" and is a political act with a negative impact on a museum (p. 88). The shared communication between the museum, the source communities, and the museum visitor is balanced through interpretation and exhibition. However, this balance is precarious at best, as there is potential to create "distanciation" contributing to the understanding, or misunderstanding, of cultural politics (Riegel, 1996, p. 99). This distanciation creating a misunderstanding of cultural politics has led to one of the ethnographic 'other-ing' of cultures on display, a practice that has demonstrated severe negative political impact on museums. This form of allochronism, or:

> … a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse (Johannes Fabian, as cited in Riegel, 1996, p. 88)

can be so severe in its negative impact that the potential for future collaboration with source communities is lost (Herle, 1997).

The museum has become a safe space where people may come together to discuss the representation of culture and social diversity. Museum staff are tasked with incorporating many possibilities of representing cultures and making decisions about

which perspectives and approaches to use (Morphy, 1986). One particular strategy that

curators and educators use to avoid bias within an exhibition is to present multiple

perspectives and interpretations, or "representational relativism" (Morphy, 1986, p. 24).

By approaching an exhibit with representational relativism, the museum presents

information and objects with an emphasis on cultural context with the intent that visitors

will empathize with the cultures represented (Morphy, 1986). Even when cultures have

been presented using multiple perspectives, the objects on display have been critiqued by

scholars and professionals because of the motives behind collecting. Many objects on

display in museums that represent non-Western communities have strong ties to the

colonial era. Because of this association with colonialism, anthropology and ethnographic

museums have been accused of romanticizing "other cultures without reference to the

present conditions of their existence" (Morphy, 1986, p. 25).

The present and previous conditions of a culture's experience are built upon the

social construct of remembrance. In a community, there is a connection to the past, present,

and future. However, there is not a concrete definition or description of how the

community members remember the past (Urry, 1996, pp. 45- 46). The linear concept of

time has been expanded over the years to include a relationship between an individual or

community and the surrounding world (Urry, 1996, pp. 48- 49). Objects found around us

and in museum collections are the physical representation of the relationship between

community and world. Acting as a "documentation of remembrance" for the community,

objects create an act of "collective remembering" (Urry, 1996, p. 53; p. 51). Museums, as

places that house collections of objects, are institutions of collective remembering. But the

motives behind collecting may exclude objects from communities that are not a part of the

dominant culture's collective remembrance (Urry, 1996). In addition to those communities that do not agree with the methods of display or interpretation of their community in museums, new and separate institutions are created to act as the communities' own space to discuss, interpret, and represent themselves in remembering the past (Urry, 1996).

Museums and those cultural institutions created by communities communicate a dialogue of collective remembrance with which museums visitors of other cultures may interact (Bodo, 2012). In this way, a cross-cultural dialogue becomes a part of the museum's social role. In the past, the museum's academic role created a static representation of information and objects, limited to those with the "'adequate' level of cultural literacy" (Bodo, 2012, p. 182). As museums transitioned to embrace social responsibility, the approach to representation transitioned from "essentialist" to "dialogical" with tension among museum professionals. But with this transition, museums became a shared "common space of social interaction" (Bodo, 2012, p. 182). The academic approach using the perspective of the dominant culture evolved through collaboration to create a space for dialogue between cultures, to address issues of representation and misrepresentation, and informs the museum as a social institution (Bodo, 2012).

Together, the diversity of a museum's staff, collections, and collaboration with source communities creates a social institution that serves as a place for discussing cross-cultural interpretations. Richard Sandell (2002) poses a framework in which the museum creates a multifaceted approach to combat social inequality and provide a positive, intrinsic value to the lives of marginalized groups in a community (p. 4). The museum acts as "an agent of change" while addressing the representation of source communities through

exhibition (Sandell, 2002, p. 9). This change can be positive or negative in shaping or

denying a community's identity in relation to the dominant culture (Ivan Karp, as cited in

Sandell, 2002, p. 12). Ultimately, the museum has a social responsibility to the

communities represented in its exhibitions and should provide the space and opportunity

to discuss matters of social change and inequality for visitors and source communities to

interact (Sandell, 2002).

Current Communities within the Discourse

A major political impact of cultural representation in museums addresses the

display and interpretation of marginalized communities. Marginalized communities are

determined by distinct differences from a mainstream culture. The terminology of

marginalized and mainstream are quite distinct, yet there is a fluid boundary between the

two concepts (Younge, 2012). Rather than facing political impact based in governance,

museums must negotiate relationships with communities in terms of human politics and

interaction. Museums work closely with the marginalized communities as an institution

rooted in the mainstream dominant culture, because there is no way of isolating the

marginalized from the mainstream (Younge, 2012). No matter where the boundary lines

are drawn between marginalized and hegemonic cultures, both are always present within

the walls of a museum. Most common are the two major groups of museum goers, which

Michael Ames (1992) calls the "principal financial support" and the "originating

populations" (p. 12). While there may be some overlap between the two groups, as is

possible between marginalized and hegemonic cultures, there is a distinct concern of the

museum goers and community members who identify with the marginalized community

that the museum's collections and exhibition represent their culture as accurately as possible, rather than as entertainment (Ames, 1992).

In the case of the current discourse, the hegemonic culture is the western European and American culture, with a population that is predominantly Caucasian. The marginalized communities and cultures are the diasporic communities as well as the cultures that have been heavily affected by colonization. These communities are often represented in museums by the ethnographic collections that have been historically featured in exhibitions for centuries (Ames, 1992; Fyfe, 2006; Shelton, 2006). While display of these cultures should produce a neutral, educational presentation of people and cultures from around the world, the effect is decidedly opposite in that it has the consequence of othering any non-Western cultures (Karp, 1991). This is often the result of the convergence of the "ideas, values, and purposes" of the culture on display, the creators of the exhibit, and the museum visitor (Baxandall, 1991, p. 34). Taking into account the political, social, and cultural implications, this can cause positive and negative responses from the source communities. From these responses comes the opportunities for growth and collaboration.

