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The Conservator's Compass: Navigating a More Collaborative Future
for the Care of Objects of Indigenous Patrimony

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in American Indian Studies

by

Nicole Marie Loya Talamantes

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Conservator's Compass: Navigating a More Collaborative Future for the Care of Objects of

Indigenous Patrimony

By

Nicole Marie Loya Talamantes

Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Ellen Pearlstein, Chair

Museums as institutions of education have long stood as the absolute authorities on the protection, interpretation, and representation of Indigenous peoples' cultural materials within museum collections, despite the continued assertions of the communities from which those materials originated. Conservators working within museums have historically focused specifically on the physical preservation of these materials with little input from source communities. In recent years and with the passage of important legislation and international attention there has been a growing recognition that collaboration with Indigenous source communities is important and necessary to the proper care of these materials. However there are a number of obstacles to truly collaborative partnerships and a shortage of published information

on the subject. This paper seeks, through interviews with museum professionals and a review of available literature including conference papers, articles, and exhibition publications, to ascertain the current state of collaboration in museum conservation. In conducting the research it was found that the level of collaboration currently being practiced in museums has increased dramatically in the last twenty years and shows impressive potential, but there are many shortcomings that still must be addressed.

The thesis of Nicole Marie Loya Talamantes is approved.

Wendy Teeter

Felicia Hodge

Paul V. Kroskrity

Ellen Pearlstein, Committee Chair
University of California, Los Angeles

DEDICATION

It's impossible to express in such a short space, the enormous gratitude I have and debt I owe to everyone who played a part in completing this thesis. From conception to completion, the following pages have spanned the most tumultuous years of my life and the following people pushed, and at times carried me through.

First and foremost I must thank my ancestors, who came before me and fought the fight so that my path would be possible. During the writing of this thesis I lost several loved ones and I especially want to thank them, for in the examples of their lives and deaths full of dignity, resolve, and deepest love they gave the heirs to their legacies the ability to survive their almost unbearable loss. I therefore thank my grandmother Bertha Patron Loya whose encouragement and belief in me was, to the very last, unshakeable as with this thesis I now fulfill my very last promise to her; my grandmother Armida Torres Talamantes whose humor, will to live, and capacity to surprise never ceased to inspire; my grandfather Richard Talamantes who always made me laugh and filled our hearts with the most pure and joyful love; my uncle Hector Torres who I can't think of without a huge smile at some story or other, and whose children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have inherited a beautiful example of love and caring. I thank them with gratitude beyond words, a debt that can only be repaid in kind to future generations, I promise.

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for all the support, it was invaluable and I cherish our relationship. For Michelle, thank you for answering your phone at all hours of the night knowing I would often be hysterical at the other end of it and for laughing with me. To Gabe, Diana, Kiana, and Maya thanks for the amazing laughs, the love, and the Disney. And thanks to Lisa, David, Rob and Soli thank you for sharing your home and the loving warmth therein so often. To all the Loya, Talamantes, and Torres clans thank you for the love and support that I often take for granted, I love you all deeply.

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I. Introduction

Although there are substantially more people of Indigenous descent employed in museum professions now than there has ever been previously, the number is still fairly low. With notable exceptions such as the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in the United States Indigenous people are still not strongly represented in larger institutions. The museum conservation field in particular has continued to have a very low presence of Indigenous people working in collections. This shortage belies the fact that for many years Indigenous activists have fought to have a say in the care and use of their cultural patrimony held in museums. Along with the efforts of these activists, many conservators have made legitimate efforts to work with the communities from which the objects in collections originated. Despite this, some differences in methods and perspectives between non-Native conservators and source communities have traditionally presented difficulties in achieving true collaboration. Following decades of civil and human rights activism by Indigenous people throughout the world and hard work on the part of dedicated people on all sides, new legislation and changing attitudes have reflected a greater awareness of and respect for the rights and concerns of Indigenous peoples. This has led to a rethinking of older paradigms concerning concepts of ownership, guardianship, and the care of heritage materials from Indigenous source communities. Consequently, the ways in which collaboration with these communities is approached and accomplished is undergoing a transformation. With these advancements, the ocean of differences between source communities and non-Indigenous museum professionals is arguably becoming smaller and more navigable.

Smaller and more navigable as that ocean might be, it is still rife with many of the same obstacles and challenges, especially for the average non-Native conservator who has usually

been trained in traditional methodologies which do not address the need for or purpose of collaboration. To keep moving forward, new methodologies must be forged and taught which foster a more complete knowledge of objects in collections and recognize collaboration as an integral part of practice. As museums and professional conservation societies have begun to incorporate increased collaboration into their ethics and practices we are beginning to see the many benefits of this approach. The rapidly growing number of Indigenous community-operated museums, like the Alutiiq museum in Kodiak Alaska, have also done a great deal to further advance the recognition of Indigenous people's rights and interests in protecting their cultural patrimony as well as to trail blaze collaborative efforts encouraging other museums in their wake. Along with these advancements, however, an eye must always be kept to the future. Collaboration, much like culture and science, is a dynamic process. This thesis seeks to examine the background of the present state of collaboration in museums in order to understand its current limitations and to propose the means to navigate through differences towards a more collaborative future.

