PRESERVING WHAT IS VALUED: AN ANALYSIS OF MUSEUM CONSERVATION AND FIRST NATION PERSPECTIVES

by

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1997
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PREFACE

Grateful thanks is due to the interviewees in this research who contributed so much knowledge and time.

Financial support for this research from the Canadian Museums Association, the British Columbia Arts Council and the Cultural Services Branch of the Provincial Government of British Columbia, and the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology is gratefully acknowledged.

Special thanks is given to John Donlan for his excellent editorial and reference assistance, and to Perry Millar. Assistance from Chris Turnbull and Laura Beresford in the preparation of transcripts from the taped interviews is acknowledged with gratitude.

No reproduction or quotation from this work is allowed without permission from the interviewees, if it is their words, or from the author if it is from the main text.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Mina McKenzie of Palmerston North, Manawatu, New Zealand, Rangitane descent, whose wisdom, remarkable presence, generosity and commitment contributed so much to her people and country, to Maori perspectives in heritage preservation and museums, and to those from around the world who were fortunate enough to spend time with her, including this author.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH STATEMENT AND GOALS

The intention of this study is to examine the cultural meaning of preserving heritage objects from the perspectives of First Nations, to understand the significant qualities of the object to preserve, and to compare these with values held in museum conservation. This research provides detailed information and analysis in order to understand more fully the perspectives of the indigenous cultures from which ethnographic museum collections originate. In addition, it illuminates if and how conservators can preserve the conceptual integrity of these objects while preserving their physical integrity. Preserving conceptual integrity or cultural significance is an ultimate goal in conservation; for example, the Canadian code of ethics for conservators states, "The purpose of conservation is to study, record, retain and restore the culturally significant qualities of the object with the least possible intervention" (IIC-CG and CAPC 1989: 18).

This dissertation is divided into five parts: Chapters 1 and 2 (the review of the literature) introduce the research; Chapters 3 and 4 discuss conservation and establish the background context of values and perspectives; Chapters 5 and 6 present published aboriginal viewpoints on preservation and introduce the First Nations of British Columbia. Chapters 7 and 8 present and analyze the data from the research interviews in B.C. and
New Zealand. The study ends with Chapter 9, the conclusion, and this is followed by appendices and the bibliography.

Thus, Chapter 1 presents the research statement, goals, the need for the research at this time, and discusses the research design. Following the Introduction, Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature, focussing on the relationships between conservation, museums, and First Nations. Chapter 3 answers the questions "why did conservation develop out of restoration in the twentieth century" and "why does it hold the values it does?" This is followed by an examination in Chapter 4 of the current museum context, specifically in North America, and the changing relationship between museums and First Nations. This chapter analyzes conservation and museum values and discusses the influence of values and beliefs from the contexts in which conservation is embedded: museums, science, and professionalization.

Chapter 4 also examines conservation beliefs and values pertinent to ethnographic conservation and this research. In Chapter 5 the study describes viewpoints on what is important to First Nations in the preservation of their heritage and what they perceive as the function of objects now housed in museums. This information is presented from the literature authored by Native writers and speakers. Chapter 6 focusses on First Nations of British Columbia, contextualizing the research interviews by providing an overview of their social and historical background. Chapter 7 analyzes the construction of the meaning of "preservation" and perspectives on how museums conserve objects from interviews with First Nations individuals in British Columbia.

As a comparison, data from New Zealand is presented in Chapter 8 as a case study of how Maori conservators have brought together indigenous and
conservation perspectives on preserving what is of cultural significance in their work on Maori collections; in other words, how they have balanced preserving the physical integrity of objects with preserving their conceptual integrity. Chapter 9 summarizes the conclusions of the study.

The starting point for this study is Mitchell's description of "junctures of ... impasses" and their potential to provide illuminating information on cultural negotiations. (Mitchell 1992: 10). The impasse in this case is the apparent conflict between First Nations and museum conservation perspectives on the preservation of ethnographic collections. It is the dilemma posed by attempting to preserve the physical integrity of objects in collections when these objects' conceptual integrity lies in their being part of a living culture, which may involve levels of access and use which go far beyond museum conservation norms. This research describes and analyzes in detail the perspectives of museum conservation and of First Nations in order to elucidate this impasse and provide an in-depth understanding of these perspectives.

Both the impasse and the perspectives are representative of their temporal and geographic contexts. In the last decade, in British Columbia and in other areas where issues of aboriginal land and other rights are actively being negotiated and settled, traditional museum norms and practice, including the conservation paradigm, have been called into question. "An object's acquisition by a museum, and the museum's subsequent efforts to preserve it are, indeed, in some instances, looked upon by the originating peoples as a perversion of the natural order of things" (Moses 1995: 18). Furthermore, "in some situations the relationship between museums and
Indigenous peoples is very complex, as there is a lack of trust, insight, and knowledge on both sides relating to museum policies, cultural beliefs, and the significance of the preservation of objects from a living culture” (Harris 1993: 31). But in the field of conservation, "[t]o make decisions it is necessary to know exactly what the object represents" (Jedrzejewska 1976: 6). This research will explore what the object represents to both conservators and First Nations, and the meaning and purpose of object preservation in both perspectives. It will clarify the complexities related to the preservation of objects in museums outlined by Harris above. Additionally, this study is intended to assist in rectifying the lack of insight and knowledge mentioned by Harris, in this case on the part of conservators regarding the perspectives of the indigenous originators of ethnographic collections. It is also intended that this research provide insights into the conservation profession and its value system.

As Pearce has written, "[T]he way we set about understanding something has an enormous influence on the kind of knowledge that emerges. Knowledge in museums, as elsewhere, is not a fixed commodity" (Pearce 1993: 25). The research interviews with First Nations individuals in British Columbia will present First Nations perspectives on museums and museum conservation, as well as the meaning to them of the "preservation of cultural heritage". With regard to conservation, this study will examine how its self-definitions and values and the current context within which it is practiced have influenced the kind of knowledge it both produces and concerns itself with. This research answers the questions of whether in fact radically different perspectives exist between First Nations and professional
conservation, and if they do, if there is an impasse between them, or whether the two perspectives can be resolved. This latter question will be addressed in the research interviews, and is a focus of those with the five Maori and two non-Maori conservators in New Zealand.

**CONTEXT FOR THIS RESEARCH**

This study is most pertinent to the subdiscipline of museum conservation called ethnographic conservation; that is, the conservation of collections from indigenous peoples. Conservation is practiced according to what the profession has believed to be appropriate ethical principles; these have been codified and are similar in most western museum practice. Until recently, collections from indigenous peoples have been treated and regarded by ethnographic conservators within the parameters of practice and ethics applied to other area/materials subdisciplines within conservation.

The context for conservation in this study is the museum. Factors such as the current decline in museum financing are now influencing changes in, for example, Canadian museum philosophy and practice. This study will analyze these factors and examine their influence on the current practice of conservation. Of particular interest to this research is the changing relationship between museums and First Nations. ("First Nations" is a Canadian term which will be used throughout this study, and will be used interchangeably as a noun and an adjective, for example as is current practice with the word "Canadian".) The First Nations are now sharing, in several countries at least, some of the power the museum structure has traditionally held. For anthropology or other museums holding ethnographic collections,
especially those located in the same country (province, state, territory) as the indigenous peoples who created the collections, the traditional cultural triangle of "museums, objects, collections" (Pearce 1992: 1) is in the process of being opened up to incorporate the perspectives of the First Nations (Ames 1992). "Contemporary societies are becoming more multicultural or multiethnic in composition and these diversities are becoming more visible and more politically active. What is significant, as Geertz [The Uses of Diversity 1986:120-121] points out, is that the location of diversity is changing, from elsewhere to here" (Ames 1991: 27). Although the First Nations have, in this context, always been here, their political, judicial, economic, and cultural activities in the last decade have brought aboriginal viewpoints into high visibility in Canadian society. Material culture studies have traditionally considered artifacts to constitute "mute evidence" that was interpreted by research (Hodder 1994); First Nations consider artifacts as part of living cultures for which they are the spokespeople. In museums, as Mitchell has written, "(M)useum norms, such as preservation, are questioned in light of Native Americans asserting their right to manage objects of cultural patrimony" (Mitchell 1992: 1).

It is a goal of this study to clarify the meaning of preservation as seen from both First Nations and conservation perspectives, and to elucidate areas of common ground and of conflict. As Mitchell has written, "[T]erminology such as curation and ownership might therefore mean very different things to both parties" (Mitchell 1992: 2). This study proposes that "preservation" itself is in this category, with conservators focussing on the conservation of
material culture and indigenous peoples focusing on the preservation of traditions, community, and identity as First Nations.

The context for research in this area is current and extends beyond the subject area of museum/First Nations relationships. Post-modernism has contributed a recognition of the validity of multiple perspectives and a questioning of the western perspective as highest authority. At the same time, aboriginal people as well as other minorities are assuming the right to speak for themselves and to gain control over their future directions in territorial, political, and economic spheres. Control of future directions includes control over heritage resources. Recent landmark legal decisions and enactments, such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in the United States (NAGPRA) (1990) and the Nisga'a Agreement-in-Principle in British Columbia (1996), are confirming aboriginal rights in areas pertaining to museums as well as in the larger societal spheres. Developments in other areas of Canadian society form a larger context which parallels the changing relationship of First Nations and museums. In the 1990s in Canada innovative programs have begun to incorporate aboriginal viewpoints and lifeways into traditionally western systems such as the Canadian justice system and policing practices; for example, traditional Native methods of punishment have been substituted in several cases for the usual Canadian legal recommendation. In museum practice there has also been the recognition that parallel paths may accomplish mutually-acceptable goals. Doxtator has described parallel goals in the context of First Nations-museum relationships, saying that these relationships are hindered "by the fact there is no one shared goal. There are instead parallel goals" (Doxtator
1994: 22). This research will explore whether the meaning of preservation pertaining to heritage objects involves shared or parallel goals in relation to conservation and First Nations viewpoints.

In other areas of Canadian society as well those who consider themselves as central participants or "stakeholders" are currently enlarging their rights to negotiate, to voice opinions and to be part of the decision-making process. This is reflected, for example, in the medical field in the evolving patient/doctor relationship. The "non-expert" -- the patient -- is being increasingly considered a partner in the health care process, one with whom an appropriate treatment is discussed and worked out, rather than dictated to on the basis of medical knowledge. A professional medical conference in Montreal was termed a landmark conference because for the first time breast cancer patients spoke of their experiences as receivers of treatment, sharing the platform with researchers and doctors (Mickleburgh 1993). Likewise, fishermen in the Canadian maritime fishery on the east coast have been providing experiential information to scientists in a collaborative effort on the question of diminishing fish stocks. Recognition of the value of experiential as well as scientific evidence also represents a questioning of the authority of science as the encompassing answer to particular problems. This context has bearing on a field such as conservation which defines itself as being based in science. In addition, it has bearing on whether and how conservators are sharing their authority with First Nations regarding the preservation of museum collections.

An additional contextual element for conservation is found in the contemporary changes museums have been undergoing, which have led
many of them to focus on serving communities or "clients" rather than their traditional mandates such as preservation and research. This has obvious implications for an area such as conservation which has been situated in the conventional view of a collections-centred museum. The changes have involved a reconceptualization of the terms of discussion as well as the content of the discussion itself. This reflects in part a reconceptualization, in the late 1980s-1990s, of the terms and pertinent societal values, especially concerning the economic context, in which museums and other cultural organizations operate. For example, a report commissioned by the Ontario Association of Art Galleries in Canada uses the language of commerce to define what galleries should be doing (less emphasis on the product and more on the philosophy of service) (Taylor 1994); this is similar to the marketing done in the recent North American exhibition of paintings from the Barnes collection, which emphasized their monetary worth rather than their artistic importance (Rhodes 1994). This research will examine the impact the reconceptualization of museological terms, especially in North America where new direction de-emphasizes the collections in favor of the visitor experience, is having on the role of conservation in contemporary museums. An additional influence is shown in the fact that conservation itself is undergoing changes in its own canon; major issues such as the standards for environmental protection of collections have been reassessed (Michalski 1994; Erhardt et al. 1995, Schultz 1995, Real 1995, Lull 1995). The need for the research presented in this dissertation and the research itself can be said to represent a reconceptualization of the norms for ethnographic conservation.
NEED FOR THIS STUDY

The need for this study grew out of these contemporary changes in Canada and its museums. As mentioned, for museums in British Columbia and other areas, the last decade has witnessed a growing importance attached to the changing relationship between museums and First Nations. Conservators of ethnographic objects are facing situations that challenge fundamentals in their ethics and practice, but it is too early to have clear guidelines for, or overt general peer acceptance of their decisions. At the same time First Nations individuals have argued that while museums may believe they are changing, collaboration with indigenous people has resulted more often than not in merely superficial changes in the museum. "Used and discarded, Native American thought serves as a substitute for true assimilation of ideas" (Mitchell 1992: 10). It is felt that this research provides timely information to illuminate a particular dilemma in ethnographic conservation. As well as addressing this dilemma, it is intended that this study provide new insights into the field of conservation by an analysis of its values, and into First Nations perspectives on preservation by providing a richness of detail and a greater depth of understanding through the voices of the First Nations speakers themselves. This is a major lacuna in the conservation literature; although in fine art conservation reference is made to the wishes or intent of the artist, in ethnographic conservation First Nations opinions have barely begun to be represented. Indigenous perspectives reprinted verbatim are virtually non-existent, except for a very small number of professional articles written by First Nations conservators.
There is a need for this research in museum conservation at this time because it presents an analysis of a current situation that challenges the ethics and practice of ethnographic conservators. This situation, the context of this study, has been created by a complexity of factors including the changing relationship between First Nations and museums, the authority of multiple voices, the importance of service to minority communities and other "stakeholders" affected by an enterprise, the questioning of science as an overriding authority, and the recognition of aboriginal rights. In addition, as money for museums becomes scarcer, it is not surprising that standard practice in conservation is also being questioned on economic grounds. Finally, there is a need for current research on this topic because of the lacunae existing in knowledge in this area, as outlined in the next section.

EXISTING LACUNAE IN THIS AREA OF RESEARCH

The field of conservation is based in technical studies concerned with object deterioration, treatment, and analysis. The following chapter reviewing the literature provides additional detail. Ethics are considered as subject matter in conservation primarily in relation to treatment and analytical decisions, and in discussions pertaining to the conservation codes of ethics and guidance for practice and the areas which they cover. Discussions directly exploring changing values in conservation have only recently begun to be a major focus of professional symposia and their publications (Krumbein, Brimblecombe et al. 1994; Oddy 1994; Dykstra 1996). Unlike the field of museum studies, in conservation there is a lack of research exploring the beliefs and assumptions underlying the ethics and practice.
Similarly, there is a lack of analysis of the social history of conservation designed to illustrate the development of particular values and beliefs. The construction of the meaning of conservation has rarely been the subject of research by conservators. On the other hand, even if no focussed studies have been done in these areas, discussions questioning the meaning and parameters of particular aspects of conservation ethics and practice, such as those found in the "Restoration: Is It Acceptable" symposium published in Oddy (1994) illuminate particular areas.

Recently, also, ethnographic conservators have begun to document changes in their practice and beliefs in relation to working with First Nations, in the changing milieu of museums and indigenous peoples. Numerous lacunae exist, however, in conservation research directed towards this area. For example, almost all publications relate to case studies with which the conservators have been involved; there is a presentation of what happened and why, but little analysis contextualizing the case study in a more abstract social paradigm or theoretical model. In this context, however, it must be noted that the few indigenous people who are trained conservators have published several papers on First Nations perspectives, and conservators in general have shown interest in learning more about these perspectives.

Lacunae in the museum studies literature relevant to this research are discussed in the literature review chapter. These lacunae concern, for example, a relative lack of study in museology of the nature of the field of conservation, and a lack of study of the parameters of preservation as influenced by the changing nature of the relationship between museums and First Nations.
As mentioned previously, a major lacuna is that there has been very little representation of First Nations opinions on the preservation of objects and specifically on museum conservation ethics and practices. The conservation literature in particular contains very few statements made by First Nations people on what preserving cultural significance means to them, and how they see the conservation of their material heritage. There has been no methodological original research done in this area in Canada. Since preserving objects from indigenous cultures is the daily work of ethnographic conservators, the lack of indigenous voices in and on conservation represents a serious lack in the field.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study follows several methodologies depending on the area of research. The analysis of the museum context, and the analysis of conservation values and beliefs and their origins are based primarily on documentary sources. These sources are described in more detail in the literature review chapter. As the conservation literature is overwhelmingly technically based, relevant discussions in fields such as museology and museum anthropology (for museum context), sociology, archaeology, and philosophy (for values and applied ethics) were consulted. During this phase of the research, several consultations were held with specialists in these disciplines, particularly Dr. Michael Ames (anthropology), the former director of the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (MOA), Dr. Michael MacDonald (philosophy), the director of the University of British Columbia Centre for Applied Ethics, and Dr. Susan Wilsmore (philosophy),
SJW & Associates, London, U.K. Conservation ethics and practice as discussed in this study were confirmed through the field's literature, and informed by conversations with conservators and this researcher's experience as a conservator for twenty-five years. Of particular value to the study has been the researcher's experience as a staff member of the UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where she has been employed as the chief conservator for the past sixteen years. In addition, this research was informed by an International Partnerships Among Museums (IPAM) program in 1992 in which the researcher spent time in New Mexico and elsewhere with Ms. Virginia Salazar, Regional Curator, Southwest Region, U.S. National Parks Service, and a member of the Santa Clara pueblo, and other curators and conservators (Clavir 1992).

The second major area of research, First Nations perspectives on preservation, while informed by the researcher's experience at the Museum of Anthropology, by participation in the IPAM program, and by publications authored by or citing First Nations, is specifically derived in this dissertation from primary sources. This study concentrates on British Columbia, with comparative data drawn from New Zealand. New Zealand is the only country at the time of this research with more than two professionally-trained conservators of indigenous ancestry. This situation provided an extremely relevant case study for comparing how scientific conservation and indigenous cultural concerns are brought together in the preservation of museum collections. A description of the interview process in New Zealand follows the discussion of the methodology used in British Columbia.
To gather the main data in British Columbia, interviews were conducted with First Nations individuals connected to museums and cultural centres or to cultural affairs in the area of heritage. The interviewees were chosen from various constituents of the First Nations community and a broad range of opinions. They were selected on the basis of recommendations from other First Nations people, and in several cases from within their own communities. Those selected, however, in most cases made it clear that they are not to be thought of as representatives of their communities. It can be found in the literature and was often reiterated by both the person recommending and the interviewee, that people do not speak for their nation but only for themselves, and that others can be expected to have a different opinion. This is discussed further in the text of this study. It was recognized that differences of opinion vary not only nation to nation, but community to community and individual to individual. As Mitchell has said, "The difficulty of articulating a native philosophy across regional and temporal boundaries has already been alluded to. This confusion and complexity, however, should not discourage us from identifying the manner in which cultural differences are debated in the context of the museum" (Mitchell 1992: 11). While in one sense being able to represent only individual opinions makes the study more difficult, as one cannot extrapolate from the conclusions of the research to say that there is "one First Nations perspective", or even "one Kwakwaka'wakw perspective", it does not discount the value of the information. Not only are statements on preservation and conservation from indigenous people important to hear in ethnographic conservation, and serve to fill the lacunae mentioned earlier, but the general consensus of opinion from these different
individuals on some of the key matters studied, such as the necessity to use objects and the importance of cultural preservation, does allow conclusions to be drawn.

The following section further describes the sample of interviewees. The most ideal sample would have been as many individuals from as many nations and communities as possible. This, however, would have been too extensive and not possible to accomplish successfully for geographic, financial, and practical reasons; in addition the interviews would have, of necessity, been much shorter and more superficial. Another approach would have been to concentrate on only one community and conduct in-depth interviews with many people there; however as there are important differences relevant to this study between the nations, and especially between the Salish and the more northern coastal nations regarding sacred/sensitive material, as outlined in the chapter on First Nations of British Columbia, it was decided that this approach was too narrow. It was decided instead to do selective in-depth interviews in order to better understand the opinions voiced in this multicultural situation, and to obtain opinions on details of direct concern to conservators with which one could then compare conservation values and practice. It was decided, also, to interview approximately twenty people, to allow for a sample of opinions to be represented.

Twenty-one First Nations individuals were interviewed in British Columbia, including one First Nations person who was not from British Columbia but visiting at the time. As a senior cultural anthropologist working with museums, she had illuminating perspectives on the research
being done. Another individual who is not of First Nations ancestry but is a Band member in British Columbia through marriage and was Director of a First Nations cultural centre was also interviewed. Although it was recognized that the opinions voiced would be individual opinions, the research process incorporated an assumption that a range of perspectives could be better obtained by a diversity of interviewees. The interviewees therefore represent both genders, ages ranging from the early twenties to the late eighties, and different Band affiliations. They represent people who grew up and/or now live in urban centres, and those who live on reserves. Several of the younger people have mixed Native/non-Native parentage, and several of the older people have been, or are, married to non-Native spouses. The individuals interviewed defy stereotyping. They represent different life experiences, different experiences with regard to museums, different ties to traditionalism and the reserve, and different status within their communities. The individuals were initially selected on the recommendation of a First Nations curator at the UBC Museum of Anthroplogy, Ms. Pam Brown. Approximately ten people initially contacted did not wish to be interviewed. Some preferred not to make arrangements for an interview, and others said they were too busy. Regarding those interviewed, in three cases it was possible to talk to several people in one community, and these people were chosen on the recommendation of the contact individual in that community. Personnel at three Native Cultural Centres (with collections or museums) are represented. In addition, people who have worked with larger urban museums are represented, and people who have worked less or not at all with museums but more in passing on traditions are included. The
interviewees were paid an honorarium of $50 for their time; this was provided by the Research and Teaching Committee of the Museum of Anthropology. It is the aim of the museum to attempt not to structure working with consultants in a way that might be construed as exploitative. On this point the reader is also referred to the discussion below regarding the UBC ethical review process and the comment by one of the interviewees, CL.

Informed consent for both the interview and the publication of quotations from the interviews was obtained, as is described in the ethical review process. In addition, permission was requested to use the individual’s real names and affiliations (both Band membership, and workplace when relevant). Real names and workplaces were used if permitted. One person chose to maintain anonymity; all gave permission for their names and affiliation to appear as they are represented in this list. Another person who gave permission to be interviewed could not be reached for further permission to publish; material from this interview has been presented without identifying characteristics under the initials AN for anonymous. The following people were interviewed.

**List of Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and Affiliation</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Adelynne Claxton</td>
<td>Coordinator, Saanich Native Heritage Society</td>
<td>40-60 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>Sandy Jones</td>
<td>Elder, Coast Salish, Saanich</td>
<td>80-90 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Elsie Claxton</td>
<td>Elder, Coast Salish, Saanich</td>
<td>80-90 years</td>
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Interviewed together, notes taken, Nov. 3, 1995

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and Affiliation</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Alfred J. Scow</td>
<td>Kwakwaka’wakw, retired judge, B.C. Provincial Court</td>
<td>60-80 years</td>
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Taped interview Nov. 22, 1995
AN: Anonymous, at one time had responsibility for collections at a Cultural Centre, taped interview, Nov. 1, 1995

BM: Dr. Beatrice Medicine, Native American (Lakota -- not B.C.) senior cultural anthropologist, [age group 50-70 years], interview: notes taken, Nov. 10, 1995


DC: Doug Cranmer, Kwakwaka'wakw, artist, [age group 60-80 years], taped interview, Sept. 29, 1995

DK: Dena Klashinsky, Kwakwaka'wakw and Salish ancestry, university student, former Museum of Anthropology Native Youth Programme student and Coordinator, [age group 20-40 years], taped interview, July 6, 1995

DS: Debra Sparrow, Musqueam (Salish), artist, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Oct. 12, 1995

DW: Dolly Watts, Gitwangak Band, [Gitksan] Businesswoman, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Nov. 17, 1995

GW: Gloria Cranmer Webster, 'Namgis (Kwakwaka'wakw), founder and former Director of the U'mista Cultural Centre, (age group 60-80 years) taped interview Sept. 27, 1995

HG: Howard Grant, Musqueam Indian Band (Salish), Executive Director of the Musqueam community, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Dec. 20, 1995
JP: Juanita Pasco, Kwakwaka'wakw and Weka'yi ancestry, Collections Manager, U'mista Cultural Centre, [age group 20-40 years], taped interview, Sept. 27, 1995

KH: Chief Ken Harris, Simoigit Hbegwaxw, Keeper of the Clan Totem for the 'Gisgahaast Clan, Gitksan, Elder-in-Residence, United Native Nations, and Resident Elder, Institute of Indigenous Government, [age group 60-80 years], taped interview, Nov. 24, 1995

KL: Kim Lawson, (mixed First Nations and Danish/British ancestry), [age group 20-40 years], archaeology liason, taped interview, Nov. 1, 1995

LMS: Leona M. Sparrow, Musqueam (Salish) Band Councillor, Band Liason with the UBC Museum of Anthropology, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Dec. 16, 1995

LJ: Linda Jules, (Kamloops Indian Band member through marriage, non-Native ancestry), former Director of Secwepemc Cultural Education Society Museum, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview, Oct. 6, 1995

PB: Pam Brown, Heiltsuk, Curator at the UBC Museum of Anthropology, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview June 1, 1995

PS: Peggy Svanvik, 'Namgis First Nation [Kwakwaka'wakw], Board Member, U'mista Cultural Centre, [age group 50-70 years], taped interview Sept. 28, 1995

RB: Rita Barnes, Kwakwaka'wakw, [age group 50-70 years], taped interview Nov. 8, 1995. When asked how she would describe herself, for example as an educator, she replied: "I'm just someone who enjoys her culture. I can't do without it. What I do know, I like to share. I think I'm very typical of a lot of First Nations people in the city, at least from my area."
(Personal communication, Jan. 17, 1997).
To provide comparative data to the above sources:

(i) interviews were conducted in New Zealand with 5 Maori conservators and two non-Maori conservators. The respondents' names and affiliations have been placed in the chapter on New Zealand perspectives for contextualization.

(ii) an interview was conducted by letter with the only Canadian First Nations ethnographic conservator, who comes from eastern Canada:

JM: John Moses, Delaware Band, Six Nations of the Grand River, Conservator, (age group 40-60 years), personal communications (letters: June 16, Sept. 5, 1995)

While written material from New Zealand is presented in Chapter 5 on perspectives on cultural preservation by First Nations authors, to show the similarity of indigenous perspectives, the interview material from New Zealand is presented in a separate chapter following the discussion of the British Columbia material. The New Zealand interviews focussed on the question of how conservators balance preserving the physical integrity of objects with preserving their conceptual integrity. For context, however, the interviews include questions more broadly related to the relationship between museum conservation and indigenous people in New Zealand, for example, questions concerning whom the conservators feel they are primarily serving by their work (the collections, the Maori people, the museum public, their institutions, etc.).

The material from the Canadian conservator John Moses, on the other hand, has been included as a comparative voice in the chapter on perspectives from First Nations in British Columbia. As a Canadian First Nations
individual who answered the same questionnaire as the others in that chapter, but as the only person who was also a trained conservator and therefore had a full appreciation of this perspective, his viewpoints are particularly relevant for comparison with what the others in that chapter are saying.

The type of interview strategy selected follows Patton's "detailed interview guide approach" (Patton 1990). A detailed list of questions outlining the issues to be explored was prepared in advance, in order to ensure that the same basic information was asked. The questions were designed for open-ended, conversational responses in which the interviewees would be able to respond in their own terms. The questions were phrased to be neutral and proceeded in a logical order with easier-to-answer, straightforward questions (for example, responses based on experience, opinions or feelings) coming before questions of theoretical knowledge or concerning situations in which the respondent might experience difficulty (for example, "how would you resolve X conflict"). The question of neutrality was problematic, however, not so much from the wording of the questions asked but because of the emotional and politicized situational nature of the research problem, and because of the varied relationships, assumed or real, between the researcher and the respondents. For example, the researcher was known by the interviewees as the conservator at the UBC Museum of Anthropology, and their experiences with that museum, and their feelings towards museums in general were included in many answers. When this pattern emerged, the interviewer added questions asking them directly about their feelings towards museums, and if they had any advice they wished to
give the Museum of Anthropology. Several respondents had an acquaintance with the researcher through their work with the Museum of Anthropology, whereas others had never met the researcher before. The researcher disclosed her interest in the research project at the beginning as part of the procedures followed by the UBC ethical review for research involving human subjects, as described shortly.

Interviews were taped unless the interviewee chose otherwise, in which case notes were taken. Every effort was made to transcribe the tapes accurately, although there proved to be difficulties with the quality of the sound. Transcription was done by two people, one of New Zealand origin. Quotations for possible inclusion in the text of the dissertation were sent back to the interviewees for permission to use. Many of the interviewees sent back changes to the transcripts of the quotations. These changes included clarification of names, additions to bring out the clarity of a statement, removal of repetitive words, and requests to not use certain material. Alterations to the original transcript by the researcher were minor; for example, further clarification was occasionally added in square brackets, and in selecting quotations the text might be condensed to present only the relevant information. If words were left out three dots were substituted. In addition, only the initials of some third parties were used, as they could not be reached for permission. Spellings used were either provided by or accepted by the interviewee; some are phonetic, and some are those currently in use at the Museum of Anthropology. A second permission form was sent out requesting permission to reprint the whole interview transcript as an additional volume of the dissertation. Many interviewees made further
changes and clarifications, although some did not correct or clarify. Except for the changes suggested by the interviewees, and the removal of some "um's", third party references, and typographical errors, the interviews are reprinted in an unedited form. This was done so that as accurate a reproduction of the text of the conversation could be presented, but one which the interviewees felt comfortable having in a publicly accessible format.

The interviews with the conservators in New Zealand were conducted first, in the Fall of 1994, using a questionnaire that followed the same methodology described above, but which was centred on conservation practice and ethics. The questions were designed to elucidate whether the conservators held both conservation and Maori values, what their differences were, and how they and their workplaces brought or failed to bring these two value systems and different procedural/protocol systems together, eliciting specific situations as examples. The interviewer followed the types of questions on the questionnaire, but allowed for digressions and further questions on matters pertinent to the respondent's particular work or opinions. Interesting information was often raised in a respondent's answer, and further discussion of this information was then pursued. It was particularly necessary to clarify certain discussions for the researcher who had had very limited previous experience with Maori and museum matters in New Zealand. In addition, as new information came up, the initial questionnaire was modified. For example, when the interviewer learned that the conservators worked both on objects owned by their institution and owned by Maori, whether housed in the museum or housed in the
community, answers to questions were often sought for both situations. A copy of the initial questionnaire is included as Appendix B.

The interviews with First Nations people in British Columbia were conducted in the Fall of 1995. The questionnaire is included as Appendix A. The first interview, done with Ms. Pam Brown, provided feedback on the appropriateness of the questions from a First Nations perspective. As the interviews progressed, it proved impossible to adhere to the questionnaire exactly because of factors such as time limitations and how the interviewee expressed himself or herself. Especially important was the divergence in the experiences of the interviewees in relation to the research problem. The interviewees ranged from elders with little experience with museums but having traditional cultural knowledge, to a former museum director, to a hereditary chief who had returned to school and whose courses included anthropology, law, and literature. The questionnaire was designed so that certain questions could be used or left out depending on the responses of the interviewees, and the way they expressed their knowledge of or interest in the subject at hand. Some of the respondents began by making a long statement in which they described views they felt related to the matter at hand; in these cases the initial questions followed points raised by this statement but related to the questionnaire. Some interviewees were able to provide information pertinent to the whole study while others contributed only on smaller or particular aspects of it. For example, one person who had recently retired as a judge contributed views on the question of ownership, but had less to say on questions relating to the details of museum conservation. As could be expected, the respondents with collections
experience or responsibility had much to contribute on questions which raised issues in museum or conservation practice. Equally, it was easiest for the interviewer to conduct these latter interviews, as there was, to a certain extent, a common ground and common professional language.

The most difficult methodological challenge in this study was presented when the common ground was uncertain. To some extent this existed in New Zealand because of the researcher's lack of experience with the history and cultures of that country. The excellent guidance and generosity of the late Mrs. Mina McKenzie, in particular, is most gratefully acknowledged in enabling the researcher to achieve a better understanding of New Zealand. In British Columbia, interviewing First Nations individuals not associated with museum conservation presented the challenge of exploring one value system from the perspective of another value system. This could be considered a limitation inherent in the methodology and this study; however, given the intent of the study and the recognition of the impasses discussed in previous sections, the researcher considered it necessary to attempt to overcome the problem. This was done, for instance, by using specific examples to clarify the questions being asked. In several interviews, for example, descriptions of what might be considered damage to objects were given. In many cases, also, the interviewees responded with specific examples to clarify their answers to the researcher. The interviewer found it hardest to interview the two elders SJ and EC and understand the way they had grasped the questions being asked and to be sure that the points which they were making were mutually intelligible. The assistance as well as the knowledge AC contributed to this meeting was invaluable.
Although this research was conducted for a doctorate from the University of Leicester, the researcher, as mentioned previously, is an employee of the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (MOA) in Vancouver, Canada. The research topic has relevance to the work of that museum and as well could have a bearing on the future relationship between both the university and the museum with First Nations in British Columbia. As some of the First Nations people in British Columbia who were interviewed were not "professional museum colleagues" and the potential for a power imbalance could be seen to exist between the researcher and the interviewee, the interview strategy followed the ethical guidelines set out by the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Sciences Screening Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects, and received their approval before commencing.

The UBC Ethical Review process represents one aspect in this study which addresses current issues in undertaking an academic study involving First Nations people. The traditional link between universities and First Nations, like that between museums and First Nations, represents a complex history reflected, for example, in the power relationships of a dominant society to colonized and marginalized sectors. One interviewee in fact spoke directly to this:

CL: People get doctorates on the knowledge of our elders.

The university/First Nations relationship also represents, writ large, the focal subject of this study: the difference in values and perspectives between western society and First Nations. In British Columbia today, First
Nations are in the process of reclaiming control from the dominant culture over their territories and resources, including how their knowledge and resources are used and how they are represented, whether this is the subject of a museum exhibition or an academic dissertation. First Nations control is represented in this study by, for example, the necessity to obtain a research permit from the Musqueam Band Council before interviewing Band members; a copy of the permit is included as Appendix C. In addition, the desire of First Nations to represent themselves rather than be represented through the intermediary of western theory or scholarship is acknowledged in this study by balancing the academic analysis with direct and detailed quotations from the interviewees.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

In order to focus on the goal of analyzing museum conservation and First Nations perspectives on the preservation of what is valued, the following parameters for the study were chosen. Conservation is examined as it is practised in museums and not in private practice. As the principal area of research is British Columbia, this study is contextualized mainly in a North American perspective. As has been mentioned, however, comparative data is also presented from New Zealand, because of its unique group of indigenous conservators. The larger context surrounding this study in general, however, focusses on North America with an emphasis on Canada, and includes the cultural environment and museums as well as the context of First Nations activities in political, cultural, and other spheres. The perspective on museums in this study is also particularly North American,
concerning as it does museums on that continent working directly with First Nations, often in their region. This interaction has strongly influenced the direction these museums are taking, including their beliefs and values. In addition, North American museology has been influenced by particular features such as Disneyland, by cultural contexts and histories which while Euro-based are particularly North American, and by current North American economic and political concerns; all of these can be seen to be reflected in the policies and practices of the museums in this study, which form the context for the research in British Columbia.

This research has not only a geographical focus but also a temporal focus. It is primarily concerned with contemporary developments in the changing relationship involving conservation, museums, and First Nations, which has occurred in the years 1986 - 1996. While the research in the beginning chapters on the origins and values and beliefs in conservation must of necessity take a historical perspective, it is also the rapid reconceptualization of the museum/First Nations paradigm in the last decade that has provided the context for the focus of this study.

Although it is necessary in research of this kind for the researcher to maintain an objective viewpoint, the impossibility of complete objectivity, and the influence the researcher has on the subject being researched, have been acknowledged in the literature on research methodology, as well as in field research in anthropology (for example, see Winter 1984 and Patton 1990: 372). The researcher is a Canadian, a trained conservator who graduated in 1976 from the Master of Art Conservation program at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. She is employed at the University of British
Columbia Museum of Anthropology, and was previously a conservator at Parks Canada, Ottawa and Quebec City, and at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. One of the primary foci of the UBC Museum of Anthropology is its relationship with First Nations people. The researcher acknowledges that these factors have influenced both the choice of research topic and the professional viewpoint brought to this research.

As discussed earlier, this research focusses on the field of conservation, and particularly its subdiscipline ethnographic conservation. Other areas of conservation practice such as fine arts or monuments and sites are referred to when they provide particular comparisons with or amplification of ideas pertaining to museum objects and especially ethnographic object conservation. If particular areas of or concepts in conservation are studied, the parameters for these examinations are discussed in the text. For example, regarding the conceptual integrity of the object, this research is not focused on the traditional conservation meaning of "conceptual", one in which the conservator researches the cultural significance or context of the object through the curator's knowledge or the museum's catalogue records. Instead, it is focussed on a concept of "conceptual integrity" which has been derived situationally during contemporary museum practice, that is, through museum /First Nations relationships. The conservation of archaeological objects is discussed when it pertains to indigenous objects, for example, when it is mentioned by First Nations interviewees. Otherwise, this research makes some references to archaeology ethics and practice as allied to that of ethnographic objects, but it is not a focus for research in this study. The issue of repatriation and reburial of human remains is also outside the parameters
of this study because it involves other concerns such as those pertaining to human bodies and treatment of the dead. The antecedent to the field of conservation, restoration, is referred to but is also not the subject of this research.

This research focusses on ethnographic conservation as practiced in museums. Art galleries and other institutional settings for collections are not included in the research, except in the New Zealand situation which is explained in that chapter, although reference may be made to ethnographic objects or conservation practice in different institutions if it illuminates a point related to museum conservation. Museums themselves are not the focus of this research, but are studied as the context within which the type of conservation being examined is practiced. The question of repatriation of museum collections is considered to be a concern in its own right, involving as it does particular legal, museological, and cultural factors. Repatriation is not included as a subject in this study unless it is being referred to by interviewees or is relevant to a particular discussion.

First Nations cultural perspectives are presented to determine the importance and meaning of the term "preservation of culture", the role objects have in this, and their views about museums. However, many areas of First Nations activities relating to cultural and museum matters, for example in education, are outside the scope of this research. Equally, larger questions involved in the subject of cultural identity are beyond the scope of this study, although research in history, the social sciences and elsewhere on the complex meanings and usage today of terms such as "traditional" would be of interest in issues raised by this study.
This study touches on many subjects beyond its strict focus. Some of these have just been mentioned; some will be found in the relevant chapters that bring up the area of interest.

CONCLUSION

This research concerns the perspectives of First Nations individuals related to the constructs of the museum conservation of objects. The intention of this study is to examine the culturally significant qualities of the object from the viewpoints of First Nations and to compare these with values held in museum conservation. The research provides detail to understand the perspectives of the indigenous cultures from which ethnographic museum collections originated and to illuminate if and how conservators can preserve the conceptual integrity of these objects while preserving their physical integrity. This latter is explored specifically by an examination of how Maori conservators approach this problem.

It is a goal of this study to clarify the meaning of preservation as seen from both First Nations and conservation perspectives and to elucidate areas of common ground and of conflict. It is hypothesized that conservators approach preserving the cultural significance of the object through preserving especially its physical integrity which they can "read" through scientific evidence, and its aesthetic, historic, and conceptual integrity which they interpret through the intermediary of western scholarship as well from physical evidence. First Nations, on the other hand, view the preservation of cultural significance as occurring through the preservation of their traditions, community, and identity as First Nations; preservation is about people, and
objects play an assisting role. This study explores whether the preservation of objects in museum or cultural centre collections can be part of both perspectives at the same time.

The study is situated in the traditional cultural triangle of "museums, objects, collections" which, in Canada and other countries such as New Zealand, is being opened up to incorporate the perspectives of the First Nations as "stakeholders" in anthropology museums. The immediate context for this study is therefore both the internal museum environment of conservation/other museum mandates, and the relationship between museums and First Nations. This complex is situated in the larger societal sphere of Native/non-Native relationships and the current political, economic and social gestalt in the countries under consideration during the period 1986-1996.

This study grew out of the need to address what were perceived by ethnographic conservators as ethical conflicts which arose as the relationship between museums and First Nations changed and as museums themselves changed. As well as understanding these perceived conflicts, it is intended that this study provide new insights into the field of conservation by an analysis of its values, and into First Nations perspectives on preservation by providing a richness of detail and a greater depth of understanding through the voices of the First Nations speakers themselves.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The intent of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature sources pertaining to the three major areas of museum practice and theory discussed in this research: museum conservation ethics, current museology and its relationship to conservation, and First Nations and their relationship to museums, especially in North America. The portion of the dissertation concerned with First Nations opinions on preservation is not included in this chapter, as what literature exists is better presented in Chapter 5 where explanatory quotations can be included. In addition, this dissertation touches on other subject areas such as the nature of professions, the socio-political history and current context of the First Nations of British Columbia, and the museum situation in New Zealand pertaining to Maori collections. Literature pertaining to these areas that assists the main focus is contained in the relevant chapters. It is not the intention of this chapter to provide all the references consulted during the research; these are in the bibliography and in their context in the relevant chapters. Rather, because the principal areas of this dissertation -- First Nations perspectives on cultural preservation and object preservation, and the values and beliefs pertaining to preservation held by the conservation profession -- are not literature-supported to a large extent, this chapter serves as a guide to the types of published or public sources consulted for this research.
CONSERVATION AND CONSERVATION ETHICS

The overwhelming majority of the literature in conservation is concerned with object deterioration, treatment, and the analyses which assist these areas. It is focused primarily on the understanding of the physical attributes of objects, materials, and the environment, leading to the material preservation of that object. For example, in a search of the international database Conservation Information Network, the following numbers of references were found.

Table 1: Emphasis In Conservation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Aug. 1993</th>
<th>May 1997</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>analysis</td>
<td>19,202</td>
<td>23,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treatment</td>
<td>8,764</td>
<td>11,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conservation</td>
<td>5,230</td>
<td>7,058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 "The Conservation Information Network is an online information resource developed and maintained by an international partnership of seven institutions involved in the conservation and restoration of cultural property. The seven partners are:

- The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI)
- The Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN)
- The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)
- The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)
- The Conservation Analytical Laboratory of the Smithsonian Institution (CAL)
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
- The International Council of Museums (ICOM)"

from the Introduction to the Conservation Information Network p. 1-1

The bibliographic database appears first in print as "Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts", and is now published by the Getty Conservation Institute.
The emphasis in conservation can be seen to be overwhelmingly on the technical aspects rather than the museological or philosophical aspects. It is recognized, however, that the figures illustrate broad conclusions only, as the numbers represent keywords, not the entire content, and the database entries can be less current than the parent hardcopy "Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts". On the other hand, the vast majority of entries for analysis and treatment are evidence of the direction of the field.

In North America, conservation ethics are often mentioned in technical papers and in conference presentations but are rarely analyzed. Internationally, there are relatively few conservation publications containing an analysis of ethics, and most papers in which ethics are included are based on particular object case histories or issues in the training of conservators. There are even fewer studies exploring the relationship of conservation ethics
to the social milieu in which conservation was created and is practised. As mentioned in the Introduction, it has only been within the last three years that conservation symposia and their publications have focussed on ethics as a primary subject area, and on the relationship between society and conservation, for example as seen in the following publications: Krumbein, Brimblecombe et al. 1994; Oddy 1994; Dykstra 1996.

An editorial in *Studies in Conservation* (38 (1) 1993), the premier international peer-reviewed journal in the conservation field, gives further insight into the reasons for the high proportion of scientific studies published. "Conservation of objects is a more open-ended problem than many science projects. ... *Studies* is in the fortunate position of having a large number of excellent papers, mostly scientific studies, to publish. However, for conservation to be successful, it must give proper weight to all aspects of the meaning of the object, its treatment and scientific study" (1993: 1). It is the meaning of the object, to First Nations and to conservators, which is the focus of this research.

Although Wilsmore and a few others have written on ethical issues and practice in conservation (Ashley-Smith 1982; Wilsmore 1986; Wilsmore 1987; Wilsmore 1988; Wilsmore 1993; Wilsmore 1993; Wilsmore 1994; Wilsmore 1994; Ashley-Smith 1995) there are no published syntheses directed to analyzing the underlying value system of the conservation profession, either in the conservation literature, the museum literature, or the social science literature. In this study the meaning of the object in conservation and the values underlying the profession have been analyzed, chiefly from the conservation codes of ethics. Used in this study are codes from the:
International Institute for Conservation - Canadian Group (IIC-CG) and
Canadian Association of Professional Conservators (CAPC) 1989; American
Institute for Conservation (AIC) 1991 (both references); New Zealand
Professional Conservators Group (NZPCG) 1991; American Institute for
Conservation 1992 (both references); American Institute for Conservation
1993; ICOMOS (The International Council on Monuments and Sites) New
Zealand 1993; American Institute for Conservation 1994; American Institute
for Conservation 1995 and, from Europe, the United Kingdom Institute for
Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works 1981 and the ICOM
Conservation Committee 1984. In addition, conservation ethics and beliefs
have been researched from museum and conservation publications such as

These publications show that the integrity of the object is valued by
conservators and preserved. The "integrity" or "true nature" of the object has
been defined usually as including "evidence of its origins, its original
constitution, the materials of which it is composed and information which it
may embody as to its maker's intentions and the technology used in its
manufacture" (Ashley-Smith 1982: 2). Only in the last decade have attributes
of the object not necessarily seen in the physical evidence of the object, such
as spiritual meaning or cultural significance to the originating people, been
acknowledged in conservation codes of ethics (IIC-CG and CAPC 1989;
ICOMOS 1993). It is this understanding of conceptual integrity that is most
pertinent to First Nations people. This meaning of conceptual integrity is
increasingly acknowledged in conservation, as well as being a concept
important to First Nations. The conceptual attributes of objects are part of
"cultural significance", the key wording in the Canadian Code of Ethics concerning the preservation goal of conservation practice (IIC-CG and CAPC 1989). Hodkinson considers cultural significance when he writes about "the metaphysical changes in the significance of paintings" (Hodkinson 1990: 59). He enlarges the concept of significance beyond artist's intent to include contemporary attitudes and influences of which the artist may be unaware at the time, and "latent significance, yet to be recognized by future human perceptions" (Hodkinson 1990: 60). Papers have been given by conservators relating to the spiritual aspects of objects they have worked on (Greene 1992; Pouliot 1995).

In conservation, conceptual attributes have chiefly been addressed in the profession as a whole in relation to preserving the intent of the artist or maker. This is seen in the British definition of "true nature" of the object previously quoted. Artist's intent is mentioned in early conservation references such as Ruhemann (Ruhemann 1963), recalling principles laid down in the seminal 1930 Rome Conference and published in "Mouseion" (Office International des Musées 1930). Artist's intent has been the subject of recent articles such as many of those published in Shared Responsibility (Ramsay-Jolicoeur and Wainwright 1990), and articles published following the 1994 AIC workshop on this subject, such as Dykstra 1996.

For this study it was also necessary to look at the profession of conservation in order to understand the goals of the field and especially those values not found appreciably in its antecedent, restoration, such as preserving the integrity of the object and the emphasis on scientific methodology. Only recently has conservation been analyzed from the point of view of its
attributes as a profession (Ramsay-Jolicoeur 1993; Wilson 1993). There are, however, many papers concerning the training of conservators, and a number of these are European in origin and focus on the training of restorers. Conservators have not been a subject of analytical studies from outside the profession, for example, by sociologists, or philosophers writing on professions and ethics. Conservators have, however, looked to other professions outside their own for guidelines in constructing a Code of Ethics (Weaver 1983; IIC-CG and CAPC 1989: 20). In addition, conservators frequently draw from other fields, mainly in the physical and natural sciences and to some extent in engineering, but they also include, in many instances, art history and architecture, in the development of treatments, analytical methodologies, and experimental approaches.

There are several important short papers on the history of conservation which were helpful in portraying the growth of the profession. Some of these referred to specific countries only, such as Gilberg (1982) and Ruggles (1982) for Canada, and Pearce (1990) for archaeological conservation in Great Britain. Caldararo gives a detailed summary of the development of archaeological and anthropological conservation internationally (Caldararo 1987), offering insights as to why these developments took place when they did. Retrospectives on the development of conservation also can be found in anniversary publications such as that of the Jubilee Conservation Conference at the University of London Institute of Archaeology in 1987, (Black 1987) and in writings by and about the founders of conservation.
MUSEUMS AND CONSERVATION


These publications have analyzed museums and their relationship to society. The foundations of traditional museology are being examined, the assumptions critically analyzed, and new museum theory and practice proposed. Much of the contemporary critique has been centred around issues of representation and voice, and reflects the concerns of the contemporary intellectual milieu with cultural diversity and with the philosophy of post-modernism. Conservation is mentioned as a component of traditional museology, but it is not analyzed to show how the field is affected by current changing cultural and museological contexts. In the last five years the field of museology has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of publications discussing the authority of the museum to speak as the sole voice for its collections; there has been no similar extensive critical analysis in the conservation literature. There has, however, been increasing awareness of the implications for the objects in museums of First Nations viewpoints about collections.
At the same time as the above discussions are occurring, the role of conservation within the museum is being examined and critiqued by museum professionals such as Ames (1992) and MacDonald (1992). This discussion is situated especially in two contemporary museum issues: financial cutbacks and the changing role of collections-based mandates in the museum of the future. The targeting of conservation as an area which is too costly in this decade of museum budget cuts is underpinned by a vision of the museum of the future, articulated by museum professionals such as MacDonald (1992) and Stevenson (1987). In this vision, which has been voiced particularly in North America, the new museum emphasizes "the authentic experience", not "the authentic object", and it may accomplish its mandates through new technologies such as videodisk and interactive and lively presentations to museum visitors rather than through "glass-box exhibits". Chapter 4 explores in more detail the implications of this concept of the museum: it has critical implications for the future role of conservation within the museum and to the principles and practices of the conservation profession.

If one goes by the published literature, conservation hardly involves itself in the debates in museology, apart from First Nations issues. It does, however, react to them; for example, the pre-conference training workshop for the annual International Institute for Conservation - Canadian Group (IIC-CG) conference in 1994 was "Doing More with Less". As detailed in Chapter 4, conservation is a museum profession separated from the main museum world. One objective of this dissertation is to understand this and to locate conservation within the socio-cultural and economic museum milieu. There is, however, very little literature which comments on conservation in this
context, although recent publications such as Knell (1994) and Keene (1996) situate conservation in a "real world" context.

FIRST NATIONS: RELATIONSHIPS TO MUSEUMS, CONSERVATION

In the literature on the changing relationship between museums and First Nations, the issues of access and representation are again focal points, with the addition of the area of repatriation. These areas are, however, beyond the scope of this study. The professional field of conservation is considered in this literature, when it is considered, in its role of fulfilling the traditional museum mandate of preservation of collections. In addition, very few ethnographic conservators have spoken about or written on how the changing museum context is affecting their conservation practice. Very few museums, with the exception of the new National Museum of the American Indian, have compared First Nations views on cultural preservation and traditional museum views on collections preservation (Smithsonian Institution Office of Design and Construction 1991; Kaminitz 1993; Nason 1993).

The museum literature represents publications by First Nations people who work in museums (for example, Webster, McKenzie, Moses, Ladd, Harris) as well as by non-Native museum anthropologists and other staff (for example, Ames, Bernstein, Welsh, Halpin are all anthropologists). Some of the publications relevant to this research include: Ladd 1983; Ames 1986; Ames, Harrison et al. 1987; McKenzie 1987/8; Webster 1988; Ames 1990; Ames 1990; McKenzie 1990; Ames 1991; Bernstein 1991; Halpin 1991;
Bernstein 1992; Moses 1992; Webster 1992; Welsh 1992; Ames 1993; Harris 1993; Moses 1993; Ames 1993-4; Ames 1994; Moses 1995. Publications such as Inglis (1991) present a history of a particular museum's involvement with First Nations and an analysis of changes in practice (Inglis and Abbott 1991). Several books such as those already mentioned by Ames (1992), Karp, Kreamer et al (1992), and Karp and Lavine (1991) are concerned with the theoretical analysis of the changing role of museums as well as specific requests and museum interactions with First Nations. Some present case studies in museum/First Nations relationships (Johnson 1986; Hoover and Inglis 1990; Merrill, Ladd et al. 1993) and are concerned with the content of what is being negotiated, the process of consultation, and the intangible elements such as developing a respectful relationship.

Many museums are engaged in the evolving process of discussing and consulting on issues in museum-First Nations relationships. For example, museums are publicly debating the concept of "stewardship" versus "ownership" and the implications of "public trust"; formalized museum repatriation policies are being developed; certain objects are being repatriated; laws such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the U.S.A. (1990) and the deliberations of the Task Force in Canada and ratification of its report (Task Force, Museums and First Peoples 1992) have redefined what is expected of museums, and case studies have been published showing how museums have attempted to acknowledge different concepts of ownership in collections management policies, and to establish advisory boards for museum business. The museum
response has included not only work directly affecting the collections but also exhibition and public programming policies and points of view.


Bell, Webster, Ames, and Messenger have written that the ownership of First Nations pieces in museums is not necessarily clear, from both legal and moral points of view (Ames, Harrison et al. 1987; Messenger 1989; Bell 1992; Bell 1992; Bell 1992; Webster 1992). If it were, then conservators could follow the reasonably explicit obligations to the owner as stated in the Codes of Ethics. In both the Canadian and American Codes, at this time, obligation
to the originator is separated out from obligation to the owner, and the commitment to the originator is defined by terms such as "respect" rather than by concrete obligations. In the United States, however, ownership of certain kinds of museum pieces is explicitly covered by NAGPRA. Museum conservators in the United States are as obligated to follow the Act as are their museums, and the literature on NAGPRA is therefore relevant to them in its definitions of which objects now will be owned by and must be returned to their originators. In Canada, Bell (1992) has placed ownership of museum collections as potentially falling under legislation on aboriginal rights. However, what has so far been legislated and what has been tested in Canadian courts regarding museum collections is negligible, and Bell’s necessarily theoretical work remains a source for guidelines in the future.

Objects defined as sacred or culturally significant and the obligations of a museum towards these objects is another focus of literature in the area of museum/First Nations relationships. In the Canadian Task Force report, reference is made to "sacred and ceremonial" objects and to objects "of special significance to cultural patrimony" (Task Force, Museums and First Peoples 1992: 9,5). "Sacred" is defined in the American NAGPRA legislation. The museum literature includes reports of consultation with indigenous religious consultants (Bernstein 1992; Herle 1993), post-NAGPRA anthropological discussion on the implications in the courts of defining "sacred" (Welsh 1992), and articles on the care of culturally sensitive objects and sites (Bowdler 1988; Heikell, Whiting et al. 1995; Moses 1995). In both Canada and the U.S. there are direct parallels between sacred objects and sacred sites concerning issues and ethics (Parker 1990).
There is, however, far more going on in museum/First Nations relationships than reaches publication. Much of this is between the museums and the nation concerned. Some of it is made public to the museum community at conferences and may reach publication. These conferences include anthropology meetings, and increasingly sessions at the meetings of national and provincial museum associations. In 1993, for example, both the Canadian Museums Association and the British Columbia Museums Association had sessions focussing on First Nations and museums. In conservation, the 1993 meeting of the ICOM Ethnographic Working Group held a session on repatriation, the eighteenth annual conference of the Canadian/ U.S.A. conservation training programs focused its professional papers on "First Peoples Art and Artifacts: Heritage and Conservation Issues" (Spirydowicz 1993), and the 1991 meeting of the American Institute for Conservation held its general session on the conservation of sacred objects.

Other sources of information on museum/First Nations relationships, which are not necessarily published, are a museum's public programming and other joint ventures with Native individuals or organizations. These programs often relate to issues more than objects, and become a complement to requests for repatriation and access to collections as well as reflecting the current thrust of non-traditional museology. In addition, it is to be noted that the majority of these programs are co-partnerships in various forms with First Nations. In other words, not only is their subject matter different from traditional museum practice, but the program is mounted with and directed/advised by non-"professional museum" partners. Illustrating these public programs and joint ventures by referring to the UBC Museum of
Anthropology, they may include performance (for example Gawa Gyani, a collaboration between the Karen Jamieson Dance Company and the family of Chief Ken Harris, the first family of the 'Gisgahaast clan of the Gitksan people, 1991-2), exhibitions using graphics which can travel to non-museum community venues, including their originating aboriginal community (for example, "Proud to be Musqueam", 1988, "Cannery Days", 1993), and talks (for example, the Museum of Anthropology, in collaboration with the UBC First Nations House of Learning, presented "The Presidents Series" in 1991 and 1992). Programs such as these do not fall within the mandate of this study.

There are, however, examples of joint ventures concerned with collections held in museums. Using the UBC Museum of Anthropology in 1993 as an example, these programs include the loaning back of purchased works for ceremonial use (e.g., for the Matilpi potlatch, Oct. 23 1993, Walker regalia history, 1993), exhibitions initiated by First Nations "non-museum" individuals and realized by them with museum expertise provided by the museum (e.g. "Mabel Stanley: Contributions to the Community"), increased access to collections for families (e.g., Watts request to MOA), and consultation with First Nations regarding culturally sensitive storage and exhibition of objects from their communities (e.g., MOA correspondence with the Hopi Tribe, 1993). Documentation on these relationships exists chiefly in the museum's internal files and archives.

To return to the literature, it should be noted that one further museum source of information on relationships with First Nations is museum policy documents. The Task Force report was a seminal guiding document in
Canada on museum/First Nations relationships (Task Force, Museums and First Nations 1992). Most policy documents are in print but not published in the academic literature. Some types of policy documents issued by particular museums include repatriation and co-management policies (Museum of Anthropology, Royal British Columbia Museum) as well as other agreements or contracts (Musée de la Civilisation, Quebec City) (Dorion 1990). To consult these documents, it is usually necessary to contact the museum itself.

One interesting source of public information on museum/First Nations relationships is the popular media, such as newspaper articles. As Ames has pointed out (Ames 1992: 6), if the issues are current and the milieu and relationships are changing, the popular media are sources for the most current debate. In the Canadian media, aboriginal affairs are given increasing coverage, and there the larger political and social context of Native/non-Native relationships can be gauged. Topics such as ownership of First Nations objects and the repatriation from museums of objects and human remains have been covered as the subject of films and television programs (PBS 1990; Museum of New Mexico 1991), in newspapers (Enge 1993; Enge 1993; Enge 1993; Enge 1993; Matas 1993), through articles in popular magazines (Lawson 1989; Preston 1989), and in popular literature (Hillerman 1989). In addition, various media have reported on First Nations and museums in cultural sector news through, for example, reviews of museum exhibits or in articles or programs emphasizing topics such as appropriation of voice.

On all these matters pertaining to the relationship between museums and First Nations, New Zealand and Australia provide an excellent
comparison for North America. This study used New Zealand as a comparison in order to question Maori conservators on how they balance preserving the object's physical integrity with Maori concerns about preserving conceptual integrity. A starting point in the literature for this comparison is the proceedings of the conference organized by the Cultural Conservation Advisory Council, which brought museum professionals from around the world to New Zealand to discuss appropriate care of Maori material in international collections. The quarterly of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand has published several articles on the conservation and significance of Maori cultural property in New Zealand museums (McKenzie 1987/8; McManus 1988; Ithaka 1989; Griffin 1993). There have been several conference presentations by Maori museum personnel pertaining to the care of Maori collections which were available to the author (Evans 1987; Evans 1994; Evans 1994; Tamarapa 1994; Evans 1996). In addition, articles by New Zealand museum personnel have been published in the museum literature outside of New Zealand, for example by Maori curator Hakiwai (Hakiwai 1995).

In conclusion, the research in this dissertation is concerned with specific areas not well studied in the existing literature. Published and other public sources of information have, however, formed a context for and at numerous times been directly relevant to this research. This chapter has outlined these secondary sources which have informed the museum foci of this research.
CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATION AND ITS VALUES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the historical foundation for the values the field of conservation holds. Some of these values are in marked contrast to both restoration, out of which conservation developed and, pertinent to this research, some First Nations values. This chapter is intended to explain why conservation came to define its field by an emphasis on preserving the integrity of the physical object and by scientific inquiry determining what constitutes proper preservation and treatment of collections. The question is asked: what factors caused conservation to emerge as an approach to solving problems seen in collections, rather than relying on the traditional techniques of restoration?

Before considering why conservation developed in this way as a separate, scientific museum field, it is interesting to begin by noting at what point the words "conservation" and "conservator" began to be used in relation to museum collections. According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1968), since medieval times various forms of the words "conservancy" "conservatory" and "conservator" in English have held the connotation of stewardship, keeper in safety, or preserving from destructive influences, from the Latin conservare meaning to preserve. Through the centuries these words
have been applied to guardians of rivers, sewers, forests, tender plants, orphans and the disabled: those who cannot look after themselves or natural resources requiring care and regulation to prevent destruction. The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) adds the definition "careful preservation" for the word "conservation". Museum conservators have assumed the role of guardians of the welfare of objects that metaphorically "cannot speak for themselves", although as pointed out in the Introduction, the viewpoint that objects constitute "mute evidence" is being challenged by some First Nations.

Mention should also be made that the word "conservationist", which has gained current use in the field of ecology, is considered incorrect in the context of collections. "Conservator", it should be noted, not only has more similarity with its antecedent "restorer", but also with "curator" (and "director"), and might naturally have been favoured by its practitioners at the time they were organizing into a professional field. In addition, the word "conservation" in its museum collections context was used from the very beginning in German, (see Rathgen's publications as listed in Gilberg 1987), but in English words such as "restoration" and "preservation" continued to be used. (In French, "restaurateur" has continued to be used, and "conservateur" translates as "curator". Contemporary conservators in France use either "restaurateur" or "conservateur-restaurateur"). Hodges could find no use of the word "conservation" in English before the establishment of The International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) in the early 1950s (Hodges 1993). However, in a report in the *Museums Journal* of September 1906, the director of a museum is described as having
given his fullest attention to "the growth, the conservation and the arrangement of the collections" (1906: 108). This example appears rather isolated, however, and may be a borrowing from continental usage.

Conservation has developed into a distinct professional occupation. A conservator is different from a restorer and different from colleagues in allied museum fields. Conservation is different from other museum disciplines in such fundamentals as philosophy and qualifications, and at the same time conservators themselves share much in common, even internationally. As a relatively new occupational group, conservation exhibits most of the traits of a profession, and can certainly be said to be well into the process of professionalization. Conservation has its own codes of ethics that are similar country-to-country, its own training programs, a sense of duty to public service, and community acknowledgment of expertise. In many countries conservation has articulated criteria for status in the field, common understanding of what is the focus of knowledge, including a theoretical basis, common understanding on the advancement of that knowledge, and the means for sharing that knowledge. Practitioners can earn their living as conservators, being hired for jobs advertised as being for conservators. Rewards are not only in the form of professional salaries, but there are several honorary forms of recognition within the field, nationally and internationally. Conservation encompasses distinct areas of specialization, but all share the same professional grounding mentioned above.
CONSERVATION: ORIGINS

Several authors have illustrated that repairing objects when they break or wear out is as old as antiquity (Calderaro 1987; Corfield 1988; Oddy 1992). Restoration, however, expands on the definition of strict repair to include changes done for non-utilitarian reasons, for example to alter or to "improve" the appearance of the objects. Apart from repair, motivation for these modifications may include changes in social context, for example in fashion, or political or religious acceptability, or they may be attempts to return the object to an appearance it is believed to have had before the passage of time and history altered its features.

In Europe, an increased demand for restoration of fine works occurred following the Renaissance with the establishment of large private collections (Coremans 1969; Oddy 1992). It has been noted that restoration was usually carried out by artists and craftsmen in their workshops, and that these artists were highly secretive about their methods and discoveries (Coremans 1969; Ruggles 1982; Calderaro 1987; Hartin 1990; Oddy 1992). Hartin notes that at the time of the opening of the Louvre in 1793, a distinction was made between the restorer and the artist/restorer: the vocation of restorer came into being, although the artist/restorer continued to work as well. Authors such as Hartin and Roche provide a summary of the history of restoration of paintings (Roche 1972; Hartin 1990). Roche notes that as early as the eighteenth century picture restorers were using techniques such as transposition and cradling as well as cleaning, which continued and developed in modern conservation (Roche 1972: 132). Lining a canvas support with an additional canvas, another practice that has continued to be
used in modern conservation, developed first into a standard procedure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (1992).

For objects as well as paintings, the restorer cleaned, repaired, and carried out changes in the appearance of the piece. During the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, fashionable taste favored antiquities as well as two-dimensional works of art having the appearance of being whole. Missing parts were often added to objects as diverse as fragmentary classical sculpture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and Haida argillite pipes in the nineteenth century. The artists of the day crafted contemporary additions to complete the missing areas, or used similar pieces from entirely different objects. Oddy has illustrated the latter with examples from the collections of the British Museum (Oddy 1992: 9-10). As Coremans has said, satisfaction was expressed at "aesthetic surgery ... which gave a work of art a pleasant appearance, even if such surgery greatly accelerated its deterioration. Thus, at this stage the restorer restored, but did not yet conserve" (Coremans 1969: 8).

One could not claim, however, that science was never used in restoration methods. Caldararo writes that scientific knowledge was used in some restoration, as seen in 1846 in the *Essai sur l'Art de Restauroer les Estampes et les Livres (Essay on the Restoration of Prints and Books)* by Bonnardot (Caldararo 1987: 86). Although conservation as a separate approach was not internationally recognized before 1930, as will be discussed later, nonetheless scientific influences occurred in the world of restoration. It is important to consider these influences as paving the way towards a conservation world-view as it developed away from traditional restoration. Restoration continues
today as a dominant practice in the art market. It can also form one element in a professional conservator's practice; restoration, guided by a conservation codes of ethics, is considered a part of conservation. In other words, in museums and galleries the new discipline of conservation did not replace restoration, but rather continued it under another guiding set of principles and methodology. What is fundamentally different is that these principles and methods mark a distinct break with the artist/craftsperson's empirical studio skill and secrets designed to enhance the appearance of the work, which is the basis of restoration.

Scientific conservation as a field can be said to have been recognized with the international conference in Rome organized by the International Museums Office of the League of Nations in 1930. Entitled "Conférence internationale pour l'étude des méthodes scientifiques appliquées à l'examen et à la conservation des œuvres d'art" ("International Conference for the Study of Scientific Methods applied to the Examination and Conservation of Works of Art"), it convinced the participants of the utility of laboratory research as an auxiliary to studies in the history of art and museology (Office International des Musées 1930).

It should be noted, however, that this was not the first international conference on preservation. In the field of the preservation of archives and paper, there was a conference as early as 1898, and various examples exist of collaborative committees composed of scientists and scholars in this area at the turn of the century (Caldararo 1987: 86). There were undoubtedly many instances at this time of consultation of individual scientists by those associated with museums and historic sites on various preservation problems,
such as the one reported in the British *Museums Journal* of 1910 regarding stone deterioration (Anderson 1910). Perhaps because the 1930 Rome Conference was organized through the League of Nations rather than through a museum or other institution, perhaps because the conference encompassed a broad range of materials including both artistic and historic heritage, perhaps because developments in society had witnessed significant changes since 1898, or perhaps because the founders of conservation either attended or worked for those who attended that conference, the 1930 conference is referred to more often in the conservation literature than the earlier meetings.

 Conservation as a recognized professional field, however, cannot be said to have begun until 1950 with the establishment in England of the International Institute for the Conservation of Museum Objects, becoming, in 1959, the present International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC). According to an historical note which appeared in a publication of the IIC, the Institute was formed to continue the international exchange of conservation information which had benefitted conservators just after World War II (1993). The Institute was also concerned with promoting the professionalization of the field, acting in the areas of "[i] the status of conservators, by forming a professional self-electing body; (ii) publications: abstracts of the technical literature, and original work with a scientific bias -- the end of the "secrets of the Old Masters"; and (iii) training, with the aim of raising standards"(1993). It should be noted that although the use of science in the treatment of objects increased after WWI, this did not mean that conservation treatments were necessarily done in a systematic manner by
scientifically trained people. Iona Gedye wrote that in the early 1930s conservation training did not exist, although Dr. Wheeler, founder of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, very much wanted to find formal training for Gedye and her co-worker. Gedye was forced to approach her work in the following manner: "armed with Dr. Harold Plenderleith's first small book on the Conservation of Antiquities and a few basic chemicals, [we] started a "hit or miss" attack on the remaining finds" (Gedye 1987: 16).

The conservation field's internal process of professionalization has developed in many countries with the establishment of graduate training programs to replace apprenticeship training, the publication of codes of ethics, recognition of the field in the form of employment opportunities in museums and galleries for trained conservators, and the increase in and establishment of the other elements of professionalization mentioned in this and the following chapter. It must be noted that conservation is one of the more recent fields to professionalize. The professionalization of occupations in Europe grew significantly in the nineteenth century (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1966). One factor which promoted this growth is technological change (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1966: 21), a component of conservation as well. The elements of professionalization discussed previously confirm that conservation has followed a process similar to other professions as they emerge.

Authors such as Coremans 1969; Caldararo 1987; Evans 1987; Gedye 1987; Gilberg 1987; Hodges 1987; Corfield 1988; Hodges 1993 have reported on technical and historical developments, and on publications in art and object preservation and conservation before WWI, between the wars, and
immediately following WWII. The concern in the following section is to focus on factors in the societal context which may have influenced the shift from restoration to conservation, including the emphasis on the preservation of the integrity of an object, especially its physical integrity in addition to its aesthetic qualities.

The key time period for this shift occurred between 1888, when the first museum laboratory concerned with the preservation and restoration of collections was opened, and the Rome Conference of 1930, in which the validity of a scientific approach to the care of collections was internationally acknowledged. It is important as well to examine the contributing factors leading up to the creation of the Chemical Laboratory of the Royal Museums of Berlin in 1888.

A hundred years before the establishment of the Berlin laboratory chemists and other men of science had begun experimenting with restorative methods for ancient materials. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries eminent scientists such as Chaptal, Davy, and Faraday were asked for solutions to problems in the restoration of materials as diverse as papyrus, ancient pigments, leather bookbindings, and bronzes. Authors such as Caldararo, Corfield, Gilberg, and Keyser have described this research in more detail. The answer to why scientists rather than restorers were brought in for these problems can be found in the combination of a number of factors, of which two focus directly on the object: the nature of the materials, and their condition. It can be noted that even by systematically analyzing the object from these viewpoints, a conservation approach rather than a restoration approach was already being established.
The fundamental common factor in the problems of these materials was that they were deteriorating in visible ways that had not been seen to such an extent before. Furthermore, the traditional methods of restoration were neither designed to be nor proved to be successful in arresting the deterioration. Two primary causes for the degraded condition of the many objects in collections occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first was the increasingly polluted atmosphere as the industrialization of Europe progressed. The pollution derived chiefly from the expanded use of coal and gas, especially that with a high sulphur content. In 1843 Faraday had linked the deterioration of leather bookbindings to the use of gas lamps. The second factor in the deteriorated condition of collections was the fact that large numbers of archaeological objects were now entering collections. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed large-scale excavations: Caldararo says that "the tragedies which befell antiquities found at Herculaneum, Pompeii and Stabia at the hands of restorers certainly influenced the scholars and scientists of the period of their discovery" (Caldararo 1987: 85). (Caldararo notes that the first chemical analysis of archaeological material was published in 1798, with many more being published in the next 80 years (ibid.).) Archaeological objects often exhibit deterioration caused by their environment. As mentioned above, increased interest in and availability of these objects may have fuelled the desire to be able to see them in their original state, that is, cleaned and whole. At the same time, some of the materials being found, particularly the metals, can become unstable in archaeological environments; this often continues above ground unless physical-chemical measures are used to stabilize the material.
The nature of the materials invited problem-solving by chemists, especially when restorers' methods proved inadequate. This connection with archaeology also meant that collections of objects and works of art were associated with a field more closely connected to scientific disciplines and approaches than were art history or text-based classical studies. In addition, there may have been greater value placed on the remains of the original object in archaeology than in the other two disciplines (Caldararo 1987, citing Hulmer 1955). As previously mentioned, respect for the integrity of the object and for a systematic analytical approach are two factors distinguishing conservation from restoration.

Archaeological objects were by no means the only collections area in which the work of restorers was being questioned. Many authors have cited the problems with restoration work in paintings (Ruggles 1982; Samuels 1987; Hartin 1990). The 1906 volume of the British Museums Journal carries an article discussing a painting by Velasquez now a part of the collection of the National Gallery. An enquiry fifty years before had revealed that a large part of the canvas had been retouched: "Moreover, he (the restorer) claimed to have painted into the picture whole groups of figures" (1906).  

2 The extent of the dissatisfaction with restoration in this case can be understood from the full account. 'The story Lance told was this. While the 'Boar Hunt' was the property of Lord Cowley it was sent to a dealer or restorer to be relined. Unfortunately, in ironing the back of the picture too great a degree of heat was applied, with the result that the paint was blistered and the canvas in places laid bare. ... According to Lance, when the picture was (subsequently) placed in his hands the whole of the centre was destroyed, although there were slight indications here and there of figures. The arena, he said, looked like a dissolving view, and there was one piece of canvas bare as large as a sheet of foolscap. 'And on that bare canvas you painted the figures we see now?' he was asked. 'Exactly,' said Lance. 'What guide had you in repainting those groups?' 'Not any.' (The report continues with the observation that Lord Cowley, even after the painting was returned, "was never aware of the misfortune that had befallen his Velasquez.") ... 'He [Lance] estimated that when the 'Boar Hunt' was purchased by the nation one-eighth of the canvas was the pure untouched painting of the original master.'
gives an example from the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century where skillful restoration had been performed on a painting which Bernard Berenson had said was not a Giorgione but was "of exquisite quality" and in a state of "deplorably bad preservation". Seventeen years later this same painting was described by Berenson as an admirably preserved "splendid portrait", which he attributed to Giorgione. Sixty years later it was revealed that the painting had been severely overcleaned, and it became "this sad, but still moving ghost of a picture" attributed to Titian (Samuels 1987: 151). By 1929, Samuels says, the tide had set in against extensive restoration, and quotes a letter from the artist Modigliani to the Times regarding "incredible" alterations to Italian paintings. The letter said, in part, "[T]oday, restoration does not go beyond repairing the actual damage .... in the background or less important parts of a picture" (Samuels 1987: 376).

Architecture also showed a development of attitudes about appropriate restoration that paralleled a conservation approach, including systematic analysis and a respect for the integrity of the object. According to Bonelli, between 1880 and 1890 one of the new concepts which arose was based on the "advances in scholarship and the conviction that each monument is a distinct and separate entity. ...The restorer defined as an "artist-re-creator" who sought to identify himself with the original architect was replaced by the "historian-archivist" who based his activity exclusively on established evidence ranging from documents in archives to paintings,

Not only had Lance falsified and overpainted large areas of the work, but his own efforts did not last. At the time he examined the painting shortly before the enquiry, "he thought that it was not in the same condition as when he left it after the repainting. 'The surface was mine,' he said, 'but I am sorry to say it is now almost gone back to Velasquez mutilated" (1906).
and from thorough analysis of the monument to the literary texts of its time" (Bonelli 1968: 195).

**LEGITIMACY OF A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH**

As mentioned earlier, scientific knowledge and methodology had been brought to bear on questions regarding works of art and antiquities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, long before conservation became a separate and recognized discipline. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Enlightenment and the subsequent growth of the influence of science in European society and thinking during those centuries found applications in art as well as in many other areas of knowledge. As Pearce has written,

Modernity was concerned with the development of meta-narratives, overarching discourses through which objective realities and eternal truths could be defined and expressed. At bottom this rested on the belief -- and it was a belief -- that objective reality existed and that human beings as essential individuals shared in it and could therefore appreciate it. This gave rise to the discourse of scientific knowledge and understanding arrived at by the operation of human reason upon the observed phenomena of the natural world, for which museums and their collections were perceived as the principal repositories of primary evidence. (Pearce 1992: 2)

The advancement and acceptance of science meant that not only was new knowledge discovered, but that a new paradigm of thinking developed -- a philosophical world view of the nature of the universe and how to understand it. A rigorous, logical, and systematic method of observation, experimentation, validation, and prediction was basic to the scientific worldview. A rational explanation of the organization and interrelatedness of systems of knowledge was sought. This approach and the continuing
expansion of knowledge has been important in the pure sciences, in the applied sciences, and in the technological developments since the Enlightenment. It has been of fundamental importance in defining the field of conservation. Traditional restoration relies on empirically acquired skills to solve problems in achieving the desired appearance of a work for historic or aesthetic purposes. Conservation begins its approach to an object from the intellectual, rationalist point of view of what caused the problem and how it can be mitigated.

The combination of a scientific climate and archaeological antiquities as the basis for the beginnings of a conservation approach is well illustrated by the circumstances surrounding the setting up of the first museum preservation laboratory, in Berlin in 1888, and the outlook of its director, Dr. Frederich Rathgen, a chemist who has been called "The Father of Modern Archaeological Conservation" (Gilberg 1987). According to Gilberg, Rathgen wrote that his appointment as director was due largely to the efforts of the eminent German chemist Otto Olshausen ... In 1887 Olshausen was approached by his close friend and colleague Adolf Erman, the Director of the Egyptian Collection at the Royal Museums of Berlin, for advice with regard to what he described as the unusually rapid decay of many of the bronze and stone antiquities in the collection. Many of these antiquities had been deposited in the collection some fifty years earlier ... Olhausen, who had previously demonstrated a keen interest in the scientific study of antiquities, recommended the establishment of a permanent position for a trained chemist who would be responsible for their care and preservation. (Gilberg 1987: 107)

Gilberg also states, "Rathgen was quick to recognize the need for a more systematic approach to the conservation of antiquities" (Gilberg 1987: 106).
It is interesting to note that the organization of scientific education in Germany may also have contributed to this country being the first to establish a research laboratory associated with a museum. Mendelsohn noted that in most cases the old European universities were resistant to the demands of science (Mendelsohn 1964). He writes that in France the post-Revolution Ecole Polytechnique shone as an example of innovative education in theory and practice in the sciences. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, however, Napoleon's militarization of the school contributed to its lessening importance, and by mid-century Germany's science teaching outclassed that in France. He notes that Germany's polytechnical institutes cultivated ties with industry and commerce, and new German universities united teaching and research goals and established an important series of scientific professorships. The German chemical industry was one of the beneficiaries of the great numbers of men trained at the polytechnical institutes.

It should not be presumed, however, that because Rathgen was the first chemist employed permanently by a museum in the preservation of its collections that chemical methods had not been used previously on antiquities by museum personnel. Brinch Madsen gives an excellent account, for example, of the preservation of early Danish archaeological specimens in the National Museum in Copenhagen, which began in 1807 as "The Commission for the Preservation of Artefacts" (Brinch Madsen 1987). The materials -- rusted iron, other metals, and wet wood -- were often extremely friable. The man appointed as secretary to the Commission in 1816, Christian Jurgensen Thomsen, began to catalogue, repair, and restore the objects acquired. Brinch Madsen gives accounts from Thomsen's letters, which
discuss the difficulty of preserving archaeological specimens and recommend techniques in the field so that the objects do not disintegrate. These techniques included allowing urns to dry and "harden" before too much handling, and, by 1845, coating bronze objects immediately upon excavation with shellac (Brinch Madsen 1987: 343-4).

Although these methods proved successful, they are evidence of a significant difference from Rathgen's approach thirty years later. Rathgen is said to have sought, "an explanation for their [objects'] deterioration through an understanding of the mechanism by which archaeological materials, such as clay, stone, and metal, corrode or decay." (Gilberg 1987: 106). His handbook, Die Konservierung von Altertumsfunden (The Conservation of Antiquities) published in 1898 shows this approach in Part I, which was devoted to the causes of deterioration of archaeological objects before and after excavation (Gilberg 1987). Thomsen's methods, on the other hand, were techniques derived empirically from working with the objects, much like a restorer's techniques, although these were aimed at the arresting of deterioration. Neither Thomsen nor his archaeological assistant C.F. Herbst were chemists, although Thomsen's letters show some familiarity with chemistry. Before 1850 many of the methods they used successfully during excavations appear to be not analytical methods but preventive methods and simple cleaning methods with water or spirits. They used barrier coats as treatments rather than beginning with an analysis of and attack on the inherent causes of the material's on-going deterioration. However, at least after 1850, Herbst did experiment with chemical methods in a similar empirical way and achieved a remarkable success in 1859. He discovered a
method of preserving waterlogged wood with an alum solution, a method which, with modifications, became a standard treatment in the Danish National Museum for the next hundred years (Brinch Madsen 1987: 344).

It would be incorrect to assume that preservation methods developed by trained chemists were necessarily the only good and successful ones, even judging by modern conservation standards. It would also be incorrect to assume that because the men mentioned above were not chemists, they did not see themselves as applying science to solve problems. (It should be noted that the word "scientist" itself was not coined until 1833 (Morrell 1990: 983).)

A further example is provided by the first textile conservation studio conceived to operate under "scholarly control", which was organized in 1908 by two Stockholm museum directors under the leadership of Agnes Branting, where "scientific research and analysis were applied to the conservation of all types of textiles, including archaeological textiles" (Caldararo 1987: 90).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the fashion for antiquities and the increased number of objects available to private and public collections prompted an interest in detecting fakes and in the establishment of provenance. At the same time, questions of the nature and structure of materials and manufacturing techniques interested scholars. A systematic methodology to resolving these questions was seen as appropriate, and scientists provided not only useful knowledge in the needed areas but a logical approach to resolving problems. In addition, the new questions being posed to science regarding works of art bore a relationship to new technologies. For example, the microscope had practical applications in art as well as in the natural sciences. Röntgen published his work on radiography
in 1895. "Shadowgraphs" of paintings were made shortly thereafter, with Faber in 1913 establishing the scope of radiography for the study of paintings (Burroughs 1938: viii). Thirty years later, the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard had hired a radiographer even before it hired chemists.

The relationship between science and technology is complex (Spiegel-Rosing 1977). Suffice it to say that in the context of this research, Keyser has called conservation a "rationalized technology" rather than a science (Keyser 1989). Although conservation scientists do contribute extensively to the field with applied research, the work, training and approach of the conservator is perhaps more accurately covered by Keyser's definition. In the work of both, however, the legacy of positivism can be strongly seen.

Another outlook that can be seen in science and society was an optimistic belief in science as the conqueror and the key to progress for humankind. Pearce points out the attitude of "higher moral ground" associated with the Enlightenment concept of progress (Pearce 1992: 3). This certainly was part of the climate favourable to the emergence of conservation. Mention is made later of this attitude, specifically in chemistry in the early twentieth century. Further examples are given below from the Presidential Addresses of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in the decade 1921-1931:

1921: "All thinking men are agreed that science is at the basis of national progress." (Sir T. E. Thorpe, p. 8)

1923: "The extensive territory which has been conquered by science." (Sir Ernest Rutherford, p. 3)
1925 "The general aim [of science] was summed up in an almost consecrated formula: 'to subdue the forces of Nature to the service of man." (Prof. Horace Lamb, p. 1)

1926: "It has been borne in on me more and more that if civilization is to go on, it can only progress along a road of which the foundations have been laid by scientific thought and research. More than that, I have come to realize that the future solution of practically all of the domestic and social difficulties with which we have to grapple nowadays will only be found by scientific methods." (HRH Prince of Wales, p. 2)

1928: "Nothing in the progress of science, and more particularly of modern science, is so impressive as the growing appreciation of the immensity of what awaits discovery." (Prof. Sir William Bragg, p. 18)

1931: "It may fairly be said that science is perhaps the clearest revelation of God in our Age." (Gen. the Rt. Hon. J. C. Smuts, p. 13)

(1921, 1923, 1925, 1926, 1928, 1931)

Before closing this section, mention should be made of the growing belief at this time of the importance of chemistry in particular, as it is the major scientific discipline involved in the development of conservation. The "imperialism of chemistry" has been alluded to (Straker 1994) because chemists felt that within their discipline lay the ability to discover the nature of the world. According to Straker, a professor in the history of science at the University of British Columbia, "They seized every opportunity to get something under their domain" (Straker 1994). Biochemistry emerged to analyze the "chemistry of life": the Rockefeller foundation funded physical chemists to become biochemists, to discover the causes of mental illness. Chemists were both optimistic that all of this was possible, and they were "civic-minded". Chemistry "was a vocation" (Straker 1994).
MUSEUMS

In the nineteenth century the growth of the public museum with its board of trustees had some influence on the concept of the importance of preserving the physical objects in the institution's care. The boards had a mandate to preserve the collections in the public trust. The material preservation of the object as well as its aesthetic importance became a matter of increasing concern and the development of significant public collections brought the restorers' work under closer scrutiny. In the same period the collections policies of these museums, particularly their pursuit of archaeological objects through organized excavations, created the conditions where large numbers of unstable objects had to be made fit to take their place in the collections and on public view.

In addition, a logical, systematic approach was increasing in importance in museums in the nineteenth century, especially in museums of natural history. Appropriate methods for cataloguing specimens and for acquiring particular collections were rationalized on the basis of logical systems. Indeed, comprehending the nature of the universe was seen, especially in the post-Darwinian era, as requiring systematic study of its many components. It is interesting to note that in the meeting in 1888 creating the Museums Association of Great Britain, goals for the new association did not mention preservation, but did include plans for arrangement of natural history collections and schemes for acquiring comprehensive collections through securing reproductions and exchanging duplicate and surplus specimens (Teather 1983: 238). In the same year, however, the British Association for the Advancement of Science had finished
a two-year report on museums in the United Kingdom that "outlined the common purpose of museums on which there was not great difference of opinion", that being the preservation of specimens in collections (Teather 1983). Although science was part of museums, men of science working on preservation problems were still apart, Rathgen becoming the first to be on staff in that same year.

Museums not only used scientific methodology in their operations, but the collections themselves served science. The 1906 *Museums Journal* carries a report from the Liverpool museum stating that "a considerable number of scientific men have used the collections for research" (1906: 108). (The same report notes an agreement between the museum in Liverpool and the University Institute of Commercial Research for research laboratory space and the services of a scientist and a technician (ibid.).)

Collecting itself was done for "scientific purposes". While this might be expected for natural history collections, it was also considered appropriate for ethnographic collections to be put in museums of natural history (Cole 1985: 50). In an article in the 1909 *Museums Journal* one author bemoans the neglect of "ethnographical specimens" because of their great value financially and scientifically (Knocker 1909: 196). Archaeological material might be collected with increasing attention to scientific rigour, but many of the finds still remained "antiquities". The use of the term "specimen" for ethnographic material placed it squarely in the realm of science.

Pertinent to this research, Cole has documented in detail the collecting practices of museums of material culture from the North American Northwest Coast in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Cole 1985).
He describes the nineteenth-century belief that material culture had to be urgently and massively collected before the cultures disappeared or became assimilated. He documents the use of indigenous people as living dioramas in world fairs and expositions. He describes the interest in collecting human remains for scientific study of "the races". Again, ethnographic material, as distinct from the (non-technical) material heritage of European peoples, was placed in the domain of science and museums. The museums then presented this material as if the people no longer existed, considering the older material as authentic and what had happened since as tainted too much by European influence. This only added to the image of museums as places that preserved the past. The role of living indigenous people in museums was either as display specimens or non-existent. It is not surprising that museum conservators, whose profession was born and grew up in traditional museums concerned with objects from the past and not with their relationship to living people, found the questions posed by First Nations to museums today not within their realm of experience to answer.

It is interesting to note in this context a difference which Stocking has described between British anthropology and American anthropology (Stocking 1990). Ethnographic research by British museum ethnologists was much further removed, in terms of the geographic distance between museum and research area, from the living subjects of its research than was American ethnology, and Stocking describes the differences this made to the content of the research (Stocking 1990: 720). Keeping in mind that conservators in Great Britain contributed tremendously to the professionalization of conservation, it may be that this isolation was an element in the ethnographic conservators’
complete acceptance until very recently of the break between objects in museums and their originators.

Regarding archaeology and public museums, it must be noted that the particular needs of the curators could be a driving force behind the necessity to find solutions to preservation problems. For example, Ruggles quotes Charles Trick Currelly, the first curator/director of the Canadian Royal Ontario Museum, as saying,

I had spent a good deal of money in Egypt on iron objects of the Roman period, and many of them were badly rusted. I had always had a hope that in some way or other I would learn to get rid of the rust....Very few of the museums had been buying rusted iron, and one of the men at the British Museum advised me never to touch it, that it would break my heart, as after a few years one would have nothing but a pile of rust in the case. This wasn't pleasant, as I had spent altogether too much money on Roman iron. (Ruggles 1982: 6-7)

Currelly also describes a method he had learned in Munich and brought back to Toronto that was successful in treating his Roman iron.

The first clearly defined preservation problem Gettens and Stout (two pioneers of conservation in the United States whose work will be described shortly) tackled at the Fogg Museum at Harvard, the transfer of Asian wall paintings, came about because the museum's curator of Asiatic Art "had explored cave temples and other sites in western China. Paintings on the temple walls he found to be of high quality and generally neglected. His associates had experimented with a process to take the paintings from the walls and let them be taken to places where they would be safe" (Stout 1977: 13). As this process had proved unsatisfactory, Gettens and Stout took up the problem.
These examples illustrate the intertwining of the history of conservation with the history of museums, including areas such as collecting practices. Although collection subject matter and cataloguing methods were being rationalized and systematized, the subjective and practical sides of collecting practices were not ignored. Roman iron was not collected because it could not be preserved, not because it was considered unimportant. While Gettens and Stout worked on the technical problems associated with the transfer of the wall paintings, they and presumably others such as the curator and director put preservation before questions of cultural significance to the originating people in considering the right of the museum to remove the paintings to North America. It is precisely these values which are being debated today. This moral dimension is the area which conservators now have to consider in relation to First Nations.

One characteristic of modern conservation as distinct from restoration is its inclusion of preventive conservation. Although as early as 1691 there are references to the importance of taking measures to prevent a damaging environment from harming museum collections (Elias Ashmole, letters, as reported in Corfield, 1988), restoration of moveable cultural property concerned itself primarily with work on the object itself. Some of the early scientific studies on the deterioration of materials had repercussions for preventive conservation, such as that in 1787 on the deterioration of lead by the acidic fumes of certain woods (Corfield 1988: 4). Keyser writes that in the nineteenth century there was already some good information on the preventive conservation of works of art (Keyser 1994: 2). However, the first written reports from the Berlin museum laboratory by Dr. Rathgen only
concerned the objects themselves and not the museum environment. (A
detailed review of Rathgen's work is discussed in Gilberg, 1987.) Corfield
reports that Georg Rosenberg, an artist who was instrumental in the
preservation of collections at the National Museum of Denmark for forty
years beginning at the end of the last century, was concerned with
environmental control and preventive conservation, although his major
interest was in the preservation of organic materials, especially wood. An
awareness of the importance of preventive conservation also can be found in
occasional remarks in the Museums Journal, for example: "As far as the
protection of the pictures and frames from thoughtless handling on the part
of visitors is concerned, in most places it is customary to use a barrier" (Quick
1906: 99). During World War I collections were exposed to particularly
harmful environments, and this will be discussed later to show its impact on
the development of conservation. The 1930 Rome Conference highlighted the
importance of the environment in the first recommendation of the
"Commission spéciale pour la restauration des peintures et l'application des
vernis" which concerned the best museum environment for works of art
(Office International des Musées 1930: 129).

THE ART WORLD

Two important general contexts in society for examining the
development of conservation as distinct from restoration have been discussed
thus far: science, and museums. The third context important for conservation
is the art world. Were there developments in the art world that increasingly
linked science with art? Were there developments that promoted greater
respect for the integrity of the object per se, as distinct from its art historical context or its stylistic features?

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, science had direct influences on art, both in technical matters such as studies of the permanence of pigments and in general art theory. Keyser is one author who has written about this in her discussions on the connection between colour science and art theory in Victorian England, in which she links theories of knowledge to the representations in paintings. In the prospectus for her book, *Victorian Chromatics: Colour Science and Art Theory 1750-1850*, she considers the influence of Newton's *Opticks* on eighteenth-century discussions of colour, Goethe's opposition to Newton's theories and his own knowledge of science and colour theory, and the influence of philosophers such as Kant, Schopenhauer, and Schelling on the knowledge of phenomena in relation to representation in art. She traces the influence of Continental thought on developments in England, stating that "[t]he cultural divide in England between 1800 and 1850 was not between art and science, but between different kinds of art-science complexes. The best known clash of ideologies was the Romantic and contemplative versus the Utilitarian and pragmatic....The sciences whose content could be readily adapted to various ideologies made the strongest contribution to Victorian chromatics: chemistry, taxonomy, physiology, and history" (Keyser 1993: 4). Keyser concludes, "A traditional approach to nineteenth-century colour theory cannot encompass the connection of the sciences to art theory, which had become extremely complex in the course of the eighteenth century... . Furthermore, a significant aspect of the history of nineteenth century art and
art theory was the challenge to Renaissance values by science, technology and industrialization" (Keyser 1993: 1).

Studies such as this have shown that there was a significant relationship between art and science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. New technologies were also part of the relationship in many different ways. Technological advances such as the invention of photography and its evolution into an available format with wide appeal, both for users and viewers, profoundly influenced ways of seeing and redefined the role of the traditional artist (Copplestone 1985: 15-17). The use of x-rays on collections has already been noted. The creation by industry of new and inexpensive colours led to their extensive use in works of art and on objects.

Ties of another nature existed between applied scientific research and the arts. Industrialization had allowed fortunes to be made, and art collecting and good taste have long been prestigious in western society. Several of the major art collectors in Britain in the first quarter of the century were also major industrialists in the chemical industries. William Hesketh Lever, Viscount Leverhulme, whose business interests were in soap manufacturing, donated several buildings for art galleries (the London Museum, an art gallery at Port Sunlight) and the Leverhulme Trust is a funding body for the arts in Great Britain. Samuel Courtauld’s fortune was made in the textile industry, where chemical manufacturing processes, in his case the production of rayon, and the chemical dyeing of textiles are very significant. Courtauld was twice Chairman of the National Gallery Board of Trustees, a Trustee of the Tate Gallery, and endowed the Courtauld Institute of the Arts. In addition, he and his wife acted as benefactors to the Tate Gallery, enabling
them to purchase a number of French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. The celebrated chemist Ludwig Mond bequeathed his extensive collection of paintings to Great Britain. Julius Mond directed the major British chemical house Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), and was an art collector and connoisseur.

Copplestone describes another major connection between art and science at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth:

Physicists investigated the nature of colour while painters such as Seurat attempted to codify its emotional content. Around the turn of the century the new, self-conscious use of science in aid of art was one of the many elements that promoted the belief that art itself should be new and different. (Copplestone 1985: 11)

The extent of this difference is succinctly put by Chipp in his description of Cubism: "The Cubist movement was a revolution in the visual arts so sweeping that the means by which images could be formalized in a painting changed more during the years from 1907 to 1914 than they had since the Renaissance" (Chipp 1968: 193).

The early part of the twentieth century saw the emergence of movements such as Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism, Orphism, De Stijl (Neo-Plasticism), Suprematism, and Constructivism. While abstract art expressed the artist's inner as well as outer realities, the influence of science and technology in the style of the representations and, with certain painters, in the representations themselves can be clearly shown. Janson, for example, explains that some painters saw in Cubism "a special affinity with the geometric precision of engineering that made it uniquely attuned to the
dynamism of modern life" (Janson 1962: 529). In 1910 the Futurists "issued a manifesto violently rejecting the past, and exalting the beauty of the machine" (Janson 1962: 529).

Just prior to World War I, movements such as Orphism sought to make "objective" art free of the influence of the material world and of the painter, and based instead on universal laws. These artists believed "laws existed for art as well as for geometry, that supreme example of perfect relationships, and that therefore it might even be possible to construct works of art by means of the intellect" (Chipp 1968: 309). As a parallel, conservation's methodology, different from restoration's, could be said to preserve works of art by means of the intellect first, with technical skills following intellectual analysis. In Russia, artists such as Tatlin and Malevich created abstract art "motivated by a complete acceptance of the contemporary world of machinery and mass-produced objects" (Chipp 1968: 312). Both Constructivism and Suprematism, the respective movements in which these two artists were leaders, "set up an ideal world based upon the absolute functionalism of machinery and the efficiency of the materials of industry" (Chipp 1968: 312).

Fernand Léger's 1919 painting "The City" has been described as: "buoyant with optimism and pleasurable excitement, it conjures up a mechanized utopia" (Janson 1962: 529). Even after World War I his vision of technology was not discouraged, but expressed the belief that "machinery was not only the most successful of man's creations aesthetically but also his most significant" (Chipp 1968: 197). Léger also expressed sentiments similar to a belief in the integrity of the object: in 1924 he wrote, "Every object,
picture, piece of architecture, or ornamental organization has a value in itself; it is strictly absolute and independent of anything it may happen to represent" (Léger, 1924 "The Aesthetic of the machine", as quoted in (Chipp 1968: 217). In a 1926 article entitled, "A New Realism -- the Object" he wrote: "Every effort in the line of spectacle or moving-picture should be concentrated on bringing out the values of the object" (Léger, as quoted in Chipp 1968: 279).

The abstract tradition of Tatlin and Malevich was carried on in Germany in the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus dedicated itself to the ideal of the unity of the applied and fine arts. One teacher, Johannes Itten, "proposed that the sources of creation lay in an intellectual and sensual understanding of the true physical nature of materials ... and that contemporary technology with its host of new possibilities was the guiding inspiration" (Chipp 1968: 313). Chipp describes the reaction at the Bauhaus: "the physical properties of colour and light and of industrial materials aroused enormous enthusiasm among the students" (Chipp 1968: 314).

Other interrelationships between art, science and technology are documented in the journal Leonardo in, for example, a 1986 discussion from several points of view of the impact the popularization of Einstein's "Special Relativity Theory" had on artists at the time the theory was first proposed (Henderson 1986).

It should be noted that in the early twentieth century the arts from the point of view of the creator were not the only place where there was enthusiasm for the physical properties of objects. Connoisseurship, long a tradition in the fine and decorative arts, emphasized the importance of the
formal elements, the visual evidence, in appreciating a work. As early as the
eighteenth century connoisseurship was being regarded as a science (Argan
1968). Bernard Berenson, one of the best-known art connoisseurs of the late
nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, began by following the methods of
"scientific connoisseurship" founded by Giovanni Morelli. Scientific
connoisseurship involved a disciplined visual analysis of the morphological
details of paintings, especially to verify attribution. The belief in the
importance for certain disciplines of the physical properties of objects was
ture for both conservation and connoisseurship. According to Calo, "the
priority of formal elements in the evaluation and appreciation of painting
[was] a position that, at the time, required the devaluation of subject matter as
the primary signifier in a work of art" (Calo 1994: 171). Berenson opposed "an
excessive interest in meaning at the expense of what he regarded as properly
artistic qualities" (Calo 1994: 171). Form itself was the vehicle through which
significance was expressed.

The following statements show that other methods and beliefs in
connoisseurship were similar to a conservation approach. Berenson, for
example, wrote, "In every instance we shall begin with the decorative 3
elements, and while doing so we shall ignore the other elements whether
spiritual or material, social or political" (as quoted in Calo, 1994: 3).
"Berenson's legacy to art history is that the object speaks to the viewer in a
unique way" (Calo 1994: 3). Berenson's aesthetics stressed "intrinsic values,
the value of the work of art as contained entirely within itself" (Calo 1994: 13).

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3 Decorative, as Berenson used it, meant the formal qualities or the artistic properties in a
general sense, not simply the superficial ornamentation or pattern (Calo 1994:9).
Calo says that "[a] persuasive case has been made for the fundamental relationship between connoisseurship as Berenson practiced it and the development of formalist art history" (Calo 1994: 4). He continues, "Insofar as formalism is understood as a methodological approach to the study of art or an attitude toward art appreciation originating in the careful scrutiny and disinterested judgment of modern connoisseurship, Berenson rightfully assumes a pivotal role ..." (Calo 1994: 178). The belief in careful examination and analysis of the formal qualities of the work to produce an objective evaluation, the emphasis on intrinsic values, and the lack of interest in the work's content and socio-political context to establish its meaning within the discipline are attributes in which conservation and connoisseurship have parallel paths.

This discussion of the art world in the years preceding the emergence of conservation illustrates that there were numerous influences of science and technology on art and that there was a climate in the art world favourable to the development of the values expressed by conservation as distinct from restoration. In addition, present in the art world was the element of respect for the physical nature and integrity of the object per se, as distinct from the importance of style or iconography.

**WWI AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

In post-Victorian society, science and technology were increasingly seen as the way of the future. While this atmosphere provided a nurturing environment for the emergence of scientific conservation, one key event at this time, World War I, had a catalytic effect on its development. World War
I, of course, had a momentous impact on Europe as a whole: "The whole complexion of the world -material, social, economic, political, moral, spiritual—has been changed" (Thorpe 1921: 22). Pertinent to the context of this research, the Great War caused extensive damage to cultural property, while at the same time accelerating the general development of new technological and material resources.

The British Museum removed a large proportion of its collections to safer locations during the war. The measures taken and the moves themselves have been described in detail in Kavanagh 1994, and in some of the histories of the British Museum such as Caygill 1981. According to Kavanagh,

the best of the removable antiquities and coins were lodged in ... a new section of underground railway. This was a line coinciding with Holborn and Oxford Street. ... Forty to seventy feet below the surface, it was certainly safe from air attack, but there was a great risk from damp. ... It was prepared to receive the collections...by the installation of floors, a lift, ventilation apparatus, electric radiators, hygrometers and thermometers. (Kavanagh 1994: 31).

These measures successfully protected the British Museum's collections from bomb damage, but at a cost to the condition of the objects themselves. Kavanagh writes that the Director of the British Museum at the time, Sir Frederick Kenyon, admitted that there had been some minor damage to the collections, but she quotes Andrew Oddy, the Keeper of Conservation at the British Museum at the time of her writing, as saying that the damage was much more extensive. He explains that bronze disease and on-going rusting had broken out on archaeological metals, salt efflorescence had occurred on pottery and stone, and foxing on paper (Kavanagh 1994: 34). All
these conditions are related to inherent vice or destabilizing elements in the pieces, such as from the remains of an archaeological environment, being affected by prolonged high humidity. Kavanagh reports that the collections of the National Gallery also suffered from damp conditions during temporary wartime storage (Kavanagh 1994: 35).

This damage to the collections became the catalyst prompting the British Museum to call in scientists to assist in the preservation of its collections. The formation of the British Museum's Department of Scientific Research is outlined below. This significant step had far-reaching importance and began England's development as the original centre for the field of conservation, the location for the IIC, the publisher of the major international peer-reviewed journal in the field, Studies in Conservation, and the establisher of the use of English as the principal language for professional publication in conservation. It must be left to historians of this period to examine whether the instability of Germany as a result of the war, and Britain's emergence on the winning side, also shifted the balance in what had initially been a German strength in museum conservation.

Why were scientists and not restorers called in to work on the British Museum's collections? Many factors contributing to a favorable climate for scientists to examine and solve problems regarding deteriorated artifacts have already been described. An important socio-economic factor existed as well. After WWI, the British government for the first time gave large-scale financial support to scientific research considered in the national interest, creating the centralized Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR). 4 The

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4 Salomon speaks of "a closer link between science and the state provided by WWI". He writes, "The age of institutionalized science policy only really started when scientific activities
establishment of the Department marks an epoch in our history. No such
comprehensive organization for the application of science to national needs
has ever been created by any other State. We may say we owe it directly to
the Great War" (Thorpe 1921: 12). The Department concerned itself with, for
example, issues in mining, food technology, fuel consumption, forestry, the
Geological Survey and building technology. In addition, "The Department is
also directing inquiries on the preservation and restoration of antique objects
deposited in the British Museum"(Thorpe 1921: 9). Dr. Alexander Scott FRS, a
past president of the Chemical Society, began directing the stabilization and
preservation of the collections in 1919. The laboratory was moved to the
British Museum in 1922, although it was not formally incorporated as a
Department of the British Museum until 1931.

In the United States in 1927 the Director of the Fogg Art Museum at
Harvard, Edward Forbes, invited Rutherford John Gettens to be the first
chemist permanently employed by an art museum. Forbes had also engaged
a radiographer, a gilder and paintings restorer, and a year later was to
employ George L. Stout, another founder of American conservation, then a
graduate student in fine arts, to assist in instructing Harvard's fine art
students. Forbes himself taught a course in the materials and methods of
began to have a direct effect on the course of world affairs, thereby causing the state to
become aware of a field of responsibility which it now could not evade" (Salomon 1977: 47).

The maintenance of national cultural identity has also been a federal government
activity in many countries. It is interesting to note that the establishment of heritage
preservation as an official government priority, with the attendant funding, was instrumental
in Canada in the promotion of the field of conservation, including Canada's present
prominent role in it. The establishment and maintenance of the Canadian Conservation
Institute, the large laboratories of Parks Canada, and the conservation segment of the
federally-funded Museums Assistance Program are examples of the vital influence federal
government action has had in this area. Equally, recent government decisions to cut back in
the budgets of all these organizations have also had a pronounced effect on their activities.
paintings, including studio experience where the students practiced techniques of fresco, egg tempera, mixing colours, and gilding. As Stout wrote, "Without knowing it, we were on the edge of the wide field of conservation" (Stout 1977: 13).

Forbes could be said to have truly provided a context for conservation to develop in the United States. His approach remains the foundation of what is still taught to conservation students sixty-five years later. The fine arts students at the Fogg learned about the nature of raw materials, causes of deterioration, and measures to stop deterioration: Forbes specifically wanted a chemist to contribute in these areas. Gettens and Stout worked on many technical projects (reporting on one of them at the Rome Conference), and in 1932 began the publication *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts*. While a radiographer worked on questions of attribution and history, Gettens and Stout "tried to learn about the entire state of any work that came our way -- materials, construction, workmanship, design content, degradation" (Stout 1977: 96). Not surprisingly considering the approach of the team at the Fogg, resources drawn from industry and research science contributed to early conservation there. One of the first projects that Gettens and Stout worked on has already been mentioned: the transfer of Asian wall paintings. Gettens found a synthetic material, "polymerized vinyl acetate", which was still in the process of development at the Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh (Stout 1977: 16). Gettens notes how he and Stout picked the brains of the scientific people in Boston and Cambridge, and "the picking was good" (Stout 1977: 96). In the early thirties Forbes had approached the president of the Chemical Foundation for a donation, and it was this foundation which financed the
publication of *Technical Studies*. On a broad scale, in museums in the United States, many buildings, collections, and foundations bear the name of their industrialist donors.

In Canada, research scientists were not employed by museums until much later. At the Royal Ontario Museum, several men who worked as cabinet makers or preparators used their skills in the preservation of objects, following methods tried successfully in European museums (Ruggles 1982). Gettens and Stout were asked to assist in the transfer of Chinese wall paintings at the Royal Ontario Museum in 1933: they had by this time worked on wall paintings for three other museums. In 1929 Douglas Leechman published a short monograph on the preservation of anthropological specimens for the National Museum of Canada. Leechman had begun working as a preparator at the National Museum in 1924, while continuing his education, receiving a B.Sc. and later an M.A. and a Ph.D. for theses on anthropological topics (Gilberg 1982). Gilberg writes that Leechman, although not formally a restorer or conservation scientist, was keenly interested in and familiar with the standard works on preservation at the time. Gilberg quotes Leechman's introduction to his monograph to show that he espoused some of the basic methods of conservation, such as beginning by identifying the materials, understanding the chemistry of their deterioration, and understanding the effect the proposed treatment will have on the materials. The introduction shows that Leechman also clearly believed in some of the same values that underlie conservation, such as the importance of preserving the integrity of the object (Gilberg 1982: 43-44).
In the fine arts in Canada, various restorers, often recommended by a well-known artist or another gallery, were employed by the National Gallery (Ruggles 1982). In 1938 Mervin Ruggles became the first person with a chemistry background to be taken on in their restoration studio, although the photographer at the National Gallery was already using methods such as ultra-violet and infra-red light in documentation photography. Ruggles learned his restoration and conservation through apprenticing in the studio.

CONCLUSION

Conservation can be seen as an extension of the tradition of restoration, but developing out of a new conceptual environment in society. Internally, within museums and galleries, the development involved an abandonment of the existing view of what constituted appropriate repair to and preservation of collections, and saw the rise of new methods and concepts. For example, knowledge in restoration is based on tradition and craft, and knowledge in conservation is based on empirical research as a method of enquiry. Ben-David discusses the importance of the recognition of science as a way of acquiring knowledge independent of tradition, and examines the moral obligations this placed on scientific practitioners, for example to communicate one's discoveries for public use and open criticism (Ben-David 1971: 75-76).

Externally, the development involved a new importance for collections preservation in a new environment. The environment centred on science and technology, their relationship to society, especially the world of art and museums, and the increasing perception in society that science would provide the solutions to problems. At the same time, there was a new socio-
economic environment. European industrialization and imperialism influenced everything from the increasing pollution of the air in European cities to the accumulation of enormous art, archaeological, and ethnographic collections from around the world. Eurocentric attitudes infused the developing public museums, and ethnographic exhibition halls and storage areas were considered the repositories of the material remains of the past lives of indigenous peoples as European expansion exerted tremendous pressures on their cultures.

The development of conservation as a distinct field came about through the evolution of an existing area of practice, spurred by urgent and sometimes new problems, in a climate that acknowledged the necessity and the legitimacy of the scientific model. The factors contributing to this climate have been discussed in this chapter. In summary, they are:

A) the influence of science and technology in society: 18th, 19th, 20th centuries, including
   :logical positivism: a scientific world-view
   :appreciation of scientific solutions to problems: eg. authentication
   :the growing importance of chemistry
B) the early involvement of scientists in preservation matters
C) the increased deterioration exhibited by objects in collections
D) the increase in agents of deterioration, such as air pollution
E) the increase in number and importance of archaeological collections
F) the nature of the materials
G) the recognition of the inadequacies of restoration
H) the professionalization of society
I) the influence of the museum context
   :collecting practices, curators' needs, public and board
   accountability, role for preventive conservation, systematization
   of collections
J) the art world in the early twentieth century, including
   connoisseurship
K) the influence of World War I (and later World War II)

The first practitioners in the field of conservation were either scientists,
who derived their goals and values from their respective fields, usually
chemistry, or technicians -- preparators-restorers or artist-restorers -- whose
backgrounds varied greatly. Conservation, like science itself, is an activity as
well as a body of knowledge. It is not surprising that it shows continuity with
the "pre-conservation" activities devoted to the same goals. Conservation and
restoration overlap, but they do not coincide. Conservation did not eliminate
restoration, but the two co-existed, much as in the nineteenth century the rise
of professionalism in the sciences did not supplant the amateur.
Conservation, however, exerted its legitimacy, grew in association with the
large, powerful public museums, solidified itself as a profession as it replaced
restoration, and became more and more associated with the way works should
be preserved. Conservation could maintain this power and status because of
its claim to be scientific in an era in which science was increasingly revered.
The dominance of science -- methodology, knowledge, and values -- in
defining the distinction between conservation and traditional restoration is
significant.
Thomas Kuhn has succinctly summarized his findings on the development of scientific professions. He says, "Early in the development of a new field, social needs and values are a major determinant of the problems on which its practitioners concentrate. Also during this period, the concepts they deploy in solving problems are extensively conditioned by contemporary common sense, by a prevailing philosophical tradition, or by the most prestigious contemporary sciences" (Kuhn 1968: 80). The history of the emergence of conservation bears out his statements: for example, in the period 1830 -1930, one sees the prevailing belief in science and the importance of and possibilities in chemistry in the need to preserve what was defined as national heritage in many countries including England and Germany, the common sense approach to preservation in Denmark, and in the preparations for the storage of the British Museums collections in the Underground.

Kuhn continues with a description of a mature science. Although it is too early to rank conservation as mature, it does exhibit some of the qualities described by Kuhn. For example, the problems solved are defined not so much by external forces as by an internal challenge to increase the scope and precision of "the fit between existing theory and nature" (Kuhn 1968: 81). This accurately describes the nature of the high proportion of technical/scientific papers published and presented at contemporary conservation conferences as well as the current revisiting of some of conservation's canons such as the guidelines for environmental control (Michalski 1994; Erhardt et al, 1995, Schultz 1995, Real 1995, Lull, 1995). Kuhn continues, "[A]nd the concepts used to resolve these problems are normally close relatives of those supplied by prior training for the specialty" (Kuhn 1968: 81).
As will be discussed in this research, it is not surprising that conservators found themselves unprepared, professionally speaking, to respond to First Nations requests related to objects in museums. Many of the values in conservation, for example, respect for what is intrinsically found in the object (rather than elements attributed to the object), or the belief in the value of museums as institutions and in the preservation of what is housed in them, or a belief in the worth of modern science and technology, are values that may not be shared by First Nations peoples approaching museums with requests about objects from their heritage. In addition, some of the requests directly conflict with established practices in conservation. Finally, conservation has developed to a point as a discipline where it is very much self-generating, even as an applied field. The problems presented by First Nations' requests were not, following Kuhn's description, "close relatives of those supplied by training"; little in conservation's technical outlook had prepared conservators to consider the significance of objects to living indigenous people. In other words, conservators could not situate what was being asked for by First Nations clearly within the goals and values of the conservation profession, nor in the profession's historical development, nor in its current self-definition of the parameters of the field.
CHAPTER 4

CONSERVATION VALUES AND ETHICS

In order to further understand the reactions of conservators to First Nations perspectives pertaining to collections, it is necessary to examine the norms and values of conservation in greater detail. Conservators' perspectives on what they are preserving and why are presented in this chapter.

As mentioned in the literature, there are no published syntheses in conservation directed to analyzing the underlying value system of the conservation profession. In order to analyze the construction of the meaning of conservation, therefore, this chapter examines the codes of ethics to which the profession adheres, and conservators' self-definitions of who they are, what they do, and for whom they do it. As Wueste has said, professional norms are both the product of official action by a group, as well as customary norms that develop as a consensus from interaction or discussion in public fora (Wueste 1994: 34). In this chapter conservation values are examined in and of themselves as well as contextualized within the general value system represented by the museum.
ETHICS AND VALUES

A Framework

Although this research is concerned with principles and ethics in conservation, it is beyond its scope to examine the broad field of ethical theory. Discussions of ethics can be found in the literature of many academic disciplines, especially the social sciences and philosophy, which examine ethics from theoretical and practical perspectives in both western and other societies. In addition, various professional fields ranging from medicine to education have literature concerned with questions of values and ethical practice in those fields. Winter summarizes the thinking of six basic schools of ethical theory and says that the theories "range from a total denial of the intelligible meaning of value statements, to a social process view of ethics, to theological, metaphysical, and intuitive theories that refer moral concepts to deities or immutable principles" (Winter 1984). Wildesen presents an excellent discussion of ethics and values in archaeology, which provides a degree of analogy for conservation as both share certain values, for example, placing a positive value on scientific methodology and the contemporary "conservation ethic" of preservation of heritage resources (Wildesen 1984). In addition, a positive value is placed in both fields on the salvage or "rescue" paradigm.

Ethics have been defined as, "any and all sets of moral principles and values that govern individual and group behavior" (White 1959 as quoted in Winter 1984). Definitions of values include, "the central organizing principle(s) of any society", "what is regarded as good and desirable", and "conception(s), explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or... group, of
the desirable which influences the selection of available modes, means, and ends to action" (Abbott 1988: 3). Professional values, therefore, provide a moral framework guiding actions and representing choices.

Winter distinguishes between ethics and values in the following way: "At the group level, ethics are the laws, mores, traditions, and other codes that regulate individual actions and maintain group welfare. At the individual level, ethics take the form of value statements (eg. commands, assertions, conclusions) that involve right, wrong, desirable, undesirable, good, bad, and related behavior" (Winter 1984: 37).

A significant dimension of ethics is the moral authority associated with them. While it is outside the scope of this research to discuss approbative ethical philosophies, it is important to underline one practical consequence of the association between ethics and authority: ethics not only provide a framework to guide actions, but a social power structure and its institutions are intertwined with the definitions of what is approved and disapproved. It will be seen later that First Nations are taking issue with who has control over their material heritage as much as they are with how it is cared for.

**CONSERVATION VALUES, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN CONTEXT**

The professional ethics and values with which this research is concerned are those pertaining to how conservators view objects, especially ethnographic objects, and the purpose and the parameters of conservation work on them. Three major influences on this are: the context of conservation within museums and the values expressed through these institutions; the
scientific outlook which was, as seen in Chapter 3, determinate in making conservation a separate field from its antecedent, restoration; and the growth of conservation as a profession, and the values common to those disciplines which consider themselves "professional". These three areas will be considered in turn in this section.

**MUSEUM VALUES**

As outlined in Chapter 2, much has been written in the museum literature on the cultural values represented by museums. The social history of museums repeatedly shows that choices have been made concerning what to collect, how to collect, what to do with what has been collected, and for whom and for what purposes the collections are kept. The importance of collections is the most fundamental aspect of museums which has bearing on conservation. Pearce and others believe that a museum's collections "will always be, and should always be, at the heart of the museum operation" (Pearce 1992: x). Many of the objects become the icons of the culture, symbolizing values and providing the tangible evidence for them. The museum as an institution itself becomes a signifier as well as a creator of cultural meanings. Museums, therefore, have a vested interest in preserving their collections, and preservation is found as a primary mandate in most institutional policies, including the definition of a museum from the International Council of Museums. It is a somewhat self-fulfilling, circular path giving museums the power to designate which objects are deemed to have cultural value by having curators accept them into a museum's collections, and then for conservators to believe that these objects must be
preserved because they have cultural value, since they are in a museum's collection.

At the same time, "knowledge is now well understood as the commodity that museums offer" (Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 2). Objects in museums can be used as primary data: "the underlying premise is that objects made or modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged" (Prown 1982: 1). From a conservator's perspective, the objects contain knowledge in their very fabric, and should be preserved intact so that this knowledge can be gleaned either now or with future analytical techniques. If the objects are unique and irreplaceable, not preserving them means a permanent loss of this knowledge. As well, not preserving objects, according to the ethics of conservation, represents for conservators the loss of the intrinsic authenticity represented by the object as a tangible link with the past. There are, therefore, reasons to preserve the object per se. According to MacDonald and Alsford, however, "[P]reservation of heritage objects is not an end in itself, but serves to maximise (over time) the access to the information encoded in them" (MacDonald and Alsford 1991) as quoted in (Keene 1994). Many conservators, while agreeing on the importance of the information, believe in the immediate value of preserving objects as an end in itself.

MacDonald's arguments are based on a very contemporary view of knowledge and what this means for museums. He says, "Information and experience replace commodities as the basis of wealth" (MacDonald 1987: 213). His opinion is that the dominant paradigm of the museum as educator
is outdated, focussing as it does on artifacts and static displays. Education today has been developed into an emphasis on learning (i.e., on what the participant receives rather than what is taught), and learning can occur in many ways. In the new museum, the old artifact-centricity is abandoned in favour of the total experience, which (to simplify) comes from recontextualizing artifacts in environmental simulations and then animating the environments to show people and artifacts interacting. Only in this way can the intangibles of culture -- ideas, beliefs, values -- be expressed. Artifacts thus become only one of several resource bases essential to museums. (MacDonald 1988: 9)

MacDonald represents a point of view which distances itself from that found in traditional museology, the context in which conservation developed. MacDonald has stated,

[C]ollections have suddenly become something of a burden to museums. Most museum directors now feel like directors of geriatric hospitals whose budgets are devastated by patients whose survival for another day depends on expensive, high technology support systems. Conservators in museums are like a host of relatives who guard the wall plug of the life-support machines. (MacDonald 1987: 213)

Lately, MacDonald appears to have moderated his perspective on the preservation of objects in museums. In 1992, he said that, while all museums are, at the most fundamental level, concerned with information ... [the] museum's principal resource -- their collections of material remnants of the past -- are of value, and are worth preserving, primarily for the information embodied in them. The information may be intellectual, aesthetic, sensory, or emotional in nature (or more likely some combination), depending on the object and its associations. (MacDonald 1992: 160)

He goes on, however, to state that the same value applies to the newer collections museums are building such as oral histories, audiovisual
materials, replicas, and reenacted processes. Again, most conservators and
some museologists would part company with MacDonald, as they would
make a distinction between objects or other materials which have been
catalogued into the museum's collection and are preserved according to
conservation guidelines, with the view to extending their lifetime for as long
as possible, and items which may be designated as being able to be replaced;
that is, a copy serves as well as the original. In summary, therefore, most
museums include preservation of collections as a fundamental mandate of
their institution, but in contemporary museology, especially in North
America, this view is challenged by a new direction emphasizing the museum
as a "presenter of culture, not of objects" (MacDonald 1993). The following
descriptions summarize other values and qualities represented by museums
in the European tradition.

Secular, scientific and European

The "museum" under consideration in this research is an institution of
European society, representing beliefs based in the Enlightenment as well as
western cultural values. Some of these values and beliefs are: separation
between the religious and the secular; belief in the value of science as a way to
find out objectively the nature of the universe; the value of knowledge gained
from enquiry; and that one has a right to gain this knowledge, and to use it to
educate others.

Value given to works of art

Beliefs based in western cultural values include the pre-eminent
position given to the fine arts over other expression of material creativity. In
addition, the field of conservation in general, both principles and practices, reflects western values regarding fine arts and archaeological "treasures", much more than it reflects the beliefs of non-western creators of objects. This will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections on individual conservation values.

The Value of Authenticity

The traditional museum institution, in addition to subscribing to the above values, places a high value on objects considered "authentic". These represent "the real objects, the actual evidence, the true data as we would say, upon which in the last analysis the materialistic meta-narratives [of European culture] depended for their verification" (Pearce 1992: 4). Authenticity bestows a numinous quality on the object which, by virtue of its survival, maintains a direct and unique relationship to real events that happened in the past. Conservators are important to the museum in ensuring the continued survival of the object.

The Value of Ownership

One of the meta-narratives in western culture is the importance of ownership; this subject is not, however, the focus of this research, and is too vast to be adequately explored here. It is, however, pertinent to the relationship between museums and First Nations. Ownership of ethnographic and other collections in museums is currently being disputed on several fronts: repatriation claims challenge a museum's right to cultural property obtained in various ways; the current context of the assertion of
aboriginal rights challenges the western concept and legality of "ownership" itself; and moral or "extra-legal" claims regarding objects in museums are being recognized as having some validity (Ames, Harrison et al. 1987). That is, following the copyright model, the creator is considered as having certain rights, even after the object is sold.

For a museum, owning culturally-valued material bestows power and prestige on the institution, its directors, and curators. Herle has less formally characterized curators and museums as "intrinsically possessive" (Herle 1993) and much is currently being explored in museology in the area of collections and collecting.

It can be expected that in this high-stakes atmosphere, different and often contestatory concepts of ownership prevail between museums and indigenous peoples, and decisions about collections and who has the authority to make decisions about them is a key issue. It is a continual undercurrent in the contemporary relationship between museums and First Nations. Ethnographic conservators and conservation in general have been firmly enmeshed in western society's and museum values and recently have been challenged on many fronts to acknowledge the perspectives of those who created the objects. Parallels in this area with the treatment of contemporary art and respect for the perspective of the artist are discussed later. This research will explore the question of ownership with the interview respondents, focussing on who the respondents believe has the authority to make decisions regarding objects housed in museums, and their ideas about resolving conflicts between following museum practice and following First Nations wishes if these are different.
The value of the physical object, including if decontextualized

Objects generally have had more value if they were in excellent condition and if they had an accurate provenance or attribution. Objects were referred to as "treasures", sometimes because they were associated with or created by people deemed important in western tradition and showcased as such. Objects could have value, both monetary and cultural, in and of themselves, because of what they represented, and apart from any utilitarian purpose or cultural contextualization beyond the accompanying written documentation.

Although there have been debates concerning ethnology collections and how much of a culture could be represented by objects alone, objects in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries continued to be collected in the belief that they were material representing a way of life that was disappearing or had vanished. The objects held value as evidence of that way of life. Preserving objects away from or outside their cultures in museums was considered a worthy endeavour.

The value of the past

Museums also represent the value of knowing about and preserving the past. Age is often considered a positive value for an object, and museums are highly regarded cultural institutions in western society, one of whose most important mandates has been to "preserve the past".

Ethnographic collections, until recently, were considered primarily in the paradigm of witnesses to the past, rather than conceiving of them as part of the cultures of living peoples in the latter half of the twentieth century.
That they could be both and be important as both in a dynamic two-way relationship benefitting the people who created them and the museums who house and exhibit them, is a principle many museums in North America and New Zealand are now embracing. As recently as 1984-8, however, two conservation publications -- *Ethnographic and Archaeological Conservation in the United States* and *Ethical and Practical Considerations in Conserving Ethnographic Museum Objects* -- (National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property 1984; Rose 1988) which were important documents in describing the parameters for ethnographic conservation focussed these parameters almost exclusively within the objects' value to the museum and the scholar. The lengthy documents made one reference between them to the objects in relationship to contemporary First Nations perspectives.

**European superiority**

In many museums' histories, preserving historical artifacts supported meta-narratives of European nationalism, pinnacle achievements and superiority to other cultures, and European roots in refined classicism. Indigenous collections were housed within this perspective.

**Static moments in linear time**

The value placed on preserving objects from the past as discrete pieces of evidence also involved a belief in the value of the "authentic moment" in a culture's history. Freezing a culture's history at one moment in time in museums, the "ethnographic present" as it has been called in anthropology, created an understanding of indigenous cultures' history as being important
but at a constructed fixed period of time in the past. In addition, all of this lent support to a more negative view of museums as promoting the static and being static themselves.

**Democracy**

Modern museums, especially those which are public, non-profit institutions, place a high value on democracy in the sense of serving a large public. Museums in many countries, supported by taxpayers, have either charged no entrance fees or low entrance fees in order to make them accessible. A fundamental museum mandate is that of education, and museums evolved from institutions that educated passively through displays to active and pro-active participants in education at many levels. Museums, especially in the U.S., are supporting the principle of accessibility through equal opportunity employment practices and through modifications extending access: for example, wheelchair-accessible buildings or displays developed for visually-impaired visitors. First Nations viewpoints, however, may include requests for restricted access to certain collections based on gender (for example, that women should not see or handle certain men’s regalia) or other "undemocratic" criteria. Ames has written on the democratic aspect of museums in relation to the representation of ethnic and other groups (Ames 1992; Ames 1992; Ames 1993).

**Uniqueness**

For this research "uniqueness" is important as a quality of the many objects housed in museums, rather than a quality of the museum itself.
"Uniqueness" and "irreplaceability" have a value in the museum perspective going beyond the laws of scarcity. Uniqueness derives from the fact that an object is hand-made, and is added to by the particular history of that object; this latter makes even machine-made objects unique. "Uniqueness" is also one of the valued paradigms in western aesthetics and is applied to artists, their visions, and their works.

CONSERVATION AS PART OF THE MUSEUM ENTERPRISE

Conservation developed and matured within the museums represented in the above discussion. It can be generally stated that conservators believe in the norms and values presented above and support them through their work. A more detailed discussion of conservation values as shown by its practitioners is presented in later discussions.

Importance to the Curatorial Mandate and Values

Conservators occupy an important role in support of the museum values of authenticity and objects as evidence. The technical examinations done by conservators give what is considered objective support or refutation to curatorial theories regarding provenance and authenticity (in the sense of original materials and manufacture) of components as well as of the whole. New discoveries such as hidden signatures, underlying images, or materials or techniques previously not known to be present are made during conservation examinations and treatments. At the same time, conservation includes restoration procedures, and the skills of the conservator-restorers are
used to present objects so that they have the appearance curators wish them to have for exhibition.

Conservation is expected to increase the clarity of the object's meaning. Equally, by preserving the integrity of the object, conservation is supposed to guarantee that information important for curators, or the potential for it, is not destroyed. One curator has defined the curatorial role as being primarily responsible for the intellectual care of the collections (Hill 1990: 19) and many conservators have defined it this way themselves, emphasizing that they are responsible only for the physical care of objects. Significant for this research, this means that some conservators believe the decisions about if and what kind of cultural parameters and cultural significance apply to an object are made in the curatorial department and are not within the vision of what conservation is about (for example, Barclay 1989: 25; Byers 1993). Likewise, that conservation supports curatorial and institutional mandates is not just how the conservators construct their role in museums, but is recognized by curators themselves (for example, see Hill 1990).

**Importance to the Object: Objects having a "Museum Appearance"**

This question of appearance contains value judgements in itself. Ethnographic objects have, within museums, usually been allowed to keep a "dirtier" appearance than other categories of objects such as decorative arts. Appelbaum has said, "The practice of ethnographic conservation includes the idea of preserving objects in their "as-used" rather than their "as-created" state" (Appelbaum 1991: 219). The National Institute for Conservation in the U.S.A. elaborated on this principle: "Whereas art conservation often seeks to
return a work of art to its original condition, ethnographic and archaeological conservation should seek to preserve the object's life history at the time of collection" (National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property 1984: 4).

Watkins presents the following example:

The newly opened National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C., for example, offered the following explanation in a label attached (to an object in) the exhibition The Royal Treasures of Benin: "The red earth of Benin still adheres to this plaque. Unlike many copper-alloy objects, it is undamaged by Western chemical polishes and tinted waxes." Such an object more accurately represents the visual context in which the Benin people understood it, but nevertheless, in comparison with similar but restored pieces, it appears dirty. By attaching the label, the museum carefully validates an appearance that the general public would consider to represent neglect (Watkins 1989: 41).

The origin of keeping "ethnographic dirt" on objects, and its symbolic value, is not clear and could follow from two benign conservation principles:

(i) intervention on an object should not go further than what one knows about it from evidence.

(ii) removal of anything that comes with the object, including from the surface, constitutes irremedial alteration if it is subsequently shown that the feature was part of the object's integrity.

The origins of leaving "ethnographic dirt" on objects might also follow from the less benign implications arising from western twentieth century values about cleanliness and proper appearance, which are applied to "our" objects but not to the material culture of indigenous people.

Concerning how objects look, Lowenthal succinctly documents some of the values expressed by western society's changing tastes with regard to
the appearance of age (Lowenthal 1994). Signs of wear on objects have
marked the status of families as old and established, fuelled Victorian
romanticism, and signified authenticity: for example decay could signify "real
life" in unrestored or "ungentrified" buildings. Some marks of wear are
deliberately left unchanged by conservators in order to preserve the historic
integrity of the piece; keeping the bloodstains on the shirt Abraham Lincoln
was wearing when he was shot is a classic example. Concerning a different
area, Pearce discusses the complex relationship between appearance of
archaeological objects before and after treatment, and archaeological
information (Pearce 1990). She says, for example, "The object as it emerges
from the ground is an encapsulation of its history up to that moment; but the
unravelling of that history by the modern investigative techniques of the
conservator inevitably involves the destruction of evidence as much as the
preservation of a version of the artefact" (Pearce 1990: 106). Conservators
may believe they are revealing the "true nature" of the object, whereas Pearce
points out that the result is a version of the object, and one in which the
irreversible processes inherent in the excavation, cleaning, and consolidation
of archaeological materials mean that one cannot go back to verify
information which may have been present pre-excavation or pre-treatment.

If we examine the relationship between conservation and appearance
from another aspect, that of the individual object in a museum, conservation
treatment on it validates its worth as an important object worthy of this kind

Where greater value in western culture lies in a new object appearing
old, great care is taken so that the signs of wear appear natural and
uncontrived. This is one of the hallmarks, for example, of reproductions made for the antique trade. A recent example in another area, popular culture in the late 1980s and 1990s, is the clothing, particularly blue jeans, that have been "stone washed" to appear worn and faded, and the many articles of clothing deliberately ripped to make statements about their wearer's unconventionality and economic sympathies, if not status. One of the major decisions made in the conservation of collections is determining the final appearance of the object; the very fact that it is so carefully considered shows the importance given to achieving the "right" look if the treatment is to be considered successful as well as the foreknowledge of the dangers if the surface of the object is altered incorrectly.

Differences with the Curatorial Mandate

Although conservation values are embedded in museum values, conservators also consider themselves different from other museum disciplines, and they have been regarded as different by museum curators and directors. Conservators regularly attend different conferences, they have a background which is technical/scientific as well as arts-related, and they view the object differently, as will be seen in subsequent sections. In addition, in England as Ashley-Smith points out, "[A]fter the Second World War there was a notable class gulf between the curator/owner and the craftsman/conservator. Only in the field of paintings and sculpture was there sufficient intellectual interest in the outcome of treatment to allow a dialogue that bridged this class barrier" (Ashley-Smith 1995: 89).
Curators have also acknowledged their disagreements with conservators. Conservators have gained a reputation in some museum circles as naysayers to the museum enterprise, too often coming into conflict with museum curators and directors (Ward 1986; Canadian Museums Association 1991; Clavir 1995). This has occurred for several reasons. Conservators have been seen to impose impossible standards making the mandates of a museum other than preservation difficult to realize. Conservators have on occasion questioned initiatives from senior staff or fundraisers if they have felt the safety of the collections was compromised. In addition, some conservators have expressed a loyalty to the collections that may supersede their loyalty to the policies of the institution (see the following section on professional values).

The specific values over which these conflicts have developed are the conservators' belief that preservation of the integrity of the object should not be compromised by museum activity, and curatorial beliefs that knowledge is what is primarily important, that objects are sources of knowledge, and their use or representation for these purposes is fundamental.

The conflict between curators and conservators can also represent a power struggle, as much as this is possible within the structural organization of each museum. Conflicts over how a museum directs its priorities and resources are becoming more prevalent as museum budgets shrink and museum philosophy changes in some institutions to follow that of people such as George MacDonald of Canada's Museum of Civilization (Clavir 1993).

It should be noted in the context of this argument that disagreements also exist within the conservation profession, not just between the larger
categories of conservators and curators. This research concerns itself with ethics and values, and it is to be expected that conservators will have differences of opinion based on their different personal philosophies, ethics, and experiences, and on the differences developing from the context of the subdisciplines they work in (Ashley-Smith 1986; Ashley-Smith 1995) and the cultures of their particular museums or other work situations. This research is concerned primarily with professional concepts and values in conservation which have general acceptance in the profession, for example as seen in the codes of ethics.

**The Public Mandate: Importance of People, Importance of Objects**

There are continual references in the conservation literature to conservators being part of a team, which includes curators, scientists, and other professionals (Coremans 1969; Stolow 1972; ICOM 1984; Weil 1984; Ward 1986; Merrill 1990; Keyser 1992; Ramsay-Jolicoeur 1993; Lawrence 1994; Michalski 1994; Ashley-Smith 1995). Conservation treatments and final appearance are determined with input from all parties. Conservators do not work in a vacuum, but their work is circumscribed by institutional viewpoints. The work conservators do, however, is not usually held up directly for public scrutiny as part of the museum enterprise, except for work on well-known pieces, exhibitions specifically on conservation, or controversies that have arisen concerning conservation treatments, such as cleaning controversies (for example, the Sistine Chapel). Conservators work behind the scenes, and indeed good conservation work is "hidden"; it brings the object safely to the forefront rather than highlighting itself.
Requests from First Nations usually go first to the museum's director or to a curatorial department or to collections management; conservators are brought in secondarily and usually only if consultation would normally have occurred. This not only reinforces a traditional image of what is and what is not the appropriate work of conservators, but it may serve to reinforce the conservators' outlook that their work concerns objects, not people.

Importance to the Museum Institution

Conservation plays a significant role in constructing museum meanings. It not only makes the objects in a collection look good, it makes the institution look good and be recognized as such by having well-cared for collections. In Canada, for example, federal grants to museums from the Museums Assistance Program were recommended, in part, on the basis of whether the museum was seeking or able to provide "proper" care for its objects or objects on loan. Museum meanings are influenced by conservation, which takes a portion of the museum budget and spends it to reinforce the museum values previously noted. Conservation, by virtue of the impact it has on the preservation or restoration of certain objects and their appearance, can influence what constitutes evidence found in museum collections (Freed 1981; Mann 1994). Conservation can influence the construction of what looks good, and why it is judged to look good. In an art gallery, conservation has been acknowledged as instrumental in presenting a good image to the public. Watkins observes, "The impression of clear coatings and vividly painted surfaces, all in flat plane within their frames, clearly expresses to the public an
image not only of great beauty, but also of an organization exercising proper stewardship over its objects" (Watkins 1989: 39).

Watkins has also pointed out that conservation represents a value which is increasingly seen in Euro-based twentieth-century mores: the desire to always appear young and to live a long life. Denial of death is embodied in the purpose of the museum itself as an institution which both preserves and presents "right before your eyes" reminders from the distant past, and keeps them in good appearance through periodic conservation (Watkins 1989). In addition, the museum keeps the conceptions people have of the past alive through its interpretation of the collections, including preserving "time frame settings", such as for period furniture or freezing First Nations objects in an "ethnographic present".

THE SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK

The importance of scientific methodology to the field of conservation as one of its defining meta-narratives has already been noted. The discussions on the history of conservation outline how a scientific outlook became one of the principal features of conservation as it emerged as a field distinct from restoration. Ward has written, "The contribution of science to conservation has been pivotal. In bringing together materials research and the ancient craft of restoration, it precipitated the development of modern conservation" (Ward 1986: 29). The preponderance of scientific analyses and related technical information as the content of what is primarily published in the conservation literature, and in what is accepted as thesis work for graduation from the Master's level conservation training programs in North
America, also supports the importance of an objective, scientific approach to problem-solving in the conservation field. The importance of science as a meta-narrative of post-Enlightenment European thought has also been discussed, and this meta-narrative is summarized in the following comment by Pearce: "In all of this there is a paramount belief in the essential and absolute power of reason and in the physical evidence with which, as a matter of necessity, reason is informed" (Pearce 1995: 405). Scientific thought underlay and profoundly influenced the purpose of museums, especially museums of natural history and ethnography, and the way in which collections were made, organized, and displayed.

The relationship between ethical beliefs and scientific assertions is important to understand in order to situate conservation ethics. Scientific assertions can be tested using scientific methodology, whereas one cannot test beliefs as being true or false. Science is concerned with understanding what are seen to be laws governing the nature of the physical world. Ethics is concerned with how people view the nature of reality: the principles underlying the value statements people make about how they see the world.

The beliefs and values listed below have been ascribed to scientific thought and hold a positive value in the scientific world. They are summarized here for comparison with discussions later in this chapter.

1. Empiricism: There is a real world "out there" operating according to natural laws, which can be examined and understood.
2. Determinism: a causative agent produces a repeatable effect.
3. Problems have solutions: problems have real causes and are solvable.
4. Solutions must be confirmed before being accepted: control groups, repeated experiments and other methods are used to eliminate the possibility of results being caused by other factors.

5. Assumptions must be acknowledged and tested.

6. Precision: vague statements are not acceptable. However, absolute precision is tempered by an acceptance of levels ranging above or below an average point.

7. Scientific knowledge: a preference for explaining the world on the basis of scientific knowledge, i.e., believing what other scientists say they know and an aversion to explaining it based on religious or spiritual ideas, or believing what people say they know but cannot prove scientifically.

8. Paradigms: respect for the broad knowledge of the world which has already been established.

9. Theoretical: theory must be proved to work in practice.

10. Discovery: it is professionally acceptable to change one's opinion if there is a discovery of a model better matching reality than a previous model.

11. Curiosity: the value of continually searching for new knowledge, for fitting the pieces of the puzzle together.

12. Quantification: respect for quantification and mathematical expression, including statistical probability, as the language of science.

13. Empathetic: empathy for the value of human life, and for humans as subjective beings. (Whether scientists always uphold this value has been a subject of debate.)

Analysis for Conservation

Most of the above belief statements are found in the field of conservation. Conservation publications illustrate many examples of problem-solving in relation to the physical world based on empiricism,
determinism, the acceptance of paradigms, and the use of mathematical language. Recently in a debate over environmental guidelines the testing of assumptions and acceptance of new models has emerged (Michalski 1994; Erhardt et al 1995, Schultz 1995, Real 1995, Lull 1995). If the positive value of science forms a meta-narrative in conservation, it is not surprising to find that conservation professionals have adopted the language and image of scientists. The conservation work-space in a museum is usually called a laboratory rather than a studio, at least in North America. Even a basic workspace, whether it is in a museum or not, contains scientific equipment such as a microscope and safety equipment for using chemicals. Conservators often choose to wear white lab coats. In other words, science is part of the culture of conservation in its values, in its norms of practice, and in its symbols.

Several of the scientific values summarized have a particular impact on ethnographic conservation. For example, a belief in scientific paradigms rather than spiritual ones as the most acceptable way to understand the world is one potential source of conflict with First Nations concerning objects from their communities, some of which are considered sacred.

If science is this important to conservation, it could be expected that it would be referred to in the professional codes of ethics and guidance for practice governing the field. Sections of five codes are reprinted in Appendix D under headings relevant to this research. Science is mentioned directly in only two codes, that of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), published in 1984, and the most recent (1995) version of the code of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC).
The ICOM code states that "[A]n intervention on an historic or artistic object must follow the sequence common to all scientific methodology", which it then proceeds to describe (ICOM 1984: sec. 3.6). It is not surprising that science is mentioned in a code drawn up by Europeans, where it is essential to differentiate conservation from the important and widespread tradition of restoration. The 1995 AIC code mentions science and the liberal arts as the components of the field of conservation. It also includes a section on "Examination and Scientific Investigation", which states that examination "forms the basis for all future actions by the conservation professional" and goes on to state that the conservator should "follow accepted scientific standards and research protocols" in analytical investigation (American Institute for Conservation 1995: 26). Scientific methodology as an approach to problem-solving in the field, as well as forming part of its subject matter, is clearly illustrated. The antecedent AIC Code, published for use until the 1995 revisions, mentions science directly as the underpinning of professional competence in conservation (American Institute for Conservation 1993: Part Two).

The five Codes of Ethics, whether they mention science directly or not, describe a systematic approach to conservation practice following deductive reasoning from evidence, in this case the physical object and its surroundings, and deductive and inductive reasoning based on a conservator's professional expertise derived from training and experience; in addition, there is the caveat that no conservation professional should act beyond these limits.

As discussed previously, an important dimension of ethics is the moral authority accompanying it. Kuhn proposed "that the ultimate authority of
science is not so much its rational methodology and rules, but the consensus of the scientific community" (Kuhn 1962 as quoted in Winter: 43). Professional codes of ethics, which will be discussed in the next section, represent the consensus for appropriate rules for the conservation community, as defined by the conservation community.

The ICOM document states that the object's significance lies, (at least partially) in "our ability to decipher the object's scientific message and thereby contribute new knowledge" (ICOM 1984: sec. 3.6). It is the scientific aspect of conservation which crucially supports the curatorial mandate, as previously indicated. Science is important not just as a methodology in conservation, but as a goal of conservation work. In other words, it is not just the preservation of objects that is a product of conservation, but new knowledge in science. Although it is not stated explicitly, the ICOM wording above allows this new knowledge in science to be both theoretical knowledge as well as applied knowledge derived from and pertaining to work directly on the collections.

Winter discusses various points of view concerned with whether ethical systems are perceived as being relativist or absolutist and how these relate to scientific theory and methodology. He describes one dilemma in archaeology from a relativist point of view that is pertinent to conservation: "[A]lthough there should be no question about the utility of the scientific method as a means of effectively understanding cultures and human behavior, there is also no question that much of what is called science in archaeology...is actually composed of value statements" (Winter 1984: 40). Referring to another author, he continues, "[T]his mixing of research imperatives, values, and theory with scientific methodology underlies much
of contemporary American archaeology" (Winter 1984: 43). Winter concludes his review by saying that the different approaches show that "value statements (ethics) pervade all aspects of archaeology, from our rationale for doing it, to the manner in which we survey, excavate, and analyze data, to the goals, methodologies, and research imperatives that govern our research and professional relations. Once we have recognized the presence of value statements in archaeology, it should be possible to separate them from the scientific approach" (Winter 1984: 42). He suggests that one way the separation of science from value statements can be achieved is by recognizing that the goals and the decisions about what to do are based on ethics and values, and science provides the means to get there. Science itself is, after all, "based on the value statement that it is worthwhile for one reason or another...to study the meaning of reality" (Winter 1984: 43).

Although science is one of the basic meta-narratives of the field of conservation, it is not the only one. David Bomford has said, for example,

[T]here have been times in the history of conservation when empirical positivism seemed to be the only intellectual framework on offer, when everything was possible or provable if you had the right equipment, when objective truths were the only interesting ones. ... At the very least, all conservators should have a basic appreciation of the historical or aesthetic context they are dealing with and appreciate the range of related questions that scholars, curators, owners and the general public might ask. (Bomford 1994: 4)

As early as 1976 Jedrzejewska wrote, "the whole work of a conservator is a constant sequence of interpretations, as this is what guides his decisions and procedures" (Jedrzejewska 1976: 6). Keyser writes: "Conservation is more than a set of physical preservation techniques, it is also an interpretive activity which involves a complex of artistic, scientific, and historical ideas
which influence the approach to treatment whether they are acknowledged or not" (Keyser 1992: 1). Weil concurs, saying, "[J]udgement and values are implicit in the practice of every conservator no matter how "scientific" he may consider himself. In this sense one may indeed say that ultimately, the practice of conservation is interpretive, but one must add, interpretation based on a profound knowledge of objective, scientific fact and aesthetic/historical/experiential (practical) understanding of the task at hand" (Weil 1984: 89).

Rhyne cites several recent conservation authors and policies, particularly in relation to the preservation of sites and monuments, which have focussed on accepting different cultural values in conservation, including the importance of the "non-tangible" attributes of material heritage (Rhyne 1995). For example, he quotes Jukka Jokilehto, head of architectural conservation at ICOM in Rome, as saying at a workshop in Bergen in 1994, "Conservation is not only keeping the material, but also recognizing this spirit, this 'non-physical' essence and authenticity of the heritage, and its relation with society" (ibid.: 5).

Meta-narratives found in Fine Arts are also found in conservation. For example, it has already been pointed out that the prestigious position given to the fine arts in the culture of western society has influenced the place accorded ethnographic objects in the museum/gallery hierarchy. In other sections the Fine Arts influence on conservation ethics and principles will be discussed. As alluded to in the preceding chapter on the history of conservation, Fine Arts also values the artist as creative individualist, and art galleries value the created work. In conservation, respecting the artist's intent
is one of its guiding principles, and copyright legislation has legalized a respect for the artist.

**Conservation, Subjectivity and the Scientific Ideal of Impersonal Objectivity**

As mentioned, even though the conservation professional bases much of his or her decisions on scientific examination, knowledge of materials, and scientific reasoning, there is recognition within the profession that the inclusion of cultural knowledge is important in conservation decisions. For example, the question of artist's intent and the art or social history of the piece are important foundations for any action taken regarding the object. At the same time, conservation work often is done to add information about artist's intent and the object's history. The conservator, however, is expected to unearth this new information on the basis of expert observations of the physical object and its materials rather than from the traditional curatorial specializations of art or social history. It is important to recognize, though, that cultural information can be both part of the conservation decision-making process and part of its objectives. If the conservator is not completely conversant with the cultural aspects of the piece, he or she is expected to consult museum and other professionals who have that expertise: the "shared responsibility" for conservation decisions and the importance of an interdisciplinary approach have been discussed previously.

As important as the recognition that not only scientific information but also cultural information is significant in conservation decisions, is the recognition within the profession that conservators make subjective judgements in their work. Authors not previously mentioned who discuss
this include Etherington 1985; Renshaw-Beauchamp 1988; Michalski 1994; Odegaard 1995. In one sense the acknowledgment of subjectivity comes under the thirteenth belief in science, "empathy", and recognizes conservators as human rather than mechanical beings.

On the other hand, as science has become more predominant in the field, some have criticized the lack of recognition within conservation of the importance of the "connoisseurship" knowledge gained with years of experience (Orlofsky and Trupin 1993) or a "sympathetic attitude" towards paintings, as being a criterion for a good conservator (Talley 1983; Tomkins 1987). Tompkins quotes the chief of conservation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, John Brealey, as saying, "More damage has been done to paintings in this century than at any other period in history, simply because so many people are unwilling to make value judgements about complicated questions. They learn all sorts of technical expertise in their training and then they approach paintings as problems to be solved -- how to glue down the flakes or clean that spot -- when what they really need to do is get into the artist's mind" (Tomkins 1987: 45).

It is also being recognized that value judgements are being made about culturally imposed values for objects, not just about their treatment. Michalski writes about "two irrational judgements ... whose consideration has become taboo in the field of conservation: (a) artifacts vary enormously in value and (b) not all deterioration decreases artifact value, some even increases it" (Michalski 1994: 241). Wilsmore writes, "the Burra Charter ⁵

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⁵ The Burra Charter was written by the Australian group of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) as a national elaboration on the Venice Charter of 1966, and concerns professional work and ethics in the field of the conservation of monuments and sites. It was first written in 1979.
avoids a temptation that much conservation has fallen into: to make out that its task is merely a practical one which can look mainly to scientific methodology for its clarification and avoid evaluation" (Wilsmore 1993: 2).

It is too early to come to conclusions regarding changes in the place of science in conservation. There are indications that changes are occurring in some areas. For example, science is no longer the most powerful consideration in determining conservation actions for some conservators; social context is increasingly publicly acknowledged. This can be seen in the recent publication "Durability and Change" (Krumbein, Brimblecombe et al. 1994), and in the response to Clavir's presentation at the 1994 IIC Congress, summarized in Appendix E (Clavir 1994) 6. Briefly, Clavir presented a case study outlining a difference of opinion between a First Nations family who wanted a dance curtain hung vertically, which it normally does, during the celebration of its return to British Columbia, and the conservators at the museum who felt the curtain was too fragile. Because time constraints prevented stabilizing the curtain by attaching a full backing, the conservators opted to lay the curtain on a slanted support. The congress audience was asked for their opinion.

One extremely important indication of a change in attitude in conservation towards science is found in the following remarks about deterioration. Progress in knowledge of the deterioration of materials has always been defined as part of the purview of science. For example, Ward argues that "preventive conservation is only possible because scientific

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6 Note that the paper published in the conference pre-prints presents issues in the conservation/First Nations relationship rather than the main content of the oral presentation which focussed on the case study of the Frank family ceremonial dance curtain.
research has given us a better understanding of some of the mechanisms of deterioration" (Ward 1986: 14). Understanding deterioration is also one of the cornerstones upon which conservation decisions are built. "The conservator's duty is to take all possible precautions to prevent or minimize damage to collections and to oppose any situation, whether active or passive, that may cause or encourage any form of deterioration" (Ward 1986: 9). Recently, however, deterioration has been described in a conservation publication according to social and subjective criteria rather than objective criteria. Staniforth writes, "We describe deterioration as those changes that we regard [as] undesirable" (Staniforth 1994: 218).

In 1990, Hodkinson made the point that "not all changes must be regarded as damage, or deterioration, with automatic attempts at reversal or restoration" (Hodkinson 1990: 59). He continues, saying that the significance of paintings is changed "partly as a result of physical-chemical changes, but are brought about more by human perceptions.... Paintings are in a continual state of physical and metaphysical flux which changes their significance to the particular society that is interacting with them at any given moment in their history". In the same volume as Staniforth, a group report on the topic of what constitutes durability in artifacts says, "Many members of the group were concerned to express a more global notion of durability that gave due weight to the cultural constitution of artifacts" (Orna 1994: 52).

On the other hand, a rationalist scientific approach remains one of the basic meta-narratives of conservation, and although it is not the only one, it continues to be a defining paradigm. The following recent comment provides an example. It is from an editor of Studies in Conservation concerning a
submission by this author. "The referee feels that the notion that conservation values are social constructs and subject to the influence of Zeitgeist is a minority view that is gaining ground and deserves to be published" (Saunders 1997).

PROFESSIONAL VALUES

The third general area discussed in this chapter which informs conservation values is the area of professionalization. Chapter 3 described how conservation developed into a distinct field from restoration through the incorporation of a scientific attitude to guide conservation methodology, and gradually became a profession. Restoration was recognized as a highly skilled craft; conservation defined itself as a new profession. As Wueste says,

A Profession is more than a collection of persons with similar expertise and jurisdiction. It is a social institution. Acting within it, a professional has special prerogatives and vital responsibilities in promoting and sustaining certain values that, rightly or wrongly, are thought to be best served by those with the expertise. (Wueste 1994: 17)

Features of professionalization exhibited by conservation but not restoration include:

1. Training through recognized schools, usually associated with universities, rather than through apprenticeship. This is increasingly becoming the standard for entry into the conservation field, although there are variations depending on country and conservation discipline. Training through a university program signifies three important developments:

(a) the establishment of recognized criteria for entry into the field.
(b) the association of a body of theory of university standards with the necessary manual craft skills.

(c) the establishment of broadly-recognized standards of excellence.

2. Development from within the profession of a code of ethics and guidance for practice for the profession. This serves the membership by making public the standards of excellence in the "how" (the rules of conduct) as much as the "what" (the parameters and definitions) aspect of the field, and it helps the image of how the field is perceived by others. The code of ethics supports and promotes the definition of "professionalism" as an ideology (Vollmer 1966: viii).

3. Development of formal occupational organizations such as national organizations which foster a collective group identity and professional culture. In addition, the organization enforces the code of ethics, and the field comes under collective control. Among other duties, the organizations facilitate communication among group members (e.g., through publications and conferences); the keeping of "trade secrets", a feature of craft guild practice, is frowned on. Some professions' organizations also license members, adjudicate complaints against them, and protect members from unfair/outsider accusations. Wueste has written, "professions are the products of the institutionalization of expertise" (Wueste 1994: 14).

Many authors and editors such as Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1966 (both references); Vollmer 1966; Bayles 1981; Flores 1988; Morrell 1990; Wueste 1994, have described the development of professions, the debates about what constitutes a professional, and the use of the words "professional" and "profession" to refer to areas outside of the three traditional professions.
of law, medicine, and the ministry. The following observations made about professions can be seen in the development of conservation:

Rapid technological change such as has been found in the twentieth century is a factor promoting professionalization.

Professionalization is a dynamic process rather than an achieved end-state. This striving to be professional is both internalized by the participants and externalized by the work of the organizations.

Professionals are dedicated to their work, and their permanent attachment is to the profession; this attachment is kept even if employment is transferred to another institution.

Professionals organize their own work and make their own decisions, and an independence of judgement and manner is recognized even when they work as part of a team.

A professional group is self-sufficient (self-appointed and self-regulated); its sphere of authority must be recognized by the society at large and those whom it serves. The profession possesses epistemic authority and is seen as a source of expert advice or help.

Professional groups experience a sense of obligation to the larger good of society with regard to the objectives of their work. For example, while a business considers profit as a primary goal and pursues this with its own benefit in mind, professions purport to serve higher ideals. (This is equally true of institutions such as non-profit museums and galleries and has been a source of conflict with the business values they find themselves embracing as budget cuts force them to raise revenue.)
O'Neill discusses the reactions professionals have, in this case curators, to external challenges to their authority. This has relevance for this research as it parallels some conservators' reactions to First Nations viewpoints about the conservation of objects in museums. He says,

The idea of a profession combines personal motivation and therefore personal satisfaction with contributing something of value to society. Changes in external relations -- the contribution required by society -- can be traumatic and a threat to curators' motivation and sense of professional identity and security. (O'Neill 1992)

**Professional Values: Who is the Client Conservation Serves?**

It may appear as a truism to say that professionals direct their work towards providing services to their clients, but this statement has important implications for conservation, where the primary client has not been defined. The "higher ideals" mentioned above benefit the clients, for example "curing the sick" or "achieving justice" in medicine and law. They also benefit society at large, by making a contribution to the well-being of a community. The public as well as the professionals see professions as protecting vulnerable interests (The Report of the Professional Organizations Committee, Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario, 1980, in Ramsay-Jolicoeur 1993).

Conservators have described themselves as "advocates for the artifact" (Phillips 1982; Ward 1986). The UK "Guidance for Conservation Practice" notes the conservator's responsibility to uphold the best interests of the object (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works 1981). In this sense the object is seen as the primary client of the profession. For example, Merrill says, "Our loyalty is not owed to our institutions,
organizations, or colleagues, but rather to the unique and irreplaceable objects that embody our history, culture and aspirations" (Merrill 1990: 170). People are also seen as the clients of conservation. For example, the public of public museums, and especially, as often stated, future generations. Conservation is, however, object-centered; it is the basis of the profession. This also represents museological values; as Pearce writes, a museum is "constituted by its collections" (Pearce 1992: 2).

Michalski considers a point of view not often explicitly stated in conservation, one reflecting an acknowledgment of cultural values in heritage preservation. He writes, "[W]e must realize that to say we have a responsibility to the objects is only a parable. Our responsibility is to our biological inheritance as perceptive, active, emotional beings and our social inheritance as knowledgeable, cultured beings, as influenced by objects" (Michalski 1994: 257). Publications on professions often define responsibility as belonging to the interests in the project that are vulnerable. The Report of the Professional Organizations Committee, as referred to by Ramsay-Jolicoeur (1993), outlines three categories of interests, all of which are potentially vulnerable. First party interests are those of the providers of the service (e.g., the conservators), second party interests are those of the clients of the professional services, recognized as those who have purchased the service (e.g., museums, collectors), and third party interests are those of the general public who have not provided or purchased the particular professional service, but who are liable to be affected by it. The vulnerability of second, and especially third party interests (third parties, not necessarily being involved directly in the contract, may be expected to have less knowledge of
the parameters of the work) has justified the regulation of professions such as architecture, engineering, law, and others in the eyes of many governments.

Another way of configuring the question of vulnerability and who the clients of conservation are is to ask, "who will be harmed by bad conservation measures?" A case could be made here that unique, irreplaceable cultural property will be harmed in a way different from all the other clients, because irreparable damage or loss might occur. As with the issue of public safety and professional liability, even monetary reparations can never replace the injury or "death". This perspective alters the definitions given above for second and third party interests, and will be discussed later in arguments about the preservation of unique ecological features and non-renewable resources.

Other clients who could be harmed by bad conservation follow the conventional definition of second and third party interests and (except for the last "client" which will be mentioned below) are people: the owner of the work; the originator of the work, (of special concern if the poor conservation measures have destroyed or significantly altered an artist's unique creation); the public for objects held in public trust, especially future generations; and the collectivities who might suffer some loss of their national or cultural material heritage. In addition, the institution housing the works might be harmed, both in the sense of the fiscal responsibility of its board and in the image of the institution.

It should be noted again that many of the characteristics of the conservation profession are intertwined with conservation's association with museums and galleries and its work on their collections. In the past, public
museums have been defined as non-profit institutions contributing to the benefit of the society at large. Their collections have often been thought of as embodying and making accessible higher ideals such as Truth and Beauty. For both museums and conservation, the larger society has been defined as "the public", as well as "future generations": the "general public" has usually meant, though, the majority culture. Recently, however, there is increasing recognition of multiculturalism in western society, and of particular minority "stakeholders" whose special needs must be served as well (Ames 1992; Bernstein 1992; Pearce 1992; Wueste 1994).

In discussing the relationship between conservation, science, and museums, it should be noted that there has also been a long relationship between the general public and science. This discussion is beyond the scope of this research; however, writers in the history of science such as Olby have noted, for example, the contested ground that has occurred between the elitist, theoretical aspects of some avenues of science (e.g., mathematical science) and the lived experience and knowledge of even the highly educated public. Museums making scientific subjects accessible have played an important role in creating an interface between science and the public. Conservation, which has shown itself as a subject of interest to a wide audience, particularly when featured in articles and exhibitions, has also contributed to this accessibility. On the other hand, the popularization of science is also fraught with pitfalls such as those inherent in accurate translation between scientific language and its specialized meanings, and public language and public conceptions of scientific matters (Olby, Cantor et
al. 1990). How successfully museums do this is an interesting subject but beyond the scope of this research.

The status of conservators as professionals with a basis in science confers on them characteristics that could become contestatory in their relationships with First Nations people. Primarily, it endows conservators with the status of "expert" in the preservation of cultural heritage, a status recognized, if at times begrudgingly, by the rest of the museum community as well by a knowledgeable general public. Conservators have and are seen to have specialized knowledge, provable methods, uncontroversial ethics and standards, and the right to assume authority in their area of specialization. They are also firmly in the mainstream of western culture with regard to heritage resources (in that, for example, they do not have the status chiropractors have in relation to medicine). All of this validates the conservators in their definitions of who they are and the parameters of the field of conservation.

INSIDE CONSERVATION: CODES OF ETHICS AND VALUES

This section examines further what conservation is. There is no universally accepted definition of conservation, but the codes of ethics for conservators in different countries give perhaps the clearest and most agreed-upon meaning. The codes of four countries are compared in Appendix D. Their common principles and language stem from the origin of the conservation codes of ethics in the IIC-American Group's Murray Pease report of 1963, and in the examination in each country of other national conservation codes of ethics (Pease 1963). In this section the role of a code of
ethics in a profession is examined to understand how accurate a definition of the principles of that profession it gives. A selection of self-definitions by conservators of their profession is then given. This portion continues with an analysis of several values expressed in the principles of conservation not yet discussed and pertain particularly to ethnographic conservation.

The Underlying Assumptions

A principle assumption underlying the codes of ethics, and indeed of museums, is that preservation of objects in museums is worthwhile. As Welsh has said, "[A]rt conservation was built on a belief in the preservation of art and other cultural material, a mission that has seemed so fundamentally worthwhile and desirable that it has not even been considered debatable" (Welsh, Sease et al. 1992: 13). Not only is there a strong belief in the value of preserving designated objects, but conservators have traditionally believed that conservation is fundamental to the museum. "Preservation is the most fundamental of these [a museum's] responsibilities, since without it, research and presentation are impossible and collection is pointless" (Ward 1986: 1).

What does an Idealized Code Reflect?

Some conservators do not believe that codes of ethics have real value in conservation because, for example, conservation encompasses too many different sub-disciplines, which each have different antecedents and different norms of practice. Ashley-Smith has pointed out the effect these differences have had at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ashley-Smith 1994). With regard to codes of ethics, Oddy has argued, "Numerous attempts have been
made to codify these 'rules', but all are doomed to failure because the approach to conservation can never be generalised, and is very dependent on the aims of the particular museum and curator" (Oddy 1992: 12). If conservation, however, wishes to be considered to have professional status then, as has been previously discussed, there is a special relationship of responsibility between the professional, the clients of the professional, and of the society at large. A codified acknowledgment of professional ethics and conduct serves the primary purpose of protecting the vulnerable parties in the relationship. In addition, a code of ethics acknowledges the profession's willingness to explicitly take collective responsibility for their professional conduct (Newton 1988).

This is not to say that the difficulties pointed out by Oddy must be submerged in the interests of having a single code. Newton says,

It has been asked if a "code of ethics" is not, all by itself, a contradiction in terms; as a set of rules that to outward appearances are to be applied more or less mechanically, it can hardly be adequate to the infinite variety of individual situations that present us with ethical dilemmas..... And when the practice which the ethic is supposed to guide is changing rapidly to meet changing conditions, putting tremendous strain on individual practitioners and organizations alike, the maintenance of a coherent ethic may be an all but impossible task. (Newton 1988: 50)

Newton concludes, however, that the dialogue created by these tensions, by the reactions of individual practitioners with personal moral codes attempting to apply general rules to particular situations in a professional capacity which serves a public trust, is fundamental. Conservators such as Ashley-Smith would agree (Ashley-Smith 1982). It is the process, the articulation of a collective ethic, not the finished code as a document, that makes a profession a moral enterprise, often distinguishing it
from other job categories and making it worthy of being entrusted with caring for public property or well-being. The code contains the collective ideals of the profession; these ideals are a necessary element in the dialogue of the articulation of a professional ethic. Through a code of ethics "the practitioner, already initiated into the standard practices of the profession, is initiated into its ideals; through it also, these ideals are tested against the criterion of translatability into practical and enforceable rules" (Newton 1988: 53).

The antecedents of conservation as seen in the previous chapter have meant that values predominant in the Fine Arts and classical archaeology/antiquities influenced how conservation was originally conceived in the conservation codes of ethics. Several influences are mentioned in other areas of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 3: for example, the prestige of works of fine art, antiquities as "treasures", and the necessity to write down guidelines limiting certain restoration practices considered detrimental to preserving the integrity of the object. The codes also, until recently, concentrated on the parameters for treating valued objects as distinct from the environment.

The emphasis on great aesthetic works and their appropriate preservation reflects a focus different from that in many museums. Whereas museologists have said that they are concerned with knowledge, and the object is a means to and an embodiment of that knowledge, art gallery personnel are perhaps more concerned with the work itself, placing a high value on the importance of the original aesthetic object, and on its preservation. As one author has recently said in the context of a debate about the use of computer images in an art gallery, "[I]f there's one thing a work of
art is not about, it's information... You're graphically shrinking the scope of the experience by having it almost completely eliminate the necessity of seeing the thing" (Freedman 1995: 51).

Ethnographic collections have benefited by the inclusion in the codes of ethics of what has been called the "single standard of care". This principle appears to have been included in order that all works coming to the conservator's attention, not just the most valued works or the ones which appeal most to the conservator, are treated with the same degree of respect and professional expertise, even though they may not receive the same conservation treatment. The single standard has ideally meant that for a conservator, ethnographic collections are equal to works of fine art; that pieces by aboriginal cultures deserve the same respectful treatment as European pieces, and that values derived from the historical-social paradigm of "cabinets of curiosities" as against "The Gallery" are not present. The single standard principle also supports the scientific meta-narrative: objectivity and a search for knowledge wherever it is found. In contemporary practice, however, the "single standard" which has benefitted ethnographic objects has ironically been put into question. Not only have writers like Michalski questioned the premise that conservators do not make value judgements about pieces, but indigenous people are asking that certain collections, for example, those with spiritual importance, be treated differently than other collections.

Conservation as Iterated by its Practitioners

The following quotations provide a summary of the normative attitudes of conservators towards what conservation is and what conservators
do. They underline conservators' understanding of their field as rooted in the physical aspects of objects: preventing objects from physically deteriorating, stabilizing deteriorated objects and repairing damage, and restoring the physical appearance of objects appropriately.

1974: The restorer's responsibility is to stabilize and protect the subject; no more and no less. (Cains 1974: 164)

1984: Conservator-restorers ... task is to comprehend the material aspect of objects of historic and artistic significance in order to prevent their decay. (ICOM 1984: Sec. 2.2)

1986: Conservation is the technology by which preservation is achieved. (Ward 1986: 1)

1990: ... with our understanding of the physical needs of a particular work of art. (Barclay 1990: 24)

Conservators, on the other hand, are responsible for the physical care of works of art. [ibid.: 25]

1993 ... [conservators] concentrate on stabilizing the physical condition of the collections. (Hutchins 1993: 2)

1994 Technically, conservation is the empirical science of stabilizing a work or preserving it from damage or destruction. ... In the broadest sense then, an art conservator is a professional responsible for the physical preservation, repair, and maintenance of cultural property. (Giffords 1995: 18)

1995 The primary aim of conservation is to slow the processes of deterioration and make sure that instances of sudden damage are made less probable. (Ashley-Smith 1994: 3)
At the same time, as previously discussed, a more complex vision of conservation is also recognized, although not as often referred to: conservators must understand and incorporate in their work values going beyond the purely physical needs of the objects.

SELECTED CONSERVATION VALUES AND BELIEFS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION

Integrity of the Object

If the goal of conservation is to preserve material cultural heritage, the objective is to do this within an ethical framework that ensures that the intrinsic nature of the object is not altered. As Keene has written, "[A]t the foundation of the conservation ethic lies the precept 'thou shalt not change the nature of the object'" (Keene 1994: 19). The United Kingdom and New Zealand codes use the words "true nature of the object", and the IIC-CG and the AIC (until 1995) use the word "integrity". Integrity is, interestingly, never defined, but most codes of ethics signify physical integrity, aesthetic integrity, and historical integrity. In 1989 the Canadian code went further and added "conceptual integrity". While again not explicitly defined, it is meant to include the metaphysical (in the sense of beyond the physical) properties of objects, such as cultural significance or specific religious significance (Hodkinson 1991). In the field of archives, the term "intrinsic value" has been used for many years to describe materials not retained as copies but whose value lies in their retaining their original form.
Since the codes of ethics use or used the terms physical, historic, aesthetic, and conceptual integrity but did not define them, it is difficult to arrive at meanings distinguishing the boundaries of each term. For example, aesthetic integrity can be considered part of conceptual integrity for a work of art. Furthermore, conservators, at a general level, do consider all the "integrities" in their work, so that when this research attempts to ascertain how conservators balance out preserving physical integrity with preserving conceptual integrity, it may appear as a false dichotomy.