One of the source communities that has been growing recently within the current discourse is the Hispanic community. Admittedly, there are many ways in which an individual in the community may identify – Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, for example (Oboler, 1992) – and limiting the discourse to the Hispanic community presents the possibility of excluding additional literature and conversation regarding the Latino and Chicano communities. In the case of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston displaying contemporary Hispanic art in 1987, there was a pressing need for basic research into a definition of

contemporary Hispanic art and the community that produces it, both for the artists and the

Hispanic community (Marzio, 1991). While this research was taking place, there was

discussion among museum professionals and the Hispanic communities; many felt it was

an appropriate time for "larger American institutions [to take] note of Hispanic art"

(Livingston & Beardsley, 1991). The exhibition, "Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty

Contemporary Painters and Sculptors", met with a positive response from the community

and public, but the process was decidedly different from the research and planning of an

exhibit of European Masters and the research was much more ethnographic in nature

(Livingston & Beardsley, 1991; Marzio, 1991).

The research and knowledge used within exhibitions of diasporic cultures often

have a strong divide between formal knowledge of the culture within the academic and

professional community and primary knowledge of the culture itself (Shelton, 2003). In

reality, this is a residual effect of "cultural colonialism" that exists past the age of

colonialism, but continues to other the marginalized communities whose cultures are on

display in museums (Shelton, 2003). In the case of the exhibit "African Worlds" at the

Horniman Museum and Gardens in London, England, the exhibit developers tasked

themselves with exploring the many cultures of Africa that are represented in the

ethnographic collections of the museum, and also with the effect of colonialism and the

reactions of members of black communities in greater London (Shelton, 2003).

Perhaps most recognized as marginalized communities in the current discourse of

cultural representation in museums are the discussions of indigenous communities and the

collaborations that have resulted in many museums. The discussion of indigenous

communities and their representation in museums can be further broken down

geographically, regarding the indigenous communities around the world, such as in

Norway, New Zealand, Australia, and North America. One of the major concerns in working

with the indigenous communities in Australia is the availability of knowledge. While

museums are public institutions that provide information in an informal, educational

setting, cultural knowledge among the Aboriginal Australian communities is protected and

restricted within each community according to cultural protocol (Simpson, 2006). Cultural

institutions that operate similarly to the Western museum have been created in Australia

to function as places for the conservation of traditions and cultural material, but have now

incorporated Keeping Places, or locked storage of various sizes to contain culturally

exclusive material, as a way of maintaining the restrictions on cultural knowledge within

the community (Simpson, 2006). The communities, through their involvement with

cultural centers and museums, have pushed for a shift from being represented as

indigenous communities to the presentation of indigenous histories. By incorporating

narratives from community members and archival material into the exhibits' interpretive

material, to share the Aboriginal experience and the effect of colonization in Australia

(Bolton, 2003; Simpson, 2006).

In North America, indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States have

influenced collection and exhibition practices within museums in various ways. Like the

Aboriginal Australian communities, the First Nations of Canada and Native Americans in

the United States have experienced hardships culturally, politically, and socially since the

colonization of North America. A common practice in ethnographic collecting during the

late eighteenth and nineteenth century was the collection of human remains for scientific

study. After diligent work on political initiatives during the latter half of the twentieth century, the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) began the repatriation process of human remains and culturally sensitive objects to the source communities (Lonetree, 2012). The implementation of NAGPRA was only part of the overall activism that contributed to the shift to greater collaboration between the source communities and museum professionals. Native Americans worked to change five key museum practices:

> … (1) Protesting stereotypical displays of Native American history and culture at
> mainstream institutions; (2) protesting the collecting, display, and holding of
> American Indian human remains; (3) seeking to change museums from the inside by
> having Native American communities without including the Native perspective; and
> (5) pressuring for the repatriation of Native American cultural objects, human
> remains, funerary objects, and objects of cultural patrimony (Patricia Pierce
> Erikson, as cited in Lonetree, 2012, p. 17).

Through this activism and the tribal museum movement, collaboration between Native Americans and museum professionals has grown and evolved with the objective to decolonize collections and exhibitions (Lonetree, 2012). However, the work that has been done so far in this collaborative effort does not signal the end of this portion of the discourse (Boast, 2011), but rather has created new standards of collaborative practice with source communities from which we can continue to grow.

The new standards of collaborative practice and the discourse of diversity of staff and collections inform the social role of the museum introduced by Peter Vergo's *New Museology*. The discourse surrounding communities represented in museums often centers

on marginalized indigenous and diasporic communities. However, a number of communities that are represented by objects in museums that are not a part of the current academic and professional discourse. These groups are different from the marginalized source communities discussed in academic discourse but are still a form of source community to be considered in museums.

3: Subcultures as Alternative Communities

The groups of people that are represented in museums are reflective of the groups that exist around the world. While marginalized communities are the focus of museums, particularly in the discourse of cultural representation, some groups and communities can be found among the exhibit halls of museums. Depending on the museum, and the collections, communities can be represented from historical, artistic, anthropological, scientific, and cultural perspectives. From each perspective, there is a defined community based on likes, dislikes, life experiences, location, socio-economic class, and many other characteristics. These communities are not bound by face-to-face interaction and are rooted in how the community's members identify with the larger group (Anderson, 1991).

Within popular culture museums, communities are represented by objects and narratives that tell the story of resistance, rebellion, and imagination. These communities, some of them often regarded as subcultures, are separate from the mainstream culture and are created based on affinities and life experiences. Studies of diverse types of subculture communities have been conducted in many countries since the 1920s. These subcultures are distinct communities that are not marginalized in terms of race or ethnicity, but are alternatives to the mainstream dominant culture.

What is Subculture?

Early definitions and social science literature attempted to define the concept of subculture as it appeared to a national, or dominant, culture. Some theorists defined subculture in relation to the other social experiences of the community members such as "class status, ethnic background, regional and rural or urban residence…, but forming in their combination a functional unity" (Gordon, as cited by Jenks, 2005, p. 7). Others argued that the subculture was a segment of the population that used its isolated traits to "constitute relatively cohesive social systems" (Komarovsky & Sargent, as cited by Jenks, 2005, p. 7). These early definitions influenced the studies of groups of youth that demonstrated a subdivision from the dominant culture by way of behavior and material culture.