One of the many difficulties with writing a paper of this nature is the potential to pigeonhole or offend. As Chapter three explains in more detail, there is a great diversity of Indigenous people throughout the world each with their own concerns, goals, and issues. This paper focuses on some of the issues and needs often expressed yet these are only a very small sample of the many issues involved. The intent is to look at the potential benefits of and need for increased collaboration overall, only actual collaboration between museums and Indigenous source communities will be able to address each specific situation. This paper is regrettably limited in Native voice by constraints of location and time.

Lastly, it is important to address the terminology used in this paper. Unfortunately the limitations of language make it impossible to talk about issues affecting so many diverse peoples across a geographic scale as large as this paper's without choosing one term for any number of people, many of whom might object to its usage. In this paper, except when in quotations or when discussing a specific community, nation, or people (i.e. Sugpiaq or Māori), or Indigenous peoples within a specific region (i.e. Canadian First Nations), general terms such as "native nations" and "Indigenous peoples/communities" will be used. "Source community" will be used when referencing the specific relationship between a community and materials of their cultural patrimony held in museums. When referring to the collections themselves; terms such as "objects", "collections", "materials" and of course "cultural patrimony" will be used interchangeably. All terminology used in the following pages is used with respect and any possible offense unintentional.

II. Methods

Rationale for Approach

During the early research for this thesis it quickly became clear that primary sources for information on the current state of collaborative projects would have to largely come from performing interviews within the museum community. Although an exhaustive literature review was conducted which constitutes all of sections three and four and forms the support for the research explained in section five, there was a serious shortage of material on truly collaborative projects and/or relationships between museum conservators and Indigenous source communities. This is largely due to a general shortage of such efforts, however it can also be attributed to a misunderstanding of the true meaning of “collaboration” and/or confusion with the more commonly experienced “consultation”. The more ambiguous “consultation” can mean and has meant anything from half-hearted efforts at notifying a random person in a community to the creation of an upcoming exhibit to more in depth conversation regarding an exhibit and/or collections care. It has seldom referred to the mutually beneficial and reciprocal partnership of equals that constitutes the type of collaboration being worked towards in the pages that follow. The differences between the two terms are outlined more succinctly in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Comparing "collaboration" and "consultation"

Consultation	Collaboration
Museum professional in the role of "owner", Native nation in powerless role	Involved parties meet as equals working towards solutions
Requires only "notification" with ability to comment (No guarantees appropriate contact made or opportunities to comment presented)	Requires and encourages dialogue
"Us" and "them" relationship	More amenable to the development of solid relationships and ongoing dialogue
No benefit to the source community as the goals of projects are inherently one-sided (" <u>you</u> help <u>us</u> ")	Reciprocal partnerships with all collaborators benefitting

To gather as much literary evidence as possible of the relationships between these groups and their efforts towards collaboration, the review incorporated sources as varied as dissertations, journal and other scholarly articles, symposium publications, books on related topics, exhibition companion publications, and founding documents for museums and professional conservator organizations throughout the world. The information gleaned from these sources was useful in providing support for the firsthand accounts of how collaboration has been incorporated and experienced by conservators and other museum professionals in their work. The interview subjects were chosen for their extensive backgrounds working with Indigenous communities and in their respective fields. Their willingness to be interviewed was a reflection of the cooperative and open approach to collaboration that they spoke of in their interviews, without which this paper could not have been written. Their experiences both positive and negative are perhaps the best indicators of the past and present state of collaboration as we chart a course towards a more collaborative future.

Interview Process

Following the federal requirements governing human subject research, the author applied for and was granted an Institutional Review Board exemption for this study by the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (UCLA OHRPP). The study conformed to the standards and requirements mandated in the exemption. A copy of the Letter of Approval for Exemption for this study can be found in Appendix A.

Through conversations with advisors and a survey of the available literature it was determined that a small group of prospective participants should be asked to participate in the interviews based on the level of their experiences contributing to collaborative projects or engaging in ongoing collaborative relationships with source communities. Initial contact with these prospective participants was made via an email introducing and explaining the purpose of the research and asking for permission to interview them at their convenience. See Appendix B for a generalized copy of this email.

The interviews were conducted over the internet utilizing the voice over internet protocol software “Skype”. With the participant’s permission and following the guidelines established by the UCLA OHRPP, the interviews were recorded for later transcription. Participants were informed of their right to review the transcripts and recordings and edit them. They were also informed that they could refuse to answer any questions. Following the requests of several participants, general questions were sent to the participants ahead of the interview.

Interview Format

It was decided early in the process that the most fitting format to the interview would be a topical approach, with questions loosely formed for the purpose of directing the conversation while allowing the participant every opportunity to elaborate on their experiences and expertise in their answers. Follow up questions were prepared in advance to ensure pertinent information was obtained if not covered in the participant's response. For example, participants were asked to discuss the topic of value and meaning in museum collections specifically regarding objects of Indigenous patrimony. With minor variations the question was framed in the following way: "One aspect of my research is the shift in how museums and conservators look at the value of an object to recognize what is often called its 'intangible value'. As a conservator do you see this shift, and is it changing the way that objects are conserved in museums?" Following such a loosely structured question, the participant could then proceed to answer the question in a way which explained the details of their experiences more fully than a stricter survey format would allow for. If necessary the participant would be asked to provide additional details or an experience which related to the question. An example of the questions asked of participants is included in Appendix C.