Conservators have always acknowledged cultural significance, and while it influences treatment decisions, in the past it has not usually presented the kinds of conflicts that come from living people wanting objects to serve living purposes. These purposes and the power of the requesters are new to the traditional museum paradigm. (Within this paradigm, however, conflicts have been engendered by the question of whether functional objects such as machines or musical instruments should be restored to a functioning state, and this is discussed later.) In addition, determining "conceptual integrity" by consulting with the current generation of the originators, seeking out the individuals or families who have the "conceptual" rights to the objects in question, rather than by consulting the literature or the curators only, brings a new area into conservation practice, and raises the question of adequately training conservators for this part of their work.

Preserving the essence of the object became a guiding principle in conservation, in part to counteract past practices in restoration such as "see[ing] [the work of art] return to the workshops at least once every generation to be stripped and reconstituted in the name of the currently
fashionable aesthetic principle. We know only too well that aesthetics vary greatly according to individuals, periods and regions" (Coremans 1969: 16). Scientific conservation, however, was intended to preserve the object according to a scientific meta-narrative believed to guarantee objectivity and ensure that the object would be preserved in and of itself, outside of the current temporal or cultural framework in which it resided.

It is not just scientific but also museum meta-narratives that are represented by the conservator's desire to preserve the physical, aesthetic, and historic integrity of the object. For example, museums place a high value on authenticity, which is another way of constructing "true nature". In general, conservation reasoning about integrity is based on supporting physical evidence present in or on the object, as well as documentation.

The importance of the concept of authenticity as a museum value has already been mentioned. Pearce discusses why "the real thing" and "real facts" are so attractive in western cultures, and their representations considered worthy of being housed in special institutions, museums (Pearce 1992; Pearce 1995). Conserving the "true nature" of objects is an attempt to keep intact their evidentiary value and their real connection to the past as artifactual survivors. In archives, the qualities determining intrinsic value may be physical or intellectual, giving the records evidential or informational value, and making their retention in their original form the only acceptable form for preservation (National Archives and Records Service 1982). It may also be that museums, recognizing the idiosyncratic paths that lead some objects to be preserved in museums and others not, and recognizing how much the objects in museums have been decontextualized, interpreted, and
reinterpreted -- that is, recognizing how much is lost in the course of the whole process -- place a high value on the physical evidence found in and on objects. This is the tangible touchstone with a reality that exists despite those losses. As Pearce says, "Objects have a brutally physical existence.... This means that objects ... always retain an intrinsic link with the original context from which they come because they are always stuff of its stuff no matter how much they may be repeatedly reinterpreted" (Pearce 1995: 14). In this way, museums also value objects as discrete physical entities, displayed on walls or in cases, most often as aesthetic objects or historical objects. Museums essentialize the object. Integrity represents the essence of the essence. In addition, one sees in "true nature" or "integrity", as well as in the value placed on the discrete object and its essence, one of the modern meta-narratives of the art world discussed earlier: the value of individualism and unique vision in artists, and their works of art as individual creations significant in themselves.

A relevant question for this research is whether conservators believe that integrity is a matter of interpretation or whether it is composed of attributes intrinsic to the object. If the latter, then in conventional conservation the attributes are preserved when the object is ethically conserved. As discussed previously, since the objects in question have been catalogued into a museum's collection, someone has deemed them worth preserving, and the conservator will conserve any object in the collection needing it. This conservation way of thinking is important to consider in this research, both for the authority it gives conservators to impose their conventions on any museum object, and for the question of what of cultural
significance conservators think they are preserving. Both of these areas may be contested by First Nations.

The view which sees the attributes as intrinsic considers them observable, objective facts. For conventional conservation in conventional museums, the role of conservation in preserving the physical, historic, and aesthetic integrity of pieces is not usually contested unless the physical or documentary evidence for one of these attributes is contested. That is, if evidence is lacking for making a clear decision on some matter regarding one of the attributes, then there may be controversy, but there is usually no controversy regarding whether the evidence of the physical nature and form of the object, its aesthetics, and any important evidence of its history that remains on it should be preserved. The conservation ethic that attempts to preserve objects intact, outside of the passing influences of cultural and temporal events, is strengthened. This is manifested in the conservation principle of minimum intervention and especially in the strong position conservators take towards preserving the physical integrity of objects. If, however, attributes recognized as objective facts from physical and documentary evidence are only considered important depending on how they are interpreted, there is both a recognition that it is impossible to preserve objects free of the influence of current cultural mores, and a recognition that different points of view as to what is most important to preserve are acceptable.

Pearce, Ames, Handler, and Crew and Sims, among others, all illustrate that the socially constructed meanings of objects give them their intrinsic value (Crew and Sims 1991; Handler 1992; Pearce 1992; Ames 1993-4;
Pearce 1995). Handler, for instance, provides examples showing that proven facts such as date of attribution and the artist's name are not necessarily significant, as they have no meaning unless interpreted. Interpretation means that cultural values are superimposed and the result read as the truth. Conservators who see integrity as intrinsic to the object may believe they are seeing the truth as represented by scientific investigation, rather than believing that the parameters of their work are determined in the first place by their own cultural values. Conservators may also view one or several of the "integrities" as being more socially constructed than the others, with physical integrity being perhaps the least value laden, in their opinion.

There is a contemporary contextual parallel here with another area of preservation ethics, that of ecology. One belief of the "Deep Ecologists" is that natural phenomena such as forests, animals, and marine life are valuable in and of themselves, and should be preserved outside of consideration of any relation to human beings. That is, they deserve protection from destruction for the same reasons given for objects in museums -- because of their uniqueness and irreplaceability. In museums, the value placed on authenticity, which is tied to a particular time, maker, and cultural context, gives the objects importance as unique and irreplaceable. With natural phenomena, uniqueness and irreplaceability devolve from the fact that their creation and "integrity" are not the result of human hand, and therefore human creations or manipulations can never replace them. It is beyond the scope of this research to discuss "Deep Ecology" in detail, including antecedents in western culture when divine purpose was attributed to natural creations. Of relevance here is, however, the question of whether something
threatened by human actions can be considered valuable in and of itself, and therefore needing human-instituted methods of protection from fellow beings to allow it to continue its existence undisturbed. Can phenomena have a kind of ultimate value outside of temporal and cultural contexts, or can the only value they have be whatever humans consider it to be, with the dominant humans controlling the dominant values. Regarding archaeological and site-related cultural properties, Messenger discusses the related "Non-Renewable Resource Argument" and its relation to the concept of stewardship rather than ownership (Messenger 1989:19).

Regarding "conceptual integrity", within the museum it can be said in general that it is of greatest importance to the curator: it is this knowledge and knowledge of this context which gives meaning to the object. As mentioned already, some conservators believe that meaning and context is the proper realm of the curator or art historian, whereas physical preservation is the proper realm of the conservator. This means that decisions regarding the balancing of preserving the physical versus preserving the conceptual may be based additionally on institutional power factors stemming from the museum hierarchy and its personalities as much as from individual viewpoints on what is important to preserve.

In museums, it is sometimes given to the conservation treatment to reveal what is considered the "true nature" of a deteriorated piece. Decisions regarding final appearance are referred to also in the sections on "artist's intent" and the teamwork involved in conservation decisions. Occasionally these decisions involve striking a balance between physical integrity and conceptual integrity. For example, a leather shoe would originally have been
flexible; if age has made the leather harden, is it necessary to restore flexibility, or only the appearance of flexibility? Conceptual integrity may also apply to materials as well as to cultural significance, and conservators make treatment decisions based on this, as Bomford and Podany, for example, have outlined in the fine arts (Bomford 1994; Podany 1994). Concerning ethnographic objects, for example, for the exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York and the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) in Victoria on the Kwakwaka'wakw potlatch, "Chiefly Feasts", masks were renewed by the AMNH conservators on the advice of First Nations consultants. The original type of hair on some of these masks, however, was not available and hair with a similar appearance but from Chinese goats was used (Ostrowitz 1993; Levinson and Nieuwenhuizen 1994). Note that "integrity" in this case ironically involves a measure of falsification or "duping"; the appearance is right, but the actual materials are not similar in nature to the original. This has, however, been accepted practice in "in-painting" losses in paintings as a way of distinguishing the original from the restoration; what is under study here are the parameters of "integrity" as seen by conservators. A further question arises regarding ethnographic objects, which Appelbaum has previously been quoted as saying are preserved in their "as-used" rather than "as-created" state: does this imply a balance in favour of one of the "integrities" -- for example, historic versus conceptual? Or is conceptual integrity in this instance the better term for both? Traditional conservation is summarized as centred on extending the physical life of the object, as the definitions of conservation in previous sections show. A more complex analysis of
conservation, emphasizing it as part of a team of museum professionals, acknowledges that its goal is to preserve the meaning of the works as well as their physical substance (Hodkinson 1990; Keyser 1992; Odegaard 1995).

**Cultural Significance and "Sacred"

A key element in preserving the integrity of the object is the idea of preserving its cultural significance. Cultural significance is here considered briefly in a separate section because it has great potential to be defined for a particular object in one way by aboriginal authorities and in another way by museum authorities housing the object. The Canadian code of ethics for conservators states that preserving the culturally significant qualities of an object is the purpose of conservation. All codes define cultural property as material which has been declared to be culturally significant. The ICOM document calls objects, "a significant expression" of cultural attributes. As discussed earlier, conservators are concerned with not altering the meaning of objects, and they rely on other professionals to work with them to establish that meaning.

At the time of writing, only one ethics policy in conservation gives First Nations individuals and collectivities the right to guide conservation decisions regarding heritage (in this case sites) of cultural significance to them, no matter who the legal owner is. This is the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value. The context for this document is meaningful in that it postdates all but one of the codes of ethics cited previously, and that it was developed in a country with a
legally recognized policy of equality between the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. The ICOMOS NZ Charter states:

The indigenous heritage of Maori and Moriori...is inseparable from identity and well-being and has particular cultural meanings. The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of our nation and is the basis for indigenous guardianship. It recognizes the indigenous people as exercising responsibility for their treasures, monuments and sacred places. This interest extends beyond current legal ownership wherever such heritage exists. Particular knowledge of heritage values is entrusted to chosen guardians. The conservation of places of indigenous cultural heritage value is therefore conditional on decisions made in the indigenous community, and should proceed only in this context. Indigenous conservation precepts are fluid and take account of the continuity of life and the needs of the present as well as the responsibilities of guardianship and association with those who have gone before. In particular, protocols of access, authority and ritual are handled at a local level. General principles of ethics and social respect affirm that such protocols should be observed. (ICOMOS 1993: sec. 2)

Objects which have important cultural significance and have been created for ritual use or have ritual prescriptions attached to them are often considered "culturally sensitive" objects. These objects may be considered "holy" or "sacred", in the sense that they are believed to contain an intrinsic quality of "sacredness" or power, or they may be objects that make it possible to perform a traditional ritual commandment. In other words, not all ritual objects are considered "sacred" by their originators, but there may still be great cultural significance attached to "non-sacred" objects and the rituals surrounding them.

In the last decade objects whose cultural significance lies in their being considered "sacred", "sensitive" or "potent" by their originating cultures have become a special issue for museums. It is beyond the scope of this research to
discuss in detail the debates about what "sacred" means and by whose definitions. It is also beyond the scope of this research to discuss the debates surrounding repatriation of museum collections and the special issues surrounding the storage, maintenance, and repatriation of human remains. The following discussions, however, pertain to this research and should be noted.

Many different concepts of "sacred" are enunciated, and objects may be "sacred" in different ways. Some objects are not considered "sacred" in the definition used in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) legislation in the U.S. 7, for example, but there may still be important ritual protocols that First Nations people request to have observed. This research will consider all objects falling into the "sacred/sensitive" category, or that can be called "potent" (Welsh 1992) if this affects conservation practice and ethics. For example:

**Power:** Some objects are believed by contemporary practitioners to have power within them, such as certain pieces in the Pueblo traditions of the American Southwest, or objects in New Zealand that have 'taha wairua' or spiritual force. These objects have ritual protocols surrounding them and may have a nature believed to have the potential to cause harm even to non-indigenous people. Additionally, concerning the concept of harm, Bernstein asks, "[W]hile we physically preserve a sacred object in a museum, are we at the same time causing harm to the culture and the people it represents by holding an object out of context and away from the community responsible

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7 "For the purposes of this Act, the term ..."sacred objects" ... shall mean specific ceremonial objects which are needed by traditional Native American religious leaders for the practice of traditional Native American religions by their present day adherents (1990: Sec.2(c)).
for its care and for the maintenance of the traditions it may represent" (Bernstein 1992: 27). Ames, on the other hand, discusses museums and "the empowered object" in the context of its social history and the meanings that it accrues throughout. He says, "[W]hat is important for the scholar or curator, then, is not numinosity itself alone so much as the process by which it is continually constructed and reconstructed as a social object throughout its career as it moves, or is moved, from one context to the next" (Ames 1993: 5).

**Meaning:** Some objects, images, and existing museum documentation are considered "private" by the originating people, even if they have previously been accessible to either the public or to museum staff by virtue of their being in a public museum or archives. This is especially true of older collections assembled with the mores of a different time period, which are now being informed by a contemporary ethical sensibility among both Native and non-Native people. "Private" may also include the notion of accessibility to certain people but not others; for example, to initiated members of a group but not to the uninitiated, or to men but not women.

**Politics:** One of the arenas in which the concept of "sacred" is enunciated is that of politics and aboriginal rights. Whether Native and non-Native museum professionals accept "sacred" as used in these arenas, or whether they judge it at times to be politically motivated and "inauthentic" is an interesting question and relates to the whole area of authenticity in museums. As research of a more sociological nature, however, it falls outside of the scope of this study unless it is referred to by the interviewees.

**Rupture:** The question is asked in the research if it is necessary to observe protocols and rituals for objects that have been in a museum for a
lengthy period of time. Has the rupture from their originating culture and its practices had any effect on the objects as they are today? This is asked in relation not just to ritual protocols but also with regard to museum practices. For example, in storage and maintenance is there a preference that traditions be followed or should contemporary museum practice be followed?

Ritual Use Versus Preservation: The "use" versus "preservation" issue is particularly acute in the area of ritual. Unlike those few objects in museum collections where a functioning state is accepted (discussed shortly), the "function" for First Nations objects is often linked to ceremonial purposes. In some countries such as the U.S.A. (but not in Canada) legislation enshrines aboriginal religious practice (e.g., NAGPRA and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, AIRFA).

The ritual use question for objects currently in museum collections is by no means restricted to aboriginal material. For example, in 1993 Aleksei II, Patriarch of Moscow and All the Russias, led prayers before an icon during a political event; the icon is an early twelfth-century piece which has had miracles attributed to it in the past, and was borrowed for the event from Moscow's Tretyakov museum (1993). The icon apparently deteriorated substantially because of the poor physical environment during the event and required extensive restoration.

Code of Ethics: Guidelines in this area: Conservation practice towards "potent" objects is not explicitly discussed in the codes of ethics and guidance for practice under consideration, except in the New Zealand ICOMOS document. It is notable as a conservation policy in that it explicitly states that spiritual values may take precedence over physical preservation. It
saying, "In some circumstances, assessment may show that any
[conservation/preservation] intervention is undesirable. In particular,
undisturbed constancy of spiritual association may be more important than
the physical aspect of some places of indigenous heritage value" (ICOMOS
1993: Sec. 14).

Discussion in Conservation on Appearance and Treatment of Sacred
Objects: The question of appearance and what it signifies, and whether it is
appropriate to alter the appearance of a sacred object as part of a conservation
treatment, is raised by authors such as Weersma, who writes, "Decay of
sacred objects does not necessarily mean a loss of spiritual value. ... Some
religious objects on the other hand, are required or at least preferred to be as
beautiful as possible. Conservation without "cosmetic treatment" would
make them unacceptable for devotional practice" (Weersma 1987: 567).

Mibach, in an introduction to the postprints of the 1991 American
Institute of Conservation's discussion on the "Conservation of Sacred
Objects", notes "there may be times when we could solve a technical problem,
but when that ability does not also give us the moral right to do so" (Mibach
1992: 1). Greene points out that for Jewish holy objects no longer in use, some
may be repaired by a conservator, but others carry an intrinsic attribute of
holiness and work on them by a conservator would be inappropriate (Greene
1992). Mibach also raises the questions of what parameters conservators
should consider: what they should be aware of and be able to do.

In the same AIC postprints Mellor notes that for the African objects in
museums he is considering, it is not necessary for conservators to treat them
with the same strict ritual protocols as the objects are treated when in their
own cultural context (Mellor 1992). This conclusion, however, is based on the premise that information on these issues is difficult for conservators to obtain first-hand because of factors such as the geographic distance between North America and Africa, and his conclusions are based on information mediated by non-indigenous sources (e.g., North American curators). Subsequently, the NAGPRA legislation in the U.S.A., the Task Force report in Canada, and several individual conservators within conservation have raised the question of assumptions and practicalities regarding consultation. Mellor, however, raise the undisputed issue that different cultures will express different points of view regarding the treatment of sacred objects. This is reinforced by Greene and others in the same journal.

More recent articles challenge the term "sacred" and challenge the categorizations consciously and unconsciously applied by non-Native people to "sacred" objects (Heikell, Whiting et al. 1995). For example, Heikell, a paper conservator of Maori descent and one of the interviewees in this research, points out that she has participated in many Maori ceremonies relating to works on paper which "may have been written by an ancestor, may depict an ancestor, may tell a story of an ancestor, or may relate a history of a tribal area" (Heikell, Whiting et al. 1995: 15). These ceremonies acknowledge the work as culturally significant to the Maori group, and "involve the same commitment, and command the same respect by Maori people as they would when dealing with "traditional" treasures such as carvings and cloaks" (Heikell, Whiting et al. 1995: 15).

Moses, an interviewee by correspondence in this research, who is a North American conservator of Delaware/Mohawk descent, writes in the
same forum that "sacred" objects may "continue to fulfill roles of spiritual focus and empowerment" (Moses 1995: 18). He continues, "[I]t might be argued that a museum is not necessarily the setting in which one can hope to experience or comprehend the significance of sacred objects, either from the viewpoint of those who created them, or from the viewpoint of those for whose benefit they were created and originally maintained (ibid.: 18). He calls for "well informed and carefully considered non-intervention" as an appropriate treatment option (ibid.: 18).

**Objects' Relationship with People Today:** One important issue raised in the conservation literature by Moses, Bernstein, and others is the incorporation of the concept of "living" as an attribute of sacred objects. Not only are sacred objects potentially different from other museum collections because they have certain powerful intangible attributes associated with them, and may also have particular non-museum procedures and rituals attached to them, but they stand in relation to living people in a different way than do most collections for their originators or their viewers. Although one can argue the "museum as temple" and "art as inspiring" perspective that acknowledges a certain symbolic parallel between awe-inspiring works in museums and sacred objects, there is nonetheless a significant difference between the analysed ritual symbolism of a secular institution and the "icons" it houses, and "potent" objects considered pertinent to the core of cultural identity. This is because the beliefs, ritual protocols and traditions with which "potent" objects are associated are considered necessary to perform and pass on to maintain the well-being of the individual and the culture.
Artist's Intent

Respecting the intent of the artist has been one of the guiding principles of conservation. A detailed discussion of this area falls outside of the scope of this research as it has been considered in depth primarily in the field of the conservation of works of art. It does, however, have implications for the conservation of ethnographic objects. Respecting the intent of the originator has been mainly expressed as "intent of the artist" in conservation, but as seen in the tables in Appendix D, in the Canadian code the "intent of the originator" is specifically referred to. Conservators are admonished to "understand the intention of the originator" and, wherever relevant or possible, to consult with the originator. The originator is defined in the code not only as the creator of the object, but also as his/her representatives "by legal, moral, or spiritual right". This is standard procedure regarding, for example, copyright issues (legal), and it also recognizes the right of religious or ceremonial authorities (spiritual) and community or extended family interests (moral).

In practice, however, and possibly in interpretation ("wherever possible ... consult with the originator" (italics this author's), the people referred to for a better understanding of "intent of the originator" have not been the originators themselves or their descendants, but other professionals (museum curators, art historians, anthropologists). These people may also be considered to have a legal position as museum staff of an institution owning the collections. The question of ownership, and the conservators' obligation to the owner, are discussed in separate sections. In the current U.S. code, "intent of the artist" has been replaced by "an informed respect for the cultural
property ... and the people or person who created it”. Respect, however, is not defined; there are no guidelines as to what constitutes showing respect appropriately. In the New Zealand conservators' code, the language used is stronger in relation to respecting intent, as seen in the description of responsibility to the owner. As pointed out previously, the language regarding indigenous heritage is strongest in the ICOMOS N.Z. Charter.

In contemporary art, conservators may face dilemmas in the sphere of "intent of the artist" mirroring the concerns of ethnographic conservators. Conservators of contemporary art often find that their philosophy and practice conflict with the wishes of the artist (Domergue, Lowinger et al. 1987; Merk 1987). One notable difference, however, is that the overriding context is usually one of preserving the object while honouring the artist's intent, whereas for ethnographic objects there are situations where the intent of preservation itself is challenged.

Use Versus Preservation

Certain objects in museum collections have been classified in the category of "functional objects" and are used or "run" rather than preserved according to the norms of standard museum practice. Use in itself can be said to be contrary to the usual purpose of museums: as Ferrell has argued, "Artifacts enter museums when they cease to be useful" (Ferrell 1991: 44). By this definition, an artifact in a museum is one which de facto is no longer useful or fulfilling its original purpose. It has, however, acquired a museum-defined utility such as usefulness for research or for education. Ashley-Smith, interpreting the Victoria and Albert Museum's mission statement, says
that the use of an object is to be enjoyed or to add to understanding (Ashley-Smith 1995: 4). Rose gives the following parameters for ethnographic collections: "[T]he conservation of an ethnographic object should be based upon a thorough understanding of the purpose in collecting and using that object within the museum community" (Rose 1988: 50).

In general, "functional objects" are pieces considered misunderstood or unappreciated unless they are restored to a functioning state. As Keene has pointed out, objects in museums are not just sources of information but also vehicles for conveying it (Keene 1994: 19). When older objects are returned to a functioning state, however, there is a great possibility of loss of the elements that form part of the integrity of the object. This occurs because the process of restoration to a condition where the object can function safely usually necessitates alterations to and possible removal of both the physical and the ephemeral aspects (e.g., the spaces between the physical elements) of the original construction, all of which may have been intentional parts of its craftsmanship or design.

Wear on the original components through use; on-going use continues the need for further replacement or reconstruction.

Long-term preservation is, therefore, seen as compromised when objects are allowed to be returned to a functioning state. Most objects considered in the category of "functional" have been industrial vehicles such as locomotives, airplanes, or automobiles; decorative arts objects such as clocks whose primary purpose was a functioning one; and machine readable records such as sound recordings and computer data, which exist in a physical form but remain incomprehensible if they are not "played". A few
excellent papers detailing the issues and ethics surrounding functional objects can be found in the conservation literature, in the museum literature, and in the literature of avocational groups who restore industrially made vehicles: the reader is referred to, for example, papers in The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery; Mapes 1991 and individual authors such as Odell 1986; Mann 1994; Prytulak 1995. This literature has not, up to this point, considered ritual objects in the category of "functional" objects. The following points have been made concerning why use is considered for the existing collections of "functional" objects in museums:

(a) technology plays a role of major significance in the construction of western society today, but the average person cannot comprehend its technical significance: operating machinery, for example, assists in the understanding of the artifact's intent, i.e., "what the machine was used for and how it performed its tasks" (Bowditch 1991: 4).

(b) "Motion is truly the soul and spirit of the machine", "Static displays of machinery might be likened to still photographs of dancers" (Bowditch 1991: 3, 5). The conceptual integrity of the artifact is not complete when the object is static.

(c) Some objects, such as carriages, are restored to a functioning state even though they themselves are not mechanical objects. Strictly speaking, carriages do not need to be driven to be understood, because the motion is provided by the horse and is not intrinsic to the vehicle. Due to technical obsolescence, however, carriages do belong to a class of objects that have undergone a transformation from "useful object" or even "aesthetic and useful object" to something which, in Ferrell's words, "other than nostalgic
associations ... [has been] deleted from cultural memory" (Ferrell 1991: 44).
Ferrell documents the destruction of complex historic information by poor restoration procedures on carriages and maintains that reproductions can satisfactorily accomplish the purpose of allowing understanding of the intent of the object.

(d) Ego satisfaction on the part of enthusiasts or museum personnel has been discussed as a primary motivator for having objects restored to a functioning state (1991; Dick 1991; Gray 1991). Operation becomes the definition of preservation; "Specimens ... are only fulfilled if they operate ....
Our standard language deprives them of vitality if they aren't fired-up: .."live" steam, a cold engine is "dead" " (Gray 1991: 15-16). As a writer for TIGHAR Tracks (the publication of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery) perceptively suggests, however, "somewhere along the way our instinct to preserve got tangled up with our love of flying, and we started preserving airworthiness instead of airplanes " (1991: 1).

It should be noted that the ethics of the "use versus preservation" debate regarding material heritage has also been reconfigured differently in relation to architectural heritage. Buildings are usually, although not always, immovable, subject to the extremities of outdoor exposure, and expensive to maintain. Their continued preservation in the face of natural deterioration and urban development rests, in part, on finding uses compatible for them that can also help sustain them financially. Feilden states unreservedly that the best way of preserving buildings is to keep them in use (Feilden 1981). Modern use, however, almost always necessitates alterations to the original physical structure, for example to bring the building up to fire code standards
or to make it wheelchair accessible. The ethical compromises one sees in architectural restoration in order to maintain the building in use may be unacceptable in other areas of conservation.

Within a museum, like other aspects of conservation ethics, the "preservation versus use" debate is often situated in the politics and power struggles of the institution. It is usually the curators or the educators who wish the object to be restored to a functioning state, and the conservators who are in the position of "advocates for the artifact". Weil conveys the differences already discussed between curators and conservators in the following way: "their [museums'] ultimate importance must lie not in their ability to acquire and care for objects -- important as that may be -- but in their ability to take such objects and put them to some worthwhile use" (Weil 1990: 28). As the Director of the Museum of Anthropology has said, "preservation for what purpose" (Ames 1991)? Ames points out that preservation, not just use, has served particular interests. In a personal communication he asks, "[W]hy, for example, can only the courier from the British Museum handle an object we borrow, when I can go to the BM stores and plough through the stuff on my own" (Ames 1991)? He later clarified: "The main point is ... museum rules serve the interests of those who make them, and not just the interests of the objects" (Ames 1997).

One question conservators would raise in response to Weil and Ames is whether "museum use" necessitates physical use, or whether the intention of the museum use can be accomplished sufficiently in a manner more compatible with preserving the physical object. In this way, because of the choices open to curators and educators to accomplish their goals, the situation
is quite different from, for example, sound recordings which must be used at least once for them to be understood at all. As Keene has noted with regard to computer records, "only by doing so [restoring and running an historic computer] can software 'virtual' objects exist" (Keene 1994: 24).

Conservators have most often taken the position in the "use versus preservation" debate that "[t]he demands of long-term preservation must take precedence over short-term use" (Ward 1986: 9). Yet the first statement in the Canadian Code of Ethics includes the word "use"; "It is the responsibility of the conservator, acting alone or with others, to strive constantly to maintain a balance between the need of society to use a cultural property, and the preservation of that cultural property" (IIC-CG and CAPC 1989: 5). This research on conservation and First Nations also raises the question of which "society" is referred to in the IIC-CG document, and what constitutes society's need to use designated historical objects. Does the toppling of statues during the post-communist political upheaval in the Soviet Union represent "need" for a large number of people (SOS! 1991)?

Conservators' Relationships and Responsibilities to People

Previous sections have discussed how conservation has constructed its role in relation to living people primarily in the sections on use of objects, the context of conservation in a museum, and the educational and other purposes of museums. The codes of ethics define a conservator's responsibility towards colleagues, the owner of the work, and the originator of the work.

Regarding responsibility to the owner and responsibility to the originator, it should be noted that ownership falls within legal definitions and
there can be strict protocols and consequences regarding appropriate or inappropriate professional behavior. The responsibility to the originator is covered in terms more open to interpretation such as "respect". In many countries, however, responsibility to the originator is covered under copyright legislation if the object is a work of art. In Canada, the copyright law makes provision for the artist to retain both legal and moral rights to his or her creation.

A discussion of copyright legislation and what is considered a work of art is beyond the scope of this research. The existence of this legislation, however, as well as related art gallery practice, means that conservators of contemporary art do work with living artists in making conservation decisions. As noted elsewhere, the question of First Nations legal rights is being determined largely outside of the museum sphere, but the symbolism of acknowledging moral rights is affecting museum practice in many anthropology museums.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the values and beliefs of the professional field of conservation with special reference to the conservation of objects from indigenous peoples. The ethics and values of conservation have been described and situated vis-à-vis three major contributory value systems: that of museums, that of science, and that of professions. This chapter lays the groundwork for understanding how museums and museum conservators go about "preserving what is valued", from their perspective.
Many of the themes examined here will be seen in a different context when First Nations values are discussed. The question of preserving and presenting objects versus preserving and presenting knowledge and the question of the need to use heritage objects are two examples. This chapter has shown that conservation, while on the one hand showing differences and disagreements with other museum sectors, is firmly enmeshed in and reflects most museum values and qualities. It contributes significantly to the curatorial mandate, and to the construction of what version of the object is seen and kept. Regarding scientific values, conservation again has incorporated these into its own belief system. The previous chapter showed how science came to be one of the defining characteristics of the field of conservation, and this chapter shows that its values are still strongly adhered to, although there are some voices in conservation which recognize them as value statements rather than truths. Professionalization has contributed its own set of values to conservation, although some of its elements remain unclarified in the field. For example, questions such as who are the clients of conservation, and to whom are conservators responsible are important in this research as they have bearing on how conservators construct their work in relation to First Nations.

Conservation is analyzed in this chapter by examining professional codes of ethics and the relevant literature in order to establish a value system as seen from inside the profession. Beliefs particularly pertinent to this research on First Nations perspectives are discussed in more detail. For example, conservators' perspectives on what they are preserving, both in relation to "integrity of the object" and "cultural significance" are examined, as
well as opinions on use versus preservation, a conservator's responsibility to
the originator of the piece (artist's intent), and conservation practice in
relation to objects which the originators have deemed sacred or potent. The
following chapters will elucidate First Nations perspectives in these areas.
CHAPTER 5

FIRST NATIONS PUBLISHED PERSPECTIVES ON PRESERVATION AND MUSEUMS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will cite First Nations perspectives on the meaning of preservation, the role objects play in cultural preservation, and the role and nature of museums. This information, drawn mainly from written and other public sources, will be compared with information from the research interviews in the following chapters. In this chapter perspectives from indigenous people in Canada, the United States, New Zealand and in a few cases other countries are presented. They are presented together in order to illustrate that, despite great cultural differences, shared perspectives exist regarding the fundamental importance of and respect for indigenous cultural beliefs, lifeways, and their preservation. In addition, these perspectives and their place of primacy often differ from museum viewpoints, priorities, and standard museum practice. In the quotations presented to illustrate this discussion the band, tribal or nation affiliation of the speaker is included the first time the author is cited if it was included in the literature, and if it is not mentioned in the text.

The conservation of museum collections is a rare subject for commentary by First Nations writers, even within the small but growing
Native-authored literature pertaining to museums and their collections. Repatriation and interpretation are the two most-discussed areas in this literature; both are, however, beyond the specific focus of this study, as discussed in the Introduction. Repatriation and interpretation do, though, reflect concerns about cultural authority and recognition, and these are also part of the museum/cultural preservation discourse.

Before proceeding with the main subject of this chapter, it is important to consider whether separating museum and First Nations perspectives on preservation into different chapters in this dissertation serves to create a structural paradigm of two distinct points of view that may prove false. Furthermore, does it serve to resurrect a professionally familiar but highly questionable "us" and "the other" approach? Separate chapters can also serve to lessen the acknowledgment of the reality of experiences and knowledge making up both perspectives, for example, that of the First Nations professionals in museums, that of First Nations Cultural Centres with professional museum components, and that of contemporary indigenous people, both urban and non-urban, who have worked closely with museums. Finally, categorizing museum and First Nations perspectives separately risks unconsciously reflecting a power/knowledge imbalance in which more value is placed on a western than on a non-western perspective. (This is seen, for example, in many archaeological exhibits in museums validating science to the detriment of a narrative, oral history perspective of the past.)

A focus of this dissertation is the areas in which conventional museum conservation practice presents different and potentially conflicting viewpoints from First Nations perspectives. As such, it is necessary to
consider separately the perspectives, goals, and values expressed by museum conservation, and those in which the viewpoints of First Nations are rooted. Every effort is made in this research to be aware of the potential previously mentioned problems created by the structure, and to present an understanding of complex, cross-cultural relationships. At the same time, it is also recognized that posing "distinct viewpoints" is not a western or academic construct only, and that contemporary First Nations individuals are proud of their cultural traditions and place great significance on their "radically differing perceptions of reality and concepts of cultural retention" (Moses 1993: 2). (Moses: Delaware/Mohawk) For example, Atleo compares Euro-based rational positivism with the "interconnected, holistic, and relational view which reflects a First Nations perspective of reality" (Atleo 1990: 3). (Atleo: Nuu-Chah-Nulth) This dichotomy of perspectives will be seen, for instance, in the comparison presented later between the traditional museum and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

In both the literature and the research interviews, most of the First Nations speakers clearly state they are representing their own views and are not official spokespeople for their nation, and their individual point of view may not be shared by other cultures or even members of their own community. For example, "I cannot speak for other Nations, this is protocol, that we respect what belongs to others and not place our opinion on objects we know nothing about" (Claxton 1994: 1). (Claxton: Coast Salish) Regarding the citations, the reader is also encouraged to recognize the limitations of quotations, which represent only a portion of what has been stated by the First Nations writers, and consult the sources for further information and
contextualization. In addition, it is important to remember that the First Nations individuals cited represent people of cultural diversity as well as different ages, experiences, gender, and different ties to traditionalism, to status, and to political viewpoints and context.

It should be noted that while conservators also represent a diversity of social factors and opinions, their voluntary adherence to similar professional codes of ethics enables certain generalizations to be made about what values and beliefs are represented by conservation. For First Nations, opinions can be represented, and as far as possible quotations will be used in this research to represent them accurately, and similarities of opinion can be put forward, but generalizations such as "First Nations think" cannot be made.

THE MEANING OF PRESERVATION

The following quotations provide an illustration of the meaning of "preservation" for several indigenous organizations.

The Keepers of the Treasures is a cultural council of American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians who preserve, affirm and celebrate their cultures through traditions and programs that maintain their native languages and lifeways. The Keepers protects and conserves places that are historic and sacred to indigenous peoples. (Keepers of the Treasures 1994: 9)

[The seventeen Shuswap bands] declared their intentions to work in unity to preserve, record, perpetuate and enhance the Shuswap language, history and culture. It is with these principles in mind that the Shuswap people approach the work of the Task Force [Task Force on Museums and First Peoples co-sponsored by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association]. Any work or report which comes out of the meetings taking place between the museum and native communities must have at its heart the preservation, perpetuation and enhancement of
native culture. These principles embody everything for which the Secwepemc [Cultural Education Society] strive[s]. (Jules 1991: 3).

Michael Pratt (Osage), sums up the meaning of preservation as it has just been expressed: "We all possess one common goal. It is the retention and the preservation of the American Indian way of life" (as quoted in (Parker 1990: 3).

The following quotations specifically concern the preservation of material culture from indigenous perspectives.

Ed Ladd (Ladd: Zuni) asked, "what is the significance to preservation" when there are only objects left? (Ladd as quoted in (Clavir 1992: 2)

I called for a new approach to preservation that goes beyond the old concept of holding objects in the name of the public, and instead, sees the reconnection of objects to community as an essential step in cultural preservation. I said that museums are in a unique position to assist Indian communities in the revival and retention of their spiritual traditions ....

The return of objects of cultural patrimony must take place while there are still tribal elders who remember their uses. If there is no one left who knows the stories, the songs, and the ways to properly handle the objects, how can their culture be preserved? (Hill 1993: 9) (Hill: Mohawk)

The unique feature of a distinctively traditional First Nations approach to the preservation of a specific cultural property is that the very act of preservation typically marks the point of intersection between the performance of a ritual observance or the fulfillment of a religious obligation, and the physical maintenance of the object itself (Moses 1993: 3)

Maori history is carried in material culture but also in spiritual and cultural mediums. They are all dependent on one another and important to sustaining Maori as a people. To conserve the material culture requires an understanding and participation in the culture itself to ensure the maintenance of all values and relationships significant to an object or structure. (Whiting 1995: 15)
At the Woodland Cultural Centre, we have Policies for Sacred and Sensitive Items as part of Collections Management which guide us in caring for culturally significant items. The Woodland Museum was established as an integral element of the Woodland Cultural Centre, with a mandate to collect, preserve, research, exhibit and interpret a collection of archaeological material, historical material, arts, crafts, documents and archival photographs. (Harris 1993: 32)

(Harris: Iroquois/Six Nations)

The oldest of our material cultural treasures are those of the Maori... [which have been]... fashioned into a great variety of objects of great beauty, many of which have a spiritual and cultural significance which, along with the objects themselves, must not be lost to us (McKenzie 1987/8: 35)

The meaning of preservation, defined in the words of the indigenous people quoted above, is cultural preservation: the active maintenance of a continuity with indigenous values and beliefs that are part of a community's identity. The preservation/conservation of objects is seen within this purpose. As Parker has said,

In meetings and correspondence with the National Park Service, Indian tribes made clear their unique perspectives on historic preservation. Tribes seek to preserve their cultural heritage as a living part of contemporary life: in other words, preserving not only historic properties but languages, traditions, and lifeways. (Parker 1990: i)

This holistic view can be seen not only in individual opinions, but in the practices of the First Nations Cultural Education Centres in Canada, such as the Woodland Cultural Centre and the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society quoted previously, which have professional museum components with conventional museum mandates, but at the same time situate this within
the "wider objectives of community-based cultural conservation" (Galla 1994: 1). (Galla: indigenous/India)

Regarding cultural and material cultural preservation as viewed by First Nations writers, it is important to note how often words denoting activity and life are linked to the words expressing material preservation. Words and phrases similar to "revival" and "performance of ritual" will be found in many subsequent quotations in this chapter. Even "retention" denotes activity. Another repeated narrative in many First Nations statements concerns the nature of and reasons for the experienced loss of cultural traditions as well as a feeling of positive identity as indigenous peoples. Traditional cultural memory has been broken and many elements lost in the last several hundred years; in words such as "retain", "renew" and "regain", the emphasis is on an active "re".

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY FOR FIRST NATIONS

First Nations people have expressed a strong link between cultural preservation and a positive identity as First Nations. Cultural identity is particularly important for First Nations in the historical context of today's changing socio-political situation. As discussed in the Introduction, within the last two decades First Nations in Canada, the U.S.A., and other countries are seeing, to a greater extent than in the past hundred years, the recognition of aboriginal rights in legal, political, economic, territorial, and cultural spheres by the majority societies of their respective countries. In the 1990s this recognition includes regaining some measure of self-determination and control over community and territorial matters. While many of the questions
in these spheres are in the midst of resolution, it is not surprising to observe the link between assuming control and building or asserting a strong cultural identity, especially after generations of government-supported policies actively repressing indigenous socio-cultural expression. In addition, today there is currently an urgency to recover cultural elements from the past before more disappear, for example, retrieval of cultural information from the diminishing numbers of elders who grew up having more traditional knowledge.

The cultural and societal changes experienced by First Nations have meant cultural losses qualitatively different from those experienced by the dominant cultures in the countries mentioned above. For example, in an article about Robert Davidson, a famous Haida artist now in his late 40s who works primarily with traditional styles, Laurence writes,

> Although he heard his grandparents speaking Haida and saw his father and grandfather carving miniature poles in argillite, Davidson grew up speaking English only. ... Achieving self-awareness in a community largely separated from its artistic, linguistic and ritual inheritance, he had no sense of being Haida. "I didn't hear my first Haida song until I was 16," Davidson says. "That's how far removed we were from the culture." (Laurence 1993: 7)

Although many museums preserve the surviving fragments of western historical material culture, ethnographic museum collections preserve, especially to First Nations, a historical process representing the rapidity and degree of change:

> Firstly, we have suffered from a loss of our traditions and secondly, we lack the resources to stop this runaway process of cultural deterioration. (Crowshoe 1994: 1) (Crowshoe: Peigan)

They also preserve a symbol of the power relationships causing the loss.
In many cases we as Aboriginal people have been experiencing a long process of being continually disinherited and disconnected from our pasts that was begun in the nineteenth century all in the name of preserving an aspect of Canadian history. ...

In the process of the making of Canada, there has been an attempt to subsume Aboriginal cultures under Canadian political authority leading to the separation of contemporary Aboriginal communities from their own pasts. (Doxtator 1994:19, 20)

As will be seen in the chapter on First Nations of B.C., specific government and institutional policies were actively directed towards the suppression of indigenous cultural expression as well as many other aspects of aboriginal societies. The museum-related literature written by First Nations in various countries shows the importance of the link between the loss of and current efforts to restore indigenous cultural heritage, positive identity, and community strength. This can be seen, for example, in the following comments directly concerning museum collections.

The social, economic and political climate makes life extremely difficult for many Maori people. Museums, through the cultural treasures they possess, thus become more important as places where self-worth, identity and self-determination can be regained and act as catalysts for growth. (Hakiwai 1995: 289)

Many First Nations now wish to access or regain control over their material and intellectual heritage stored and exhibited in non-Aboriginal museums. (Eastern Working Group 1991: 1)

The significance of regaining control over one's heritage is seen in the following:

We are taking back, from many sources, information about our culture and our history, to help us rebuild our world which was
almost shattered during the bad times. (Webster 1992: 37) (Webster: 'Namgis (Kwakwaka'wakw)

In museums, regaining control means that First Nations desire to develop relationships which accomplish this both in the area of collections and, as previously referred to, interpretation.

We are talking about taking control over our own lives, our cultures, and most importantly, the interpretation of our cultures, past and present. (McCormick 1988: 1) (McCormick: Cree)

Cultural autonomy signifies a right to cultural specificity, a right to one's origins and histories as told from within the culture and not as mediated from without. (Todd 1990: 24) (Todd: Metis, Alberta)

The importance of regaining both the tangible elements and the intangible elements of culture is emphasized:

As bad as the losses were in terms of land, lives and culture, a greater loss was Indian pride. This essential source of strength, which kept them together as a people, was lost along with everything else. For people trying to contend with life and develop self-confidence it is essential that they have some control over their lives and their material culture. It is degrading to be forever at the whim of others. (Horse Capture 1991: 50) (Horse Capture: Gros Ventre)

The importance of regaining the past by bringing it -- knowledge, materials, representation -- back into one's culture and under one's control is seen in the role it plays in recovering identity for First Nations. A positive meaning is reattached to identity, especially when it includes the intangible elements such as pride and strength. The tangible objects in museums play a role in recovering the intangibles, as seen in Hakiwai's comment, and this applies also to the creation of contemporary art by Native artists:
It has been a life long dream of mine to help bring the art form of my ancestors to be recognized as great art, placed along side all the other great art of the world, to bring it beyond the curio attitude which it has suffered since contact. ...

I have always felt alien to art galleries until my showing here. In showing my work you have opened the door to many other artists who are working to validate their work as true art.

Our art has helped us as a people to reconnect with our cultural past, helped us in regaining our own identity, giving us strength to reclaim our place in the world. (Davidson 1993)

MUSEUM VALUES

Three basic differences in emphasis between museum perspectives and First Nations perspectives as seen from the citations in this chapter can be represented schematically as follows:

Table 2: "Preservation": Museum and First Nations Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Traditional Museum</strong></th>
<th><strong>First Nations</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preservation of objects</td>
<td>preservation of traditional cultural practice, aboriginal values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>rationale:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loss of material culture</td>
<td>loss of culture, positive identity, control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preservation of the past as</td>
<td>preservation is positive in the context of self-determination: renewal, living expression: objects are part of living cultures today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a positive value: objects are witnesses to the past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chapter will now compare in more detail many of the museum values as seen in Chapter Four with First Nations perspectives as seen in their
literature or public statements. It is necessary to reiterate in this context that any tendency towards generalization must be tempered with the knowledge that there are hundreds of distinct aboriginal cultures in North America alone, with various histories, contemporary outlooks, and individual perspectives of members.

The new National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) which is part of the Smithsonian Institution is a largely Native American managed and staffed museum, which hopes to, in the words of its Director, "re-analyze, redirect and, in many cases, reformulate entirely the concepts and presentations of the past concerning Indian culture" (West 1991: 24). (West: Cheyenne-Arapaho) NMAI has conducted numerous consultations with Native people across North America on many aspects of museum development, collections, and programming. The following briefly summarizes some of their conclusions in relation to museums and objects:

Table 3: The Traditional Museum and the NMAI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Museum</th>
<th>NMAI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preserves objects</td>
<td>preserves culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conserves objects</td>
<td>cares for objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>displays objects</td>
<td>uses objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object based</td>
<td>people based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the objects are out of their cultural context</td>
<td>the objects, people and the environment are related to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looks at the past</td>
<td>integrates the past, the present, and the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the objects are considered inert</td>
<td>supports the Native American philosophy that objects are living and require air and natural light</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Nason 1993) (Nason: Comanche)
Other museum and First Nations values and beliefs that appear contradictory can be summarized in the following tables. Several pertaining specifically to conservation, such as object preservation versus use, and appropriate treatment of objects considered sacred or sensitive, will be expanded upon in later sections. Quotations have been included so that individual First Nations expressions of themselves can be seen directly.
Table 4: Beliefs and Values, Museums and First Nations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Museum</th>
<th>Traditional First Nations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| values the importance of heritage objects | - some believe, "The objects themselves are not important; what matters is what the objects represent. They represent the right to own that thing, and that right remains even if the object decays or is otherwise lost" (Webster 1986: 77).  
  others suggest e.g., "The [Kwakiutl] elders spoke of the importance for young people to know and touch their past [the repatriated objects] if they are to have an identity in the future " (Morrison 1993).  
  - "What will they remember if we don't show them anything" (Doxtator 1994: 19)? |
| believes in preventing deterioration, in preserving culturally designated objects | some objects meant to deteriorate and complete their natural cycle.  
  - "The emphasis on preserving the [Athabascan] Native elders' material culture was often contrary to their holistic belief that these goods should return to nature to nurture future generations" (Wright 1994: 1).  
  - "Ed Ladd stated that there is not a single item in Zuni culture which is used for religious or ceremonial purposes which is meant to be preserved in perpetuity. All are gifts to the Gods which are meant to disintegrate back into the earth to do their work" : in Clavir 1992: 8.  
  - "It is also patronizing to assume that indigenous people necessarily believe that all their works should complete a natural cycle and be allowed to degrade and eventually return to the soil. Like other people, Maori wish to keep records of their achievements and history" (Heikell, Whiting et al. 1995: 15). |
| objects contain knowledge encoded in them | knowledge resides with the elders and is passed on generation to generation.  
- "The attachment to material goods, however, did not ensure survival for these [Athabascan] people. It was the knowledge gained through oral narratives that provided necessary lessons in survival skills" (Wright 1994: 1). |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>objects very important as provide tangible evidence</td>
<td>songs, oral history and genealogy, rights and privileges, and other &quot;intangibles&quot; highly important as evidence. &quot;The objects themselves confirm the stories that have been heard by native people over the years&quot; (Hill: 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loss of authenticity / integrity in an object = loss of tangible link with past</td>
<td>link with past is made tangible by participating in traditional lifeways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| intangibles of culture shown by animated museum environments (MacDonald 1988; MacDonald 1992; MacDonald 1993) | intangibles shown through rituals, community and other cultural events  
- "a museum is not necessarily the setting in which one can hope to experience or comprehend the significance of sacred objects, either from the viewpoint of those who created them, or from the viewpoint of those for whose benefit they were created and originally maintained" (Moses 1995: 18). |
<p>| museums/ European tradition | museums and similar institutions not part of indigenous cultures. Culturally significant objects used and cared for by religious societies, within families, etc., and displayed in appropriate cultural contexts. Objects beyond usefulness often ritually retired (e.g. some burned or buried). See also comments by Ladd, Jenkins and others in Clavir (1992). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnographic collections made to represent people who were believed to be disappearing</th>
<th>&quot;To Canadian nationalists, the superiority of Anglo-Canadian society doomed Aboriginal peoples to extinction and assimilation&quot; (Doxtator 1994: 19).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting and museums historically represent European &quot;superiority&quot;, European roots</td>
<td>&quot;My culture has survived, but as a refugee in my own land (McCormick 1988: 4). &quot;Listen, we're here. We'll always be here&quot; (Wilson 1992). &quot;We are not dead. We did not die out before the turn of the century and we're not a diluted form of the supposed &quot;real&quot; and &quot;authentic&quot; Maori&quot; (Hakiwai 1995: 287). &quot;All previous anthropological and social theorizations notwithstanding, and despite the best efforts of the combined European and western military, political and religious complexes, the Native peoples of North America have not become extinct over the course of these past five centuries, and traditional indigenous systems of religion and spirituality remain vibrant features of daily life in many First Nations communities&quot; (Moses 1993: 7). See also Tamarapa (1994: 42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| public museums represent secular, scientific values | traditional spiritual values at the heart of cultural renewal. Preference for explaining world on basis of spiritual beliefs. 
- "Some (museum people) place science as the ultimate human endeavor, above the law, above the religious rights or human rights of Indians" (Hill: 9). See also Harris (1993). 
- Bedard commented "that the distinction between science and mythology has to be rejected because both are equally ideological" (Cruikshank 1993: 7-8). 
Equally, the objectivity of the state which presents itself as "non-ethnic and culture-free", working for the benefit of all, is questioned (Doxtator 1994: 20). |
| public service mandate | "Museums were not founded to serve the needs of the Maori people but rather to entomb us and our material culture. We were to become the prize exhibits of the nineteenth century, now safely 'domesticated' in museums" (Mead, as quoted in Tamarapa 1994). See also Hill (1988). |
| First Nations societies subjects to be studied, studies transmitted to public, e.g., via museums. | desire not to be subjects of studies but co-equal partnerships in urban museum enterprise, and control of community heritage. |
importance of legal ownership by museum. In addition, often find today acknowledgment of "moral" rights of others.

importance of ownership by First Nations of their cultural heritage

- "The dominant society owns the concept of museology while the First Nations people own the heritage represented in the relevant collections" (Atleo 1990: 3).

- "Museums are to acknowledge that there is a living culture associated with these taonga, and that Maori people are the spiritual and cultural custodians .... Museums are the 'caretakers' of the taonga, not the 'owners'; the mana of the taonga resides with the iwi from which it originates" (Tamarapa 1994: 43).

- "The somewhat illogical situation arises whereby the Crown of Canada, in existence for some 127 years, assumes that it has a greater right, interest in and connection to Aboriginal material of 20,000 years ago than do the Aboriginal people who have always inhabited North America" (Doxtator 1994: 20).

- "Question: I was wondering whether the material that has been returned to your museum has its title of ownership actually transferred to your museum, or are the pieces on long-term loan?

Answer: I guess it depends on who you are asking" (Webster 1986: 79).
| museum displays represent static moments in linear time | cyclical and other concepts of time e.g.,

"To most of Canadian society, the past is very separate from the present and future. The past is measured precisely in years and days...To Native societies, the past is not as distinctly separate from the present (p. 27). [In museums] to see change or European influence in the construction of an object was to see loss of culture (p. 26). ...The physical expressions of traditions change...but the most basic principles that direct those traditions remain...and are not dependent upon chronological time" (Doxtator 1988).

"In our way of thinking, everything is a significant event, and the past is as real as us being here right now. We are all connected to the things that happened at the beginning of our existence. And those things live on as they are handed down to us" (Parris Butler, Fort Mohave, as quoted in Parker 1990: 5). See also Webster (1992). |

| democratic principles for public museums | 1. restrictions (viewing, handling, storage, use) may apply to certain objects, for example see (Moses 1993: 5).

2. access for average First Nations person to museum collections has been problematic. The "public" has been privileged to the detriment of particular stakeholders such as First Nations. |
| right to know, understand the entire world | -"the separate legal status of First Nations creates a need to recognize that each one has its own national patrimony [not just Canadian patrimony]" (Hill 1988: 32).

- some knowledge is private. "Does the public have a right to know all, to see that which another culture considers too sacred to show, to possess another's cultural/spiritual legacy" (Hill 1988: 33)?

-" For many Natives (within traditional cultures), knowing is a privilege, not an absolute right. ... Access... is granted only after a prolonged period of initiation or indoctrination. ... Uncontrolled access... in many instances is considered capable of producing catastrophic results" (Moses 1995: 18).

- First Nations have expressed that they are tired of being subjects of non-Native academic studies, esp. if no benefit returns to them.

(See e.g., Nason 1981; Eastern Working Group 1991; Hill 1988.)

- "Everything about us -- from our languages to our philosophies, from our stories to our dances -- has become material in a quest for further discovery, for new treasures...our difference -- is reduced to playing bit parts in the West's dreams" (Todd 1992: 71). |
"proper care" defined by conservation guidelines and methods

- "There are Elders and other members of our community who have never seen one of our religious objects deteriorate while being functional. Perhaps the love, respect, proper maintenance and usage of an object, carried out in accordance with custom and by persons with knowledge of the traditional ceremonial and religious rites, is in actual fact the only true "conservation" of a sacred and sensitive artifact" (Harris 1993: 33).

authority of museums, government, other sanctioned institutions of majority culture.

in museums, exclusionary power of those trained over those not trained

authority of western perspective and established museum practice

Few First Nations people trained as museum professionals, few First Nations museums.

- "It cannot be stressed enough...how much the dialogue and the attempts at cooperative solutioning must start from a base where the western thinker psychologically strips himself of his convictions and perceptions. It might be the only way of participating in cooperation on an egalitarian basis" (Branche 1994: 37).

artist's intent key to meaning

cultural intent: original use of object key to meaning

"Museums may be able to preserve the "artifacts," but only the people who are directly dedicated to a culture can preserve and utilize the objects in question" (Harris 1993: 32).
| cultural significance of object from curatorial knowledge, catalogued by museum | cultural significance of object from elders, lived experience; "use" necessary to complete conceptual integrity

"Priority [at the Woodland Cultural Centre] will be given to [the artifact's] traditional ceremonial function as opposed to its museological significance" (Harris 1993: 33).

Sacred/sensitive objects of most concern, but ordinary objects may have great cultural significance. (As reported in Phillips 1991; Morrison 1993). |

| museums are ethical (follow codes of ethics) | "How often have we heard museum directors and curators say, "We're not responsible today for what was done in the past" or "If we hadn't taken care of these artifacts all these years, they would have disappeared"? Such statements do not justify the holding by major museums of materials acquired in a dubious manner.

My question to museums out there is, "Why would you want to keep objects that you know, or even suspect, may have been stolen or otherwise illegally acquired." If you can't answer that honestly, don't talk to me about your ethics" (Webster 1988: 44).

See also Echo-Hawk (1993). |

| value of authenticity | both points of view represented:

- "I think we saved the remnants of some of the great images of the nineteenth century" (re: moving totem poles from Haida Gwaii to Museum of Anthrop'ly)
- "Carve copies before they rot (and leave poles in place) and these poles will be around forever" (Wilson as quoted in Cernetig (1989: D7).

See also Webster (1986). |
FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES ON MUSEUMS

It must be noted that it is not only intellectual constructs which exhibit differences between First Nations perspectives and museum perspectives. There is also a significant, different emotional resonance which is implicit in many of the above statements. Concerning the institution of the museum, First Nations expressed both negative and positive opinions.

Positive Perceptions of Museums

Some First Nations people have expressed an appreciation of museums and their work, not only of the Native-run community museums but also of the concept of a museum in general. For example, "Museums represent an opportunity for us to preserve our past" (Wilson 1992). "Many Maori are aware of the benefits that museums have as places of professional care and responsibility" (Tamarapa 1994: 46).

Horse Capture, a museum curator and consultant from the Gros Ventre nation, has tempered this positive view with the following observations:

Native Americans, and perhaps other tribal peoples as well, have therefore a strange and special link with museums that has been described as a love/hate relationship. Many Indians appreciate the fact that for many reasons, the material that has survived is to be found in museums, where it is preserved and researched. The hate aspect comes from the fact that these museums are usually far away from Indian homes, and the materials are hence inaccessible to them. So the Indian people went to museums searching for ways to restore their culture. For the most part, they were viewed with suspicion or outright hostility. (Horse Capture 1991: 50-51)
The same mixed feelings about museums have also been expressed in New Zealand.

For the Maori people there has been a great degree of ambivalence towards museums. They are important and respected places because of the cultural wealth they possess but concurrently many Maori people feel anger and resentment in the way that museums have acted as "experts" and managers of cultural heritage and knowledge systems. (Hakiwai 1995: 287)

In addition, the importance of museum training and of First Nations museum and other specialist professionals is acknowledged. The Museums Association of the Caribbean held a workshop in 1993 that made recommendations such as, "Museums should provide education in techniques for care and preservation of artifacts for cultural groups" (Branche 1994: 39).

In Canada, in a more politicized context, McCormick suggested: "It will be our elders and specialists, our historians and anthropologists, our scientists, who from now on will be the interpreters of our Culture. That is what self-determination means and we will have no less" (McCormick 1988: 3).

First Nations people who are museum professionals uphold museum values as well as their own cultural values, and they have expressed that sometimes this causes conflict for them.

To ask ourselves to relinquish our senior museum positions to the seer of a "tribe" or to allow leaders to bang drums or spread salt on votive bowls from a museum collection is like wrenching our museological souls from our very beings. (Branche 1994: 35)

I never thought I would say this, but in a way it was fortunate that the collection was returned in such terrible shape, because we were able to convince people that the objects were much two [sic] fragile to be used. (Webster 1986: 78)

(See also Harris 1993.)
Moses, a conservator, writes about the contradiction between the purpose of museum preservation and the purpose of cultural preservation.

The specific issue at hand is whether such objects are to be artificially maintained within the sterile environment of the Euro-North American-controlled museum, or whether they are to be returned to the heart of the living cultures from which they originate. (Moses 1993: 7)

**Negative Perceptions of Museums**

Negative emotions towards and perceptions of museums on the part of some First Nations people has also been given considerable voice.

[As] Gloria Cranmer-Webster stated at the concluding meeting of the Taskforce conference [Task Force, Museums and First Peoples, 1992] "we don't want museums". The word museum has a negative connotation signifying a place where "the dead things lie" and where Native people don't go. (Doxtator 1994: 21)

Moses observes that museums "remain painful symbols and reminders of cultural loss and deprivation" (Moses 1995: 18). Tamarapa cites a Maori presenter at the national New Zealand museum conference in 1985: "the Museum represents a place of death, of bones, of plunder and relics and pillage" (Tamarapa 1994: 42). A Maori curator writes, "Museums are seen by many as a sad legacy of the past imbued with a continuing sense of paternalistic colonialism and monoculturalism" (Hakiwai 1995: 286). (See also Doxtator 1994: 21.)

Following the cultural analysis proposed by Roland Barthes which Pearce has applied to museum collections (Pearce 1992; Pearce 1995), museums house not just the "signe(s)" in the form of the older tangible material heritage of many First Nations, but in this housing and ownership
museums often carry a negative signified meaning for First Nations. Museums have become the symbols of historic, repressive, and often racist dominance by the majority culture. "Museums remain to remind us of the horrors of our colonial past" (Atleo 1990: 13). Furthermore, the housing of these "signes" "placed the museum in the role of guardian of authentic symbols of 'Indianness'" (Doxtator 1988: 26). The museum developed a vested interest in presenting an image of First Nations people of the past, and audiences came to the museum to be informed about First Nations. Museums had been invested in western society with the authority to speak about and show the images of First Nations, but First Nations were excluded from representing their reality themselves in this process.

Museums have also been offensive to many First Nations if they present only a historical view of indigenous people. In 1994, for example, a resolution from the Commonwealth Association of Museums "supports the re-defining of the idea of "museum" from houses of indigenous peoples from the past (not as dead) and considers that museums house cultures and cultural meanings that reflect for indigenous people living culture" (Commonwealth Association of Museums 1994: 1).

The following poem by a young Native American author is one cultural example capturing the resentment and negative feeling towards museums and the majority culture.
Evolution

Buffalo Bill opens a pawn shop on the reservation right across the border from the liquor store and he stays open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

and the Indians come running in with jewelry television sets, a VCR, a full-length beaded buckskin outfit it took Inez Muse 12 years to finish. Buffalo Bill takes everything the Indians have to offer, keeps it all catalogued and filed in a storage room. The Indians pawn their hands, saving the thumbs for the last, they pawn their skeletons, falling endlessly from the skin and when the last Indian has pawned everything but his heart, Buffalo Bill takes that for twenty bucks

...closes up the pawn shop, paints a new sign over the old ...
Negative Perceptions of Museum Practice

The museum process as well as the museum itself and its collections may carry a negative symbolic meaning for First Nations people. Moses argues,

[C]onservation issues quite aside, many Native peoples, on principle, take exception to the imposition of any such requirements, (such as requiring repatriated materials to be provided with certain prescribed standards of physical care in terms of security, environmental control, and so on.) and consider them to be essentially a means by which the Euro-North American museum community attempts to force from the First Nations a tacit acknowledgment that the dominant society has the right to control and regulate the access of First Nations peoples to their own cultural patrimony. (Moses 1993: 7)

A harsher view of museums and the museum process, which took standard museum and conservation practice and turned it into an analogy with prison practice, was manifested publicly by two Shuswap (Interior Salish) men who went on a hunger strike outside the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria in 1995 as a protest against the museum's refusal to return human remains to them. (The museum policy and practice supports the return of human remains, but First Nations community sanction of the request, such as having the request come from the Band Council, is needed.) An unsigned statement, presumably from the protesters, described the human remains as "incarcerated ancestors -- imprisoned in numbered cardboard boxes in a sterile cement room" (Crawley 1995: B1).

The word "collected" which usually has a positive value in western society has often been replaced in discussions by First Nations individuals with words such as "taken" and "stolen". That is, a real violation of culturally-
common values is expressed. Museums may also be particularly offensive to First Nations because of attitudes towards and the continued housing of human remains. This discussion, however, is outside the parameters of this research, as noted in the Introduction.

A well-known First Nations artist writes negatively about museum practice and an exhibit at the UBC Museum of Anthropology:

Desire. Is there desire in the museum? Oh no, desire would assume too many feelings: need, greed, jealousy, rapture. No, there is desire, but it is hidden. In the not so distant yesterday desire was hidden by the guise of objectivity. Today, this modern architecture with many windows, architecture with hints of traditional long houses or teepees, or buildings with columns and dark corridors all hide the desire....

But back in the museum the act of desiring has many foils: collecting, cataloguing, preserving, maintaining, educating. (Todd 1993-4: 57)

Moses makes the point that many First Nations have traditional practices preserving significant objects which the community wishes to preserve, and that museums, while they say they have knowledge in and are established for the preservation of objects, have in fact allowed many pieces to deteriorate (Moses 1993).

As described earlier, the current discourse with which this research is concerned is taking place in a politicized and emotionally charged atmosphere. In addition, the values and ethics of conservation and museums are being challenged by culturally different sets of values and ethics, which are demanding to be recognized as equally valid. In some cases, the values of conservation and museums are being challenged to change within a framework which supports both museum and First Nations perspectives.
The challenges to and rethinking of the concept and purpose of a museum is the change Branche, a Director of Museums in the Department of Museums in Belize, is referring to when she concludes: "All the words come together to describe this type of change -- challenging, uncomfortable, fearful, emotional, and yes, even unscientific. It is in the best interests of all that we consciously come to grips with this issue and make deliberate moves in this great transformation" (Branche 1994: 36).

FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES ON SELECTED CONSERVATION BELIEFS

The following sections gives First Nations perspectives on key concepts in museum conservation brought forward for discussion in the chapter on conservation values.

Integrity

While preserving the integrity of the object is considered a primary purpose of conservation, the integrity of the indigenous culture and cultural attributes attached to the object are of primary concern to First Nations. This reflects viewpoints already mentioned, especially the holistic relationship of living people to their past material culture, and the desire to have museums reflect this.

The most important fact that Te Maori taught the world is that Maoridom is a living culture and that our taonga [treasures] express us, a people with a past, a present, a future. As a result, museums were to admit that they had not respected or acknowledged these intrinsic values (Tamarapa 1994: 42).
Concerning heritage objects themselves, First Nations opinions represent several ideas pertaining to the conservation model of "integrity". The first, as seen in the following quotations, is the view that First Nations cultural perspectives, not museological perspectives, should determine the parameters of "integrity of the object".

Culturally significant Maori works should be decided by Maori people. This seems to be a reasonable and logical view to take. However in our colonial past acknowledged 'experts' have often determined what is important about Maori people from historical (colonial), and aesthetic (colonial) considerations. (Heikell, Whiting et al. 1995: 15)

The artifact was initially made for a specific purpose, to perform a specific cultural function, and that the natural deterioration of the artifact is therefore part of its actuality. (Harris 1993: 32)

A second concern is that preserving "conceptual integrity" (as conservators would think of it) is extremely important, and this is emphasized in many First Nations statements. This will be illustrated in more detail in the section on cultural significance and sacred/sensitive objects. An interesting comparative example, however, is related by Welsh in Clavir (1992). Welsh, at the time a senior curator at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, describes Navaho consultants for an exhibit objecting to a particular basket being shown, because it closely resembled sacred/sensitive material. The basket was a known reproduction and had never been used ritually. In addition, certain elements were evidently physically different, for example, feathers had been sewn down rather than placed. Although the basket was not "sacred", it showed sufficient conceptual authenticity for the
consultants to be concerned that it should not be seen, and it was withdrawn from the exhibit.

**Cultural Significance and Sacred/Sensitive Objects**

First Nations people have stressed several issues pertaining to sacred/sensitive objects, the primary one being the over-riding importance of respecting spiritual or other meanings considered fundamental cultural constructs.

Aboriginal people do believe in a grand narrative. We believe in the laws of the Creator. Laws are anathema to the postmodern. Some even call our Relationship to the Creator a covenant, a sacred agreement to protect the earth and the life it sustains. (Todd 1993-4: 60)

This comment emphasizes the point that the cultural significance of certain objects, especially of sacred/sensitive objects, is far more important to the First Nations community than to the museum community.

There is a sense of balance that goes hand in hand with the restoration of the ritual associated with sacred objects. ...The sacred duty has been performed. The people are fulfilled in a way that can only be experienced, not fully explained. (Hill: 10)

The importance of the cultural significance of objects to their originating culture includes:

i) the recognition of their fundamental importance to the First Nation, of their role in spiritual guidance.

In the traditional ceremony, the principal participants are the bundles/ceremonialists, the hosts [and others]. ... Creator's authority is recognized in the bundles, thereby making the objects within them sacred....At the signing of Treaty 7 in 1877, the Peigan
Nitsitapi com m unity was guided by 16 bundles/ ceremonialists and 5 societies ... (Crowshoe 1994:6)

Most traditional materials are to some degree sacred in nature. ...The most sacred items are communal and hence vitally important - meaning their repatriation could greatly benefit a living Indian community or group. ...
An essential part of these Indian beliefs is the material itself. This could include sacred material or material of cultural patrimony. Both give direction, hope, pride, strength, and all the other essentials to survival. (Horse Capture 1991: 51)

ii) the importance of the restoration/performance of ritual.

The [repatriated] objects stimulate the restoration of the ceremony. The ceremony, in turn, revitalizes the community. (Hill: 10).

iii) the continuing role in Native communities for sacred/sensitive objects which have been/are being housed in museums:

When you get to the level of sacred objects, they shouldn't even be in collections with a curator. They should be back among the people who handle and care for them. They were given to us, each one of them was given to us by our Creator and they are for us. They are not for the general public. (Pete Jemison, Seneca, in Parker 1990:37)

We are asking for things back which have been with us for thousands of years. (Bill Tallbull, as quoted in Clavir, 1992: 31)

Other concerns described previously and emphasized by many authors are:

Privacy: Many authors referred to respecting protocols of privacy pertaining to certain sacred/sensitive objects.

The fact remains that uninitiated individuals, female or male, non-Native or Native, should not have access to sacred or secret materials. (Moses 1993: 8)
"Power": This is considered an inherent quality of certain objects. It is an aspect of the "conceptual integrity" of objects going beyond the usual museum conception of this category. An analogy might be found in the comparison of a sample of granite with a sample of uranium in a natural history collection: both have a physical integrity that can be described by standard procedures, but the uranium has a powerful, invisible, intrinsic attribute. Those who know how to use it can do so for good or for evil purposes. Those who ignore it can be damaged by it. There are strict protocols in handling or using it to prevent harm. (Phillips 1996).

Traditionally [western Plains] bundles are not the only objects which can be imbued with medicine or power. Certain types of shields and shield covers, headdresses, pipes, drums, and various articles of clothing and personal adornment, can also function as physical manifestations of this concept of medicine. (Moses 1993: 5)

Although objects in museums may have been separated from their originating community for a period of time, this rupture has not necessarily diminished their importance or their "power"; this will vary community to community.

I know that respected elders from the Iroquois community in Oshwegan, called Six Nations, go there [Canadian Museum of Civilization] either annually or every two years to feed the false-face masks and that's needed. (Barnes 1993: 2) (Barnes: Mohawk.)

She [Linda Poolaw, of Delaware and Kiowa ancestry] would not touch it [an eagle feather fan] because it was a ceremonial object, but she said museum staff could handle it for her. (Kaminitz 1993: 6)

Spiritual items such as pipes, medicine bags or bundles can be documented for their educational or research value, and then
returned to the people in the native community who are qualified to handle this material. (Jules 1991: 2)

This last quotation as well as the following also highlight another point First Nations people have made, especially in response to concerns raised by the museum community with regard to repatriation, which is that they, not just museums, are able to look after objects from their cultural heritage.

[After repatriation] many communities hold public meetings, rituals, and councils to teach each other about the care of the restored objects. People of all ages learn of the significance, intended use, stories and rituals associated with each object. ... The entire community feels responsible for the welfare of the object. (Hill: 10)

Use Versus Preservation

There is a strong First Nations perspective supporting the necessity to use heritage objects.

We know what conservators do or try to do; that is, preserve objects for as long as possible. But, diametrically opposed to this is the general Indian view as I know it, which is that objects are created to be used and when those objects are damaged or worn out, they are thrown away and new ones are made. (Webster 1986: 77)

A lifetime of constant use is the artifact's only purpose. Since these objects were meant to deteriorate through functional use, they must remain crucial focal points of our traditional functions, available for use by the people to whom they belong. (Harris 1993: 32)

For utilitarian objects, this question of use has parameters related to the condition of the object. (Other parameters will be seen in the research interviews and include who has the right to use the object.) For example, Elizabeth Harry (Kee kus), an elder and basket maker from the Sliammon
band in British Columbia, who was training in museum work, said that older baskets would traditionally be repaired, and when they could no longer be used, they would be thrown out. They are useful objects, made to be used (Harry 1994).

On the other hand, Alison Nyce, from the Nisga'a Nation, has commented that when objects were sold to the early anthropologists such as Boas, there were many more people who had "grown up with the culture", and many more who could make new objects from skills and knowledge based in traditions. She noted that this is different from today's situation (Nyce 1995). Nyce might go further towards the preservation of old baskets than Kee kus would.

For ritual objects, however, use does not stop. Louie Adams, a Salish spiritual leader speaking at the "Keepers of the Treasures" conference in 1992, talked about traditional cultural matters being put in the background [rather than disappearing]. He said his culture did not go away, it was just quiet, nobody was using it, and he is pleased to see that it is coming back strongly (Clavir 1992: 7). In addition, ritual caretaking may involve handling the objects in a way analogous to use, if one considers use from the conservator's point of view: wear. For example, Hill notes that ritual caretaking includes stroking, caressing (eg., during ritual feeding using sunflower oil), as well as ritual burning of tobacco nearby (Hill 1994).

My grandad died in 1913 in Washington as part of a delegation petitioning the government. ...Three years ago his pipe came back. The family now has an annual sundance. The pipe is kept in a frame building without environmental controls -- I don't call it a Museum -- It's still alive. (First Nations consultant as quoted in Kaminitz 1993: 12)
The living culture is emphasized continually in statements made by First Nations about heritage objects. They highlight the sense of continuity and the objects' importance in contemporary life, and make the point that the function of these objects in the culture does not deteriorate and has not deteriorated. This stands in sharp contrast to the function of many objects from western material culture in museum collections.

Preservation for First Nations is again emphasized as meaning cultural preservation. It includes the need to use and maintain objects ritually and often the need for them to be seen by community members and sometimes others. It is also important that the objects' histories be told and the traditions of making them be passed on. In other words, the objects need to be part of the community's identity in the ways the community and its traditions sanction. The irony is that objects left communities, assisting in the separation of people from their material heritage, in part because of the activities of the very people who believed they were preserving cultural heritage -- those who collected for museums in order to preserve the objects and cultures that they believed were disappearing.

At a Kwakiutl feast in 1900 anthropologist Franz Boas experienced the eerie irony of his own collecting work and remarked that although the speeches were still the same as he had heard in the past, "the bowls [were] no longer here. They are in the museums in New York and Berlin." (Doxtator 1994: 19)

In contrast, Canadian museums have traditionally approached treasured material heritage by removing it from customary use and protecting, conserving and interpreting it in an institutional setting and in the name of the people of the country or region. (Eastern Working Group 1991: 1)
First Nations use of objects from museum collections is not only for the purposes of traditional ritual use, but also for the type of use museums normally consider for their collections, that is, use for educational and research purposes.

Clearly the preservation of ethnographic collections is very important. But of equal importance in this country is the access to those collections by native people, particularly the carvers, for study purposes and, in special cases, for loans of material for ceremonial occasions. (Webster 1986: 78)

In addition, one can note that the importance of cultural use is also emphasized figuratively in some word choices, for example, "to bring this generation back in touch with the power that used to be our birthright" (Hill 1993: 10). It is interesting to note how often words associated with conservation in museum language are used to describe cultural preservation by First Nations. For example, "sacred knowledge is fragile " (Hill 1993: 9); "If it had taken any longer for the sacred objects to be restored, even those elders might not have survived" (Hill 1993: 10); "I had been wondering where negative stereotyping and imagery about the Native Indian was being conserved " (Watts 1988: 1); "[p]ut the pieces of our family back together" (Jack Jr. 1996); "The need to 'balance' is what created the Peigan world view" (Crowshoe 1994: 3). (The last citation is analogous to the first principle of ethical behaviour for conservators from the Canadian code of ethics.) (All italics in this paragraph are this author's.)
Culturally-Modified Practice in Museums

There are a growing number of examples in museums of indigenous cultural concerns modifying the practice of the museum. For example, Tamarapa noted policy changes at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, in which, for example, restrictions were placed on food being brought near any taonga, as it is believed to neutralize the life force of particularly sacred items, and in which water bowls were placed at exit ways to taonga in storage so that people could spiritually cleanse themselves (Tamarapa 1994: 44). (A glossary of Maori terms is included in Appendix F.) Objects related to food and everyday functions are stored separately from sacred objects (ibid.: 45). Tattooed heads and bones are "the most sacred objects of our collection" and are kept in a special sacred storage and referred to using Maori terminology of respect (ibid.: 45). Tamarapa also states that karakia or prayers are usually spoken when a new taonga comes into the museum or is moved. She also notes the restructuring of the museum and the creation of a Department of Maori Art and History that employs senior Maori staff knowledgeable in Maori protocol, among other expertise.

Another example of indigenous cultural concerns modifying museum practice was evident during the Te Maori exhibition. O'Biso has written that Maori ritual required that the welcoming museum have a ceremony at dawn during which the doors of the museum were left unlocked and no guards or other museum personnel were permitted to be left inside but instead had to enter ritually (O'Biso 1987). Regarding objects from the American Southwest, the use of ritual corn pollen and meal to feed masks concerned conservators at one museum because of the risk of insect infestation, and a compromise
was reached with the religious leaders so that the food was ritually given to
and left with the masks, but was allowed to be frozen beforehand, which
eliminated at least the possibility that insect eggs would be brought into the
museum (Welsh, Sease et al. 1992). Clavir reported on changes being made in
1992 to a storage room at the Museum of New Mexico (MNM) to address
concerns from the pueblos:

The room for culturally sensitive objects at the Museum of New
Mexico is set apart from the rest of the collections. Features of this
room include:

1. A design similar to a traditional pueblo storage room in that
   - the person who enters crosses a threshold into another area
   - the shelves are open.
   - the room has access to a room with fresh air. The objects are
     considered living and have a need to breathe like all living things.

2. The blinds pull down over the shelves or there are dust covers so
   people do not have to see all the objects at once, as the objects in the
   room may come from different cultures. This is the MNM's
   addition to try to avoid offending Pueblo people seeing other
   objects. It is a compromise in order to use a single room for all
   material.

3. The objects are arranged by culture. Within this, the objects are
   arranged in a certain order, and sometimes piled, on the advice of
   the consultants. The consultants also advised interleaving piled
   objects with paper or cloth bags, like they do at home.

4. The room is sealed off from the rest of the collections, so objects
   can be fed (cf. #1 re living objects) or smudged (exposed to smoke,
   usually from smouldering sage, tobacco or sweetgrass), as required.
   (Clavir 1994: 6)

At the Six Nations Woodland Cultural Centre in Ontario, rituals are
not performed in the museum but
The Woodland Museum has had the opportunity to "loan" the Medicine Masks in our collection to the traditional community for ceremonial purposes. In these ceremonies, the Masks are "renewed," meaning that they are cleaned and conserved according to customary procedures. These procedures are what preserves the Masks. (Harris 1993: 33)

Ritual care is emphasized as being as necessary as scientific care. Among the First Nations, traditions of proper care and handling and appropriate use, are well and long established, and have served to ensure the continued physical and spiritual well-being of a variety of ritual and sacred objects over the span of many generations. (Moses 1993: 6)

The experts for this kind of care of objects housed in museums are those who are considered appropriate by the First Nations community, usually elders or other keepers of certain rights or traditions. Moses makes the point that these specialists should be regarded as part of the circle of professional advisors with whom a conservator normally consults. "Euro-North American museum workers should look upon Native elders and recognized spiritual leaders as a professional (italics this author's) resource in their efforts to obtain a more complete understanding of the Native materials they come in contact with" (Moses 1993: 8).

CONCLUSION

The overwhelming impression given by First Nations statements about the preservation of material culture is that preservation of objects is part of regaining respect and identity and cultural well-being through revival and retention of traditions and redress of historic power imbalances. Preservation of objects is defined as part of the maintenance of the life of the community.
In addition, objects housed in urban museums may remain in the museum or may be repatriated, according to various viewpoints, but in both cases the objects should be contextualized in a situation in which First Nations are involved in decisions about them.

If this place [NMAI] does nothing else but be a living entity that transmits human respect and sensitivity, then all the work we do and will do will be a success. (First Nations consultant as quoted in Kaminitz 1993:10)

There needs to be an equal partnership which involves mutual respect and appreciation of the First Nations' culture and history. (Barnes 1993: 3)

Equal partnership and empowerment seem to be the way of the future. (Branche 1994: 36)

Writers such as Moses (1995) have acknowledged that objects change their meaning as they progress through their life histories, and that they are interpreted in different ways by different people. The original purpose for which an object was created is not necessarily the only purpose it still serves, according to some First Nations perspectives. Furthermore, Doxtator (1994) and Hakiwai (1995) comment that it is in fact museums which have not recognized the dynamism and the changes in First Nations communities, but have tended to lock their vision of indigenous peoples in a past context. Many Native authors do, however, confirm that the contemporary needs of First Nations communities are served by reinstating sacred/sensitive objects to their original purpose, and that these needs take precedence over museological needs. It is also recognized that sacred/sensitive objects
(depending on their definition) usually represent only a small proportion of existing museum collections (for example, see Ladd in Clavir 1992).

The tables in this chapter show that there are often significant differences between First Nations and museum perspectives. The differences are primarily self-explanatory as seen in the quotations and comparative statements. Some of these differences, however, such as ownership, represent issues with far-reaching implications and are being influenced greatly by decision-making processes situated in a broader socio-political and legal context. Other issues, such as appropriate care of objects in museums, fall much more within the individual museum's purview for negotiation and decision-making. In summary, while the differences in the points of view may be significant, the issues also represent differences of scale and of the potential of the parties to bring them to a satisfactory resolution.

The museum remains a charged negative symbol for many Native individuals, while at the same time positive aspects of museum practice are noted, made use of, and participated in. Museums therefore occupy an ambiguous place, being both positive and negative, a place of decontextualization and of (often negative) recontextualization. Moreover, they are both preservers from further loss and a cause of the loss in the first place: "A lot of cultural material has been lost, mostly to museums" (Webster 1986: 78).

In her research on Native artists and their self-definitions -- whether they are artists first or indigenous artists first -- Mithlo has stated that in times of change, where the boundaries people have set up for themselves are also changing, a liminal zone exists, a state of ambiguity. In this zone people can
be "both" as well as "either /or". "The maintenance of boundaries, or the manipulation of "separateness" thus serves the interests of the disempowered" (Mithlo 1994:1). (Mithlo: Apache) Following Mithlo, in understanding why it is important for First Nations to maintain their "separateness", one can also see that some individuals have defined themselves and their work as "both museums and First Nations", while others have posited First Nations concerns as opposing museums and what they do.

This schema applies to the definition of preservation as well. In some cases, for example, such as the use/preservation issue, use is regarded as the direct opposite of preservation, when it is museum conservation that is being referred to. In other cases use is, in fact, preservation because the object is repaired, maintained, and cared for through its ritual use.

Many statements cited involve abstract concepts, such as "identity" and "respect", and some, such as the description of the storage room at the Museum of New Mexico or the changes in museum practice in New Zealand, involve descriptions of precise details and protocols. The statements on ownership make it clear that First Nations believe strongly that they own their heritage, even if the museum owns the objects. In this atmosphere, how are decisions made regarding appropriate care of objects housed in urban museums? Do the contrasting viewpoints expressed in both concrete and abstract statements produce clear conflicts, or is there a tendency to expand the conventional models of both conservation/museum practice and First Nations viewpoints on this and on appropriate care, so that an "and/both"
model referred to by Mithlo transforms the "either/or" conflictual situation? The research interviews address these questions.

In summary, as discussed in the Introduction, the traditional cultural triangle of "museums, objects, and collections" has been opened up to include the originators of the objects. The indigenous originators, descendants, and their communities have become acknowledged "stakeholders" in the museum enterprise, and their viewpoints may present differences, both conceptual and practical, to standard museum practice. First Nations individuals, including museum professionals, have written about their beliefs concerning museums and preservation. They have presented various and sometimes contradictory individual perspectives, but overall certain common beliefs have emerged. One of the most significant is that the meaning of "preservation" is based in the concept of continuing cultural traditions and identity as part of living First Nations communities today, and objects housed in museums play a role in this.
CHAPTER 6

FIRST NATIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

INTRODUCTION

A major focus of this dissertation is the perspectives on the preservation of material culture articulated by First Nations individuals in British Columbia. This chapter is intended to provide an introduction to the people and their communities, as a background context for the material from the research interviews. It will briefly consider demographics, historic and present legal status and rights, and traditional elements in the societies. The diversity of the First Nations of British Columbia will become evident, and the respondents in this research come from these diverse nations and communities. The desire to be recognized by their individuality is emphasized, for example, in the following:

Two aspects of Stó:lo society -- the specific status based on social structures and unique relationships with the Spirit world -- clearly distinguish and set it apart from many other Aboriginal communities. Recognizing this cultural distinctiveness is extremely important if one wishes to truly appreciate Stó:lo people and Stó:lo history. Stó:lo society is as distinct from other North American Aboriginal societies as Spanish culture is from different European cultures. Just as you would never try to learn about Spain by studying Swedish or Ukrainian society, you would not try to learn about the Stó:lo by studying the Iroquois or the Cree. And yet, government policy towards Aboriginal people in Canada has never appreciated these cultural and geographic differences. Indeed, one of the few things shared by all Canadian Aboriginal peoples is the experience of colonization. (Carlson 1997: 88)
This chapter was faced, therefore, with two dilemmas. The first was how to briefly give the reader some knowledge of First Nations in British Columbia without creating an oversimplified, generalized description, contrary to how the First Nations view themselves. The second was how to ensure, in the spirit of this dissertation, that this information represented First Nations perspectives on their own cultures as well as information mediated through specialists in research disciplines such as anthropology. For the latter, it was decided in the section on social and cultural history to provide descriptive information on one group, the Kwakwaka’wakw of Alert Bay, with whom several of the research respondents are affiliated, to enable one Northwest Coast cultural system and such elements as the potlatch to be clarified. This information is mainly from an anthropological perspective. To present information published by a particular First Nation, a book from the Sto:lo First Nation is used, which also enables contrasts between the more southern, Salishan-speaking Sto:lo and the more northern, Kwakwala-speaking Kwakwaka’wakw to be highlighted. In this research the names Sto:lo and Kwakwaka’wakw have been written without their diacritical marks. However, the orthography used for the Halq’eméylem language in the publication You Are Asked To Witness is “Stó:lo”, and the orthography used by the U’mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay is “Kwakwaka’wakw”. Interviewees with some affiliation with the Kwakwaka’wakw and Alert Bay (see list of interviewees) are AS, DC, DK, GW, JP, PS and RB. Interviewees affiliated with Coast Salish bands (although they are not from the Sto:lo Nation: there are distinct dialects and cultural elements) are: AC, SJ and EC from
Vancouver Island, and DS, HG and LMS from the Musqueam Nation (Vancouver).

In 1991, statistics showed that 17 percent of Canada’s aboriginal population lived in British Columbia (B.C. Hydro 1995), representing less than three percent of the population of the province (Anderson 1995). Status Indians, aboriginal people who are registered under the federal Indian Act and have rights and benefits specified by the Act, numbered approximately 85,000 in 1991 (1995: 11). There are at least an equal number of non-status aboriginal people and Métis in the province (1990). In 1990, just over half of the B.C. status Indians lived on reserves (1990: 1).

In Canada, some aboriginal people still refer to themselves as Indians and this is the term used in some official titles such as the federal Indian Act, and numerous band names. For individuals, however, the increasingly common terms are "aboriginal" and "First Nations". "First Peoples" is also used as a collective term. Many aboriginal people wish to be recognized for the specific band or First Nation to which they belong. A First Nation may refer to a single band, or to a group of bands affiliated with a tribal council or cultural group. (When used on their own, the individual words "nation" and "band" may or may not be capitalized.) A band has been defined as "a group of people that holds reserve land or has funds held for it by the federal government, or has been declared a band by the Governor-in-Council. Its definition is provided in the Indian Act" (1995: 8). Anderson writes that there are close to 200 bands in British Columbia, many with a membership of under 500 persons (Anderson 1995: 553). Tribal councils are groupings of different bands and may represent traditional alliances of aboriginal people with a
common language and culture, or modern associations formed to deal with administrative, political, and land use issues (1995: 9).

In naming individuals or groups, however, it is most important to give recognition to the name or affiliation by which those people wish to be known. The significance of being acknowledged by your own terms rather than through imposed categories is underscored, for example, in the following description of chieftainship:

I was chief of the Lillooet band for a number of years. ... Our community had decided it was time for a change so we split the chieftainship. ... I am not the tribal chief of the Stl'atl'imx Nation, I am just one. ... It is important that I am not an elected chief under the Indian Act; I am elected strictly by the people within Tl’stl’kit, which is called the Lillooet Indian band in English. Tl’stl’kit is the Stl’atl’imx term for our community.

What we are doing is re-identifying with ourselves, because in order to get our message across to the people here so that you start to understand who we are, we have to re-identify with our roots. That is going to be a tough job for our people. It is going to be an internal struggle because of the emotional, spiritual, and physical assimilation that has gone on in our communities. ... When we have done this, we will be telling you who we are in terms of being Stl’atl’imx.

We use the other term, "Nation", because that is a term that non-Native people can use to identify that we are a people with a language, a culture, a tradition -- a people who have adopted your culture and your traditions, in some ways. (Leach 1992: 23)

A map of names of the First Nations of British Columbia current at the time of this research is reproduced on the next page. One of the interviewees in this research, PB, a curator at UBC Museum of Anthropology from the Heiltsuk Nation, wrote the accompanying text. It states:
Peoples of the First Nations have always recognized themselves by names in their own language. These names denote their identities: village, house, clan or tribe. Following European contact 200 years ago, the majority of tribal groups in British Columbia were given arbitrary English names or identified under generic terms created by early explorers and ethnographers. The inevitable mis-identifications have created serious concerns for First Nations, as well as confusion in much of the published texts. Today, as First Nations take control of their own destiny and strive for self-determination, they have asked the non-Native public to recognize them by the names they prefer. We are striving to present these names on this map. To recognize our [The UBC Museum of Anthropology's] First Nations neighbours with whom we share the Georgia Straits region, we have focussed on distinctive local names. (Brown 1994)
First Nations of British Columbia

© 1994 UBC Museum of Anthropology
This map is regularly revised. Latest revision March 5, 1996.
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The intent is to provide a more accurate representation of First Nations in British Columbia. Boundaries shown are language areas and not an authoritative depiction of tribal territories. The names listed are the ones First peoples prefer to call themselves. Terms and spellings do not reflect all dialects or names used by First Nations living within the illustrated regions.
Another way of noting the distinctions between First Nations in British Columbia is to look at the aboriginal languages. According to one source, seven of Canada's 11 distinctive indigenous language families, representing 30 different languages, are found in the province, and 64 percent of the country's unique aboriginal languages exist only in British Columbia (1995: 10,11). It is difficult today, however, to find a fluent speaker of most of the aboriginal languages who is not yet 40 years old, although many communities have language programs encouraging preservation of the language. The UBC Museum of Anthropology has also produced a map entitled "First Nations Languages of British Columbia", which is reproduced on the next two pages.

In the text of this dissertation, statements will be found concerning the use of the term First Nations, noting that one cannot speak of "First Nations perspectives" as representing a homogeneous collectivity. The historic and present profound diversity of First Nations in British Columbia, as shown by these two maps alone, underlines these statements.
Languages of British Columbia

This map is regularly revised. Latest revision April 1, 1996.
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Boundaries on this map mark out areas within which distinct languages are spoken. The areas are approximate and subject to revision. Names used here are those which are preferred by First Nations and have come into general acceptance for the languages concerned. They are also subject to revision.

Georgia Straits Region:

A) Comox
B) Sechelt
C) Squamish
D) Halkomelem
E) Straits Salish
First Nations Languages of British Columbia

This table lists British Columbia First Nations languages according to Language Families — groupings of languages which can be shown to be similar to one another. Languages in the same family are historically related to one another and derived from ancestral forms.

The names given in bold print are those preferred by First Nations, or in current use. Names in parentheses are discontinued or inappropriate names. They may be dominant in earlier literature.

Corrections and additions may be forwarded to:
Map Project, Museum of Anthropology, 6393 N.W. Marine Drive, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z2. Fax (604) 822-2974.

The ATHAPASCAN language family:
1. Dakelh (Central and Southern Carrier)
2. Dene-thah (Slavey)
3. Dunne-za (Beaver)
4. Kaska
5. Sekani
6. Tagish
7. Tahltan
8. Tsilhqot’in (Chilcotin)
9. Tutchone

The WAKASHAN language family:
1. Haisla (Northern Kwakiutl)
2. Heiltsuk (Bella Bella, Northern Kwakiutl)
3. Kwakwala (Kwakiutl)
4. Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka)
5. Oweekeno (Northern Kwakiutl)
6. Dididaht (Nootka)

The SALISHAN language family:
1. Comox
2. Halkomelem
3. Niłaka’pamux (Thompson)
4. Nuxalk (Bella Coola)
5. Okanagan
6. Secwepemc (Shuswap)
7. Sechelt
8. Squamish
9. Stl’atl’imx (Lillooet)
10. Straits Salish

The TSIMSHIAN language family:
1. Tsimshian
2. Gitxsan, Nisga’a

The ALGONKIAN language family:
1. Cree

LANGUAGE ISOLATES
Three languages are unrelated to any other known language. Each of these is termed a language isolate. In British Columbia there are three:

Haida Ktunaxa (Kootenay) Tlingit
It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present the history of and political issues involved in First Nations/non-Native relations in British Columbia. The question of aboriginal title and ownership of what is traditionally theirs is, however, pertinent to discussions of cultural heritage as well as to land claims and other issues relating to traditional use of resources. British Columbia is the only province in Canada where treaties were never negotiated for the vast majority of the territory (B.C. Hydro 1995). Today aboriginal title and aboriginal rights are not considered extinguished under Canadian law. (In 1991 the Supreme Court of B.C. ruled that aboriginal rights in B.C. were extinguished by pre-Confederation (pre-1867) legislation, but the B.C. Court of Appeals overturned this decision in 1993, stating that undefined aboriginal rights continue to exist (B.C. Hydro 1995: 6). In First Nations perspectives, however, these rights have always existed.) In addition, aboriginal rights are entrenched in the Canadian constitution. In British Columbia, "there can be no certainty about the nature and extent of the Crown's title to land and resources, except through a process of negotiation designed to reconcile the respective rights of the Crown and First Nations (BC Treaty Commission 1996: 17). First Nations, on the other hand, might take the point of view that because there has been no treaty, First Nations title and interests have never been bought, and it is incumbent on the Crown as the current fiduciary of the land to negotiate instead the terms of their duties towards the land. Today in British Columbia, fundamental issues of ownership of land and resources are being brought before negotiating committees and the courts in processes that are only beginning for most bands. It is not surprising that issues of cultural heritage are being negotiated
in smaller arenas such as museums as well as being brought to the table in governmental negotiations such as in the Nisga'a Agreement-In-Principle (1996).

One other historical contextual element in Native/non-Native relations needs to be brought forward to provide a background for the information presented in this research; the nature of the power relationship between First Nations and non-Natives, and the extent of the losses experienced by First Nations in British Columbia in the imposed process of the colonization of the area. Not only were losses extensive, but they occurred within only a few generations. Initially, populations began to be decimated by European diseases such as smallpox even before the Europeans themselves had arrived (Carlson 1997: 28). These epidemics had a tremendous influence on populations; in the smallpox epidemic beginning in 1862, for example, it is estimated that one-third of the First Nations people in the area now British Columbia died (Macnair 1995: 594). The Sto:lo have published a graphic account of what smallpox in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries meant to their people, which concludes:

The smallpox epidemics killed most of the Elders which therefore resulted in a loss of their knowledge and a gap in learning. Some people refer to this as "culture loss". Sto:lo survivors also suffered from severe depression. In addition, economic hardships were encountered, which resulted in poverty and feelings of despair. While some aspects of Sto:lo society were necessarily altered, the striking feature was not the changes, but the amazing degree of cultural continuity. (Carlson 1997: 39)

The non-Native population of B.C. was extremely small until the mid-nineteenth century. The explorers at the end of the eighteenth century were
quickly followed by traders whose interests lay in acquiring valuables such as sea otter pelts, which they then transported to China. These sailors did not settle and when the sea otter population had been decimated by 1830, trade in pelts from land animals grew, and the Hudsons Bay Company established forts in several regions. In the 1850s, however, gold rush fever brought an overwhelming number of settlers into some areas of the province. Many First Nations communities were profoundly affected by these and other developments imposed or ensuing from Euro-American colonization, for example: the arrival of missionaries; occassional location changes of communities to be near the forts, sometimes resulting in rival chiefs moving to the same village; pressure on the traditional system of cultural status and ritual prerogatives from location changes, from gaps in the social hierarchy as the population died of disease, and from the acquisition by new people of wealth and often ceremonial privileges through marriage. In addition, in communities European material culture was valued and eventually began to displace aspects of traditional material culture. Other aspects of traditional material culture, especially ceremonial regalia in the nineteenth century, became more elaborate in some areas as wealth from trade increased; with new wealth, economic rivalries erupted as new value and more value accrued to natural resources controlled by different chiefs. As the settler population increased, pressure to control land became enormous. Although British Columbia has many Indian reserves, they are generally quite small, were created unilaterally without agreement with those who lived there, and in their size did not represent a viable economic base (Anderson 1995).
Tennant emphasizes that, despite the extensive disruption of Native populations and societies, the continuity of the larger tribal groups or nations was maintained. Lineages and villages suffered extensive losses historically, but in general surviving populations of neighbouring communities within a nation then came together, and by the 1850s the situation had stabilized. "The great majority of communities that were present at that time did survive and still exist today" (Tennant 1992: 9).

As can be seen, the non-Native history of B.C. is very recent. For First Nations in B.C. (which joined the Canadian Confederation in 1871), most of this period has been spent under various "Indian Laws" or the federal Indian Act. These laws or acts have been used to:

- outlaw traditional governing systems and replace them with elected band councils;
- limit the aboriginal land base to small reserves (which presently accounts for 0.36 percent of B.C.'s total land mass);
- annihilate the aboriginal economic base by prohibiting Indians to sell land, agricultural goods or farm animals;
- prohibit aboriginal people from investing moneys earned by their communities;
- prevent aboriginal people from voting provincially or federally (this was lifted in 1945 and 1960, respectively);
- limit the ability of aboriginal people to leave the reserve (special permission from the Minister of Indian Affairs was required);
- prohibit aboriginal people from retaining a lawyer or to raise funds with the intention of hiring a lawyer (changed in 1951);
- forcibly remove aboriginal children from their homes and families to attend distant boarding schools (ended in 1983);
- and eradicate aboriginal identity by creating arbitrary categories of "Indianness" -- i.e. status, non-status, Metis. (B.C. Hydro 1995: 14)

With these restrictions, the obstacles become evident, for example, in the path of the Nisga'a Nation, who began to pursue its land claim in 1887 and only in 1996 was able to achieve an agreement-in principle. In addition to the above stipulations in the Indian Act, of particular relevance to this
research is the amendment in 1884 prohibiting the potlatch and the sundance. This amendment was never officially rescinded but was dropped from the Act in 1951 and therefore ceased to be law.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

First Nations oral histories record that they have lived in British Columbia since time immemorial. According to archaeologists, there is evidence of First Nations habitation of southern British Columbia from 9,000 years ago; dates further up the coast may be even older. The glaciers retreated from B.C. approximately 12,000 years ago, and for hundreds of years after, the land continued to change its configuration, rising as a result of the pressure of the ice mass lifting and changing river courses; what early sites there may have been, therefore, are considered mainly unrecoverable (McMillan 1988: 171).

Descriptions of First Nations cultures of B.C. often embody the phrase "Northwest Coast". There are two misconceptions that may be associated with certain usages of this phrase, the first being that the cultures along the coast were similar. While in anthropological interpretation certain cultural elements in coastal societies show similarities, such as the potlatch, it must be reiterated that First Nations people today have emphasized their dislike of generalization at the expense of recognition of unique cultural traits. As will also be discussed, there are highly significant differences between the traditional cultures of the southern and the northern societies on the Coast. Second, the coastal peoples are not the only First Nations in B.C. There are
thriving First Nations in the vast interior of British Columbia; LJ, a respondent in this research, married into one of these Interior bands.

The Interior of British Columbia is geographically different from the coast. Areas of the plains and plateaus between the mountains may have a semi-arid climate. Distinctive First Nations material as well as social cultures extends both north and south of the Canada-U.S. border. One notable difference in material culture is that the totem poles for which British Columbia has become known do not exist in the Interior cultures, and in fact it is an interesting comment on museum practice that complex and outstanding material culture such as totem poles defines the representation of that area in many western institutions, but cultures with complex social and linguistic patterns without prominent material culture are relegated to a minor position or ignored.

Totem poles of the kind found in museums also do not exist in all areas of the Coast. The southern, Salishan-speaking peoples have a different material culture from the more northerly groups, as will be seen in the discussion about the Sto:lo First Nation. They also are distinctive socio-culturally. The Kwakwaka'wakw, by contrast, are a Northwest Coast linguistic group which is widely known, often under the older term "Kwakiutl", and the traditional culture of the aboriginal people who form much of the community of Alert Bay will now be discussed. Much of this section is drawn from work by ethnographer Peter Macnair, for thirty years a research curator at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, whose primary work was with the people of Alert Bay.
According to Macnair, the Kwakwaka'wakw or Kwakwala-speaking people comprise about twenty village groups (called "tribes" by Franz Boas), only one of which would refer to themselves as "Kwagu'l" (Macnair 1995). Each group functioned relatively independently, although social and ceremonial occasions brought them together. During the year, people moved among resource areas which they had the exclusive right to use, from land-based areas where they obtained foods from hunting or from plants such as berries and roots, to river and shore areas where they obtained resources such as oolichan (eulachon, "candle fish") oil and tidal shellfish, to the important ocean-based resources where they hunted seals and caught halibut. Salmon were caught in the ocean and from rivers. The Pacific salmon especially is significant, today as well as previously, not only as a staple food throughout much of the year (the runs of the five species extend collectively from spring until December, and it can be preserved by smoking, canning, and drying), but to the culture itself. Many coastal societies celebrate a First Salmon rite.

The abundance of natural resources supported a large population at the time of contact (perhaps 500 people in a large winter village, with a total population for the Kwakwaka'wakw of around 8,000 (Macnair 1995: 593)) in a stratified slave-holding society. Macnair points out that the teeming food resource portrayed in many accounts was only successfully exploited with daily labours, sophisticated technology and an intimate knowledge of the environment (Macnair 1995: 592). Other natural resources such as the western red cedar historically provided such things as fibre for clothing and ritual items from the inner bark, and containers such as carved bowls and boxes made from kerfed and steamed planks. Some boxes were made for
food storage, others for respectful storage of regalia, some for cooking, and still others as "coffins". Cedar wood was split into house planks, left whole for totem poles, or canoes, and carved into masks or other regalia. The cedar continues to be important for artists today as are other woods used in the past such as alder and yew.

Macnair describes the functioning social unit in Kwakwaka'wakw society as an extended lineage group, all of whom descend from a single mythic ancestor (Macnair 1995: 594). Several extended families each occupying a separate house constituted the namima (from the Kwakwala term numaym). Several of these namima constituted a village group.

The namima functioned more or less independently, each having specially defined resource areas that only they could exploit. Further, their ceremonial prerogatives were jealously guarded, though they could be transferred through either the male or female line in marriage. (Macnair 1995: 594)

Macnair relates an origin story and concludes:

Together the two (the man-transformed-from-halibut and the Thunderbird) became the founders of a 'Namgis namima and ever since their descendants have had the right to display such images on house frontal paintings, on carved houseposts or house frontal posts, on ceremonial settees, or on dancing blankets. Masks may also be employed in an elaborate theatrical tableau to re-enact the adventures of these mythical forebears.

Such imagery filled the daily and ceremonial lives of the Kwakwaka'wakw at the time of European contact. Each person was aware of his or her origins and secure in the knowledge that his patrimony was assured. (Macnair 1995: 595)

This last statement in particular contrasts strongly with the thoughts on identity expressed later in this dissertation by the research participants; the
role traditional ceremonial material culture plays in identity, however, remains.

Macnair describes the complex social stratification of the Kwakwaka'wakw through primogeniture within the *namima*, the *namimas* within the village group and the village groups themselves. He says that until the 1880s, significant economic control was the exclusive domain of the *namima* chief. The chief also owned ceremonial privileges such as particular songs, dances, and the right to display representations of privileges and of ancestors. Some of these were displayed at all times, such as through depictions on house fronts; others were in evidence only on ceremonial occasions such as potlatches.

The complex economic system governing the ranking system and relating to ownership of ceremonial privileges was the potlatch, an institution that characterized all Northwest Coast societies. The potlatch was society; it was all-inclusive, encompassing things economic, political, social, religious, ritualistic and ceremonial. Simply stated, a potlatch involved a payment of goods and food to assembled guests gathered to witness a host's claim to ancestral rights or hereditary position. ... [B]y accepting gifts [the guests] validated the claims of the host and confirmed his status. (Macnair 1995: 596)

To give away wealth was to be wealthy. Not only did the individual rise in stature through such actions, so did the entire *namima*, for it was the extended family that worked, often years in advance, to amass the goods and food required for distribution at a large potlatch. (Macnair 1995: 599)

It is appropriate at this point to shift the discussion in the direction of the Sto:lo, and the following point about the potlatch from their publication applies to the Kwakwaka'wakw as well.
Whenever a major feast or potlatch was held the *siyá:m* [well-respected, upper class leaders] hosting the event always borrowed from their relatives to ensure enough food was available... In other words, the hosts became indebted. In this way all who participated in *Stó:lo* potlatches (and everyone did) was by definition "in debt" and ineligible for Canadian citizenship. (Carlson 1997: 98)

The potlatches were ceremonies with legal implications, both in their traditional meaning and in their consequences in the non-Native world.

There were and continue also to be important ceremonies other than the potlatch, as Anderson describes, for many traditional Coastal cultures:

The religious beliefs of all the groups emphasized contact with supernatural beings who controlled wealth and life itself. Humans endeavoured to establish relationships with supernatural powers through ceremonial activities, notably ritual purifications, feasts, potlatches, and winter dance ceremonies. ... Gift-giving feasts called potlatches manifested the wealth and power of the great chiefs, who had the ability to mediate with supernatural powers. Winter ceremonial dances... represented the supernatural forces that created order, brought wealth, and ensured the continuity of the group. (Anderson 1995: 549)

The Coast Salish people also had and have winter dance ceremonies, other ceremonies and potlatches. However in the publication *You Are Asked To Witness: The Stó:lo in Canada's Pacific Coast History*, one will not find a section entitled "Spirituality" or "Ceremonial Life". Instead, reference to the importance of Stó:lo spiritual life occurs throughout the book, for example, in the discussion on understanding the oral tradition and its importance in Stó:lo culture; in an interview with an elder and chief at the beginning of the book; in the discussion of the creation of reserves and the effect on sacred sites; and in the chapter on nineteenth-century Stó:lo social structure and how
government assimilation policy affected the handing down of ritual prerogatives and regalia. Not only does this emphasize that connection to the spirit life permeated traditional Sto:lo society, but it is also an indication that knowledge pertaining to some ceremonies or ritual elements is not described to a public audience, such as in this case through a publication. Indeed, one indication that this is the case is found in the caption to a photograph reading:

Because of their sacred nature, contemporary Sto:lo people do not allow photographs to be taken of masked sxwo:yxwey dancers. They have graciously consented to allowing use of this photo of a carving of a masked sxwo:yxwey dancer found on the house post at Skowkale Hall. (Carlson 1997: 38)

The pole is publicly visible as part of a building, which may be why its use in a book is allowed. Other Salish communities, however, might not only have different rituals and regalia but may well have chosen to leave out any public mention of them. In the museum sphere, the private nature of some ceremonies and regalia was acknowledged, for example, by the action of the UBC Museum of Anthropology in 1996 when it removed sxwaixwe masks from Musqueam from a publicly accessible storage area. Even though some of the masks in this case were newer, not complete, and had never been danced, because of their visual links to regalia used in private ceremonies some First Nations people were offended by their public accessibility. Within the cultures today the masks are never displayed, and are brought out for use in ceremonies which are not photographed or recorded and to which only guests invited by the host attend. The private nature, for example, of some Salish rituals and associated regalia can be seen as a major cultural difference from the more public display of many types of Kwakwaka'wakw regalia to
large numbers of guests. In the museum sphere, to this author's experience, there have been no complaints from Kwakwala-speaking communities about displaying regalia to the public, except for whistles (also discussed in the interviews). The objection to displaying the whistles is not that the whistles are private, but that they are never seen but only heard in their ceremonial context.

It must also be acknowledged that this cultural element of privacy is part of a larger context. First, both the element of privacy and the context have changed over time; when the masks were originally sold to the Museum of Anthropology many decades ago, some Salish people felt that they should be seen as part of the rich heritage of the society, and indeed there are nineteenth-century photographs taken out-of-doors of some of these ceremonies or of the dancers. Second, there are geographical influences: in most cases the Salishan-speaking nations have been a minority for more than a hundred years surrounded by the most intense urbanization in B.C. The Kwakwaka'wakw, on the other hand, are the majority in their community. Privacy helps maintain boundaries which mark the community as separate (Kew 1997).

An additional important difference between Sto:lo and Kwakwaka'wakw regalia can be seen in the question of power resident in objects. Kwakwaka'wakw masks and other regalia are or bear representations of rights, privileges, and ancestral history. In the past these representations may have been sold because they were indeed simply representations, and the rights continued to remain with the aboriginal owner. In Sto:lo culture, however, power from the individual owner might
remain in an object, both in secular and ritual pieces. The objects are not inherently powerful, but can be empowered by their rightful use and connection to the family or individual who has the rights to them, and by the knowledge that is held by the person. This information concerning spirituality is again not explained at length in You are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lo in Canada’s Pacific Coast History, but it is alluded to, for example, in the following explanation of a particular account in Stó:lo oral literature in which the concept of residual spirit power figures. In order to understand spirit power,

the Stó:lo explain that if a man wants to become an expert fisherman he goes on a spirit quest and receives special spirit powers to assist him in fishing. While fishing, he calls upon this spirit to assist him. A fisherman also inadvertently leaves residual spirit power in his fishing equipment, canoe, and even his clothing -- indeed, any of his personal possessions. (Carlson 1997:192)

For museums, it is necessary to ask knowledgeable people from each Salish culture whether objects in a museum collection might be considered to still have power, which in the eyes of people from that culture might affect the well-being of its members or of others.

This chapter has attempted to provide a background for the material presented in this dissertation in the research interviews with First Nations individuals in B.C. The information in this chapter is intended to provide a context for the reader who may not be familiar with the First Nations of this area. Of necessity, as this vast subject is not the focus of the dissertation, this chapter is not detailed but attempts to describe some aspects of the traditional and contemporary cultures of selected First Nations in B.C. relevant to this
research, and highlight some points of diversity between them. In addition, it can be seen that themes emerging in this research concerning the preservation of heritage objects held in museums, such as loss and identity, and the relationship of First Nations peoples to museums, are based in this historical and social context.

In order to connect this chapter more closely with the research interviews, the following section provides selected extracts in which the respondents describe what it was like to grow up as First Nations in British Columbia. The reader is referred to the list of interviewees in the next chapter for the full name of each person and other information.

SELECTED BIOGRAPHIES: GROWING UP

AS I was born in the village of Alert Bay, upcoast from Vancouver about 180 miles on the inside passage between Vancouver Island and the mainland; ... Alert Bay is on Cormorant Island, an island that is divided into two. ... the non-Indian population live on one part and the Numgish plus a mixture of other tribal groups live on the other part of the island. So I spent my growing-up years partly in Alert Bay, partly at Gwayasdums on Gilford Island (Kwicksutaineuk), and partly at Kingcome Village (Tsawataneuk). And my father was the Chief of our Tribe, the Kwicksutaineuk, and my first language was Kwakwala which I spoke, my parents spoke, and everybody in the village spoke in those days. I was born in 1927, so that ... our language was still the primary communication between different occupants of the villages in which we lived in. Except, of course, for Alert Bay, most of the stores were located with the non-Indian sections and in our dealings with the fishing companies and stores. English was required so we had to learn English as part of the, you know, part of the process of growing up. My parents had both attended a residential school. In those days, before it was called the residential school, it was an industrial school. And my mother graduated in Grade Eight and my father was removed from the school by his father when he attained the equivalent of Grade Three or Four, I'm
not certain which one it was because my grandfather, on my father's side, apparently needed my father to record the transactions of the potlatches. And so he moved out of the residential school and they lived part of the time in Kingcome, which was the home of his uncle's, my father's uncle and other relatives as well. ... My father and mother developed a belief that in order for their children to survive in the new society we would have to be educated. For the first three years of my normal schooling period, from six to nine, I would spend about a month in Alert Bay day school for instruction and then we would move to Gilford Island, Gwayasdums Village, where there was no school, so I had no schooling for, you know, several months a year, and then in the Spring we would go to Kingcome village, where my parents participated in harvesting oolichans and processing oolichan oil, so there was a school there, so I had one month in Kingcome, so in three years I must have had a total of six months of schooling.

But my parents in the interim wanted me to learn how to read, so I carried all the books that we had with us so that when we were at Gilford Island they would sometimes have me read to them, so, you know, gradually I became familiar with the books and textbooks. When I was nine they decided that I needed a more thorough form of education, so they believed that the residential school was the closest thing, and probably the most available thing, and probably the most suitable thing for me to get this more adequate schooling. So I was enrolled in the St. Michaels Indian Residential School [in Alert Bay] which was run by the Anglican Church. So I did my elementary school, from primary grade to Grade Eight.

... What happened when school started was all these students were sorted out, they started me in primary grade, and everybody in the primary grade were given a passage to read from a book. And I read from the book as did all the others, and the teacher said to me, "You don't belong here, get over to Grade One." So I went to another building, to Grade One. And then at Christmas time in Grade One, I was at the head of the class, so the teacher bumped me to Grade Two. And I was at the Head of the class in Grade Two at the end of the year. And this was not withstanding the fact that we had half a day in school in the classroom, half a day on the grounds, working, doing our share to keep up the buildings and the grounds. Later as we grew older we started working half day on the farm to provide our own potatoes and carrots and turnips and that kind of thing, cabbage.
And we had milking cows, so we provided our own milk, we learned how to milk the cows, which was totally foreign to the coastal way of life. ...

AS  [P]ractically all of my growing up years -- the potlatches were outlawed, they were illegal, according to the Indian Act.
MC   Had your father’s [regalia] been seized from your family at the one at that Cramner Potlatch in 1921 where .. ?
AS   Not my father. I’m not sure of the details of who was all arrested in that Cramner Potlatch, but I do know from family stories that my grandparents, both sides of my family, spent time in jail because of participation in potlatches, Kingcome Village, for instance, became a centre for the underground potlatches that went on regardless of the laws. And of course they were caught from time to time. But Kingcome had the the advantage of being upriver from the inlet, the navigable waters stopped at the mouth of the river, except for canoes. So when a potlatch was going someone would be designated to keep an eye on who was coming and then the message would go out to the village. I had some exposure to the potlatch ceremonies when I was growing up, but of course, I didn’t know what they were all about, ... they took place at night, too, and the fire burning in the middle of the floor of the Big House. The events were -- parts that I can recall -- were quite eerie in the sense that there was only light from the fire that you could witness what was happening, smoke and fire and the dancer and the masks make these people so big, you know, when you’re five years old, everybody looks big. And the singing, I can’t recall too much about the singing, but in later years, when I was older, I heard singing and I have vague recollections of practically the same sounds from the older people in those days who knew all the family songs and what they represented for each family. But eventually they gave up the practice, because the enforcers ... became a little more agressive and more people went to jail, so they had fewer, and fewer potlatches. Of course, some of the older people died off, of course including my grandfather, who had many ... he was a canoe builder and he gave many potlatches and he was from all accounts he was a power broker, I think, in our society. [continues describing marriages and children of his grandfather, including acquiring some songs and crests through marriage.]

But anyway, the format of potlatches was changed. In the early days it was the -- during my grandfather’s time -- the person who gave the potlatch was the organizer of the family. He got the
other family members to participate in gathering of wealth to be distributed at the potlatches. My grandfather was a canoe builder so he built many canoes that were given away at potlatches, and other members of the family did different things, so that those were ... the properties that were given away during the potlatches. Now, even during my grandfather's time, it started to change. They started using flour and blankets and dishes and other foreign goods, and money at potlatches. Now it's basically, substantially, all money. A very few token gifts, you know and now almost anybody can throw one. You have some kind of remote connection through some former Chief. It used to be only the Chief's families that could afford to throw potlatches, because they were the ones that organized the family to contribute to the gifts. Anyway, of course what happened, as you know from your involvement with the museums, what happened ... many of the prosecutions. ...

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DK  My grandfather was originally from Musqueam. He didn't live on reserve but lived in Vancouver. A lot of my relatives are from Musqueam and live in Ladner and are fishermen. My grandmother's side of the family -- she's Mamaleleqala, which is Kwagiuult, or Kwakwaka'wakw, from Village Island.

... I spent a lot of time in the last four years or so going to visit my grandmother and my great aunts up in Alert Bay because I know there's a lot of family information there, history, that I want to attain -- especially, like just in January, I lost my grandmother so I realized how important it is to get that information from our elders so I go up for different potlatches or to visit relatives or our friends -- people, relatives up in Alert Bay and other communities. With the museum, I've been involved for seven years in something called the Native Youth Programme. So, there it's as a student -- that's what helped me to first explore my cultural background or my heritage because I really hadn't had a lot of opportunity prior to that because I grew up in "suburbia". Since becoming involved in the Native Youth Programme as a student [at age 15] and then as a coordinator and then continuing in the museum elsewhere, I've become involved in ... a lot of First Nations' activities, whether it's through the First Nations' Student Association at the college I attended or attending different social functions, or powwows or different gatherings. I have different friends from different cultural backgrounds so. ...
My grandmother lived in Alert Bay for 25 years so that is what I recognize as home. The Mamaleleqala, qwe'qwa'set'enox, our band, doesn't have a home community now. We haven't since the sixties. We were removed from Village Island. So, now they're looking at where to relocate and there's a possibility of relocating on Vancouver Island or else on Village Island but that's an issue still to be discussed or resolved. That'll take 10, 15 years. So, Alert Bay is the closest thing to what I can call a home community, I guess.

MC And so if I ask what is your Nation then, you know, would you say your nation was Kwakwaka'wakw? Or would you identify more with the Band?

DK Well, when people ask me, it depends on sort of what context I'm answering that because for someone that doesn't know, you know, Kwakwaka'wakw or doesn't know or wouldn't know different villages, I might not bother saying I'm Mamaleleqala, qwe'qwa'set'enox. That's my Band affiliation. My mom was reinstated under Bill C31 [which gave women who had lost their Indian status under earlier federal law by marrying a non-Native the right to regain that status] ... she had to make a choice on where to apply for Band membership. We could apply at Musqueam and see if they -- they can choose to accept or not accept us as members. Or we could apply at Mamaleleqala, qwe'qwa'set'enox, and my mom chose to go with that because it's smaller and my grandmother was still alive and was a force to be reckoned with! So, um, I do say I'm Mamaleleqala, qwe'qwa'set'enox, but for someone who, who may not be familiar with villages or else, you know, First Nations' names, I'd probably say Kwakwaka'wakw, explaining the previous names that were used to identify us. I am Musqueam as well but that, that -- the ties aren't strong just because I don't have as much knowledge of Salish culture and, I know relatives but it's in passing whereas, up in Alert Bay, it's closer.

MC Dena, can I ask how old you are?

DK Twenty-two. I'm ancient.

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PB I'm from the Heiltsuk Nation but I'm also part Kitasoo, which is southern Tsimshian, and part Nuxalk. I'm Kitasoo on my mother's side and Nuxalk on my father's side. Bella Bella is on the central coast of B.C. It's about three hundred miles up the coast. You can hardly get in there by, by boat or plane...there's a ferry there once a week. The population is about 1200 with about 800
off-reserve people. My family moved down here [Vancouver] about, almost 40 years ago. ... So, I've been living down here forever. ... Most of my family -- immediate family -- live in the Vancouver area. ... But we have a trade network of foods and things like that so, I never lose real touch, real touch with my family.

... [My Mum has brought us up in a Tsimshian way and so I've mainly followed her path, which is to me, I think, a pretty traditional -- we grew up using all the traditional herbs and medicines and foods and we still use them down here today. We still practise it all the time and when ... when there is marriages or deaths or things like that, when we go up North or even down here, we still follow a lot of the old practices but a lot of new things are starting to be incorporated.

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RB I was born in Rivers Inlet, which is not my home area. My parents were up there, my father fishing, my mother working in a cannery, and I was born July 3, 1934 during the fishing season. And spent my very early years in Kingcome where my father was from, he was from the Zawad'eno tribe of the Kwakwaka'wakw.

... And [we] spent a bit of time in Gilford Island because that is where my maternal grandfather was from. My maternal grandmother was from a little village from Fort Rupert, and they were the Kwagiulth tribe, the people from Fort Rupert. Gilford Island, the little village, was ... they were the Quatsino of the Kwakwaka'wakw house as well. The Kwakwaka'wakw and the Zawad'eno of Kingcome and two other tribal groups, called themselves the Muskemos, because they were four tribes which cooperated, they supported each other, and through everything. And so that's my background. ... When people started leaving Kingcome, I think they were encouraged by the Indian agent to relocate to Gilford Island, some of them stubbornly stayed on at Kingcome, my father's family being one of them, my grandfather, my uncles and my father, and a couple of other families. And because of people moving away gradually and just a few families left up there, and very few children, the little mission school there closed down and my father was supposed to put us into the residential school. Mind you, we were not accepted right away. There seems to have been some reluctance on the Indian agent's part to accept us, and because I was very little, I don't really know for sure what his reasons were, but my father seemed to have problems to get us into the residential school, and I felt I was
waiting and waiting, hearing all about the kids going to school and still at home, seven years old, quite ready for school. Eventually I was accepted ... well, all of us were, my two sisters and my brother were in the residential school. My father supplied the school with salmon twice a year to feed the whole school -- two hundred kids, about thirty staff members, thirty or forty, and also oolichans once a year to feed the whole school.

I was very fortunate, because St. Michael's School, the residential school I attended, was located in a place in Alert Bay where I had a lot of relatives, and on weekends my sisters and I could go to homes of my relatives, grand uncles, my great grandmother, uncles, cousins. ... And I think, too, as a result of that, being able to go home to relatives every weekend, we still speak quite a bit of ... Kwakwala. ... And my time in the residential school I hear stories, horror stories from other people today, some of them that I grew up with in the residential schools, some I didn't who I've just recently met, I didn't really have any horror stories. I think the most horrible experience I ever had was being strapped for not memorizing the Nicene Creed in the time allotted. As the Bible, the Prayer Book, was part of our curriculum. It was our textbook for ... when we were in Grade Three. And I have some depressing memories about the Church, ... for years and years, even after I left the school, I attended [church] faithfully and one day I just thought, what am I doing here? I walk out of this place, I just end up feeling so depressed, discovered that my dislike of daffodils and tulips was connected with the Church. So I walked out of that Church in Burnaby, and I never went back. And I've never regretted it. And end of periods of depression on a Sunday. And I don't know whether I can use the term "rediscovered", but I think I rediscovered potlatches, you know, and what it did for me.

We moved into the urban area and we had to make a place for ourselves and this society and struggling with it. That had to take priority over something that was such a big part of me. And then all of a sudden it just came back so strong, and now there's potlatches every year and it's wonderful.

I guess my memories of potlatch are like being in a potlatch, is cuddling up with my grandmother under her shawl, her big sort of blanket-like shawl and keeping warm in the Fall. And being told to be still and be quiet because she had no money, and because if
you did things that weren’t considered proper manners in a potlatch your family paid a penalty, and at that time it was they had to pay everybody in the Big House a quarter. You know? So we were always told to "Be still, be quiet. We have no money." And that’s how children were kept, you know, they were made to behave.

And that doesn’t happen any more. And kids are running around wild at potlatches to the annoyance to a lot of older relatives. But that can be changed, because I just think a lot of people now, too, that have not gone to potlatches, are just very new at attending potlatches too. ...
CHAPTER 7

FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES ON PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION: THE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

This chapter presents and analyzes the information obtained through the research interviews. The data serves two objectives simultaneously:

i) It provides evidence, in their own words, of First Nations perspectives on areas of heritage preservation of particular concern to conservators.

ii) It analyzes these perspectives in relation to the values and practices of museum conservation.

The methodology and the parameters of this research have been described in Chapter 1. It is important to remember that these interviews represent the personal opinions of the respondents, who have many differences: age, nation, gender, and relationship to museums, among others. Expressions such as "the cultural heritage of contemporary First Nations" must be understood in the context of the particular respondents in this study, rather than as a generalized statement applicable to all First Nations people. As discussed in the Introduction, in the excerpts presented here from the interviews of the respondents, every effort has been made to reproduce the pertinent oral material as closely as possible to the original. Some quotations have, however, been condensed, and this is marked by three dots. As mentioned in the Research Design, the interviewees reviewed all the quotations used as well as the full transcripts, and many made changes or
clarified certain parts. The meaning is therefore what the interviewees wish to convey, even if some words are now different from those found in the primary data, the oral tapes. In this chapter there are a few quotations from written sources or personal communications, often from the interviewees, and these can be identified by the full citations that follow them. The one exception is JM, who is treated as an interviewee as his letters were a response to the questionnaire. Otherwise, all quotations in this chapter come from the research interviews conducted in 1995 and can be referenced from the corresponding initials of the speaker in the list of interviewees reproduced below.

AC: Adelynne Claxton (Coast Salish), Coordinator, Saanich Native Heritage Society [age group: 40-60 years]
SJ: Sandy Jones, Elder, Coast Salish, Saanich [age group: 80 & years]
EC: Elsie Claxton, Elder, Coast Salish, Saanich [age group: 80 & years]
interviewed together, notes taken, Nov. 3, 1995

AS: Alfred J. Scow (Kwakwaka'wakw), retired judge, B.C. Provincial Court, [age group 60-80 years], taped interview Nov. 22, 1995

AN: Anonymous, at one time had responsibility for collections at a Cultural Centre, taped interview, Nov. 1, 1995

BM: Dr. Beatrice Medicine, Native American (Lakota- not from B.C.) senior cultural anthropologist, [age group 50-70 years], interview: notes taken, Nov. 10, 1995


DC: Doug Cranmer, Kwakwaka'wakw, artist, [age group 60-80 years], taped interview, Sept. 29, 1995

DK: Dena Klashinsky, Kwakwaka'wakw and Salish ancestry, university student, former Museum of Anthropology Native Youth Programme student and Coordinator, [age group 20-40 years], taped interview, July 6, 1995

DS: Debra Sparrow, Musqueam (Salish), artist, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Oct. 12, 1995

DW: Dolly Watts, Gitwangak Band, [Gitksan] Businesswoman, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Nov. 17, 1995

GW: Gloria Cranmer Webster, 'Namgis (Kwakwaka'wakw), founder and former Director of the U'mista Cultural Centre, [age group 60-80 years] taped interview Sept. 27, 1995

HG: Howard Grant, Musqueam Indian Band (Salish), Executive Director of the Musqueam community, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Dec. 20, 1995

JM: John Moses, Delaware Band, Six Nations of the Grand River, Conservator, [age group 40-60 years], personal communications (letters: June 16, Sept. 5, 1995)

JP: Juanita Pasco, Kwakwaka'wakw and Weka'yi ancestry, Collections Manager, U'mista Cultural Centre, [age group 20-40 years], taped interview, Sept. 27, 1995

KH: Chief Ken Harris, Simoigit Hagbegwatxw, Keeper of the Clan Totem for the 'Gisgahaast Clan, Gitksan,, Elder-in-Residence,
United Native Nations, [age group 60-80 years], taped interview, Nov. 24, 1995

KL: Kim Lawson, (mixed First Nations and Danish/British ancestry), [age group 20-40 years], archaeology liaison, taped interview, Nov. 1, 1995

LMS: Leona M. Sparrow, Musqueam (Salish) Band Councillor, Band Liaison with the UBC Museum of Anthropology, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview Dec. 16, 1995

LJ: Linda Jules, (Kamloops Indian Band member through marriage, non-Native ancestry), former Director of Secwepemc Cultural Education Society Museum, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview, Oct. 6, 1995

PB: Pam Brown, Heiltsuk, Curator at the UBC Museum of Anthropology, [age group 40-60 years], taped interview June 1, 1995

PS: Peggy Svanvik, 'Namgis First Nation [Kwakwaka'wakw], Board Member, U'mista Cultural Centre, [age group 50-70 years], taped interview Sept. 28, 1995

RB: Rita Barnes, Kwakwaka'wakw, [age group 50-70 years], taped interview Nov. 8, 1995. RB afterword: "I'm just someone who enjoys her culture. I can't do without it. What I do know, I like to share. I think I'm very typical of a lot of First Nations people in the city, at least from my area." (Personal communication, Jan. 17, 1997.)

THE INTERVIEWS: GLOBAL FINDINGS

As will be seen in this chapter, the interviews confirm many specific differences in perspective between First Nations and museum conservation concerning the meaning of "preservation" and what is important about objects.
in terms of preservation, as well as what has been described in previous chapters as a general difference between indigenous and western meta-narratives. The following quotations give succinct examples of this difference in outlook.

KL  All the potlatch stuff that you’re given ... is special because it’s from a potlatch so that means you should use it more, but the English and Danish side of the family, ... if something’s special, then you take care of it better. You put it aside. ... (I)t makes it more special when you use it less. This is a generalization, of course.

KH  We don’t really conserve (in the same sense as storage at the Museum of Anthropology), we renew. It’s a continuity, like a lineage (Harris 1995).

Pearce has presented a metaphor which can be used as an analogy to clarify these differences in perspective (Pearce 1995). She compared the collections in a museum to an iceberg: the one-tenth above the waterline represents the visible attributes of those collections. It is these to which museums generally pay the most attention (condition, aesthetics) and which are captured by museum practice (photography, measurements, exhibition). However, the collection and its individual objects are like the iceberg, composed of a large component often remaining invisible but nonetheless highly significant (e.g., how was the collection formed, anecdotal evidence). The collection exists in both worlds, the visible and the invisible.

The following diagram presents the "iceberg" analogy.
As outlined in the chapter on conservation values, conservation provides one of the best examples of an area of museum practice devoted largely to the visible attributes of objects. Furthermore, these are the attributes that are amenable to being worked with in a scientific manner.

As distinct from conservators, the First Nations interviewees have emphasized the "invisible" attributes of the object: at the level of cultural meta-narrative, at the more specific level of cultural preservation and the role objects play in this, and at the level of the important attributes of the objects themselves. Emphasis on the "invisible" is shown in many of the interview quotations, including those from First Nations people who are highly committed to the importance of the "visible" aspects of the object, such as Salish weaver and carver Debra Sparrow.
DS ... what the blankets do is they reflect the strength of the people. ... And when you see these blankets show up in different areas of life, whether it be a woman's conference, the signing of the Treaty Commission, or an educational conference on aboriginal people, or other people; it says that there are people that existed that have values and strengths, and there's nothing more beautiful than something pleasing to the eye. And if you see that, somehow or another ... it validates those people.

The following diagram illustrates the importance of "visible" and "invisible" attributes in the differential construction of the meaning of preservation by museum conservation and First Nations.

Diag. 2 Perspectives on Preservation: "Visible" and "Invisible" Attributes
The emphasis on "visible" or "invisible" can also at times reflect a differential emphasis on the nature of boundaries. Museums and conservation tend to perceive discrete although overlapping boundaries, which may compete, for example, about which world governs collections. In a culturally holistic perspective, the boundaries are often more permeable and the objects may exist in several worlds at once, for example an object may be kept in a museum-quality storage but used in ceremonial activities.

Diagram 3 Material Culture/Collections: Different Worlds, Different Boundaries
The terms "visible and "invisible", are, however, not entirely adequate to describe these two areas of First Nations objects. For the interviewees, the visible, rather than being an aspect on its own, is often symbolic of the invisible, and the value of the object lies in the act of using it within the community, so that the invisible -- rights, lineage, loss and redress, for example, -- are made manifest and witnessed. In one sense this illustrates the holistic viewpoint of First Nations: the whole of the iceberg is important, including the visible top, the submerged invisible portion, and the interior as well as the surface. Even the words "tangible" and "intangible" are not quite adequate, since in western positivistic terms the "tangible" is given the sense of having more reality than the "intangible". For example, oral traditions are no less real for First Nations cultures than the written word is for western society. Haagen states, "Heritage, for the dominant society, refers only to the productions of the past; Native people, when they refer to heritage, do so in the broadest sense of a culture (and a tenure on the land) that has been transmitted over time and that constitutes a concrete reality in the present" (Haagen 1989: 41).

In this study the words "tangible" and intangible" will be used (bearing in mind the caveat presented above) as well as the words "social" and "material". In many instances "social" and "material" better describe these two aspects of the whole; "social" emphasizes the nature of one of the principal attributes about the "invisible" for First Nations: it symbolizes lives lived, their relationships, and continuing life. Likewise the iceberg metaphor, a cold, natural phenomenon, does not adequately convey in this case First
Nations viewpoints of objects from their heritage. A historic landmark building still in use, such as a school building, for example, might serve better as an analogy in this case.

![Diagram 4 The Building Analogy](image)

Architectural conservators would be most concerned with saving and maintaining the physical, historic, and aesthetic integrity of the building, making what they might consider compromises to enable its continued use. For First Nations people, on the other hand, a school building might well be perceived as a shell made for use; it remains a shell unless life is brought to it by the students and staff using it, and the transmission of knowledge, values, and attitudes that take place there. The building and what went on inside symbolize the past and current relationships, (missionary school or today's
growing First Nations control of education) and it may evoke strong emotions. These aspects of the "invisible" or the "social" hold the meaning of the "object", the school; the building alone would not.

GW  I'd rather you showed one mask and told people about them — that connected them with human beings: who made them, who used them and who suffered for them ... They go: "Oh, it's such a wonderful building — Erikson's building! [The Museum of Anthropology designed by architect Arthur Erikson.] What a wonderful museum!" It may be a wonderful building but it's a lousy museum. It's a great warehouse but it's a lousy museum. Blasphemy!

DW  [It's up to the owner to do whatever he wants with the old one [mask]. Sometimes they'll just give it as a souvenir to somebody just to keep it, ... [in the family or ... give it away as a gift. So it keeps on being replaced, you know, replicated and so forth. But the way it happens today quite often is the museum will step in and give money ... [to a person to replicate it and they'll [the museum will] take the old one. And it's not the same. ... It just loses the whole ... you just lose the whole....

MC  Because of the money?

DW  Because of the cycle, the cycle of — 'cause then gradually, if that keeps on [the museum stepping in and buying the old mask], like the feasting and gathering that goes with the mask disappears. ... It just loses the same meaning, you know?

The following statement by LJ emphasizes a similar point made by Karp in writing about Japanese displays: "[t]he result is that the object is not valued in and for itself, but for how well it represents the nonempirical imagined world" (Karp and Lavine 1991: 20).

LJ  The value of the staff [wooden staff used by speakers on formal occasions] is not necessarily that it's old, but what it symbolises. ... The sovereign of this Nation gives a gift to the sovereign of that Nation. ... [It's a reminder ... you can actually hold and see that at one time Indian chiefs were seen on the same level as the sovereigns of the country. And because ... in the years intervening the Secwepemc as a people have become wards more
or less, of this nation [Canada], this is a reminder that it hasn't always been that way, and, at one time, First Nations were equals and will strive to maintain that and to get back to that Nation to Nation relationship. And as long as that staff and pipe exist, we can look at them and see them and we won't forget.

MC  So do you think then that ... it's OK if they sustain a little damage, it's only if they ...
LJ  Disappear. ... That's why... it was a very, very -- significant concept to me that even the replicas which were made in the image of these originals were seen to be so important that they had to be taken out and the ceremony had to be performed; to make it right, to make the replicas right, somehow.

At whatever level, the tangible evidence that the object provides is important, but the meaning of the objects lies in the intangible aspects of the culture that are symbolized, and in the emotions that these evoke as well as the cultural knowledge and norms they represent. In the following statement, the use of the word "lived", and possibly also the word "more", represents a depth of meaning and connection not covered by the possession of the objects alone.

KH  But when I took her [youngest daughter] through there [The Museum of Anthropology], she was very quiet. I said, "Is something wrong?" ... She said, "Did you really have all these things?" ... I said, "We had more. We had more because we lived it."

In the area of sacred/sensitive objects, the importance of the intangible and social as well as the material attributes of an object are apparent. Subsequent sections will show that this is important even in discussions related directly to conservation concerns, such as what is considered damage to an object.
It is noteworthy that every single First Nations respondent in this research which crossed gender, age, education, nation, museum knowledge and other categories supported the holistic viewpoint that the preservation of the intangible cultural aspects of an object are very significant, and as essential as, if not more essential than, the original physical object itself. At the same time, it is important to have and preserve the tangible representations of the social relationships and meanings.

JP I think it's important [to preserve objects] because of the dances that they go with, the songs that go with them. They still belong to people; they're still part of people's rights and privileges, and maybe those people don't know that, but someday they will, and they'll have to go back. I think if they can see it in a physical sense, it seems more real to them, than to know, well, you know, this dance and this song. But if they see the mask that goes with that, then they're more excited about it, and want to learn more. In general, I think people really like objects... people really want to work with objects and they want to come to museums to see the pieces, they don't want to see a picture of it.

DK When I interviewed an Elder from Katzie about the "From Under The Delta" exhibit about archaeological websites and asked her why she thought these objects were important, she said because she felt that every object told a story and they told stories of their people, or our people, and that young people -- sometimes, the only chance -- those objects are the only chances for those young people to either visually see some of those stories or else to initiate conversation or, if Elders aren't there (like, I mentioned losing my grandmother) if they aren't there, then perhaps some objects can help tell some of those stories or can help to maintain some of that knowledge in the community if you can relate it to an object.

KL I think that for traditional FN people, there is a different kind of link, perhaps stronger, between people and objects -- like when you make something, it has part of you in it. Gifts that you give, food that you cook, should all be done with good feelings and good intent, because those intangible things become part of the object. This kind of thing is the explanation or reason that I've been told for the things that people should stop doing after they have
lost someone close to them — like other people should cook, for the family who is grieving, and for the settlement feast -- because any strong feelings or your grief, the intangible stuff, becomes part of the food, and that's dangerous for people.

Haagen sums up the differing emphasis by Natives and non-Natives on the material and social attributes of objects in her description of the difference between western and First Nations views on culture. She writes:

When referring to culture, Native people talk about values, beliefs, and practices, and non-Native people talk about discrete cultural productions and cultural industries. ... The Western, or "modern post industrial" society deals with culture in this way; as a commodity or a production, as something that can be separated from daily life, cultivated and appreciated at a distance. It is also generally understood as something visible, or accessible in a sensory or concrete way, ...

In contrast, Native thoughts about culture reveal an active emphasis on culture as an accessible unifying force, as a common set of values that link all aspects of life into a whole. (Haagen 1989: 36, 37)

This chapter will now further examine the data from the interviews under headings related to areas of concern in conservation and museums, and compare First Nations and museum perspectives. It will become evident that Haagen's analysis, implicit in the earlier analogy of the empty or active school, is borne out.

**META-NARRATIVES**

As previously mentioned, the western positivist meta-narrative has been described as linear, scientific, and isolating the parts to gain understanding of the whole. It also holds that universal access to knowledge
is desirable for the betterment of the world. All these four characteristics are in contradiction to First Nations narratives, and all have been described by respondents as having implications in the preservation of cultural heritage.

For First Nations, an important social aspect pertaining to the preservation of material culture is the link it provides to continuity with the past. The relationship between this apparently linear perspective and a holistic viewpoint is explained by three respondents as follows:

KL People talk about cyclical and time together. People talk about circles and symbolism in lots of contexts, through philosophy and things. But, for time, and for history, it seems to me the emphasis is more on generation and succession rather than cause and effect. ... I haven’t heard any traditional cultural leaders compare western and indigenous ways of keeping history, but I hear ideas about cause and effect being important for people’s relationships to the environment but there’s also a lot more concern for cycles of rebirth and ... proper naming and succession and passing along and bringing the things from the past with you.

DB I guess what it comes down to is there are two world views, you know? Two world views that sort of collide within the museum. You have ... the museum point of view, that perspective ... that these objects should be maintained, that these objects should be protected, that these objects should not be thought in terms of ten years down the road but more like one hundred years down the road. But it’s like the traditional native belief structure is that these objects were made for one purpose, and that’s to be used within the community. And these objects are alive in that sense that they do have a fixed period of [life] and when they go, they go. You may replace that object with another object but that object takes on, is born, forms its own identity. ...

But in time that object will go. And you can use the knowledge of the original object as the basis for the new object. ...

But it doesn’t necessarily transfer the significance or the history of that object to this object. But the difference is that – I guess I see ... the museum perspective as very linear. ...

And what you’re trying to do is cheat that end; you want to elongate ... the life of that object. ...
Whereas -- Native is ... circular, it all comes back. The knowledge that is contained within the object is important, but that knowledge can be transferred to another object.

DS And I think that society in breaking down their own humanness they find that everything is compartmentalized, and that we have psychology, we have sciences, we have academics, we have artists. But in our world, I think we know and understand that all of those go together. And they are not individual. And that without one we cannot understand the other. But what we do here in 1996 [sic] is that we make it very isolated. ... And I think that we have... we as aboriginal people at one time understood that everything goes together. And that, that is balance.

Several respondents concurred with DB that prolonging the existence of an object is not natural and does not necessarily prolong its life. This is discussed further in the section on damage and deterioration. In addition, the importance of the words "life" or "living" as pertaining to objects and their cultural role, as seen in Chapter 5, is raised here and will appear in subsequent quotations. It is not just certain sacred/sensitive objects which are considered to have "life". The importance of "life" derives from the importance for First Nations of the social, intangible attributes of an object.

At the same time, it must be remembered that emphasizing social attributes does not necessarily mean that material attributes have no importance.

DB I keep on thinking, you know, the dagger is a tangible object, or a tangible representation of the past. And if I were to hold that dagger, you know, I would be so proud.

Several respondents commented on how important it is for people to be able to see the actual objects which carry personal, historical and cultural meaning:
DK  ... the need to preserve some things that we have so we have tangible evidence of our history.

DS  They're old and they came from time, and I think they just verified existence; they verified what was so that we understand what is, so we can go forward with what will be.

DS's earlier remark about society breaking down its own humanness and compartmentalization was discussed in a different way by KL, who commented on First Nations resentment of the dominant western universalistic and scientific perspective as follows:

KL  The idea that heritage should be preserved because it is of value to the entire world is better than the philosophy that believes in or advocates assimilation and "cultural evolution", but I think it's still ethnocentric, because it can be what someone decides everybody else should value, and is often disrespectful. Recognizing that there is value in "other" cultures and knowledge -- that they aren't some inadequate or lesser way of living is a good thing, but this perspective often leads to the idea of an international "ownership" of all cultures, and seems to be used to justify attempts to utilize or exploit the cultures and knowledge, and often works to minimize the community's link to the knowledge or 'profits' from it. It has been used as a justification to take things away from communities or colonized nations. [I]t goes back to a lot of old arrogance and I think it relates to imperial points of view and I see that notion reflected in ... "curio"-based talk, too, as well, in historical things -- and I think that one of the implications of that kind of statement is that: "It's of value to the entire world. It's right now sitting in a little community, who doesn't place the same value on protecting it" or "They're in the middle of a war" or "... [T]hey don't have their act together for whatever reasons, therefore we're justified in taking it away for the greater good of (meaning for) other people." In these cases, the "greater good" of humanity in general is put ahead of whatever this little community feels and that's remarkably arrogant. And it's very divisive, often the value of something or place to the local community is very different than it would be to the whole world. The "world heritage" approach seems to assume that they would be the same, or at least that what
you do to "protect" or commemorate it would be -- it can have difficulty adjusting to other values. ...

Like traditionally ... Parks [are considered] a good thing in that it prohibits development so First Nations should support Parks and the creation of Parks and should be happy to see Parks set up camps and let people tramp through the area and see how beautiful it is and what it protects -- that's seen as a "greater good" so that's seen as something First Nations should support but that doesn't take into account ... First Nations perspectives ... [I]f the number of deer in an area -- we get to people hunting regularly and people taking care of the place so that the deer have food and there's been a lot of things that people do to take care of the deer over the last thousand years besides just hunt them, but that's been the assumption. People hunt. Aboriginal people hunt deer, which has a negative impact upon the deer population so they shouldn't do that and that's the extent of the relationship and I think there's the same correlation in culture, in treaty talks. ... But ... all of this value system, the value judgments just reflect through so many things.

This respondent, whose work relates to archaeology, comments directly on conflicts between the science of archaeology and First Nations perspectives.

KL     Archaeology is both science and social science, and its vocabulary and its jargon really distances itself from aboriginal people. Its research interests, the questions that it tries to answer, are really driven by the discipline, influenced by the researcher's interests, not much by questions that the culture of community that is being studied may have. Generally, anthropology and archaeology look at different cultures as case studies which lead toward understanding what humanity in general is about. Studying culture tends to "objectify" it, talking about it this way tends to make it sound inanimate, or stuck in the past or "dead", which is very different than talking about one's own culture, and a dynamic living culture. This sounds disrespectful. The hard science vocabulary of archaeology like deposits or samples or matrix or strata, especially talking about archaeological research "proving" or finding the earliest known example of this or that, or being evidence for something, gives the impression that oral history or traditional knowledge is less believable -- that it's unproven or perhaps unproveable. That really starts closing doors on dialogue.
If the researcher is studying the past of their own culture or another, it also affects how the research questions are asked and also the dialogue. Stereotypes, generalizations also affect the research questions, especially about how much human beings have shaped the landscape -- not just used it. General public impressions and images of aboriginal cultures has affected past research, the spectrum pretty much runs from small bands of eager hunters that used and exploited nature, like they wiped out the mammoths, to the other image of "first environmentalists", that walked so lightly on the land that it, even filled with hundreds of thousands of people, would be considered pristine. It's important now to find a way for aboriginal people and archaeologists and museum people to communicate better.

And then the dynamics of where the discussion about this sort of stuff has come about really affects things, because in the past there have been sporadic invitations to Native people who've been along on crew ... to archaeology conferences, mostly discussions between individuals. Recently there's a lot more Native involvement in the BC archaeology forum, and in [the] BC Museums Association, from community leaders and cultural leaders, more communication between cultural centres and archaeologists, and the Canadian Archaeological Association put a lot of effort into talking with First Nations across Canada to develop a new statement on ethics and aboriginal heritage. All these things together look to be the beginning of discussion at a level of professional to professional and more people within First Nations communities that have a university degree who can talk about these things in more of the same language. It's a question partly of opportunities, but also partly of the development of archaeology as ... a way to make a living. The dialogue will improve when more aboriginal people become archaeologists. I think there's very little research archaeology any more, and most of the work is related to development. ... Much of the discussion between archaeologists and First Nations often begins with archaeological work related to some specific development project, and so gets wrapped in issues and concerns about land use decisions. These decisions are to be made based on many values, often concerns about archaeological sites may change aspects of a development project but won't really affect the decision to go ahead or cancel. Discussion about the specific situation needs to happen, but also more discussion on values about heritage and archaeology generally, which is much more difficult to get to.
So, the complexities about how decisions are made to protect sites or when a decision is made that that part of a site isn’t going to be protected is quite a contentious debate. There isn’t, at this point in time – we need communication and there’s a lot of power issues in those sort of communications and there’s expectations that the government can and should do more to protect these sites and should listen to First Nations more about whether or not to protect them and right now the situation stands that First Nations are consulted but, you know, how much power that has is really limited. They can comment on methodology but if the archaeologists don’t think that’s important enough or if it’s not methodology then it really isn’t a matter for the Archaeology Branch. It’s a matter for Forestry or for Highways or whatever. And part of the things that have been affected by the cutbacks is that the ... Programme for Traditional Use has been moved ... It was originally Heritage/Conservation Branch, then moved to Archaeology and has now moved to Ministry of Forests. So, that says a lot about how the government is accepting responsibility for aboriginal culture in general and that affects the dialogue with museums and affects the dialogue in all areas of culture when First Nations communities are talking with people.

KL also raises the issue of social implications from the western scientific and universalistic perspective, emphasizing the effect it is having on Native/non-Native relationships.

KL ... [In] the dichotomy between science, and traditional knowledge and all of that comes up systematically... there’s a dialogue problem. All of the past baggage with the words, and with the idea of working with outside consultants, and it’s probably because there’s just, it’s reflected in so many areas of life that – there’s the expert on economic development there’s the consultant that comes in and tells you how to build houses and there’s somebody that comes in and says what you’ve got to do to have good education, and a history of many of these projects going wrong and of good intentions leading to worse situations, and that people have just such strong, emotive reactions to any notion of expert in general that it’s actually going to be difficult to have relationships on a profession to community and a profession to profession relationship just because ... that’s such overwhelming baggage right now and trust really has to be hard-earned. I think
we’re very much at the beginning of dialogue and I think it’s very difficult. It’ll take awhile to get past this, except on a person to person relationship. I think that personal friendships and dialogues can happen quite easily and I’ve seen quite a few of them now and a lot of them that you see now have taken decades of time.

To elicit opinions on aspects of science, First Nations people were asked in the research interviews whether they felt modern scientific materials were appropriate to use in the repair or restoration of objects from their heritage. Three of the four people who voiced an opinion on this had directed or managed collections in First Nations cultural centres.

MC Some people don’t like the fact that objects from First Nations are being preserved by Western scientific methods. They don’t feel that’s appropriate. What do you think about that?

GW Well, I think that some of the people who are saying that are carvers who use power tools. Yeah. I don’t know -- we’re living in the nineties. This is part of ... museums are part of our world now and the kinds of things museums are able to do are also part of our world and I think if those objects are owned by those museums, I think those museums have a responsibility to preserve those objects in whatever way works. Yeah. However, if the people who make this kind of criticism prefer not to preserve their own treasures with Western means, that’s fine.

JP [use of twentieth century chemicals to preserve old pieces:] [Some people might say it’s not appropriate] But I think some people also might say,"Well it’s that or [lose it] forever"... [but] I think some people might object ... it’s old and that’s not the way we do [it].

LJ [Scientific materials] would be accepted unless it was an item of spiritual significance. And then people would want us to leave it alone. ... Because why repair it, or consolidate it, ... it wouldn’t be put on display anyway.
The fourth person, BM, a senior cultural anthropologist from the United States who was a visiting scholar in B.C. at the time of the interviews, stated that she considered that any methods, including western scientific, used to preserve objects were worthwhile. She had seen many pieces not well taken care of in people's homes. This was substantiated by several B.C. respondents.

The above comments on science reveal a general acceptance of this parameter in the preservation of material culture, particularly by those people who have had major responsibility for collections. Equally significantly, other interviewees had no opinion on this matter and their hesitation in answering illustrated that this was perhaps something that they had not needed to think about before. The impression that questions about the preservation of objects was not a topic which had been of much concern to a number of the respondents was reinforced in some of the other responses. The concerns of conservators represent a small, circumscribed world. Although all of the First Nations interviewees were involved in cultural or educational areas, the preservation of objects was not necessarily an important matter in their discussions, and museum-style conservation of collections even less so. In addition, there were occasional instances in the interviews where an underlying difference in perspective, or a lack of immediate familiarity on the part of the respondent with a museum concern, produced a simple miscommunication such as the one illustrated below between MC, (this author, and, as previously mentioned, the conservator at the UBC Museum of Anthropology) and LMS, the Band Liaison with the UBC Museum of Anthropology for the Musqueam Nation.
MC: [If we have a minor earthquake] what happens in terms of the care? Do you recommend that we call you and say look, the masks have fallen, this is the damage that's been done, or do we...

LMS: Before that happens, I would hope that you've got some kind of plan that's...

MC: Mhm. So do we. Boy, let me tell you. [meaning Emergency Contingency Plan]

LMS: But there isn't one, is there?

MC: We are, at the moment -- an actual plan?

LMS: Well, the museum doesn't at this point, have an operating agreement with the community to understand any part of an interrelationship. ...

Haagen notes that western and Native conceptualizations of the purpose the past serves, and the role the past has in today's culture, are very different. "Where the western world separates itself from the past, Native people express a continuity between the past and the present that does not make a distinction between heritage and contemporary culture" (Haagen 1989: 41). She describes heritage for the dominant culture as usually expressed by things which both have a relationship to the past and which are objectifiable entities or productions. Access to heritage is usually mediated by organizations or institutions, is separated from daily life, and is obtained through a relatively passive act such as observing a cultural production (e.g., a museum exhibition), rather than through doing or participating. Heritage can be appreciated at a distance and this appreciation intellectually cultivated. For First Nations, heritage is "continuous and accessible through acknowledgment and practise" (Haagen 1989: 40) and preserved through active use. Haagen gives the following example, "[T]he act of recording a language alone is not considered an act of preservation; only the act of
speaking the language ensures its survival and thus its preservation" (Haagen 1989: 39). Haagen points out that these different viewpoints have a certain legacy in the differences, historically, between tribal societies and industrial societies. Haagen says, "This is not to say that the cultural experience is thus diminished, but it is an experience of a different order than that of the immediate experience of participating and creating" (Haagen 1989: 38).

Continuity with the past and active participation in and respect for traditional cultural forms and beliefs is the basis for the construction of the meaning of preservation for First Nations. Heritage objects play a role in this, but in representing continuity and in being used in ceremonies they represent the present as much as the past. They represent an identity as First Nations.

(SJ) : [Do museums have any value?] Yes, according to SJ, an elder. He would like a museum in his community and he would go and see what he used to wear, and show it to his grandson. His grandson will learn his culture from the Longhouse, though, from his own participation in traditional spiritual life -- from participating rather than seeing objects in a museum.

RB I keep telling myself, I have to tell him [her nephew, a carver] that maybe he should replicate it so that [it] can be preserved for as long as possible. So when I was telling my brother this, he said, "Well, for what purpose? You know, it will just stay in the museum forever?" And I said, "I hope so." And he said, "But why? When it can be used?" I said, "Sure it can be used." I said, "Beau can make another one exactly like it." And he said, "You’re probably right, but you see it’s never..." My brother is quite a bit older than I am, and he said, "It just doesn’t make sense to me to have these things in a museum when they can be utilized for the things that we do today." And that was a literal translation for how we refer to having potlatches.

"[speaking in Kwakwalal]", they always said. And it just simply means, "For what we do."

PS [At the museum ... there was a whole bunch of young people who came in, they didn’t speak the language but what they
really wanted to know from Mrs. Cranmer was “Who was my family?”... What were the names of my family? ... What were the crests, ... what can I use when I’m making my own [unclear]? ... For these young people it was really important to them, to know, who they were, and where they come from. ... It hadn’t been ... before. Now they wanted to know. ... For their self esteem, they need to know.

DS And my first thought was to think, man, this blanket’s ... over a hundred years ago grandpa was born, the blanket was being worn. ... And so the significance to all of that gives me more strength as a ... connection to that. ... Now, for once, I can say, well, this is where we come from. This is our history; this is a part of it that can be seen and can be seen as a good thing. You know ... it’s not about how I felt for those years that I’m sure the people ... fifty years before me, felt ... we did not have a part, and we felt inadequate and useless, and .. because that’s what we were told, and we believed what we were told. And now we can say, no, no, that’s not what it’s about. And, you know, we can take our place in history now. And that’s exciting. ... It really is.

For First Nations, especially in British Columbia which, as previously mentioned, received no significant Euro-based settlement until the mid-nineteenth century, continuity with traditions is not necessarily based in a recovery of long-lost practices, but in many cases in a connection with remembered elders, or the knowledge of elders still living, languages still spoken or remembered, and practices within living memory. This does, however, vary from community to community and individual to individual, and AS sums up a common situation.

AS So anyway, throughout all this time my father became very knowledgeable about our practices, customs, traditions, whatever. Unfortunately in some respects he did not pass that knowledge on to his children, because he could see the ending of that phase of our lives by what had happened through the enforcement of prohibition of potlatches. ...

So he thought it would be better, I guess, if we didn’t know. If he were here today I would kick him in the behind. But because I
think that so much of our family history got lost in that way. We have some recordings of family songs, and we have certain songs that everybody acknowledges belong to our family, and I'm trying to think, in 1951 the prohibition was dropped against the ceremonials and they gradually started, slowly, they started coming back. Of course, the sad part about the revival of the potlatch was that the old people who were totally familiar with the history of all the families, the practises, the customs, the traditions, that went into the potlatches, most of them had died.

An emphasis in the meta-narrative on continuity also acknowledges the immense disruption that occurred to Native societies with European contact. Loss, and recovery from loss are major themes intertwined in the preservation narrative.

PS [Y]ou see, I think they did have them [potlatches], but then my mother would disappear, but nobody would tell us where she went... because it [holding potlatches] was against the law...

I never saw Indian dancing until the fifties, the late fifties, when they were allowed to do it again. I was like the tourists, just anxiously awaiting to see them dance.

Two features of cultural loss are particularly significant for this study, beyond the immense impact of its occurrence and the effect this has had on the preservation of material culture. The first is that the loss for First Nations is experienced as the result of deliberate policy and actions by a dominant culture, rather than by accident or antiquity. Conservators also begin their conservation narrative from the basis of loss, and their goal is to objectively regain or recover as much of the past as possible. The parallels with First Nations are there, but the differences are significant. However, the loss which conservators base their ethics and practice on is not personal, is not recent,
and is not personally experienced as the result of being dominated by a more powerful culture.

PS  [M]y grandparents were [among] those people who were jailed for participating in the potlatch. And I'm still outraged to think that my grandmother was stripped, standing naked with her people, and she didn't want us to show our arms and she wanted us to have our dresses cover our knees, we weren't to show our knees. And for her to be treated like that and she had this [ranking, she] could be the Queen Mother in our society. And to be treated that way... I mean, I remember my grandmother and I think "How could they do that to her?"...
   It still outrages me.

First Nations feel their loss; conservators work with what remains in material culture after loss. The second feature of cultural loss which therefore has an effect on practices and ideas surrounding the preservation of material culture is the emotions that are brought to it, to the context of museum/First Nations relationships, and to the objects themselves and what they symbolize. In addition, this is part of a larger context of the effects on the people themselves, which include the personal, social, and economic effects of what some have termed genocidal policies and actions.

A detailed analysis of the relationship between heritage objects, memory, and identity is beyond the scope of this study. It is evident, however, that there has been an enormous effect on First Nations and their sense of identity and well-being because of the nature of the losses suffered.

AC  The residential school era affected the First Nations in a profound manner. There were the effects of cultural losses in self esteem and self worth, not to mention the loss of language and everything to do with cultural heritage was stripped from us. The phrase "I didn't know that I didn't know" has a lot of meaning to a person like myself. (Claxton 1994: 5)
In addition, as seen in Chapter 5, museums and the objects in them play negative roles and positive roles (see below) in the question of identity. This will be discussed in more detail in further sections in this chapter.

MC So what motivated you to get involved in the museum?
DW I wanted to piece together our culture ... just our history. So much was missing, you know - when I left home, everything was erased from my mind ... the boarding school experience, you know, that was mainly what they tried to do was erase past knowledge. A whole way of life. We had to forget about that and start something new.

DS You don’t just see an object, you see a whole people and what they must have been about.

The nature of the loss and its expression in the meta-narrative affects what is important to regain or recover. It is significant although not surprising that First Nations mention regaining the intangibles as being a primary goal. GW, in speaking about the exhibit "Chiefly Feasts", which is described in more detail later in this chapter, said that collaboration returns to the First Nations "the ability to influence what other people say about us". "Chiefly Feasts", she stated, respected the wishes of the old people. The museum didn’t have the last word. This "gave back to the old people the dignity and respect their knowledge deserves" (Webster 1992: quotations from notes by Clavir).

The following comments apply to both the intangibles in "save and retrieve", and the tangibles in "preserve".

RB When you think back on how much we lost in such a short period, and then feeling even back then that we didn’t have a choice, that it was taken away from us. But eventually I guess my feeling was that it was just a matter of time that Kingcome would
no longer be doing what they had been doing when other villages had stopped. ...

As the new generation came, and lost interest, and hearing kids saying things like, "My God, she still speaks Kwakwala!" you know, as something that was out -- what's the word for it? It's like saying that someone has never grown out of the fifties. You know, that sort of thing ... [you're a square]. ...

And I think, you know, when you think in terms of how much we lost in such a short period, and we now see that we can save and maybe retrieve, then of course we should try to preserve as much as we can.

The following description shows the regaining of control over cultural interpretation.

DK When there was a filming here [at the Museum of Anthropology] of a children's show and I was talking to kids, the host of the show said to me ... "Okay, next you're going to explain the potlatch, right?" And I said: "Yes." And she goes: "Okay, well, can you do me a favour?" And I said: "What?" She said: "Can you keep it simple?" And I said: "Look ... there's simple." And she said: "Don't ... confuse these ... kids because ... we have a young, young audience." ... And I said: "Yes?" And she said: "For example, with the potlatch, just let them know that it's like a, it's like a birthday party with lots of presents, a big party with lots of presents." And I looked her and I said: "No, I'm sorry, I don't -- " And I was fifteen at the time! I said: "No, I'm sorry. I don't feel comfortable saying that. There's a lot more to it than that." ... I think I can explain this in a couple of sentences but I think I can pay a lot more respect to our ceremony than that one pat answer that you have." And so I just walked away and started talking to the kids and they had the cameras rolling and I said: "Do you understand, you know, why when marriages take place, when births take place or when, when someone passes away that people, families gather together and that recognizing that event is very important in the family. It's a milestone or -- " I used different words. "And sometimes that's documented on paper: a marriage license, a birth announcement, whatever. Well, traditionally, we couldn't do that. We had to pass things on strictly by speaking about it and this was a way for us to pass on that and also to recognize that, you know, this bracelet may be very important to my family because it's a family heirloom and I want to pass it on to the next generation. Or sometimes it's not just the bracelet but it's the design on it that's important -- the
story associated with that and those have to be passed on.” And, you know, I explained it in terms that they could understand. ...

The following diagram illustrates the nature of loss and its expression in the meta-narrative concerning what is important to regain or recover: its title is from a quotation from RB.

**Western Perspectives**

**First Nations**

**Loss**

- **Past History**
  - (Artifacts, fragments considered “finds”)
  - Museum Conservation
  - Regain tangible evidence and knowledge (and prevent deterioration of existing evidence)
  - The power of witnessing history through objects

- **Some of what is us, including things and what they mean**
  - Taken from us
  - First Nations
  - Regain intangibles: pride, respect, cultural wholeness, well-being: the object as symbol of the intangibles
  - The power of making manifest one’s identity (objects involved)

**Parallel Paths**: “For what we do, for who we are.”
In considering the question of a western universal perspective, it is interesting to note that for objects, conservators' codes of ethics use broad terms such as "historic and artistic works" and "cultural property". The all-encompassing, idealized nature of codes of ethics promoting a simple, universal statement has been discussed in a previous chapter. Conservators seek to apply the same broad principles to each individual object they work on. To First Nations, however, differences in objects are significant in preservation decisions because they represent differences in a social and cultural context. For example:

LMS  Well, look at the context. Some pieces, like I said, shouldn't be touched by certain people, and ... that's a difficult one, I mean, it's a very general question. ... You can't give one answer for everything. ... Depends on whose weaving it is, who made it, which...if someone actually owns it, like a family. ... If it's an unknown. ... Does the person who the museum wants to do this repair work, is that person recommended by the Band to do the work? ... Or concur with? Is there a concurrence or a decision? Many variables on that; no one answer.

Generalizations cannot be made about museum collections either, even if they are all from British Columbia. Respondents stressed the differences between the different Native nations, the differences between individuals, and differences between museums and cultural centres. For instance, a later section discusses why a collection of whistles from Alert Bay housed at the UBC Museum of Anthropology remain on display, whereas outwardly similar whistles at U'mista in Alert Bay have been removed from display.

The importance of the social context in preservation decisions for First Nations is nowhere more in evidence than in the "use versus preservation of
the object" debate. A previous chapter outlined the debates in conservation on whether functional objects should be restored to a functioning state, and what qualities are being preserved by preserving the object in a glass case rather than using the object as it was originally intended. The response of First Nations interviewees to this question with regard to their own objects is outlined in the next section. It has already been summed up in several previous statements, and is made explicit in the following as well.

PS My son has a mask in the museum that’s been used three times in potlatches, and it’s become more valuable. It has more value now. Each time it’s used it becomes more valuable.

PB [Wear and tear through use] [o]n the mask? I don’t have any experience of that but to me at least the family can make use of it. ... I think what you get out of it is just the use by different family members that, you know, like if the children -- well, it’s continuing, you know, your tradition and to be able to use it and that family wear it -- I mean it could always be copied again. It’s not the same thing but, I mean, if you let it sit there and sit there, it’s not what they were meant to be made for.

DB By using the object you’re continuing the cultural ... the evolution of the cultural identity. You know, that object is really in the past, but they’re using that object to continue the present and future. Whereas versus non-use, the object is still in the past, but it’s stagnated. It doesn’t evolve as much. It won’t evolve unless it’s in use, you know. It’s always rooted in the past, it’s not being carried forward.

This perspective applies even to objects with a more personal rather than a larger cultural significance.

RB I look at those things [bracelets] and I think, what a waste. Sitting in a glass case when it could be adorning someone. When somebody could be enjoying them. And I think the reason why ... I can feel this way is because some of her jewelry wasn’t really a part
of ... our past history, it is something very new. ... And they just ... to me they should be worn.

Major differences in outlook between First Nations and museum conservators in relation to the meaning of preservation can be summed up in the following chart. The next section will look at these differences in more detail.

Table 5: Preservation Of Material Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSEUM CONSERVATION</th>
<th>FIRST NATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The objects themselves are important to preserve. This is the role of conservation.</td>
<td>The cultural life the objects represent is what is important to preserve, first and foremost for and by First Nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects are preserved by not using them, but by following conservation professional guidelines.</td>
<td>Culture is preserved through use of the objects, participating in the traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of the manner of access to collections mitigates further loss.</td>
<td>Access to collections mitigates loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with collections: emotions usually involved are associated with professional satisfaction, aesthetic appreciation, wonder.</td>
<td>Relationship with collections: personal. Emotional responses to objects associated with ownership, identity, one's own history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects sources of information.</td>
<td>People, then objects, sources of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects validated even if decontextualized from original culture.</td>
<td>Objects most validated in connection to original context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reclaiming heritage = reclaiming objects.</td>
<td>Reclaiming heritage = reclaiming traditions, pride, well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General principles apply to all objects in deciding preservation questions.</td>
<td>Specifics of nation, family, and type of object important in deciding preservation questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONSERVATION CONCERNS AND FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES

Preservation Versus Use

The parameters of the debate in conservation on whether functional objects should be restored to a functioning state, as well as the fundamental importance in conservation of preserving the physical object, have been outlined previously. First Nations, however, have a very different view regarding the necessity to use objects and the necessity to preserve them beyond their useful life.

In the following comments note that the social, intangible factors, the relationship between the two women, is as prominent in the narrative as what to conservators would have been the "content", the question of preserving the baskets.

AC A great friend of mine who I had the priviledge [sic] of taking the Aboriginal Museum Internship Program with in 93/94 was a great basket weaver. She not only made baskets, she made woven figurines from cedarbark, hats etc. She also worked with hides. She made baskets from bark that she gathered and prepared herself. Last winter at UBC we had a chance to clean several old baskets. She asked the instructor why they were trying to preserve these poor thoroughly deteriorated baskets. She said that the basket had already served its purpose and needed to die. I can still hear Keekus and all her stories, truly a talented elder who I will miss forever. (Claxton 1994: 1).

Another interviewee, being told about the same basket preservation example responded:
DK  So I guess I see the value in Keekus's point about if an object is ... no longer useable and it doesn't have any incredible ... real valuable history associated with it. It’s kind of unknown or else it’s possible to have another object created that serves the same function if not more, have more value than -- it seems crazy to spend your energy on preserving this object that ... like she said, is lifeless.

To the question, therefore, "what is important about objects to preserve", First Nations place a high value on useability. There are a number of reasons given. One consideration is that use reflects what the objects were intended for.

RB  How would my grandfather have felt? I think my grandfather's feeling was “when it’s there, it should be used”.

JM  Without meaning to sound superficial or trite, I would say that nothing lasts forever, and that certain objects are not fulfilling their intended functions within the culture (i.e. Native [emphasis JM's] culture) unless they are made use of in their ritual or ceremonial context. They may be fulfilling their functions perfectly well within non-Native culture by being artificially maintained within the sterile environment of a museum, but obviously this is not their intended function within their originating culture.

The importance of the function an object is intended for can be seen in the context of the emphasis on cultural continuity.

HG  But those [pieces] that have traditional or spiritual values I don’t think should be [purchased and displayed by a museum], so long as it’s still being practised... today, it’s still thriving. It’s still being practised.

Use is especially important when ritual objects are being used.

JM  In terms of a ritual piece, the cultural significance of an object can be preserved by facilitating or enabling its appropriate use by appropriate community members.
As well as the type of object, another consideration about use involves the question of whether a family is active in their cultural ceremonies. Then the use of ritual objects is not a choice, but a necessity.

GW The same kind of rights are not associated with pieces of jewellery. We treasure a gold bracelet your grandmother gave you. You don’t ever have to wear it like we have to once in a while wear a mask that’s been passed down to us.

Use is also seen as necessary in passing on the culture.

DW Like I said, it’s good for the kids to use them ... it’s really teaching them. They’re feeling the texture, the artwork, you know, and what better way to keep the culture alive?

RB The fact of the objects being used, I think, that’s important. And understanding the use of it. Taking my granddaughter to the potlatches ...