While the idea of subculture existed to categorize groups of youth who were visually and behaviorally distinct from the dominant culture in society, the foundation for the academic study of subculture began after World War II with the Chicago School following sociologists George Herbert Mead and Everett C. Hughes (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004; Jenks, 2005). One of the main concepts within the literature produced by the Chicago School was that of 'adult socialization'. Adult socialization is the continuous process of learning through social life and interaction to determine and develop a sense of self (Jenks, 2005, p. 58). Through the analysis of urban Chicago youth, the Chicago School determined that a subculture, or the youth response within a socio-cultural context, is a normal deviation from the dominant adult culture (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004, p. 3). This determination from the Chicago School provided the framework for one of the most highly

regarded sociological studies of youth subcultures, commonly referred to in academic discourse as the Birmingham School.

The work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies is the foundation on which modern subculture theory rests. With a focus on style-based youth subgroupings, members of the Birmingham School argued that the subcultures were a form of youth resistance to the hegemonic adult culture of post-war British society (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004, p. 5). The introduction of hegemony to the subculture discourse provided a third, intermediate path of analysis as well as ideas of culturalism and structuralism; how the subgroups make culture and the characteristics that form the subgroup (Jenks, 2005, p 111). The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies explored the concept of youth resistance to hegemonic culture through a series of case studies that examined the skinhead, Teddy Boy, and mod styles in Britain. These studies concluded that the subcultures do not offer a concrete social solution for the youth subgroups but rather a solution that provides a temporary social alternative for the subgroups (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004, p. 6). The cumulative conclusions of these case studies and the Birmingham School's research have been criticized for a lack of representation of female involvement in the subcultures studied. An additional critique was the assumption that these subcultures were representative of post-war resistance and working-class consumerism and that the subgroups were not participating in the subculture as a form of entertainment and fun (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004, pp. 6- 11). This notion of subculture being separate from entertainment was later challenged as the definition and concept of subculture evolved.

Birmingham scholar Dick Hebdige highlights the state of limbo where subcultures reside, both existing with and resisting the dominant adult culture. Hebdige concludes that the function of subculture is not solely based on class distinctions or contradicting adult culture, but as "the full interplay of ideological, economic and cultural factors" that come together as a spectacular visual representation of youth resistance (Hebdige, 2012, p. 78). Early subculture was visually distinguishable from the dominant adult culture, expressing specific ideologies and behaviors through style and material culture.

The evolution of subculture theory has led to the creation of new definitions that are considered to be more concrete in comparison to the subcultures being studied. A sociological perspective emphasizing interaction examined how a person within a subculture may interact with others in the subculture and outside the subculture. The interactionist perspective created a relationship between the youth resistance and the dominant culture, offering an ideal illustration of the function of these subcultures (Fine & Kleinman, 1979). Most commonly acknowledged is that subcultures create a value-defined system of core values for their community that is distinct "from the value system of the larger society" (Fine & Kleinman, 1979, p. 7). From an interactionist perspective, no community interacts within a vacuum, and there are the opportunities for community members to interact with other community members who are not within the same geographical, racial, or social class boundaries (Fine & Kleinman, 1979). Because of this interaction with other community members and other subcultures and communities in general, the individuals within a subculture community do not have to completely identify with a singular subculture. Under the concepts of centrality, or the "degree of commitment" to the subculture, and salience, or "the frequency of the identification", an individual can

interact with multiple subcultures and identify with the subcultures to varying degrees (Fine & Kleinman, 1979, p. 13).

Within the interactionist approach to subculture theory and identification, there is also a post-subcultural theory that argues that individuals can interact and identify with multiple subcultures. This post-subcultural theory was introduced and developed during the 1990s, based upon the observation that the boundaries between subcultures have broken down "as the relationship between style, musical taste and identity has become progressively weaker and articulated more fluidly" (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004, p. 11). The Birmingham School originally associated subculture with style and music. The subsequent waning of this association brought forth the notion that these subcultures can form across perceived boundaries of social class, race, and gender (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). From this post-subcultural theory argument came new conceptual definitions, such as lifestyle, neo-tribe, and scene. These then encompassed the many aspects of traditional subculture theory while forgoing the rigidity of previous definitions and concepts that had created a unified social system of youth resistance as a subculture (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004). With this ability to form subculture groupings outside of previously perceived boundaries, new types of subcultures emerged.

Punk Subculture

The punk subculture, with its distinct musical sound and visual style, has been a subject of sociological study for members of both the Chicago School and Birmingham School. Out of the Birmingham School, Dick Hebdige focused on the vibrant style and fashion of the punk subculture and its function within subculture resistance. Beginning with mods and moving to teddy boys and punks, the visual style of a subculture expresses

the difference between community and mainstream while providing a commodity and ideological foundation for the subculture (Hebdige, 1979). Individuals choosing to express deviation from mainstream culture using drastically different clothing align with a particular subculture that creates a visual spectacle as part of its identity.

Visually, punks can attribute elements of style to the teddy boys of decades past. Particularly, the extravagant representation of clothing and creating a costume of sorts influenced the early punks of the 1970s. The teddy boy subculture was linked to criminal association as few of the Teds were "law-abiding members" (Fyvel, 1997, p. 389). With costuming that is a bricolage of American and English influences, teddy boys communicated masculinity, social class, and resistance to normalized culture in south London (Fyvel, 1997). With Edwardian influence clothing and hairstyles that mimicked styles seen in American films, teddy boys created an "anti-society" where members asserted dominance over gang territory through behavior and dress codes (Fyvel, 1997, p. 390). This anti-society brought change to the normalized dominant culture that subcultures in the future, including punks, would continue to resist.