Although the focus of this paper is museum conservation policies and practice, the conservator does not work in a perfect vacuum, nor does the collection stay exclusively under their care. As such, today's conservators work in tandem with other museum professionals who also carry responsibilities for the collections. Keeping this in mind, non-conservators whose expertise and experience it was felt would also contribute greatly to the content of this paper were interviewed as well. Because of the disparate roles these individuals play in the care of

museum collections the format and scope of the questions were modified to each individual participant to incorporate their professional experiences as well as their published works. All participants had invaluable insight and knowledge that contributed immeasurably to this thesis.

Interview Participants

As described above, the participants were chosen for their extensive experience working in museums and with or in, source communities. Interview participants included Bill McLennan, Curator in the Pacific Northwest collections at the University of British Columbia Museum Of Anthropology; Dr. Nancy Odegaard, Conservator and Head of the Preservation Division at Arizona State Museum; Dr. Sven Haakanson, Executive Director of the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak Alaska; and Landis Smith, Project Conservator with the Anchorage Loan Project of the Smithsonian Institution.¹

Dr. Nancy Odegaard has over twenty seven years of experience in conservation(Odegaard, 1995, pp. 187–193). Her research looks at the ethics of preserving both tangible and intangible aspects of material culture and the hazards and issues related to the residual pesticides and other toxic chemicals museum professionals traditionally used in the preservation of objects of Indigenous patrimony (“Nancy N. Odegaard: the School of Anthropology,” n.d.). Both issues relate directly to Indigenous source communities as is reflected in her extensive collaborative experience. Since her earliest work in the 1980’s when Dr. Odegaard worked to eliminate the use of chemicals and pesticides on the museum’s holdings (incorporated into museum policy in 1985), and participated in a 1987 exhibit entitled “Paths of

¹ During the editing stage of this paper when it became necessary to reduce the number of pages by a third it was decided that the thesis would focus on the three interviewees whose experience most closely fit the purposes of this paper unfortunately making it necessary to remove the majority of Mr. McLennan’s very kind contributions. His generous cooperation is, however, gratefully noted here.

Life” which was groundbreaking in its efforts in collaboration and consultation with represented tribes in design and implementation, Dr. Odegaard has continued to work collaboratively with source communities, including utilizing the expertise of members of the museum’s Southwest Native Nations Advisory Board which was formed out of the consultation process for “Paths of Life” (Lizarraga, 2002; “The Paths of Life Exhibition - Arizona State Museum,” n.d.). ASM organized the Southwest Native Nations Advisory Board to advise museum staff primarily on repatriation issues; however Dr. Odegaard frequently consults with members of the board on her non-repatriation work (Odegaard, 2011). During her interview Dr. Odegaard described the importance that she places on building solid ongoing collaborative relationships with members of American Indian communities in her profession.

Dr. Sven Haakanson Jr. is the Executive Director of the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak Alaska and a member of the Old Harbor Alutiiq Tribe (“Arctic Peoples,” n.d.). Dr. Haakanson is in a unique position among the interviewees participating in the project in that the Alutiiq Museum is run by members of the community whose cultural patrimony fills its collections. Furthermore most of the cultural materials safeguarded at the museum are not owned by the museum itself (Haakanson, 2011). Rather, the museum in large part serves as a safe keeping place for the community. The museum, under Dr. Haakanson’s leadership, takes its role as guardian of these objects very seriously and every decision regarding conservation, storage and exhibition is made with careful attention to traditional Alutiiq knowledge and values. To this end, the museum has a number of policies which require staff consultation with the museum’s Alutiiq Heritage Foundation Board whose members are made up of representatives of eight Kodiak Alutiiq organizations, as well as community members and elders (Haakanson & Steffian,

2010). In his role as Executive Director, Dr. Haakanson often consults and collaborates with other museums including the 2010 joint purchase together with the Anchorage Museum of History and Art of a 19th-century Alutiiq spruce root hat at auction and the shared ownership of the hat (Holland, 2005). Dr. Haakanson brought a great deal of insight into the state of collaboration in his interview both as an Alutiiq person and as an Alutiiq museum professional.

Landis Smith has had extensive experience in conservation both in her private practice and through her work with numerous institutions including the National Museum of the American Indian and The National Museum of Natural History. Ms. Smith also stressed the importance of collaboration to her work and has collaborated extensively with source communities throughout her career. One of her recent collaborative projects was also her largest, as a project conservator for the “Anchorage Loan Project”. As part of a team assembled from several museums to oversee the conservation and care of the over 500 objects that were to be housed on exhibit at the Anchorage Museum, Ms. Smith worked together with Alaskan Native consultants who contributed their expertise and knowledge to the project at an unprecedented level. Ms. Smith and the other project conservators made great efforts to keep collaboration a focal point of the project and her perspective on the obstacles faced and benefits received during this approach were enlightening. In addition to larger projects Ms. Smith also collaborates with representatives of source communities using live video and teleconferencing for small projects, when travel is not feasible (Mahony, 2011).

As evidenced above, all of the participants were well suited to the purposes of this project. Each one of the participants possesses extensive experience and knowledge in their respective fields and was well situated to provide insight into the questions posed by this thesis.

Their contributions together with the literature review enabled the author to construct a more accurate picture of the present state of museum collaboration which follows.