GW I suppose for kids in the city the business of touching may be more important. Potlatches are so much a part of kids lives here.

Knowing about the use of archaeological objects, where the question of actual use today does not come up, is also important to passing on the culture.

LJ There was a piece ... that was a beautiful little carved piece of bone, that had fascinating carvings on it. ... So its aesthetic value was important, but what we really wanted to know was how it was used. So that information was very, very important. ... And so we’re talking about preserving the cultural, conceptual [integrity]. ... And that’s paramount. You can lose the object entirely. ... If you have, ... its use and its place in the culture, you’ve still got something. Whereas if you’ve just got the object [and] you don’t know what it was used for, well, all you can do is appreciate it on an aesthetic level.

Passing on the culture means passing on a positive cultural identity.
AS  And now the artifacts that have come back, the new art forms that are being developed, are, I'm sure, a contributor to the growing revival of the culture, the arts, the building of self-esteem is gradually taking place. And I think there is a growing pride in who we are and where we came from. You know, or even though in some circles today, that's not considered to be such a great thing, but we think it is.

Use also proclaims rights and privileges, in the sense of cultural prerogatives witnessed by the community at a potlatch or other ceremonial occasion.

AN  The Native people didn't have a writing system, a way for them to pass that down was to invite people to be witnesses for different events ... marriages, when an boy became a man, a young girl when she became a woman. And so you would never just privately hand these things down, you would have to gather people to be witnesses so they would say, “Oh, yes, well, I remember that was handed down from his grandfather.” And you couldn't just use whatever you liked, just because you liked it. ...

You had to have the right to use it.

HG  [Within my blood line, I was very privileged to be born into the family line that contained, I guess, the ranking, I wouldn't want to call it ranks, but we'll use that word for now, but I was born into a family that had the right, or the privilege to wear a mask. And this mask was handed down from generation, to generation, to generation.

HG  Right now I have a family mask that's present in the Vancouver Museum. ... Yes, we'd love to have it in the family again. Yes, these kinds of masks are to be worn on ceremonial occasions, but I would be a crazy person to say "I want to keep this in my house." ... But again ... there are special occasions ... that I think I should be allowed to wear it if it was possible... recognizing that after use I would return it.

Finally, use proclaims not just family or lineage identity, but cultural identity as a whole. The following illustrates a parallel between the use of cultural resources and the use of natural resources.
And they see value in it [DK's academic and museum credentials related to anthropology and archaeology] now, particularly because it is closely associated with, perhaps, with land claims or with us establishing our ... our own – not ownership but our use of certain areas or the value of our cultural traditions.

The word "use" rather than "ownership" establishes rights in the complicated arena of aboriginal land claims. Use is what gives value to the object.

[T]here's a difference between what an artist carves, and sells ... a mask to a family to use for ceremonial purposes, he may carve a very similar mask and sell it to a gift shop. But once this mask has been used by the family in a ceremonial context, it takes on a cultural significance. You know, whereas this mask that got sold in the gift shop is more viewed as an object of art.

I know there are a lot of things that are brought out in special, only in special occasions that are, are danced or whatever, even if they are a bit frail, but people just take more care -- but the only way to validate it or for people to see it is, is in a potlatch.

BM challenged the precedence First Nations give to the cultural need to use objects. She said that many First Nations people feel they have the right to the use of the items, but that they are not thinking of the wear and tear on them, nor how to take care of them. She remarked that they "get touchy" if this issue is raised. This, the contemporary politicized arena which provides the larger context for museum/First Nations relationships was discussed directly by several respondents and will also appear in a later section.

In this study, the word "use" has been used as conservators often use it, to cover a general category that can bring physical risk to an object. First Nations respondents, however, most often made distinctions in their answers
between types of objects, types of use, and weighed the risk to the physical object versus what would be gained accordingly. This is seen in the previous quotation from PB, and AC's comment which follows:

AC Baskets are work things, but some could have a different use in an educational collection, and some are worth preserving.

To further underline the perception that "use" is not one general category, certain kinds of wear are mitigated by the passing on of cultural values. That is, there exists a traditional cultural connection between the use of objects and caring properly for those objects. It can be noted that this is a value found in western as well as indigenous societies. For example, western musicians take great physical care of old musical instruments which they use, because they respect the instruments, and their inherent meaning, the sound, will depend on their condition.

PS And I think that sometimes it's very important to touch. ... But I mean, if they're going to be rough and stuff, then of course, they mustn't be allowed to do it. But .. well, learning self-discipline and respect...

GW In the dance programme, they [the children] have little masks and other gear that they're allowed to touch and learn how to take care of. But it's not so much a matter of just "touching". It's "using".

PB I think if you have or if you borrow a blanket or if someone -- you lend it to people -- there's always an expectation that they'll look after it. You don't have to really say that, you know ... when I used to go to some ceremonial feasts and I never had a blanket and people would lend it to me and they'd say: "Be careful!" You know, they wouldn't say that... you don't do that... and people are always willing to lend their material and, and they know that you'll look after it.
The Collections Manager at the U’mista Cultural Centre commented:

JP When I'm working in the back room they'll come in and they'll kind of pick it up, and no washing the hands, no nothing, just, you know. ...

And I have to tell them that's not how you pick that up. But usually I don't worry about it, they're used to handling it, it's maybe not pieces of gold, but the same regalia they use for a potlatch. ...

The above quotation also shows different constructions of the meaning of "proper handling" between a museum conservation perspective and the First Nations perspective in the community. "Handling" will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

Many of the respondents' answers about whether a particular object needed to be used or not were based on practical considerations, rather than politically or culturally correct sweeping statements.

(SJ) : would he use his paddle shirt today if he had it back? SJ pointed out that it is fifty years old, and probably would "have had it" – [would not be in a usable condition].

Use was not spoken about only in terms of its original use. For example, objects were passed down generation to generation, but if they were not in good enough condition to be danced at a potlatch, they could still serve an important cultural purpose.

DW But we don’t put a [price on it] ... we don’t think of it as in dollars, you know, like it's ... it's priceless or anything ... as long as someone’s using it. Like, if I'm giving it to my grandson and he's going to practise using it, that's OK, you know. And then eventually it just goes out of sight, and then there is the new one.
Where masks are too fragile to be danced, but it is important to use them at a potlatch, then there are examples of compromises which have been made to take this into account.

JP And they displayed it. They didn’t use them to dance them but they brought them out to show everybody that had come.

In this case, the use of the objects at the potlatch was assisted by staff at the U’mista Cultural Centre, where the family had chosen to house the objects. As this museum in Alert Bay was the family’s choice, and the family were concerned about the objects’ well-being since these pieces were important, standard conservation practice integrated well with “use” of the objects at a potlatch. The collections manager at U’mista brought the objects over to the Big House for the potlatch.

JP I brought them in, and told them how to, just a little: “This is how you do it, you know, you use two hands. Don’t hold two objects” -- and just went over the basics with them. They were all excited. They wanted to use the little white gloves but -- but I didn’t have any!

In conservation there is a tendency to look at "use" in terms of original use, and to view a museum’s role as protecting the objects from use. "Museum use", however, also involves the risk of wear or damage to the physical object. This is most obvious if objects are used in interactive educational programs, but wear is also potentially a part of every museum process involving objects: hanging or mounting exhibitions, travelling loans, even acquisitions meetings. The U’mista Cultural Centre, whose main collection of older material was repatriated to them in the 1970s on the condition that they build a museum and follow standard museum
procedures, including not using the pieces, has purchased contemporary objects specifically for loan to families who have the rights to certain dances, but do not have the masks. A related "museum use" common to places having collections from the Northwest Coast is described by a staffperson at a cultural centre:

AN With the masks in the museum here, they were given back to the museum ... on the condition that they'd stay in the museum; none of the masks ever leave the museum to go back to the families, if they have the right to use it, but that family can make a copy of that mask. So it doesn't leave here.

In museum cataloguing, and in conservation in terms of the marks of physical wear, recognition is often not paid to any use the object was put to between the time it served its original purpose and the time it entered the museum. Several respondents mentioned having ceremonial objects at home that no longer served their original purpose because of the condition of the piece or the devaluation of the cultural practice, but which were still useful.

RB My sister has a bentwood box that's even older than what I have, and her sisters used it as a toy box for years and years and it came [from] my great great grandmother, so I don't know, I can't begin to think how many years back that might have been.

RB And it's a fairly old piece, and I had it, mind you, years ago when my children were small, when it came into my possession from my Dad, I used to allow my children to take it for show and tell. And I raised five kids and they all at one time or another took this piece and sometimes carefully and in a plastic bag, but in the case of my son just having it around his waist and parading down Rumble Street never thinking that someone might recognize it as something very valuable and could have been snatched out of their hands just like that ...

But eventually I was to realize the value of this thing, after my father died, and so decided to store it in the museum. But I find that a lot of people have a right to this thing. Just very recently my
nephew phoned and asked if he could sign it out of the museum for Calvin Hunt's potlatch in Fort Rupert, and I myself personally feel that I can't refuse them.

Another respondent commented on the role a museum can play when an object is no longer considered usable.

HG As an example, I know a person here who has a mask that is two hundred years old. I'm sure its deteriorating. I'm sure that someone in the next generation, the generation after, will come to a decision point of "I can't use this in our sacred ceremonies anymore, because it's just too far gone." So one of two things is going to happen. One, they're going to put it away and leave it in the corner, which will rapidly deteriorate, or, two, they'll sell it. Maybe, because they might lose the significance, or they might just say "It's taking up too much space in my house." So if there was that strong communication link between your museum and this community, they could say, well, hey, there is the ability to store it there, to keep it there, for eternity.

Access

The need for both preservation and access is as much a dilemma to be worked out for the respondent in the last quotation as it is for museum staff.

This respondent views museums the way conservators do, as places which have as one of their goals the preservation of objects. Housing objects in a museum is not, however, entirely satisfactory to some respondents, as standard museum practice is not designed for easy access nor does it answer personal needs.

DW .. And I forgot to tell my uncle that if they ever need it, it's there, because if they can ever use it, that's good. But I don't want to preserve it, I don't want it to go to a museum. I want it to be there when they want it; when they need it, you know, I don't want to go through signing papers, and you know, handling shipment
and putting it in crates and everything. I just want to say, sure, go ahead, take it, it's at Nancy's house. It should be available.

At the same time, in more than one cultural centre staff emphasized that excellent collections management practice is necessary if the centre has objects which are used. AN makes the point that if objects are going in and out of the museum, written agreements so new staff know the procedures and know who can borrow what are very important.

A failing of museums in fulfilling personal needs is discussed further in a later section, in relation to the toybox mentioned previously. It is important to remember that personal needs, including borrowing for use, are significant factors defining preservation from First Nations holistic, "continuity of culture through living it" perspective. It should be noted that respondents may make distinctions between cultural centres and museums in this context, as illustrated by the positive experience of the family who placed their regalia at U'mista and potlatched it, and the negative view towards museums expressed by RB's sister regarding the toybox.

From the point of view of physical risk to the object, the preservation versus access for use dilemma has been mitigated, as already noted, by allowing copies of old pieces to be made by artists, and by purchasing contemporary pieces for ceremonial use. In British Columbia, this has been done not only at cultural centres but also at the Royal British Columbia Museum in the capital of the province. In addition, urban museums and especially cultural centres situated in First Nations communities have offered to keep privately-owned regalia in store-rooms in the facility as a service. The facility acts as steward of these collections, providing a safe environment and
facilitating access to someone who has the family’s permission to see or borrow the piece.

It should be underlined that “easy access” refers to bureaucratic administration, not to public access. In this the issue is very different from the access mandate for most contemporary public museums. All the respondents were concerned that proper cultural protocols were observed, that only those who had the rights to wear the masks would be allowed to borrow them.

GW  [T]he documentation [which came back with the repatriated pieces] was so bad and we had to wait for so long, no one really knew who owned what and we certainly weren’t about to do something that might create a lot of problems by allowing someone to use this mask who ... didn’t really have the right to. So, we just said no. They’re symbolic, I guess ...

AN  I couldn’t tell him [what he was allowed to use in his potlatch] because I didn’t know his family lineage or what was handed down to his family. And the potlatching system, you couldn’t just use whatever you liked, you had to have the right to use it.

So you couldn’t just pick and choose, you know, what you’d like to use, you had to have the right.

Another major role of museums was to help people access not only objects but curatorial and archival information which would tell them what rights and privileges belonged to their family. A major criticism of museums has been that the access needed by First Nations has not been possible in the past.

LMS  I did forewarn the Museum of Anthropology some twenty years ago that there were people within this community who knew there were objects within the museum holdings that were part of the traditional use and that certain families had indicated they might like to access those particular pieces for family functions, or public functions. The museum just did not know how to respond.
Had absolutely no idea, other than going into severe shock, of what to do.

It is particularly interesting to investigate how the cultural centres have resolved the preservation versus access dilemma, having to serve both professional museum and community concerns. As mentioned, some centres such as U'mista have resolved this by having a contemporary collection for use, housing personal regalia for appropriate people to use, and allowing no use of the older repatriated collection. At U'mista, cultural reasons for not using the pieces (e.g., not being entirely sure of who owned some of them originally) as well as standard museum reasons (e.g., the condition of the returned collection), provided the rationale for non-use. The question was asked, however, whether when the collection was first repatriated, the elders in particular expected that now they would be able to dance the pieces again. How did the elders accept the museum rationale, since these pieces had been repatriated from major museums to U'mista on the condition that they be kept in museum conditions? GW, who as mentioned was the driving force in accomplishing the repatriation and creating U'mista, was its first Director, and is the daughter of Dan Cranmer, at whose potlatch in 1921 this regalia had been seized, answered:

MC And when they first came back, then, did people want to use them?
GW Oh, no. No. They were in pretty bad shape, some of the pieces, and it was pretty obvious that they couldn’t be used.

She continues with comments on the impossibility of knowing who, in many cases, the pieces originally belonged to, and any use would have been inappropriate.
JP, the current collections manager at U'mista, fifteen years after the Centre's inception, commented:

JP I think they were happy to see the pieces come home. ... I think they all pretty much understood that, you know, you shouldn't be using them because they are so fragile. But at the same time, they ... "Well, we've been told the pieces belong to us, why can't we use them?" I think ... we've changed quite a bit. ... I wasn't there for the opening ceremonies, but I know ... with the stuff we had transferred from Cape Mudge ... it was displayed at a potlatch.

The changes referred to in JP's comments reflect continuing changes in museum practice in B.C. as whole: the acceptance in museum practice of compromises meant to allow both museum and First Nations needs to be met concerning objects from their cultural heritage.

In the norms of conservation certain objects are considered to belong to a category called "functional", as discussed in Chapter 4. With this issue in mind, the question can be posed: would ceremonial objects from First Nations therefore be included in the "functional" category? JM, the only conservator working in Canada at the time of this writing who is of First Nations descent, answered:

JM I feel Native American ethnographic objects occupy an entirely different area of concern, and their use by the cultures which created them involves a fundamentally different set of issues. (Moses 1995)

He explains further:

JM It would seem to me that if we are discussing the actual use and operation of technological or scientific artifacts in museums of science and technology, or perhaps agriculture or industry, etc., then we are discussing the use of mechanical objects in purely didactic terms; that is, they are presumably being made to operate in situations open to the general public, specifically so that the
method of their construction and/or operation might be made known to as many people as possible; ie. school groups, family groups, etc.

I am assuming that if we next discuss the use of ethnographic objects, we are talking about their use by their originating culture or contemporary descendant population. I suppose in answering your question [what is the fundamentally different set of issues referred to in the first quotation], I automatically thought in terms of either a ceremonial rite, or perhaps an object of traditional art or craftwork being made available for examination by contemporary Native craftspeople or artisans. In either instance I would think it unlikely that such a gathering would be open to the general public. That is, knowledge of the object would not be made available for public consumption.

It is interesting to note that in many museums technological objects which are accessioned pieces from the collection are frequently made use of for instructional purposes or for other reasons like public relations or fund raising. Situations which immediately come to my mind are things like the printing press at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa, and certain aircraft in the collection of the National Aviation Museum, also in Ottawa. On the other hand, many museum professionals, whether curators or conservators, shudder at the thought of, or reject outright, the notion that perhaps selected ethnographic artifacts might be made available for use or examination by their originating or descendant populations.

I feel that in such situations a number of larger issues immediately become involved, including for example (in the case of religious objects) the right of Native peoples to practice their traditional religions in a free and unhindered manner, inasmuch as some Native groups believe that until certain of their sacred objects are released from museum collections, they cannot practice their true religions in their originally intended form. In other words, sacred objects are not interchangeable, and "replacements" or "stand-ins" for objects held by museums are not appropriate." (Moses 1995: 1-2)

It should be noted that while JM's comment about "replacements" certainly applies to cultures such as the Zuni in the United States, it is less applicable to many of the indigenous coastal nations of British Columbia such
as the Kwakwaka'wakw, where objects illustrate family rights celebrated in ceremonies, rather than being sacred personal or communal property. The issue of sacred personal or sacred communal property is complex, however, in B.C. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the coastal and Interior Salish nations have private and personal ceremonial property, and some coastal peoples have clan-connected communal shrines for ceremonies concerning the whale hunt. Detailed research into the need to use original objects by indigenous peoples in B.C. is beyond the scope of this study, requiring anthropological research in the communities and nations concerned. The issue is, however, commented upon by some respondents in this chapter in the section on sacred/sensitive objects.

The following table compares the similarities and differences between First Nations and museum perspectives on "use". Museum conservation viewpoints are summarized from the information in the earlier chapters on conservation values.

Table 6: "Use": Museum Conservation and First Nations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSEUM CONSERVATION</th>
<th>FIRST NATIONS (FN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artifacts entered the museum when they ceased to be useful.</td>
<td>Older objects entered the museum because FN under pressure from dominant western culture. Today traditional ritual use of objects being renewed, and use of heritage to establish positive identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum uses recognized: enjoyment, increased understanding.</td>
<td>All uses related to passing on the culture and observing cultural protocols important: e.g., ceremonial use, teaching children, artists learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use recognized as a necessity?
No: if risking damage to a valuable artifact.

Use recognized as a necessity?
Yes, if risking damage to cultural continuity, spirituality, rights. Not always necessary to use older objects.

One time use may be necessary e.g. if original information is in a medium which is incomprehensible if not "played" or "run".

Cultural protocols, not protection of physical object, govern use.

Principal argument against use is that it causes physical damage to object's integrity through alteration and wear.

Traditional use adds value to the object: wear and alteration part of this.

Risk of damage from museum use mitigated by e.g. using replicas or reproductions, handling rules.

Sometimes cultural norms can work with museum norms, e.g. when appropriate, use new pieces, and by respectful treatment of regalia. This upholds value of passing on the traditional culture.

AVOCATIONAL GROUPS / SOME MUSEUMS

Avocational groups especially uphold:
use what artifacts intended for.

Use is what objects were intended for.

Use establishes technical understanding.

Use establishes cultural understanding within the culture.

Use is fun: for participants and museum visitors.

Many emotions evoked through use of traditional objects.

Motion is "the soul of the machine".
Preserving physical integrity alone does not necessarily preserve meaning; according to some, meaning of the artifacts established only when they are used.

Use is one element preserving the culture that the objects have meaning in.

FIRST NATIONS

Damage
Since the major objection by conservators to "use" is the risk it poses to the physical fabric of the object, interviewees were asked about their opinions
on what importance physical damage has to the cultural integrity of the object. The interviewees' outlook on damage contrasts strongly with the traditional conservation perspective.

HG Now, again, I'm talking explicitly here, about our community's masks, that are art objects [in the museum] ... if we were to utilize it and it somehow got damaged, and if I were to want to use it again, first of all, yes, I would like it repaired, because I want to use it again. And if I had enough respect for that work, I would ensure, first of all, that it didn't get damaged. ...

DC I never see "wear", anyway. It "ages" and what not. Let it go that way.

DW No. They just fix it.

DK There's important value in using it that gives lasting value, either in knowledge or further understanding or whatever in the family or community, then some of those minor damages ... you have to swallow, you know?

It should be noted, however, that it is perhaps unfair to compare the opinions of people whose experience with the question at hand derives from their daily lives as much as from their museum or cultural centre experience, with the viewpoint created by a particular profession whose central ethos is to preserve physical objects. The focus of this study is First Nations and conservators' perspectives; future research might compare these viewpoints with the perspectives of a museum's general public and an avocational group such as car or airplane enthusiasts using old machines, to examine in more detail whether and how First Nations viewpoints differ from these. Within the parameters of this study, it was possible to compare the question of what constitutes damage to a museum object from the point of view of respondents who had little or no responsibility for collections (represented by the
interviewee excerpts above), with the perspectives of a First Nations
conservator, JM, and with the former director of U'mista, GW, who was
obliged at the cultural centre to create a museum environment according to
the standards of the late 1970s.

GW: Oh well, a Hamat'sa mask, I think -- if there's a scratch on it
-- it's part of being used. If it were damaged to the point where the
mouth wouldn't open or close, well, THAT'S damage! I think that
anything that impairs the function -- if the eyes won't open and
close any more. Yes. But I think things like a little scratch or a
feather coming loose or whatever is part of normal use.

JM, the conservator, gave a more conservation-oriented definition of damage,
but one which recognizes use.

JM On a very practical level, damage to me would include tears,
rips, split seams, pieces completely detached or missing altogether.
It does not include flaking paint or shedding fur, worn fabric
surfaces, creases, or use/wear marks in and of themselves.

Damage is to be avoided in the first place, as far as is
reasonably possible, and within the limits of an object's intended
use within its originating community.

Both acknowledge that damage to the material is mitigated within the context
of its social function as an object to be used. Deterioration is accepted as part
of a natural process and part of the object's use. It is considered damage
when it impairs the function of the object, not its material.

The seriousness of damage was defined in social terms in other ways:

MC And I guess if something happened during the dance
[example given of a piece falling off], I guess that would be very
serious.
PS That would be very serious, especially for the dancer. ... And
the dancer's family.
In other words, the damage done to the mask was secondary to the damage done to the honour of the family.

GW The family giving the potlatch would have to give more money away to wipe away the shame of the accident.

The way objects should look was also defined socially, unlike the conservators' outlook on integrity of the object.

JP I kind of like the marks of time, but I think that's me. I know the elders, if something's in real bad shape, they don't show it like that.

Damage was also defined socially in that importance was given to the process of mitigating it through informing people who were using the objects. In addition, the importance of the decision-makers, not simply the decision, was emphasized by one respondent, CL, who said that he would ask the elders how they would choose to preserve the objects. Another respondent remarked in an essay:

AC I can appreciate the work of museum staff on their respect of handling our objects and we are thankful for that. It would be even better if our own First nations [sic] elders can be a part of that. (Claxton 1994: 4)

The following speaker illustrates the relationship between informing the users and damage to the pieces.

DK I guess if ... the family whose object it is and people who are involved in the conservation of it or the preservation of it discuss or are aware of ... concerns about the object and ... [if it is danced] there may be some wear and tear ... But as far as ... totally needless ... misuse -- not "misuse" but needless jeopardy -- putting that object in jeopardy... for no reason or just because of lack of understanding about the dangers of mishandling it, then I guess maybe you can
make sure that the people who are going to be ... in contact with the object are aware of how to try and handle it appropriately and definitely do not go out walking in the rain with it and, you know, those issues so that it's not needless that if, if during a ceremony, while it's being danced, something happens or while it's carefully being lifted off the head of the dancer there are flakes that come off or something.

Interviewees also expressed the view that traditional care can act to mitigate damage:

MC Do.. these pieces ever come back with ... with cracks or any kind of damage?
JP That hasn't happened yet. Probably because, once they're used, they're put back away and then they're brought back to the Center ... soon after, like maybe a day after or sometimes two days after the potlatch.
MC So, do you ... do you tell the people: “Folks, because it's been used, you have to put it back in its box right away.” Or do you ..?
JP No, no. That's just the way things have always been done. We were told that originally potlatch pieces weren't even on display, and so when people used the regalia, they put it away, as soon as they were done with it. Like, personal blankets, they don’t display them in their homes. They have them folded up and put away and bring them out and they put them right back away. It's just the way they've always done it.

It is interesting to note that in the experience of staff at the cultural centres, there has not been much damage through use (as they have defined damage). At U'mista, there has been much more serious damage, namely complete loss, through theft of two objects on display by visitors.

For conservators, often the ultimate expression of First Nations views on damage in opposition to theirs is the question of whether certain objects in museums, or ones considered in the western perspective as part of the
world's artistic heritage, like totem poles, should be allowed to "complete their natural cycle", that is, deteriorate for ritual or other cultural purposes.

PS [About the memorial poles at the Alert Bay graveyard]. We often get comments like, I know that a niece who worked in the tourist bureau has said that the tourists have come and [said] people ought to be ashamed of yourselves for not [keeping up] these poles. So ... I said, maybe you need to tell those people that those poles aren't there as tourist attractions. They weren't put up there for tourists, they were put up there as memorial poles; that those memorial poles will stand there until they crumble, and when they crumble then gone are the memories. ...

The old people say that they're not supposed to be [maintained].

DB When a totem pole is erected in the village, there is a significance, a cultural significance attached to that pole. If the pole, in time, erodes or decays, and perhaps falls over, it's the choice of the family, or the individual who owns that pole to perhaps repair, and, you know, re-erect that pole. And that would take a potlatch, and it's ... a choice of economics, I suppose. But the pole, when it's lying on the ground, doesn't lose its cultural significance. In time that pole, you know, starts returning back to the earth, and that pole may provide what's now known as a nurse log, you know, that little seedlings grow from the pole, that insects and small animals use the pole as refuge, but in time that pole goes back to the earth. It's a cycle.

GW You hear stories [that] a mask could be used four times and then it had to be burned. Its life was over. But this didn't seem to be any kind of general rule that I know of.

Even objects such as baskets should be allowed to disintegrate and not be preserved, according to one respondent.

AC To see our baskets or swoqualth blankets on the verge of "total destruction" should be given the "right to die". They have served their purpose, new ones would have to be made if our ancestors had so desired. (Claxton 1994: 1)
Breakage as well as complete destruction was mentioned as originating in certain instances in cultural practices. This type of knowledge might have an impact on conservation decisions about restoration.

AC One of the elders of Saanich ... mentioned that when an object has gone through its life cycle, its owners usually buried them. This is why several stone bowls have been unearthed by construction or road ways going in. The owner sometimes broke the bowl and then buried it. It has gone through its cycle. It was the choice of the owner to have it buried. It saddens me to see these objects now being sold for thousands and thousands of dollars. Some of these stone bowls have reached museums, a dedicated space for them in museums would be ideal. (Claxton 1994)

Some First Nations, however, expressed mixed feelings about letting objects deteriorate according to custom.

(SJ) after his grandmother’s funeral, his mother burned her mother’s regalia. SJ feels now that this was a loss, although it was a traditional practice.

KH For sentimental reason I would [keep a particular mask], but in the olden days they wouldn’t. We used to burn our dead. And we also have a burning ceremony of these things once we’ve renewed them.

DS Well, you know, I can understand them saying it [some objects should be allowed to deteriorate], but I also don’t agree to the extent that they...some things, as we said before, need to be validated. ... But if we can have a pole that came from ... a century or two ago that still exists, there’s strength in that deterioration as it happens. And whether we’ve slowed that process down, I mean, heavens, we’re looking to slowing down our own deterioration every day! ... You know, we’re putting on face cream ... we’re trying special remedies and potions to keep us younger, but when we meet an elder, you know, what do we feel in that? That we ... hope we’re as graceful as that when we’re that age. And I think that that’s just something that my boy needs to see. He needs to see...he loves the museum.
At one particular cultural centre, a staffperson stated that she felt today people would prefer to see the poles preserved, and noted several old poles that had been restored and given to local museums. Unlike the poles in the graveyard at Alert Bay, however, none of these had been memorial poles currently continuing their use as memorial markers.

Two First Nations respondents, both senior experienced museum people, noted the influence of cultural change and the influence of museums on ideas about preservation. In this they both emphasized the influence of the social and cultural context on preservation. BM stated that while she agreed that Zuni War Gods should be allowed to deteriorate because this was part of on-going ceremonial practice, Haida poles should not be allowed to deteriorate because they did not fulfill this same function. She felt it would be a disgrace to allow them to rot, and that this attitude, that objects should be allowed to complete "their natural cycle", was part of the highly politicized nature of the relationship between First Nations and museums, and of repatriation in particular.

Another respondent was asked:

MC  Are there any objects that you feel shouldn't be preserved -- that should, you know, be allowed to complete a cycle?
GW  Not only for me but, I think, for a lot of Native people -- we had to change in the way that objects are used. You know -- that traditionally when something wore out, somebody replaced it. When a pole fell down, that was the end of it. You didn't re-place it. It had served its purpose. But I think that because of contact with museums and conservators and people like that, everyone began to look at things in a different way. You know, there's a totem pole by Willie Seaweed. We know there's never going to be another one by Willie Seaweed -- and maybe for us it's not right -- and we allowed that to fall down and rot away. And I think people have developed a different way of looking at those objects and, as I
said, I think it has to do with the way that we now know something about museums and conservation. And history.

This theme, that as First Nations people have more experience with museums (and vice versa), changes occur to bring the two points of view closer together, or mutually more understandable, will appear again. Another respondent made the point that First Nations might agree with some of the museum reasons for preservation, but that this was not to be read as being the same as the museum point of view.

LMS I think it's relative to how many similar objects are around, circumstance, how old the piece is, and some of the same criteria you might use, we might balance as well. It doesn't mean we put the same weight on each one.

It can be seen that First Nations in this study resolved the question of physical damage to heritage objects through use by supporting the cultural necessity to use the objects in certain culturally-appropriate ways, and by working to mitigate potential damage and to slow deterioration for many but not necessarily all pieces. As will be seen in later sections as well, museums were recognized as having an appropriate role to play in this, but it was necessary for social and cultural protocols to be a deciding part of the preservation process. Museums and cultural centres could both facilitate use and facilitate preservation when objects are used.

DK [If] you could, somehow, foresee that — that possible damage — and prevent it in some way but still use it the way that you'd hoped to and that would be, in a perfect world, that would be what you'd hope for.

KL I think part of finding bridges between museums and First Nations and finding balance for preservation and use is that traditionally things did fall apart and there is traditional ways of
getting successors to objects just as there is a proper way for people to inherit names and positions so part of the revitalization and empowerment should be reviving the way the succeeding objects -- whether the proper "death" for an object is to be hid away somewhere and disintegrate or whether there's a way that you can release the spirit of the object somehow and transfer it to the new object and let it deteriorate much more slowly in a museum. Whether that would be acceptable or not I don't know. But I think that's one of the things that ... the whole question of revitalizing Native culture and empowering communities to take over all the traditional roles and whatever traditional spirituality the community is going to carry forth I think that's a question that has to be put to those people who take on the spiritual role. ...

Integrity

Apart from "damage", other conservation criteria are challenged by First Nations perspectives. The following section describes the interviewees' responses to the question of what constitutes the integrity of the object, and which "integrity" is most important to preserve of the four listed in the Canadian conservators' code of ethics: the physical, historic, aesthetic or conceptual integrity. Most of the First Nations interviewees agreed that

JP I would think that what the objects mean ... would seem to take precedence.

For this respondent, meaning rested in the cultural intangibles symbolized by the objects. She continues:

JP Because you can always carve another piece, but it's those songs ...

Likewise GW felt:

GW I don't know whether the people who made those things or used them thought in terms of aesthetics, integrities, because it was
a symbol of something that was old and valued and it was that aspect of it that was important — not so much what it looked like, I think. ... I guess that's a Western thing.

Other respondents chose words emphasizing lineage and the continuity of the culture:

LJ They were being preserved less to just preserve the object, they were being preserved to preserve a culture.

RB ... when you think of historical, I am thinking in terms of ... that it's a part of the family history.

AN That's really hard [deciding which "integrity" most important] ... I think... number one would be the cultural aspect of it. Because that's where the whole history gets carried through, is through the cultural aspect of the Native people. ... You can't pass it on ... unless you're having the cultural part of it, the potlatches, so it would be the main number one, certainly cultural. ... Passed on, continue to be talked ... [about].

The holistic nature of "integrity" was also pointed out.

PB I think that [cultural significance] would be the most important in terms of family and ... the history is to me the most important and ... you know, like it's all rolled in together, like you can't really separate it. ... everything is interrelated.

Some respondents chose "conceptual integrity", some chose "historic integrity" to represent these intangibles, and some picked all the integrities, but it was clear that any difficulty in the minds of the respondents lay in choosing from the conservators' wording, not in what was important to preserve.

In emphasizing the intangibles, however, it bears mentioning again that many First Nations respondents did not negate the importance of
preserving the physical objects symbolizing those intangibles. GW and PS observed:

GW Well, if you don’t have the physical, you don’t have anything else, do you? So, I guess that’s the most important thing.

PS [I]t’s more important to keep the mask ... and hopefully use it. ... If the mask is destroyed, then they will have nothing.

BM also supported a traditional conservation point of view, stating that objects have value in and of themselves, and should be preserved. They are a part of someone’s culture and may well not be being made anymore. Conservators would concur with these opinions about the fundamental importance in preserving the physical object.

One expression of the stated goal of conservation, as seen in Chapters 3 and 4, is the preservation of the cultural significance of objects. Conservators preserve this by respecting the historic, aesthetic, physical, and conceptual integrity of the object when working on museum collections. Although this study uses the word "preserve", one could make the semantic distinction that what First Nations want to keep and what they want to preserve are two separate questions. An urban museum puts them together, but at the U’mista Cultural Centre what was important was preserving the old collection of repatriated pieces while also displaying it, and keeping a contemporary collection for use. It was important that the contemporary collection reflected (and therefore preserved as a whole) the range of ceremonial dances, both as a base for knowledge and as a base for use. The intangibles were preserved by both the contemporary and the older collection. In other words, one could say that the contemporary collection was kept and kept up to make it
available for use in order to preserve the "intangibles". The museum was also a source of knowledge not only about family rights but also about associated "intangibles": how to organize a dance, which people should be asked for certain information (JP).

As well as preserving history, of primary importance in the keeping of heritage objects is that it assists in preserving knowledge and practices culturally significant to the contemporary community.

KL  I can’t explain it except in a question of identity... as a symbol or a representation of the – somebody was talking about the difficult journey that First Nations cultures have been carried through. ...

DB  The objects will always be the connection to the past. They’ll always be representative of the past. ... I think that the museums more and more that these objects are becoming important, you know, in terms of the cultural identity of different communities, and that these objects, you know, they may reside in mainstream museums, MOA [the Museum of Anthropology], [unclear], may return back to the community, or that there may be some kind of partnership, perhaps, that these objects will perhaps remain in MOA under community control, but, you know, the community has contributed some of its knowledge to that object, some context to that object.

DS  But, you know, it [weaving] wasn’t about a job for me, and some of the ladies, it was about life, it was about really connecting unanswered questions from the past and finding out what the answers were here, and using those for sort of building blocks for reestablishing, I think, who we were as native people in our community. Because, I think you know, we live on an everyday basis, knowing that we had to assimilate, and we assimilated pretty good, but there was something always missing, you know? And we weren’t quite sure what it was. Even though we had the winter ceremony, it was something that could only be done in Winter. And what I sort of see as lacking in our community was something that is really, I think, an interesting statement, in that people usually have to see to believe, and we had nothing to see exactly. That reflected any kind of positive reflection from our past.
The objects symbolize both continuity and change, as do the cultural practices, including the making of original art and reproductions or replicas.

DS They are now doing replicas for the show called “Written in the Earth” ...

And they’re duplicating those pieces. Those men that are out there right now have never either identified with anything. And when they saw those pieces, those guys out there, I think they were really moved as well. And they’re very geared up. They’re feeling very connected. They’re there, and they’re working and working and working.

It’s excitement about... I would be the only woman, besides Susan, involved with it. And I think that that’s somewhat important, that there is that change that’s also has happened that it’s not just the men carving or engraving anymore.

JM, the conservator, emphasized the importance of preserving conceptual integrity by preserving knowledge in the originating community.

JM Preserving cultural significance is, to me, the most important aspect to preserve. Cultural significance means that knowledge of the original function or use of objects is maintained within the originating community or its descendants. The least important is the preservation of any marks that might indicate the object’s history. Objects can end up bearing various marks and abrasions from a variety of causes, including neglect or poor treatment received while languishing in a museum storage vault. They are indeed indicators of its history, but not necessarily ones that community members might want to preserve.

PB responded to the question, "how is the cultural significance of objects preserved?" by talking in detail about the intangibles, but not about the role of conservation or collections management in the museum where she works.
I think by people knowing the stories behind it and whose family it was from and whose name and the crest or clan and when it should be used and how it should be used and who has the right to use it and how it was passed down ... the names that were given or how it was used in dances.

This brings up the question of whether "conceptual integrity" or "cultural significance" can ever be preserved in or by a museum, in First Nations eyes, or whether it can only be preserved by cultural knowledge and practice in the community. In general, the interviewees gave answers similar to the following:

AC [The] cultural significance of objects is usually preserved by families who pass their knowledge down through the generations, not by museums.

And most agreed that museums had a role to play:

PS [M]useum resources can help people know their ancestors, their family.

Two of those who work in cultural centres noted the centre's role in preserving cultural significance. They both mentioned housing the old collections, but their responses focussed mainly on preserving cultural significance through using the centre as a resource offering classes teaching the language, the singing and the dancing (JP, AN). In other words, the words "conceptual integrity" and "preserving cultural significance" brought to mind the intangibles. One respondent noted the centre's role in preserving cultural significance by its storing of regalia for individuals (RB) and one noted the role of U'mista in the revitalization and re-emergence of traditional cultural practice, "pulling it above ground rather than underground" (CL).
GW focussed on the intangible symbolism, as the important element of cultural significance that is preserved at U'mista. She also suggested that this rested in the collection as a whole, not in the objects as individual pieces.

GW I think the way that it [conceptual integrity] is preserved here is different because the history of the collection – the way it returned, what it symbolizes for us – and the pieces, the objects in MOA’s collection, don’t have that kind of thing. But I don’t know that you can think about objects there in the same way that you think about objects here. One of the things that I was criticised for when I was at the centre was that there were no individual labels ... That didn’t seem really important to me because it was the whole collection that was meaningful, not individual ones. And I don’t even think about MOA’s collection in the same way because ... pieces were acquired in different ways.

Conservators usually treat each object individually, and indeed the codes of ethics base the importance of preservation in part on the uniqueness of each piece. Conservators may treat art using the artist’s body of work as a reference, but rarely do treatment decisions rest on the intangibles represented by regarding the collection as a whole, intangibles which are of museological significance (e.g., why did the collector acquire these particular pieces?) or of symbolic significance to the originating culture.

A First Nations point of view on the difference between museums and cultural centres in their attempt to preserve what is culturally significant was succinctly summarized in the following:

GW Well I don’t know if museum people should really be talking about preservation or maintenance of culture because all you’ve got are things and those things -- those objects really, oh, really don’t mean much by themselves, sitting on shelves. They only come to life when they are really used. So, I guess, your job is to preserve those "things". It’s our job to preserve the culture that those "things" have meaning in. Yeah. I think that, sometimes, people expect too much of museums -- they expect even too much of the
cultural centres ... I think it's true of MOA or anywhere else that people should not think just because things are carefully taken care of there that people in the villages, like Alert Bay, don't have to worry. We have our own stuff to do.

DB In my mind, I see museums as sort of the introductory for a mainstream society. That they can go to different museums and get an introduction to different communities. ... But that they know that there are other cultural centres, that there are other people ... within the community that live that culture.

Museums may preserve "things" but the significance of the objects is preserved by continuing cultural practices from one's heritage.

Further differences were underlined between cultural centres and museums and their roles and relationships.

GW This was in the days when the middle workroom [at the U'mista Cultural Centre] was used to make hundreds of sandwiches for potlatches. Anyway, they [conservators] were just appalled that we were allowing all this kind of thing to happen in a museum. They forgot we weren't a "museum": we were a cultural centre where this kind of stuff was supposed to happen!

DB But... in the terms of a cultural centre, I think cultural centres can act, furthermore, as an intermediary between the general public and the community. You know, the community doesn't have to more or less deal with these individuals, that there's some sense of control through the cultural centre.

Cultural centres serve the community by preserving, showcasing, and facilitating both tangible and intangible aspects of culture.

AC First Nations are reclaiming their heritage and cultural centres are one of the approaches we have chosen. (Claxton 1994: 4)

LJ The important thing was that we would be able to show things in our facility [on the reserve]. That people wouldn't have to
travel to Victoria or Ottawa to see items that were important to Native culture.

LJ I think the preservation part is important to -- quite a few people. Some see the museum as a base where items could be preserved better than they could preserve them at home. Particularly people that are getting older and know that one day they'd die, and wanted to be sure that the... basket that they'd taken care of all their life was going to be preserved and didn't feel that the youngsters in their family would be keen enough to preserve them.

LJ I know that Leona [not LMS: person who followed LJ as the centre's museum director] did help other people [in the community] that had items that they didn't want to donate to the museum but they wanted to keep. So she helped them [make] boxes ... using the tissue paper and that type of thing. So there was a little bit of backup [for people who]... wanted to know the best way to preserve their items.

CL noted that a community facility gives a sense of pride, and with repatriation would give something tangible as well.

LJ also noted the role of the cultural centre in educating not only visitors but the community's children. The creation of the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society and its museum component resulted in introducing Shuswap culture to the primary school system of the area, which had previously highlighted only the well-known Plains cultures on the one side and the Northwest Coast cultures on the other side of Shuswap territory.

Conservation Practice and Guidelines

Conservators' practice revolves around the parameters for preserving the physical object. How do First Nations regard these parameters and the museum practice associated with them, if the importance of preserving the
physical objects is in relation to cultural meaning and practice? Interviewees pointed out that the physical elements of an object are important in what they signify, and answers to questions regarding the restoration of objects, for example, focussed on whether or not the social meaning of the object would be changed, or whether or not the restoration assisted in or was necessary for the object's use.

HG I would prefer, personally, if things were damaged, or whatever else, either the original pieces, if they're strong enough, would be used, replacement, i.e. if it's cedar bark and you went and got new cedar bark to replace it with, that would be my second, and thirdly only under extreme conditions would you actually replace it with something much more modern. ... Because in my culture, every piece that was attached to it would have had significance.

JP They were never shown [in] bad shape. But I kind of like them that way better. But if they are for potlatches then they try to make them look good.

This last quotation is interesting because the custom of making objects look good for the potlatch was the basis of the conservation work done for the exhibition "Chiefly Feasts", which was, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, a display about the potlatch, past and present, jointly conceived in the early 1990's by the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and the Royal British Columbia Museum. The conservators at AMNH refurbished the masks according to conservation principles such as reversibility, and justified their methods and materials by reference to professional conservation standards (Ostrowitz 1993). The decision to refurbish, however, had been taken by First Nations consultants to the exhibition, in conjunction with the
curators. GW was a guest curator for that exhibit, and her opinion on
restoration can be seen in:

GW Well, don’t conservators say the less you do the better? ... It
seems to me that still applies. These pieces aren’t going to be used.
They’re simply going to be exhibited so there shouldn’t be a
problem of any rapid deterioration or chance of damage.

This appears to be in contradiction to the work performed for "Chiefly
Feasts". When asked about this exhibit, she replied:

GW I think the thing with "Chiefly Feasts" was that they only
asked one person to advise them to refurbish or whatever but I
think what happened soon after that people at the American
Museum realised that they should talk to more than one person --
that not one person spoke for everyone. Yeah, because I think if
they had asked other people, they wouldn’t have [had] the same
masks.

This situation underlines the importance of the earlier statements that
the opinions expressed by the respondents, while at times presented in this
study using words such as "First Nations perspectives", represent the
viewpoints only of the individuals interviewed. Collectively they represent a
sampling of opinion which can indicate a trend, but other opinions may well
be encountered.

In these interviews, First Nations respondents never disparaged the act
or intentions of physically preserving heritage objects, even if they held
different opinions about it.

DK You know, I may feel the need ... to slightly alter something
because it makes it more vital to me or to my family at this moment
and to try and respect that and realize that it may not necessarily be
what you would choose to do with that object but it doesn’t have
the same connection perhaps to you than it might have to me.
DS Because if the museum didn't do the study that they do to look at ways of preserving it, and helping to maintain the usefulness of the objects, they wouldn't be there.

As will be seen in other interview excerpts, some respondents noted a general lack of familiarity and understanding in their communities regarding museum practices and their rationales.

LJ I think the people that were most concerned about caring for the item and damaging it and that type of thing, were people that are from the museum profession. Now, they were really the only ones that were very concerned about it at all. Everyone else saw these items as stuff that is hanging around their own house, and what's the deal, you put it in a museum and all of a sudden you can't touch it.

Respondents viewed physical preservation as part of a whole. Since the objects, even in a museum, represent intangible cultural attributes such as rights and privileges, they are as important as the tangible, and they become more important, even of governing importance, in an era in which the process of recovery from cultural loss is only a few decades old. The clients of conservation, in the eyes of the interviewees, are the First Nations and their material culture, not the material culture of First Nations.

LMS Yes [clients of conservation are First Nations, not the objects themselves]. Because the objects that you speak for are the "property" of the First Nations. They belong to the First Nations community. So there has to be connections between the conservator and the community.

HG But the fact of life is that we're still micro-micro in the sense of the world, we're still micro in the sense of the only preservation that we see is our own. ...
Restoration

In balancing preservation versus access, how is repair or restoration for use balanced with the normal conservation parameters for this type of work? How far does restoration for use proceed, and what is acceptable in the perspectives of the interviewees, especially regarding an object that is the property of an institution such as a cultural centre and not an individual who has made an individual decision?

Two First Nations respondents whose work was not in collections management, nonetheless concurred with the conservation viewpoint of minimal intervention on the object.

PB  For myself, I would always rather not do that [alter an old piece e.g., add more buttons or feathers], if I didn’t know how or I, we didn’t have the original or something that matched it. I think it just depends on the person because some people would but I don’t think I would feel comfortable about that.
MC  Say it was a mask and the paint was peeling a bit. Would you rather keep that old paint showing or would you rather have it renewed by an artist?
PB  Well, I’d probably just leave it but if there was an artist I knew that knew what he was doing and knew his work or whatever, then ... I would use that. But otherwise I think I would rather just leave it.
MC  Why?
P B  That’s how it was meant to be... because if you change it, it changes the whole piece. Like, you know, it’s like sometimes I think about my Mum’s baskets. I feel really bad that they’re falling apart but, if you change it, sometimes it just changes the whole — it changes the meaning sometimes, I think. It depends, like, maybe for a blanket it’s different. I don’t know. ... Sometimes, I’d rather listen to elders and see what they would think and, you know, because they had definite opinions.

RB  I’d certainly be upset about Beau [a well-known Northwest Coast artist and relative of RB], about anyone altering something that belonged to me, something like the sisiutl, but then I think it
would be up to me to caution them "I don’t want it changed in any way. Don’t try to improve it ...." Mind you, he did do that. He did do that without [my permission]. ...

I think it was important that it be whole. And yeah, he probably knew me well enough that I would have said “No”. But he also has enough faith in himself that ... [t]hat I could be very pleased with what he did. Because I couldn’t see where he did. I really don’t know how he did it. It was his paint job ... and you know, the paint job didn’t look new ... Whatever he did ... he was very good at it.

The limits put on restoration in both cases are individual decisions. Both respondents are speaking from their own personal experience and point of view and both are hesitant about drawing generalized conclusions. They emphasize socio-cultural aspects of the situation such as not wanting to alter the meaning of the object, asking elders, and in the second case raise the relationship between the respondent and an artist in her family.

Other respondents said explicitly in response to the questions of intervention that they were giving their own point of view and that others might feel differently. Most concurred with minimal intervention, some for reasons that appear technical but may also have a cultural foundation, and others for reasons that echo conservation principles such as respect for integrity.

SJ, EC If a mask has flaking or faded paint, leave it.
AC We might use the wrong paint

DK Personally, I think I would feel that it’s important to have an object, if it does have this incredible history that accompanies it, to try and leave it so that it represents that history. Yes, if I were to paint it, that’s part of its history but then, as a result, you may lose, you know, the visual indications of the previous history before I touched it. So, personally, I don’t think I would make the choice to paint it though I think other people have the right to make that choice if they feel it is important to restore it, you know. ...
RB  I just think that if things have been kept for historical ... I think they should just be left in that state.

DS  I'd like it to be left the way it is. For whatever reasons it had, I don't want to play with someone else's property from that time period. ...

[M]y first instinct in connection to it, is it belongs to my people. ... I don't tamper with something ... that I respect, and I wouldn't insult my people by guessing that that's what it looked like.

One person who was an accomplished artist, and another who had done some carving, replied that they would opt for restoration.

AS  I would be inclined myself, to repair and refurbish. As long as that repairing or refurbishing does not change the form of the original ...

If you wanted to preserve the state it's in now, you photograph it.

DC  I mean, if you're not going to keep it up [the physical object], you're not going to be able to dance with it, are you?

DC, the artist, when asked about refurbishing his own pieces, however, replied in the negative, with the tongue-in-cheek statement:

DC  [Y]ou have to do a new one once in a while!

To elicit opinions on the limits of restoration, interviewees were asked whether it was acceptable to alter the cloth rigging which holds the mask onto a dancer's head. In the responses, the pragmatics of use were mentioned, as they also had been in the question of wear and tear on the object.

DC  No, no -- it wouldn't really matter. I mean there's an awful lot of altering of rigging. I mean, you know, people have different size heads.
Two individuals who held direct responsibilities for collections answered:

GW Well, I guess if you’re never going to loan it out then it’s important to keep it exactly as it was. But, if you’re going to loan pieces for use and the rigging doesn’t work and you say you can’t change a knot or anything, it really doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. Yeah. No, I don’t -- I think I’d be terribly upset if I worked in your museum and loaned a piece for use in a potlatch up here and someone decided: “Ah, this thing looks just so dog-eared and grubby. Why don’t we wash it and repaint it?” Yeah, that’d be pretty awful. But I think the rigging is -- if you’re never going to loan it out, then I think it is important to keep it exactly the same kind of knots, the same order.

JP I think ... they’re pretty good about altering things. ... They work around what’s there and they’ll make their own and have it and then take it off after. But they wouldn’t drill holes ... or anything ... They understand that if pieces are old you can’t treat them [unclear], because they’re not going to stand up to everything. You can’t change it just because it doesn’t work for you. So they’re really good at adapting things.

However, for many respondents the limit for restoration is reached if the meaning of the object is altered.

HG Repaint it? ... Personally, no. ... Because the various ways and means that they painted a mask is very important. To change it, I think is disrespectful.

Social meaning in the case above and below rests both in the object as signifier and the culturally valued relationship to that signifier.

KH ... it [a Dog Salmon pole of Chief Nii 'Ta'm, in Kitwanga, that had rotted] was restored in fiberglass. Our people wouldn’t accept it. I was willing to accept it, but the old people weren’t willing to accept it. ... it’s not because ... [whether the same materials i.e. the same type of wood had been used]. It is alien because it’s fibreglass, it’s not wood.

MC So even though it looks the same...

KH It looks the same; you couldn’t tell the difference.

MC Even though it represents the same...
KH  It looks the same. You couldn't tell the difference. But it's fibreglass, you see. ... So it's still laying on the ground. Nobody put it up. So I think the answer to your question [whether the same materials as the original should be used in restoration] is if they used another species of wood and get somebody to carve it, [it would be OK] because ... the ritual of bringing people together, honouring the past, and resurrecting the past, say, in this new creation is the important thing.

DC, the artist, believes that the social meaning of a piece shouldn't be altered, but restoration can assist in maintaining the social meaning and in the aesthetics.

MC  And what if they decide to add more cedar bark or feathers [to a mask to be danced]?
DC  Yeah, it always helps. It really doesn't matter as long as you haven't altered the mask as it is, you know.

Likewise, if a valued social meaning can no longer be realized, for example the piece is in such bad condition it can no longer be used in any way, then it is not worth restoring. The example of Kee kus's perspective on baskets in bad condition has already been given. The following illustrates this further.

GW  [T]here were a couple of pieces that we knew from photographs ... that they had not been well cared for ... particularly a frontlet that was complete with the ermine train, sea-lion whiskers, the whole thing. And what came back was nothing but the frontlet. Nothing else. And people said: "It's too bad, then. It will have to be thrown away."

DK felt that while some alteration is acceptable and to be expected, the limit for restoration is reached if it is overdone and the original object is "lost" or its preservation truly jeopardized. Other respondents, especially those who had worked in museums, made similar statements.
DK  As individuals, we change and we grow and adapt and are completely transformed. The same with masks. I think in some cases they serve a different role or function than they did three years ago or twenty years ago and if ... they’re going to be at a feast and my family is displaying them as objects that are of value to us then perhaps if, if a family member who's going to dance it or an elder feels it’s important that the mask look, you know, as outstanding as it was intended to look, then perhaps it needs repaintining or adjusting rigging or else replacing cedar bark. But ... if that comes to a point where it’s been done so many times that ... it’s getting ridiculous or it’s lost ... you can no longer ... really finish it or else if it is the piece ... you know, I think, too, to a large degree altering it is okay but jeopardizing, I guess, its preservation, ... I think you’d have to weigh that decision.

RB  You know what? I think he’s already done some doctoring on that. ... And I looked at it, and Miriam, I couldn’t find where it had been fixed.

... when I went to see Beau later, and said, “You fixed my sisiutl, didn’t you?” And he said, “Oh, you noticed.” and I said, “Which side was it on?” and he said, “Why would I tell you if you can’t see it? Pretty good job, hey, aunty?” he says to me. So I guess... I’m really not concerned that there’s any paint or anything. I don’t think it’s been repainted or anything like that.

RB’s comments illustrate again the importance of social relationships. As has been mentioned before, the relationship of trust between aunt and nephew underlies how this person makes decisions about the limits of restoration. She is not concerned that her nephew will go overboard and repaint her piece, as she trusts his judgment and skill. It also illustrates one classic objection conservators have had to artists or other non-conservators repairing heritage pieces; the work may approach falsification.

Are other conservation parameters relating to restoration important in First Nations eyes for objects from their heritage? For example, RB’s remarks above were in response to the conservation principle of differentiating the
original materials from materials used in restoration. Other respondents replied:

**DK** [T]hat [to be able to distinguish between original materials and later additions] wouldn't necessarily be one of my primary concerns... to be able to tell from the object. I think it might be important to have that knowledge with ... either people who are preserving or housing the object or within the family who have a connection to it, that they have that knowledge that "so and so" altered it last year or made these changes. As I mentioned, there's value in that. It's more history ... to accompany the piece. ...

[I]t [types of materials] may affect ... traditional values that are associated with that object. Perhaps they want to use cedar bark or use something else because that's the way it's always been done. If that is in conflict with using alternate materials then I perhaps would go for traditional. But, as I mentioned, if it goes with the integrity or with the intention of the object, -- but if it doesn't diminish those intentions -- and if it is just as workable with the different materials then it's a possibility.

One respondent observed that change to what conservators would call the integrity of the object does not necessarily mean "damage". Change can be good, signifying cultural continuity and "life".

**DK** [I]f it's from the immediate family, it's continued in one family, then the grandson has made alterations to his grandfather's mask, then I think that's pretty incredible -- the idea of continuity. You know, I guess, continuity is [most] important, if there's slight changes made, then it increases the value of the object.

This respondent compared change to physical objects with cultural change, as part of a normal evolution, and in this context noted the contrast between traditional museum practice that freezes objects in the past, and objects that are part of a living culture and continue in that context. This again is the root of two different constructions of the meaning of preservation: the museum meaning that keeps fragments from the past from disappearing, through
physical and intellectual means, and the First Nations meaning that continues and renews past traditions and the material culture associated with them, in order to preserve the past by bringing it into the present and ensuring it has a living future.

DK I think it'd be important to somehow either have that knowledge be known that this object has been slightly altered and this was added by "so and so" and that enriches the history of that object. I don't think it diminishes it in any way because of the fact ... [there were] some ... recent changes to it. I get frustrated sometimes when people think: "Well, if artists used chainsaws to basically get the basic shape of an object -- they're carving a large pole or something -- well that's inappropriate. It's inauthentic because ... they're using chainsaws." And I'm like: "Well, the reality is when they get down to the fine, fine line, no chainsaw can ever compare to what an artist can do." And so as far as saying, well, an object is, is inauthentic or it doesn't have value because it suddenly has velcro attached to keep the riggings on, well, the fact is that that makes it function better and it makes it easier to use or maybe it will help it last longer ...

In answering the question of who does the repair work, and who is the appropriate person to preserve the object, respondents distinguished between objects still in the family or had close family connections, and those in the museum's care. Even for the latter, however, many answers were similar to the following:

DK If there's a family or a community directly associated with an object, I think it's important that those people be involved with any changes made to the object.

Many respondents mentioned artists in the family or community who were considered highly skilled, as people they might ask to do the work on a piece of theirs, and certainly on a piece originally created by that artist. One
artist, however, DC, preferred not to repair older pieces of his. He felt the responsibility was up to the present owners of the piece, and he himself would prefer to create new pieces. In museums and cultural centres in B. C., it has become standard practice to ask artists from the community to do restoration on totem poles when it involves recarving or repainting.

If an older piece belonging to their family was damaged, several respondents said they would just leave it. In part their answers reflected their opinion about objects reaching the usable end of their lives. In part, however, as the question was a generalized one and different types of objects not specified, economic and cultural reasons were seen as potential factors in the decision. The decision about who does the actual repair and whether a repair is done are situated a larger social context.

DW They do maintenance, and there’s a feast involved... And it’s just another way of keeping our culture alive.

Three respondents said that if a piece was damaged when it was in the confines of a museum’s responsibility, then it was up to the museum to repair it (and presumably pay for the repair). Cultural centre staff answered that they might do very small repairs themselves, and conservation questions would be addressed to the Canadian Conservation Institute or local conservators the respondents knew. One respondent who was not a museum person noted the difference between restorers and craftspeople.

HG ... My grandmother made a million baskets. Half of them are in Vancouver still, not all of them. From a personal point of view, yes, I’d like to see them maintained. It reminds me of my grandmother. But at the same time the people who would refurbish it would not have the same skills that they had, you
know, and the same care. Because a refurbisher only does it for the aesthetics.

First Nations respondents did not interpret the question of who should repair as a conflict between artists and conservators. Several interviewees who were associated with museums mentioned that there was value in the work of conservators as well as of community artists. The role of conservators was to inform and work with the family or community, share their knowledge of conservation concerns and methods with them, and also with artists repairing or creating new work. Their role was also to perform restoration work if the museum had damaged the object or had responsibility for the object.

Some respondents also believed there were cultural limits on the work a conservator should do, especially with sacred/sensitive objects or other objects needing private ceremonial maintenance. One Salish respondent noted that it was not appropriate for a conservator to wrap up spiritual objects. Instead, the conservator should approach elders who would know about it and could send someone in to wrap the object (AC). Another respondent made the following related comments:

LMS I wouldn’t try to suggest to you in that statement that people aren’t interested in conservation, but it’s how the conservation is done that they’re most concerned about. It may not be appropriate to put two different types of rattles in the same cage. OK? ... That’s like putting two different species of animals together. ... They may not interact.
MC What about the appropriateness of putting them in cases? Or cages, as you said. At all.
LMS It may not be. Some of them might be better off in bundles. Wrapped up. It may be more appropriate in a side room, rather than in visible storage.
For "proper care" of ethnographic collections, the conservator needs to seek expertise from the community, as well as sharing his/her expertise with the community.

**Importance of the Difference Between the Original and the Repair**

As discussed in the chapters on conservation values, it is a principle of conservation that repair and restoration materials should be able to be distinguished by some means from the original materials. This is done in order to avoid the possibility of the restorer's work being taken for the artist's work, and as a reaction against the falsifications perpetrated in the past by some restorers. This principle involves two components: the materials themselves, and the way the work is done: the "brush strokes", as it were.

All the First Nations respondents who expressed an opinion on the question of materials for restoration stated that the original materials were preferable for restoration. The reason usually given was that they were traditional. Some respondents, however, felt it was acceptable to use modern materials if this was what was most practical.

DC  I don’t think it really matters today. I mean, there’s so much plastic. Nobody uses leather hinges on transformation masks any more. You know, they’re shiny, brand new hinges with stainless steel screws or whatever. People are not even trying to hide it any more, you know? I guess today -- whatever works.

JP responded to this question by noting that some artists like to try to make their own paints and that she thought it was fine to use these different materials. Another comment came from a conservation perspective.
JM Where the stability of the object allows, I would prefer that the same materials and methods be used in its treatment. As a conservator, however, I of course realize that this is seldom possible, and is contrary to certain ethical constraints by which we are supposed to abide.

It should be noted that the question of acceptable materials was asked as a theoretical "which would you prefer" type of question. It was not part of a discussion focussed on a particular object, such as might happen in a museum situation. In a museum room with particular objects brought out for discussion, the participants would be more concretely informed about, for example, the options conservators use to distinguish restoration from original materials. They would then be given a better idea of the final appearance of the object. It is possible that a situation such as this might have produced different responses. It is precisely this kind of discussion several interviewees noted was necessary in future First Nations-conservator relationships.

It could be hypothesized that if cultural continuity is what is important, then it is less important to know who did the work, unless this was a factor related to lineage. One respondent, when asked if it was important to be able to tell the difference between the original object and newer restoration or repair, replied:

PB I don't think people would really worry too much about, you know, that sort of thing
I think mainly [what they worry about is] that they can have access to it and, and maybe use it.

Regarding distinguishing the original from the repair, two respondents who had responsibility for objects in cultural centres answered from their experience with museum practice. JP, at U'mista, felt that for museum-related
practical reasons it was important to be able to tell the difference between the original piece and the newer restoration. Her experience had shown her that some restorations are done extremely well, while museum documentation is often not as complete or as organized as it should be; therefore it does not always provide an adequate back-up system to tell the difference. GW said that while it was not important for her if one could tell the difference between original and restoration, if modern materials were used, such as plastic broom bristles instead of the much harder to come by sea-lion whiskers, then one was obliged to state this, for instance in an exhibition situation. Other respondents who had worked in museums also voiced opinions that could be said to be based in a cultural-museum middle ground, recognizing both social attributes and standard conservation values:

DB I think it’s kind of...there’s a dichotomy. Because if the object resides in the community ... that’s fine. It doesn’t necessarily need ... [or] have to distinguish different parts of the mask that have been repaired more recently. That’s the life of the mask, that’s the history of the mask. ... [For] repair work done in the museum ... the conservation dialogue still applies. That you have to be able to reverse what you’ve done to the mask. If it’s done with ... actually, yeah, if it’s done with the blessing of the community, I suppose, the family, that would be different. That would be different.

For this respondent, the conservation dialogue still applies if the object is in a museum, but he leaves the issue open-ended by adding that the wishes of the family may create a different situation. JM, the conservator, supports this view:

JM I personally would want to be able to tell the difference between the work of the originator and the work of a museum conservator. If you’re talking about restoration or repair done by a
traditional craftsperson from within the community, I feel that becomes a different issue.

**Handling**

Museum handling rules are an area of conservation practice where museum concerns for object safety can be seen to be challenged by First Nations wishes for direct access to and control over their own heritage. Handling objects with gloves is also exclusively a museum practice and not a First Nations practice.

KH Well, I don't want to say this, but I did chuckle a little bit when I was sitting in class and everyone was using white gloves. ... I thought to myself, well I wonder how many of our people would use white gloves when they handled...what they really do is get into grease [oolichan oil] and put grease all over it ... (today carvers use linseed oil).

One First Nations respondent at the Museum of Anthropology expressed ambivalence about following or enforcing handling rules:

PB [S]ometimes I think [it's] good and sometimes I think ..."They wouldn't have done that". I mean ... that thing that was in my grand-father's was ... used as a doorstop. There's ... things in people's houses that are just ... out. They don't worry about it. ... [S]ometimes, I think the cultural centre idea will probably be growing to something that would be really museum orientated, you know, in terms of storage and that sort of thing. But it would be nice, in the ideal situation ... to do it without even thinking about it being in a museum ...  

In a First Nations community cultural centre, as distinct from a large urban museum, the differences in the power issues between those who control access and those who want access, and in the symbolism of the objects being in a "museum", are presumably different for that community's
members. It can be hypothesized that the question of handling rules would become less contentious at a symbolic level in a cultural centre. The following example comes from the Secwepemc Cultural Education Centre.

LJ There was a standard joke about the Mickey Mouse gloves. ... They saw us with the white gloves on and they said we were Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse and it was a big joke. ...
If you asked them to put on the gloves they would put on the gloves. The attitude was, "Oh, yeah, I'm in a museum now and I've got to handle this basket with gloves", and they had a little bit of a chuckle. But ... nobody ever got annoyed or upset.

The earlier example related by JP described a family wanting to use white gloves as a sign of showing respect, care, and sense of importance about the objects they were displaying at a potlatch.

One respondent who was viewing ancient archaeological pieces from her area at the Museum of Anthropology felt that not touching them at all was what was respectful.

DS [H]e had all the objects on the table, and he said, "Well, Debra, if you want to pick any of them up, you have to use the gloves." and I said "Why would I want to pick any of them up?" And he looked at me, and he said, "Well, to look at them." And I said, "I don't want to. I can see with my eyes, I don't need to touch them. And I wouldn't want to." Why? ... Because they lived in a different time frame, that I very much respect for. They lived beneath this earth for many, many thousands of years some of them. And I don't want to be a part of that in that way." I don't have to go and touch them and feel them and know that they exist. I can see that they do. And even in making them [doing reproductions], I'll use pictures, and seeing them here, I'll keep that picture with me. But I don't want to touch them. I don't feel [it's] necessary for that.
Traditional Care and Respectful Care

When the social meaning of particular objects for First Nations has not been lost, aspects of traditional care may be requested to be integrated with conservation-type care in a museum. This has certainly been the case with ritual maintenance of objects housed in museums in different parts of North America. The following section examines issues relating to respectful care and traditional care as seen by the First Nations respondents in the research interviews, and how this relates to current museum practice.

Many respondents in this study mentioned that traditionally regalia was kept wrapped up. A museum storage system such as Visible Storage at the Museum of Anthropology would not, therefore, be culturally appropriate, although "non-display" storage in the same location could be provided by using another custom: regalia stored in bentwood cedar boxes. Boxed storage could, with consultation about appropriateness, be harmonized with conservation methods, including insect control. Likewise the advice from a Kwakwaka'wakw elder to keep the upper and lower beaks of the potlatch masks clasped together when they are not being danced (JP) is a practice easily integrated into museum practice. One respondent mentioned that, as far as she knows, details of the best way to look after things, according to custom, has been lost in her community (DS). Another respondent supported the comments made earlier by LMS concerning not keeping certain objects in proximity to each other. This respondent, from a different nation than LMS, mentioned that she had heard that in her culture some masks should not be displayed next to each other, and that she did not know enough about it but there were others in the community who would know (PB).
Several respondents mentioned that regalia was kept hidden between uses (one recalled it being wrapped and hidden under the floorboards of their house) for "secular" reasons such keeping it "nice", away from the children who might damage it in play, and away from prying eyes. (KH, DW, RB). One interviewee noted that in his culture there were certain taboos about women handling hunting implements, but he felt that in a museum, as these tools were no longer being used for their original purposes, it would not be necessary to observe these restrictions. On the other hand, the Makah Cultural Centre in the state of Washington does not allow women to handle or research men's whaling equipment. One respondent did mention that in her culture no one is allowed to touch anything belonging to the members of a particular society who have shamanistic "extraordinary powers", or to touch medicine bags (DW). These latter type of objects, she felt, would still have power even if they had been in a museum for many years.

As mentioned, cultural proscriptions for culturally sensitive objects can affect areas of conservation concern such as storage, and these restrictions may also affect exhibition of the items. In addition, in the following example issues found in the conservation concern -- "should functional objects be restored to a functioning state" -- such as where does the meaning of the object lie, are brought into the situation and are part of the final decisions. At U'mista whistles used in the potlatch were taken off display, following the advice of elders, because they are only heard at a potlatch and these particular whistles had been ceremonially used. Meaning lies in the sounds produced, not in what the object looks like. "They should only be heard, not seen" (GW). MOA's Visible Storage system classified whistles as "musical
instruments", whereas, as GW asserted, they are not in this category as one cannot play a tune on them. Catalogued as ceremonial objects, however, museum staff are sensitized to the possibility that cultural restrictions might apply. Through JP, MOA sought advice from U'mista about whether the whistles should be removed from their Visible Storage, and the answer was negative.

JP I asked Gloria about that [the whistles at MOA], and she said that those ones it was OK, because those families had sold those ones. ... some of them ... may not have been used in potlatches.

At the time of this writing another cultural centre had also decided not to take their whistles off display, as they had been already seen for a long time, and the community appeared to support this decision. The issue of Kwakwaka'wakw whistles in these three locations emphasizes both the necessity to recognize cultural, community, and family differences, and how museum practice may inadvertently not acknowledge these differences. Two respondents (DW and KH) had a parallel complaint about Visible Storage that DW described as:

DW I did research on ... Chief Harry Mountain's objects. ...
And when the objects arrived [at the museum], they were put into categories, and they're lost to his family.
They're all in categories. Like, all masks...
So when the family member comes there they can't even see [because what belonged to Chief Mountain is organized by category, not by family name].

Regarding the whistles and Chief Mountain's regalia, the standard museum practice was disrespectful to and diminished the cultural significance of the objects in the eyes of the interviewees.
The respondents also emphasized the importance for museums to respect culturally significant objects and to consult on how museum methods can show this respect.

AC So my recommendation for objects that have reached museums/art galleries for some reason [is that they] should be treated with respect, have tribal elders present to see that they are stored properly and stored only with other objects that pertain to that object. This being masks, stored separately from the winter spiritual objects such as rattles, wool garments, spinners, hoof articles, paddle shirts and drums. They should not be displayed as in their natural life with their owners they did not hang as trophies but were wrapped and stored until it was needed. We have unwritten laws on the care and handling of these cultural spiritual objects that are practiced in the home. The same rule should apply in the "new storage facility" (museum/art galleries). (Claxton 1994: 3-4)

Sacred/Sensitive Objects

In considering sacred/sensitive or private objects in British Columbia, there are significant differences between the nations.

AC Masks owned by the Coast Salish have a very spiritual place in our lives. Masks should never be handled by women, they too should be wrapped in a special blanket and placed only with the objects that are used in the mask dance ceremonies. Masks are handled only by the owners or the members of the immediate family who belong to the mask dance society. (Claxton 1994: 3)

The Salish masks and dances are not only restricted according to cultural norms pertaining to individuals, but are also meant to be collectively private, held within the community and not publicly accessible.

HG Now, within the Coast Salish Hunqu'minum [Halkomelem] culture this is still a very private ceremony. We have not danced for money. ... And this is not for public display, because it's for your own personal strength. ... It [regalia used in this ceremony] was not
for something to be ... viewed by the general public. They sold it because they wanted to acquire monetary gain to purchase other things...So, the museums around the world, I would presume, have a number of these masks which hold a lot more meaning and a lot more value than money could really buy.

Several Salish respondents also emphasized that the spirituality associated with the object remains with it even in a museum, "no matter what happens ... The significance of the mask will manifest itself later on back at its home" (CL).

In Kwakwaka'wakw culture, however, the objects are considered to have life, as the culture has life, but not inherent power.

GW  As for masks... I don't know if you can ever make an exhibit really real because, I mean they're -- when they're sitting on a shelf, they have no life. And it's interesting. In English, you say you "put on" the mask but the term in Kwakwala language is "to be inside". You are inside the mask. The mask isn't "on" you; you are inside.

GW  And I guess what was different from our repatriation -- you read a lot of stuff about other Native groups demanding the return of their ... objects because those are needed in their ceremonial rites -- the difference for us [was] we didn't need any of this because people had continued carving masks, people had kept masks and other gear. The demand for the repatriation of the potlatch collection was based on other things -- the idea that they belong here, that they were wrongfully placed in museums.

The repatriated ceremonial regalia is the heart of the display area at U'mista. The following Salish example, however, shows a contrasting cultural point of view. HG noted that certain objects such as house posts, or blanket pins that were worn daily, are types of objects from his culture that could be appropriately displayed in a public museum or held in its storage. Other objects used only on ceremonial occasions were considered private, and only members of the family should have access to them.
LJ, a member by marriage of the Shuswap Band (Interior Salish) commented that any objects associated with burials are considered sensitive and might require certain protocols in handling and storage and would not be displayed. She gave the example of certain archaeological pieces which included carved items and quartz crystals being given a blessing ceremony (LJ). An elder, seeing the crystals in the museum, said they had power which they would not have lost. The museum people working with the crystals underwent a spiritual cleansing, as their power was seen as a danger to those who might handle them. LJ also gave an example illustrating how observing protocols for different types of objects depended on how spiritual a person was and what they felt comfortable with, not simply on the object itself.

LJ I told you it was a decorative drum just to tell you that it wasn’t a special drum, it wasn’t a drum used for spiritual ceremonies. It was just simply a drum, and she wouldn’t touch it. She wouldn’t sing the song. Which is probably just as important as the fact that she wasn’t touching the drums, because she was on her moon [menstruating], she couldn’t sing the song. Wouldn’t sing the song...

And she won’t be involved in any ceremonies, she won’t touch any ceremonial regalia ... there are some women that won’t serve people food. So as far as the objects are concerned there are probably taboos like that concerning spiritual items. ... Or, it might be extended to items that are intended to contain food.

LJ noted that at the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society sensitivity towards spiritual objects extended to the accompanying documentation.

LJ We never really collected a lot of information on rituals that are being practised today, because we both simply didn’t want it collected and they didn’t want it in to be stored in a museum. It was something they were living; the ceremonies were something that was ... a very personal part of their life ...
If you were interested in knowing the ceremonies... in order to get all that information you actually had to go through it. ... and do it... spiritual training. ... If you want that information, you have to earn it. ... And the only way you can earn it is by dedicating yourself to that way of life and going through it. ... Keeping the information in written form is not seen as necessary, because it's a tradition that has to be kept alive by doing it, and if it's not kept alive by doing it, there's no sense in having information that people can look at.

On the other hand, the museum was allowed to keep photographs of nephrite carvings, which were spiritual items uncovered during a construction project and later reburied.

The question of how a museum accommodates traditional First Nations practices is not only one of balancing Native and western perspectives, but also of balancing the past with the present. Some interviewees strongly supported the traditional, while others commented on how they in their own personal lives had been faced with balancing the traditional with modern perspectives and the museum's role in this.

DW Well, I guess what was really bothering me was that... there was so much supernatural beings... in our culture. The transformations. I didn't quite know how that happened, you know. So it was important for me to go find out. ... And when I studied ... at the Museum of Anthropology, I was able to sort it out in my mind. I can live with it. I believe both sides.

Many respondents, whatever their relationship to a museum, mentioned the necessity of respect and communication between museums and First Nations about culturally sensitive objects.

HG So... certain things I believe should be acquired by museums in order to show the rest of the world a thriving culture existed, but also I firmly believe museum individuals should understand the culture of a community first and say what can and cannot be
displayed. What should and shouldn’t be purchased. So there’s again... that reality sense that should be conveyed to the students that are being taught.

One young woman commented on acknowledging culture change:

DK I get frustrated with people sometimes thinking that culture is, you know, there’s certain, there’s either certain tools or ways of making or preserving something that if you go beyond these certain traditions, then it’s no longer traditional or it’s no longer cultural and the reality of the fact that I grew up in Vancouver doesn’t make me any less Kwagiulth or any less Musqueam than it does if I were to grow up in the community itself. There is some contact that I have through my relatives and there is some knowledge there that is still of value.

With regard to sacred/sensitive objects, and following traditional cultural practices for objects now in museums, she observed:

DK I guess certain masks that aren’t considered to be necessarily as sacred or -- it’s kind of hard because I find potlatches are a lot more public nowadays than they may have been in the past so it may be that almost any mask could be [public]. I mean ... people have mixed feelings about Sxwaixwe, whether they should be on display and yet a person who applied for the Native Youth Programme wrote an essay on a Sxwaixwe he saw from his community in the museum here and just talked about how he was, at first, a couple of years ago when he’d come in here, he’d find that angered him -- for them to be on display -- but now he doesn’t necessarily have that same anger. He thinks that there is some value and he’s so grateful that he had the opportunity to see it and he might not otherwise have the opportunity. So, even some masks -- it depends on each individual how they feel, whether it should be on display publicly or not.

GW commented:

GW I think ‘sacred’ and ‘spiritual’ are the two most overworked words in Indian vocabulary. ... [T]here aren’t terms in Kwakwala that are the equivalent of ‘sacred’ and ‘spiritual’. We talk about things not
being ordinary. Yeah -- not ordinary -- which is closer to 'not natural',
maybe 'supernatural', but I don't know I ever heard old people talk
about 'sacred' or 'spiritual'. It's part of this whole invention -- the
invention of culture.

It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to examine the broader issues
involved in "culture change" and "invention of culture". GW also commented:

GW When I first came home, I often asked different old people:
"Why, why is this done? Why this mask?" "Because that's the way
it's always done." "Well, when did it start?" "I don't know. It was
always done that way."

In GW's community's traditions, ceremonies are not invested with obligation
because they were ordained by (a) higher power(s), but because they were
always done; cultural continuity and tradition demands them.

As cultures change, material culture changes as well. The question
was asked of interviewees whether new objects had the same significance as
older ones in their communities. Museums traditionally place a high value
on antiquity, although the mandate of many art galleries and certain
ethnographic museums includes highlighting the vibrancy of contemporary
culture. GW emphasizes that age may be important because it has personal
meaning, but that a a new, similar mask can replace it culturally.

MC So then is there any special value to an older object over a
newer object, a cultural value?
GW Yeah, I guess there is. I guess you'd be able to say, you
know, this is the mask my grandfather wore when he first became
this kind of dancer. But if that particular mask is gone altogether
it's not the end of the world. You can still carve a similar mask. I
suppose the value of something old generally for our people is the
same as the value of something old for everybody, you know, --
your great-grandmother's wedding ring or something.
As GW explains,

GW  There’s lots of times that the object itself is not as important as the right to own that object, and the object may be stolen or sold or lost, but the right remains with the owner, and you can always have a copy or another mask made.

In considering whether older objects are as significant as newer ones, two respondents commented on the relationship between "antiquity" and the present in a holistic Native perspective.

JM  I think that chronological age does have some impact upon the way certain objects are perceived within the community. On a very practical level, I know of potters, for example, who are always very much interested in surveying museum collections for examples of early Iroquoian or Eastern Woodlands pottery, because as craftspeople they are interested in replicating as closely as possible early manufacturing techniques. On a different level, community members appreciate the age of the Confederacy wampum belts, for example, because they realize that some of the belts date from the very formation of the League, and they are a way of connecting the generations across time. That is, they consider the belts in the same way an American, for example, might consider the original copy of the Declaration of Independence or the US Constitution. In terms of contemporary fine art and craft, there are many Six Nations artists working today who have created what are considered to be modern masterpieces, in a variety of media.

KL  [T]hese are the only things left from a very difficult time when traditional religion, ways of life and so much else were under attack, when everything else tangible was taken away and a lot of people died so the historic moment symbolism of this is one of the little fragments that’s left and there’s so little left that we’ve got to protect it all. ...

JP said that in her area a copy may not have the same significance because it has not been danced before, but otherwise it has the same
significance in the sense that it can be used in the dance as a material symbol of the same rights and privileges.

JP [S]ome of the pieces that are for sale in the gift shop, one of them which has been used in a potlatch is worth more than it would have been if it hadn’t ...

And that’s because it has more history. But I think what’s more important are the rights that go along with it. The piece can always be replaced.

RB stated that an important cultural value is the sameness of the objects, representing continuity, and that traditionally older pieces were replaced after a period of time; this information can also be found in other comments by interviewees regarding totem poles and certain ritual regalia. HG commented on sameness and continuity in relation to repair:

HG Ceremonial objects have a lot of significance ... They were constructed, created for specific events. To recreate new objects to signify that particular event, no problem. You know. But to, I guess, refurbish, to reconstruct that original object takes away what may have been in that story. So I would oppose taking the older object and revamping it. ...

He emphasizes in this context that public, community objects seen on a daily basis are different from private, family, ceremonial objects.

Regarding use in Salish culture, one elder noted that his daughter will be sewing a new ceremonial paddle shirt, and it will have power: "New and old, it is the same thing in the Longhouse" (SJ). Likewise, in his opinion it is acceptable to use new materials in repair or replication. DK noted that while the older object represents a certain period of time and that this is important, if a contemporary mask was made with the same intentions and served in the same tradition that the first object was created in, then it is just as valuable
PB noted the importance of the newer objects in continuing a living culture.

PB  I think they're equal...I mean, there are so many beautiful (Heiltsuk) things, like at the Royal Ontario Museum but ... there's also, with the canoe revival -- you know, they're making canoes and things that are just as important and you know ... they're teaching the young people to carve in ... family traditions and other traditions and to me that's just beautiful. ...

DS echoed these sentiments and expanded them to include the importance of the connection between contemporary cultural endeavours and the economic role they play.

DS  ... Because it's not about owning anything for me. And it's about other people being able to take these pieces, especially in museums where I know a lot of people come, and view what they're going to see as history but as history in the making for now. So that we can see a connection between the old blankets and the new ones? ... And that they exist again. ... If we can become self-sufficient based on who we are, and not hope on what somebody says we have to be, then I'll be happy.

Is the western practice of placing more value on the works of certain artists a Native value as well? Are older objects from the past valued more highly because they were made by a particular master? Is a replica of a Mungo Martin [a widely respected Kwakwaka'wakw carver] mask valued as highly as the original mask itself? This may have bearing on how First Nations view their need to use certain objects as well as providing a commentary on how cultural significance is perceived. Several respondents noted that First Nations are well aware of the gallery and museum value of "quality", and appreciate the difference seen between certain old pieces and certain new pieces. However, a new piece that is beautifully made may be
just as appreciated, as seen in PB's previous remarks. In addition, a piece
does not have to be beautifully made to have significance:

KH Some of the masks I still have today were very quickly made
for the potlatches. When I was given the tribal house, I found it,
and it is so important. I could get a carver to fix them up really
nice, but the importance is that they represent a period of time
when we weren't allowed to dance. ...
[A] lot of these things can be important because [of] all the
circumstances surrounding them.

An anthropology museum would agree that an object does not have to
be beautiful to have significance in its terms. No respondent answered
positively that a piece by a famous artist was more significant than an equally
fine piece by someone else. PS, however, answered the question by saying
that a reproduction of a Mungo Martin mask would have to be made by one
of his descendants. In other words, the importance of the question to her did
not lie in whether the replica of the Mungo Martin mask was valued as highly
as the original, but in whether the cultural protocols of who was the most
appropriate person to carve the piece had been observed.

The idea that a "star" artist's name does not predict cultural importance
is seen also in the objects offered to the museum which is part of the
Secwepemc Cultural Education Centre

LJ [They would say] ... the showcase of the Shuswap culture
really is not complete without this particular basket that I got from
my grandmother, or the type of thing they felt that it was important
for such an item to be there to represent the culture.
MC Yes. And was it important also for them that a certain
person, for example, be represented ... say, a famous Chief, or their
grandmother who had been, you know, a respected elder -- or have
something that you could say ... this belonged to so and so, or this
was made by so and so?
LJ No, that isn’t usually a very large part. ... [For the archives] ... their major concern [was] to represent the people... “Why not the old photos rather than through items.”

An artist, DC, commented on the role and importance of the artist. He views himself as someone who has painted and carved as a way to make a living.

DC Some of them [secondary school children] ask, what’s it like to do carving? I have nothing to say other than that it feeds me. As simple as that. ...

[I]n the Renaissance and beyond, the people were architects, sculptors and painters and that’s what they did for a living. They painted. And after the Renaissance, all of a sudden we have this word ‘Art’! ... Why save these things if the work was done by Mungo [Martin]? ’Cause Mungo done an awful lot of things. Hmmm, I really don’t know.

KL proposes that the questions surrounding the cultural significance of old or new objects and materials be looked at from a point of view that makes a cultural analogy, namely whether new objects or materials can be viewed as appropriate successors to the old objects, or simply as reproductions. This provides insight into the meaning of cultural significance as well as affecting what is considered the best place to house the old and new objects. She believes that if the objects are successors, it follows that the appropriate repository for them is in the community. If the new object is a replica, however, the new one may belong better in a museum showing contemporary pieces.

KL I know it in analogy ... people saying that what’s important is that the traditions live on and that things should have their proper place just as people should be in their proper place ... I know that there were some communities and some masks where the appropriate thing to do was to carve a mask for a dance season
and then burn it and that, you were to make another one the next year. That was the appropriate line of succession and, for others, the appropriate line was to make a new one and then when it was the right occasion you can dance it as many years as the dance is required but then, on a really special occasion like a really big name or ... the successor for that particular name, a grandfather to grandson or something like that, that that's when another brand new mask was made. That's when that would be commissioned and I don't know ... I've heard of cases where you commissioned new masks, and new regalia is made for this specific occasion and that a totem pole is raised, or a house is built and ... a lot of these things tend to happen at the same time. So, without being told what happens to the old mask. ... [I]'s something that I've only seen little glimpses of but it sounds like a really important concept and that would really affect the question of whether the old ones belong in the museum to protect physical - or whether the old ones belong in the community because if it's a successor, the new ones belong in the community but, if it's a replica, the new one belongs in the museum, according to First Nations values. So, I think there's a lot of room there for dialogue and discussion but it would be very particular to, perhaps, even each family, even more than each community and that would be a difficult one ... to be prescriptive about.

A word resurfacing often in these discussions is "respect". As mentioned previously, conservators see that this value underlies their work, although respect is not defined in the codes of ethics. In response to the question "For you in your work, what does respect mean?", four non-Native ethnographic conservators, two from British Columbia, and two from museums in the United States which in the last decade have highlighted contemporary Native Americans in their permanent and temporary exhibitions, gave the following answers:

Respect for an object involves having a deferential regard or esteem for it physically, conceptually, historically, aesthetically as well as all it represents. It involves treating the object with consideration, avoiding any activities that might degrade, insult, offend, or injure
it. This consideration should guide all treatment, handling, use, and exhibition of the object. (Sease 1994)

I think of respect as genuine recognition, consideration and concern for the entire context of the object. (Odegaard 1995)

I guess it means putting the object before myself, you know, deciding that just because I would like to do this treatment because it would be an interesting treatment to do, is not enough. It has to be because it's something that the object needs as opposed to it's a challenge or interest and that it would be fun, or whatever. (Brynjolfson 1996)

Well, I think respect means to look at the object in its entirety and from how to handle it, the proper way of handling it, the proper way of mounting it, displaying it caring for it, treating it, storing it and if you can give the object that kind of treatment from all different aspects, like you're not exposing it to any part of its case that will cause further deterioration, then I think that you have given it respect. (Thorpe 1994)

It should be noted that these conservators focussed on the object in their answers; while not excluding people, the words they used related to respecting the objects.

In contrast, First Nations interviewees discussed "respect" in relation to objects having cultural life and the relationship of objects to people.

DK You know, to have an understanding of the community or its concerns or its needs. You know? So, then, every little thing you do is ... responding to those needs. Or respectful of it.

(SJ) Part of respectful treatment is remembering that the objects have life and treating them accordingly. This life-force is important for people.

(SJ) If an object in the museum from e.g., his family, not everyone could touch it; others would not know how to treat it with respect.
DS I must say that in working with the museum, they have been the most respectful of believing in what they don't see [e.g., in commissioning work]. They have trusted me and Robyn, they have respected us, and we respect them back. And that's why I don't have a bad feeling about museums, because I've worked with you, out there.

LMS reiterated the need for respecting the social and cultural differences symbolized by the objects.

LMS There are different items with different purposes for different people. So you can't put the same balances and checks in place for conserving them.

HG noted the "respect" that goes into the making of objects.

HG Now, if you went to someone's home, and if it was say for example, the family crest, you would always see that crest in the family's household. Probably of three times the quality of the stuff that they are selling to the general public. So there is a difference in respect in what you have acquired, you and the museum, and I'm sure you'd be able to tell, taking two similar objects, saying "Yes, you know this one had a lot of respect."

One respondent clearly distinguished "cultural respect" from "museum respect", and made the point that the latter was not sufficient.

AC It is a great concern to our people to see objects mistreated. By the term mistreated, I do not mean that the person does not handle it with the greatest of care, I know personally that they are handled with respect, but what I am stressing here is how the artifact may lay on a shelf unwrapped beside something of entirely different background. (Claxton 1994: 2-3)

Conservation: The Field

The above sections have discussed aspects of conservation practice and beliefs, comparing First Nations and museum conservation perspectives.
Some respondents also commented directly on the overall practice of conservation in museums. Several comments showed support, although not necessarily unqualified, for museum conservation. GW's comment, for example, is repeated here in this context.

GW   We're living in the nineties. ... [M]useums are part of our world now and the kinds of things museums are able to do are also part of our world and I think if those objects are owned by those museums, I think those museums have a responsibility to preserve those objects in whatever way works.

KH   And I think when I answered your letter there, I said something like that, that you do have a prerogative, as a conservator, and I have a lot of respect for that, and I hope my killer whale mask will be handled with white gloves too.

AC wrote, albeit in a paper for a course related to conservation and taught by the former head of conservation at a major museum:

AC   I realize the mandate of a museum is to save everything or slow down the process of deterioration on objects. I respect that theory, but if it is a lost cause to try and save something, let it die peacefully, there are probably "twin" objects out there that can be saved. Museum practices are doing wonders in preserving objects that are in good condition for study purposes, to this I refer to First Nations objects, this my people are grateful for. (Claxton 1994: 1)

Other differences in First Nations/conservation perspectives were noted.

DS   I suppose [respect means] ... find out where that particular object originally came from and in working either with it, or with the people that it will come from, or stem from...you see, you can only do the best job that you know how. You know. I mean, let's face it, it's in a particular building, and you've gone to a particular school to learn how to look after this particular object.
LMS If the philosophy is one hundred percent preservation, then you’re going to end up with different methods than you're going to have in an institution that says indigenous access first, conservation second.

The earlier discussion of handling rules showed that some respondents considered the conservation approach rather excessive or unnecessary. The following comments add to this:

DK [M]y uncle’s an artist and he tends to say: “Well, you know, when an object, when a pole falls over, it falls over because it’s meant to fall over and, when it starts to rot and deteriorate, it’s part of it’s life process as a pole.” And he kind of shrugs his shoulders and laughs when we talk about humidity controlled environments and stuff like that.

DK [I]f you know that the only way to preserve it for the next fifty years is to lock it in a dark box ... and they’re all sorts of conditions and if no one is going to see it as a result of that then what is the purpose of preserving it for another fifty years for that, for that end?

DC, like the boy in the children’s story who declares the Emperor has no clothes, noted aspects of conservation to which attention is not usually drawn by conservators, perhaps because these aspects are not how the profession wishes to present itself.

DC [W]hen we were over at Ottawa, we went through the C.C.I. [Canadian Conservation Institute] and went to see what they were doing. ... They were picking off little bits of grass and mud and stuff -- ... And I said “How long have you been doing this for?” She’d been at this thing for something like two months! Hardly started!

DC When I walk in [to the conservation lab], you’re either on the phone [Laughter] or making something and the rest of the group are on the computer. Another computer!
GW sees conservation not in terms of universal principles, but embedded in its social museum context.

GW We’ve not done anything [about the frontlet with the ermine train that was in such bad condition]. We never did anything about bringing it back to the condition it was when it left. There was the problem of money and the other thing, I guess, was that the National Museum of Man should have taken care of that. It needed work before they returned it to us. If we’d insisted on that, we might still have been waiting!

Conservation on the frontlet depended on who had caused the damage and who had the resources to pay for it, not on overarching principles of aesthetics or integrity of the object. GW later went on to explain more explicitly her feelings about refurbishing old material:

GW I would say the conservator’s approach [is appropriate for these objects] because of the history of that collection. It seems to me that amateurs shouldn’t mess around with any of that and I still feel that, because most of that damage was caused while it was in the care of supposed professionals, those professionals — I think it’s their responsibility to take care of whatever needs to be done.

LMS also views conservation as not separate from the museums in which it is practised and their social meaning to First Nations.

MC Would [you] agree that the standards are appropriate for the old fragile material such as the basketry?
LMS I don’t know if they are or they aren’t appropriate because I don’t have a lot of access to information about other facilities. OK?

LMS We have placed our trust in the museum, and the museum has almost usurped that trust. It’s taken it over. And it’s as if you are the authorities. And we are going to look after these pieces the way we think they should be looked after. But the trustee also has a responsibility to communicate back [to the First Nations].
DK emphasized how conservation might change in the future but this would involve recognizing and respecting the social attributes of the objects.

DK  "consultation" ... listen to communities and try and honour their intentions. ... Give them all the information you can possibly know about the preservation of an object.

FIRST NATIONS PERCEPTIONS OF MUSEUMS

If different individuals expressed a range of opinions and emotions in relation to museums and cultural centres, where is the appropriate place, in their eyes, to preserve heritage objects? Are these objects family heritage first or community heritage first?

All respondents acknowledged that some objects are important to individuals and families and that they will be kept by those people and handed down generation-to-generation. This is, of course, a practice prevalent in most societies.

DW  I believe they should be within the family. ... Because it's very important for family memory to see them every day. To talk about them, to fix them, to use them and if they're not..if they're absent there's nothing for us.

The value of these objects to the family may lie, for example, in their sentimental, personal meanings, may derive from having the cultural right to certain regalia (and with the Salish, as mentioned previously, this regalia is considered private and personal), or may rest more broadly in their value as reminders of cultural identity.
Objects made by family members and jewellery were mentioned several times as examples of personal items that people would prefer to pass down in the family.

DK I think my first intention would probably be to keep it [a bracelet], to pass it on to someone in the next generation that's in my family. It also depends on, I guess, whether the object -- if that has value outside our family. You know, if it has rich heritage for the community... [if] there is particular value there, educational value or cultural value outside of my immediate family or extended family -- that perhaps other people might gain more. There might be more value in having the whole community have access to it than just, really, restricting it to our family.

Regalia was passed down according to custom. Whether regalia or jewellery, however, they are found in the collections of both cultural centres and museums. With regard to jewellery, it may have been made originally for sale rather than for a family member. For regalia housed in urban museums, it is most often there as part of what was collected in an earlier era. (However, the history of collecting from First Nations in British Columbia is a specialized subject which is beyond the scope of this research.) In the case of regalia stored at cultural centres, it may be there, for example, because of the repatriation of older collections. As mentioned earlier, in cultural centres and occasionally in museums, regalia may be stored there while not owned by the facility. Individuals or families may choose the facility for safe-keeping, and this is one of the roles cultural centres in a community see themselves providing. Regalia in this category is not usually displayed and is only available with the individual's or family's permission. In storing this regalia, the traditional museum mandate of preserving objects considered of value to the culture is being continued, but at the same time the particular value First
Nations societies place on family lineage is also accommodated. The cultural centre has maximized its mandates to serve the community and to provide both preservation and access to objects of cultural (lineage) significance.

Would the interviewees choose to store objects from their family at a cultural centre or museum, rather than keep them in the family? It depended on the type of object, whether it was already in a museum's or cultural centre's collection, and what was the legal ownership status of it. It also depended on the location of the cultural centre in relation to where the family was now living, and their relationship with that centre. One respondent mentioned making a storage decision with the advice of the Band Council. Many respondents did not answer this question theoretically but in relation to the realities of a particular cultural centre or museum, for example, whether the objects it housed were currently on display or in storage, and the quality of its storage. Most mentioned in various ways that their decision would be linked to the centre's acknowledgment of the importance of access for the family to the objects.

Several respondents mentioned there was value in having objects from their heritage stored and displayed in large urban museums. At the same time, however, the interviewees stated the need for appropriate access, as well as the need for collections to be housed back in the community. Storage at an urban museum or community cultural centre was not presented as an either/or situation for many respondents. Rather, it reflected a "both/and" position. Interviewees acknowledged that urban museums can serve urban First Nations as well as a larger audience, that urban museums have conservation resources not cost-effectively available to smaller facilities, (for
example, specialized equipment and knowledge necessary to preserve ancient waterlogged basketry), and that urban museums already existed with their museum-designed facilities and expertise of their staff. However, there was a strong emphasis on the need for more community and family input into these museums. In addition, issues of ownership and "keeping in trust" needed to be acknowledged and worked through. First Nations cultural centres are situated within the community, are controlled by a Board made up of community members, and provide financial revenue for community members through employment and sales in the gift shop. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the relationships of the cultural centres and their museum components to particular communities; however, interviewees were asked whether young people they knew were interested in working in museums or cultural centres or becoming conservators. Most stated that this was not yet a priority with people they knew. The reality of obtaining jobs, especially in urban museums, was slight in comparison with obtaining jobs in other fields such as education or social services. Although it was not stated directly, it appeared that the nature of the work involved in museums was also not particularly attractive nor had high status. The young people such as DK and DB who were interviewed began working in museums because it was a job which had come to their attention when they needed one.

Are the objects family heritage first or community heritage first? Interviewees answered this question with specific details. These answers considered how the objects left the family, whether there were any family members alive, and whether promoting the community aspect would help in repatriation. The complexity in sorting out which family members could
currently prove direct lineage to older pieces housed in museums was also mentioned; without this evidence, the objects would be given "community" status (PB, AS). Archaeological objects, to which family lineage also could not be ascribed, were considered community objects. The First Nations conservator who is not from B.C. but from the Six Nations in Ontario used the example of his area's wampum belts, which were always considered communal property. All of the B.C. respondents, however, emphasized the rights in their cultures of the family rather than the community (if the family was known) to their "personal property", including deciding its disposition and who has access to it.

LMS Oh, yeah, they are part of the family, they're personal property, and they should be handed out to whoever I want, and if I want people outside the family to have access, then that should be allowed, but if I want to restrict the access, there should be means of accommodating that too.

LMS, however, also stated:

LMS Well, that's very difficult to separate the family from the community, because the community's all interrelated.

There's ways to identify specific items that belong to certain families -- even when they are in the community. ... Some things it doesn't matter. Some things there is no known owner ... or you can identify that it came from a certain house. ...

But not one individual owned the house. They were extended families.

Another interviewee expressed the link between family and community with regard to the preservation of heritage objects this way:

DB I think ... ultimately a family or individual owns those pieces. And if that can be proven then it's the right of that family or individual to do whatever they want with it. But I think it's
becoming more and more, people are becoming more and more conscious of their cultural history; there would be pressure by, within the community ... if these families [sold pieces] ... it's sort of like a cultural responsibility. ... [It's no longer socially acceptable to sell objects for profit, traditional objects.

Many respondents would probably agree with PS who said:

PS  I'd like to think they're family and then community. ... 

One interviewee also noted that the family or community issue was being examined as well in other contexts, including intellectual property rights, and the political issue of individual ownership of land situated on reserves or reservations that a family wanted to pass on to a non-status family member (that is, not having legal status as an aboriginal person).

Discussion of questions of legal ownership is beyond the scope of this study. However, in various responses, almost all of the respondents made it clear that they and the people making up their communities have a primary and continuing interest in objects from their heritage housed in museums. Issues were raised such as how the objects left the families, and respondents talked about the complexity of the factors involved. One interviewee mentioned knowing that something which had been sold a long time ago was no longer yours, but at the same time knowing that the person who sold the object did not have the right to sell it. Other comments included the opinion that objects were sold because of pressures on the cultures to assimilate, and these values are different today. The value of the objects to the identity of the home community is now widely acknowledged; interviewees questioned whether museums respond to this need. In addition, if a family no longer legally owned the pieces, does a parallel exist with the moral rights accorded
in Canadian law to the holders of copyright? AS, a former judge in the B.C. court system, commented:

AS  I think that the difficulty in applying different concepts to different societies is difficult... first of all, I guess to my way of thinking, artifacts that belong to Indian families, ownership should be interpreted, preservation should be interpreted according to the customs and the traditions of the Indian people. And if you try to adapt a modern concept [like copyright]. ...

When GW talked about objects in museums and said, "Well, if they're legitimately yours then I think you have the right to make whatever conditions", the parameters of the word "legitimately" are extensive and contested.

Regardless of who legally or morally owns the cultural property, however, decisions about its preservation are being made daily in museums. Respondents were asked whose responsibility it is to make these decisions if objects from their heritage are housed in a museum or cultural centre, and how to balance consultation with families and professional conservation duties. Many respondents said that for objects housed in the museum, it was the job of the conservator to make sure the objects were not damaged and to maintain fragile pieces so they would not disintegrate further. They agreed with the views of the First Nations conservator JM:

JM  I think that most Native people would recognize that if we're talking about an object that is maintained in a museum's collection, then that museum will have its own staff conservator do any necessary treatment. I would add, however, that in the case of a ritual or ceremonial object in a museum collection, many groups would resent the direct intervention of a conservator.
Museum responsibilities were also seen to extend to loan conditions, but in this case the loan conditions emphasized social aspects rather than the usual museum registration and transportation concerns. One respondent said that she would be concerned if museums loaned objects to those who did not have the family rights to those pieces. A museum should ask for verbal proof of lineage and rights in the same way that declarations of lineage are made at a potlatch when a mask is danced.

GW I guess what's important ... at a potlatch is that the speaker is able to say at the end of the dance: "This comes from our host's grandfather down from his mother's side and it came from [further information given], a bit of the history given. ... [I]t seems to me that if someone requests a loan of a mask, then they ought to be able to tell you stuff like that. "This Eagle mask belonged to my grandmother, who used it to dance at a potlatch given by her husband."

As has been the case with the Royal British Columbia Museum and the Museum of Anthropology, a loaning institution can include as its professional responsibilities working with the indigenous community to ensure the safety and preservation of objects on loan and verifying cultural information. Working with a cultural centre in the community, if there is one, facilitates this process enormously. Likewise, as mentioned in previous sections, conservation treatment decisions such as whether an object should be treated to preserve it or allowed to deteriorate can also be made in consultation with appropriate community members.

Were the interviewees, however, expecting that every conservation decision had to be made in consultation with the community? In examining the responses to the interview questions, the answer was no. The interviewees were, though, expecting a better relationship and more
involvement than has generally been the case. LMS described her feelings about the previous relationship as follows:

MC  So then... how do you make decisions about whether something is too old to be used?
LMS  I don’t know. We don’t have that opportunity with museums.

HG describes what he would like to see in the future in terms of collaborative relationships and museum decision-making.

HG  Almost all of my responses have been in respect to museums that are located locally — i.e., the Museum of Anthropology, the Vancouver Museum. But when you’re talking about ... Perth, Scotland, or whatever else, it’s...first and foremost I think that the collections that are around the world that are of a ... family category should be returned to a local museum. And replicas to be..to take its place. If the museums around the world want that type of display. And once that is done, then now I can respond to a number of these questions, to say that OK, can we refurbish pieces that are deteriorating. Then it gives you a ... stronger communication link, by where you’re not offending the family etc. and taking the time to do certain things. But the communication link should be to the point that ... if we were able to do that, to bring all objects to the local, general, regional area, I guess, then I would believe that the curator’s, and the people who are staff at those museums will [have] a good, background working knowledge of the people that have the ownership. I think the answer would be much more easily clarified that way. You would almost know when and when not to contact the Board.

Some respondents commented directly on the current politicized atmosphere in which questions of ownership and the relationship between museums and First Nations are being worked out.

HG  So communications is a very important thing, that we all tend to ignore. That we take for granted. We assume too many things. And how things were. Like you have to work with the
aggressive negatives of people who purchased art work and have now since donated them to museums, I mean, you gladly accept these things, but how they were acquired still has bad taste in the mouth ...and the communication that you’re getting is give me those damned pieces back, you thief, you thieves and whatever else. You know? And it makes it tough for people like you to do your job. ...

KL... [S]o if the person who, whether they own the right to reproduce the mask or physically own the mask or whose grandfather owned the mask at the time that the government took it away, kind of thing, or the time that it disappeared from his basement, sort of thing -- if the person who has that kind of a claim on ownership is willing, then I think there’s a very clear role for the museum to take responsibility; specifically for the physical protection of it and that if there’s anything like, smoking it or smudging it or feeding it, that the traditional owner would have, that those are different kinds of roles that can be accommodated. With so many objects, that’s such a time consuming thing and that becomes quite a bit on trust but I think it’s not only feasible but it’s very positive and I think there’s... right at this point, there’s a lot of antagonism and there’s so much differences in world views and there’s so much politics over ownership and what are the implications. Does this mean land claims? I mean, is this a Fisheries issue, or is it a culture issue, is it this, is it that; and its just a historic moment because there hasn’t been dialogue based on trust in the past, there’s so much bad water under the bridge, that there’s a long way to go before you can have a lot of communication on trust, that I think once we reach that point ... I think there will actually be a point in time when there’s a lot more of that. You know, not society-wide, but certainly within specific professions, that that’s the best place for First Nations to put their energies, is to building those positive relationships, especially now that archaeologists and museum professionals are quite willing on a professional basis, rather than just an individual basis. I think there’s been a lot of individual commitment in the past, but what’s new is the commitment and recognition at the level of the profession, that this is important. And I think that’s quite a historic moment.

An important point that this respondent is making is that in today’s context, museum questions may have bigger implications riding on them. Museum
conservation and First Nations perspectives on museum issues, however important to the future of anthropology museum practice, may be subsumed in a larger context centre on land claims or other treaty negotiations.

If the respondents attach meanings to the preservation of material culture which centre on living traditions and continuity in the community, what are their personal feelings towards and thoughts on off-reserve museums and museum practice? The importance of the social attributes of museums was emphasized by one respondent, who had also commented on the poor physical storage conditions in the museum for archaeological pieces from her area.

LMS It's difficult for the First Nations communities--I'm not talking about me personally--it's difficult enough for First Nations communities to figure out how they have a relationship with a museum. ... And then once you open the door and you're inside the museum, it's even more difficult to define how you have a relationship with the objects in the way they're displayed and the context in that, and the person who within the museum is responsible for the caretaking. That's a whole new relationship that has to be developed.

As many interviewees had worked directly in or with museums, it might be expected that they would have at least some positive opinions about museums. Conversely, they may as equally have developed a negative outlook, depending on their experiences. The previous sections have shown both supporting and critical points of view of museums and both will be seen again in this section. All respondents had in various ways, however, perspectives different from the conventional museum conservation outlook, and all had personal perspectives on the "access/use versus physical preservation of objects" dilemma. Some of the people who worked in
museums and cultural centres commented directly on how their thinking had been changed, perhaps compromised, by their museum work.

LJ  [Being museum trained in Collections Management, we’re being pulled this way, and yet we’ve got community members trying to pull us this way too. And both arguments have credit. So you have to balance them. And... I think up until now the way we balanced it is just to take every sort of collection, separately. And deal with it on a separate basis.

PB  I guess the way we were brought up is, is I didn’t have to worry about that. I mean we had that frog bowl in our family for years and it would always be there. Like, we touched it and we had a talking stick... and that killerwhale and things like that and we had all these berry baskets that, you know, there are some very old baskets that are sitting there that we were allowed to – I mean, we’ve got berries and they were dripping with you know – and then today, when I look at it... I, always think it’s so fragile and I’m afraid to touch it. Before, we never used to... It was just something that we used.

Of importance for this study, some of the respondents’ attitudes towards museums, both positive and negative, influenced their attitudes towards museum conservation and object preservation. In other words, conservation was not seen in isolation from its social context.

DK  [Because the way I connected with my culture was through this museum. The way I first started to explore that, I recognize the value of institutions like this or cultural -- different cultural centres -- and the need to preserve some things that we have so we have tangible evidence of our history.

AC  Museums see their role as the saviors, they seem to think that if it was not for them everything would be lost forever. (Claxton 1994: 3)

KH  And I don’t think it has anything to do with colonialism. I think it has to do with people who have the insight to preserve.
Some interviewees emphasized the negative symbolism of a museum for First Nations people.

LMS They're [museums are] symbols of colonialism.

PB [T]here's still a lot of fear, you know, about what museums mean. ... I mean up till now it's always been, it's been quite negative. You know, they have our stuff and they don't want ... to let us near it and they don't want to call us the right name and that sort of thing. But ... I mean it's changing...

LJ I think the whole experience at the Museum of Anthropology ... from the point of view of several Native people that I've talked to -- tend to see the Museum of Anthropology as ... a treasure trove kind of a place; you go into the Visible Storage and there's so much there, in a small space, it's overwhelming. And it's impossible, really, for ... a lot of Native people to walk in there and not get a sense, that "Wait a minute, why is all this stuff here?"

Several respondents complained about the "gatekeeper" attitude they perceive in museums, which they feel prevents them from easily accessing their own heritage. One respondent mentioned this not only in relation to access to collections, but to an always-looking-over-your-shoulder attitude while examining pieces from one's heritage (CL). In addition, the very fact that urban museums may be far from the communities whose objects they house prevents ready access for community members.

DB I guess it comes down to what you define as access. You know, if objects are residing, for example, here in Vancouver, from my area in Prince George, it would mean that people would have to make a twelve hour trip by car, ten to twelve hours, by road, and they would have to, you know, make an appointment and organize...

However, one respondent who wished to remain anonymous for this comment said:
I place a strong value in having these things in museums and I don't personally have a problem with them not being in the community because I feel that they are quite accessible to me, intellectually as well as physically. I don't see any real barriers to me going to look at them if I wanted to research them or just to see them.

Some respondents resented the museum acting as an expert on First Nations cultures and on preservation. This feeling also extended to archaeologists and was seen in a previous comment from LMS about museums usurping trust. CL and AC concur in this.

CL  We have lived here since time immemorial ... [W]e don't need archaeologists to tell us this from the bones.

AC  Mentioning this to the "museum experts", we always got a "what do you know" look. I suppose we were not to be the experts of our own traditional objects. (Claxton 1994: 3)

One respondent underlined the First Nations perception that museums are meant for "them, not us".

DW  There's a lot of celebration that accompanies the major exhibits and our people can't really -- my people can't go see them, they can't afford to see them. You know ... they're meant for the people who can afford it. The middle class or the educated people, not for us. It's not for our benefit.

These perceptions devalue the role of museums in First Nations eyes in the preservation of material culture.

DW  The way I see it, the objects are preserved for a society that can afford to go see them ... And not for us.

Some people were emphatic that they did not trust museums.
LMS  Museums aren't trustworthy. ... In the eyes of many communities, not just a community, but many communities.

Another respondent, however, said that she herself did trust museums:

DK  And I guess places like this [MOA] can contribute to that understanding [of First Nations cultural traditions or histories] and so that's when I try to explain to First Nations people that ... I trust, I have some trust in this institution and in sort of the ideals or philosophy or whatever you want to say.

PB explains what she believes museums have done right and what they have done badly.

PB  I think that [what museums did wrong] is that the story was not told in consultation with First Nations. They just assumed that they were saving us and didn't really care how we were presented. The lack of respect in not listening. What I think they did right? At least we have a lot of the material that otherwise wouldn't have been here. That museums are -- some museums -- are doing right, I think. They're trying to work with First Nations today.

A positive attitude towards museums was recounted by several older interviewees, one of whom spoke about his father.

AS  Well some of it -- quite a bit of it went. [W]e found different things in different museums that were sold by other people who had no authority to sell them. ...

And I talked to my father ... "Shall we try and get these back?"

"Well, no," he says, "they're alright where they are, as long as they identify them as belonging to our family."

KH  And this is where I think the Museum of Anthropology and others like it are so important as a repository for these things and if they are properly catalogued and the history of how we came about is reported because this is what anthropology museums are all about.
PS I guess we wouldn’t know a lot about history if we didn’t have museums.

It is interesting to note that DK is put in the potentially awkward position of having to justify to other First Nations people her attitude towards museums, because she has worked at both the Museum of Anthropology and the Canadian Museum of Civilization as an exhibit interpreter among other duties, and has organized public programs of First Nations performers at MOA.

DK I think people who were in the museum that day – it was valuable for them to hear of his [coordinator of a ceremonial drum group’s] response, to hear him say he had difficulty being in here (... "I’ve been here once before and I had no intention of ever returning."...) and, when people do ask me that or question that, I say I realize that in some cases some of our, our most sacred objects are kind of just tossed out there for anyone’s consumption and, or sacred teachings or traditions, and it can be really difficult to deal with that and I don’t necessarily agree with that happening but there is other, you know, value... in having some of these objects on display and perhaps there needs to be, you know, a lot of reworking about exhibits or about philosophy but ... there’s potential there and I talk about my own experience.

In her answer to another question, she explains further about her experience and what the value of museums to First Nations is in her opinion.

DK And I’ve mentioned ... to some First Nations people, that perhaps this [Museum of Anthropology] is the place that is neutral, for people to come and to somewhat get an understanding of our cultural traditions or the histories that we all have or the diversity that is in our peoples, among our peoples.

And sometimes ... I think they’re really grateful ... It relaxes them when they see that I talk about: “Well, this I kind of have a problem with ... I, I wonder about this, or I question this, or I feel uneasy about it.”. ...

And I just try and let them know that this is a kind of resource that they can use and take advantage of. I think First
Nations people should be made aware of that and we should be constantly working ... to recognize that this, this is of significance to you, of value to you and you know, we would like you to know that it is accessible to you and it doesn't mean that people can go walking off with stuff but, even coming here, even being able to look up things, even, you know, to look at objects, to read information. I mean, there are people come in here saying: “I don't know anything about my culture.” Or: “I want to know about this mask. It's very important.” They're looking for a particular artist or whatever.

She continues with advice to the museum.

DK You have to respond to those needs... to be facilitators in that respect, to not just house objects but to, to honour cultural values or teachings that go with those objects and also to honour the people who are associated with those objects, and may be the descendants of the original makers of the object or users of the object but their connection is just as strong, I think, to those objects and it's just as important to try and have a connection with them.

Other respondents described appreciatively the roles played by contemporary museums:

RB I guess this is how we learned [you never question why] ... but the only thing with that, is when you learn things that way, you just accept it as such, and you don't say “why”. ... The reason I bring this up is because at the museum people are always asking, well, why? ... So now I've had to go home and ask a lot of questions about why is that, and why do they do this, and have learned so much ... because the museum made me question things.

GW Museums are important institutions for Native people, whether they realize it a lot or not. I think of parts of this Coast where people lost much more than we did and, if they're really serious about rebuilding, then they need the kind of resources that are in museums and archives in order to do it properly -- not to invent.

LMS Well, yes, museums can have a big role in that by telling us there's only one tablecloth of this design known to exist in the
world. ... That imparts present knowledge to the indigenous community.

DB But I think once they're back and community controlled, or, you know, the communities know these objects, it maybe that the community may choose, or the family may choose, or the individual may choose to have these objects to remain in the museum and that these objects would more or less reside in the museum for the rest of their life.

Training is another appropriate role respondents saw for museums. That is, museums should not only communicate back to the communities by informing and collaborating with Band Council members, individuals, and families who have lineage to objects housed in the museum, but should share their information in training situations such as jobs and internships. Several respondents noted that museum training had helped them in their own cultural knowledge and appreciation of their heritage, that is, the training provided tangible skills and incentive to acquire knowledge in the "intangibles" of their culture. One respondent noted that this occurred for his daughter not in a training situation but as a museum visitor.

KH I know the interest developed the time we walked through the Museum of Anthropology. And she [Margaret Ann Harris, his daughter] saw all these things that, you know, that we couldn't even imagine, our young people couldn't even imagine that ever existed.

CL emphasized that it was not just "teaching" which museums could offer, but "practical help".

All of the above roles apply, with varying resources and expertise, to cultural centres as well as museums. The respondents, though, were making the point that there is an appropriate role in their eyes for the existing urban
anthropology museum, in spite of residual negative feelings by some of them. This said, however, many of the respondents, as mentioned earlier, made significant distinctions between museums and cultural centres and their relevance to First Nations.

GW  [I]t was the Band Council that I worked with. They were fairly, fairly clear that we were not building a museum because Indians don't go to museums. We were to build a place where things can happen.

DK also pointed out that one must recognize the significant differences between urban museums themselves.

DK  [W]orking at the National Museum [Canadian Museum of Civilization] was a real experience for me as far as recognizing that this place [Museum of Anthropology], whether you consider it academic ... or respect[ful] [or] not respectful ... I think there's different motivations there than here. And I recognize the difference in the public that came through both institutions. Here we tend to have people that may not be more informed but are more interested in being informed or ... see the value ... of the history associated with objects versus what I saw with a lot of visitors at the National Museum. It was one of six "sights" they stopped at in a day in the capital region and it was a time to get photographs. ... [T]he concern was more how to ... respond to or cater to those needs ... And you make them think and be real impressed but it's very superficial. There's no depth to it and how, ... the potlatch is represented in one of the exhibits -- a video about the potlatch, explaining it -- they make it seem totally mystical and quite, quite far off from this world and the reality is, in a lot of cases, it's not. I mean, ... it's a functioning form of governing ourselves. It's a way of gathering together and spending social time. It is a way of passing on certain teachings ... We had a lot of pressure to make our presentations shorter and snappier: "Make it more interactive." And we were also considered to be part of a department that was called "Performances and [I believe] Special Events". Versus being in "Education" and I don't think we were recognized as being -- I think we were more thought of as being entertainers than people who were offering valuable information and education. ... I don't think there's a way to make it short and
snappy and if -- in making it interactive, I'm ... belittling the potlatch ceremony or ... I'm not giving all the information that I should be. I think if I'm going to teach someone about a certain tradition then it's my responsibility ... to tell them every -- you know ... the whole, all-encompassing aspect of that tradition. I'm not just going to say one pat answer.

Although the interviewees cited above are speaking about their perceptions of museums, the statements represent not only knowledge but the emotions they feel about visiting museums and being in museums. The emotions become part of the intangible attributes associated with museums, and their comments show a range of emotions:

PS That was a real big adventure. That was the first time I ever went to a museum.
... For me it was fascinating. Because I've always been nosy ... and to see things, and...

JS [Wife of AS, talking about her father-in-law]... [He] looked around [the Museum of Anthropology] and he was in awe, and he said, "I never thought I'd live to see this". He was totally in awe. And he came up, you know, grew up in a time when ... these things were not treasured. I don't know if you've heard me say this, Al, but it was very moving.

DK Masks that my uncle makes... If there's one in the museum's collections, I'm, you know, proud to take a look at it and realize it's my uncle's mask.

DW Well, for one thing, [in an urban museum] it's mainly non-Natives taking care of it. ...
And I feel really, I feel bad, I feel bad that our own people aren't there, because they're, ... I know there's a few, but they go in and out, they're gone, ... they're not there permanently. It's very, very difficult for us to go in. I know. I really feel bad, I really do. Because not everybody knows what they're talking about. They don't understand why we feast.

LMS And anytime I go out there [to the UBC Museum of Anthropology], I feel like a, almost an alien, because there's
nowhere for me to be, I'm constantly pointing fingers to fix this, and what about that. There's no space for me to sit down and really look at anything comfortably.

DS Well, no. I didn't really go through the anger parts because I think I sort of went through that before I came to this. I think that in not knowing even who I was, or even what I was a part of, I think I was already angry, or went through the anger, before that. So when I got to the museum, and go to different museums, I feel sad. I feel a real certain sadness about the fact that there was this whole hundred years of silence that no one was connected to these objects and that they sat there all that time, unrelated to us, again. And when you go in there and view those objects and see the reflection of them yourself, then it stirs in you the emotions that you will have to deal with the rest of your life. Which are positive. You see in that you see a people. You don't just see an object, you see a whole people and what they must have been about.

Both positive and negative emotions are triggered by what is tangibly there, for example, the objects or the building. The tangible elements evoke emotions because they symbolize intangibles: cultural loss and misunderstanding, or esteem and validation. Sometimes the trigger is the realization of what is not there.

RB But I do remember the first time I ever saw ... the stuff that we use in our potlatches and things. ... Having a big lump in my throat and you know, I can't even remember what museum that would be.

You know, I think it was sadness, because potlatches weren't...there were practically no potlatches going on. I know up at Kingcome they had potlatches, I remember potlatches when I was a little girl; but to me there was that in between time. And I know when I was a little girl I used to go to these big potlatches with all the dancing and everything, that seemed to go on for days when I was a little girl, was at a time that potlatching was banned. But then there seemed to be a big gap, and that could even have been in the time I was in the residential school that there was no potlatches, although I remember a couple of times that my sisters and I would be taken home because ...because of a potlatch...
We moved into the urban area and we had to make a place for ourselves, and this society, and struggling with it. That had to take priority over something that was such a big part of me. And then all of a sudden it just came back so strong, and now there’s potlatches every year and it’s wonderful. ...

I think it was [sadness when I first saw objects used in potlatches, in a museum]. I think it must have been in a period of life when I was not, when I was not going back or anything like that. And feeling that...remembering that feeling that it gave you sitting in the Big House, the smell, and the atmosphere, everything that goes on in a potlatch, I think just sort of whelmed up, and yeah, it did get emotional, and you know, suddenly the drumming, the drum log with his sticks and sort of come into the fore, and all of a sudden wanting to hear something, something so familiar like the potlatch songs.

Cultural centres and their collections evoke emotion.

RB I think the museum [Umista] itself is a source of pride, and... I think it’s a reminder too, of past days. I know -- I can only speak for myself -- I have a feeling that of pride of that museum. The work that went into it, and I was there at the opening, when this old man was asked to speak and he was from Port Rupert, and he started, and he was standing there, and I was standing here, almost directly in front of him, and he was asked to speak, and he started to speak, and he couldn’t, and the tears, and it was a really dry day, the ground, the dirt was dry, and the tears, seeing the wet on the ground from his tears and him saying to this old lady next to him, “You speak. I can’t.” Because he was just so emotional. And so she spoke. She spoke for him. And the way she spoke, she spoke of those things, it was almost like they were people coming back. That, you know, our people have come back.

In the interviews, respondents who commented on the emotions felt when they were personally involved in a traditional cultural event were only positive.

(SJ) [Re his regalia] The objects have power, have life, and some release is needed from the storage box every so often. This release also has the effect of making SJ feel good.
Well, attending potlatches, because we would go, we would go to as many as we can, and I'd come back to the city and I would just have this feeling so good, and feeling and nothing and nobody could hurt me. I just feel so good, and I just want everyone to feel good. Mind you, it doesn't last, and then I need another potlatch.

Some interviewees spoke directly about their emotions regarding objects particularly meaningful to them and a related museum experience. The following description illustrates a First Nations perspective mentioned previously, namely that it is easy for museums to become sources of loss, even in the act of preserving.

[The bentwood box] would be very old, and my niece and my nephew used to use it as a toy box. It sat displayed in the living room in a corner for the toys that were living room toys, and then after I put my sisiutl in the museum at Alert Bay and I was telling my sister—she also has another mask in the museum, which would be about the same age as my sisiutl— and I said to her, you know, your bentwood box, it's so old, and it's so fragile, you should really take it to the museum. And she said, “Well, you know, the museum up at Alert Bay is so new and you notice that most of the things you can touch them, you know, they're right in the open, they're not in cases, so I was thinking maybe I should just have it stored in a museum in Vancouver, and I said, “Why don't you store it out at the Museum of Anthropology?” So I phoned Dr. Ames, and her and I— I drove her to the museum— Dr. Ames took one look at it and called somebody and said, “Come and look at this.” And they seemed to have marvelled, a bunch of them sitting around, standing around this thing marvelling at it, and I don't know if it ever got— whether anybody ever— how would they find out such a thing? Like how old it is?

I think they would just compare it with every box that they know about...

Well, when we left the museum, my sister said, “Now it's in the museum, they'll put it away somewhere and I won't even be able to see it. It's been part of me since I was just...” because she had it when she was a little girl because my great-grandmother gave it to her. “And it will be just hidden away in that museum and...
the only thing that I have of it is a memory that’s in my head that
this thing is mine, and it’s hidden away”....

I may in time even forget the design on it. ...

So she said, “This thing that was passed on to me, I’m no
longer going to get anything out of it, it’ll be in my will that it goes
to my daughter, but it will just sit in the museum.” And she looked
at me, she said, “So now what?” You know. And I didn’t have any
answers for her. All I knew is that it shouldn’t sit in her apartment
any more, she’s now moved into an apartment, and I said there’s
also too the chance of theft. ...

And I said, “You said lots of people had broken into this
apartment block already. There’s also a chance of you losing it.
And then you will never see it again. At least you know it’s in the
museum.” And she said, “But to me it just doesn’t make any sense,
one day I’m going to die, it’ll go to Geraldine, and what’s Geraldine
going to get out of owning this thing”?...

And I said, “Well, you could always sell it to the museum,
they’ll display it. She can go up there any time she wanted to look
at this thing, but you’ll have the money in her hands.” And she’d
go “As if I would do such a thing.” So you tell me what really
makes sense here. ...

But she’s put it in there so that nobody could touch it so that
it wouldn’t deteriorate any more than it’s deteriorated already. ...

We left and she was so sad, and I felt so guilty talking her
into this.

The following account concerns a group of Salish women from
Musqueam who were reviving the art of traditional weaving, and their visit
to see old Musqueam weavings now in major U.S. museums. The Musqueam
Band’s lands form part of what is now Vancouver.

DS And, you know, we took a trip to New York. The group of
women [weavers] did.
MC Yes. Tell me about that.
DS [I]t was really the most moving thing that had ever
happened to that group. I wasn’t involved with the first group, but
I went with them. And some of the women had never been on a
plane before, so here we go off to, you know, the other side of the
country. I don’t think they really knew what they were in for. Half
of them hardly go downtown. Or, in fact, I hardly go downtown!
So, we flew off, we went to New York -- and I don't really think that they knew what they were in for -- we go flying into, you know, Midtown, down in Manhattan, and get to our hotel room, and we were way up in the, I don't know what floor, and everybody's, like, in shock. And I never knew what culture shock was until that happened. ...

And it was really amazing for the women. Some of them didn't come out for a few days. But then we had to go off to a couple of museums; we went to the Museum of American Indian. And then later on that week we got a train and went down to Washington, and went to the Smithsonian, and went into the Smithsonian and viewed the collection they had on Musqueam. ...

And as we were heading to that section, we passed the Northwest Coast section, and [the] feeling that we had, as we walked through that museum, was so moving, because here were pieces that we knew lived here in Musqueam. ...

Way over there, in this building and they belonged to someone else, and yet they were part of who we were. ...

So I think, you know, we as people view those objects so terribly different than museums or other cultures. And I don't want to focus on one particular culture, but we really do recognize that, and yet it is a controversy and it is a catch twenty-two because we know that that has to be. If it wasn't we probably wouldn't even have one. And I think it's a really...people are torn between, you know, aboriginal people are torn about their feelings. And I think their first feelings, as you will see when you get to know different people in different communities their first reaction is anger because, you know, in the process of healing, and coming to know what your healing is, you will feel anger. And I felt anger when I was younger. And then I went through another process of trying to understand why everything is the way it is, and you have to look at the larger picture now. In balancing you understand between what was and what is. ...

And so it really does set your mind and your spirit at motion. And as you go in motion, you realize you have to balance both of these. And it's a real challenge to stay balanced.

The depth of the many emotions the women experienced on their visit is evident from this account. Among other things such as being in a city like New York, the women were balancing the loss of their material heritage to
museums, with the protection and survival these museums had given to the objects. As with the previous example of the bentwood box, very mixed emotions accompanied the personal experience involved in an urban museum preserving pieces from one's own heritage.

Feelings of uncertainty associated with unresolved issues, unclear answers to questions, and unsettled outcomes permeated many of the interviews. As previously mentioned, some of this was due to respondents' unfamiliarity with professional conservation concerns; not having thought about these concerns, respondents hesitated in many of their answers. Some of the feeling of unresolved issues, however, was part of the content of the answers, as seen in the above descriptions. In the time period of this study, relationships between museums and First Nations remain, of course, incompletely resolved. At the level of the object, there are also uncertainties:

DB All right, when these pieces came to the museums, they were sold to the museum by families ... sold to collectors who in turn donated it, or sold it to the museums. Some pieces were stolen out from graves or families, individuals, but when they came to the museum does that mean that in the grand scheme of things, that's where they were meant to be? You know, that their perceived end is at a museum?

Or is that just part of their life? ... I don't know. ... I think that objects within the museum are still ... well, they're unsettled and that the communities, for the most part, they don't know exactly what's out there yet. ... The issues are unsettled, and the determination of the object, or the status of the objects are yet to be determined.

One interviewee, however, spoke of the future not as unsettled but as excitingly open. She also connected the future to the past before museums, and acknowledged a positive role for museums in the present.
DS So there’s much to learn yet ... I mean, I think it’s just beginning. I really do. And part of that is that in educating ourselves we have to go back in time, we have to go into history, and where is history for us but in museums? And yet in those museums we see our history doesn’t just go back to museums it goes back a hundred and thousands of years.

Unknown paths, uncertainties, and unresolved issues do, however, allow room for change. Many of the respondents, both those who had positive and those who had negative feelings regarding museums, noted that museums today are in the process of change regarding the concerns of First Nations.

DS So in that way I think we are really excited to know that the museum is there and the changes with museums in being more open, in opening their doors, to also know that these particular people that they are housing their objects are [...] also functioning people. They’re not people who only...whose past only lives in a museum, they’re still here in the future.

AC Museums have come a long way in this day and age, they are now more lenient, they will loan out to the community a sacred object to be used for special ceremonies. I think it is about time. (Claxton 1994: 3)

LMS They’ve changed somewhat. But the attitude is still there, although the actions are not always the same. The attitude is attempt to control — attempt control of the objects, rather than look at the museum as being a facility for protecting the object so that people can access and use it, OK. It’s protect at all costs rather than protect for use.

GW: I think that there are a lot of changes happening in museums. I think a lot of museums are acquiring the kind of humility they should have had a long ... I think it finally got to people that there was this attitude: “These things belong to us. We know everything and we don’t have to ask anybody”. I think that’s changing. I think that Native people’s attitudes towards museums is changing as well. I think there are more Native people working in museums. That makes a difference.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The responses of the interviewees illustrate both support for the preservation of objects and distinct differences from standard museum and conservation values. Doxtator's concept of parallel paths presented in an earlier chapter provides an analogy supported by the interviews. Strictly speaking, these paths have too many complexities and unprecedented or unresolved questions to be completely parallel. In addition, there are in some museums, or in some individual's museum practice, connections bringing the two paths together, a "product" or a process that helps to meet the different needs of both sides. (How successful these are to either party depends on the particularities of each case and issues such as power relationships; this is beyond the scope of this study.) The diagram on the next page illustrates the parallel paths and some of the links.
MUSEUM ANTHROPOLOGY COLLECTIONS

First Nations

PRESERVE LIVING CULTURE

Sacred/ Sensitive Objects wrapped, boxed, access restricted.

Observe Traditions

Replicas

Use

Respectful Process

Observe Correct Protocols

More Communication

Trust, Respect

PRESERVE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

WELL BEING, RESPECT, PRIDE

Parallel Paths: Finding common ground.

Diag. 6
This section discusses the respondents' views on how museums and conservation could change to better meet the needs of indigenous people. The major point regarding the future, already seen in many of the quotations, is the need for more communication between museums and First Nations.

LMS Developing the communication lines, OK? ... Coming to a community, working with a community, rather than the community having to go bang on the door.

Regarding conservators, several respondents noted the value conservation training has, and that this knowledge would be beneficial to the community if shared with it.

DK For example, my Mom might be able on the surface level [to] observe that, perhaps ... the beak of a Hamatsa is falling apart or is falling off. But something more subtle she may not be aware of and it's amazing what you -- the difference in how you look at an object when you've got some of that training and you're aware of weaknesses or areas that may be of concern and so I think someone like Juanita [JP, collections manager at U'mista, who trained in part at the Museum of Anthropology] could play an important role in bringing up those issues to the family and allowing them to make that decision but at least providing them with the best information to make the most valid decision, you know, that's important to them. I think the decision is up to that individual or family but I would like to hope that they're making a very informed decision and they're given all the information.

DS And that's what I'm willing to do. I'm willing to look at what can we do now -- you and me. I know what went wrong. I know what was. But I just want to work .. about always being positive about how we can work together now.

LMS And if the museum can't adapt to the needs of the communities surrounding it -- and I'm talking about the First Nations communities -- then the museum itself can become redundant and defunct, because the communities will find a way to get their own facilities.
(AC) can see both sides of the preservation/use dilemma -- hard to choose between them. She suggested one solution: have the objects in a museum in the community, and put both technology and the people's ways to work.

DK [Have an awareness of] ...this is kind of generally ... how this community feels or a number of communities feel and perhaps it may be a conflict with what you have to do sometimes or but .. to at least recognize, to acknowledge that: "I realize that these are your concerns." [P]erhaps sometimes you have to make different decisions or difficult decisions but even, I think, that acknowledgment ... "I am aware of these concerns and they're valid concerns". -- I think people appreciate that, even if it doesn't have the same final ending that they would hope to have to pass but at least there's acknowledgment and there's that connection and then there's trust also on the part of communities.

DW used the word "co-operation". "Co-operation" semantically might be interpreted as being closer than "collaboration" in acknowledging that the needs of the parallel paths are equally valid.

DW [W]hat I would like to see is co-operation with the people. If they're not coming forward ... go out and tell them what's there and the possibility of...that repatriation is possible. ...And just bring the people up to date. They don't know. ... And that's so important...Just to inform us. ... After all, we have a stake in the objects in the museum.

DB noted the trend in Canada towards collections being supported in several locations -- larger urban museums and small community museums or cultural centres, and that this involved partnerships between the institutions. In other words, "product" was important but so was "process", in this case a continuing process of developing relationships had been started and was proving viable and was seen as a pathway into the future.
At the same time, DB noted the trend by First Nations towards more community control. He said that one result would be that if you wanted to learn about a territory and the people in it, you would have to go to that territory, rather than to an urban museum or academic institution. Other respondents argued:

HG  Stronger communication. I would say to any museum or to any institute that [as] part of the curriculum [they] should visit First Nations communities, to talk, as you are doing right now ...and to maintain posts, linkages, in respect to communicating with the public that someone owns the art pieces. Because too often we make academic decisions that are very logical and very real and albeit the right one, but people get offended. ... Almost all the right decisions are so debatable and so controversial, you know? ... And my thoughts are, this should have been done twenty years ago, and not for a thesis paper but just general care of the object.

LMS  And I’m not saying that the First Nations communities know everything, OK? I’m saying there is a spectrum of knowledge that each party has that has to be shared, and it has to be received in the right manner, and the educators have to realize that they don’t know everything, and respect that someone else may have knowledge that would be helpful.

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY

GW  Your job is to preserve those "things". It's our job to preserve the culture that those "things" have meaning in.

In these two sentences GW has succinctly summarized the nature of the meaning of "preservation" for First Nations vis-à-vis the meaning of the word for museum conservation. The following tables summarize the major differences with conventional museum and museum conservation perspectives articulated by the First Nations interviewees, in conjunction with the tables presented earlier in this chapter.
Table 7: Summary: Museum and First Nations Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSEUM S</th>
<th>FIRST NATIONS (FN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generalizing language e.g. &quot;The Haida,&quot; &quot;objects.&quot;</td>
<td>Specifics crucial: which objects, which families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In museums, most objects considered and kept non-functional.</td>
<td>&quot;Functional&quot; inappropriate wording but &quot;access&quot; and &quot;for use&quot; following cultural protocols very high priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects themselves preserved.</td>
<td>Objects preserved mainly as embodiments of cultural knowledge; preserving the intangibles for most (not all) respondents more important than preserving the objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiquity valued in those objects which are old.</td>
<td>New objects may serve the same purpose as old ones for many FN of B.C..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator of objects a &quot;name&quot;.</td>
<td>Name of artist not as important in traditional &quot;intangible&quot; values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred/sensitive objects; some museums changing, e.g., special storage and access, loans and repatriation, NAGPRA in U.S.A. Can find some cynicism re: construction of meaning of &quot;sacred&quot;.</td>
<td>Museums should not have sacred/sensitive objects at all unless FN have decided to keep them there; decisions around sacred/sensitive entirely up to FN. Can find some cynicism re: construction of &quot;sacred&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums secular institutions: only &quot;sacred&quot; is in symbolic sense of &quot;museums as temples&quot;.</td>
<td>Sacred/sensitive attributes can remain with object even in a museum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum owns objects or has stewardship role. &quot;Moral rights&quot; of FN in their heritage objects acknowledged in B.C. museums.</td>
<td>Our heritage first, not yours.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public heritage. Coastal B.C. -- ceremonial objects family first, then community heritage.

Coast Salish and Interior B.C. -- ceremonial objects also private, individual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 8: Summary: Conservation and First Nations Perspectives</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONSERVATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects treated as if unique and irreplaceable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumes the end of &quot;history&quot; for the object has been reached: &quot;integrity&quot; or &quot;true nature&quot; freezes object in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes see conservation ethics as universal, beyond time and place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use lessens value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four &quot;integrities&quot; valued, but physical the bottom line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage is anything which affects the integrity of the object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to &quot;integrities&quot; represents damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage has physical implications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conservation and museum ethics, values, mandates govern most conservation decisions. | FN social and cultural protocols govern most preservation decisions.
---|---
Restoration should not falsify. | Restoration fine, as long as cultural meaning of object not changed.
Distinguish original work from restoration materials. | Similar materials to original preferable in restoration, but for cult. centre, important to know which is which.
Respect is for objects, more abstractly their cultural context. | Cultural respect, respect for people. "Museum respect" not sufficient.
Clients are collections, public, institution, owner. | "Clients" are us.

**Table 9: Summary: Conservation and Cultural Centres**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSERVATION CONCERNS</th>
<th>CULTURAL CENTRES' SOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use versus preservation.</td>
<td>Contemporary collections for use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide secure housing for individuals' regalia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advice re fragile pieces.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate access but manage collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for objects, including originators (in abstract).</td>
<td>Facilitate respect for people's rights to use objects, and careful use of objects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preserving cultural significance (purpose of work on objects).

Cultural significance preserved within the culture. The centre's role is to:
- facilitate the passing on of what is of most cult. significance: the intangibles, cultural continuity.
- house significant collections in the originating community.
- show significance to culture through display, interpretation, from FN perspectives.

Table 10: Continuing And Future Role For Museums, As Seen By The First Nations Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build relationships with communities through respectful communication.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate access for First Nations to objects from their heritage within the museum, nationally and internationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate access to curatorial and archival information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take initiative to communicate information related to a community's heritage back to the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek, listen to, respect community members' opinions. &quot;Honour their intentions&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share museum disciplines' knowledge and skills with community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure cultural protocols followed re storage, display of and access to collections, and return of objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train and employ First Nations people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve the urban First Nations communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as a facility to present First Nations voices to the larger public, in co-operation with the First Nation concerned, following above principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide excellent quality, secure storage to community members for safekeeping of fragile and/or important objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain high professional museum standards in collections management, conservation: this facilitates access for First Nations of many generations to their heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear the costs of specialized functions possible only in a large facility, e.g., environmental controls, certain scientific and conservation laboratory equipment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews with First Nations respondents confirmed that there exists a fundamental difference between their perspectives on what is valued as preservation in relation to material culture, and the viewpoints of standard conservation and museology. There are two different constructions of the meaning of preservation: the museum meaning of keeping fragments from the past from disappearing through physical and intellectual means, and the First Nations meaning of continuing and renewing past traditions and the material culture associated with them in order to preserve the past by bringing it into the present and ensuring it has a living future. The differences in perspectives between First Nations and museum conservators originates in their respective underlying cultural narratives and histories. The interviews confirmed many specific differences as well as what has been described in previous chapters as a general difference between indigenous and western meta-narratives, a difference between an indigenous world view,
which is holistic and includes spiritual areas of private individual and community knowledge, and a western linear, positivist outlook where knowledge is considered world human heritage and categorized in order to comprehend it. The interviews showed, however, that for some individual interviewees there exist similarities between the two perspectives on certain matters. On the other hand, the interviews also showed that statements of differences both in overall outlook and in specific areas of concern in conservation and museology are not over-generalizations but rather play a fundamental role in the construction of the meaning of preservation in both cultural hemispheres.
CHAPTER 8

NEW ZEALAND: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This study compares indigenous and museum conservation perspectives on the preservation of what is culturally valued, specifically focussing on material culture of the kind found in museum collections. The principal conclusion thus far is that museum conservators and First Nations continue to have distinctly different philosophies on what is valued as preservation and on how it is accomplished. Acknowledging these differences raises the question for a museum with collections from First Nations of whether and how it is possible to reconcile these dissimilar perspectives. This chapter looks at this question from a conservation perspective, analyzing whether it is possible to balance preserving the physical integrity of collections with preserving their conceptual integrity. The question is examined using comparative data from New Zealand. Five fully-trained conservators of Maori heritage were interviewed in 1994, with a focus on how they have balanced their scientific conservation training with Maori cultural concerns. They are listed below, with the organizations they worked for at the time of the interviews.
List of New Zealand Interviewees

DWh  Dean Whiting, (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Conservator, New Zealand Historic Places Trust, Wellington, N.Z.

NT  Nick Tupara, (Rongowhakaata), Conservator, New Zealand Historic Places Trust, Wellington, N.Z.

RE  Rose Evans, (Te Ati Awa), Objects Conservator, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, N. Z.

RW:  Rangi Te Kanawa Warnes, (Ngati Maniapoto), Textile Conservator, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, N. Z.

VH  Vicki Heikell, (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Conservator, Conservation Services, National Library of New Zealand /Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa, Wellington, N.Z.

In addition, two non-Maori conservators who work on Maori material were interviewed to provide a broader perspective on ethnographic conservation in New Zealand. They are:

JG  Julia Gresson, Senior Conservator, Auckland Museum Te Papa Whakahiku, Auckland, N.Z.

VC  Valerie Carson, Textile Conservator, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, N. Z.

Other New Zealand museum personnel, both Maori and non-Maori, contributed to the discussion. Acknowledgement is especially due to the late Mrs. Mina McKenzie, (Rangitane), Director Emeritus of the Science Centre
and Manawatu Museum Te Whare Pupuri Taonga o Manawatu, in Palmerston North.

Two of the Maori conservators work for the National Museum, one works in the National Library, and two were working for the Historic Places Trust. The preservation of material cultural heritage discussed in this section will therefore be broader than in previous chapters, including some references to libraries, and to the preservation of historic sites and buildings. On the other hand, this chapter will also have a narrower focus in that it is concerned specifically with examining one question in its surrounding environment, that is, how have conservators integrated dissimilar if not conflicting perspectives in their work, balancing Maori cultural perspectives and conservation perspectives and their commitment to both. The first part of this chapter clarifies the context in museums for this question, and the second part examines the conservators' work. A glossary of Maori terms is found in Appendix F.

Sufficient parallels exist to compare New Zealand and British Columbia regarding both museum conservation and indigenous perspectives, despite the obvious cultural and other differences. As seen in Chapter 5, Maori values with regard to cultural heritage preservation resemble other indigenous views. In conservation, the conservators' Code of Ethics in New Zealand is similar to those in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) New Zealand code acknowledges indigenous cultural concerns more than the conservation codes of ethics for moveable property, but it is not too dissimilar from other recent codes for sites and architecture. The conservation schooling
that the Maori conservators have had, at the conservation program in Canberra, Australia, is on a par with similar programs in the other countries. The New Zealanders' conservation treatments, and the values underlying that work, are in keeping with the broad international parameters of the profession.

Although conservation values in New Zealand have been both imported from and influenced by the profession overseas, there is a context specific to New Zealand that influences the preservation of indigenous ethnographic collections held in museums there. It is beyond the scope of this research to give a detailed account of this vast context, which includes topics such as the socio-political history and the internal affairs of New Zealand, cultural and other knowledge pertaining to the Maori population, the question of the construction of identity in New Zealand, the development of museums in New Zealand, and current museum practices. However, several points emphasized by the research interviewees can be made.

Aotearoa New Zealand is now an officially bi-cultural (Maori/Pakeha) country, with the acknowledgment by the government of the partnership implicit in the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. National museums and other publicly-funded cultural bodies were, at the time of the interviews, developing policies to make their institutions more bicultural, and were able to obtain government funding for some implementation. Actions ranged from hiring Maori staff and enlarging programs concerned with Maori heritage, to instituting names and signage in Maori as well as English. The five Maori conservators were able to attend the conservation program in Australia through funding provided by the Roopu Manaaki I Taonga Tuku Iho,
The Cultural Conservation Advisory Council. At the time of the interviews the nature of the relationships between the indigenous and non-indigenous population were highlighted in New Zealand with an emphasis on achieving equal partnership. One of the non-Native conservators commented:

JG I think New Zealand is very concerned with the whole issue of cultural sensitivity in all areas of life and that museums are just one of them.

With regard to her museum, the second largest in New Zealand, she said:

JG I think we take a much greater sense of responsibility to Maori objects here than any others, and that’s just a lot to do with commitment to biculturalism. ... The bottom line is that the Maori collection here is incredibly strong, that it’s got all these ties to the living world that a lot of the other objects don’t have, and that there’s a lot of accountability to those people, too, who own them, or used to own them. And so I do think they will always be treated differently, and so they should be. And that there will always be more resources go into it, like that cloak store; we got central Government funding, you know, which if you asked for that for the textile store for the colonial costumes, you could probably forget it. There’s all those issues.

By comparison, Canada’s official bilingualism does not include aboriginal cultures; rather, the policy recognizes the status of the French- and English-speaking populations who were considered the founders of the country.

As noted earlier, there are many different Native nations in B.C. and Canada. In New Zealand, while the Maori (and the smaller population of Moriori) are considered the indigenous peoples, they also should not be considered as one people. The iwi or "tribal/ national" groups, the hapu (subtribal) designations within these, and the lineage of an individual are extremely significant.
But there is an inter-tribal thing. There’s not a Maori thing. There’s no such thing as a “Maori” person. They are all tribal (though we don’t use “tribal” any more) but you can go from one end of the country and see one hundred different ways of doing the same thing.

Regarding collections from indigenous people now housed in museums in New Zealand, many of these have a different legal status than they do in B.C.. Objects and in some cases buildings were loaned or put “on deposit” in the museums by their Maori owners, and are not therefore legally owned by the museums. The following example was given by one of the interviewees:

A lot of the collections ... have been given [by Maori people]. If you look in the record book, they’ve been given by Maori communities or custodians -- all those things -- and there’s all sorts of reasons why and a lot of it ties back culturally. The strength or the inner essence that an artifact has can affect the well-being of a community or an individual so, to combat that, rather than destroy that object or dispose of it in a traditional sense, they’ll give it to a museum and a lot of them would suggest that the ills in a museum is because they have all these things that cause ill to the community. My own family, for example -- a sickness befell my family and the priest there came into deal with it -- this is really cosmicky -- so to deal with it, suggested that it was coming from these carvings. Okay. So, the carvings should be burnt but, but the undeniable need to preserve these things is handed down to them by their ancestors. They gave them to the museum to take that burden and make the museum sick and by putting a bit of space, a bit of distance, between them, they were happy with that arrangement. ... [W]hen a museum says: “We should be giving you back your treasures.” “Oh, no, no, no! That’s all right. You keep that one!” Otherwise it would have meant -- if they didn’t have that outlet -- they would have had to destroy those carvings in the end, culturally they would have had to do that but there is a strong sense of preservation amongst Maori communities which, I’m sure, is not all that appreciated.
The Maori sense of cultural ownership, though, extends to objects housed far away and will be discussed later. Although land or objects may have been sold, the mana (power) which was a part of them was never sold. Connecting with those pieces, "keep[ing] them warm in some way" (McKenzie, 1990 #97: 172), rather than repatriation, may be a satisfactory acknowledgment of cultural ownership and a fulfillment of what is culturally necessary.

NT There's a meeting house, Ruatelpuke, in Chicago in the Field Museum where the local tribe -- we're not even using "tribe" these days -- iwi, went over there to help with the conservation and preservation and it was enough for them to reestablish that connection and I think it was beneficial for the museum to see that, the history or the lack of history was embellished greatly by having these people there and some of these conceptual type things you talked about became far more apparent to them. So, again, the doors were open. The glass case was open. People came in. It meant the objects stayed there. In fact, it meant the objects benefited from their being there from both points of view. Those people came back to New Zealand quite happy with that.

Whether the objects remain in a museum or are returned to the iwi is in some cases under dispute, and in some cases has been successfully negotiated. It emphasizes, however, that negotiation with the appropriate indigenous representatives is a part of normal museum procedure, seemingly more than it is in Canada, depending on the institution. In the interviews the respondents gave a number of examples showing that negotiating with Maori community members was taking place in many aspects of the museum's operations.

RE If I could use an example of, say, Te Hau Ki Turanga which is our meeting house here [at the National Museum Te Papa
Tongarewa in Wellington] and Rongowhakaata [people]. ... [I]nitially [it] had to be negotiated that ... to be retained in the museum. So you have to go through the process of acquisition: how we acquired it and was that acceptable that it is in [the] Wellington area and how is it going to be displayed and used. We negotiated over that. That was really more managerial ... plus ... that it would be able to be used as a functional house by all the [Rongowhakaata] but by no one else. So, we would have in the new museum like a pan-tribal *whare* (meeting house) that everyone else could use. But [people other than the Rongowhakaata could] not [use] Te Hau Ki Turanga. So, that was the first decision.

Importantly as well, the question of who makes decisions about the care and treatment of First Nations objects in museums, and the parameters of conservation work, are configured within this context of legal ownership by Maori of many of the objects in New Zealand’s major museums.

A portion of the older Maori material cultural heritage, both communally-owned as with carvings in *whare* in Maori communities and individually-owned such as stone *Hei tiki* or cloaks of plant fibre and feathers, remains in the possession of their indigenous owners in their houses or on the *marae*. An important part of the institutionally-supported work of several of the Maori conservators was to provide conservation advice and perform treatments, especially for preserving the communally-owned *whare* or meeting houses and the ancestor portraits, carvings, or photographs in them. At the time of the interviews, there was not a strong equivalent in New Zealand to the B.C. First Nations cultural centres that house collections and maintain relationships to larger museums. One interviewee did mention a movement towards *iwi* cultural centres and museums and the possibility of repatriating collections to these (VH). An analysis of the historical, cultural,
geographic, and other factors involved in these different developments is beyond the scope of this research.

The interviewees in this research did, however, make many comments on the relationship between themselves, their institutions, and Maori people. The following sections present research indicating that it is possible for conservation to successfully serve both the museum "western perspective" needs and the needs of indigenous communities.

MUSEUMS, COLLECTIONS AND MAORI PERSPECTIVES

Pakeha perspectives are, not surprisingly, the foundation underlying the Euro-based cultural institutions in New Zealand. Some of the differences with Maori cultural perspectives were noted by the interviewees in the following aspects of their institution's work.

Cataloguing a collection:

VH [W]hen I look at a drawing or print, I see the meeting house and the lake. The "Drawing and Prints Curator" sees the lake and then there's a house and it's a whole different view. That's all about access. Maori people are less likely to access that drawing and print of their home area because it doesn't actually mention their house -- or it does, as an aside. ... Or things like manuscripts. A lot of our people don't know they're in here because the access points says: "Maori Song". Now, if a Maori person was doing that they would say: "Waïata from Te Arawa by -- ". Now the Maori person would say: "Oh, wow, it's from my area. I'll get that". ... Often, they say that we had access but we didn't really. We don't come from the same place.
The collections themselves:

RE [A]fter all, a museum is its collection and it has to realize that. ... Its collection... in Maori terms is not just the collection; it's also the Maori viewpoint. They're not just collections; they're ancestors.

Use of replicas:

RE But, from the community viewpoint, I don't think they can allow that. They won't allow that because you can have a facsimile cloak but that cloak won't be worn by Te Rauparaha. ... I feel there's an enormous amount of transferral of the person -- their mana -- to the collections they had because they would instill that mana in them.

Interpreting an historic site:

DWh They built this [new] meeting house on a very old pa site there. ... A site that was important to the people down there so they were reusing the whole place as it once was ... they were re-occupying it. So the project was seen as their way of interpreting the place and making the history come alive again I guess in the same way that plaques and notice boards are in a European sense.

The interviewees also noted that Maori people used cultural institutions differently.

VH [I]t was significant that half the staff at the library [when I was a child] were Maori, so we were actually encouraged. Because, when I went, you used to have to sit at a desk by yourself in a library but ... the Maori staff in the Maori area -- used to put all the desks together so you'd come in with all your friends and make lots of noise. I mean, that's significant ... they embraced us rather than told us to be quiet or get out.
VH For instance, at the city art gallery when I was there with a Maori group, a lot of people hadn’t been to a gallery and a lot of the time they were going up to the lovely oil paintings and touching because they hadn’t the prior knowledge about galleries. ...

So, I see that as part of my job, too – to go out and teach our people that’s not an appropriate thing in a gallery or touching our tukutuku [panels made of dyed, woven plant material, often on the inner walls of a meeting house] that we have here in the library because they’re so used to going up and touching and feeling. We’ve got one downstairs with feathers and you see all the little Maori kids often when they come in, touching and playing with the feathers because that’s what they do in the whare and they’re often encouraged to do that -- touch carvings and things -- but it’s just trying to teach them what’s appropriate. Or, maybe, it’s teaching us what’s appropriate. I don’t know.

Interviewees noted that indigenous people in New Zealand harbour mixed feelings about museums similar to First Nations in Canada. The interviewees expressed this both on behalf of Maori visitors to their institutions and in relation to their own work and place in their institutions or organizations.

The following are two descriptions concerning Maori visitors to museums:

RE Maori communities don’t feel that their needs are being met by this museum. ... [In one of our exhibitions] there was one item and it was a mourning cap made of seaweed. ... There was a certain amount of information but there was no information as to how it was made, what it was made for. And I’m telling you, the Maori communities... really want to know how things are made and what it’s been made from because a lot of that information has been lost. A lot of it has been lost -- not all of it. And that’s why people want to come into our storage areas. They want to know the old styles of carving ... the changes and divergences and styles of carving, the paint that was used and the decorative elements. ... And they really want to know. And I know that because, when I’ve done these negotiations, they say to me: “Well, why do you think it had a
different paint? Why do you think it had a different colour?" ... I feel the Maori community isn't being aided. I also think it isn't being aided because it doesn't have input into the curatorial aspect -- being able to come in and tell their stories.

VH They don't want them [portraits or photographs of ancestors] to leave the *whare*, meeting house. If they let them leave the meeting house, they're certainly not going to let them leave the district. So it's a bit of a problem [performing conservation treatments]. It's all to do with the past. Often people from big institutions have come in and taken a look and said, yes, and they've either used that material or it hasn't been returned. So there's all that suspicion that you have to break down, coming from a major institution, particularly a library, where we collect information. That's what they think we're out there for -- to see what they've got so we can take it away.

With regard to the role of heritage objects, there are many similarities between the views expressed by the First Nations people interviewed in B.C. and the Maori conservators and others interviewed in New Zealand. For example, there is a strong context in Maori culture that acknowledges the importance of the intangible, spiritual aspects associated with material culture and paying respect to ancestors who may be represented.

NT Look at the forms of the art. They all have names ... They all have lineage; people have lineage to them, therefore they have a spirit about them. They are a living thing. They are treated... like people! People talk to them and people sleep with them. They hug them and all that sort of stuff. ... [T]here's a sense of community -- they want to be next to them and, when they're not next to them -- there's a thing called *ahi-ka*, or the home fires, and if you're away too long, your home fire is going to go out and so there's a dire need to want to go back and be back with your people.

RE [T]he touching is part of ... the keeping of the carvings warm.... [K]eeping them and touching them is linking with them. And most people who do that, are linked to those carvings.
The above comments reinforce the important role that material cultural heritage plays in identity for Maori, as well as for First Nations in B.C., as was seen in the previous chapter. RE links this identity to cultural continuity in a similar way to First Nations values in B.C., and their construction of the meaning of preservation.

RE That issue of respect comes from the status of the carvings and it's like an in-built thing and I can't really even explain it. It's something that you’re brought up with, that you have a -- it's really hard for me to put it into words. ... Maybe it's an awe (or not necessarily a fear) 'cause you have a knowledge that you’re linked. Your lineage is through to this person somehow and I feel that anybody of any Maori descendancy would feel that.

In New Zealand museums one might see a visitor greeting a carving of an ancestor by touching noses with it. In some museums there are bowls of water for cleansing one's hands at the entrances to galleries or storerooms holding objects with mana, and green leaves placed directly on or near objects, pertaining to remembrance and life. As VH says below, "It is more than an object to me":

VH [T]he Wentworth indenture ... that document returned to New Zealand and the things that I did, not only as a conservator but as a Maori person, before we did any conservation work ... we had a tapu (taboo) lifting and I had water in here and those were things that were hard to explain to other people. If I’m conserving ... Maori material, I like to follow through on all those things because it's more than an object to me. Even works on paper are more than just works on paper ... and most of my colleagues are fine about that -- so we sang and we had the tapu lifting, we had the water and we had the green leaves and things around the object which we wouldn’t normally happen to have around such an important document, but I felt that was important to its return and to its actual conservation, in a way, it was its whole -- it was its return home so the conservation was more than just the physical
aspect. It was that whole spiritual thing to bring it back to life. If you had been sitting in an attic in England for one hundred and fifty years. ...

The *mana* of the object may exist even in a museum and even after many years, and respect is paid:

NT  [T]hat ... meeting house — there's that area in the front which is called *marae*. Now, they'll create a *marae* situation wherever they are and, if it's the display hall of a museum, they'll create [it] by locating, positioning themselves relative to a treasured item like that and undergo ceremonies.

As with the First Nations in British Columbia, the meaning of the object for the Maori lies in its non-empirical significance: the "intangible" and "social" aspects referred to in the last chapter.

NT  And people do touch them, lean on them, break them, abrade them ... fondle them, whatever they do. In a spiritual sense, I suppose, they fondle the community. It's retaining that, that is most important.

VH  I guess it would be its spiritual integrity [as most important to preserve] because, without that, it doesn't mean anything ... [W]hy have a piece of paper with a lot of script on it if it doesn't have any *mana*.

Preservation is constructed to mean cultural preservation through living cultural continuity and practices. Preserving the objects is one means of achieving cultural preservation; another important aspect is speaking the language. As will be seen in various quotations in this chapter, Maori believe that heritage objects and buildings need to be used to preserve the living culture and to be kept, if appropriate, as evidence of the past for the use of contemporary and future generations. In some cases it is appropriate for the
works to complete a cycle and not continue to exist beyond the life of their owners.

RW Preservation is not actually part of Maori custom, so far as I understand. Once something is dead or has no life about it, then it must return -- be returned to Papatuanuku. That's the land. And, now we don't see any great loss with that because our affinity to the land and sea and the sun is what, what we are about. ... So, we're not actually completely losing it. My mother and my grandmother are traditional Maori weavers and they continue to weave traditionally and, in doing so, they are actually keeping part of the culture alive. So, when they see a cloak that is past it or stained or torn or something, then they would say: "Just wrap it up, and bury it and I'll make another one." So, that's their way of preserving a culture, which is totally opposite to what I'm doing because I will keep the dead alive, however, and they are accepting of that but that is a western, a western thing, isn't it?...

I have never had to make that decision about when to put a taonga (treasure) that is absolutely beyond repair to the ground to return it to Papatuanuku.

At the same time, one non-Maori conservator pointed out that there are Pakeha (western) objects in her museum that protocol demands should be allowed to "die".

JG People do talk about a mauri ... or the life force of an object and that some objects should be allowed to die or just pass away, whatever. I guess it's paralleled a bit too with things like those flags from the military collections that are supposed to fall apart and dust to dust and all the rest and yet we've actually got some of those that haven't been allowed to fall apart.

One conservator indicated that the issue was analogous to a "museum cycle", in which objects are in such bad condition that they cannot serve museum purposes, and so are allowed to "die".
RW  [Re a cloak that was extremely deteriorated, was in a museum's collection, but its lineage was known.] I think we would go back to the iwi and discuss the issue with them. It'll never be exhibited so it's not going to be seen, whichever hands it goes.

JG commented on a change in the indigenous cultural context of allowing objects to "die" or "complete their natural cycle".

JG  I do think it is important that they do last, the object, and sometimes that might be in philosophical conflict with the person who made it. But then, the person who made it, I guess, also wasn't aware that maybe it might be one of the last ones there ever was going to be and maybe they wouldn't have cared and maybe they would have.

CONSERVATION WORK AND RELATED PERSPECTIVES

The Maori conservators view their work in relation to Maori collections in their institutions as preserving them in a way acceptable to the Maori people, giving advice on preservation to Maori communities, both on objects existing within the community and those housed in the museum, and ideally letting discussions with the Maori owners contribute to the final decisions, and in appropriate cases control those decisions.

VH  [Re: who decides on the care of the object in a collection?] If the community doesn’t [yet] know about it ... then it is my responsibility. If the community takes an active part in looking after these things, then I think it’s a partnership issue. But most of the time our people, if they see another Maori person there working, they’ll take your advice and say: “Well, you’re the expert there, then you’ll know what to do.” And they usually follow your advice. ...But, if they said they wanted [something] done [with which I disagreed], I would, in a Maori forum, be able to express my opinion and say: ... “I don’t think you should do this.”
That the final decisions are made by appropriate Maori community or lineage members is certainly true when the objects are on the marae, and it is the goal when objects are on deposit in a museum; when the objects are part of the museum's collection, some issues related to preservation such as loaning out for use may be curatorial decisions. However, in these cases a negotiation process normally occurs in an effort to reach an acceptable decision. It was important to all the conservators that the Maori community involved were given detailed information on which to make informed decisions about preservation.

RW What I can do is that I can actually explain. I can sit down and I can explain that: "If we're not going to do this now, then we won't have this with us next year or the year after. That's your decision."

VH We adhere to the N.Z.P.C.G. [New Zealand Professional Conservators Group] Code of Ethics so, when I work with Maori communities, there's also [the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value] -- working for indigenous people and their things. For works on paper, it's a bit different. It's actually a bit harder to convince Maori people to do things about their paper things than ... about their carvings ... they see that as important. But if they want to let it go and they don't want to keep it, then there's nothing I can do. So, there's sort of that wanting to show them how to look after it but, if they don't want to, then I have to be able to let them actually do that -- but so long as I give them all the options then they, ultimately, have to decide. There's nothing I can do about it, really.

DWh [Working on meeting houses and their carvings in the Maori communities] I guess we separate out what is new work aspects of the project and what's preservation aspects of the work. But, sometimes, there's overlaps in that because processes like overpainting ... a lot of people see that as new work. That's quite a normal thing to do, and we try and do it so we can preserve the original, but the overpainting should also be accurate. That's what people are aiming for in a lot of these cases so that's part of our
work, whereas if they were wanting to replace all the carvings with something quite different, well, then, I guess we sort of step back from that and ... find them the right channels for them to do that, whether that's funding or help or whatever. So, we're not there to block the development of maraes or anything. We're there... with a role to play, and that's the preservation aspects for a lot of these projects.

The conservators view their work as contributing to the Maori people by offering their training and expertise.

For the conservators themselves, mixed feelings regarding museums and their relationship to Maori perspectives were experienced not so much as being contradictions between different cultural meta-narratives, but as being situated in the practices and viewpoints of the Pakeha-controlled institution or its staff not serving the Maori people. They expressed the feeling that the institution was opportunistic and using bicultural opportunities for its own agenda rather than in the context of a co-equal partnership with Maori people.

VH Sometimes they [non-Maori personnel at the National Library] acknowledge that you need to do those things [Maori rituals] but they don't actually understand. They think, oh, you know, that she's just doing her thing so let her do her thing and they also find it strange that, because I'm a professional, as a conservator that I would still be upset about those things [not following Maori protocol, as with a preliminary opening of the Wentworth Indenture by library staff] ... but they certainly use it – all the publicity shots in the end were all the Maori people coming in to view it and all the big wigs (dignitaries, politicians, etc).

NT [E]ven when you ring them up, they can never remember what their Maori name is, but it's all part of our apparent bicultural swing around the nation. A new era of biculturalism...
One conservator who works with historic sites and monuments noted contradictions between the *Pakeha* perspective regulatory guidelines his institution works with and Maori viewpoints. For example, registering historic places or classifying buildings does not reflect the perspectives of Maori communities (DWh).

DWh In a lot of ways, it has little relevance to Maori people if the place is registered or not. They don’t seek status on it because it has its own status and, the other thing is, they feel it is another control that is being applied to it, when it’s registered. ... (T)he other thing that was resisted before this new Act came in was the classification of buildings. Generally, Maori structures weren’t classified... because they represent ancestral people; you can’t apply a ranking system to people. That was quite inappropriate. So, the [Historic Places] Trust was good in enabling marae to exist outside their classification.

One non-Maori conservator also commented on the difficulties she had with some of her museum’s policies and procedures. These did not concern inter-cultural relationships, but reflected instead the same conflicts described in the chapter on conservation values, in which new directions in museology, budgetary restraints, and internal situations in which objects are being put at physical risk and the conservator is perceived as a “naysayer” for challenging this, created difficulties between conservation and the institutional modus operandi.

JG Well, I think a lot of the challenges simply come from the way museums -- the direction they’re taking and that the less money there is and the less time there is and the more people want to develop galleries very quickly and develop buildings really quickly, the less conservators are able to impose or even recommend standards that they’re more familiar with and, while some of that, I think is negotiable -- and it’s particularly negotiable in terms of people wanting access to their objects -- there are some
things that aren’t negotiable and that, one example is simply -- people doing construction work and [damaging objects]. ... An electrician was working in the Pacific Hall ... basically he broke a very precious object and that could easily have been avoided.

In other words, in her eyes it was not the Maori/non-Maori concerns and perspectives surrounding collections which presented the principal challenge to ethnographic conservation, it was rather the internal, conventional museum power relationships and differences in mandate, situated within the current context for and direction of museology. One non-Maori conservator emphasized that working with Maori concerns had provided positive benefits to her rather than being a negative, conflictual experience.

VC An enriching experience -- no question about it. I know that I’m a better person for having had this contact and having experienced so much from Maori people. I mean I feel very fortunate.

The differences between Maori and Pakeha cultural meta-narratives were experienced on a personal level by the Maori conservators, but were not necessarily experienced as conflicting.

RW I would not do that [rub a carving] in my profession. But, being a Maori, I might even do that myself and, in fact, I think I have done. ... It’s a personal thing and, because I’m of Maori descent, I have no problem with it. I can actually, sort of, come in and out of these worlds when I feel like, when it’s appropriate, when it’s suitable. It’s actually the same amount of respect for both.

One interviewee, the same person who related the priest’s recommendation to his family to burn the carvings, but, at least in speaking to
a *Pakeha* interviewer, also referred to it as "cosmicky", noted a conflict he had experienced:

NT Certainly, when we were studying in Australia, I had great difficulty with the Codes of Ethics. From a Maori perspective, I thought that there would be conflict here immediately to the point where I felt it necessary to talk to the head of our department... about Codes of Ethics. I suggested to him that this would be impossible for me to implement, to put down on my people who already had cultural ethics of their own that go over many thousands of generations and you're asking me to impose another ethic and I think we will find it extremely difficult to move amongst our people if we were too strong with these ethics.

It is significant, however, that this occurred while the conservator was training. All the conservators noted that in their work they are able and in fact are committed to addressing these differences in perspective and making the Euro-based structures serve Maori people. As noted, conflicts they have are more with their institutional policies and procedures and the values these express, than with differences in the underlying meta-narrative affecting their work. NT continues his discussion of the problems he had with the conservation code of ethics by saying:

NT [W]e had some input into [the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter]. I think that's a good first step towards ethics for Maori things. The artifacts that we work with, we have no power over. We have no determination as to why they're there or what their use will be but that's determined by the communities that live around them and we try to acquaint ourselves with their ethics... and utilize our knowledge to assist them to progress around these artifacts to keep them going and that may cut across a lot of codes of ethics but there is an undeniable desire to preserve and carry these things forward. There's a great deal of respect and honest responsibility with regard to the protection of these things so we... encourage that through. The way we encourage that through may be slightly different from the way they may have done it
traditionally but, under analysis, it is very much the same. The techniques are more modern but the same passion is still there.

In other words, conflicts between the two perspectives, when they are experienced as conflicts, do not necessarily remain a conflict in the conservator's work. NT worked to resolve his conflict with the ethics by contributing to a professional ethical charter on the one hand and working to integrate Maori perspectives into his work on the other. RE put an end to a conflict by following ethical conservation procedure on the one hand and by acknowledging the community's right to make the decision on the other.

RE Now, if, for instance, a community then said: "Well, we don't care." Then I would say: "Right, I've done everything I can. I will document it to cover myself, ethically."

Another conservator commented on her work in relation to differing perspectives as follows:

RW We have to educate our people and... in the same respect, the museum world has to be educated... The community out there, the people believe that their carving or their cloak is inside that museum and no one's ever going to see it. No one's ever going to touch it or be around it. It's never going to be worn. It's like it's never ever going to be loved in their eyes. And yet, in our world, it's comfortable, it's lying flat, there's no dust on it. ... [W]e're, all together at the start, we both care a lot for our taonga and now we just need to compromise.