The sound of punk derives from the genre of rock 'n' roll. Scholars such as Carl Belz have explored the folk tradition of rock 'n' roll as a "traditional folk sound" representing the people participating with the music communicating beliefs, values, and social behaviors (Belz, 1967). Similar to the way that subculture represents resistance to a parent, or adult, culture, rock 'n' roll and the genres created from rock 'n' roll are musical resistance to the music of generations before (Belz, 1967). Rock 'n' roll became the sound of the young, expressing fears, anxieties, and how youth see the world (Belz, 1967, p. 139). More

importantly, this genre musically demonstrates the various influences of musicians and the variations rock 'n' roll musicians present through their own creations. Belz (1967), focusing on the rock 'n' roll genre, references the Beatles as a prime example of the "kind of compendium of the stylistic complexity of the period in question," while also being an exception to the rule that rock 'n' roll is not concerned with world issues, only the local youth experience (p. 139). For those genres, including punk, that followed rock 'n' roll, there is an awareness of local community and world issues. Belz also discusses the blending of folk tradition and fine art through rock 'n' roll that bridges the gap between communities (Belz, 1967). Whether the commodification of popular music changes the function of rock 'n' roll or makes the function obsolete, is experienced in other genres of music connected with subculture, namely punk, one of the most explored subcultures in sociological studies.

Members of the Chicago School and Birmingham School have focused their studies of the punk subculture in the United States and the United Kingdom. The presence of the punk subculture in other countries has both aligned and challenged some of the theories that the Chicago School and Birmingham School presented. Stephen Baron compared those theories with observations of the punks on the West Coast of Canada (Baron, 1989). Baron theorizes that Canadian subcultures were not a part of sociological studies because of the lack of dramatic and overt style that are used to identify with a subculture (Baron, 1989, p. 290). Baron aligns with the theory that the function of subculture in general is a way to "escape class and occupation in a symbolic manner" (Baron, 1989, p. 292). However, he also discusses the female role of subculture and how the function changes from resistance to class to resistance to social role, a challenge to the lack of female presence in studies

from the Birmingham School (Baron, 1989, p. 293). Many of these West Coast Canadian

punks were resisting the adult culture, similar to those punks studied in the United

Kingdom (Baron, 1989). The difference of the Canadian punks is the degree of resisting the

adult culture and the life experiences that inform the individual's punk identity (Baron,

1989).

With the wide, international presence of punk also comes the influence of the mass

marketing industry. It is said by some scholars that punk was killed, like so many other

subcultures before it, by the marketing industry. However, Dylan Clark (2003) argues that

punk is not only a subculture but also a cultural formation that, instead of dying,

experienced a rebirth (p. 225). Attributing the commodification of punk to the dependency

on fashion and music for expression, Clark marked the early punks as "easy targets" (Clark,

2003, p. 227). This dependency on fashion and music for expression was essential to what

Hebdige discussed as the function of subculture (Hebdige, 1979). However, the visual

expression through style has decreased its value as a cultural capital (Clar, 2003). Because

of the decrease in cultural capital, the vibrant atmosphere of the style, behavior, and music

of punk became sterilized as it was commodified (Clark, 2003). This sterilization is often

applied to those musicians in a music genre that a subculture identifies with, leaving little

interaction with the individuals in the subculture. The commentary that the punk

subculture has died because of commodification glosses over the many life experiences that

contribute to what punk is and has evolved to be (Clark, 2003). Considering the punks of

2000 and beyond, the subculture has become a meta-subculture addressing issues and

experiences in the community and its mass industry commodification (Clark, 2003). As a

subculture or meta-subculture, the punk community still expresses its beliefs through style, fashion, and music all the while resisting the adult culture.

Gamer Subculture

Since 1974, role-playing games have existed as a way for a group of people to gather and utilize their imaginations in a fantasy game simulation that exists outside of everyday behavior. These role-playing games, ideally, consist of three major characteristics: a game system with a problem-solving framework, an established sense of community, and the alteration of the players' primary identity (Bowman, 2010, p. 11). Through the creation of a narrative as a collective form of storytelling, players formulate scenarios and adventures that their altered character identity must navigate (Bowman, 2010; Cover, 2010). Early tabletop role-playing games, such as E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson's *Dungeons & Dragons,* are a bricolage of fantasy literature come to life through its audience. The narratives that emerge from these role-playing games often share archetypes from storytelling used over centuries (Bowman, 2010, pp. 16- 17; p. 14). Led by the foundational narrative created by one person -- in the case of *Dungeons & Dragons* this is the Dungeon Master -- the group of players come together and continue the narrative based on the decisions made collectively throughout the game by the players (Bowman, 2010; Cover, 2010; Williams, Hendricks & Winkler, 2006).

Just as the narratives of role-playing games are expanded based on the players' decisions, the genres of the games also expanded based on players' affinities. The inclusion of science fiction and horror genre role-playing games offered players new settings in which they experienced adventure through their player-character and created a limitless concept of fantasy for these games (Bowman, 2010). For the purposes of this paper, and in

keeping with the majority of the literature about role-playing game communities, the notion of "fantasy" and fantasy role-playing games refers to the traditional Tolkien-esque sense of the word, featuring dragons, elves, dwarves, and magical quests, in addition to the opposition to "reality" and the "real world".

The role-playing gaming community is comprised of a variety of players, who players may come from different races, genders, ethnicities, and social classes. The community of players is also constructed by other factors, such as preferred game, operating system, and character type, and are influenced by worldview, affinities, and lifestyle (Williams et al., 2006). Historically, the fantasy role-playing game that is most commercially successful, and is credited with popularizing this form of fantasy gameplay, is *Dungeons & Dragons* (Waskul & Lust, 2004). However, many other games have been created after the fashion of *Dungeons & Dragons,* such as *Chivalry & Sorcery,* that allow the player to create a player-character, or an avatar for digital games, to compete or interact with other player-characters within the fantasy world of the game (Tresca, 2011). Through these games, the player may explore scenarios, created through imagination, that are specific to the fantasy setting of the game while making decisions as a player-character that are informed by the player's life experience (Waskul & Lust, 2004; Williams et al, 2006).