III. Background of Indigenous Source Community and Museum Relationships in Collaboration

Before looking at how relationships between source communities and conservators have been shifting with regards to conservation, it is necessary that some of the differences and difficulties which can become obstacles to collaboration first be understood. These obstacles continue to influence relationships today and include the checkered past of museum acquisition and exhibition practices; logistical issues; and the differing goals, approaches and concerns of conservators and source communities. Limitations on space require that this section will provide only a brief introduction to the generalized issues that follow, as the backgrounds that each party brings with them to the table when attempting to work collaboratively could fill volumes.

Background to Relationships

As expressed in section one: Indigenous source communities come from culturally, socially and historically diverse backgrounds which vary dramatically from community to community and from one region to another. Therefore it would be impossible to tell one single history which perfectly encapsulates the experience of all Indigenous peoples and their cultural material. Globally, however, Indigenous people have been subjected to many similar injustices. This similar history more often than not includes the forced and violent separation of a people from their languages, lands, religions, and material of cultural value and significance. Such a history profoundly influences the ways in which many of these communities approach relationships with museums that are working with their cultural patrimony. The legacies of these histories are further perpetrated in many museum practices, and

continue to haunt discussions on collaboration as noted by participants in recent symposia (Dignard & Canadian Conservation Institute., 2008; “What can Native Museums Dare?,” n.d.), providing unique challenges to the collaborative process.

Perhaps nowhere in the annals of museum practice are these injustices more blatantly obvious than in the early acquisition methods of archaeologists and museum collectors. The first steps towards building the massive museum collections of today, early museum acquisition practices were dubious at best (Fine-Dare, 2002, p. 4). This reckless collecting was the result of a widespread belief in what has been termed the “vanishing race”. This theory was essentially the belief that American Indians were a “vanishing race” (Lyman & Smithsonian Institution., 1982), doomed for annihilation at the hands of Manifest Destiny. Consequently it was deemed imperative that their cultures be recorded and documented before it was too late. The famed Edward Curtis’ magnum opus “The North American Indian” was entirely driven by his confidence in the certainty of this belief. Tellingly, the very first image in that work is an image titled “Vanishing Race” portraying a group of Navajos riding away from the photographer on horseback (Curtis, 1907).

Vanishing race references are easily found in other publications concerning ethnographic collections and exhibits of the day as well. In the section on the Department of Ethnology, one guidebook to the 1893 Columbian Exposition referred to American Indian cultures as “...the almost extinct civilization, if civilization it is to be called...” (Morgan, 1892, p. 269). Museums were constantly sending their representatives out to American Indian communities charged with bringing back American Indian “trophies” and “mementos” (“Gets Rare Trophies of Vanishing Race,” 1914) which often included sacred objects and human remains often without the

knowledge or consent of their owners or guardians (Harper, 2000; Vizenor, 1999, p. xvi.). Grave robbing was rampant and far from being unaware of such dishonorable practices, early museum founders such as George Gustav Heye actively participated in such acts (Herscher, 1999). This history is still glossed over today in many ways as seen in an article published in 2000 by Smithsonian Magazine which idolized Heye as a “passionate collector” who “accomplished something of enduring significance in his life of focused accumulation, though our contemporary sensibilities may not be entirely comfortable with an individual who appropriated, on a massive scale, the evidence of cultures not his. Some may even see in Heye’s actions a bloodless reenactment of earlier great wrongs. And yet, in his unstoppable course, Heye saved an irreplaceable living record that might otherwise have gone to oblivion” (Small, 2000, pp. 9–10, 56). Casually dismissing those who would question Heye’s practices, the author essentially blames any such arguments on “contemporary sensibilities” or defends Heye using an argument heavily laden with vanishing race connotations: that without Heye’s actions the objects he collected would have disappeared forever.

The exploitation of Indigenous peoples of course neither begins nor ends with the acts of grave robbing which often filled the shelves and display cases of museums. Sometimes it takes on a less obvious form as it is in the case of research and projects which benefit from the knowledge of an Indigenous community without providing any notable benefit back to the community. Linda Tuhiwai-Smith provides a much more in depth discourse on this subject in her groundbreaking book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (L. T. Smith, 1999, pp. 9–10, 56). An argument could also be made that this is similar to the one-sided museum models of consultation which seek the knowledge of source communities on the institution’s collections but do not

actively reciprocate by sharing their own knowledge with the community through trainings or other means of assistance. In a recent paper Conservator Tharron Bloomfield described the role of the Māori Preservation Officer, a position created by the National Preservation Office in New Zealand to provide technical assistance to Māori communities as they work to preserve their own materials. He uses this role as an example of “...the need for museum conservators to work with indigenous communities on materials that are held in community hands” (Bloomfield, 2007, p. 147). Likewise John C. Moses proposed that “at the institutional level Aboriginal groups or individuals might receive training and enact traditional care inside mainstream public museums housing collections of Aboriginal artifacts. At the community level, museum staff might travel to reserves and other communities to provide training in the form of workshops” (Dignard & Canadian Conservation Institute., 2008, p. 24).

The means through which many Indigenous cultural materials and objects came into museum collections and consequently under the care of the conservator, the dismissive attitude that can still be encountered in some members of the museum community, the fact that many sacred objects and human remains controversially remain in museum collections today, and the historically one-sided nature of projects and research undertaken by the wider museum and academic communities are only parts of a legion of issues that both sides must face when working towards increasing collaboration.