Even the scientific aspect of the western meta-narrative that outwardly might appear to be in conflict with traditional indigenous viewpoints has been integrated in the conservators' perspectives:

RE I do find I have that aspect [scientific] in me too. I don't actually find it a very hard river to cross really. ... I've had to do
quite a few lectures on Maori and science ... I found that it [science] was so creative and such a creative area that I don’t feel that it’s a cold clinical viewpoint. ... Science is not just a narrow vehicle. It’s not just something that is fact. Because, as we all know, in science fact is only a proven theory and theories change and I suppose something that helped me move in that area was when I did anthropology. ... It was that science was a paradigm, that various scientific views were a paradigm within a belief system....

So, I don’t really see it as such a disparity with what I do now, which is in conservation and working with Maori communities and with Maori taonga. That panel ... I just do not find myself in a dilemma there at all ... when we were putting forward a proposal for the natural history resource centre with the Maori element of it, they put me on the area of ... developing the scientific angle. A lot of people ... thought, oh, it just wouldn’t work because Maori science is different from western science, and I said: “I don’t see why we can’t link them.” Because you can link, for instance, the carvings, the sciences, the material sciences behind carvings, the wood technology, the science behind wood deterioration (the insects that eat into woods) and why, for instance, trees were cut down at a specific time and why they were waterlogged, why they were put in rivers [because the sap would be reduced and you would not have an insect attack]. All those things that are actually intriguing to Maori communities. I don’t think that science was even taught properly in Maori communities.

Two conservators made comments showing they had used analogies meaningful to them from their professional conservation training to describe Maori perspectives. One interviewee drew a parallel with the conservation concept of integrity, and the other with the principle of non-falsification.

NT From a conservation point of view, conservators seem to have a more intimate view on objects and, in the past, I’ve only maybe seen it from a visitor’s point of view because a conservator likes to look inside. What molecular structure is it made out of? What sort of inner character does it have apart from the aesthetic or the exterior views -- the interior thing -- which was a sort of a spiritual dimension for me, from a Maori perspective, working with these old artifacts and it sort of touched me.
NT  [If you have an object in a community, that’s the setting where it was created. The meaning why it was created is in there and, in fact, you’re removing it from that and turning it into another object somewhere else and, in a sense, falsifying it.

So, in a way, you’re destroying that object... what we’re saying is that the object is dynamic with the community which is ever evolving and that’s what we’re preserving. That is, it’s too narrow to conceive that you’re preserving just the material but it’s ... a living, breathing object. Sounds really terrible but its soul [is] with the community; [what] you’re preserving as a museum is actually falsifying a lot of that.

The fact that the conservators’ work included negotiation with communities and working with the *kaumatua* (elders knowledgeable in Maori protocols and culture) attached to museums, and that their work often focussed on traditional Maori material heritage, meant that the framework of traditional Maori social perspectives was one within which the conservators found themselves working. Again, this emphasized the importance of acknowledging the "intangible" or "social" elements in the successful process of their work. In advising or conserving objects or structures belonging to private individuals or communities, for example, issues of gender, age and status were added to the significance of lineage relationships.

VH  What I’m eventually hoping to do is to be able to do it as a group because Nick and Dean get to work together often and being men also helps them. Being a woman who goes by herself, somewhere, is a lot harder ... and often in your own communities harder still. Because they have more of a right to ask you who you are, where you’re from and all those sorts of questions to sort of set you up and that’s quite hard.

The following examples shows how two young female Maori conservators addressed issues relating to material culture preservation when
speaking to a high-ranking Maori male. MC is this author, the interviewer, and this quotation is included to explain the context.

MC  When…[MP]… spoke to the museum studies undergraduates at Massey, and he brought some of his taonga -- cloaks and mere … and some tiki. They're his -- this is my understanding -- and he put them out on the table, one cloak on top of another, and put the mere on top of the feathers. And then, the other thing was -- I thought, well, okay, because they are his -- but then the museum studies students came up and I didn’t mind that they were encouraged to touch them but they touched them roughly and he’s got his back turned and he’s talking to another student. So, he’s not in a position to notice them. So, I mentioned this to [Mina McKenzie, also a faculty member]. She said it would be an insult to tell him what to do, to say: “Look, did you know that the students were bending the cloaks like this and this?” … [If he asks, we’ll tell him but if he doesn’t because of his status and his stature – … how would you handle it?]

RE  Well, I feel that I know MP well enough to say [something] so that's maybe not such a good example to use and he has family links … I definitely respect his status and I think he's got an enormous amount of knowledge. … I just might say … “Okay, if you don’t mind doing it, it’s up to you.” He did actually -- him and I had a discussion one time -- he wanted his cloaks to be ... cared for traditionally, to be put out in the sun. He said: “What do you think?” And he was testing me out. I said from a scientific viewpoint ... “I disagree and, by putting them out in the sun, you get the ultraviolet rays.” On and on, I did my white coat spiel. He said: “Yes but I want them to be dealt with in a different way.” And I said: “Fine, that’s your thing and that’s what you want to do. Good on you. But it’s not what I’d do.” So, I wouldn’t get uptight about it. However, if it was the collection items in the museum -- It’s very hard to ask me to do that. I have had these situations where people have had great standing and they’ve handled things -- handled things roughly -- and I’ve been standing at the back going: “Ooooh!” And I’ve tried to go like this [supportive, demonstrative gestures] but I haven’t actually said to them: “Look you were holding it in this particular way and you tore this off, whatever.” I’ll try and rescue it. I approach it in a different way … I know M. so well that I don’t feel that it would be a problem. But it would be with someone else, who was on the Board, say, and had
great mana and standing. Just as much as M has but I don’t know them.

When RW was asked about whether she would express conservation concerns to person of high stature, she responded:

RW You have to [express conservation concerns even to someone of high stature] as it would be very unprofessional of me if that advice wasn’t given.

RW I’ve spoken to M. about how he cares for his cloaks and there certainly is room for thought there because ... you think about it and his theory behind the warmth from the sun -- actually encourages the oils in the feathers ... to become more viscous and lubricates the whole feather and, then it stands upright. Now, I am not disagreeing with any of that. It’s an interesting point and who really knows whether it’s good or bad? Ultraviolet is very damaging but it also kills mould so it’s another compromise, isn’t it?...

[O]ne day in the sun that actually may kill the mould that may have been present there, that will lubricate the oil, may be best for the cloak if it’s done once twice a year rather than it being totally closed in a, you know, in a cabinet and never, ever taken out into the sun and may -- who knows? We don’t know. It’s an experiment. I don’t disagree with him but I think it’s really interesting.

In these situations the interviewees’ reactions to risk to the material aspects of the object were tempered with Maori socio-cultural considerations in relation to the people or institution with which the objects were connected.

CONSERVATION WORK: THE TANGIBLE AND THE INTANGIBLE

As discussed, although two general meta-narratives, Maori and Pakeha, exist in New Zealand in the context surrounding the preservation of
indigenous cultural heritage, they do not necessarily remain in conflict for the
Maori conservators either in their personal value systems or in their
professional conservation work. Some parts of the meta-narratives do not in
fact conflict, as has been seen in a previous quotation about the importance of
the preservation of material culture to Maori people, and is seen again in the
following:

RE [W]e often see things in black and white. We see that
communities want their taonga back and the museum is a big, bad
wolf that won’t give them back -- the community will be all right,
but often the community has issued concerns, especially old people,
that they cannot look after them. They would rather have their
collections held in acceptable conditions and be there for their
grandchildren and great-grandchildren to see, especially in areas
like this where people are from different tribal groups.

RW I do say to them not to touch and I explain the reason why,
they’re very accepting of it. It is an education and they’re becoming
very interested in the care and preservation of taonga and what’s
involved.

In other cases where the meta-narratives do in fact conflict, the
conservators have been able to bring the two points of view together by the
way they perform their work. The values they express represent both
perspectives, a "both/and " rather than an "either/or" viewpoint.
Significantly for this study, the major issue of how to balance preserving the
tangible physical integrity of a work with preserving its less tangible
conceptual integrity was not experienced as a conflictual situation by any of
the interviewees.

RE [W]hen I’m treating a carving, I’m not treating it as a piece of
wood. So, that’s the first issue -- that I’m treating an ancestor -- so
that’s quite a different thing. And I often find myself chatting
away. I know that might seem that I'm going to be put in a white coat with those arms that link behind, hands tied up, but, in fact, it's just the way I feel. It's just the way I've been brought up. So, there's no real problem that I have with it.

RW I do feel, because of my ethnic origin, I have no real problem dealing with that spirituality in conservation.

Because the conservators believe in the importance of both the tangible and intangible aspects of the object, they have altered the conventional conservation approach to treating the objects to ensure their preservation, in both the western sense of stopping deterioration and in the indigenous sense of continuation of cultural life. Their work shows respect for both viewpoints and for the people associated with them.

RE [Rituals might take place] generally. Before they go on exhibition -- they go up -- I worked in the front of Te Hau Ki Turanga and we had a ceremony before it went up, to lift the tapu. I did ask if it was necessary before it was worked on and they said that I didn't have to. But I'm always aware of that because, from my angle, I don't want to get into any trouble as well. But I'm quite aware of the power of the carvings.

VH [W]hat I tend to do is, I do a treatment and then, after it has had its physical being restored and conserved, then I can get somebody in to say something.

The work of the non-Maori conservators also shows respect for both perspectives:

VC [Y]ou have to accept that, yes, these things will be used, will be borrowed but they're not borrowed lightly. They will be borrowed for a tangi, for a funeral, and that's right and proper.
The approach of highlighting respect for both the tangible and intangible elements pertaining to collections was equally accepted by the non-Maori conservators who worked on Maori objects.

JG There are certain things that most people know about like not treating carvings when you're menstruating, not using saliva on objects, not eating or drinking near objects, so there's that level of... your personal behaviour in a way.

In the following example, it is not so much the intangible elements pertaining to an object that are highlighted as much as it is the intangible elements relating to the community/collections relationship.

JG [re Museum of New Zealand storage area] It answers all the conservation requirements. It's a big space. It's got heaps of shelves. It's supposedly going to have quite a good environment and, to me, it's totally hostile to any visiting group.

The conceptual integrity of not just the object but also the display area for the collections was important, as seen in the following example. This is reminiscent of GW's comment in the last chapter that conceptual integrity was expressed by the whole collection in her cultural centre, and was not just in relation to individual objects. Cultural significance lies in the "whole", made up of both tangible and intangible aspects.

JG For an annual exhibition called the Fletcher-Challenge Ceramic Award...the central Maori Court was used, for the opening ceremony...and it was used inappropriately. ... The conceptual integrity was totally ignored, for the sake of more space. ... this is not only insensitive to the space, but places those objects at great physical risk - which it did, because they had various sorts of equipment trailing over the objects. ...

[The inappropriate use] was just because it had nothing to do with the objects in that gallery. It was using them as props, I guess...as a backdrop. An exotic backdrop, in a way. So it will be
interesting to see what happens next year because, at present, there 
is no alternative space that has that size . . .

The non-Maori conservators were very conscious of their position, and 
of doing their work appropriately.

JG Here, anyway, we're fairly conscious of not alienating the 
public by using methods and materials which reinforce the 
scientific or slightly cynical view of treatment or storage of museum 
objects. . . . I am very concerned with the idea of making it 
comfortable for people to come in and look at objects. And, on a 
very practical level, that might involve using, for instance, grey Jiffy 
[Ethafoam] foam instead of white.

VC [V]ery early on I came in contact with a very powerful Maori 
woman and these issues of cultural conservation, of a Pakeha 
woman actually handling Maori material was right up front. . . . I 
was in trepidation of meeting this woman, who I knew was 
powerful and she came in and we sat down at the table and she 
came across very strong. And I was very daunted. And she threw 
out the gauntlet and said: "You're not going to be handling our 
material." So . . . I realised then I had to establish where I was at, lay 
my cards on the table and stress to her how I felt about handling 
Maori material and about how important and precious it all was. 
So, I had to establish my base, so that took quite a long time. It 
wasn't just talking. It was actually the physical handling of the 
material and letting them see that I was serious and that I was 
careful.

Some comments of the Maori conservators acknowledged that the 
Pakeha conservators were put in a different position in relation to the Maori 
communities than they themselves were.

VH [B]eing Maori, that helps. I mean, if a Pakeha had gone in 
and said that, they . . . probably would have been ticked off.

VH It's a power thing and you need the tangata whenua [first 
people of the land] to educate their own people rather than 
someone else because . . . people back home wouldn't perhaps
acknowledge a *Pakeha* person telling them "Hey, you shouldn’t be rubbing the carvings" when they come to museums, or putting leaves on them like they do because the leaves signify life. But if I said to them, maybe you could put the leaves on but, hold off -- you know: “everyone’s rubbing them, there won’t be anything left”, or something – they may be more likely to say: “Okay, then, we won’t”. [M]aybe a way of determining standard of care is to provide appropriate training to First Nations people and increase their understanding of what the profession is about ... and why you’re doing it.

In addition, while the Maori conservators expected all *Pakeha* staff to be respectful of Maori heritage and perspectives, two interviewees commented that they did not expect non-Maori themselves to perform any ceremonies.

MC  What about in terms of any rituals ... are there things that either you need to do or someone has to come in and do either before you work on a piece or before a piece goes on exhibit or?

RW  Not that I know of, no. I haven’t had anyone come into the lab yet and do anything. That’s my thing. I take care of that myself, even if it’s only a little prayer or something. That’s not before every cloak but there’s a certain amount of silence that I give the cloak beforehand.

MC  [I]f it’s a *Pakeha* conservator -- should that person, do you think, find an appropriate person to do something ... before treating it?

RW  I don’t really think so. I still think it’s a personal thing. I think each person to his own. I don’t have a problem with doing my little bit and I don’t have a problem with anybody else not doing their bit. I’m concerned about my spiritual awareness with this *taonga* ... So, no, I don’t expect Valerie [VC] to have that sort of contact with it ... but ... she does have respect. It’s respect.

VH  [Re: expect Pakeha conservators to get someone in after a treatment to say a *karakia*?] Well, I don’t know. I think they would be prepared to do that but we deal with such a lot of Maori material, too, it would be hard to judge them. And, at the moment, we have an informal policy where if [the piece is] really significant it is blessed.
VH gives a very practical answer to the question, an attitude also reflected in many of the responses of First Nations people in British Columbia to preservation questions.

While the Maori conservators did not question the need for appropriately preserving both the tangible and intangible aspects of an object as part of their conservation work, this does not mean that they never experienced conflict if the two aspects were in contradiction.

MC As both a conservator and a Maori person, do you think it’s okay to put objects at physical risk if it means preserving their conceptual integrity, their cultural meaning?

RW Well, I have two hats that I have to wear here. I’m not sure which one I’m going to speak for, whether it’s my Maori cap or it’s my conservator’s cap. The answers will contradict each other. With my conservator’s cap on, if an object is in poor condition, then I would advise against it being lent out. If the people are adamant that this taonga should go out, then I would agree to it with certain conditions. ... [RW continues with an explanation of the conditions.]

VH The whole issue of letting something go that I might think is important but the people who own it don’t - that’s a problem for me, it’s a struggle for me and sometimes ... I keep having to say: “Why am I in this profession?” And I’m always having that struggle. I haven’t encountered any others because, you know, I work with mostly sympathetic and supportive colleagues, who support me in any way in my decisions.

ACHIEVING BALANCE

The following examples in conservation practice illustrate further how the conservators have balanced their professional conservation knowledge
and values with serving the interests of the Maori community, and whether and where what might be considered compromises in conservation principles and methods have been made.

RE Now, we went all the way up to the east coast and negotiated that and there were other concerns they had. Like, for instance, there were some cosmetic changes that they wanted to happen, because a lot of the longitudinal cracks in the carvings went right through the faces of the figures and they didn’t like that. That was — from a conservation viewpoint, unnecessary. Minimal interference states that, if it’s just cosmetic, it’s not necessary. However, with that consultation, I felt that it was and it will go that far because that is what they want and they are, in a sense, the guardians of that house. Well, then, I would take notice of it. So, that’s the process of negotiation.

RE [A] practical angle for how I work with the collections is that I observe certain restrictions ... one of menstruation -- I don’t work on the carvings during menstruation -- and I don’t use saliva for removal. Like saliva’s so particularly good removing animal glue which is unfortunate. I don’t blow on the carvings, which is what you often get used to during treatment. You blow away various things. And it also makes you so much more aware of when you’re treating a carving, and you’ve got to use a scalpel or something. If it fell down: “Oh look, I’m really sorry about that.” You just find that you naturally do it.

RE To people who make tukutuku that’s ridiculous. Why keep all the old stuff? It looks tatty, and doesn’t look any good. But I had to try and explain it – we try to keep as much of the original as possible – as I was doing with the carvings. That was an acceptable viewpoint on their part and then we will do minor treatments.

RE There was another issue which was the tukutuku... because of the nature of the materials that they’re made from, they get damaged where people sit against the walls. A lot of people up there stated that they would like to have these remade. ... I had to state that these were original. They weren’t necessarily original to the house. They were made later when the house was reinstated in the Dominion Museum — and were made by Raukawa women – not the same tribal group. So, that brought a fairly controversial issue to it: they weren’t necessarily Rongowhakaata and they were
damaged. And the *Rongowhakaata* people thought they should be replaced. But, when it was explained that they had been in the house so long and that these panels had been made under the direction of Ngata, who was from the east coast, and that they had kept, in a sense, the house warm all that time then it was agreed that we would retain them.

DWh I’ve done reports that are really just discussion documents where I’ve looked at the condition of the pieces and some of the different appearances they may have had -- these are carvings, for example -- and then given them some long term scenarios about they could be preserved and what for. One particular place -- they had a set of carvings that had come off a building that had collapsed. They’d been kept on the *marae*. They hadn’t built another one -- a meeting house -- since but some people are talking about doing that and some just want to keep them somewhere, store them somewhere. Now, they’re equally valid. Keeping them requires a little conservation, a little restorative reconstruction and things like that. But they’re not being used in the way they were intended so they’re out of context with the rest of the *marae*. So, if they were to be reused on the outside of a building, then you’re going to lose some material information because these carvings need to be stripped back -- the paint’s all cut up. Obviously, if they’re going outside, they need paint on them. So, they have to figure out if it’s that significant losing that. They also have to realize that the life that they have on the outside is much shorter than they would ever have being stored inside. So, they have to know that information and that’s what they ask me is to provide that. So they have that and they’ll make their decision on it. But it’s equally important -- say if they chose to put them back on the outside, I would consider that a good way to go because these carvings are in context again. They’re in the right position. They are doing what they’re supposed to do -- they’re not there just to provide interesting information about paint history or carving styles. They’re there to function culturally, primarily. So, if they have to go back there, that’s where they go.

VH We have Maori reference staff, which I sort of form part of and we operate as a team. We cover all areas in the library so if we get a big group in and we had a group from Tauranga a couple of months back, who are doing a big land claim so we got out everything that they wanted to see and part of that was that I give them a, a run-down on why we use white gloves -- not that ...
you've got to wear white gloves but why we wear white gloves and why it's important and, if they have any of the other documents at home, they could do this and that. So I gave them a sort of a brief run-through on what conservation was and they were all really receptive to that and you tell them things like: "Don't laminate anything!" And they all go [intake of breath]: "Oh!" Too late.

The above examples show that in integrating conservation and Maori viewpoints, an accommodation was almost always found that did not compromise conservation principles and ethics. It is presumed, from the accounts, that the other Maori people involved were satisfied with the outcome as well.

One conservator gave an example of how important it is to make sure that in negotiations mistakes are not made about what is or is not a cultural belief:

VH  You've got to decide whether it's because culturally they don't want to or because they don't really understand where you're coming from ... your reasons why -- You know, maybe they're suspicious that you're just coming and saying you want to take it back, or ...[if it's] for a cultural reason ... then you stand back. But you don't want to push the issue, either, so it's a struggle. Somebody's whakapapa books were burnt in a fire but they rescued them. They weren't actually badly damaged ... [but] they thought they should let the rest of it burn ... and it wasn't because it was a cultural thing to do that. It was because they thought it wasn't worth keeping them any more because it's all burnt around the edges.

A major area in which conservation and indigenous cultural beliefs have been shown to conflict is in the area of use of objects in museum collections. In New Zealand, as in B.C., "use" ranges from artists and craftspeople handling objects in order to learn from them or create similar pieces, lineage descendants handling objects from their heritage while
viewing them, and the loaning out of objects for significant or ceremonial occasions, such as the example of Maori cloaks for funerals. The following examples show further that the Maori conservators, while trying to minimize risk to the object, were not uncomfortable with the object being used. At the same time, the conservators stated that they would not put an object at physical risk.

RE I couldn't put up with putting an object at risk. So, I wouldn't. I think that, to be absolutely honest, I would be going against my cultural background as well by doing that. ...

I just know from ... the long work that I have done here -- that no one in the Maori community who I have negotiated with so far has ever put the collection at risk. I have negotiated and discussed all these problems with them. I have stated: “Look, that is going to put that carving at risk.” They will say: “Well, if that’s the case, we’re not interested in doing it.” If I do my consultation correctly in a sensitive manner, which is I think the way I do it. So I’ve honestly had no problems like that at all.

RE But I don’t make them wear white gloves like a lot of people would. ... I honestly think that handling aspect of Maori culture is really important and you should be able to handle it or touch the carvings.

The conservators have defined "risk" and "damage" both similarly and differently from the conventional conservation viewpoint. Two aspects parallel the perspective seen in the B.C. First Nations interviews: "small" types of damage are not considered to be damage but a matter of course, something that is to be expected when an object is used.

DWh I find a lot of physical sort of damage and things like that, that seem really bad are quite insignificant out there, really.

And risk is defined to include both physical and spiritual considerations:
I do feel an enormous concern for the collections and their physical and spiritual well-being and I think that they are so intertwined that I don’t think the community is interested in putting them at risk. That’s what they’ve told me.

The Maori conservators implied that they would recommend against use if they felt that use would pose a significant risk to the physical integrity of the object. In other words, the conservators did not support use each time because this was part of the Maori cultural perspective; they professionally assessed the condition of the object and the context, and argued for whatever position maximized preservation within these parameters. They accepted, however, that ultimately use or non-use would not necessarily be their decision to make.

The parameters of damage as seen above pertaining to Maori culture were recognized by the non-Maori conservators as well.

If you were actually using them, you’d probably be more worried if it was getting older or deteriorated because you might not be able to use it for much longer ... It depends on the cultural context.

"Access versus preservation" and "preserving conceptual integrity versus preserving physical integrity" appears to be much less of a conflict today in ethnographic conservation in New Zealand than in Canada. In New Zealand, Maori rights to their heritage are acknowledged and the conservators work to preserve objects as much as they can within the context
of Maori traditional owners having the decision-making power in many instances. In New Zealand, not only is there an official bicultural indigenous/non-indigenous federal policy, but it is also backed up by powerful review committees to ensure implementation of the policy. In Canada the conservators work within the code of ethics and their conservation training which emphasizes preserving the physical object, and the relationship with First Nations is more dependent on individual institutional response.

The Maori conservators conceptualize their work clearly and Maori and non-Maori interviewees were in accordance with a similar vision. Unlike the conventional conservation perspective, which emphasizes the objects alone, the conservators in New Zealand did not separate the objects, even in museums, from their indigenous social context.

VC I think it’s probably very difficult to try and break down the difference between the community from which the objects have come and the object because you’ve got to respect their wishes as well -- you feel as if you’re an advocate for the object but as the object, to them, is a living part of their culture you can’t really divide it.

DWh [Clients] would be Maori people ... collectively as objects and themselves but, we’re a client to them. [W]e are to them because they still look after their own objects. We’re just tools to them or things they can use to preserve what they think needs preserving.

On the issue of social context and how to reduce a potential conflict between a museum serving the public at large or serving a special interest group such as a First Nation, one conservator said:

VH I always believed if it was something to do with the tangata whenua then the tangata whenua’s requests and rights come before
the public trust because, nine times out of ten ... the public trust ... is [for] the Pakeha people and not Maori or tangata whenua interest.

It appears that making decisions on issues in which conservation values conflict with indigenous values is an easier task for conservators in New Zealand than it is in Canada. The official national policy and its sanctions are undoubtedly a contributing factor. A second factor for the Maori conservators is, understandably, their level of identity with and lineage in the indigenous population.

RW [I]t's where your respect lies. Like I'd like to touch that carving or rub that carving because it has this aura about it I can feel. Like I feel close to it. It's from my iwi and I even want to go up and give it a hug and yes I will! I'll do that! But I won't ... – I don't think I'll touch that painting over there because the acids on my fingers ... might show up in ten years time or something. But ... I have no affinity to that painting as I have with that carving.

A third factor is the knowledge that for many of the objects housed in museums Maori ownership is undisputed, and therefore the conservator's task is configured as one of advice rather than decision-making. Even for objects legally owned by the museums, there is a strong sense among the Maori of cultural ownership whoever the current legal owner is and wherever the object resides.

NT Maoris have a funny thing about ownership. [S]ay land, for example. Land is a treasured thing. Maori people still identify -- Dean and I, we're, strictly speaking, we're from the East Coast district, Te Tairawhiti. Doesn't matter where we are, that's where we're from. Whether or not we own land there or the legal aspects of ownership accorded to the land, we're still from there. ... [T]he meeting house that's in the National Museum at the moment is one from my home, Te Hau Ki Turanga. That's always going to be our house. Doesn't matter who owns it. It doesn't matter what history
says, that we sold it or someone bought it or whatever, it's still going to be our house and *Te Hau Ki Turanga* is the breath of Turanga, which is the name of the place that I come from and that's always going to be the breath of my people, regardless of legal ownership. There's a cultural ownership that overrides all that. Possession is another sense of ownership. There's just been a deal with the Rotorua people to have stuff brought back from Auckland Museum to their museum there as well as stuff from the Canterbury Museum but the ownership hasn't been brought back. The physical object has. Possession for them, that's important. The legal ownership is also important but possession is more important. The thing is they never relinquished a custodianship or cultural ownership, which is all-encompassing. The legal angle is something they'll wrangle. They'll keep wrangling for it and, if they get it, they get it but, if they don't, they still know those things still belong to them. ... Every time they see those things they, culturally they'll speak to them and, and do all the things that they'll do to them even when they were in their communities.

**NT** Some of the stories that came back from when it [the Te Maori exhibition] was in America, that the halls -- that the display halls that they [the Maori] had to walk through to get to their exhibition -- through the Egyptian hall, the Melanesian hall and so and so and so and so, the Peruvian hall -- that they paid respect to all of those peoples as they believed that ownership or that cultural ownership is still with those people and so they had to go through their ceremonies to make way for them to pass by to their own thing. There's that sort of sense of ownership.

A fourth factor contributing to the lack of conflict in bringing Maori and *Pakeha* conservation values together in conservation work is the relative clarity of the pathways for pursuing decisions. For example, many museums have Maori *kaumatua* and staff support in other departments enabling advice to be more easily obtained and the appropriate persons to be contacted and protocols to be correctly observed with regard to Maori heritage related to any part of the country. As the Maori working in museums are often younger, recently-trained professionals, an important role of the *kaumatua* is
to be on hand, elders sharing their special knowledge and giving guidance to
the younger people. In addition, the conservators received positive support
from Maori community members regarding their work and favouring in
many cases decisions acceptable to them and professional conservation.

RE Once they had seen the damage, they said: “We’ll leave that
up to you to treat and we would prefer that pataka to be here for
our grandchildren and great grandchildren because we can’t care
for it back home because we don’t have the resources -- the human
resources -- and we don’t have the financial resources.

An additional factor is that although all the conservators use either or
both of New Zealand’s conservation code of ethics and charter for the
preservation of sites in their work, it does not occupy as strong a position as it
does in Canada. The code of ethics does not appear to have been emphasized
in the Australian conservation training program at that time to the same
extent as in North America. It was certainly taught, but perhaps not
referenced in the same manner. In addition, the codes are situated within the
Pakeha perspective; even the more progressive charter does not adequately
serve the perspectives of the Maori community in the eyes of some of the
conservators.

VH [T]he standard of care has been something written with
European painting or European sculpture in mind and that
"standard of care" came from the respect that they had, how they
felt about their objects, you know, it wasn’t usual for European
paintings to be touched or sculptures to be touched but it was, it is
for Maori people to, you know, to touch their carvings and so, I
think in many ways it can often be seen as a Eurocentric way of
viewing things, about standard of care and, and I think that, if you
believe spiritual care is more important then you have a different
idea what "standard of care" is about.
DWh Well, the ICOMOS Charter really just makes it a grey. It's just, it just sort of says if you want to do things in a sort of indigenous way, you know, don't use the rest of this Charter, basically.

NT Yeah, that's right. You decide what you want to do and carry on.

DWh You do. That's fine. You know, we won't bother you.

NT It's not really helping the people. It's saying you carry on with your own thing. ...

And, if you want us involved, well we'll have to consider these other things. It's not really helping those people with the preservation of those things. It's setting them off. It's sort of cutting the rope to the boat: "Away you go." And some Maori people say: "Well, thank goodness for that because you've been bugger all use in the past."

DWh Yeah. But ... it does have its advantages because really it would be very difficult to get sort of a national charter for a lot of this material and they may have to develop their own ones in tribal areas and some have, haven't they?

The interviewees therefore may experience more freedom than North American conservators in conceptualizing their work, not having a context that places an importance on reiterating the high standards of universal, idealized codes of ethics. In other words, the work of the New Zealand conservators certainly falls within the standard ethical guidelines in conservation, but the compromises of daily practice appear not to be overly burdened by the ideals of the profession.

Finally, the conservators have more freedom in that conservation in New Zealand, and certainly the existence itself of trained conservators of Maori heritage, is relatively new. The context for both the conservators and
the Maori communities they are working with is perceived as being a learning situation.

DWh  [W]e’re building up an awareness, at the moment. It’s really the first stage.

RW  So, we actually need to -- although I haven’t done it yet, it’s more in the role of the curator, to sit people down and say: “Our conservator, here, has advised that if you -- that if the cloak is in good condition, it can be let out. Can you make sure that it’s handled carefully, that it is kept out of the rain, that it’s kept in a clean environment? If it’s not in good condition, then we need to sit down and we need to say: “It’s not in good condition. If you’re going to take it out and subject it to this and that you must be aware that this may happen.” Depending on museum policy -- they are the true custodians of the cloak, they can accept my advice but not actually go along with it.

RE  [F]or people who are carvers and they work out there in the field and they’ve said: “What sort of adhesives? We’ve used this sort of adhesive and we’ve dowelled this and we’ve done this and this.” And I’ve said: “From my angle and I’m not telling you what to do but this is the way I see it.” And they’ve said afterwards: “Well, I’m glad you told me because I wouldn’t want to harm this carving and I’ll go along with what you say.”

The conservators expressed the opinion that a main objective of much of their work was to get Maori community members to understand and accept conservation guidelines. Although a learning situation might promote a lack of clarity regarding how to balance contradictions between preserving the physical object and preserving the conceptual object, at the same time less solidified parameters allow for more room to move. The conservators themselves may also not be as bound in conventional professional stereotypes of what a conservator is and the parameters and objectives of his or her work,
having as they do a different cultural identity, at whatever level they
experience it.

Although two perspectives can definitely be seen, several conservators
in New Zealand warned against making generalizations, and emphasized the
"in-process" nature of their conservation practice.

JG You do have to be very careful because some people might see that [cloak storage at the Auckland Museum] as cold and clinical and not, sort of, warm enough or alive enough for them. Others might see it as a sign of respect, you know, that we are actually spending heaps and heaps of money and looking after the cloaks and that they will last longer than they might otherwise last. So, you have to be incredibly careful, I think, of making those generalizations.

The conservators brought together the two perspectives with their differing emphasis on the material and the social not only from the force of their own convictions that both had value, but also because the perspectives, although they concern objects, are directly related to people.

DWh [Re "respect"] [T]reating the object along with the people and the place. ... The object is nothing without its people so if we don't respect the people, we can't be respecting the object. ... [W]e sort of take it in the reverse.

All of the conservators stated that the clients they served were both the objects and the people, even though several felt their institutions demanded that the institution be considered the primary client served by the conservator. Since the conservators serve people as well as collections, it was considered important that good social relationships be established as one of the goals of conservation work. It was also considered the best way to get the conservation message heard. The conservators, both Maori and Pakeha, felt
compromises between the two perspectives were necessary to avoid alienating Maori community members, and therefore better leading to the objective of serving the Maori people and to the conventional objectives of conservation in relation to preserving collections. Together, these two objectives should promote the goals of a bicultural institution, and therefore the institution was directly served as well.

VH [T]here were about eighty Kai Tahu descendants [tribe in the South Island] of the signatories [of the Wenworth Indenture] who arrived and the other thing was we had to let them handle it so... it was a parchment that was in an A4 size envelope. It was actually quite a large folded document. People were having a close look. Often, I think, you have to let them do that because, if you don’t, then you don’t build up that rapport with people. That’s part of its, that’s part of its coming home, too.

JG [K]eeping the goodwill of those people and not insulting them is more important than maybe a tiny mishandling misdemeanour.

Two previous comments from RW show that sometimes the same values underlie the western-based conservation work and Maori-based cultural beliefs of the conservators; this common ground in the dimension of the “intangible” brings the two perspectives together.

RW It’s actually the same amount of respect for both.

RW We both care a lot for our taonga.

Doxtator, as mentioned in the previous chapter, refers to parallel paths for museums and First Nations, which can accomplish separate but productive goals, even if there are no common goals. In New Zealand evidence has shown both common and separate goals. It is possible also that
the many links between the museum and Maori perspectives currently being forged have been made possible by the increasing numbers of indigenous people working in museums, numbers much greater than in Canada. Unlike Canada, they work primarily in established rather than separate museums. That it has even five professional conservators of indigenous ancestry makes New Zealand unique.

The vision of the Maori conservators in bringing together Maori and Pakeha cultural narratives on preserving what is valued can be seen in the following quotations.

DWh [W]here this code of ethics revolves around the object -- there would be a shift to something quite different. ... [I]t may look on the surface the same but, like here in our section four: "The first responsibility of the conservator is to the object and its long term preservation." You see, that’s not really what we’re about here at the moment so that will be a fundamental shift, I imagine.

RE [The] waka tupapaku [the containers that were made specifically for the bones in the old days] -- they wanted them separately kept and not to be seen so they’re curtained off in an area but they don’t want them back either. They’re too powerful. So, there are all these other issues that the museum will have to deal with and it’s never had to do that before. It’s just like a whole, completely new belief system that we’ve got to develop, if you see what I’m saying.

SUMMARY

The Maori conservators have brought into conservation a shift in values and practice towards a holistic view of the collections they work on. The meaning of the objects and of the conservation work done on them comes from both the material and the social aspects pertaining to the objects and
their context. What the Maori conservators have shown is that there is no inherent contradiction in bringing these two aspects together, in preserving both the physical and the conceptual integrity of the objects, rather than one at the expense of the other. They have created a conservation practice which maximizes both types of preservation of integrity by bringing two different world views together regarding what is appropriate in relation to collections preservation. They have addressed specific conservation issues such as what is damage, and what is the best way to reach conservation decisions. They represent what Mina McKenzie had called for in New Zealand museums, "A Maori voice that speaks in two ways; it speaks at a level with European academic voices but has its own quality, its own stance and its own viewpoint" (McKenzie, 1990 #97: 170). The perspectives and work of the conservators in New Zealand, both Maori and Pakeha, illustrate a successful model for the conservation of collections from indigenous people.

The following table compares conventional conservation practice and the practice of the New Zealand conservators.
Table 11: Conventional Conservators and N.Z. Conservators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONVENTIONAL CONSERVATORS</th>
<th>N.Z. CONSERVATORS (Maori and Pakeha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believe responsibility is to the preservation of material cultural heritage, for the public, the owner. The context for &quot;ethnographic conservation&quot; is a museum or private owner and often does not involve people from the originating culture of the objects.</td>
<td>Believe responsibility is to Maori objects and people: the two are inseparable. The context for &quot;ethnographic conservation&quot; is a living culture with representatives or contacts in or near the museum, and living objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on objects, consult with professional colleagues.</td>
<td>Negotiate with appropriate community members; this is an established part of conservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often have final say in preservation decisions or provide specialized advice to museum director, curators.</td>
<td>Recognize Maori often have final say in preservation decisions; conservators provide specialized advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share knowledge with general public, train new conservators, in order to preserve objects better.</td>
<td>Job includes sharing their knowledge with Maori <em>kaitiaki</em> (guardians), artists, assistants, students, museum visitors, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONVENTIONAL CONSERVATORS</th>
<th>N.Z. CONSERVATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maori especially</td>
<td>Show traditional forms of respect to carvings and other powerful objects as part of their conservation work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE FOCUS IS ON THE MATERIAL</td>
<td>THE FOCUS IS ON BOTH THE MATERIAL AND SOCIAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Maori social and ceremonial protocols to conserve tangible and intangible aspects of objects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

This research has elucidated and compared First Nations and museum conservation perspectives on preserving what is considered of cultural significance. It has confirmed that although the value of "preservation" is not challenged, two different constructions of its meaning continue to exist: the museum meaning that keeps material fragments from the past from disappearing, through physical and intellectual means, and the First Nations meaning that continues and renews past traditions and the material culture associated with them, in order to preserve the culture's past by bringing it into the present and ensuring it has a living future. This study has provided an understanding of how western society appreciates the productions of the past by preservation, exemplified here by museum conservation. It has been shown that First Nations, on the other hand, "live the tradition", connecting the past to the present as part of a participatory whole which is their indigenous culture. This dichotomy in perspectives illustrates also that the museum object lives and has lived in different worlds. As Pearce has observed, "any object may have existed in a number of discourses during the course of its physical life, and may therefore figure in a number of interpretation patterns" (Pearce 1995: 299).
The phrase "First Nations" in this study, as explained in the text, represents the opinions of the individuals interviewed as well as those found in the literature and is not meant to be understood as a generalization. The research has illustrated, however, that the interviewees share many points of view which differed from the conventional museum conservation perspective. These differences concerning preserving what is valued have been clarified in this study and are summarized in the tables throughout and in the conclusions to the various chapters. These differences exist at the level of cultural meta-narratives, including the meaning of preservation, as well as at the level of the objects themselves. An important difference between museum conservation and First Nations perspectives on preservation is an emphasis in the former on the tangible elements and in the latter on the intangible elements as being what is important to maintain or to regain by preservation. Prolonging an object's existence is not the equivalent, in First Nations eyes, of continuing its life.

Conservation is thought of by its practitioners as a technical intervention on collections, based in science and a code of ethics. This study emphasizes that it is a cultural intervention. Museum conservators believe they are working on physical objects, but they are also working on cultural materials contextualized in a heavily meaning-laden facility in a particular society.

A principal goal of this research has been to describe and understand, from the perspectives of First Nations interviewees, the culturally significant qualities of the heritage object. A second goal has been to elucidate the values held by the conservation profession regarding the preservation of historic and
artistic works, with a special focus on ethnographic collections. A third goal has been to compare First Nations and museum conservation perspectives in order to illuminate similarities and differences, and to examine whether museum conservators can preserve the conceptual integrity of these objects while preserving their physical integrity.

This research has shown that the culturally significant qualities of the object according to the First Nations interviewees are related to its social meaning. This meaning is embedded in socio-cultural relationships in the past and today. For conservators, meaning is embedded in the physical object, and by ethical conservation one preserves the object's conceptual integrity. For many of the First Nations interviewees, the importance of the physical object lay in whether it could be used in maintaining or regaining the culture. If it could not be used, handled, replicated, worn, witnessed, or seen in culturally-appropriate and necessary ways, then there was some question as to how much energy should be expended in preserving it, especially in a facility controlled by those who did not come from the culture. At the same time, interviewees expressed an appreciation of preserving physical objects in the manner of museum conservation, as physical evidence for them of the knowledge and skills of those who went before. For BM, for example, this was also linked to an appreciation of "museum values" such as aesthetic quality. Often, however, this preservation was linked to non-connoisseurship "intangible" qualities evoked or made manifest through the object. These included not only the symbolic nature of the pieces, such as the representation of a particular family's or individual's rights and status in aboriginal society, or a Band's claims to territory, but also emotions such as
pride in one's heritage and lineage. In other words, while the First Nations interviewees placed a heavy emphasis on preservation serving the "use" in its many forms of the object in their communities, they perceived preserving physical objects as a "both/and" rather than an "either/or" act. That is, preservation was constructed by many interviewees to include both "use" and "physical preservation", and cultural elements such as traditional care taken with regalia, or a common-sense approach to not using objects in poor condition but in finding appropriate ways to continue their use to the community (e.g., through having a new one made, display or storage in one's community cultural centre, showing but not wearing or dancing regalia at a potlatch, or participating in co-operative relationships with already existing museums willing to provide access). A theme throughout was the necessity for First Nations to have unbureaucratic access to and a very significant measure of control over their material heritage and the meanings attached to it which represent them.

Although "preservation" was not set against "use" by the interviewees, but rather constructed as including both, in some cases "one but not the other" situations were advocated. It depended on what was appropriate culturally. For instance, HG gave examples of the kinds of objects for his people which could be displayed publicly and those which were private. In general, however, interviewees did not see situations as exclusively in one category or another; for example, they saw some objects in community centres or remaining with families while at the same time some would be available in urban museums. Again, however, this was contextualized within a framework of assuring that the social and cultural needs of the community
were met and the community and museum had developed a relationship of trust and acted co-operatively.

The goal of elucidating and analyzing the values held by the conservation profession was the subject of Chapters 3 and 4 and provided a basis for the comparison with First Nations values and beliefs about preservation. The details of the comparison between the value systems is best summarized in the tables throughout the text. The goal of examining whether museum conservators can work to preserve the conceptual integrity of these objects while working to preserve their physical integrity was met by the interviews with Maori conservators and to some extent from the interview with JM. The Maori conservators all believed that this was not a conflict, and they spoke about ways in which they integrated Maori cultural concerns in their conservation practice, deriving positive benefit from being able to use their expertise to serve Maori communities. One non-Maori conservator also commented on the positive rather than the conflictual nature of a conservation practice in which preserving conceptual integrity was being balanced with preserving physical integrity. This has been recognized in Canada as well: "Sharing authority and collections is much more than a responsibility, however, as it is also an opportunity" (Janes 1994: 155). The conservators acknowledged that melding the preservation of the conceptual and the physical was not always easy, but several commented that the more difficult preservation situations for them came from intra-museum conflicts, similar to those discussed in Chapter 4. If ethnographic conservators define their clients as First Nations, Wilson's comments provide insight: "One of the things I did not learn in Cooperstown [conservation school], it came to me
only later on, was that the integrity and quality of conservation as a profession relied not only on the expertise within the field, but also on its relevance and contribution to the society which it was there to serve and that that relevance and contribution rested on an understanding of that society" (Wilson 1992:1).

It has been possible in several instances outlined here to link together what has been described as often separate but parallel paths of First Nations and conservators so that museum preservation of collections can serve the goals of each. In this the emphasis is not only on achieving an acceptable end-result or "product" such as an appropriate storage system for sacred/sensitive objects, but also in the process of achieving that result. For it to be successful for First Nations, it is necessary to conduct the process in a manner emphasizing the First Nations goal of "regaining the intangibles", that is, in a manner the participants feel has been respectful of them and their culture. The process is also important in that it brings together First Nations and museum staff, which can serve not only to make differing points of view more intelligible but also allows information which may be part of the collective knowledge of one party but not necessarily of the other to surface through discussion. This makes resolution of the problem at hand more accessible. For example, it is useful for a museum to know that first of all an object cannot be borrowed for use without, in First Nations eyes, a substantial burden of proof that the person has the rights to this object, or for First Nations to know the reasons behind certain conservation requests such as freezing ritual foods. The acceptance of the importance of process is already acknowledged by conservators in their treatment work, and this research has
shown that the importance of a code of ethics lies not only in the end-product of policy, but in the process of construction whereby practitioners are continually juggling the ideal with the realities of daily practice. This tension was also seen, for example, in the comments made by conservators in the case study of the Frank family dance screen.

It is important for conservators to recognize that the moral authority they may have assumed towards questions of preservation, derived in part from the authority inherent in professionalism and in a code of ethics, is not unquestionably applicable beyond the borders of the profession’s history and current practice. The universalism of the ethical code and principles exist as constructs from within the profession. This does not, however, preclude that others accept these constructs in whole or in part as the way to care for material heritage of concern to them. The politicized and contested area of ownership was discussed in this study by focussing on who has the authority to make decisions concerning care of heritage objects in museums. This research has shown that conservators were not challenged by First Nations in the usefulness of their knowledge for certain situations, and in some cases it was sought out. Conservators were asked to share their expertise with indigenous communities, to themselves consult the expertise of the community, and to broaden their professional and rationalist definition of "good care" to include preserving the social and ritual aspects attached to the object; these latter would normally be preserved by appropriate community members in community situations.

Particular conservation parameters of practice applied to collections from indigenous peoples, such as the nature of the final appearance of objects
(e.g., the question of keeping "ethnographic dirt" on), the use of modern materials and methods, and the question of what constitutes damage, were all reviewed in this research. The interviewees in general proposed that the answers lay in what made the object socially useful following the cultural protocols of their particular community. Some respondents preferred whatever was more traditional in their culture, whether in physical materials or in how the act of repair was carried out. Other respondents, in particular those with museum responsibility for collections, recognized the rationales behind particular conservation practices but acknowledged that cultural concerns would override them, particularly in ceremonial situations. Emphasis again was given to the social context of family or individual rights and ownership as a determining factor in making decisions. At the same time, for objects housed in urban museums respondents recognized that every detail of small decisions could not be discussed with community members, and that it was the daily task of the museum professionals to look after the physical maintenance of the collections. This was said, however, in the context of statements about the necessity for better consultation, cooperation, and communication between museums and First Nations, implying that the community's needs and wishes would already be better understood by the museum staff.

The "both/and" model provides a current framework for museum conservation/First Nations relationships. For example, First Nations are asking conservators to expand the conventional model of conservation in resolving the question of preserving physical integrity or preserving conceptual integrity, so that a "both/and" model of product and process
transforms an apparently "either/or" conflictual situation. In an analogy, Clifford argues that differences between urban museums and cultural centres do not preclude overlap and communication: "None can completely cover or control the important meanings and contexts generated by the objects they display. Thus exchange and complementarity, rather than hierarchy, ideally should characterize their institutional relations" (Clifford 1990: 242). Ethnographic collections, until recently, were considered primarily as witnesses to the past, rather than part of the cultures of living peoples in the latter half of the twentieth century. That they could be both, and be important as both, in a dynamic two-way relationship benefitting the originating people and the museums and their conservators, has been shown by this research to reflect a model for preserving what is valued by both First Nations and museum conservation. The model articulated by the First Nations interviewees in this research, however, includes working towards rectifying what is perceived as a power imbalance originating in the past between museums and First Nations. Conservators are asked to share with the community their knowledge of how to physically preserve and protect objects, and in their profession to include and respect the importance of preserving the "intangible" social and cultural aspects of heritage objects by honouring both the object's and the originating community's intentions.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GENERAL OUTLINE OF QUESTIONS FOR FIRST NATIONS RESPONDENTS, BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. Could you tell me a little about your nation and family and where you are from?

2. (a) Could you give me some examples of your interest or involvement in the cultural aspects of your community or in museums?

(b) Do you remember the first time you went inside a museum? What was it like?

I am interested in this interview in your thoughts about preservation of objects which are important to your heritage.

3. (a) For example, could you tell me what kinds of objects you would like to see preserved in your family or community for many generations to come?

(b) Why is it important to you that these objects are preserved?

4. In your opinion, would these objects be best kept by
i) being handed down generation to generation within the family, or
ii) by being kept in a First Nations cultural centre so that they might be both available to the family and serve the needs of culture and education for the community and nation as a whole, or
iii) by having some, at least, of these objects kept in an urban museum where they serve both urban First Nations and non-First Nations, as well as any people coming in from outside the urban centre.

5. (a) Would you give me your personal opinion about museums? Do they have a future role?

5. (b) When you go into a well-known museum in a big city, and see objects from your community, how do you feel, what emotions come up for you?
6. What about older objects which are now in museum collections, and which are returned to their home area -- are they family heritage first or community heritage first, and would you prefer to see them kept by a member of the originating family or cared for in a community facility?

7. Does safekeeping of important pieces of cultural heritage mean that appropriate members of the family could also use or wear the pieces?

8. How do you feel about the fact that through use or wear the piece runs the risk of being scratched or broken or damaged in some way?

9. What kind of wear on a piece would you consider to be "damage", and what kind is nothing that matters?

10. If a piece which is, for example, a hundred years old, gets damaged and needs repair, and an appropriate person from the originating community repairs it -- is this situation as acceptable as having the old piece undamaged?

11. Can you give me any guidelines on how much physical risk an object can be put to if you also want to preserve it? (What about an older piece which is already fragile?)

12. (a) For a piece which is a hundred years old, and represents that time period, those ancestors, would you prefer to keep it in the condition in which it exists now, which represents what the maker and the people of that time were like, or would it be OK if it was altered by people today or in the future (e.g. through use)?

12. (b) Would the decision depend on what part was altered -- for example, it might be OK to change the rigging on a mask so it could be worn, but not to repaint the mask - you could probably give me a better example.

13. For the same piece which is a hundred years old, would you prefer it to remain in the condition in which it exists now, which represents how the maker intended it to look plus the signs of the passing of time and the object's history -- even if this includes some damage -- loss of fur or feathers or cedar bark, for example -- or would you prefer that it is cleaned and restored to look more like when it was new?

14. (a) Would you prefer that the same materials and methods as the original ones are used in the restoration, or would it be fine to use something in use today which works well and looks the same?
(b) Who would be the most appropriate kind of person to do the restoration — eg. a family member, an artist in the community, the person who knows the rituals, someone who has received training in the preservation of fragile museum objects...?

(c) Would it matter to you if you couldn't tell what was the work of the original maker and what was the work of the restorer?

15. (a) Are there objects from your heritage which are in museums, but which, on their return to your community, you would not want to preserve, but instead would want them to continue a cycle where they would in the end deteriorate? (Would you give me an example, if it's appropriate?)

(b) What if these objects remain in museums — who has the authority to decide whether they should be preserved or allowed to deteriorate?

(c) Could you clarify for me — if an object is in a museum's collection, and it's not on loan, is it the responsibility of the museum to make sure the object is kept safely?
(if yes) - then if it is the responsibility of the museum staff to take good care of these objects, how should they react when a person comes in with a legitimate request which involves putting the object at some physical risk, like wanting to handle it?
-or -- to rephrase -- re this issue of care -- I'm the MOA conservator, objects from your community are housed in the museum, do I have the responsibility for ensuring proper care -- and making a lot of decisions about -- how objects from your community should be looked after?

16 (a) Museum people have often considered the following four aspects about objects worthy of being preserved. I'd like to read them out to you, and have you tell me which in your opinion is the most important to preserve, and which is the least important.

1. the object itself, as a physical creation
2. the cultural significance of the object
3. the appearance of the object, according to the maker's intentions
4. any marks on the object which are indicators of its history

(b) (if cultural significance)
   How is the cultural significance of objects preserved?
   Can this be done in a museum? (What if the museum is located in/outside the community?)
17. Is there any difference in the significance to your culture of older objects rather than contemporary objects such as those made by weavers and carvers today? Could you describe briefly the roles both older and recently-made objects play in maintaining your cultural traditions?

18. In your opinion which is more important regarding, for example, an older mask or an older weaving — to preserve the object intact and keep it from getting damaged so that it can remain as tangible evidence made by one's ancestors, and an inspiration to younger artists — or to use it and possibly wear it away, so that the purpose for which the piece was created is preserved and maintained?

19. Let me ask essentially the same question now but about education of young people: Which is more important in your opinion concerning the education of your future generations — that older objects made by their ancestors are kept safe, to be able to be seen and appreciated, even though people may not be able to touch them because the objects are fragile -- or to have older objects which can be touched and handled and sometimes used so they can be appreciated in many dimensions, even if this means that the objects won't last as long and won't be around for as many generations to come?

20. (a) If an older object is in fragile condition, could a new piece be used and have the same cultural significance?
(b) What would you do with the older piece?

21. Are there any recommendations you would like to give the Museum of Anthropology to improve the storage or appropriate care of the collections presently housed there? Are there particular protocols to be observed (e.g. who sees particular objects)?

22. (a) Do you know of anyone who might want to receive training in the scientific conservation of collections? (If no -- would this knowledge be of any use to your community?)
(b) What kind of a role, if any, would you give to science regarding the preservation of objects from your heritage?

23. If you gave something to a museum -- for example, you donated something that had been made by your grandmother, and the museum put it on display, would you take your friends or family to see it there? Would you feel it was special that you could say, "my grandmother's basket, or blanket, is in an exhibition in the museum"? 
24. (a) Are there any traditional methods of preservation which you would like to see used for objects from your community which are currently housed in a museum? (What are they?)
(b) Do you feel it is appropriate to apply the standard methods of museum conservation to prevent deterioration of objects from your heritage housed in a museum?
APPENDIX B

INITIAL QUESTIONS: NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATORS

A. Background: Professional

1. What is your job title?

2. Could you describe your training or experience -- and your background -for this work?

3. How did you get into conservation?

4. In your work, do you use the New Zealand conservation Code of Ethics? Other policies or codes?

5. How much of your work involves working directly with members of the originating communities of the objects in your museum?

B. Now I'd like to talk about conservation

(challenges: general)

1. From your point of view as a conservator working with collections from First Nations, would you describe any situations you are facing which you feel present particular challenges in your work.

2. What is it exactly about what you've just described which presents the challenge?

3. These challenges -- is conservation responding to them in your opinion? How?

4. (a) Off the top of your head, do you have any suggestions of what else conservators or the Code of Ethics could do in response to these challenges?
(conservation serves whom?)

5. I'm going to show you a list of groups whom conservators serve in their work: the clients, so to speak, of the profession. I'd like you to choose the primary client in whose interests you feel you are working as a conservation professional.
   a) the objects/works themselves
   b) your museum
   c) the general public and the public trust
   d) the originator(s) of the objects
   e) the legal owner of the work if different from any of the above?
   f) other

If you could choose from the list the second group conservation serves, whom would it be?

(respect)

6. Most Conservation Codes of Ethics speak of the necessity to respect the objects, but don't define this. For you in your work, what does respect mean?

7. (a) Do you ever perform rituals or say prayers, or have this done by another appropriate person, as part of your conservation treatments?
7. (b) Would you wish a non-Maori conservator to do this?

8. (a) Thinking about the culture you come from or feel part of, what role do objects have in the preservation of your culture?
8. (b) Are there objects in the collections of museums or art galleries today which have a cultural purpose in your culture which is not served by their being in the museum? (If yes) Is there a way that the purpose could be served and the object stay in the museum, or is there simply a real conflict?

(access)

9. Do Maori use the museum? Do they like it? What do/don't they like about it?

10. Could you give me any examples which would describe the current relationship between your museum and Maori people?

(use)

11. (a) Does your professional museum training or practice include in general not allowing visitors to touch or use objects?
(b) What are your thoughts about allowing functional objects in collections, for example farm machinery, cars, clocks or musical instruments to be restored to a functioning state?
(c) Would you put ethnographic collections in the functional objects category?

12. In your museum (/work situation), are any objects borrowed from the collection for use, or used in the museum, for example for religious rituals?

13. What kind of use, in general terms, do objects receive in your museum?

14. Could you describe how it is decided which objects can be used?

15. Have you personally been involved in the discussions or arrangements with the people who request to use museum objects? If not, who does this in your museum? Are you or another conservator or museum staff present when the objects are being used?

16. How do you feel, as someone who is involved in the preservation of these objects, about their being used?

17. Are you saying, then, that you believe / Would you agree or disagree, then, that .... there are situations where it is ethically allowable to put an object at physical risk if it means preserving its significance, its conceptual integrity?

18. Are there other kinds of use of objects which happen in your museum? Could you give me some examples?

19. Do you have any suggestions as to how requests to your museum by Maori people to use or touch objects could proceed to resolution in a smooth and satisfactory manner for you as a representative of conservation, or is this already the case?

(use: touch)

20. (if not already answered) If people from a particular community or family want to come in and view objects from their ancestors, are they allowed to touch the objects? Do they have to wear white gloves? Has it happened that they have been able to try objects on?

21. What, in your own opinion, are you trying to preserve in your work as a conservation/museum professional?
Do you think that a conservator who isn't an objects conservator would agree with you?

(conservationists / First Nations: preservation, appearance of objects)

22. (a) Are there any other examples you could tell me about where the preservation of the physical object could have been or was at risk because the cultural significance of the object was considered more important?
   (b) How did this situation work out? Could you recount how this resolution was arrived at?
   (c) Could it have worked out better, in your opinion? How?

Has your professional practice from your training changed as a result of First Nations requests/concerns? Could you give me some examples?

23. (a) What about appearance of objects -- in your experience have there been differences of opinion between Maori and conservators as to how an object should look?
   (b) Could you describe the situation to me?
   (c) How was it resolved?

24. Do you think the conservation Code of Ethics provided good assistance in working out the situations you just described? If not, how could the Code have been better?

25. How would you balance out the significance of an object to its originating community, versus to the visitors and staff of the museum in which, for example, the object has been housed for the last fifty years?

26. In your opinion, who has the right to decide on how a museum object should be cared for -- the museum conservator, someone designated by the originating community, or...do you have another choice?

27. (a) If a contemporary, non-religious object in your collection needs to have some damage or deterioration corrected, who should do this in your opinion:
   1. the museum conservator,
   2. the maker of the object, or,
   3. in a case where the maker is no longer alive, an appropriate craftsperson with the traditional skills?
   (b) Would your opinion be the same if the object had religious or other important cultural significance to the originating community?
28. If there is a conflict about how an object housed in a museum should be treated, which side would you prefer the decision-makers lean towards: (a) one favoring the public trust in whose name museums act to preserve their collections (b) one favoring the originating people, that they should have a significant say in what happens to their heritage.

29. On the whole, do you think that requests to museums by First Peoples, or the current way museums are relating to First Peoples, are in conflict with or are in agreement with museum conservation ethics and practice?

(standard of care)

30. If it is decided that objects of cultural significance should be repatriated to their place of origin, do you think that there should be the stipulation that the objects be housed in a museum-type situation and given museum-quality care?

31. If people from the originating community decide that they don't want the object back but prefer it to remain in the museum, which should prevail, in your opinion, — normal museum standards of care and conservation, or, if different, the wishes of the people regarding a culturally appropriate way of storing the objects? How has this apparent conflict been resolved in your institution, or has it not been satisfactorily resolved in your opinion?

32. (a) Do you think that some museums have created a double standard by regarding objects from indigenous peoples differently from the rest of the collection? (b) Do you think the issues we've talked about regarding objects from First Nations pose a problem for conservators who act in accordance with a Code of Ethics which covers in one code all types of objects and works of art?

(integrity)

33. I'd like to look for a minute at the term preserving the integrity of an object, which some conservators use. Is this term used here?

(if yes) (a) Could you describe what "integrity" means about an object? (b) The Canadian Conservation Codes of Ethics talks about preserving the physical integrity, the aesthetic integrity, the historic integrity, and the conceptual integrity of objects. The conceptual integrity refers to the non-
material aspects associated with the object such as its religious symbolism. Would you agree with the necessity to preserve these four aspects of integrity?
(c) In your opinion, is any one of these the most important to preserve?

34. Which opinion would you say you hold:
a) that the qualities of an object defined as part of its "integrity" are intrinsic to the object, — that it is part of the essential nature of the object, something "out there" on or in or part of the object which can be examined.
(b) that the qualities of an object defined as part of its integrity can vary with, for example, the opinion of the person who created it, who collected it, or who curates it. In other words, the qualities which appear under the heading of "integrity" are part of the subjective opinion or the culture of the viewer?

35. Do you think there is any parallel between the rights of artists as seen in copyright laws and the rights of the originating peoples of ethnographic collections?

36. Last question: What about the conservation principle of the same standard of care for all objects: not necessarily the same depth of treatment, but the same standard of care. This is sometimes talked about as "all objects should be treated equally". Do you think that as a bottom line either preserving physical, or preserving conceptual, integrity should always take precedence, or that there should be different strokes for different artifacts, so to speak.
MUSQUEAM INDIAN BAND
6370 SALISH DRIVE
VANCOUVER
BRITISH COLUMBIA V6N 2C6
TELEPHONE: 263-3261
FAX: 263-4212

MUSQUEAM BAND COUNCIL

PERMIT TO CONDUCT ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON A MUSQUEAM TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

PERMIT NUMBER 95-108MB - ANTH

This is to certify that the Musqueam Band Council has adopted Band Council Motion dated October 23, 1995, authorizing

Miriam Clavir
(Name of Anthropologist/Researcher)

to conduct anthropological investigations on Musqueam Traditional Territory. Museum preservation of First Nations material culture,

(Site/research description as applicable)

consisting of tape recorded interviews with Musqueam Band members as listed below,

subject to the following conditions:

1) The Permit Holder shall obtain prior approval and make all necessary arrangements for the final deposition of research materials, upon authorization from the Executive Director, and any associated documentation with the

Designated individuals of the Museum of Anthropology
(name of approved repository)

2) The Permit Holder will review, with persons designated by the Executive Director, all documents generated during the period of this Permit to properly determine which field documents should be copied for deposit with the Musqueam Band Archives.

3) The Permit Holder will adhere to all Policies of the Musqueam Indian Band relating to heritage resources.

4) The Permit Holder will adhere to the standards and guidelines accepted by the Musqueam Indian Band.

other) 4.1 Chief and Council on behalf of the Musqueam Indian Band will receive a copy of the final thesis.

(Executive Director) Yr. Mo. Day
APPENDIX D: CODES OF ETHICS

The following tables summarize conservation as seen by the International Committee for Conservation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and in the conservation codes of ethics or guidelines in Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

For reference purposes, in the tables the page numbers in each code appear in brackets after each statement. The Codes referred to are: the 1989 Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice for Those Involved in the Conservation of Cultural Property in Canada, published by the (then) International Institute for Conservation-Canadian Group (IIC-CG) and the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators (CAPC); the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice published in 1994 by the American Institute for Conservation (AIC); The NZPCG Code of Ethics, published in 1991 by the New Zealand Professional Conservators Group; and the Guidance for Conservation Practice published in 1981 by the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (UKIC). In addition, reference is made to international guidelines found in The Conservator-Restorer: a definition of the profession from the International Council of Museums (ICOM 1984). The codes of ethics specifically for conservators are also compared with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value (ICOMOS 1993).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Definition of Conservation</th>
<th>Purpose of Conservation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>&quot;All actions aimed at the safeguarding of cultural property for the future&quot; (p. 18, Glossary).</td>
<td>&quot;To study, record, retain and restore the culturally significant qualities of the object with the least possible intervention&quot; (p. 18, Glossary).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;[t]he preservation of cultural property&quot; (p. 1, Preamble).</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>&quot;Conservation is the means by which the original and true nature of an object is maintained&quot; (p. 1).</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand (NZPCG)</td>
<td>&quot;All actions taken to recognise, prevent and retard the loss or deterioration of cultural property&quot; (p. 8).</td>
<td>&quot;Conservation safeguards cultural property for the future&quot; (p. 6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Action taken to prevent or remedy the damage and deterioration of items of cultural significance&quot; (p. 6).</td>
<td>&quot;Conservation is the means by which the true nature of an object is preserved&quot; (p. 9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Conservation is the means by which the true nature of an object is preserved&quot; (p. 6).</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand (ICOMOS)</td>
<td>&quot;Conservation means the processes of caring for a place so as to safeguard its cultural heritage value&quot; (p. 4).</td>
<td>&quot;The purpose of conservation is to care for places of cultural heritage value, their structures, materials and cultural meaning&quot; (p. 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internat'l (ICOM)</td>
<td>&quot;Preservation is action taken to retard or prevent deterioration of or damage to cultural properties&quot; (Sec. 2.1).</td>
<td>..&quot;to maintain them as nearly as possible in an unchanging state&quot; (Sec. 2.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Included in Conservation</td>
<td>Not incl. in Conservation</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>&quot;[E]xamination, documentation, preventive conservation, preservation, restoration, reconstruction&quot;^{8} (p.18, Gloss.).</td>
<td>Research on the meaning of objects not mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>&quot;[I]n all aspects of conservation, including, but not limited to, preventive conservation, examination, documentation, treatment, research, and education&quot; (p. 1, Code, I).</td>
<td>&quot;[I]ncluding, but not limited to...&quot; (Domains of research not defined.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N.Z. (NZPCG)</td>
<td>&quot;[A]ssessment, preventive measures, treatments, restoration&quot; (p. 7, Services).</td>
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</table>
| N.Z. (ICOMOS)| "[M]ay involve, in increasing extent of intervention: non-intervention, maintenance, stabilisation, repair, restoration, reconstruction or adaptation" (p. 2).  
"The conservation of places of indigenous cultural heritage value therefore is conditional on decisions made in the indigenous community, and should proceed only in this context" (p. 1). |                                                                                          |
| Internat'l (ICOM) | "[R]etard or prevent deterioration...by control of their environment and/or treatment of their structure.  
"All interventions must be preceded by a methodical and scientific examination aimed at understanding the object in all its aspects" (Sec. 3.5). |                                                                                          |

^{8} Definitions for each of these terms is given in the Glossary on pp. 18-19 of the Canadian code of ethics (IIC-CG and CAPC 1989).
Regarding the objects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility to Owner</th>
<th>Responsibility to Originator</th>
<th>Responsibility to Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The care and treatment of a cultural property is the shared responsibility of the owner and the conservator&quot; (p. 9).</td>
<td>&quot;The conservator shall endeavour to understand the intention of the originator in creating or using a cultural property, and take this into consideration in the conservation of the cultural property&quot; (p.9).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship with the owner outlined on p. 13-14 in 4 points.</td>
<td>Wherever relevant and possible, the conservator should consult with the originator regarding a proposed treatment&quot; (p. 10, Sec. 'Examination).</td>
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<tr>
<td>The owner is either: 1. the person(s) having legal ownership of the cultural property. 2. the person(s), such as the museum director, curator, archivist or librarian, exercising professional custodianship over a cultural property. (p. 19 Gloss.)</td>
<td>The originator is either: 1. the person(s) who designed or created the cultural property 2. the person(s) representing the creator or designer of the cultural property by legal, moral or spiritual right. (p. 19 Gloss.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Relationship Information</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>Relationship of conservator to owner outlined in Guidance or Practice pp. 2-4</td>
<td>&quot;All actions of the conservation professional must be governed by an informed respect for the cultural property....and the people or person who created it&quot; (P.1, Code, II).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>&quot;The opinions, wishes and views of the owner, custodian or other responsible person must be fully acknowledged and considered.&quot; (p. 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship with owner further delineated in sec. 5.1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>Relationship with owner or custodian: &quot;It is the responsibility of the conservator, as the person with the necessary technical knowledge, to uphold the best interests of the object, and to advise truthfully as to the best course of treatment&quot; (Guid: Prof. Relat's).</td>
<td>The conservator has responsibilities to colleagues, trainees, to the public, to the conservation profession and to posterity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int'nat'l (ICOM)</td>
<td>&quot;Concern for prof. ethics and standards for the objects being treated, and for the owners of these objects...has led to attempts to define the profession&quot; (Sec. 1.3).</td>
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</table>
Regarding the ideas pertaining to objects of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cultural Significance</th>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>&quot;The purpose of conservation is to study, record, retain and restore the culturally Significant qualities of the object with the least possible intervention&quot; (p. 18 Gloss.).</td>
<td>&quot;All actions of the conservator must be governed by a respect for the integrity of the cultural property, including physical, historical, conceptual and aesthetic considerations&quot; (p. 5).</td>
<td>&quot;[I]ntegrity of the cultural property, including physical, historical, conceptual and aesthetic considerations&quot; (p. 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>&quot;Cultural property...is material which has significance that may be artistic, historic, scientific, religious or social&quot; (p.1 Preamble).</td>
<td>&quot;All actions of the conservation professional must be governed by an informed respect for the cultural property, its unique character and significance&quot; (p. 1, Code, II).</td>
<td>&quot;[U]nique character and significance&quot; (p.1, Code,II).</td>
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</table>

"[T]reatment that is judged suitable to the preservation of the aesthetic, conceptual and physical characteristics of the cultural property" (Guide for Pract. p. 3 "Treat't, see also "Comp'n. for Loss").
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Additional Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.Z. (NZPCG)</td>
<td>&quot;Cultural Property: All objects which have aesthetic, archaeological, historic, scientific, technological, social or spiritual value for any generation&quot; (p. 8).</td>
<td>&quot;The true nature of an object includes evidence of its origins, its original construction and materials, information as to the technology used in its manufacture, and the cultural significance of the object&quot; (pp. 9-10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>&quot;It is the responsibility of the conservator, as the person with the necessary technical knowledge, to uphold the best interests of the object&quot; (Guid: Prof. Relat's-owner).</td>
<td>&quot;All professional actions of the conservator are governed by total respect for the physical, historic, and aesthetic integrity of the object&quot; (Guid. for Con. Pract: Cons. and Object).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;[T]otal respect for the physical, historic, and aesthetic integrity of the object&quot; (Guid. for Con. Pract: Cons. and Object).</td>
<td>&quot;The true nature of an object includes evidence of its origins, its original construction, the materials of which it is composed, and information which it may embody as to its makers intentions and the technology used in its manufacture&quot; (Guid.: Purpose of Cons.).</td>
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</table>
"The objects are a significant expression of the spiritual, religious and artistic life of the past" (Sec. 3.1).

"Each object contains...historic, stylistic, iconographic, technological, intellectual, aesthetic and/or spiritual messages and data. The conservator-restorer should be sensitive to them, be able to recognize their nature, and be guided by them in performing his task. (sec. 3.4)

"The documentary quality of the historic object is the basis for research in art history, ethnography, archaeology and in other scientifically-based disciplines. Hence the importance of preserving their physical integrity" (Sec. 3.2).

### Regarding ideas pertaining to the physical preservation and use of the object

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Preservation</th>
<th>Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Conservation is defined as &quot;all actions aimed at the safeguarding of cultural property for the future&quot; (p 18 Gloss.).</td>
<td>&quot;It is the responsibility of the conservator, acting alone or with others, to strive constantly to maintain a balance between the need of society to use a cultural property, and the preservation of that cultural property&quot; (p. 5 Code).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>&quot;[Cultural property] is an invaluable and irreplaceable legacy that must be preserved for future generations&quot; (p.1 Preamble).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The conservation professional shall serve as an advocate for the preservation of cultural property&quot; (p.1 Code, III).</td>
<td>&quot;While recognizing the right of society to make appropriate and respectful use of cultural property, the conservation professional shall serve as an advocate for the preservation of cultural property&quot; (p.1 Code, III).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are further principles of conservation practice common in the codes and guidelines which can be summarized as follows:

1. Single standard of treatment regardless of value or quality of object: the conservator must adhere to the highest standards of conservation practice (quality of work, not extent of treatment) with every object conserved.

   2. Suitability of treatment and materials used to the object.
   3. Techniques and materials used should be reversible.
   4. Examination before any intervention or recommendation.
   5. Necessity for documentation of methods and materials.
   6. Guidelines for ethical relationships with and responsibility towards colleagues, trainees, subcontractors, the public, and the profession as a whole.
   7. Modification of or concealment of original physical nature of object is unethical.
   8. Conservators must act within limitations of their individual professional competencies.
   9. Conservators must share knowledge about techniques or materials.
   10. Methods and materials must not adversely affect the object, based on the best of current knowledge.
   11. Recognition of the importance of preventive conservation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N.Z. (NZPCG)</th>
<th>&quot;The first responsibility of the conservator is to the object and its long-term preservation&quot; (p. 9).</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>&quot;Concern for its future should include protection against damage and loss&quot; (Guid.: Cons. and Object).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
12. Practice to include safety measures to minimize risk to people and the environment.

13. Additional ethical guidelines for interpretation (e.g. authenticity), sampling, testing and scientific analysis should be followed.

14. Compensation for loss must be detectable within guidelines and documented.

15. Observance of guidelines for acting in emergency situations.

16. Observance of guidelines for extent of treatment and recognition that doing nothing may be best.
APPENDIX E

THE FRANK FAMILY CEREMONIAL CURTAIN:

A CASE STUDY PRESENTED AT THE 15th INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION (IIC) CONGRESS “PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION: PRACTICE, THEORY AND RESEARCH”, OTTAWA, 1994

A summary of the history of the curtain was handed out to each member of the audience, as well as a list of four options for the rationale behind how to hang the curtain. These are reproduced on the following pages. Each member of the audience (composed almost exclusively of those associated with conservation) was asked to hand in a coloured card corresponding to one of the four options; these options approximated going from conservation control of the decision on how to hang the curtain to First Nations control of the decision. In the final vote, a total of eighty-two people voted in favor of the curtain being supported according to a conservation decision, and three hundred and thirty-three voted in favor of the curtain hanging vertically (Frank family wishes).

VOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eighty percent favoured a decision in which preserving conceptual integrity might outweigh preserving physical integrity. Out of the total, fifty-eight
percent chose one of the two middle options, rather than the more absolute ends of the scale. Thirty-six percent, however, chose the last option, the blue card. Interestingly, one-sixth of the cards had handwritten comments on them, indicating that many members of the audience felt the need to amplify or modify the options presented. Comments included the issue of political correctness, the need for conservators to have time to do proper treatments and that this be respected by the museum staff making exhibition arrangements, the belief that long-term preservation outweighs short-term use and statements that a co-operative relationship should be possible rather than decisions presented as "yes" / "no" answers. Several asked questions about clarification of ownership, legality, ceremony and spirituality. One person commented on a red card that they would have chosen a white card before their personal experience at a British Columbia museum. Some people pointed out flaws in the ways the options were worded, believing that not enough clarity and not enough continuum of options was achieved, and others felt that a previous paper in the same session delivered by Kaminitz may have influenced the results (Drumheller and Kaminitz 1994). It was agreed that a redesigned study could have produced results with clearer details.
The Frank Family Ceremonial Curtain: A Summary

This Native ceremonial curtain (or screen) from British Columbia, Canada, is part of the history of Chief Alex Frank and his family, who are Nuu-chah-nulth people living on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The curtain left the family about 65 years ago and eventually ended up in Andy Warhol’s collection. It was repatriated to Canada in 1988 by the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) in Victoria.

The curtain is traditionally hung as a backdrop to important family events. It is large, measuring about 4 metres by 8 metres, and it is made of flat sheets of cotton. Designs depicting kinship relations in the Frank family are painted on the cotton. Although the physical curtain had moved out of the possession of the Frank family, the family, as is usual on the Northwest Coast, had never relinquished the ceremonial rights associated with the imagery depicted on the curtain.

The curators at the museum worked closely with the Frank family to determine what should happen to the curtain on its return to British Columbia. It was agreed:

• that the museum would house, exhibit, and act as stewards for the curtain, maintaining it in its collection.
• that there would be a major event to celebrate the return of the curtain and present it publicly, and the Frank family would decide the timing and nature of the celebration.

The Frank family said that the celebration could be held at the RBCM, and requested that for the event the curtain take its traditional place, and be hung vertically as a backdrop to the speeches and dances. They decided that the event should happen at the end of the fishing season, only months away. The museum conservators examined the curtain and came to the conclusion that it was too fragile to be hung vertically, and that there was not enough time, nor other resources, to do a full backing. Preventive conservation measures would of course help but the object might still sustain physical damage.

Condition Report Summary: One very large flexible cotton curtain made of several pieces: soiled, fragile, has weaknesses and losses in the fabric, and losses in the paint layer.

Miriam Clavir; Preserving conceptual integrity: ethics and theory in preventive conservation IIC Congress 1994, Ottawa, Canada September 12-16 1994
**Question:** Should the curtain be allowed to hang vertically at the celebration?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECISION</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow Card</strong></td>
<td>No. Museum makes final decision, and does so according to professional conservation standards. Curtain displayed on slight angle, fully supported underneath, no touching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Card</strong></td>
<td>No, but agree to higher angle for support so Frank family can show curtain off easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red Card</strong></td>
<td>Yes, but make every effort to explain physical consequences of vertical hanging to family. However, family given final decision re: vertical hanging. If can’t dissuade, make vertical hanging as safe as possible, whether family likes these measures or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue Card</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Present conservation point of view but accept that cultural continuity (cultural preservation) can be more important than object preservation. Frank family has traditional rights regarding curtain. Additions etc. to curtain to make vertical hanging safe checked first with Frank family. They have right to refuse conservation measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Miriam Clavir; *Preserving conceptual integrity: ethics and theory in preventive conservation*  
IIC Congress 1994, Ottawa, Canada  September 12-16 1994
APPENDIX F: GLOSSARY OF MAORI TERMS

hapu
sub-tribe

Hei tiki
pendants made of pounamu, greenstone or nephrite, and passed down generation to generation.

iwi
tribe, nation, people

kaitiaki
 guardian

kaumatua
 elder knowledgable in Maori protocols and culture

mana
power

marae
ritual area, especially meaning the enclosed space in front of a meeting house.

mere
short flat weapon, often made of stone

Pakeha
people of European descent

pa
secure village of the hapu, often fortified or strategically situated

pataka
storehouse

tangata whenua
first people of the land

tapu
 taboo

taonga
treasure

Te Hau Ki Turanga
meeting house from the Rongowhakaata people housed in the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington

tiki
see "Hei tiki" above

tukutuku
panel on the inner wall of a meeting house, made of dyed, woven plant material

waka
 canoe

waka tupapaku
 burial chests

whakapapa
genealogy, lineage

whare
house, meeting house


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PRESERVING WHAT IS VALUED: AN ANALYSIS OF MUSEUM CONSERVATION AND FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVES

by

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B.A., The University of Toronto, 1969
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A Dissertation Submitted For A Research Degree, Doctor Of Philosophy, Department Of Museum Studies, The University Of Leicester

VOL. 2: TRANSCRIPTIONS OF RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

1997
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This document contains transcripts of interviews done by Miriam Clavir for her doctoral research, "Preserving What is Valued: An Analysis of Museum Conservation and First Nations Perspectives". The Table of Contents represents a list of all of the interviewees who gave permission to have their interviews included. A complete list of interviewees can be found in the main text of the dissertation; it is comprised of the names found in this document, and the following people who are not represented.

Permission was not received to reproduce the transcript from LJ (Linda Jules), LMS (Leona M. Sparrow), PB (Pam Brown) or KL (Kim Lawson). The principal reason given was that the transcript might be misinterpreted. In addition, only the taped interviews where a transcript could produce a reasonably unmediated reflection of the conversation are included. The interviews where notes were taken (BM – Beatrice Medicine, and CL) are not included, nor is the interview with AN who could not be reached for permission. In three cases represented in this document, the interviewees gave permission for shorter excerpts from the long interviews to be reprinted. These will be seen in the material from the collective interview with AC (Adelynne Claxton), SJ, (Sandy Jones) and EC (Elsie Claxton), and in the material from KH (Ken Harris) and JG (Julia Gresson). JM (John Moses) is represented by correspondence he sent in response to questions from this author.

The interviews from British Columbia are organized according to the initials of the interviewee, and precede those from New Zealand. They were
transcribed by Ms. Chris Turnbull and Ms. Laura Beresford, whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged. Every effort has been made to transcribe the interviews accurately. The sound quality of the tape recordings, however, proved to be uneven, and there are unclear passages. The interviews are reproduced here with the permission of the interviewees, and with any suggestions, corrections, and additions made by them.

Some names and words unfamiliar to the transcribers and researcher have been rendered phonetically. Some "um's" have been removed, some third parties are referred to by their initials only, and occasional clarifications have been added in square brackets. Otherwise, this author has not altered the content of the transcripts and they remain unedited. The primary data are the audio tapes which remain in the researcher's possession for five years, but whose disposition is ultimately the decision of the interviewee. MC in the transcriptions is this author, the researcher.

Any reproduction or quotation of the material in this document is not permitted unless consent has been obtained from the interviewees.
ADELYNNE CLAXTON
AFFILIATION: COAST SALISH
COORDINATOR, SAANICH NATIVE HERITAGE SOCIETY (SNHS), [AGE GROUP 40-50 YEARS]

SANDY JONES
AFFILIATION: COAST SALISH
ELDER, SAANICH [AGE GROUP: 80 & YEARS]

ELSIE CLAXTON
AFFILIATION: COAST SALISH
ELDER, SAANICH [AGE GROUP 80 & YEARS]

NOTES TAKEN.

Permission was granted to include these notes that were excerpted from a document called "Notes: Interview with Sandy Jones, Elsie Claxton, Adelynne Claxton, Nov. 3 '95", sent to Adelynne after the interview took place. In addition, notes and quotations have been taken from some of Adelynne's writings. These are marked as such, and the references listed at the end. The titles refer to subject areas of the dissertation.

Cultural Significance preserved in/by a museum?

AC : cultural significance of objects is usually preserved by families who pass their knowledge down through the generations, not by museums.

Loss (and relationship to museums) and identity

AC The residential school era affected the First Nations in a profound manner. There were the effects of cultural losses in self esteem and self worth, not to mention the loss of language and everything to do with cultural heritage was stripped from us. The phrase"I didn't know that I didn't know" has a lot of meaning to a
person like myself." (Claxton, 1994 #490: 4-5)

Why Preserve?

AC "Preserving history for future generations of First Nations has become a priority in my life. Preserving history through our legends, art, audio/video and language is an on-going project on the Saanich Cultural Centre." (Claxton, 1994 #490: 5)

Role of Museums or Cultural Centres with collections - future of Museums

AC "First Nations are reclaiming their heritage and cultural centres are one of the approaches we have chosen." (Claxton, 1994 #490: 4)

SJ : (Do museums have any value?) Yes. He would like a museum in his community and he would go and see what he used to wear, and show it to his grandson. His grandson will learn his culture from the Longhouse, though, from his own participation in traditional spiritual life - from participating rather than seeing objects in a museum.

Conservation standards and practice

AC :not appropriate for a museum conservator to wrap up spiritual objects. Miriam should approach the elders like SJ and EC who know about it and can send someone in to wrap it.

AC "(Keekus) also told how she cleaned baskets, she would "dunk" them in a tub of water and the basket was put out to dry. My mother also told me that this was their method of cleaning. Mind you, the weather had to be ideal in order for the basket to dry thoroughly." (Claxton, 1994 #423: 2)

Contemporary vs. Old: contemporary

SJ : ok to use new material in repair or replication. Eg. SJ's daughter -a new shirt will be made and it will have power. New and old, it is the same thing in the Longhouse.

Restoration or Leave in present condition?

SJ : would have his shirt repaired if it comes back to him, but not repaired
for use. He couldn't say if some parts of the shirt are more important to repair than other parts - e.g. is it important to have it clean? to have all the paddles there? to repair the holes? The family can repair. But don't shrink it! Can't wash it easily with the paddles. (Don't risk damaging it in a permanent way in the name of repair - e.g. don't risk shrinking it in trying to clean it.)

SJ, EC: If a mask has flaking or faded paint, leave it.
AC: We might use the wrong paint

**Preservation vs use**

SJ: (Miriam asked whether if there was an old blanket like the one SJ's grandmother made, should it be used today, and should it be repaired?) It was felt that it should be preserved.

AC: recounted telling her mother about a blanket in a museum that was very damaged, and her mother asked why the blanket wasn't cut up to make a new one.

SJ: Whether a piece should be used or preserved depends also on the particular piece and the owner. If e.g. SJ was the owner of a blanket and he used the piece and he wanted it kept that way, then it is best to keep it in use. If the same blanket has become (just a decorative object or is used in other non-traditional ways) like a blanket on the floor, maybe it is best in this case to preserve it.

**Use**

SJ: some objects which are appropriate for some people to use and not for others, even if it is appropriate for them to borrow these pieces. SJ related how one person couldn't use his sticks - 'they don't like me' 'they go away'.

AC: baskets are work things, but some could have a different use in an educational collection, and some are worth preserving.

SJ: would he use his paddle shirt today if he had it back? SJ pointed out that it is fifty years old, and probably would 'have had it' - would not be in a usable condition.
Way forward, future

AC  "I can appreciate the work of museum staff on their respect of handling our objects and we are thankful for that. It would be even better if our own First nations elders can be a part of that." (Claxton, 1994 #489: 4)

AC  can see both sides of the preservation/use dilemma -hard to choose between them. She suggested one solution: have the objects in a museum in the community, and put both technology and the people’s ways to work.

Sacred/Sensitive Objects: sacred, private

AC  "....(S)ome museum workers believe that our tribal spiritual and cultural objects have no life because they have moved into a new surrounding. I do not agree with that, our spiritual cultural objects are alive, they belonged to someone who had given it life..." (Claxton, 1994 #489: 2)

AC  "Ceremonial rattles have life, it was given life by the owner and should be handled with caution, wrapped and not touched by anyone else other than a person who belongs to that certain lifestyle. Masks owned by the Coast Salish have a very spiritual place in our lives. Masks should never be handled by women, they too should be wrapped in a special blanket and placed only with the objects that are used in the mask dance ceremonies. Masks are handled only by the owners or the members of the immediate family who belong to the mask dance society. " (Claxton, 1994 #489: 3)

AC  "I know for a fact that there is life in our cultural spiritual objects. My son is an active member of the "sway-whee" . (Also written Sxwaixwe.) "When he turned twelve years old my father handed him down a mask that was tradition in our family to be passed down to him. This tradition is passed down from generation to generation, my grandson now owns his own mask, so ours is not a dead culture, as long as we live, generations to come our masks will be alive. When my son received his mask I was personally involved in the process of making his mask come to life. This is not talked about so I will not go into this subject." (Claxton, 1994 #489: 3)

AC  "So my recommendation for objects that have reached museums/art
galleries for some reason (is that they) should be treated with respect, have tribal elders present to see that they are stored properly and stored only with other objects that pertain to that object. This being masks, stored separately from the winter spiritual objects such as rattles, wool garments, spinners, hoof articles, paddle shirts and drums. They should not be displayed as in their natural life with their owners they did not hang as trophies but were wrapped and stored until it was needed. We have unwritten laws on the care and handling of these cultural spiritual objects that are practiced in the home. The same rule should apply in the "new storage facility" (museum/art galleries). (Claxton, 1994 #489: 3-4)

SJ : pointed out that some things are secret. There are objects which he owns and someone else doesn’t, and vice versa, and there are rights to use these objects. (The knowledge associated with these objects may also be private.)

SJ : his regalia- the objects have power, have life, and some release is needed from the storage box every so often. This release also has the effect of making SJ feel good.

SJ : some pieces only men should touch.

SJ : (asked if spiritual objects still have life in a museum) Yes -therefore don’t put them with other, unrelated pieces, and keep them wrapped.

(if an object has been in a museum for a long time, is it still alive?)

AC : objects are dormant.

SJ : has 70 year old stick he is still using, and will give to his grandson when he grows up. The paddle-shirt, however, which has been away for so long - it is hard to make it come alive again. ^5

Perceptions of Museums: (and archaeology) (and museum process except for conservation standards (separate section)

AC " Museums see their role as the saviors, they seem to think that if it was not for them everything would be lost forever.

Having visited several museums during my internship, I was alarmed at the way a lot of our artifacts were treated so casually. Some of the artifacts in "real life" were only to be touched by the owner. Some objects could not be touched by females. Some objects should
have been wrapped and so on.

Mentioning this to the "museum experts", we always got a "what do you know" look. I suppose we were not to be the experts of our own traditional objects.

Museums have come a long way in this day and age, they are now more lenient, they will loan out to the community a sacred object to be used for special ceremonies. I think it is about time." (Claxton, 1994 #490: 3)

AC I realize the mandate of a museum is to save everything or slow down the process of deterioration on objects. I respect that theory, but if it is a lost cause to try and save something, let it die peacefully, there are probably "twin" objects out there that can be saved. Museum practices are doing wonders in preserving objects that are in good condition for study purposes, to this I refer to First Nations objects, this my people are grateful for." (Claxton, 1994 #423: 1)

SJ,EC : big urban museum like RBCM has different feeling. A museum at home would have more meaning, they would visit it.

AC : agreed with above and added: it would employ "our own people" and it would work for them.

Respect

AC "It is a great concern to our people to see objects mistreated. By the term mistreated, I do not mean that the person does not handle it with the greatest of care, I know personally that they are handled with respect, but what I am stressing here is how the artifact may lay on a shelf unwrapped beside something of entirely different background." (Claxton, 1994 #489: 2-3)

SJ : Part of respectful treatment is remembering that the objects have life and treating them accordingly. This life-force is impertinent for people.

SJ : if an object in the museum from eg his family, not everyone could touch it; others would not know how to treat it with respect.

AC : "wouldn't know how to handle" objects from other areas, so one goal of Saanich Native Historical Society is to have collection from its own area.
Damage and Deterioration

AC "To see our baskets or swoqualth blankets on the verge of "total destruction" should be given the "right to die". They have served their purpose, new ones would have to be made if our ancestors had so desired. This question was brought up as to why we allowed totems to deteriorate, the answer, "They have served their purpose, and maybe a new one was made to replace the old one". (Claxton, 1994 #423: 1)

AC "A great friend of mine who I had the priviledge ot taking the Aboriginal Museum Internship Program with in 93/94 was a great basket weaver. She not only made baskets, she made woven figurines from cedarbark, hats etc. She also worked with hides. She made baskets from bark that she gathered and prepared herself. Last winter at UBC we had a chance to clean several old baskets. She asked the instructor why they were trying to preserve these poor thoroughly deteriorated baskets. She said that the basket had already served its purpose and needed to die. I can still hear Keekus and all her stories, truly a talented elder who I will miss forever. " (Claxton, 1994 #423: 1)

AC "[O]ne of the elders of Saanich ... mentioned that when an object has gone through its life cycle, its owners usually buried them. This is why several stone bowls have been unearthed by construction or road ways going in. The owner sometimes broke the bowl and then buried it. It has gone through its cycle. It was the choice of the owner to have it buried. It saddens me to see these objects now being sold for thousands and thousands of dollars. Some of these stone bowls have reached museums, a dedicated space for them in museums would be ideal. (Claxton, 1994 #489: 4)

SJ : after his grandmother's funeral, his mother burned her mother's regalia. SJ feels now that this was a loss, although it was a tradtional practice.

Traditional Care, Proper Care

SJ : treats his regalia with respect, keeping it wrapped and put away. However, every so often the regalia needs to be taken out and aired, hung up, although kept covered.

: cedar bark may help to keep insects away.
Museum of Anthropology

AC: It would be good to bring the elders in to look at the objects housed in the museum and to talk about the objects they are seeing and advise us.

Other

AC: "This paper will cover only objects that culturally belong to my Nation because I cannot speak for other Nations, this is protocol, that we respect what belong to others and not place our opinion on objects we know nothing about. I say this because for me to say what happens to say, button blankets, chilkat blankets, tobacco pouches etc., may have entirely a different handling procedure for other Nations." (Claxton, 1994 #423: 1)

Papers by Adelynne Claxton


(#489) Claxton, A. (1994), Handling and Care of Cultural and Spiritual Objects, essay, "Curatorial Care of Artifacts" course, Nov. 30 -Dec. 9, 1994, University of Victoria: 3.
ALFRED J. SCOW
AFFILIATION: KWAKWAKA'WAKW
RETIRED JUDGE, B.C. PROVINCIAL COURT, [AGE GROUP 60-80) YEARS]

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED NOV 22, 1995, AT HIS HOME, VANCOUVER

MC If you could just tell me a little bit about your own background, about your nation, about any involvement you’ve had with cultural activities, about the kind of upbringing you had, how traditional or not it was, that kind of thing.

AS Alright. I was born in the village of Alert Bay, upcoast from Vancouver about 180 miles on the inside passage between Vancouver Island and the mainland, and the ... Alert Bay is on Cormorant Island, an island that is divided into two. One is a ... all the non-Indian population live on one part and the Numgish plus a mixture of other tribal groups live on the other part of the island. So I spent my growing up years partly in Alert Bay, partly at Gwayasdums on Gilford Island (Kwicksutaineuk), and partly at Kingcome Village. And my father was the Chief of our Tribe, the Kwicksutaineuk, and my first language was Kwakwala which I spoke, my parents spoke, and everybody in the village spoke in those days. I was born in 1927, so that the ... our language was still the primary communication between different occupants of the villages in which we lived in. Except, of course, for Alert Bay, most of the stores were located with the non-Indian sections and in our dealings with the fishing companies and stores English was required so we had to learn English as part of the, you know, part of the process of growing up. My parents had both attended a residential school. In those days, before it was called the residential school, it was the industrial school. And my mother graduated in Grade Eight and my father was removed from the school by his father when he attained the equivalent of Grade Three or Four, I’m not certain which one – it was because my grandfather on my father’s side apparently needed my father to record the transactions of the potlatches. And so he moved out of the residential school and they lived part of the time in Kingcome, which was the home of his uncle’s, my father’s uncle and other relatives as well. So my father became ..
my father and mother developed a belief that in order for their children to survive in the new society we would have to be educated. For the first three years of my normal schooling period, from six to nine, I would spend about a month in Alert Bay day school for instruction and then we would move to Gilford Island, Gwayasdums Village, where there was no school, so I had no schooling for, you know, several months a year, and then in the Spring we would go to Kingcome village, where my parents participated in harvesting oolichans and processing oolichan oil, so there was a school there, so I had one month in Kingcome, so in three years I must have had a total of six months of schooling.

MC Right.

AS But my parents in the interim wanted me to learn how to read, so I carried all the books that we had with us so that when we were at Gilford Island they would sometimes have me read to them, so, you know, gradually I became familiar with the books and textbooks. So when I was nine they decided that I needed a more thorough form of education, so they believed that the residential school was the closest thing, and probably the most available thing, and probably the most suitable thing for me to get this more adequate schooling. So I was enrolled in the St. Michaels Indian Residential School which was run by the Anglican Church. So I did my elementary school, from primary grade to Grade Eight.

MC This is the one in Alert Bay?

AS Yes, this is the school at Alert Bay. I finished my elementary school in four years in residential school.

MC Wow.

AS What happened when school started was all these students were sorted out, they started me in primary grade, and everybody in the primary grade were given a passage to read from a book. And I read from the book as did all the others, and the teacher said, "You don't belong here, get over to Grade One." So I went to another building, to Grade One. And then at Christmas time in Grade One, I was at the head of the class, so the teacher bumped me to Grade Two. And I was at the Head of the class in Grade Two at the end of the year. And this was not
withstanding the fact that we had half a day in school in the classroom, half a day on the grounds, working, doing our share to keep up the buildings and the grounds. Later as we grew older we started working half day on the farm to provide our own potatoes and carrots and turnips and that kind of thing, cabbage.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

AS And we had milking cows, so we provided our own milk, we learned how to milk the cows, which was totally foreign to the coastal way of life. Anyway, I don’t know how much you want.

MC This is very interesting actually.

AS Just to go on, but anyway .. practically all of my growing up years – the potlatches were outlawed, they were illegal, according to the Indian Act.

MC Had your father’s been seized from your family at the one at that Cramner Potlatch in 1921 where .. ?

AS Not my father. I’m not sure of the details of who was all arrested in that Cramner Potlatch, but I do know from family stories that my grandparents, both sides of my family, spent time in jail because of participation in potlatches; Kingcome village, for instance, became a center for the underground potlatches that went on regardless of the laws. And of course they were caught from time to time. But Kingcome had the the advantage of being upriver from the inlet, the navigable waters stopped at the mouth of the river, except for canoes. So when a potlatch was going someone would be designated to keep an eye on who was coming and then the message would go out to the village. When I was in Kingcome I had some exposure to the potlatch ceremonies when I was growing up, but of course, I didn’t know what they were all about, it was .. quite .. they took place at night, too, and the fire burning in the middle of the floor of the Big House. The events were – parts that I can recall – were quite eerie in the sense that there was only light from the fire that you could witness what was happening, smoke and fire and the dancer and the masks make these people so big, you know, when you’re five years old, everybody looks big. And the singing, I can’t recall too much about the singing, but in later years, when I was older, I heard singing and I have vague
recollections of practically the same sounds from the older people in those days who knew all the family songs and what they represented for each family. But eventually they gave up the practise, because the enforcers were too .. became a little more aggressive and more people went to jail, so they had fewer, and fewer potlatches. Of course, some of the older people died off, of course including my grandfather, who had many .. he was a canoe builder and he gave many potlatches and he was from all accounts he was a power broker, I think, in our society. His parents arranged a marriage between him and the daughter of the Chief of the Numgish tribe.

MC Oh.

AS And so through that marriage, he acquired a lot of the .. some of the fur .. his wife's family's songs and crests. And they had three children. One was a girl, the first was a girl, who died quite young, the next was my father's older brother, and then my father. And .. but there were, I think there were several years between each one of them. It was, according to my father, a way of birth control, that he really doesn't know how it works, but it seems to work because there were only three of them.

MC Right.

AS When she died, and he married a girl from the Bella Bella tribe, and thereby acquiring some songs and crests and regalia from the Bella Bella. And I'm not sure how that marriage ended, but maybe she went back home; I never heard.

MC Yeah?

AS His last marriage was to the daughter of the Hunt's in Fort Rupert. They didn't have any children, but the Bella Bella marriage had one child, my father's younger brother, I guess, what would you call him? A step brother? No, anyway. Half brother. Different mother, same father.

MC Right.

AS So anyway, throughout all this time my father became very knowledgeable about our practises, customs, traditions, whatever.
Unfortunately in some respects he did not pass that knowledge on to his children, because he could see the ending of that phase of our lives by what had happened through the enforcement of prohibition of potlatches.

MC Yes.

AS So he thought it would be better, I guess, if we didn’t know. If he were here today I would kick him in the behind. Because I think that so much of our family history got lost in that way. We have some recordings of family songs, and we have certain songs that everybody acknowledges belong to our family, and I’m trying to think, in 1951 the prohibition was dropped against the ceremonials and they gradually started, slowly, they started coming back. Of course, the sad part about the revival of the potlatch was that the old people who were totally familiar with the history of all the families, the practises, the customs, the traditions, that went into the potlatches, most of them had died.

MC Yes.

AS So I’m sure what happened then was a changing, a changing of the guard, a changing .. ceremonials were short-circuited. What used to take four days, seven days, now took one day, you know. And so they .. our ceremonials, our customs, our traditions, were in one sense were contaminated. But in another sense I suppose that’s what happens to all cultures. Is that they change from generation to generation. So anyway, now there is a totally new culture. And there is frequent bickering amongst people. That song doesn’t belong to you, that .. it belongs to so and so, you know.

MC Right. Yeah.

AS But anyway, the format of potlatches was changed. In the early days it was the – during my grandfather’s time – the person who gave the potlatch was the organizer of the family. He got the other family members to participate in gathering of wealth to be distributed at the potlatches. My grandfather was a canoe builder so he built many canoes that were given away at potlatches, and other members of the family did different things, so that those were .. the properties that were given away during the potlatches. Now, even during my grandfather’s time, it started to change. They started using flour and
blankets and dishes and other foreign goods, and money at potlatches. Now it's basically, substantially, all money. A very few token gifts, you know and now almost anybody can throw one. You have some kind of remote connection through some former Chief. It used to be only the Chief's families that could afford to throw potlatches, because they were the ones that organized the family to contribute to the gifts. Anyway, of course what happened, as you know from your involvement with the museums, what happened .. many of the prosecutions ...

[Interruption]

JS [speaker is Alfred Scow's wife, talking about her father-in-law] .. looked around, and he was in awe, and he said, “I never thought I'd live to see this.” He was totally in awe. And he came up, you know, grew up in a time when [unclear] and these things were not treasured. I don't know if you've heard me say this, Al, but it was very moving.

AS I probably did, but I don’t remember it.

MC So he then actually didn’t get a bad feeling from being in the Museum of Anthropology and seeing all the things there. He..?

JS He did not, no. He was very moved by the things. Anyway. Talk about the art.

MC Thank you.

JS You’re welcome. OK.

MC See you. Bye bye. Your father ..

AS Is ...

MC Sorry, go ahead.

AS Yeah, we'll get back to my father later, but while I'm still thinking about the prosecution, of course I didn’t know what happened during the prosecution, Mrs. Cook was the interpreter in potlatch prosecutions; in later times my father was interpreter for other prosecutions of Indians because he was a self-taught man. When he was forced to leave school, he did not stop his self education. He read
everything that he could get his hands on and so he knew .. he was fluent in our language and he became fluent in the English language, so he was a very able interpreter. And he told me that what happened in the prosecutions, when the person was convicted, he had the option, he was given the option, of either going to jail or giving up his regalia. And so many of them gave up their regalia rather than go to jail. But my grandparents didn’t. They said to heck with you. And some others did too, you know. That’s why there were so many in jail. They (the Chiefs and families) didn’t all give up their regalia. They kept them hidden away from the prosecutors, the enforcers, until .. but nevertheless, it was a .. you couldn’t really call it a consensual thing, because it was .. it’s almost like it was a solution that was forced upon a person, rather than freely given.

MC Right.

AS And I think that that, while it was .. it may not have been legal, at that time, it was probably before probation was in use, so it probably was an illegal alternative sentencing.

MC Right. Right.

AS This was the basis on which many of the artifacts were returned to Alert Bay, for example, because of the illegal surrender of the artifacts of different families. But unfortunately what happened then .. many of those artifacts will stay in museums because they cannot be identified as belonging to a particular family. And sometimes when they are identified as belonging to a particular family, that family is no longer around. You know.

MC Right. Yeah. Yeah.

AS However, it is very useful in the sense that it is now available for display in the area that they came from. And I think it probably restores a lot of pride in the material part of our culture amongst our people. Because the art work in the early artifacts was unbelievable. Especially with the kind of materials they had. The innovative development of the arts that much of the art in [the] Kwagiulth area, was borrowed from the northern tribes.

MC Mmmhm.
You know, so there was a mixture of backgrounds too, that.. so the mixture of art from the North and the Central area became our new art of the Kwagiulth area.

Yeah.

And I think that the Indians, we, accepted all this negative feedback from outside, from the government, from the Acts, so that for many years we really believed that we were inferior.

No.

And now the artifacts that have come back, the new art forms that are being developed, are, I’m sure, a contributor to the growing revival of the culture, the arts, the building of self-esteem is gradually taking place. And I think there is a growing pride in who we are and where we came from. You know, or even though in some circles today, that’s not considered to be such a great thing, but we think it is.

Right. What about .. can I ask you about the question of ownership? Of the objects, because some of them were definitely illegally taken. But some of them, for example, that we have at the Museum of Anthropology, you know, may have left a family in, say, the 1920’s and...
'30's and maybe we bought it from a dealer in the 1950's, you know?

AS Yeah.

MC I'm just wondering how to sort out that question, because ..?

AS Well, it's not an easy question to sort out, because many of the people - I'm thinking about our territory - many of the people who sold these artifacts, to missionaries, to traders, to loggers to fur traders, and those kinds of people, many of those people who sold these artifacts did not have the family consent to do so. But to identify which ones, impossible. But many were sold in that way. And many were probably sold for a - I'm thinking of the missionary collection - you know, I don't know the background of how some of the missionaries acquired such large collections, whether they bought them or whether they were part of the collection, or .. whatever, you know?

MC Yeah.

AS And I think that, myself, they should be repatriated to where they came from, to where .. because that's where they belong. But many of the families who may have owned them are no longer around. But to have them accessible and available in communities they came from, that would be a good thing. But my father believed that .. he believed that the preservation and the care that's given to the artifacts at the museum is helping to preserve the things that were made by many of our people who are all gone now. They represent the art from that period which should be preserved. If they were sent back to our communities, our people wouldn't know what to do with them. Some of them would get resold anyway! You know?

MC Right. Right. Right.

AS So it's not an easy .. there's no easy answer to, you know, how those things were acquired, what should be done with them, why should they go back? One thing that is certain that I feel that my Dad was correct about, those that cannot be identified, or those that belong to families that are no longer around, should be kept in the museums. Even the others with the consent of the family should be kept in museums because for other people to see, for other people to witness the kinds of things our ancestors did. You know.
MC Right. So do you mean the community museums, like U’mista, or do you mean the urban museums, like the Museum of Anthropology?

AS Well, certainly the Alert Bay museum, the Cape Mudge museum would be good places for some of those things, but I think they could not build big enough museums at Alert Bay or Cape Mudge to house all the things from all over the world, virtually.

MC Right. Yeah.

AS So there’s room for both: our local museums and general museum like the Museum of Anthropology. That’s my view, anyway.

MC Yeah. Do you have ... in your family has any regalia been passed down, or did it all sort of leave the family?

AS Well some of it .. quite a bit of it went .. we found different things in different museums that were sold by other people who had no authority to sell them.

MC OK.

AS You know. And I talked to my father about .. “Shall we try and get these back?” “Well, no,” he says, “they’re alright where they are, as long as they identify them as belonging to our family.” So there are different views amongst the Indian people. G. W., of course, has a totally militant view about what should happen to these things. I don’t believe that she represents all of the people’s views.

MC Now, I don’t know whether your father said this before U’mista was built, or if he saw U’mista all set up, but do you think he would have said something different if he’d seen the museum, you know in Alert Bay.

AS He saw the museum.

MC Oh, he saw it. OK. OK.

AS Yeah, and some of the things were, according to him, inaccurately described as belonging to certain families.
MC Oh, to other families. Ahha! Great. Yeah.

AS And he was not that enamoured of the Curtis movie about ...

MC Yes!

AS So still it's a reflection of part of our society in the early days, you know, and someone else's perception of what the .. and of course of the .. for the purposes of movies they, I suppose in order to get things done, really, in a short period of time, they were staged. You know, the arrival at the canoes here, the Hunts or Boas or whoever told him that this is the way it used to happen. OK. Let's get some people together, we've come in canoes to pillage, and ...

MC Yeah.

AS Anyway.

MC One of the questions U'mista raised for me was whether these objects are family heritage first or community heritage first. You know, because some people say, "Oh, well, the National Museum wouldn't have returned them at the time without a museum being built, and without them going to a museum." But things are different now, you know, and I'm just wondering whether families, if things are being repatriated now, whether they would like to see them go into a community facility, or whether they would rather have them back in the family.

AS Well, I suppose the difficulty is .. initially of course, they were family, no doubt about it, before they were given up, or surrendered, or sold, or whatever, all those things belonged to a particular family. But that was many generations ago. Now we get the same thing that came from, let's say this: for some reason there's a record of a name. OK. Then you try to trace back the survivors of that family, and what happens, of course, is the intermarriages, and the deaths, and the changing family structure, over the years. Like, some families were .. well, I'm thinking of my own family, for example. My grandfather was the Chief of the Kwicksutaineuk tribe, his wife, the daughter of Tlakwagi, a Numgish Chief. My grandfather on my mother's side, was the Chief of the Kwakiutl, Fort Rupert. And his wife was the daughter of another
Numgish Chief, so they .. my great grandfather and my great grandmother probably had certain artifacts that belonged to their family, and by marriage some of those objects went on to my grandfather's family on my father's side, and some went to my grandfather on my mother's side, and then their children all married into different families, and then here I am!

MC Right.

AS See, today, I could probably lay claim to everything that belonged to our great grandfather in the Numgish band. So you know, how do you go back to the family? So then you're left, in most cases, you're left with family first but there's no family, or it's so remote that we really can't trace it, then it belongs to the community. You know. So again it's .. see, of the .. I guess the .. what you could do, what .. you know, I was thinking if a certain artifact was brought back from Ottawa that came from our territory as belonging to a certain person, and put it in the middle of the floor of a gathering of all the tribes you'd probably have a hundred people claiming ownership.

MC Yeah.

AS So that's why I say I guess the simple answer is now community, unless there's a direct traditional passing down, unless it can be traced, yes, that was given to so and so by this marriage to so and so at a potlatch, and his .. he passed it on to his son when he married so and so, threw a potlatch with so on, and so on down the line. You know, and I doubt that you can find too many of those that can be traced in that way.

MC Mmhmm

AS I mean, sure, I just did it. I just demonstrated what I can claim, and I'm a Kwicksutaineuk you know, but I can claim Numgish ...

MC Right.

AS You know?

MC Yes.
AS  So, anyway.

MC  And the objects ...

AS  I’m sorry. That might not be helpful to you.

MC  No, it’s all really interesting, because it’s so complex.

AS  Yes.

MC  It’s just so complex. And there was a really interesting .. actually, I haven’t read what the case is about, but there was a case in Alaska with the whaling screen? I don’t know if you’re familiar with it, where it was the clan that traditionally looked after the screen actually wanted to sell it, and at the same time the community itself said, “No, this is community heritage.” But actually, they wanted to sell it to somebody else. And I think in the end it got decided, you know, it was one of these stories also, dealers, and you know, and all of that, and it stayed in a Seattle .. it got as far as Seattle and then got impounded in a warehouse there for a couple of years. A very well known piece for people that know this kind of thing, but in the end I think they decided in favour of the community, actually. And there is a judgement in one of the law journals, B. P. at UBC, he gave me a copy of the, you know, the case, explaining how they decided it because ...

AS  Interesting.

MC  Yeah, it is, because also with the .. in the United States with the NAGPRA legislation, about repatriation, if it belongs .. like, they wanted to show that it was .. it can be returned if it’s inalienable community property, therefore it should never have been sold. But if it belonged to families, then it’s not .. the return is not mandated by NAGPRA. So people on the Northwest Coast were very interested to see how this case was going to be resolved as a test case for material, you know, especially in, you know, Alaska, which is part of the States, but also in Canada because so much Canadian material is in United States museums.

AS  Right.

MC  So. And then you have the copyright legislation. And I’m actually
wondering if there are parallels, because artists are given moral rights that stay with the work, you know, and is there a parallel, even if the legal ownership is defined by Canadian law is still, you know, in the grey area, could you use the copyright legislation as a parallel to say well, even if that’s grey there’s still the moral rights you know. I don’t know, what do you feel about that? I don’t know how familiar ...

AS I think that the difficulty in applying different concepts to different societies is difficult, because you’re .. first of all, I guess to my way of thinking, artifacts that belong to Indian families, ownership should be interpreted, preservation should be interpreted according to the customs and the traditions of the Indian people. And if you try to adapt a modern concept .... And when you’re thinking in terms of the modern day artist today, very, very few of them use the static forms that were used by two generations ago, because they developed it, they improvised, they do things. It’s still Indian art, they’ve done something to the original figures. For example, the bears, the frogs, ravens, today have a different form than they used to fifty years ago, you know?

MC Right. Right.

AS So, I think that maybe the modern artist can apply copyright to their product for the future, but he can’t go back.

MC Right. Yes, and I guess some artists, they are reproducing designs but they don’t have the right, you know, to .. it’s not their crest, or whatever, but because they’re artists, they’re doing that, but it’s like, you know, they aren’t following the old system.

AS Yeah. See, they’ve changed the form.

MC Yeah.

AS Many artists have changed that. Look at the killer whale over there, on the right. It’s not the killer whale you see on pictures and paintings. The one on the right.

MC Yes. Right.

AS My nephew did that.
MC   Oh, really?
AS   Yes.
MC   It's very good.
AS   It's a sun mask. That comes from our family. Bill Holm did that.
MC   The sun mask?
AS   The sun mask.
MC   Oh, did he really!
AS   Yes.
MC   Yeah.
AS   I did the T'sonoqua [sp?] over there.
MC   Did you really? Oh, that's fabulous.
AS   On the left.
MC   So then do you see that there's a reason, like, there's another dilemma that I've been thinking about. Like some people say contemporary objects .. there's no need to really preserve the older objects because what's important to preserve are the passing down of the .. the songs passing down and the skills to make the objects and that the objects just represent things, so, that, you know, it's important to preserve that kind of .. the activities, sort of, the intangibles. And other people are saying, well, no, we should preserve the old objects because they represent a time period that is different, you know, people who grew up in it, it's a more traditional way of life and everything, and the objects are not the same today, so how do you feel?
AS   Yeah. I guess in one sense you can't argue against .. that's the way our grandfather did them.
MC   Yeah.
AS And OK, you preserve them, but his great grandson can be doing the same bird, for example, as the Hoohok [sp?] or the Crooked Beak of Heaven, or something, but he’s .. style wise he’s developed his own form. It’s still the same thing to him, but his great grandfather wouldn’t recognize it necessarily. You know? And yet this is still authentic Indian art because it’s done by an Indian artist based upon an earlier concept, you know?

MC Yeah.

AS So who’s to say what is right? I don’t really think you can get dogmatic about this kind of thing. Because sure it’s .. I think it’s great to preserve what the old people did, and they’re doing that in the museum, and to know that they did, and where did they get that from? The got it from an earlier time. This is their interpretation of what the earlier art was. So who’s to say that the new generation interpretation is wrong and should ..?

MC Right. Right. Now, what about when pieces are repatriated, another question that comes up from me, especially if these are older pieces, they’re going to be more fragile, should they be used? Which again is that preservation of the culture, you know, or should they be, you know, put behind glass cases and be kept in a museum?

AS Well, if they’re fragile, I think they should be kept in glass cases, but if the family who claims ownership to them, wants to use them, then they should have their own artist do a copy and use that.

MC Yeah. Yeah. That’s a good solution, actually. Yeah.

AS Because Indian artists can copy anything. My nephew could copy any of the old stuff he wanted. But he said, “It’s boring. I want to create.”

MC Right. Now, what about repair? I’m wondering about .. like, say you were going to use something, like, you know .. and it needed refurbishing, say this is an old piece, it gets repatriated, it belonged to your grandfather, back in your family, but it’s in very solid condition, so you decide you’re going to use it. So it may be solid but it’s got some cedar bark is missing, and maybe there’s an area of paint that’s missing. Would you rather just keep it that way, you know, the way it is, old, or
would you rather have your nephew, you know refurbish it to make it look a little more like it looked when it was first danced, first made?

AS I would be inclined myself, to repair and refurbish. As long as that repairing or refurbishing does not change the form of the original.

MC Right. And would you do it also if it wasn’t going to be danced was in a, you know, in a fragile condition so it was going to say, be in a museum situation, but it still, you know, because of the missing cedar bark, it didn’t look like it [unclear], it didn’t look like it used to look, would you then still .. I mean, would you prefer it to be refurbished, or would you prefer it to just be..?

AS Oh, I think myself it should be refurbished. If you wanted to preserve forever the state it’s in now, you photograph it.

MC Right. And say, I don’t know, say it has, you know, mountain goat fur on it, and there .. you couldn’t get any, or your nephew, whoever was going to do the refurbishing couldn’t get any, so he used something that looked similar .. would that be OK, or would you..?

AS No, I think it had to be mountain goat. I know where you can get some! Anyway, like, I copied that mask from a book, and I didn’t do too good a job of the hair, but its the hair and the eyebrows are bearskin. That was on the original, so I found one of the other judges, up in Terrace, who is a great hunter, and so I phoned him up and said, “Look, I understand you do some hunting, you hunt bear and other things. Do you happen to have any slashes or bits of bear fur?” “Gee, I think I do,” he says, “I’ll have a look.” So he went to look. “Yes, I do,” he says. “Do you want any?” I said, “Sure. Send it down.” So he sent it to me.

MC Wonderful.

AS Yeah. And if I’d .. it took me a long time to do the mask because I was copying from a one dimensional picture. You know.

MC Of course, yeah.

AS I guess I started to rush doing the hair instead of taking the time that I took with the rest of it, I could have made the groove, or the
indentation for the fur a little more .. so you couldn't see the ..

MC  The skin.

AS  The skin part.

MC  Still, it looks just great. Had you done a lot of carving or whittling before?

AS  No, no. My wife, from time to time thinks I should have a hobby. And I remember shortly after I was appointed to the bench we went up to Prince Rupert, and I had a duffle coat that I wore through thick and thin, but I lost the toggle, it broke off. So I wandered around with two toggles, and these were wooden toggles, and I was walking down the street in Prince Rupert one day, and this elderly lady with a young girl who was obviously her grandchild, she must have been about seven or eight or thereabouts, and it was an overcast Prince Rupert day and this little girl stopped in front of me, and she said, "Hello, you old Two Button." "Hello." I said So at that time we had two of our nephews staying with us, and we enrolled them in hockey. I cut off the tops of their hockey sticks. So I told my wife about what happened, and I said, "I think I'm going to make a toggle." So I got a hold of the old hockey stick, and I cut off a piece to make a toggle the same size as the other ones, so when I finished it, and varnished it like the others, and grooved a thing for the lace, you couldn't tell the difference between any of the toggles. And my wife said, "Why don't you take up carving?" she said. Anyway, I didn't think anything of it, cause now this little - I didn't see that little girl again - but I knew that when I was going downtown I had three buttons. So then I .. we moved to Coquitlam many years later. And my wife read in the local paper, "There's a carving school going on! You want to go and see what's going on?" "Oh, I might as well." I wasn't doing anything much except for my work. So I went in the evenings once a week, and we did simple things, different things, and at the end of it, the instructor said, "OK. Next week is your last class. It'll be just show me what you've done this week." And he had many of his own carvings on the table. He said, "You can copy any one of these, or do your own." So I saw a blacksmith at an anvil. I said, "Tell me about this one." And he said, "Well that's made out of one piece of wood." And he said, "And for your project I think it would be kind of difficult." So I said, "Well, I'll tell you what. I want to find out if I have any talent to carve. And so I
have to tackle something that's difficult but possible. So tell me what I
would need in the way of wood.” So he said, “Well, I have a piece of
wood here.” So he said, “You can take it, and you can borrow my
carving, if you want to.” And anyway, I carved it, and it turned out
pretty good – I’ll show it to you.

(Conversation ends with discussion of Pender Is., B.C.)
DONALD BAIN
AFFILIATION: LHEIT-LIT'EN (CARRIER) NATION
UNIVERSITY STUDENT, FORMER MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY
NATIVE YOUTH WORKER AND COORDINATOR, AND MUSEUM
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CIVILIZATION, [AGE GROUP 20 - 40 YEARS]

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN INTERVIEWER'S HOME, SEPT. 19
1995, VANCOUVER.

MC ... [unclear] on September 19, 1995. I should get Don a plate. Well,
'cause while I'm getting you a plate, Don, could you tell me a little bit
about your background, your family, where you grew up?

DB OK. Well, my mom is a Carrier, Lheet-lit'ten and that's up around
Prince George, and just, in terms, she's a full blood, and my dad is
Scottish, and he immigrated to Canada about thirty years ago, and
basically that makes me half Scottish and half [unclear] Carrier. But
under Bill C-31, I am now considered a status Indian; a status Indian
recognized by the Federal Government as an Indian, as defined by the
Indian Act. I've always felt that I am [unclear], I am Carrier of Lheet-
lit'ten. But, you know, I'm learning, I guess, I'm learning. I don't
pretend to speak for my nation, or for my band, or for my family. I
speak for both. The only person I can speak for is myself right now.

MC Mmmhm.

DB So, I've been working in museums virtually all my career, I suppose. It
started with [unclear] in the Youth Project in 1986; I was only fourteen
when I started. Stayed within my teens until 1989, 1990 I went to
Ottawa to work with the Native Youth Cultural Programme with Ed
Geoffrey, in 1991 to 1993, I worked at the
Museum of Anthropology at UBC either as a NYP manager, or
coordinator, and then in my last year at MOA I was doing booking.
Then I went back, back to school for a year and then I went to Ottawa.
And more or less, that's where I've just come back from. I've been
there for a year and a half working at the Canadian Museum of
Civilization, the CMC. I have a long museum record.
MC Mhm. Great. I’m just going to .. great. So, Don, you started in museums pretty early. Where did this interest in museums, or was it interest in, you know, your culture, or what prompted you to get into this?

DB Well, what prompted me to get into museums wasn’t so much the fact that I was [unclear] to museums, it wasn’t so much an interest of trying to discover, or rediscover my cultural background, truth be told, it was a job – it was a job, pure and simple. A summer job. And I more or less stumbled into it, because I didn’t know about the NYP, and if it wasn’t for my vice-principal in high school, who just happened to be taking the place of one of my teachers in one of my classes, and you know, he brought me aside after the class and told me about NYP.

MC Wow. Great, great. A success story!

DB Oh, no. I thought I was getting in trouble, because I skipped out the day before, and I got snagged. I thought I’d got snagged, and I thought, “Oh, no!” As it turns out, NYP. And I didn’t, I don’t know, I grew up in Surrey, so I mean, it’s like that, that sort of an attitude of sort of rebellion [unclear], I mean, I’m fourteen and my mom, my dad, brought me to the museum, because at that time there was like, Sunday programmes, and you go and watch them on Sunday. And I wanted to leave, but my dad wouldn’t let me leave, and I thought why not? And so I tried, and got in. Apparently afterwards, a couple years afterwards, I found out that I was a .. there were some reservations about me because I was too young. Some people thought I was too young.

MC That’s great. OK. So, now I’d like to ask you some of your thoughts about preservation of objects. So, first of all, could you tell me what kinds of objects that are, I don’t know, maybe part of your family, part of the Carrier tradition, that you’d like to see preserved for generations to come?

DB Well, I think that in terms of objects that now reside in museums, for the communities it’s still a learning process as to where those objects are and what objects are still there. In my case, by the looks of it, there is a lot of clothing, a lot of clothing and a lot of examples of trade goods, but nothing too much. There apparently isn’t too much Mom, the
Carrier, has represented. There is a dagger, a big .. a steel dagger, an iron dagger, and this iron dagger was my great, great grandfather’s, and the Chief Kwah, Kwah is spelled K-W-A-H, or Q-U-A-W, as it's now known, which is my mom’s maiden name.

MC Oh, I see.

DB That dagger now resides in the museum of Fort St. James.

MC Oh, really?

DB A small community museum.

MC Yeah.

DB And ...

MC And is that Carrier territory up there?

DB Mmhmm. Yeah, it goes up there. But Kwah, Kwah was a .. apparently had a number of lives. Up North I’m virtually related to everybody. So, related to the Birds, the Princesses, the Georges, all these families. They’re all descendants of Kwah. So. Interesting.

MC Things like the dagger or the clothing – why is it important to you that the objects are preserved?

DB I think on one level it’s the basis of "study". I know that a lot of native people, or a lot of native bands, a lot of native groups, are beginning to take a strong interest in museum collections, in terms of their holdings, in terms of the information that resides in different depositories, whether archival, or you know, department collection records, you know, that information is ...

MC What kind of information?

DB Well, information such as, perhaps the recording of oral history myth, stories, place names, and that, on one level, it as I say, or as I said before, it’s a level of study in which we have the opportunity now to go back, and dig through these archives, dig through the records, collection records, cross reference the information with the objects that
we find in different collections and begin to get some sense of feeling, a
cultural context prior and during the first European contact. Which
wasn't that long ago in BC. At the same time, on a different level, on a
more deeper level, it's a connection to our past. It's a connection to our
cultural identity. It's these are, like the objects, for example,
clothing, or the stone dagger, those are like tangible reminders of our
past. And to actually talk about it, you know, in terms of using
archival records, or using oral history, for example, and there's a lot of
communities now using oral histories, they're recording interviews
with the elders. The elders are basically transcribing their thoughts,
place names, you know, family histories, individual histories, which
provides a broader community history. You know, couple that with
recording museums and repositories, archival repositories, you can get
a pretty good picture.

MC Mmhmm.

DB But I think it's very important to find out what's there. But in terms of
what to do with that information, what to do with those objects, that's
still up for discussion. And museums, some museums sort of shudder
at the word repatriation, that's going to happen, but to what level?
What museums are changing because we as First Nations are
demanding access to our past.

MC Mmhmm. So something like the stone dagger then. Where do you think
would be the best place for it?

DB I don't know. Oh, yeah, this steel dagger, not stone dagger, that would
be up for, you know, a very long discussion. I know right now, the
Carrier, more specifically my band, the Lheit-lit'len, are considering
and quite likely will develop and build a cultural centre in the area of
Prince George that the scope of the mandate has been decided on more
or less. But up there, where it resides now, it's still relatively accessible
to the Carrier, to my family [unclear]. But, you know, if that dagger
was somewhere else, say, in Ottawa, the CMC, or the Smithsonian, or
in Chicago, or in New York, that would be a different story.

MC Yeah. Is the museum up there in Fort St. James, do you know if ..
have you personally had any dealings with them? Do you know ...

DB No, no, I haven't followed them at all.
So, also then, say if there was one or your relatives, if the inheritance to the dagger was clear, and that person was, you know, the appropriate person, decided that they wanted to have the dagger out of the museum and in their own family’s possession, how would you feel about that? Which do you think is the better, in a sense, the better place to keep it?

If there’s a clear right to the dagger, an inherited right to the dagger, hereditary right to the dagger, to one individual, I would think that individual would know of his responsibility to that dagger, and to the wider family. You know, he may keep it within his house, or within his family, but that dagger would come out at feasts, at potlatches. It would come out. I don’t think that that person would withhold that dagger, you know, and I really don’t think that that person would sell that dagger. But you never know. In that case I think that there would be people that would intervene and make it quite clear that that dagger’s not for sale.

Mhm. So you’re saying that there are individual rights that come with responsibilities to the community, and something that is important as the dagger is more than just .. it’s a family object in one sense, but it’s more than just that. It’s a community object that ...

Yeah. I think so, and to some regard, you know, because there’s so few objects left. I mean, from my culture. [unclear] I shouldn’t say [unclear], but I think it .. an object such as the dagger takes on more of a community identity more than just an individual, you know. It represents the continuity, you know, of the past and the present. The dagger on one hand is .. I keep on thinking, you know, the dagger is a tangible object, or a tangible representation of the past. And if I were to hold that dagger, you know, I would be so proud, and you know, to know that this dagger has been within my community, within my family, you know, for, I guess it’s almost a hundred years. A hundred and twenty, a hundred and thirty years now.

Wow.

Yeah. You know a hundred and thirty years, its .. to realize that that dagger was forged, was traded, it was used – you know, in ceremonies, perhaps in war, but that dagger is tangible past, somehow.
MC  Mmmh. Now, do you think there's a role for museums in big urban centres, like, say, the Museum of Anthropology, where I don't know what the percentage is, exactly, of First Nations who live in big cities, but as you say, there isn't that much material culture left from the people, from the past, that have survived to the present. Do you think ... how do you divide ... do you think there's a role for some of that to be kept in a place like the Museum of Anthropology where, you know, most of your, I mean, you're the only person from your people who's worked there, and there's other questions of access, and you know, it's ... the more you think ...

DB  I guess it comes down to what you define as access. You know, if objects are residing, for example, here in Vancouver, from my area in Prince George, it would mean that people would have to make a twelve hour trip by car, ten to twelve hours, by road, and they would have to, you know, make an appointment and organize [unclear]. I think what's happening here in Canada is that, unlike what's happening in the States, where it seems like they're consolidating a lot of the national collections, well, they are consolidating a large part of the national collections into the National Museum of American Indian. I think here in Canada it's regionalized, you know, the national collections in time will become regionalized, you know, into smaller, and smaller, cultural centres. So you know, and you'll have part of a collection in Ottawa, perhaps, and then part of the collection will be in Vancouver, perhaps, and more and more of the collection will end up in small cultural centres, or community museums, you know, partnerships. I don't know what kind directly, but it seems like there's a bit of a movement, especially here in BC, for cultural centres. Cultural centres within the community. Community based cultural centres like U'mista. You know, and I think to some degree U'mista is sort of like the cultural focal point for Alert Bay, and that they have these objects that were carved around the turn of the century, that were ... well, were being used at the turn of the century, and still are being used today. I mean, that's a proud reminder to having [unclear].

MC  Mmmh.

DB  You know, and I think more and more communities are looking into that. And that's why you have the N______kwatin cultural centre in Kamloops, the Coqualeetza cultural centre, which is more of a
curriculum centre there than is traditionally defined as a cultural centre. But U’mista, Cape Mudge, then you have the Nuxalk cultural centre [unclear] Bella Coola.

MC Yeah, I think so.

DB And the Haida, they have the Queen Charlotte Island Museum, and apparently they’re looking to – the Massett Band – looking into [unclear] I don’t know if you’ve heard this.

MC No.

DB Two years down the road, the Canadian Forces Base, in Massett, there’s a base there, will be shut down. And they’re selling the base to the Massett for one dollar.

MC Oh.

DB And so a forty-million dollar facility, buildings, infrastructure. And the Massett are trying to develop aboriginal plans using that base as it’s base, you know, they forsee .. apparently one of the things they’re looking at is an eco-tourism platform, the base will be transformed into, like, a cultural centre as a lodging and .. one idea that’s on the table is that this will be the starting point of a walking tour [unclear] so that it would be like a week, ten days walking from N--[unclear] up P--[unclear].

MC Great! Fantastic, eh?

DB So. I don’t know. An example that there’s going to be more and more community control, or community based and controlled cultural centres reflecting the immediate community. You know, and I think that’s what it should be, because these are the objects, these are the people, you know, of this territory, and if you want to learn about this territory, about the people within this territory, the culture in this territory, you would have to go to that community and find out from them. Not the community coming to the urban setting so much, say, well, this is, we’re coming to you, telling you about what this object is made of. You know, it should be the other way around. And I think in time it will be.
MC  Mmhm. So I guess the next, maybe, if you could give me your personal opinion about museums, and about their future.

DB  Hmm. Well, I think the museums in Canada, and more specifically the museums in BC, the provincial museum, the RBCM, MOA, the Vancouver Museum, more or less, they are changing, they will be changing, dramatically, the role, you know, as defined in the past, and that the museum as a repository of information, of knowledge, that if you want to learn about a different culture, go visit the museum. If you want to learn about that culture, you get educated, you go to the universities. That's going to change. That is changing. I think whereas before the pendulum was swung over in favour of the museums, and sort of more established institutions, the universities, for example, it's swinging back to the communities, that these objects, these histories come from. And I think more and more it's becoming, you know, our say is becoming more and more recognized as being counted, and being valued, I mean, it's no longer just a discussion based on anthropological, or ethnology, or ethnological – anthropological, or ethnological – data, you know? It's talk to us.

MC  Yeah.

DB  Because that's what it more or less comes down to: talk to us. I think museums in the future, you know, and to some degree MOA's already doing this – R., R. H. at MOA used the analogy that museums are becoming more and more the traffic policemen, in that they redirect inquiries, inquiries, you know, they stand at the intersection, you know, of in this case a cultural intersection, of mainstream societies and native cultures. And they're getting questions from mainstream society that MOA then can answer to a certain point, those questions, but at the same time can redirect more serious questions, consult communities, you know, because before it was the museums, the universities, it was the definitive place to go for information. If you want the information, go and talk to a prof, you talk to a curator. Whereas now, I think, well, I know, it's to the point where such inquiries that are not so readily assumed by professors or curator's. And that, you know, that it's no longer that definitive. You're going to get different perspectives. And I think more and more people are beginning to realize that. And that maybe it's better to talk less and get our perspective and if you want you can talk to an anthropologist, or a curator, or a historian, for that matter, to try and get different
perspectives. And what it comes down to is your own personal world view. You’re going to take what you believe, what conforms to your idea or what you’re more comfortable with in terms of your own understanding of people. So, then you take a little bit of both, a little bit from each perspective and form your own.

MC Mmhm. Mmhm.

DB So.

MC So, if, you know, you go into MOA, and you see a Carrier piece, say, do you feel proud that they’re there in this, you know, important museum, or do you feel, sort of, “Oh, shit, why aren’t they back?” you know, in the community, [unclear]. You know what sort of emotions .. and do you have about museums, and have these, sort of, I guess, have these changed? And .. ?

DB Hmm. Well, I’ve learned, to tell you the truth, through my academic study, that emotions are purely .. a purely emotional response is not as constructive as .. is not constructive or logical response. And that these objects, you know, do reside in the museums. And how they got to the museums, you know, you can argue that they were stolen, that they were taken, traded, and sold to museums, and you know, that they’re there now. And what I think we should be concentrating on is the cultural significance of the object, rather than how that object came to be in the museum. That’s a very emotional, would be a very emotional topic. But I think what we should be doing, you know, is working with museums, in to some degree partnerships, but then in other parts of that [unclear], in other parts, I mean, it should be community controlled. Museums should not have a right to certain objects, sacred objects, funerary objects. But I think right now, it’s a period of discussion, a period .. from the different communities how to, you know, about these objects being with the museum, and that these .. you know, what choices are open to different communities. You know, would they want to repatriate these objects, and if you repatriate objects, are there guidelines that certain institutions may have imposed in terms of repatriation. Repatriation. You know, for example, you know CMA guidelines, using CMA guidelines as a basis of repatriation, you know, like, you have to have climate control, or, you know, well, climate control in closed spaces ...
MC Mmhm.

DB For this particular object or these groups of objects. I don't think that the museums should have a .. should impose their views of what the objects should be done .. or what the objects should be used for. Once it's decided, once it's been negotiated, once it's been proven that these objects belong to a community, then the museum should give the objects back to the community with no strings attached. You know, that's not to say that all objects are going to be like that. There's an emotional response and a logical response, and I think for a lot of native people it's still very emotional.

MC Mmhm.

DB But logically, if you're repatriating a large number of objects packed into a territory, and you take the commitment of building a cultural centre, you know, to house these objects, you know, you have to think of the mandate of this cultural centre. Are these objects going to be used within the community? How is that going to be determined? Who's going to use these objects? How are these objects going to be used? You know, that mandate will also cover, you know, when these objects fall into disrepair, do you repair these objects, or do you let them go back? So they continue their natural cycle. Because, you know, for example, totem poles. When a totem pole is erected in the village, there is a significance, a cultural significance attached to that pole. If the pole, in time, erodes or decays, and perhaps falls over, it's the choice of the family, or the individual who own that pole to perhaps repair, and, you know, re-erect that pole. And that would take a potlatch, and it's a .. it's an economic .. a choice of economics, I suppose. But the pole, when it's lying on the ground, doesn't lose its cultural significance. In time that pole, you know, starts returning back to the earth, and it that pole may provide what's now known as a nurse log, you know, that little seedlings grow from the pole, that insects and small animals use the pole as refuge, but in time that pole goes back to the earth. It's a cycle. And when the pole is emerged to a log it sprouted all these [unclear] trees and [unclear].

MC Wow.

DB So in terms of a mandate, you have cultural centres, what do you do? Do you repair, do you let it deteriorate naturally, do you try to prevent
to some degree that deterioration by using climate control, conservation techniques, and strategies, or do you make new copies? Or have that .. have an artist make a copy of that object? Will the new object reclaim the old object’s sort of identity, cultural significance?

MC Mmhm.

DB Is the community centre based for the community primarily? And are the collections used by the community primarily? Or can the collections be accessed from outside by scholars, students, the general public? It’s accessible to the general public, what kinds of strategies are you going to use for access? Are you going to use temporary exhibits, are you going to use visible storage strategy? Are you going to use a combination? Are you going to use, you know, I don’t know, you couple that with the financial responsibilities – you know, the upkeep and the accessibility, the upkeep of the guidelines that you set out in the mandate, that is a long term financial responsibility. And in terms of our communities, a lot of the communities are still thinking about employing their own, you know, right now. And what Dr. Ames said a long time ago, and I remember him stating it, museums are inherently non-profit. You’re always putting money back into the museums and in this case, you know, cultural centres.

MC Yeah.

DB Cultural centres are not going to be self-sustaining. They’re not [unclear] rejected as capital funding from the band, from band funds. And [unclear] as somewhere down the road, you know, they’re going to get like the current situation is now, you know, with Canadian museums. The funding will get cut back more and more and more; the attention to the objects starts to suffer, the upkeep of the building, you know, the maintenance upkeep starts to falter a bit, and then you have additional problems, you know, for example, potentially a bug infestation, you know, but you don’t necessarily have funds, so you have to be creative, you know? I’m thinking about MOA. You know that converting .. trying to maintain the mandate, the guidelines, within a shrinking budget. You know, it seems like it’s not going to stop. The budget is going to keep on growing smaller, and smaller, and smaller.

MC Yeah. Yeah.
So, maybe it's going to be like a boomerang effect, but at some point people realize that museums are cultural centres, aren't just repositories, but, you know, of objects, but of culture. That U'mista [unclear] has a kind of focal point of culture, I think, within the community of Alert Bay. And I think that in time, I'm thinking in the context of community museums, I think a lot of people would agree, I expect. You know, the museum and the arts aren't trivial things, they aren't there for entertainment, you know, they aren't there for entertaining, but they're there for education, they're there for the creative .. the creative [unclear] .. it's our culture.

OK. So then .. you used the example of U'mista. So, are you saying that it's a place which helps preserve culture, not in part because it has the objects, like, that is one component, but that it has these other components, too? Is that like .. you know, how is it .. what's it's role in that sense in helping a culture, the culture of the people?

Well, U'mista, during the 1970's when it had money ... You know, for the use of these videos which told the history of the collect , [unclear] and treasuries, and ..


A Strict Law Bids Us Dance. You know, and I think they do research, about the collections and to some degree act as a cultural additive, you know, to others teachings. And not necessarily speaking for the community, but acting as an intermediary between the community and other institutions. And you know, more and more the other insitutions, the more mainline institutions, established institutions, have recognized [unclear] as a value centre of, you know, in these terms Kwakwaka'wakw culture. You know, the quality of culture. And you know, to have cultural centre that 's valued and more or less not on the fringe, but you know, that can actually stand in the arena and say, you know, we represent .. our cultural centre is situated in Alert Bay, and our collections represent different communities within Alert Bay, but in that sense we are Kwakwaka'wakw. That we have people working there that are from the community, that reside in the community, that have grown up in the community, they've participated in the ceremonial life of the community, and you know, I think it's becoming more and more in time to have people, curators,
conservators, you know, people working up front on till, the cash at the till, administrators, you know, that more and more are now, they’re all native and that all adds more scope. And to some degree in the [unclear] cultural centre, you know, more in terms of mainstream institutions, but as well it comes more and more important to the community; maybe you have a native youth programme perhaps, being run through the cultural centre during the summer, you know, we have the younger generations working in the cultural centre, maybe in the gift shop or in the till, working there. There’s going to be some trading of information, and they’re going to be there being exposed to these different avenues of study at best, albeit very informal. But they’re going to be exposed [unclear].

MC So do you think then, the cultural significance of objects, do you think that, for example, that at MOA, that we can play a role in preserving the cultural significance of objects, or do you think that’s really only done when the objects are back in the community? In a museum or in a family?

DB I think institutions like MOA can show the cultural significance of objects through exhibits but those exhibits have to be done by consulting with the communities. By getting contemporary quotes from key people from within the community, you know, providing a cultural context to this particular object or group of objects to show the significance of these objects. So not so much as arts but as living and antique art pieces within the community’s life, cultural life, or identity, I should say. I think museums can play that role. In my mind, I see museums as sort of the introductory for a mainstream society. That they can go to different museums and get an introduction to different communities.

MC Mmhm.

DB But that they know that there are other cultural centres, that there are other people, you know, within the community that live that culture.

MC Yeah, right.

DB You know, that’s not to say that these people who come in – you know, a person off the street – and say, “Well, you know, I’ve always been interested in Carrier culture, can you tell me a little bit.” and museums
can say, "Yup, this is this, this is this, this is what you want to do." You know, universities too. But that's not to mean that that person can go up to my community and just walk in and say "Hey, you know, I'm doing this paper on Carrier people, and I've always been interested in Carrier culture." and that's not going to mean that that person's going to be received with open arms.

MC Yeah.

DB But with a .. in the terms of a cultural centre, I think cultural centres can act, furthermore, as an intermediary between the general public and the community. You know, the community doesn't have to more or less deal with these individuals, that there's some sense of control through the cultural centre. And a cultural centre doesn't necessarily mean that there's people there [unclear]. But they can provide more details, and perhaps, you know, point you to other individuals, you know, individuals who are willing to speak to these .. you know researchers, or general public.

MC Yeah, yeah. So, then what .. maybe .. could you tell me .. what role do objects have in all of this? As distinct, say, from oral tradition, or as distinct from, you know, graphic presentations, or, like .. ?

DB The objects will always be the connection to the past. They'll always be representative of the past. And I think .. I think that the museums more and more that these objects are becoming important, you know, in terms of the cultural identity of different communities, and that these objects,you know, they may reside in mainstream museums, MOA, [unclear], may return back to the community, or that there may be some kind of partnership, perhaps, that these objects will perhaps remain in MOA under community control, but, you know, the community has contributed some of it's knowledge to that object, some context to that object.

MC Yeah. So let's talk for a minute about this question of use of object. Because, you know, the tradition of the museum, you know, the objects are kept behind glass, where they are essentially .. it's in order to preserve them as intact as, you know, as they are. They've already deteriorated to a certain extent and to try and preserve everything possible about what is left of them.
So, I don't know whether ... well, first of all let me ask you do you feel that there's then an inherent contradiction between that and trying to also preserve these objects as part of a living community?

Yeah, there's two worlds ... I guess what it comes down to is there are two world views, you know? Two world views that sort of collide within the museum. You have sort of the museum point of view, that perspective, you know, that these objects should be maintained, that these objects should be protected, that these objects should not be thought in terms of ten years down the road but more like one hundred years down the road. But it's like the traditional native belief structure, is that these objects were made for one purpose, and that's to be used within the community. And these objects are alive in that sense that they do have a fixed period of [unclear] and when they go, they go. You may replace that object with another object but that object takes on, is born, forms its own identity, you know?

But in time that object will go. And you can use the knowledge of the original object as the basis for the new object.

But it doesn't necessarily transfer the significance or the history of that object to this object. But the difference is that, you know, I guess I see the perspective, the museum perspective, as very linear, you know?

And when you're trying to do is cheat that end; you want to elongate that ... the life of that object.

Whereas Native it's ... Native is [unclear] circular, it all comes back. The knowledge that is contained within the object is important, but that knowledge can be transferred to another object. That object will turn, you know, [unclear].
MC Right.

DB And it's basically use versus non-use. You know?

MC Yeah.

DB By using the object you're continuing the cultural .. the evolution of the cultural identity. You know, that object is really in the past, but they're using that object to continue the present and future. Whereas versus non-use, the object is still in the past, but it's stagnated. It doesn't evolve as much. It won't evolve unless it's in use, you know. It's always rooted in the past, it's not being carried forward. You know, I think objects like that can be still used by artists, for example, I mean, artists come into MOA every once in awhile to review a Hamatsa mask for example.

MC Yeah.

DB You know, to figure out the workings of it. But those objects ... you know, the prime example, a couple of years ago, was when that native artist came, was with that .. Mungo Martin's, [unclear] and C. M. with her white gloves and saying, well, you've got to handle it very carefully, this is cedar bark, you know, especially handle cedar bark very carefully - non-use. But to him, you know, he was an artist, and he basically grew up with that idea that this is a living object, and that it's made for use. And so there he was, looking all around, and looking at it, you know, with no sense that this .. the Mungo Martin [unclear] that this mask was a hundred, or a hundred and fifty or a hundred years old.

MC Yeah.

DB You know, that there was no concept of that to him, because it was still [unclear] object was still an object that was still made to be used and that's why he was looking around in this collection. When C. sort of intervened on behalf of the museum, I suppose, he didn't take lightly to that -- granted that guy has a bit of a chip on his shoulder, and he was drunk -- but the whole idea was that to him, it was a living object. And you learn from the living object.
Yeah. But so, U’mista, for example, has, like, the older objects that were repatriated. They aren’t used any more, and they have a potlatch, or a so-called potlatch collection as they’ve called it, which are objects, contemporary objects so that people who have the right to a certain dance can borrow something in the potlatch collection that they don’t have, you know, the appropriate mask in the family. So what they’ve done is they’ve sort of said, well, these older ones, you know, are to be preserved, and the newer ones can be used. So, which ones would you say, say if the Carrier people set up a cultural centre, which way would you like to see them go? I guess I’m trying to get what, like, on a continual .. what are the limits with these older objects? Or should there not be any limits? You know what I mean?

Mhm. I think different communities are going to have different views, different mandates, different cultural centres will have different mandates from other cultural centres dictated by the community. And when I say that .. what I said before about how an objects – you know, it’s circular life – when it reaches what is perceived to be the end of it’s life, I guess it’s up to the community then, you know, what’s to be .. you know, what’s to come of these pieces. And by the sounds of it U’mista has decided to take them out of circulation, if you will. But to some .. to some extent that’s the same thing that museums have done, to some degree. I guess you could speak at a different level [unclear] point of view is that, alright, when these pieces came to the museums, they were sold to the museum by families, you know, sold to collectors who in turn donated it, or sold it to the museums, some people [unclear], some pieces were stolen out from graves or families, individuals, but when they came to the museum does that mean that in the grand scheme of things, that’s where they were meant to be? You know, that their perceived end is at a museum?

Mmhm.

Or is that just part of their life?

Yeah.

I don’t know. I think [unclear], I think that objects within the museum are still very, well, they’re unsettled and that the communities, for the most part, they don’t know exactly what’s out there yet.
MC  Mmmh.  Mmmh.  The whole issues are unsettled [unclear].

DB  The issues are unsettled, and the determination of the object, or the status of the objects are yet to be determined.

MC  Mmmh.  Mmmh.

DB  But I think once they're back and community controlled, or, you know, the communities know these objects, it maybe that the community may choose, or the family may choose, or the individual may choose to have these objects to remain in the museum and that these objects would more or less reside in the museum for the rest of their life.

MC  Mmmh.

DB  Their perceived end is residing in the museum.

MC  So that the ...

DB  I guess that the end that I'm speaking of is ceremonial use, not so much the intrinsic value, the artist coming in and viewing these objects – maybe that's part of the life too.

MC  Yeah.

DB  A different cycle, a different phase of an object.

MC  Yeah, right.

DB  That [unclear] so clear is that what U'mista by the sounds of it has taken, you know, taken the older objects out of ceremonial life. But they're still accessible by the families, the community as a whole. And I guess that's what museums do to some degree. But I think right now museums, and museum collections have to be re-evaluated from a community perspective. Because a lot of those objects, you know, to understand the context of how they're sold to collectors, or the museum, or given to the museum, you know, there's a lot of external pressure. Don't be [unclear], burn your objects, you know, paganist, oh, you'll all burn in hell, conform. I think in that context these objects were not stolen outright, but a subtle [unclear]. A more society based -
societal based [unclear].

MC Yeah.

DB And I think museum collections have to be re-evaluated from the community perspective.

MC And who in the community? You know, political leaders, traditional, spiritual leaders .. ?

DB No, it’s a community decision, I think.

MC And where do the families, like, you know, so much is family owned, traditionally on the Coast, anyway, where .. how do the families go with the whole community?

DB I think, well, in terms of the community, I mean, ultimately a family or individual owns those pieces. And if that can be proven then it’s the right of that family or individual to do whatever they want with it. But I think it’s becoming more and more, people are becoming more and more conscious of their cultural history; that there would be pressure by, within the community, you know, of these families [unclear]. You know, and whereas before these objects were sold, sold for profit, I think if you had an object at the turn of the century, for example, who owns that? You know? And we can prove that’s yours, and yes, we’re still using it in ceremonies, but once it’s [unclear] perhaps that this object can no longer be used. I think the automatic assumption is that they will reside within this .. like, that family, or individual could turn around and take that object out of collections and try to sell it outside the community. And you find a lot of people [unclear] that object. [unclear]. Some of would be outright, some would be more subtle, you know?

MC Yeah.

DB I think to a larger degree, native peoples and their families are becoming more and more .. well, they recognize that they are part of a larger group, and that as a whole, you know, they are this culture.

MC Mmmh.
And it’s sort of like a cultural responsibility. [unclear] And these objects should remain within this … you know, I don’t think it’s no longer socially acceptable to sell objects for profit, traditional objects.

Yes.

Ceremonial objects. And I mean, there’s a difference between what an artist carves, and sells … a mask to a family to use for ceremonial purposes, he may carve a very similar mask and sell it to a gift shop. But once this mask has been used by the family in a ceremonial context, it takes on a cultural significance. You know, whereas this mask that got sold in the gift shop is more viewed as an object of art. An art object [unclear].

So if you have a mask, say an old mask, say something that’s up in [unclear], and [unclear], and it gets used, and you know, it gets, I don’t know, gets banged into a post if it’s holding up a dance screen, or something like this inadvertently, you know, gets a big dent in it. Is that a problem, is that a worry? I mean, it’s a worry to a traditional museum, but is it, do you think it’s a worry?

I don’t think so. Once again, you know, it’s up to the community, or the family, or the individual that owns the mask. You know, a mask was damaged during a potlatch, as I understand it – I recall ] talking about that – that objects were taken out at U’mista and they were mishandled and when they came back U’mista had to repair them, these objects, you know, to maintain them. Once again, I mean, what’s the role of these objects [unclear]? There has to be [unclear]. And I think if the community feels that that’s not such a big deal, and in fact that that bump, or that scratch in the mask should become sort of like the history of the [unclear] or of such and such [unclear]. And Billy Joe banged into the thing and … you know, that’s important. It reminds you of the potlatch, that these [unclear] but if it’s painted over or repaired, then people will say, “Oh, remember when Billy Joe, wasn’t it that one? Yeah, Billy Joe slammed into the bandstand?” You know? I mean, it’s up to the community [unclear] the family [unclear].

Yeah. Now, you mentioned intrinsic value, earlier on. So, say a mask gets damaged, and part of it is repainted, you know, by somebody of the family’s choice, does it have the same intrinsic value?
Yeah, I think so. I think so. It’s up .. you know, the repairs of masks have always been .. if you look at some of the older masks and you’ll find they’ve been nailed shut, and that they’ve been repaired, sewn, something like that, taped, you know, that the value of the mask has been appreciated on the cultural value, I suppose. It doesn’t de-appreciate, or suffer.

Yeah.

I think the context of when it’s different is when it’s done outside the community. For example, [unclear], like the Musqueam, the Musqueam family tomb.

Yes.

You know, when they collected it, you know, Harlan Smith collected it – I found correspondence in the CMC ...

Oh, really! Oh!

Photocopied it, got it.

Great. Does MOA have it basically copied down?

Yeah. It’s all there. I’ll be working on it in October, start working on it.

Oh, great! Is that what you’re working on?

Yeah.

Oh, fantastic! That’s so good!

I like have a pile of correspondence. Like A. P.’s correspondence from the 1948 vault excavation. You know, that potlatch, the house diggers .. ?

Yeah?

I got everything. The pink canoe.

Oh, yeah? Great! Fantastic! Are you also going to talk to M., or have
you talked to M. K. about the tomb, the Musqueam tomb, because he has some ideas about that whole thing.

DB Yeah, yeah. I talked to him a little bit about that, but he, he’s mostly into .. well, when I talked to him it was in a very general sense, but what I’m starting to piece together is, like, letter by letter.

MC Yeah.

DB You know, the history of this piece, and I think I’ve been bitten by the archival bug, you know.

MC Yeah.

DB It’s like I can track this down, you know, and I’m starting to figure out different strategies.

MC Oh, I’m really interested in what happens to that.

DB Yeah.

MC To the piece. Because M. K., one of the things that he’s saying is that, you know, there are a number of people, collectors, who are actually after that piece for a long time, but that also to raise the issue with the family – I gather that .. I mean, after this whole thing with “Under the Delta” gets settled and also the “Written in the Earth” gets settled, that people in the museum are going to work with the owner for a protocol for the other Musqueam material which is in the museum right now, whether it’s, you know, whether it’s on loan, just to try to do something. But M. K. feels that the family would be very embarrassed if the whole question of the tomb gets brought out into open discussion because they would be embarrassed by the fact that their relative sold it – you know, even though they’ve got a new concrete one, or whatever that at the time they were, I gather, you know, that was fine, they were pleased with that. But that it would be a source of embarrassment to the family. So .. I don’t know, I’m very interested to see how it goes, because that’s, you know, that’s .. every time we get people into the museum who are horrified that we have that on display and right at the beginning and everything like that, you know, at the same time, if it’s an embarrassment to the family to have .. suddenly to have it brought up as a big public issue, you know, what do you do? Anyway.
Yeah. I think for that family, the best thing is to try and maintain a historical context.

Uhuh.

You know, what was acceptable then may not be acceptable now. You can't apply [unclear] use of today [unclear] or your family's with that of sixty years ago, you know?

Yeah.

And I think, yeah, there would be some initial embarrassment, but the fact that they, the family members now have an opportunity to reclaim this object as their own would more or less be a very empowering experience.

Yeah.

And that they should view it, you know, for other contexts, you know what's going to be a part of the community of Musqueam.

Yeah.

But, yeah, for example, getting back to the question.

But getting back to the question of the repairing of objects, the Musqueam tomb, where it was originally collected, the front part of the tomb, the part of the tomb was more or less decayed, had deteriorated, you know, there was nothing left of the front part, from what I understand, to be saved. It was too far gone.

Yeah. The front part with the figures on it.

Not well, I should say the front platform part.

Yeah, the bottom.

The bottom part of it? But during the seventies there, when the MOA decided to well, when MOA approached the national museum, you know, perhaps they would borrow some of these objects that were
collected Coast Salish sculpture, [unclear], and just by chance – oh, came across another thing – just by chance that the Musqueam family tomb was an example of a particular style of carving, that, you know, now that it was brought out. But before it was brought out, CCI, the Canadian Conservationists repaired that front end. But they didn’t have any real, from my understanding, historical evidence of what was really there, other than these photographs, those famous photographs that Harlan Smith took in the ‘30’s there. But prior to that there could have been something very intrinsic to them; and you know, it changes. Well, the CCI at that time chose to repair, basically interpret the front, I guess, you know, they took the back end, and reversed it to the front end. I think nowadays that that wouldn’t be done by CCI. I don’t think CCI would do that anymore, or museums would even think of that, you know that they would have any real information on this piece.

MC Well, conservators are not supposed to do that according to the Code of Ethics. You’re never supposed to go further than what you know to be physically true about the objects. So I’d be interested, actually, and I could find out, who did the treatments and talk – they’re probably still around – and talk to them and look at their reports. I could do that next time I’m in Ottawa. It’d be interesting to see, you know, what they made those decisions on. Because they may have been … there was also more of an effort toward restoration at that point, and they may have been pushed, felt pushed, to do a restoration, that to have just left it was somehow unacceptable to the national museum or something like that. But I, you know, that’d be interesting. I’d like to think about that one and ...

DB I do. I photocopied the CMC records.

MC Oh, you did. Oh, great. So, do you have the conservation from CCL?

DB I think so, yeah, there is some in the records, which I photocopied.

MC Good, good.

DB I was like the MOA mole.

MC Yeah!.

DB Doing my own thing. Plus, as an aside, the carver who carved the
Musqueam tomb, M. Duncy [unclear, sp?], and apparently [unclear] there's the Saanich Indians of Vancouver Island who wrote this manuscript and it wasn't published, but somewhere down the line, the CMC bound, like made five copies of this manuscript, and they were, you know deposited, one was deposited in the national archives, one in the museum archives, the CMC archives, and one to the UBC archives, and one to the provincial archives in Victoria, and one in SFU, and that's how it worked. But apparently the one at SFU disappeared, the one that's at UBC is still in Special Collections ...

MC So it's still there.

DB Yeah, it's still there, limited access. You can't photocopy all of it at once, so you have to go back for a multiple visit.

MC Oh.

DB And, I don't know what happened to the one in BC archives. But when I was at CMC, I came across the original manuscript, and then I came across the second draft, and it was annotated, annotated ...

MC Oh, interesting!

DB So I photocopied it, and made two copies, one for MOA library and one for A. And basically there's a footnote that I'm just flipping over. This carver from Duncan had carved the family tomb that now resides in the National Museum [unclear] Musqueam. And he states that this carver is the same carver that did the [unclear] Duncan longhouses, which by coincidence are the ones that A. H. has a backdrop at MOA. He has the Musqueam tomb and then you have the [unclear] houseboards behind it. So, it could be ...

MC Oh, yes, yes. Interesting.

DB You have the same carver for the same thing.

MC Yeah. Fabulous.

DB And there's a name, he has a name. I have his name.

MC Oh, great. Great. Great! Wow.
DB Things. It's interesting.

MC Yeah. That's a really ... that's just a really great skill you've developed there, ferreting out all this stuff from the archives.

DB A. called me the "bulldog". The "pit bull" of archives, because once I get my teeth into something, I'm not letting go.

MC OK. Going back and talking about repairing things.

DB Uhuh.

MC If a repair is being done to something, do you think that the traditional materials should be used as much as possible, or do you think that something that gives the appearance, but maybe as a different [unclear], acrylic paints instead of you know, or maybe it's plastic sea lion, instead of sea lion whiskers, or .. ?

DB No, I think it'll always be as close as possible to the natural materials that were originally used. In case of, like, sea lion whiskers, I would imagine the family, or the individual, wouldn't settle for anything less than the sea lion whiskers. And that paints, I mean, that's entirely up to the family, the individual. But I don't think paint would be such a [unclear].

MC So would it matter then, do you think, that, say it was a piece that was a hundred years old. Would it matter if you couldn't tell which were the new sea lion whiskers versus the which were the hundred year old ones, or you know, which was the new paint versus which was the old paint?

DB I think it's kind of a ... there's a dichotomy. Because if the object resides in the community that's fine. It doesn't necessarily need ... then you have to distinguish different parts of the mask that have been repaired more recently. That's the life of the mask, that's the history of the mask.

MC Yeah.

DB You know, maybe you'd be sitting there and someone may be willing to
tell you, you know, that mask has been repaired, and perhaps you look
here to see if there are new whiskers, but for a museum perspective, as
you were saying, repair work done in the museum, you know, the
conservation dialogue still applies. That you have to be able to reverse
what you've done to the mask. If it's done with a .. actually, yeah, if
it's done with the blessing of the community, I suppose, the family,
that would be different. That would be different.

MC Now .. OK, I should ask. Why would it be different? If it was done
with the blessing of the community, it was done by a conservator, are
you saying that would be OK too, or just the blessing of the
community, done within the community. You know.

DB Done within the community, but if it's a blessing .. right. To clarify. If
the object was being borrowed from a museum, and that object
somehow is damaged, say in transport or within the museum, you
know, the confines of the museum responsibility, I think the museum
has a responsibility to repair the piece to closely resemble the original.
You know, try to repair the damage. But .. how do I .. if it's a blessing
of the group, of the family, the museum, you know, it would repair as
much as possible OK. The difference between .. the difference I'm
trying to make here is that the objects have been used. Like in a
cultural context. They're being used. And if they are damaged it's up to
the individual or the family as to what should be done. You know, to
repair it as closely as possible and ...

Yeah. Talking about museums and responsibility to objects, like if
they're damaged, within the museum, and within the confines of the
museum responsibilities. It's not much different, I suppose, between
an object that's being used within a cultural context and an object that's
being used within a museum context. The only difference being is that
the individual or family of the cultural object, may do some repair,
may completely repair, or may not repair at all, any damage. Whereas
the museum, the museum object would be repaired back to its original
state.

MC Mmmh.

DB That the damage would be barely noticeable, if at all.

MC OK. So, say you have a mask, that you know was done by a carver who
people think is very important, you know, maybe it's Willie Seaweed,
you know, whatever, whoever, and that piece gets damaged, and somebody of today's generation repaints that damaged area, but in doing that also repaints over some of what Willie Seaweed had... his original painting. Do you think, I mean, how do you... is that OK? Also, if it's done, you know, by somebody in the community, another artist in the community.

DB  Another artist, you know, once again it's coming back to the, to the, you know the choice of the family or the individual. So, to them, you know, Seaweed was a carver and a painter, you know, he may have been a relative, you know. If it's damaged, well, "Oh, well, yeah, Seaweed painted it originally but there was some... when we had the fire way back then there was lots of damage, so I had, you know, my cousin Joe painted it, repainted it."

MC  Yeah.

DB  So the significance isn't that... it's still there, but it isn't such within a museum context. If there was a fire and there was a lot of soot damage on this piece, the museum would take that piece and strip away the soot. You know, rather than painting over it, or rubbing it down, or trying to sand it down. I think the significance is a different, it's a different perspective, you know, within the community, within the family, there's an acknowledgement of Seaweed, but Seaweed wasn't just a carver and painter, but he was an uncle, who went out fishing. There's a lot of memories that make up for him, rather than just the mask had been painted and carved by him.

MC  Right. Right.

DB  So, in a museum context that Charlie Seaweed was an instrumental figure within a, you know, like, Cape Mudge, Campbell River area. I mean, he's part of the Seaweed family, and this is an example of his work.

MC  Yeah.

DB  That's all you have in a museum context. You don't have the memories of [unclear] or the context of that.

MC  Right.
MC So, one of the things that conservators say they’re trying to do, it’s in the Code of Ethics for conservators, is to say, well, we’re trying to preserve the integrity of the object, and that includes the physical integrity, the materials, the historic integrity, if there’s something we can tell ... you know, a mark that’s part of its history, [unclear], the aesthetic integrity, which is especially, I mean, this can go under Fine Arts, especially for objects that were created with a deliberate physical appearance, you know, like painted in a certain way, and also the conceptual, this is just in the Canadian Code, what they call conceptual integrity, which means that if the piece has a religious function, for example, say it was a Buddha that had smoke on it left from tars and smoke left from incense and candles burning, the conservators would leave that on. And so it’s interesting, because on the one hand you’ve got ... the conservators defining, first of all, if there is integrity to the object, and that the conservators shouldn’t screw around with it. And, first of all, would you agree with that as terms for a museum principle?

DB From a museum perspective, yeah. It’s like — I think the term I’ve used before — is there’s a cultural object and a museum object. The cultural object implied by that is if it’s still being used within the community, you know, that it’s an act, apart, perhaps, of the [unclear]. Of the province [unclear]. You know, that that object has a lot more flexibility in a lot of ways, you know, in the way it’s been handled, conceptually, aesthetically, physically.

MC Yeah.

DB But when you have a museum object, that museum object, what I said, what I stated before, it’s more or less frozen, it’s ... museums in general by a stereotypical definition, you know, they keep objects. And you can break these objects down into historical settings or time frames, and if you can get a large enough collection you can actually start distinguishing different phases of artistic work, or perhaps ceremonial use, adaptations, the use of European trade goods, you know, the use of metal tools. You know, you can trace that.
MC Yeah. Yeah.

DB So from a museum perspective, I suppose these museum objects are an example of the time frame and the ethics which you describe are appropriate for that. For the museum object. But if you try to apply those same ethics to cultural objects, no way. I mean, that there isn’t .. there’s no flexibility at all. Because if by chance you tried to apply those ethics to an actual cultural object, I mean, you’re in a conflict pretty quick.

MC Mmmhm. But an object could be both at this point, anyway.

DB Yeah. It could be both.

MC Both, as [unclear] museum object and a cultural object. So how do you decide, what .. ?

DB Well, I suppose, I guess what U’mista does, the RBCM does too, is they loan out key objects to a community for a ceremonial use – from what I understand there’s some understanding, that, you know, you have to handle this very carefully, there’s a .. for example, there’s a packing protocol somewhere for care and handling in Alert Bay or something like that. When they .. in Alert Bay, what U’mista’s done is they use objects that’s packed before hand, and it takes some time to pack correctly, but when they’re returned, you know, they’re more or less .. no one pays attention to that.

MC Yeah.

DB I remember when M. sort of, you know, was getting upset, she was telling me about how these objects were being returned, you know, she was saying, “Well, you know, we pack them all nicely and they come back all dishevelled and sort of thrown in ... ” and I guess that you’re always going to have the museum, those ethics will be compromised every time those objects go out, but that’s the life .. that’s the compromise of the object itself. Between the act of cultural object and the museum object. I think the museum object that mentality, has to give way to the cultural object. [unclear].

MC Yeah. OK. So do you think, though, because we’re looking here, and we’ve sort of set up museum object here and cultural object, and when
I was in New Zealand, one of the things that became clear to me, especially the conservators that are Maori, you know, they’ve been given this special training, as conservators and they have a responsibility, as conservators, and as museum people, to tell the community, to share their expertise with the community, so that they feel that they have a responsibility to say to the community: “OK, the museum’s, you know, yes, this object is coming back to you to your community house, you know, or it’s on loan, or whether it’s on loan, or whatever, but, you know, I have this responsibility to tell you that it would be safest if you handle it in this way, and it will be .. and if you pack it up in this way, it will, you know, it won’t get damaged in transportation.” So that in effect they are acting the museum role and doing exactly what J. was so worried about, you know, with the objects going in and out of U’mista, but I guess they felt sort of a responsibility, you know, to do that. So that the community, then, could decide – had all the information on hand to make an informed decision. Rather than, sort of, yeah, I guess that’s the way they looked at it. But at the same time, even by telling people something like that, you’re still setting up .. saying, well, maybe not setting up standards, but you’re giving them information .. like, I don’t know how equal a situation is. Whether the community would then feel that they really have free choice about whether to transport it, or whether it would just make them feel guilty, if they didn’t pack it up the way they’d learned from the museum people. You know? So which way do you go?

DB I think [unclear] some adversarial role, I guess. You know, this is my object, you know, this is my mask, and, you know, you want me to pack it like this? You know, I’m going to use my mask, and .. you know, I think a lot of people, a lot of native people would just sort of, you know, scoff, “Museums!” you know. “They want us to pack it this way?!” you know. I don’t think they are going to pay much attention to that. And I think that’s, as a role of the conservator, or a museum professional to give that option to the community, but that role as being “ought to”. And I think perhaps somewhere down the line, people are going to start saying, “Yeah, you know. Maybe we should pack it up this way.” But it’s an option, and I think right now it’s still very emotional for a lot of native people and they’ll just see it as, you know, somebody will laugh it off, and “Ah, museums,” you know? Or other people will say, “Oh, museums are still trying to dictate to us how to use our own objects.” And, you know, I guess that’s personal perspective.
Do you get kidded by your friends, or do you get negative responses from people when they learn that you've done all this work in museums? People say to you, "Museums! Why on earth do you want to work there?"

Yeah. I get that. I get that every once in awhile.

What do you say?

I guess in a lot of sense, I ... I was at a conference a couple of .. well, years ago it seems like. And an elder was asked by – it was a Native Youth Conference – an elder was asked what he felt, we as native youth should do in today's world – you know, because all doing the discussion we were talking about traditional values, but, you know, contemporary pressures, you know, how do you rectify each .. how do you justify where you are? And he just basically said, you know, stood up and said, "What you do is take the best from both worlds and combine them to your own." And for me, I guess that's what I've been doing. I'm getting educated about different views, personal views. It goes back to what I said in the very, very beginning, you know, you can take a period of time, and you can look at that period of time from a personal – well, a period of time, from a historical point of view, an anthropological point of view, an archival point of view, I guess, on a, yeah, an archaeological. You can look at it in terms of an oral history, but all these different perspectives, that one, or at that period, you can read about them, you can hear, you can listen, you can write about it, but in the end you form your own view. And you take little bits and pieces of this, and what more or less conforms to what you believe and what is more comfortable for you and what your personal beliefs are at that point in time. And in time your view will be added to the other views, you know, and another individual will come up and say, well, what do you think of this, and you tell him. And that person goes to different historians, and different anthropologists, and different curators, you know, different museums, different repositories. And in time that individual's going to have their own sort of personal view of what happened. I learned that history, there is no singular tree. There's no one perspective. There's no one [unclear]. Everyone has a bias. And the bias in this case is not used in a negative sense. So it's your own personal world view.
MC Do you think there’s any use for a First Nations person training as a conservator, and apart from that, say, lets say they wanted to work, you know, in a job in a bigger museum.

DB Yeah. I think there’s a need for native people within larger institutions to act as a bridge, if you will, to actually provide some extra views, because, they are going to be instances where people within a community may need, you know, a museum professional, and they will be more comfortable dealing with a museum professional as native, and even more so from the community than an individual outside the community.

MC Mmhm. And what about somebody who trained specifically to do that type of museum type of preservation? Do you think that’s very useful?

DB Yeah, I think it’s very useful to have that knowledge, you know. It doesn’t mean that that person is going to go through that training, and walk out just using that training as his or her basis for knowledge. They can combine that knowledge with what they know, or what the community tells them of they need. You know, basically to conform that knowledge to the community needs, the family needs. You know, that I think it’d be more open ended, I suppose, in terms of options, that that native .. well, that the conservator who happens to be native may be working in a cultural centre for a mainstream museum. There’s .. I think there would be more flexibility for that individual. That individual would be more flexible and .. than an individual from outside the community.

MC Mmhm.

DB You know, not to say that that flexibility doesn’t exist outside the community. It’s just that I think that a lot of native people would feel comfortable dealing with native people, and I would think that a native conservator would probably be more willing to listen, to listen, to, you know, members of the native community, whereas somehow .. not on purpose, but a person on the outside of the community may be suggesting what’s wrong: you can do this .. but the community would view that as trying to influence or perhaps dictate their own actions. Like, this is an example of outside interference. All we want you to do is this, well, you know, what, I could do this, are you sure you really want to do this? We can make .. we could do this, we can make
MC Mmhm.