The fantasy of the role-playing game exists as a "shared fantasy," meaning that the players experience the fantasy world collectively (Fine, 1983, p. 72). As previously mentioned, one player acts as a referee and the creator of the shared fantasy's foundation, such as the Dungeon Master (Fine, 1983; Bowman, 2010). This referee is responsible for the setting, scenarios, and logical flow of the game. The other players interact within this created fantasy world to create a collaborative narrative. Most importantly, the referee is

responsible for establishing the core values and worldview of the fantasy world that the players follow during the course of the game (Cover, 2010; Fine, 1983). Within the larger gaming community, there are integrated, unspoken core values that a referee may include in their fantasy narrative. For instance, whether or not the players or referee experience an unlimited supply of goods and gold or are rewarded for any display of courage, the role-playing fantasy world remains a battleground for the highly constrained moral good and the vast evil that opposes this moral good (Fine, 1983, pp. 76- 78). These core values and the values of the setting that the referee creates are the basis for the scenarios that players encounter in the fantasy world. In establishing a logical flow and a sense of realism of the shared fantasy, the players approach each scenario and make decisions following these core values and using the fantasy's logic (Fine, 1983).

The players of role-playing games interact with each other and other player-characters by way of prediction and reaction. Rather than simply "tak[ing] on a role", the player must take on a persona that exists within the shared fantasy, with hypothetical goals, emotions, and values, and interact with other player-characters that are functioning similarly within the game (Fine, 1983). The player-character in a fantasy role-playing game can be an extension of the player's identity in the real world, where the character is a reflection of the player's skills, knowledge, and values. The character holds meaning for the player, so the adoption of the fantasy persona on a regular basis is possible. However, the player's identification with the fantasy persona does pose a threat, as the possibility of over-identifying with the fantasy persona can prevent the player from separating from the persona (Fine, 1983). While over-involvement with player-character identification is a strong possibility in the role-playing game community, the player also has the ability to

distance themselves from the action of the character and from the response to the scenario at large (Fine, 1983). With this connection to the fantasy persona, the player may "use" the character as a way to explore and interact in social situations without major social consequences, which in turn influences their decisions as a player and a person (Bowman, 2010; Waskul & Lust, 2004).

A rapidly emerging community behavior is the use of language and humor to communicate etiquette and social norms within the fantasy game world. The use of language and humor can be specific to the group of players that gather for the role-playing game for a single play session, but can also be used among the larger community of players (Aldred, 2008). Players develop a level of communication that is specific to the player-character and that functions similarly as the persona, player, and person sub-identities to the player's role in a game on a micro-level (Hendricks, 2006). Each decision that a player makes regarding language within the game communicates the perspective of the player and persona in varying degrees of ambiguity. In the way that a player incorporates themselves into the game by using language, such as pronouns, to identify as the persona in the fantasy world (Hendricks, 2006), the incorporation of humor in the role-playing game community acts as a signifier of the degree of identity within the group. A joke or anecdotal reference may function for a person as a way of identifying as a gamer, as a player of a specific game, and even as a player of that game in a specific location (Aldred, 2008). More importantly, the element of language and humor communicates the core values of the subculture as it refers to the settings and scenarios to which the player is most accustomed.

The role-playing game community creates its culture in the same way that it creates its fantasy. The players in the role-playing game take on many responsibilities in creating

the narrative that establishes the larger fantasy world based on value, worldview, actions, and experiences with which the player-characters must interact. In doing so, the players in the role-playing game community create a social world that holds meaning for the participants because the participants have assigned meaning to the fantasy world, not because the dominant culture in society sees the fantasy world as meaningful (Fine, 1983). Whether the person is acting as the player or the persona, they are working together with other players to achieve common goals in a fantasy setting that mimic social scenarios that the person may encounter in the real world. However, unlike the real world, the fantasy setting allows for the players to navigate the scenarios without a restricted set of rules and without consequences for not complying with the rules (Fine, 1983, pp. 234- 235; Bowman, 2010). In this way, the role-playing game community creates social boundaries through player identities, game setting and scenarios that create a cohesive cultural system that exists among the dominant culture in society.

Punks and Gamers as Alternative Communities

According to generally accepted definitions, the punk community and role-playing game community are subcultures. These communities operate on a micro- and macro-level with the many groups, locally and internationally, that gather together for the sake of expressing identity through style, music, and role-playing games. Rather than solely identifying as role-playing gamers or punks within isolation of either community, these individuals identify as people within the larger society (Fine, 1983; Fine & Kleinman, 1979). The cultural systems that are created through role-playing games specific to the games are not used in everyday life, but may be used in the community to achieve common goals that are influenced by the core values and worldview of the fantasy setting. The same

may be said for the punk community expressing beliefs through music and fashion. These two communities are distinct as the punks visually resist a dominant culture while gamers resist behaviorally. Rather than creating a community whose ideology is determined by social class or race, the punk and role-playing game communities form as a result of how the individuals use the style or games. In serving the function of expressing alternative identities and navigating social situations, both communities are subcultures.

In contrast to the youth resistance of the 1960s and early punks (Jenks, 2005; Fine & Kleinman, 1979), the role-playing game community is a functional subculture; the community members use the games as a means of entertainment and social exploration. The incorporation and use of imagination to create a fantasy world for the role-playing game contradicts the assumptions of the Birmingham School that the community and subculture are founded on the ideas of entertainment (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004; Fine, 1983). The community of role-playing gamers is imagined as two-fold. The individuals interact within the community while also expressing and sharing in a core set of values (Anderson, 1991). In the case of punks, the individuals interact with the material culture. In the case of role-playing gamers, the players interact within the community's shared fantasy. In addition to the lack of face-to-face interaction with other community members at large, the "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991) of both subcultures is rooted in the collaborative imagined social system. The underlying core values of local communities bring these groups together to form the larger community and subculture.