Logistical Challenges in Collaboration

Understanding some of the history behind museums and Indigenous source communities is only one of the steps in increasing successful collaborations. The collaborative process itself has many logistical challenges that must be recognized and compensated for. These challenges

include, among others, logistical problems such as the distance between museums and source communities, the diversity of needs and concerns from varying Indigenous communities, and the different perspectives and methods of care employed in museum conservation as a scientific discipline and perspectives and methods of care employed by the originating communities in which the object was created and given meaning.

Indigenous nations have extremely diverse social, cultural, and political structures and also must often navigate unique and complex legal systems such as in the United States where the labels “American Indian” and “Alaskan Native” serve not only as ethnic identifiers but also as legal and political ones. Despite the calamitous vanishing race predictions and centuries of repression of and attacks on indigenous people’s traditions and religions, there are many indigenous nations and communities who have survived together with their dynamic cultures. For some perspective on this, as of this writing, in the USA alone there are five hundred and sixty five federally-recognized American Indian tribes and Alaskan Native entities (“Indian Affairs | Home,” n.d.). This number does not even take into account the hundreds of communities currently petitioning for recognition, or Native Hawaiians who are currently barred by the government from doing so (Akaka, n.d.; Klopotek, 2011, p. 261).

This diversity of cultures and concerns means that museum conservators working with very large collections which often encompass many Indigenous cultures are not able to utilize the collaborative results produced with one community or nation as a boilerplate plan with other communities. For the process to be truly collaborative, conservators must work with appropriate representatives from each community on an ongoing basis. A collaborative plan for conservation developed between a museum conservation team and the Fort Sill Apache is unlikely to properly

address the concerns of other Apache communities let alone the needs of a First Nation community in Canada.

In addition to the diversity of communities, the feverish early collecting practices of museums have deposited collections of Indigenous objects spread far and wide and often great distances from their communities of origin. Not only has this prevented access and use by source communities, it has also made face to face consultation and collaboration very difficult and costly. This is especially painful in an ever-worsening economy. Paying for community consultants to travel to the collections can often be too heavy a financial burden for both the community and the museum. This is particularly true for underfunded museums and museums with larger collections which, aside from having more diverse collections (thus requiring more extensive collaborations), can also be much farther from source communities than smaller more local museums (L. Smith, 2011).

Presenting many difficulties in collaboration are the different approaches that non-Native conservators and Native nations have historically brought with them to the table. In large part these differences are a result of the origin and form of their relative knowledge and experience. The originating community possesses knowledge and authority which derive from its position as the originators and current guardians of their culture: the so called “intangible” properties such as the cultural, social, political, and religious qualities of an object as well as vital material/technical knowledge. The material/technical knowledge of originating communities has traditionally been subordinated to standardized museum methodologies by the museum community however this has arguably become less so (Bloomfield, 2007, 2013). Along with their material knowledge, the “intangible” properties have also been less recognized by many

museum professionals as can be evidenced through a review of many codes of ethics and standards of practice where until recent revisions they are conspicuous by their near total absence. When intangible properties are mentioned there are usually no guidelines for consultation with the present-day guardians of that knowledge (“Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice,” 1994, “Professional Guidelines for Practice,” 2002). Although in this way intangible properties have often been less valued than their tangible counterparts, if a museum is understood to be an institution which cares for collections for the purpose of education and/or knowledge, than the intangible properties have a vital role to serve in preserving the **whole** object. This knowledge for example may include the protocols which the creator of an object intended to be respected, thus respecting them would mean preserving the contextual information and purpose of an object (Johnson, Heald, McHugh, Brown, & Kaminitz, 2005) in addition to respecting the relevance that the object may still have for the community. Objects of Indigenous patrimony which are in a conservator’s care often require more than just standard museum preservation practices to maintain their integrity, they require traditional preservation practices as well. As keepers of that knowledge, Indigenous source communities must be recognized by their non-native conservator collaborators not as consultants, but as **experts** integral to the process.

In *Preserving What is Valued* Miriam Clavir gives a very thorough history of the evolution of museum conservation from the early restoration practices of artists and craftsmen (who often did more harm than good) to the professional occupation it is today (Clavir, 2001, p. 5). Modern practitioners have access to copious amounts of training in conservation science and methods including professional degree programs in universities and colleges around the globe. There are also many national and international societies and professional organizations for

museum conservators as well as symposiums and conferences which concern conservation science. The conservator's specialized knowledge concerns the physical condition of objects with the goal of preserving them in the best condition for the longest amount of time or, as the 2000 Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice of the Canadian Association for the Conservation of Cultural Property and of the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators puts it; "Conservation includes the following: examination, documentation, preventive conservation, preservation, treatment, restoration and reconstruction" (p. 12). The conservators approach is scientific in nature, and academic/institutional in origin.

The differences in these two approaches can create problems and lead to friction between museum and community representatives when the intangible needs of an object are at odds with its physical preservation ones. While the often contrasting approaches and goals have often provided for some conflict and disagreement, their differences are not insurmountable and each side of the table has something to gain. Collaboration however, can only happen when the concerns and goals of both groups are openly considered and addressed.