DB So.

DB I'm biased.

MC That's OK.

DB I'm biased.

MC This is your personal opinions.

DB Because I've been ... I more or less grew up in MOA, and to some degree, I mean, because like I grew up with these problems too, like, and I've actually started ... I've seen, or heard, or read the sort of steps MOA's been taking, trying to rectify certain problems ...

MC Right.

DB So, like, for example, visible storage. When I was at MOA, visible storage was great in concept, you know, a great idea, you know, when you think of the plusses and the minuses, the pro's and con's of visible storage, the pro's come out. Wow, it's great! This is what we should do. But then I went to the CMC, I don't know if that's the prejudice, I had to make a presentation to a First People's [unclear] Committee, and I don't think that was, after I talked to them ... they basically gave me the project of researching different galleries and wanted to know my impressions of different galleries. So I went to the National Gallery, went to the Museum of Nature, went to the Museum of Science and Technology, you know, to get the different perspectives, you know, what was my impression. And I asked B. to send me some slides of visible storage. [unclear] great, because one of the key problems of the First People's Halls is you have such a vast collection but most of it is replicas.
held in storage areas, how do you know until you get those collections out, [unclear] – you know, visible storage? You know, it’s a prime example. So I stood up there, and this committee’s made up of T. H., and, you know, G. W. and you know, native representatives from different communities – there was about twenty-five – G. M. ...

MC Oh, really?

DB There was about twenty, twenty-five people, you know, it was really nerve racking. I started off with a joke: there are two types of people that make me nervous when I talk to them, you know, there two groups of people when I talk to make me really nervous, and I said, Indians and curators, and then I turned to G. and said, “Oh, yeah. G.’s my worst nightmare.” You know, G. M.

MC Oh! Did he laugh?

DB Oh, yeah. But as soon as I started to talk about visible storage, G.W. sort of stood up and said, “No, no. Visible storage is a warehouse. It's a warehouse of all these objects.” You know, these objects, it’s more or less this glorified kind of trophy room, you know, look at we have, ha ha ha. And I’m .. I keep kicking myself that I didn’t stand up and say, well, “No, that’s your view.” But there was G.W. standing there, you know?

MC Yeah.

DB But my perspective is visible storage is an alternative, you know, and that’s what it is. Purely visible storage. You know? And yeah, MOA’s visible storage is only designed for a certain amount of objects, and MOA has far surpassed that capacity. And, you know, that’s why we have the prototype to try to rectify that problem. And also rectify a number of other problems you know, for example, individual climate control, or climate control and light levels and such. But visible storage basically serves as one form of access to museums functions. You know, to visual access. You know. You have a visual comparison between objects, you know. You know, and I don’t know if I’ve been indoctrinated, you know, but the whole idea of visual storage, in my mind, is a good one. But to a lot of people, they don’t like the warehouse in [unclear]. It’s too overwhelming. You know, when I go into visible storage, I don’t know what to do. You know? I’ll stop and
look, you know? I don’t go running through it. Visible storage is not a place to run through in the space of five minutes.

MC Yeah.

DB It’s a place where you could spend hours. But in that .. that’s one aspect, I think, MOA’s trying to rectify. I think what MOA has to do, though, is get away from that art gallery feel. The glorified art gallery. And then somewhere down the line you have to assume that that question of cultural context, and the lack of it, you know the “Great Hall” and the [unclear] Area” and “The Masterpiece Gallery” that has to be addressed. You know, be it text on the wall, or some kind of visual presentation, AV presentation, the combination.

MC Do you think, though, that MOA could in essence keep sort of the physical layout as it is now, but sort of add these things. Add the graphics and the video, and .. ?

DB Realistically, MOA doesn’t have the money to do anything else.

MC Yeah.

DB So I mean, like, yeah it would have to be additions, the key locations, you know, and that whole idea of the electronic gallery in place of where [unclear] is now. You know [unclear], but I think we need some kind of, like, the SAM, the Seattle Art Museum – have you been there?

MC Yeah, when it first opened, though, so I haven’t seen .. yeah.

DB You remember they have these labels, and they have like a .. in one case they have like a historical programme, black and white programme of these objects, you know? And [unclear]. But then then the next week, there’s a colour photograph of a more recent event of a potlatch of the same object and there was the object again. And then there was like, quotes, and a brief description of the object. What it was used for, and there was a quote by such and such, you know, a contemporary quote. There it is. A thumbnail sketch of what that piece [unclear]. You know. You have the historical context in the black and white photograph, and then the contemporary context with the colour photograph and the contemporary quotes, and you know, coupled with the fact that the object [unclear], you know?
Unedited transcript of original interview, with later clarification from some interviewees.
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MC Yeah.

DB Continuity.

MC Yeah.

DB That’s what museums [unclear].

MC Well, there’s a little bit of that, a little bit, you know, in that class project that J., her group .. ? That I thought was really great.

DB Yeah. I think so, yeah.

MC You know, and it’s going to be up permanently .. it was really .. .well, one more thing. Getting back to the future generations, OK, say at U’mista or another cultural centre, do you think it’s better for the future generations, and I’ve also heard referred to, especially I guess, with the Six Nations People, the Seventh Generation principle, so do you think it’s better for the education of the future generations of First Nations, that the future generations can see the old objects, even if they can’t handle them because they’re so fragile? Or that the older objects may have disappeared, or, you know, only partially of what they used to be because of being handled, I mean, but there are still cultural traditions that are continuing and there are newer objects that are made.

DB Exactly. The trap that [unclear] question, is that you’re thinking linear instead of circle.

MC OK.

DB OK, so you have an object, that is inspired by an older object, OK, and perhaps that object is now, or several generations from now, presides in a museum type institution, a cultural centre of some sort, that generation know that object is an example, for example it could be a mask, a ceremonial mask, but that ceremonial mask has a long life. It’s like now, you know, you look at a Mungo Martin Raven and you know that there were Raven masks before that. You know? But in this case, this mask was inspired [unclear]. The meaning of the mask and the significance of that mask isn’t changing. It’s evolving, you
know, and who's to say that somewhere down the line that these masks will take on new characteristics. Well, they will take on new characteristics. But these characteristics are reflecting the community. And an example, you know you have a living community when that [unclear] with the environment.

MC  Uhuh. Right, right.

DB  And taking what's good, you know, of both worlds, and combining into their own. That's an example of their culture. So not necessarily seven generations, you know, that object doesn't have to last for seven generations but the idea of it, the meaning of that object will last. And will inspire other objects at the same time.

MC  Alright. That's great. Now, is there anything else at this point that you want to add.

DB  I live in Surrey?

MC  Yeah!

DB  I'm just kidding .. I'm a Surrey boy!!

MC  Great. Alright. Well, Don, thank you, thank you. That was really terrific.
DOUG CRAMNER
AFFILIATION: KWAKWAKA’WAKW
ARTIST, [AGE GROUP 60-80 YEARS]
TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN HIS HOME, SEPT. 29, 1995, ALERT BAY.

[Starts in middle of conversation]

DC  The request to borrow objects from museums? I mean, there are people around capable of making things, of reproducing things [unclear]. We appreciate objects. I don’t know. I wouldn’t want anything back. I mean that belongs to you because, you know, they probably – what the hell, we’d have to fix it! And about the traditional protocols regarding the way objects are [unclear] I don’t know. I mean, you guys went to school – I mean, studied to fix things or whatever. Okay, you’d be out of a job. [unclear]. So, I don’t know. I think, I mean, what’s there should be there and should stay there.

MC  Like some of the things in the Museum of Anthropology should stay?

DC  Oh yeah. I mean, then you have the ridiculous Indians who say “Hey, that was my great grandfather’s. I want it back!” The question is why?

MC  Yeah. What did you feel when the stuff, you know, the collection came back here?

DC  I didn’t feel anything. It was when I was a baby. I mean, God. [unclear]. But as for the rest of them who came to this opening, hell, that was a big party!

MC  So, do you think it’s worthwhile at all to preserve these objects?

DC  Why did they start doing it in the first place, I wonder? You know?

MC  I don’t know but, yeah, that’s the first question.

DC  So, I don’t know; you don’t know. There has to have been a reason. They went out and collected, didn’t they, in Boas’s time and Hunt’s
time? And it’s everywhere. [unclear]

MC But do you think here – the collection here – is serving a purpose for the community ....?

DC No, I don’t think so. I mean it’s a museum. It’s supposed to be a ‘cultural centre’ and very few people use it as a cultural centre. [unclear]. I mean, people get along to begin with, you know? That’s right! I don’t know. No, I think – I think people like them to be doing what they’re doing. You know.

MC Do you think you get a sense that some of the younger people who want to learn to carve would go and look at those older pieces here?

DC Oh yeah. Okay. I mean that is one good thing about it - the young carvers are going in to look at old pieces. Yeah, it works for them. It worked for me [unclear]. But when I first started out at UBC, I mean I’d call in to see – what do you call it – the museum in the basement of the library and they were pulling things out. And there were things that people hadn’t even seen yet already. It served the purpose for guys like me because I said one day “I’m going to copy everything in this museum.” That I liked. Looking back, it would have taken me a life time!

MC When you first went into a museum – and I don’t know whether it was one down in the Carnegie Centre in Vancouver?

DC Yeah!

MC So, like, did you feel anything like when you first – I don’t know.

DC They had all the old stuff, you know? That was it! [unclear]. I mean, there was hardly anybody radical about this when I was young. There wasn’t even a lot of land claim things or whatever. But then they didn’t have a whole lot in museums. They had a lot of that slate – they had more slate than anybody else had.

MC What about objects that get handed down within families? I mean like things that are in the museum here now – some of them probably would have got handed down to you at some point, if they hadn’t been taken away. So, like, do you see that it’s worthwhile – I mean, again, in
terms of preservation – that families keep their older things ...

DC  No, you have to remember that these people don’t know how to look after things. Throw it in a corner... Well, I don’t know. I had a set of undersea animal type things – some part of the animal kingdom – it was given to me by ... hmmm, well, [unclear]. We had to make this whole set. If you want something and you had the right to it, then do it, you know, instead of going to museums and saying “I want that. It’s mine.” [unclear]. It costs so damn much to fix something, you know? So, the Maritime Museum – that pole that’s outside the Maritime Museum? – Mungo carved [it]. They want to donate this to the U’mista. The thing is what – over 38 [feet] long? And it needs an awful lot of fixing, I’m sure. You know? I mean, nobody has the money anymore.

MC  Exactly! That’s the thing and, if it comes to down to paying an artist to create something new or spending the money on trying to fix something old up – but then, I mean, Mungo Martin was a famous artist. So, is there a use in or a purpose to preserve something by artists that people think these are great artists?

DC  Ah ... [unclear]. Escher, who said the same thing.

MC  Does he?

DC  Yeah. You know ... in the Renaissance and beyond, the people were architects, sculptors and painters and that’s what they did for a living. They painted. And after the Renaissance, all of a sudden we have this word ‘Art’! But anyhow. Know[ing] Mungo has done it – yeah, I guess. Why save these things if the work was done by Mungo? ‘Cause Mungo done an awful lot of things. Hmmm, I really don’t know.

MC  So we have examples – you know, we have at the museum those two big pieces by Bill Reid that are ‘touchables’ and we’ve had people come and say “How come you have this very famous person who made these and you’re letting them get worn away?” Which is true, like all the adzing on the back of the bear is all – you can hardly see it now. And so, we’ve been criticized for letting these be ‘touchables’ and I bet we’ll get more criticism after Bill dies. The prices go up and everything! But then, on the other hand, it’s a way for kids to experience the pieces.
DC  Yeah, well – I mean this is what the things ... were carved for, anyway. Even when it was outside. People had a great time, old Bill said. But I don’t know. I never see ‘wear’, anyway. It ‘ages’ and what not. Let it go that way.

MC  Yeah. So what about, like, your pieces – and I know you worked in collaboration with Bill – but also pieces that you’ve done where, you know, they’re mainly – either you did them on your own or there was a team of people working under you? Were, like – say it’s a pole or it’s a mask or something like that – would you want it to be kept up or maintained?

DC  No, I don’t think so. Everything is – you have to do a new one once in a while!

MC  No, actually it’s interesting because a friend of mine in Britain was talking about this. She’s in sort of organizing – like Circle Crafts in Vancouver? – She was heading up Circle Craft for a long time when she was here and then she went over to Britain and she got involved there in the not-for-profit arts sector. But she’s in the marketing end of whatever you call it – cooperatives – and she was saying that the thing is that the British government put so much money towards heritage. You know, they have to support the National Trust and all museums and everything and she just wanted a bit of that pie to go to artists. Because she saw it as definitely being part of the same pot of money and that heritage, because it’s such a ‘motherhood’ issue, ends up winning out.

MC  That’s it, yeah. I mean, do you feel there’s any use to preserving objects in a museum setting or does that just make them ‘static’?

DC  No, I think what people have to advance now should be that [things] should be preserved. You know?

MC  Why?

DC  So they can be seen. Even “dumb Indians” want to see these things. Not to take them away. Yeah, but then we have to go back to why they started collecting these things. Is it for the same reason they have today or is it different?
MC  Do you mean people who buy contemporary art of the same thing or people who collect the old –

DC  The old pieces. You know, the white man is a very strange animal. He collects and collects and collects and collects and collects and collects and collects and one day, he puts it into a museum! But then, these guys that were in the business of collecting – how they found some of the stuff that they were buying, I really don’t know. The pieces are very similar to [stuff] that came out of here. How some of these guys got started – there was a guy in Echo Bay. His name was M. E.. He had a store and he was giving credit to guys during the winter time when the fishing would be bad or whatever. So he just cut off the credit! You know, he wasn’t making any money. A guy came in one day with a mask and said “What will you give me for this?” The guy was new. He didn’t have a clue. So he gave this guy some food and grub and away he went. He tucked this thing up on a shelf. He still didn’t know. Summer time rolled around. He had a [unclear] attached to the barn and a great big, fancy boat tied up to this float [unclear] and said “How much do you want for this?” He says “God, I don’t know.” The guy offers him $500. He didn’t know it was that serious. But he was getting stuff from England, from other people’s basements and how he got [unclear] I have no idea. He came with a whole pile of stuff one day – a pole [unclear] – and tried to say that Mungo did them. But it’s unfinished! I don’t know what he did with them but any how. He was the first guy, I think, to sell a big lump – like $3000 then was big money – to the Glenbow.

MC  Oh, wow, the Glenbow! So about what year was this?

DC  Oh, God ... around about the late fifties, I guess. And then, this guy used to have a second antique shop on – what’s that street next west to Granville?


DC  Powell, I guess. And he’s the guy who came up here and bought up everything.

MC  I think it also, you know, confirms a lot of status on the collector to give something to the museum. It becomes “the collection of so and
so", you know? And I think that’s also – also to the individual “I gave my grandmother’s Christening gown.” Or something like that, you know. People then, you know – it gives me status to go and see my name on that label or whatever. But that’s really also a ‘white’ concept, you know, of museums ...

DC Yeah but you know I [unclear] get tired of it or just run out of room.

MC Yeah, could be other [reasons for donating personal collections].

DC Walter Koerner started to build that [unclear] of his –

MC The ceramic? Yeah, yeah.

DC Yeah, it was a nice thing to do. I liked what I saw.

MC Or people like R. B., too. He gives stuff to us, gives stuff up here – he gets a big tax receipt every time he does it. He gets the pleasure of collecting. He’s got lots of money and then the pieces that he – for whatever reason – doesn’t want as much, give him his tax receipt.

DC Yeah! Well, this is one thing – Oh, God, I don’t know.

MC So what about – I mean, what do you think – is there a future for museums?

DC Been around for a long time. I don’t think they’re ever going to go away. Well, there has to be a future – look at that damn thing that’s being built [unclear]!

MC So, what I also wanted to ask the objects here are, um – I mean, they would have been, they were family owned originally. But now, do you think that whether you or whether people – do they see them first as ‘family heritage’ or do they see them as ‘community heritage’?

DC Family.

MC Family.

DC It seems pretty loose here now. Even songs were something you just couldn’t pick up and use. You’d have to ask permission. But what
they were doing earlier – let’s say twenty years ago – they were singing songs that people knew, whether it was the right thing to do or not. But, you know, this was when things sort of went downhill – against protocol or whatever. They started to break rules. They were using anything and everything. So, we had old people saying “This is not right.” But nobody was listening.

MC So were they doing it because people were –

DC Because they didn’t know anything, any more. You know? Like when I say they were singing songs that people knew. So they used them, telling the song whether it belonged to them or not. [unclear]. But now we have young people listening to tapes of songs that Mungo and the other old people were doing. But the strange thing about it now is that these people don’t speak the language and the songs are different – very different. But, I think it’s going to happen, anyway. The next bunch of kids – the songs are going to be different again.

MC Right. What about, then, the pieces – the pieces here – when they first came back (or even after that) were people expecting to use them, to dance them? Did they like it or not like it when, you know, the centre said ‘no’, you know, these pieces are –

DC I don’t think so. I mean these things came back after just sitting in a museum.

MC People didn’t mind that, you don’t think?

DC No, I don’t think so. No. As I say, one had to have the right to it. And we didn’t know who belonged to these things [unclear] nobody really remembers [unclear]

MC Do people – like, a number of people carve here. Do a lot of families have their own regalia that they use or do people often just borrow from the collection, if they can borrow from the centre?

DC This village? No, I mean, people are storing their stuff at the centre now. A lot of it – that really belongs to somebody. There are carvers here but, you know, they will – somebody will come in and say “I want another one of these. Could you do it? Some one’s giving a potlatch.” So, you might as well do it. [unclear]. She came in with this cradle
rattle, as it was called. You know – a round thing. She came in [and said] “Can you make this?” “Yeah. Yeah, okay.” [unclear] Just when she was going to leave, I said “How many?” “Twelve.”

DC  No, this was, this was, this was old Agnes. Yeah. But I still had students. I had twelve students and I had a new toy, which was a wood blader and it was a piece of cake. I turn twelve rattles, cut them in half, gave them to the students and they were done in a couple of days.

MC  If one of your pieces – not a pole, so not something outside but something inside – got damaged, would you want people to come first to you to see if you wanted to repair it or would, you know, would it matter to you, if it got damaged [unclear] –

DC  If it belonged to somebody else? Yeah, okay. It isn’t mine any more. That’s their business. You know? I was through with it the day I took money for it!

MC  So, what about – what about the old pieces? Say something got accidentally damaged – somebody banged into it or something like that? [unclear].


MC  Like, say, it was something that was from your family – would you want people to come in and ask you first before, you know, somebody else did it. you know. Do you have any feelings about that?

DC  Oh, no. Some, some, some guy out there should fix it up who’s the guardian of it. No, it wouldn’t really matter.

MC  Well, what about this thing that museums have where – especially conservators [unclear] I’m a conservator.

DC  Yeah, okay.

MC  Okay. But you know, like, we try to prevent even the slightest scratch from happening –
DC  I know that!

MC  So, how do you feel about that? Because, you know, we define 'damage' as being like sort of on a scale from one to ten. You know – like before you even hit one, it's damaged. Where would you put 'damage'? Say at what point would you consider one of your pieces to have been 'damaged'?

DC  Oh ... You're talking mask or whatever?

MC  Yeah. Say, again, not something outside [unclear].

DC  Yeah, okay. I don't know. The thing is you can break a mask and what's the good of fixing a broken mask?

MC  Yeah. What about one of your paintings?

DC  Damn it, I'll do another one. No, no – like I say, this painting isn't mine anymore. Okay. Some people have bought it and it's in somebody else's hands. It's their business. It's not for me to fix it.

MC  And something that's outside, like a pole – do you think, especially for something outside that, you know, they should keep the natural cycle as people have said? That they should be allowed to deteriorate?

DC  Well, I mean, it's not happening now. They're trying to preserve these things from the day that they stood them out but – Oh, God, take the Haida group as an example. You tried to do [preventive work] on all of them but something went wrong. After thirty years, these things are as rotten as some of the hundred year poles we have. I couldn't believe it. Those were solid pieces of wood when we set them up.

MC  These ones?

DC  The Haida group at UBC. outside.

MC  The ones and the house? The poles attached to the house?

DC  Yeah.

MC  Right and they are – they're really rotten.
DC Yeah. I called Michael Ames and said do something with that bird up there. Because that thing is going to fall down one day, I'm sure.

MC Is that the one with the tree growing out of its beak? Yeah.

DC I can't believe it because I can stick my whole arm up to my elbow in the bottom of one of those things.

MC So, would it be better for us just to take them down and let them rot? Or should we – ? Like now, what's happening, is that we're trying to raise a whole bunch of money to get them –

DC But the thing is, I mean, what are they raising this money for? To build new ones? Just to take them down? Or what?

MC I think to get them consolidated a bit – the rotten parts, you know, taken out and have something solid put back there. But to be preserved – not to have new ones created – but to have better mounts so that water drains away so they won't get as rotten and to, um, maybe put 'caps' on the end grain and stuff like that. And then there's the question of repainting. Maybe we'll all want to get them repainted. So, it's like a real preservation project rather then saying “Well, these have had their life. Get artists to carve new ones.” Get carvers to carve new ones!

DC Well, I don't know what to do. I mean it's going to take an awful lot of fixing for those things. Like the houses – I think they want to do something with the roof. They want to build a bigger big one – a big house – but they think they're going to have problems with the Musqueam. "If you're going to show this stuff, why can't you show one of ours?" But the roof – Oh God! [unclear]. But Marjorie – not Marjorie.

MC Audrey? Audrey Hawthorn?

DC No, she was a young lady who was there. Madeline.

MC Oh, Madeline Rowan! Yeah.

DC Yeah, when she was talking to somebody who [unclear] knew
something. He wanted a Kwagiulth house frame – they wanted to hire us to carve it where the Mungo Martin poles are. I mean, there was supposed to be a [unclear] and everything else where those poles are. But then they had another study of that real estate, you know? They said it wasn’t stable enough for anything else to go out there. So they just left it. But we were even down to talking bucks then, you know, and then all of a sudden it’s gone.

MC [unclear]. If a contemporary piece is used in a potlatch, does it have the same significance as using an older piece in a potlatch.

DC No, I don’t think so. As long as it works.

MC As long as it works it’s okay? Yeah.

DC Things like masks. You can see some of those white masks and you can see paint showing through, under some of the – Okay, these are masks that elders asked to change while they are setting up for the potlatch. “We’re missing a mask here. What are we gonna do?” She said “We’re not going to use this anyway.” So she white-washed the whole thing and then, and then we have a different mask. And some of the very crude ones are done the night before – the night before the potlatch. We never do anything. They did it over night, you know? Everything was prepared the night before the potlatch. So [unclear] your screen – they did the screen that night. Yeah and it was great. I used to [unclear]. We went wild! Terrible! Yeah, the paint that they have at the time, you know, [unclear] the mask now. The old paint wasn’t even dry yet, you know? So you have some very weak, very messy paint jobs after they did dry. Yeah!

MC Did they do them the night before because no body else – no one else was supposed to see so they could get them all – Yeah.

DC Yeah. [unclear]. They have the fire – maybe a couple of gas lamps [unclear].

MC Um, so what if – if somebody took one of your masks, say, in the same situation – the night before the potlatch and they need another mask. You know, they’re missing one. They paint over it. Um, would you mind?
DC If it was still my mask, yeah. But, if it was theirs, no.

MC No. Okay. Yeah, yeah. So, like, if it was something that was yours and that you loaned - yeah. What if they just say they had to just alter the rigging or something like that?

DC No, no - it wouldn't really matter. I mean there's an awful lot of altering of rigging. I mean, you know, people have different size heads.

MC And what if they decide to add more cedar bark or feathers or something?

DC Yeah, it always helps. It really doesn't matter as long as you haven't altered the mask as it is, you know. Cedar bark you can get [unclear]

MC Right. So, the mask as it is - that is, you mean what it represents? Yeah. What about the painted design? That's also, again, it's like your own work on your mask so, if they'd altered the design, would that be like going a little far?

DC Hmmm, yeah I guess. But [unclear] nobody would really know the difference, anyway. You have a guy make one mask. It's the same mask - another guy makes the same mask. A lot of them make the same mask. It's [not?] about trying to come up with different looking styles, you know. After a while, you can't say which is right.

MC Right, yeah. That's interesting. Yes, so I guess if someone was altering something and say they used wires and plastic material instead of - well, I guess they do a lot now. They're putting sealion whiskers - looks the same. Do you think, again, does it matter that the original materials aren't - or does it depend on the materials - that they're aren't very many sealion whiskers available so it's okay to use plastic for them but for cedar bark, they can still use cedar bark?

DC I don't think it really matters today. I mean, there's so much plastic. Nobody uses leather hinges on transformation masks any more. You know, they're shiny, brand new hinges with stainless steel screws or whatever. People are not even trying to hide it any more, you know? I guess today - whatever works.
MC  So do you think there’s, um, for like an older mask that’s, say, at U.B.C. - do you think conservators should reconsider what they do and whether it’s worth [unclear] like they’ve been – we should [unclear] and do more ‘anything goes’ or do you think that for stuff that isn’t in museum collections, that the kind of ways – you know, the conservation approach – still has a place?

DC  Yeah, but yeah. I mean, okay, I’d lose [unclear] because, when we were over at Ottawa, we went through the CCI and went to see what they were doing. There was a young lady [unclear] “Do you know what the material is?” “Oh, yeah!” It’s [unclear] [unclear] serious about this thing. “Why the hell don’t you just knit another one?” After that, they let us out. They were picking off little bits of grass and mud and stuff –

MC  Oh, that was that archaeological find! Yeah, yeah, yeah.

DC  And I said “How long have you been doing this for?” She’d been at this thing for something like two months! Hardly started! Yeah, but instead of using real [unclear] on the side of the cedar bark or whatever, it’s a good substitute when you don’t have that. [unclear] [unclear] poor old Indian lady see a long time ago. You just can’t just go an buy it – you can’t.

MC  If you went to a museum, say, to look at something – you want to look at the older pieces. You want to see how things were done eighty or a hundred years ago – would you want to know what was a hundred years old and what was, you know, M. Clavir’s 1995 restoration?

DC  No, I don’t know – I don’t think so because, I guess, if there was something I sort of liked and it was old or whatever – Yeah. I’d think, oddly enough, it was good! You know – as long as it was all there, whatever the material was that was needed to fix this thing – I don’t think it really matters. If you go overboard and use – and not cement the way the original did – Well. Because conservators are – these guys do a lot of stuff where they match colour on a forty foot totem pole!

MC  How many days and months did it take them?

DC  No time at all!
MC Oh yeah?

DC They’ve got this thing down to a science. I couldn’t believe it. Like that Wakas pole that was in Stanley Park. He had to put that thing back together again [unclear] which really surprised me. But they move it in Stanley Park [unclear] where they are now. That [unclear] pole. [unclear] It’s never going anywhere. It could last another two hundred years in that museum, I think!

MC That one – that’s an example where the beak that you repaired – wasn’t that wood that was all put together? Like it wasn’t a log – done again from cedar log – it was done from bits of –

DC Oh yeah! The problem with that was there’s no wood back there!

MC Right!

DC And, I mean, what it ended up being was 2 by 4s, 2 by 16s, 2 by 8s. And everything was laminated.

MC So, was that your idea or was that their idea?

DC Oh, they had to do it that way because of, you know. They have some good glues now!

MC That’s one thing we’ve got!

DC Yeah, but they advertised. I mean, they went looking for big pieces but we needed a whole lot of wood. About – oh, I don’t know – eight feet long and about eight feet through, you know, for the bottom beak. ‘Mac. and Blo., the Cedar Leaders of the World’ offered to deliver a piece of wood for – what type was it? – $17,000! Yeah, but after, I mean, overrunning twice already, you know? You had to make it look good! I just said “Why the hell don’t you laminate it?” [unclear] and they still didn’t know how to, how to remove it. Any how, I said I’d make a frame for the top beak. [unclear] good idea and then we built it like a cedar strip canoe.

MC Oh really?

DC Yeah. It was light. It was strong. But the bottom beak was laminated.
MC Could have been – I guess it couldn’t have been done that way because you would see into it or could it have been done that way, too, like a cedar strip canoe?

DC They don’t do cedar strip canoes here!

MC No, I mean in Ottawa when you did it.

DC Oh yeah, you couldn’t see it. The thing was finished. It was painted anyway. You could see – but it finished off pretty good. But the original – I’ve seen some pictures of it – it stayed, I don’t know, about four or five years without the beak. I guess there was a lot [unclear] to try and put a beak on. After the pole, long time after.

MC Oh, I didn’t know that. Okay.

DC And we did so there’s a [unclear] on the beach. Cut that in half, which was how the top was and you set this [unclear]. It changed several times but the body of the raven was painted on the [unclear] side.

MC Oh really? Like originally? Yeah.

DC And then when they changed the front of that big house (this was when a lumber mill sort of kept this town), so they saw their chance and finished off the front of these things with siding, you know. And this is what they did with the big house, I don’t know, two years later after the [unclear] was off and they painted the whole thing white and they –

MC If there’s a piece – it’s in a museum but you know which family it’s from -- who should have the authority ... to say whether it should be maintained or whether it should be allowed to deteriorate or whether it should be....

DC Okay, this is in a museum. It’s yours anyway.

MC Well, we like to think so but you know!

DC I mean this is what you’re there for, aren’t you? I mean to maintain these things that are sort of falling apart in museums anyway. Okay.
I'd fix things if I was the conservator. It's my job.

MC Do you think, though, something like, say, the two Bill Reid pieces that are touchable – I mean, what should I do? Should I say “Look, let's get ... new ones carved. Stop these being ‘touchables’. They're getting way – they're getting worn too much.” Or I could say “Loosen up, Miriam. These are massive carvings. There's plenty of stuff to wear away on these and, you know, the kids enjoy it.”

DC This is what – I mean, this is what Bill intended – why Bill did these. 'Cause, you see, this was for kids. It wasn't, you know, it wasn't– I guess you could call it ‘art’. I mean, what do you call things that kids ride on, you know? Play model? No, I think I'd leave those things. This is what they were meant to be used for.

MC Right. So, then, again back to masks because if they were meant originally to be danced, then, you know, then somebody – say, again, you know the family – somebody comes and they're supported by the community or their families and so has the right to the song or to the dance. Well, then, should we say “Okay. It was intended, it was created as a piece to be danced. We should loan it out to be danced.”

DC Yeah, loan it out, I guess, but maybe you should ask some questions. "Who told you you had the right to use this thing?" Same with the song. Even, you know, even if it's the right one, it's not the right song [unclear]. See what they say. There's an awful lot of people walking around, I'd say, know a lot of things but the minute you start asking questions, they don't know anything.

MC Yeah. So, do you think that it would be a good idea for us [to find] a way we can check things out a little better? You know, should we like call up the centre here if we get a request from somebody who's from this area or call up Gloria or call up somebody else? Should we get an advisory board of several people ... ?

DC Yeah. Don't know who the heck you'd call up if somebody came along and wanted to borrow something out of the museum –

MC Yeah, somebody, say, from this area.

DC I don't know. Call Peter MacNair.
MC That’s true. Yeah, that’s a good idea, actually, because actually the last time we did loan things up – I forget whose potlatch it was but Juanita was down visiting. That was the year she was down and Randall was up here so it seems like we had that line of information. Yeah.

DC That would probably be the [unclear]. He knows about as much – masks in museums – as much as anybody else.

MC Yeah, that’s a good idea. One of the things that conservators say is that we’re preserving these four aspects of the object. What we’re trying to do when we preserve objects is to preserve these four things about objects. One of these [is] the physical integrity of the object – the material. The next is the aesthetic integrity, which is how the person who made it intended it to look. Then, there’s the historic integrity, which is all the marks of time that might be significant. Then, the last thing is the conceptual integrity or the cultural significance of the object and we’re supposed to – we say, we’re trying to preserve all these four things but often we have to balance one out against the other. Like, if somebody says, this masks is to be danced. That’s it’s cultural significance but then we’re trying to preserve the physical object as well. You know. Conservators usually end up opting to preserve the physical object. But – do you think of those four things – do you think, first of all, that they’re important to preserve and, if so, is there one that is more important than the others of you have to make the choice ...

DC Oh, I don’t know. It’s all important, I think. I mean, if you’re not going to keep it up, you’re not going to be able to dance with it, are you? And stuff like that.

MC Yeah, that’s true. I’ve heard that it would be a dishonour, a shame for the dancer if something fell off while he was dancing it. See, I don’t know because – actually that’s sort of important because, you know, about whether we were loaning something out whether we really try and secure everything that’s not supposed to move in case – because a lot – something will have old glue on it. It could give at any time.

DC Oh, yeah.

MC Something fell off?
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DC Oh, yeah.

MC Something fell off?
DC  Yeah, something fell off!  This is what someone would say!  Something fell off!

MC  [unclear]

DC  No, I don't think so.  If something went wrong at a potlatch - if you tripped or fell down ... - I don't think you'd have any [unclear] for something falling off a mask.  But someone keeps an eye out on everybody.  If something happens, then - Oh, [unclear] a way from here.  My grandmother used to say "Take it easy."  All the time.  But I really didn't care.  If somebody phoned me at work of if something was wrong, somebody would tell me "Your father gave us money!"

MC  Right!  Do you think that the cultural significance of the object can actually be preserved if they're in a museum situation?  Or is that something that gets preserved outside of the museum?

DC  Well, they're not the only ones and if you don't have - Oh ... if you don't have [unclear] a particular thing or, whatever, the other thing is there culturally.  These are pretty hard questions!  I'd say no bloody way!  I'd say 'no' to everything, you know, but there would be many other people who'd say "Hey, I like what you're doing here."  A lot of people really don't care.

MC  Yeah.  Well that's interesting for us, though, because, well, we hear all kinds of different opinions ...

DC  Because they're hard-headed people I don't much go for whatever reasons who don't like museums at all.  The stuff that's in them - why are they there?  Why aren't they somewhere else?  Yeah.  Well, who knows?  Maybe I - some old masks in museums that I see outside!

MC  So, when you just said you say 'no' to everything, you'd say 'no' to the request for dancing?  Even though they're trying to preserve the cultural significance of pieces?

DC  No, it really doesn't matter.  Like it isn't mine - it's yours.  Do what you want with it, you know.  And it's your job to conserve!

MC  That's what I get paid for.  Do you have - I don't know - pieces of yours here that there are some pieces that say - I don't know, you have young nieces and nephews who come over and you say "Don't touch that."  You know?  Like, is there some ... that you want to keep a little
out of the hands of –

DC I don’t have anything!

MC Ah.

DC Yeah and if somebody came along [unclear] [unclear] [unclear].

MC Well, that piece – the N. T. figure you worked on while you were at the museum ... We were concerned – like, Darrin and I were concerned about drilling those holes. Go ahead! Do you think, again, that we were just being too picky?

DC Oh yeah! I mean, if those arms are going to stay on – I mean that “Mickey Mouse” way that N. put it on, he should have known that it was never going to stay on. As I keep saying, do whatever works – whether it’s plastic, metal or whatever.

MC Is there a difference between – I mean if you sell an object – a mask – to someone who’s going to use it or, you know, you make it for use or you make it strictly for the market. Is there ... any kind of difference in the way –?

DC No. It’s the same mask. Let them hang it on a wall; the other wants to maybe use it. Same kind of work, same eyes, chainsaw, sander.

MC ... Now that you’ve had this recent experience at the museum, do you have any recommendations for us? How we should be doing things specifically in relation to the collections? Anything ...

DC I don’t know ... what you need. When I walk in, you’re either on the phone or making something and the rest of the group are on the computer. Another computer!

MC Very true! You are speaking the truth.

DC ... I don’t know, maybe you should get more computers. ... Well, I don’t think so. I mean, do you hear anybody complaining? Do you?

MC Um, no, actually. Not so far. maybe we’re just anticipating this.
Unedited transcript of original interview, with later clarification from some interviewees. Reproduced with permission; further quotation requires permission from interviewee.

DC Well [unclear] if nobody's complaining, why change it?

MC Yeah ... Are there many young people who are interested – like who take up carving?

DC People are doing it all the time now. Yeah. When I [unclear] come to Vancouver, I'd go to the galleries that had buyers. There were two - three new names every time I'd go. [unclear]. People I don’t know. I don’t know. It’s happening with the 'Ksan. I don’t hear about that any more. W. H. showed up from time to time that summer. I don’t know what he’s doing. [unclear]. Flogging his stuff. He never changed anything. It’s a shame. Anybody who ever went to 'Ksan, they all came out doing the same thing!

MC Do you ever meet anyone who’s interested in museum work? Who gets inspired by the centre here, say? Or something like that? Apart from Juanita! Is there anybody else? You know. Or is there something that young people would rather be – they’d go into education or social services or, you know, do carvings?

DC Hmmmm. God, I don’t know. But we were all trying to talk to some grade 12 kids here [unclear] what’s the point of going to school [unclear]. They didn’t understand. Wondering why, you know? They just don’t like going to school. Period. That’s it. But living in a village, they don’t have to know anything. [unclear]. Fish [unclear] And, I don’t know. Some of them ask, what’s it like to do carving? I have nothing to say other than that it [feeds] me. As simple as that. But you’re going to have to learn from somebody. There’s no point going off on your own, making junk or [copying] Bill Reid or whatever.

MC Well, I guess then, maybe, for the benefit of the tape maybe could you just briefly just go over a bit about your family, background and, you know, sort of how you first started to carve or get involved in that kind of thing and when you went to potlatches as a kid? Stuff like that.

DC Yeah, I went to potlatches, yeah, when I was a kid but it was not like now [unclear] Two, three weeks to do a potlatch. They didn’t crowd everything into an over night thing. And kids listened – different today. What other changes? There wasn’t any booze. [unclear]. Now for carving – everybody carved something when he was small. You didn’t have drugstores [unclear]. If you wanted a boat, you carved the
[unclear] on the boat; if you wanted a [unclear], you carved a [unclear]. Carving. We used to hang out with a guy called Alfred Shaughnessy. His father was a carver and he carved miniature poles. So we'd go in and hang around. It was just a nice place to be, you know? The old man didn’t care whether you smoked or not. We were what? Seven eight, nine, ten! Yeah, that was the first carving – the first totem pole carving [unclear] but he was one of the first ones who carved for the tourist trade. Funny guy. He carved his own ... coffin.

MC Oh really? Carved it?

DC Yeah [unclear] inlaid with – his design – was inlaid with yellow cedar. A totem pole in the corner. [unclear] light the lamp [unclear] coming out of his box, hanging on the wall – the guy was sleeping in his coffin!

MC That’s great! ... There’s some place in Africa ... where they carve the most extraordinary coffins. One looked like the guy’s car and one looked like it was a big, um, sort of a big lobster – some kind of a crayfish or something. They’re just fantastic! The people have a great time!

DC Yeah, it was even [before] Charlie James was carving for tourists. And then I went fishing for a living. Very early – as soon as I was big enough to pull a net. School was out because this is what you did with the rest of your life, anyway. Damned if – you can’t do that today. Fishing’s not a bad life. Then I saw my dad with a chainsaw – hanging onto one end of this saw, falling trees. Yeah. Then, one day, they shut the fishing down for ten days for conservation purposes. That’s when I quit fishing. Went back and stayed [unclear] ’57, I guess.

MC Still with your dad?

DC No, I quit him. I went off on my own. I went to Victoria to visit my grandmother and I did some carving, for a little, just to kill time. [unclear] Junk [unclear] [unclear]. So I did and Bill Reid called me. [unclear]. And he asked me if I wanted a job. “Doing what?” He said “Whittling.” And I said “For how long?” He said “A year, maybe longer.” That was 1958. No one knew who this guy was. No idea. [unclear]. He was old when I met him! So we were this odd couple that worked together for three and a half years.
So, when you were in Victoria when you went to visit your grandmother, did you go in the museum there?

Yeah, yeah. That was the old one.

So was that when M. K. – he was at that museum for a while.

Yeah. Wilson Duff. Then he went to live in Vancouver and then he shot himself. I thought he was [unclear]. Yeah, there were an awful lot of angry people when he died. [unclear]

Thank you. Those are all the questions I’ve got.

Well, I didn’t have a whole lot of good answers, I’m afraid but –

No, that was great. Thank you. Is there anything else anybody would like to add?
DENA KLASINSKY

AFFILIATION: KWAKWAK'WAKW AND SALISH ANCESTRY,
UNIVERSITY STUDENT, FORMER MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY
NATIVE YOUTH PROGRAMME STUDENT AND COORDINATOR, [AGE
GROUP 20–40 YEARS]

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED AT THE UBC MUSEUM OF
ANTHROPOLOGY, JULY 6, 1995, VANCOUVER

MC ... with Dena Klashinsky at the Museum of Anthropology on July the
6th. Dena, I wonder, could you just tell me a little about your family
background, where your from, your affiliations?

DK My grandfather was originally from Musqueam. He didn’t live on
reserve but lived in Vancouver. A lot of my relatives are from
Musqueam and live in Ladner and are fishermen. My grandmother’s
side of the family – she’s Mamaleeqala, which is Kwagiuilth, or
Kwakwaka’wakw, from Village Island.

MC Great. Can you give me some examples of your interest or
involvement in museums or in cultural aspects of your background?

DK Personally I try and support – or I spent a lot of time in the last four
years or so going to visit my grandmother and my great aunts up in
Alert Bay because I know there’s a lot of family information there,
history, that I want to attain – especially, like just in January, I lost my
grandmother so I realised how important it is to get that information
from our Elders so I go up for different potlatches or to visit relatives or
our friends – people, relatives up in Alert Bay and other communities.
With the museum, I’ve been involved for seven years in something
called the Native Youth Programme. So, there it’s as a student – that’s
what helped me to first explore my cultural background, or my
heritage, because I really hadn’t had a lot of opportunity prior to that
because I grew up in “suburbia”. Since becoming involved in the
Native Youth Programme as a student and then as a coordinator and
then continuing in the museum elsewhere, I’ve become involved in,
you know, a lot of First Nations’ activities, whether it’s through First
Nations’ Student Association at the college I attended or attending
different social functions, or powwows, or different gatherings. I have different friends from different cultural backgrounds so ...

MC Great. Okay. So, if somebody – like is there one community that you identify with in particular? I’m thinking of say, say that you had something from your family in the museum and we were going to return it to a cultural centre that you would designate. Is there, would you say –

DK U’mista.

MC Okay. It would be U’mista? Yeah. Okay.

DK Just recently – in September actually – there was a lot of – In Dan Cranmer’s potlatch in 1922 or ’21 – was it ’21 or ’22? – the objects that were returned, part of them were returned to U’mista and part of them were returned to Cape Mudge museum and so a lot of my great grandfather’s objects, regalia and stuff, were returned to the Cape Mudge museum for various reasons that weren’t, necessarily, for the reasons, you know, what the children, his children, wanted. So, just in September, they returned I guess something like 75 to $80,000 worth of objects back to U’mista from Cape Mudge. So, they wanted that back in Alert Bay. My grandmother lived in Alert Bay for 25 years so that is what I recognize as home. The Mamaleleqala, qwe’qwa’set’enox our band, doesn’t have a home community now. We haven’t since the sixties. We were removed from Village Island. So, now they’re looking at where to relocate and there’s a possibility of relocating on Vancouver Island or else on Village Island but that’s an issue still to be discussed or resolved. That’ll take ten, fifteen years. So, Alert Bay is the closest thing to what I can call a home community, I guess.

MC Right, okay. And so if I ask what is your Nation then, you know, would you say your nation was Kwakwaka’wakw? Or would you identify more with the band?

DK Well, when people ask me, it depends on sort of what context I’m answering that because for someone that doesn’t know, you know, Kwakwaka’wakw or doesn’t know or wouldn’t know different villages, I might not bother saying I’m Mamaleleqala, qwe’qwa’set’enox. That’s my band affiliation. My mom was reinstated under Bill C. 31 so she had to make a choice on where to apply for band membership. We
could apply at Musqueam and see if they – they can choose to accept or not accept us as members. Or we could apply at Mamaleleqala qwe’qwa’set’enox and my mom chose to go with that because it’s smaller and my grandmother was still alive and was a force to be reckoned with! So, I do say I’m Mamaleleqala qwe’qwa’set’enox but for someone who, who may not be familiar with villages or else, you know, First Nations’ names, I’d probably say Kwakwaka’wakw, explaining the previous names that were used to identify us. I am Musqueam as well but that, that – the ties aren’t strong just because I don’t have as much knowledge of Salish culture and, I know relatives but it’s in passing whereas, up in Alert Bay, it’s closer.

MC Dena, can I ask how old you are?

DK 22. I’m ancient.

MC Okay, so the other, the other questions are about preservation of objects, which are important to your heritage. So, for example, I’m wondering whether you could tell me if there are kinds of objects that you’d like to see preserved in your family or in your community for generations to come – if there are particular kinds of objects or –?

DK To be preserved on, like, behalf of our family community or in our community?

MC It, it would be up to you. I’m trying to think first of –

DK Objects from our community, our cultural objects?

MC Cultural objects, yeah – whether, um, sort of, all objects from your – or, or whether there’s a particular kind of, you know, whether it’s regalia or women’s work or something that you, you in particular would like to see preserved. Or maybe there aren’t – maybe they’re ones that, that, you know, they get used and then –

DK Yeah, it’s tough. I guess – my uncle’s an artist and he tends to say: “Well, you know, when an object, when a pole falls over, it falls over because it’s meant to fall over and, when it starts to rot and deteriorate, it’s part of it’s life process as a pole.” And he kind of shrugs his shoulders and laughs when we talk about humidity controlled environments and stuff like that. I do recognize the need for
preservation and – because the way I connected with my culture was through this museum. The way I first started to explore that, I recognize the value of institutions like this or cultural – different cultural centres – and the need to preserve some things that we have so we have tangible evidence of our history. I don’t think that every single object needs to be preserved. Some objects need a life! I mean, as long as – I guess, I guess it’s kind of – I’ve mixed feelings about that because it’s mentioned is it a question of use or is it a question of preservation? In some cases, I’d like to hope they go hand in hand but, obviously, very limited, the use, if you – it can’t be used on a constant basis if you hope to preserve it any length of time. I think there is value in preserving some objects for the long, long term, for future generations.

MC Why? I mean, if you could say why, you know?

DK When I interviewed an Elder from Katzie about the ‘From Under The Delta’ exhibit about archaeological websites and asked her why she thought these objects were important, um, she said because she felt that every object told a story and they told stories of their people, or our people, and that young people – sometimes, the only chance – those objects are the only chances for those young people to either visually see some of those stories or else to initiate conversation or, if Elders aren’t there (like, I mentioned losing my grandmother) if they aren’t there, then perhaps some objects can help tell some of those stories or can help to maintain some of that knowledge in the community if you can relate it to an object. It’s easier sometimes to preserve that, that history than it might be, you know, I mean if there’s – Yeah.

MC The objects – we’ve talked about sort of objects in general now – but would you see them best being kept by – being handed down generation to generation within your family or with being kept in a First Nations’ cultural centre, like U’mista, so that they’re available for the whole community for education and for, you know, also presumably, at the same time for the family for whatever purposes they want. Or – and/or some of the objects, at least, to be in a bigger museum like this one where they are available for city First Nations and a big, wider audience.

DK I think it depends on the object in particular. For example, there’s, there’s some things – my Mom’s involved in a lot of First Nations’
spiritual traditions and there are some objects that are passed on from one generation to the next. Some of these traditions are not necessarily Kwaguilth or coastal but they’re passed on. They’re sacred objects that are passed on and they’re very carefully preserved and some of them go back for generations and generations. Those are objects that are quite personal or sacred to maybe an individual or to a certain lineage or responsibility, whereas some other objects may have been that way in the past but they’ve kind of shifted in function and they’re a little bit more public or they’re, they’re, .. there would be no concern with sharing them with a larger audience, with the community or else beyond that community. So I think some objects – it’s possible to preserve them just with individuals but the reality is I can’t control the conditions in my house. I can’t guarantee, you know, that it’s protected from fire or from earth – you know, from all types of other conditions and, if I was looking at wanting to preserve an object that was kind of held in trust from my family as a large whole, then perhaps I would look to a cultural centre or else a larger institution and I also see the value of providing people in Vancouver or urban settings opportunities to see objects that come from some of our communities. There’s value there I think and also for First Nations’ youth that live in the city – urban youth – I think it’s [unclear] to come here and have access to objects, to see them, because, as I mentioned myself, I grew up in Tsawwassen, just outside of Vancouver, so I didn’t have a lot of – except for brief visits with my grandmother – I didn’t have a lot of opportunity to see our cultural objects. And my Mom is – both her parents were First Nations or native – and she grew up without having any connection with her culture. Very, very little. It’s only been in the last five years that she’s managed to explore that so I can see the value in providing some opportunities for urban First Nations people to connect with their culture. It’s tough because I don’t know how much you can connect with an object when it’s sitting on a, on a shelf or a concrete platform but, at least, there is some visual stimulation there. There’s some opportunity.

MC Is it, – would it be – it may not be appropriate for you to tell me this – but you mentioned sort of these, some objects that could be more public and some that are more private. Could you give me an example of a type of object in each of those or is it not appropriate –?

DK Well, as far as Kwakwaka’wakw culture or Salish culture, I’m not as knowledgeable about some of our more sacred teachings because,
whether they’re still there and they’re still held within a very small group of people, those teachings I don’t know. I can relate to other First Nations’ traditions like, for example, pipes, medicine pipes. They’re very sacred and I know people that have pipes that are a couple of hundred years old and, perhaps after six generations, the stem may have changed but the pipe bowl was the same and there are certain responsibilities that go with that, that pipe and it’s not passed on, you know, easily. It’s passed on with a lot of thought and a lot of preparation, and those are very sacred and people don’t, don’t keep them out except for the ceremony. The drums, I’ve been taught among more Plains traditions, that drums should never be left lying around or out in the open because they’re, they’re objects of power and to leave them just exposed or to have them face down where, you know, the surface you actually hit – to have that lying down, it’s like making a person lie face down. It’s not, it’s not appropriate so they have to be stored in a certain way and looked after in a certain way. More public objects –

DK We were talking about public objects. In some ways I don’t feel it’s necessary – sometimes I question whether it’s appropriate for me to answer that because sometimes I don’t feel as, as knowledgeable about our cultural traditions from within those cultural traditions – as other people. Sometimes I have mixed feelings because I’ve learned so much from working in this institution or from a more and more academic perspective than I have – I’ve seen a lot of potlatches but it’s only, the only way I get an understanding of what’s going on is because of previous readings or things I’ve learnt at the museum or elsewhere and, at the time, when it’s going on, I don’t get a lot out of it. People can’t explain things to me because it’s all in Kwakwala or else it’s happening so fast and, you know, it’s just not possible, so I make assumptions based on what I learned from books or from elsewhere or from some Elders but I, I don’t think there’s much opportunity. I guess certain masks that aren’t considered to be necessarily as sacred or – it’s kind of hard because I find potlatches are a lot more public nowadays than they may have been in the past so it may be that almost any mask could be, I mean, there’s – people have mixed feelings about Sxwaixwe, whether they should be on display and yet a person who applied for the Native Youth Programme wrote an essay on a Sxwaixwe he saw from his community in the museum here and just talked about how he was, at first, a couple of years ago when he’d come in here, he’d find that angered him – for them to be on display – but now he doesn’t
necessarily have that same anger. He thinks that there is some value and he’s so grateful that he had the opportunity to see it and he might not otherwise have the opportunity. So, even some masks – it depends on each individual how they feel, whether it should be on display publicly or not. But, also, contemporary masks that are made by some of our artists – to have them on display as well – it doesn’t have to be an object that is fifty or more years old. Masks that my uncle makes. If there’s one in the museum’s collections, I’m, you know, proud to take a look at it and realize it’s my uncle’s mask. Or Lyle’s masks – to see those and to be able to appreciate the work that he does. I mean – Sometimes, I guess, a contemporary mask, if it’s made with the intention to have it on display, you know, versus to have it just strictly for ceremony.

MC And if it was a mask or a bracelet that was made for you, say, do you think you’d pass it on – the bracelet – to your daughter or would you keep it in the family or do you think that you would, for example, maybe put it U’mista for show?

DK I think my first intention would probably be to keep it (a bracelet) to pass it on to someone in the next generation that’s in my family. It also depends on, I guess, whether the object – if that has value outside our family. You know, if it has rich heritage for the community or for – there is particular value there, educational value or cultural value outside of my immediate family or extended family – that perhaps other people might gain more. There might be more value in having the whole community have access to it than just, really, restricting it to our family.

MC What about objects that are now in museum collections but which, say, get returned to, Alert Bay? Would you see them as family heritage first or community heritage first?

DK That’s a tough call because I have mixed feelings about – what I know, I mean, it’s limited what I know about the objects that were returned to U’mista and the conditions that they were returned but it does somewhat frustrate me, knowing that these were objects that were removed from families and from individuals that are returned under only certain conditions and returned not, like not to the families that lost them but to a community as a whole and also certain conditions providing access, providing access to people outside the community. It,
it’s – to some degree those things are really sacred. Like, for example, if someone were to lose their great-grandmother’s wedding, you know, engagement ring and for certain, certain reasons and then have it returned a generation or two later and be told: “Well, it’s not really yours. It’s more important that it – that the community be able to see it and enjoy it because, that’s, you know, it’s important. It’s got historical or cultural value. So, we’re going to place it in this institution and you can come visit it or come see it, you know, look at it. Admire it and show it to relatives and family friends but it’s not really yours to pass on to the next generation.” And maybe that’s been done for how many generations. So – but then, again, U’mista serves a really wonderful purpose in that visitors go to visit and to see Alert Bay. There’s somewhere where they can go to see some aspects of our culture and it also makes them aware that the potlatch was banned from 1884 to 1951 and I think that’s really important. That’s why the photographic exhibit in the galleries now (that was, J. contributed to) I really, really value because it shows objects being used in a contemporary context and it also brings up the fact that the potlatch was banned for sixty odd years. And a lot of people aren’t aware of that. And there is value in people seeing: “Wha! There is, there is, there are a lot of important cultural objects. These objects are very important to a community and to families and it was restricted. They were not permitted – in fact, punished – for participating in these ceremonies that are so valuable to them and to their history.” So, there is knowledge that can be gained through public display of these objects. So I don’t know. Once again I’m giving ambiguous answers!

MC No, no – that’s great because this is what I really – I mean I’d much rather have ‘on the one hand, on the other hand’ kind of your thoughts than to have a, you know, sort of something you, know, that’s politically correct you feel you have to say. So, okay. What about if older objects that are in a museum but are important, you know, important pieces of heritage, cultural heritage important to your family? If these are older and more fragile, how do you feel about the family using the pieces (like, say, a mask)?

DK I think those are choices that have to be made by the people whose, whose heritage is, is at risk and if – I would trust my, my, my mother or my grandmother to make decisions to decide whether there was more value in having this used in a ceremony for a particular reason than there is in preserving it in a more sterile environment or if they
say: "No, I think it’s important that we preserve this object so that we have it for future use or future generations to even see, to know it exists." So, I think the choice has to be made by individuals, you know, who are very important to you and they have to think long and hard about that. But those are choices we make about, you know, a lot of – not just objects that may be in a museum but other, other things in our lives. We have to decide whether there’s more value in making use of something at this moment or waiting or you know. I guess, maybe, they’d have to make decisions of – I would trust, an Elder generation to make those decisions on behalf of my generation and also future generations, what was more important.

MC And do you think there’s – who would be the person who would point out the fragility of these pieces? Would it be, would it just be sort of assumed that, you know, something that your mother and your grandmother would just, would take into account when they were looking at the pieces or, or do you think that it is something like [your? unclear] role to point out the particular, you know, the, the, the physical weaknesses if there are, you know, fragile areas of the object or would you, because you have a, you know, you’ve worked in museums, you would know, you would notice some things but obviously you’re a younger member of the family so it might not be appropriate for you to even get into.

DK I think if I notice something I, I wouldn’t hesitate to, to bring it up and, and say that I’m aware that this may be a problem or: “What do you think about this? It looks like there’s some deterioration here. Do you think it more important that we use it now and afterwards pass it on to them to make that decision?” But maybe initiate some questioning of it and I think that, you know, someone like Juanita in the community, working in U’mista, plays a very important role. I think she can provide some of that knowledge that, that other people, you know, may not be aware, you know, have access or be aware of. For example, my Mom might be able on the surface level [to] observe that, perhaps, a beak, the beak of a Hamatsa is falling apart or is falling off. But something more subtle, she may not be aware of and it’s amazing what you – the difference in how you look at an object when you’ve got some of that training and you’re aware of weaknesses or areas that may be of concern and so I think someone like Juanita could play an important role in bringing up those issues to the family and allowing them to make that decision but at least providing them with the best
information to make the most valid decision, you know, that’s important to them. I think the decision is up to that individual or family but I would like to hope that they’re making a very informed decision and they’re given all the information.

MC Yeah. Great. And we’ll go on and talk about repair. Okay, what kind of wear on a piece would you consider to be damage and what kind of wear would be really nothing that mattered?

DK Do you mean like, for example, if someone made alterations to a mask to fit them?

MC Yeah. I could see sort of like different degrees of intervention. Like one that’s maybe just adjusting the rigging and possibly removing old rigging because it’s not going to be strong enough. But then there might also be repainting part of the mask or, or replacing cedar bark. You know, the sort of levels of, of, of either covering up or taking away from the old object or, you know, an intervention that is, yeah, more, you know, I don’t know, as much a part of the person today as it is –

DK I think for those objects to have value, they have to have some kind of life and that life may not necessarily indicate, meet, require that used, that they are danced with. It may mean that they’re used to show, you know, family members. That kind of thing. But, if they need to be, some changes are made to the mask as part of that life or that function that mask is serving, I think that those are appropriate changes – if they’re not damaging the mask. I think like we as human beings – to say that we, you know, the way I walked, the way I appeared or the way I felt and the way I viewed the world at sixteen, that was the limit of, of how I was able to grow or to expand then I would be pretty sad at that prospect, whereas recognizing that as individuals, we change and we grow and are adapted and completely transformed. The same with masks. I think in some cases they serve a different role or function than they did three years ago or twenty years ago and, if, if, you know, they’re going to be at a feast and my family is displaying them as objects that are of value to us then perhaps if, if a family member who’s going to dance it or an Elder feels it’s important that the mask look, you know, as, as outstanding as it was intended to look, then perhaps it needs repainting or adjusting rigging or else replacing cedar bark. But, if, if that comes to a point where it’s been done so many times that it’s, it’s getting ridiculous or it’s lost, you know, you can no longer, you
know, really finish it or else if it is jeopardizing the piece – you know, I think, too, to a large degree altering it is okay but jeopardizing, I guess, it’s preservation I would sometimes want – I think you’d have to weigh that decision.

MC So, if it’s a, if it’s an older piece in the collection – like say it’s really like one of the oldest pieces from your family or your community and even if, well, say it gets used and there’s some damage of some kind and an appropriate person from the community or someone designated by the family repairs it. In, in your view, is that as good as having the original piece undamaged?

DK Yes and no. Obviously, the piece itself is, is, is, you know, been put in some jeopardy and maybe is going to deteriorate further because of the damage, if you could, somehow, foresee that – that possible damage – and prevent it in some way but still use it the way that you’d hoped to and that would be, in a perfect world, that would be what you’d hope for. No, I guess the piece does lose some, you know, if it is damaged or in jeopardy then, then I would be concerned. I don’t know if I would – even if you could go back and make the decision about whether or not it should be danced, knowing that it would be damaged and you couldn’t prevent it – I don’t know if I would say: “No, don’t dance it.” I might say: “Yes, go ahead but realize that this is what is going to happen.” It would be unfortunate but, perhaps, sometimes that would, once again, be one of the choices you have to make.

MC Yeah, yeah. So, there’s really – it’s hard to try to think of guidelines of how much physical risk an object could be put to of you also want to preserve it. You know, I mean, because say handling, you know, there are ways to make it less risky. And the same thing, you know, with dancing it. I would presume that from helping the dancer putting it on or off in a way that, you know, helps to, you know, handle it gently or whatever. But also the kind of risk, I mean it’s like, like, you know, if you use it – like, here in the museum, I guess what I’m trying to get at, is that the museum, you know, the traditional conservation position has been no damage or all, all, all, [Background noise], physical scratches, flaking or whatever is considered damage and we don’t want any of it. But, in fact, is it really damage? You know, if you lose a few paint flakes or a little cedar bark is that really damage or is there a, a certain point where you can say after this point, I would consider it damage? You know. So the guidelines are, yes, it can be handled – it
can be danced – but it can’t be taken out in the rain or, I don’t know.

DK I guess if, you know, the, the family whose object it is and, and people who are involved in conservation of it or the preservation of it discuss or are aware of, you know, concerns about the object and, as you said, recognize that, okay, obviously if it’s going to be danced, there may be some wear and tear – there may be something happen. That happens and that may be inevitable but as far as, totally needless, you know, misuse – not ‘misuse’ but needless jeopardy – putting that object in jeopardy for, for, for no reason or just because of lack of, lack of understanding about the dangers of mishandling it, then I guess maybe you can make sure that the people who are going to be in, in, in contact with the object are aware of how to try and handle it appropriately and definitely do not go out walking in the rain with it and, you know, those issues so that it’s not needless that if, if during a ceremony, while it’s being danced, something happens or while it’s carefully being lifted off the head of the dancer there are flakes that come off or something. Well, that you can’t sometimes avoid and you make the choice. I guess you realize the risks you’re taking when you decide to use it and, like I mentioned before, there is value in using it. There’s important value in using it that gives lasting value, either in knowledge or further understanding or whatever in the family or community, then some of those minor damages you have to swallow, you know?

MC Yes, yes, yes. Great. Okay, this is sort of a, you sort of answered this but I’ll ask it in this way: for a piece that is a hundred years old and so it represents the time period of those ancestors would you prefer to keep it in that condition, which means that it will represent the makers and the, the, what the people of that time were like with some alterations to it’s history? Or would it be okay of it was altered by people today?

DK Drastically altered or altered beyond [unclear] absolutely like beyond necessity?

MC Well, say, yeah – well, but, maybe it’s been repainted to make it look, you know, like you said, to make it look its best.

DK Like, I, personally, I think I would feel that it’s important to have an object – if it does have this incredible history that accompanies it – to try and leave it so that it represents that history. Yes, if I were to paint it, that’s part of its history but then, as a result, you may lose, you know,
the visual indications of the previous history before I touched it. So, personally, I, I don’t think I would make the choice to paint it though I think other people have the right to make that choice if they feel it is important to restore it, you know. I guess, as I mentioned before, making sure that people are making the most informed decisions that they can possibly make so if, if people go through a process of saying: “Well, if we decide to make these changes to this, we cannot recover how it looked before or go back. These are irreversible changes. Is it that important that we do it? Do we want to?” And, and if they feel really strongly that that is what they want to do, then I think their wishes should be abided by, as long as they are aware, you know, “You’re losing this, in exchange for ... this is what you’re gaining and is that worthwhile to you?” The question to ask is: “Is there a balance there?” and then make the choices from there.

MC Yeah, yeah. No, I think it’s a really good point because, you know, if you’re repainting, you are covering up something but, if you’re just adding cedar bark and fur that has, you know, has gone and you’re, you know, restoring it, it’s something that you aren’t, you aren’t covering up the original. You aren’t, you know –

DK I think it’d be important to somehow either have that knowledge be known that this object has been slightly altered and this was added by “so and so” and that enriches the history of that object. I don’t think it diminishes it in any way because of the fact it was some contemporary, you know, recent changes to it. I get frustrated sometimes when people think: “Well, if artists used chainsaws to basically, get the basic shape of an object – they’re carving a large pole or something – well that’s inappropriate. It’s inauthentic because that’s – they’re using chainsaws.” And I’m like: “Well, the reality is when they get down to the fine, fine line, no chainsaw can ever compare to what an artist can do.” And so as far as saying, well, an object is, is inauthentic [sic.] or it doesn’t have value because it suddenly has velcro attached to keep the riggings on, well, the fact is that that makes it function better and it makes it easier to use or maybe it will help it last longer. Then that’s not an issue as far as I’m concerned because I get frustrated with people sometimes thinking that culture is, you know, there’s certain, there’s either certain tools or ways of making or preserving something that if you go beyond these certain traditions, then it’s no longer traditional or it’s no longer cultural and the reality is the fact that I grew up in Vancouver doesn’t make me any less Kwaguilth or any less Musqueam
than it does if I were to grow up in the community itself. There is some contact that I have through my relatives and there is some knowledge there that is still of value so the fact that an object is slightly altered, I think, it’s, it’s incredible to say, well, yeah, you know maybe the grandson of the original artist – if it’s from the immediate family, it’s continued in one family, then the grandson has made alterations to his grandfather’s mask, then I think that’s pretty incredible – the idea of continuity. You know, I guess, continuity is [unclear] important, if there’s slight changes made, then it increases the value of the object.

MC Yeah. That’s really interesting because, you know, what I said earlier about fur that’s missing and you put it back on and cedar bark, you know, it’s not covering up anything but, in fact, often there are [unclear] there’s maybe the piece of skin without the fur on the eyebrows or there’s some cedar bark. And so, of course, in the museum, the conservator would look at that and say: “Well, no, that’s the original. We can’t cover it up or we certainly wouldn’t take off to put something else on.” But it fact that really, you know, that’s a very static approach to, to, what is important about the object.

DK And even if you look at anything that’s of value to you, whether it’s your vehicle or whether it’s you, the clothing that you wear, if there’s damage done to the vehicle, well, no, that’s a documented history of how this guy cut in front of my brother yesterday and caused damage to the whole front of his vehicle. I think it’s better we leave it because that’s evidence of what my brother went through – the trauma. I mean it’s not a wonderful parallel but it’s kind of ridiculous people go: “Why?” And the same thing with something that’s very important to you. If it’s my button blanket, buttons fall off and it’s looking kind of shabby or you can no longer see the design, well, I’m going to add buttons because that’s what the blanket was intended to look like originally. I guess if you’re staying true to the original intention of the object and you’re not drastically changing it or getting really, you know, if it’s like you said, maintaining some sort of restoration or, you know, slight alterations but I, I don’t think that you need to limit the object to just, you know, if things are falling off left, right and centre, (to) say, well, it’s got to be left that way because that’s the object because I don’t know that if, if, – yeah.

MC Yeah. Great. So, okay, if there’s, um, restoration being done, would you prefer that the ... and methods that are used are ones that are the
same as in the original piece or would something that looks the same, like maybe you can’t get, I don’t know, the same kind of fur, you can’t get mountain goat or something but you can get dog or, or whatever. You can’t get dog but you can get, you know, sheep or whatever [unclear] Anyway –

DK I guess, as I mentioned before, you’re using a different technology to achieve the same means that, that it’s irrelevant how it will get to that point. If it’s done with respect or it’s done with the same intentions, if the same final product is achieved with those intentions and using slightly different tools, it’s not an issue for me, I don’t think, because it’s the integrity, it’s the intention that I think is important and, and how true you’re staying to the original object or the original value of that object. So, I guess, it’s like you said: if it looks the same but a slightly different material or method, I think it would be appropriate.

MC And would it matter to you if, say, a restoration had been done and you couldn’t tell which was the restoration and which was the older piece like, say, the fur was exactly the same so you – would that matter? Would that be an issue for you?

DK Would, would you mean would I prefer that it’s obvious what is restoration and what isn’t?

MC Or even if it’s not obvious but that, I mean, I guess it’s because it’s one of the arguments made for not using the same materials is that if you use something that looks the same but it’s not the same then you can always tell what was done later and, but other people say: “No, traditional materials should be made as much as possible because it’s more in keeping with the object.” So, anything in conservation, like you know in an oil painting that’s missing some pieces you would inpaint probably – well, you’d inpaint with, with, with different materials or, or some [unclear] always tell, distinguish. But that’s again, that’s museum values.

DK I don’t think it’s as – hmmm, that wouldn’t necessarily be one of my primary concerns to tell, to be able to tell from the object. I think it might be important to have that knowledge with, within either people who are preserving or, or housing the object or within the family who have a connection to it, that they have that knowledge that “so and so” altered it last year or made these changes. As I mentioned, there’s
value in that. It's more history to accompany, to accompany the piece. But to physically – I think it – I, I would be very sad if you lost that knowledge and you couldn't tell, you know, by looking at an object that there's this continuity and it's constantly been touched by a lot of different generations or different people. But just to specifically – purposefully – make sure that you use different materials – I think there are other ways to document the changes than the physical, you know, make up of the material that you're using. You may do it through oral history or else to actually document it on paper or to photograph it before it was restored and then have a photographs of it, of it after restored or – There's different ways that I don't think that if you're just doing it for that and it, and it, it may effect – as someone, you mentioned earlier – perhaps traditional values that are associated with that object. Perhaps they want to use cedar bark or use something else because that's the way it's always been done. If that is in conflict with using alternate materials then I perhaps would go for traditional. But, as I mentioned, if it goes with the integrity or with the intention of the object – but if it doesn't diminish those intentions – and if it is just as workable with the different materials then it's a possibility.

MC And who do you think would be the most appropriate person to do the restorations? Would it be somebody from the family or the community who's, who's an artist? Or would it be, you know, a museum conservator or somebody, I don't know, somebody else?

DK I think if there's a family or a community directly associated with an object, I think it's important that those people be involved with any changes made to the object. And I think that artists sometimes have an understanding of, of the traditional materials or, design elements that are important but I also think there's value in the training that conservators and other museum professionals have in maintaining an object or preserving it but I, I don't know whether it has to be one or the other. Perhaps a combination of both. Perhaps an artist has, is the one that may actually physically do it or have the idea about who they would like to restore it and make changes in consultation with a conservator, who's, who's letting him know – Yeah and once again, as I mentioned, helping him make the most informed decision, saying, you know: "If you do this, this, this may happen." And, you know, perhaps yourself or Darrin, what you guys can tell me about: "Well, this is definitely going to bleed or, or this leaks chemicals." Or things that I may not even be aware of because you can't see it physically but
it's happening. I would appreciate knowing that and if I can think:  
"Well, do I want do that or do I want look for something else that isn't 
going to be as damaging or as potentially damaging?" And then 
perhaps I might make that alternate choice. Maybe I might still say: 
“No, I want this because it's really important.” But, I guess if it’s in 
consultation, I don’t know if – I still think the, the final decision 
belongs to people who are immediately connected with the object, um, 
as far as their cultural or family history is concerned. But I think 
museum professionals can certainly be there, helping them to make an 
informed decision and offering their professional advice.

MC Great. Are there any objects that you are aware of from your traditions 
that you wouldn’t want to preserve but should be, you know, to 
complete their natural cycle and deteriorate?

DK That I wouldn’t want? Okay.

MC Yeah. I mean are there any categories of objects that you know about 
that, that are really inappropriate to preserve?

DK Well, there’s nothing that immediately comes to mind because I’m – as 
of this moment – and also I mentioned I’m not the most informed 
person about our cultural traditions. But also, when you mean by it 
shouldn’t be preserved and it should complete their natural cycle, do 
you mean that whether it’s a choice of keeping it in a constant 
environment, limiting its use outside of that environment just for the 
purpose of preserving it or if just – if both could go hand in hand and 
you preserve it for longer, if that’s possible or if you purposefully just 
leave it where ever and let anything affect it because it’s serving a 
certain function? I don’t –

MC Yeah, okay, well I’ll give you two examples. One is Haida, Haida 
people who say when, you know, they want – ... for example, when 
Keekus was here as part of the internship programme and was looking 
at some our baskets and said, she said: “Look, these are, you know, 
these are old, these are lifeless. They can’t be used any more. We 
would – I would just throw them out and have new ones made.” So.

DK I think there’s like, as I mentioned before, if an object has some sort of 
value or significance to a person in a family or a community and that is 
why they already serve – seek to preserve it then if it no longer has the
same functions or can’t offer the same value to that individual, family
or community, then, - When I went back east and I was working at the
National Museum, when I went [unclear] to their archives, I
particularly looked up Village Island, Mamaleqala material. A lot of
it had been deaccessioned to Cape Mudge or U’mista, as a result of
those changes. But some things they preserved when I looked through
their archives were like a bag of wild rice from 1922, from around the
Great Lakes region or a piece of a door frame from someone at the turn
of the century, someone of Iroquois ancestry who lived in a pretty
modern house but, I don’t know, there were slight adaptations made to
their door frame that were quite – no, not even unique. I shouldn’t say
that. It was just a door frame. But they knew it was from a man, who
was Iroquois ancestry! Things like that I think are quite ridiculous! I
don’t understand the idea of preserving them, when you can pick up
wild rice anywhere now and it’s the same wild rice, pretty much.
Unless it’s some unique – scientifically there’s nothing else like it.
There’s never ever anything else produced that’s like it. Um, so I guess
I see the value in Keekus’s point about if an object is, I mean, it’s no
longer useable and it doesn’t have any incredible, like, you know, real
valuable history associated with it. It’s kind of unknown or else it’s
possible to have another object created that serves the same function if
not more, have more value than – it seems crazy to spend your energy
on preserving this object that isn’t, like you said, like she said, is
lifeless. It doesn’t have the same value that was associated with it.
About preserving poles or something like that, I can see reasons for
wanting to do that, because they’re, they have confidence that they’re
producing more poles that are just as valuable and will be just as
valuable to future generations as those poles. Um, there, there comes a
point when you’re, you know, even with your own personal, you
know, objects – things that are very dear, the nearest and dearest things
for you, that you, you, you’ve carried around for twenty-five years,
when it’s finally in tatters, you have to decide to let go of it because it’s
not, it’s not the same object that you hung up constantly for the first
fifteen years. Um, I guess it’s the same thing when it doesn’t have that
depend to the family. Then, it seems kind of crazy to waste time and
energy and perhaps money on preserving something that doesn’t have
– if it doesn’t have the same value for that generation, it probably
won’t have value for future generations either.

MC Yeah, [unclear] talking about is –
Either cultural value in the, in the sense that it’s, it’s an indication of a, of a certain history or certain cultural traditions or it’s still vital in cultural, in certain cultural traditions, is still a functioning object today or it has this history associated with my family or my community that I can say: “Well, this object was used this –” Or it’s an example of when we did ‘this’. But if it’s one of twenty that’s the exact same, from the same time, from the same maker and this one they don’t really know where it came from or it’s not a very nice looking example of it, or whatever – if there’s no uniqueness to it then I think I don’t think there’s value there. I guess value in the form of history or value in the form of its, its, as I mentioned, use – like, it’s important to some cultural tradition at this moment, you know, or future cultural traditions.

Yeah. Okay because, in conservation, there’s a lot of talk in the Code of Ethics about preserving the integrity, what’s called the integrity of the object and the physical integrity of it; the aesthetic integrity, if it was like a painting that was created for an aesthetic purpose; the historical integrity, which is, um, if there are particular events in the history which have left their marks on the object and, you know, should be preserved, um, and then there’s, in the Canadian Code of Ethics but not in some of the other codes, there’s what’s called the conceptual integrity, which is the significance of the object, the cultural significance of the object and conservators are supposed to balance the four out and in fact, I think, conservators end up always favouring the physical integrity. But I’m wondering if you think one of those integrities is more important to preserve than the others? There’s physical, aesthetic, historic and conceptual.

What did you say about what conceptual –? Could you –?

It’s the cultural significance of the object. So –

Conceptual.

Yeah, yeah. I thought you might say that! I think – Okay, so if it is conceptual, if it is preserving the cultural significance, how is the cultural significance of objects preserved and can it be done in a museum?

As I mentioned a few times, that, that I think the decisions, some
decisions really rest with a family of people that are associated with an object, who, who have that object somehow tied very closely to them. They’re, you know, they, I would hope that they have the knowledge of why that object is important to them as a family unit or a community unit — like culturally why it’s important — and — losing my train of thought — that they, what, what, what they think is important about honouring or respecting that object, or maintaining it for future generations in some form or fashion, in — I guess those are the people who have to make the decisions about what that object was intended for, what it is intended for now and what you hope to maintain it for in the future and if you know that they only way to preserve it for the next fifty years is to lock it in a dark box with whatever in, in, you know, and they’re all sorts of conditions and if no one is going to see it as a result of that then what is the purpose of preserving it for another fifty years for that, for that end? So they have to make, to weigh those decisions, I think, and make what they think is appropriate for their family. And when I talk about making those decisions, I don’t think, I don’t, I would hope — I mean, this isn’t a perfect world — that when I think about those kind of decisions, if I were considering those issues that I’m not thinking of my own needs at this moment but I’m thinking of, okay, if my grandmother knew of this object, it was important to her and how did she see its value or, or my ancestors and then also think: “Okay, do I want to share this with, with my child and with my grandchild and how is it important?” And trying to take into consideration all those — that continuity of those generations. And it’s so often heard among First Nations Elders or teachers that you don’t make decisions for yourself. You make decisions for, for, for both ancestors or past generations, and future generations. I guess it would be my interpretation of what the value of the object is trying to honour my ancestors and my children and saying: “Well, okay, what is more important for all of these people in this object? What’s the value of it? How can, how can I try and maintain that value and honour that value as best as possible?” If that answers your question.

MC Yeah, yeah, well that’s good. Yeah, yeah I think with, you know, like in Canada what happens is that the object of, of, of, you know, European heritage ends up [unclear] gets designated as having those values. It’s like people on some national government board who designate and make a national historic site and don’t relate to — it doesn’t come from below. It comes from, you know, on top sort of and, and so we’ve ended up with a bunch of, of men who’ve designated
battle fields and forts and you know and, and what we should honour nationally when they don’t have that –

DK It’s not community based. It’s not coming from the people. It’s really frustrating. An example of kind of why I – I was just thinking of, a month and a half, two months ago, I was asked by my band to accompany an archaeologist into our territory. There’s a site there that’s known to have, at least, a minimum of 11 different human remains, 11 different sites of human remains. They’re not burials. They’re, they’re sort of tucked in crevices of a cliff-side and the site is very accessible by people on this island by foot and also by boat. I was asked to accompany this archaeologist who was doing the second survey in five years of this site. We didn’t disturb the site. We never touched anything. We just observed what we could see. I didn’t know if I would be nervous or scared or feel like squeamish about being around these remains and when I got there, the whole time I was there, all I was aware of was being respectful of everything that I was thinking and doing when I was at that site. We weren’t joking around, We weren’t doing anything inappropriate and I was really conscious regarding these bones and these objects that were there as belonging to my ancestors and it’s Mamaleleqala territory. It’s definitely my ancestors and I didn’t know this but after the fact one of my band members alluded to the fact that he was told by an Elder that it may in fact be directly from my family lineage. And that’s from, that was from one Elder and I don’t know for sure and no one else has ever said anything and so it’s not really an issue because the whole time I was thinking: “These are my ancestors.” But it really made it that much more real when he brought that up. [unclear] And issues came up about this site because a survey was done in 1990 and a survey was done in ’95, this year, by us, and it was obvious there was drastic changes to the site, and in fact there’s signs indicating how to get to the site on the island because part of it’s Crown land and part of it’s private land. The area that’s private land is a resort and they have actually maintained a trail from their resort to the site and have signs telling people how to get there and, um, so there’s concern about how to preserve it and, and I was discussing – There are certain politics. Like our band will never suggest putting a fence up because, for them, that’s, that’s, you know, clearly marking a certain territory that is definitively, definitely ours but then it’s easy to say: “Well, here’s your burial or human remains. That’s your land but, aside from that, the rest of it is legally his.” So, the band will never politically make that decision and
it may have to come from the Parks, Parks Canada or Parks – the Provincial Parks Board because they are responsible for maintaining this whole area now. But when I brought it up, brought this up with this other band member, he said: “Well, I think there should be a fence but we’re not going to ask for it.” And I said: “Well, what about the possibility of moving these remains?” And he said that, that, that those remains will never be removed. That site – they’re there for a reason. And I said: “I realize the importance of this site. For some reason it was selected because it was a place of power or sacred.” It’s very important. But when you lose, when you lose that sacredness or there’s no way to protect that, when it’s so accessible by land and by sea, I was concerned because I thought that, er, that place is no longer the place that our ancestors selected. It’s changed drastically from that and if those remains or those objects that are with those remains are in jeopardy, I would feel better placing them in another site that is perhaps just as sacred or a lot more secluded or can be protected a lot better than leaving them there just because, supposedly, that was at one time a very important site. I wouldn’t say, no, it’s not important but it was but conditions have changed and we can no longer protect it or, or look after it the way we were able to in the past. And so my feelings were to remove it and place it somewhere else. So, I guess, sometimes you can hang onto the idea, well, this was the way it was originally intended – it has to be that way – but the reality is you have to make changes. You have to decide, well, I’m going to slightly alter this object because you, you can’t even recognize it from, you know, its original form because it’s become so, – paint flakes so much, or whatever – or else you may say: “No, I’m not going to do anything to this object because I want to, you know, continue to preserve it for future generations and that may mean that it’s not danced. And that was how it was originally intended – to be danced and I’m no longer honouring that because I think there’s different value. The value has shifted slightly but it’s just as important – you know, that preservation or else that, that life that you’re bringing to the object by using it.”

MC And so would you say that in that situation you’d use a contemporary object and it would have that same value – like, say if you decide not to use the older objects because they’re too fragile – that a contemporary one would have –?

DK I think it’s, I think it’s possible. I don’t think you can necessarily replace the contemporary object with, like, replace the older object with
the contemporary one like in all aspects but perhaps to be used for dancing. I mean, because that’s what our people have always done. When an object, you know, is placed too close to fire and scorched or when an object just naturally decays or whatever happens, then you replace, you create a new one and that’s, I don’t think that’s of any less value than the former one. You know? Perhaps, as far as history is concerned about that object, this one, this history’s a lot more fresh and a lot newer and more limited but it doesn’t mean it’s not going to have the same history come fifty years, the same value to it. Um, this represents a certain period of time or a certain history that’s important. A contemporary piece, I think, if it’s done with the same intentions; served in the same tradition that the first object was created in, it’s just as valuable.

MC  Yeah. Great. Are there any guidelines you would like to give MOA to improve storage or appropriate care of the collections [unclear]?

DK  Guidelines? Big word that we’ve had tossed around here for a few months is ‘consultation’, particularly even more so now. Um, I guess just trying to remain really open to, to questions or concerns from communities about how objects are presented here, whether it’s First Nations or other objects. I mean First Nations, obviously, issues we were talking about. Um [pauses] sometimes I find it difficult to, to make observations or judgements about this institution compared to other institutions or to say museums should do this because this place, I think, in some ways, is a lot different than anything else I’ve experienced in other institutions. And that’s positive. I’m talking about, um, because my, my taste of a few other places has not been as wonderful. I guess, for certain, really being open to try, like, to listen to communities and to try and honour those intentions. You’re in a difficult position because, you know, professionally you may be trained to preserve, you know, to do everything to preserve this object or to, as you mentioned, whether it’s historical, con[ceptual], you know, the integrity of the object or the physical, et cetera, there’s a lot of factors that you’re weighing and that you’re trained to do, and it’s tough because, you know, you have to respect the community and say: “Well, this is honestly how they strongly feel and I think we should honour that.” Now, sometimes you may be aware that, perhaps, in your opinion, they’re not making the, the decisions for the best reasons or, or whatever. I mean, as long as, I guess, that MOA make sure they try and inform a community as best as possible – like give them all the
information you can possibly know about the preservation of an object, um, so people are aware of the consequences of the whole thing. Make sure that they know that because they may not be but, then, aside from that, I think trying to respect a community's wishes and that sometimes that community is, is very divided. I mean, I realize that. There's all kinds of internal politics and differences of opinion and what I say is completely different than what someone else is going to say about these issues but, I guess, trying to respect, you know, wishes that come from a community and to, to honour those and to recognize that an object, its function or significance may change and alter slightly from one generation to the next and, and my ideas about something may be a little bit differently - different - than perhaps - You know, I may feel the need to, to, to slightly alter something because it makes it more vital to me or to my family at this moment and to try and respect that and realize that it may not necessarily be what you would choose to do with that object but it doesn't have the same connection perhaps to you than it might have to me. But to try and definitely provide information, you know, and to, to sort of, I guess - also, also to seek, sometimes, community responses to how an object is displayed or how it is preserved. I mean - I just - I really - I found it wonderful when we visited the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario and, I guess, Tom Hill took us through and talked about how they treat some objects in the collections and how they, I guess, ceremoniously feed the False Face masks and things like that and I think, from what I'm aware of, of pipes being separated - disjointed here when they are on display - and that was on request from the community. From what I've seen, MOA tends to be quite responsive to those concerns and I think they should, should continue to strive to be very responsive - not more responsive - to those types of concerns but also, sometimes, to not always just react to concerns but sometimes to try and seek out those and try and figure out because you're making decisions on a daily basis about some of these objects that other people, that, that communities might not be aware of. I think you'd have a better understanding of what their concerns are - and they also understand the concerns of conservation - then, through that partnership, I think, you know, decisions can be made that are in the interests of both parties.

MC Yeah. Great. And so, in other museums where your experience hasn't been as good, was it because, like, was it at all because museums were not concerned, you know, at doing any consultation or was it just the way they were -
DK It, it may not be – when I referred to other museums, it’s not necessarily directly associated with strictly conservation but in general with philosophy about the value of objects or how to display things or who’s voice is going to be heard associated with objects. Working at the National Museum was a real experience for me as far as recognizing that this place, whether you consider it academic, striving for the academic league sound or, or, respect – not respectful, I don’t know – I think there’s different motivations there than here. And I recognize the difference in the public that came through both institutions. Here we tend to have people that may not be more informed but are more interested in being informed or, or, or see the value of, of the history associated with objects versus what I saw with a lot of visitors at the National Museum. It was one of six ‘sights’ they stopped at in a day in the capital region and it was a time to get photographs, which is sometimes you get in the same case here but I found there they tend – the impressions that I have (which was only a couple of months there) the concern was more how to, um, how to respond to or cater to those needs: “I learnt something quick and snappy and, and somewhat flashy.” And you make them think and be real impressed but it’s very superficial. There’s no depth to it and how, um, the, the potlatch is represented in one of the exhibits – a video about the potlatch, explaining it – they make it seem totally mystical and quite, quite far off from this world and the reality is, in a lot of cases, it’s not. I mean, it, it’s a functioning form of, of governing ourselves. It’s a way of gathering together and spending social time. It is a way of passing on certain teachings but it’s not all, you know! Bizarre! I mean so that, that frustrates me because it’s, it’s inappropriate representation and, and then also, there’s pressure with the Native Youth Programme. The First Nations Youth offering presentations there. We had a lot of pressure to make our presentations shorter and snappier: “Make it more interactive.” And we were also considered to be part of a department that was called ‘Performances and (I believe) Special Events’. Versus being in ‘Education’ and I don’t think we were recognised as being – I think we were more thought of as being entertainers than people who were offering valuable information and education. And I don’t think there’s a way to make it short and snappy and if – in, in making it interactive, I’m belittling, you know, the potlatch ceremony or I’m not providing, I’m not giving all the information that I should be. I think if I’m going to teach someone about a certain tradition, then it’s my responsibility to, to tell them
every – you know – all, like, the whole, all-encompassing aspect of that
tradition. I’m not just going to say one pat answer. When there was a
filming here of a children show and I was talking to kids, the host of
the show said to me, okay, when we were taking a break between
filming, she said: “Okay, next you’re going to explain the potlatch,
right?” And I said: “Yes.” And she goes: “Okay, well, can you do me a
favour?” And I said: “What?” She said: “Can you keep it simple?”
And I said: “Look, there’s simple.” And she said: “Don’t, don’t, don’t
confuse these, you know, kids because, you know, they’re, they’re – we
have a young, young audience. Don’t confuse them.” And I said:
“Yes?” And she said: “For example, with the potlatch, just let them
know that it’s like a, it’s like a birthday party with lots of presents, a big
party with lots of presents.” And I looked her and I said: “No, I’m
sorry, I don’t –” And I was fifteen at the time! I said: “No, I’m sorry. I
don’t feel comfortable saying that. There’s a lot more to it than that.”
And she went: “Well what are you going to say, then? Are you going
to take, like, for the next forty-five minutes explaining this?” I said:
“No, I think I can explain this in a couple of sentences but I think I can
pay a lot more respect to our ceremony than that one pat answer that
you have.” And so I just walked away and started talking to the kids
and they had the cameras rolling and I said: “Do you understand, you
know, why when marriages take place, when births take place or when,
when someone passes away that people, families gather together and
that recognizing that event is very important in the family. It’s a
milestone or –” I used different words. “And sometimes that’s
documented on paper: a marriage licence, a birth announcement,
whatever. Well, traditionally, we couldn’t do that. We had to pass
things on strictly by speaking about it and this was a way for us to pass
on that and also to recognize that, you know, this bracelet maybe very
important to my family because it’s a family heirloom and I want to
pass it on to the next generation. Or sometimes it’s not just the bracelet
but it’s the design on it that’s important. – the story associated with that
and those have to be passed on.” And, you know, I explained it in
terms that they could understand so it, it’s frustrating when people
like, when people try and say: “You can only, you know, we only have
two minutes to do it.” Or it has to be really simplified and I don’t think
it, it has to be simplified to be entertaining or to be, to be, you know,
to keep people’s interest. I think you can offer different levels of
interpretation, you know, for someone that just wants, you know to
spend, you know, twenty minutes in the museum or half and hour.
They can get a general surface impression of it but if you’re doing
anything catering to, you know, flash or catering to certain – then I think – I mean, I learned the same thing when I went into ceremony or the first time that I ever went to sweat. I experienced some things that I, I could never explain, that I was quite awestruck by and I did three nights of that and the fourth night, I went into a different sweat and there it was totally simple. It was just simply people praying, simply people singing and they had the simplest altar with a pipe on it, whereas, here, we had a really incredible, elaborate altar and both are valuable but I could see how I could very easily have gotten caught up in the – “Wow! This is really neat.” I saw things that are really bizarre or whatever and just get caught up in that, that rush, of that flash, versus what was the purpose of this ceremony. It is to recognize that sometimes you need help; sometimes you need to give thanks. So, that’s why I get frustrated with, with, perhaps, the viewpoint or the philosophy behind the National Museum at times. Also, I’ve mixed feelings also about the exhibits at the Provincial Museum – about how things are explained or certain storylines that are created and objects that are slotted in to fit with those storylines or – I mean here, we, I kind of – it’s frustrating, people get frustrated with the lack of labelling yet I realize when you put something down on a label, people see that as being the gospel. That is it. That is the entire story. That is factual. It’s never going to change. Whereas we know with the maps we have in the Visible Storage area galleries – those are drastically – not changed, but we, we’re constantly revising what we know about, our knowledge of it and so, as a result, these are revised so it’s – I just think this place has more intentions of honouring the voice of communities or trying to. Sometimes they don’t do a very good job of it. We’re under question with some exhibits at this moment but, but being open to listening to those and doing what we can to respond to those concerns, whether they be about conservation, whether they be about general representation. Whatever. I guess just really having the honest intention of responding to or, or trying to, initiate, you know, the concerns, you know, the voices of the concerns of the community. You know, to ask for that – maybe [unclear] before you have to, you know, you have two days to make a decision. You know, to have an understanding of the community or its concerns or its needs. You know? So, then, every little thing you do is responding to those needs. Or respectful of them. I don’t if you’d always be responding.

MC Yeah. At least respectful. Yeah.
And actually even having an awareness of that, of that respect perhaps. This is kind of generally how, how this community feels or a number of communities feel and perhaps it may be a conflict with what you have to do sometimes or but to, to at least recognize, to acknowledge that: “I realize that these are your concerns.” You know and perhaps sometimes you have to make different decisions or difficult decisions but even, I think, that acknowledgement of this, you know -- “I am aware of these concerns and they’re valid concerns.” – I think people appreciate that, even if it doesn’t have the same final ending that they would hope to have to pass but at least there’s acknowledgement and there’s that connection. That is the only way First Nations communities will develop a trust in museums and cultural institutions. I mean, when I give tours to First Nations groups, I’m constantly – the first ten to fifteen minutes of the tour, I, I know I’m being appraised, I know I’m being evaluated. They’re looking at me and thinking what is she doing here? What kind of words is she going to mouth at us? Is she totally – I don’t know – their idea of bureaucratic or academic or whatever. And they realize I have a sense of humour. They realize I have a long history with this place, that I have a lot of respect for this place, the people who work inside it or I have a fair amount of trust. So then I can see people kind of “whew”. They kind of lighten up and then, and then they’ll start asking me some hard hitting questions. Sometimes they do that right off the bat. They’ll go: “What about repatriation?” Or: “I don’t like coming to places like this because I don’t like seeing these objects locked up.” And da di da di da.

What do you, what do you say to that, for example?

[unclear] I mean I’ve had that from very close friends of mine. Like: “I can’t handle coming here.” And when we did public programming a year or two ago with drum groups coming in and I managed to connect with one drum group and get them to come in. The guy who, um, coordinates this drum group, whose drum was being used, he said: “The only reason I came here was because you asked me to. I would not have come here if you had not – I’ve been here once before and I had no intention of ever returning. And I just did it because you asked me.” He said that to the audience who was there that day: “Just because a friend of mine asked me to be here.” And he brought up some things and I think people who were in the museum that day – it was valuable for them to hear of his response, to hear him say he had difficulty being
in here and, when people do ask me that or question that, I say I realize that in some cases some of our, our most sacred objects are kind of just tossed out there for anyone's consumption and, or sacred teachings or traditions, and it can be really difficult to deal with that and I don't necessarily agree with that happening but there is other, you know, value. There is value in, in having some of these objects on display and perhaps there needs to be, you know, a lot of reworking about exhibits or about philosophy but there, there's potential there and I talk about my own experience: "Well, for example, I grew up in the city and, for me, I had limited knowledge or access to my cultural tradition but it was so sporadic or was so, for such short periods of time that I never really could feel comfortable and say, yeah, this is mine. You know – this is part of me. I had the interest in saying that but I didn't think that I, I could. That it was okay for me to, you know – I wasn't going to claim something that I didn't understand or I didn't really know very well." So I explained that I think, I think there's value in that and also explained that, well, the reality is that a lot of contemporary issues that are very much in the media and very much on the minds of Canadians as far as aboriginal land claims or fishing rights – things like that – and I realize that because I have mixed ancestry, my father watches T.V. sometimes and I see how he's fed by the media and he sees sometimes that is the story, that angle that they chose to attack a certain story from or issue from. Sometimes he forgets that that's one angle just being covered and then still I get frustrated that he'll, you know, ask certain questions that I kind of look at him and: "I can't believe you're asking that of me." He reminds me of how a lot of Canadians feel about certain issues and I also forget because I'm in this place so much and talking to people who work in here and are concerned with these issues. I go out there and I use certain terms and people look at me like: "What are you talking about? Like, what kind of language is that?" And I've mentioned that to some First Nations people, that perhaps this is the place that is neutral, for people to come and to somewhat get an understanding of our cultural traditions or the histories that we all have or the diversity that is in our peoples, among our peoples. Then, perhaps if they understand that history or that really close association that we have with land or association we have with fish or whatever – if they had a better understanding of our culture, perhaps they could appreciate those values more and perhaps they'll be a little bit more open to listening when people talk about land claims or whatever. And there's issues that, that may go to [unclear] to the Canadian public that, that we may
and there's — or if that public influences or pressures politicians or, you know, et cetera, the reality is that you don't want people knocking on your door at Musqueam, you know, or peering in windows and I had visitors that when I do mention that Musqueam's 10km: "Oh, do you have a map of how to get there?" And I try to explain to them: "Well, there's nothing there that you would really want to see. It's not what you expect." Or people that phone up here, wanting to visit old Indian villages. There's some stuff that we only keep to ourselves and I'm not going to give tours of my living room for anybody but how do I still work towards creating a better understanding of our traditions, be they limited to ceremony within a big house or be they how they affect my, my uncle's right to fish or something else or, you know —? And that's influenced by a lot of other factors, cultural and historical, et cetera. And I guess places like this can contribute to that understanding and so that's when I try to explain to First Nations people that, you know, I trust, I have trust in this institution and in some of the ideals or philosophy or whatever you want to say. And sometimes — and I also, I think they're really grateful and they're really "wow". It relaxes them when they see that I talk about: "Well, this I kind of have a problem with ... I, I wonder about this, or I question this, or I feel uneasy about it." Or da di da di da. Or I, I hand out copies of the map they have and I say: "Take a look at it. If you see and area that, that you're wondering why we used a certain term to identify it if it's your area or, if the spelling seems off to you, let us know and we may want to alter it. This map is constantly being revised." Or I'm also quite open. I kind of admit, like, as far as Visible Storage, I don't know a lot about interior cultures or I don't know a lot about Plains cultures. 'I'll go try and look up something with you and I'll try to find a staff person who maybe better informed than me and we can look up things and, if you have concerns or of you're wanting more information, I'll try and do my best to address those." Just kind of there to facilitate. And I just try and let them know that this is a kind of resource that they can use and take advantage of. I think First Nations people should be made aware of that and we should be constantly working to do that, to realize, to, to recognize that this, this is of significance to you, of value to you and, you know, we would like you to know that it is accessible to you and it doesn't mean that people can go walking off with stuff but, even coming here, even being able to look up things, even, you know, to look at objects, to read information. I mean, there are people come in here saying: "I don't know anything about my culture." Or: "I want to know about this mask. It's very important." They're looking for a
particular artist or whatever. You have to respond to those needs ... to be facilitators in that respect, to not just house objects but to, to honour cultural values or teachings that go with those objects and also to honour the people who are associated with those objects, and may be the descendants of the original makers of the object, or users of the object but their connection is just as strong to those objects and it's just as important to try and have a connection with them.

MC Yeah. Have you found, has there been anybody in the Native Youth or, or other people you've come into contact with - your friends - who say: "Well, you know, I'd like to learn how to be a curator or, or, or a conservator." I mean, I, I, you know, maybe work in a cultural centre at home. Anything like -? Or, or is that still not - people are just not relating to that kind of thing?

DK Well, I think three examples of that Don, Greg and myself. I mean, the reality is a lot, lot of the Native Youth students who come through here are just that - they're young students and so this is just like kind of the first job experience and they've got all kinds, a wide range of interests so just because they may not choose to pursue anthropology or conservation or some other area working in museums or cultural centres doesn't mean it's because they still have objections to or problems with or issues with these kind of institutions. It may mean that they're more geared - they always have been - hoping to become a policeman or they're more geared towards other sciences or whatever and it, it just means that it's not their interest but I think most of the people that I know that have come through the Native Youth Programme talk about it being a very valuable experience, whether it's taught them public speaking skills or whether they enjoyed being around here as a positive environment or they thought, you know - And so, not to say that it's a perfectly rosy, picture perfect, you know, experience here but there, there's [unclear]. There, there's positive and negative experiences anywhere, I think, or - I think they see value in it from people I've known. I mean I went through it for two years here and then a year in Ottawa and I have, the last three or four years, I've gotten to know some of the students who have passed through as well. So. I think they're certainly open to it. I think - I mean - the response from my band members when I went up for this archaeological survey and also when I was at a recent meeting of our band the response was: "When are you going to hurry up and get out and get your credentials so we can take advantage of this experience?" Or whatever. And they
see value in it now, particularly because it is closely associated with, perhaps, with land claims or with us establishing our, our, you know, our, our own – not ownership but our use of certain areas or the value of our cultural traditions and so they want people that are, that can work within the community that are First Nations from that community or from other communities. But they see the value.

MC You know that’s really – the comment you say is really interesting. It’s a good parallel when you said establishing not, you know, not necessarily ownership but use. I mean that’s the same thing with the objects – establishing use, you know –

DK I see what you mean, definitely. But so their response has been positive like: “We want –” And they recognize that there’s the need sometimes for a certain area of expertise or of training or knowledge and they say: “Well, we’d be happier to have somebody from our community or someone who’s First Nations with maybe the same cultural values or a more complete understanding.” Because you can study for twenty-five years you could study a culture or you could study whatever but if it’s not part of your – if it’s not connected with your personal views or if you haven’t experienced these values since you were young or you don’t associate them with yourself then I don’t think you have an understanding of that culture and you never will. And so I think there’s some, you know, encouragement on the part of band members to, yeah, to have somebody from within. And even the fact that they asked me to accompany an archaeologist into our territory – they knew I took a, a history of this place and I’ve taken a few post-secondary courses in anthropology and archaeology, one in archaeology. So I’m not necessarily qualified to do it on my own or to really, to be working side by side with somebody else but they said: “No, we want you because it’s culturally sensitive material. It’s remains.” And this archaeologist is well respected and very trusted. They still wanted someone to accompany him and thought: “Well, you obviously have the interest and have some of the training so that you can perhaps be of some assistance to him or you are aware of certain things, you know, that other people may not be.” And so they asked me to accompany him for my own benefit and for representing the band so there is an example of, of where I see the value – Or responding to the fact that two dozen kayakers move through our territory every summer and they’ve recently created a park in our territory which is going to increase that by a large degree, that perhaps
there is a need for us to establish some kind of cultural interpretive centre at Village Island and at least be greeting people then spend a couple of summers hiring young people to camp out there or to live there every summer and just to show people round and if people are going to show up you might as well try and lead them in the right direction. You can’t – obviously, we can’t protect it year round, obviously we can’t tunnel through land we don’t technically have ownership or jurisdiction over so we can’t boot them off but at least we can, you know, make them aware of: “If you’re stomping around this area, please be respectful of archaeological –” Or make them aware of the laws regarding archaeological sites or et cetera and explain some of it to them. So they see the need of establishing cultural interpretive centres either on location or somewhere like U’mista which is, is more associated with Alert Bay. It’s, it’s an actual community. A contemporary community but there’s value in that as well. No, it wasn’t through the band. Not at all. that’s why this, this survey that we did was actually paid for and sponsored by Parks because they created the [unclear] Marine Park in our territory, apparently – my understanding – with very little if not any consultation with the Kwagulth or Kwakwaka’wakw, [unclear] the Kwakwaka’wakw Nation, particularly my band whose territory’s right in that area or other bands and as a result now they’re trying to back peddle a little and responding to some of our concerns like: “We know of this one site that is very obvious, very accessible. What are you going to do to protect it?” Oh, we’re concerned about it.” So, they offered to pay to have this archaeologist come in and now it may be that they take the initiative and suggest putting up a fence or they may do this or that and, in some ways, one of the band members that I talked to said that he thinks in fact this site and other sites will be better off under the jurisdiction of this Park now than as general Crown Land because there’s that mandate to, you know, to, to encourage people to visit but to, to somehow control that whereas, if it’s just Crown Land they’re not necessarily as concerned with constantly – not patrolling but, you know, maintaining a presence in that area. Well, he said it may be better now but, yeah, Parks is kind of now going back and saying: “Oh do you have any concerns about this?” So.

MC  This is great Dena. Thank you.
MC And I'll just start by saying that I'm sitting in Debbie Sparrow's house talking to her on October 12, in her living room, and maybe first if you could just tell me a little bit about, you know, where your parents were from, where you grew up, and also your involvement in weaving.

DS And carving.

MC And carving.

DS Well, engraving they call it. I guess I always call it carving.

MC Yes.

DS Well, I grew up here, right here. I was born and raised here; I was the first one raised here. When my parents got married and they had five children away from here ... 

MC Oh.

DS And over on Westam Island, and that was where a lot of the – some of the – community lived then.

MC So where is that again?

DS It's over in Ladner; they call it Westam Island.

MC Oh. I don't know that. OK.

DS And they came back here when they finally got a house here and so I was born here.
M C  Here being Musqueam?

DS  Yeah.

M C  For the benefit of the tape.

DS  Yeah. Here being Musqueam, yeah. So, you know, like, I grew up here and sort of made my way through life, and about ten years ago when I got involved in the weaving – of course, I was involved with teaching myself how to engrave silver about, oh, three years before weaving.

M C  Oh, OK.

DS  A couple years before.

M C  Yeah.

DS  And I got really interested in that and teaching myself, but I think what it's done is it really opened up a lot of questions that were really unanswered for me most of my life about our culture and our heritage.

M C  Oh.

DS  And I got really excited about it, and when weaving came along, I didn’t really particularly want to be involved in that; I was more interested in the engraving. But I needed a job at the time, so I said, oh, hey, it looks like good money, and it could be a little fun – yet I wasn’t really interested. But once I got involved with the class, the group then – there was nine women ...

M C  Was that the one that Betsy was involved [unclear]?

DS  Yeah. There was two. The first one, you know, the one I kinda overlooked for the first year before that?

M C  OK.

DS  Then the second group, which I was involved with, because the first class was so successful, they had follow-up one? And so I took that one, and Robyn actually took the second one over again, so I worked with Robyn and Wendy, and Barb Kiyou [sp?] again took the second
one, and then the rest of them were all men.

MC  OK.

DS  So we had a real eye-opening again, to a part of our culture we really didn't know much about either.

MC  Ahah.

DS  So I think it really stirred .. I know it did in me, and I don't know about the other women; I can't speak for the other women in Musqueam but I think some of them, for instance, my sister Robyn, and Krista and Roberta Lewis, and a few of us have stayed involved with weaving, but the rest have sort of wandered away again and gotten jobs in different areas. But, you know, it wasn't about a job for me, and some of the ladies, it was about life, it was about really connecting unanswered questions from the past and finding out what the answers were here, and using those for sort of building blocks for reestablishing, I think, who we were as native people in our community. Because, I think you know, we live on an everyday basis, knowing that we had to assimilate, and we assimilated pretty good, but there was something always missing, you know? And we weren't quite sure what it was. Even though we had the winter ceremony, it was something that could only be done in Winter. And what I sort of see as lacking in our community was something that is really, I think, an interesting statement, in that people usually have to see to believe, and we had nothing to see exactly.

MC  Yes.

DS  That reflected any kind of positive reflection from our past.

MC  OK.

DS  So when the impact of society was there, you know, the coming of the Europeans, I think after the assimilation process it was done to such a degree that everything became very .. I don't know, I suppose it was moved into museums and if it wasn't it was never talked about again. So there was never continuation of the visual arts. So when I got involved with the engraving and I asked Mike Kew out at UBC to send me whatever he had on Musqueam, I was really, really shocked about
how much was there that we didn’t know about. So I really sort of dove into, you know, associating what it would do for me as a native person in Musqueam, and using that to, you know, create something from silver. And then as I moved on to the weaving and saw a lot of the work I was doing reflected the weaving, with spindle whorls and mountain horn goat bracelets, you know, they used the mountain goat wool for the blankets and they used the horn for the bracelets. So then I saw the spindle whorl designs and I used a lot of those on my jewelry, but I’d take them apart as well. I’d take them out of their element. So, you know, that’s what I started to see was happening, and then we started to use the museum quite regularly to just do the blankets and see just what exactly was there. And, you know, we took a trip to New York. The group of women did.

MC Yes. Tell me about that?

DS That was really .. it was really the most moving thing that had ever happened to that group. I wasn’t involved with the first group, but I went with them. And some of the women had never been on a plane before, so here we go off to, you know, the other side of the country. I don’t think they really knew what they were in for. Half of them hardly go downtown. Or, in fact, I hardly go downtown!

MC Yeah.

DS So, we flew off, we went to New York – and I don’t really think that they knew what they were in for – we go flying into, you know, Midtown, down in Manhattan, and get to our hotel room, and we were way up in the, I don’t know what floor, and everybody’s, like, in shock. And I never knew what culture shock was until that happened.

MC Yeah.

DS And it was really amazing for the women. Some of them didn’t come out for a few days. But then we had to go off to a couple of museums; we went to the Museum of American Indian – at the time it’s [unclear].

MC Right. Right, right, up in ...

DS Up in the Bronx. That’s right. I missed that trip, because I was feeling a little sick, but they went, and so they viewed the museum there, and I
think now it's gone to .. I don't know if they sent it to Smithsonian?

MC Yeah. It's part of their collection, but I think it's still in New York City at the moment but they .. but it's now part of the National Museum of the American Indian.

DS And then later on that week we got a train and went down to Washington, and went to the Smithsonian, and went into the Smithsonian and viewed the collection they had on, on Musqueam.

MC Oh, wow. So .. ?

DS And as we were heading to that section, we passed the Northwest Coast section, and feeling that we had, as we walked through that museum, was so moving, because here were pieces that we knew lived here in Musqueam.

MC Yes.

DS Way over there, in this building and they belonged to someone else, and yet they were part of who we were.

MC Yes.

DS So I think, you know, we as people view those objects so terribly different than museums or other cultures. And I don't want to focus on one particular culture, but we really do recognize that, and yet it is a controversy and it is a catch twenty-two because we know that that has to be. If it wasn't we probably wouldn't even have one. And I think it's a really .. people are torn between .. you know, aboriginal people are torn about their feelings. And I think their first feelings, as you will see when you get to know different people in different communities their first reaction is anger because, you know, in the process of healing, and coming to know what your healing is, you will feel anger. And I felt anger when I was younger. And then I went through another process of trying to understand why everything is the way it is, and you have to look at the larger picture now. In balancing you understand between what was and what is.

DS And so it really does set your mind and your spirit at motion. And as you go in motion, you realize you have to balance both of these. And
it’s a real challenge to stay balanced. And I find that, you know, I’m continually thinking all the time about, you know, what was. And the only place I can find any connection with that is the museum. And we can’t even ask any of our elders, because they’re young elders. They’re seventy-five, they never saw .. my grandfather was the last one to see weaving, and he’s niney-six now.

MC  Wow.

DS  And he was a little boy – he was only five, so you know ninety years – there was none.

MC  Yeah, yeah.

DS  Or eighty-five years until he saw us do it again. And .. do the weaving. And so here’s a real big gap between the whole process of understanding – what is our position as aboriginal people? And in that you will see all of the controversy that comes up around aboriginal titles, aboriginal peoples speaking out about issues and land claims and the whole process. And if you don’t have a solid foundation to work from, you’re going to be pretty scattered. And I think over the fifty years we have been pretty scattered, and I think now some of our chiefs are coming back to understand that you can have a university degree, but if you don’t know who you come from, and if you don’t know who you are, to me the degree means nothing.

MC  Yeah.

DS  So my goal, if I’ve had one, has been to be .. to get a degree in who I am.

MC  That’s great! Yeah.

DS  And that has come through with the weaving, and the success I have had as a human being is given to that. Not to a process that didn’t work for someone before me, and before that, and before that. And I don’t hold any resentment or bitterness toward that, I just know what works for me. And in that I find all the respect and values and self-esteem and success that society tries to teach their people through the academics.
MC Yes.

DS And what I’ve come to know is academics is actually very creative. And so I’ve turned in balancing the focus of academics, I’ve turned the process into creativity which the more you understand about it, the more academic it becomes, as far as I’m concerned.

MC Uhuh. Uhuh. That’s very interesting, yeah.

DS And also what I see too, also, you can’t have one without the other. Unless if you do, there’s a narrowness to that.

MC So the academics would .. I mean, would that also be like studying the techniques, and things like that?

DS Oh, yeah. I mean, because if you’re a weaver – I did do the project with Jill on balancing two worlds, weaving two worlds together, for children per se, but I think it’s also for adults – and it talked about .. and I might not get the message across in some ways to some academics, because I think they think only one way, and so since I’ve come to where I am, and I see that in order to be a weaver you have to have the same tools as you do in going through the process of understanding how this all goes together. It’s about history, it’s about science, it’s about mathematics, it’s about all of the same tools. And I think what happened, in fact, I talked to Robyn about this last night, I said, I see that in a process of change we went from, like, black to white so quickly, and I mean, you know, from who we were to who we were supposed to be, that in the ..there was no slow change, and everyone got lost in that quickly through lack of communication in languages.

MC Yeah.

DS And that played a big part, because if you can’t communicate with someone and they don’t hear what you’re saying in the language that they know, then there’s going to be a lot of misjudgments and a lot of misunderstandings. And I think that that happened, and I now think that we’re coming to a time where we are becoming more educated about who we are. And feeling that that’s alright now. It wasn’t alright before.

MC Yeah.
DS So there’s much to learn yet, about everything in all those areas, I mean, I think it’s just beginning. I really do. And part of that is that in educating ourselves we have to go back in time, we have to go into history, and where is history for us but in museums? And yet in those museums we see our history doesn’t just go back to museums it goes back a hundred and thousands of years. So in that way I think we are really excited to know that the museum is there and the changes with museums in being more open, in opening their doors, to also know that these particular people that they are housing their objects are too, are functioning people. They’re not people who only .. whose past only lives in a museum, they’re still here in the future.

MC Yes. Great. OK. Could you tell me .. do you remember the first time you went inside a museum?

DS I sure do.

MC What was that like?

DS I went into the museum ...

MC Of Anthropology?

DS Before anyone else did.

MC Oh, yeah.

DS I was very lucky, and maybe I was sent there without even knowing it, but they wanted an installation crew to bring all the objects from storage into the museum ...

MC When it was first being ...

DS When it first opened.

MC OK

DS So I got to unveil some of the objects that had been stored for years, and years and years and never seen.
MS Wow.

DS So I was there with .. oh, she was a Swedish lady.

MS Oh, I know .. Rhea, was it Rhea?

DS Rhea was there, but there was .. what's her last name?

MS Roe.

DS No, Rhea Roe was there, and then there was another lady. It might have been Rhea. Anyway. There was four or five of us, and they wanted someone from Musqueam. I didn't know what I was going to do, I just said, yeah, I'll go. And I went, and there we were in the museum, it was empty; there was nothing in it.

MS Wow.

DS Except for the cases and they brought in these boxes, and boxes, and boxes, and it was just like a big Christmas party because we just kept getting to open everything.

MS Yeah.

DS And to .. and you know, I had a really good conversation with Rhea there. I think it was Rhea. We were sitting there one afternoon after we had taken a lot of the objects out of their boxes. And I was actually quite .. I was moved. I was looking at them thinking about the time that they were really being used. And we talked about that. And if she was the one that came from Sweden, she told me a story about the spirit world, where they come from. And we talked about different spirits. And I said, yeah, you know, I really don't even like to handle these objects. And I said I'll probably go home and have nightmares about it. But I know too that it has to be done, and they wanted someone here to be a part of it, but you know, I'm not really a .. I'm not really superstitious. But I think I have respect to some degree for what I want to be around and what I don't. And so, anyway, we did all that work, and we installed them into their cases, and so I worked there for about a year, or until it was almost done, and I moved away from there and I moved away from Vancouver and I went North for about seven years to Kwagiulth Territories ..?
MS  Oh, yeah.

DS  Now, that was a real eye opener as well, but what was nice about it was that I really understood these objects that I had been working with, because I did work in the Northwest Coast section.

MS  OK.

DS  But as I worked in there, I also did venture into the different sections like China and Africa, and I really .. I mean, it was an experience for me, a real learning experience to be there and to be a part of it. And then to go back and to look at them again and to see that they’re almost still there, where we put them. And I almost forget that I was there, you know, because it was a long time ago. I think I was probably seventeen.

MC  Wow.

DS  Of course now I’m only twenty-nine, but ...forever! I’m forever twenty-nine! So then, I never really went back to the museum again, until, I suppose until we went with the group, which would have been around ’86.

MC  Right.

DS  And we went as a group just to see what was there, and we went as a group to Victoria to see the blankets there, and as I said, we went to the Smithsonian to see the blankets there. Well, I went back about four years ago. They asked me to come back and give a talk again on weaving. And I did. And so this time I went to the Natural ... the Museum of Natural History?

MC  Right, yeah.

DS  And she informed me that there were a couple of blankets in that museum so I asked to see them. And we went to the back to the area where they were. And what was really interesting for me was, I think they only had three or four and they were just really plain twill blankets, but, they were collected in Musqueam. So I wanted to see them, just to see them. And as he pulled the drawer open, I said, “Can
I see the catalogue card?” So he went and got it and brought it back, and said, “Oh, you might find this interesting, it is right from Musqueam. It’s not just from the Lower Mainland. Came right from Musqueam, collected 1898.” And I went, “What?” He goes, “Yeah.” I said, “1898?” He goes, “Yeah.” And I said, “That is so strange.” and he said, “Why?” and I said, “Well, that was the year my grandfather was born.” That’s why I know that date so well.

MC So, like, the emotions that you’ve felt, you know, like when you’ve been in museums that .. like when you first started unpacking the things at MOA, you know, was there that anger that you talked about, or sadness, or when you were with the women going to Washington was there .. ?

DS Well, no. I didn’t really go through the anger parts because I think I sort of went through that before I came to this. I think that in not knowing even who I was, or even what I was a part of, I think I was already angry, or went through the anger, before that. So when I got to the museum, and go to different museums, I feel sad. I feel a real certain sadness about the fact that there was this whole hundred years of silence that no one was connected to these objects and that they sat there all that time, unrelated to us, again. And when you go in there and view those objects and see the reflection of them yourself, then it stirs in you the emotions that you will have to deal with the rest of your life. Which are positive. You see in that .. you see a people. You don’t just see an object, you see a a whole people and what they must have been about. And so you set .. I mean, I do anyway. I live that world sometimes when I’m working. And sometimes when I’m sitting here looking out my window, I wonder what I’m doing here. I wonder if I really belong here. Or if I do, what is it that I have to do. And part of it I know is what I have to do is to be a communicator for .. for that in bringing messages forward that are positive about what we represent as aboriginal people. And I think too much in society we focus on now and the fact that aboriginal people are not doing this and are not doing that and are not going anywhere, I always wonder – and the question to me is – where do you want us to go?

MC Yeah.

DS And maybe we don’t want to go there.
MC Yeah.

DS Maybe we like being where we are in our community. Maybe we like the fact that we are not all stressed out in the same way. And if that's progress, I don't know if I want it. But if I can balance it, if I can have a little bit of it when I need to have it and none of it when I don't want it, then this is my saving grace that I can take a little bit from both worlds, or a lot from both worlds, if I want it. But I think it takes a lot of time and understanding to get there.

MC Mmhm.

DS And I think that society in breaking down their own humaness they find that everything is compartmentalized, and that we have psychology, we have sciences, we have academics, we have artists. But in our world, I think we know and understand that all of those go together. And they are not individual. And that without one we cannot understand the other. But what we do here in 1996 [sic] is that we make it very isolated.

MC Yes.

DS And I think that we have .. we as aboriginal people at one time understood that everything goes together. And that that is balance.

MC So when you said earlier sometimes you wonder if you belong here, do you mean, like ...

DS Well, I know I belong here, and I know am here; I mean, I'm here. But my spirit is connected to the longing to be again with the people, with my people that were the original people. The people that knew what they're existence was. And understanding, I guess, the philosophies of the spirit. So I don't always run across a lot of people who understand that, and I think they call them, they might call them people of religion now. You know, so that we too, again as humans, only think that we have .. I mean, it's a controversy with me because – and I might not be making sense right now, but – there are people who go looking for something and they go either to religion or they go to a psychologist, or they go .. they go somewhere because they're not quite happy with what they thought, or who they are. So they look in different areas, and some people say, well, if you're not happy, I guess you should see a
... psychologist. And if you're not happy then maybe you should go to church. And maybe you should do this and this and this, and maybe you should go back to school, and maybe you ought to get married, or maybe you need a man, or maybe ... 

MC Yeah.

DS Maybe what we really need is to understand what our position is in the world in relation to creation. And that's what I feel is my journey. Is understanding how that works for me. And so there isn't anything in this world right now that offers me that. So I know that that's OK. So my closest connection with that is my work, which is weaving, and carving, and being alone. Alone is where I find I'm the happiest.

MC Me too. Yeah.

DS Yeah. Because I think even being alone, silence has many messages. And in the silence of understanding those messages, and the wisdom that our people has, I can hear them when I'm alone. And I can use them to create and be the best I can be when I'm creating. And reflecting them when I'm working, not myself. I don't take any credit for the work that I do. Because that work's not mine. It's merely a reflection of these wonderful people that existed. And it's for them that I work. Not for myself. So it's for creation, it's for God, it's for what his messages are is the creator of all things that we never own anything. Whether it be the land, or sea, or forest, or sky. We are here as part of all harmony of creation and without one we couldn't exist without the other. But as humans we take ownership to everything. And we become selfish, and greedy and our mind becomes the function that we use the most. Sometimes I don't know if that's too healthy. So you know, mostly I stay uninfluenced by anyone.

MC Mmhm. So, in your .. in the work that you create, the works that you create, do you make a distinction between the ones that you sell, the ones that you give to people, or might want to be passed down to your kids, or the ones that get used in ceremonies .. ?

DS I hope not.

MC OK.
DS I hope not. Because as we started out in the beginning, it was never about selling, it was about learning. So we never really sold anything to anyone for money. For the sole purpose of money. What we did was the first thought was if someone wanted to commission something, then we would do it. Never would I make a piece to sell. The reason I made it was of your interest as a human being. That was the first and utmost reason that I would do anything for anybody. If somebody really wanted something then we would talk about it.

MC Yeah.

DS We’ll talk first. We will understand that in the process of change as well, that everything has a value to it. And if I’m going to value the people that existed and the talent that they’ve given to me, as a gift, then I have to – as a contemporary person – is to realize that there is a value on it; and the only value system that society understands is money. So if I say that my blanket costs five hundred dollars, when in reality it costs five thousand, and I was to sell you it because you were my friend and I said, “Oh, I’ll give it to you for five hundred.” what I would be doing is not putting a value on myself, or my people, per se. Not myself, but the whole process of history and what the value is about those people. So I would say, because of the job that I am going to do and because of what you want, it will cost you this amount of money.

MC Yeah, yeah.

DS As we’ve worked, it is a real controversy again, and it is catch twenty-two again – and I’ll use those words repetitively – because it really is a controversy about it. Because we’re the first people, women, to be selling blankets. And it’s been a real challenge to put a dollar sign on them. Because you cannot put a dollar sign on being a human being. And when I create, I don’t care if I’m creating for the Longhouse, for a naming blanket, or whether I’m creating a commissioned piece for a museum, I am still going to be as passionate about it as I am about a piece that isn’t going to be sold. Because each one is a part of my people and I can’t make a distinction. I can’t distinguish between something that is going to be sold commercially and something that isn’t, because I feel as passionate about both, or all. And each one that I do.

MC You said earlier, you know, that you worked in a sense for your
ancestors, the people who went before. But you’re also working .. are
you also working for the future generations too?

DS Well, of course, because you can’t know where you’re going if you
don’t know where you’ve been. And it’s ten years that Robyn and I
have been working, and in those ten years, finally this year, working
with the airport we will validate the disbelief, if any, that this would
never go in any direction again. It is here, it is going to be the building
blocks again. I teach ten women every Wednesday night, on a
volunteer basis for the women, and they’ve collected a little money to
pay me, because they’re so interested in learning. Now, those women
have asked me over the last ten years to teach, and I’ve always said,
“Yeah, sometime.” and they’ve finally found a way of getting it
happening.

MC Yeah.

DS So we’ve been working for, I don’t know, six months, and you know,
the children are recognizing the weaving more than they ever did.
And you know, they can identify with it now, and not only the
children, but society. We’ll see, I think when they unveil the airport,
and Vancouver will also see that there is some goodness in what we
represent as people. And I think that that’s something that’s been a goal
also for me is to, in a way that’s meant to happen, because I won’t really
push it a lot, but I really think that things will come in turn, when
they’re supposed to ...

MC Yeah.

DS So that there’s been times where I haven’t worked at all. You know,
maybe a year goes by and you know, I haven’t been sitting here
continuously working. In fact, you can see in my room, I don’t own a
piece. Because it’s not about owning anything for me. And it’s about
other people being able to take these pieces, especially in museums
where I know a lot of people come, and view what they’re going to see
as history but as history in the making for now. So that we can see a
connection between the old blankets and the new ones?

MC Yeah.

DS And that they exist again. And I mean, if we look south to the Navaho
country, we see this huge process of economics for these Navaho people. And that will be a part of what my goal is. If we can become self-sufficient based on who we are, and not hope on what somebody says we have to be, then I’ll be happy.

MC Right.

DS And I’ve always said, that my goal, part of my goal also, was to .. that Vancouver would see – all of Vancouver – would see someday the positive of the people. And I didn’t really expect it to happen in ten years. I thought it would take, you know, a good twenty years minimum for it to sort of flow into society subtly and be seen here and there one, you know, one here and one there, you know. But when the airport happened, I was taken aback. And all of that is for those people that have been so wrongly done in the past. It’s for them. It’s for those people who suffered, and felt inadequate in the process, and if I never .. I always told Betsy this: if I never made another blanket at the airport, I’d never regret it. In fact, I don’t know if I even want to. Because that had been my goal – was to work towards an understanding between – a positive one ...

MC Yeah.

DS Away from politics between two peoples. And we see the surface now, in politics, in what has happened to the aboriginal people. And I think that society feels somewhat threatened by it. But I really don’t think they should. I think that we’re coming to probably a better understanding about all of our positions. And, you know. So, eventually, I think, I would like to see that the community reflects .. the visual arts is so important. And we haven’t had that for so long. So we had an elder’s meeting and presented our work to the elders.

MC Oh, yeah?

DS And they were totally .. if they were on one of those planes, they would have hit the sky, because they had never seen really what we have been doing over ten years. The museum probably knows more about what we have been doing than our own people do. And when they saw them, they were very, very, impressed. In fact, I just talked to one of the elders the other day, and she said, “I can’t stop thinking about those blankets.”
MC  Wow. She was very moved.

DS  Yeah. They were. And they're so large. The people are like, "Boy." They can't imagine them. Or fathom them. So we'll have, you know, a special presentation for the elders. But, you know, you've got to remember these elders, like I said, are young elders. They never even saw them when they were young. They don't know anything about it.

MC  Yeah, yeah.

DS  So to me there's this real sadness, you know, over the last 75, 100 years. Because no-one could reflect anything positive about who they were?

MC  Yeah. So would you like to see some of the older pieces, you know, brought back here, and stored or displayed, somewhere around Musqueam.

DS  Mmhm. Well, most definitely. Because I think there's no place like home. And I think that it would give the people a sense of identity again, because they have nothing to identify with. There's controversy about the Winter Ceremonies. Seventy-five percent of the people now don't go there, and twenty-five percent do. And of those twenty-five percent, they're the ones that are not involved too much in the community, other than in the Longhouse. But we're really trying to overcome that as well too. We had our Thanksgiving dinner last night where it was very successful. And I think the people are moving - I don't know if "moving" is the word to use - but I think that they are becoming aware, and now it's going to be a race for who's got more culture than the next one?

MC  Uhuh.

DS  And that's because of change now, and they're starting to feel it's OK to be who they are. If they're going to be somebody who are they? Well, gee, what is it to be a native person? So that's something I've worked on for fifteen years now. So I know what it is, and I know that feeling. And I'm very excited when I'm sitting with the women and they're learning how to weave and they're just as excited about it.

MC  Yeah.
DS And the questions that they ask, and the answers I can give back is what it's all about. Because nobody could answer those questions before.

MC So .. and if some of the older pieces were, you know, moved back here ...

DS We'd have to build a house for them. A room for them.

MC Yeah. Would they be used as well -- worn? I'm trying to think of that balance again, between preserving something that's older and fragile, and really the purpose for it being here.

DS Well, I think we would use our common sense, as everyone does, and that some that were not useable any more would be duplicated and some of the ones that are useable can be. But would have to be, you know, looked after with great care. I think that's something I'm very grateful to the museum for is that that blanket you have now that was commissioned by you, is travelling, is a travelling piece, because it goes to many important occasions. And I think that is a very important part of relations with the museum. Instead of having it hang there with no identity to it, it's now given a .. it's given a .. it's been given so much more than even the ones that only knew one place. So that it travels -- you know, it's gone to different functions, it's been cared for and looked after well and respected. And I think that's also something that's also coming back to community is respect of, you know, the importance of looking after what you have. And you see over the last hundred years, or the last 850 years, our communities have lost a little respect for themselves in not knowing who they were, and I think you will probably see a change coming over all people with that.

DS Too. Hmm. Josh [son of DS] always watches me weaving [unclear] and if I'm sort of behind they remind me that I haven't done any work lately.

MC Oh, great. So, do you think .. talking about balance, balancing out the significance of new objects, the ones that are, that you and the women are creating, and the old objects, do you think that they have the same roles, do you think that they have different roles, and should they all be preserved? Does it matter if a new one replaces an old one, you
know, as long as there’s an object that .. ?

DS Well, I think it’s basically, as I said before, a controversy as well. Because you have different people thinking about things in different ways. And I’m very open to suggestions from museums about how they see them.

MC Mmhm.

DS And taking a little of how they see them and how I see them and finding a really good balance there.

MC Yeah.

DS Because it’s common sense that you cannot, you know, use something that’s very fragile, you can’t use a blanket that’s falling apart, or an old mask that’s you know .. but I think too that you wouldn’t want to. I think that there are some things that have to be left with almost with an aura around them that’s very mysterious and very respectful and you keep a distance from that. And in doing that you can make something that replaces that that connects you to that particular piece.

MC And so ...

DS So that ..

MC Go ahead.

DS So that with the project that I think D. – what’s his name now? – at the museum there.

MC C. or P.?

DS D. C.’s working on some of the [unclear] from Musqueam?

MC Oh, yeah.

DS They are now doing replicas for the show called “Written in the Earth” with M. H.

MC Right. Yeah.
DS And they’re duplicating those pieces. Those men that are out there right now have never either identified with anything. And when they saw those pieces, those guys out there, I think they were really moved as well. And they’re very geared up. They’re feeling very connected. They’re there, and they’re working and working and working. Now, I wanted to work on a couple of those pieces, but I have so much to do, and I went out there and had a look, and I’m not a carver, and they’re carving – the bone, and they’re carving whatever. And I wanted to try that. I wanted to try carving, because I engrave, and D. said he’d save me pieces. But right now I’m really so busy I don’t know if I’ll get there.

MC Yeah.

DS And yet I really do want to try. I want to be a little part of it, because there is such excitement with those men out there. But I don’t know if it’s excitement only about the men. It’s excitement about that the men should be the only ones excited and I would be the only woman, and besides Susan, involved with it. And I think that that’s somewhat important, that there is that change that also has happened that it’s not just the men carving or engraving anymore.

MC Yeah.

DS Susan and I are the only two women in this community, and I don’t know about other Salish communities that even do this kind of work. So it does show you that you know, maybe in the last life I was a man.

I think .. I do believe that we come back and forth many times. And I think that’s what makes everybody so unique, is that everytime we come, we come with a different message.

MC Yeah.

DS And we experience also the feeling of the messages we have before us, so that it gives us more, you know, satisfaction, hopefully, as a human. And I think that’s what we work toward as humans: just to be happy.

MC Mmhm.
DS And I don't think it's the money that really makes us happy but how we make that money. And we forget that. And we sit there, and I'm as guilty as anybody: worried about money. And then I laugh at myself a little bit, because when I had my first daughter I lived on four hundred a month. Now I have three kids and I probably live on fifteen or two thousand a month, and I still feel like I did when I had four hundred.

MC Yeah, yeah.

DS Because why? Because my values have gone up too, and the kids want a little more, and you spend, and then you go, "Where did the money go?".

MC Yeah.

DS Then I think, wait a minute. If I could live on four hundred happily, then why am I more concerned and stressed now over this money when I hardly had any before?

MC Yeah.

DS I don't know. So I think it really does sort of swallow you up suddenly before you even realize it. You know? So it's really interesting, you know, that how do we put a value on these objects we're making for the museum? And I find that really interesting. We've always maintained how we're going to value our blankets because we feel we're in a position: we're the only ones who are investing in our – and I've talked about that many times – how do we value these blankets?

MC Yeah.

DS But what we've done is basically set the precedence for people coming behind us.

MC Yeah.

DS Hopefully now we'll understand, and the people will understand that they are valuable to us.

MC Yes, well, yes. It's the primary thing.
DS Yes. But it's something that you have to be careful with. Because they
don't think the same way you do, either. Here we have [unclear] beliefs
[unclear] work with. But you know, when you're going to do
duplicates, for instance, in a show? How do you put a value on that?
D. had mentioned to me that all objects were worth between two
hundred and five hundred, and I said, "How do you know?"

MC Yeah.

DS And he said, "Well, that's what we were told." And I said, "By who,
though?"

MC Yeah.

DS I mean, who ..

MC ...was a real problem for the whole question for the objects that are
going to travel because, you know, the insurance ...

DS [unclear].

MC Yeah, says you have to put a value on it in case something happens to
it, and just how do you establish that?

DS I've had a couple of phone calls about that, and I said, "Well, you
know," I said, "how I [unclear] ..."
No, it's alright. I think that's something, you know, that's a real
controversy because, well, what I usually do, and I haven't talked to D.
C. about this yet, but I was going to suggest to him for my sake, and I
don't know, he's already dealt with the men, I was going to say, well,
you know D., I'm going to deal with you the same way I deal with
anybody else, and that is, I will choose the objects I will do – I've chosen
one, and I'm going to do two more.

MC Yeah.

DS Because the show's not going to travel for awhile.

MC Right.

DS But when I do ...
When I do, I will quote what I feel they are worth, and when I do that, I will do that one the same basis as I do everything else, half when I start and half when I finish.

MC  Uuhh. You’re right.

DS  But that’s how I work, and I won’t work otherwise.

MC  Yeah.

DS  Because I’m in a position of power for myself. And I’m not letting anybody take my power away, because they’re an institution. So, I will do the work with you if you want me to, but if you don’t want to handle me that way, then I won’t do it. And that’s just how I work, because I am responsible for me.

MC  Yes.

DS  Not anybody else.

MC  Right! Yes. Now, what about, OK, what about if one of the pieces gets damaged? What I’m wondering about, like, say, with the weavings at the airport? At what point would you consider them to be damaged and then maybe ...

DS  Redo them?

MC  Maybe redo them, or yeah, repair them, or what would be if something, well, not the weaving at the airport, but something, a blanket you made, is worn, and you know, gets stretched out of shape. Is it like, in a museum context that’s damaged because it’s stretched out of shape. But if it was worn on an occasion, then it’s not damaged. You know what I mean?

DS  You’re trying to figure out what the humaness is of objects that are looked at otherwise. Well, that’s why you’re an institution and we’re not. I mean, I hate to use that word, “institution” but it is what I’ve heard you call yourself. And so it is, and I think that’s what Betsy tried to do when we had our exhibit there and we called it “The Hands of Our Ancestors” – we were trying to over .. trying to I want to say overstep – but we were trying to find a way of making the exhibit more
human.

MC Right.

DS So that it wasn’t just an exhibit; it wasn’t just something to come and look through the glass and walk away. And it is, it’s a battle to understand how you do that, or what you should do. We .. I haven’t been asked yet at all what would happen if something got damaged. The museum owns it, OK? The museum owns it on the basis that they would loan it out for certain occasions. Now, I think that since they own it and not me anymore, but I could have my two cents if they wanted it, they would stipulate to me that if I were to borrow it, that I would please respect it. Now, if I somehow lent it to somebody else that same day, and they did something that got it all stretched out, or the kids jumped on it when it was .. you know, whatever. Well, I would hope that they would have it insured for such a reason, so that in the case that something happened to it, it could be either duplicated or ..

MC Right.

DS I’m sure that they have insurance for that, you know? For damage?

MC Yeah, they do. I don’t know what ... Do you need to get that, or .. ?

DS Somebody’s not giving up, eh? [Son wants attention.]

MC Yeah.

OK. So we were talking about damage, and what, you know, what it is, and we, oh, whether the museum has insurance. I think we do, but I think the deductible is so big, that it’s only, you know, only for something .. I know Alison would know all the details anyway, of that. But like, you know, say your weaving went out .. OK. So say another museum asked for your blankets for an exhibition, and we decide to loan it, and you know, we would ask that it not be exhibited under high light conditions and that kind of thing, because, you know, to us that would damage the blanket. But if you know, the blanket went out – I think it was .. was it this past year it was taken out? There was a woman’s conference on? Was that your piece?
DS  No, that was Barb's.

MC  OK.

DS  [unclear]

MC  Like, do you see a difference between the different purposes, the different kinds of use, the different occasions, and therefore .. ?

DS  Well, I suppose, yeah, of course there would be different weaving occasions, but I think they’re all so important, because what the blankets do is they reflect the strength of the people. So I think that it actually is good for the museum in relation with people. Because you see, we haven’t got to a point yet where these blankets are readily available to everyone. And I think that what I say is again my goal, is that one day we will all own one, as the button blankets, and they represent your strength; they’re your robe of power. And I don’t particularly own one yet, because I don’t think I’m in a position to own one. I don’t think I’d make myself one, but if someone made me one then I’d be honoured, but I wouldn’t sit down and make myself one. I wouldn’t be that elevated. So I would make one of course for my children, some [unclear] that would be nice [unclear] for an occasion. But I think in seeing those blankets when people .. you see, people are so used to Northwest Coast, the button blankets, the Pendleton blankets, the Navaho blankets, and they see these blankets and they’re really taken aback by them because they’ve never seen them, and they want to know where they come from, and the first thing they say is, like, Navaho, or, how about Mexican, or Southwest, or how about right here? And it really says something for our .. the richness of our culture, the strength of it, if you can .. and you know, I think that’s what it’s all about. It’s all about that. And when you see these blankets show up in different areas of life, whether it be a woman’s conference, the signing of the Treaty Commission, or an educational conference on aboriginal people, or other people; it says that there are a people that existed that have values and strengths, and there’s nothing more beautiful than something pleasing to the eye. And if you see that, somehow or another – I talked about this earlier – it validates those people.

MC  Yes.
DS To say that these people are “Oh, you people did that? Well, gee, I hadn’t heard any of you people could do those kinds of things. [unclear]?” And now that we do know that, and I take it very seriously, and I take it very passionately, and I always, you know, I’ve said it time and time again to Betsy and Jill and everybody else in the museum, it’s been my saving grace. It’s been my place in society now. You know. I mean, I was one of those rebellious people who, you know, kicked up my heels and was a rebel, and I never just quite fit in, and I didn’t like school, I hated it, and I’ve finally found something that has given me peace of mind, and peace in my spirit, and has connected me to a whole history of wonder to me. And so, you know, that’s what I feel these blankets reflect when you’re out in society. When the museum, or when, excuse me, the airport opens, and everyone in Vancouver and throughout the world, sees these blankets hanging there, they will know that these people exist, we still exist, and they have a history that is rich and can be shared with everyone. And that’s our place. Is that if the sadness of it all is that we have to see to believe. And I think the Bible says “Blessed are those who believe it without seeing.” And I’ve always felt that blessed, but now I know that in order for people to understand that, they first have to see something.

MC Right, right.

DS So when the airport says we want these blankets but show me you can do it I had to argue with them for a whole year. I must say that in working with the museum, they have been the most respectful of believing in what they don’t see. They have trusted me and Robyn, they have respected us, and we respect them back. And that’s why I don’t have a bad feeling about museums, because I’ve worked with you, out there. Now, other people might have their run-ins, and I’ve even heard people in the area from the Northwest Coast make negative comments, but I still feel they’re in the process of anger. So that’s why they make them. And I think they’ll eventually come out of that, in knowing that we too, if we ever brought those objects home, would have to work with you very closely to make sure that these objects maintain they’re life in the way that they’re looked after. And so we would have to work very closely to keep that relationship, and to know which ones do we use, and which one’s don’t we use? And I think that’s only common sense. You can’t use something that’s very old, and anyway, I wouldn’t want to. I talked to D. C. about this when he had all the objects on the table, and he said, “Well, Debra, if you
want to pick any of them up, you have to use the gloves.” and I said “Why would I want to pick any of them up?” And he looked at me, and he said, “Well, to look at them.” And I said, “I don’t want to. I can see with my eyes, I don’t need to touch them. And I wouldn’t want to. Why, D.?” I said, “Because they lived in a different time frame, that I very much respect for. They lived beneath this earth for many, many thousands of years some of them. And I don’t want to be a part of that in that way.” I don’t have to go and touch them and feel them and know that they exist. I can see that they do. And even in making them, I’ll use pictures, and seeing them here, I’ll keep that picture with me. But I don’t want to touch them. I don’t feel necessary for that.

MC Yeah. So an older piece, lets say the blanket from 1898 in New York, if it had a hole in it, would you prefer to see it just ... to see that hole left alone, so that the work really represents the time period of 1898, or would you prefer to see it, you know, sort of repaired, you know, by say, someone like yourself, so that the blanket is whole again, and you know, you can see the design as the original maker had intended it to be seen?

DS I’d like it to be left the way it is. For whatever reasons it had, I don’t want to play with someone else’s property from that time period.

MC Mmhm. Property meaning, like, ancestors rather than, like the New York Museum?

DS Yeah.

MC Yeah.

DS Yeah, because my first instinct in connection to it, is it belongs to my people.

MC Yeah. Right.

DS I don’t tamper with something that I feel ... that I respect, and I wouldn’t insult my people by guessing that that’s what it looked like. And that’s why ... we had a little misunderstanding with Margaret, only in that she asked me if I would submit my name to ... there’s a couple of pieces out there that are broken?
MC  Oh.

DS  And she’s not really sure .. I mean, they must have been broken in that time frame, but only one half existed.

MC  OK.

DS  So that she said, “Well, how ’bout if, you know, you take a half of this object, and think about what you would think it would look like on the other side?” , and I said, “No.” And she said, “Well, why not?” And I said, “Well, I wouldn’t insult the person that did it in the first place to guess what they were doing, and I respect them enough ...”

MC  Yeah.

DS  And I would like to see it left the way it is because, because that was theirs.

MC  Mmhmm.

DS  It was theirs, it wasn’t mine, and I’m not going to even insult them or myself and say I would guess what it looked like.

MC  Yeah.

DS  I wouldn’t do that. I would like to see it left just the way it is. Because that’s what it was when you found it, or when you brought it up – I didn’t think it was found, but I said I couldn’t feel ...”

MC  Yeah.

DS  It’s not even that I wouldn’t want to guess with my mind, but I couldn’t feel it?

MC  Yeah.

DS  And if I did some other time, if I remembered that piece, and say, in [unclear] years down the road I had an understanding, a feeling about it, for instance, maybe I was creating something on my jewelry, and that evolved out of it, then I would know that that was the way it was supposed to be. That I had permission then to do it.
MC  Yeah. Yeah.

DS  It’s almost like I have to have permission. I don’t have permission from you, or Margaret, or anyone else to do that. The only permission I could feel it could come from is from Creation itself. And I couldn’t second guess that, and I wouldn’t ...

MC  Right.

DS  I wouldn’t do that to anyone. I wouldn’t want to know that a piece that I had, if only half of it was left here, somebody guessed at what it might have been, like in the next world.

MC  Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

DS  Unless I was a real spirit and I came and I said – came back to a certain person and said, “I want this message there, and by doing it.” And that’s certainly happened if we understand what the whole spirit world’s about.

MC  Mmm.

DS  I mean, I think I have permission by my ancestors to communicate some sort of message for them through the visual art of blanket itself.

MC  Yeah.

DS  The blanket is not – I’ll never call it a wall hanging; it’s a blanket. It is not an art piece in my eyes, when I’m creating it.

MC  Uuhh.

DS  What it is is a story. It will .. when you look at it you can’t help but say, “Wow”. I mean, you look at the Navaho one I’ve got on the wall here, and everytime I look at a different section, I just think, man, they’re amazing.

MC  Yeah.

DS  And yet their work is so different from ours, and yet it’s similar.
MC  Mmhm.

DS  So as much as it is different it is similar, and yet it’s unique in it’s own way, and so is ours.

MC  Mmhm.

DS  And I think the really nice thing about, again, is .. the blankets, is that, you know, they are unique to Salish people.

MC  Mmhm.

DS  And each Salish community will take on it’s own style, and colour theme and uniqueness.

MC  Yeah. Yeah.

DS  For instance, D. L.’ wife, R. left Musqueam and she’s going over and she’s teaching over in Saanich?

MC  Uhuh.

DS  And she’s taught quite a few women, and I think they presented a blanket at the Commonwealth Games to the Queen. Now that blanket, they presented, was a colour combination that I would have never chose.

MC  Uhuh. Uhuh.

DS  But she chose it, and it was almost like some of the other women in the community had mentioned that they didn’t think it was nice, and I said, to her it is. And you have to respect that.

MC  Yeah.

DS  You know. But also you have to know that the difference between us and them is that we will take time to really calculate where this blanket is going, and to what degree we would make sure of it’s uniqueness. Now, it looks to me that she rushed that. And, you know .. I don’t know what the story is, and I shouldn’t even be saying but anyway,
that is something that is, you know, has become, you know, it will become unique to every community.

MC And so the .. you were saying that you call them blankets and even the ones not, that can’t be worn, like the ones that are smaller, or the ones for the airport that are very large, they’re still .. to you they’re stories rather than aesthetic pieces?

DS Well, I wouldn’t want to think that I’d just made something for nothing to hang there.

MC Right.

DS You know, that it’s just nice to look at?

MC Right. Right, yeah.

DS I would think that it’s part of history when it’s there, and it says something about who it is, and what it is, and what it represents. And I’m sure it does, because people can’t help but ask those questions.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

DS You know?

MC Yeah. It’s interesting, because in conservation we talk about conserving the .. the four aspects of any objects that we want to – to preserve and also to not tamper with essentially are the physical integrity of the object, especially an old object. That, you know, to keep it – all it’s .. to keep it in it’s original .. in the form in which we have it, you know, and the aesthetic integrity, the way it looks, and the historic integrity, which is, in a way, what you’ve been mentioning with the different occasions it’s been used on. Like, that all adds to it’s history. And then what we’ve called the conceptual integrity. Which is it’s significance. It’s that intangible part; it’s that .. it’s the, yeah, whether it’s a spiritual object or if it’s a, you know, whatever.

DS I think anything that came from that time period is because the people just were spiritual people.

MC Uuhh.
DS And I don’t know [unclear] something they were cooking with, to something they were fishing with, anything they did they did with respect to the land and respect to creation, and that in itself in this day and age we know as spiritual. And yet we think that that’s something that is in a category on it’s own but it isn’t.

MC Yeah! Right, right. It permeates, it .. yeah.

DS Yes. Yeah. So I think that something that makes us different from – if we have differences – is what makes us different from the mainstream society.

MC Yes, yes.

DS But not all people any more. I mean, the last seventy-five years we have groups of people who don’t understand that as well. You know, in our own peer group in Musqueam, so, you know, it’s I don’t know. I don’t talk to too many people about it.

MC Yeah.

DS In our own community, too much. Just starting to with the weavers, but, you know, I guess it will unveil itself. I think [unclear] it is too whichever direction it goes in. I really do believe in, you know, in the fact that everything .. everything happens at the time it’s supposed to?

MC Mmhm.

DS I mean, these blankets were to be unveiled again. They were to be brought back into this world to have a purpose.

MC Mmhm.

DS You know, and that’s the process that we’re in with that.

MC So do you think that, you know, for the objects that are in museums, can what we’ve called the conceptual integrity, in which, you know, which .. you know, which .. you know, it’s cultural significance, and whatever way you’re looking at it, can that be? I mean, we’re preserving the physical object in the museum, but can we do .. do we
have a role, or can... you know? In terms of the cultural signif... is there anything museums should do or should not do? In terms of, you know, if we're trying to preserve... you know, the object is in a museum, and we want to make sure we don't tamper with any of those four things. The physical integrity...

DS I think they've already been tampered with, though.

MC Yeah.

DS And I can't see how you could do anything else other than that.

MC Uuhh.

DS Because they are old objects, they came from the very four things you're talking about when they existed. You know, they were living objects is what they were.

MC Yeah.

DS You know, at the time that they were either collected or sold or whatever they were. However they found their way there.

MC Yeah.

DS And you know, there is a... I don't think there is too much you can do to add to that, unless, unless, you know... and I don't even think there's an "unless". I just don't think there is. They're old and they came from time, and I think they just verified existance; they verified what was so that we understand what is, so we can go forward with what will be. And all of that is in connection. It all, you know, it all goes into the pole of life, the circle of life, and we don't if they're there and if they can help us to take... go over our next hurdle in understanding what really happened.

MC Yeah.

DS But, you know, the world that they live in, and who looks after them...

MC The world the objects live in?
DS Yeah.

MC Yeah.

DS The museum. The whole world of museum people. There are different people that understand different things and they look at them differently. For example, when I went to a museum in New York, and he said, "Well, this blanket was made in 1898." and I totally felt connected to it. Because it was already made, but it was collected in 1898.

MC Right.

DS And grandpa ...my grandpa is 96. It was collected in 1898. So that means it was probably made a few years before that. So that would make it well over a hundred years ago.

MC Mmhm.

DS And my first thought was to think, man, this blanket's like .. over a hundred years ago grandpa was born, the blanket was being worn ...

MC Yeah.

DS And so the significance to all of that gives me more strength as a, you know, connection to that.

MC Yeah.

DS And .. you know, because .. society itself, you know, you look around in society and you have whatever culture you came from to reflect from, whether it's Scottish, Norwegian, and history has gone back in time, validating it, and there are TV programmes and books written and people travelled to these worlds, and in all those worlds, I mean, I've watched all of my life, in my life, and I've watched in respect and in wonder and all of that, I've never felt like I do now about reflecting who I am. Now, for once, I can say, well, this is where we come from. This is our history; this is a part of it that can be seen and can be seen as a good thing. You know, it's not about, you know .. it's not about how I felt for those years that I'm sure the people before me, fifty years
before me, felt where we did not have a part, and we felt inadequate and useless, and .. because that's what we were told, and we believed what we were told. And now we can say, no, no, that's not what it's about. And, you know, we can take our place in history now. And that's exciting, you know. It really is. But, you know, as far as we [unclear] I don't really know how much more you can do to change.

MC Mmm. Mhm.

DS Maybe that's just something that will happen, you know, in time itself, and ideas will come from younger people, or, you know, [unclear] most people use the museum from here.

MC Yeah. So is there something that would make people feel more .. more like they would want to use it, since we do have .. like you don't have a house here yet for old objects and there is, you know, MOA is down the road, so, do you have any suggestions?

DS Well ...

MC Or do you think it's just because, it's, you know, it's not a Musqueam institution and so it will never really be the same. You know, that it will never be .. it will always be a foreign ...

DS I don't know why .. I don't know if I have an answer for that. There's too many individual people around here that I couldn't speak for. I don't know. I mean, I go to the museum a lot, only because I'm in another .. for certain different reasons. But this Sunday, last Sunday, I was actually going to go in and take the kids and walk through. But I would like to see a Musqueam exhibit there, permanently on display there, something that - I mentioned to Mike on a couple of occasions, that it hasn't happened, and I'm hoping that, you know, pretty soo .. well, maybe in the near future I'll [unclear] and go talk with him about it, because I really think that's important.

MC Yes.

DS And I think that the airport opening and us wanting to revenue people to the museum because it's the only place we know that houses, you know, who we are, in our community, and we're going to have to start a more commercial venue with the work we do, and that would be the
place that we would want to revenue to, for now.

MC Uhuh. Uhuh.

DS And I really think that when they come there, they see that blanket at the museum, or at the airport, sorry, they're going to want to go somewhere where they can see more and if it's only given away, how are they even going to know it exists?

MC That's right. Yeah.

DS And I really would like to see .. I mean, we have the vast Northwest Coast – just one totem poles, and we have everything. And there is nothing there, except for the masks, but ... I would really like to see that.

MC Yeah.

Are there any suggestions that you could make to us about, I mean, apart from that, the way we store the objects, or maintain them, or who sees them? I mean, I don't know whether, you know, you've been involved in any of the controversies over the masks, the Salish masks that we have at the moment?

DS Oh, I know about it.

MC Yeah. So .. and the tomb, as it's called. The Musqueam tomb as you walk into the galleries and everything. Like, just your personal opinion on whether .. I don't know. Or is just something you're .. you know, you're not so much concerned with?

DS Well .. I guess I would say I can understand. Those masks that were collected at the time were being used. And that particular dance is not seen by the public, and therefore it shouldn't be shown there.

MC Mmhm. Mmhm.

DS And especially those masks. Now, if you'd acquired more contemporary masks from someone here .. now, in the process of change, the respect of that particular kind of dancing [unclear] and it probably stopped in that time frame that you collected it. That's why those should still be put away.
MC  OK. OK.

DS  Now, these young guys that are dancing, they don’t see the significance in what they do, and so I .. if they wanted to sell you one, I would probably say go ahead.

MC  Yeah.

DS  Because they’ve lost the whole, you know, the whole value of it.

MC  Yeah.

DS  Although it’s still only done in particular times, for instance, funerals, marriages, whatever.

MC  Mmhm.

DS  It’s, you know, the ones that are in museum – there, I don’t believe they should be seen.

MC  Mmhm. Mmhm. Do you see the objects that are from Musqueam, do you .. like, some of them, you know, some of them – well, at least who the individual was who had it I don’t know whether we know always who owned it, or whether we know just how it was collected, but .. and the same thing in New York. They said the Musqueam, but they didn’t have the name of the family, or individual. So would you see those .. are those objects are they .. would you see them as community heritage, or would you see them as family heritage that .. ?

DS  Well, it’s a really hard thing because, you know, in the process of change, and what not, if they came back as a community project, and some had Sparrow on it, and some had Point on it, the problem with it, and from communities, is that how we used to organize, if we organized, but how we functioned as families and communities before this all happened. We knew and respected all of the components that we had of life and values. Now if one of those objects were to come back and say we had a little museum here and it came back, and it said “Belonged to the Sparrow family” but the catalogue may say .. not want to be known?
D S  But you did know it belonged to the Sparrow family, and in this whole rebirth of cultural awareness and community, in some ways it stirs a lot of emotions about where it really does belong, or who it belongs with?

M C  Yeah.

D S  Which is good in a way, but out of it there's a lot of anger too, that well, it belongs to my family, not your family.

M C  Yeah.

D S  And there's still that little bit of ownership going on there that has been, you know, influenced to us by society that we always have to take ownership. And maybe I'm contradicting myself, because maybe we did take ownership, but we knew how to respect it.

M C  Mmhm.

D S  Prior to Europeans arrival. Because we knew who we were. We knew that this family did that, and that family did that, and the Sparrow's did this and the Point's did that and the Campbells did this. We knew that; and it was, you know, respect that was there. Now there is no respect in communities anymore, I'm sorry to say, and there's just a lot of anger, and a lot of jealousy. Oh, a lot of jealousy. So with that comes a lot of bad feelings too.

M C  Yeah.

D S  And so it's a real controversy whether those names should be revealed. For instance, you said, OK: "There's a Swaixwe mask in there; it was collected in 1950 by E. S." And then somebody goes out there and they say where's that mask from? And you say, "Well, it was collected by E. S." Well, that wasn't [unclear]. He took it from So and So. And So and So didn't know he sold it, and blablablabla. And you know that's happened a lot.

M C  Yeah, yeah.
DS And so that's where it becomes very .. I wouldn't want to be in your position.

MC Yeah.

DS You know?

MC Yeah.

DS And yet the people have the right to know, and yet you don't know if that's your position.

MC Mmm.

DS So, I mean, that's something that I've always sort of even played with myself. On one hand it's good, and on one hand it's not. So it's not a position I want to be in.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

DS It's almost .. you know, some people -- you have to be so careful. Because some people do not have good intentions. Some people do not have the same intentions as I do; mine are honourable, and some people don't. They just .. they're in there too for themselves and what they can get, and how they can get it.

MC Yeah.

DS And so it's very tricky.

MC Yeah! Yeah. Yeah.

DS Especially I see that happen a lot with the Northwest Coast people, like the Kwakwaka'wakw and the Haida's, and, you know, those particular people as well, too, that are very, you know, they don't ... museums .. their things in museums, and they feel very .. they feel a lot of anger yet about what is going on.

MC Mmm.
DS And you have people in the Southwest: I’ve heard them talk at a museum function with B. in Seattle and there’s a lot of anger there about – and it’s understandable – about spiritual objects that were used by medicine men, and by – do you know those mountain goat horn rattles too?

MC Yeah.

DS Well, those should never be seen, either.

MC Really. I didn’t know that. I didn’t know that.

DS Those are very secret. Were very secret.

MC Yeah.

DS So, you know .. there’s a mystery around that whole time frame about whether sacredness of it, or the spiritualness of it should be .. who should be associated with it. Just in that there’s a lot of superstition around our people and their beliefs. And yet my beliefs, aside from them, are ... what I do is I listen to what people have to say, but I still try to take the goodness out of it rather than the superstitious parts that say, well, if you touch that, you know, you’re in trouble, or ...

MC Mmm. Mmmhm.

DS There’s sort of a somewhat of an evil around it.

MC Mmm.

DS Or a badness, you know, like ...

MC Mmmhm.

DS But there’s a fine line between good and bad, and in all cultures you’ll see that.

MC Yeah.

DS You know, that I have an [unclear] here, bite your thumb. You know, the spirit. And why do we have to always believe it’s there? It’s
everywhere, I suppose.

MC  Yeah.

DS  So I always just try to believe that there is good that came out of it as well. So that part of it I sort of, you know, leave there, and try and make a judgement just by myself, rather than [unclear].

MC  Mmhm. So for us in a museum, what is it ... what should we be doing to show respect for the objects? Or, you know, are we already, you know ...you know,we’re operating at a certain level, but we, I don’t know. If one of those things .. it’s one of those things. It’s really interesting. In the conservation Code of Ethics, it says, for conservators, we always have to respect the object and respect the intentions of the originator of the object, but it doesn’t .. you know, respect is very broad, people are going to interpret that differently, and ...so, I don’t know. Do you have any recommendations?

DS  Mmm, I suppose anything I could think of off the top of my head would be that you would find out where that particular object originally came from and in working either with it, or with the people that it will come from, or stem from .. you see, you can only do the best job that you know how. You know. I mean, let’s face it, it’s in a particular building, and you’ve gone to a particular school to learn how to look after this particular object. You know?

MC  Yeah.

DS  And no one can blame you for that. No one can say: “You’re not doing your job.” You only know what to do for that. And by sitting here talking to me and other people, that too is helping you to understand.

MC  Mmhm.

DS  If you can, which way you can better your relationship with the museums. So I don’t know how much more you can do to better that.

MC  Yeah. Yeah.

DS  Because of the position the objects are in. And that’s a very fragile position.
MC Yeah.

DS So I think you’re basically going about it in the right way, and if there was something that I felt really strong about, it was wrong, or not being done, I would have said it a long time ago.

MC Mmhmm.

DS Before you even came here.

MC Mmh.

DS And, you know. So, is there anything else you can think of? Or .. ?

MC I think that’s ...I guess one other question is, you know, if, like .. people say to us: well, there’s traditional ways of storing objects, you know, for example, we kept these objects in wooden boxes, or we used this particular material to keep insects away. Is there anything like that that .. ?

DS I think that .. in Musqueam it’s basically lost.

MC Yeah. OK.

DS I don’t even think .. I don’t even think I would give credit to anybody who’s taken courses, or anybody who’s .. I mean, even our oldest people don’t know what would be the best way to look after anything.

MC Yeah.

DS So, you know, I myself, personally don’t think that I’ve ever heard of anything about how they did preserve anything, if they did. You know, so really you’re the best ones to offer .. to know about that is you. And that’s why we can work together. Because if the museum didn’t do the study that they do to look at ways of preserving it, and helping to maintain the usefulness of the objects, they wouldn’t be there.

MC Right.
DS They just wouldn't be there.

MC Yeah.

DS For us to even make a controversy over.

MC Yeah! Right!

DS So people can argue all they want. And I think the other thing is that in the process of change, we have to remember the people, the aboriginal people, that you are not the ones we had the controversy with. It may have been five workers before you.

MC Yeah.

DS And that's what I'm willing to do. I'm willing to look at what can we do now - you and me. I know what went wrong. I know what was. But I just want to work .. about always being positive about how we can work together now.

MC That's fabulous.

DS You know?

MC Yeah, yeah, right. I realize I have just one final question.

DS Yeah?

MC About objects. Which is that are there any objects that you would prefer to see allowed to deteriorate. For example the Haida people have said that these poles should go back and complete a natural cycle, you know. Are there objects that you can think of that .. ?

DS Well, you know, I can understand them saying it, but I also don't agree to the extent that they .. some things, as we said before, need to be validated.

MC Right.

DS But if we can have a pole that came from, you know, a century or two ago that still exists, there's strength in that deterioration as it happens.
MC  Mmmhm. Mmmhm.

DS  And whether we've slowed that process down, I mean, heavens, we're looking to slowing down our own deterioration every day.

MC  Yeah! Right!

DS  You know, we're putting on face cream, we're, you know, we're trying special remedies and potions to keep us younger, but when we meet an elder, you know, what do we feel in that? That we, you know, hope we're as graceful as that when we're that age. And I think that that's just something that my boy needs to see. He needs to see .. he loves the museum. And when he goes there I would hope that there's something that I can teach - You know that that's ... - you know. In fact, I have my grandmother's baby shoe sitting on my counter in the kitchen. And she used to come to Norway, it was made in Norway, hand made, in leather, and she's 87 now. You know, there's something in that, that says, "This was my grandmother's" His great-grandmother's. By the time he owns it, I'm going to have to [unclear] it because it's deteriorating. In fact, I should ask the museum how I should keep it.

MC  Yeah. Yeah, I can take a look at it.
DOLLY WATTS
AFFILIATION: GITWANGAK BAND, [GITKSAN]
BUSINESSWOMAN, (AGE GROUP 40-60 YEARS)

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN HER RESTAURANT, SEPT 27 1995, VANCOUVER

DW Should I just talk about the research my daughter's doing?

MC Yeah. And also I'd just like to hear a little bit about your family, you know, and ...

DW Yeah.

MC Yeah. Well, I'm from Kitwanga and my father was Akb'hai [sp?] Wally; his name was Wallace Morgan, but he was chief Akb'hai – he was a high chief in our village from the Wolf tribe.

MC OK.

DW And my mother was also a chief, really from Gitsegukla which is S'kiniposee [sp?].

MC OK.

DW That's where my grandmother came from and she became a Chief herself. Because .. and then .. like, my grandmother moved to Kitselas ...

MC Uuhh.

DW Which is towards Terrace; she married Chief K'itchsilas [sp?] so that's why my mother was able to become a Chief.

MC OK, OK.

DW But I was just saying, like, on different .. just in my family, like my
husband's side, you know, there seems to be Chief's all over the place; there's Chief Harry Mountain – that was his grandfather. Chief John Mack [sp?] from Bamfield was his great grandfather, and another one in Port Alberni. So ...

MC Right. So were you brought up in the tradition a lot or not so much?

DW In the beginning I was. I was one of fourteen. But for some lucky reason, you know, well, my father was trying to protect me from my brothers because they were quite mean to me; I was just a runt in the family. So he brought me to the feasts. We would be gone for days; I saw a lot of what they didn't see.

MC OK. And the language? Did you speak the .. ?

DW Yes, I speak the language. But when I was seven I went to a hospital, because I had tuberculosis.

MC OK.

DW And then I went, from there, I went to the boarding school for ten years, and then I got married and stayed in Port Alberni.

MC OK. Wow. So what motivated you to get involved in the museum?

DW Yeah. I wanted to piece together ...

MC Do you need to get that? [telephone]

DW No. I wanted to piece together our culture. I mean, our .. just our history. So much was missing, you know – when I left home, everything was erased from my mind or they .. you know, the boarding school experience, you know, that was mainly what they tried to do was erase past knowledge. A whole way of life. We had to forget about that and start something new.

MC Do you remember the first time you went in to a museum?

DW No, I really don't, you know, except that I know that in our village, you know, like, there used to be all kinds of – I can't say hundreds – but there was totem poles all over and all of a sudden they had
disappeared.

MC Oh. And your village is .. ?

DW In K'itwanga.

MC OK.

DW Yeah. And my father was .. he knew George Macdonald and some other people in Ottawa, and he visited some of the museums and he would come back to tell us that there are more artifacts in that museum than there was in the village.

MC Uhuh.

DW So. And I missed seeing all the artifacts in our village.

MC Yeah.

DW You know. And I actually saw a man enter my uncle's house and search for artifacts. I was a little girl and I walked in and I just stood and watched him and he went down into the cellar and looked.

MC Was he, like, somebody from outside of your village?

DW Outside the village.

MC Yeah.

DW So I had some idea that something was going on that shouldn't have been going on. But I really went to the museum to piece together, you know, our history.

MC OK. OK. So how do the objects fit into that? Because I know that .. an important part would be the oral traditions and songs and dances .. how did the objects fit into that?

DW Well .. I guess what was really bothering me was that, like, there was so much supernatural beings, you know, like in our culture. The transformations. I didn't quite know how that happened, you know. So it was important for me to go find out.
MC Yes.

DW And when I studied, you know, at the Museum of Anthropology, I was able to sort it out in my mind. I can live with it. I believe both sides.

MC Are there some objects that you would see being preserved in the museum, maybe the museum in K’itwanga, you know, but then other objects, types of objects, you would see being preserved in the family? Or do you see them more as they just should be preserved in the family?

DW I believe they should be within the family.

MC Uhuh.

DW Because it’s very important for family memory to see them every day. To talk about them, to fix them, to use them and if they’re not .. if they’re absent there’s nothing for us.

MC Right.

DW You know, we can’t talk about it, and I did .. actually, I did this drawing of a headress when I was thirteen years old.

MC You’re kidding! You did that?

DW I did that.

MC That’s fantastic! It’s beautiful!

DW I entered it .. I did five paintings, and I entered it in a British Columbia wide competition, and I won.

MC I can see why. Wow.

DW The reason I was able to do that when I was thirteen – I was in boarding school – was because my father used to hide his headresses in between the [boards? unclear] of the upstairs floor.

MC Yeah.
DW  He'd put it really far in so we couldn't touch it. But I used to just about
break my arm, you know, and reach for it and look at it, and feel it. But
I was too young. I wasn't seven yet; I know I was younger than that.
When I looked at it, from my memory, I thought it was a man. Not a
bear. But years later, when he was dying, you know, they brought out
all his regalia, and I looked at it and I couldn't believe it; it was a bear.

MC  Yeah. Did he not want you to see them because you were young kids,
or was it because it was, you know, they were more to be seen just in
the, like, particular ritual cycle or something?

DW  Oh, just to keep them nice, I think.

MC  Yeah.

DW  It was not complete yet; it was not finished.

MC  Did he make them? Or did he .. ?

DW  No .. I don't know who did. But whoever made it didn't finish, like,
you know, the abalone around the .. it was unfinished in that way.

MC  And when your father passed on, this regalia, did it go to someone who
had, you know, one of the relatives that he ...

DW  Yeah. His button blanket went on to somebody else. The whole works
was supposed to go, but they can, if they want, will it to someone, like,
leave it to someone, and he left it to my sister.

MC  OK.

DW  To take care.

MC  Yeah.

DW  I'm just going [unclear].

MC  Sure, sure.

DW  You were asking if .. he just put it out of sight so we wouldn't damage
Right, right. I guess do you think it’s important, well, to preserve the older objects? You know, I’m just wondering if there’s a different ... you know, you talk about the objects being kept by the family members and how important it is for them to be able to see them, and to use them, is there a difference in that – as to whether it’s an older object or a newer one that’s been used by somebody?

OK. The original ... what normally happened and what should happen is that they should be kept within the family and then, you know, there’s proper ...

[Interrupted by someone off camera]

There. OK. So, I was asking you about whether there was a difference with older objects and newer objects, in that, you know.

Yeah. Yeah. I think they should be, you know, like left at home, you know, and the reason why is that when they get old there is a way of replacing it. Like, I’m from the Wayawe [sp?] [Fireweed] tribe and I would get someone, the opposite, like on my father’s side – like from the Wolf tribe – a carver from there to carve the object to replace it.

OK.

And he gets paid in the feast house. So I don’t know what they do with the old ... it’s up to the owner to do whatever he wants with the old one. Sometimes they’ll just give it as a souvenir to somebody just to keep it, you know.

Yeah.

In the family or whatever. But they can give it away as a gift. So it keeps on being replaced, you know, replicated and so forth. But the way it happens today quite often is the museum will step in and give money ...

Oh, OK.

To a person to replicate it and they’ll take the old one. And it’s not the
same. In fact, in the village they'll call that object, or the carving, "government". No matter who pays, they'll say, "Oh, that's a government mask."

MC OK. So even if the obj .. if there was a community museum would this feeling be the same? You know, if it was right in the K’itwanga .. if it was like a cultural centre/museum?

DW I don't know. It just loses the whole .. you just lose the whole ..

MC Because of the money?

DW Because of the cycle, the cycle of .. 'cause then gradually, if that keeps on, like the feasting and gathering that goes with the mask disappears.

MC Right, right. But the feasting and dancing can be with .. I mean, it is, it goes with whatever mask is being used, right? So ...

DW Yeah. It just loses the same meaning, you know? Like, when, like, when we do, say, it proper, I would commission someone to do it, and the old one .. like, I might set aside of give it to someone, like, kids could practise with it. But to always keep it near us.

MC Mmmh. So, do you think, once the object is too fragile to be used in any way, say, you know, it's .. then what .. ?