The role-playing game subculture establishes and maintains its core values through gameplay, while punks express core values through style and music. However, in contrast to members of other subcultures who find that their core values are distinct from those of

the larger society like punks, the role-playing game community's core values exist only in the imagined fantasy settings of the game. These core values are adopted by the fantasy persona, utilized by the player in order to guide the persona's actions, and are acknowledged by the person as being distinct to the gaming community. But as the person does not identify wholly as a role-playing gamer, and the core values are influenced by the fantasy setting's worldview, the individual person does not adopt the value system of the fantasy world to navigate social situations in the real world. In this way, the value system of the fantasy setting starts and stops with each time a group of players gather to play.

As with other communities, there is an understanding of the mainstream and margins as it relates to the larger dominant culture and the subculture, respectively. The mainstream is the core entity, while the margins are multiple groups that exist outside of the mainstream. The mainstream cannot be defined without the margins, however, the state of the margins is constantly changing as they have no definite or definable boundaries for what constitutes margins. The division between mainstream and margins is dependent upon the distinct differences between the dominant culture and the subculture (Younge, 2012). In many cases for marginalized communities, this division is the result of racial and socio-political differences from the mainstream culture. In all cases, there is a distinct division of power between the mainstream and the margins (Younge, 2012). This perception of power can change over time as the differences between the mainstream and margins change and fluctuate.

In the case of subcultures, the division between the mainstream and the margins is determined by the core values of the community and when these core values are adopted. This distinction is evident to those within the subculture, but may not be evident to those

outside of the community. Because of this, punks and the role-playing game subculture has been used as the explanation for behaviors outside of what is considered the social norm (Ewalt, 2013; Tresca, 2011; Willis, 1997). During the 1980s, a decade or so after the creation of *Dungeons & Dragons*, the role-playing game community was marginalized and sometimes criminalized for adopting core values that were distinctly different from the larger value system (Ewalt, 2013, p. 26). And punk groups, like the Sex Pistols, were seemingly mocked by members of the mainstream culture as seen in televised interviews (Hebdige, 1979; F., 2013, "Sex Pistols – 1979"). With the commodification of both subcultures, the marginalization of punks and gamers decreased and evolved as the mainstream culture accepted the subculture's value system as being associated with expression and entertainment.

Studying the punk and role-playing gamer communities as marginalized communities has illustrated that the subculture exists alongside the dominant culture, using the larger value system in the everyday while adopting a separate value system when identifying with the subculture. The role-playing game subculture is only periodically identified as being different from the mainstream through gameplay while punks may identify as being different based on age and life experience. Meaning that the subcultures, as a whole, are marginalized communities. This does not take into account all functions of the community. In order to accommodate the subcultures as a community based in entertainment as well as functioning outside the mainstream culture's value system, the communities must be identified as something other than marginalized.

I propose that the punk and role-playing game subcultures are alternative communities rather than marginalized communities. Through the identification of these

subcultures as alternative communities, the function of the style and role-playing games may be accounted for in the distinction between the mainstream and the margins. As an alternative community, the punk and role-playing game subcultures retain the shared interests and value systems that are adopted through style and gameplay and that separate the community from the larger value system of the dominant culture. They do this simultaneously conceding that the community members are not always separated from the dominant culture and value system. In the times when the community adopts its value system, it is creating an alternative value system that is distinct to the subculture that is utilized by the alternative identities created as individuals within the community.

Informed by the studies of subcultural theory and the analysis of the communities of punks and role-playing gamers, the conclusion that the punk and gamer subcultures are alternative communities encompasses discussion of communities with shared values and that are distinct from the mainstream and marginalized communities. However, as the individuals in the communities do not always function using the core values of the subculture or separately from the mainstream dominant culture, the punk and role-playing game communities are neither subculture in the traditional academic sense nor marginalized communities. In this way, the punk and role-playing game communities are alternative communities, rather than subcultures or marginalized communities, with respect to the dominant culture.

4: Case Studies: Alternative Communities in Museums

The many museums in the United States offer a range of collections that are diverse in nature. Whether these museums have a focus in art, music, history, anthropology, or

science, the collections within the exhibition halls tell the story of groups of people and communities large and small. Some museums focus on popular culture to tell the story of the people within the United States. From the east coast to the west coast, popular culture museums of all kinds use objects to explore ideas of personal collections, storytelling, and history.

The collection of popular culture objects, referred to as "popular collecting", has been growing steadily since the 1950s, but has been in practice since the Middle Ages (Martin, 1999, p. 26). The rise in popular collecting is attributed to the rise in cultural studies and popular social history, particularly in America after the 1930s (Martin, 1999). From postcards to brooches, novelties and objects with a financial or aesthetic value, popular collecting not limited to the social and academic elite. Since the period between the first and second World Wars, popular collecting has been associated with entertainment as well as education, as it is associated with a moment in time and a pleasurable experience (Martin, 1999). Using the educational and entertaining motivations of popular collecting, popular culture museums use objects for popular social history to both entertain and educate.

These popular culture museums, like all other museums, can be specific or general in their collections. Like the Burlingame Museum of PEZ in San Francisco, California or the Stax Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis, Tennessee, collections can be variations of the same item (such as a candy dispenser) or can celebrate the creation of a tradition, such as the creation of soul music from the influence of gospel music from the Mississippi

Delta. As there are few limitations to what constitutes popular culture, there appears to be no limit to the kinds of objects that can be found in their collections.

Case Study: Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland, OH

Since 1996, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame has called Cleveland, Ohio its home. The concept of creating a museum for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame was introduced in 1983 and in 1986, the city of Cleveland was chosen to be the permanent site of the museum (Weathersby, 1996). While other cities such as New York, San Francisco, Memphis, and Chicago were in consideration for the site of the museum, final deciding factors for Cleveland came from the public support from the city and the sixty-five million dollar commitment from city officials that equaled almost half of the initial funding of the museum ("About the Rock Hall"; Weathersby, 1996).