Prevalent Native Nation Concerns

As stated earlier, no two Indigenous communities have the exact same concerns and/or needs. Still, there are a number of concerns which are frequently expressed by Indigenous consultants and therefore likely reflect fairly widespread concerns about museums as appropriate repositories for objects of Indigenous patrimony. As already mentioned at the beginning of this section, many of the cultural materials found in museum collections today were forcefully separated from their communities, this separation has served to curtail the ongoing sociocultural

roles of many sacred objects. The current dispositions of these objects raise concerns over representation, access, and intangible meaning and value.

The representation of Indigenous cultures in museums is a topic that has received a significant amount of attention and discussion. In 2000, *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian* was co-published by The National Museum of the American Indian and The University of Washington Press. The book put together papers and discussions presented at a 1995 symposium which sought to analyze how museums were starting to change the ways in which they represent American Indian cultures, and seek consultation to better incorporate Native voice (National Museum of the American Indian, 2000). With contributions from both Native and non-Native museum professionals the symposium and book explored a topic which had been discussed before but not in the same depth nor with this extent of Native voice. Historically the lack of consultation with originating communities meant that the exhibition and care of the objects were, to say the least, inaccurate and contextually lacking. Important cultural knowledge regarding the handling, storage and purpose of objects in collections was not usually sought by museum staff (Henderson, 1996). This information has proven to be of vital importance in contextualizing these materials for contemporary conservation and exhibition practices (L. Smith, 2011). Without this contextual information, exhibits fail to connect the cultural materials in their collections with the living communities from which they originated, thus relegating their source communities to a distant, static, and romanticized past. This disconnect seemingly substantiates and at least in part directly results from the “vanishing race” mentality.

The problems of little influence and absolutely no control by source communities on the representation of their own culture is mirrored in William T. Hagan's 1978 description of American Indians as "archival captives". As he rather bluntly put it: "To be an Indian is having non-Indians control the documents from which other non-Indians write their version of your history" (Hagan, 1978, pp. 135–142). If Hagan were to have substituted the words "material culture" for "documents" and "conceive" for "write" it would have summed up the situation in museums quite well. It is not surprising therefore that source communities have long been demanding a strong voice in the representation of their heritage material through involvement in museum practices and subsequent publications. It is necessary in order to correct historical inaccuracies and emphasize the connection between their living dynamic cultures with their heritage material.

Concern is also often expressed for the incorporation of traditional care into museum conservation as the intangible values of an object often require specific physical care. Indigenous communities have long been stressing the importance of these intangible values however museums, as European-modeled institutions, and their conservation professionals whose training and experience originated from within this model, have traditionally placed the highest priority on preserving the physical integrity of objects. Here again source communities have often been relegated to the roles of consultants and/or interested parties instead of experts. This role is disputed by Mr. Bloomfield when he writes that "Māori people are the traditional owners of taonga and as such we are more than just stakeholders or advisers. The knowledge and understanding Māori people have of taonga is essential to their preservation" (Bloomfield, 2007, p. 149).

Similarly, the intangible properties of cultural heritage are increasingly becoming better understood and valued. One of the clearest definitions of intangible value comes from the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* which has defined intangible cultural heritage as "...the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity..." ("Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage," 2003)

The final portion of this quote regarding the transmission of intangible cultural heritage and its connection to a community's identity and continuity very aptly presents these items as living parts of dynamic cultures which are still very much here, as opposed to the remains of cultures long since gone. Many source communities have obligations to the traditional care for these living objects. These can include traditional cleaning such as smudging, ceremonial feedings, blessings, and ensuring respect of cultural protocol regarding the restrictive handling and/or sight of objects by those without the authority to do so (Odegaard, 2011). In the storage of objects attention often needs to be paid to the placement of the objects at certain heights or facing particular directions and away from other objects in the collection. By incorporating these practices a conservator shows their respect for the community as well as the object and gains a more thorough and complete knowledge of the collections under their care.

Sometimes these values however, seem to fly in the face of standard conservation practice, such as in the case of an object for which deterioration is an integral aspect of its lifecycle. While in the past objects which fall under this criteria have been held up as the definitive example of pan-Indigenous intent, this situation is hardly symbolic of the goals of Native communities. Indeed, the assumption that all Indigenous people believe that all of their creations must deteriorate can be offensive as one conservator, Vicki Heikell noted (Heikell, 1995). As Heikell makes clear, just as other people seek to keep records, so too do Indigenous people. The deterioration of all objects and the end to the conservation of Indigenous material patrimony in museums certainly paints a frightening enough picture to convince conservators into resisting collaboration, but as always, reality is much more complex. Intentional progressive deterioration as a goal only applies to certain objects from some communities. When it does, the conservation of such objects forestalls the completion of its life-cycle and can harm the community. Recognition of the value of these types of intangible meaning and value has been asserted by organizations such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites which in their New Zealand charter states: “In some circumstances, assessment of the cultural heritage value of a place may show that it is not desirable to undertake any conservation intervention at that time. This approach may be appropriate where undisturbed constancy of intangible values, such as the spiritual associations of a sacred place, may be more important than its physical attributes. For the occasions where progressive deterioration is applicable, museum professionals shouldn’t be afraid to communicate with communities and try to resolve the situation together rather than ignore the discrepancy.