DW Mmmh. But we don't put a .. we don't think of it as in dollars, you know, like it's worth, like, that it's priceless or anything to ask .. as long as someone's using it. Like, if I'm give it to my grandson and he's going to practise using it, that's OK, you know. And then eventually it just goes out of sight, and then there is the new one.

MC Yes. OK. Now, what about if the object had been made by a very famous person, or had belonged to a famous person, and got to the point where it couldn't be used any more. Do you think people's feelings would be different; would they want to say, "Oh, we want to keep that because so and so carved it, or it belonged to so and so .. ?

DW I don't know. There are no famous people in our society. They're carvers and they're working. Like we can commission them to do work for us.
MC Right.

DW So there are no famous people in our village. No matter how .. even if you’re the king. Because our whole system is different. Like, my father served the people.

MC Right.

DW And in your society people serve the king.

MC Yeah.

DW But we do it the other way around.

MC Yeah, yeah. That’s very interesting.

DW We have to be humble, and we just, you know, we can’t say that we’re better than anybody else.

MC So you’re saying that as long as the object is still able to be used, then it’s good to keep it, but to preserve it longer than that doesn’t really have a meaning.

DW No, no. Because there’s a danger than when it leaves the, you know, the community it’s not going to come back, and for sure we’ll never see it. As long as I’m in that village it’s impossible. The way I see it, the objects are preserved for a society that can afford to go see them.

MC Right.

DW People travel to see it.

MC Right.

DW And not for us.

MC That’s interesting. I’m just going to ... I guess that’s .. I was worried that it [the tape recorder] was flashing or something.
DW No, it's OK.

MC It's OK. Sorry for interrupting. If an object is being used in, you know, for some purpose, like, say it's something in your family, a mask in your family or something that belongs to you – I don't know what's appropriate to say, but – and it gets damaged in a certain .. you know, it's accidently banged and it gets damaged. Is that serious at all?

DW No. They just fix it.

MC OK. So .. and, so, it would be repaired by someone in your family, or you would just go to somebody who you knew could do it, or .. ?

DW Just whoever could do it, again.

MC OK. Now, if there was an object .. if the same object had come to the Museum of Anthropology, and, so, right now, you know, it's being housed in the Museum, you know, whatever happens to it later, but right now it's in the Museum .. and it gets accidentally damaged, I mean, should we .. do we make the decisions about that, or should we call somebody, you know, like, in your community, or call you, if we know it's from your family, or .. ?

DW Yeah.

MC You know, how is that best to set up?

DW I always maintain that the object should be in our village, you know, and someone could do it there.

MC Yeah.

DW It's so important for us to see those all the time. Even the damaged ones that, like I said before, are replicated, but it's important for the old one to remain because then the young ones can look at it, feel it, play with it, you know.

MC Right.

DW And they only become sacred when, you know, I'm thinking about our masks, you know, like, there's other sacred stuff that we're not allowed
to touch, you know, but these ones become sacred or very important when the person dons it, you know, for that occasion.

MC OK. And .. but when the occasion is over then the sacredness, does it remain with the object, or does it .. ?

DW Well, we take care of it. You know, we put it away, out of sight, and take very good care of it until maybe ten years or so down, then we take it back out again to use.

MC OK, OK. So are there any prohibitions about, you know, only certain people should see the objects, or only certain people should touch it, or women who are menstruating, you know, shouldn't be any where near it, or anything, you know.

DW Not that I know of, you know, but like I said, there are certain objects which we can't touch.

MC When you say "we", you mean somebody who is not ...

DW Just people.

MC Just people. OK.

DW Because there's another society called the Ouihalites [sp?] and they have - some have - extraordinary powers and we're not allowed to touch anything of theirs. Man, woman, child, anybody. Sometimes they even mark their territory and you're not allowed to step in that area. You just stay away from the whole thing.

MC Oh. I'm wondering if we have any of those objects in the Museum of Anthropology.

DW Well, the medicine bags. I saw one that said, I think it was "Chimshino gibsa" [sp?] medicine, you know, a bundle there.

MC Really? I didn't know that.

DW That's sacred.

MC Yeah.
DW But we had a medicine man in our village, and we were not allowed, not even around his shed. He had a shed. But we used to stand on the fence; we used to try really hard to see what was in there. It had little windows, but they were so dirty, you know, the windows were so fogged up that we couldn’t see anything.

MC Yeah.

DW But we were very young when we knew that we couldn’t go near the .. we could go visit him, and, like, his wife was my auntie, we could go visit them in their house, but we couldn’t .. that was out of bounds.

MC Right, right.

DW So anything .. any objects that he has, I mean, he’ll make sure that there is some kind of power on them, you know.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

DW So we don’t even try to touch.

MC Yeah, yeah. So something like that, like, it would be very important for us to return that object.

DW Yeah. I think so. And the village people would know what to do with it. Because they’ve got families gone, you know, like, they belong to someone, you know, they might be buried with the guy, or something, like, if they can find his grave, because it’s so important for us not to touch it, too.

MC And it would still have all that power even if it’s been in that museum for so many years, or something.

DW Oh, yeah. Yeah.

MC That’s very interesting. I just have to take a look here for a minute.

DW Yeah.

MC Do you think there’s any role for museums? Just in general, you
know? And whether it's an urban museum or a one back in community?

DW I think they could help us by helping us to build our own museums. I mean, practical help, rather than just teaching. I mean, I know about museums now, but to go back and .. it's practically impossible for us. I know that the government only sets aside so much money for museums, and probably half of it goes to Ottawa and then gets, you know, the other larger museums gets parts of the money, and then by the time it gets to the reserve, there's nothing.

MC Yeah. Ninety percent stays in Ottawa, for the National Museums there. Doesn't leave much for ...

DW Yeah.

MC So, when you go into a museum – like, you know, MOA, you have some associations with, and I don't know about the museum in Victoria, or in Ottawa – when you go into an urban museum, what kind of emotions come up for you?

DW Well, for one thing, it's mainly non-Natives taking care of it.

MC Yeah, yeah.

DW And I feel really .. I feel bad, I feel bad that our own people aren't there, because they're, like, I know there's a few, but they go in and out, they're gone, you know, they're not there permanently. It's very, very difficult for us to go in. I know. I really feel bad, I really do. Because not everybody knows what they're talking about. They don't understand why we feast. And well, in my case, like the door, you know, like the door – our family story on this?

MC Uhuh.

DW The got the wrong advice from .. and I saw the list of people that gave them advice, and they had no business doing it.

MC Oh, really?

DW And so the story was changed that the woman there was the mother of
the G'itksan people, and she wasn't. She was the head of our family. Our ancestor. It's not everybody's ancestors.

MC Oh, right. Huh.

DW So.

MC All these things I'm learning [unclear]. Yeah.

DW So every year, or, you know, any time I go there, if there's a person doing a tour I stand and listen. And what I hear, you know, I just ... I lost my temper last summer. I just stopped the presentation, and I said, "I'm sorry, I don't want you to tell that story, because you're not telling it right." I know it was wrong, but ...

MC Yeah. So what did the museum say about that? What did the people in administration, or Michael, what did they say?

DW Oh, M. K. came out, and H. No, who's inside the -- Dr. Ames' assistant -- J. came running out and told me I should have known better, and M. came out and said, you know, you should have waited. And I said "No." I said, "I'm fed up with hearing it. It's my family story." My mother paid the money to erect the totem pole. And you know, nobody else did. And we still have it. I have photographs of it.

MC Of the pole?

DW Yeah. [unclear] and the little lady and she's holding a little [pail? unclear].

MC Yeah. Now, the poles. That's another example of objects that should be allowed to complete their natural cycle rather than be preserved, or ... 

DW Yeah. I don't know. There's misinterpretation once it leaves our village. I know there is.

MC Mhm. Would you ... would your family, or would anybody do maintenance on the pole when it's standing in your village or is it better for just, you know, eventually go, you know, into the ground.
DW  They do maintenance, and there’s a feast involved.

MC  OK.

DW  And it’s just another way of keeping our culture alive.

MC  Yeah.

DW  You know. I know there’s been .. like, the government stepped in through P.S. to preserve the poles, you know?

MC  Oh, yeah.

DW  But there’s nothing .. like, our people don’t want to celebrate, because they didn’t pay for it. It loses the meaning again.

MC  OK. Yeah. Yeah.

DW  And our people are just getting lazy. Everybody’s just doing everything for them. Like in the olden days, you know, they would build a shed and the pole would lay down and they would fix it, and then we’d have a, you know, we would have a pole raising again, you know, just when it was fixed.

MC  Great! Uhuh.

DW  But now, you know, there’s a crew of, you know, some people coming in to look at it and fix it, you know, and ...

MC  Yeah. So it would get fixed rather than .. like, if a new one gets carved, it would be for a new occasion, you know? Or would it be .. would you sometimes do that of an [unclear].

DW  You see, yeah, right now, like, we have like, the one Wekawa [sp?] and we raised it once more and we fixed it, but then it was beyond repair. And we weren’t really happy with the carving anyway, but the person my mother got was probably the best at that time. So my family was going to get together and raise the new one and replicate it.

MC  OK. Great. Great. Wow.
DW  But somebody, like, my sister is from another village, where they take money for training, like, you know, what do they call that – you know when some people are learning how to do .. ?

MC  Like apprentice?

DW  Apprentice.

MC  Yeah.

DW  You know, they'll pay their wages to do that – somebody will, I don't know who, but she mentioned that when I talked about it. I said, “No.” I said. “There's about six of us,” I said, “seven, maybe eight of us who can afford to give a thousand dollars in.” And then all our other relatives? We have five hundred in our house – if everybody gave a dollar that would be a five hundred [unclear], if everybody gave ten dollars that would be five thousand.

MC  Right, right.

DW  We can afford to put one, and be proud. Because our head chief had one done in another village through the apprenticeship, and when he was raising it very few people went to his pole raising; they just said, “Oh, he's raising a government pole.” and we were ashamed of him.

MC  OK. Oh, that's very interesting. If, you know, if you were repairing .. someone from your family's repairing a mask, say, would it matter whether the same kinds of materials were used, you know, to try and get the same kind of fur, or whatever, or would it be OK as long as it looked the same?

DW  They try to do the .. you know, they try to use the same ...

MC  The same materials and the old ways of doing it and, like, with the cedar, and like with the cedar bark. Yeah.

DW  Yeah.

MC  One of the things in museums that is in the Code of Ethics for conservator's is that we're supposed to preserve four aspects of the objects. We're supposed to preserve its physical integrity, you know, as
an object and not let it get damaged; we’re supposed to preserve the
historic integrity, so, if it’s .. if there’s been important events associated
with it, and there have been marks on the object from those events,
then we would make sure those stayed on; and we’re supposed to .. if
there’s an object that was made to have a certain appearance, we’re
supposed to preserve the aesthetic integrity so that it looks the way the
artist or the person who made it intended it to look; and then the final
thing is we’re supposed to preserve what is called the conceptual
integrity, and that’s, like, the cultural significance, so, you know, an
example would be .. well, from China. We have some Buddha
figures, and if there was a greasy film on them from the burning of
incense, we would leave it on, because it shows what the object was,
you know, meant to the people. So, there’s physical integrity, historic
integrity, aesthetic integrity, and conceptual integrity. And one of our
problems is trying to balance them out, and I think as conservators we
tend to go on the side of physical integrity; you know, that we have the
object, that it’s surviving and whatever happens to it in the future, you
know, if it goes back to it’s own community, or whatever, at least
there’s an object to go back. But then conceptual integrity’s extremely
important. And I’m wondering what advice you would give me in
trying to balance those things out.

DW Well, I think just leave it the way it is.

MC OK. Do you think that the cultural significance of an object can be
preserved? Does a museum have a role in doing that? I mean, I’m
just thinking – like, again, right now when some of the objects are still
in the museums – do we have a role that we should be thinking about
in doing that? In preserving cultural significance?

DW Well, I’ll just talk about an example, you know?

MC OK. Great.

DW I did research on Harry Mountain’s .. Chief Harry Mountain’s objects,
because he’s my ex-husband’s grandfather.

MC Yeah.

DW And when the objects arrived, they were put into categories, and
they’re lost to his family.
MC Because of the categories they were put into?

DW They’re all in categories. Like, all masks, all Quwaiquai [Swaixwe] masks, all, you know .. all Raven, and so ...

MC OK.

DW So when the family member comes there they can’t even see, but in this case they didn’t even know where their masks had gone, what ever happened to those masks.

MC OK.

DW Oh, I’ve lost the question again.

MC It was about whether a museum, museums have a role in preserving the cultural significance.

DW I think, like, they left them the way they were, and that was good. ’cause someone, like, the youngest member of the family came there and was able to identify because of certain marks in the wood.

MC OK. And do you think that, like, if, you know, he had asked to .. if he could borrow one of the masks or had one of the masks to dance, you know ...how do we .. and what do we do?

DW Yeah. Like, we’re just in the process of doing something about the masks because in the way in which they were brought there.

MC Oh, OK.

DW There was, well, there was Mungo Martin and, what’s-her-name? G. W.

MC Oh, yeah. Yeah.

DW H. I forgot her first name.

MC Oh, A. H.
A. Those three were there when those masks arrived, and, like, the woman that was living with him had ... they had loaded this stuff onto a seining boat and brought it down.

Oh, the woman who was living with Harry Mountain.

With Mountain, yeah.

Chief Mountain, yeah.

And she had no business doing that. Absolutely none. Because they were his family's, not hers.

Right, right.

And when they arrived, she was paid for the objects ...

So they paid her, they didn’t ...

Plus a bonus.

Oh, yeah?

For bringing it down.

They didn’t pay him, didn’t pay ... like ... ?

No. No, he was dying. He was sick in the hospital and dying. He didn’t know what was going on, because he had diabetes and he was going into shock and stuff, and going blind and he wasn’t that old. So those objects still really belong to the family.

Yeah.

And they had a meeting and they decided that the masks for now, like, should stay there.

Yeah.

But I know what Dr. Ames feels like with the bears [?], it belongs there and it’s not going to go anywhere, you know. But as far as the family’s
concerned, it's their mask and they're going to decide what to do with it.

MC Right.

DW And for now they would like to leave the bear and my son has – since he has Harry Mountain's first name, Negai [sp?] ...

MC OK.

DW He wants to get some money to build a case and so all the masks can be brought together, and the family can have a look at it, and what not.

MC Right.

DW And at the same time they want to borrow the masks, or replicate them if they have to. Because they can't use the originals.

MC Yeah.

DW And the reason why they would like that is because those masks represent thousands of dollars, because not only did Harry Mountain – he was preserving the culture. Not only did he preserve the culture by replicating another whole bunch that Ottawa had taken in the early twenties – he replicated them – he paid for .. he brought artists, like Mungo Martin and Charlie Shaughnessy – I forget what artists – he brought them to the village island and housed .. you know, they lived with him while they were carving.

MC Hmm.

DW He paid them and he had a feast for those masks.

MC OK, OK.

DW So they're, you know, they're .. in our culture that's priceless. Just the fact that, not the [unclear] but everything that went into preserving the culture: the dances, the people, you know, the stories were retold, they didn't just dance it, but they had to explain it.

MC Yeah.
DW And tell who was .. can use the songs and the masks.

MC Yeah.

DW There's so much [unclear], you know, but one night all of these masks disappear, and you know, people from all over the world are coming to see them, and they're paying the museum to see them. But the people that really need them are in the village.

MC Yeah.

DW They can't see them. And the result was that the other families, and I won't name them, but there were other chiefs, who were lucky enough to have theirs duplicated; they had artists, I mean, carvers in their family, where the Mountains didn't.

MC Yeah.

DW And the new generation didn't know where the masks were, what they were, if they were entitled. They're still wondering. Like, a lot of them, the young people, don't even know.

MC Yeah.

DW But the other chiefs have all .. you people have nothing. You have nothing. If you have something where is it? Where are your masks?

MC Yeah.

DW And it just really weakened as a family because all of their regalia masks were gone. They're all there. The only thing missing is the body. They have the headress and the masks and even the button blankets, the talking sticks, everything from Harry Mountain is there.

MC Wow. Yeah. Yeah. So when you brought the family down, what were the feelings? I mean .. ?

DW They were very happy that I found the masks.

MC OK.
DW But there was tears too, because they were missing for so long. There was a young man who was learning how to sing; he just learned everybody else's songs, but he didn't know Harry's songs. His grandfather, he said. But once he saw them he could connect the songs to the masks and he learned them, and he's a good singer today.

MC Yeah, yeah. Great. So, you know, you've talked about the objects like, after you .. you know, after the new one is made, the older one is used by younger people when they're learning to dance, or something like that. Is there any .. is there any sense in putting something aside so that, you know, in two or three or four generations they'll be able to see something really .. like, something old, that came from a time period - say from, you know, a hundred or two hundred years ago. You know what I mean? Like I'm trying to weigh out the use, like, by the immediate generations, yeah, and also just immediate generations or future, you know, future generations.

DW But the very fact that they would be there in the village with the families, they would be replicated and kept alive.

MC OK.

DW When they leave, then they're gone.

MC And, right. So the new pieces have the same significance as the older pieces?

DW Mmhm.

MC Yeah. Is there .. ?

DW There's one .. like, there are, like, there's some general stories, you know, like where people are selling art, you know, but sometimes I think too that some of the artists are carving, you know, like copying the real thing, you know. Mainly because they're from another area, like, just say, Coast Salish carving G'itksan stuff, you know, they really have no significance to them.

MC Yeah.
DW  Where for us it does.

MC  Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

DW  So we .. we don’t feel really good about it because if we looked hard enough we might find the same object in the village, because they’re copying.

MC  Mmhm.

DW  But there are some general stories, like the Killer Whale, you know, coming to save a whole village.

MC  Mmhm.

DW  That’s why the West Coast people have a whale, killer whale, and a Thunderbird.

MC  OK.

DW  It’s like an emblem; you’ll see it all there. And, like, the Makah people ...

MC  Right.

DW  And it’s a general story how the, how the Thunderbird came and took a whale out and saved the people, fed a whole lot of people.

MC  Right.

DW  So just about everyone has that, you know, the Thunderbird. I think I even have it. And we all have a Thunderbird and a Killer Whale on that side.

MC  Oh, great. Great. Are there any traditional methods of keeping objects, or things like keeping insects away from objects or anything that would be appropriate for us in the museum to know about? Like storage, or ..?

DW  They kept them in cedar boxes. I don’t know, it was like a treasure box, you know. The Chief Gwayadam [sp?] had a very fancy cedar box.
MC  OK. OK.

DW  And that alone, whether they knew it or not, that keeps a lot of insects away.

MC  Right, right.

DW  And those were very private.

MC  Right.

DW  If you see a cedar box with nothing on, no designs, then you know it's just for everyday use, but a very fancy one is saying to you that no, you're not supposed to go near it.

MC  Yeah. Yeah. OK.

DW  We just called them treasure box.

MC  Yeah. We heard a story, I can't remember actually now who the person was, or where he was from, but he looked at some of our feast dishes - the ones we have now - and he said, "Oh. I remember as kids, we used to use these as sleds." Now, is that kind of ... is that kind of use ... like if something was used not in the way in which it was intended, does that [unclear]?

DW  It was probably old. You know, like I've said, you know.

MC  You know, yeah. Like sitting under somebody's house ...

DW  Like, especially the dishes and that, just old and leaky or something like that. You know, they're not really good for use anymore.

MC  Right.

DW  Like I said, it's good for the kids to use them, they'll do whatever they want, you know. But it's really teaching them. They're feeling the texture, the artwork, you know ... and what better way to keep the culture alive?
MC Yeah. Well, great. This is great. I don’t think I’ve got any other questions. Is there anything that, you know, you want to ask me about this project, or .. ?

DW Yeah. Well, I think what I would like to see is cooperation with the people. If they’re not coming forward, you know, to go out and tell them what’s there and the possibility of .. that repatriation is possible.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

DW And just bring the people up to date. They don’t know.

MC Right.

DW And that’s so important ... Just to inform us.

MC Uuhh.

DW After all, we have a stake in the objects in the museum.

MC Yes. Yeah. But we have a repatriation policy now that should be up at the front desk, so ...you know, it should be something that ...

DW More. Like, to reach out more in the community.

MC Yeah.

DW Because I know the general feeling, like, we’re not happy with museums. Like, especially those of us that want to, you know, find out about our culture. But we can’t leave the reserve. We can’t afford it. We can’t go [unclear].

MC Yeah.

DW There’s the odd one that’s lucky, like R. H. and all the famous artists. Like, they can go out and, you know, they get grants to go to different countries to go look at the objects, but not all of us know how to do that.

MC Yeah. Yeah. But also people come down here. We don’t get up to your territory very much, but if people are coming here, you know, and we
can, you know, at least make, you know, show them what’s in the museum, give them a copy of the repatriation policy, tell them to spread the word about it, you know, that would help us too, because it would happen sooner than, you know, [unclear].

DW I think you need even more than that.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

DW Like, you need videos or something, you know, like ...

MC OK .. That’s a good idea.

DW Take photographs of .. not photographs but video objects from different villages so they can see it.

MC Yeah. That’s a good idea.

DW The Knowledge Network or something. Talk about repatriation. Have it available.

MC Yeah. That’s really a good idea. I know in the United States what the .. I don’t know whether it was the NMAI, you know, the American .. the New Museum of American .. the National Museum of the American Indian, you know, or whether it was the Library of Congress – somebody who’s got a big archival collection – what they did was they got a video camera and they took photographs from each village, and they would just hold them in front of the camera like this, you know, so that that video then could go back to the community and people could see not just objects but the photographs that had been taken and they could, you know, decide on the .. there were all kinds of issues. Whether they wanted copies, whether they wanted the public to have access to those photographs or all that kind of thing.

DW You know, I went just to Victoria to the Ethnology Division, you know?

MC Oh, yeah.

DW I was upstairs and they allowed me to go in behind the closed doors, and you know what there’s copies there?
MC Oh, yeah.

DW There’s you know, baby cradles, there’s .. they’re just jammed in there. One on top of the other, right up to the ceiling.

MC Hmm.

DW All of those came from villages and we can’t even see them. We don’t even know that .. you know, we can’t examine them to see the craftsmanship, or whatever, you know?

MC Yeah, yeah, yeah. Now, speaking of craftsmanship, is that a good reason to keep older objects around?

DW Oh, definitely.

MC Yeah.

DW Definitely. Especially when there’s moving parts, you wonder if there’s a trick to that. It’s like puppetry, I guess, but not everybody knows.

MC Right. So that might be a reason, then, to, like again, not in the museum, but to preserve an older object rather than .. you know.

DW But it would have been kept alive if we didn’t leave there; if it didn’t leave our village in the first place.


DW So basically what I’m saying is, like, in .. you know, the masks, the regalia that we have, it should stay in our village.

MC Yeah. And also, what about things, you know, I don’t know, other just regular boxes or baskets or something like that, too. Do you feel the same way, or do you make a separation between the regalia and the other?

DW Well, I guess we can’t do nothing about .. people are so poor they have to sell everything they make, you know?
MC  Yeah. Yeah.

DW  But at one time, we used them. And it was important for the women and the young men, or the young women, to see the baskets and all the different objects. Like carved spoons and carved horns.

MC  Mhm. Is there, are there a lot of people did they learn those old skills? Or not too much?

DW  Not too many of them. Like I say those were boarding school days, you know, the English people would spend most of their hours .. I think they must have stayed awake to see how they could erase our minds!

MC  Yeah, yeah, yeah. What about people .. is there any young person you know who is interested in getting museum training or is that, you know, because there are so many other pressing issues right now?

DW  Yeah. I don't know if they would .. like, it really isn't our intention to have .. to preserve things. That's never in our minds. I've got a mask and a bird, you know, actually feathers, representing an owl, just in my sister's house, in a box.

MC  Yeah.

DW  And I forgot to tell my uncle that if they ever need it, it's there, because if they can ever use it, that's good. But I don't want to preserve it, I don't want it to go to a museum. I want it to be there when they want it; when they need it, you know, I don't want to go through signing papers, and you know, handling shipment and putting it in crates and everything. I just want to say, sure, go ahead, take it, it's at Nancy's house. It should be available.

MC  Yeah. And for the objects right now, though, that are housed, say, in the Museum of Anthropology, until they go back to the home, to your home community; but you want us to preserve them though. Like, you want us to keep them from danger? Or would you, or is it? I mean, how do you feel about that? I mean, I don't want to presuppose that you do.

DW  Yeah .. well, now they're there, preserve them. But it's hard to identify them? There's just that little number there. You have to be
skilled to go back and find out whose it is, and when and how and where, you know. Where they've come from, who brought it there, did they sell it, what happened?

MC  Right.

DW  But I liked Richard Atleo

MC  His paper?

DW  His paper on the museums.

MC  Yeah, yeah.

DW  Because the reason my people sold them was because they were poor. You know, they needed money.

MC  Do you think that's why the woman who was living with Chief Mountain sold the .. you know, his things? To pay medical bills or anything?

DW  No.

MC  He had lots of money.

DW  He had a sailing boat. That was the sailing boat they used.

MC  Right.

DW  He was an industrious person. I studied a lot about him and he didn't ever sit still.

MC  OK. The workshop I was just at, yesterday and today, was about earthquakes and how to protect objects and especially the people who are visiting the museum at the time, but then also the collection; what you should do to prevent them from getting damaged during an earthquake – as much as you can. And I'm just wondering if a lot of these measures are .. you basically try to make sure the object isn't going to move when everything starts to shake. So it means tying things down, strapping things down and everything. Is that something again, for right now, just as a measure, because not knowing either
when the earthquake’s going to come, or when the object’s going to are back, you know, that we should deal with the objects.

DW Yes, I think so. But as soon as possible, though, I would like to see them go back, somehow to the community, you know, either as you know, photograph, like three dimension, or through video, you know, so people can look at them.

MC Yeah, yeah.

DW Or just a video of all the G’itksan stuff or a video of all the Tsimshian stuff; it’s important to us because there’s all this other stuff creeping in, like bingo .. there’s other distractions. And we’re changing our way of thinking, you know, about putting our money for feasts. The dollar has to go somewhere else before the feast. But the reason there was a whole period when we weren’t allowed, you know, to celebrate our masks and have feasts. But the sooner we’ll get them back the richer the whole country will be because we’ll be able to replicate them and, you know, relive the stories.

MC Yeah. Well, I know – and I don’t want this to sound like an excuse – but the sooner we get a request, you know, to .. like, now that we have the repatriation committee and it’s supposed to respond within thirty days, to say, at least, you know, this is what we’ve got from your community and we’re considering this request, and, you know, maybe we need this information, or maybe, you know, can we come and meet with you, or, you know, just to get the whole process going. But so far, because we’ve been so busy, it’s just been when we’ve gotten a request that comes in in writing that says we would like this, or that. You know what I mean? So, if there’s anybody who wants to do that, or if there’s anyone who wants to come in and do the video, I know it will happen quicker than if I go back and say, “Oh, I talked to Dolly and ...” you know what I mean, it’ll sound like it’s coming from me, and it won’t happen as quickly, but anyway. But you’re, you know, I know you know how to put a bug in their ear. So. But, anyway, because I .. it wouldn’t take that long to video the pieces. I don’t see any problem with that. You could come in, and, you know, do it in the morning. Oh, here comes somebody ...
MC  Yeah. Do you just want to say that again?

DW  We were just talking about exhibitions and whatnot. There's a lot of celebration that accompanies the major exhibits and our people can't really - my people can't go see them, they can't afford to see them. You know, so again, like I said, they're meant for the people who can afford it. The middle class or the educated people, not for us. It's not for our benefit.

MC  Yeah.

DW  But it's probably if it was, like, if it was video taped, you know, and made available, and sent back to the villages, you know, that would be good. Because then we'd know where they are, and could have a look.

MC  Yeah.

DW  We can't afford .. I know my people can't afford to go to these major exhibits.

MC  Yeah. OK.
MC  Gloria, if this goes on too long or anything, just tell me.

GW  Uh huh.

MC  And thank you also very much for letting me do this -- this is great. OK, what I wanted to focus on were your thoughts about preservation of objects and how they relate to cultural preservation. And, I'm wondering first of all whether there are objects that people are preserving as part of their heritage within their families that are different from the objects that are in the museum. I mean, there are those that have a different history but what I mean is, are there those that people would prefer to keep within the family and not put in the museum? I don't know, like maybe jewellery, something like that?

GW  Well, yeah, certainly, jewellery I think, but as far as masks, rattles and that kind of thing, I don't think that, that's really a concern. There's lots of times that the object itself is not as important as the right to own that object, and the object may be stolen or sold or lost, but the right remains with the owner, and you can always have a copy or another mask made, whatever, carved.

MC  So then is there any special value to an older object over a newer object, a cultural value?

GW  Yeah, I guess there is. I guess you'd be able to say, you know, this is the mask my grandfather wore when he first became this kind of dancer. But if that particular mask is gone altogether it's not the end of the world. You can still carve a similar mask. I suppose the value of something old generally for our people is the same as the value of something old for everybody, you know, your great-grandmother's
wedding ring or something.

MC  Yeah, yeah. So, when, with a museum here, the cultural centre, do you find the people keep, like some of the regalia, the people keep it for safekeeping in the cultural centre?

GW  Yeah

MC  So that it serves the purpose of both housing the old collection and the contemporary collection which I assume is for loan, dancing?

GW  ... and this was something that, you know, when we began to plan that building, we really had no idea the response there would be to this offer. We were thinking of places like Kingcome, which doesn't have a fire department - what would happen? But it's interesting that most of the people who store their regalia here are people who live here. There's plans for a new collection of masks that's being carved to be used in a potlatch later in October [unclear]. Yeah, we just had no idea. We've run out of storage space!

MC  When did you first visit a museum? When was your first experience of a museum?

GW  I suppose when I was a highschool student in Victoria, I went to the old, Provincial Museum then. Yeah.

MC  And do you remember at all – do you recall your feelings when you went to that museum?

GW  There seemed to be a lot of stuffed birds around. Yeah, there were a lot of stuffed birds and animals. And I never saw a case of materials that made me think: “Ah, Jeez! This belongs to us!” I suppose that had to do with who the director was at that time – a biologist? So it wasn’t, as I remember, much of a people place. Yeah. That’s a long time ago!

MC  And here – my understanding is that when the potlatch collection was going to be returned, there was a stipulation – I guess by the National Museum of the time or whatever – that you have to build something equal - a ‘real’ museum. How did you feel about that? Would you have done the same things if there hadn’t have been that stipulation?
GW I think we would have because it was something that some people had talked about for some time before and when what was then the National Museum of Man agreed to return the collection and that this was the condition, we said: "Yeah, okay. We'll do that but we don't have any money." And they said: "Well, we can allow you this amount, you raise the rest. So, that was what happened. And I guess what was different from our repatriation - you read a lot of stuff about other native groups demanding the return of their sacred, or whatever, objects because those are needed in their ceremonial rites - the difference for us [was] we didn't need any of this because people had continued carving masks, people had kept masks and other gear. The demand for the repatriation of the potlatch collection was based on other things - the idea that they belong here, that they were wrongfully placed in museums. Yeah.

MC And when they first came back, then, did people want to use them?

GW Oh, no. No. They were in pretty bad shape, some of the pieces, and it was pretty obvious that they couldn't be used. I guess the other thing, too, was that, because the documentation was so bad and we had to wait for so long, no one really knew who owned what and we certainly weren't about to do something that might create a lot of problems by allowing someone to use this mask who ... didn't really have the right to. So, we just said no. They're symbolic, I guess.

MC When they came back - especially, I guess, the older people - did they want them refurbished? Did they prefer to have seen them put back into, you know, the kind of condition in which they would have been shown?

GW Well, I know there were a couple of pieces that we knew from photographs taken at the time that everything was added up that they had not been well cared for either - particularly a frontlet that was complete with the ermine train, sealion whiskers, the whole thing. And what came back was nothing but the frontlet. Nothing else. And people said: "It's too bad, then. It will have to be thrown away." We've not done anything. We never did anything about bringing it back to the condition it was when it left. There was the problem of money and the other thing, I guess, was that the National Museum of Man should have taken care of that. It needed work before they returned it to us. If we'd insisted on that, we might still have been waiting!
Right, right! ... Was there any objection in the community to sort of the museum approach – to taking a museum approach? Do people say: "Oh, we don’t want things kept static like that." Or do people speak of the centre as different from a museum? ...

What I remember best about the beginning was, you know, the board – no, we didn’t even have a board of directors then – it was the Band council that I worked with. They were fairly, fairly clear that we were not building a museum because Indians don’t go to museums. We were to build a place where things can happen. The other thing I remember was, when the construction started, by that time we had a board of directors and there was a meeting and I said: “Listen! One of the things museum people worry about a whole lot is something called a story-line. We better start thinking about a story-line.” And the chairman of the board said: “Well, Jeez, Gloria, we’re fishermen! We don’t know anything about story-lines. You worked in a museum. You worry about it.” So, that was very hard. I had really, really wanted to work with Jean André ... and I decided if I couldn’t have him – I wasn’t too impressed with anyone else – we were just going to do it ourselves ... And it was very much a community thing. I ran around thinking how am I going to do this?, then just realizing there was nothing I could write or say that would be better than what people said at the time of all the upheaval and horror of the potlatch law applied in such a devastating way. And what I did was I drew up something like a hundred pages of these letters ... We had all these tables and I just spread all this stuff around and when somebody came along, we’d hand them a cup of coffee and a felt pen and [we’d say]: “Go in there and read that stuff and put a check mark on whichever pages you think we should include.” And so we just picked the ones that had the most check marks. I think it worked.

I was just going to ask – I was wondering because the objects are traditionally owned by families so do you think now the objects are looked at more as community heritage or more as family heritage?

Well, I think it’s community. Yeah. I think everyone understands the lists that Halliday, the Indian Agent, put together with the help of – What was his name? He came from another village. Halliday hired this guy to make a list of all the gear that was locked up in the parish hall and the man said: “Oh, yeah. This is mine and that’s my uncle’s.”
And Halliday didn’t know anything just by the way he wrote it down. And that was part of the problem – one of the big reasons for the delay in getting things done the way we figured: we were arguing with Cape Mudge. They said: “These are family owned and this is the way we want it done.” And we were saying: “We know we can’t do that. Why don’t we just divide the collection right in half and not worry about these names that were pencilled on the inside, that were hanging on tags, because we know they’re not accurate?” But, no, they’ve been difficult with everything that way ... We know for sure that that beautiful Echo Mask that’s there does not belong to them but it had somebody else’s name on it. It was really interesting. We had the National Museum arrange for a bunch of us to go to Vancouver where they had a table full of photographs. I’d taken my Aunt along and here was the beautiful Echo Mask with I forget how many mouths and I said to my Aunt: “Do you remember this?” And she said: “Yes. It belonged to us. There’s that white man’s mouth and I remember the verse [song? unclear].” And I tried to say, “Hello! The name on that mask –.” Yeah. So, anyway.

MC So when did the touchable collection come about? ... Because of the perceived need? People wanted to, you know, like dance a mask and that they maybe didn’t own one themselves? I was just wondering that from right at the beginning that you started to make the collection of contemporary objects as well?

GW Well, it’s not really a ‘collection’ – it’s not one collection of contemporary objects. My mother had quite a number of them – of masks there – and she would allow people to borrow different pieces but it’s not like – What we tried to do with the small group we had at the Vancouver Museum was make – make a whole lot of button blankets made in different styles because the Museum was getting requests from different groups and their material wasn’t in good enough shape for going out. And so we wanted to do something and so we said that we would do it and that [unclear] group gave us more of these things. What’s stored [there] doesn’t belong to the Centre.

MC So the masks that belong to your mother, the ones that are – right. And so, if somebody wants to borrow them, they come and see her and ask her permission? Yeah. Now, if one of those was damaged, say accidentally, do you think that – does it matter that much or is it just more important that the mask got used?
GW Damage can always be fixed.

MC Yeah! So what would you consider 'damage' because, you know, conservators have a very strict definition – any scratch is 'damage'. But is there something where you can say, okay, this really isn't that important but this would be damage?

GW Oh well, a hamat'sa mask, I think – if there’s a scratch on it – it’s part of being used. If it were damaged to the point where the mouth wouldn’t open or close, well, THAT’S damage! Yeah. I think that anything that impairs the function – if the eyes won’t open and close any more. Yes. But I think things like a little scratch or a feather coming loose or whatever is part of normal use. Yeah.

MC Okay. So then, I guess, with the older pieces that are not being used, would you say that there is accidental damage – somebody brushed against one and knocked it against something? Would you have it repaired by an artist locally or would you, you know, send it to CCI. to have that kind of conservation repair on it?

GW Well, I don’t know what they’re doing down there now, I’m just awfully glad that Juanita’s there.

MC Yeah, she’s great.

GW Yeah. But remember when CCI. used to have this mobile lab? And they would offer to, you know, parachute in for three days or something if something needed fixing. So, every year we’d get this form and every year I would say: “If you can’t send someone for three weeks, then just don’t bother!” We’re talking about DAMAGE that was done to these objects while in the care of the National Museum and I figured it was their responsibility to do something about it. So eventually they did send – it’s been so long that I can’t think – J. and ... J. M. and – what was the guy’s name? ... Anyway, yeah, so they came for three weeks and did a lot of work and I think were horrified by the kind of things we did then. This was in the days when the middle workroom was used to make hundreds of sandwiches for potlatches. Anyway, they were just appalled that we were allowing all this kind of thing to happen in a museum. They forgot we weren’t a ‘museum’: we were a cultural centre where this kind of stuff was supposed to
So, if something, I guess – say repainting – say something – the paint was flaking off, would you – would it be repainted? You know, again, a conservator would only inpaint wherever there was something missing but I think, say, when a totem pole gets refurbished, it gets repainted. So, which way would you go, especially with the older material? Which approach would you favour? What was appropriate?

I would say the conservator’s approach because of the history of that collection. It seems to me that amateurs shouldn’t mess around with any of that and I still feel that, because most of that damage was caused while it was in the care of supposed professionals, those professionals – I think it’s their responsibility to take care of whatever needs to be done.

Maybe I should ask now – for the benefit of the tape – if you could briefly talk about that collection and its history in relation to your family?

Okay ... My father held a large potlatch in November 1921 at the time when there was a federal law prohibiting potlatching. There was an Indian Agent here, in Alert Bay, at that time who felt that his one purpose in life was to stop the potlatch altogether and he was convinced that he had done that after he arrested forty-five people, who were present at my father’s potlatch and they were charged with terrible crimes like singing and dancing and giving gifts, receiving gifts, making speeches. An arrangement was made between the lawyer for our people and the prosecutor, who happened to be the Indian Agent, that if entire villages gave up all of their ceremonial gear, that the individual people from those villages would not have to serve their jail sentences. That was done in places like Fort Rupert, here in Alert Bay, Village Island, Cape Mudge, Campbell River. I’m trying to think of the others according to the names of the people who were charged ... One of them from New Vancouver, yes – a chief gave us his coppers in order that his three sons who had become dancers would not have to serve their jail terms. The coppers were taken and the three sons served their jail terms anyway. So it was pretty bad. I guess it was in the late sixties that we began thinking about demanding the return of the collection. I guess the other part of it was that the old people
continued to hope that, somehow, the government would come to its senses, realize this was a bad law, would repeal the law and return all of the treasure. That never happened. What did happen was that in 1951 when the Indian Act was revised, the whole section relating to the potlatch prohibition was simply deleted. The law was never repealed. And I guess already people were I guess wondering: "Where are our masks?" That was in the early 1960s. In the early seventies, in fact, we decided to get serious about it and, in 1975, the National Museum agreed to return the part of the collection that was there.

MC Was that the director of the time who'd agreed? And was that –

GW Bill Taylor? Yeah. He underwent a lot of stress, I think, from directors of other museums who said: "You're crazy to do this. It'll set a terrible precedent! We'll have all these Indians pounding on our doors!" And of course none of that happened because what happened here was so unique. It didn't happen anywhere else in the country. Nowhere else on this coast was potlatch stuff returned. It's only here and I guess only because of Halliday. Yeah. So, yeah, in 1975 the museum agreed so we began to work on planning the U'mista Cultural Centre. Much later, we began talking to the Royal Ontario Museum. That went very, very slowly. I don't know - Toronto was the centre of the universe! I never heard back from them for six or seven years. I remember the arrogance of those people. We thought our chances in court were pretty good. They had a few lawyers on the Board and I said: "Fire them! Go ahead. We're going to win because we know we're right." Horrible people! Anyway ... and it turned out that they didn't even know - like we had these documents or copies of documents - where the director of R.O.M. in 1922 wrote to [unclear] - What's his name? Duncan Campbell Scott - and said: "I understand that" - the National Museum was called the Victoria Memorial Museum - "I understand that they have received all this loot from - and, if you have some at liberty, could we have them?" And Campbell Scott said, yes, they could on the understanding that the collections belonged to these people. ROM never knew that. [Laughter.] so that took a lot of fooling around but eventually we got back that part of the collection and what's left went to what was then the Heye Foundation for the Museum of the American Indian, which no longer exists. It's collection has become part of N.M.A.I. and Leslie Tepper was able to find nine of them. We figured thirty-two pieces weren't there. One of them we know, for sure, went to the British Museum. Jonathan [unclear], an American,
talked about it. [unclear]

MC  So your father wasn’t a little young to be holding a potlatch?

GW  My father was quite a bit older than my mother. Yeah. We don’t know for sure when he was born because people didn’t keep records in those days. I think they guessed at his age when he went to the residential school. I guess his first year there was something like 1895 ...

MC  Say we look at the pieces that are at the Museum of Anthropology now and say you were advising us on care and preservation and appearance and everything with these pieces. Some of our pieces are in quite good condition and some are in conditions less good. Would you advise us to refurbish the pieces that aren’t in as good condition or would you rather have them just left, you know, the way they are now without letting any people fix them with modern materials and mess them up a bit?

GW  Well, don’t conservators say the less you do the better?

MC  That’s true.

GW  It seems to me that that still applies. These pieces aren’t going to be used. They’re simply going to be exhibited so there shouldn’t be a problem of any rapid deterioration or chance of damage.

MC  With “Chiefly Feasts” I think that the museum in New York — that the Hunt family had advised them to refurbish some of the pieces, which I thought was interesting, you know, because I thought does that apply to us or is it specifically also because they were being exhibited in the context of a potlatch presentation. So, they wouldn’t have been danced in poor condition but are exhibited in poor condition.

[ Interruption. GW’s mother arrives — conversation in Kwakwala. Talk about weather with MC. ]

MC  … You were advising us on how to, you know, look after some of the pieces. So, yes, I guess the whole question of refurbishing or not and way the things were done for “Chiefly Feasts” — do you think that that should be generalized or, you know, that things should be brought back to look the way they looked or whether they — the objects — should be
kept the way they are now. You know.

GW I think the thing with "Chiefly Feasts" was that they only asked one person to advise them to refurbish or whatever but I think what happened soon after that people at the American Museum realised that they should talk to more than one person – that not one person spoke for everyone. Yeah, because I think if they had asked other people, they wouldn't have [had] the same masks.

MC That's very interesting ... If a piece is going to be repaired, would you prefer that the materials as close to the original materials get used or would it be alright to use something that looks the same – presuming that their substances are not going to harm the object, that kind of thing? Does it make a difference, do you think, whether – especially a piece of regalia – whether – I don't know how easy it is to come by sealion whiskers today –

GW Very hard.

MC So, you know, would it be preferable if they could get the sealion whiskers or is plastic okay?

GW Oh, I would say that sealion whiskers were preferable if the point of it all is to be as true – if the point of it all is to keep the object in a condition as close to what it was originally. Yeah. But I think you also have to be honest. If you're going to use plastic broom bristles and you're going to exhibit that object, you say what that is.

MC Would it make a difference to you whether you could tell what was the original material and what was added later?

GW No, not for me. I don't know whether it would make a difference to other people.

MC Are there any objects that you feel shouldn't be preserved – that should, you know, be allowed to complete a cycle?

GW Not only for me but, I think, for a lot of native people – we had to change in the way that objects are used. You know – that traditionally when something wore out, somebody replaced it. When a pole fell down, that was the end of it. You didn't replace it. It had served its
purpose. But I think that because of contact with museums and conservators and people like that, everyone began to look at things in a different way. You know, there’s a totem pole by Willie Seaweed. We know there’s never going to be another one by Willie Seaweed – and maybe for us it’s not right – and we allowed that to fall down and rot away. And I think people have developed a different way of looking at those objects and, as I said, I think it has to do with the way that we now know something about museums and conservation. And history. Anyway, [unclear] probably conquered that when he said: “Nah, just get rid of it all.”

MC No, I think – actually it’s funny because when Doug was down at the museum during his residency, Laura, who’s on the front desk, asked him the same question and he said: “Fall down and rot? Do you know how long it took me to carve that?” Yeah, I want to see him some time. I’ll give him a call later on and see what the next couple of days ... Yeah, I think that’s an interesting question because, for me, what I – it also – But the objects at the Museum of Anthropology – are we looking after them appropriately or not?

GW I think you’re not. I think you’re not.

MC Okay, when you sit down again, closer to the mike, I want to hear more about this ...

MC So the question whether we’re looking after the pieces at U.B.C. appropriately or not?

GW Oh, it’s not so much looking after them. [unclear] To me, there’s an arrogance about it, in spite of all those little books, that says: “We don’t really know much –

MC So it’s the Visible Storage system that has created this?

GW Yes!

MC Like, it’s not the kind of shelves they’re on or the kind of treatments we’ve given the objects. It’s the – it’s that ‘These Are Our Hoardings’, kind of look to them. Yeah. So what do you think about the argument that at least people can see them, instead of them being in a back room where they can’t be seen?
GW  I'd rather you showed one mask and told people about them – that connected them with human beings: who made them, who used them and who suffered for them – whatever. But just don't [unclear] No, no, no. They go: “Oh, it's such a wonderful building – Erikson's building! What a wonderful museum!” It may be a wonderful building but it's a lousy museum. It's a great warehouse but it's a lousy museum. Blasphemy! Yeah.

MC  So, okay, the objects that come from this area that are at the Museum of Anthropology – who has the authority over those objects? ... I mean that's – should we phone up U'mesta before we do anything or, because they're housed in the museum, should we take normal museum procedures to at least insure their safekeeping? But, you know, I don’t know.

GW  You don’t phone U’mista. Who's there, except J. who knows anything? Yeah.

MC  Phone you?

GW  And she's just learning.

MC  Yeah, she's young.

GW  No, don’t phone me. You’re a collection. But it just seems to me – I was just looking – one of my cousins is giving a memorial potlatch for his grandmother in October so we were talking about that and I said: “Well, if you get a copy of Audrey Hawthorn’s book, I’ll show you what I mean.” And I hadn’t looked at it for a long time and there were all those terrible mistakes. [unclear] dreadfully bad. And so, let's see, we were wrongly identified ... I guess it was in the fifties, wasn’t it? She was just getting, like, crates of stuff and so things were wrongly identified. She may have bought things that she shouldn’t have and I'm almost certain of that. And I tried to tell her.

MC  “Shouldn’t have” because they shouldn’t have left the family?

GW  Because they were stolen. Because she hired me to come up for a month with photographs of the pieces. This would have been 1960 ... and my mother was living in our house and we would invite several
old people at a time ... and it was heart-breaking to have people look at them: “That’s one of my masks. It was stolen.” And, like in those days, almost everyone in the village would leave to go to River’s Inlet ... and then Audrey was identifying pieces as coming from Echo Bay! If she’d known anything about this part of the country, she would have known that there’s no reserve at Echo Bay! But she never questioned that and I just – I felt terrible that I was the person who’d kind of opened this all up again. And so she gave the usual, “… I (or we) bought it on good faith from [people] who had the right to do that.” Yeah.

MC But they didn’t have the right to do that. Well, do you think somebody should approach MOA?

GW Well, I think the families – the people I talked to then – are pretty much all gone. I guess if the families want to do something about it ...

MC Yeah, because I mean in our repatriation policy, you know, if there is anything that is stolen, it is the first to be repatriated. We will expedite them ... Put it to the test, eh?

GW Yeah, I’m not about to stir that up! There is – is D. W. still there?

MC She still has her bannock operation going on outside. Apart from that she’s not really associated with us.

GW Okay. Well I don’t know how much this has to do with your thesis but it’s something that does concern me because she organised this big trip of the Mountain family down there and there’s some controversy now about who really owns that. None of them really own it. Those masks were – like my paternal grandmother married several times. One of the people she married was Harry Mountain, who really wanted to show these particular masks, which had been given to my aunt at the time of her marriage. But the masks were never shown, as my aunt and her husband never had a potlatch. So, the masks were shown when Harry Mountain married my grandmother and he just hung on to them. Years later, he married another woman, who was my father’s cousin. When Harry became very ill, she went to my father and said: “... My husband is dying and I have no money to bury him. I’m going to sell the masks in Vancouver” Somewhere in those files is a letter from my father to Audrey Hawthorn advising her not to buy them. And she scribbled on the bottom of my father’s letter, this should be
ignored because it probably has something to do with some family disagreement or something. Yeah. And I was really angry when I – . And I thought: “God! Think who’s letting this crazy D. W. just run rampant and stir up all this stuff without really knowing the history of those particular masks! And I keep thinking I really should write to Mike Ames one of these days and outline this history and tell him just to be very careful!

MC Could I, when I get a transcript of this tape, could I give that little portion to Michael?

GW I’ve been meaning to write and say that. You’ve just saved me from having to do that. Yeah!

MC ... Okay – the question of how conservators look at objects. They say that they’re going to ‘preserve’ – what they’re trying to preserve are these four aspects: the physical integrity, the aesthetic integrity, the historic integrity and also the conceptual integrity, which is the cultural significance. So, I guess my first question is, then, do you think one of these integrities is more important to preserve than the other integrities? If you had to choose one out of them – the physical, historic, aesthetic and conceptual?

GW Well, if you don’t have the physical, you don’t have anything else, do you? So, I guess that’s the most important thing.

MC Do you think with the conceptual integrity – can it be preserved in a museum? I guess, first of all, let’s look at two aspects. One is a cultural centre, like U’mista, and then a museum like MOA... Can the conceptual integrity be preserved in either of those situations or is it really something that gets preserved outside of the museum situation?

GW Hmmm ... I don’t ... Yes, I think the way that it is preserved here is different because the history of the collection – the way it returned, what it symbolizes for us – and the pieces, the objects in MOA.’s collection, don’t have that kind of thing. But I don’t know that you can think about objects there in the same way that you think about objects here. One of the things that I was criticised for when I was at the centre was that there were no individual labels ... That didn’t seem really important to me because it was the whole collection that was meaningful, not individual ones. Yeah. And I don’t even think about
MOA's collection in the same way because ... pieces were acquired in different ways. Yes, so, I don't know if you can generalize about it. I guess the more you know - the more you know about objects - then, I guess, you should be able to better care of them and care for them in the proper way. The physical integrity is the most important but the other three are equally important.

MC What about the question of school kids and what they get from the objects? Because everybody says, "Oh, kids need to touch things in order to be able to appreciate them." Yet, for example, the older objects don't get touched. So how do you balance that - the need of the younger generation?

GW Well, I guess you teach them pretty early that there are separate things that you can touch and others you can't touch. When I was there, one of my jobs at the beginning of every school year when each class came in for their first dance class was to sit them down, talk about the collection, how we got them, what it means and why it's really important for them not ever to touch so the collection of these things, "still will be here when you have children to come in and learn to dance ... They're not ours. They belong to everyone - even people who aren't born yet." I suppose for kids in the city the business of touching may be more important. Potlatches are so much a part of kids lives here. In the dance programme, they have little masks and other gear that they know they're allowed to touch and learn how to take care of. But it's not so much a matter of just 'touching'. It's 'using'. Yeah.

MC We have - say somebody - well, that has happened, I guess - about a year ago? Maybe more - where came up from MOA and were danced in a potlatch when Juanita was down with us. Well, there are two things: one is the question [that] one of them had some pieces that were a little loose and we made sure they were secure because I guess I'd heard that if something fell down that it would be a dishonour to the dancer.

GW Oh yes!

MC That it wouldn't just be bad for the mask but it would be bad, you know.

GW Oh yes. The family giving the potlatch would have to give more
The other thing was the rigging. I don’t know if the person danced it or not. Like would that have been important? Do you think that we should have – I mean, again, the museum approach is to alter absolutely nothing. So, I think the Collection’s Manager probably took piles of photographs of the knots in the rigging in case it came back differently. But, you know, is that really significant? You know – altering rigging? Because, you know, the other rigging – I don’t know when it was last used but we’ll say it was thirty or forty years old. So it documented what the rigging was like then but, at the same time, you know I don’t know in the scheme of things – it wasn’t as if the mask was going to get repainted or something, you know! But what do you think about that – something like the riggings – is it important to try and keep that thing, too?

Well, I guess if you’re never going to loan it out then it’s important to keep it exactly as it was. But, if you’re going to loan pieces for use and the rigging doesn’t work and you say you can’t change a knot or anything, it really doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. Yeah. No, I don’t – I think I’d be terribly upset if I worked in your museum and loaned a piece for use in a potlatch up here and someone decided: “Ah, this thing looks just so dog-eared and grubby. Why don’t we wash it and repaint it?” Yeah, that’d be pretty awful. But I think the rigging is – if you’re never going to loan it out, then I think it is important to keep it exactly the same kind of knots, the same order. Yeah.

So, if we could generalize a bit about museums: What are your personal feelings towards museums? I mean there seems to be some things about them that you think are doing things in an okay way and other things where they aren’t.

I think that ... I think that there are a lot of changes happening in museums. I think a lot of museums are acquiring the kind of humility they should have had a long – I think it finally got to people that there was this attitude: “These things belong to us. We know everything and we don’t have to ask anybody.” I think that’s changing. I think that Native people’s attitudes towards museums is changing as well. I think there are more Native people working in museums. That makes a difference. Museums are important institutions for Native people, whether they realize it a lot or not. I think of parts of this Coast where
people lost much more than we did and, if they’re really serious about rebuilding, then they need the kind of resources that are in museums and archives in order to do it properly – not to invent.

MC So do you think – are young people interested in going into museum work or are they still really – education or law, those things seem more attractive?

GW I think gradually, slowly young people are becoming interested in museum work ... I think the internship programme they’ve got happening at the C.M.C., the Aboriginal –

MC Cultural Stewardship Programme?

GW Yes! Yes, but I think very slowly, it’s happening. Yeah. I remember when I was at the centre [I?] only applied for student summer projects. And I bitch and complain about how incompetent [they were?]. They never learned any work habits – you’d take them by the hand and show them what needed to be done. I remember Bill saying one day: “Well, why do you bother?” And I said, “Because somewhere on this island, there’s a kid we’re going to hire – who’s going to say, ‘This is what I’m going to do for the rest of my life.’” And there she is.

MC Yeah. Great. She was such a pleasure to have. Wonderful. With the pieces that are at MOA, do you think that if people want to borrow them and, you know, they present evidence to the appropriate people – in that, we’re very lucky to have the centre here because it helps us out enormously. But do you think we should loan pieces for use or do you think that there should be some pieces or some conditions – like we should make a judgement, say, about if it’s very fragile or if its something or it’s by Mungo Martin or something like that – that we should say no, these pieces can’t be danced.

GW Yeah. Well, if they’re legitimately yours then I think you have the right to make whatever conditions. I would be concerned if a museum had very generous loan policies – so generous that people would have the right to whatever mask: “Well, I don’t have the time to carve this. Let’s go borrow [one].” Yeah. I would not like to see that happen. I think that if it were a mask of Mungo’s and they were going to carve another one, then MOA has the right to have as strict conditions as possible. I suppose the other thing is, because of the totally screwed up
documentation on so many of those pieces from this area, how does anyone really know when someone requests a loan of the piece that that someone really has the right to it? I think it's different for the B.C.P.M. because the pieces they are able to loan, they know exactly who they belong to and are able to ask that person's permission. Yeah.

MC  So do you have any suggestions for us as to how we can not make too many mistakes in this area?

GW  Yeah ... I really don't know ... I thinking of the masks said to be Harry Mountain's. I just hope nobody ever asks to borrow them! For your sake! I really hope nobody ever asks to borrow them. It's really hard to say...

MC  Is there – because they are shown publicly when they are danced – does that have some kind of a sort of a social control mechanism in that? That somebody saw it being danced and thought, no, that it shouldn't be ... ? Do you think that that means that people are going to be pretty appropriate before they even ask us because they know they're going to be showing them publicly? Or do you think that because the masks are – because the documentation has been so screwed up – that, in fact, a lot of people watching wouldn't know whether the people dancing had the right to that particular mask?

GW  Well, you know, a question like this is sometimes asked at a potlatches when a mask appears and people have a fair idea of the rights and privileges of that family [unclear] and a mask that doesn't quite fit in, "Where did you get that from?" I guess what's important [unclear] at a potlatch is that the speaker is able to say at the end of the dance: "This comes from our host's grandfather down from his mother's side and it came from –" – a bit of the history given. If people – I don't know. I'm fumbling here because I really haven't – But it seems to me that if someone requests a loan of a mask, then they ought to be able to tell you stuff like that. "This Eagle mask belonged to my grandmother, who used it to dance at a potlatch given by her husband." Yes What you don't want is someone going through Audrey's book and saying: "Hey, that's a really neat mask! Why don't we ask to borrow that for our potlatch, you know?"

MC  Oh, you were talking about if somebody wanted to borrow a mask, they should be able to – they should know some of its lineage.
G W  Yeah, yeah. It just seems to me in the times that I’ve been home I’ve been to potlatches where masks are used or dances are performed where no explanation is given and people like my mother say: “Well, why are they doing it? It doesn’t belong to them.” So, I think institutions like MOA have a responsibility not to encourage that kind of thing.

MC  Are there other recommendations that you would like to give to MOA?

GW  Oh, no!

MC  Apart from getting rid of Visible Storage.

GW  I don’t know whether it bothers anyone else but it bothers me.

MC  I think, actually, other people have commented on that. Yeah.

GW  I remember after it was – after it opened, I took my daughter through and, as we were leaving, I said to her: “So, what do you think?” And she said: “It really reminds me of Granny’s house.” My mother’s. And I said: “In what way?” She said: “Everything’s all kind of jumbled together.” Yeah.

MC  Do you think that – I remember also Keekus. She was working on some baskets and we were just trying to stuff them. They had gotten squished and creased and she said: “Why are you keeping these things at all? Why aren’t you just getting somebody to weave a new basket? These baskets, you know, they’ve served their purpose. Why are you even keeping them?” And I thought, that’s an interesting question because, in a sense, especially if somebody does see the basket. I mean we wouldn’t – she said: “Well, why don’t you throw them out?” Those were her exact words. We wouldn’t throw them out. Why don’t we give them back to Powell River or, you know, where they came from. Why don’t we, at least, try that first, presuming that we have the money that we make a project that we say: “Well, okay, this sounds worthwhile. Why don’t we do this, you know?” But, then, there is also, you know, the western museums’ value system that says: “No. If it’s old, keep it.” Yeah.
GW Well, why do you keep it? I mean what if somebody figured out to—a way to make the basket by analyzing the fibres or something. What if they could determine how much pollution there was, either in the soil or the whatever at the time the bark, or whatever, was stripped.

MC Right! Yeah.

GW You know, it seems to me that there’s information in all things that we, ah, haven’t even thought about yet. For that reason, in addition to usual museum reasoning, we’ve got it and we’ll hang onto it! I don’t know—have people in Powell River ever said that they wanted stuff back?

MC No. Not yet, anyway. I think that that whole thing for conservators, though—preserving the integrity of objects—is about preserving them so that, if, in future, there is a way to know what the pollution level was at that time or some other information which could be quite interesting, that the object is there and intact. Yeah. So then—you know the four integrities I mentioned? Physical, aesthetic, historic and cultural—...The aesthetic integrity, for instance. I mean that’s—I guess the question is: is that really just a value judgement? You know that’s sort of again the western—the art market...that whole art side thing. This object has aesthetic value...Or is it something intrinsic to the object? You know—that survives the decades despite whatever value judgements put upon it or is it really just a series of value judgements. Some people like it. The next decade, they don’t like it. You know?

GW I don’t know whether the people who made those things or used them thought in terms of aesthetics, integrities because it was a symbol of something that was old and valued and it was that aspect of it that was important—not so much what it looked like, I think. Yeah. So, yeah, I guess that’s a Western thing. Yeah.

MC But somebody—you know the great carvers—Mungo Martin was recognised as being a great carver, a great artist so, in that sense, it was that aesthetic value and the people who really did wonderful work, were also recognised people. Would you agree or not?

GW Yes. But then, you know, you think of, I suppose, all the Wilson Duff stuff [unclear]. I suppose it was Wilson who started this whole Charlie Edenshaw thing? And people would look at a bracelet—“Oh, it’s a
Charlie Edenshaw!” – so that it might not have been a Charlie Edenshaw. In fact, I think most of them found out that some of the pieces that were identified as Charlie Edenshaw pieces turned out to be made by someone else. So, how important is the name? It’s simply a beautiful piece.

MC Yeah, exactly. Then it’s like the aesthetics are a value judgement because, if it’s suddenly not an Edenshaw, the piece has much less value ... Some people don’t like the fact that objects from First Nations are being preserved by Western scientific methods. They don’t feel that’s appropriate. What do you think about that?

GW Well, I think that some of the people who are saying that are carvers who use power tools. Yeah. I don’t know – we’re living in the nineties. This is part of, you know – museums are part of our world now and the kinds of things museums are able to do are also part of our world and I think if those objects are owned by those museums I think those museums have a responsibility to preserve those objects in whatever way works. Yeah. However, if the people who make this kind of criticism prefer not to preserve their own treasures with Western means, that’s fine. You know.

MC Yeah. So, in the continuity of cultural traditions, I guess – I know like sometimes I use the word ‘preservation’ ... I think, no, no – don’t use the word ‘preservation’ because that sounds like preserving, sort of static, moth-ballling approach. But, you know, we can use another word like ‘maintenance’ of cultural tradition, whatever. Do you, like – I guess the role of especially the older objects in museums – do they have a special role or do you think the contemporary objects can, you know, have the same significance? And also, yeah, I guess that whole question again of the objects – they may be older but if they’re in a museum, they are, in that sense, moth-balled. I’m still trying to sort out a bit the question what role the objects have and is really important for us to be looking at ... What museums should be thinking about, you know, and aiming towards.

GW Well I don’t know if museum people should really be talking about preservation or maintenance of culture because all you’ve got are things and those things – those objects really, oh, really don’t mean much by themselves, sitting on shelves. They only come to life when they are really used. So, I guess, your job is to preserve those ‘things’.
It's our job to preserve the culture that those 'things' have meaning in. Yeah. I think that, sometimes, people expect too much of museums – they expect even too much of the cultural centres [unclear]. And we've tried to say just because the centre is there, don't think that everything is going to be okay [unclear]. You can't leave it all to us. If your kids really aren't learning as much of the language as you think they should be, don't blame it on us. What are you doing to help us? I think it's true of MOA or anywhere else that people should not think just because things are carefully taken care of there that people in the villages, like Alert Bay, don't have to worry. We have our own stuff to do. Yeah.

MC I think that I really agree with you there and that's also one of the reasons why we're very ready to loan things that may be – maybe too ready. You know. [unclear] I hope we know what we're doing.

GW Yeah, yeah.

MC What you've just said reminds me of an article I read by Appadurai. He's from India and he writes on museum stuff and he was saying how much museums – in India, anyway – are very much on the British model and they really are quite foreign because people – why go into a museum when there's a temple a thousand years old down the street? So what museums have done, since the British left, there have gradually become more and more centres – cultural centres – where they become the – they help organize activities and become meeting places for market or crafts people or whatever. They're also involved in education and that kind of thing with the schools. The model – the glass case model –

MC ... yeah, the museum really – they came about because people – Europeans – were trying to preserve their past that they were quite distanced from, especially because of the Industrial Revolution and that things had changed so rapidly. But where the traditions are preserved, like in the temple down the street, the museum is not appropriate – it's not needed. So, in a sense, you are in that position here, where the traditions are preserved in the big house and people knowing their songs and the language. So then, I mean the centre – I haven't talked to Juanita in a lot of detail. Hopefully up here I'll have the chance to talk to her more but is there also a big archives programme? Is that also what the centre is about? And was 'archives'
... maybe taking oral histories from people?

GW Yes, yes — I think not enough of that. When I left, there wasn’t a single computer in the place. Now there seems to be one on every desk. The latest thing is a talking computer and it’ll teach you how to speak Kwakwala and I just snort! That ain’t the way I learnt it! I think people can sometimes get carried away with the technology. Maybe I think that just because I’m such a klutz when it comes to that kind of stuff. But it’s such an impersonal way to learn a language from a machine. Yeah. I think we have to be careful about that kind of stuff.

MC So are there things that aren’t shared, like particular songs, particular dances or things that you have to make sure of something is on a tape that is kept strictly private?

GW No — I guess some of them are, you know. [unclear] Any member of our family can have access to the tapes. We’re talking about a whole lot of people, you know? Think about Mungo Martin’s tapes at the Provincial Museum. A whole lot of people who are either closely or more distantly related who have a perfect right to ask for those kinds of things. Other people are now video taping potlatches but, for a time, it used to be [unclear] did that kind of thing and the master copy was kept at the centre and any member of the family could come in and order a copy. If it was some one weren’t sure of, then we would go back to the host of that potlatch and say "so and so has asked for it, is it all right?" [unclear]

MC What about objects ... ? Like they would have been passed to a particular individual so, if somebody says they have the particular right to a particular dance or song — if they say that does that mean that no body else in the family probably has that right? You know, that it’s very individual?

GW Yeah. Yeah. If my uncle gave me a dance in his potlatch, it’s mine until he decides it’s time for me to pass it onto my daughter[unclear]. It’s not mine anymore. And with it goes whatever — a mask or [unclear] Yeah.

MC What do you think of the division — and again I have to talk to Juanita as you know — the question of the whistles not being on public display because they shouldn’t be shown at times. Do you think that MOA, for
example, should take our whistles off visible storage and put them into a closed storage?

GW It was important for us, I think, to do that because we're not a museum. Really. Even if there weren't these restrictions, how the hell are you going to show sixty whistles!

MC Yeah, right!

GW I don't know. I mean, MOA's always had them on exhibit. Has anyone ever said take them off?

MC No.

GW For us it was the best thing to do. And, I guess, if we were a museum, we would say: "Well, people need to see these things." We never had to deal with that. That may be funny if MOA decided we shouldn't be exhibiting these whistles and wrapped them all up and they put them all in closed storage and visitors come along and say: "What happened to all the whistles?"

MC Well, we have had requests that we've turned down. Twice we've had musicologists wanting to blow the whistles because they want to hear their sound. And we turned them down – really not knowing anything, like not understanding this other aspect to whistles, but just, you know, because we didn't think it was appropriate at all in any case. You know? And I don't know whether – it's interesting because this whole question – like, there are some objects that are made [so that] without their function, they're nothing. And I'm thinking here – this is applied a lot to museums – like clocks or to musical instruments because, if you don't hear them. what's the good of looking at them? And it's really true when it's something like a sound recording or a computer disc. You know, it's really nothing to look at. It's only something that's useful if the contents are revealed. And I wonder whether – um, the whistles are musical instruments so the musicologists look at them from that aspect. I'm wondering whether the question of not, of not separating things out from their function – whether that also applies to masks, say – whether they should be looked at as, well, I don't know. I mean you can certainly appreciate a lot about them just by looking at them. You don't have to necessarily touch them but you can't – you also miss a lot without ever seeing
them danced.

GW Yeah. Well, I would disagree that the whistles are musical instruments – you can’t play a tune on them. They’re not like a flute or whatever. They produce a sound that has a certain meaning. I have no idea what musicologists will make of that! I don’t think they’re musical instruments at all. And I suppose – I suppose that’s part of the restrictions the old people say. They should only be heard, not seen. What they look like isn’t as important as the sounds that they make. As for masks, I guess, even of they’re – even if they’re exhibited completely out of context, I suppose you can appreciate them and admire them for the workmanship, the details or whatever. [unclear] I don’t know if you can ever make an exhibit really real because, I mean they’re – when they’re sitting on a shelf, they have no life. And it’s interesting. In English, you say you ‘put on’ the mask but the term in Kwakwala language is ‘to be inside’. You are inside the mask. The mask isn’t ‘on’ you; you are inside.

MC Are there objects – I mean, would you use the word ‘sacred’ with regard to the objects?

GW No. No. I think ‘sacred’ and ‘spiritual’ are the two most overworked words in Indian vocabulary. And it just bores the hell out of me! I mean there isn’t – there isn’t a – there aren’t terms in Kwakwala that are the equivalent of ‘sacred’ and ‘spiritual’. We talk about things not being ordinary. Yeah – not ordinary – which is closer to ‘not natural’, maybe ‘supernatural’, but I don’t know I ever heard old people talk about ‘sacred’ or ‘spiritual’. It’s part of this whole invention – the invention of culture. One of these days, I’m going to write a book!

MC Because I was thinking of the title of the film ‘A Strict Law Bids Us Dance’, which to me implies that there’s something higher up and larger that is the reason for doing this. So I can see that the words ‘sacred’ or ‘spiritual’ are often used for that higher up, larger kind of conception. If a mask is used in a strict law that something is bidding ‘us’ to use, then it has associations to – I mean, the mask in itself, you know, is a representation. Its not like in the American Southwest where the mask has actual power within it ... but that it’s still somehow tied in with something that is bigger and, you know, beyond.

GW When I first came home, I often asked different old people: “Why,
"Why, why is this done? Why this mask?" "Because that’s the way it’s always done." "Well, when did it start?" "I don’t know. It was always done that way." Yeah.

MC Well, I don’t have any more questions written down. I know there’s lots more I have to ask you about. You mentioned the Harry Mountain masks. You used a word for them. I wonder, could you write it down so I can transcribe it? [unclear] Okay and what does that mean?

GW ‘Masks from the’ – [unclear] is the wood – ‘masks from the wood’.

MC Is there a word in Kwakwala for ‘preservation’? Was keeping old objects part of the traditional way of doing things or just once they were no longer able to be used, they would be –

GW Well, it seems – and I don’t know if there was any one particular thing. You hear stories about – you know, a mask could be – a mask could be used four times and then it had to be burned. It’s life was over. But this didn’t seem to be any kind of general rule that I know of. Yeah.

MC Well, things like jewellery, because they were personal, were they different from something like a mask is personal but, I don’t know, it’s different because it’s also associated with rights.

GW The same kind of rights are not associated with pieces of jewellery. We treasure a gold bracelet your grandmother gave you. You don’t ever have to wear it like we have to once in a while wear a mask that’s been passed down to us.

MC But would people be likely to put bracelets into a museum or cultural centre or would it be more that things personal, in that sense, would get passed down to children?

GW Oh, more likely to be passed down. The few pieces we have in there were – a friend had bought a bracelet in – or was it one or two bracelets? – in Vancouver and later discovered that they had come from a grave site. She didn’t want to keep them but didn’t want them returned - didn’t want to return them to the store so somebody else could buy them. So she said: “I want to give them to the cultural centre but don’t use my name.” And the other bracelets my cousin
brought in and those have been – those have been uncovered from another grave when a logging road was being built in one of the islands down there and he said: “I don’t want to keep them. But we weren’t going to bury them again because somebody else would just dig them up. Don’t use my name.” So, I think very few people would donate pieces of personal jewellery to the centre.

MC I think with some museums, especially in a historic museum, people ... give their grandmother’s christening gown because they like to see it – somehow it gives it value to have it shown in a museum. You know? But would that kind of thing, do you think, would ... people think the same of cultural centres?

GW No, I can’t think of any pieces, any objects that are there that would be the equivalent of a christening gown. I guess the closest [thing] is the button blanket that was my father’s given to me when he died. And it’s in pretty bad shape and I wasn’t wearing it anymore. And we had the problem how to exhibit an apron, a neck-ring and a head-ring and I said to my mother I said: “Is it possible that my father wore this blanket in 1921?” And she said: “It’s possible. It’s very old.” And I thought, well, then that’s what I’ll do. It’s either [this] or we use one of those big cardboard tube things. Yeah.

MC Okay, well, I think that’s all that I can think of right now. Is there any more information about what I’m doing that I should be giving to you?

GW No, I can’t think of anything.

MC Okay. Well, thank you so much. It was fabulous.
MC So I am talking to Howard Grant in his office. Could you just say a few words?

HG OK. Well, first of all I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for seeking our participation into your thesis to review all of the academic work you have taken and are trying to put into logical real perspective.

MC I was wondering if you wanted to begin – I don't know if you've had much time to look over the questions – would you like to begin with me asking questions, or would you like to begin with just speaking.

HG Well, in order to coordinate this properly so that we can have some semblance of logical format, we would just go through your questions. I did briefly look at them, but to be quite honest with you I didn't have the time to go into detailed, to wrap my mind around it, you know?

MC Yeah.

HG But I'm fairly familiar with a lot of the museum efforts and the pro's and con's from my family perspective so, I will ...

MC Good, excellent. OK. Well, let's just start briefly with the first question. If you could just briefly tell me a little bit about your background, did you grow up here, and did you have .. were you always involved in cultural affairs, and you know, did you .. ?

HG I was very fortunate that my family was probably the first family down here as a whole to not go to boarding school.
And although I'm a fairly young person I had the fortunate opportunity to have everyone's parents, grandparents, great grandparents to be my parents. So. They had to talk to somebody. Somebody that's other than of their own age. So yes, in having grown up here in Musqueam all of my life, born in 1936, somewhat came to my senses, I guess, around 1950 or thereabouts, and I guess I had the opportunity to talk to people who, at that time, were in their eighties, nineties, so ... I'm looking at oral history to around the 1850's, 1860's. So, yes, I had long time, I had a lot of oral history presented to me, I had a lot of oral teachings. And again, being blessed with that fact that Musqueam was one of the few communities in the 1950's to still have more than one Long House. In other words, most First Nations had come into the so-called community Long House concept. Like if you go around First Nations today, you'll see one big Long House whereas in Musqueam we had many Long Houses, still existing, still vibrant in the winter season, etc. And in my early years I lived right next door to two family Long Houses, and in the winter I would hear, see and observe the traditional teachings and lifestyles that were being performed for centuries. So, with that bit of background, then I entered the public school, because my mother saw it was necessary to become educated, to so-called exist in the world today. So by day I was a citizen of Vancouver, Canada, etc., by night I learned secondary education which was the Long House, and during the winter I resided right in the Long House. So, yes, I have an extensive background.

And now you’re the Executive Director of the Band Council?

Of the Musqueam community. OK.

It would be equated to the City Manager of any municipality.

Do you remember the first time you went inside a museum?

Yes. It was again at a very young age, I would say I was about four years of age, because the museum was located at Main and Hastings in Vancouver.
MC  Oh, the Carnegie Building. Right. OK.

HG  And I had the opportunity to observe Major Matthews and I was disheartened, I guess, because a lot of the work that Major Matthews was performing in that time frame was doing a study of August Jack, and his wife.

MC  Oh.

HG  And his name was Hotsilano [sp?], where they get the name Kitsilano. So again I was disappointed because August Jack used to get paid to be interviewed, and knowing him at that time that the money that was made would be used to purchase alcohol for the most instances. That was the sad part. But the good part was looking at the museum pieces that were from around the world, and not having the opportunity, because there was no television for me at that time, I did see things that are only read about in books.

MC  Right, right. Well, thanks, that's ... what I'd like to do now is objects and questions about the preservation of objects. And so I'm wondering first if you could tell me what kind of objects you see as being important to pass down generation to generation and what kinds of objects ... yeah, first of all, just what kind of objects would you like to see preserved? In your family or your community? I guess that are important to hang on to ...

HG  Yes, there are, because within my blood line, I was very privileged to be born into the family line that contained, I guess, the ranking, I wouldn't want to call it ranks, but we'll use that word for now, but I was born into a family that had the right, or the privilege to wear a mask. And this mask was handed down from generation, to generation, to generation. Now, within the Coast Salish Hunqu'minum (Halkomelem) culture this is still a very private ceremony. We have not danced for money. We have not danced publicly for money. And it's still a very private affair. And this is not for public display, because it's for your own personal strength. Unfortunately a lot of our native people, again, similar to August Jack, sold swaixwe for monetary gain. It was not for something to be handed down and viewed by the general public. They sold it because they wanted to acquire monetary gain to purchase other things ... So, the museums around the world, I would presume, have a number of these
masks which hold a lot more meaning and a lot more value than money could really buy.

MC Yes, yes.

HG So I .. certain things I believe should be acquired by museums in order to show the rest of the world a thriving culture existed, but also I firmly believe museum individuals should understand the culture of a community first and say what can and cannot be displayed. What should and shouldn’t be purchased. So there’s again the .. that reality sense that should be conveyed to the students that are being taught.

MC So could you give me an example, one or two examples, objects, that could be purchased and displayed by a museum, would be appropriate?

HG OK. House posts that by permission of the families would be allowed. Because things are seen, observed, by communities, by the general public as a whole. Various carvings and various weavings, various basketry, crafts, etc. But those that have traditional or spiritual values I don’t think should be, so long as it’s still being practised. Now, whether or not we will be practising our culture and traditions that have been handed down in the future, I don’t know. But today, it’s still thriving. It’s still being practised. I think those kinds of things, which are an extension of oneself, as opposed to something that is of the more general nature, general meaning a king’s crown, you know, on public display.

MC Mmhm.

HG That can be handed over, but certain things of a personal value shouldn’t be displayed.

MC Mmhm. So and .. there’s some objects that are, like the ones at the .. like the mask. Which is important to be kept within the family and just private. There are others that could be shown in a community facility. These other ones, do you see them as being shown .. is it important for some of them to be in the sort of big urban museum where they’re seen by, you know, people from all over, or is it first important to have a community facility, so that people from the community can see them and use them.
HG I think museums should work with communities to set up the local museum, which would have similar displays of sorts, which are of the past, present, and possibly the future, whereas pieces could be borrowed by the more urban or the larger museums, displayed over time etc. Recognizing that the smaller museums don't have the resources to maintain, retain... I believe that there should be a central bank which would preserve it over a long period of time, you know. I'm not that familiar with the, you know, workings of preservation, but I do know that certain techniques that, whatever that need to be followed, and only large museums, such as the Museum of Anthropology have the equipment to do those kinds of things. Like basketry that are three or four thousand years of age.

MC Yes.

HG Those I can see controlled in a central banking situation.

MC Mmmh.

HG But other forms of objects should be displayed in both areas.

MC So you see there is a future role for museums, but part of that role is to assist in development of communities.

HG Mmmh. I would, like, again it... see, the bigger museum does not have the ability to communicate the whole history and background to those specific objects. And nor should you. Because people don't want to read a thesis on an object.

MC Right.

HG But at the same time you do have objects currently that are being displayed which people, especially people of native descent, can say, "I have rights to that particular object." And a lot of those objects that you currently display now have strict rules and regulations which allow you to say "I have the privilege to don or to hang it." And, if I may use an example, like the clan system of the Scottish people. I would be silly to hang a piece of tartan that didn't belong to the Grants.

MC Right. Right, right.
Likewise with individuals. Although they may believe that they have a right to hang it, they don’t. And certainly .. with our masks, as an example, if Miriam Clavir said “Yeah, I’m related to Howard Grant” I can wear that mask. I have that right. You would say I have the right. I would say I have the privilege. Now, if Miriam Clavir came to my extended family and said I want my son to don that mask, because it’s in my blood right to do so. You missed ninety percent of the rules and regulations which govern and allow you to be, even be considered to have your son don that mask.

MC Hmm.

HG Now, that’s the missing pieces which you don’t have in a museum.

MC Yes.

HG Secondly, you have entrepreneurs and carvers that come to a museum and say, “Miriam Clavir, I’m an artist. Can I touch that? Can I look at that?” They in turn recreate a million masks that don’t belong to them, and they sell it for profit. They lose the full meaning and respect of that mask. And it’s like the Japanese carving ten million little totem poles.

MC Right, right. Yeah. Yeah.

HG So I’m offended at what’s happening, because we have a number of people who have copied my family’s mask – although the masks are fairly similar – there are specific details of that mask which only belong to my great grandfather.

MC Right.

HG And yet today I see some people donning masks of very similar carving.

MC So do you think at the Museum of Anthropology, our system of visible storage, where people can come in and see a lot of, you know, what in most museums is kept, you know, behind the scenes, do you think then that that .. is that a good system, or a bad system, in that anyone can go in and see, so it’s good, you know, in the sense it gives access, you know, to having to make bureaucratic appointments, things like that, but on the other hand, it means that anyone could look and
borrow. I don't know. How do you feel about that? Is that something that .. ?

HG  I ...

MC  This is not on the question thing, but [unclear]

HG  No, I don't care for it in the sense that, you know, as an example, we have a current initiative whereby one of the [unclear] is .. his contract is from individuals to recarve certain pieces that were found in a midden site, or whatever, or archaeological site. They were blanket pins. That's fine. There's no problem. That is again, standard stuff. It was worn in the public on a daily basis. But there are specific items that one should clearly understand that were only worn on very specific ceremonial occasions. Now, those are the private collection of families. Now, they are again once you receive such items, you should find out, say, "OK. What is public. What is not?" and then you make that decision. You say, "OK. We will have them behind closed doors and when a Grant comes in. And yes, that indeed belongs to the Grants, or the extended family, show me your genealogy, bang, you can come in to review, touch, feel, and even maybe recreate." You know. But that would be the family's privilege as opposed to anyone else, or the general public's privilege.

MC  Yeah. And so, in regards to objects like this, what would be the best way for us to proceed, would it be, you know, to contact you? Say somebody .. say we have things come into the museum, or there are things in the museum and we wanted to look into these matters, you know, should we .. start by phoning you, or start by contacting or Leona, or .. what is the appropriate way to set something in motion?

HG  OK. Say, for example, you had something that belonged to Howard's great, great grandfather. Let's say. Probably just for ease of access sake here, because you don't know every person that resides in Musqueam, or any other community, for that matter. The first point of contact would be the Band Office, the Executive Director, the Band Manager, whomever, and to say that we're trying to locate the descendants of Charlie Hotsilano [sp?]..

MC  Mmhm.
H G  OK. That should be fairly easy. I would say, "OK. Yes, I can give you four names." and then you would contact those people and say "We have Charlie Hotsilano's [sp?] belongings we would like to move it, display it ..." whatever, and we seek your guidance in this matter. All four individuals would come in, or one, whatever, and [unclear] displays, "No, that can't be ...".

M C  OK. Great, thank you. OK. About older objects that are now in museum collections. I’m thinking now, in a certain sense, for you, there are the older objects, [question] number six now, there are objects that are .. have family affiliations, like the ones we just talked about, but there are also things like the basketry that is two thousand years old and doesn’t have family affiliations, so would you say that some objects are family objects first and other objects are community objects first, or does at a certain point everything in a way also become community heritage? You know, what I mean? It’s family heritage too; I’m just trying to sort that one out.

H G  Masks in particular, and I guess totem poles and house poles, whatever, are family objects, and I think it would be beneficial to work harmoniously with the family to discuss whether or not it should or shouldn’t be on display.

M C  Mmhm.

H G  Community objects, again, policy is only a Bible that you would refer to when in doubt. The general policy application should be “We’re considering doing a display of Musqueam that pertains to the Marpole midden site, OK. Almost all of the stuff that you’re going to find at the Marpole midden are of a public or community ownership, whether it be a blanket pin, basketry, but I would believe that everything that is sort of acquired by the museum, other than from an archaeological or midden site, the majority of it, I presume, would be a familiar type of arrangement, ie. by which [unclear] said I’ve got this mask and I’ve got this box, I’ve got this whatever. I would venture to guess that ninety-nine percent of it would be family. So. You have a lot of [unclear] the larger displays would be belong to a particular family. And there again I would always say, "OK. Who owns this object?" And if Howard Grant had sold it to you, then you would go to the Grant descendant. Howard Grant’s descendant.
MC  OK. I've been leaving out one or two questions, because ...

HG  No problem.

MC  OK. I don’t want to take up too much of your time, this is a long ...

HG  Yeah.

MC  A long list. So one of the questions that I’m really interested in looking at, is this question of, to preserve objects, especially older objects, you know, and they could be .. it could be something that is a hundred years old, or it could be a thousand years old; the best way to preserve them is not have people touch them. But, on the other hand, you know, some objects are part of use today – ceremonial use today. So I’m trying to figure out the parameters of that balance. But you would say, for example, you would agree rather than disagree with the fact that a family object means that that family can decide whether it’s appropriate for it to be used, and who is appropriate to use it?

HG  Yeah.

MC  OK. And if a piece is worn down or broken – maybe we should make two categories here, the family pieces and the ones that are community pieces, does it matter if it’s worn or broken through use or handling?

HG  When you say worn through use ...

MC  Worn away, I mean.

HG  Now, say if you had a piece at the museum right now in that condition, or are you saying that if Howard Grant had a – Howard Grant’s family – had a piece that was donated, purchased by the museum from his grandfather and I would approach you and say, “Can I take that out?” and that would be the concern you would have.

MC  Yes, yes, let’s say that.

HG  OK. This is something I would think that could be and should be decided by the museum and the family, OK? Because it’s like the health of a mother, or a grandmother, or a grandfather, to say, should we take them out? Should we place them in an elder home, or
whatever. And you would advise and apprise them of the pro’s and con’s of taking it away. And I think that if the family were still practicing their traditional culture and whatnot, they would take all of this into consideration. Right now I have a family mask that’s present in the Vancouver Museum. I had the opportunity to view and to recreate it with another mask. Yes, we’d love to have it in the family again. Yes, these kinds of masks are to be worn on ceremonial occasions, but I would be a crazy person to say “I want to keep this in my house.” Especially if it’s going to be preserved. Do I want it on public display? No. You have the bank that can provide you with a safety deposit box.

MC Yes.

HG I would love to leave it there [in the ? unclear] proper environment. But again, as I said, there are special occasions, you know, that I think I should be allowed to wear it if it was possible.

HG But I would have to look at it as well, I mean, [unclear]. And again, recognizing that after use I would return it. You know, it’s like a bank, a vault for it.

MC Right. And if the object had gone into the museum a long time ago, so that in fact the rigging fit your grandfather or great grandfather’s head, and it was .. you know, it was as he had used it. Would you prefer to keep it like that, you know, as a sort of a memory of him as well, or would .. or really is the important thing more to be able to continue using it?

HG The important thing is to continue to use it. And as you change the fitting, say, for example, most masks would have a cedar bark, or a cloth strapping, whatever, we all know that over time it’s going to deteriorate. The attachments that would hold it in place, and everything else, is important for memory, it’s important for historical sake to say, “Here are the types of materials that were used a thousand years ago, or here’s what was used a hundred years ago, and ten years ago.” But if one were to have the opportunity on occasion, of course you would have to change the strapping, because there’s no way you’d be able to wear it. But again, looking at it and saying, “OK.” You would have the mask itself, and then you would have the display alongside it. Not the display, but you’d keep these ...
MC Right. You'd keep the thousand years old, or the hundred years old, or .. yeah. And I don't know whether this is true for your culture, but some people would like to see, in something like a mask, they would like to see it refurbished. If it's looking old and worn, and it is being .. going to be used, they would like to see it looking just, better. I don't know whether that's true, or not, could you say that that's something that you would .. if it was an older piece would you ..

HG Repaint it?

MC Yeah, consider that kind of thing?

HG Personally, no. Personally no. Because the various ways and means that they painted a mask is very important. To change it, I think is disrespectful. Yes, we have modern paints that are available to give it more gloss, or whatever, but at the same time masks, to my knowledge, that were produced in the era that they were, especially those that were used and were very intimate to a family, they were, at least, in a high quality manner, those that weren't, I mean, you can take a look at the various carvings now that are sold to the general public versus those that aren't. Now, if you went to someone's home, and if it was say for example, the family crest, you would always see that crest in the family's household. Probably of three times the quality of the stuff that they are selling to the general public. So there is a difference in respect to what you have acquired, you and the museum, and I'm sure you'd be able to tell, taking two similar objects, saying “Yes, you know this one had a lot of respect.”

MC Yes.

HG And this one had not. So that's another question that one has to logically evaluate. For me, the masks I know that you have at the museum, don't need a touch up. Because they were produced in the finest quality of that day.

MC If again, with an older piece, and, say, from your family, your grandfather, and if you .. say the museum now, you borrow it out, and use it – here on Question # 10 – you use it and it inadvertently gets damaged, you know, something is worn away, or rubs off, or something like that. Would you then have it restored to hide that
damage? Do you consider that to be damage, or would you have it, you
know, the new piece put back on, or the scuff mark covered over a bit,
or would you still prefer, you know, to leave it as it was originally with
this scuff mark or a bit missing .. ?

HG Now, again, I'm talking explicitly here, about our community's masks,
that are art objects etc., if we were to utilize it and it somehow got
damaged, and if I were to want to use it again, first of all, yes, I would
like it repaired, because I want to use it again. And if I had enough
respect for that work, I would ensure, first of all, that it didn't get
damaged.

MC Yes.

HG Secondly if by accident, it did, I would hire a person that knows what
they're doing, and probably I would confide in some of your staff in
respect to saying, "OK, how can we do this."

MC OK.

HG Because we want to maintain the quality of that piece.

MC Yes. Some of these questions you've already answered with your
answers. There was the question, # 14, materials and methods used.
Would you prefer that if the same materials were used, say, cedar bark
was missing, cedar bark was used again, it may not be possible then to
tell what was the original and what was the addition, the later addition,
so what some people do then, is they add a material, or they do
something just so you, you know, you can always tell, this is an
addition because it has a modern material incorporated in it, even
though you can't see it, you know, it doesn't show up, but at least .. or
you can also document it: this is the piece that was missing; this is the
piece I put in. But to have some distinction between what is original
and what is added at later time. Or with some people that just not
important at all, because it's just like the use, that the continuity is
important, so it the continuity of maintenance of objects important.

HG In the majority, in the majority, and I would say this would happen
with all cultures, every piece that's attached to that regalia has
significance to it. To repair it with foreign objects .. for young artists, or
for a young person to replace it, they may not understand the meaning
and the intent and the reasoning behind why specific pieces were used, so I would prefer, personally, if things were damaged, or whatever else, either the original pieces, if they're strong enough, would be used, replacement, i.e. if it's cedar bark and you went and got new cedar bark to replace it with, that would be my second, and thirdly only under extreme conditions would you actually replace it with something much more modern.

MC Mmhm.

HG Because in my culture, every piece that was attached to it would have had significance.

MC OK. Question # 15. Are there objects which you from your culture that you would like to see not preserved but allowed deteriorate to conclude a natural cycle. Where it's important for the object not to be preserved.

HG Not to my knowledge. Not to my own personal knowledge, most objects that were created gave an eternal expectancy to it; to give a message, to communicate. In my community are the “Art-Here”[?], the so-called Art or construction or creation of pieces had significant meaning to the non-Coast Salish society which is just now starting to appreciate the extentialism of the Coast Salish world. [unclear] Picasso, I guess, he was not your traditional artist, you know?

MC No.

HG And society over the last hundred years, or fifty years, have very much appreciated Picasso's work. And Picasso and company, and all the artists similar to Picasso, because of the affluent society went beyond the traditional concept of art, and I wouldn't want to say this publicly, but let's use for example, the Haida, the Kwagiulth, art versus the Hunqu'minum art, because we lived, and we were very, very blessed with natural resources and abundance, we started practising a highly complex, affluent culture. And we had a lot of free time.

MC Yeah.

HG So the art objects of the Coast Salish upon contact were already beyond Picasso's state. And if you really look at the art work of Coast Salish,
you’re now seeing things that one never saw before. So this is where most of our artists are at, and I would equate it to a Picasso piece.

MC Yeah, yeah.

HG To now try to answer your question fifteen, no, I think every piece that was created, had an endless lifetime to it. I don’t know, I can’t think of any piece that should be allowed to deteriorate. I hope I answered that one.

MC Yes! That’s great. So if an object is in a museum’s collection, and we’ll say it’s not a family piece that should be, you know, that it should be returned to the family, and it’s not a piece that where there’s some doubt about how legally it got into the museum’s collection, and, you know, not to say that these other pieces may not get returned into the community, but how should decisions be made about the safekeeping of those pieces. Like, is there .. should the museum go ahead and not using a .. sort of .. try to give the highest standard of care to the pieces and consult when something, you know, comes up? I’m just trying to think .. the practicality is that we probably can’t consult on absolutely everything, I mean ..

MC ... According to work and also not to impose on the community’s time and priorities too much, and how do we .. and when is it appropriate for the museum to just go ahead and try and do the best care that they can?

HG That’s a difficult question to respond to, Miriam. Almost all of my responses have been in respect to museums that are located locally – ie: the Museum of Anthropology, the Vancouver Museum. But when you’re talking about in Perth, Scotland, or whatever else, it’s .. first and foremost I think that the collections that are around the world that are of a familial, family category should be returned to a local museum. And replicas to be .. to take it’s place. If the museums around the world want that type of display. And once that is done, then now I can respond to a number of these questions: to say that OK, can we refurbish pieces that are deteriorating. Then it gives you a more broad .. I guess stronger communication link, by where you’re not offending the family etc. and taking the time to do certain things. But the communication link should be to the point that it’s .. if we were able to do that, to bring all objects to the local, general, regional area, I guess,
then I would believe that the curators, and the people who are staff at those museums will have a good, background working knowledge of the people that have the ownership. I think the answer would be much more easily clarified that way. You would almost know when and when not to contact the Board.

MC  Right, right. OK. Good. OK. # 16. The conservation, the profession of conservation, has a Code of Ethics, the conservators like, consider themselves, you know, a profession, we’ve drawn up a code of Ethics, and one of the things it says is that, what conservators are trying to do is preserve the integrity of the object. And the integrity of the object, none of this is defined in detail, but the integrity of the object is composed of the physical integrity, the aesthetic integrity, that the object was created for aesthetic purposes, the historic integrity, so that if there were important events that ended up marking the object, that you don’t remove those marks, and in Canada, conservators have added what they call the conceptual integrity, which is meant the more intangible aspects to the object, the cultural significance to the object. For example, if it had been a Buddha that had been in a temple and was covered in soot from the incense, the conservators would leave that soot on, you know, unless it was very acidic, or something, then .. now, the conceptual integrity .. so, often what happens, like, the conceptual integrity, to me, the way I look at it, is dancing a mask. That’s the cultural significance. But that, that’s, then dancing also puts physical integrity - the physical integrity at risk? It doesn’t necessarily, but sometimes, especially if something has to travel a long distance to be used, that kind of thing. But I’m wondering, from your point of view, of these four integrities is there any one that is most important to preserve, or would you see them all being balanced out?

HG  No, I think you summarized it very well, in the sense that, yes, it all should be balanced out, because, as an example, if someone were to use an object and it had to be marked for that specific purpose, and that was the reason why it was created, then it should continue, because it does have historical significance to it. So, I would [give? unclear] equal weight to all four.

MC  OK. And do you think that the conceptual integrity, the cultural significance of an object, what role does a museum have in preserving that, if any? Like, say a museum .. you know, I can see it preserving the physical object, you know, or even the aesthetic and historic .. you
know, because they’ve left physical marks represented in the physicality of the object, but the conceptual, if it’s not represented in the physicality of the object, if it’s not the layer of soot on the Buddha, but is something that is more part of the how the community defines it, the cultural significance, is there a role for the museum in having to preserve that aspect of it.

HG The physical object?

MC Yeah. It’s physically in the museum, the museum is also is supposed to preserve it: the physical integrity, the aesthetic integrity, the historic integrity, and the conceptual integrity. How does like does the museum really have a role in preserving the conceptual integrity?

HG Could you elaborate on the conceptual?

MC Well, I see the conceptual integrity as being the cultural significance of the object. So, in other words, to make sure that nothing that would damage the cultural significance happens while that object is housed in the museum. I could also see it as. I don’t want to, you know, ask any leading questions, but, maybe the role of the museum in terms of preserving conceptual integrity is to make sure that the museum knows that this is an object that belongs to this family, that this family has the right to borrow it, or maybe it’s more of a in the protocols, or something like that, that or maybe it’s, you know, I don’t know. I’m trying to figure this one out. Because this is the one that often we see as opposed to preserving a physical object, is ...

HG I’m still not ...

MC OK. Alright. If an object has cultural significance – let’s try to think of something – well, say a house post has cultural significance, and especially we’ll say it’s an older house post. And it’s housed in the museum, and the museum is supposed to preserve not just the physical object, but also preserve or not let the fact that it’s culturally significant not let anything harm it’s cultural significance. So ...

HG OK. Let me use a mask. Let’s work with this.

MC Alright.
H G  I have a mask, or my family has a mask, and you purchase my uncle's mask, or my grandfather's mask, you've got it and you're preserving the physical aspect of it, i.e. the mask.

M C  Yeah.

H G  Now, the cultural aspect, when you're asking to preserve that is, is to say that do you show it? Do you not show it? Do you talk about it? Do you communicate it to the public?

M C  Mmhm.

H G  Do you let it out, do you display it? There are some that need to be displayed, i.e. the house posts. OK? 1) this is again a family ownership, but it's a public display thing. Now, that one there no problem with the question that you're asking -- you physically display it, you physically put on safeguards, you promote it's cultural integrity. But now, with masks that are of sacred meaning, yes, if you have one in your possession, yes, you physically protect it, but you have only very, very limited understanding of your sacred concept. You would never be able to communicate the emotional significance, the spiritual and whatever significance. So. You wouldn't be able to do justice to that. So. That piece of work would be in another category. Or, again, like I said, you have the family category which had two components, which is public, which is private? So, again it's one that has to be .. a policy would have to be developed on procedures, as to the staff at the museum, to have to work on.

M C  OK. Great. Question # 17. Is there a difference here about older objects rather than contemporary pieces, or even a mask, something that is used. Is there .. you know, in Western culture there is an importance attached to older objects, and .. but I know in some cultures what's important is again the continuation of the traditions as the making, making sure there are artists or weavers and others, you know, people who can continue the traditions and are able to make new objects is as important as preserving the old ones. And I was talking to person who wasn't from here and he said, "Well, it's an old blanket, it's got holes in it, it's not any good any more and let's just cut it up and sew it into a new blanket that we can wear, that we can use." And I'm just wondering, you know, how you feel about that.
OK. Ceremonial objects have a lot of significance, OK. They were constructed, created for specific events. To recreate new objects to signify that particular event, no problem. You know. But to, I guess, refurbish, to reconstruct that original object takes away what may have been in that story. So I would oppose taking the older object and revamping it. OK. I would like it, personally I would say, again, I'm talking about the family versus you know, of the two subheadings, the family versus the community objects, no problem. Those things were used on a daily basis, for daily things. But anyone that comes in that says I want to reconstruct a family object don't understand the full meaning behind it. An artist, especially an artist of today, to seek .. let's just step back here for a second. Artists - native artists of today have no real .. they're not artists, they're .. what's the word? They're copyists? They're copying art, and it would be like you and I going to Emily Carr Art School and reproducing Picasso every day. There's no significance to their .. to the art work of today. Probably the only one that, oh, there's a few I guess. Like Susan Point is one, she's taken the old teachings and she's recreating modern art that .. and you've got this Larry Paul that ..

Right! With his paintings.

Yeah. That's .. but you take B. D., and L. W., you know, they're just copyists, they're not artists. [unclear] artist.

Yeah. And but something, like, a basket that was originally made to be used, and in fact has become ...

Deteriorated.

But it's also still an older piece, is it worth preserving in your mind, or .. ?

Yeah. I mean, from a family perspective, no, from a historical perspective, yeah.

Yeah.

My grandmother made a million baskets. Half of them are in Vancouver still, not all of them. From a personal point of view, yes, I'd like to see them maintained. It reminds me of my grandmother. But at
the same time the people who would refurbish it would not have the same skills that they had, you know, and the same care. Because a refurbisher only does it for the aesthetics.

MC Yes.

HG Where the originator said, “Hey, this basket better not leak, and ...” And so, you’re going to lose something in it.

MC Yeah. Yes. And for kids, one of the questions that also comes up, kids, one way they learn is by handling the objects, but of course the more they handle the objects, the quicker the objects deteriorate. Do you think it’s OK? Should older objects be used in that context, or .. ?

HG No.

MC No. OK.

HG No again, you hand it to the copyists, such as L. W., to reconstruct something.

MC Let’s just go to 21. Is there any recommendations that you would like to give the museum in terms of improving the care of the collection, or just anything pertaining to objects from Musqueam that are now currently in the museum?

HG Stronger communication. I would say to any museum or to any institute that part of the curriculum should be visit First Nations communities, to talk, as you are doing right now, because .. and to maintain posts, linkages, in respect to communicating with the public that someone owns the art pieces. Because too often we make academic decisions that are very logical and very real and albeit the right one, but people get offended. Your biggest problem, as well as my biggest problem, as well as the Government of Candada’s biggest problem, is not to communicate. Even though they may be right. Almost all the right decisions are so debateable and so controversial, you know? So communications is a very important thing, that we all tend to ignore. That we take for granted. We assume too many things. And how things were. Like you have to work with the aggressive negatives of people who purchased art work and have now since donated them to museums, I mean, you gladly accept these things, but how they were
acquired still has bad taste in the mouth and people .. and the communication that you’re getting is give me those damned pieces back, you thief, you thieves and whatever else. You know? And it makes it tough for people like you to do your job, and who ant to do your job. And my thoughts are, this should have been done twenty years ago, and not for a thesis paper but just general care of the object. As I said as a young boy growing up I loved seeing things from around the world that I would never have had the opportunity to see. Even today on knowledge network you get to see things, but it’s not the same. It’s not the same.

MC Do you think that, I don’t know, a relationship, a more trusting relationship can be built between Musqueam and the museum?

HG Yes. I truly believe that. Of course we aspire to have our own museum. But we also recognize that it requires a lot of .. I mean, the chiefest part of a museum is the building of the damned building.

MC Yeah.

HG Right? It’s the operating and the maintenance that [would? unclear] kill us. So we would love to have a small museum whereby people would come here and visit, to look at and touch, but at the same time we need that big bank to store those pieces which require the preservation aspects that only large museums have the ability to do.

MC Is there a way that the museum should look at so that it is used more by people from this community, or is it more important that the bank, the .. you know, the people .. they don’t necessarily have to go in .. you know what I mean, it’s not like they need to go and use it, go into a museum, it’s more that the museum is there so that when they wanted things from it it’s there for them.

HG A bit of both, really. A bit of both. I’m just trying to think of specific cases. We have to grow as well, and we’re not growing because of the past history. As an example, I know a person here who has a mask that is two hundred years old. I’m sure its deteriorating. I’m sure that someone in the next generation, the generation after, will come to a decision point of “I can’t use this in our sacred ceremonies anymore, because it’s just too far gone.” So one of two things is going to happen. One, they’re going to put it away and leave it in the corner, which will
rapidly deteriorate, or, two, they'll sell it. Maybe, because they might lose the significance, or they might just say "It's taking up too much space in my house." So if there was that strong communication link between your museum and this community, they could say, well, hey, is there the ability to store it there, to keep it there, for eternity.

MC  Yeah. Well, OK. I don't want to take up any more of your time, I'm just wondering whether .. do you hear of any young people who are interested in learning, you know, these skills of perservation, or working in a museum maybe, but you know, back here, not necessarily at a big institution, museum, or is it still that people have other priorities first, you know, with law, and education, and social services, and ...

HG  Yes, we have people who would be interested. But the fact of life is that we're still micro - micro in the sense of the world, we're still micro in the sense of the only preservation that we see is our own, and we also see that there are no job opportunities. If I was to say to my son, daughter, niece, nephew, or whatever, "Why don't you take museumology?" And he would say "Well, I need a job."

MC  Right.

HG  So that dictates. Law and education, sad to say, our native politicians and our more respected speakers, keep saying, "We need to go into teaching, go into law." And they've missed the boat in the sense that there are many, many other disciplines we should be encouraging our youths to take. Yes, we pay lip service to that, saying "Take museumology, take forestry, take .. " you know, in reality the world is changing rapidly and tourism is taking over. But here museumology would benefit [unclear]. But we will never, never, in my time, have the resources to construct a museum. So. And it's a fairly closed shop to get a job in museums.

MC  Mmhm. Unfortunately.

HG  So I doubt if you'll see a native person inspired to that discipline at this point in time.

MC  Mmhm.
HG  Sad to say. I mean, can you imagine if you had someone like a Leona or a Howard as a colleague. It would enhance your knowledge and others around who respect you, this piece wouldn't be .. you know. You wouldn't have to come out with these kinds of things.

MC  Right, right. Good. Well, thank you very, very much.

HG  I don't know if I've even been any help.

MC  Oh, yeah. I learned a lot.
JOHN MOSES: QUESTIONS AND REPLIES BY CORRESPONDENCE

AFFILIATION: DELAWARE BAND, SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER
CONSERVATOR, [AGE GROUP 40-60 YEARS]

Correspondence received June 16, 1995

Q-1 Could you tell me a little about your nation and family and where you are from?

A-1 I was born in St. Hubert, Quebec (where my father was serving with the RCAF at the time), and subsequently raised in and around Ottawa, Ontario. My family is originally from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory near Brantford, Ontario, which is where both my parents were born and raised, and where the majority of my relatives continue to reside. I am of Mohawk, Tuscarora, French and English ancestry through my mother’s side of the family, and of Munsee-Mahican Delaware, Pequot, German, and Irish ancestry through my father’s side of the family. My Native ancestors were among those elements of the Six Nations Confederacy and their associated bands which, under the leadership of Joseph Brant, allied themselves with the forces of the British Crown at the time of the American Revolution. I am a Status Indian under the Indian Act of Canada, and am a registered member of the Delaware Band of the Six Nations of the Grand River.

Q-2 Could you give me some examples of your interest or involvement in the cultural aspects of your community or in museums?

I am interested in this interview in your thoughts about preservation of objects which are important to your heritage.

A-2 I have maintained a continuing interest in the heritage and traditions of the Six Nations of the Grand River community, and of Native peoples generally, since I was a young child. I first became interested in heritage work in a museum context as a summer high school student when I was 15 and 16. After service in the Canadian military, I went to
college and received a three year diploma of applied arts in museum technology. Academic field placements and subsequent conservation internships both in Canada and abroad eventually led me to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, where I worked for a total of six years as an assistant conservator, working primarily with objects from CMC’s ethnographic collection. Since July, ’94, I have been on the conservation staff of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian in New York City, in the traditional homeland of the Delaware (Lenape) speaking peoples. In addition to my treatment work, I sit on NMAI’s repatriation and traditional care subcommittees, and participate in training programs for Native community museum workers through the Smithsonian’s Office of Museum Programs. While still at CMC I sat on the planning committee for CMC’s Aboriginal Training Program in Museum Practice, and continue to sit as a member of CMC’s First People’s Hall Planning Committee.

Q-3a For example, could you tell me what kinds of objects you would like to see preserved in your family or community for many generations to come?

A-3a I would like to see preserved directly within the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory at large, those objects which bear witness to the political and spiritual heritage of the community as a whole. Within my whole family, as with most families, we possess certain heirloom-type objects (including letters, documents, photographs, etc.) which we consider as treasured personal property, and which of course should remain the responsibility of family members and descendents to preserve and maintain possession of indefinitely.

Q-3b Why is it important to you that these objects are preserved?

A-3b Certain community-owned objects should be preserved as a means of demonstrating continuity and solidarity between successive generations of community members. Privately-owned objects may serve essentially the same function, but across generations within individual or extended families.

Q-3c In your opinion, would these objects best be kept by

   i.) being handed down generation to generation within the family, or
   ii.) being kept in a First Nations cultural centre so that they might be both available to the family and serve the needs of culture and
education for the community and nation as a whole, or
iii.) by having some, at least, of these objects kept in an urban
museum where they serve both an urban First Nations and non-First
nations audience, as well as any people coming in from outside the
urban centre.

A-3c Privately owned objects should be the responsibility of family
members. Community-owned objects, I feel, are best maintained
within the community-operated and administered cultural centres. In
the case of the Grand River community, this is the Museum of the
Woodland Indian, part of the Woodland Indian Cultural and
Educational Centre. This is actually located on Reserve lands in
Brantford, Ont., and is a ninety minute drive beyond Toronto, and is
thus accessible from major urban centres.

Q-4 What about older objects which are now museum collections, and
which are returned to your home area— are they family heritage first
or community heritage first, and would you prefer to see them kept
by a member of the family or cared for in a community facility?

A-4a The most significant group of objects to have recently been repatriated
back to Grand River was a portion of the Confederacy wampum belts.
These are considered to be communal or national property, and are
presently cared for by the Museum of the Woodland Indian on behalf
on the Council of Hereditary Chiefs.

Q-5 Does safekeeping of important pieces of cultural heritage mean that
appropriate members of the family could also see or wear the pieces?

A-5 I would made a distinction between “safekeeping” and “appropriate
keeping“ . Appropriate keeping to me would include provisions made
for the wearing or use of objects at appropriate times by appropriate
members of the community under the appropriate circumstances.

Q-6 How do you feel about the fact that through use or wear the piece
runs the risk of being scratched or broken or damaged in some way?

A-6 Without meaning to sound superficial or trite, I would say that
nothing lasts forever, and that certain objects are not fulfilling their
intended functions within the culture (ie. Native culture) unless they
are made use of in their ritual or ceremonial context. They may be
fulfilling their functions perfectly well within non-Native culture by
being artificially maintained within the sterile environment of a
museum, but obviously this is not their intended function within their originating culture.

Q-7 What kind of wear on a piece would you consider to be “damage”, and what kind is nothing that matters?

A-7 On a very practical level, damage to me would include tears, rips, split seams, pieces completely detached or missing altogether. It does not include flaking paint or shedding fur, worn fabric surfaces, creases, or use/wear marks in and of themselves.

Q-8 If a piece which is, for example, a hundred years old, gets damaged and needs repair, and an appropriate person from the community repairs it—is this situation as acceptable as having the old piece undamaged?

A-8 Damage is to be avoided in the first place, as far as is reasonably possible, and within the limits of an object’s intended use within its originating community. If and when damage does occur, however, having it repaired by a skilled crafts-person from within the community is, to me, an appropriate course of action.

Q-9 Can you give me any guidelines on how much physical risk an object can be put to if you also want to preserve it? (What about an older piece which is already fragile?)

A-9 This is difficult to answer, as of course each object is different and will have its own particular weak points or inherent problems.

Q-10 (a) For a piece which is a hundred years old, and represents that time period, those ancestors, would you prefer to keep it in the condition in which it exists now, which represents what the maker and the people of that time were like, or would it be ok if it was altered by people today or in the future (eg. through appropriate use)?
(b) Would the decision depend on what part was altered – for example, it might be OK to change the rigging on a mask so it could be worn, but not to repaint the mask – you could probably give me a better example.

Q-11 For the same piece which a hundred years old, would you prefer it to remain in the condition in which it exists now, which represents how the maker intended it to look plus the signs of the passing of time and the object’s history – even if this includes some damage – loss of fur or cedar bark, for example, – or would you prefer that it is cleaned and restored to look more like when it was new?
A-11 It is hard to comment in this situation on the passage of time. For some objects that have managed to stay within the originating community, certain losses or damages will have occurred as a result of the object’s intended use. For objects in museums which exhibit losses or damages, I would want to know exactly how they occurred; i.e. they could be the result of improper handling by a museum staff member; they could be the result of an inappropriate attempt at conservation or restoration; or they could be the result of biological activity or chemical contamination, after having been kept for however many years within a substandard museum storage environment. Thus, for example, if an object were repatriated back to its originating community, as a member of that community I would prefer that all traces of its stay in the museum, including losses or damages, be removed, repaired, or compensated for somehow.

Q-12 (a) Would you prefer that the same materials and methods as the original ones are used in the restoration, or would it be fine to use something in use today which works well and looks the same?

A-12a Where the stability of the object allows, I would prefer that the same materials and methods be used in its treatment. As a conservator, however, I of course realize that this is seldom possible, and is contrary to certain ethical constraints by which we are supposed to abide.

(b) Who would be the most appropriate kind of person to do the restoration – e.g. a family member, an artist in the community, the person who knows the rituals, someone who has received training in the preservation of older objects...

A-12b I think that most Native people would recognize that if we’re talking about an object that is maintained in a museum’s collection, then that museum will have its own staff conservator do any necessary treatment. I would add, however, that in the case of a ritual or ceremonial object in a museum collection, many groups would resent the direct intervention of a conservator.

(c) Would it matter to you if you couldn’t tell what was the work of the original maker and what was the work of the restorer?

A-12c I personally would want to be able to tell the difference between the work of the originator and the work of a museum conservator. If your talking about restoration or repair done by a traditional craftsperson from within the community, I feel that becomes a different issue.
Q-13 Are there objects from your heritage which are in museums, but
which, on their return to your community, you would not want to
preserve, but instead would want them to continue a cycle where they
would in the end deteriorate? Please answer yes or no, if it’s
appropriate. I would appreciate an example.

Q-14 (a) People have often considered the following four aspects about
objects worthy of being preserved. I’d like to read them out to you,
and have you tell me which in your opinion is the most important to
preserve, and which is the least important.
  1. the object itself, as a physical creation
  2. the cultural significance of the object
  3. the appearance of an object’s, according to the makers
      intentions
  4. any marks on the object which are indicators of its history

A-14a Preserving 2., cultural significance is, to me, the most important aspect
to preserve. Cultural significance means that knowledge of the
original function or use of objects is maintained within the originating
community or its descendent. The least important is the preservation
of any marks that might indicate the object’s history. Objects can end up
bearing various marks and abrasions from a variety of causes,
including neglect or poor treatment received while languishing in a
museum storage vault. They are indeed indicators of its history, but
not necessarily ones that community members might want to preserve.

(b) (if cultural significance)
How is the cultural significance of objects preserved?
Can this be done in a museum? (What if the museum is located
in/outside the community?)

A-14b In terms of a ritual piece, the cultural significance of an object can be
preserved by facilitating or enabling its appropriate use by appropriate
community members. Non-ritual or utilitarian objects can maintain
their cultural significance by being made available to contemporary
artisans and craftsmen from within the community, as models of
traditional style or technique.

Q-15 Is there any difference in the significance to your culture of older
objects rather than contemporary objects such as those made by
weavers and carvers today? Could you describe briefly the roles
both older and recently-made objects play in maintaining your
cultural traditions?

A-15 I think that chronological age does have some impact upon the way
certain objects are perceived within the community. On a very practical level, I know of potters, for example, who are always very much interested in surveying museum collections for examples of early Iroquoian or Eastern Woodlands pottery, because as craftspeople they are interested in replicating as closely as possible early manufacturing techniques. On a different level, community members appreciate the age of the Confederacy wampum belts, for example, because they realize that some of the belts date from the very formation of the League, and they are a way of connecting the generations across time. That is, they consider the belts in the same way an American, for example, might consider an original copy of the Declaration of Independence or the U. S. Constitution. In terms of contemporary fine art and craft, there are many Six nations artists working today who have created what are considered to be modern masterpieces, in a variety of media – the contemporary Iroquois silverwork of Elwood Green, and the antler & bone sculpting of Stan Hill, for example.

Q-16 In your opinion which is more important regarding, for example, an older mask or an older weaving – to preserve the object intact and keep it from getting damaged so that it can remain as tangible evidence made by one's ancestors, and an inspiration to younger artists – or to use it and possibly wear it away, so that the purpose for which the piece was created is preserved and maintained?

A-16 Referring back to this concept of the cultural significance of an object, as discussed in 14. above, I feel that maintaining cultural significance is better served by making the object available for its intended use, rather than necessarily keeping it under lock and key in a display case or storage vault.

Q-17 (a) If an older object is in fragile condition, could a new piece be used and have the same cultural significance?

A-17a I personally feel that a newly created or commissioned piece can have just as much significance as an older object. If something is created specifically for ritual or ceremonial use, then it possesses that significance inherently in the minds of those who created it.

Q-17 (b) What would you do with the older piece?

A-17b An older piece can be made use of in whatever manner is deemed appropriate by its tribal customs.
Q-18 Which is more important in your opinion concerning the education of your future generations — that they have older objects made by their ancestors around, to be able to appreciate, even if they can’t touch them because the objects are fragile — or to have older objects which can be touched and handled and perhaps used so they can be appreciated in many dimensions, even if this means the possibility that the objects won’t last as long?

A-18 As per 16. above.

Q-19 Are there any guidelines you would like to give the Museum of Anthropology to improve the storage or appropriate care of the collections presently housed there?

A-19 Speaking for a moment as a conservation staff member at NMAI, your institution might find it appropriate to establish a traditional care sub-committee, composed of regular museum staff, and representatives of Native communities or descendant populations represented in your collections.

Q-20 Do you know of anyone who might want to receive training in the methods and principles museums use in the conservation of the collections they house? (If no—would this knowledge be of any use to your community?)

A-20 The Museum of the Woodland Indian in Brantford currently has, I believe, about 6 full-time staff members. I don’t think that they have a conservator, but between their registrar and collection manager, they are able to see to their own preventative conservation needs. While there are very few conservators of native ancestry in Canada right now, I feel its just a matter of time before more of our young people become interested in the field, and receive the necessary training, either through formal training programs, or through internships/apprenticeships.
Correspondence received Sept. 5, 1995

Thank you for your letter of Aug. 10, concerning items #11b and c of your survey.

It would seem to me that if we are discussing the actual use and operation of technological or scientific artifacts in museums of science & technology, or perhaps agriculture or industry, etc., then we are discussing the use of mechanical objects in purely didactic terms; that is, they are presumably being made to operate in situations open to the general public, specifically so that the method of their construction and/or operation might be made known to as many people as possible; i.e. school groups, family groups, etc.

I am assuming that if we next discuss the use of ethnographic objects, we are talking about their use by their originating culture or contemporary descendant population. I suppose in answering your question I automatically thought in terms of either a ceremonial/religious object being made available for use in a specific rite, or perhaps an object of traditional art or craftwork being made available for examination by contemporary Native craftspeople or artisans. In either instance I would think it unlikely that such a gathering would be open to the general public. That is, knowledge of the object would not be made available for public consumption.

It is interesting to note that in many museums technological objects which are accessioned pieces from the collection are frequently made use of for instructional purposes or for other reasons like public relations or fund raising. Situations which immediately come to my mind are things like the printing press at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa, and certain aircraft in the collection of the National Aviation Museum, also in Ottawa. On the other hand, many museum professionals, whether curators or conservators, shudder at the thought of, or reject outright, the notion that perhaps selected ethnographic artifacts might be made available for use or examination by their originating or descendant population.

I feel that in such situations a number of larger issues immediately become involved, including for example (in the case of religious objects) the right of Native peoples to practice their traditional religions in a free and unhindered manner, inasmuch as some Native groups believe that until certain of their sacred objects are released from museum collections, they cannot practice their true religions in their originally intended form. In other words, sacred objects are not interchangeable, and "replacements" or "stand-ins" for objects held by museums are not appropriate.
I hope this answers your question, and again, it has given me the opportunity to organize my own thoughts on some of the issues at hand.

Sincerely,

John
MC  OK. So talking to Juanita Pasco, in her living room, Alert Bay, and will you, first of all, try to forget that you’re talking to me, OK? Please don’t let, as much as you can, anything that, you know, just say the things that you think, not that because I’m a conservator and all of that I want to hear. So ...

JP  Yeah.

MC  OK. So, first of all let me just start .. with just some things about your background, for the benefit of the tape, if you could maybe describe a bit about your family, you know, your affiliation.

JP  Sure. I was born and raised here in Alert Bay, but my mother is from Cape Mudge, across from Campbell River, she’s Weka’yi, and my grandmother was actually Haida, [unclear]. My grandpa Geoffrey was Cape Mudge. And my grandparents lived out in Harbledown [sp?].

MC  Oh. OK.

JP  So the homestead was out in the Strait, from Harbledown Island. But my grandparents lived here after they finished logging and stuff; they moved to Alert Bay. My father was raised here.

MC  OK.

JP  I was raised here. Did you want to know about .. ?

MC  So, I asked you your band, is .. ?

JP  Is Cape Mudge.
MC  Cape Mudge.

JP  Yeah.

MC  And could you tell me about your involvement in the museum, or in other cultural activities that relate to ... 

JP  I started working in the museum in '89. As a receptionist. I just kind of wandered in there, and Divina, who was the registrar at the time, gift shop manager/registrar, asked what I was doing. And I said, "I'm just visiting Andrea." "No, I mean with your life." "Oh. Nothing." I was going to school. And I was going to North Island College part time, kind of hard to stay home, I needed so I started working at the centre as a membership coordinator and receptionist and janitor kind of rolled all into one, and then it moved into secretary/receptionist, and then when I left in 1991, to go back to school, I was the assistant administrator. So but I had always been involved with the collections, because you kind of do everything [unclear] a small ... 

MC  Right. Yeah. And were you .. oh go ahead.

JP  I went away to school for a few years taking university transfer courses, [unclear] doing anything, but I always came back to the Centre, and I always worked in the summer, the four months that I was off from school.

MC  And at the same time were you .. were you going to potlatches, or does that come later on?

JP  That came later on. I went to potlatches with my mom when I was little. I can remember sitting on the dirt floor watching the Hamatsa dancers and the cannibal bird masks, and being really tired, and not understanding what was going on, but still being there. My mom still brought me. I don't know if she brought any of my older brothers and sisters or anything, so .. because I think to this day me and my mom are still the only two who still attend the potlatches.

MC  Mmm.

JP  Or sort of [unclear]. And then I met Andrea Cramner. And when I met her, that's when I started going to potlatches again.
MC  OK. Now, who’s Andrea?

JP  She is Gloria Cramner’s daughter. She would be Bill and [unclear].

MC  Right.

JP  And the return of [unclear] and that’s when I started .. and when I started working at the cultural centre again it sort of renewed my interest in what was going on.

MC  So it .. sort of in the beginning it was like .. the cultural centre right at the beginning was .. it was a job.

JP  It was a job.

MC  Yeah.

JP  And it became more than that.

MC  Yeah. Do you remember the first time you went into a museum, any museum?

JP  I’m sure they took us to the museum here, the Alert Bay Museum when we were little, like in elementary school. But it didn’t leave that much of an impression on me. Other than that, I went to the RBCM. This one was the first cultural centre I was in.

MC  Yeah.

JP  And then after that I guess the first museum would have been the RBCM.

MC  Mmhm.

JP  I found it really disorienting the first time, because it was so .. all the di .. they call them diorama’s or whatever?

MC  Oh, yeah.

JP  They just blew me away, they were just too lifelike and too frozen in
time, kind of, and I found it really disorienting going through the old
town and stuff.

MC Yeah. So it wasn’t a really enjoyable experience then.

JP No. Even I .. I just tried to skip all that and go to the Northwest
Coast stuff, and it still .. it just disoriented me.

MC Yeah.

JP But ...

MC How do you feel about the Northwest Coast stuff?

JP I was pretty much .. I didn’t really think anything of it. I went there to
see it, and I still wasn’t really .. I didn’t think of museums in the
context of how First Nations people are portrayed. I remember a few
masks in particular that really struck me and a few things that I really
liked about it: I liked the old clip they played “In the Land of the
Headhunters”.

MC Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

JP What I really liked about that wasn’t the clip, I liked the song that went
with it. And it’s probably because I heard it, I heard it sung [at the
potlatch? unclear], kind of thing.

MC Right.

JP “Hey, I recognize that!” and it was just one more step in getting more
involved in the cultural centre.

MC Yeah. So that .. and this was after you started working here?

JP Mmhm.

MC Yeah. Great. Yeah. That’s .. it’s interesting, you know, how people
kind of get into their field. Yeah. OK. So let’s talk now a bit about the
preservation of objects which are important to you, you know, your
heritage, and your family too. I’m wondering whether the kinds of
objects that you like to see preserved were in the community for
generations, or within your family. Are they all represented by the objects at the museum, or are there other ones that you’d like to see?

JP I think there are other ones, like transformation masks that we don’t have a lot of .. the one that the Centre does or should have is actually in the British Museum in London.

MC Ah.

JP I think a lot of .. we don’t have a Chilkat blanket in our collection, yet there’s photos of a Chilkat blanket within the pieces that were all taken. (Later clarification: the photo isn’t of the "Potlatch Collection" but it does have a few pieces in it.) So I think there are things out there that we’re never going to get back. But that what we have [unclear].

MC Mmmh.

JP And most of the dances are represented, and a lot of families have ties to most of the dances. I think what I would like to see is more pieces that families can use. I think there’s not enough.

MC Aha.

JP Because a lot of families who have never potlatched before don’t have the [regalia].

MC Right.

JP They can borrow it, but sometimes they don’t know who they can borrow it from, they don’t really know how to go about organizing a dance.

MC Yeah.

JP There’s so many things that they have to know, [unclear] even to ask.

MC Yeah. Are there objects, I guess what comes to mind is jewelry, that people maybe pass down within the family that don’t end up in the Centre?

JP Not that I can think of. I think that there are probably masks and things
out there that are really old, that ... I know one family in particular, W. has some Kutslow [sp?] headresses, and they're over a hundred years old.

MC  Wow.

JP  So those have been passed down, and they probably never will end up in the museum. They probably will just continue. They don't use them all that often. There's a lot of history behind them.

MC  Yeah. Yeah. So these objects that are being, you know, kept or, sort of, in the Centre, or kept through the generations, I'm just wondering if - this is sort of a funny question - but, like, for you personally, why do you think that these objects should be preserved?

JP  I think it's important because of the dances that they go with, the songs that go with them. They still belong to people, they're still part of people's rights and privileges, and maybe those people don't know that, but someday they will, and they'll have to go back. I think if they can see it in a physical sense, it seems more real to them, than to know, well, you know, this dance and this song. But if they see the mask that goes with that, then they're more excited about it, and want to learn more. In general, I think people really like objects. Computer .. computer [unclear], but people really want to work with objects and they want to come to museums to see the pieces, they don't want to see a picture of it.

MC  Mmm. So have you found that in people here in the community, as well as tourists?

JP  I think from people here in the community. When I'm working in the back room they'll come in and they'll kind of pick it up, and no washing the hands, no nothing, just, you know.

MC  Yeah, right.

JP  And I have to tell them that's not how you pick that up. But usually I don't worry about it, they're used to handling it, it's maybe not pieces of gold, but the same regalia they use for a potlatch [unclear].

MC  Yeah.
I figure they have a [unclear].

Yeah. Do you think that the .. is there a difference, like, you know, you talk about the mask being meaningful because the dance is associated with what the masks represent. Is there a difference then between an older object, you know, and a newer object?

I think maybe the only difference, if it has been danced before.

Mmm.

I know some of the objects that are for sale in the gift shop, some of the pieces that are for sale in the gift shop, one of them which has been used in a potlatch is worth more than it would have been if it hadn't.

Right.

And that’s because it has more history. But I think what’s more important are the rights that go along with it. The piece can always be replaced.

And so if you have a piece by somebody famous, like Mungo Martin, do people see that as being more important because it was carved by Mungo, or do they think it’s not as important as this other piece because it’s been danced?

I think people do like older pieces because generally they are a lot nicer. I mean, we have some new, we have a new piece coming in the collection that the artists that come and had a look at and they say it’s great. Even D. said it was a nice piece! Wow! Squeezed a compliment out of him – and, and it’s just because all the, the lines delineating the mouth are carved in [on the native one? unclear] and it’s just really well done. You don’t see work like that nowadays.

Yeah.

And they didn’t have as good a tools yet. And we don’t know who it was carved by. So. But I’d say it was as nice, a real work of art.

Do you think that .. that .. that objects .. say if somebody has
something at home, you know, and were thinking about putting it in the Centre. Do you think that there's a difference? Like, would you encourage them to put it in the Centre or would you think it's just fully as fine if they decide to keep it in, you know, within their family?

JP  I think it's fine if they decide to keep it, because people are quite .. I know quite a few families that are really afraid of their regalia - if they know somebody has the rights to it they'll loan it, and that's really good, whereas, if it's in the Centre, and it's not a gift and they haven't, they haven't quite said: "Well, we'd like other people to use it", then, usually, it's treated as a museum object type of thing. Unless the donor says, "It's for my family or anybody else for use who doesn't have one". In the case that we find out who owns it. But I think it's up to the family. I think it would get a lot more use if it was just within the family because they would still be loaning it out.

MC  Yeah. So do you think the objects that are, are in the Centre that are the older pieces, like the potlatch collection, would you consider it family heritage first or would you consider it community heritage first?

JP  I .. I kind of consider it family heritage. Maybe because there are names tied to the original owners, and stuff, and because there are .. George Hunt did do the documentation for the [unclear] saying who owns it, and it was held by this certain person but it was owned by somebody else and he got all the information down [unclear]. And then I think it is communal because, they're too old to be signed out safely, and now they're there for everybody else to enjoy, even if, for some tourists, it may not mean anything to them, they still appreciate the potlatch collection. Just going into the room, I've had a lot of people comment on the different feeling they get because it's out in the open.

MC  Yeah. Do you think that .. that .. you know, like say the [unclear], a piece, from this area. Do you think that these should have been repatriated back, or, you know, do they serve a purpose being moved to UBC or do they, you know, or would you wait, or, you know, if a family specifically wants them back or, you know, has a right?

JP  I .. I think .. I think they're fine where they are. To me, it's not the same as the pieces that we have here, unless [unclear] is kind of backed into a corner and said: "Well, if you give them up" in the potlatch ban
"then your family won’t go to jail.” Whereas the pieces that UBC has sold .. I mean, maybe pieces that, they’re not sure how, they simply just got a hold of them, but they did belong to them, and .. but I think it’s good to have them there, because they get wider range [unclear] and more people learn about it.

MC Some of the pieces you have in the collection, the loans, that you loan for use, like they aren’t all really contemporary. I think you’ve got some by, that belong to Agnes Cramner. Are those also part of ones that get loaned out?

JP Agnes has her personal storage there.

MC Oh, OK.

JP And she has some really nice old pieces there. She has – I forget now.

MC OK. So, those ones aren’t loaned out to anybody?

JP No. Agnes .. Gloria will phone me and let me know about consignment pieces. We needed to set up a system to keep better control of the things that were there and some families have stipulated that three of the children have to sign it.

MC So they get three signatures before .. ?

JP Three signatures, yeah, before you can really get going. It’s kind of hard to track down all those three signatures, but if I .. I’m not really strict about it. If I know what the piece is going to be used for, then I .. At a potlatch where all the sisters are, then I just use the one signature and they’ll be satisfied. Sometimes the rules get broken, but generally they’re quite workable. And it’s a hassle, but that’s the way it is.

MC Do .. do these pieces ever come back with, you know, with cracks or any kind of damage?

JP That hasn’t happened yet. Probably because, once they’re used, they’re put back away and then they’re brought back to the Centre as soon as [unclear] soon after, like maybe a day after or sometimes two days after the potlatch.
MC  So, do you go, like, do you tell the people: "Folks, because it’s been used, you have to put it back in its box right away." or do you .. ?

JP  No, no. That’s just the way things have always been done. We were told that originally potlatch pieces weren’t even on display, and so when people used the regalia, they put it away, as soon as they were done with it. Like, personal blankets, they don’t display them in their homes. They have them folded up and put away and bring them out and they put them right back away. It’s just the way they’ve always done it.

MC  Yeah.

JP  They invented [unclear]. This is how you do it.

MC  Do you think .. do you know whether people when the potlatch, when the potlatch collection was returned – I don’t think, you know, right at the beginning, it maybe wasn’t .. at the beginning. But do people want to use it, do you think people understood why these objects couldn’t be used, or did they think the whole, you know, ‘Oh, this is a real museum approach?’ was .. ?

JP  I think they were happy to see the pieces come home. But I don’t .. I don’t think anyone .. I think they all pretty much understood that, you know, you shouldn’t be using them because they are so fragile. But at the same time, they, you know: “Well, we’ve been told the pieces belong to us, why can’t we use them?” I think we’ve .. we’ve changed quite a bit. I don’t know .. I wasn’t there for the opening ceremonies, but I know .. with the stuff we had transferred from Cape Mudge, the Handy’s family’s stuff – it was displayed at a potlatch. The family weren’t happy with the way it was at the Cape, they wanted it displayed, so it was kind of a change. I mean, from things not being on display, they wanted the pieces displayed and the Cape hadn’t put them up, so they transferred them over to U’mista and when they did that, I packed it all up the weekend the family had a potlatch. They came in, brought it up to the big house and then brought it right back.

MC  Oh, great.

JP  And they displayed it. They didn’t use them to dance them but they brought them out to show everybody that had come [unclear].
OK. So, that means like holding them and walking around with them?

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I brought them in, and told them how to just a little: “This is how you do it, you know, you use two hands. Don’t hold two objects” – and just went over the basics with them. They were all excited. They wanted to use the little white gloves but – but I didn’t have any!

That’s kind of neat! In a way, it shows that they are important pieces in a way – you know, that they need, that they’re – that: “These are ones we handle very differently, and carefully.”

Yeah. And some of them, obviously, were really fragile, they had to. But, they .. all the cedar bark was just really flopping around all the time, so we had to find poles to carry them, and stuff.

Oh, great.

Yeah. Things that were really hard, I tried to make little mounts for them to take them so they wouldn’t have to handle them. But they were .. they were quite good. I never bothered with packing instructions, ’cause I thought: “They’re going to be in such a hurry at this potlatch, it’s best they just get them back into the boxes and get them back to the Centre. Worry about that after.” So, they did quite well.

So, are these pieces going to go on permanent display?

Yes. We have the money now [unclear]. They’ll be .. they have to widen the display area. I don’t know how that’s going to work. Aesthetically, though, because when we talked about the expansion, we talked about exhibit space and doing more [unclear]. The only shortage in exhibit space is the potlatch collection. We don’t know how it’s going to look when we throw thirty-one more pieces in there; plus there’s still twenty-four in England. So, we don’t know what it’s going to look like. There was some suggestions of putting them .. hanging them on the wall and stuff, but I don’t think that’s a display that they want conveyed, that their art to be [unclear].

Right.
JP  They want [unclear].

MC  Now, if one of them came back, you know, with a bit of damage – say, there was a crack or something like that, came back from the potlatch, do you think, would it matter to the owners, I mean, the family? Like, would they consider it significant, or would they consider it as, well, just you know, it gets used and stuff .. ?

JP  I think that's probably [unclear] things happen. People are pretty easy going. We did have a piece that was stolen, so. So I think the family was quite upset, unhappy with [unclear].

MC  Yeah.

JP  I think everyone was really upset, I mean, related to that family or not. But that was one of the risks that we took [unclear]. We were living on borrowed time. A few years later and something finally got taken.

MC  Have you had anything news, any .. ?

JP  Nothing, no. I have, I have .. good feelings that it will show up somewhere. They'll show up [unclear] and it'll [unclear].

MC  Yeah. OK. If one of the older pieces got damaged, say some paint chipped, or wood cracked, well, say some paint chipped. Would you like, would you [unclear] because already there are paint chips. Or would you, you know, ask [unclear] to say: "Well, I would do something" [unclear] or like Doug or something, who is an artist, would do something?

JP  I think I would probably just leave it [unclear]. We have a few pieces that – after sitting on those mounts for fifteen years – they're coming apart and I may just take a needle and thread and try to fix them, sew them together myself. It's because they're joined with cedar bark and the cedar bark is breaking down and so it needs a different mount that's going to support the cedar bark as well because the cedar bark's sort of, taking all the weight at the front and the [unclear] of the headress. And I think I need new [unclear] but I haven't got around to that. And I think change the mount definitely, which I'm lucky, because [unclear] is coming up to do the other pieces. I can get him to do this one. And I
think the way the pieces are mounted now [unclear] he sewed a [unclear]. And I can’t believe it. Some of them are just like, wow, how did he get this in here? He, he used just little dowels [unclear] and I think that maybe, the dowels probably shrunk when they were, when they dried out, so that they were [unclear] took the headdress, and the frontlets, were able to just haul them off and out because the dowels probably aren’t as tight as they used to be [unclear]. But we’ve put some masks back on [unclear] and he uses these things with nails that are in the back to support them [unclear] ingenious!

MC Yeah, really! So, can you, can you give me any guidelines on how much physical risk is acceptable, you know, for an object, if it’s going to be .. it’s going to be used, like, is there a [unclear]?

JP I think .. like, if it was an older piece that was going to be used – I know they .. they don’t let people use them, but, for dances, [unclear] they did let the family show them at the potlatch and that, that’s pretty [unclear]. But I think if a family were really bent on using the piece, then we’d have to [unclear].

MC So, then, part of your job is to tell them about the risks. But, then, are you saying, that because it’s family heritage and these pieces are owned without the rights, therefore it’s their decision?

JP No, it’s still U’mista’s decision. The Board still has final say on whether a piece [unclear].

MC OK. So all requests go through the Board. Yeah.

JP Which is good.

MC Yes! No, that’s good actually. It’s really good, yeah. So that it’s not, it doesn’t come down on you or anything. It’s – so it’s a bigger group making a decision.

JP Yeah. And they’re .. they’re deciding if it’s appropriate [unclear].

MC So, do you, sort of, do a presentation to the Board and say: “Look, this piece, you know, is very fragile so I would recommend this .. ” or “This piece is very solid, so .. ”
JP  I have, I have .. for the [unclear] or for the pieces that came back from New York. There are a few in particular that aren’t very [unclear] One of the wool blankets, that I don’t think can handle dust or being [unclear] and the other is a full peace dance [?] frontlet with the ermine skin and I’m kind of worried about that. I’m thinking of bagging it just to protect it because, if we do get an insect infestation, it’s a prime target. It’s just nice, dried [unclear] ermine skin [unclear]. It’s complete, it’s .. the headdress is [unclear] – everything is in really good shape but it’s very fragile and I recommended to the Board that they not be displayed. I may go back to them and say, you know: “When we get the pieces up, we can put these out for maybe two or three weeks. And then put them back again, put them back in storage again” And just so people can see them. I’ve been hauling people into the back and showing them, who want to see, but ..

MC  Yeah. Well, that’s what the Tate Gallery used to do with their Turner collection of paintings, was that they would bring them out one month a year because, they, they were fragile and [unclear] new gallery and special lighting and everything. And it became a big event. People would really look forward to December because that’s the month that they would be able to see them.

JP  Yeah. So that’s an idea. [unclear]. Actually, it’s [unclear], yeah. I think that’s where, I’m sure that’s where I got that idea [unclear] just wait for a little while.

MC  Yeah. Well, yeah. It’s a good way to balance out that [unclear].

JP  Yeah, Because I know people are [unclear] and, with it being open, you know, it’s just [unclear] it couldn’t survive out there. It’s just too tempting. I know people will be touching it and hugging it.

MC  I asked you a bit before about the kinds of [unclear] objects [unclear]. I’m wondering whether something that’s altered for use, like, say, the rigging has to be changed, or something like that. Is there also sort of a continuum where, some alterations are acceptable, some are less acceptable?

JP  I think .. they’re .. they’re pretty good about altering things. I think they, they work around what’s there and they’ll make their own and have it and then take it off after. But they wouldn’t drill holes and
[unclear] or anything, they’re all – the dancers that dance are, at least the usual dancers [unclear]. So they’re .. they .. they understand that if pieces are old you can’t treat them [unclear], because they’re not going to stand up to everything. You can’t change it just because it doesn’t work for you. So they’re really good at adapting things. [unclear].

MC Now with something like a totem pole, you know, sometimes it gets repainted. Is there any .. well, do people say: “Well, why don’t we do that with this old mask? It’s really, you know [unclear].”

JP Doug thinks that. He’s dying to get at that terrible [unclear] pole, it’s got a little bit of woodrot – a lot of woodrot on the bottom that has to be dug out, and [unclear]. I cringe when I think of it. And there are other pieces that you could look at, you know, one of our totem poles in the big house is cracking, and it’s a support for the silverpainting [?] [unclear], bolting it, and keeping it together. But I don’t know if the crack’s going to get bigger.

MC Yeah. Do you think that the old pieces, whether it’s a pole or a mask, do you think it’s preferable to keep the piece in the condition in which it is now, you know, because it’s as close as it was to the original [unclear] had this mark, and the passage of time, or do you think that, you know, refurbishing it, so it looks .. like, it looks ...

JP [unclear]?

MC Yeah.

JP I kind of like the marks of time, but I think that’s me. I know the elders, if something’s in real bad shape, they don’t show it like that.

MC Right.

JP They were never shown [in? unclear] bad shape. But I kind of like that way better. But if they are for potlatches then they try to make them look good. When Roy had his potlatch in ‘90, [unclear] his nephew Kevin. And he was painting the “Undersea Kingdom”?

MC Oh, yeah.

JP Masks that Agnes owns for the potlatch. And these were done by Doug
in 1970, so they would [unclear]. And they’ve just repainted them because they wanted to show them.

MC  Doug didn’t repaint them?


MC  Did he want to repaint them, it just didn’t look like he was .. ?

JP  I think he probably didn’t want to. That was about the time Doug took the summer off, and I think they had a meeting; they called the (tribal members?) [unclear] potlatch, somebody [unclear] could get it.

MC  Yeah.

JP  An old and dirty [unclear]. He didn’t repaint all of them. [unclear].

MC  Mmhm. Do you have, like, a certain committee of elders, as some acting advisors, or is it just basically people who you know who come in, and you know .. ? Is it sort of a formal arrangement, or less formal, or .. ?

JP  I’d say it’s less formal. For the storage at the Centre, I think, we keep the masks together, the beaks together. Because Agnes told me they should be clasped when they’re not being danced. And I .. for the personal storage, people’s stuff, because even though we’re in the back, it still manages to get really dusty.

MC  Yeah.

JP  So I try and keep that under cover, and curtained, and .. I try and keep them the same; if there’s stuff that’s [unclear] I tie our masks together. Nobody’s mentioned it to me, and people who have I’ve explained what Agnes told me.

MC  Right. Now, what about the decision about the whistles? To take them ...

JP  Off display?

MC  Off display. Now, is that elders, or one or two people in particular who
thought [unclear]?

JP I think it was elders who advised Gloria that the whistles aren't put on display. They've never been on .. well, actually they put them on display, but I think that person got in trouble for it. They only did it for one day, but still, it shouldn't have been done in the eyes of most people. Their reasoning was these whistles had actually been used in potlatches, so they shouldn't be on display, since they're never seen during potlatch. But we have a really big collection. And they're two toned, and three tones, and [unclear]. And nobody ever gets to see them, but that's just the way it is.

MC If you walk into a storeroom, do you see them, or ..

JP I boxed them, wrapped them in tissue paper.

MC Yeah.

JP The numbers were kind of small and wearing off, so we had to renumber them, and check that they were all there, and check the numbers and we did an inventory of it, and then we made boxes and wrapped them in tissue and numbered the tissues and with that we wrapped it [unclear], labelled the boxes and put them on the shelves, the very back shelves. On the very bottom shelves.

MC So is that something, I mean, that you .. you brought the question up, or came .. sort of just [came from? unclear] Gloria?

JP I think I asked somebody once, why we didn’t display the whistles, because they were taking up .. they were taking up shelves, a lot of shelves, storage, and Gloria said that we don’t display them [unclear].

MC Now, what about us? Did you write Ann and tell her about this, or what do you think’s going to happen when [unclear].

JP I asked Gloria about that, and she said that those ones it was OK, because those families had sold those ones. They were .. and even .. and she said they were .. some of them probably needed .. may not have been used in potlatches.

MC Yeah. Because we used to [unclear].
I know there’s some [unclear] that are not supposed to be [unclear] because it disturbs the spirit or something. Because the [unclear] the dancer. I don’t know why you would, but … but that was just one of the things that, [unclear] or something.

Right.

Because they’re the ones that [unclear].

So when you said you [unclear] like, that’s whistle, just the whistle, or [unclear]?

Yeah, just whistle ordinarily, yeah.

OK. If a piece is repaired, do you think that … would you prefer to see it repaired with the same kind of materials that it was made with originally, or with sort of materials that look similar, like, maybe the old paint as well as well as the traditional paint, [unclear] paint anyway. And you know, something like [unclear] paint, so it looks similar.

I think that it looks OK. [unclear] make your own paint, or …

Right.

Some people … I know there are artists who like to try it, and so … and as far as the pieces go, I think it’s fine to use different materials.

Do you think that … is there an importance to being able to tell what is part of the old piece, and what is the newer restoration?

I think so. Just because if it’s done so well [unclear] and the documentation [unclear]. After coming back to the Centre and seeing the documentation, I know it may not always be where you think it’s going to be, so I think it’s important not to make it so perfect that you can’t tell.

Yeah. Do you think, like, before you worked in the museum, do you think you would have said the same answer? Or do you think that sort of came out of it?
I think that’s something that came out of conservation and from having to straighten out all the documentation!

Yeah, right! Yeah. So do you think there is a role for conservation, you know, in a collection like yours, or what parts of conservation would you keep of the ideas of conservation, and what parts of the ideas of conservation would you say isn’t appropriate for [unclear]?

I think handling it, is a good thing. But we’ve been pretty lax here, I mean, people are always coming in the back to see what we’re doing and stuff, and I .. actually now they’re wearing gloves, which is nice, because most of them won’t wash their hands, so if I can get them to squeeze on a pair of gloves, and that’s good. I think in general conservation’s a good thing. We do want people [unclear]. I don’t particularly like dusting, but we dusted the entire collection, and it was hard, because the pieces are on the mounts, so we had to go with our screwdriver and take off the whole mount, and then put them on a platform we made, and screw them down, and then dust them there, depending on where the pieces were.

Yeah.

But I think in general the good housekeeping and stuff, but it’s pretty hard with no lab, and no place to do anything.

Yeah.

We had a freezer, which we found out wasn’t any good to me, because it didn’t go low enough [unclear]. I did actually find a dial and I adjusted it, but it didn’t go, it wasn’t cold enough, so there goes that idea, so we donated it to the Big House.

Yeah. Good idea.

But we haven’t had any problems and we’re lucky that we haven’t. There was a little scare at first [unclear] potlatch collection, and there’s two mounts in there that have .. with holes in them, but I went back and checked the old condition reports, and they were there.

OK. [unclear].
JP  So I'm really glad, actually, that we really do have all those old condition reports, because they really help me for checking to see if something's old or [unclear].

MC  Yeah. Great. Well, I'm glad it's useful.

JP  Yeah.

MC  In .. OK. If it's a pole, you know, that needs some restoration, well, I don't know, you could tell me [unclear] onto the pole or mask, like, who's the most appropriate person to ask? Would it be somebody, you know, like Doug, who's an artist, or would it be CCI?

JP  I think for our people [unclear]. If he did the pieces specially. But my guess is .. the Charlie James piece that we [unclear]. But Doug has said that the CCI can match up things like you wouldn't believe. "They'll make that look just as old as that." So Doug was really impressed with their paint matching and [unclear].

MC  Great, great.

JP  But his approach is a lot different.

MC  Yeah. I guess we were talking about whether Doug would be best, or ..

JP  Yeah, I think they ..

MC  Are there any objects where there need to be certain rituals done, if something is going to be refurbished, [unclear], any particular songs, or particular .. ?

JP  Not that I know of. There could be, but I don't know a lot about that. There may be, but Agnes would know.

MC  Yeah. Are there objects which people have said shouldn't be preserved, they should be allowed to complete their natural cycle?

JP  Mmhm. [unclear]. Definitely [unclear]. I know they had a study done with graveyard poles. [unclear] [unclear] and everything. But the elders stopped it and [unclear] they shouldn't be preserved. That's what the poles were intended to be. They also .. before [unclear], early in the
seventies they thought that .. for a summer job they had a bunch of students painting the poles, and the elders saw that too, and they said they shouldn’t do that [unclear]. And that’s something a lot of people have commented on, is why don’t they fix up those poles in the graveyard, they look terrible. But they don’t [unclear]. And we’ve had poles donated to the Centre [unclear].

MC [unclear]

JP That has gone back to the earth! Except for the cement and other parts. They did manage to salvage the eagle – I think its an eagle. They gave it to Tom Brown, family of the original carver.

MC OK.

JP So they gave it to him. And he’s got it mounted up by his house, it’s kind of cool.

MC Yeah.

JP Yeah.

MC Great.

JP He gave a little piece to Aaron to take back to the States so that .. he went and got a piece off of it to bring back to his Dad. Because I guess his Dad grew up in Chicago, so [unclear] so he told Aaron, if you get stopped at the border with that we will keep them all. I think it had a little bug problem too.

MC Mmm. Mmhmm. Well, what about .. the poles in the graveyard .. the grass is cut in the graveyard, there is maintenance in a sense in the graveyard but so is it just inappropriate to maintain the poles, like, if one of them fell over, it would just fall and be left. Is that right?

JP I think so.

MC Yeah.

JP But that hasn’t happened yet. And they did put two more new poles in there, and then [unclear]. There’s a new pole right [unclear]. Although
they actually had the pole up, but they just unveiled it.

MC So would you say that, like, would the elders have authority to say that certain objects in the museum should be allowed to deteriorate? Or do you think that that’s really U’mista’s decision.

JP I think that’s U’mista’s decision. The Board would probably keep that under consideration. [unclear] And they make the [unclear] [unclear] [unclear].

MC So if the object is in the museum, then that’s really the responsibility of the museum to give it the proper care. But if it’s a family that has deposited their objects with the museum do you work out sort of individual arrangements with the family, or ..

JP We try [unclear] and now we’re finally .. [unclear] going to start the masks [unclear] the widow of the donator has not agreed with [unclear]

MC Ah.

JP She’s never complained before [unclear] own family [unclear] now that’s complained. And I asked Gloria about the mask, and she said it’s an outright gift. Bill says he’s part of that family, so he can borrow the mask whenever he wants.

JP So I was just: “Don’t get me in the middle of this, because I can see it exploding.” I think it was just [unclear] because they’ve been loaning it out for years [unclear].

MC OK.

JP So. And the Tony Hunt mask [unclear]. It was on the original condition report that they were a gift from the Hunt family, who didn’t have any masks [unclear] use them. And then they asked for a .. they were on loan, I think, they were on loan. And then they asked for a tax receipt. And so Gloria wrote them and said if it’s an outright gift, if so, then we can give you a tax receipt.” And they didn’t say anything. If its’ not a loan, then sorry. So in the end it was an outright gift. And [unclear].

MC OK. Conservators have these four aspects of the objects that they
consider they’re preserving. So, the integrity of the object, the physical integrity, the aesthetic integrity, the historic integrity, and the conceptual integrity. Do you think that there’s one that’s more important – if you’re trying to balance them all out – is there one that’s more important than the others?

JP I would think that what the objects mean [unclear] would seem to take precedence. Because you can always carve another piece, but it’s those songs [unclear].

MC So, does the museum have another role in preserving the songs, or dances? Or is that really .. that part belongs .. that’s outside in the community, outside the museum that it gets preserved?

JP It has been outside in the community, but for years the [unclear] a group of people having these singing classes just in their home. And they started in the Centre, and then they moved to [unclear]. But now they started it back up again, at the Centre. There’s one from seven to nine up on the [unclear].

MC OK.

JP In 1991 they did their own street project which was mainly getting songs from one of the elders [unclear]. They got about 283 songs, 31 tapes in all. And he could tell who owned the songs, where it came from, and who wrote it. But these are important, and we’re having a lot more requests for those tapes now. We get most of our requests now, for information, rather than [unclear] permission [unclear] [unclear]. So I can see the Centre getting more information about ...

MC Yeah. So what about a museum like MOA then? Is there anything that we can do to assist the cultural .. you know, preserving the cultural integrity of a piece, or, you know, again, because we’re sort of an urban museum that’s not staffed, you know [unclear] it’s not staffed by people of the culture, so ...

JP Right. Well, I don’t know. When I was there, I was looking through the [unclear] archives, and the letters, those I found were [unclear] because people could see where the pieces came from.

MC Aha.
They could see the actual correspondence.

Oh, yes.

And that was something I felt was really .. these old people talking about [unclear] talking about shipping these pieces down to Audrey Hawthorne on the steam truck [unclear]. I felt that was really neat. And just kind of put them into context. These actually came from the person who made them.

Right.

I thought that was really neat.

Yeah.

[unclear]

Yeah, no, it’s true.

But it really .. it really .. and I was just looking at whistles and things and the correspondence. I thought it was really neat.

Yeah. Yeah, because it does. It relates them then to real people.

Yeah. [unclear].

Yeah. And the way, you know, a lot of museums have quotes now instead of a label form a curator, it’s often a direct quotation from somebody: like the letters are a direct quotation from the person who wrote them.

Yeah.

That same thing, that immediacy. OK, we talked about contemporary objects and older objects because, I guess, you know, like, if your museum started to collect, would you collect contemporary objects? Would there be any use to collecting them if they weren’t being used? Like, say for example there’s a particular .. like, say there’s something that isn’t represented at this point in the collection, would you go out
and say, look, we need a [unclear] mask, you know, just so people could see.

JP  We haven’t been. [unclear]. But the new stuff might get [unclear] so they can sign it out.

MC  Yeah.

JP  Because it’s in good shape now and it can be used. That they would be [unclear] good shape [unclear]. And also, if they potlatched it would be hard to follow, because they don’t know who did a lot of the potlatch collection because they were never signed. So, if they did [unclear] they get a lot [unclear]. [unclear] get gifts, we don’t [unclear].

MC  Mmm. Yeah. Wanted to get something in particular. If you had a budget do you think you would say, want to aquire deliberately from certain artists, of, you know, have certain people you know, that have ...

JP  I think it would be nice if we had a budget. We don’t have any of Tom’s work, or Beau Dick’s ...

MC  Really.

JP  Yeah. And these are artists that are contemporary, they actually [unclear] live in [unclear]. Even women [unclear], think the newest contemporary stuff is [unclear] baskets made by [unclear] we bought [unclear]. Even Donna’s Chilcotin [?] earrings [unclear] because these are people that are from the community, made these things, know who the artists are [unclear].

MC  Yeah. Yeah.

JP  [unclear] and you can record so much from [unclear].

MC  Right, right. Are there things .. I mean, we talked about the whistles and things that are kept private, in a sense. Are there things also that, you know, if you have a piece that you would document, but you would say alright, there’s a song associated with it, but we really don’t have the right to have the song sort of in the archives, or .. ?
JP We .. I .. Not really. The pieces that we have, a lot of the information was lost, but if we do have a piece then we have the .. you know [unclear] the policy for dubbing tapes, and [unclear] they do show that they’re related, the person who owns that song, or their family owns that song, then they can have a [unclear]. It’s important that they can .. to show us. They actually have the right [unclear] song .

MC How do you balance off [unclear] questions, how do you balance off the question of educating young people, you know, and having the objects .. like what I hear is you know, kids need to touch things, that’s how they appreciate them. How do you balance that off, like, for the older objects, but preserving the objects?

JP I think .. what they’re doing now in some preschools is to have .. they have [unclear] with blankets on it, and kids wore the blankets every day, and they got worn and worn, and now [unclear] and they treat them a lot better. So they don’t use their masks a lot then either. And they [unclear].

MC Mmmm.

JP So it’s not something they’re doing every day; they’re still doing the songs, and learning how to sing the songs, and doing the dances, but they don’t get to use the masks every day [unclear] potlatches [unclear] ceremony.

MC Right.

JP [unclear]. I think that approach has worked a lot better in the past -they put a blanket and then not every child .. and they were never folded up, and now they fold them [unclear] a lot better.

MC Yeah. Oh, neat. Good psychology.

JP Yeah. That works quite well.

MC The one point you mentioned, you know, a new piece can always be carved, will the new piece have the same cultural significance as the older piece?

JP I don’t know. I wouldn’t see why not if it [unclear]. It may have been
that the person who carved it did intentionally carve it for the potlatch and afterwards had this mask that [unclear]. I think they would be just as significant [unclear] history of the mask. They had been there, and had experienced it.

MC Yeah. Right.

JP [unclear].

MC Yeah. What about the question of conservation being scientific? And a lot of people say, "OK, those are western values. They don't really have a place for objects that aren't heritage." Is there anything .. ?

JP I don't know, because I think they practically [unclear]. I mean, they were .. I was told that pieces were kept in these sort of boxes, and they were only brought out for potlatches and then they were put away. So they looked after their pieces in their own way and they weren't out [unclear].

MC Right.

JP I think they .. and then they did it [unclear].

MC Yeah. But if you say, oh, that there was an old piece where the wood was .. had gone soft, you decide to consolidate it with a twentieth century chemical, plastic, whatever, I mean, would people object to that on an old piece, would they say, "Oh, it's not appropriate."?

JP I think they might. But I think some people also might say, "Well, it's that or [unclear] forever."

MC Yeah.

JP So they would really have to think about what they wanted, before. I think some people might object to .. just as a stance, and then [unclear] it's old and that's not the way we do ...

MC Right.

JP But other people will evaluate more closely, and if you don't then you either have to alter the piece and get that wood out, or [unclear].
Do you think the people might object to, you know, that would take a slightly different stance, would they be young people, like, would they sort of be young political hotshots kind of people, or would they be old people who are very traditional people, or .. ?

I think it could be both. It seems to me. Because [unclear] the old people. But then there's the younger people who don't see the point in [unclear].

Do people object .. do you think there's objections to sort of museum style things that you do, or, you know, that the people .. ?

I think they object to the [unclear]. Even for signing out their family [unclear]. [unclear]

Yeah.

We've loaned pieces out, and other artists at the time have said, "Well, how come we get to borrow [unclear]? And not because they had special privileges, they wrote a letter and asked, and it was approved. And they're not .. they just don't understand that [unclear]. Go through the right channels and you get what you want.

Right, right.

But I think it was more the person who used it [unclear].

What about young people, you know, who were [unclear]? Do you find, are people showing interest in museum work, do they say, "Oh, this is a job I'd like to be trained for. This is something I'd like to do with my life."

I think a lot of people don't know what it is that we do. And even my family don't know for sure what it is entirely what I do. But some people [unclear] being all by yourself.

Yeah, yeah.

And there's other people, that .. Gordon [unclear] practically, but I think there are .. with the culture, I wouldn't say with the pieces, but
they’re interested in the culture [unclear].

MC Yeah.

JP And they think museum people are [unclear]. In the Cultural Centre [unclear] works a lot more than I do, so it’s just what I [unclear].

MC Right. Do you think .. like, I heard that because, you know, Gloria was such a .. so instrumental in the Centre that there are also people that don’t like the Centre because you know, if they don’t like Gloria, they don’t like the Centre, kind of thing. I mean, how is .. is that still .. ?

JP I’ve had that. I went to Cape Mudge to look at the storage there, and the whole time they just badmouthed C. Well, it’s not what I came here for. I came here to look at your storage.

MC Yeah, yeah.

JP And it was hard to talk to them because they kept going back to the same thing, they couldn’t see past it, but Gloria’s not there any more, we’re doing different things, we’re working on some of the same things, they still see it, because it’s in Alert Bay as [unclear].

MC Yeah.

JP We’re really trying to change that, and it’s hard. People complain because we don’t do enough things for the outlying villages, yet we don’t have a big enough budget to do all these activities [unclear].

MC Right. You know, that’s something, actually, not that MAP has a lot of money, but they would really support an application to do things like that because they did have, you know, a section there, of projects initiated by First Nations cultural centres, so that might be a source. Like Tara Douglas who would tell us everything, is no longer at MAP, but ...

JP Yeah, that’s right.

MC [unclear] persons there [unclear] but probably get somebody at the time to write the grant you know, you could ...
JP   Yeah, I should mention that to [unclear].

MC   Yeah. So do you think the museum is integrated into the community a lot do you think? Or somewhat? Or not really, it’s more for the tourists?

JP   I’d say somewhat. More than it was. The singing and dancing classes we have more people coming out.

MC   Yeah.

JP   [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]. I think that they try really hard to get [unclear] going . . . like it’s not for them. Or the exhibits don’t change, [unclear]. Slowly people are starting to realize that we do other things here.

MC   Mmhm. Do you think people [unclear] because they just don’t like museums?

JP   I think that may be it. I can see [unclear] leave town.

MC   Right. Well, I mean, it’s funny. In a certain sense, MOA, we get the people, you know, we only get our local community of Vancouver when they have out of town guests that they want to bring to the museum.

JP   Yeah.

MC   You know, it’s the same thing. We just have a bigger pool of people to draw from. So . . .[unclear] But it is interesting. The community comes for the activities, I guess, where the tourists come for the objects because they haven’t seen them before, whereas the people in the community have seen the objects before.

JP   Yeah. You guys get anything new down there? We get that question all the time.

MC   Right, right.

JP   They’re starting to realize that we are changing [unclear] do a lot of stuff out [unclear].
MC  Mhm. Well, like, when .. say, when "Eulachon" was here. Did that bring people in, or did they not .. ?

JP  No. My sister's family came, and we had about an average [unclear] of people. Not that they don't serve wine and cheese [unclear] I think that cut down the attendance. But it was pretty good. The people who did [unclear].

MC  Yeah. Did people .. ?

JP  Well, they had to lift the crates.

MC  Yeah, I bet! It's one of those things .. it's one of the interesting things about it is they've [unclear] heavy crate. Did people think it was kind of funny to have an exhibit about Oolichan? Or, you know, did they .. ?

JP  I think the people who did see it really liked it. The tourists loved it. And they had no idea until they ...

MC  Yeah.

JP  But even the locals. I mean, I liked it. I really enjoyed it.

MC  Yeah, yeah.

JP  I think the people that did come [unclear].

MC  [unclear]. OK. I think that's the last of the questions, and I guess .. there's one other thing, which is: are there any recommendations that you want to give MOA.

JP  With regards to repatriation, or any .. ?

MC  Anything concerning objects that we might have from this area, whether, you know, maybe it's repatriation, maybe storage, maybe care, or anything you think would ...

JP  Nothing I can think of right now.

MC  I'll bring the tape recorder tomorrow night, too.
JP  I’ll think about it.

MC  Yeah, yeah. No, seriously, because I might as well take these things back.

JP  Yeah, I can’t think of anything.

MC  Great. Sounds like a duck. Poor guy.

JP  Yeah, I’ll have to think about that. I’m sure there’s something I can think of.

MC  Yeah. OK. I might even bring along some more questions.

JP  OK.

MC  Yeah. If there’s anything else, if there’s anything else about sort of museum style conservation, you know, the way we do it, and what’s important to people here, you know, if there’s anything else you want to say about that, you know, that’s great. Alright. Thank, thank you Juanita, that’s great.
'SIMOIGIT HAGBEGWATXW A.K.A. CHIEF KEN HARRIS

AFFILIATION: KEEPER OF THE CLAN TOTEM FOR THE 'GISGAHAAST CLAN, GITKSAN
ELDER-IN-RESIDENCE, UNITED NATIVE NATIONS, AND RESIDENT ELDER, INSTITUTE OF INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENT [AGE GROUP 60-80 YEARS]

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN THIS AUTHOR'S HOME, NOV. 24, 1995, VANCOUVER

These quotations taken from the longer interview have been clarified by Chief Harris. The titles are this author's and refer to subject areas of the dissertation.

Sacred/Sensitive Objects: sacred, private

KH You've heard people say we don't discuss these things in public, we discuss them behind closed doors, and only our close relatives are here to learn from us. They were very determined that nobody else would learn the culture, and if they use these things in the Feast Hall, they'd put them away until the next time. Not because there was some secret about it, but because they don't want it laying around, because I think—well, we have the same fear that a young thing will go "Oh, boy, what's this?"
... And that's the only thing, that's the only thing. But there is no such thing as secret societies.

MC ... Or anything with, you know, women are on their time of the moon they shouldn't handle this, or they shouldn't see this kind of thing, or you know, somebody's uninitiated, or [unclear]?

KH That only has something to do with hunting, because our people
believe the animal has a way of smelling people, so you go through this ritual of washing yourself, fasting yourself before you go hunting, so you don’t ... (The taboo is related to the time of the moon)... [the hunted animal] associates your smell with the person who is menstruating because if the animal can smell things a mile away, that's the person he’s going to smell. (An example -- if one brushes against a bitch in heat, other dogs pick up the scent.)

... So. It's called laysatuxk [unclear] -- laysatuxk doesn’t mean that it is taboo, it means that it would be unclean.

... So, no, I don’t think so. I don’t think so. Not the objects (not used for hunting), but when it comes to hunting and handling hunting equipment, things like that that would carry the odour .. ..

MC And so it wouldn’t .. like, if we had some hunting equipment in a museum, but it wasn't being used for hunting anymore, we don’t .. you know, it doesn’t matter then to .. ..

KH I think the only thing that would smell the odour is the mice.

KH And this is the same significance, and we don’t have any special spiritual relationship with the object (if the object is symbolical), we go beyond that.

KH We think more in terms of the origin of things which is what the clan totem is all about. It’s .. although we know the ‘Gilhaast [was] given to us by a Creator and he told us what it’s for and how to use it, we don’t accept it as something that has power on its own. The ‘Gilhaast is the clan totem by symbolism, and also is the anchor post in the time of the great flood. The Dag’mhaast is moored to the ‘Gilhaast with a special anchor rope called ‘Olgan (the three strand rope, a special design). The Creator --Giioulilii -- gave three items (i) Gilhaast, Dag’mhaast and Lan’m’gyte -- the symbol of authority, the house of authority, and the crown of authority.

KH But still, I think the importance of unsegmented renewal comes with the burning ceremony. I went to a burial in North Vancouver the day before yesterday for one of our veterans, he was cremated, an awful lot of his things were left (uncremated that they [the family] didn’t think was important to them anymore). They gave it to us, and they also gave us the wreath and personal items of a military nature, and I know this is all perishable, and when we accepted that, what I said was that things that are perishable when it’s life ends we’ll carry out a burial ceremony, which is the burning ceremony. And we will put them to
rest, proper rest.

... The others that are of great importance, we will keep in our archives ...

MC So some things will be burned and some things will be kept in the archives?

KH Yeah, well, the perishable stuff, you can’t just leave it. I mean, it would be sacriligious, I think, to leave anything just laying around, or just thrown out if it had some value in his lifetime. ... I think a proper burning ceremony is proper.

MC By perishable, do you mean .. ?

KH Well, all things are perishable, really, but the life span for different things is important. Like, wood—normally a new pole is made for the late ’simoigit’—it’s the obligation of the new chief to know that the pole (the clan totem) has to be replaced. Our totem poles are cut down and burned. ... And a new pole goes up in its place. You know. It depends on [the] life span. (Also mortuary poles—there is a new one for each death, like a headstone.)

Damage and Deterioration

KH And so I think if there’s a crack in it and it looks like it was damaged, they might have something surrounding it, ... They were hidden in the wall and it tells of the period of time.

MC So when the mask you had made of the killer whale ... when it at a certain point gets more fragile because, you know, through use, whatever, will you keep it, or will you just .. ?

KH For sentimental reason I would, but in the olden days they wouldn’t. We used to burn our dead. And we also have a burning ceremony of these things once we’ve renewed them. Totem poles are cut down and they’re burned and a new one goes up in its place.

Conservation standards and practice

KH We don’t really conserve, we renew. It’s a continuity, like a lineage. (telephone conversation, Nov. 20 ’95) (Conserve in the same sense as storage in MOA.)

KH Well, I don’t want to say this, but I did chuckle a little bit when I was
sitting in class and everyone was using white gloves. ... I thought to myself, well I wonder how many of our people would use white gloves when they handled ...what they really do is get into grease (eulachon oil) and put grease all over it. (Today carvers use linseed oil). But still, you know, I can see the conservator, you know, doing a job. And I think when I answered your letter there, I said something like that, that you do have a perogative, as a conservator, and I have a lot of respect for that, and I hope my killer whale mask will be handled with white gloves too. (Figuratively speaking, all killer whale figures including masks are the property of Dag'mhaast.)

Meaning of objects

KH But when I took her (my youngest daughter) through there (The Museum of Anthropology), she was very quiet. I said, "Is something wrong?" ...She said, "Did you really have all these things?" ... I said, "We had more. We had more because we lived it. It's one thing to say you have culture but when you lived it it's more important." (What we have in MOA is just a fraction of the real thing.)

KH There are two different types of wood that you use. 'nin'a'glg'n. You use birch and hardwood for the upper class people (the 'simoigit must use hard wood) and the other people use soft wood -- it's new, easy to carve...

... It's ...But my new explanation for this is I'm using myself now the soft wood, because it's lighter and it's easier to put on your face when you're dancing. But that's not necessarily true: another one Ken Harris [unclear] ... ...

... But that is true. When you look in the olden days you identify with people and you look and you say, "I identify with Pdaxk (the clan)" [and the] material they use.

... You see. Now, I might if there are a few things off the boat: this, and what [unclear] to be said in the early times we'd have a [unclear] number of things that passed on from one generation to generation to identify families. And now everybody's putting up totem poles like it's going out of style. (Family property is being co-opted.)