The museum building boasts 150,000 square feet designed by I.M. Pei, the architect of the East Building of the National Gallery of Art and the pyramid entry to the Louvre Museum (Weathersby, 1996). The construction of the museum on the shore of Lake Erie began and ended with rock and roll. The ground breaking ceremony was attended by many popular music artists such as Pete Townsend, Billy Joel, and Chuck Berry while the completion of the construction was celebrated in concert by Jerry Lee Lewis. And in 1995, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame opened with a celebratory concert with many performers that included Chuck Berry, Johnny Cash, Aretha Franklin, and Bruce Springsteen ("About the Rock Hall"). Since this opening concert, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame has created exhibitions within its multi-level exhibition hall in alignment with its mission "to engage, teach and inspire through the power of rock & roll" ("About the Rock Hall"). These exhibits

fall into four general categories of rock's roots and history, social and civic influences, the fan experience, and performers perceptions of rock and roll (Weathersby, 1996). Using multimedia technologies, the exhibits provide large and small scale experiences for the thousands of visitors each year to explore and engage with the individuals and bands featured in the exhibits (Weathersby, 1996; "About the Rock Hall").

The exhibitions within the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame have explored the many facets of rock and roll as well as popular music. However, the exhibits are not limited to the musicians who have been inducted in the Hall of Fame since 1986. Previous and current exhibits feature musicians with long lasting careers, magazines and published material by professionals in the music industry as well as the do-it-yourselfers across the country, and the photographers who captured moments in music history ("Exhibits"). Rather than simply presenting the music and the musicians, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame presents a multi-faceted approach to the people who interact with the many music genres represented in the Hall of Fame. Rather than simply focusing on the rock and roll bands of the 1950s and 1960s, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's exhibits encompass those that embody rock and roll. As 2016 inductee Ice Cube described, "Rock & roll is a spirit... Rock & roll is not conforming to the people who came before you, but creating your own path in music and in life" (as quoted in "About the Rock Hall").

Most recently, in partnership with the Newseum in Washington, D.C., the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame produced the exhibit "Louder than Words: Rock, Power & Politics" as a way of illustrating the connection between rock and roll and political and social movements. The exhibit focuses on the use of rock as a way to "challenge assumptions and

beliefs, stimulate through and effect change" over a range of decades, music genres, and forms of activism ("Exhibits"). Challenging the political ideologies of the time, the musicians in "Louder than Words" represent the opposition to the dominant ideology and culture through their actions and lyrics similar to how the punk subculture represented through action and style. The objects within the exhibit have musical and political meaning in demonstrating this opposition. From hand-written lyrics to Neil Young's "Ohio" to correspondence between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Priority Records regarding N.W.A.'s "F*** the Police", these objects demonstrate the resistance that the musicians against the dominant culture.

Case Study: Museum of Pop Culture, Seattle, WA

In comparison with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Museum of Pop Culture in Seattle, Washington, has had an interesting evolution since its creation in 2000. The museum, created from the personal collection of Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, began in Seattle with a strong focus on Allen's collection of Jimi Hendrix memorabilia and has grown to incorporate more popular music artists and popular culture collections (Bruce, 2006). Not only did the museum's collection expand and evolve to incorporate more aspects of popular culture, the museum's name has evolved to reflect this. Starting from Allen's original concept of a "Jimi Hendrix Museum" and shifting to become the Experience Music Project, the name change indicated that the museum was no longer simply just a place for Hendrix enthusiasts to gather, but also a place of visitors to experience popular music of all kinds (Bruce, 2006). With its addition of non-music related popular culture collections and exhibitions ten years ago, the Experience Music Project became the Museum of Pop Culture

in November 2016, after many variations of names that tried to encompass the vast and varied collections (Kiley, 2016).

Designed by Frank Gehry, the building was intended to be a destination and major attraction in the Seattle Center. Located near the Space Needle, the building's use of color and form make it distinct among museum architecture. Inspired by the materials Gehry associated with rock and roll, the model for the Museum of Pop Culture was created from broken portions of electric guitars, materials from tour buses, and from Allen's Jimi Hendrix collection (Bruce, 2006). The creation and building of the museum relied heavily on innovative technology to produce the iconic waves of the movement-inspired architectural design (Bruce, 2006). However, innovative technology was not limited to the design and creation of the museum's 140,000 square foot building; the museum's exhibitions and collections are aided by a vast amount of interactive technology ("About the Museum"). Inside the Museum of Pop Culture is the signature Sky Church, the world's largest LED screen, continuously playing videos for museum visitors to enjoy while walking between exhibits (Bruce, 2006). The media- and object- heavy exhibits, ranging from popular music history to science fiction and fantasy popular culture, straddle the line between educational and entertaining. The Museum of Pop Culture extends the boundaries of what a traditional museum can provide for its visitors. In the sixteen years after its creation, the Museum of Pop Culture has remained driven by a mission statement that is inspired by innovation in presenting popular culture.

The Museum of Pop Culture is a leading-edge nonprofit museum, dedicated to the ideas and risk-taking that fuel contemporary popular culture. With its roots in rock

'n' roll, MoPOP serves as a gateway museum, reaching multigenerational audiences
through our collections, exhibitions, and educational programs, using interactive
technologies to engage and empower our visitors. At MoPOP, artists, audiences and
ideas converge, bringing understanding, interpretation, and scholarship to the
popular culture of our time. ("About the Museum")

The exhibits at the Museum of Pop Culture have evolved over time as the collections
have expanded to include objects from science fiction and fantasy genres of popular
culture. In keeping with the original concept for the Museum of Pop Culture, there is a
permanent Jimi Hendrix-themed exhibit influenced by Paul Allen's personal collection of
memorabilia of the Seattle musician. In addition to this exhibit, exhibits regarding science
fiction and fantasy literature, film and television fill the halls for thousands of visitors each
year. With temporary exhibits featuring costumes from the *Star Wars* franchise, Hello Kitty,
and the Jim Henson collection, the Museum of Pop Culture celebrates popular culture and
provides museum visitors with the opportunity to delve deeper into the exhibits with
interactive computers and display technology ("At the Museum"; Bruce, 2006).