Time and again Native nations have fought to make the importance of intangible values clear, taking every opportunity to reincorporate their knowledge and stories into the social and cultural fabric of their community. In the introduction of *Museums and Source Communities*, Alison Peers and Laura Brown explain from their perspectives that “Artefacts prompt the re-learning of forgotten knowledge and skills, provide opportunities to piece together fragmented historical narratives, and are material evidence of the cultural identity and historical struggles. They also prompt the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations...” (Peers & Brown, 2003, p. 6) However before any of this can happen, the community must have access to the collections.

The subject of access is one of tremendous importance as many objects of Indigenous patrimony in museum collections still serve or are able to serve certain functions in the daily life of their source communities. As Thomas V. Hill put it “We don’t have a word for objects in our language; they are always things ‘that do something’. So although we are putting objects in display cases in museums, these are living, breathing items” (Dignard & Canadian Conservation Institute., 2008, p. 236). As objects that “do something”, the source community may also require the use of these objects for ceremonial use outside the museum. Outside of ceremonial use the community may also have need for the objects for educational or exhibition use. These can be very difficult situations for some conservators to accept as it takes the collections outside of the oversight of conservators and into less regulated conditions which can greatly increase the risk of physical damage. However any use, including the museum’s regular storage and care of the object involves some element of risk and the benefits of continued use must be weighed as well.

Perhaps the single greatest obstacle to increased collaboration between non-Native conservators and indigenous source communities is the near total lack of trained indigenous museum conservators. This lack of diversity is reflective of the larger museum community but is arguably more distinct in conservation where even in Native-run institutions there are few trained indigenous conservators. There are many reasons for this diversity deficiency, and recent scholarship has focused on these reasons as well as the need for and benefits of increasing the number of trained Indigenous conservators. Conservator Tharron Bloomfield and University of Arizona doctoral candidate Martina Dawley have both written in detail on the many barriers facing indigenous students who may wish to enter conservation programs including societal pressures back home, as well as financial, geographical, and historical issues, and requirements and subjects which are not relevant to nor inclusive of indigenous cultural materials and/or communities (Bloomfield, 2013; Dawley, n.d.). There are some conservation programs which have made efforts to improve in these areas however, Bloomfield mentions specifically the UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Materials and the University of Melbourne Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation (Bloomfield, 2013, pp. 5–6). Programs such as the one at the UCLA/Getty also seek to incorporate subject matter and experiences which are more relevant when working with indigenous cultural materials such as the need for collaboration, the importance of obtaining a more thorough understanding of the backgrounds of collections including the background history of museums and indigenous peoples, and the importance of intangible aspects of objects (Bloomfield, 2013, pp. 5–6; Pearlstein, 2008, pp. 1–2). The importance of increasing diversity was underscored at the 2007 symposium when John Moses stated: “With respect, I submit that the next great challenge lies in

changing the face of the conservation profession itself. We need to see more Aboriginal persons working as professional conservators in institutions. Our respective institutions need to do more to hire, train, retain and promote professional conservators of Aboriginal heritage. It's no longer good enough that we simply engage periodically with aboriginal groups at the community level or at the institutional level on particular finite projects.” (Dignard & Canadian Conservation Institute., 2008, p. 24).

The issues discussed in this section are by no means the only concerns that indigenous communities have with museums. However they are some very important ones that factor into collaborative relationships and projects. Ignorance of these and other concerns can and have exasperated efforts to improve collaborations and form successful partnerships.

Conservator Concerns

The past and present reality of museum conservation as a profession is that it is largely the product of a Eurocentric museum model (Rose, 1988, p. 5). Clearly this has had a strong influence on the development of ethics in the profession. Like their colleagues in other museum professions, conservators have been almost exclusively trained in methods and theories which manifest this Eurocentric model and the values entrenched therein. Among the inherent values of this type of model, the highest priority has traditionally been given to the physical condition and preservation of the objects in museum collections. This approach has been highly visible in the codes of ethics for many conservation organizations. For example the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) into the 1990s mandated in its “Standards of Practice” that its member conservators be "governed by unswerving respect for the *aesthetic, historic* and *physical integrity* of the object” (emphasis added) (“Code of Ethics and

Guidelines for Practice,” 1994) (“The American Institute for Conservation - About Us,” n.d.). Although as Clavir states, a more substantive understanding of the purposes of conservation includes the preservation of the “meaning of the works as well as their physical substance”, clearly providing for the long term physical stability of museum collections has long held the nearly undivided attention of the conservation profession (Clavir, 2001, p. 32) Many similar codes of ethics and mission statements going back throughout the recent history of conservation have documented this primary and seemingly solitary goal. Although today many professional organizations and museums have incorporated other purposes into their codes and standards, physical preservation remains the dominant purpose for museum conservators.

At least one conservator, Glenn Wharton, has noted that this focus on longevity has the effect of training conservators to deal with the problems of deterioration by solely emphasizing “material analysis over cultural analysis” (Wharton, 2005, p. 200). Besides revealing an institutional bias, this emphasis may cause conservators to miss out on important opportunities to learn better and more appropriate methods of treatment as Indigenous communities often have long established and integrated systems for such care (Barclay, 1986, pp. 97–99). At the 1986 Canadian Conservation Institute symposium “The Care and Preservation of Ethnological Materials” Lisa Mibach, then Director of the Intermuseum Conservation Laboratory, presented her research on traditional methods used by Native American communities to create and care for their objects. While she was researching this topic, she realized there were many similarities between these methods and those employed by modern day museum conservators. Amongst these similarities were the “certification of trained annual inspectors, pest control methods, and

selection of treatment materials according to the compatibility of their chemical and physical properties with those of the object to be treated and its environment" (Barclay, 1986, p. 97).