... But that's alright, that's alright, because these things have changed and with the coming of the white people a lot of things will change still. ... So there will be the new significance of a lot of things.
KH  But while we have a lot of respect for our past and these clan totems reminds us—mnemonics I think I call it sometimes—it reminds us of these things. It jogs our memories. We don’t look at it and say, “Well, this is it! Thank goodness, it looks, just looks like the last one, it must be it.” They’re really mnemonics. They remind us that there has been a long period of time when these things were used for the same reason ...

MC  And is that a definition then of unsegmented renewal?

KH  That would be a good definition. What it means is that you take this, you copy the [object]. ... It’s like unsegmented lineage.

KH  ... I wonder how many carvers have recarved, and recarved, and recarved these things. Though I don’t think we can claim any true ... Copyright. ... We can’t really claim that because we are simply copying the old thing that was there.

... But historically it’s important; politically it’s important; spiritually it’s important, but when I was fishing with my father, in the olden days we made our own ropes, anchor ropes and [unclear] sailboat time and there was always three strands to it, but they used old webs from nets (ropes made from old webs; Indian’s contribution is the three-strand rope). And I see all the ropes that have more than three strands and I see all the ropes that had more than three strands, so I asked my Dad one time, I was very young then, and I says, “How come our ropes are only three strands when some of these other boats, big boats, have five strands? And he says, “Well, it’s traditional, son,” in our own language, “because that’s the way we’ve always done it. It’s simply tradition.”

...And I says, “What do you mean?” “When we were placed on our Da’m lax’am’d, we were often told there was going to be a flood, and we were told to make our ropes open [unclear], and we were told how to do a mixture of hide, a mixture of spruce roots, mixture of cedar, and he said, three strand ropes that we use. (continues relating story) ... And so I says, “Well, my question was three strands.”

... He says, “You know there’s an awful lot of change, and you’ll know there’s more in your time because changes are happening all the time. But in our time we think of our Creator, and our spirituality, we think of our politics, and we think of our economy, our food and everything we have as one thing like the three strand rope. (The three strands are twisted together; they are spirit, politics, and social life. If one unravels the other two become weak.) It unravels at the same time; it doesn’t matter how fast you unravel this rope, the three strands unravel at the
same time, you see. So when we talk about spirituality it’s all interwoven with the politics and our economy. Economy has a way of showing itself in [unclear]. We do it because we’re instructed by our Heavenly Father ‘Giïhoulii and our politics changes over time when we developed the four plans, but still it’s the politics of a family. So it’s the politics and spirituality and economy—it’s all really one as far as we are concerned. So they don’t make a [unclear] distinction, I think is what .. .. he said.

KH  So we establish this as a clan perogative to identify our people through our women which is a matrilinear system. And unsegmented lineage is so important. And it’s the same way with our objects. There is a term for it. I used it at one point too—the different properties, incorporeal objects, I’d guess you’d call them. And it’s very important, too, because it’s the unsegmented rites of passage that makes these objects very important.

Different perspectives -First Nations & non-FN : holistic vs linear, etc.

KH  Everything must start with a centre, and it develops.

Contemporary vs. Old

KH  in answer to question whther more importance attached to an older object than a contemporary one, replied that importance lies with the prime authority -belonging to the house of the Chief. -unsegmented lineage.

KH  When we started rebuilding our people I became very concerned, because we are losing our culture. When I first got my new headpiece made, the killer whale, I had it resting on two big boulders. Apparently, from what we understand, when the killer whale, which is a mammal, knows it’s going to die, it anchors itself on a couple of boulders until it dies and two other killer whales can carry it off to the burying ground after it’s dead. But they don’t drown.

...And so I asked my nephew, who was a carver, to carve me that, and that is to represent our dying cult. Now, that started with me, you see.’ ...

... A new mask. It started with me, but it has a historical importance. ...

...You see, because I can see our culture dying and there’s no way we
can do anything publicly, because we are forbidden, you know, the law forbids us to do these things. To carry on we had to go underground. ..Some of the masks I still have today were very quickly made for the potlatches. When I was given the tribal house, I found it, and it is so important. I could get a carver to fix them up really nice, but the importance is that they represent a period of time when we weren’t allowed to dance. ... a lot of these things can be important because all the circumstances surrounding them.

Perceptions of Museums

KH These things. And this is where I think the Museum of Anthropology and others like it are so important as a repository for these things and if they are properly catalogued and the history of how we came about is reported because this is what anthropology museums are all about.

MC Some First Nations people ... say to us, that they don’t like the visible storage because it looks like we’re saying, “Oh, look at everything that we’ve got.” You know, it’s like our colonial hoarding, ... we’re sort of putting that one display.

KH I think I would thank you for doing that, myself. I think I would, because you have preserved an awful lot of things that mean more to me than just visible display.

KH And I don’t think it has anything to do with colonialism. I think it has to do with people who have the insight to preserve.

Restoration or Leave in present condition?

KH ... it (the Dog Salmon pole of Chief ‘Nii’Ta’m Lax’Oxk [spelling?], Kitwanga, B.C., that had rotted) was restored in fibreglass. Our people wouldn’t accept it. I was willing to accept it, but the old people weren’t willing to accept it. ... it’s not because [whether the same materials ie the same type of wood had been used]. It is alien because it’s fibreglass, it’s not wood.

MC So even though it looks the same ...

KH It looks the same; you couldn’t tell the difference.

MC Even though it represents the same ...

KH It looks the same. You couldn’t tell the difference. But it’s fibreglass,
you see. ... So it's still laying on the ground. Nobody put it up. So I think the answer to your question is if they used another species of wood and get somebody to carve it, because ... the ritual of bringing people together, honouring the past, and resurrecting the past, say, in this new creation is the important thing.

Role of Museums - future of Museums

KH And she's [Margaret Ann - his daughter] been getting some .. but I know the interest developed the time we walked through the Museum of Anthropology. And she saw all these things that, you know, that we couldn’t even imagine, our young people couldn’t even imagine that ever existed.

KH ... (Line of succession) — We have a new Chief now, and he’ll be responsible for making a new totem pole, making new masks, making regalias. And that it's done, I mean, that's all that's done, it’s displayed like we did our last pieces [unclear] that has replaced the old ones. .. And I am thinking that when all the stuff that I have now has been replaced, my nephews and nieces are doing a good job replacing them, maybe what I have now will rest, and I’m hopeful that it might be the Museum of Anthropology. .. Because this I think is important to make sure that the things that my nieces and nephews copied were authentic, and it has been brought down to our generation in Seriat'im and unsegmented .. lineage. Lineage would be unsegmented, it seems, I guess, a renewal.

MC Actually, what do you mean by unsegmented renewal?

KH .. What if our people ask: “Where’d you get that?” “Where’s the old one?” ‘Where’s the .. where’d you copy it from?” You know? “Where is the copy?” And it’s very important, and when we show a new item which we did. (A headstone is not traditional but accepted.)

KH I like the concept of your visible display. I like that. Because will come and look at it, and I think if I am so fortunate to be able to put my stuff in the Museum of Anthropology, I think I would like my successor’s, if for some unfortunate reason they lose what they had—like in a fire or something—to be able to go to the Museum of Anthropology and say, well, we’re from the Wilp House, this has been placed here by the late, the late, late, late and we’d like .. we had this unfortunate fire, we lost everything, if it pleases you we’d like to be able to copy what was there.
Now, they will look at it and have an artist, a carver, to look at it and say, "Alright. I've seen it now and I know all the detail and all of the cuts to be shaped on that ..."

Decision-making, decisions

KH Well, when I was taking your course I thought about that, because we were talking about properties, properties belonging to the museum and conservator's job to make sure that it isn't damaged. Well, I quite agree with that. I think that perogatives are of the conservator.

MOA

KH makes same point as DW that one critique of visible storage is that it separates the objects - you go to one part to look at jewellery and art, and another to look at baskets and masks - doesn't really represent community's interests. (It is a mix.)

Integrity, Tangible & Intangible aspects of objects.

KH I'm all in favour of the arts - what we have goes beyond the visible arts". (telephone conversation, Nov. 20 '95) [Clarification]: symbolism.

Other

KH I would rule out any idea of "rejection of museum-type objects". As keeper of the "Clan Totem" for the 'Gisgahaast Clan, I offer my support of your project. (Fax, Sept. 6, 1995)
PEGGY SVANVIK

AFFILIATION: 'NAMGIS FIRST NATION [KWAKWAKA'WAKW]
BOARD MEMBER, U'MISTA CULTURAL CENTRE, [AGE GROUP 50 - 70 YEARS]

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN HER OFFICE, SEPT 28, 1995, ALERT BAY

MC ... talk to you, and also if this starts to go on too long and you have other things just let me know, otherwise I just might sit here talking and talking to you. So, first of all, I was just wondering if you could tell me, first, just a little bit about your ... about your family, about where you're from, your band, all of that.

PS My family are originally Kwagiulth from Port [unclear] grandparents.

MC Oh!

PS And my father. They were born and raised there, and then they grew up at the M_______ Seaweed River, and then my grandfather was, they called him Wanu [sp?], they said he owned that river.

MC Hmm.

PS Yeah, so he was called Wanu. He was also Chief [unclear]. Second to the highest Chief.

MC Wow. Wow.

PS And when my father and my aunts came to the residential school and the name got to be Whannock [sp?].

MC Ah.

PS Yes. That’s how it came to be. I often wondered how until I found out that the [unclear], they were called Whannock.

MC Yeah. Yeah. Oh, that’s interesting.
PS Yes, so that’s sort of .. and then like, I suppose I guess my sisters were in the residential school. I think my grandmother moved over here too, because my father and his brothers and sisters were here so they moved over. And then in 1943 my father joined the ___________? band so that’s how we came to be in the ___________? band.

MC OK. And were you born here, Peggy?

PS I was born here and raised here.

MC Right. Was the residential school operating when you were growing up?

PS Yes, but when I was ready to go to school they had a day school here. So then I went to the day school; I never went to the residential school, which is I think very fortunate for me. My older sisters were in residential school.

MC And you’re on the board of the U’mista?

PS U’mista _____?

MC And have you been doing that for a long time?

PS Yes, I probab .. I think I’ve been in for three [unclear].


PS I found that it’s been a really, really positive experience for me.

MC Oh yeah? Good. Could you tell me why it’s .. ?

PS Well, because you have the museum [unclear] I mean, I’ve been in there. But then I got on the board, and I see what it takes to run it, all the things that they’ve got to do and the many things that they want to do.

MC Yes. Uuhh.

PS Among them is the concern about language.
MC  Mmhm.

PS  And it’s very important.

MC  Yeah. Today, what I’d like to focus on is how the preservation of the objects, and how that relates to the other kinds of preservation: the preservation of the language, for instance, and keeping cultural traditions, and because, you know, we’ve heard a lot of people saying, well, a museum, you know, a museum is irrelevant to us; we don’t want our objects kept in glass cases, it’s not static, you know, our culture is living. But here you have a very old collection, very important, so I’m just wondering what your feelings are about museums?

PS  I guess we wouldn’t know a lot about history if we didn’t have museums.

MC  Yeah.

PS  And I think that this museum at least has kept the artifacts that we probably wouldn’t have if it not for the [unclear]. I think that the preservation of those artifacts is very important, especially for younger generations to know where they come from. To know where they’re coming from. I think there’s been [unclear] not being very good for people because there are a lot of young people who don’t know where they come .. who they are, and I think it’s created a lot of problems for them in their social lives.

MC  Yes. Yes. So, do you think then, like, do you think the objects help in that other people, you know, find .. find themselves again?

PS  Their identities?

MC  Yeah.

PS  I think so. I think .. I’ve been there, like, we have, at the museum they had a  .. at one point they had the __________? where people would come in and ask to speak [unclear].

MC  Yeah.
PS And there was a whole bunch of young people who came in, they didn’t speak the language but what they really wanted to know from Mrs. Cranmer was “Who was my family?”

MC Yeah.

PS What were the names of my family?

MC Yeah.

PS What were the crests, what were .. what can I use when I’m making my own [unclear]?

MC Yeah.

PS And the masks .. [unclear]. For these young people it was really important to them, to know, who they were, and where they come from.

MC Yeah.

PS [unclear]. It hadn’t been [unclear] before. Now they wanted to know.

MC Yeah.

PS For their self esteem, they need to know, and I think that’s what ..

MC Yeah.

PS That’s what they are, and the masks and the objects are [unclear] I think [unclear] is like that. I have a niece who’s a born again Christian and among her friends were people who [unclear] that the totem poles were objects of worship. And they shudder when they walk by [unclear]. Although she’s part of that group, and she believes in that religion she still didn’t like it because she thought about her grandmother, because my mother used to take her when she went dancing, sewing blankets for her.

MC Wow.
PS And so they think of her grandmother as being heathen, and godless.

MC Yeah.

PS And so she was telling me and so I told her, well, I said, maybe your friend needs to know, I said, that the totem pole is not an object of worship, every group of people has let’s say .. how do you say it – like the Scots, they have tartans and that ..

MC Right.

PS .. identify what land they come from.

MC Yeah.

PS I said, it’s the same way. It’s like, we don’t have numbers but I can always [unclear], in the old days the people had totem poles. And there’s the story of the family on the totem poles, and when you come into the village, or wherever you are, you can tell whose house that is by the pole that’s in front of it.

MC Yeah.

PS It’s like the coat of arms.

MC Yeah.

PS So. I said, that’s all it is; it’s not meant to be worshipped. It just identifies your family, where you come from.

MC Yeah.

PS [unclear] thought about this. [unclear].

MC Yeah. Great. Great.

PS [unclear].

MC Would the young people who, you know, came and asked Mrs. Cramner about the crests and their family background, would they also be people .. would they go to potlatches, and ..?
PS  Mmhm. They're very interested. Some of the young people that were there were artists.

MC  Ah, OK.

PS  Yeah. They’re artists, and they’re .. I mean, they’re making things, and they want to know .. like, if they’re going to keep something for themselves, what [unclear] we have a potlatch [unclear].

MC  Yeah.

PS  [unclear] potlatches [unclear] what names can we get. Those are the kinds of things they want to know. And I think having museums is helpful in that way.

MC  Mmhm. Yeah. Would .. like .. like the museum, I guess, got started because of the repatriation of the, you know, of the collection. But I imagine also the people have family heirlooms that they keep within the family, you know, like maybe jewelry or something. You know, some people might .. I don’t know what the difference is, but other people would think of donating things to the museum, or if they would rather keep them within their family?

PS  Probably if they have no one, you know, to leave it to otherwise.

MC  Yeah.

PS  Did you see .. one of the old people told me that they’re not supposed to be hanging our masks up for display, they’re supposed to be kept wrapped up and put away until they’re used again.

MC  Yeah.

PS  So times changed and a lot of the old pieces that are in the museum now might not .. may not be [unclear] in the museum because they have to have special care because of what they [unclear].

MC  Yes. Mmhm. Do you know whether .. would traditional .. would objects that got older and then more fragile, and couldn’t be used, would they have still been passed down to show or would they have
just ..?

PS Yeah, probably. And then they may have .. they probably made a copy out of them.

MC Mhm. And would the copy have had the same importance as the old piece?

PS As it’s used in the potlatch, you know. My son has a mask in a museum that’s been used three times in potlatches, and it’s become more valuable. It has more value now. Each time it’s used it becomes more valuable.

MC Yeah. Do you think that, I guess in your, oh, I’m trying to think .. somebody has their grandmother’s Christening gown, or something like that, and they give it to the museum, and they go .. it has more value because it’s now in this important museum. And I’m just .. like, I’m just wondering whether .. do you think this would apply here or not, or whether it’s you know, as you say, the value comes from something else, the value comes from using it. But is there any status to having your objects, you know, or some of your family’s objects in the museum?

PS Well, there probably is, but I mean, I don’t .. I mean, I haven’t really seen this mask, as I say, there’s one, and that belongs to my aunt and her husband. It came in the collection that was repatriated, and I don’t know which one it is, but my sister told me it’s there. And I .. [unclear] who’s a niece, I told her about it. I’m not sure she [unclear]. I have a grandson, and I had to go to the museum [unclear] books and I took him along with me. And he’s a very, very intelligent little fellow; I was always looking for books, so he was looking around and then [unclear] I was finished, I went over and I called him, and I said, “Let’s go now. I’m ready to go.” And he said, “Can’t go,” he said, “because it’s still talking to me,” he said. He was sitting in front of mask, and he said, “It’s talking to me.”

MC Oh, wow.

PS So I said, oh, him and his imagination as I walked away. “OK,” [unclear]. And he came, and said, “If you go, my grandma, I wanted to tell you whatever it said to me.” and I didn’t ask him, because I
thought I didn’t want to encourage him because I thought [unclear].”

MC Yeah.

PS And then I was talking .. we had a group of elderly people in the treatment centres, so I was telling them about that, and then the one man said to me, “He’s recognized [unclear]. The boy probably was talking to it.” [unclear]. And he said, “That happened to me in this museum.” he said. [unclear]. I’m not to tell my grandson this, but anyway, I said .. he was walking by and he said, “And I was told to sit down. So I did.” He said what he saw was an old person’s arm, and he started to talk to him, and he said, “The message I got before was before. But because there’s a Monetuk [sp?] and I saw him sitting down, and he said he had his head dangling down, and I thought [unclear] to come down. So then Gloria came down and she laughed “Is there anything wrong with the culture?” and then disappeared. But he said the message he got from the [unclear] after was it was nice that he wanted to sit there, wanted to [unclear].

MC Ah!

PS Yes, so he told me that they can’t, there’s a spirit there. And the mask is .. it’s old. The mask they wanted to dance is old. I got kind of a chill up and down my spine when he said that, because it was my grandson who said it, and I thought, I didn’t pay attention to it.

MC Yes, yes, really.

PS I never asked him “What did it say to you?” right, because I just thought he was ... 

MC What do you think about whether the mask should be danced, and these are older ones, and they are more fragile, and you know, just, you know, a bit of a physical risk, anyway.

PS Mmhm.

MC So how do you balance off that?

PS I mean, if .. I think if I were going to use any of those old masks I wouldn’t take it and leave it up there, I would take it, use it at once,
and send it back down.

MC  Aha.

PS  And not leave it laying around.

MC  Yes.

PS  Because they are fragile, or if any of them need to be used by, like, say, a family knows it's there and I've said leave it, it could mean a [unclear].

MC  Yeah.

PS  Like they'd say as it's used more and more it's more valuable. So I hadn't thought of it that way when we .. when I mentioned my son's mask had been borrowed three times.

MC  Yeah.

PS  They said each time it's used it becomes more valuable.

MC  Yeah. And just showing it rather than dancing it, would that be enough, or does it really have to be danced?

PS  It could be. They did that collection that came back. Yeah, and they got the .. and it was rather nice, because of the one .. one of the Whannock [sp?], the ladies guides, [unclear] in which her family said her father's collection was brought back. So it wasn't used for dancing, but what they did at the potlatch was they showed it, [unclear] it was put away again.

MC  Yeah. So if a mask is being danced, and, or after, you know, it was danced and maybe, you know, it got banged into or something and got scratches, or a bit of a break, would that be very serious, anyway?

PS  Yes, I think so.

MC  OK. So it would be better to have it undamaged?

PS  Mmmh.
MC  OK. Because I'm wondering whether there's sort of some degrees - I mean damage is a .. you know, sort of a heavy word, whether there's some degrees of things that could happen to a mask that .. you know, like a scratch, say. And really that's not too serious, but ...

PS  No, it's not. But if it got broken ...

MC  Yeah. And I guess if something happened during the dance, I guess that would be very serious.

PS  That would be very serious, especially for the dancer.

MC  Yeah. Yeah.

PS  And the dancer's family.

MC  If something did get damaged, especially one of the older pieces, who would be the best person to .. well, first of all, should it be repaired, and who would be the best person to do that, would it be a local artist, or would it be, because it's an older piece, would you, well, want somebody from like the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa to do a repair, sort of a museum type of repair rather than the kind of repair that an artist would do?

PS  I'm sure that that probably would be better.

MC  Yes, I think so.

PS  I .. you know. And once in a while the artist will learn how to do something like that.

MC  Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What about if it's a contemporary mask? You know, there are some masks in the Centre that are used for dancing, like one of those that the paint started to flake off, or it got a bit of a break, do you think that the .. again would you get the local .. the local artist, or maybe Juanita down at the centre with that, or .. ?

PS  I guess it would depend on how well they could do it.

MC  Yeah.
PS  Maybe .. and like that, I mean you do want somebody to do it and do it well.

MC  Yeah. And would you want it to look .. I guess .. would you want to be able to tell the difference between the original piece and the repair?

PS  I wouldn’t want them to over do it. I mean, I wouldn’t want them to make it look like there was a it was new or something.

MC  Right, right.

PS  I mean, I .. they’re not new, and that’d be like my going to a beauty parlour and putting my face [unclear] all over to somebody. Colour my hair.

MC  Yeah. There was a .. I don’t know if you saw, there was an exhibit that Gloria was doing called “Chiefly Feasts” that was down in an exhibit in Victoria, and came from New York, like, it was a collection from New York. And some people, some members of the Hunt family wanted the pieces in that exhibit to be refurbished a bit because they said a few pieces have been in the museum for, you know, over fifty years, they haven’t been that well taken care of, they don’t look very good, like, if they were being danced, you would never dance [unclear] in condition.

PS  And they were from [unclear]?

MC  And I’m wondering also whether you’ve heard any comments or how you feel about, like, the pieces here in the centre, which also, when they came back, weren’t in the .. as good condition as they were in 1921. Whether you think that maybe more cedar bark needs to be added, or fur if it’s gone missing, that kind of .. you’ve never heard any comments, or [unclear]?

PS  No, I haven’t. I’ve never felt that they needed to.

MC  Alright.

PS  You know, what I say of myself, because I realized how that they’re age ..

MC  Yeah. Yeah.
PS I think it's age, and it might be that some family member might, and if they do, then it's their choice.

MC Yeah. Because I guess ... yeah, in a museum, you know, especially for those of us who aren't part of the culture that made the objects, we think, well, this is the object as it is now, and it represents a certain time period, and it represents its own history. And so we don't want to add anything to it, you know? But that's again a kind of a balance to whether you keep something that represents the original artist and the way that he made the piece in the beginning and how the people originally, you know, how it sort of ... how you're preserving something that was made, you know, a long time ago, and whether you try and show it the way it was ... when the people first saw it. When it was first shown.

PS Mmh. I don't know whether we could ever see it that way again. I mean, when we're young, we're young, and we're looked at different. And then we get older, and we're never going to look young again.

MC That's true! That's very true.

PS I mean, my hair's grey and I know it's going to change; if I dye it, then I won't look real. Dye it black and people will wonder, what happened to Peggy?

MC Yeah! OK. It ... oh, what about objects that people say shouldn't be preserved, or should be allowed to deteriorate, or you know, be allowed to go through a natural cycle?

PS Yeah, it's kind of ... I guess like the memorial poles at the graveyard. We often get comments like, I know that a niece who worked in the tourist bureau has said that the tourists have come and people ought to be ashamed of yourselves for not [unclear] these poles. So I told ... you know, I said, maybe you need to tell those people that those poles aren't there as tourist attractions. They weren't put up there for tourists, they were put up there as memorial poles; that those memorial poles will stand there until they crumble, and when they crumble then gone are the memories.

MC So they're ... so the memorial poles, they aren't maintained?
PS  Well, according to one of the old people, they’re not supposed to be [unclear]. But I did hear .. kind of hear something from the community that they were [unclear]. The old people say that they’re not supposed to be.

MC  Right.

PS  I mean, people want to change, things do change.

MC  Yeah. I’m wondering whether .. I don’t know .. the poles that we have at the Museum of Anthropology, I don’t know whether there are any on exhibit or not. There are some masks, but I’m not sure about the poles. But if there was a pole that was in the museum, that had been a memorial pole, so I guess probably shouldn’t have been in the museum, but should it .. you know, would it have been better to have, you know, return it and let it .. or is the cycle broken because it got taken away? It might not [unclear]?

PS  Probably, because [unclear]. You know, there’s people like Mrs. Cramner that [unclear] those days are probably numbered, you know, that .. she’s our nico [unclear] .. I guess maybe those poles wouldn’t be around if it weren’t for the museum. [unclear]. I know that there was a pole that was standing up and it was my uncle’s place. It was up there, I mean, it completely rotted away. We don’t have a copy of that. We probably have pictures that we could find [unclear] to do it. Rotted away if it [unclear] standing up for probably many years [unclear].

MC  Right. So if there’s something .. well, say, the objects at the centre. Are they family heritage first, or are they community heritage first?

PS  I’d like to think they’re family and then community, because family is [unclear]. Our extended family is .. like, take for instance when I was young, they’re very, very strict about marrying into the families [unclear] married because you’re related. Like, they say that I married a white man, so they couldn’t [unclear]. But you know, we’re all somehow connected.

MC  Yes. Yeah. So then if the objects are in the museum, you know, and the family .. like, what’s the relationship between the museum and the family? Like, does the museum make the decisions about how to care
for the object, that kind of thing, or do they consult a family?

PS Well, I think as much as they can, they do, and I think ...

MC Consult, or .. ?

PS But I think they do it anyways, I mean, like a family has anything to say about - I don't think people are shy. They say what they want to say.

MC Yeah.

PS And I think what they say is considered, I mean, this is going be damaging for the artifact, but I think most people want to keep them, they want to preserve them. There are times when, you know, even .. I think they are even some of [unclear] related. They're just put away in a museum. [unclear].

MC For safekeeping.

PS Mmhm. I mean, they are using it, in that way.

MC Yes. Yes. Yeah. So then people are using the museum then both for things like the language classes and then also for some families anyway as, you know, for the objects.

PS Yeah. There are some things that they put away that are .. it's not on display.

MC Yeah. But it's .. the responsibility of the museum to make sure they're caring for these objects according to the best way that they can keep them.

PS And I think that they do do that.

MC Good. The museum has such a wonderful reputation everywhere. It's .. In museums, people like myself are working at preserving objects that are in the museum. What we say we are trying to preserve, right, are these four aspects of the object. The integrity of the object, and the physical integrity, the materials, there's the historical integrity, you know, the history as, we, you know, to see it, from the object, and there's the aesthetic integrity, if the object was made to look a certain
way, to preserve the way artists or the maker had intended it to look. And then there’s also what we call the conceptual integrity, or the cultural significance of the object. And I’m wondering whether you think .. is there one of these that is more important .. like, sometimes, again, you’re balancing things off. So is there one that’s .. sort of, the bottom line to preserve, or the most important one to preserve of physical, historic, aesthetic, and cultural?

PS I think .. don’t you think they all [unclear]?

MC I do!

PS [unclear] one of them has to be more important.

MC Yeah. It’s hard. I guess what it is is somebody says, “Well, I’d like to borrow this mask to dance it.” then we’re saying, well, the physical integrity is a bit at risk, because of the dancing, but the cultural integrity, to preserve that, it has to be danced.

PS If it’s a .. I would say then that probably it’s more important to keep the mask, and hopefully [unclear].

MC Yes.

PS And use it. Because if that mask is destroyed then they will have nothing.

MC Yeah. Yeah. Because that’s the other thing for the .. for young kids. You know, that’s where it’s so important to .. for them to be able to access these pieces, and .. well, kids like to touch things.

PS Yes, they do.

MC And so .. and how .. is it .. is it more important that kids of this generation touch things, or is it that the things are preserved for, you know, generations to come?

PS I think if they touch it they will maybe probably touch it later [unclear].

MC Yeah.
PS And I think that sometimes it's very important to touch. [unclear].

MC Yes. Yes.

PS But I mean, if they're going to be rough and stuff, then of course, they mustn't be allowed to do it. But... well, learning self-discipline and respect.

MC Yes. And do you think also that they could touch the more contemporary pieces, like, you know, is it necessary for them to touch the old pieces? I mean, in a way, that's a special feeling you know.

PS Yeah. Like I said, if it's done in a way that's not going to be harmful, then they need to be supervised very well if they're going to.

MC Yes.

PS But sometimes that... sometimes... especially children who are artistic, I mean...

MC Yeah. Yeah.

PS Very artistic, and maybe some [unclear] touches them in their hearts and they need to feel.

MC Yeah. Yeah. And I mean, I think artists also work by touch a lot. And...

PS Mmh. But I think if they have these three special things, then [unclear]. But I don't think they should be allowed to, unsupervised, do things like that, because they're only children, and sometimes they can't control [unclear] because they're little and they can't hold onto it -- it's [unclear]. Maybe if they get a [unclear] they could handle.

MC Yeah. Do you think that... like, here the museum is part of the community. But at UBC, at the Museum of Anthropology, is there a way that we can contribute to preserving the cultural significance of the object, or that's not our role, and that we really can't assist in that. Our role is more to preserve the physical object that are housed there. How do you feel about that? Is there something that we can do, I mean, assist, or provide, or...
PS What I know is that the [unclear] you know, whose are these?

MC Yes, yes.

PS Basically [unclear]. I mean, I don't think that if someone said they want to take it and [unclear] they need to know.

MC Yes. Yes.

PS They need to know [unclear]. That they want to [unclear] their ancestors. I think that [unclear] the need of the native people is to have more family. They have had a very negative [unclear]. They've [unclear] family [unclear]. And I think that it was a teacher, and my mother said to me, you know, "You don't call children names. You don't call them bad names, because if you do it continually, then that [unclear] is stuck in their head and that's what they [unclear] [unclear]." And I think that is what's happened to our people. A lot of the young people are starting to feel good about themselves. And we still have a long way to go and I think that knowing where they come from is very important to their well being.

MC Yes, yes. For all of us, yeah.

PS I think that the .. my grandparents were one of those people who were jailed for participating in the potlatch. And I'm still outraged to think that my grandmother was striped, standing naked with her people, and she didn't want us to show our arms and she wanted us to have our dresses cover our knees, we weren't to show our knees. And for her to be treated like that and she had this [unclear] could be the Queen Mother in our society. And to be treated that way. My grandfather, not that but the others who were then .. you know. I think that the .. I mean, I remember my grandmother and I think "How could they do that to her?"


PS It still outrages me.

MC Yeah. Yeah. Did the old people talk about what it was like and then also to have their objects taken away from them?
PS They probably did, but I think those that were jailed were the ones who didn’t give up their objects voluntarily. Those who did were not jailed, you know, they had an option. I guess my grandparents were stubborn, there were a few of them who were very stubborn.

MC Yeah. Proud.

PS Yes.

MC Yeah. The .. if a piece, a mask that’s been made by a famous artist, or somehow .. Mungo Martin, or someone who’s very well known, do you think, or would a reproduction of a mask like that, would that have the same significance, you know, as well ...

PS Probably not, but it would have to be done by his family.

MC Right. Yeah. Yeah.

PS It would have to be, you know, one of his true descendents. And he does have true descendents, who haven’t been recognized, really. He had a daughter, and she had children and those children .. and those children are very artistic too. They carve as well.

MC Aha! Great! Great! Yeah.

PS Like I said, [unclear] that this is an important [unclear].

MC Yeah. And if the objects are passed on, within a family, like, my understanding is they’re passed on to specific people, so .. but I guess with older objects that are now in museums, that sometimes the most you can know is the family name, but you don’t know the specific individual it should have been passed onto because that part was ...

PS Everything went to an older son.

MC Aha.

PS There may be something that went to the younger ones, but everything went to the older son.
MC I see. OK.

PS Like, my grandfather was a Chief, but, like, the oldest, his oldest son, became a Chief when he died. But the elders said also, it's not necessary that your oldest son, like, the oldest son is not the [unclear] public sort of a person.

MC OK.

PS Then they may choose a younger one, that is more vocal.

MC Right, right.

PS And it's always agreed upon by the family. It is not something that is simply decided.

MC Aha.

PS But if a person's shy [unclear] speak. But if you're a Chief you need to be speaker.

MC Yes. Yeah.

PS One of the elders told me in that case they [unclear]. Unless of course they get somebody to speak for them.

MC Yes.

PS And I don't know if [unclear]

MC So young people who are, you know, interested in finding out about their background, would they be able to go the Centre and look at those objects and would they be able to know whether an object .. who it would have been passed down to, or would they have .. ?

PS I guess I would go along and when they looked at [unclear] on a genealogy.

MC OK. Yeah.

PS And they've lived [unclear].
MC Yeah. Right. Yeah. Because it seems to me that there's also, unfortunately, this information has been lost, too, so it's hard to sort things out?

PS Yes. So in that case they would probably just use it, and I think and if it was kept, and if they knew it was in that family they'd perhaps [unclear].

MC Yeah. Are there young people interested in, you know, carving, and are doing that, or is it often if their father is a carver or something, or an uncle, then they'll learn.

PS I think that .. I don't know. It seems to be a natural talent. Of course, they do have to learn techniques, but it seems to be something that they do. And I have a son who's carving, and I had no idea he was interested in carving.

MC Yeah. Wow.

PS And I didn't know he carved, or had the urge, you know, and I was surprised around Christmas, we had a mask. The first mask that he gave. He gave to us.

MC Oh, fantastic. Lovely.

PS And he's made several, and he's made a really nice mask. And I guess they apprentice under the carvers [unclear]. They're the same age as William Alfred, they grew up together, then you know, they seem to have a [unclear].

MC Oh, yeah.

PS Just learning things from him, and [unclear] says that he has a really natural talent, and it seems to me that, you know, he's able to carve well because it comes from his heart.

MC Yeah.

PS He's got the heart for it.
MC Yeah. Great, great.

PS But it seems to be very natural. Like, I said that Grand (unclear) Mungo Martin’s descendents said well, they were in residential school, and they had a contest about ________? logo, and they had the children do it, and it was one of his descendents, a little girl, who’d done it. Who won the contest. Well, I said, she comes by it honestly, she’s a descendent of Mungo Martin.

MC Yes.

PS But nobody knew that she was.


PS I knew that she was a descendent of his.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

PS She was just a little girl who did a really neat job.

MC Well, good for her. Yeah. Do you think .. are the young people interested in working in the museum? I mean, apart from the, you know, a job, and as a job, you know, are they, like, a lot of people with education, or into law .. ?

PS I don’t .. there’s not a lot of [unclear], but I’m hoping that will change, that are getting that from school. But I think that things have to change. There’s a support they get also [unclear].

MC Yeah.

PS That’s where .. I think that’s where they fought for the [unclear] support. They both [unclear]. But talking about that, my granddaughter said that she was really discouraged because she’s going to N________, and she tried to .. she’s having trouble with social studies, she tried to question the teacher on something he didn’t know. He didn’t even have the courtesy to say I am busy right now, just walked away from her. But she said, the thing that really got me [unclear] was those white people asked him for help and he stopped right away to help.
MC  Ohhh.

PS  [unclear]. So she told her mother, and her mother said it's a good thing she told me, because when she got her report card, her report in social studies was so bad, and if she hadn't told me that, I would have been really upset with her.

MC  Yeah.

PS  So she did contact him and talk to him about it.

MC  Yeah.

PS  So if she didn't have the support at home, she might have just gotten discouraged and dropped right out.

MC  Right. Yeah.

PS  But she had the support of her mother.

MC  That's great. That's great to have that open communication. Yeah. Do .. I don't know. Like, when you were growing up, or anything, did you ever go to a museum? Was that ever part of your background or .. ?

PS  No, not here. I did got a museum once in Vancouver, even though in Steveston, went to the church and museum in Vancouver. It's where the Carnegie Centre is now.

MC  Yeah!

PS  That was a real big adventure. That was the first time I ever went to a museum.

MC  OK. And what did you think of it. Do you remember what it felt like going to go there?

PS  For me it was fascinating. Because I've always been nosy [unclear] and to see things, and  ...

MC  Yeah. Did they have any collections from your people?
PS  I didn’t see any. I didn’t see any there at that time. There may have been, but they didn’t take us around to ... ... so I think put on one [unclear] where they .. you see, I think they did have them, but then my mother would disappear, but nobody would tell us where she went.

MC  Right.

PS  And I think the reason they didn’t tell us was they were afraid being children we may [unclear]. So it was [unclear] and we never knew. My mother would disappear. My father stayed home, and my mother would disappear. Because that was very unusual, because she was not the kind of woman that went all over and left her children behind. Our older sister still [unclear] because it was against the law.

MC  Yes.

PS  So I didn’t see .. I never saw Indian dancing until the fifties, the late fifties, when they were allowed to do it again. I was like the tourists, just anxiously awaiting to see them dance.

MC  Yeah. Was English spoken in your house?

PS  When we were children we only spoke our language, and then I first went to school and that was the only language I knew. I learned to speak English in school.

MC  Right. Yeah. But you always talked to your parents in your language.

PS  Yes. And the thing that was different then is that when we were children we called each other by Indian names.

MC  Oh.

PS  And, you know, we don’t do that now. It’s Mary or I, or you know, Gloria or something.

MC  Right, right.

PS  She has an Indian name I never call her by. I always say “Gloria”.
MC  Yeah. Yeah.

PS  Just as Mrs. Cramner everyone calls her Agnes. [unclear].

MC  Yeah.

PS  And I was called by my Indian name by my mother and my Aunt, and my brother [unclear] but when we went to school .. in fact, I didn’t even know my mother had a [unclear] went to school, they asked us our mother’s name and I said, “Mother” so the teacher said, “Your mother has a name.” So she said, “Go home and find out.” And so when I went home I said to my father, what is my mother’s name? And he said, her name is Edith. That was the first time I knew that she had a name. She was mother to us.

MC  Yes.

PS  I’d never called her anything but mother. And [unclear].

MC  Right, right.

PS  So I found out her name was Edith, then.

MC  Are your kids interested? Do they speak the language, or they .. ?

PS  They understand, they partially understand, but we didn’t – and I’m sorry to this day that I didn’t teach them when they were small. But they understand .. I do speak to them in our language, and they understand, and when it gets .. when it gets [unclear] carried away.

MC  Yeah. Yeah. Are there any .. any recommendations that .. for us at the Museum at Anthropology that you might have about pieces from this area that, you know, about anything that is ..

PS  I just think it’s really important for – especially for the young people – to .. if it, like, it’s important to know what families they belong to.

MC  Yes, yeah.

PS  Like that’s important.
MC  Mmhm. Mmhm.

PS  The other day I was walking along, and this little girl said to me: “Have you seen my school? Have you seen my school?”

MC  Oh

PS  [unclear]. But she’s absolutely thrilled about “my school” and I think that that’s important for children, I think it’s important to young people. And even the names of people is very important.

MC  Mmhm. Mmhm.

PS  I think that names is very important.

MC  I think that’s all the questions I have. I’ll have to take a look .. this is so interesting. I’d like to sit and talk some more, you know? I can’t think of anything, right at the moment else to ask you. If I do, maybe, you know, write a letter or a chat, try and reach you on the phone or something, like that if that’s OK. Great.

PS  Alright. And if you can’t get a hold of me, just leave a message with the museum there, seeing as if I ever get the chance to I go down there.

MC  Yeah. OK. Great. And is there any more information that I can give you about, you know, what we’re doing, what the museum is doing, anything like that?

PS  I can’t think of anything right now, maybe I’ll do the same thing. If I need to, you know, if I need to maybe I’ll just get in touch with Juanita. You know.

MC  Yeah. Great. And if you’re ever in Vancouver, you know, come and look at, you know, what we have ... 

PS  I’d love to. I went there once, I didn’t have a lot of time, when you go and you have to [unclear] and you have to [unclear]. So I just quickly went through, but I found it was really interesting to me, very interesting, but I didn’t have a lot of time. [unclear].
MC Yes.

PS I went to a museum in Stockholm.

MC Oh, yeah!

PS And they had [unclear]. And [unclear]. But anyways, I wanted to buy one, so when he passed me the [unclear] it was gold, you know, right before the time of Christ.

MC Really.

PS Way back.

MC Yeah.

PS [unclear] of gold and they weren't considered valuable because they had just been used as doorstops.

MC Oh, wow.

PS And it was all kinds, all shapes, and it was jewelry, plates, everything - they were different. It didn't seem like you should possess them either, that they were there for you to see, I think.

MC Yeah.

PS And then [unclear] they had an exhibit from Russia.

MC Oh, yeah?

PS Art exhibit from Russia in the museum.

MC Like modern art?

PS No, from way back. It was very, very interesting also. Again, when we went to UBC, it probably would have taken a whole day just to see this. Just to appreciate it.

MC Yeah.
But we were there for, maybe just for two or three hours we were there.

Aha. Great. Well, thank you so much.

It was nice meeting you finally. I looked at your name and I thought, “I’ve got to call ...”
MC  I'm talking to Rita Barnes in the offices of the Association of First Nations Women, formerly the Professional Native Women's Association. Great. Rita, I was wondering just to begin if you could tell me a little bit about your background, your nation, your family, and also your involvement with cultural activities.

RB  OK. I was born .. I was born in Rivers Inlet, which is not my home area. My parents were up there, my father fishing, my mother working in a cannery, and I was born July 3, 1934 during the fishing season. And spent my very early years in Kingcome where my father was from, he was from the Zawad'eno tribe of the Kwakwaka'wakw.

MC  OK. Later I'll get you to write these down for me.

RB  And spent a bit of time in Gilford Island because that is where my maternal grandfather was from. My maternal grandmother was from a little village from Fort Rupert, and they were the Kwagiulth tribe, the people from Fort Rupert. Gilford Island, the little village, was .. they were the Quatsino of the Kwakwaka'wakw house as well. The Kwakwaka'wakw and the (Zawadeno's ? unclear) of Kingcome and two other tribal groups, called themselves the Muskemos, because they were four tribes which cooperated, they supported each other, and through everything. And so that's my background. I .. when people started leaving Kingcome, I think they were encouraged by the Indian agent to relocate to Gilford Island, some of them stubbornly stayed on at Kingcome, my father's family being one of them, my grandfather, my uncles and my father, and a couple of other families. And because of people moving away gradually and just a few families left up there, and very few children, the little mission school there closed down and my father was supposed to put us into the residential school. Mind you, we were not accepted right away there seems to have been some
reluctance on the Indian agent’s part to accept us, and because I was very little, I don’t really know for sure what his reasons were, but my father seemed to have problems to get us into the residential school, and I felt I was waiting and waiting, hearing all about the kids going to school and still at home, seven years old, quite ready for school, eventually I was accepted, and my dad, well, all of us were, my two sisters and my brother were in the residential school, my father supplied the school with salmon twice a year to feed the whole school - two hundred kids, about thirty staff members, thirty or forty, and also oolichans once a year to feed the whole school.

MC Oh, right.

RB And years later I’m to find out that that was part of the agreement for the Indian agent allowing us to be accepted into the school. And after watching a film called “Washing Away of Tears”, I realized what was happening there. And anyways, my family, the Dawson’s in Kingcome, stubbornly hung on to Kingcome and gradually people started moving back, bit by bit. So relocation was never successful. Spent nine years in St. Michaels school. I was very fortunate, because St. Michael’s School, the residential school I attended, was located in a place, in Alert Bay where I had a lot of relatives, and on weekends my sisters and I could go to homes of my relatives, grand uncles, my great grandmother, uncles, cousins, where we were able to go. And I think, too, as a result of that, being able to go home to relatives every weekend, we still speak quite a bit of our .. of Kwakwala.

MC Yeah.

RB Children of other villages were more unfortunate. People from the .. Haida, Tsimshian, Nisga’a, who came from way up North, never saw their families from ten months to the next. I just can’t imagine what that must have been like. And every time I think back on those years, I think, can you imagine, villages and villages, throughout Canada – not just Canada but the United States, because they had in place the same system, you know, where they were taking children out of villages and putting them into residential schools. Imagine villages in the States and all of Canada who had no children between the ages of five and sixteen, between five and seventeen, it just .. I just can’t conceive of it. Of course, I’m not there to know what it’s like.
Yeah.

And my time in the residential school I hear stories, horror stories from other people today, some of them that I grew up with in the residential schools, some I didn’t who I’ve just recently met, I didn’t really have any horror stories. I think the most horrible experience I ever had was being strapped for not memorizing the Nicene Creed in the time allotted. As the Bible, the Prayer Book, was part of our curriculum. It was our textbook for a certain .. for when we were in Grade Three. And I have some depressing memories about the Church, I .. for years and years, even after I left the school, I attended school faithfully and one day I just thought, “What am I doing here? I walk out of this place, I just end up feeling so depressed.” I discovered that my dislike of daffodils and tulips was connected with the Church. So I walked out of that Church in Burnaby, and I never went back. And I’ve never regretted it. And end of periods of depression on a Sunday. And I don’t know whether I can use the term “rediscovered”, but I think I rediscovered potlatches, you know, and what it did for me.

Mmm. And what did it do for you?

Well, attending potlatches, because we would go, we would got to as many as we can, and I’d come back to the city and I would just have this feeling so good, and feeling and nothing and nobody could hurt me. I just feel so good, and I just want everyone to feel good. Mind you, it doesn’t last, and then I need another potlatch.

Right.

And I never really thought about it. The time that I did think about it, that I had to think about what it did for me, why I felt the way I did, was the day that my daughter was feeling so down about some awful stuff she had to do at work, like firing someone, firing her first boss that she ever worked for out of high school, and then she was eventually in a position to hire, to supervise managers of different stores, stopped at my home one day because she needed to talk. I watched her get out of her car looking so unhappy, and I opened the door to her, she walked in, put her arms around me and said, “Mom, I need a potlatch so bad.” And that was when I thought about it. And eventually my children and I talked about it and it has the same effect. Every once in a while they need that good feeling of sitting in the
potlatch and that feeling of this is a part of .. this is a big part of me. This is .. I suppose it does for us what a Church or a synagogue does for people who are associated with such places.

MC Yeah. So just to focus in first a minute on the objects that are used in the potlatches, like the regalia, the masks, and the blankets and everything. What .. I'm just wondering how important are they in sort of maintaining the cultural traditions, and does it matter if the mask is an older one, or whether it's a new one, you know, as long as it's the right mask for the dance?

RB I think, well, especially today, in contemporary potlatches, I think what matters is that it's the same. It doesn't have to be the original one, because they tell me today those masks were only used once and never used again. Some people say they were even burned after they were used, but somehow I find that really hard to believe.

MC Right.

RB And, you know, totem poles were never maintained, they were just allowed to deteriorate.

MC So how do you feel now about that? Like, Alert Bay for example, has such a wonderful museum. And I guess one of the questions I'm trying to sort out is what role is there for that kind of conventional museum preservation. So that, for instance, like you just mentioned the poles weren't maintained but we maintain .. you know, the poles down at MOA, you know, they may eventually go back to their home communities, but still there's the question of to maintain or to follow what was the traditional practise.

RB Well, I think with, you know, changing times, I think they should be preserved. And, I mean, people replicate those things in museums all the time, but I think they should be preserved.

MC Why?

RB Well, I think it's important. I think it's important to .. I think it's like a base for keeping things ongoing. Because what's outside of the museum you can't possibly know what's going to happen to what might be a copy, and you just never know. Through fire, through
theft, through what could happen. That you’ve always got this base to go back to.

MC  Yeah.

RB  Mind you, it’s not a complete base, because there are so many things missing that will probably never be recovered, but I just think that we should keep what we have.

MC  So then one of the things that I’m trying to balance out is, for example, the need for people to use the objects, whether they’re .. people have the right to, you know, dance a certain mask, or whether they’re young kids who are being introduced to these objects through a school programme with U’mista, or something like that. So there’s, you know, kids like to handle things, and, I mean, you’ve got all [unclear] experience in this, and, but every time something gets handled or used, you risk breaking off a bit or the paint flaking or losing some feathers or something like this, so it deteriorates, you know, in the Western view it deteriorates, it deteriorates more quickly. How do you balance this out? The preservation and the, you know, the use, you know, if use is going to hasten the losing of bits and pieces.

RB  Well, I thought that the things in the museum are not handled, that they have some stuff that have been made and are fairly new for hands on stuff.

MC  That’s true at U’mista, that’s what they’ve done. Yeah. But for instance, at the Museum of Anthropology, we got a request a year ago from a family that had the rights to these pieces of .. or these masks and needed them for a potlatch, and so we, you know, we lent them back, and, I mean, they arrived back in perfect condition, you know, and but it’s a que .. it’s sort of how we establish our museum practise too, you know, and I’d just like your thoughts on that. You know, do we ask people to wear white gloves, or do we ask them not to, you know, I don’t want to act like a policeman to the people who have, you know, who .. I mean, access is such a big question.

RB  I know, I have a piece in the U’mista museum ...

MC  Oh, you do! Aha.
RB And it's a fairly old piece, and I had it, mind you, years ago when my children were small, when it came into my possession from my Dad, I used to allow my children to take it for show and tell. And I raised five kids and they all at one time or another took this piece and sometimes carefully and in a plastic bag, but in the case of my son just having it around his waist and parading down Rumble Street never thinking that someone might recognize it as something very valuable and could have been snatched out of their hands just like that.

MC Yeah.

RB But eventually I was to realize the value of this thing, after my father died, and so decided to store it in the museum. But I find that a lot of people have a right to this thing. Just very recently my nephew phoned and asked if he could sign it out of the museum for Calvin Hunt's potlatch in Fort Rupert, and I myself personally feel that I can't refuse them, and so this is the third time that my nephew has signed it out of the museum for someone. Once for himself, and I keep telling myself, I have to tell him that maybe he should replicate it so that it can be preserved for as long as possible. So when I was telling my brother this, he said, "Well, for what purpose? You know, it will just stay in the museum forever?" And I said, "I hope so." And he said, "But why? When it can be used?" I said, "Sure it can be used," I said, "Beau can make another one exactly like it." And he said, "You're probably right, but you see it's never ..." My brother is quite a bit older than I am, and he said, "It just doesn't make sense to me to have these things in a museum when they can be utilized for the things that we do today." And that was a literal translation for how we refer to having potlatches.

MC Mhm.

RB [Speaking in Kwakwala] They always said. And it just simply means, "For what we do."

MC OK.

RB And but anyways, so I found out he felt, he found out how I felt and that's ...

MC That's where it is now.
RB  Yes. And though we'll probably replicate it one day, if I ever refuse to allow him to sign it out of there again.

MC  So is this Beau Dick is .. ?

RB  Mmm hm.

MC  Oh, great. So he's certainly wonderfully able to replicate something.

RB  Oh, yes. He just amazes me.

MC  So, like, I guess I'm also interested in what you would consider damage to the piece, because in museums there's a no, you know, we have this very strict definition of damage, where almost anything, a piece of .. a flake of paint falls off, and we consider it damage. And you know, this comes out of the tradition, conservation comes out of the tradition, of the restoration of European oil paintings where, you know, the smile on the Mona Lisa goes, and forget it. So it's a very almost absolutist definition of what is damage. And it also comes out because in the past, curators, and some directors have been very cavalier about the way they've treated objects. You know, they haven't .. and objects have deteriorated in museum care. So when the conservators came along – we're kind of the Johnny-come-lately's of the museum profession – ...

RB  Really, I didn't know that.

MC  Yeah. Yeah, it really wasn't until the fifties that the word "conservators" began to be used and in Canada it wasn't until the late sixties that there were any conservators in the museums. And the first programme was in 1973, so it's really quite recent that conservators ...

RB  I had no idea. I didn't .. I just have no idea of that.

MC  Yeah. Yeah, so conservators came along, and they said, "Look." you know, "What you're doing is deteriorating these objects." So that they .. in a way they set up these guidelines that are quite strict, that help preserve the objects that other people had not been taking good care of, but, like in your case, say, with an object that gets signed out for use in a potlatch, you know, if a feather falls off or the paint flakes off, does it really matter? Or only if it's something major, like you know, a big
piece falls off. Like, what do you think? What do you accept as not being really damaged and where do you draw the line?

RB I really don't know.

MC OK.

RB I mean, it's not something I have ever thought about. I thought .. I've just thought it was, you put something in the museum, it will be preserved.

MC Right. Well, and that should be what .. that's the theory, yeah. That's what should happen yeah.

RB And once they're in the museum, they're not handled by the public, and I've never thought beyond that, Miriam.

MC OK.

RB My sister has a bentwood box that 's even older than what I have, and her sisters used it as a toy box for years and years and it came .. my great great grandmother, so I don't know, I can't begin to think how many years back that might have been.

MC Yeah.

RB Who was from Fort Rupert, who was [unclear] left, left Fort Rupert, she married first an Englishman, had one daughter, and he drowned, married again, and had a daughter and son, and the daughter of that marriage was my great grandmother.

MC Oh, right.

RB And she was born in Port Townsend, and then when .. he disappeared, we don't really know what happened to him, he just didn't go home from work one night after working night shift, at the waterfront, so nobody really knows what happened to him. But my great, great grandmother came back to Victoria where she died and a relative from Fort Rupert went to Victoria and picked up the children, and my great grandmother brought the bentwood box back to Fort Rupert with her which had gone out of Fort Rupert with my great, great grandmother,
so if she was .. and it wasn’t new by any means, apparently, when she took it away, so it would be very old, and my niece and my nephew used to use it as a toy box. It sat displayed in the living room in a corner for the toys that were living room toys, and then after I put my sisiutl in the museum at Alert Bay and I was telling my sister – she also has another mask in the museum, which would be about the same age as my sisiutl – and I said to her, you know, your bentwood box, it’s so old, and it’s so fragile, you should really take it to the museum. And she said, “Well, you know, the museum up at Alert Bay is so new and you notice that most of the things you can touch them, you know, they’re right in the open, they’re not in cases, so I was thinking maybe I should just have it stored in a museum in Vancouver, and I said, “Why don’t you store it out at the Museum of Anthropology?” So I phoned Dr. Ames, and her and I – I drove her to the museum – Dr. Ames took one look at it and called somebody and said, “Come and look at this.” And they seemed to have marvelled, a bunch of them sitting around, standing around this thing marvelling at it, and I don’t know if it ever got .. whether anybody ever .. how would they find out such a thing? Like how old it is?

MC I think they would just compare it with every box that they know about. You know, like Bill McLennan, you know, especially Bill, because he’s photographed so many and so he might be able to recognize similar styles and say, you know, there’s a box in this museum, there’s a box here, there, that looks really similar, and that one’s from 1850, and that one’s from 1860, so, you know, I think that’s how .. you know.

RB Well, when we left the museum, my sister said, “Now it’s in the museum, they’ll put it away somewhere and I won’t even be able to see it. It’s been part of me since I was just .. ” – because she had it when she was a little girl because my great grandmother gave it to her. “And it will be just hidden away in that museum and the only thing that I have of it is a memory that’s in my head that this thing is mine, and it’s hidden away.”

MC Yeah.

RB I may in time even forget the design on it.

MC Hmm.
RB So she said, "This thing that was passed on to me, I'm no longer going to get anything out of it, it'll be in my will that it goes to my daughter, but it will just sit in the museum." And she looked at me, she said, "So now what?" You know. And I didn't have any answers for her. All I knew is that it shouldn't sit in her apartment any more, she's now moved into an apartment, and I said there's also too the chance of theft.

MC Yes.

RB And I said, "You said lots of people had broken into this apartment block already. There's also a chance of you losing it. And then you will never see it again. At least you know it's in the museum." And she said, "But to me it just doesn't make any sense, one day I'm going to die, it'll go to Geraldine, and what's Geraldine going to get out of owning this thing?"

MC Yeah. Yeah.

RB And I said, "Well, you could always sell it to the museum, they'll display it. She can go up there any time she wanted to look at this thing, but you'll have the money in her hands." And she'd go "As if I would do such a thing." So you tell me what really makes sense here.

MC I don't know. I really can't say. It's ...

RB But she's put it in there so that nobody could touch it so that it wouldn't deteriorate any more than it's deteriorated already.

MC Yeah. Well, so maybe, you know, we have .. there are boxes you know, in the Great Hall, you know, as you go down the ramp, maybe at least it could go there, so it's getting a bit of pride of place.

RB Do they allow that?

MC Yes.

RB Do they do that?

MC Yes, yeah. If you requ .. it would be good to request it, say, look, this
was given in good faith for safety and security, but is it possible to put it in a place where we have easy access and it is a pride of place, you know? Because that’s another thing I’m thinking of. You know, if I gave my grandmother’s wedding gown to a historical museum, you know, and put it on display, I’d probably, if I was taking visitors through, I’d say, “Hey, that was my grandmother’s.” I’d be proud of it in the museum. But your sister doesn’t get that same feeling of being proud of it.

RB No. She just knows that this thing is packed away somewhere in the museum being preserved. I mean, it was never suggested to her that she could do this.

MC Yeah. So it should, maybe, next ...

RB Well, I’ll certainly phone and tell her this is a possibility.

MC Yeah.

RB Yeah, because the more I think about it, it really is ...

MC Yeah, because it’s like it’s been taken away from her now, even though it was voluntary, it’s still like ...

RB I’m going to suggest it to her.

MC Yeah, and if you were talking to Dr. Ames, mention it to him, too, because he’s very much for access rather than preservation. I mean, he’s for preservation too, but he’s very much for access. So.

RB Well, gee, that’s good to know, you know? We left and she was so sad, and I felt so guilty talking her into this.

MC Yeah, because preservation shouldn’t have to mean that things are put away and you don’t see them, and you don’t have access to them. I mean, that’s interesting in a sense because what’s happened in this case is that preservation has meant a loss for her.

RB Yeah.

MC Whereas not a gaining. But .. you know, we always say, “Well, you’re
preserving something. That's a positive thing." But in this case it's a loss. It's .. yeah.

RB Oh, I'm really glad, [unclear] Miriam.

MC Well, you know, if .. let me know because when I get .. I don't get back to the museum until January, because I'm on study leave, but I can also, when I'm back in the museum, if it's not put out yet, I can add my voice to having it put out, it's just that you'll have to remind me.

RB Yes, I will. I will.

MC OK.

RB And you know, once I phone my sister, she won't let me forget either.

MC Yeah, right. To go back, for example, your piece at U'mista. Say it was loaned out for a potlatch and something happened, you know, an accident in transportation, and some of the paint got removed, would you prefer that it's left as .. even with the paint removed but still it's the work of the, you know, the person who made it from that time period that is no longer, do you prefer that it remains like that, or do you prefer that it, say Beau Dick, you know, repaints it so that it looks the way it .. ?

RB You know what? I think he's already done some doctoring on that.

MC OK. What kind of doctoring?

RB Because there was a piece chipped out of the ear, you know like the little, I don't know what they are, they're little hollow looking things.

MC Oh, yes. Yeah.

RB And the last time I seen it when there was a group from the Museum of Anthropology at Alert Bay, they had brought it out to show them, and it was so complete. And I looked at it, and Miriam, I couldn't find where it had been fixed.

MC Aha.
RB I could not... and when I went to see Beau later, and said, "You fixed my sisiutl, didn't you?" And he said, "Oh, you noticed." and I said, "Which side was it on?" and she said, "Why would I tell you if you can't see it? Pretty good job, hey, aunty?" he says to me. So I guess... I guess I'm really not concerned that there's any paint or anything. I don't think it's been repainted or anything like that, I mean, I don't think it will be, and... 

MC Would that be of concern if it was repainted over the old paint?

RB Yes. I think so.

MC Yeah.

RB Yeah, I think I'd rather leave it as it is, and if the paint fades or gradually is rubbed off, and it's not really used that often, and it's only been used three times, and you know, in all the years that I had it, when I was very young, it was never used. It had been used one time and never again. And this way it has been utilized by other families that have the right to it.

MC Yes.

RB And those families might have... well, I think it helped them... because people when they... before they give a potlatch they're trying to round up all the things that they have a right to, and a lot of those things are inaccessible, so I've just been pleased that this has helped to an extent. But I'm still concerned. Every once in awhile I think well, I've got to be sensible about this, and must remember to tell Beau to replicate it so he doesn't have to keep signing it out of the museum. And so that it can be preserved. But there it would sit, you know, there again it would just sit. Because all the private stuff is not displayed.

MC Yeah, and that's interesting too, because of the way the museum's organized they have only have the objects from that... you know, the potlatch collection.

RB And it's not a very big museum before you have quite a bit.

MC Yeah. So that some of the... I mean, if people wanted some of their private pieces to be out, I think it could happen because there is the
room, you know when you first go in and you’re going down the ramp, there’s a room to the right that has some archaeological pieces and other pieces that aren’t part of the returned potlatch pieces, so I think that, you know, again, if you requested it, say, to Juanita, you know, that you’d like to have it if that’s what you would like, you know, that that .. it would be interesting to see how they respond. You know, but I think that ...

RB Beau keeps them out of his stuff, his new stuff. Like he made a big Hamatsa mask, one of those great big long things where they have handles along the beak?

MC Oh, yeah, yeah.

RB And he .. that is stored at the museum.

MC OK.

RB For whatever his reasons are, and it’s pretty new, I mean, it’s just been recently carved, so ...

MC That’s .. yeah.

RB So whatever his reasons are, maybe just for safety, insurance against theft, I don’t know.

MC Yeah, yeah. That’s good that the museum can provide the secure, safe place.

RB That kind of sevice, yes.

MC Do you remember the first time you went in to a museum and what that was like?

RB The first time I ever went into a museum. I know I must have started going to museums at one time in my life, but Miriam, I cannot remember a very first time I ever went into a museum. So if that’s the case, it must not have made a very big impression on me.

MC Right.
RB  But I do remember the first time I ever seen the stuff out of .. the stuff that we use in our potlatches and things ...

MC  Yeah?

RB  Having a big lump in my throat and you know, I can’t even remember what museum that would be. It had to be the Planetarium.

MC  Oh, OK. The Vancouver Museum.

RB  The Vancouver Museum.

MC  And the lump, was it sadness? You know, that .. or was it .. ?

RB  I think it was sadness. You know, I think it was sadness, because potlatches weren’t .. there were practically no potlatches going on, I know up at Kingcome they had potlatches, I remember potlatches when I was a little girl; but to me there was that in between time. And I know when I was a little girl I used to go to these big potlatches with all the dancing and everything, that seemed to go on for days when I was a little girl, was at a time that potlatching was banned. But then there seemed to be a big gap, and that could even have been in the time I was in the residential school that there was no potlatches, although I remember a couple of times that my sisters and I would be taken home because of some .. because of a potlatch.

MC  Yeah.

RB  And something that was really important to my family I would guess. But when you’re little, you don’t question why potlatches are given, you’re just a part of it, and of course it’s exciting if you can dance, you know, then you’re a bigger part of the potlatch. It’s always wonderful to be a spectator, but when you’re can be a part of it, that feeling of pride. Like children, when they have sort of a starring role in something, whether it’s in a choir at church or whether it’s in a school play, that feeling of pride. But there seemed to be a big gap when it didn’t happen very much. But then, Miriam, it could have been me, too. Like feeling “I have to go on to other things.” Like a lot of us did.

MC  Yeah.
RB We moved into the urban area and we had to make a place for ourselves, and this society, and struggling with it. That had to take priority over something that was such a big part of me. And then all of a sudden it just came back so strong, and now there’s potlatches every year and it’s wonderful.

MC Yeah. When you saw those objects in the Vancouver Museum, was the sadness about not having, you know, been to a potlatch in a long time, or .. ?

RB I think it was. I think it must have been in a period of life when I was not, when I was not going back or anything like that. And feeling that .. remembering that feeling that it gave you sitting in the Big House, the smell, and the atmosphere, everything that goes on in a potlatch, I think just sort of whelmed up, and yeah, it did get emotional, and you know, suddenly the drumming, the drum log with his sticks and sort of come into the fore, and all of a sudden wanting to hear something, something so familiar like the potlatch songs.

MC Yes. So these objects just brought this rush of memories that were .. yeah.

RB Yes. I dwelled on it for a couple of days.

MC Yeah. So, one of the things in conservation .. there’s a Code of Ethics conservators follow, and they, you know, we say what we’re trying to preserve are these four aspects about an object. We’re trying to preserve the physical integrity, you know, the actual physical object and not let it get harmed, the historic integrity, so that’s .. if there have been any important historic events or actually, potlatches or whatever, especially if they’ve left their mark on the object, then we don’t remove that, you know, the aesthetic integrity if it’s an object that was made, like a painting for aesthetic purposes, and also the, and in Canada it’s called the conceptual integrity, which means the cultural significance. So again, for example, if it was a Chinese Buddha, and there was soot and tar all over it from burning incense, the conservators would probably leave that soot and tar on, unless it was really deteriorating the object. Because, you know, that’s part ..

RB Part of it.
MC Part of its use. But now, this question of conceptual integrity, it's not just the, you know, the physical traces of it, left on an object, it's the fact that the object is continuing it's conceptual life, by being danced or whatever. So first of all, I guess, one of my questions is can a mus .. you know, is there any role for a museum in preserving conceptual integrity, or does that really happen outside the museum? And I'm thinking both of a museum like ourselves, but also a place like U'mista?

RB I wish I knew. I can .. how .. I think only the museum can know that.


RB Alert Bay, the role that they play, I mean, they protect new .. the new stuff that are used in potlatches, like what Beau keeps in a museum.

MC Yeah.

RB But I don't really know that for sure either. Because they might have sold it to the museum and with the understanding that he would have use of it. I know that Beau has sold sets of masks to someone, with the understanding that anytime he needed it for a potlatch ...  

MC He could use it.

RB Yeah. So these people come back with it and [unclear] protecting their .. protecting what they own. So, well, I think, you know, the museum at Alert Bay does just that. They release some things.

MC Yes.

RB But that's not .. well I ... So, you know, it was probably just the stuff that is stored there by private owners like my sisiutl [unclear] that I use that way.

MC Yeah. Yeah.

RB So I think .. I don't know. I would think any place, any museum would be very protective of what they have. Even though, like, for instance, if I had sold my sisiutl to the museum, I would not .. I just don't think that I would, should feel that they should .. I don't think that they
would expect .. I wouldn’t expect them to release it to me any time I wanted to use it because it’s theirs.

MC Right.

RB And I certainly would be nervous about taking out such a thing and then return it with the museum unhappy with me. Such a big institute.

MC Yeah. Now, what if the sisiutl hadn’t been .. had been missing from your family, and you ended up .. you saw it in the museum, and you recognized that it was the one from your family. but you know, sometime forty years ago it had left your family and you weren’t sure how it had left, or something like that? I think that’s the case for a lot of objects that are in the museum.

RB I think I would have to assume that it was sold.

MC OK.

RB I know .. like, in my family, because I know that my family, they didn’t have anything confiscated from them. They were – well, at least the Dawson side of the family – they were Kingcome and when people were asked to turned over their ceremonial masks, unlike places like Cape Mudge who willingly gave up, who brought down their stuff to this place where it would be taken by boat or scow to Vancouver, unlike them, Kingcome, and I think another village was Turner Island, never volunteered any of their stuff, they kept it, they hid it away. So I would have to think, for myself, because I can’t think for somebody else, that if I’d seen anything that had belonged to us, I would have to assume that it had been sold. And if something is sold, it’s no longer yours. And I guess we would have to do the next best thing and have it replicated. Which I’m sure you know, somebody in the family will do. Certainly Beau has done a lot of that.

MC Yeah. So, OK, then of those four things that I said museum conservator’s are trying to preserve, the physical integrity of the object, the aesthetic integrity, the historic integrity, and the conceptual integrity, is there one of those that is more important than the other?

RB OK. The physical integrity, that would be, like the flaking off of paint
and stuff.

MC Exactly. To make sure it doesn't happen. That the object doesn't deteriorate any more.

RB And the historical integrity, and what was the other one?

MC The aesthetic integrity.

RB Yeah, I know. Explain to me the aesthetic.

MC OK. The aesthetic .. I guess the aesthetic integrity .. for example, with your sisiutl. If you signed it out to Beau, you know, and he used it in potlatch, and the next time you saw it it was repainted. And even though Beau is a fabulous artist, you'd say, "Well, wait a minute. It's original integrity you know, done by whoever, was this!"

RB Yeah. I would be very upset about that, so now we've got ...

MC OK.

RB And what was the other one? There's a fourth.

MC The conceptual integrity, which is the cultural significance of it. So like, if we're trying .. I guess, the point is, is the museum is trying to preserve, to make sure that that part gets preserved, then part of that is maybe lending it out to appropriate people in order to .. you know, as long as it's in good enough condition.

RB I would think historical to me would be the most important.

MC Oh, OK.

RB And then the conceptual.

MC OK.

RB I'd certainly be upset about Beau, about anyone altering something that belonged to me, something like the sisiutl, but then I think it would be up to me to caution them "I don't want it changed in any way. Don't try to improve it, don't ... " Mind you, he did do that. He did do that
Unedited transcript of original interview, with later clarification from some interviewees. Reproduced with permission; further quotation requires permission from interviewee.

without ...

MC Do you think he did it because it wouldn't have looked good in the potlatch?

RB I think so.

MC For an object to .. ?

RB And I think it was important that it be whole. And yeah, he probably knew me well enough that I would have said "No". But he also has enough faith in himself that ...

MC Aha. Yes.

RB That I could be very pleased with what he did. Because I couldn't see where he did. I really don't know how he did it. It was his paint job or something, and you know, the paint job didn't look new, it didn't ...

MC Aha!

RB Whatever he did, Miriam, he was very good at it.

MC Great. Great. If the object had been sold to the museum, so it belonged in the U'mista's collection, would you, you know, and the museum decided to refurbish it, say, to add, whether it was paint or cedar bark or feathers or something like that. Maybe it's going on in an exhibit and you wanted it to look, you know, complete. Would you want them, because it's an object associated with certain rights, would you want them to also kind of ask you before they went ahead and did that?

RB Mmhmm. I would definitely.

MC OK. Even though it's an object that has been .. ?

RB Yeah, even though it now belongs to them, but the right, the way it looks is ..

MC They're related. Yeah.

RB Yeah. So I think historical first and then that.
OK. And the historical, I just want to .. all of these categories overlap, so I just want to make the distinction between historic and aesthetic. So historic is also, you know, it's been used in a potlatch and maybe it got a little banged and you knew that, or it lost .. a couple of feathers came off when it was being danced or something - it probably doesn't have feathers, but just as an example - that would be historic, and the aesthetic would be if Beau had painted it so you couldn't see what it looked like originally. So of those two is the historic more important or is aesthetic more important or is it hard to say.

Well, it's hard to say, because my ... I think of, you know, when you think of historical, I am thinking in terms of .. that .. of that it's a part of the family history.

Yes. OK. Alright. Yeah. Yeah. Right. Which is important. So, that's like your sister's box. You know that it's .. yeah. Yeah. And you know, the chief, the chief should be able to say, look, yes, you know, you can preserve it, but I wanted to be able to have access to it.

Yes, I want to be able to look at it. But she had gotten to a point where she didn't really like handling it.

Aha. Yeah.

You know? She was always so careful with it.

Yeah. Yeah.

And saying "If I hadn't been so stupid and used it as a toy box it might be in better condition."

Yeah.

Although I don't know really. For me it never changed from the time when I first seen it to the time when I last seen it. It was an old box.

Do you think that there are pieces - I'm thinking maybe jewelry, you know, which is smaller and in a way maybe more personal, because it's worn a lot. Are there pieces that you would always think of passing down to your children rather than putting in a museum?
RB  I would pass all my jewelry down to my children. My sister got bracelets from my mother.

MC  Oh, yeah?

RB  And one of the .. they were gold bracelets.

MC  Wow.

RB  They were all gold. And one of the bracelets was a bracelet that wide, and it had got so thin in places that you could see through them.

MC  You’re kidding.

RB  She took it to a jewelry store, and had it lined with silver and you could see the silver through it. And it’s very old, it’s no longer perfect, but she still uses it, it’s still .. and I think, well, I guess her feeling is, it should be worn.

MC  Yeah.

RB  They can be replaced eventually when they’re just worn down to nothing, I don’t know, but I wouldn’t personally go and have something preserved that is so old.

MC  So what do you think then .. say .. I don’t know if Beau does jewelry .. ?

RB  No, he doesn’t.

MC  Well, OK. Well, let’s say he did. You have a beautiful gold bracelet that he had made, and you know, and he’s a well known carver or an artist because he’s so .. he’s very good, he’s very well known. And so would there be a certain point where you’d say well, OK, this should be preserved because it’s .. like people do with Bill Reid’s jewelry, for instance. They say, “Well, he’s so important that we’ll preserve it.”

RB  Well, Miriam, I have to be honest.

MC  Yes, please be honest.
RB I look at those things and I think, what a waste. Sitting in a glass case when it could be adorning someone. When somebody could be enjoying them. And I think the reason why I don't, I can feel this way is because some of her jewelry wasn't really a part of a very, you know, our past history, it is something very new.

MC OK.

RB And they just .. to me they should be worn.

MC Right. So that's what makes it different from the sisiutl.

RB Yes. And I guess metal doesn't deteriorate as fast as those old valuable old pieces of carving.

MC Yes.

RB Yeah, I don't feel that strongly about silver.

MC Yes. Well, that's interesting, because, you know, my bracelet, it's already all scratched up, and at a certain point I'm thinking, should I wear it less because, at some point, like, the design, it'll just be all covered with scratches. It won't look the same. You know.

RB Well, you know, one of my sister's bracelets, she always said - because she got everything. That just seemed to .. the way things worked, the oldest daughter got all the jewelry, all the china, you know, all the valuable things. Well, my sister used to say to me that she says, "One day I'll have one of my gold bracelets and have it cut into two bracelets [unclear]." And I was all for that, "Oh great, I can say I've got something that belonged to my mom."

MC Yeah.

RB You know, something sentimental when we .. my younger sister she was horrified [unclear] when she was older, she said, "You can't go and wreck such a beautiful piece. Look what it would do to .. the carving wouldn't make any sense at all." I was so disgusted with her. I really wanted a piece of that gold bracelet that belonged to my mom. So it's .. so there again my feelings about silver and gold weren't really that. Even the work that went into it. And maybe because it was something
very recent in our history as people.

MC Yes.

RB But you know, what I really do like is shells like abalone and even mother of pearl things that weren’t prevalent here, I really liked them, and they’re carved. I’m very careful with them.

MC Yes.

RB I especially like the abalone from around .. the local abalone shells. And I never really ask, you know, why I’ve always had a preference for them, because they’re not that valuable, excepting that I think it was something that was always around. It was in our masks, it was .. they were always around the house someplace. As big earrings and things.

MC Yeah, they’re very beautiful and they’re fragile too.

RB And going through this old trunk in the attic, there was a box of abalone shells, all shapes and sizes, and it was part of my mother’s dowry when she married my dad. And of course some silver and gold that went to my father’s sisters. And then she came with all her gold that eventually my older sister Doreen ended up with. The one with the bentwood box. The one that gets all the really ancient stuff. To be the oldest.

MC Yeah. That’s interesting. I’m a younger sister myself, so ... yeah.

RB I hope you’re getting something out of all this.

MC Oh, I am. This is great. It really is. So do objects .. is there a certain point when the objects become community heritage rather than family heritage. You know? Or in your tradition do you think it’s always family heritage.

RB It’s always family heritage.

MC OK. So .. and what about archaeological objects say, that where you don’t know the name of the family. Would those, how .. would they be .. I guess I’m thinking of, you know, if they go into a museum or something like that they would be ...
RB I really don't know.

MC Yeah.

RB I don't really know. My dad apparently sold something at the museum. I went to have a look at it and it's a stone... what do they call it?

MC Oh, yeah. Those stone mauls.

RB Yes. And I remember seeing that. It was always around.

MC Yeah.

RB And I know that my dad would go and get it once in awhile with a bunch of other tools and stuff when he was going off in his canoe someplace. But I never ever questioned. I was not interested in his tools, ancient or otherwise.

MC Yes. Yes.

RB But I had to go look at this thing, and then I remembered it, and holding it and the stone and you could see the imprint of, you know, where work had been on there, and this things was... it was established at about 9000 years old, and I just can't believe that it was something that was in my family for 9000 years.

MC Yeah. Right.

RB I have a sense that my Dad might have found it, it could have been given to him. I never did ask my brother. I must ask him if he knows the history of this thing; where did my father get it? But when.. finding out that it was 9000 years old and holding it, and I think a combination of knowing that my father had had this thing for years and probably used it for whatever, but that it was 9000 years, and how many people have used it, because there was the imprint of fingers on it, I just got... something just went up and down my spine.

MC Yeah. It's family heritage too.
RB  Mmhm. Well, that, I think a combination of both. The possibility is that it came very recently into our family, to my Dad, mainly, or it could have come from his grandfather, so, I think for that reason, well, of course it should be preserved, because I don’t see anyone using such a thing anymore.

MC  Right, right.

RB  Well, you know, my husband, he has, I don’t know what you call those things that sort of smooth those things ...

MC  Oh, like a mat creaser?

RB  I don’t know what it is, but it has a flat iron type thing and then you hold it.

MC  A plane? A plane? Is that what it is?

RB  Yeah, I guess that’s what it is. And it looks very ancient, and I walked into the garage one day where he was [unclear] handling that day, and he doesn’t use it of course, and looking at it, he said, “I’m just wondering what I should do with this maybe make sure that it goes to Grant when I die.” And I said, “Where did you get that. Is that from your Dad?” and he looked at me and said, “It is from your Dad.”

MC  Oh, wow.

RB  And he used it, he used it when it first came into his possession.

MC  Yeah.

RB  He used that. And he said it’s such a wonderful old thing, it wasn’t .. it was the top of the line at that time, and so as he was handling this thing so lovingly, you know, and I think it’s because it began to have a history. And I said, you know, “Grant’s not even a carpenter. What would he do with it.” And he said, “I think he’d like to have it. I think the idea that it came from your Dad, I think he would just like to have it. He doesn’t have to be a carpenter.” So I guess he was saying for the sentimental value.

MC  So that’s interesting. So the objects, even when they aren’t being used,
like their useful life is over, either because they’re too old, or because the person ...

RB There is an easier way out. You know, it’s been replaced by something more modern.

MC Yeah, yeah. As long as it has these personal associations it’s kept in the family. And I guess at some point if, you know, it loses those personal associations for somebody then that’s when it goes into a museum some time or gets sold, or whatever.

RB Yeah. And this thing, well, I doubt it will ever have any monetary value, but Ian just seemed to really .. but also too I think he liked my father. He liked talking to him. He learned a lot from my Dad I think, and traditional ways of doing things. Taking him up the river and showing him historical places where smoking salmon was done.

MC Oh, yeah.

RB And taking him and my children to show them the spawning grounds, and explaining what happens, you know, the life of a salmon. And mother’s been telling me about my oldest daughter sitting there and crying and saying “It’s so sad.” sitting there in the canoe at the falls.

MC How old was she then?

RB She would have been about four. Four or five. So sad, you know, he must have told the story very, very well for her to have understood and have the feeling that it was so sad that they only struggle up this fall to die.

MC Yeah. Well, this is just great. Maybe I should just .. I don’t want to keep you too much longer, you know.

RB Well whatever you need. If you think you can get any more out of me, I don’t ...

MC OK. Thank you. I’ll just look and see whether .. well, there’s one question here about, you know, if a piece is repaired, would you prefer .. like, if the materials which are the same as the old materials are used, the only problem is, is that you never know what was original, or what
was added later. So that whatever, you know, your forebear, or whoever was the artist did, you can't distinguish that from what, say, Beau does, if he uses the same kinds of paints, or ...

RB Yes.

MC Or, is it OK to use new materials that may not be the same, say sort of an acrylic paint, instead of an oil paint, or something like that, because even if you can't tell visually, you'd still be able to tell with a test, or whatever that it's ...

RB Yeah. I just think that if things have been kept for historical, or .. I think they should just be left in that state.

MC Yeah. And that's how, like, I would think too, but that's because of my being a conservator, and I, you know, I'm just wondering whether that applies, like whether you would agree. Yeah. Good. Well, that's interesting, because that's also, you know, there's so many things conservators do, it's interesting to see where some of them are really just things that, you know, you come up with or we come up with or things where would people would support, you know, what we're doing. This question of deterioration. Like, if there had been a pole from your family and that was now in the Museum of Anthropology, would you want it to go back and complete its natural cycle?

RB No.

MC No. Yeah.

RB No.

MC Is there .. why, is it because it's old and you know, is sort of .. represents of different time period and the ancestors and everything, is that .. ?

RB Yes.

MC I mean, I'm I don't want to put words in your mouth I'm just trying to think ...

RB Yeah. For that reason.
MC Aha. Aha.

RB I guess my feeling is to hold on to as much of what we had as much as possible.

MC Yeah. And why does that have value for you to hold on to as much as possible.

RB When you think back on how much we lost in such a short period, and then feeling even back then that we didn’t have a choice, that it was taken away from us. But eventually I guess my feeling was that it was just a matter of time that Kingcome would no longer be doing what they had been doing when other villages had stopped.

MC Yes.

RB As the new generation came, and lost interest, and hearing kids saying things like, “My God, she still speaks Kwakwala!” you know, as something that was out – what’s the word for it? It’s like saying that someone has never grown out of the fifties. You know, that sort of thing.

MC Right. You’re a square.

RB Yeah.

MC But yeah, that’s interesting. Because now that’s a real value.

RB Yes.

MC You’re .. you know, I’m sure you’re really respected for your ability to speak the language.

RB Yeah. And I think, you know, when you think in terms of how much we lost in such a short period, and we now see that we can save and maybe retrieve, then of course we should try to preserve as much as we can.

MC Yes. Yes. And, like, education of kids. Do you think it’s important for them to have the old objects around, or is it just the fact of the objects being used that’s really important.
RB The fact of the objects being used, I think, that’s important. And understanding the use of it. Taking my granddaughter to the potlatches, she – but although you don’t sit there and try to teach her anything, explain anything to her – but some little things are .. like she knows the song that brings out the Crooked Beak.

MC OK.

RB That’s .. I gather that’s one of her favourite part of the potlatches is the .. [unclear] masks that come out.

MC Oh, yeah.

RB Or she’ll be sort of dozing and she’ll hear the song, and she’ll go, “That’s the song for the Crooked Beak.” and then she’ll sit up and watch expectantly at the corner where the Crooked Beak is going to come out.

MC Oh, great. How old is she?

RB Well, she’s now seven. Seven going on eight next month. But, you know, she’s known this for a long time. Walking her to school today and she starts humming something, and she said, “Do you know what song that is?” and not really listening, “What is it?” “Don’t you know? That’s the song for the Crooked Beak.”

MC Oh, yeah.

RB You know, and I guess this is how we learned, how we .. but the only thing with that, is when you learn things that way, you just accept it as such, and you don’t say “why”. So what we have to encourage the questioning. “Don’t you want to know?” The reason I bring this up is because at the museum people are always asking, well, why? And I think, I don’t know, it was something that was always there and you never question why it was.

MC Right, right. Well, that’s the .. different ways of teaching and learning.

RB Yeah. So now I’ve had to go home and ask a lot of questions about why is that, and why do they do this, and have learned so much since, you
know, had my time at the museum I have learned so much, because the museum made me question things.

MC Great.

RB Things I had just always accepted as "Oh, that's the way we always did it. It was always done that way. The agenda was always like that."

MC Yeah.

RB And learned so many things. Which has been a really good thing for me because now I've got a lot of things to [unclear]. Now I can say to my grandchildren, as well as my children, do you want to know why this is done that way.

MC Are there traditional ways of keeping objects that might be appropriate for us in the Museum of Anthropology? Either things like ways to keep insects away, something like that, or I'm also thinking of, you know, well, these objects, maybe we should ask some elders whether they should be on display or not.

RB I don't know. I really don't know.

MC Yeah. How do you mix that ... you know, the Western tradition and conservation is very scientific and how do you balance – that's another balance thing – between balancing sort of that scientific point of view with a traditional, First Nations, point of view? You know, which is not, you know, should things be stored, you know, if they're .. like today, whether they're at say, at U'mista. Is it better to store them in the way conservators say to store them, which is all based on science, or is better to make, you know, to store them, like they were traditionally stored in wood boxes, to store them in wooden boxes, or to .. you know?

RB Well, I can't answer that, because I don't know that our ancestors knew that this was a way of preserving things. I know how my father kept all his masks, all his Hamatsa masks all the stuff he used at potlatches, and to me the attic, because our home wasn't that big, the attic was very small, and it just seemed to be, you know, wall to wall, with a floor full of stuff.
MC Were they wrapped?

RB They were wrapped. They were always wrapped in burlap. And the only thing I was ever interested in that attic was my mother’s trunk and her wedding gown. I used to like to pull all these things out and examine it and all the masks, they were just there, staring at you, all the time.

MC So they weren’t wrapped, or they were wrapped?

RB They were wrapped.

MC OK. So they were staring at ..

RB Yeah, you know, you can still see the ...

MC You can still see the form. OK. Yeah.

RB Yeah, so. I don’t know why I say staring, they always seemed to be wrapped. Maybe there were a couple that .. that maybe just the body part, like, the bulk of it was wrapped.

MC Yeah. But you had the sense .. did you have a sense of them being alive?

RB Yeah.

MC Yeah.

RB And he also had a lot of whistles and things, and you know, wooden things that make those eerie sounds.

MC Yeah.

RB That give you that feeling of a potlatch, you know, anticipating some myserious things.

MC Yeah.

RB And he had a whole bunch of those as well.
MC That’s really interesting, because, you know, the significance of those for you, and the significance for somebody like myself when I just see them in museums is entirely different, you know. Very different emotions. Yeah.

RB But that’s understandable, Miriam. I mean, this has been .. these things have been a part of me ever since I could remember, ever since I can remember giving my first dance when I was taken out of the Big House by the Hamatsa thinking that I was going to a mystical magical place and then I was only handed over to an aunt who in turn took me home, washed me up, put me into my – they were blue sleepers, you know, still with the feet and the trap door and everything – and put me into that and put me into a cream coloured crib. So I have no idea how old I was, but I was still little enough to sleep in a crib, and being so disappointed. You know? So all that stuff has been a part of me so it’s really understandable. And I know it has the same effect on probably most everybody in my home area.

MC Yeah.

RB And I .. once in a while when I go to the museum and see all that stuff, I think, wouldn’t it be wonderful if they could half [have? unclear].. if you can walk into that museum, and I guess something similar to what they have in Victoria, you know, the ..

MC Yeah.

RB Like the use of it for a certain time of the year. You know, my grandson Chris, taking him to potlatches from the time he was little and taking him to the museum once, a long time ago, by this time he’s three years old. We walk into the museum, into the Great Hall, he sees all those totem poles, and he looks and he goes, “Can they walk?” And I realize when he goes to the potlatches, he sees the dances with the masks.

MC Yes.

RB And I guess they’re just totem poles who have come to life.

MC Right. Right!

RB To a very little boy. And taking him to Expo, and we went to see the
Kwagiulth dancers, and when it was finished, and I said, "OK Chris, let's go, it's all finished." "No, it's not, no, it's not. They're coming back." and he tried to climb up the. . . trying to get away from me, he wanted to sit there and wait for the rest. So already that was so much a part of something whatever something like that might give to a little child.

MC Yeah.

RB I guess my memories of potlatch are like being in a potlatch, is cuddling up with my grandmother under her shawl, her big sort of blanket like shawl and keeping warm in the Fall. And be told to be still and be quiet because she had no money, and because if you did things that weren't considered proper manners in a potlatch your family paid a penalty, and at that time it was they had to pay everybody in the Big House a quarter. You know? So we were always told to "Be still, be quiet. We have no money." And that's how children were kept, you know, they were made to behave.

MC Yeah.

RB And that doesn't happen any more. And kids are running around wild at potlatches to the annoyance to a lot of older relatives. But that can be changed, because I just think a lot of people now, too, that have not gone to potlatches, are just very new at attending potlatches too, so . . .

MC Mhm. So they have to learn too.

RB Yes.

MC Yeah.

RB I think.

MC Yeah. Something that you said earlier that made me think again about that is the question of older objects. What .. do you think .. I mean, does the community .. the older objects that are in U'mista is .. I don't know how to say this without making it a sort of leading question, but is it sort of a .. is it a source of pride for the community, or .. I'm trying to think of how important having the older objects there is, or whether what's really important is having objects to be used, whether they're
old or new. You know what I mean?

RB I think the museum itself is a source of pride, and .. but I also .. I think it's a reminder too, of past days. I know – I can only speak for myself – I have a feeling that of pride of that museum. The work that went into it, and I was there at the opening, when this old man was asked to speak and he was from Fort Rupert, and he started, and he was standing there, and I was standing here, almost directly in front of him, and he was asked to speak, and he started to speak, and he couldn't, and the tears, and it was a really dry day, the ground, the dirt was dry, and the tears, seeing the wet on the ground from his tears and him saying to this old lady next to him, "You speak. I can't." Because he was just so emotional. And so she spoke. She spoke for him. And the way she spoke, she spoke of those things, it was almost like they were people coming back. That, you know, our people have come back?

MC Yes.

RB And it might not even have meant that. It might have just been the literal translation of that I put on it.

MC Of U’mista.

RB Yes. But that was the way she spoke of those things. And then she talked about the fact that it wasn’t complete, and probably would never be complete, but what we do have back will have made that day very great, that we have got, sort of, that many back.

MC Do you think the people were disappointed, the older people were disappointed that they couldn’t use the objects? Because my understanding is that the museum said “No, [unclear]”.

RB I don’t know. I don’t know. How would my grandfather have felt? I think my grandfather’s feeling was “when it’s there, it should be used”. Mind you, he wasn’t here when the museum was built, and he certainly wasn’t one of the people who gave up .. who had his things confiscated. He never volunteered them at any time. But I know that what was there had to be .. should be used.

MC Yeah.
RB When I was given that sisiutl, and a thing came about where I was going to display it in my home, and it just ended up in the basement, because there was really no practical place anywhere upstairs. I said to – when I was asking how it was used, what kind of a dance, and my father said, “Well, you never know. Maybe one day. Maybe one day you will have a use for it to be used. So maybe I should tell you about it.” So he sat down and told me about it, and I didn’t hear everything. When you’re young you ask questions. You know, you love your family, you love your grandfather, or your father, and you find out quickly what makes them feel good. And I discovered what made them happy was when I asked questions. So then quite often .. some things I heard, you know, but other times I wasn’t really that interested.

MC Yeah. Well, this is just great. I think this is about all the questions that I had.


Also from the same day: Her youngest son Todd now owns the sisiutl.

- RB remembers in the late 70s early 80s a grant was given to the Alert Bay Band for youth. They were to paint the poles in the graveyard. The elders said stop, you can’t do that. The elders explained to them that the poles should just deteriorate -- we all die eventually.

- RB knows elders have said that some things have to be maintained, and the museum is a good place for them to be preserved, for example, things important to potlatches, used in potlatches, e.g., masks, headdresses

- The Muskemos - composed of four tribes, from Kingcome (wolf), Gilford Is. (bear), Hopetown and Wakeman Sound (Raven?)
[Tape begins in middle of conversation.]

DWh ... um, we’ll make sure that the masters go back to them. That’s the only way to control it, really.

MC Yeah, that’s great. Yeah, yeah.

DWh If anyone else wants to take it up, well, then, they have to talk to them to get the, the masters and go through the whole process again. But, you know, [unclear] are involved because there has been a problem here before where, um, images, um, go out without and end up on all sorts of things. Just publications and there’s recognition only to the photographer and it hasn’t been done towards the people who are there – the people whom the image belongs to, really. So, you’ve got to be careful. Yeah. We tend to keep everything, um, bound up in one volume – slides and everything – and we –

MC So, for one site? Like –

DWh Yeah, for one project and, um, we keep it upstairs in our own filing system out of the library. It’s in, it’s in the database – yeah – but people have to come through us to get hold of it. Yeah. So, it takes a bit of pressure off the librarian because she doesn’t know who to contact and,
um, and, um, we feel that we’ve got some control over what’s happening. Yeah.

MC So would you, then – like, say, somebody came in and said: “Look, I’d really like to look at the – what you’ve got on this particular project.” Would you then go back to, like, the, the, the kaumatua? You know, to get, to say: “So and so wants to look at it. Is it okay?”

DWh Yeah, you sort of want – you sort of ask if they’re from there, really. And if they’re not, to ask, to ask them or give them a contact to ask those people about it. Um, it’s pretty rare that you get like a research person coming here because I think they pretty much know now that we’re not a research place. Yeah. The information we keep and collect is just purely for the process of conservation so that’s of little relevance to most other people. Um, the only researchers I think would be interested in this are conservators doing something on treatments or something, really. Yeah. The only historical information – we keep that to the bare minimum for all of Maori places because, um, I mean you could collect just tonnes of information. I mean, this is an example. The marae here has put together their own history. Yeah, here it is all here but they wanted to make sure that it didn’t get into the public, sort of, area. So, I said – I haven’t made a copy of it or anything. I’m just going to use what I need for a report I’m going to do on this next week and I’ll give it back to them.

MC Right, right. That’s great.

DWh So, it’s out of my hands, then!

MC Great. So, Dean, what, um, what’s your job title here?

DWh Um, “Maori Buildings Conservator”. Yeah, yeah.

MC Okay. And, and – and Cliff is?

DWh He’s my father.

MC He’s your father, okay. And he’s with the museum?

DWh He’s at the museum, yeah.

MC Okay. So, how did you get into conservation, then?
DWh Um, through the, through the – Well, yeah, it’s probably a long story, really. Because my father, well, since we were very young, we spent most of our time working on maraes. He was an artist and I guess he went back to maraes as a base for his art but, at the same time, he saw a need to try and preserve the art because it was disappearing or being changed – not so much “changed” but it was disappearing and there was a great need for help and assistance so it really grew out of that, I guess. Um, um, for myself, it’s just having that long association with marae and to his area, um, which is Te Whananau-A-Apanui. We had a relationship there with our own people, as well. So, I guess it’s I sort of grew up with, um, with marae and wanting to help some way in their preservation. Um, I really only got interested in conservation while I was in Wellington doing another course in something else. I really only came here to go windsurfing! It’s a windy place! Um, I sort of grew out of that and decided I should have a job and, um, and I was able to – I did a bit of voluntary work at the museum, actually, with a person called Jack Fry, which you may have come across his name before. He’s retired now but he was the conservation officer then and, um, I just said I was interested in working on Maori material in [unclear] somehow but then I was able to get a, an internship through Mina’s lot. Yeah, so –

MC Oh, right, right! So, the council, the –

DWh The Conservation Council, yeah. And it really just grew from there. It just sort of raced away and I was thinking about then going to Canberra and doing the conservation course and we’re getting an – The internship was set up between the Historic Places Trust and the Museum of New Zealand, at that time. And it was a great internship because we did lots of things. We went up to Auckland and we helped out with the H____nui? project that’s up there – it’s a big meeting house that’s being restored in the Auckland Museum. We also went out and looked at meeting houses being built. It was a great time just to feel around what was going on at that time. So, it was a really good internship and then, of course, we had all this summer work – um, working for the Trust. My Dad had been working with the Trust for many years doing surveys of marae around the country and also doing, um, projects for marae – restoring their artwork and, er, carvings and, you know, everything. So, he – Nick, Nick Tupara and myself were both doing this – he, then, um, we did some big projects up in the East
Coast of New Zealand and we spent about three months up there just staying on the marae and working with the people so it was a great, great sort of foundation to go overseas and look at the, the scientific aspects of conservation. Yeah, so it's good having that sort of cultural start, I guess, to it and then going over to get the necessary qualifications. It was very much a sort of like you're going over there to do this and you're coming back to do that! You don't have many options! You couldn't come back and say: "Oh, I've decided I'm going to do paintings, fine arts paintings. There's a lot of money in that." It just wasn't possible, eh, and here we are. But, um, yeah. [unclear]

MC That's great. Now, a few of these questions we've already talked about but I'd just like to get them on tape.

DWh Yeah, sure.

MC So, in your work, do you use the New Zealand Conservators' Code of Ethics and other policies in which, other policies –

DWh Yeah, um, we have a Code of Ethics which is I think a fairly standard code, internationally, I suppose. Yes, we've used that in our work, out the work that we do. We have to sort of identify what processes are going on and we, we look at it when we're discussing with the marae what they want to do with whatever and I guess we separate out what is, is new work aspects of the project and what's, um, preservation aspects of the work. But, sometimes, there's overlaps in that because processes like overpainting is real – well, a lot of people see that as new work. That's quite a normal thing to do and, um, we try and do it so we can preserve the original but the overpainting should also be accurate. That's what people are aiming for in a lot of these cases so, you know, that's part of our work whereas if they were wanting to replace all the carvings with sort of something quite different, well, then, I guess we sort of step back from that and, um, let them, let – and find them the right channels for them to do that, whether that's funding or help or whatever. So, we're not there to sort of, um, block the development of maraes or anything. We're there to, with a sort of role to play and that's their preservation aspects for a lot of these projects. So, some of the other things, um, we help with coordinating and, and, and getting the right people or whatever. There's long been an association with [unclear] – the Arts' Council – yeah, Maori Arts' Council, we should call it – and, you know, they get applications in on
they're wanting to restore or repaint and they'll send them over to us and, you know we'll send things over to them, too. There's always this, um, combination of things that's going on often. Yeah, sometimes it'll be a bit of this and a bit of that. Some of the Trust projects have been the re-creation of a whole meeting house. A big one was called, um, down in Kaikoura called, um, Taka-Hanga and that was really – it was a whole meeting house that was funded partly by the Historic Places Trust, by the Maori Arts' Council and by the people there. And it was really to, it was really – how do we say it? – it was interpreting the site there. Yeah. The meeting house was explaining the history of the site. They built this meeting house on a very old pa site there.

MC Oh, I see, yeah.

DWh A site that was important to the people down there so they were reusing the whole place as it once was or, you know, they were re-occupying it or using it. So, um, the project was seen as a, as a, as their way of interpreting the place and, you know, making the history come alive again I guess in the same way that plaques and notice boards are in a European sense. This meeting house stood for that reason so – Yeah, there's – I suppose you could [go? unclear] into things anyway and you could find some sort of way of doing it! But that's our main aim, the preservation of history and the preservation of those values that relate to sites that have the buildings there. It's great because it gives a lot of freedom and, and thought on how to tackle the things and it's not so narrow or restricted that you, that you just had to say, well, you know, you've got the wrong people in and just bail out and go and do something else so once you're sort of into something – once, someone's asked you to come along and do something or say something about it – you're involved and you've got to carry it through, how ever that may turn out. But, in terms of the conservation practice we carry out, as professionals we would follow the Code of Ethics – which I see is, is really a thing to control the professionals rather than control [unclear] what's happening. Yeah.

MC Right, right. And you follow also the ICOMOS Charter?

DWh Yeah.

MC And the Antiquities Act and the other – the Historic Places Act?
DWh Yeah, well there’s actually bits and pieces that need to be done. The Antiquities Act really only relates to things that are found – archaeological artifacts – so, yeah, um, we generally don’t have too much to do with that – the programme that I work in – but that’s changed recently after some large items have been found and things like that so we are gradually getting involved in that as well. Also, as Maori people again, we’re involved in archaeology and things like that – we get drawn into it as well to advise them on what to do. Yeah.

MC Right, right. Do you find any contradictions between these, you know, regulatory, um, guidelines and what, what the community would really like to happen or what even you feel would – ?

DWh Yeah, sometimes there is even a, um, in our own Act or in some interpretations of the Act, I guess, um, particularly things like processes or registering historic sites. In a lot of ways, it has little relevance to Maori people if the place is registered or not. They don’t seek status on it because it has it’s own status and, the other thing is, they feel it is another control that is being applied to it, you know, when it’s registered. All sorts of things. And I believe that, too. I mean, I think, um, things like a registration process is really there to protect, um, sites that are out of the ownership of Maori people because it links in with the local authorities and if anyone does anything on their land that’s got, say, an archaeological site, they have to get consent through the Trust and things like that if it’s registered. If it’s not, then we probably won’t know about it. Yeah, so, um, it’s great for that, you know, but I don’t think it should be sort of applied wholesale to everything. You’re just wasting a lot of resources and getting titbits of information to make it sound significant and, um, the other, the other thing, um, that was resisted before this new Act came in was the classification of buildings. Generally, well, Maori structures weren’t classified for the reason that you can’t – because they represent ancestral people, you can’t rank, apply a ranking system to people. You know? That was quite inappropriate. So, the Trust was good in enabling marae to exist outside their classification. Yeah and that’s really important. Unfortunately, this registration process has a two-tiered system – a “Category 1″ and a “Category 2″ – one being more significant than the other one slightly less and the ones not even on it – I mean, a third. Yeah and it may imply that if you’re not on the register, you can’t get the sort of resources or funding to preserve whatever’s there. So, yeah,
people are still trying to figure out how, how to measure significance. They never will! But they try.

MC But do you think that, at least here, "significance" is being – it is being measured in terms of what the people say is the significance or is it measured in terms of what, sort of, the outside or from the organization – like from the Trust – comes in says: “This is, this is –”

DWh Yeah, the Trust has been good because, um, it, it’s got lumbered with an Act so it has to figure out how, how to work it and, really, anything that’s registered will try and get the – or, no, it’s going to be policy or something that the iwi or the tribe will say what is and what isn’t. If they want things registered. They don’t have to. Yeah, so there’s no compulsion to do it but, if they do, we won’t have a consultant coming in and doing it or the Trust itself applying significant values to a place. It has to come from the people. Otherwise, it’s irrelevant to them and it’s quite inappropriate to tell people about their own history. Um, yeah.

MC So, what, like what would you say in your work – what are you trying to preserve in your work as a conservator?

DWh I guess, yeah, it’s more that holistic thing. I guess – it’s the history of something and that, and that’s both the people, the object and the history. Because the history is living, it’s used, um, it’s used in court today. It’s used in all sorts of things. It’s a living history and its a history about now so you can’t isolate, um, historic items from the present, I guess. Yeah and I worry about if you go, if you go into a building and say: “Well, you should take it back to 1900. This is what it looked like and it looked great then and why don’t we do that?” Because you’re really saying to them that the last 90 years have been irrelevant to that and, um, yeah, yeah – I think it’s about, um, extending the life of a lot of materials and things. I mean, often we’re dealing with things that have, um, been unfortunate in an accident. We treat a lot of carvings that have been backed into by horses and buses! The ones that stick out the side of a meeting house? Yeah. A lot of those. Yeah, horses are terrible. They don’t know what they’re doing when they go backwards and, um, and we’re dealing a lot with things like paints that have given up before their time or, or even just the maintenance of painted surfaces because it’s in a cycle. You know it’s every 20 years you’ve really got to renew painted surfaces in order
to protect the timber so a lot of our work is maintenance of what's there now, really. Yeah. So, we're just maintaining. We're just sort of advocates of maintenance, I think, in a lot of ways. Yeah. So, there's not that need to understand or try and dissect the whole history of the building and the people and find the significant elements and then re-highlight them in a conservation project. Yeah, our role is really to provide the maintenance tools for Maori people. Yeah.

MC Okay, so, like in the conservation code of ethics, I think in a lot of countries, the word 'respect' is used: respect for the object, the item. What, what - how do you - what do you think that means?

DW h Yeah, yeah, well, er, I guess, I guess I get away with it by treating the object along with the people and the place. So, yeah, the object is - put it this way, the object is nothing without it's people so if we don't respect the people, we can't be respecting the object. Yes. So, we sort of take it in the reverse, the reverse way of looking at it, I guess.

MC So, do you think that, like, working so closely with people and people's needs [unclear] do you find that that challenges your conservation practice?

DW h Yeah. It's very difficult!

MC Can you explain?

DW h Um, you're dealing with people who are usually unemployed, unskilled in a lot of ways and often, you know, they are sort of there because they haven't got a lot of anything else to do. Some places. Some other places are quite different. But, when you come across places like that, it is very difficult. You tend to end up doing the work all by yourself and you don't feel like you're doing much in terms of relating people to objects because some of them don't care. But, at the same time, at the end of the day, you find that people have been watching and have observing and have been taking in things on the perimeter of the job and they're the important people. So, you've just, you've got to stick at it and, and, um, and, you know, the whole - the people who come from there are quite trusting when you come in and do work on their meeting house so there's, um - you know, you've got to fulfil their expectations on providing the end result with the people, the tools they give you to do it with. Yeah. But it is hard and, um, we,
we’re starting to try and, um, set the projects up and try and discuss more about the sorts of people we need on them – who would be suitable, I guess – because often on some of the earlier ones, when we’d just started, we didn’t think of things like that. I guess experience is showing us that now! That you have certain types of people that you look for and generally the people who are involved in the arts are the ones that are really good, um, and also, um, we come across builders and things that are really good to know, as well.

MC So, then, would it be appropriate to take some of those people from one area and they would work on a project in another area?

DWh It can be, yeah. It just depends but, yeah, it can be. This summer, we’re hoping to try that. We’re going to try more of a much larger project and that will involve a lot of other maraes. So they’ll put up a couple of people who can come along and, and work it like a proper workshop where you come in to learn something and, at the same time, to do the project. Yeah. So that’s the idea – we’ll try and slowly build up a – I guess at the moment we’re building up an awareness, at the moment. It’s really the first stage. Um, but I think that it’s slowly, in some areas, where we’ve done a lot of work, we’re now at the point where we can start to build up skills and that in the area. Yeah, so hopefully some of the people we worked with on earlier projects, we’ll, we’ll involve them in these other ones to bring them up to speed on some of the newer things we’re doing and, um, we’ll also keep them involved in thinking about preservation and conservation. The next step, of course, would be hopefully to those that are interested and who will soon sort of surface or make themselves known is that they’ll want to go further into conservation. But, at the moment, that’s rather difficult without a body that trains people so I guess we’ll just have to plug away with trying to gather a bit of – gather the numbers or the interest. Because it’s very expensive to train people in conservation but it’s needed. I mean we need people – we need people in the regions, really. I mean we’re all Wellington based and that makes it very difficult to, um, control things. It makes it difficult to know what people are wanting all the time because we can’t go as often as we like and we can’t understand all the issues or all the concerns. So, yeah.

MC So, who do you think, um, you know, conservation is a profession. Professions have their clients and so who, who do you think the primary client is? I mean is it the actual object? Is it the people, the
community? Is it, is it the Trust – the organization that you work for?

DWh Yeah, no it would be Maori people, I think. Yeah. Yeah – collectively as objects and themselves but, yeah, we’re a client to them. We’re, yeah, no we are to them because they still look after their own objects. We’re just tools to them or things they can use to preserve what they think needs preserving. Yeah. I don’t see us as being – yeah, it’s probably getting a little off side with the Code of Ethics which puts the object in the middle of everything. Everything evolves around that and no one can touch it or have an opinion on it or something but, um, yeah, that’s really, that’s, yeah, it’s to, it’s to Maori people who we really, really see – I mean we work for this organization and this organization is also there to serve the public of New Zealand so it’s the same, same idea.

MC Do you think – are you – would you say you’re working on pieces that are sort of amongst the most significant in terms of preservation of culture?

DWh Yeah, I think a lot of – there’s a lot of things out, out, outside institutions that are very important and relative to the history of this country and are some of the things that we work on. Um, yeah. The collections you see in museums aren’t representative of the Maori history at all. So, um, yeah, no I think some of them are. Yeah. The other thing is that the, um, I mean all the things in museums have tended to, have, are rather undocumented. So, um, they have a lot of, um, sort of art value, I guess, some of those but they’ve lost a lot of their history. They still have, um, importance to Maori people, though, because they represent all sorts of things but, equally, there’re some very important things out there in terms of sites and, and structures and things inside and outside and hanging off and still out there. Yeah.

MC Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, you know, like the Code of Ethics – the Canadian one, anyway – you’re supposed to preserve the conceptual integrity. Well, they say physical integrity, historic integrity, aesthetic but they also say conceptual. You know they don’t define the terms but I take that to mean it’s cultural significance. Are those the values that you’re preserving?

DWh I guess they are, yeah. Yeah, that’s interesting.
MC I think, actually, in Canada they didn't realize what, what they were doing when they put in 'conceptual' because I think then - but what they don't say, though, is how you balance out a conflict if there's a conflict between preserving something as a - preserving it's physical integrity or preserving its conceptual integrity. They don't give any guidelines to which way you should go. What, but in your work, what do you think?

DWh Yeah, well that's difficult. Yeah. Um, I guess I always believe that people - they understand what you're telling them and I think the first thing, the important thing is to make sure that everyone has the information of what something's about so, um, a meeting house, for example, we may look back at some past appearances of the building. there may be some things underneath - some panels, you know - like at Rangiatea [Otaki] when we were there the other day. Those little underpaintings under the panels?

MC Right.

DWh They said: "We want to replace all of these panels because there's nothing on them." Or something. Well, if they knew there was, well then they would probably make a different decision. Yeah. So, I think people do make the right decisions because it's a collective thing as well so you always get extremes and, and views but I think you get probably as good as anywhere - probably a reasonable compromise in a lot of these situations. So, it's good in that way in that decisions are made that way. Um, but it's important that the conservator gives all the, I guess, physical information about something to them. And that's a lot of the questions they ask us. I've done reports that are really just discussion documents where I've looked at the condition of it, of the pieces and some of the different appearances they may have had (these are carvings, for example) and then, um, given them some long term scenarios about they could be preserved and what for. One particular place - they had a set of carvings that had come off a building that had collapsed. They'd been kept on the marae. They hadn't built another one - a meeting house - since but they, some people are talking about doing that and some just want to keep them, keep them somewhere, store them somewhere. Now, they're equally valid. Keeping them requires a little conservation, a little restorational reconstruction and things like that. Um, but they're not being used in the way they were
intended so they’re out of context with the rest of the, with the rest of the marae. Yeah, so, if they were to be reused on the outside of a building, then you’re going to lose some material information because these carvings need to be stripped back – the paint’s all cut up. Obviously, if they’re going outside, they need paint on them. So, they have to figure out if it’s that significant losing that. They also have to realize that the life that they have on the outside is much shorter than they would ever have being stored inside. So, they have to know that information and that’s what they ask me is to provide that. So they, they have that and they’ll make their decision on it. But it’s equally important – say if they chose to put them back on the outside, I, I would consider that a good way to go because these carvings are in context again. They’re in the right position. They are doing what they’re supposed to do – they’re not there just to provide interesting information about paint history or, um, carving styles. They’re there to function culturally, primarily. So, if they have to go back there, that’s where they go.

MC Right, right. So, you’re really – you’re dealing a lot with this question, then, of balancing risks to the physical integrity in order to, you know, preserve or to maintain the cultural, you know, connection. So, do you - so you take steps – like, as a conservator, you know, do you take steps to, um, I don’t know, not minimize use but to say, you know, if you did this then you wouldn’t be leaning against there so you would – Could you give me any examples of that sort of thing.

DWh Yeah. One is with tukutuku panels. Yeah. There was a building up – oh, it was just past [unclear], actually, where we were.

MC Okay.

DWh In, um, [unclear]. There they, in the interior of the meeting house they placed a – meeting houses don’t usually have any seats in them and this one, about ten or twenty years ago, they put a, seating out from the wall. Seating went right around, right around the whole thing because it was a bit more comfortable for when they were meeting but all around the walls, also, were tukutuku panels and, um, they’re very – they’re quite sort of fragile, really. Oh, here’s Nick!

MC Hi!
NT  Gidday!

DWh Nick, this is Miriam. Nick. [Further introductions - agreement to tape]

MC  So, we were just talking, actually, about the conservator and the kind of conservation that you were taught on the code of ethics and, then going out and working with communities, the challenges that might come up to your conservation practice and what you consider is important to preserve and, and, um, we were talking about like in Canada, the Canadian Code of Ethics for Conservators talks about preserving the physical integrity, the historical integrity, aesthetic integrity but also conceptual integrity, which is the cultural significance and, and the, you know, objects and so, um, Dean was just telling me of this example of a meeting house with tukutuku panels –

DWh I was telling her about Tukurangi. You know the tukutuku panels were getting rubbed. They put that seat around the wall but, um, yeah, like you were saying we’re minimizing that sort of damage. You know, we sort of suggested that – we, we pointed out what the cause was and, you know, talked about ways of minimizing that. One was to tell people not to lean against them but that would be pretty difficult, I think. They were talking about removing those seats at some time. Yeah. So, I guess it was just highlighting what was going on, what was happening in terms of the physical damage. It’s really up to them to decide what they can do to minimize that and that’s probably – I mean, the fact that they have, they’ll be repairing those panels as well, um, you know they’ll gain an appreciation of the amount of work that goes into them and then they’ll – it’ll spin off in terms of them deciding what’s the best way to look after them. They’ll, they’ll know when they finish the project, when they take the seats out of it. Yeah.

MC  Great, great. Well, you know what I’m going to do? I’m just going to turn over the tape because there’s something wrong with this machine. [Talk about machine. Tape turned off.]

MC  Um, great. Can I, can I just ask how you got into conservation?

NT  Me? Pretty much the same way Dean did, if he were to answer that question. Um, the, the building that they’re building – they’re building a brand new museum, a new National Museum and, during that time, they set up a committee to advise on Maori aspects of that museum,
one of which was staffing – that was one of the issues they raised – and they didn’t have Maoris employed in museums in various numbers, in many numbers at all and, certainly, they had no conservators so, at that time, the head of the Maori Studies department (Sid Mead) was head of, ah, was also on those committees and he put it to the university graduates that anyone would consider going into conservation.

MC Oh, I see.

NT And I just happened to be Johnny on the spot, I suppose. I didn’t really understand what conservation was so I spent some time at the National Museum. Dean was there also doing, like, a post-training internship thing and it was various events that happened during that time that indicated to me that this would be a great profession to be in. We had an exhibition – Maori exhibition – go to the States, which was quite, pretty well quite successful over there so they bought – when they came back, it coincided with Dean and I being in there so we were involved with a little bit of touring around of New Zealand with that exhibition. It was sort of part of the ‘cosmicky’ things that happened for me, anyway, with those objects. From a conservation point of view, conservators seem to have a more intimate view on objects and, in the past, I’ve only maybe seen it from a visitor’s point of view because a conservator likes to look inside. What molecular structure is it made out of? What sort of inner character does it have apart from the aesthetic or the exterior views – the interior thing – which was a sort of a spiritual dimension for me, from a Maori perspective, working with these old artifacts and it sort of touched me. It touched me. And then the Historic Places Trust approached the museum for assistance on some of their marae projects so Dean and I started going out on some of those. And it had the same feeling with the, the artifacts that were still out in the community but now we had the dimension of the people with those artifacts and the enormous amount of connection that all of that had. I found that, again, quite moving. So, in view of all that, we took off to Australia and did our degrees and came back and managed to get work here with the Trust. I’m sure that sort of – that, that same passion that was there then is still evident now. With the Trust work, I feel, more than perhaps the museum work because it’s a different community, different artifacts and different situations. From a professional – from a conservational professional side, it’s extremely challenging. Nothing, nothing’s the same.
DWh It's exciting, really.

NT Yeah, it's because we have to figure it out. So, um, that keeps me going.

MC So, these challenges – I mean, like, yeah, can you give me examples of some of these challenges?

NT Well, that whole ethical question. Certainly, when we were studying in Australia, I had great difficulty with the Codes of Ethics. From a Maori perspective, I thought that there would be conflict here immediately to the point where I felt it necessary to talk to the head of our department, Colin Pearson, about Codes of Ethics. I suggested to him that this would be impossible for me to implement, to put down on my people who already had cultural ethics of their own that go over many thousands of generations and you're asking me to impose another ethic and I think we will find it extremely difficult to move amongst our people if we were too strong with these ethics. He suggested to me that we, that I ask them whether or not they want codes of ethics and, if in fact they do want codes of ethics, what kinds of ethics they think that they need and to be there more to assist and advise and guide them through the development. I don't know if Dean's mentioned the New Zealand ICOMOS Charter.

DWh Yes. I've got a copy.

NT Right! But we had some input into that. I think that's a good first step towards, um, ethics for Maori things. The artifacts – col word, really – the artifacts that we work with, we have no power over. We have no determination as to why they're there or what, what their use will be but that's determined by the communities that live around them and we try to acquaint ourselves with their ethics or their – what we call – [unclear] and utilize our knowledge to assist them to progress around these artifacts to keep them going and that may cut across a lot of codes of ethics but there is an undeniable desire to preserve and carry these things forward. There's a great deal of respect and honest responsibility with regard to the protection of these things so we, we play on that and encourage that through. The way we encourage that through may be slightly different from the way they may have done it traditionally but, under analysis, it is very much the same. The
techniques are more modern but the same passion is still there.

MC Yeah, yeah. So can you, can you think of, for anything, right, right off the top of your heads that would improve the Code of Ethics now? I don’t know if there’s any –

NT Just the easy P.C. ones! Well, we’re actually – yeah, we’re actually looking at all of that. Right now, we’ve actually got a conference in October and they’ll be an A.G.M. with that and we suggested changes to the – A couple of years ago, they asked for a Maori name for the New Zealand Professional Conservators’ Conference. Everyone’s into Maori names in New Zealand.

DWh Then they forget to use them!

NT Yeah, they never use them!

MC It’s all small print – yeah.

NT Yeah, that’s right and even when you ring them up, they can never remember what their Maori name is but, um, it’s all part of our apparent bicultural swing around the nation. A new era of biculturalism [unclear]. The Trust has a Maori name which is not even evident on its official publications. Oh, here it is there, yeah – if you know where to look. Um, so they asked us for a name and because Dean and I and Rangi, I suppose – there’s only a couple of us that are Maori in the conservation group so immediately everyone looks across at you and we sort of looked in shock back but I, I suggested to them that that was fine, that this needed to be Maori in some sense in order to build a name that really meant something. So, um, and I think generally they agreed to. So, we were going to, to redraft this Code of Ethics.

MC I would be, I would be really interested in seeing what you come up with, if you could send me a draft of it because I think it’s really – yeah, that’s something the Canadian conservators should look at, too. I think – their own code.

NT Well as a base, we will use the [unclear] one because they’ve already crossed–
DWh Similar language, similar language – yeah, a lot of the language and things in there should be the same.

NT And, as well, the Historic Places Trust is developing a ‘conservation plan’ model and ‘conservation plan’ is another good buzz word! I don’t know if that’s strictly the model we’re all proud of but it’s developing and growing. We’ve already gone down that path, some way. I think that particular one has a fair way to go yet.

DWh Yeah.

NT But those sorts of base, bases will contribute to this. We’ll have to get that together. [unclear] will have to get that together. We already have a name in mind but, um, yeah, and they still have to accept a redrafting of their code and I don’t foresee that it’s going to be too much of a problem.

DWh No.

NT And, um –

MC Do you, yeah – I was wondering if you anticipate sort of objections from the other conservators.

DWh Might be.

NT There may be. Personally, I don’t because I think they’re strong arguments in New Zealand today in the light that our social being has, has, has developed. I can justify that and I’m prepared to justify that. Um, it’s a wee bit funny but, um, Maori things at the moment are just the thing and everyone wants it and, um, I suppose quite – I don’t see it’s going to be that difficult.

DWh No, no, but there is a slight shift, um, where this code of ethics revolves around the object – there would be a, a shift to something quite different. There may be – it may look on the surface the same but, um, like here in our section four: “The first responsibility of the conservator is to the object and its long term preservation.” You see, that’s not really what we’re about here at the moment so that will be a fundamental shift, I imagine.
NT Well, the thing, too, with most of these codes of practice, are all museum generated or have been historically and the Trust is in an unusual position in that it is a museum but in a much different kind of a nature. In fact, if you were to look at it technically, the Historic Places Trust has more museum involvement than any other organization in the country. Um, we have a huge estate of some sixty odd buildings, all of which are museums. They all employ curators, collections managers of a breed.

DWh Don’t say that!

NT So, we are a museum organization but we are community based and I think, um, the new museum here – there’s both the new national museum and some of the larger museums around the country are trying to be more community based; are trying to open their doors and their collections, their storerooms up and having great deal of difficulty with that I, from what I can see. So, although these models are strictly closed, glass case museums, I think even the museums are wanting to open those glass cases up a bit. We’d probably want to open them even further. We’d want to open the doors of the museum!

DWh And get them in!

NT Ah, but that’s a reality that’s floating in New Zealand. There’s been lots of talk about repatriation. There’s been a lot of debate about that, a lot of action about that, a lot of inaction, more debate. Um –

MC Repatriation within the country as well as from overseas back?

NT Yes, as well as from overseas. Um, and it’s gone both – Maori people on both sides. There are Maori people who don’t want these things back or they feel that there is justification for them remaining where they are. Um, there’s a meeting house, Ruatepupuke, in Chicago in the Field Museum where the local tribe – we’re not even using ‘tribe’ these days – iwi, um, went over there to help with the conservation and preservation and it was enough for them to reestablish that connection and I think it was beneficial for the museum to see that, the history or the lack of history was embellished greatly by having these people there and some of these conceptual type things you talked about became far more apparent to them. So, again, the doors were open. The glass case was open. People came in. It meant the objects stayed there. In fact, it
meant the objects benefitted from their being there from both points of view. Those people came back to New Zealand quite happy with that and there's been other meeting houses where, where other *iwi* have decided [unclear] which is owned by the National Trust in England remains there and they're very happy for it to remain there at this stage. I mean –

DWh It depends on the circumstances were acquired. In both those cases, I think they were, they were –

NT Yeah, they were – there does appear to be a, a sale with regard to that but with community owned property it’s never always that clear cut.

MC That’s right. Well, yeah. Yeah, in fact, in the United States, the, the Native American Graves Protection Act mandates that anything that was communal property and was sold was, in fact, inalienable communal property, not the right of any individual to sell and museums must return it.

NT Right, oh, Jeez! Well, that’s not quite the case here, but I think Maori people in other, with regard to other objects have put strong cases like that. Um, there’s one happening at the moment with the Dunedin Museum which has a house called *Mataatua* and the – what the heck are they called? – the Ngati Awa people are asking for that back and that was apparently given for an exhibition and, once the exhibition closed, they never saw their house back. That’s one side. The Dunedin Museum is saying that it’s contributed a lot to that house in the time it’s been in their museum and it’s become a community focal point for them locally and that they’re actually denying that local community a focal point, which Ngati Awa doesn’t see at all. They are looking to developing their own museum, to have their things back and a lot of *iwi* are getting into that sort of thing. A lot of museums are intimidated by that sort of thing because they think that they will lose their collections to these *iwi* museums and there’s a lot more expertise around these days; Maori professionals, I suppose, or semi-professionals or just people with a reasonable idea of things are getting involved with this, are supporting this and it’s getting more difficult for the museum to use the old argument that they can’t look after their own material, which [unclear] has always denied.

DWh Want a cup of tea?
NT Want a cup of tea? If you feel like one.

MC I'd like to keep talking.

NT Yeah, yeah, that's okay.

MC Good. All right. Yeah, one of the – just talking about the code of ethics earlier, um, I've had a number of comments about the Canadian one because they use, use these words but it's still very vague and they won't come out on one side or the other so they say "respect for the object" but they don't define what "respect" means. They say "preserving the cultural significance of the object" but they don't say that this is cultural significance as determined by the originating people not as determined by, you know, the national Canadian identity or something like that and, um, so they say, um, like the American code – I don't know if you saw – they just now have revised it and in their revision have said exactly what, what your code says which is the bottom line is the conservators have to conserve the physical object or else you're unethical. They say, you know, you've got to respect the wishes of the originating people but – next clause – you must preserve the physical object. You know? And, and I mean somebody has to really, to me, lay it out clearly.

NT Well, I think that, to some degree, that's a fault of the [unclear] one. Now, again, another New Zealand thing is that they've come one inch but they're not prepared to go ten inches. Um, there's an overall statement or preamble – even now, the Historic Places Trust has that but most Acts of Parliament do. There's always what they used to call the "treaty clause" so they put in this Treaty of Waitangi clause that covered everything that was Maori and then they found that people were – that's all they talked about, the "treaty clause" so the Historic Places Trust doesn't have a "treaty clause" but it has a preamble. Um, the ICOMOS Charter has a preamble that, sort of, swoops over everything Maori. It goes: "Whack! There is it there, locked in." And then we all carry on with the rest of our charter and, um, breaking out of that containment and spreading it throughout the document is something that people really haven't achieved. Maybe this is the chance for that.

DWh Hmmm, or maybe this one will be the next one!
MC Yeah, I'd be interested to see whether, you know, you can make changes that you want and whether they're accepted by the conservators here or whether when you try and really make things clear - like, people can deal with it, deal when it's a grey area but when you try and make it clearer then, you know.

DWh Well, the ICOMOS Charter really just makes it a grey. Yeah, it's just, it just sort of says if you want to do things in a sort of indigenous way, you know, don't use the rest of this Charter, basically.

NT Yeah, that's right. You decide what you want to do and carry on.

DWh You do. That's fine. You know, we won't bother you.

NT It's not really helping the people. It's saying you carry on with you own thing.

MC Yeah, yeah.

NT And, if you want us involved, well we'll have to consider these other things. It's not really helping those people with the preservation of those things. It's setting them off. It's sort of cutting the rope to the boat: "Away you go." And some Maori people say: "Well, thank goodness for that because you've been bugger all use in the past." So, um -

DWh Yeah. But, but I say, though, it does have its advantages because really it would be very difficult to get sort of a national charter for a lot of this material and they may have to develop their own ones in tribal areas and some have, haven't they?

NT Yeah, that's right. But there's, there is an inter-tribal thing. There's not a Maori thing. There's no such thing as a "Maori" person. They are, they are all tribal (though we don't use 'tribal' any more) but they, you can go from one end of the country and see one hundred different ways of doing the same thing.

DWh Yeah, same. Yeah, whether you want to write them down -

MC So, so what elements would you, you know, include like to be
preserved. Like, what would you say, you know, in terms of preservation is for –

NT Well, I think to a certain extent you have to have those broad sweeping concepts but you need to be able to apply them to, in my view, to every step through the thing as opposed to one statement at the beginning. You still have to have enough flexibility in one way to accommodate for the different tribal differences and sometimes it’s not even tribal differences. Sometimes, it’s just a context in which that tribe finds themselves today. It’s got nothing to do with the history. It’s just circumstances of how history’s placed them and, um, so you need that sort of flexibility. There isn’t a clear cut method of doing it. It’s something we’re going to have to coach through. It sounds a bit weak to me. Shall we just stick with the pakeha system? Yeah, well, that, I mean that – and, because of that, there’s going to be a great deal more change. There’s not going to be an extra bit added in here and the rest carries on. I’m going to have to blend it in. It needs more, more work and a lot more thought but I think we’ll get it through. I think – actually –

DWH: Yeah – eventually.

NT I know that there is one or two that, that can debate that but, at the same time, I think that’s healthy. I invite them to debate and, if in our Annual General Meeting it all comes out, good. We need to be prepared to offer our debate as well but I think we can.

MC So you would say, for instance, that it is, it is ethical for a conservator to allow an object or whatever to be put at physical risk if it preserves the cultural significance of the object?

NT Yeah, yeah, that’s tricky. I think it’s a matter of degree. I think that you can turn it around the other way, actually. You can say that you can take a museum – an object to a museum and they’ve turned it around completely as an object.

MC Turned it around?

NT As opposed to – well, if you have an object in a community, that’s the setting where it was created. The meaning why it was created is in there and, in fact, you’re removing it from that and turning it into
another object somewhere else and, in a sense, falsifying it.

DWh So you’re destroying –

NT So, in a way, yeah, you’re destroying that object on the other way and what we’re saying is that the object is dynamic with the community which is ever evolving and that’s what we’re preserving. That is, it’s too narrow to conceive that you’ve preserving just the material but it’s a, it’s, I suppose, a living, breathing object. Sounds really terrible but its, you know, its soul with the community you’re preserving as a, the museum is actually falsifying a lot of that. Museums would try their best to put Maori people in front of them and have bilingual, um, interpretations and open days and that is a way of trying to give first aid to these things but that’s really all they can do. And, sort of, like, many Maori communities are coming to the party on that. But they accept those objects are in there. These other objects which are in here – I came back with those different kinds of objects. They actually live.

DWh They belong somewhere else.

NT And people do touch them, lean on them, break them, abrade them – um, you know – fondle them, whatever they do. In a, in a spiritual sense, I suppose, they fondle the community. It’s retaining that that’s is most important.

DWh I find a lot of physical sort of damage and things like that that seem really bad are quite insignificant out there, really. Yeah. I mean you could probably find similar examples of things happening in museums by accidents! [unclear]. People eating their lunch over things which is just as bad.

NT Some of the cocktail parties they have.

DWh Yeah, some of the cocktail parties they have around these things! Um, um, we went to Rangi [atea?] there are some very old (well, relative to New Zealand) some old things in there and they survived quite well in the amount if time they’ve been there. Um, so, yeah, I don’t know if there’s too much argument sometimes when people say, you know: “It should go in to a museum so it can be looked after.” And things like that. Yeah.
NT Because Maori people do use museums. A lot of the collections they have been given. If you look in the record book, they’ve been given by Maori communities or custodians – all those things – and there’s all sorts of reasons why and a lot of it ties back culturally. Um, the strength or the inner essence that a, an artifact has can affect the well-being of a community or an individual so, to combat that, rather than destroy that object or dispose of it in a traditional sense, they’ll give it to a museum and a lot of them would suggest that the ills in a museum is because they have all these things that cause ill to the community. My own family, for example – a sickness befell my family and the priest there came into deal with it – this is really cosmicky – so to deal with it, suggested that it was coming from these carvings. Okay. So, the carvings should be burnt but, but the undeniable need to preserve these things is handed down to them by their ancestors. They gave them to the museum to take that burden and make the museum sick and by putting a bit of space, a bit of distance, between them, they were happy with that arrangement. So, there was no – Oh, when a museum says: “We should be giving you back your treasures.” “Oh, no, no, no, no! That’s all right. You keep that one!” Otherwise it would have meant – if they didn’t have that outlet – they would have had to destroy those carvings in the end, culturally they would have had to do that but there is a strong sense of preservation amongst Maori communities which, I’m sure, is not all that appreciated.

DWh Yeah.

NT Like, look at the forms of the art. They all have names or [unclear] names. They all have lineage; people have lineage to them, um, therefore they have a spirit about them. They are a living thing. And they’re treated like –

DWh People.

NT Like people! People talk to them and people sleep with them. They hug them and all that sort of stuff. They want – there’s a sense of community – they want to be next to them and, when they’re not next to them, they – there’s a thing called ahi-ka, or the home fires, and if you’re away too long, your home fire is going to go out and so there’s a dire need to want to go back and be back with your people. All the time. And half the people who come and live in the city, they’re constantly going back. Some of them even – I’ve even talked to people
that have sighed: "Oh, yeah, mine's gone out. Never mind." The old home fire's burnt out ages ago!

MC I've heard the expression, um, about keeping the objects warm. I don't know whether that relates, sort of, to the 'home fires' but –

NT Yeah, I suppose it can. Well, quite often, the people depicted in these photos are the home people in those communities caring for their objects. Particularly that one there. And people who live away would refer to them as the home fires, the ahi-ka. They're referred to as ahi-ka, the home fires and their activities is keeping those carvings company means that they're doing it for you while you're away. And they're referred to as ahi-ka. If there was no one there, well, the place would become sterile and those fires go out and people go to great lengths to try to rekindle a lot of them.

DWh They have a lot of respect, those people who, who live back on the marae.

NT The ones that stay there, yeah.

DWh Because, especially in these days of most people living in cities nowadays, they have a lot of importance to a lot of Maori people who live away from live away from their tribal areas, really.

NT And these home people are held in great esteem alongside the things they keep there. So there's a – and, again, the preservation of those things preserves themselves as well and people see that, the work that they've done in keeping those things warm so that their people who live way off give prestige to them. And when they go back, they'll, they'll say that. They'll stand up in front of the marae and, and, and spout out an appreciation of those sorts of things.

MC Right. So, if something was in a museum but not on deposit – the museum has a legal title to it – would the people kind of want it out of the legal ownership of the museum or is that, sort of, less of an issue or –

NT No, that's an issue. Um, it's a tricky one, though. Maoris have a funny thing about ownership. Like, um, say land, for example. Land is a treasured thing. Maori people, um, still identify – Dean and I, we're,
strictly speaking, we’re from the East Coast district, *Te Tairawhiti*. Doesn’t matter where we are, that’s where we’re from. Whether or not we own land there or the legal aspects of ownership accorded to the land, we’re still from there and even people, the South Island people, identify to the mount of Mount Cook, *Aorangi*. Doesn’t matter who owns *Aorangi*. That will always be their sense of identity. Um, the meeting house that’s in the National Museum at the moment is one from my home, *Te Hau-Ki-Turanga*. That’s always going to be our house. Doesn’t matter who owns it. It doesn’t matter what history says, that we sold it or someone bought it or whatever, it’s still going to be our house and *Te Hau-Ki-Turanga* is the breath of Turanga, which is the name of the place that I come from and that’s always going to be the breath of my people, regardless of legal ownership. Um, there’s a cultural ownership that overrides all that. Um, possession is another sense of ownership. Um, there’s just been a deal with the Rotorua people to have stuff brought back from Auckland Museum to their museum there as well as stuff from the Canterbury Museum but the ownership hasn’t been brought back. The physical object has. Now that they — possession for them, that’s important. The legal ownership is also important but possession is more important. The thing is they never relinquished a custodianship or cultural ownership, which is all-encompassing. The legal angle is something they’ll wrangle. They’ll keep wrangling for it and, if they get it, they get it but, if they don’t, they still know those things still belong to them. And, in fact, the people who want to keep them also know that those things belong to them and they can, they take heart in knowing that and, every time they see those things they, culturally they’ll speak to them and, and do all the things that they’ll do to them even they were in their communities. So, when we had the *Te Maori* thing here (where the artifacts toured the States and came back), droves of people came down here. Bus loads upon buses! They did just about every ceremony you can think of on them. They cried all over them and all — It doesn’t matter who owned them. There’s no way you’re going to stop that. And not only that, I think they have a strong sense, I think, for indigenous people. Some of the stories that came back from when it was in America, that the halls — that the display halls that they had to walk to to get to their exhibition — through the Egyptian hall, the, ah, Melanesian hall and so and so and so and so, the Peruvian hall — that they paid respect to all of those peoples as they believed that ownership or that cultural ownership is still with those people and so they had to go through their ceremonies to make way for them to pass by to their own thing.
Um, you know, that there's that sort of sense of ownership. Maori people are right into that! Any sort of excuse, I think, to do something!

DWh It's easy to apply. Yeah, yeah. But most Maori people would know what's in museums of their own, of importance, and would know –

MC They would know? Okay. Uh huh.

DWh And treat it like things in their communities, yeah – just happens to be in this place called a 'museum'.

NT There's this thing called marae which is in front of that, that picture of a meeting house – there's that area in the front which is called marae. Now, they'll create a marae situation wherever they are and, if it's the display hall of a museum, they'll create by locating, positioning themselves relative to a, a treasured item like that and undergo ceremonies and it doesn't matter what, where they are, if there's more than one of them, they'll do it! They do it here!

DWh They do it here.

NT Even if they were to walk in here and see these things in here, they would, you know. Now, if there's more than one of them, they're compelled to do it, regardless, and even if they have never visited a museum or never ever laid eyes on particular objects, they would still need to do that. Whether or not it was once of theirs or not. It would be more compelling if it was but, um, they would want to do that anyway – to make peace with that, that –

MC So, do you think, like, you know, I'm a pakeha conservator. Now, should I – are there things that I should do before or after a conservation treatment on, you know –?

NT Yes. That's a tricky one!

DWh It's trickier in a museum. You're referring to a museum sort of situation?

MC Yes. Ah ha.

DWh Yeah, that – yeah.
Well, that's harder, that one because the -

It's sort of, it's sort of behind the doors, sort of thing, if you know what I mean. In some ways, the communities are quite happy for things just to happen that they don't see. You know, nothing changes or things like that. But, I guess for things like meeting houses and things like that, um, maybe the roles change a little differently. Often you're dealing with just one specific thing: a carving or, you know, something else. The conservation treatment is just to stabilize or keep it the way it is. Um, yeah, it's fairly invisible to most people. Um, when it comes to these other sorts of projects – like, _Te Hau-Ki-Turanga_ might be one that would gather a bit of interest – I'm not sure.

Yeah, I think they're – depending on the tribe you're involved in – like there is this big conservation plan for this one in the National Museum. 1. It's not only that you are a _pakeha_ person but, or a non-Maori person, but you may, even if you were Maori, you might be from another tribe or – and your gender would, may be significant to some tribes. Like, for most tribes. The male roles and female roles in some places are quite separate and, certainly, if you're working out into a community – like, here, this one here, these people are working on this carving – women (old, young, _pakeha_ women), that's that assessment that you have to make of the [unclear] or the protocol that that _iwi_ or sub-tribe, the _hapu_, is involved in. Recently, I was working in a place called [unclear] in Rotorua. Rotorua's a stickler for no women and they go to great lengths to continuously remind the nation about that and so, when I was working in there, um, on a major project on their meeting house, the woman worked. Which shocked me. But they, the women there, had decided that they should work at that _marae_ so it was from not so much what the _iwi_ was thinking, it was what this _marae_ was thinking and the women were there and they decided that they were going to work there and that's not for me to say whether it's right or wrong but it's something that they determined.

It's a question that goes to them to figure out because I've been at places in the same area where woman have worked on them but the process that's been carried out is seen as a maintenance process. Like cleaning or something. So, therefore, it doesn't –

There's no creation of new –
DWh There’s no creation of new things so things can stay as they are, sort of. I guess working in situ you don’t need to go off to those sorts of –

NT I suppose that’s, that’s what makes it difficult with this code of ethics, across the board because you’ll get someone else who’ll want to do it differently. Again, they are still preserving that object. How the route you take to preserve it will vary, depending on, on everyone else. But I think there should be an acceptance that people come from different directions on that but, at the end of the day, we all still are going to do the same thing. It’s having enough flex to be more broader in your vision and trying to interpret that because, often, when you first arrive it’s not all that clear what these people are going to do and, I suppose –

DWh Often because no one’s there!

NT And you try to figure it out, after a while.

DWh Long walks along the road!

NT Because it can with, with regard to the differences in the individual. Like this Rotorua job when I turned up there, they were sure I wasn’t the person that should have turned up. One, as a conservator, they have only a vague idea of what that is but it must, whatever it is, because it’s science related, it must be a pakeha person and, um, then because this person is to work on their most sacred of artifacts, they must also be an elderly person. So, when I pull up in the car, they look out and think: “Oh no, he hasn’t arrived. It’s someone else. It’s the [unclear] come to pick up the mattresses or something! So, when you stand there, there’s a certain amount that you have to make obvious to those people and, er, I mean that’s difficult because Maori people, Maori people are sticklers for age – a thing that their elders are important. And that’s a good thing, in my view. So, you have to display for them clearly the intention that you hope for –

MC Now, there it goes. You were just saying that even if – we were talking about the rock art and that even if the, if the cultural connections are so far in the past, like in Canada, that they’re beyond living memory that the people still feel a, a, you know, a lot of responsibility to the, to the preservation of, of – or responsibility towards the pieces?
NT Well, certainly in the South Island, there’s been a lot of change – a newer shift of older peoples and newer peoples migrating in and intermarrying or doing war with them and destroying them. But, as a result of that shift around, today we have a settlement pattern with a particular tribe in particular areas which may not have been the case when particular artifacts were formed, like some of these rock art sites, and in the South Island, particularly, the rock art if it’s of, if it’s of sufficient age falls outside living memory. It’s creation falls outside living memory. In fact, living recognition – [unclear]. But, the peoples down there – the Ngai Tahu people who are there now – accept a custodial role for those things despite the fact that they’re not particularly their own but they’re in their land so they have a responsibility to those things and they’re prepared to take that on with a great deal of a fervour. In other areas, people in the central North Island in the [unclear] Forest – there’s a site there that the Ngati Manua people who are there now have no memory of those things being formed yet they still feel a responsibility to that and want to, um, be informed of what the other – the landowner, the legal landowner of that property – is doing with regard to those things, um, involving Historic Places Trust or involving the Department of Conservation. Whoever. It always involves a certain amount of conservation with those people. Um, certainly there are other areas: the Rotorua districts, the Lake Tarawera district – there’s rock art there and the people do have a memory of those things and that’s passed on like, er, the importance of those things is passed down like any other artifact. And, although there’s a subtle difference there, the passion is, is still strong for them as they would be, as I explained before when Maoris who go to museums and see artifacts from Egypt that if those things, for one reason or other, ended up in their land, they would assume a responsibility to care for them, regardless of who put them there. And I suppose in a very broad sense, Maori all belong to the same beginnings [unclear] the creation of stories, regardless of whether or not you were here today or yesterday, you’re here because you all come from the same stock. And, um, there’s a very strong sense of that and it’s symbolled in all these artifacts, it’s symbolled in the – in nature, in heaven and in earth and in the bush and all that sort of thing that, um, those things that are constant it’s symbolled in the, in the mountains and the rivers and the oceans. So, although you don’t have a history – a direct history – to that particular artifact, you know you’re connected there because it’s on the landscape. It’s also, you are also on the landscape. So, there’s that sort of thing and then that spills over into
our – which is another thing in conservation (conservators don’t really play around with it) – that’s the conservation of the natural resource. Dean’s got in here bits of fibre and plant. It’s also – it’s part of conserving the, these objects in their community – it’s conserving the way they made these things and the natural resources they extract from their surrounds to make these things and so everyone is a part of the same thing and people have descendancy from plants and all sorts of stuff.

DWh Yeah, yeah. There’s that significance from plants, too, which is really important. They would have their own whakapapa or genealogy and they come down. We’re just sort of one string of things relative to another. The children of Tangaroa are one lot and we’re sort of the –

NT The same line that we began from is the same line that the plants began from –

DWh The plants and the fish –

NT Or the timber, the fish. That we all come from the same line so even the people – we’re still tied in even broader than that. So, all that sort of stuff. So, the conservation of materials, of feathers, of fibrous plants are huge issues for Maori people. The conservation of all of those things –

DWh The trees –

NT The trees. The forest that [unclear] where they sought the timber for their carvings. All of that is tied in. Um, and that’s another part of conservation, really. It’s that, it’s that whole picture. And the loss of those things is like a very personal loss to the people. And people are renowned for their – sometimes – their name, the name of their tribe is named after something – a resource they never had.

DWh Waka. Tane. Yeah – named after the wood its made out of.

NT Yeah, that’s right. But it’s all those sorts of parallels. And I remember saying to me grandmother once, who was going through genealogies and I said to her: “Wasn’t that the name of the taniwha or the spiritual being that lives in the river?” And she said: “Yes, it is.” And I said: “Well, how come that person, that thing is in my genealogy?” And she
goes: “Because there was an interaction between, between our worlds and you’re the result of that.” So that the river, according to tradition, I am descended from the waters in the river and these people who have descent from heaven – the [unclear] tribe – some of them trace their descendancy from the sky. You know, most people have this story that most people arrived here on wakas, the great canoes, but the [unclear]. I think Ngai Tahu has the descendancy from the sky. In fact, the mists around their mountain – stuff like that – I mean for other, for people other than Maori people that seems really cosmic but that’s the way people really believe and they know that that’s where they come from. And that’s really deep rooted sort of stuff.

DWh But there’s a basis behind it. [unclear] It’s not just an interesting tale [unclear].

NT It’s hard to talk about because there’s a lot of things to tie in but once you know much of that you’ll see that there is a logic to it.

DWh Like Pikeous [sp?] is a bit like that, eh? Yeah he came –

NT Yeah. This guy Pikeous was supposed to [unclear] ridden on a whale to come to –

DWh To come to New Zealand.

NT But, when you analyze all of that and connect it, he came from the Cook Islands. When you tie that up with the old whale route, the feeding ground of the whales, he followed the whales.

DWh Followed the whales and he rode –

NT He rode on the whale to come here. They showed him the way by their –

DWh They’re quite clever, really. They’re a quite clever way of capturing a, an element in history to be remembered by.

NT And that figure’s remembered and performed at a [unclear]. The whale is always a respected ancestor. It’s a great food resource and is tied up with a lot of other stories with travel and things like that and is often depicted on these boards here as a, a symbol of abundance. You know,
support of the gods for those people and all that sort of stuff so it’s, it’s – if you investigate closer into it, there is a logic behind it, although it does sound (on the outside) a bit far out!

MC And so the traditional use of the resources, like, is a lot of that knowledge intact or was a lot of it lost?

DWh A lot of it’s lost.

NT A lot of it’s gone, eh? As the resources dwindled, even quicker the, the knowledge of using those resources have gone too. There’s still some around and I think it’s a matter of trying to preserve that knowledge, too, and there’s a lot of barriers in front of us preserving that knowledge with the different laws that relate to our resources in this country or how the resources is controlled and distributed inhibits, I feel, a lot of how we can preserve that sort of knowledge.

MC Yeah. But your work with the Trust in fact preserves that knowledge as it relates to, to objects because it, you know –

NT It goes some way, it goes some way towards it. Yeah.

DWh Yeah, as you get involved. Like that example of the [unclear] collecting. Yeah.

MC Yes.

NT At Rangiatea?

DWh Oh, there but, no, it was at Otaki the other day.

MC If you could just say that again for the sense of the tape.

DWh Oh, okay. Yeah. Well, the project at Otaki was to try and, um, replace a lot of damaged [unclear] lining in the roof area and that required the collection and preparation of material and some, something that the people there had sort of lost touch with for quite a while. Yeah. That was a – yeah.

MC So – just another conservation question – the, the, um, the thing about same standard of care which is in the Code of Ethics that, that was
originally put there I think so that ethnographic objects would be accorded the same standard of care and respect as the European fine art objects but now what happens in Canada, for example, is that if an object is going to be used by First Nations, conservators say: “But wait a minute! We wouldn’t let this European painting be used so how can we, you know, our of the same standard of care guideline, how do we, how do we do this?” What do you think about that?

NT Yeah. I suppose, if you look at it as you’ve said it, they are using those paintings. I mean do they keep them in cupboards upright where no one can see them? I mean they’re there to be viewed – they’re painted to hang and be viewed. They are using those objects as they’re designed to be used as! That’s an item that’s designed for a gallery, um, as their museums are designed around so they asking us to put an ethnographic object to use in the same fashion as another kind of an object.

MC Right, right.

NT And that’s totally incorrect. We wouldn’t ask them to hang their oil painting on the side of a, an ocean going waka but they’re asking us to hang a waka in the same fashion we would hang – that they would hang a painting, um, and you know they’re, they’re talking about apples and oranges. They’re not apples at all.

MC Okay. Now just to, to push this one step further – if the community wanted to use a waka in the ocean –

NT And they do!

DWh They have!

NT And they have!

DWh In a muddy river, actually.

MC Oh yeah? Because they have actually – a community in Washington State also did that – took an object, one, one of the canoes that was in the museum and used it. Yeah. So how do you handle that? What do you do? How do you –?
NT Well –

DWh I don't know.

NT That, that's a better question because, um - I mean there's an educative role that we need to play to say to them the amount of intervention you have to do to a waka to float it in the ocean, to use it, is such that you're going to end up with a brand new waka. That the ancestral profile of that waka will be altered so dramatically that you would be destroying your ancestral profile to them. And with a lot of these newer wakas that are coming – they call them 'plastic fantastics' after the America's, America's Cup yacht – and those, those waka are certainly viewed in, with lesser respect than these others timber ones, the timber ones you see. So, again you need to be wise – you need to wise up to what they're about and understand why they're about that way to find a compromise –

DWh Yeah, like I say, it really comes down to providing the, the right information to people to understand the physical needs of things and then, then they should be able to make their own, right decisions about them.

MC Have you ever found you weren't able to provide the right information because the person you were talking to was either an elder or a person of such high stature or something that culturally it wasn't appropriate for you to, to sort of give that?

DWh Oh, yeah. I mean sometimes you're talking at a different level – to a different level of people, who will then –

NT Go and take that up –

DWh Translate it to someone else. Yeah. Or, or when you go away, they will talk amongst themselves in their own way.

MC Yes.

NT And come back to you. We have here, fortunately (and this is quite unique, I think, in New Zealand) we have here a Maori Heritage Council, which is meeting at the moment with the Maori – with the Trust Board.
MC Yes. I actually had dinner with them with Mina McKenzie.

NT Right. Okay. Yeah, well, that – and it’s that sort of level of leadership, I suppose, with them that we can tap into as a support mechanism for a lot of what we do and these people are from – have a good tribal spread from one end of the country to the other and, um, they’re known to those people. They’re respected. They are the holders of the history and the knowledge from their people, especially these [unclear]. Well, the whole lot of them, really, or most of them. But there’s also pakeha people there – people with skills in archaeology, in particular, people with university education and stuff. People who can contribute as a resource to support us and, um, I think they do do that very well. They, they accept their supportive roles and we call on them as, as required to, to – they instigate things for us and bring us in. So we have to –

DWh More often and not, just like Mina with Te Kauwhata and really she’s paved the way for me there –

NT It’s that waka thing?

DWh No, this is, this is just outside Palmerston North. We went on Sunday – Mina and Miriam. She’s really paved the way, already. She’s done all that sort of talking around and talking about – It’s quite easy. She’s just really said: “Right. Just go to it.” Do something with these people – that’s really what she’s told me to do.

NT And, in some areas, we’ve had people we’ve worked with before and we develop a relationship. When you’re working on something as significant as their ancestral house, you do develop an intimacy with those people and, if you conduct yourself in a sensible manner, that can last for years and years and years. I know that a lot of the projects I’ve worked on that I’ve really become part of those people and, um, you work together: you achieve together. It’s not you and then, you, the expert from Wellington or from the city and then the home people – you blend in with them. And, um, while you’re working, they’ll [time? unclear] your history and their history. They talk with you about their people –

DWh They’ll find something!
NT And find a connection. And Maoris always do that. They always ask you: "Well where are you from?" So they can say: "Oh, so and so and so and so – we're connected up that way."

DWh The thing is you never say where you live. You need to say where you're from.

NT And Maoris will connect up. All the time. They always find something: "Oh, yeah, that's right! So and so and so and so." And away you go and you're one, you become one of them and that makes it easier for any other work you have to do in that district. You can –

DWh You can just go directly and they'll treat you as if the project never stopped in a way.

NT And, on the flip side to that, is, of course, if you do things incorrectly – if you cause offence.

MC Ah ha. Will they tell you?

NT Well, they may tell you. They may throw you off! But it certainly would make it awfully difficult for you in the future or to continue on with that but, um, Maoris do, do take offence if things are not done correctly. Again, it's identified in their protocol. [unclear] Now, I managed to get through okay. Um, [unclear] there's never ever a smooth way in. Most of the time, it is but you'll get – and they'll be a certain situation at a marae that you're not aware of and you'll get dragged into and, you know, so you have to play your cards right and all that sort of thing. But, most of the time, they're glad to see you. You're there to do them a great honour in, in helping them preserve something that's the most important thing in their life. But get that wrong and they'll turn that around. But, they're very accepting and you'll get there, they'll feed you – they want to feed you, they want to put you up. They can't do enough for you, you see. In fact, they kill you with, with all the attention sometimes. Yeah. So, I mean, if they want to take a waka out and float it, get in amongst them, inform them of the facts in a way that's befitting the respect for them and, um, in most cases, they come around. They can see – and there's other alternatives. If they wanted a waka – like, there's a great waka in the Auckland museum and everyone thinks it's again from my people.
We're going past and they'll say: "We'll stop off and we'll get our *waka* out and we'll take it up to this event." And everyone's going — and the museum's in a huge panic. But in the end they replicated the *waka*. You know, they took other *wakas* with them and we thought: "Well, what about — that's the history of that *waka*. What about the history of your other *waka*?" You know? Are you going to undermine those for this one? And so then they took a *waka* by another name from another ancestor, replicated that and took that. And they were happy with it — every one was happy with that. So it — and that *waka* — and Auckland breathed this huge sigh of relief. So, um, it's having an ability to read how these people are thinking and trying to — with them — find a conclusion to whatever anxieties they have. And, um, I suppose that's not a skill that you learnt at conservation school!

MC Yeah!

DWh No, that's a people skill, I think.

NT Yeah, it's talking, it's communicating.

MC Do you think, like, the conservation training programme should change?

DWh I think it should include more of the cultural understanding elements in it. Um, it's very much tied to the scientific.

NT It is very much science orientated and that, that was strange at the beginning when we were first in there in Australia because we were the Aboriginal people. [unclear] And whenever you go anywhere, whenever you go to a *marae*, you stop and you talk to those people and they talk to you and everyone knows where they stand in relationship to each other. And you're — a position for you is set on why you're there, the purpose you're there. And you're not the only one to decide that. It's decided in a forum. So, when you arrive in Canberra at the university and there's Aboriginal things all over the place but there's no Aboriginals there, it's hard to define where you're supposed to — where you fit with these things. And it's very uncomfortable — extremely uncomfortable. In fact, I hate, hated working with a lot of those Aboriginal things because you couldn't establish a position with them and, from your own cultural background, it's telling you that human pasts that are part of these artifacts are extremely sensitive.
You’d look at that hair, cordage they used – rope made out of human hair! [Groans] Okay, okay! [unclear] You know, stuff which is culturally very sensitive to us.

DWh Dynamite for us!

NT And with no indigenous people there to –

DWh Probably for them, too, I think.

NT Yeah. With no Aboriginal people there to confirm one way or another the situation with regard to that. We treated it with a great deal of sensitivity and just let the pakeha people touch it and we would stand back and –

DWh We got in first and got the little scoops.

NT Yeah, sort of probes on probes. Right. But, er, yeah I think conservation training does not take that into account enough – and certainly second place, if it has a place at all to the [unclear] of conservation. Um, and that’s really what this is – this debate – is going to be about. The whole Code of Ethics debate is about science and it’s about culture.

MC Yes.

NT It’s about first places and second places and really it’s about equality, of balance. And everyone is – all the conservators that I’ve ever met are science based. Until now.

DWh Oh, lots of them are, are arts based. A lot of them. Yeah, some do come in, though – chemists – they come into conservation. Some are quite, you know – artists, they come in.

NT Yeah and the arts ones certainly have a greater appreciation for resource and some of the cultural side of things.

DWh Yeah, and some of the cultural side, I really think. There’s a good mix of both.

NT And certainly some of the science ones are puzzled by the arts ones –
DW h The arts ones, yeah –

NT Because of the aesthetic thing and they always have this fear: "Oh, this artist is going to repaint a painting." And, you know and there's a voice of suspicion. And when they think about us – I'm sure they do – is that: "Oh, they're going to re-carve this." Or do something wildly – a wild interventive treatment on it. But it's, it's trying to find that balance. So, everyone's suspicious and the artists sort let that all go past them. They couldn't care about any of that. Yeah. So there are those sorts of divisions.

MC Yeah, yeah. Well, this has been fantastic. It's going to be four o'clock, though, so I don't want to keep you –
ROSE EVANS

AFFILIATION: TE ATI AWA

OBJECTS CONSERVATOR, MUSEUM OF ZEALAND TE PAPA TONGAREWA, WELLINGTON, N.Z.

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN HER OFFICE, SEPTEMBER, 1994

MC This is the interview with Rose Evans at MONZ, Museum of New Zealand.

RE Te Papa Tongarewa.

MC Good. So, what's your job title?

RE 'Conservator of Objects' so it covers a large amount of collection areas which ... are Maori/Pacific history, natural history and modern art.

MC Oh, good. Okay. And can you briefly tell me about you training, your background for the job?

RE I got an Art History/Anthropology degree and one year towards my thesis - a Masters of Art History - and I took a scholarship and went to Australia to the University of Canberra - and did a Bachelor of Applied Science in Conservation.

MC Okay. And how did you know about conservation? How did you get into it in that sense?

RE How did I know about that? Well, actually, my bent was more in curatorial because I had the theory between Art History and Anthropology, which was really a Maori Studies degree, so I was actually going into that area. I then went travelling for a long time. I came back and I looked around and I volunteered in Conservation. I volunteered in 'Paintings', interestingly enough, because that was the only accessible area. 'Objects' was very undeveloped at that stage here, and there was very little time. There was a lot of remedial treatment occurring and most of it was building maintenance. And so I couldn't
go into that area but it was always an area of interest because of my background and stuff. And I did a pre-internship in art with Ed Kulka – paper – and Chris Seager in paper as well at the Auckland City Art Gallery. And I did [work] for Carl Peters and Gerry Barton in the Auckland museum and that was really the area where I worked on Maori and Pacific collections. And that was the area I was going to take 'cause it's so varied and so interesting...

MC So do you use the New Zealand Conservators Code of Ethics in your work?

RE Ah, yes. But if you ask me if I could quote it, I don't know if I could quote it. I feel embarrassed that I couldn't. I looked at it the other day and – as I was replying to your paper and I was reading through the issue of the responsibility to guardians or owners, legal owners of collections. So, I do use the code of ethics. Yes, definitely.

MC What about other policies or policy papers?

RE Policies at the museum are changing so rapidly it's hard to keep up at the moment. But, as I was saying before, we've got a new bicultural policy which would impinge on my job quite drastically. But it hasn't been implemented yet. So, that would be one of the major policies I would work under.

MC Did you have input into that new bicultural policy or was it just something that developed by, you know, administration or higher ...

RE Well, there was a working group, initially, on bicultural policy. That was then moved into the managerial area. An Associate Director position was developed so that that person, Joe Doherty, could fully develop this bicultural policy and he presented that to the kaitiaki group so that there is a certain amount of consultation. But the area that it would impinge on my job would be the way that – the biggest way that it impinges on most peoples' jobs here – would be the staffing numbers – the input to increase Maori staffing and also the increased accessibility of collections to the Maori communities. And we are going to develop a system in collection management which will validate the collections. Our registration systems aren't up to scratch, like most institutions. Data base and computer systems are really moving at the moment, so that conservation and collection
management records will be linked. And our data base would be [set up] so that I would be able to pull up collection management information at the same time as putting in my conservation reports. Unfortunately, the registration or collection management information is so ... oh, I don't know if I want to be quoted as saying that ... their collections are poorly validated at the moment by the community out there.

MC Can you explain what you mean by validation?

RE Well, there are a lot of older people (Kaumatua) around at the moment, who have knowledge of these collections. They have been [in] houses (wharenui) that have been ‘in situ’ when they were young. There have been collections that they’ve handled or used and, as yet, the two areas I’ve worked in, like [unclear] and [unclear], some of the old people have still been alive and we can do oral histories where they’ll be able to recall their memories. And, really, we need that because otherwise all the information that we have as “Collector 1945, Wanganui” – or something like that, which is just absolutely hopeless because often it wasn’t. Those sort of collections are – those records are incorrect. So, by bringing the access to the Maori communities, you’re also bringing the communities in to validate the collections as well. Because a lot of people say: “Yes, I know that photograph. I’ve seen that photograph before. That’s my auntie.” And that’s what the National Library does as well (which you’ll probably find out from Vicki) is that they have a system where people can come in and say: “Yes, I know these people.” And, like, I have done that myself. I found a photograph of my grandfather and they said: “We didn’t know who that was.” So, they allow that now. Other museums don’t necessarily allow that.

MC In the States, the National Museum of the American Indian is doing that within a programme in which they will then return a copy of the photograph to the community, to the family, so it really serves both people very well, you know.

RE And so they should, really, shouldn’t they?

MC Yes, exactly. And also if something is private or sensitive, especially some of the old photographs taken at the turn of the century would not be allowed to be taken today. These photographs are put in storage that
there isn’t access to, except selected people from the community ...

RE We’re at the beginning of that – not fully developed yet – but we do acknowledge the effect that some collections are or should be private and that doesn’t mean just [carbons? unclear]. It doesn’t mean just objects and textiles. It also moves into areas like, for instance, oral histories and photographs. It’s so fast moving, though. We move so fast because we’re only opening in a few years. The changes have been huge and just in the last three years, storage has moved.

MC Okay. So, some of your work, you were telling me earlier, does involve working directly with members of the originating communities. So that is part of a consultation team. Also, you were talking about having people come in. You would be supervising – or have supervised – some people who have come in.

RE The first process is we – well, if I could use an example of, say, Te Hau-Ki-Turanga which is our meeting house here and Rongowhakaata ... so we moved the house and it initially had to be negotiated to be retained in the museum. So you have to go through the process of acquisition: how we acquired it and was that acceptable that it is in [the] Wellington area. And how is it going to be displayed and used. We negotiated over that. That was really more managerial, plus dealing with that policy is that it would be able to be used as a functional house by all the Rongowhakaata but by no one else. So, we would have in the new museum like a pan-tribal whare that everyone else could use. But not Te Hau-Ki-Turanga. So, that was the first decision. Then, the second issue is when I then went and did a report – a condition assessment of the separate elements of the house. I put it down to quite factual (professional) terms now because it’s the only way that I can relate it. And, for instance, the poupou and poutokomanawa – I separated them off and provided the alternative treatment options. Now, we’ll always be going for minimal interference and structural stabilization but I would give them the option and I would say: “This is really what we, what I, suggest we do, and these are the reasons.” Now, we went all the way up to the east coast and negotiated that and there were other concerns they had. Like, for instance, there were some cosmetic changes that they wanted to happen because a lot of the longitudinal cracks in the carvings went right through the faces of the figures and they didn’t like that. That was – from a conservation viewpoint, unnecessary. Minimal interference states that, if it’s just
cosmetic, it’s not necessary. However, with that consultation, I felt that it was and it will go that far because that is what they want and they are, in a sense, the guardians of that house. Well, then, I would take notice of it. So, that’s the process of negotiation. There was another issue which was the tukutuku. They’re quite badly damaged and, because of the nature of the materials that they’re made from, they get damaged where people sit against the walls. A lot of people up there stated that they would like to have these remade. We could. I don’t know what we could do with the tukutuku and I, as well as other conservation people had to uphold that as well as other concerns. I had to state that these were original. They weren’t necessarily original to the house.

They were made later when the house was reinstated in the Dominion Museum – and were made by Raukawa women – not the same tribal group. So, that brought a fairly controversial issue to it: they weren’t necessarily Rongowhakaata and they were damaged. And the Rongowhakaata people thought they should be replaced. But, when it was explained that they had been in the house so long and that these panels had been made under the direction of Ngata, who was from the east coast and that they had kept, in a sense, the house warm all that time. Then it was agreed that we would retain them. But we would not re-fabricate them. From my point of view, I was happy with that – but I also had to then negotiate with the fact that we do minimal treatment so that we would keep as much of the original material as possible. To people who make tukutuku that’s ridiculous. Why keep all the old stuff? It looks tatty, doesn’t look any good. But I had to try and explain it – we try to keep as much of the original as possible – as I was doing with the carvings. That was an acceptable viewpoint on their part and then we will do minor treatments.

MC And will you do the minor treatments or will it be, say, if there was an area missing, Dean was telling me, the community from the houses he’s dealing with, because they’re in the community – weavers – who will come to do it.

RE Now, when I worked out that condition report and I did a treatment assessment and had the different options and the times and the resources that I needed and the amount of people that it would take, allowing for maybe two to three people per collection piece so we’d have maybe six people from Rongowhakaata working with me and I would supervise. Now, some of those treatments I would do alone, because it would be time-saving and a little too extensive. But a lot of
treatments would be minor treatments as I was saying and I would be working in a supervisory angle and we would have a training session and I would keep a close eye on what was going on, but I would try and establish a head of each team so there would be a hierarchy since it’s the easiest way of working in groups. They would have to work that one out themselves. It wouldn’t be me saying this person is going to be it because it wouldn’t work. But, from an area of tukutuku that’s something where I think the problem comes in because I feel that using a traditional material would be ... how do you say ... you wouldn’t be able to distinguish it from the original. So, I was going to come up with these in Japanese tissue fabrications. Two people [out of the field? unclear] absolutely murderous and they thought I’d gone completely mad! After explaining, I don’t feel that they did think it was so crazy. So, I would be going from a different aspect from Dean because he can use – or he has to use – a lot of items that are actually structurally stronger. They have to withstand wear because they’re going to be used. This house won’t be used, only on various occasions by Rongowhakaata. So, I’m able to have a little bit more leeway, to be able to stick more to our code of ethics, more than maybe Dean can. I don’t generally consolidate carvings. I don’t do those sort of things because I don’t feel that it’s necessary. These carvings aren’t standing out in the elements. They’re not being used. However, if they were going to be in a situation where they would be more susceptible to damage – well, then, perhaps I would change my treatment options.

MC Right.

RE The women were asking if they could work on the tukutuku and, yes, they could, that would be fine. However, we would work in a situation where I would explain why I felt “this” treatment was a good option. “This” treatment was from my angle the way we should go and they would say why they would think that their treatment was good and then we would come up with a compromise. I didn’t want to lose any of the original tukutuku and, when you reweave a lot of that, you do lose it.

MC That’s interesting and, with work on the wooden carvings, do people also have to come in and do certain rituals before you can work on them? I don’t know of there was any tapu, you know, that had to be –

RE Generally. Before they go on exhibition – they go up – I worked in
the front of Te Hau-Ki-Turange and we had a ceremony before it went up, to lift the tapu. I did ask if it was necessary before it was worked on and they said that I didn’t have to. But I’m always aware of that because, from my angle, I don’t want to get into any trouble as well. But I’m quite aware of the power of the carvings.

MC Yes. You mean like personal trouble?

RE Yeah, yeah.

MC So, I guess [from] some of what you’ve been describing to me, it sounds as if it presents particular challenges to you as a conservator that if you were working on, you know, Western paintings or something you would have to –

RE You wouldn’t have to deal with it. It’s quite unique – it’s quite different in that section. Morally challenging. But it really wears you out, especially the amount of extra time that you put into the consultation. And it’s not often just consultation – because some people call it ‘consultation’ – but I like to call it ‘negotiation’ because, from my angle, it’s a give and take on both sides. But you don’t have to. Often, though, there is a similarity in contemporary collections – contemporary art collections – because artists are still living and the artists through their own personalities, what they like – and I have worked on modern contemporary collection exhibitions – they demand consultation and also demand the ability to partake in the treatment of the collection items. And often, someone like Ralph Hotere – I would ring him up and say: “Look, this damage has occurred. How do you feel?” Now, the museum owns the art piece so the museum has the ability to say: “Well, actually, it might be – this is a contradiction, really – that might be, may deteriorate … (the artwork) so we would prefer not to use your sanding machine. Thanks, Ralph.” However, I also feel that art is – I’m not saying it’s the same – but there is certainly a parallel where it is something that is moving and changing, especially when the artist is there and the artist states: “I’ll treat it. It’s fine. This is what I use: da di da di da …”

MC And in Canada, actually, contemporary artists are protected by the copyright law so they legally have rights to works even if they are owned by somebody else. And these rights – actually the museum and gallery accord more rights to the artists than the law actually does
because the law is specifically for – you can’t denigrate works of art and also you can’t wilfully damage them. So, it’s of interest to conservators, but that same copyright that was written for works of art does it extend to something [aboriginal]?

RE That’s extraordinary!

MC It is, it is. It’s that whole thing between art and crafts and that whole thing between artists and, you know, people, indigenous peoples, and it also extends only to the individual who made the object and their estate; whereas, in Canada like on the West Coast, the family have rights. So, that’s an area in Canada that’s still being worked out. It’s quite interesting but ...

RE Well, we haven’t even worked that out here. I mean, that’s something I brought up on many occasions that if the artist’s in town and the artist has ... I often communicate with them just as much as I will do in the area of Maori collections. I’ll ring them up and say: “How do you feel?” So, there’s actually an incredible parallel.

MC There is, yeah.

RE I think we have to sort that one out because we’ve had a few problems in the modern or contemporary art collection area. Especially in sculpture area. Because there are the installations as well and collections.

MC It’s really interesting.

RE And they are in that very area where there are contemporary artists – Shona Rapira Davies, if you’ve heard of her. But she draws on two areas: one, she’s an artist but, also, she’s a Maori artist and she has stated quite fervently that she doesn’t want her pieces displayed in a certain way. And, if they are, then she will destroy them.

MC Well!

RE She’ll come back and destroy them. Well, what do you do? The institution can say: “Well, we legally own this.” But they don’t for publicity’s sake and, for the standing – status – of the institution, they have no right to do that. Well, they can’t do that, can they? Putting
themselves in an extraordinarily vulnerable position. So I think all these areas are only starting to come up now.

MC And in Canada the artist retains what are called ‘moral rights’ to the piece so that would be – that would come in – if the artist says: “No, you cannot display it in this manner.” The institution has to accept that.

RE Wow! We haven’t got that far yet.

MC Okay. Tell me, who do you think – Okay, conservation is a profession and professions, by definition, have a people they serve or things they serve: their clients. So, who would you say – especially of you had to choose a one over the other – like would you say your client – is it your institution? Is it the object? ‘Advocates for the artifact’ is sometimes a phrase used in conservation. Is it the originating people of the collection? A little tough question here!

RE Well, are you asking me for a personal viewpoint or an institutional viewpoint?

MC Well, give me both, actually.

RE Well, I’ve been told from an institutional viewpoint, my board of trustees that is who my clients are. I disagree and I would say that the collections are my client group. And when it comes to Maori collections all tribal groupings are so closely related – so they aren’t any different (tribally) to me. So, the client for me is the collection and I think if you ask any conservator they would say the collection. But they are always at odds. I think they are mainly at odds with the institution as opposed to anything else. I mean, I’m not at odds with the Maori community but I’m perhaps – would be termed – at odds with the institution.

MC Great, okay. Now you mentioned earlier – you mentioned respect for the pieces. Could you tell me more what ‘respect’ means? Like how, in your view, what do you do to show respect to the pieces or what does ‘respect’ mean?