Within these exhibits, many subcultures are represented through objects and media
displays. The gamer subculture and role-playing game community can be found in two of
the current exhibitions on display. In "Indie Game Revolution", the creation, design, and
production of independent video games and how they are influencing the gaming industry
today are illustrated through interactive computer displays, imagery, and a large pixelated
sculpture. In the exhibit, museum visitors are able to interact and play a rotating roster of
games so as to have a hands-on experience with the exhibition material ("At the Museum").

The gamer subculture in "Indie Game Revolution" is found in the game designers and creators, continuing the tradition of creating games through creativity and innovation (Kline, Dyer-Witheford & Peuter, 2005).

In "Fantasy: Worlds of Myth and Magic", the role-playing game community is found among objects that represent a shared popular fantasy. Alongside displays of film memorabilia from *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Harry Potter* resides the Library of Arcane Wizardry ("At the Museum"). Next to a large interactive computer display that allows visitors to choose from videos archives sit display cases holding original role-playing game materials from popular games such as *Magic: The Gathering* and *Dungeons and Dragons* ("At the Museum"). While these gaming materials have not been sold for decades, each represents a moment in time in which the role-playing gaming community evolved from the creation of a shared fantasy between players.

Together, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Museum of Pop Culture present objects that are associated with communities that are subcultures in that they resist dominant society, but have also been incorporated into popular culture. Using multimedia and innovative technology, both museums present these objects and the communities they represent through interactive exhibitions. Similar to museums of art, history, and culture, these popular culture museums present alternative communities of subcultures to the public for the purposes of education, engagement, and entertainment.

5: Conclusion

Since the publication of Peter Vergo's *New Museology* in 1989, the field of museum studies has evolved from museum methods and practices to the social role of museums. A

major focus on the diversity of museum staff, diversity of collections, and community impact has created the academic discourse of cultural representation in museums as social institutions. With an emphasis on how museums and museum professionals work with source communities, many scholars have analyzed the collaborative process and the resulting exhibitions as a way of establishing standards of practice and offering recommendations for improvement.

While the source communities discussed in this literature are marginalized indigenous and diasporic communities, many other communities are represented in a variety of museums across the country. These communities are created by ideologies and behaviors that offer an alternative to the dominant culture while existing within the mainstream culture. Rather than being marginalized by race, religion, or ethnicity, these alternative communities are distinguished by style, affinity, and shared tradition. Alternative communities can come in many shapes and sizes, weaving in between the margins and mainstream culture. These alternative communities are not static in their existence and have evolved over time from many subculture communities. Subcultures, particularly punks and gamers, can be found in museums that focus on popular culture and collections, such as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Museum of Pop Culture. These two museums, as well as other popular culture museums, represent alternative communities through interactive exhibitions with the intention of educating visitors about history and communities through objects and narrative.

Cultural representation in museums has become an important part of the discourse of the social role of museums. This discourse involves the source communities, the museum

staff, collections, and the community in which the museum resides. These groups work together to create an environment that respects both the source communities' beliefs and traditions and the museum's mission and practices. From this discourse a collaborative environment became a standard of practice when creating interpretive exhibitions, especially when working with marginalized communities. This standard of practice can be used when creating exhibitions about other communities that are represented in a variety of museums. However, based on the lack of literature, there appears to be very little collaboration with source communities that are not considered marginalized communities.

Subcultures, as alternative communities, are one of the source communities that could benefit from the collaborative environment that was influenced by the New Museology. With a subculture's ability to create a core value system that resists the dominant culture for a length of time, there are many similarities to the marginalized communities that are emphasized in the academic discourse on cultural representation.

Popular culture museums, like the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Museum of Pop Culture, present these subcultures as alternative communities that are a part of mainstream popular culture, rather than distinctly separate. The punks and gamers are represented by objects that are displayed next to other objects representing other alternative communities. These objects and their corresponding interpretive material illustrate the differences and similarities between the dominant culture and the alternative communities represented. In the case of "Louder than Words" at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the musicians and artists represented are a part of the commercialized music industry while also representing the ideologies of their respective subcultures. The

Museum of Pop Culture presents the shared fantasy of gamers alongside the inspiration and influences from the literary and film genres that have long been a part of the mainstream entertainment industry. Both museums engage their visitors using interactive displays and exhibits as they discuss the mainstream and the alternative that exist simultaneously.

While there is innovative exhibit design happening in these popular culture museums, there remains a question of how the museums engage with the alternative communities as source communities. I offer this question as a way of contributing to the academic discourse of cultural representation in museums. Popular culture museums may benefit from the collaborative environment that comes from the experiences other museums have in working with source marginalized communities. Rather than simply featuring a specific musician, photographer, or game designer, in collaborating with alternative communities, popular culture museums can feature the community as a whole.

Implications for the Field

This capstone research may serve as a continuation of the cultural representation discourse in museums. The foundation of this discourse, regarding marginalized indigenous and diasporic communities, has a robust amount of literature that can be used to expand how museum professionals approach representing communities through exhibition. The concepts and practices outlined in the existing literature can be applied to other communities represented in museums across the country. It is important to note that in expanding the discourse of cultural representation in museums, the discourse of

representing marginalized communities and source community collaboration with museum professionals is not being minimized or halted.

By introducing the concept of alternative community representation through popular culture museums, the fields of museum studies and arts management may open new avenues of inquiry to include new communities to be included in discussing cultural representation. In addition, the study of popular culture museums as institutions of education and not simply entertainment may provide new insights to the study of museology. Through these avenues of inquiry, alternative communities represented in museums become a part of the larger discussion of communities represented in museums.

Suggestions for Further Research

In suggestions for further research, I recommend an in-depth analysis of the interpretive planning process for popular culture exhibits. The collaborative process between source community and museum professionals is emphasized in the creation of an exhibition of marginalized communities. In comparing this process with the interpretive planning process of popular culture museums, there may be opportunities for collaboration between alternative communities and museum professionals in the future.

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