RE Well, first of all, I suppose it comes with the fact that, when I’m treating a carving, I’m not treating it as a piece of wood. So, that’s the
first issue — that I’m treating an ancestor — so that’s quite a different thing. And I often find myself chatting away. I know that might seem that I’m going to be put in a white coat with those arms that link behind, hands tied up, but, in fact, it’s just the way I feel. It’s just the way I’ve been brought up. So, there’s no real problem that I have with it and I don’t think that I should get any sort of treatment for it. That issue of respect comes from the status of the carvings and it’s like an in-built thing and I can’t really even explain it. It’s something that you’re brought up with, that you have a — it’s really hard for me to put it into words, really. Maybe it’s an awe (or not necessarily a fear) ‘cause you have a knowledge that you’re linked. Your lineage is through to this person somehow and I feel that anybody of any Maori descendency would feel that. Especially because before, as I was saying, that before the alliances were so strong that you could always link up somehow. But, oh, that’s really how I work. And a sort of practical angle for just my area — a practical angle for how I work with the collections is that I observe certain restrictions which was one of menstruation — I don’t work on the carvings — and during menstruation I don’t use saliva for removal. Like saliva’s so particularly good removing animal glue which is unfortunate. I don’t blow on the carvings, which is what you often get used to during treatment. You blow away various things. And it also makes you so much more aware of when you’re treating a carving and you’ve got to use a scalpel or something. If it fell down: "Oh look, I’m really sorry about that." You just find that you naturally do it. It may sound like a whole lot of mumbo jumbo.

MC It doesn’t actually. It sounds much better than treating them clinically; you know, the way doctors used to treat people — materials of science.

RE However, I do find I have that aspect in me too. I don’t actually find it a very hard river to cross really. I just don’t see — I’ve had to do quite a few lectures on Maori and science, as such, because I think that I feel — and I think a lot of other people do feel — that the Maori community has often veered away from scientific careers because it seems a male dominated white ethos. And, in many respects, I suppose I stayed away from it to a certain degree until I got pushed into it by my mother. And I found that it was so creative and such a creative area that I don’t feel that it’s a cold clinical viewpoint. There are all those contradictions in science itself that, if a lot of people realised it. Science is not just a narrow vehicle. It’s not just something that is fact. Because, as we all know, in science fact is only a proven theory and theories change and I
suppose something that helped me move in that area was when I did anthropology and I did all those ethos on the world view courses, which I linked to the science that I did later on. It was that science was a paradigm, that various scientific views were a paradigm within a belief system.

MC Yes, exactly.

RE So, I don’t really see it as such a disparity with what I do now, which is in conservation and working with Maori communities and with Maori taonga. That panel ... I just do not find myself in a dilemma there at all and often I’ve had to – when we were putting forward a proposal for the natural history resource centre with the Maori element of it, they put me on the area of – what was it? – it was developing the scientific angle. A lot of people were very – thought, oh, it just wouldn’t work because Maori science is different from western science, and I said: “I don’t see why we can’t link them.” Because you can link, for instance, the carvings, the sciences, the material sciences behind carvings, the wood technology, the science behind wood deterioration (the insects that eat into woods) and why, for instance, trees were cut down at a specific time and why they were waterlogged, why they were put in rivers (because the sap would be reduced and you wouldn’t have an insect attack). All those things that are actually intriguing to Maori communities. I don’t think that science was even taught properly in Maori communities. It’s not linked or seen then as – to use this awful phrase – a client group. And I think if it was, well then it would be so much more. I think a lot more Maori would move into science. They would go into areas like ethnobotany. Fascinating, you know? They would see there wasn’t a huge contradiction between the scientific training and their Maori upbringing. If that’s an answer to you ... I don’t know!

MC No, it’s great because actually I saw in one of the conservation council’s publications that they’d given you a grant to do a course on Maori science. And I thought: “I’ve got to ask Rose about that.” So, we just talked about that. That’s terrific. Do you think – are there objects within the collections of the museum – some of this may be repetitive – it’s just I’m asking them because of its comparison.

RE Because you have to!
MC So, are there objects within the collections of museums or galleries which have a cultural purpose in Maoridom, which is not being served by their being in the museum?

RE You give me an example of what you mean.

MC Something that would be ... I'm thinking of the Zuni twin war gods in the United States are all being returned to Zuni because the health of the people and the well-being of the community depends on their being in Zuni. I guess I'm wondering whether there are some objects that really need — the communities feel need — to be repatriated.

RE Oh, yes.

MC Over other objects or just, um ... ?

RE Well, I think there's a huge issue over human remains and mokomokai (which are carved tattooed heads). I think a lot of Maori communities feel that they should be buried. And I'm in a sense in agreement. But the institution here feels that they shouldn't be, so we'll have to come to a compromise in that sense. Ah well, some of the institution — and it hasn't necessarily been put out in writing. I don't feel that they're going to go off and bury them at this point because I think a lot of people want to do more scientific analysis of them. Ah! There we are!

MC Exactly!

RE But I think that's just a red herring, myself. I think that that's just been put in there. So, I think a lot of communities feel that they should be buried. There are waka tupapaku, which are the chests, burial chests, which are localized, which probably a lot of people say should go back. Because of their association, they should be buried as well or dealt with in a certain manner. So, there are those sort of very tapu "items". If the institution dealt with them in a very tapu manner, then perhaps it might be a different scene and this institution does intend to. We have had a lot of discussion in the storage, the way that collections are stored, the tribal locations and separate private storage areas (a lot of tribal groups that are now going through into visible storage areas won't see, or other people won't see, as well, and won't touch). So, I think it's often a matter of how you deal with collections as to where
they should be. Because I think, as I was saying before, a lot of communities are in the Wellington area or Auckland, whatever. A lot of them. There was that huge urban movement in the fifties where they were moved out of their original locations. So, the rural communities are quite lean at the moment, but they are building up. So, I think if people felt that their collections – if they knew about the collections, if they knew what we had, why, if they had access to them and if they feel that they were treated and cared for properly, then I think that they would allow them to stay in the museum community. And I think that the way that you deal with that is like I was saying, through the bicultural policy where you increase the staffing numbers. You have more Maori kaitiaki it really is a big issue with the Maori communities. If they know that the networks are there – and we’re not just talking about this area which is Tangata Whenua Te Ati Awa. We’re not just saying it’s Te Ati Awa people in this area, but the network of people who are from the different tribal groups. That information goes back to your aunties and your uncles, whatever. And so they feel that the collections are safe. But that trust hasn’t often been developed because the institutions have never – have always been exclusive zones and because they’re so scared of collections being repatriated and taken back. I mean it was a big scare after ‘Te Maori’ with people, somebody saying: “Look, this is what you’ve got. You never told us about that and we want them back.” And often even with the pataka ... the other day, there was the concern with various people that maybe the pataka should go back but once the tribal input was put there into display and curatorial research and in conservation and the opportunities to the tribal groups are numerous because they can get training in curatorial and conservation and perhaps possible careers. It is definitely possible. And work at least because they can be near to offer their collections and help their collections and keep them warm, so to speak. It seems quite favourable that institutions are there, keeping collections in a standard of care that is not only culturally sensitive but also physically well-cared for.

MC Can you tell me a bit more about the conflict of keeping them warm?

RE Like, if I’m Ngati Pikiao and you’re Maniopoto and you’re not even in your area, you’re down here in Wellington, you don’t have anyone in your tribal group around you to keep you warm, to support you. And that’s the other issue of bringing up your staffing numbers because they’re there to specifically keep an eye on you, come and stand near
you and support you. And I think a lot of people feel that like Mina. She was stating that she felt quite strongly that she was down here 'cause she’s Te Arawa she’s Ngati Pikiao linked. She said that she felt quite strongly she wanted that pataka to go up in this Wellington museum. And she was there to keep that house warm. As I would with Taranaki carvings, I would say the same thing with Te Ati Awa and other people who are Ngati Porou. They would feel that, too. And, as we’re a national institution, we serve a national basis as opposed to being regional. If we are regional then I feel that we would have a strong responsibility to Te Ati Awa, Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa carvings.

MC Yes, that’s very interesting. You know in the States the NAGPRA legislation that came in in 1990 – the Native American Grave Protection Act – it has mandated all museums that receive federal funding must (this is the period that’s ending now) they must look at everything they have from any native group – and they’re doing it just within the States because it’s United States law – they have to send out to the tribe a list of their holdings in the museum. So, they have to tell – they have to go through everything – tell the tribe exactly what they have so that all the tribes know where their objects are in American museums and then they have to – they have no choice – they have to return all human remains. And the excuse about scientific study, the answer is: “Look, you haven’t done it in the last fifty years, so why do it now?” And, in some cases, you know, people are consulting with people and saying – well, I guess in all cases they are – because some people don’t want their human remains back because they have no way of integrating them, of burying them. There were no reburial customs in that particular group. And, because they’re very powerful, they’re trying to come up with a cultural solution that will work. Sometimes it’s to rebury them, but outside the village. Places like that. In some cases people are seeing the value of getting some scientific information, for example, for land claims. It’s very interesting because the law has really forced museums and forced archaeologists who are the ones really – physical anthropologists have been wanting to return human remains, to move on that issue rather than sit on it.

RE Did you talk to M. about that?

MC M. P.? No, I actually didn’t. I met him but he was a lecturer and then
we sort of had lunch together, but no, I didn't really talk to him about it.

RE  Because he has a role specifically to do with mokomokai.

MC  Oh, okay.

RE  The carved, preserved heads. And he has an enormous amount of information on them. I was working with him not long ago he said a lot of people won't go near them. Human remains are kept a secret and they're in a vault. And no one will go. But, from a job point of view – the fact is that's my job, and Moanaroo, and that's her job as well, she's a Collections Manager and all three of us got in there. It was actually quite interesting because I didn't really want to go and then I thought, well, we should upgrade the storage if that's the way we're dealing with them at the moment (in a storage, in a museum context). Well, then, we should upgrade instead of leaving it there in an old vault and letting them rot. So, if you are going to go on the premise that they're a museum collection item and that they should be the most respected, in a sense – I mean, here they are sitting there and we really shouldn't be leaving them behind a door and I thought: “Okay, I'll go in there.” And M. was going through and telling me, showing me the different heads – how old they were; if they were tattooed after death; how long before they were tattooed before death; if they were trade heads; if they were heads that had been taken by their own people say, for instance, in battle, so they wouldn't have been taken by anyone else. That sort of thing. And it's quite incredible information. Just made me balk at the amount of information he knew. In a sense, I could really respect his viewpoint about it. He actually feels that there's so much more investigation that has to occur – analysis – on this collection group (and not only this collection group but all the way through New Zealand in the different vaults in the different museums) before they can be returned. And so there is that aspect and also the other thing that puts in different light is M.. He couldn't be looked at – like an evil scientist.

MC  Like a pakeha.

RE  Yeah, yeah – sitting there with those callipers. He has a genuine interest in that area of history because it was ... I just want to quickly say that I feel that really how I feel that if not being dealt with properly
in that sense from my museum stance. However, the different tribal
groups have different viewpoints on their different taonga and that
will come out with the validation process so that it's accepted that we
will negotiate those when they come out, once the access and the
information to the collections is sent out. So, with our database, it's
going to take a while, but it will happen. The second issue is that I was
just going to say that I don't feel that the Maori communities feel that
any of their needs are being served in any sense.

MC What the Maori communities –

RE Maori communities don't feel that their needs are being met by this
museum. I don't think it is. I mean, like, we still don't have
exhibitions that are orientated to various controversial viewpoints that
are up in to contemporary times and, as I was reading your paper (I
don't know if this museum would be very happy with me) but you
were stating that your museum was becoming activity driven, or
facsimile driven even, and not necessarily educational. And I agree
and I'm very concerned with it and I've talked to a lot of people who
have the same concerns. From an objective viewpoint and from a
Maori viewpoint – and I link them both in being the same – if you
go up and see an exhibition that we have at the moment, and there was
one item and it was a mourning cap made of seaweed. It was sitting
there. There was a certain amount of information but there was no
information as to how it was made, what it was made for. And I'm
telling you, the Maori communities lap that information up. They
really want to know how things are made and what it's been made
from because a lot of that information has been lost. A lot of it has
been lost – not all of it. And that's why people want to come into our
storage areas. They want to know the old styles of carving. How they
carved, you know? A lot of people have forgotten that carvings were
decorated massively. They feel as if they were dressed. They weren't
just plain old carvings which had a red coating on them. Often, they
were multi-coloured and were decorated with all sorts of elements.
Maori/ Pakeha, as well, the links that came in there – the changes and
divergences and styles of carving, the paint that was used and the
decorative elements was enormous but that isn't being held out to the
communities either. And they really want to know. And I know that
because, when I've done these negotiations, they say to me: "Well, why
do you think it had a different paint? Why do you think it had a
different colour?" Nowadays, museums are saying often that
collections ought to speak for themselves. Well, they don't. We have a responsibility to say what information we have so we can educate the young and the old. They are all out there wanting to know. I think that they feel that those collections aren't even out there to be seen by them. Because we're getting into facsimiles and we're reducing amounts of collection items and we're reducing the amount of written text because a rule in the world at the moment states that people only have a concentration span of fifteen words. I mean, how ridiculous! I feel quite strongly on that and I feel that there are a lot of people, not just the Maori community but I know they are interested, in information coming out which we can tell them about the collection items. And that's not just curatorial, such as where they came from and so on, but how they were made and what they were made from. Like seaweed – I mean who would think of using that? And kelp. People are wanting to know how kelp was used. I've told lots of people kelp bags were available. They used to hold mutton birds and tied them around the top. Some people say: "Yes, I remember that." Old people say: "Yes, I remember that." But young people think: "Well, you know that didn't happen." We just use plastic bags because materials change so much. I think that from that angle that's how I feel the Maori community isn't being aided. I also think it isn't being aided because it doesn't have input into the curatorial aspect – being able to come in and tell their stories. We are hoping to – from what I gather – in the new institution the way we will work with a new infrastructure. We will get over that by having guest curatorial, outside curatorial shows. And we will get over that by negotiation on the curatorial process. But we have to be able to be lenient and flexible enough to be able to allow these controversial exhibitions to come through. So the institution doesn't see that its status isn't being harmed in any way. Unfortunately, institutions are now so publicly aware that they are impinging on their staff huge restrictions. Do you agree?

MC Oh absolutely! Completely! And it's very worrying because it's like a new trend in museology. It seems like all the museum directors are stampeding off in this new direction.

RE It's a religion. It's very dangerous.

MC Yeah! Actually, it was part of my paper which I cut out. I was wondering whether museum directors were using this new trend
towards entertainment, and also the lack of money, to not look after collections the way they didn’t look after them fifty years ago. Museum directors just go on about their own things.

RE They just find another way of doing it.

MC Yeah.

RE Yeah, I sort of agree with you. But, from the community viewpoint, I don’t think they can allow that. They won’t allow that because you can have a facsimile cloak but that cloak won’t be worn by Te Rauparaha.

MC Yes.

RE That’s the difference. Or that mere was held by Te Takawaru, the warrior. That’s what I was saying before. I feel there’s an enormous amount of transferral of the person – their mana – to the collections they had because they would instill that mana in them. So that’s why I feel that those directors won’t have a stand. They just cannot and people won’t allow that. Especially when we’re dealing with materials, usually organic materials, that just deteriorate like a touch of a button really. Especially if they were out, if they weren’t cared for – we have insect damage or mould damage which just wipes them out. Yes, I feel conservation is often at odds with institutional policy but when it brings in something like a bicultural policy it can’t be. You have to be able to go back to that all the time and say: “Look, I’m sorry but we have this huge responsibility to our Tangata Whenua and that is why it’s bicultural as opposed to multi.” It’s something there so that’s what I’ve always got hope in, that we can pull back on the clause and say: “Well, you know, we owe this to our community.” Otherwise, I mean, after all, a museum is its collection and it has to realize that. Often it doesn’t. It’s collection, unfortunately for the institutions, the collection in Maori terms is not just the collection: it’s also the Maori viewpoint. They’re not just collections; they’re ancestors. So, they’re not willing to just let them go by the by!

MC So, it may be different for Canada. I think one of the problems in Canada for the museums is that the collections seem to be sometimes pawns in the political process of land claims and fishing claims, and the communities are asking for their collections back more to assert independence and power. At the same time, Governments will give
collections back because it's an easier solution than giving land back. Museums are concerned that those collections are not going to be cared for and, in fact, will probably be sold to finance because they're valuable and a lot of places are in dire poverty.

RE They're just so many New York collectors that have to have them in their loft apartments.

MC You've got it exactly.

RE It's horrible.

MC It seems to me because of the political process in Canada, some of it seems quite adversarial. It seems to me here that in every community there is a respect for and caretakers of the traditions, including objects. You know, objects that have been repatriated would be highly respected culturally and that the appropriate cultural thing would be done with them. Probably they wouldn't turn up on the art market.

RE I hope not. I would like to say that I agree with you. I can't say - couldn't say - that it's true. I'd like to say from my viewpoint they wouldn't be sold. But I'm saying that we're all human and I know some have sold off land that was Maori land and they shouldn't be doing it. They're at odds with the rest of the family. That's human nature. But you can't make a blanket statement that states all Maori people would be this way. I mean, if you can see what I'm saying. That turns me into a nasty witch, really, for saying that. The community structure is very strong and I would think there would be an enormous amount of care given in that sense. However, there would have to also be - the reality is, there would have to be so much help from the museum or some institution which would try to back that up. You can't just say - I really think it's irresponsible for an institution to say: "Oh well, then. Here you go. 'Cause you want it, you can have it." Because it's not fair. A lot of people in the communities say: "We can't care for that taonga. We don't have resources." Because all the young people come into the cities. And that's a huge responsibility to put on the older people and the people back there where the funds are so sadly lacking. That is the reality. And what sort of building structure do you have? I tried to explain it with the pataka and some people said: "Maybe we could put it back outside or maybe we could put it back inside." And I said: "Well, that's fine and that is an option." I'm not
sitting there saying: "No way!" Because it's not up to me to say that and, if that's what they want, well then that's what they can have. However, I said: "Let's just go down to the lab and look at those carvings and I'll show you what the damage is." Once they had seen the damage, they said: "We'll leave that up to you to treat and we would prefer that pataka to be here for our grandchildren and great grandchildren because we can't care for it back home because we don't have the resources — the human resources — and we don't have the financial resources. Now, if the institutions on the other hand said: "Well, we will help train your young people for care and old people and if we would give money for a building that is air conditioned or humidity/temperature controlled", then fine. But can you see any institution in your mind immediately who would do that?

MC Yeah, that's so true. Well, what serves the national interest then? One big building in one location?

RE Well, I don't know about that. I think that what will develop in the future will be regional Maori museums. I honestly see that as something that's going to happen. That's my personal vision or viewpoint. I don't know if a big national institution does serve even the whole pakeha or Pacific Island cultures. I mean look at the Pacific Island culture. They might just say: "Stuff that! We don't want all our stuff in that awful old building. We'd rather have our own one in the way that we want to serve the Pacific community. I have seen different institutional places. I've seen — I went out to [Page ? unclear] Porirua the other weekend. I've noticed the way that they really work with their community. And it was great. They had a good coffee bar and yoga classes. They had a good arts and craft area where people could have a big input into the way they were exhibiting. And they had a library. What a great community centre! What do they want with this great white elephant up on the hill really? So, I agree.

MC Okay, now tell me, things are so interesting now. When M. spoke to the museum studies — this was the museum studies undergraduates at Massey — and M. came and he brought some of his taonga - cloaks and mere and some other small and some tiki. They're his — this is my understanding — but he put them out on the table, one cloak on top of another, and put the mere on top of the feathers. And then, the other thing was — I thought, well, okay, because they are his — but then the museum studies students came up and I didn't mind that they
were encouraged to touch them but they touched them roughly and he’s got his back turned and he’s talking to another student. So, he’s not in a position to notice them. So, I mentioned to Mina and to David. Mina was very – she said it would be an insult to tell him what to do, to say: “Look, did you know that the students were bending the cloaks like this and this?” If M. was interested, he would – if he asks, we’ll tell him but if he doesn’t because of his status and his stature – So, I’m wondering whether something like that – how would you handle it?

RE In that situation or in the institution?

MC Well, give me both. One with a person who has something privately and then in the institution.

RE Well, I feel that I know M. well enough to say that’s maybe not such a good example to use and he has family links so I don’t feel that – well, I definitely respect his status and I think he’s got an enormous amount of knowledge. But I think he always respects mine. I just might say to M., “Okay, if you don’t mind doing it, it’s up to you.” He did actually – him and I had a discussion one time and – he wanted his cloaks to be looked after traditionally, to be cared for traditionally, to be put out in the sun. He said: “What do you think?” And he was testing me out. I said from a scientific viewpoint I said: “No, I disagree and, by putting them out in the sun, you get the ultraviolet rays.” On and on, I did my white coat spiel. He said: “Yes but I want them to be dealt with in a different way.” And I said: “Fine, that’s your thing and that’s what you want to do. Good on you. But it’s not what I’d do.” So, I wouldn’t get uptight about it. However, if it was the collection items in the museum ... It’s very hard to ask me to do that. I have had these situations where people have had great standing and they’ve handled things – handled things roughly – and I’ve been standing at the back going: “Ooooh!” And I’ve tried to go like this (supportive / demonstrative gestures) but I haven’t actually said to them: “Look you were holding it in this particular way and you tore this off, whatever.” I’ll try and rescue it. I approach it in a different way, Mina was right about that. But the problem is that I know M. so well that I don’t feel that it would be a problem. But it would be with someone else, who was on the Board, say, and had great mana and standing. Just as much as M. has but I don’t know them. I would probably be standing behind, and on hand to prevent any potential major damage.
MC For me being white and everything, too, I don’t want to be at all in the role of a police man.

RE Ah, awful then!

MC So, I just stand back.

RE Ah! “Unhand that object!”

MC Exactly. We don’t ask people to use white gloves or anything when they come in. And the people coming in do have connections to the objects in some way or another. So, yeah, just stand back. So, that’s the contradiction between museum practice and –

RE Yeah, I know. It’s incredible isn’t it? Although I do try and get in there first – like when I brought the group in to show Te Takiya [sp?] [pataka name mentioned previously] I got in first and said: “The condition is really bad and if I pick this up here, there is movement in the wood.” So, everyone was really quite aware as to the condition of the maihi first, before even looking at it.

MC Right.

RE That was how I deal with it.

MC Yeah, that’s good.

RE So that they are aware of it’s physical condition and they respect my viewpoint as well as much as my respecting theirs.

MC Do you let people try on certain objects? Like, if someone wanted to try on – like we have masks. Often the descendent will kind of put it on.

RE Well, it depends on who it is. And the other thing is, because I’m in the ‘Objects’ section, I don’t have to deal with cloaks. You’d have to ask Rangi that. If it was really badly damaged, I don’t know what she’d say. She might just say, look, she might do the same like me and say: “Look this is in really bad condition and I think it would tear.” Honestly, to be honest, Maori communities are very concerned – or the people that I meet and talk to are very concerned – about the deteriorating
conditions and would do anything not to continue that. I very much felt that and noticed that concern. So, if you can move in that angle. You can say this is in such bad condition because some people, just anyone, can look at a carving and say: “That looks all right. We just carved a few up north. They’re really strong.” Whatever. But if you can say: “Look, this has got borer damage. This has got longitudinal splits and look at this. This is terrible!” They suddenly see it. ‘Cause you often don’t see it, do you? It’s invisible damage, you’re actually eliminating the potential for any damage to occur so that’s how I deal with it. And it’s quite hard often, you know. I’ve got young carvers in and they just want to look at it. And they’re thinking: “Who do you think you are?” I’m not saying that “who does she think she is”? But after a while, they often respect my knowledge and I respect theirs. But I don’t make them wear white gloves like a lot of people would, and say: “Please don’t handle that.” I honestly think that handling aspect of Maori culture is really important and you should be able to handle it or touch the carvings.

MC Yes, I think it’s important too and I think it’s important also on another level for artists, I think, to be able to physically approach something. Especially if they’re replicating an object or they’re making a similar object.

RE Yes, they get that manual feel for it.

MC Yes. In general, in your professional museum practice – I mean with pakeha people – you wouldn’t let them touch the collections would you? Or would you? Is there a bit of, um, the same standard?

RE There’s probably a little but more! Oh boy! I don’t know. What a question, really! It’s pretty hard and I don’t want to appear that I’ve got – like you were saying – you don’t want to appear that your ethics are rock bottom in one case an extremely high on another.

MC That’s right. The double standard.

RE Let’s face it, in the stance of Maori communities, I would honestly think that the touching is – part of the keeping of the carvings warm. It’s keeping them and touching them is linking with them. And most people who do that, are linked to those carvings. I don’t think that most people would go up, touch and say hello and chat away to a
carving that wasn’t linked to them. And that’s from their own viewpoint; unless, of course, they didn’t know and they were from the city or whatever and it’s not that they didn’t know but it’s a different way of looking at it. That’s an important thing – for the community to feel proud of the collections, proud of their taonga. So, I think that’s important. But I don’t think a lot of pakeha are that interested in touching the carvings. It’s got a different thing to it. There is definitely a fact that pakeha people would look at it and say: “That’s interesting.” But they won’t be as demonstrative and they won’t touch the carving and talk to it. It’s a different thing. But, really, when it came to both communities handling those Tahitian masks – well, that was a different story – they (masks) can’t deal with any handling. But they didn’t – I showed Ngati Pikio those masks. I said: “Would you be interested in looking at these? They’re Tahitian.” No one wanted to touch them. They’re mourning masks as well. They don’t want to touch them. Not interested. They wanted to see them but they didn’t want to touch them. It hasn’t happened so far – that I’m in that position. But, of course, you know, textile collections – everyone wants to touch them so that’s what you’ll have to talk to Rangi about. [unclear] And, they always touch whether they’re Maori or pakeha. People will touch anything which is textile. I don’t say that Maori will touch them but they will want to touch them. They want to see how they’ve been woven and so will pakeha people because they’ve got an interest. I don’t know why. Maybe because they’re more tactile or because we’ve been brought up with this idea that textiles are to be handled. So, I don’t have the problems that Rangi would probably have.

MC  Well, I’ll talk to her. What about – do you get requests to loan certain objects back to – either long or short term – back to a community, back to a marae or whatever? Do you get those requests?

RE  Yes, we do. And they are family items and they get loaned back and often – they’re usually the same pieces and they’re usually like mere which are stone and they’re in good condition and they’re treated with an enormous amount of respect because of the mana that they have.

MC  Are they loaned? Is it for sort of –

RE  For burial rites, for a tangi. Generally for a tangi.
MC  So, they’re placed on the coffin or whatever but then they’re taken back.

RE  Yes, yes. Treated with an enormous amount of respect, you know, and, like, not handled by just anyone. And, there’s a bit of controversy — over, for instance the areas of cloaks.

MC  So what happens in that area then?

RE  If we’re given enough time — Rangi and I were talking the other day — the community, the Maori communities, also have to have respect for what we do in conservation. And often (it’s happened with me and with her) where we’ve been gone, we’ve been told: “You’ve got to have this ready and you’ve got two days because we need it by then.” And really you have to drop everything! And they have to be able to say: “Well, we’ve got this coming up.” Not that I’m saying that you absolutely have that ability to know that a tangi is coming up but, perhaps, we would be able to, through the institution, whatever, be told which items will be used in future so that we can have some delegated collections. For instance with — if there was cloak which was unstable in some area, well, I don’t know if Rangi would really agree, after she had talked to various people and stated that this was going to get damaged if you wear it — I don’t think that they would want to wear it. But if they have given her enough time, then she would be able to stabilize it so it could be worn. That’s how we get round that and the same would go for anything in my area as well. If they wanted to borrow stone or bone or ivory or wood — and it was broken or unstable — I would like to be able to be given respect, to be told: “You have five days to treat it.” Instead of: “You’ve got one hour.” So, there’s a give and take on both sides. I sometimes feel that there’s an enormous — pressure on me to constantly be there at beck and call of not only this institution, but also various Maori communities. “Do you think you could come out here and do this?” “Do you think you can get that done.” “We need it now.” And really that’s not fair — you’ll find that, if you talk to a lot of people in this institution, a lot of the kaitiaki, you’ll find that there’s a lot of stress on them to perform not only for the institution but also for the Maori community. And that’s not often — it’s not fair because it puts you in two different camps. And hopefully we will install — some sort of policy — not necessarily ‘policy’ but request systems that would be able to allow me to have enough time so I don’t have to work night and day.
MC    Yeah, yeah. Because that’s over burdening you.

RE    Yeah and you really do feel an enormous pressure, a responsibility, to do that. Often. Like if you say: “Well, I’m sorry you can’t have that because I don’t have enough time.” Then they think: “Huh! Who does she think she is? She’s a bit high and mighty.” And: “We won’t be going back to her, then. She’s obviously far too pakeha.” You know? I’m not saying that’s an insult but really it is! So, I think that Rangi would probably agree with me on that but then she would have to say it herself.

MC    Great. ... You were saying that you think the difference is quite substantial between people like Nick and Dean working out in the community. But at the same time it’s similar.

RE    Yeah, they’re similar because they’re working in – for – communities except, obviously, they’re right out there. Far more practically orientated when you’re bringing a lot more people in. But also the treatments are different because you’re working on functional items as opposed to – I’m not saying they’re ‘non-functional’ here but you are able to have certain...

[Interruption]

MC    Okay, let me ask –

RE    Because they’re non-functional, you’re able to say that your treatments are less intrusive. They’re more minimally orientated. You work with your Code of Ethics more strictly. There are less contradictions in using it, using the Code of Ethics and working – you’re not sort of straddling the two areas, which is, one, working with Maori communities and then working with taonga as well. Do you feel that? What do you think?

MC    Well, it’s interesting because in conservation we talk about “functional” objects – you know, I think of clocks, musical instruments and steam locomotives. And yet when those are part of collections, you know, there is this whole debate about – steam locomotives are a prime example of something that often a community wants to restore and the restoration means taking away
lots of the original in order to put in a boiler that works and, you know, that kind of thing. Cars, too, another example. And I really have problems with that kind of making an object functional because it's so interventive.

Re: Yes, I do too and I thought that, in a way working with historical collections, you could state that some of your collections would be functional and some wouldn't be. Therefore, you would be able to state that some would deteriorate faster than others. So, there is a debate here. I mean we've got problems with our historical collections where the communities have become involved in restoring a Peugeot car and a steam locomotive that we've got and a number of other things. Like we've had to discuss that one through with the collections, with the exhibitions and state that they are functional parts and they have to agree with the fact they're going to start deteriorating much faster than others.

Mc: Yes. So that brings up the whole question of the integrity of the object, you know – preserving the integrity of the object and what is "integrity". You know. And how do you balance off 'integrity' in terms of if an object was made to function –

Re: But everything was made to function. I mean, really. Isn’t it?

Mc: Mmmm but everything has cultural significance, too, but there are sort of degrees of cultural significance in a way. You know. Certain things are – you the, the people – I guess would you have to ask the people to define "cultural significance" for pieces from their communities? Is that – or how do you –

Re: Really, I don’t know, actually. I’m in a bit of a quandary about it. These aren’t really major questions in my job here. They might be for, say, Nick and Dean out in the field. But out here – because everyone has been in complete agreement that they want to extend the longevity of the taonga there’s no problem with that one. You see, that’s what I’m trying to say is the difference is working in a museum and a lot of the collections are here – we are seen as supposedly here as caretakers or kaitiaki of the collections. The longevity is really important so that they are here for the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren; whereas when you are working out in a community and you’re working on a house that’s there and they’re using it, they might see
that in a different way than seeing a house or house carvings which are a hundred, a hundred and fifty years old (which, theoretically, if we were going to go with traditional methods - traditional methods were just to allow the house to die or to have its life - then, out in the field, that wouldn't be here now). There have been changes in viewpoint from the communities themselves to the way that they see collections now. They want to be able to extend their life, their physical life, as well as extending their spiritual life. There's no question about that - that they have spiritual life - and, as I was saying before, we try and cater for that as well. So, that's what I'm trying to get round to saying what the difference was in my view between the two different - because we all provide a service, so to speak, don't we? I mean, the Historic Places Trust provides a service and this museum provides a service to the community but there's a different type of service because we're different, we're different type (in a sense) "technicians": - we have different functions. The community doesn't have one particular type of aim. There's not one service level. There's three, four, five different ones. Does that seem fair to you? I mean I don't think that we could, we could maintain a service like Historic Places Trust does and they couldn't maintain ours. But we could, perhaps, be aligned in an organization. We could be politically aligned or not. That's the way it is. Because funding - you have different sources and, if that's the way it could be done, we'd go along with that.

MC Yeah, yeah, yeah. So you basically found in your work that differences of opinion have been able to be worked out -

RE Between?

MC Between the community and between what you would want to do.

RE May as well shut the door.

MC It gets too hot, though. We'll be in the same situation as the last time. You know - I'm just trying to think of examples that, where the, you know, where you've felt most of the situations have come to a successful resolution.

RE Yeah, I think so. I don't - In my time that I've been here, we haven't had any major problems. There have been some and it's not because of where conservation stands. It's really been a political - a higher level
in the negotiation, a political negotiation. It's been nothing to do with
the treatment of the taonga. So it's really been a breakdown in
negotiations, if you see what I'm saying, and I think that maybe there
was one situation where, not long ago, we had a problem with – the
Manutuke panels that were going back into a church up in Gisborne.
And – now this is an interesting issue – they were going up to the
community and the community weren't aware that they weren't being
repatriated but they were going on long term loan.

MC Ah, so the community thought it was repatriation and the museum
thought it was a loan? Yes, okay.

RE Yes. I don't think either of them really made it clear. They both had
different expectations. And the community felt that if they were going
back, they were going back. They weren't necessarily interested in the
legal expertise that was needed. No one's to be expected to know all
those things. Anyway, so there was a small problem that developed –
well, not necessarily "small" – where the community said – Well,
suddenly the legal document was sent up to them and they needed
insurance and they needed to reinforce the building in a certain way to
be able to allow the insurance to be implemented because the church
was, supposedly, unable to have insurance policy written for it. So,
they suddenly said: "Why is this? Why do we need insurance? This is
our taonga. We're taking it back where it rightfully should be." The
museum then realised that they had a problem on their hands and that
it was no longer a long term loan with few problems. What the
community really insisted on having was a repatriation. Really, when
you come down to those terms, that's terminology! Neither of them
understood what the other one wanted. The problem here is that this
is what I was trying to say earlier on is that we didn't have anything
written into our policy – which allowed for repatriation. Now, it has
been dealt with but at that point it wasn't and that was only, what, a
year ago. So, repatriation is a bad word in museums because
institutions feel that as soon as they start repatriating everyone else
will want their taonga, therefore their (museum's) collections will be
dissolved, as such. It's a big fear in communities – in the museum
communities worldwide. So, the panels were repatriated in the end.

MC They were repatriated?

RE They were. The institution, I think, also went ahead and helped fund
various things like – There was water damage through the windows, they had to have an interior glazing that would help eliminate humidity and temperature changes. Also we’ve had to stabilize the interior structure to stop the leaking. And the institution spent hordes paying for that. So, this is where we have a problem with things like repatriation where you state: “Well, yes, you can have your taonga back.” But if the community can’t afford the up-keep of a structure – They may not even have a structure, and they may not even have the community to resource that, and the institution is saying: “We’re doing our bit.” You know, really, it’s not enough, is it?

MC No and one of the things that’s happened in Canada, for example, in a similar situation is that the First Nations have said: “What we do – how we look after the objects that are repatriated is our business. Just give them back.“ Once you agree to repatriate, it’s unconditional and you can’t say you can only repatriate to museum conditions or we’ll repatriate only if you provide a better environment for these objects. So – But in this case, it sounds to me as if the museum was trying to ensure that the objects would be, would be preserved back in the community location.

RE Well, I think that the first issue was that – they weren’t repatriating. They were doing a long term loan. So they were legally obliged to ensure the environment – not only in the humidity/temperature conditions but in security – allowing those loan items to stay in an acceptable condition. Now, when the problem occurred and they had to repatriate in a sense from an ethical basis, then they also – they felt almost obliged to them, to go ahead. I’m not sure I should say that but it is in a sense true. I think that if we are to repatriate, we have to also see where our obligation and responsibility is to the community because the community has stated that it doesn’t necessarily want repatriation to go ahead because it doesn’t have the resources to cater for it. Because we often see things in black and white. We see that communities want their taonga back and the museum is a big, bad wolf that won’t give them back - the community will be all right but often the community has issued concerns, especially old people, that they cannot look after them. They would rather have their collections held in acceptable conditions and be there for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to see, especially in areas like this where people are from different tribal groups. They don’t live in that localized area any longer. That’s the main point there as well, I think, that if you’re going
to work in that premise then the main issue to deal with from that point on, the museums should see, is that staffing numbers of Maori people should rise, and you have different tribal groups working as staff and the networks to the communities are strengthened and that people feel good that their taonga is being looked after by their, by their relatives, by their community. I think that's one way — that's another way of looking at it in a creative way of seeing an institution move, and a challenge for the community. So, it's never been like that and it certainly is changing now.

MC Yeah, so that's great. So, do you think — I mean, I guess in the past museums haven't been popular with Maori people.

RE No, they haven't and still a lot of them aren't. No, they're not because they don't make the collections accessible. Not only do they not make them accessible but they don't make their knowledge of them accessible. People don't know where their collections are. They often don't feel welcomed when they come into an institution by a curator or a registrar because they're (curators, registrar's are) slightly suspicious, perhaps, of having these people coming in because they're suspicious, the old reasons which are the areas of repatriation. What else is there? There's the area that they get exhibited in a way they feel is culturally insensitive. They say: "This is a paddle and this paddle was collected in da di da by John Smith in 1822." And the relevant information — where it is from, who made it or who used it, isn't there and that must be so upsetting in many cases. Like I just cited one example. I work in a museum and so I can see it from both sides but I went down to Nelson and looked at the photographic collection of my family down there from the Tyree collection and that was gifted to the museum when Tyree died and he kept all the glass plate negatives. He did a lot of photographs of the Maori community and one of the major families down there is my family and all the photos were there (Nelson museum). And I sent them a fax and said: "I'm coming down to work in the Motueka museum. Can I please have a look at the photographs of my family?" And I went there and he said: "Well, here are some that I found but they're — there are an enormous amount more but, for each print you want to look at, that will be $1.00, thank you." I was incited with fury! I thought: "How dare you charge me to look at my family!" That's the first issue. The second issue, I said: "But my family's in Motueka and they'd really be interested in seeing these photographs and I can identify most of these people and they could
identify even more.” And he said: “Oh, right. Well, you set up a time and perhaps they can come in but it is still $1.00 a print.” So, he wasn’t even trying to get the Maori community in. Two, he wasn’t wanting to even identify the people. Three, he was actively keeping them away by charging them money! I was infuriated! Now, that was the first time that I had experienced something from a community aspect. I’ve always been able to say things like, “Oh, I’m coming down, da di da di da. Could you get these prints out?” And they will do that for the first time but, the second time – well, it takes them a bit of time to get through those prints so that will cost a dollar a print. So, I was just shocked! That’s the sort of reception that every person would get there.

MC Yeah. And where is this again?

RE Oh, you know!

MC A library or an art gallery or ...

RE A museum, which keeps photographic collections and they have fantastic photographic collections – a major one in New Zealand. Very old.

MC Well, Vicki was mentioning a similar thing yesterday, including the fact that the access isn’t under terms that the people would look for so that the photograph might be under the name of the lake whereas the people would come in and look under the names of the families or you know what I mean. The access just isn’t there, it just isn’t there for –

RE Yeah, it’s so hard to look through photographic collections just for any one. Libraries are difficult things and it’s one thing I noticed when I was in Canberra – I was talking to a woman called June and she’s Aboriginal. She said to me the first year she used that library, she would just go in and pretend she could use it. Because she was too embarrassed to say to people: “I just don’t know how to work this indexing system.” So, in the photographic side is right, too – they have to be able to cross-index or have photographs duplicated in different areas and be able to ask people how is it that the community is best able to see these. I mean they want to see their ancestors but why should it be under a lake? It’s just crazy. I think – from that point, you see I haven’t had so much experience looking in to a museum. I’ve had the experience of looking out. That was really the first time.
And other times, too, you know, when I have seen some of the collections that are in the museum – of my family collections that were put in because of a family dispute. A lot of the collections go into our stores because there's been a dispute over them. Really, to be honest, I would rather they be in there because the dispute is so upsetting to me with the family that it's nice to be able to have them there. But, the access to them! One of them – I just found it in a store room and I said: “What's this doing here?” And they told me what it was and I said: “I can't believe that this is the trunk that two sides of our family fought over for eighty years and you hadn't even told me!” Boy, I was mad. And that was me – I'm allowed to go into the store rooms but the communities aren't. So, so that's pretty shocking really, isn't it?

MC Yeah, it really is, isn't it? That's too bad.

RE Yeah. Things like that – information, access to [unclear] – that has to really change and, theoretically it's going to in this institution a lot more.

MC Yeah. So what other changes? Like, you know, if we were talking about, especially relating it back to conservation, what other changes, either in the way conservators are trained or what or changes within the profession or within the Code of Ethics? Is there anything of the –

RE Well, the Code of Ethics, when I was reading through, is so broad – but it was stating that you had to consider the paramount concern that was with the guardian or custodian of the collection or piece. What an open-handed statement! But the “guardian” and “custodian” – that issue is debatable. Is the “guardian” or “custodian” the museum, in this instance or is it, is it the community? I would state that it was – well, you know from my aspect, we have enormous allegiance to the community.

MC I think that the Codes in Canada, too – they wrote in these things like “conceptual integrity” but they didn't, the implications were not clear to them what they meant so that –

RE Oh, it's so open-handed that it could be anything and maybe that's why they've done it like that so they can say: “Well, actually we didn't mean this at all. The native or the indigenous people are the custodians and
the guardians aren’t necessarily the legal custodians and guardians. I’m sorry but you misinterpreted that one.” So, therefore, we probably have to rework our Code of Ethics, definitely. It was – actually, it’s a new field in New Zealand, conservation. There has to be understood and that whole area, working actively or pro-actively in Maori communities is very new as well.

MC  Nick and Dean were talking about presenting at the A.G.M. of the Conservation Conference some revisions to the Code of Ethics.

RE  Yes, I absolutely agree.

MC  I wish I was going to be there. I would love to hear the debate, you know, and see whether other conservators agree or disagree and when things are trying to be made a little clearer –

RE  Hmmm, yeah, so defined. Oh, I honestly don’t think there will be too many problems with conservators, as such. It’s not the conservators that the problem is with; it’s the higher management systems.

MC  Okay, do you think, then, that the conservators would agree that it is all right to put an object at physical risk, if it preserves the cultural significance of the object? Not in every case but it is as a principle – that the conservator does not always have to have the physical preservation as their bottom line but an ethical conservator can ethically put an object at risk, physical risk, in order to preserve its cultural significance.

RE  Well, I have to say – maybe I seem like some old dragon here, but I honestly couldn’t put up with putting an object at risk. So, I wouldn’t. And I don’t – I think that, to be absolutely honest, I would be going against my cultural background as well by doing that. I just know, I just know from the work – the long work that I have done here – that no one in the Maori community who I have negotiated with so far has ever put the collection at risk. I have negotiated and discussed all these problems with them. I have stated: “Look, that is going to put that carving at risk.” They will say: “Well, if that’s the case, we’re not interested in doing it.” If I do my consultation correctly in a sensitive manner, which is I think the way I do it. So I’ve honestly had no problems like that at all. That’s what I’m trying to say: the difference I feel with someone, or people who work out in the field, is I think that
in instances their treatments have to be so much more intrusive. To be able to allow that house to withstand the elements, they have to have intrusive treatments. I don’t have to and therefore I don’t have to deal with those ethical questions. And I don’t want to have to deal with those ethical questions. If it comes right down to it – if a carving was going to be at risk, I would discuss that issue thoroughly so that I’m sure everyone who I was talking to would not put it at risk. They want those collections, they want that taonga to be there for their grand kids. There seems to be an enormous emphasis. They just keep saying that. “If that’s the case, Rose” – for instance, the flutes that are being used and I’ve stated: “Look, that flute is really at risk by using that.” And I talked to Arapata and he said: “If that’s the case, Rose, we won’t use it. We’ll use a different one. We’ll use a facsimile. We’ll get a modern one because we don’t need to put it at risk any longer.” And I’ve had no problem with it – Arapata’s a curator – to put that one through. I really think that’s the difference, the key difference with Nick and Dean’s area and mine – is that I have the ability to stand behind that. Now, if, for instance, a community then said: “Well, we don’t care.” Then I would say: “Right, I’ve done everything I can. I will document it to cover myself, ethically.” I think that’s a very important thing. And when things like that have occurred, not necessarily – I haven’t had that one with Maori communities – but, in other areas, such like in modern art, I have stated: “Right. This is the memo. I’ve signed it and I’ve cleared myself. This is it and it goes into my files.” Because I’m quite concerned with that – don’t want to have to be put at risk in my, not only my reputation, but my professional standards. It just really hasn’t come up as a problem. And I think that Rangi would say that, as well. Well, really, I do feel an enormous concern for the collections and their physical and spiritual well-being and I think that they are so intertwined that I don’t think the community is interested in putting them at risk. That’s what they’ve told me. Even when I’ve done workshops and I’ve said – for people who are carvers and they work out there in the field and they’ve said: “What sort of adhesives? We’ve used this sort of adhesive and we’ve dowelled this and we’ve done this and this.” And I’ve said: “From my angle and I’m not telling you what to do but this is the way I see it.” And they’ve said afterwards: “Well, I’m glad you told me because I wouldn’t want to harm this carving and I’ll go along with what you say.”

MC Great. Okay, well we’re covering – well, there’s just so much to cover ...
RE [unclear] It's incredible but we've got the other two coming. But I was going to mention the mokomokai - is that a lot of them haven't been localized. We don't know where a lot of the human remains are from and we don't know - so the communities don't want them back because they can't be buried anywhere. It isn't appropriate - you might bury them in the wrong place. So, if they are localized, they should be buried in to that place but the community, like you were saying in Canada, doesn't know how to deal with that. And so, what's, what M. was putting across was that the museum then had to take that responsibility as the person or the organization who held the human remains and dealt with it in a particular way that would have to develop, would have to develop a new way of sorting this out. In a sense, we were going to be - we were going to keep the remains there for people to be able to mourn over. So, it's actually quite an interesting issue because a lot of Maori communities do want them buried but, if they're not localized, you don't want to bury them in the wrong place.

MC Right, right, right. Would there also be the case where some are localized and they're also named? You would know the individuals?

RE Only from archaeological digs - if we've been able to associate them with burial sites - like a location. And, when we go through the basement, I'll show you that a lot of the people wanted them - waka tupapaku (the containers that were made specifically for the bones in the old days) - they wanted them separately kept and not to be seen so they're curtained off in an area but they don't want them back either. They're too powerful. So, there all these other issues that the museum will have to deal with and it's never had to do that before. It's just like a whole, completely new belief system that we've got to develop, if you see what I'm saying.

MC Yes, yes.

RE It'll only start coming up now, I think.

MC Great. Okay. This is fabulous. I guess our time - we probably should get -

RE What do you think - you've covered just about -
MC Yeah, yeah.
RANGI TE KANAWA WARNES
AFFILIATION: NGATI MANIAPOTO
TEXTILE CONSERVATOR, MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE
PAPATONGAREWA, WELLINGTON, NZ

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN HER OFFICE, SEPTEMBER, 1994

MC It goes in that direction there. It's recording now and it's not going to stop. It's only when it hits the other way that it fouls up and it doesn't - Okay. Good. Okay ... so. All right so this is – I'm talking to Mrs Rangi Warnes. Okay. Thank you. And you job title is?

RW Conservator of textiles, specializing in Maori textiles.

MC Okay. And your background. What [is] your training or you experience that –

RW My background is that I come from a family of traditional Maori weavers. My grandmother, who is 102 years old, has been weaving traditionally since she was 17 and that was passed on to my mother and I've always been surrounded with harakeke, as we know it, NZ flax or Phormium tenax what you see growing all around which is what our Maori textiles are made of.

RW [I was asked to look into conservation by...] A group of weavers that had recently formed to revive the traditional arts of weaving and this is where they looked at people like my grandmother and my mother, whom are, needless to say, honourary members of this committee and, also, when Te Maori happened – the great exhibition Te Maori – when that happened that made our people aware of the significance of our taonga. And the next thing they wanted was someone Maori to look after them so that's how it came about. The weavers actually were formed to revive that culture, of traditional Maori weaving and they saw me as a relatively young active weaver and asked me if I would like to learn conservation So, I was very lucky and I took hold of that opportunity. I went to Canberra and did a three week short course in conservation. That was in 1986 and I had to come back and get my chemistry and then go back and do the science degree.
MC Well, that's a real commitment, that long course. So, in your work, do you use the New Zealand Conservation Code of Ethics or are there other policy documents that you use or –?

RW I use the New Zealand Code of Ethics and the professional code of ethics for conservation.

MC Great, okay. I know that in Canada conservators use it. I feel that it's not clear enough in some areas about - for example, they talk about respect for the object but they don't say what that 'respect' - what it is and how would you define 'respect'?

RW Respect for its physical being; respect for its creator; respect for its craftsmanship; and respect for its spiritual being. All of those different things come with an object. I do feel, because of my ethnic origin, I have no real problem dealing with the spirituality in conservation. We can look at works of art and say: "That's a beautiful work of art, made like this and that. Get all excited about it. But I can actually get excited by looking at a cloak that belonged to an ancestor of mine and thinking of him and what he was about. I can relate to that spirituality side of it like that aura that it has.

MC So, what –

RW We have to have the same respect for all things, you know - for things that aren't ethnographic.

MC Right. Yes, yes, yes. Ah huh. So, what would you do, for example, if there was a cloak in the museum's collection that belonged to the - correct me of I'm giving a false, you know, example - but belonged to the ancestor of someone and the person died and they wanted to borrow it for the funeral? What, you know - so you have like respect for the physical object but then respect for the histories and you know mana -

RW There definitely has to be room for compromise and I think it comes down to 'respect'. I certainly deserve respect for my profession and vice versa: things that go along with that cloak must be kept alive. So, we actually need to get down - although I haven't done it yet, and it's more in the role of the curator - to sit people down and say: "Our conservator, here, has advised that if you - that if the cloak is in good
condition, it can be let out. Can you make sure – that it’s handled carefully, that is kept out of the rain, that it’s kept in a clean environment? If it’s not in good condition, then we need to sit down and we need to say: “It’s not in good condition. If you’re going to take it out and subject it to this and that then you must be aware that this may, will happen.” Depending on the museum policy they are the true custodians of the cloak, they can accept my advice but not actually go along with it.

MC Yes, yes. Now, is there a problem if the person who comes in to borrow the cloak is of very high stature and has the right to borrow the cloak – can the museum tell him or her – can you even say please handle it this way? No matter if they do or not – that’s something else. Can you actually express those things to somebody of high stature?

RW You have to as it would be very unprofessional of me if that advice wasn’t given, because I would be responsible in the long term. The cloak should not be let out of this institute without my advice to accompany it.

MC Right, right. Now if the cloak – if it belonged to the person – well, say, it’s not a part of the museum’s collections. It maybe on deposit or perhaps it’s another situation – You know, the person is keeping it at home and, you know. Do you have, again – do you say something or would it be insulting to say something if the person is, you know –

RW I don’t think it would be insulting. I think it would be appreciated, I’d say.

MC Now what about if it was a pakeha saying it? Would that –

RW ?

MC Well, say if I was the conservator who happened, say I was the conservator in the institution that day and I was in the position of – would I be able to say that or would that be not –

RW Yes, you would be able to say that and this is why I think it’s important that later on you talk to Valerie. She does say exactly that. It’ll be very interesting because she has got a few backs up because of her white skin but, God bless her, I think, because she hasn’t – nothing’s gone wrong
yet, you know, and they have realised that this white lady does know what she’s talking about and, in actual fact, she does care for the taonga. And that’s her responsibility and they must respect her for it. And they appreciate her.

MC Okay, yeah, that’s really interesting. Do you feel – I mean you work with, with Maori collections – do you feel that that – are there, are there particular challenges in working with collections where the people have such a living connection to the collections? Are there particular challenges that you feel in your conservation practice?

RW Um, well only just recently I’ve noticed our people, they’ve realised our taonga are special and so they want to come and see them but they don’t want to come and see them in groups of twos and threes. They come to see them in groups of tens or even tribes so we have a whole group of people coming through our collections and even that can upset the environment. They believe that they’re revisiting and rekindling all this spirituality and making a connection with their taonga and their taonga’s making connection with them, they don’t realize this other part of it. In the end, you really have to have your wits about you and try to explain conservation. They’re very sensitive to it and they’re proud to belong to this nga taonga. Nothing’s going to take them away from it. And they can come and look at them whenever they like and we have to give them that opportunity.

MC So, when people come in, do you have the particular pieces laid out? Will people be able to touch them and will they be able to touch them with or without white gloves and how would that work?

RW I do say to them not to touch and I explain the reason why, they’re very accepting of it. It is an education because they’re becoming very interested in the care and preservation of taonga and what’s involved and I think they eventually can appreciate what advice we have.

MC Yes. Now, I went to a lecture that M. P. was giving and he – the whole traditional care of cloaks came up and putting them out in the sunlight and so he was talking about the pieces that are his so – but what, um, I mean have you had instances where somebody’s said: “But you’re not caring for them in the traditional way and they should be cared for in the traditional way as well as in the museum way.”
R W  I've spoken to M. about how he cares for his cloaks and there certainly is room for thought there because, you know, you think about it and his theory behind the warmth from the sun – actually encourages the oils in the feathers to become more viscous and lubricates the whole feather and, then it stands upright. Now, I am not disagreeing with any of that. It's an interesting point and who really knows whether it's good or bad? Ultraviolet is very damaging but it also kills mould and so it's another compromise, isn't it?

MC  Yes, very much, and you say one day out in the sun, how damaging is that?

R W  Yeah, one day in the sun that actually may kill the mould that may have been present there, that will lubricate the oil, may be best for the cloak if it's done once twice a year rather than it being totally closed in, you know, in a cabinet and never, ever taken out into the sun – who knows? It's an experiment. I don't disagree with him I think it's really interesting.

MC  And what about in terms of any rituals or anything sort of in that realm that – are there things that either you need to do or someone has to come in and do either before work on a piece or before a piece goes on exhibit or – No, it's not. Okay.

R W  Not that I know of, no. I haven't had anyone come into the lab yet and do anything. That's my thing. I take care of that myself, even if it's only a little prayer or something. That's not before every cloak but there's a certain amount of silence that I give the cloak beforehand. You know. That's my thing.

MC  Is it offensive to the cloak – say, if it's again a pakeha conservator – should that person, do you think, find an appropriate person to do something like before treating it?

R W  I don’t really think so. I still think it’s a personal thing. I think each person to his own. I don’t have a problem with doing my little bit and I don’t have a problem with anybody else not doing their bit. I’m concerned about my spiritual awareness with this taonga, because this taonga I’m sure would have gone amongst a lot of other people that haven’t looked at it maybe in the same way. So, no, I don’t expect Valerie to have that sort of contact with it or – she does have respect,
it’s respect, yeah. That’s the basis of all humanity, isn’t it?

MC It should be, anyway! Yeah. Okay. If conservation is a profession and professions have their own particular clients – with doctors, it’s the patient; with lawyers, it’s their clients or whatever. For conservation, like who do you – like who do you consider your client? Would it be the object or would it be the institution your work for or would it be the community that the object – the person, the family that the object came from or, um –

RW I think that it would be the object. That is my, that is my profession, you know, to preserve the object.

MC Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

RW I suppose I should be saying the institution but ...

MC Well, I think most conservators would agree with you, actually – that they might have to – yeah, that they have to work within the institution, they find that the institution is just not heeding them then they would probably have to go and work elsewhere. Right. Don’t worry. This won’t be –

RW Yeah. It has nothing to do with the direct care of the collection.

MC Yes and plus I find a number of museum directors that don’t really care. Yeah.

RW So, it’s a contradiction.

MC Okay, are there – okay, well I guess this is sort of a general question – Objects in Maori culture – do they have a traditional role in the preservation of the culture, if that’s an appropriate way to put it?

RW Preservation is not actually part of Maori custom, so far as I understand. Once something is dead or has no life about it, then it must return – be returned to Papatuanuku. That’s the land. And, now we don’t see any great loss with that because our affinity to the land and sea and the sun is what, what we are about. Our creations. So, we’re not actually completely losing it. My mother and my grandmother are traditional Maori weavers and they continue to
weave traditionally and, in doing so, they are actually keeping part of the culture alive. So, when they see a cloak that is past it or stained or torn or something, then they would say: "Just wrap it up, and bury it and I'll make another one." So, that's their way of preserving a culture, which is totally opposite to what I'm doing because I will keep the dead alive, however, they are accepting of that but that is a western, a western thing, isn't it?

MC Yes but they're accepting of that? It's not considered a sacrilege to keep these objects, to preserve them beyond what would have been their normal life? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes. Now that's really interesting because how, how, I guess, how does an object get life and how do you know when an object's life is over and would an object – ? Okay, yeah.

RW It probably has no more functional use any more. It can be so degraded it's condition is such that there's nothing you can do for it.

MC And if this was a cloak that had been worn by a person of high stature, um, so I guess it would have mana from that person, would – does that – you'd still wrap it up and put it in the ground? But if it's a new cloak, because it wasn't worn by that person, would not have that mana?

RW No, it would not have that mana.

MC Okay.

RW Ah, gosh! I have never had to make that decision about when to put a taonga that is absolutely beyond repair to the ground to return it to Papatuanuku.

MC So, but this is I guess interesting for me because we have the same situation with totem poles on the Northwest Coast and some people feel that returning them to the ground is part of their natural cycle and, for example, if certain – some of the Haida people have expressed that. And because the Haida are the spiritual owners of those poles, even if they're in the museum now and even if the museum is the legal owner, the Haida have retained and always retained spiritual ownership. So the question is for me, how does, what does the museum do? Does the museum go to the community and what if the community says: "They should return to the ground." Do we return
the pole for that purpose and, in this case, you would say probably the institution would keep, would, would keep it in a box or whatever. Well, I mean, you know, I mean it’s hard because you don’t have to come up against this situation –

RW  Well, um, if the, if the custodians –

MC  The traditional custodians, the Maori custodians?

RW  If the original custodians/owners are correctly identified, then they have some say. But that depends on whether the objects were deposited some years ago, whether they are actually in the hands of the museum, it’s the museum’s decision to retain them or give them back knowing that the people would like to have them back. So, maybe it gets down to what’s written on a piece of paper, I guess.

MC  Do you have komatua and would you go, would you go you know for a – say, if something like this came up – would you go to them or would you go back to the iwi. You know, how would you resolve it?

RW  What? To establish –?

MC  Sort of, what would be the best thing to do? Yeah.

RW  If we had for instance a cloak that was absolutely deteriorated. It was in the museum collection?

MC  Yes, let’s say it was part of the museum’s collection but it’s lineage was known and ... Yeah.

RW  Okay, I think we would go back to the iwi and discuss the issue with them. Either way it’ll never be exhibited so it’s not going to be seen, whichever hands it goes.

MC  Although it might be seen by weavers who come in to look at techniques and materials, I don’t know.

RW  Yeah, that could be but that could also be documented as well, so ... in some cases, documentation is a preferred type of reference rather than actually handling the artifact.
MC Yes, yes. Maybe – it may not be possible to answer until the case actually comes up and you’re actually negotiating with the people and then, you know, it just sort of develops like that – however it will develop. It’s a difficult situation, anyway!

RW I think there has to be room for compromise. Both parties – like the institution and the people. Even the fact that they get together and discuss is enough, is enough to say that this taonga is getting special attention. So, it’s getting that respect.

MC Good, okay. So what – what about wearing? Like, if somebody comes in, are they – Well, no, let’s just – somebody wants to, to borrow a cloak that is in the museum’s ownership because, for a special occasion. Do you –

RW I’m not really keen on it but, then again, if this cloak is in the museum and just say, for instance, some lady comes in and says: “Well, that’s actually my grandmother’s and I’d like to wear it to my graduation.” We can’t really deny her that because we can’t deny her grandmother that. But she must realize that this cloak is a very special cloak and that you need to handle it very carefully. And I’m quite sure that if we sat down and we talked things through that we can actually make her realize how important it is – not only because it’s her grandmother, but because it’s physical being, because of its spiritual being and because it’s such an important piece that we actually get them to handle them very carefully. I would not recommend the cloak go out to someone that had no inheritance to it.

MC Yeah, I think that’s very similar to what’s happening in Canada, too. That, you know, the people are the appropriate people to loan the piece out to and it’s for a special occasion, especially then we loan – unless the object is too fragile and we sit down and we point that out. Yeah, yeah. Now, would you be part of those discussions or would it all sort of go through the curator?

RW I haven’t been yet. In one or two cases I’ve just passed the information on to the curator.

MC Oh, Okay. But they come at least and ask your opinion on –

RW They have to.
MC  Because institutional policy says they ‘must do’?

RW  Yes. It’s a standard procedure artefacts are condition reported before they leave and when they are returned.

MC  Okay. Good. Are there any other instances of use. I'm just trying to see whether the parallels between here and Canada – so there’s use with loan out for special occasions, you know, if appropriate; there’s people coming in to look at things from their family and were, you know, where handling is discouraged but it may (I would think it might happen). Is there anything else? Whether, like in Canada, when certain of the First Nations need to come in and, for example, feed their masks every year.

RW  Do they?

MC  Yeah, yeah. They come into the storeroom and, well, we close the door and it involves often cornmeal and sometimes smoking – smudging smoke from sweet grass and, you know, and prayers. And so they do that and, you know, they come back next year and do that. Yeah.

RW  No, I don’t think anything like that has really happened that I think our people are becoming more educated, as far as conservation goes. We have all these treasures, all these carvings. And they can come and rub them and do all those things but I think they’re aware that you shouldn’t handle them with just your bare hands. Smoking I don’t think they even think about it. Have you been onto a marae?

MC  Yes. That, er – [unclear] I went to the [unclear] marae with Mina McKenzie and Dean was there and Ned Laughton; you know, because they’re having a 100th anniversary and he wanted to know if the Trust could help repair some of the – yeah.

RW  Ah, well, on the marae, there’s lots of things happening around the carvings. They get leaned on, they get smoked around, sometimes there’s food around them. All of that so it’s in its natural environment. If we take it from that into what we say is a cleaner and a more healthier environment it is also unnatural to it.

MC  What about – you know, well, in the Canadian Code of Ethics it talks
about preserving the physical integrity of the object, the aesthetic integrity, the historic integrity and also the conceptual integrity, which is what I would take to mean its, um, meaning – its meaning significance, cultural significance, you know, religious significance. 'Integrity' – is that something – I guess that’s sort of like the ‘essence’ of the object. I don’t know. Do you have another definition of ‘integrity’? I don’t know if the concept comes up in the ethics here but I’m trying to think of what else would you consider to be, you know, the ‘integrity’. If you’re preserving the integrity of the object, what, what – Another word for it or, do you think, does that cover everything? You know what’s written in the conservation code? Okay, okay. So, so as both a conservator and a Maori person, do you think it’s okay to put objects at physical risk if it means preserving their conceptual integrity, their cultural meaning?

RW Putting them at risk?

MC Yeah, physical risk. Yeah.

RW As in – as in lending them out?

MC Lending them out, letting them be handled.

RW Um ... Well, I have two hats that I have to wear here. I’m not sure which one I’m going to speak for, whether it’s my Maori cap or it’s my conservator’s cap. The answers will contradict each other. With my conservator’s cap on – if an object is in poor condition, than I would advise against it being lent out. If the people are adamant that this taonga should go out, then I would agree to it with certain conditions. The worst thing that could happen was that they just say they’re going to take it and not agree to my conditions. I’m sure even just the presence of something at a place is enough. So, just say, for instance, we had a cloak that was in very poor condition and we, we packaged it up so that absolutely nothing could happen to it, that people could see it but they couldn’t touch it. Its being there is enough for them. And that, in its whole condition and it having this special packaging also creates a more special occasion.

MC Would it be appropriate in the situation where it’s in poor condition and its packaged specially – would it be appropriate for someone like you to accompany the object?
RW Yes, that would be a condition.

MC Okay. So, it wouldn’t be a problem if you were a – I don’t know – attending a funeral of someone who wasn’t a relative or –? Would you come across where situations like that where it wouldn’t be appropriate to have somebody from the out – sort of, maybe wouldn’t ever be from the outside enough? I don’t –

RW I don’t see why there should be a problem with somebody like that accompanying the taonga. I mean, they don’t have to be hovering over it; they just have to be around to supervise the handling, the transportation and the rest of it. If you’re white, so be it. After all, you’re there for the care of the taonga, personally, I don’t think there should be any problem with it at all. I think our people are becoming more educated about this whole thing and they would be more accepting of it.

MC Yes.

MC [this side of tape begins in mid conversation] .. collections to inspect for insects so we don’t have any room and it’s interesting because there is a Native – a First Nations museum in Brantford, Ontario, which is Mohawk and the director, who is First Nations – like the whole of the museum is First Nations controlled and set up and everything. It’s part of an ongoing cultural centre: it teaches language programmes, it teaches all kinds of things. But, he doesn’t want ceremonies done in his storage area. He asks that the people take the objects out and do the ceremonies, you know, in, in –

RW In the environment?

MC In the environment, yeah, so he can keep the museum storage area as a museum storage area but that the ceremonies can still happen.

RW That sounds okay.

MC Yeah! It’s sounds great but then, of course, he’s right in the middle of his community, you know, and he is – but I thought, yeah, that makes a lot of sense, doesn’t it?
RW It does.

MC Yeah, yeah. And then there's the question, too, they have wampum belts there that are the— they are the tribal history recorded in shell, belts made of shell and they're very important there because they're legal documents. They, they show treaties, they show everything and, and and there they have traditional caretakers of the belts. The traditional caretakers want to repair the belt, you know, with—I guess in a way it's like—I was talking to Dean Whiting about, um, the tukutuku and people in the community will reweave a section but, in this case because these objects—they have ritual caretakers and it's only the certain, only certain people can do the care and Tom Hill, the director of this museum, said that, yes, these belts do go out for the traditional care, that he would not ask a conservator to come in with our, you know, our—

RW Expertise [unclear].

MC Yeah. I don't know whether you get that kind of, ah—

RW Well, I do know a case of a lady that has reawnen a section of a cloak with new fibre—same fibre but new fibre. That's her way of doing it and she was acting the traditional caretaker. But we don't advise that because we know full well that later on, through environmental changes, humidity and what not that new fibre is going to react a lot differently than the old fibre and, when it does so, it's actually going to cause stress on the old fibres. I think we have to be understanding of our traditional caretakers. If they're appointed by the owner there's nothing you can do. We can certainly give our point of view, our professional point of view. Whether they accept it or not is another thing. But I think it's professional of us and I think it's almost, abiding to the Code of Ethics to say so, to say, "We don't really do it that way. We'd rather do it this way because..." But everything's done nicely.

MC Yeah, well that, yeah. That's good if it's done respectfully.

RW Yeah, respectfully.

MC Did, um, in the case of reweaving, would some of the original fibre have to be removed in order to be able to do the reweaving? Is that also a problem.
RW I don’t know. I don’t think so.

MC Okay, yeah. So, um, so in your work as a conservator, what, what are you trying to preserve when, you know – like do you feel that you are, I don’t know, preserving the physical object, preserving also its, its life? Preserving – what are –

RW It’s physical being. I guess that must come first: that’s what we must stabilize. Retard deterioration and keep it as a whole and improve its aesthetic qualities. Um, and in doing all of that, it’s keeping its integrity.

MC Okay, great. Um, do you think, yeah, do you think somebody who isn’t a textile conservator would agree with you? Like, do you think you would have the support of other conservators in, in that?

RW Ah, the support of other conservators that won’t have the same opinion as me as in the physical preserving first? Um, I hope so.

MC Yeah, it would think so, I would think so but, yeah, it’s not –

RW Well, ultimately you’re doing a combination of tasks. You intervene with the object straight away so that’s a physical thing. You might change or you might add something to it, just to make it more stable. So that’s what we’re dealing with first and then making it more stable. You know, it will always – whether it’s a couple of fragments of a cloak, it still remains the cloak of that person. So, ultimately first you look at it physically –

MC Yes, yes.

RW But that will always be there. It’s like, it’s like its Maori, its spiritual being is always there.

MC Okay, now, I have, I have more questions, if you have more time. I was wondering if you want a break, though. Do you want a cup of tea and then come back?

RW What’s the time?
MC It's three o'clock.

RW Should we go and get a cuppa? Have about a ten minutes short one, huh?

MC Okay, that's great with me. Is that fine with you?

RW Yeah, that's fine with me.

MC Okay, good, we're recording. All right. Um, I just looking at these. I'm going to try and so we don't go over - Okay, we talked about appearance and whether there's differences of opinion in terms of if they're objects that the community says should look like this but, as a conservator - like say if there was a stain on a cloak I don't know whether - is that something where you might, they would want you to remove the stain but you would say: "Well, the removing would cause too much damage so I'm not going to do it." Or? You know.

RW Again, I think it's a, it's an area for compromise. They actually, need to be educated a bit more on the whole aesthetic values of it. We have a stain on this cloak but the stain actually comes from, is possibly a blood stain. Or it's a water stain and it might be a urinal stain. And this dirt and this soil patch may actually be the patina of that person. So, there's all of those sorts of things that you need to explain to them because, you know, we've all been sort of educated in society to believe that something has to be clean to be acceptable but it's definitely not so with these things. And so we just have to say that that's part of its heritage. But if the stain is actually causing deterioration, then, we need to evaluate all that, of course. We need to have a good look at that stain to see whether it is ethnographic or not. So, until we can establish that, then we can actually advise on, the reasons why we're either going to leave it there or remove it.

MC What about if, for example, some of the feathers are missing. Would, do you think would the community want the cloak to look as it used to look, with all the feathers intact and would you add new feathers?

RW Yes. Again, I think we're of the thinking that we would really like all of the feathers on there. But, again, they need to realise - you know, if you're going to put all the feathers back, then you may make it look like it was made yesterday. So, you know, look at it this way. Its shows
its authenticity by the condition that it’s in. And, if I should add some
more feathers then that’s another part of its history – become a part of
its history. I put something of myself in that or you have so do you
want to interfere with that? All those things.

MC Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

RW It’s a matter of getting down and talking it through.

MC Do you find in this museum, which is an old museum, that, that you
have with an object – an ethnographic object – you have the cultural
significance to the originating people but, because the object has been in
the museum for fifty years or more, that it now also belongs to what I
would call the ‘museum culture’ – that it has significance too, you
know –

RW No, I don’t actually. When I look at it, it’s still is part of its cultural
being.

MC The Conservation Code of Ethics, um, do you think that it provides
good guidance in dealing with bicultural matters or do you think, you
know, would you like to see it reviewed and revised in New Zealand
or do you really think it’s really not used so much. It’s up there in the
background and it doesn’t, you know – it’s okay as it is.

RW I think it has to be reviewed, given the issues that need to be addressed,
especially recently as I know we’re in the procedure of adopting some
new bicultural policies. I think there’ll definitely have to be some
space made with the Code of Ethics to have those fitted in. All to do
with acquisitions, loans – you know, cultural issues.

MC Um, so, okay, in your opinion, if the object is in the museum, then the
person who decides on its care is the museum conservator in
consultation. Is that sort of a fair summary of what you’ve been saying
or would you –?

RW Yeah. If it’s in the museum collection, an object that’s in the collection
or is on deposit. It will still have to have discussion with people like
myself, conservators and collections management to best decide its best
storage, its best means of exhibition, etc. And each case, whether it be
on deposit or loan or part of the collection, they all deserve that, that
same thing, while they're under the roof of this institution.

MC Okay, good. Um, if - okay - if the, if the object is an object that is contemporary, so I don't know whether this museum collects, you know, contemporary - ?

RW It does.

MC Okay, so if, so if it's contemporary, then, would it be the maker, then, who has the - we were sort of talking a bit about this earlier - or the conservator - or how would you, say it's contemporary and it's got some damage. Who would, who would decide what to do?

RW Well, I think if it happens then the curator gets in touch with us and we assess the damage. The damage is then documented and then that is passed on to the artist. And with their approval, we will commence treatment.

MC Yes. Okay, what about this whole question: museums say that they hold objects in the public trust, that objects - at least, in Canada, they say: "We, the museum, know we aren't really the owners. We're just holding them. We're holding them in trust as national heritage or holding them in trust for the public." How, though, do you balance out the public trust with the responsibility to the First Nations community that made the objects?

RW That's a tricky one. I think the easiest way to go about this is to always set an example. So, we have a collection of cloaks, three or four that came from an iwi. They were - they have actually become part of the museum collection and we want to exhibit them. I would say that, first, an approach be made to the original custodians and the plans be available made to them as to what we were going to do with these cloaks. Now, in doing so, that's actually making that part of the public aware of what's happening. So, we're considering the public - in the interest of the public with consulting with those that are, that are primarily concerned or related to the pieces.

MC Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because also, to me, you know, a second part of that is that conservators are, in a way, self-appointed custodians. Nobody says to me: "Miriam, you go and look after these. You go and work at U.B.C. and look after the objects in the Museum of
Anthropology.” You know, I chose it as an individual. I made that decision without the support of a community. So, I wonder what right I have, really, to be a caretaker in that sense or, you know, a conservator of objects from other cultures, you know.

R W I mean, you are who you are because of your experience, your expertise. That’s how I see myself, anyway, and my obligation is foremost for that taonga. And I think I’d probably argue with the taonga’s people and get myself into a lot of trouble, you know, to prolong the stability of the object because that’s my profession and because I see it also as still keeping the integrity of this, of this taonga still with them. And in all reality, they can’t do what I do. They don’t know what I know but I would never, ever say anything like that to them. What I can do is that I can actually explain. I can sit down and I can explain that: “If we’re not going to do this now, then we won’t have this with us next year or the year after.

MC Yes, exactly, exactly, exactly. Yeah. Um, so on the whole, would you say that - sort of that the relationship of museum conservation, Maori communities - do you think that relationship, the way museums are relating to Maori, is that, um, is it going well? Is it going - is there a lot of conflict?

R W We have to educate our people and in the same respect, the museum world has to be educated. The community out there, the people believe that their carving or their cloak is inside that museum and no one’s ever going to see it. No one’s ever going to touch it or be around it. It’s never going to be worn. It’s like it’s never ever going to be loved in their eyes. And yet, in our world, it’s comfortable, it’s lying flat, there’s no dust on it. We’re all together at the start we both care a lot for our taonga and now we just need to compromise. Museum people have to be patient, I think, too because when you get out into the iwi, the hapu, you have to go through so many traditional procedures before you can actually get down and talk, talk plainly and clearly about those issues, you know? So all of that is going to take some time.

MC Yeah, yeah!

R W But, you know all of this is done for the benefit of that of our taonga and even going to a marae and being welcomed onto it and all of that is all keeping that taonga alive because it’s all happening for that, for that
reason. You know, when you go onto a marae, you, you pay your respects to the gods and all of that. So all of those, of those issues are actually keeping that, that taonga alive.

MC Yeah, yeah.

RW But I guess that’s the way it has to be because that was the environment in which it came into this world.

MC Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah – it’s true. So, one of the things in the Code of Ethics – they talk about the same standard of care. You know, meaning not the same treatment to each object but the same respect should be given to, to each [unclear] to all objects. Do you have any problem with saying that, you know, allowing this object to be touched is, you know, and allowing that European painting not to be touched is the same standard of care?

RW I would not, you see, I would not in my profession. But, being a Maori, I might even do that myself and, in fact, I think I have done. So, you know, it’s a personal thing. And because I’m of Maori descent, I have no problem with it. I can actually, sort of, come in and out of these worlds when I feel like, when it’s appropriate, when it’s suitable. It’s actually the same amount of respect for both.

MC Yes, yes. So, it’s a different – it may be a different way of caring but it’s the same standard of respect.

RW Yes, exactly. It’s where your respect lies. I’d like to touch that carving or rub that carving because it has this aura about it I can feel. Like I feel close to it. It’s from my iwi and I even want to go up and give it a hug and yes I will! I’ll do that! But I don’t think I’ll touch that painting over there because the acids on my fingers might, might show up in ten years time or something. I have no affinity to that, to that painting as I have with that carving. So, because of my blood and because of all of that, I can almost say: “Okay, you’re allowed to do that.”

MC We had a instance at the museum where a, where a white artist was visiting from – he was Dutch, I think. He said he was a wood carver and he wanted to touch the carvings because he said: “Look, I’m an artist and that’s the only way I can appreciate them.” And we said no. This was actually – he wanted to touch this – it’s a contemporary sculpture by a very well known Haida artist and we said no. We said:
"Because you, first of all, you may be a wood carver, and you can try and go to this artist's studio and talk to him personally and touch the objects that he's working on in his studio, but it's not appropriate for you to touch this museum piece and, you know, if we let you touch it as somebody who – if you went and got his permission and came back to touch it, that's fine but otherwise, you know, we have to let the whole world touch it, and he wasn't pleased at all. But I think that's all we could say to him. So – because he didn't have a real affinity and also because he was saying: "Well, I want to touch the work of the master carver." But we knew this object had been carved by a lot of apprentices as well as the master carver, like a workshop. So, you know, it was sort – he wasn't just going to be able to touch the master carver's work, you know, he was actually touching – yeah, yeah.

RW Well in some cases we allow it but, you know there are exhibitions that say no, please refrain from touching. And I think a lot of people want to touch. It's just a natural instinct for them to do, to go up and rub. It's like saying hello. You know, our museum's the same. You can't really do that. It is a shame in one respect.

MC Yeah. Would you consider other things, like, for example, having somebody from the community create another sculpture, a replica. I don't know whether you can do that and whether it's appropriate to this – to create something that becomes one –

RW That people can go and touch?

MC Yeah. Or is that, it's just not appropriate?

RW It wouldn't have the same integrity.

MC Yeah, right! Okay, okay we talked about integrity and some people say, well, integrity is part of the very essence of the object and other people say, well, no, integrity is just an opinion. You know, a connoisseur of art objects will look at the patina and the look at the object and the conservator will look at its physical materials and somebody from the originating people will look at its cultural significance whereas I think a lot of conservators feel that the, the, the aesthetic integrity, the historic integrity, the physical integrity and the conceptual integrity are, are not people's opinions: They are part of the object and that's why we're preserving the object.
RW It's all a part of it. You see when I'm treating it, I know that I'm treating this, that belonged to that man, that important man. You know all of these things that are happening when you're treating it. So, for me, anyway, I see it as the total of all of that – all of its history, its physical being, all those aspects. In my view, first of all for stabilising its physical being be my approach.

MC Good, all right. I think we're coming – I think I'm coming to the end of my questions! Yeah, wonderful. Wonderful. Thank you so much. Are there questions that you want to ask me about –?

RW No, I think what you've asked me is – they've been good questions. It was one of those things that did concern me when I came into this profession. From the beginning, I thought, you know, Te Maori did do something for me. I mean I was always involved, I was always surrounded with craft, with traditional Maori weaving and being Maori. Then I became proud to be Maori because then I thought that we had this very special thing about us where we had, we had seven gods in our heaven not just the one and we had a god of the land, a god of the sea and all these things. When Te Maori happened, that confirmed all of that for me. It said yes, you're right. What you believe in is right. We are a special people. We are – we have all these gods and we must respect them and so I came into this profession and I still have that with me and that's my perception of a lot of things when I look at them. And it's because I'm ethnic. So, you know, that's me and that's what they are – not that I'm saying that I'm the same thing as them but I can certainly relate to them because I know that I'm a Maori and I know that they're of Maori origin as well. Their creators are Maori. Their thinking was Maori. Their bellies were Maori, you know? That's my thinking for a lot of dealing with handling Maori taonga. In fact, there's a few of them I get anxious with but that's a form of respect. I mean I see those taiaha out there and I think: "Oh, God, I wonder who held that!" Whose head that hit and all those things and, you know, that may be a completely different view to somebody else in England who looks at this weapon and says, I don't know, it's a piece of wood with feathers on the top of it or something. I don't know whether they have that perception or not. But I think they probably do. I can see – I'm not surprised that all of these, that you're doing something like this because you can definitely see that in the western world – that their understanding of my perception, say, of this
object is something that isn’t familiar with them at all and it’s just really to do with the difference in culture. It’s because I have to have respect for the land. I have to have a respect for the sky and the sea and I’m quite sure that isn’t really the upbringing of, you know, the western world.

MC What about in conservation training? Do you think, you know, that the programme could be improved in a way or changed in a way to give people more sensitivity?

RW Ah, I think there, could be room made in some cases we may have to consult with the people, the native people to see if it’s the right treatment or not but maybe we could sort of broaden out a bit, so that we can actually explain better how indigenous people perceive the whole being – the whole being of the object – so we can approach it with that understanding. But, you know you’ll be speaking with Valerie soon so that will give you another side to it and I think by the time you get that you’ll either be totally confused or it’ll all be quite clear to you. Because I, I – having worked with Valerie (um, you know, she supervised me, trained me for my first time in this profession) and, yeah, she has an understanding. She understands, you know, the cultural sensitivities. So, you know, she is very westernised but has actually made the space for this culture, as she should.

MC Great. Well, thank you again, Rangi. It’s been really great. Wonderful.

RW That’s good. Well, all the best with it.

MC Thank you! Thank you.
Okay, it looks good. We're in the right direction and everything is happening. Right, good. So, this is an interview with Vicki Ann? Vicki? – Heikell.

Vicki will be fine.

Okay, great. Right. So, first of all, what is your job title?

Um, I'm the paper conservator/Maori. I work in the lab on works on paper (not exclusively Maori) and then I have my own Maori Preservation Programme where I go out to the marae and to the local Maori communities and talk about preventive conservation and I do surveys and, um, and carry out treatments on things held by the marae in the Maori communities. So ... yeah.

Well, I'm in the unusual position in that, um, this position at the moment is funded by Lottery Environment and Heritage. I'm on a seed grant. It was one of the ways the National Library could establish a conservation position. So, for five years, it will be a reducing grant so that it's 100% paid by — my salary is paid by Lotteries and also my travel budget and most of my treatments and over five years, that will reduce until the National Library is to foot the entire bill. But it's a very small budget to start with, I work on $2000 to do everything — so it's a bit difficult and, at this stage, I'm only allowed one day a week to work on Maori things. Mind you, it's not actually work — officially that's what I'm supposed to do but it's not quite like, like that so far so ... yeah.
MC And the programme we mentioned when we were in the cab, um, and I asked you whether you had support from management for that, is that, is that the same programme?

VH Yeah, this is the Maori Preservation Programme. In principle, they think it's [the Maori Preservation Programme] a great idea because they have to – part of the National Library going through a big restructuring and, um, part of those aims is to make it a bicultural organization and so each unit has to have a business plan that fulfils a bicultural aim and, um, my programme is seen as, sort of, a conservation unit's bicultural, um, contribution. I don't entirely agree with that but it's a way I can actually use that to further the ends for Maori people. So. I have support from upper management Maori staff but not necessarily the other staff, not, um – they agree with it on principle but they're not really willing to provide the resources for it as far as I can see. But I am wheeled out when needed to, um, you know. "We've got this new preservation programme going. Would you like to talk about it?" And things like that but often back that up with funding. Yeah.

MC Great. How did you get into conservation?

VH Um, well, I was doing an arts degree – Bachelor of Arts degree – at the university here in Wellington and I was majoring in Maori and Sociology and a Maori Art paper and one of my holiday jobs I got was, um, working for historic places trust doing restoration of and conservation of meeting houses in my tribal area so I got to go back and work on [unclear] and, um, from there I was going to be sort of out of a job so I was offered a job – well, I was finishing my, my degree and I wasn't going to have a job to go to so I got offered a job at Historic Places Trust as a researcher, doing all the background research for Dean and Nick before they went out in the field. Like what a house may have looked like, going through old photographs and so that they had an idea what might have changed and then from there I did the research on the 'Te Marae' video and I had nothing else to do so they said, "Why don't you apply for this?" "Oh, okay. Go to Australia." So, I did and I got it and did a six month pre-training course at MONZ working on the 'Taonga Maori' exhibition that went to Australia and then went to Australia, did my three years and came back and did my post-training here, at the National Library. So, yeah.
MC Great. In, in your work, do you use the New Zealand Conservators' Code of Ethics and/or other policies?

VH Yep. Well, we adhere to the N.Z.P.C.G. Code of Ethics so, when I work with Maori communities, there's also that - I can't remember if it's ICOM or Heritage - working for indigenous people and their things. For works on paper, it's a bit different. It's actually a bit harder to convince Maori people to do things about their paper things than just to do about their carvings and what they - they see that as important. But if they want to let it go and they don't want to keep it, then there's nothing I can do. So, there's sort of that wanting to show them how to look after it but, if they don't want to, then I have to be able to let them actually do that - but so long as I give them all the options then they, ultimately, have to decide. There's nothing I can do about it, really.

MC Um, so the photographs must be important, too, but do you actually treat the photographs or do you bring them back for the photographic conservator to treat?

VH Well, no, that's - so far, what I've found is that, of course, people don't actually want them to leave the marae. Um, what I do is I do a survey and I give them - I do all the examination then I consult with Mark, the photographic conservator and say what options are best. Most of the treating of photographs has been actually copying negatives and reframing in a way that, um, gives them a better environment because usually the meeting houses, the ones that I've encountered anyway, have been quite damp. They don't want them to leave. They don't want them to leave the whare, meeting house. If they let them leave the meeting house, they're certainly not going to let them leave the district. So, so, um, it's a bit of a problem. It's, it's all to do with the past. Often people from big institutions have come in and taken a look and said, yes, and they've either used that material or it hasn't been returned. So, so there's all that suspicion that you have to break down, coming from a major institution, particularly a library, um, where we collect information. That's what they think we're out there for - to see what they've got so we can take it away. So, yeah.

MC Now, what about access, which I know, like talking yesterday to Rose and Rangi, people are coming in to see pieces from their, from their hapu or their - do you have the same? Do people come in here or do
they ask you if you have photographs or do you have documents pertaining to –?

VH We don’t, we don’t have that to the same extent that I think the museum has. What we have is, um, people wanting access to our pictorial reference collection and, actually, an instance last week, we had somebody wanting a photograph of one of their ancestors. Now, there’s copyright to all of that. In a way, it’s sort of trying to protect that iwi area. They don’t, they don’t actually convey that to the client. They said, you know: “Why do you want it?” And all this sort of stuff and, and these people – she got really angry and said: “It’s my ancestor and what right have you to, um, to do that.” And they want to pull all these items out. So, we don’t – I get enquiries from people (because I go out to the communities) who want me to find all sorts of things for them, which I can’t do but we don’t – our manuscript section, most of the stuff is, is not restricted so anyone can actually look at it, which brings up other issues of other iwi not wanting other people to see their things but, um, because they didn’t bequeath it and it was, you know – National Library says that they can’t, they can’t not show people, which is a whole different area that policy is working on about who gets to see it. But it’s, it’s sort of out of my league ‘cause it’s all information, tech and all that sort of stuff. Who gets to see what – I don’t know.

MC I was, um, I was lucky enough to go down the American Southwest and New Mexico and I went to this really interesting meeting at the Museum of New Mexico where it was, it was – they’re doing a group there – actually you people here might want to talk to them because it was all about they have a sort of photo archives group there which includes the state archivist, it includes the other places that hold archives and then they had representatives of all the pueblos there and they were hashing out this whole issue of what happens with this material that – because, you know, the state laws says everybody should have a right but a lot of the material, you know the photographs, were taken at the beginning of the century that would never have been allowed to be taken later and was considered secret, they’re sensitive or whatever. And so, you know, it was very interesting, anyway.

VH We don’t, we don’t have any policy at the moment, as I understand it. We’re lucky that we have personnel who work in those areas that are,
for the most part, sensitive to those issues but you can’t guarantee that they won’t make a mistake. And, as I see it, I have some great concerns about them launching this big image services thing and I’m a bit concerned that there is no policy regarding Maori material and what gets reformatted and digitized and sent around the country. But, every time I air those concerns, they said it’s not a problem. It’s a whole policy thing that we, as a small group – Maori group – can’t handle because it’s a huge – but I don’t want it to be taken away from – I don’t want that, to suddenly be, you know, two blocks down the road before we have realised. But, because it’s a big new thing for the library, it’s sort of already down the road with all the charts. You’re just seeing this rocking the boat with another Maori, another Maori issue that doesn’t concern, doesn’t concern these – Yeah.

MC Yeah, yeah. Typical. I know like there’s this sort of western academic view that all knowledge should be accessible and, you know, most of the First Nations in Canada and in the United States really disagree strongly with that. They feel that they’ve been violated many times.

VH Yeah, well that’s right. We hold huge collections of genealogies – whakapapa books and tables and all that and I’m sure that the people who gifted them had no idea that one day they’d be copied a thousand times and sent to, sent to anyone. And that’s the problem. Often, some people are saying: “Well, we actually own it and we bought it. Therefore, we can do this, this and this with it.” And it’s all the spiritual, the cultural aspect that, that worries me because people won’t gift their things any more if they let them – particularly Maori people – so busy trying to get their things out, they’ll be less likely to, um, give over information like that if they realize what’s going on.

MC Yeah, yeah. Um, well in, um, you know in the conservation codes of ethics, at least in Canada and I think here too, it talks about ‘respect’ for the object, ‘respect’ for the item and I’m wondering what you feel here in your work. What does that ‘respect’ involve?

VH Well, um, here for most drawings and prints and things, I follow the Code of Ethics. I seldom get Maori material unless I ask for it because of access. It’s not given a priority to get access out to Maori clients so I don’t often see Maori material unless I make, make an effort. But when we do have things, do have things like the Wentworth indenture, which was a, which was a land deed signed six days after the
Treaty by six South Island rangatira ceding South Island – selling the South Island to two men from Australia – that document returned to New Zealand and the things that I did, not only as a conservator but as a Maori person, before we did any conservation work we had, we had blessed – we had a tapu lifting and I had water in here and those were things that were hard to explain to, to other people. If I’m conserving something of Maori, with Maori material, I like to follow through on all those things because it’s more than an object to me. Even works on paper are more than just works on paper. So, we – and most of my colleagues are fine about that – so we sang and we had the tapu lifting, we had the water and we had the green leaves and things around the object which we wouldn’t normally happen to have around such an important document but, but I felt that was important to its, to its return and to its actual conservation, in a way, it was its whole – it was its return home so the conservation was more than just the physical aspect. It was that whole spiritual thing to bring it back to life. If you had been sitting in an attic in England for one hundred and fifty years –

MC Oh really? So, it was returned to New Zealand?

VH It returned to New Zealand. The National Library purchased it in an auction at Sotheby’s so, um, yeah, that was important and I did get angry because we had this huge communication about how it should be done and then some curators brought it down and they’d opened it up so nobody knew what it was and, you know, they said: “Oh look” – this was before we’d actually done all the tapu lifting and all that – and I found it upsetting and I had to leave. Sometimes they acknowledge that you need to do those things but they don’t actually understand. They think, oh, you know, that she’s just doing her thing so let her do her thing and they also find it strange that, because I’m a professional, as a conservator that I would still be upset about those things. You know, sort of like – but, but they certainly use – all the publicity shots in the end were all, all the Maori people coming in to view it and all the bigwigs [dignitaries, politicians, etc]. So, those were the publicity shots that they used. They used those sorts of things to say that they’re culturally sensitive so I, I don’t know. And it was important to me that the people who belonged to that indenture were here so there were about eighty Kai Tahu [tribe in the South Island] descendants of the signatories who arrived and the other thing was we had to let them handle it so it was a, it was a parchment that was in an
A4 size envelope. It was actually quite a large folded document. People were having a close look. Often, I think, you have to let them do that because, if you don't, then you don't build up that rapport with people. That's part of its, that's part of its coming home, too, is to let those people touch it and have a look. They wanted to and I see it as part of my job, then, to go out and educate, um, educate people on the things that you shouldn't do. Because, for instance, at the city art gallery when I was there with a Maori group, a lot of people hadn't been to a gallery and a lot of the time they were going up to the lovely oil paintings and touching because they hadn't the prior knowledge about galleries.

MC Yes, yes.

VH So, I see that as part of my job, too — to go out and teach our people that's not an appropriate thing in, in a gallery or touching our tukutuku panels that we have here in the library because they're so used to going up and touching and feeling. We've got one down stairs with feathers and you see all the little Maori kids often when they come in, touching and playing with the feathers because that's what they do in the, in the whare and they're often encouraged to do that — touch carvings and things — but it's just trying to teach them what's appropriate. Or, maybe, it's teaching us what's appropriate. I don't know.

MC Yeah, yeah. So, in your work, then, you know — conservation as a profession and professions, by definition, have clients. You know — doctors, lawyers. So, who, who would you say are your primary clients? Would it be the items themselves? Would it be the community, the originating community? Would it be the National Library?

VH Well, er, while I work in here, my primary clients are, are the curators from within the library and their objects are the drawings and prints, cartography, manuscripts. When I'm out with my programme, my primary clients are Maori people — what they want me to do. In the library, I can tell the curator what I think should be done to the object and, for the most part, they, they, they agree but with, um, when I'm out in the Maori communities, it's what they want and then I have to — talk through that and I give them options but it works a bit differently when I talk, when I talk, talk with Maori people.
MC Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, in Maori culture, works on paper do have a role in the preservation of the culture?

VH Yes, they do. It's just, um, it's [hard] trying to get the Maori communities to see that that's the case. They sort of know that but they don't often - they know it's important, particularly with land claims, Maori Land court minute books, whakapapa books which are very important to them but essentially, being an oral culture, um, a lot of the older ones don't see it as important as restoring a house. And, here again, you have to educate people but, you know, having a lot more tertiary educated younger Maori people makes it a lot easier, too. So, often, if I could link up with somebody from that area who's, who's, who can talk to their old people along with me to tell them it's important and that's, that's - I mean, they know it's important but when their whare is falling down as well they'd much rather spend their money fixing their whare than books because they think their books will last - "Oh, yeah, we'll get those books finished sometime." - and those books go with the old people when they die so they know they're often not a permanent thing. So, yeah. Photographs are really important to Maori people so I don't have a problem with the, photographic material, because that depicts their ancestors. They're quite prepared to have something done about that and they're quite willing to listen to you but when you see these old manuscripts of lovely old drawings and things and you try telling them old drawings are - "No, we want this fixed." So, that's, yeah. It's a big education thing, which is sort of beyond one person, really. However.

MC Yeah. When you say that the books go with the old people, are they actually buried? Yeah?

VH Buried. Well, often in my area - that, that's changing, too. Often, I remember a lot of my old people took with them their books, their whakapapa books. Often now they pass them on...

MC Is this, um - do people, you know, who are conservators and I guess also National Library curators, do they have a hard time with something like that being buried rather than, you know, being preserved?

VH I think, yes - well, I suppose they do. I don't have a - I don't really have a problem with that. I sort of think, well, that's how they want it
to go and, if it's and oral culture, then perhaps it's being – it's the knowledge that I'm interested that they keep and, um, a lot of our, particularly a lot of our Maori, early Maori librarians who were, sort of, in many ways, indoctrinated into the sort of library way were going out and saying: "You need to bring these things back in!" And they would get upset and a lot of my work has to, sort of – because they don't forget either, the Maori people when you go onto the marae they'll say: "Oh, such and such came in 1969." "Oh, who was that?" Yeah, um, yeah so there is that thing but I think that's changing. A lot of the curators and librarians accept that that's part of what's happening but they hope we go out and reeducate them so that they'll – they're hoping that we'll bring them back here but – and I think a lot of the people in upper management think that's what my job is, that I'll go out and show people how to look after their things and say: "Now, if you want them to be looked after, you can bring them back to the National Library." But that's not what I'm saying at all. I'm saying I want to go out and teach our people. Because, once you take it out of its context, it doesn't actually mean a lot. I mean, we have lots of whakapapa books here in the manuscripts section that don't mean a lot to anybody because nobody knows where they're from until – and we don't have a big Maori client focus at the moment so we don't bring in those Maori clients to say what these are so they don't mean anything. They might go for six hundred years, you know, under right temperature and R.H. but they're not going to mean anything because nobody knows they're here and nobody knows who they, who these people represent whereas I'd much rather have something with non-ideal conditions but staying within the community and, um, and, um, and having a spiritual life as well. For me, those things are sort of dead until somebody comes along and says: "Oh, that belongs to me." They sort of don't, they don't mean anything anymore. So, yeah, I'd rather teach people how to look after these things in not such ideal conditions and have them for their people, because that's who they relate to. So that's what I'm going out and saying but I don't know if there's [unclear] I don't tell them that's not what I do.

MC And do you have items here that you feel would be more useful if they were back in the community?

VH Well, I do but I don't know how we could achieve that. Um, because when I worked at MONZ, I was into repatriation and I was involved with Rose in a repatriation of carvings and, and people had sort of
forgotten who the person — they no longer knew who the person was — that they did all the research. It’s often a lot harder with manuscripts to get all the people together to say: “Who does this belong to?” So, um, that’s, I see, a few more years down the track and then there’s moves towards iwi and tribal cultural centres in museums and once they get going then perhaps we could repatriate back to — I see us, as a, as a library, repatriating those things back to those iwi museums, once we’ve created the right conditions for those, for those things and, from there, the people themselves who, you know, who it belongs to. Yeah. Because we’ve got song books, things like that there, that my relatives are always ringing up for that they, that they would like. They’re sitting down here. But somebody from another tribe, just over the fence, can equally argue that those belong to them so, so that’s a whole other ball game!

MC So, so, if you got request in like that, would it be appropriate to photocopy the relevant, the relevant information and send it to, to the people who request it?

VH Yeah, well, you have, um — as a — they use, actually, conservation to say that you can’t photocopy these sorts of things. They say that it’s damaging but I don’t actually have a problem if they request one-offs but it’s, but there again it’s who gets to see it. You see? That’s a Maori issue and that, um, one of my relatives wants, wants to see it but they also have to establish their right to see it as well and that, um, yeah, that’s a really hard one. I mean, I don’t want to deny them access, either. It’s, um — oh that, it’s really hard, it’s a hard issue to get into but, ultimately, I think, the thing of access with, with the right people — they should be allowed to have it, at least, photocopied once. I mean, that’s supposed to be the joy of image services, to get a working — you know, to get a copy that then can be copied and so things like that. So, I see it’s advantages as that but, yeah, that, that’s a hard one. I don’t Yeah, we, we, we have huis all the time about these sorts of issues. You know, Maori people who look after the collections — it’s a thing that reoccurs, comes up in every hui about who gets to see and should be allowed and how do we, how do we determine that? And we haven’t really come up with an answer yet and I suspect, too, it’s because most of our profession, are quite young and we’re not, we don’t know how to deal with it. But, you know, if you have somebody like I often do, you know, some of the older Maori who work in here say I want this and this, You can jump up on your own and go and get it
[unclear]!

MC Right!

VH But, you know, that’s, that’s hard for us being such a small, small group.

MC Yes, yes. Do, do you have kaumatua here for the library?

VH We do. He’s our Maori policy and planning manager and we do have a kaumatua who come in for occasions such as tonight’s powhiri and they do the things, but they, these kaumatua aren’t here to discuss those issues. They come in [or are brought in] and carry out the traditional functions and then they leave and so we don’t really have a full discussion with our kaumatua. So, if you’re from the East Coast, you might have got totally different ideas than if you’re from an area that had quite a lot of colonization so you have a different idea of how, you know, how access and all that sort of thing. Yeah.

MC Yeah, yeah, yes. So, if a group of people from, you know, came into look at some items in their area, um, would you make them do standard museum practice with white gloves?

VH Yeah, yeah. We all get together. We have a Maori reference staff, which I sort of form part of and we operate as a team. We cover all areas in the library so if we get a big group in and we had a group from Tauranga a couple of months back, who are doing a big land claim so we got out everything that they wanted to see and part of that was that I give them a, a run-down on why we use white gloves not that, you know, that you’ve got to wear white gloves but why it’s important and, if they have any of the other documents at home, they could do this and that. So I gave them a sort of a brief run-through on what conservation was and they were all really receptive to that and you tell them things like: “Don’t laminate anything!” And they all go: “Oh!” Too late. So, yeah, that’s — we like to encourage that sort of, that sort of [thing] here at the library.

MC Yeah, yeah. Are there other things that or things that might, you find present particular challenges to the way you were trained as a conservator?
VH Not yet. Um, the whole issue of letting something go that I might think is important but the people who own it don’t. That’s a problem for me but, um, it’s a struggle for me and sometimes I have, I think, you know – I keep having to say: “Why am I in this profession?” And I’m always having that struggle. I haven’t encountered any others because, you know, I work with mostly, um, sympathetic and supportive colleagues, who support me in any way in my decisions. I haven’t encountered any difficulties yet.

MC Right, right. So what – so you’re saying that you, that sometimes you just have to, in order to preserve the cultural significance, you have to not preserve the physical part of the object? Let it, let it –

VH Yes. It’s sort of a fine line. You’ve got to decide whether it’s because culturally they don’t want to or because they don’t really understand where you’re coming from so, um, you sort of have to do a really hard sell when you go out to the communities that these are the reasons you’re doing it and, um, so that, that, that’s the struggle is whether they don’t actually understand your reasons why – you know, maybe they’re suspicious that you’re just coming and saying you want to take it back or whether it’s because of a, um, for a cultural reason and, if so, then you stand back. But you don’t want to push the issue, either, so it’s a struggle. Um, somebody’s whakapapa books were burnt in a fire but they rescued them. They weren’t actually badly damaged and they thought, therefore, they should let the rest of it burn. They were going to burn it and it wasn’t because it was a cultural thing to do that. It was because they thought it wasn’t worth keeping them any more because it’s all burnt around the edges. So, you know, they could have lost the whole hapu whakapapa because of that so you had to, once you establish it, then you could then fight from a conservation point of view that this was what you wanted to do because you don’t, you don’t have to burn the rest because it’s actually going to be fine. So, um – and, being Maori, that helps. I mean, if a pakeha had gone in and said that, they, you know, they probably would have been ticked off but I was able to say that and that’s what’s good about the job and satisfying. It’s hard work, too.

MC Yeah, yeah. Um, do you think – does this work easier if it’s, if it’s your own community than if it’s a community – or are you sort of related to a lot of the communities?
Um, well it’s actually easier — well, I find easier — not in my own community.

Ah ha!

Because often the expectations are higher in your own community and you have to actually do a lot more talking! If you can come in and be — but if you go to — like, I go to the Waikato. I have to establish who I am and then they try and figure it all out and which area you’re from and they find out your relatives and establish your credentials and then you can tell them that when I go home — I haven’t actually done an official workshop at home — I’m sort of leaving that until I’ve got good at other areas! — there’s a lot more expectations on you and it’s, it’d be all right — What I’m eventually hoping to do is to be able to do it as a group because Nick and Dean get to work together often and being men also helps them. Being a woman who goes by herself, somewhere, is a lot harder — even in, and often in your own communities harder still. So. Because they have more of a right to ask you who you are, where you’re from and all those sorts of questions to sort of set you up and, um, that’s quite hard. So, yeah.

So, so, okay, if, if the library ideally — how could the library better serve the Maori people?

Um, well, they could become instead of organizational focused more client focused but they think that people should come to them and we, we should be going out to the people and, like, I don’t see that as being a problem. If we want to — because we’re in this new — New Zealand’s in this new sort of reducing budget and we have to be all client focused and, you know, the government doesn’t help you any more — I see no reason why we can’t, we can’t go out to those people and provide our services out there or ‘sell our product’, as they say, to our communities. Um, I feel that we should and we should also bring in, by, by going out we bring in those people whom we can educate them on, on a — I mean, I can’t see why they, if they wanted to, they could do a real sell job on Maori people because they just want to absorb everything because they don’t come into libraries and institutions generally so, if we got in first, you know, they could, um — Yeah and I think they need to provide more, more, more of us. More conservators. We need more Maori curators and curatorial positions. It’s sort of that — when I look at a drawing or print, I see the meeting
house and the lake. The ‘Drawing and Prints Curator’ sees the lake and then there’s a house and it’s a whole different view – That’s all about access. So, Maori people are less likely to access that, that drawing and print of their home area because it doesn’t actually mention their houses or it does, as an aside. But if a Maori curator was in there, they’d more than likely say: “There’s a house and there’s this lake that’s related.” Blah, blah, blah. And you get more people in and it’s all about, it’s all about access and access to the knowledge. There’s got to be a Maori perspective in libraries. They’re trying hard but it sort of sometimes misses the mark. Often when I say things like that, people don’t see what the problem is because it’s recorded. You know. Or things like manuscripts. A lot of our people don’t know they’re in here because they say ‘Maori Song’. Now, if a Maori person was doing that they would say: “Waiata from Te Arawa by −.” Says. Now the Maori person would say: “Oh, wow, it’s from my area. I’ll get that.” If they see it now, they go: “Maori song.” They don’t know what that is. And that’s the only way they’re going to bring more people in and that’s the only way we can provide a service, um, to our people. I’m sort of all new to this. I’ve only just sort of finished being a student. But those were the problems I found when I was researching. Often, they say that we had access but we didn’t really. We don’t, we don’t come from the same, from the same, from the same place.

MC Yeah. When you were a child, did you go to museums or galleries or libraries at all?

VH No. We went, um, we used to go on school trips to, um, to museums and art galleries but I – it wasn’t actually something I – in fact, it wasn’t something I really did until I got into conservation or was doing my Maori Art paper. I went to see ‘Te Maori’. It was the first – in fact it was the first time I’d been to the National Museum. But it wasn’t a place that really interested me. It didn’t really, it didn’t say anything about, about me really and until I saw ‘Te Maori’ that I realised that all these things were in here but, in many ways, it still didn’t say anything to me because I found it sad that this taonga labelled little tekoteko that had come off a house was now sitting there by itself, was not still attached to its house but, um, and I didn’t go to art galleries and, um, because I didn’t – there wasn’t anything relevant to me, I didn’t feel. I went to libraries but, um, that was only, you know, because it was in the centre of town and it was a meeting place! But, um – and we had, and we had, um – and it was significant that half the staff at the library...
was Maori, so we were actually encouraged — Because, when I went, you used to have to sit at a desk by yourself in a library but they used — the Maori staff in the Maori area — used to put all the desks together so you’d come in with all your friends and make lots of noise. I mean, that’s significant, I feel and it was a — and they embraced us rather than told us to be quiet or get out. Yeah.

MC Right, right. But you had a — like, the Canberra programme is a tough three year programme so you had enough, um, of whatever, you know, passion for what you were doing, that you, you know, it carried you through that programme.

VH Yeah. It was actually because, um, I wanted to do ethnographic conservation — objects/conservation — but I realised that, that the type of conservation I wanted to be working on (houses and thing like that) I wouldn’t, actually, ever get to do because Dean and Nick are already doing it and they’re the men and they’d always get picked ahead of me. The only reason I got to work on houses when I did because the houses were named after women and they were from my area. So, I sort of realised that, to do conservation, I’d have to do something — I wouldn’t be able to do the, you know, the meeting house stuff, but I’d have to do something that other Maori people weren’t doing so I could fill a gap. And I saw that Rangi was doing textiles; Dean and Nick, rock art and buildings; whereas Rose needs the graphic because they need a paper conservator. So, it wasn’t something that I — it didn’t — it wasn’t something I had a feel for, initially. I didn’t really always want to be a paper conservator. I wanted to be — and I still do — have more of an empathy for ethnographic objects. In fact, some of my best conservation work on the programme was when I did ethnographic work and I had, you know, I had more of an idea because I was more, I was able to think laterally when I worked on objects. I could, I could — I had more of a feel for that than I did with paper but, um, eventually I felt, well, I better get down and do something that Maori people need. So it was more, it was more not that I wanted it but that Maori people would need me and that’s what spurred me on to become a — I thought I wasn’t going to get through. Somebody’s waiting for you back at home to do some work. So, yeah.

MC Great. Um, okay. I should probably just turn my tape over before it, ah —
MC  Great. Okay. Um, okay, so, are there any other examples that, um, you could tell me about where the – about balancing the preservation of the physical object with balancing its, its cultural significance? Ones where you thought it worked out either particularly well or you thought it didn’t work out very well? Anything that comes to mind?

VH  No, ‘cause I’ve – I only started work in February so I haven’t really encountered them. But everything I’ve done so far has worked out what I feel, sort of, quite well. If I had a lot more money, though, I’d be able to do more! But I can’t – the Wentworth indenture was probably the big one that I –

MC  Right. What about other – is there any, are there any differences in opinion about the appearance of objects? You know, between the community – you know, I don’t know – wants a stain removed or wants it to look this way and you feel professionally to look another way.

VH  Um, no. I haven’t encountered that. Do you mean like the aesthetic versus the –?

MC  Yes, exactly. I’m thinking, you know, like with the painting – repainting – issue. But is there anything that might be –?

VH  No, I haven’t actually found that. Like, we’ve had lot of hand-coloured photographs that have, that have been silverfish damaged and, you know, and, um, I had thought that they might want all of that sort of area inpainted and things like that for exhibit. I haven’t found that the – however they usually only want to know that they’ll be around but now that the objects are all right and will be around for a bit longer. I mean, I think Nick and Dean may have. I’m not sure. But, with works on paper, it hasn’t been a problem.

MC  Okay, one of the things in, in Canada that’s another issue is that works that have been in a major institution for a long time – excuse me – are being held in the public trust and, and, when First Nations request something to do with those works, sometimes those institutions if it’s pretty good and the conservator especially will say: “Well, I’m sorry but it’s in the public trust. We are safe-keeping it for the public trust rather than for a, a – privileging a small, small group of people.” And other museums will say: “Well, the originating community has certain
rights.” But how would you balance out, sort of, the preservation for the public trust, and the significance of the object nationally to, to the significance for the –

VH Well, I always believed if it was something to do with the tangata whenua then the tangata whenua’s requests and rights come before the public trust because, nine times out of ten, it’s for the public trust which is the pakeha people and not Maori or tangata whenua interest and, um, yeah. I mean, I can’t, I can’t relate it back to my work because I haven’t encountered anything such as, such as it yet and I doubt whether I – I don’t know whether I would or not but, um, I’m just trying to think of – Yeah, I can’t think of anything but I would always put the tangata whenua, if it was a, if it was a, um – Mind you, if you come to something like the Treaty or something, I’d say that the tangata whenua’s rights would be first but, however, it’s the foundation of our nation so I don’t know. But I’d have, I’d have to temper that with making sure that the tangata whenua knew what they were getting themselves into and what, what the implications were and, um, and I think that we, we don’t want to set our people up to fail by saying: “Well, you can do this.” But, once it’s happened, go: “Well, you know, I knew this was going to happen.” We’ve got to be able to say: “This is – I’m in this profession therefore I can help. Therefore this, this and this is going to happen if you – you know – and I can help you.” And, um, and that’s a hard one because at the end if I had the kaumatua had all got together and said: “This is what we’re going to do.” And I didn’t agree – I think I’d have to say I didn’t agree but I’d have to let them, let them do it.

MC Yes. Now, what about if it was concerning a treatment? Like who do you, who – this is for an item that is now in the library’s collection and presumably got there through – you know, wasn’t illegal, anyway? Who do you think has the right to decide on the care of the object or the item? Would it be the conservator or would it be the, you know, from the communities wishes?

VH Well, if the community doesn’t know about it, which is like us, then it is my responsibility. If the community takes an active part in looking after these things, then I think it’s a partnership issue. Um, but, um, most of the time our people, if they see another Maori person there working, they’ll take your, they’ll take your advice and say: “Well, you’re the expert there, then you’ll know what to do.” And they
usually follow your advice. So, I haven't had - but, if they said they wanted done, I would, in a Maori forum be able to express my opinion and say: "I don't think" - in a Maori forum, I'd be able to say - "I don't think you should do this." But I wouldn't ever do this on behalf of an institution. I wouldn't say: "The National Library" or "We at the National Library think this." I would go out into, into a forum for Maori people because then they could express their opinion and I might find out why they - When they come into institutions, they're immediately defensive so they'll say: "We want this done because it's ours." And you can't, you know. And: "We have a right. This is our spiritual thing." But if you take it back to the Maori forum, then you get the opportunity, um, to have your say and then you get up and say: "Well, this is why, blah, blah, blah." They can get up and say: "Well, this is why we don't want it done." And you can actually thrash it out and achieve some sort of compromise.

MC Yeah, that's a really good point. What about - Okay, the word 'integrity' is used, at least in the Canadian Code of Ethics - you preserve the historic integrity, the aesthetic, the physical integrity and, in Canada, we have conceptual integrity in there also, which is the (as I understand it because the term isn't defined) you know the significance, the cultural significance - and are these, for you, the essential elements to preserve or what are you preserving?

VH The physical and, and the spiritual and - yeah, I guess the spiritual - See, when I work on objects from here, I feel they've lost their spiritual integrity. There's nothing I can really do about that. You know. But, when I'm out in the Maori community, they still hold some of that - they, they hold their spiritual integrity and [unclear] physical integrity. But sometimes I try, I know who it belongs to, often I might get them in to say a karakia over something and went before, you know, once a treatment's done, so that it sort of goes back whole. But that's not something I do often. I just - I don't have the time or the - but, often, like the carved gateways when they came back, um, they were blessed and everything before we did anything with them, put back up.

MC So, it would be before treatment and after treatment? Or - ?

VH Yeah. With those ones it was before because they'd come back home. But, um, what I tend to do is I do a treatment and then, after it has had its physical, it's physical being restored and conserved, then I can get
somebody in to say something. I mean, it's very sad when you see all those things. Well, for me, anyway. And often, you see things that relate to land claims that are going on now that you, that you have to get someone in so they can, you know.

MC Would you like the *pakeha* conservators to also do that after there was a treatment, you know, through however means whether it was appropriate to come in or ask you to get somebody to come in or –

VH Well, I don’t know. I think they would be prepared to do that but we deal with such a lot of Maori material, too, it would be hard to judge them. And, at the moment, we have an informal policy where if [the piece is] really significant it is blessed. Like Marian had to go out and restore a, a rolled *whakapapa* when she, when she first arrived. I think she’d only been here from Canada for about a week and a half, or something and had to go and do that and she was startled by all the – she had to go out and she encountered all the *kaumatua* and it sort of freaked her out when they sort of unrolled it and all that. But she, I mean, she understood what it was all about so, um, and the same with a lot of paintings that go out now. They often have the, all the *karakia* done. I mean, I think at the moment, we’re such a small staff that it can only be the, the really significant things. But we don’t just do it so long as the curators – they just do it for publicity. You know, that it’s a way for them saying: “We’re a bicultural institution.” But, I usually liaise with, um, Dick Grace upstairs, who’s our Maori policy and planner and *kaumatua* and say; “Look, this is an important thing. Will you come down and, you know, do a quick *karakia* over it?” And he’s usually obliging and often the staff will say: “Is this an important thing? Should we do something about it?” And, um, yeah.

MC If you had to sort of, you know, work on preserving one of the integrities over another one just because that’s, that was the situation ‘cause – which would you choose ‘cause, like at present, there are like a [unclear] of ethics all in a line. You should preserve da di da di da di da and they don’t tell you what to do if there’s a conflict between any of them.

VH I guess it would be its spiritual integrity, um, because, without that, it doesn’t mean anything so, you know, why have a piece of paper with a lot of script on it if it doesn’t have any *mana*.
MC Yes, yes. Okay, I think, um – Okay, there’s one more thing I want to talk about which is, um, the principle of the same standard of care which is in the Codes of Ethics – you know, not the same treatment but the same respect, same standard of care – um, one of the things that’s worried conservators in Canada is that if they allow First Nations people to handle objects or to, you know, say conduct religious ceremonies (for certain people, it involves leaving food remains near or on the objects and which then might attract insects, you know, from a conservation point of view) but so, if that happens, then you are – you’re not giving the same standard of professional care to those objects because they’re – you are putting them at risk, you know. So, so, we don’t know what to do with this principle of the same standard of care. How to resolve the fact that we also do want to allow First Nations to handle the objects but we don’t want to allow Europeans to handle paintings. What – do you have any thoughts on that?

VH Well, I guess it’s – the standard of care is been something written from a, um, written with European painting or European sculpture in mind and that that ‘standard of care’ came from the respect that they had, how they felt about their objects, you know, it wasn’t usual for European paintings to be touched or sculptures to be touched but it was, it is for Maori people to, you know, to touch their carvings and so, um, I think it’s, um, in many ways it can often be seen as a Eurocentric way of viewing things, about standard of care and, and I think that, um, if you believe spiritual care is more important then you have a different idea what ‘standard of care’ is about. And First Nations people may well think that by not touching your paintings or not touching sculpture, you don’t actually give it the same standard of care which they do with, with, with their things. I mean, that’s a hard thing when you repatriate things that have had this ‘standard of care’ – it’s hard for museums to then see the people touching them or dressing them or, you know, doing things to them. But, after all, it’s, it’s a, it’s a thing that belongs, it belongs to the tangata whenua and, therefore, it’s the tangata whenua’s right to make those decisions about standard of care in consultation. And, again, if you tell them in their own forum that, as a result of that, you may do this and this, they may modify their, their, their, um, what they do. I mean, we – when the ‘Te Maori’ exhibition came, we were encouraged to touch all the objects. So. That was before I became a conservator! I imagine all of them freaking out but, um, if you – I don’t think you can actually stop people doing that and I don’t know how you’ll resolve that unless you have First
Nations people who are conservators, who can give it, who can give it both, both their points. Um, even when at National Gallery of Australia, we had a southeast Asian sculpture and everyday they would put bowls of water and camellias at the foot of – an there was a big – and the conservators though we shouldn’t do that, we could attract insects so they brought in fresh plants. But you had to let them do it. It was an integral part of their, their religious [belief] to do this so you couldn’t stop them doing it. Well, I don’t think you can stop them doing it and, um, if it came down to it, I would be with the tangata whenua on this one. I don’t know how you can resolve that until you get more tangata whenua who are in those positions of power because that’s what it is. It’s a, it’s a power thing and you need, you need the tangata whenua to educate their own people rather than someone else because they probably won’t – I know that we wouldn’t, people back home wouldn’t perhaps acknowledge a pakeha person telling them they shouldn’t be rubbing the carvings when they come to museums and things or putting, or putting leaves on them like they do because the leaves signify life. But if I said to them, maybe, you could put the leaves on but, you know, hold off – you know: “everyone’s rubbing them, there won’t be anything left”, or something – they may be more likely to say: “Okay, then, we won’t.” But I don’t think – well, I can’t think of a way you can resolve that until you – maybe, maybe a way of determining standard of care is to provide appropriate training to First Nations people and increase their understanding of what the profession is about or what – and why you’re doing it. And that’s, I mean that’s often – when I was younger, people would say: “Don’t do that.” But they didn’t tell you why. You just didn’t do that. And yet you’d get incensed, livid: “They’re mine. They’re from my area. Don’t tell me what to do!” And so, you know, there needs to be more maybe communication. I don’t know. It’s a hard one.

MC I realize that, yeah, one other thing I wanted to ask you about is whether you thought, you know, like in the training programmes, like in Canberra, were all these issues, you know, were they dealt with and discussed? Or do you think the training – like, do you think training for conservators should be changed in some way?

VH Oh, definitely. I think it needs to include more, more of these issues around indigenous people and tangata whenua and spiritual and physical and all those – I mean, we only ever touched on it and it was only because the staff had Maori trainees in their classes. It wouldn’t
have, it wouldn’t have been brought up otherwise. I mean, we had — I mean, our ethnographic lecturer was a Canadian and so [I think (s)he? had a lot? unclear] of experience with the First Nations situations. A lot of our required reading was the sort of ‘what do we do when the First Nations come in and they burn sacred grasses or things?’ And, um, but it was surprising because most of the conservators, most of the Australians said: “Oh, no, you shouldn’t allow that to happen.” But there was actually no discussion. I think there needs to be, um, an integral part of training, particularly for ethnographic conservators, who seem to — the ones I’ve encountered in Australia are trying hard but they haven’t got anything to work from because of the appalling history of Aboriginal/Australian relations and Australia Europeans. So, um, yeah, it was only the Maori problem was ever discussed so, um — and that was only a few brought it up so I think it’s important.

MC Yes. Great. Well, listen, thank you so much. It’s really been wonderful. It was just great for me.

VH Ah, well, that’s good.

MC Do you have any questions that you want to ask me or anything about —?

VH No, no, I think you set out in your fax what you were hoping to achieve and what you were going to do. I’d be interested, very interested to see an end result from this. That’ll be great.

MC Well, I’ll certainly send you something and I may not — I’m doing it part-time so it’s going to take me another three years, if I actually [unclear]

VH Oh it’s always hard.
JULIA GRESSON
SENIOR ONSERVATOR, AUCKLAND MUSEUM TE PAPA WHAKAHIKU,
AUCKLAND, N.Z.

TAPED INTERVIEW RECORDED IN HER OFFICE, SEPTEMBER, 1994

Permission was received to reproduce these quotations taken from the longer interview. Clarification of subject areas is included in square brackets at the beginning.

JG [The conceptual] (i)s always considered as well as the physical and that it’s not also just a scientific emphasis on conservation. Most conservators here, particularly ethnographic conservators, are well aware of the cultural practices, not all of them but quite a few of them and have made a conscious effort to respect those and incorporate them in their work.

JG [Respect:] I don’t think it’s very easy to define. ... There are ... different people I have respect for and one of them was the person who made the object. I guess the other is the culture they come from and perhaps even the community they come from. There’s not much I would necessarily know about that. And, then, respect for the people who are living now, obviously. And they’re not the same people and that’s ... — a point — that I think needs to be made because often you read about ethnographic objects and communities using them now. There’s feeling that those objects are old and the communities are still living whereas, in actual fact, ... in our collection there are a lot of brand new objects that are made by people who are living now. ... There’s a danger of only respecting old things and not perhaps respecting new things as much better because they’re made with so-called inferior materials or they’re made with ... less skill and time involved and so that’s quite a difficult issue as well.

JG [what does respect mean in your conservation work?] On one level, it means not transgressing beliefs that you know about in terms of your treatment or handling.
There are certain things that most people know about like not treating carvings when you're menstruating, not using saliva on objects, not eating or drinking near objects, — so there's that level of your personal behaviour in a way and then there's other levels, for instance, in storage and packing of objects for transport. Here, anyway, we're fairly conscious of not alienating the public by using methods and materials which reinforce the scientific or slightly cynical view of treatment or storage of museum objects. ... I am very concerned with the idea of making it comfortable for people to come in and look at objects. And, on a very practical level, that might involve using, for instance, grey Jiffy foam [Ethafoam] instead of white. Now, that quite interests me because I know in Wellington they specifically use white ... it's something that I think is personally much better, even on a very simple level, to try and not make things too surgical. And, when we're packing an item for transport and it's not going to an institution — it might be going to a marae or a small museum or, for instance, last weekend, a cloak went down to celebrations in Ngaruawahia and, when I packed that cloak, I thought carefully about — I could easily have used Tyvek and made it look ... like something about to be used in operations but ... we covered the pad inside with brown cotton so you don't notice it as much and the cloak's wrapped in calico rather than Tyvek so it's not too over the top, really. And it's something quite simple and, in the long run, it would be very interesting to say to someone: "Do you think that that makes any difference?" Because it could be that we think it does and, in fact, it doesn't. But, for some people it might be a sign of more respect to have all the fancy Tyvek around it. I don't actually know that so I'm just assuming that it's less, [intimidating]. — And, in the same way, we packed some objects that went down to Rotorua Museum and they come from that and they've been sent down there on quite a long term loan and we had a ceremony here in the morning and they were sent off and we'd packed them carefully but again using non-intimidating material. Once those objects are handed over to the people from Rotorua, the local people who are taking them back, then you lose control over how they're handled and, as far as I'm concerned, that's fine. I accept that so that when they tip the box up and the whole cloak slides down to the bottom and little bits fall off, well, that's just too bad. That's part of the deal and similarly when they get put in the back of the van and you can see there's not enough padding and they're going to be rattling well it's just fate - has to be recognised as part of the deal. There comes a point
where you stand back and you’ve lost control and that’s -
... Part of the whole ....

JG  [Client:] Well, I actually see it as the public. The reason I do is because I really don’t see the point in having a whole lot of objects sitting in a building if no one’s going to ever see them or use them or know about them and I don’t personally think the argument that you’re keeping them for posterity holds because what is posterity? And how long are we going to wait? [Laughter] I’m not — I don’t see the object as my primary client, which is presumably what you’re getting at... [or]
... The customer’s so fixed here so there’s no doubt that institutionally it’s the customer who’s the client and increasingly so.

JG  Well, I think a lot of the challenges simply come from the way museums — the direction they’re taking and that the less money there is and the less time there is and the more people want to develop galleries very quickly and develop buildings really quickly, the less conservators are able to impose or even recommend standards that they’re more familiar with and, while some of that, I think is negotiable - and it’s particularly negotiable in terms of people wanting access to their objects — there are some things that aren’t negotiable and that, one example is simply - people doing construction work and [damaging objects]. ... An electrician was working in the Pacific Hall ... basically he broke a very precious object and that could easily have been avoided.

JG  I think in the future, it’s going to get more and more difficult for conservators to maintain what they still see are necessary standards. Some of them might be — have been over the top and unnecessary and definitely we’re going to have to be a bit more flexible. Certainly, at the moment, I think there is a perception in this building that we are the conservation police. You know? And part of that’s a joke and part of it’s perfectly serious and, when it comes to the bottom line and there’s not enough time and dreadful unplanned things are happening like pouring concrete the day an exhibition opens while there’s stuff all around, we are the only ones who will step in and say: “This is just terrible. It’s not going to happen again.” And, of course, it does happen again. It’s not reported by anyone else and it gets extremely tedious to be this sort of lone voice that’s crying in the wilderness and it becomes more tedious because there are so many more people coming in to the museum here and, I’m sure, everywhere else who are total non-
museum people. They’re coming in and — they’ve got an enormous amount of power. They’re running huge contracts to do with ... carpentry and mobile dinosaurs and this and that and they don’t know about, perhaps, special things you need to know about touching museum objects and, when they’re very politely and gently told about it, they’re not interested. Ultimately, they want to finish the project and they want the people through the door.

JG I guess we’re going to have to tread the line between maintaining what we see as non-negotiable conservation standards and not being labelled as troublesome and difficult so that people aren’t going to even tell us what they’re going to do because they can see trouble ahead so "let’s just sneak behind here without getting them involved at all" and that’s going to be quite difficult I think.

JG .... particularly living in a city like Auckland where some of the objects you see in use outside the museum and sometimes there is this incredible thing where you think: “Gosh, we’re being so careful with these objects but, I mean, I’ve actually got five of these at home and I’m not that careful at all!” And there is that strange feeling, particularly with something like barkcloth where most people have lots of barkcloth and I remember rolling one of the huge wedding bark cloths from Tonga. You know, we’re so careful not to tread on them with our shoes and I’m sure, if, you know, a group of Tongans were there, they’d think we were absolutely mad. You know, why not? They’re made to walk all over and, you know, they’re made to be used so don’t be so fussy. But then I think that there are groups or classes of objects which curators, too, out there are conscious of preserving and the cloak collection would be a tacit example of that and that’s really quite an interesting example in that cloaks are seen as a finite resource — old cloaks — because they don’t come up very often either for auction or for donation or whatever. And the new ones that are being made up are obviously quite different, however great the skill with which they’re made. And they don’t either have that incredible history through use or association or whatever that the old ones do. Perhaps there’s the recognition —I’m not really sure — of the fact that a lot of cloaks that are held outside the museum have deteriorated — but opposed to that is the storage situation [here] of the cloaks, ... while the storage units are made of wood now, which is quite a warm looking material, the fact is that they are in an air conditioned, artificially lit space and that to some people that is a problem.
... The fact that the cloaks are sort of living, vital objects and here they are laid flat in a storage room that doesn’t have any people in except when they’re visiting or doing the odd bit of work and, more than anything, that they’re lying there, not being interacted with, in a way. And there’s a lot of them and only a very small percentage of them are out on display. Now, that collection is accessed (certainly now, too, that it’s in new storage) by weavers, who are looking for old techniques and patterns as well as just looking at ones that are familiar. ... You do have to be very careful because some people might see that as cold and clinical and not, sort of, warm enough or alive enough for them. Others might see it as a sign of respect, you know, that we are actually spending heaps and heaps of money and looking after the cloaks and that they will last longer than they might otherwise last. So, you have to be incredibly careful, I think, of making those generalizations. In the same way, I’ve recently repaired some fibre out on the canoe in the Maori gallery and the other day I noticed it’s broken again. Now, the canoe and most of the material in the central Maori court are totally accessible to visitors and part of that is a recognition of the importance of being able to handle things and stroke them and touch them but it was the young Maori technicians who actually came and said to me that they thought that people shouldn’t be able to touch that canoe anymore because they’re doing too much damage. And I find that quite interesting, too. Because, like, for some people you’re letting them touch them and yet, for others, they actually might think that that is not a good idea.

JG You can’t stop people from touching that big canoe. The only way to do it would be to put horrible barriers around it which, aesthetically as well as politically and culturally, would be pretty insensitive. So, I think it will just remain as it is. That sort of damage will be fixed and the fibre, for instance, isn’t original anyway whereas the boat is. ... In the meeting house that’s being conserved, a lot of that can’t be touched by people because the original colours are so fragile, but they’re easily visible because they’re [the visitors are] right next to them.

JG Now I certainly accept that people aren’t going to wear gloves and they don’t want to wear gloves ... so that would happen with cloaks; that sometimes they would, sometimes they wouldn’t. It just depends on the situation but generally again it’s that question of alienation. You know, you just alienate people if you say, you know: “Put your white gloves on so you can touch your own family’s cloaks.” Which is
ridiculous. You can’t do it.

JG [re Museum of New Zealand (Wellington) storage area] It answers all the conservation requirements. It’s a big space. It’s got heaps of shelves. It’s supposedly going to have quite a good environment and, to me, it’s totally hostile to any visiting group.

JG We probably would, actually, [ask a pakeha weaver's group to wear white gloves while examining the Maori cloaks in the storage room], and we recognize that sort of hypocrisy sometimes in the way we deal with people from other cultures. And admittedly pakeha culture doesn’t have that strong thing of touching and stroking things — it might with furniture or certain objects. I mean who can say if someone’s got emotional attachment to something — why they want to touch it — but it is true and I’ve heard her [Mina McKenzie: (Maori descent), Director Emeritus of Manawatu Museum, Palmerston North] use that example of someone wanting to borrow a wedding dress from Manawatu’s collection and how she looked at that completely differently from the way she would look at a Maori family asking to use a cloak and yet, to each of those families, they could well have the same significance and attachment. ... No, we probably would, to be perfectly honest, ask them to wear gloves. However, they also recognize that I’m a fabric person too, I do textiles, and I know that you need to feel a fabric to get something from it and it may be that if that fabric hasn’t been felt for the past forty years that you know it probably doesn’t matter, especially of someone’s washed their hands, if they touch it for five minutes. So, it depends a bit on the situation and the materials, I guess, like metals or something where I would draw the line because we spend a lot of our time, you know, taking marks off metals. And, you know, it’s the same thing. There are plenty of old sailors who’d like to come along and touch old bits of metals from the maritime collection and ... they wouldn’t be caught dead in gloves and that’s a problem we’ve had with the Maritime Museum is that — we’ve asked that they do wear gloves when handling some of our objects — not all of them but some of them — and they’ve said that they couldn’t possibly. I know a lot of that is the macho thing of we’re not going to be seen dead in white gloves. So, we’ve that problem as well.

JG I do think it is important that they do last, the object, and sometimes that might be in philosophical conflict with the person who made it.
But then, the person who made it, I guess, also wasn’t aware that maybe it might be one of the last ones there ever was going to be and maybe they wouldn’t have cared and maybe they would have.

JG People do talk about a *mauri* ... or the life force of an object and that some objects should be allowed to die or just pass away, whatever. I guess it’s paralleled a bit too with things like those flags from the military collections that are supposed to fall apart and dust to dust and all the rest and yet we’ve actually got some of those that haven’t been allowed to fall apart. ... There must always be that conflict between what people traditionally believed without perhaps knowing that those things weren’t going to continue to be made and, that they weren’t going to be able to be replaced so there might come a time that, if those ones weren’t preserved, then there weren’t any left and maybe that’s a problem and maybe it’s not.

JG Right because I really don’t think that there would be many people, if you said: “Do you think the Maori cloaks that exist should be allowed to deteriorate and disappear?” I’d be very surprised if you got anyone saying: “Yes.”

JG I’ve often been brought up to Ethnology when people have brought in a cloak or something to say what I think about it or what the options are and - it’s always that. You know: “These are the options and we can help you with this or that.” And, often, we might give them something to do it with. You know, they’re going to mount it or whatever.

JG It’s also the thing that you’re divorced from actual - if you were actually using them, you’d probably be more worried if it was getting older or deteriorated because you might not be able to use it for much longer ... It depends on the cultural context.

JG Out in the Maori gallery ... is a *pataka* (or storehouse) and quite a few years ago now when I first came back here someone was employed really to put feathers on that *pataka* and to do the fibre to attach the feathers and it’s someone who’s not Maori, who’s got the most incredible knowledge and skill about how to make things and does it incredibly well, using all traditional technique and who has got great respect among a lot of the Maori community but the fact is he’s not Maori and he’s not connected to that *pataka* and he was brought in to
work on contract.

... And I think there is a danger in people, again, almost romanticising that side of it and assuming every time that, you know, it's the people who own the object or used to own it or whatever who have done these things [e.g. feather decoration on a pataka] when, in fact, it might be someone totally unrelated and it's interesting on what basis that decision was made.

JG So there's that sort of use where [people are] actually looking for a design or inspiration or traditional motifs or whatever. But then there might be instances where they're simply coming to see that object and there'll be prayers and all sorts of things. And that's nothing to do with conservation and we're not involved with that. That's all the Ethnology Department.

JG I've got complete confidence in [X, a member of the Ethnology staff] in gauging who the people are and whether it's appropriate to tell them [the handling rules] or not and it may be that it's inappropriate and there is a risk and he'll take it and that's probably, I think, the right decision in that keeping the goodwill of those people and not insulting them is more important than maybe a tiny mishandling misdemeanour. I mean, it's a bit different if they're holding a bit of greenstone over a marble floor I'd be extremely nervous because if that drops, that's it. ... I'm sure too that there are a lot of occasions where someone like [Z, a Maori member of Ethnology] couldn't possibly tell someone not to do something because it just would be [inappropriate].

JG To me, ... it has to be recognised that they're [Codes of Ethics are] situational ethics. They ... don't stand for every occasion; every occasion's different, and you have to consider all the sort of variables, and I also don't think that people should use codes of ethics as a sort of badge, almost, like they're going to behave well because: "We, we've got a code of ethics." Almost like a shop-front window, you know — if we've got one then we must be professional.

... And I also think that codes of ethics don't hold a lot of water unless there are sanctions against unethical behaviour and if there aren't, and nothing in fact can be done, then what you're doing is suggesting to the public and to other people that there's this control over professionals, which, in fact, often doesn't exist. And so, yes, there would be situations, I think, where I would put the object at physical risk, because of the conceptual integrity, or whatever, involved. In fact, part
of the fact I don’t think objects exist in isolation, really, and that they are always part of the cultural context. It might not be originating context; it might be something completely different ... And, obviously, there would be degrees of that, as I say. I mean, I wouldn’t be happy about someone borrowing a cloak and then falling off a waka into the water. You know? I mean, that sort of thing has happened — not with cloaks in this collection, but we’ve had people come in with cloaks that have been, you know, submerged in water and that sort of thing. I mean that’s a greater degree of possible damage than just letting a weaver flip over a cloak to see how it’s made. It would depend a lot — and on the political situation, too, I mean who is it that’s ... I think it would be naive to suggest that those political aspects don’t matter because they do, often. So, who it is making the request or who it is that actually is putting the object at risk — and, I mean, it does happen all the time. I know that during ‘Te Maori’, ... my predecessor was very worried about one of the carvings which was being handled a lot and he did actually ask someone to stop handling it and got, you know, a severe reprimand from them for it, and I mean that, too, is a question of ownership, I guess. ... legal as well as moral. And that Code of Ethics emphasis, yeah, I find sort of like, well, like the ten commandments: you don’t have to have the ten commandments to behave properly, really, do you? Almost of like, almost like a security blanket. I mean you should think about those things, anyway. You shouldn’t really need to be — I guess there’s a slight — that sort of false security of professions. I mean it’s really a badge of professional status too, isn’t it, to have a Code of Ethics? If you haven’t got one, maybe you’re not a true profession and I think they’ve been used a bit like that in the past. And, in fact, on a very, very few occasions in New Zealand, when there have been complaints about conservators, virtually nothing’s happened. Well, then that sort of reinforces my belief that, you know, they’re just there to look good and that, in fact, they don’t particularly protect the public. And do they, in fact, even protect the objects more than they are protected anyway?

JG We didn’t really have a great deal of training in the ethics. ... I ... thought about that in terms of anthropology and then ... looked at it in terms of conservation. ... There is something ‘newly converted’ about them [recent conservation graduates] that is ‘holier than thou’ and much less flexible, I think, - "flexibility" is something which you get the longer you work. ... And I guess a lot of it is that they haven’t been faced with a wide variety of situations where they think you can apply,
almost like the Code of Ethics, you can apply these rigid little rules to
every instance when, in fact, you start to realize that they change quite a
bit according to what the object is and what it’s being used for and all
that sort of thing.

JG And the, and the other question is do ethical codes actually encourage
ethical behaviour? And, I think, in a lot of professions, there’s implied
that they don’t, they have absolutely no effect on ethical behaviour,
that they really are just a little badge that, in the end, might not make a
lot of difference.

JG I think New Zealand is very concerned with the whole issue of cultural
sensitivity in all areas of life and that museums are just one of them.

JG ... For an annual exhibition called the Fletcher-Challenge Ceramic
Award -- the central Maori Court was used for the opening ceremony,
... and it was used inappropriately; ... the conceptual integrity was
totally ignored, for the sake of more space. ... this is not only
insensitive to the space, but places those objects at great physical risk —
which it did, because they had various sorts of equipment trailing over
the objects.
...[the inappr[ropriate use] was just because it had nothing to do with the
objects in that gallery. It was using them as props, I guess, ... as a
backdrop. An exotic backdrop, in a way. So it will be interesting to see
what happens next year because, at present, there is no alternative
space that has that size....

JG In the ‘Volcanoes and Giants’ exhibition ... there’s a stone carving
there, and there’s a wooden carving, they’re the two main Maori
objects — apart from Natural History, which I guess you could call
‘Maori’, in a way — but [Z, a Maori member of the Ethnology
Department] came and asked me to liaise with the display staff to
protect them more from handling ... in some situations touching is
seen as desirable and in other ones, it’s not.

JG ... The staff members have managed to persuade people to their point
of view, which is, for instance, in cloaks new feathers needn’t be put on
and that missing or bare areas needn’t be filled. ... That ... probably
comes back to the way they’ve done it and that [X, a member of the
Ethnology Department] is very good at explaining that to people and,
ultimately, it is again always their decision but he might say: "Well,
here, we don’t worry about if there’s a bare patch” or whatever.

JG I know that Nick and Dean often have people wanting to repaint over original colours to show that the carvings are being looked after and that they’re new and fresh.

JG In terms of the repainting, I mean here it’s just such a huge issue because of the meeting house that was repainted by the museum. ... It came into the museum very early on. It was requested by the Ngati Maru tribe near Thames that the museum undertake custodianship of it. It was falling into disrepair and there are photos of it looking extremely neglected and sort of disintegrating. And it came here and eventually it formed the sort of focus of the Maori Gallery ... luckily there were some photographers ... at that time who took really good photos of a lot of meeting houses and maraes and it was quite clear that these carvings had originally been polychrome, but ... they had a thick red paint on everywhere and it turned out that this paint had been put on by the museum. ... Supposedly in 1953 when the Queen came to visit. There’s absolutely no record. ... What’s so interesting is that then a lot of Maori communities saw these red carvings and thought, right, let’s make ours red as well. Now, there is a strong tradition of red carving, and there was long before the museum started painting, and the incredible importance of red as a colour, as a sacred colour and one with lots of mana, but this idea of sort of wholesale red paint does seem to, in some parts, been influenced by the museum. So, now we’ve taken all the paint off, to cut a long story short... ... Ngati Maru still own it. It’s not the museum’s and they’ve been involved all along at various times and obviously give permission for everything that’s done. And a lot of that [owners have not requested that the meeting house be repainted] also may be also because it’s inside. It’s got none of the problems of — the fact that you need to have a good coat of paint to protect the cravings underneath from the weather ... And it may be that — you know, the colours do look spectacular and you can see them quite clearly even though they’re not complete. So, all those issues.

JG I ... can’t think of an instance where someone would have wanted something to look newer or fresher than we have made it and part of that might be the perception of museums, that it is a place for ‘old things’.
JG In terms of contemporary material, one example that springs to mind is ... a tapa cloth wedding dress that was actually made last year by a Fijian woman living in Auckland. ... I know that she uses ‘Janola’ bleach to whiten her tapa cloths because it’s quick. ... I think personally that you just have to accept that; in her case, I wasn’t willing to say: “Well, that’s actually the wrong thing to use ... you should be more gentle.” [They’ve] done it for years. The idea of having some smart young conservator come along and say: “Well, you know, maybe you should use this or that.” However gently or respectfully they say it, it can be quite an insult. And I find that ... with the generally old women I deal with in terms of the textiles and particularly lace is that they are very antagonistic if you suggest other ways of doing it. You’ve got to be incredibly careful. Even things like this absolute myth of using this blue tissue paper with lace is incredibly strong here. Every old lady firmly believes that you can only store lace in blue tissue paper. Now, I don’t know where it came from. Maybe it looked better on blue. You know, the only time I’ve really tried to explain that it doesn’t really matter if it’s white, I got told: “Oh you’re too young. You wouldn’t know about it.” And I’m not young either! ... So, we certainly buy a lot of materials that we know are inherently bad and that includes a lot of the plastics which now are used for making baskets.

I think in that case, we’d probably repair it [the wedding dress], particularly because she’s gone back to live in Fiji! But ... if it was a big section wrecked and she could make another one, then I personally would think that we’d probably ask her to do that. The thing is it would take for ages to repair it and I don’t think there would be a philosophical problem with that but, again, that would be actually [Ethnology’s] decision again, probably not mine. ... And then you’ll get people who aren’t interested in doing that.

JG I actually can’t think of a recent instance where a Maori community actually wanted to go ahead with something that was opposite to what — not in this museum ...

JG I think we take a much greater sense of responsibility to Maori objects here than any others, and that’s just a lot to do with commitment to biculturalism. ... The bottom line is that the Maori collection here is incredibly strong, that it’s got all these ties to the living world that a lot of the other objects don’t have, and that there’s a lot of accountability to those people, too, who own them, or used to own them, or
whatever. And so I do think they will always be treated differently, and so they should be. And that there will always be more resources go into it, like that cloak store; we got central Government funding, you know, which if you asked for that for the textile store for the colonial costumes, you could probably forget it. There's all those issues.

JG We have isolated instances of that [people from other minority cultures represented in New Zealand wanting to handle or use objects from their heritage which are in the museum]. That's the thing about New Zealand: you don't actually have heavy usage in that way, so it's actually quite easy to be magnanimous. ... We have ... a Japanese family that come every year from Japan, to look at their father's Good Luck flag, which is laid out for them in the council room and a lot of care's taken with them when they come but, you know, maybe if there were fifty of them coming every year, they wouldn't get the same attention. And to be honest, too, they're asked to wear gloves when they're handling it but then - I'm not that familiar with Japanese culture, that's the other thing, I don't know whether they would want to touch and feel it with their hands or not and I'm not actually there either. ... I just put a pair of gloves there ... But the other problem is that to gain access to objects here and to look at them, you have to know what's here and that's the crux of the matter. It's catch-22 — ... they mightn't be catalogued and well referenced and they might not have photos and you don't know what's here if you can't ask to see it. Whereas the Maori collection is very well documented by comparison and people know what's here because they might have been told by their relatives or it's easy to look it up, even, or say: "Well, what objects have you got from this tribal area?"

JG What I'm conserving is what I know of the maker's intent and I might not know much at all. I'm preserving the materials and the way they're constructed and that's obviously connected with the technique and the information all that that contains. ... For me, I preserve the 'real thing' because that's something I'm quite concerned with at the moment, hyper-reality and all the imaging and what have you ... I'd say [I'm] not preserving but not interfering with the more intangible qualities of the object, if you know about them (and, of course, you might not at all).
JG -aesthetic view a construct, physical integrity can be self-evident

[re Chiefly Feasts and conservators at AMNH doing the restoration]

JG ... (T)raditionally it's supposed to be refurbished and look like that but the fact that it's not actually that person doing it — it's a professional conservator — surely, makes the whole thing different.

JG ... just ... to emphasize that everyone's in a different position and I'm in a different position from, say, all those people in Wellington because I think there's a lot more pressure down there for a certain view of the way things are ...
MC ... cultural significance of the object might mean allowing – putting it at some physical risk – allowing it to be in a situation where it might be at some physical risk. That’s probably, sort of, going right to the most difficult situation there but –

VC Are you actually asking the question if I treat it am I putting it at risk?

MC If you treat it or if someone comes in to handle or touch the – what, you know, what you’ve been working on or wants to borrow it out for a funeral or you know I’m not –

VC Yes.

MC I don’t know what situations you might have been involved in but something - yeah - something, something like that.

VC Um, I think, I think there’s two things there. There’s the business of actually being a pakeha and how do I cope with that if it comes to that and then the other one is, as the conservator, my concerns. I mean, you would have heard this, this from other people. Um, I don’t know quite which way to go about it. Maybe I should start at the beginning?

MC Sure. Excellent.

VC Start at the beginning [unclear]. I, um, I think, as a New Zealander, if, if you’re a sensitive New Zealand pakeha or as New Zealanders as a whole, we’re aware of our Maori people. They’re around us all the time and, if you’re a sensitive person, you see the innate good of so many Maori people and you appreciate the culture.

MC Yes.
VC And that comes with contact and, without contact, you read what's in the paper – you read the negative things – and this is going back again on what you said, what we talked about, about the marae, staying on the marae – how you were changed personally. We saw it when the Te Maori exhibition returned from the States and how, if we went – these exhibitions were held in, in several museums in, in New Zealand where the treasures travelled around again and we had corporate evenings where sponsors would put on an evening – a bank or a big industrial concern would put on an evening and they'd invite their guests. Now, I would go to some of those corporate evenings and I would meet people I knew who probably had not been through the museum door since they were a child. Certainly hadn't really taken any interest in the Maori culture. Suddenly [unclear] they were suddenly aware of what a, what a treasure house was there in front of them.

MC These were pakeha people?

VC These were pakeha people. Not only were they seeing the taonga for the first time with opened eyes but they were seeing young people who, young Maori people who were brought in to act as guides (untrained). And the pride that was coming through – because I think in a lot of cultures, in a lot of societies, the indigenous people in some cases have lost their pride. And we were seeing this pride coming through and it was a very exciting experience. And it was very exciting to be there, to be able to say to these people that I knew from outside the museum world, the corporate world, 'This is what's going on. It's wonderful. It's a renaissance. It fills me with awe and pride. I hope it does the same thing to you.' And to hear them respond. So, I think that Te Maori fulfilled the awakening in the pakeha but it certainly did a tremendous amount for the Maori people because, again, another expression you may have heard is that Maoris used to feel that there was a notice over the door of the museums that said 'Maoris not welcome'. And now, that has gone and we see Maoris coming to museums in droves. Because they're feeling comfortable, they're understanding where they're at or where they come from. So there's those issues. So, prior to this, when I first came back to England after I completed my training, very early on I realised I was going to be working with Maori material and I was a pakeha woman and a woman, which was another issue [unclear].
Right, right. And I have had connection with Maori over the years and my forebears certainly — my great-great-grandfather, his first wife was a Maori woman although I'm not descended from her. I'm descended from the second wife. So, I was aware of Maori things in my background way back but not in recent times. And then I came here and very early on I came in contact with a very powerful Maori woman and these issues of cultural conservation, of a pakeha woman actually handling, handling Maori material was right up front. I was very scared. I was in trepidation of meeting this woman, who I knew was powerful and she came in and we sat down at the table and she came across very strong. And I was very daunted. And she threw down the gauntlet and said: "You're not going to be handling our material." So, we had — I realised then I had to establish where I was at, lay my cards on the table and stress to her how I felt about handling Maori material and about how important and precious it all was. So, I had to establish my base so that took quite a long time. It wasn't just talking. It was actually the physical handling of the material and, um, letting them see that I, that I was serious and that I was careful.

So, um, can you tell me approximately what year it was?

This would have been about 1981.

Okay. Uh huh. And, and so did it take several years?

It took — I, well, um, you see the credibility had to be built up. Very early on, I was invited to a hui of the Maori weavers and, the first time I went, I didn't say anything. I just let them talk to me. I didn't push myself in any way because I felt that that was important and then the next hui I went to (I had become a member of the weavers' group at this stage) — I was invited to actually give a presentation which was quite informal [unclear] and talking about how I would treat their taonga. There was conflict of interest in that as a conservator I was seeing cloaks being repaired and had seen, had experienced from a Maori woman telling me how she had put on deposit into the museum a family cloak. She had actually rewoven a section that was missing or had had rewoven (I don't know whether she had physically done it). She'd borrowed this for her graduation at Victoria when she'd
done a Bachelor of Anthropology. She wore it to her graduation. She said: "I stood up and, when I sat down, I heard the wrenching of the fibres." And the new had pulled away from the old. She said: "I made a decision that that was quite wrong and that that cloak would never be worn again because it should be respectfully laid up." And so this was really a very interesting statement coming from a Maori woman, which was — touched me as a conservator and so I tried to put this over to Maori women in the nicest possible way that there were times when these cloaks and items really — if you wanted them to survive — shouldn't be worn or there shouldn't be any re-weaving. And this is difficult because this same, very strong woman from back in 1981 I knew was doing re-weaving. I think what she does now is that she actually will re-weave the taniko, the lower border of the cloak and add that on. that's slightly different because you haven't got the stresses and strains on, um, on the, on the whole of the cloak if it's just the border, the lower border that's been re-woven. Now, it's not for me to say whether she's doing right or wrong because it's her spirit of it not mine but this was an issue that had to be addressed and I think I got the message over. The other one that came up, of course, which you'll know about is that: "We should just, once these things start to go, we should bury them or we should burn them. We should let them die." And I felt that that was sad because there is so much to be learnt from the work that has been done prior to our time and if those examples are there — aren't there — how are we going to keep that art alive? And I'm very aware of what Cheryl Samuels —

MC Oh yes, yes — with the Chilkat blankets. Yes.

VC — has done with the Chilkat and how her long struggle to be accepted by those people when they felt she was an intruder coming in and telling them what to do but we now know, of course, that she has done a magnificent job. I've heard about this from many quarters. And, of course, she's been to New Zealand. Are you aware of this?

MC No.

VC She has sat down with Maori weavers. Rangi Te Kanewa — her mother (Rangi comes form a long, long line of weavers) has actually sat down with Cheryl and the excitement of discovering that, yes, their twining is exactly the same. The materials might be different but they could both do each other's work and so that excitement was evident,
was very real and it was wonderful to actually witness. So, this business of having examples from which to learn and you will get the weavers like Digger Te Kanewa and Rangmarie Hetet (the old lady) saying: “Yes, we must have these examples because we learn.” And I’ve been with them when they’ve looked at our collection and become so excited to see something that they’ve never seen before and they must go away and try it. So, it’s good. What, what, what they’re experiencing, what they’re saying is good and it does back up what the conservator says and then – the great delight – in about 1986 was when Rangi appeared. I met her when I was invited to go to an UNESCO basketry course in, at Canberra University which was for South East Asia countries and, at the time I was invited to go to this I said to them that I’m not an indigenous person – that a Maori person should be going – and they said: “Well, we don’t think that there’s a Maori person there. We think that you should be going.” “Yes, I’d go but I wasn’t happy about the fact that there wasn’t a Maori person.” And at the last minute the weavers put up Rangi’s name. This was her first introduction to, to conservation as, as we know it. She came to Canberra with me and I, I realised very quickly that she was excellent material for training as a conservator and from then, she took off. She came and pre-interned here and then she went to Canberra for three years. She came back here. She went to London to study at the British Museum for three months and in the Textile Conservation Centre [unclear] to try and get a European overview because we realised that she must have the balance between the two cultures. Not just Maori material and, um, that’s where, where she’s comes from because you know her background and how important it is to have someone who’s come from a long weaving line and it’s been great for the Maori community. And the other thing I think is very important to talk about is the fact that I respect, um, the textiles, the Maori textiles, the *taonga* that I work with. I handle them in a loving way. Um, and I’m seen to do that and that, of course is terribly important to do that – that you, you show this respect when you’re with Maori people. I might be working in the Maori textile store and a group of Maori people will come in and they’ll look and you can see them looking at me: “What’s this *pakeha* woman working on this for?” And then, later, I’ll be told just something that will indicate that they were comfortable with, with this. So, it’s this respect and being aware and perhaps talking to the textiles and perhaps a little prayer – just because I, I mean I feel it quite, quite naturally. It’s just there within me.
MC So, do you think then as a, as a conservator – you know, conservation is a profession. Professions have their particular clients and, you know, that they serve. So do you think – would you say that, for you, is your client, your primary client, would that be the objects themselves or would it be the communities that the objects have come from or would it be your institution or, um, who, who would, you know, if you had to choose one?

VC I think it’s probably very difficult to try and break down the difference between the community from which the objects have come and the object because you’ve got to respect their wishes as well – you feel as if you’re an advocate for the object but as the object, to them, is a living part of their culture you can’t really, um, divide it.

MC Right, right.

VC But, by the same token, we may not know – we may not have a provenance. We may not know where it’s come from but we do know that it is a Maori object that’s come from the greater community, the culture itself. So, um, but as a conservator your concern is obviously for the object. You want to do the right thing by it to make it feel comfortable, whether it’s in storage or on display.

MC So, then what would –

VC So, I haven’t really answered your question.

MC No, that’s good.

VC Bit fudgy.

MC So what advice would you give conservators in Canada about how to work out the balance between preserving objects as physical entities and preserving their cultural significance, especially if the two conflict? Like, if the two can go hand in hand, well obviously that’s wonderful and sometimes they, they certainly do but sometimes, um, for example we get requests for, to borrow masks for dancing, you know, which obviously will put them at some risk and the transportation will put them at risk and all of that. What, what advice do you have in how conservators should, you know, should, should work – which should they – how do they balance it out – so, which do they respect more, in a
way?

VC  Well, if, if it’s at all possible to make contact and establish good contact with the people from whence the mask came – and I realize that’s not always possible. In some countries, you can’t and that comes through very clearly when you, when you visit other countries or go to conferences but I guess that’s, that’s the primary thing that you – and, and you have respect for the, for the object. Um, I think all you can do is give them a condition report in whatever form, whether it’s, it’s a written one or, or purely a verbal one of your concerns for the object – that you feel it’s going to be put at risk and, very importantly, why, why it’s being put at risk so that you’re not just saying blankly: “Oh, this shouldn’t go.” And not giving a reason why. And perhaps going as far as saying: “Well, you know, if it’s handled in this sort of way, these are its vulnerabilities and may – it’ll fall apart.” It might be so weak that, if you pick it up, it just falls apart and so that you’re actually making a recommendation. In your, in your eyes you feel that this thing is at risk and, if you want it to, to survive, it, um, it should not go. Should not be handled. But, I mean, in the end, the choice is really –

MC  Now what if – if it is – the object is not, is part of the museum’s collections which is usually the case in Canada. We don’t have that, that much that’s on deposit. Does that, does that still –?

VC  Yes. Um, I don’t know whether we’ve really, really actually finally addressed this one. I don’t know. It’s almost a curatorial, a curatorial decision. We wouldn’t, we wouldn’t make the final decision. The curator would make that final decision. We would give our recommendation and it would go to them and I’m sure there are times when things have actually gone and when they shouldn’t have and certainly we’ve seen them come back a pile of dust but that’s – well, I mean, you can’t do too much about it.

MC  No, no.

VC  All you can do is to make the recommendations and you can actually say when it comes back: “Well, I told you so.” I think you should! I mean if there’s actually a condition report written when it comes or is returned you’ll be saying: “Well, you know, I indicated in the beginning that this was going to disintegrate.” And lo and behold!
MC Yes, exactly.

VC Which should make them think another time.

MC So do you think – the two areas that I’m interested in – one is the Code of Ethics and the other is conservation training. Do you think that either of them could be improved to deal with these, these bicultural issues from, from your experience? That, er – do you have any, you know?

VC Well, I think, I think it’s very difficult with, with the Code of Ethics, too. Um, I really – I don’t know I’ve got much to say about that. You – I mean, we – yes, you could come into conflict but really the answer is much the same as what I’ve said about, about the curators with making the final decision. What was the second? You said the Code of Ethics –

[Valerie Carson walks away from microphone. Returns]

MC Well, actually even before we get on to the topic of training, um, I guess the other, the other question I have that comes out of the Code of Ethics is the same – this question of the same, the principle of the same standard of care given to all objects. You know. And, in Canada, conservators are worried that by allowing First Nations objects to, you know, be used – loaned for use (say, the masks being danced – something like that) that they aren’t giving the same standard of care as a European painting or a, or a, or a decorative arts dinner set. You know they wouldn’t – they simply wouldn’t allow that to be used and so they are – You know, the Code covers everything and so the same standard of care which, which originally helped to put ethnographic objects on the same standard with as much respect as European objects is now, conservators feel, unprofessional if they –

VC I think you have to accept that and I think that’s where we’re at in New Zealand where I think we’re a long way ahead of many other countries is that we’ve, we’ve actually addressed that one and you have to be, you have to accept that, yes, these things will be used, will be borrowed but they’re not borrowed lightly. They will be borrowed for a tangi, for a funeral, and that’s right and proper so they’re not – and I don’t think – you see, I mean, we wouldn’t have – I don’t recall that we’ve lent anything that was used for a dance, for instance. The piupiu – you know the skirts? – now that is the sort that would receive the same sort
of physical damage as your dancing mask in a way because it's a movement thing. Now, piupiu are made today. Every Maori community has them. They don’t have to borrow those from a museum but, if they did, they would be put to an enormous amount of, um, an enormous amount of stress because – I don’t know whether you know much about he piupiu but its, it’s dyed with a ‘resist’ method where they scraped away the epidermis and naturally immersed it in the black dye and so you get these bands of colour going through because it’s black and you know what happens to black fibres. Everything black. There’s a chemical reaction and things deteriorate very quickly. So, we have in so many museums around the world, you have these Maori objects (whether they’re cloaks with black tassels or the piupiu with the skirts) broken off. You often will go, if it’s an old museum, there’ll be a pile of, of these little tags lying in the bottom of the case because they’ve just broken down and fallen off so they would be put to a similar, go through a similar problem should one dance in them so they’ve, they’ve never been –

MC Do they have – they don’t have the same kind of mana that a cloak has or –

VC No, I don’t think so. I mean you’d have to ask a Maori person that. I don’t – I’m sure because a cloak is something spiritual, it’s put around, it’s enveloping. You will see there’s a New Zealand artist called John Devon Ford –

MC Oh yes. Mina has some work by him.

VC That’s right. And you see his cloaks floating – his drawings – floating over the land. They’re protection. They’re a mother theme. They’re, they’re up there. So they’ve got an enormous amount of prestige.

MC Right. So, training – did you feel that in your training and in the training of, of people who you seen, you know, working, coming into the lab and working has, has the training given people a basis on which to make decisions on these bicultural areas or –

VC I would certainly think so within, within the lab here. I, I trained in London at the Textile Conservation Centre and it was –

MC In Hampton Court?
VC Yeah, yeah. We did next to no ethnographic material. Um, so, um, I just adapted my skills, my knowledge to Maori material so it had – I didn’t have a basis of ethnographic training there obviously. Um, but certainly that – well, it’s a long time since I was there – now they are being exposed to ethnographic material and I think also, when Rangi went there (she was there about two months as an intern), she was, she was able to bring her, her culture to the place and also we – another New Zealand lass graduated and she’s returning here shortly and she’s pakeha but she, um, I know she has spread the word, so to speak, as well over there. But coming in here, yes, they certainly are exposed and you realize – have you heard that Alison Rae from the British Museum ethnographic department – sorry Alison – wait a minute I’ve got the name wrong. Sorry her, her surname has escaped me, oddly enough. Anyway, she’s head of the organics department in conservation and, um, the British Museum decided that they want to have – Oh, [unclear] Darota Starzecka [unclear] came out to New Zealand? Have you come across [unclear] Darota Starzecka, a curator? She’s, she’s head – she’s not a conservator. she’s there with the oceanic section of the British Museum collection and has always come to New Zealand and has spent a lot of time with Maori people. She was big on this conference as well. And she felt that they wanted to put on a major Maori exhibition at the British Museum but they needed – they realised that they needed this input, this, this contact with Maori people and so they’ve had Rangi there and now, they’re sending Alison over and she’s going to spend – she’s actually going to intern here, which is incredible when she’s actually head of a department! But this is, this is how they actually managed to get her over here. So, she’s coming here to actually experience first hand in our lab, which means all of us, not just textiles obviously, to get experience first hand about how we handle and how we treat maori taonga, which is very, very healthy.

MC That, that, that’s excellent.

VC It is. It is excellent. I’m very excited about that. She comes in January.

MC Great. So, in your work then, if – what would you say, um, what are you preserving in, you know, in you work? What, um, what the, sort of, the essential elements of the, of the pieces that you would say that you’re preserving?
MC Okay, say a textile –

VC We’ve got a cloak, we’ve got a cloak so what’s –?

MC Okay, well, in the traditional Conservation Code of Ethics they same, well, you’re preserving the physical integrity and, in a work of art, you’re preserving the aesthetic integrity; in something of historic significance, you’re preserving the historic integrity, um, and also in the Canadian code they have put in ‘conceptual’ integrity, which is, includes ‘cultural meaning’ and, um, but what they haven’t defined any of these terms and they’ve all sort of put them all along one line. They haven’t, you know, er, they haven’t sort of gone into any details and I’m just, so I’m just wondering whether there are other things or whether you feel that you are preserving all of those?

MC Yes, yes. We’re preserving all of those. There couldn’t be any question about that.

MC Ah ha. Anything else that hasn’t been mentioned or anything –?

VC No, because I think you’ve got the spiritual and the physical well-being. Well, those, those, those would be the two basic things as far as being a conservator – so is the physical and the spiritual well-being and, and making sure, that if, if you know the provenance and where it’s come from, the people, um, are comfortable with what you do. You don’t always go out and say: “Look, I’m working on a piece from Te Awamutu so I must actually check with Te Awamutu people that this is right.” But there would be times, yes, you would. We probably, we probably haven’t done it with cloaks but certainly with – I’m sure it happens with Rose with the, with the carved pieces.

MC So, um, do you think that in, in preserving the, the spiritual as well as the physical, do you think other conservators in other disciplines, like Fine Art, would, you know, would, would maybe not support you in this because they might – would they agree with you, like, you know, if you were writing a –

VC They would in New Zealand.
MC They would. Ah huh.

VC They would in New Zealand. Yes, they would indeed.

MC And they would agree with loaning, you know, allowing use for these particular types of collections.

VC Well, we always feel uncomfortable about that and I know Rangi would agree with that as well but you have to work that one out. You have to, you have to either – it’s either a compromise or you work this thing out. You have to work it through. I mean everything in conservation is not done in a hurry as you well know! You can take six months to decide on a correct treatment or something! So, a lot of thought goes into it before you undertake the treatment. I think it’s really interesting, this business. I, I trained that when you work on an object you actually go into the provenance, you go into the history – you have a full understanding of where it’s come from and how it was made. I am aware that there are some conservators – they seem to be particularly perhaps in the painting area, maybe in water, er, in paper – that they’re not quite as concerned about the history of the object. They don’t seem to do the same the research as we do and whether it’s because it’s a painting and they know, they understand, um, what technique the artist used, what pigment he used and so on but not so concerned about the integrity of it. I, I get this feeling. I don’t know whether I’m right but I’ve certainly heard it. Certainly, working with textiles, I never – I always go into the history of the object. I want as much information as the curator can give me and I think that this then becomes very much a two way street where you, you are able to – because you’re in such close contact in a way that a curator can really never be – that you’re able to add important information, which could well be historical information to the curator’s knowledge.

MC Right, right. Great. Okay, well, so, um –

VC And certainly, as, as textile conservators working with Maori material, we have discovered all sorts of things that have been forgotten or lost –

MC In terms of techniques?

VC In terms of techniques and have been able to bring this to the attention
of the, of Maoridom and this is very exciting. We’re currently just finished or just completed a survey of the entire Maori textile collection and the sense of awe and wonder, most days, when we discovered something new that perhaps hadn’t been seen fifty, sixty, seventy years – been buried.

MC That’s excellent.

VC The thrill that the curators and the collection managers have had from what we’ve found and, of course, what’s so interesting is the evidence of what happened at contact with the European settlers coming and the women bringing their wool and the wool that was – the dyed wool, whether it was vegetable dye in the first stages, and then the Berlin wool that came from Britain because Victorian women were doing their embroidery and I’m sure that would happen with Canadian Indian pieces [unclear] as well. So, it’s very exciting.

MC It is very exciting, isn’t it.

VC And so that brings in, of course, different conservation issues because you’re suddenly having to work with, with different materials that have ben added in that will perhaps cause different things to happen with the object.

MC Well, excellent. That’s probably all the questions that I have. Do you have any questions for me? Or anything or anything else – any other issues that I should know about?

VC What I had intended to do before I saw you again was to actually read through my notes from the ethnographic meeting in Washington last year. I haven’t. I haven’t made the time. That’s what it boils down to because where there have been a number of times when I’ve felt, you know, we as New Zealanders, we really should have been giving papers because just hearing people from other countries sort of being surprised that you really should be thinking about cultural issues and sensitivities but hasn’t crossed their minds, probably because they haven’t had contact with the people who created the objects in the beginning.

MC I think that’s so true that, like, I’ve found that the people who are working in institutions – there is a First Nations population in that
area and these issues are, are, are being, being dealt with by everyone in the museum – whether it's the curators or who ever. But those institutions are usually quite progressive, are really interested in doing the right thing – not just from a conservation perspective but from a, you know, from the First Nations perspective. But the institutions that are further removed from, from living people are – they’re not, er –

VC And that’s sad because it’s an enriching –

MC Oh, definitely!

VC An enriching experience – no question about it. I know that I’m a better person for having had this contact and having experienced so much from Maori people. I mean I feel very fortunate. I feel sad for those other New Zealanders that haven’t had the experience that I’ve had.

MC I’m going back to I.I.C., which is meeting in Ottawa – the preventive conservation conference – and what I’m hoping to do with my session, if it works, if I can carry it off, is to, um – Actually, I’ll just shut this off now.
APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF MAORI TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hapu</td>
<td>sub-tribe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hei tiki</td>
<td>pendants made of pounamu, greenstone or nephrite, and passed down generation to generation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iwi</td>
<td>tribe, nation, people</td>
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<tr>
<td>kaitiaki</td>
<td>guardian</td>
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<tr>
<td>kaumatua</td>
<td>elder knowledgeable in Maori protocols and culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>mana</td>
<td>power</td>
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<tr>
<td>marae</td>
<td>ritual area, especially meaning the enclosed space in front of a meeting house.</td>
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<tr>
<td>mere</td>
<td>short flat weapon, often made of stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>people of European descent</td>
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<tr>
<td>pa</td>
<td>secure village of the hapu, often fortified or strategically situated</td>
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<tr>
<td>pataka</td>
<td>storehouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>tangata whenua</td>
<td>first people of the land</td>
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<tr>
<td>tapu</td>
<td>taboo</td>
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<tr>
<td>taonga</td>
<td>treasure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Te Hau Ki Turanga</td>
<td>meeting house from the Rongowhakaata people housed in the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington</td>
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<tr>
<td>tiki</td>
<td>see &quot;Hei tiki&quot; above</td>
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<tr>
<td>tukutuku</td>
<td>panel on the inner wall of a meeting house, made of dyed, woven plant material</td>
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<tr>
<td>waka</td>
<td>canoe</td>
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<tr>
<td>waka tupapaku</td>
<td>burial chests</td>
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<tr>
<td>whakapapa</td>
<td>genealogy, lineage</td>
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<tr>
<td>whare</td>
<td>house, meeting house</td>
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