Insightful conservators have long struggled with the question of just how far to take the preservation imperative when other factors come into play. The British Museum held a colloquium on ethnographic conservation in 1989 as part of their ongoing efforts to encourage dialogue between conservators and professionals from other disciplines; this particular discussion was with curators. It is interesting to note that in this case conservators were in the position of needing to defend their decisions to sometimes limit or halt exhibition and use of an object. In the lecture entitled "Where to Start, Where to Stop" M.D. McLeod explained that the questions any conservator should ask themselves before they begin their work are "How do we decide what to conserve and what to leave alone, and, when do we start conserving something – and when do we stop?" (Hill, Giles, Gowers, Museum, & Britain, 1995) The first place McLeod suggests looking for answers is within the originating community itself.

Although the physical integrity of an object is clearly the primary concern in most conservator's training and practice, the two other concerns expressed in the AIC's Code of Ethics: the "historical" integrity and the "aesthetic" integrity of an object have also been deemed important considerations in the care of objects. Although connected to the physical condition of an object, these two areas of concern are considerably more subjective. It is important that when we say "historical integrity" we ask "whose history?" And when we say "aesthetic integrity" we similarly question whose perceptions we are considering. Like the physical, these values are contentious in their usage here as the only aesthetic, historical and physical purposes and values to which it has usually referred are those given them by museums and not necessarily their

creators. This is not always deliberate, as Wharton notes conservators “inevitably perpetuate their own assumptions about the world” in their everyday decisions and are not always aware of their power to do so (Wharton, 2005, pp. 199–200). All these properties are important in that they contribute to the primary purposes of the museum which is education. By maintaining the physical integrity of an object it will be kept available for future generations to learn from, by preserving the aesthetic it will still be “worth” seeing, by preserving the historical it will still be “accurate”. However the fact that conservators have been highly concerned with the historical value of the material in their collection, yet have traditionally neither sought the expertise of the source community nor included them in the process shows that there is much room for improvement and much to be gained by collaboration.

Clearly even the most astute conservator faces difficulties working within an older system constructed to sustain a mode of representation that did not take into account the voices of the people being represented. The emphasis on the physical object and the lack of available training in recognizing the intangible needs and concerns of heritage materials has meant that many conservators do not see consultation and collaboration as part of a complete conservation process. Conservators who have experience in collaboration with source communities often describe the difficulty in training new interns and new conservators who come to the lab not only completely unprepared to approach collaboration with source communities, but also unable to recognize the need for it (Odegaard, 2011; L. Smith, 2011). The average conservator has been trained in a fairly well-established conservation methodology and to deviate from this methodology takes not only an open mind but also a great deal of initiative. Modern conservators must now navigate a course between the science-centered training they have

received and the responsibilities they have to the collections and the concerns of their source communities

IV. Maturation of Native Nations / Museum Relationships

This section has a decidedly North American emphasis, making three case studies of conservators, institutions and projects primarily situated within the United States and Canada which have placed a strong emphasis on becoming more collaborative. This chapter will begin by looking at an individual conservator, Dr. Nancy Odegaard, Head Conservator at the Arizona State Museum, who has worked together with the museum's Southwest Native Nations Advisory Board as well as with Native nation consultants on the material culture held at the museum. She has also made a significant effort to work with Native nations on objects being repatriated into communities which have been treated with toxic chemicals and pose a danger to the community. Dr. Odegaard's early conservation training beginning with the late 1980s, and the political environment of those times heavily influenced her to seek stronger partnerships with Indigenous source communities in her work.

Another excellent example of the progress that can be achieved when individual conservators are encouraged and empowered to work collaboratively with Indigenous source communities can be seen in the preparation for the "Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska" exhibit which opened in a new wing of the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center (Anchorage Museum) in May of 2010. The exhibit was the culmination of many years of consultation and collaboration between participant museums and Alaskan Native communities, a major part of which was the "Anchorage Loan Conservation Project", a

collaborative venture between the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in which nearly 600 Alaskan Native materials were loaned to the Anchorage Museum. The project had its own conservation team who made working collaboratively with source community representatives a priority.

When it comes to developing truly collaborative-rich relationships, tribal museums and cultural centers like the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository in Kodiak, Alaska are leading the way. In contrast to many non-Native run institutions which have to weigh many competing interests, tribal museums and cultural centers answer more directly to the community. The Alutiiq Museum has forged collaborative partnerships with museums on a national and international scale as well as within their own communities. One of their most collaborative conservation efforts has been with Harvard's Peabody Museum on the treatment of an Alutiiq warrior's kayak which will be displayed at the Alutiiq museum through a long term loan. These examples highlight what many today would consider fairly progressive policies and attitudes towards collaboration and consultation with source communities but are only the beginnings of a shift towards meaningful partnerships in the care of Indigenous cultural materials.

The Arizona State Museum: Dr. Nancy Odegaard

To understand Dr. Odegaard's contributions it is important to first understand the path she has traveled from her early training beginning in the seventies, the environment in which she continued her training and began her career, and her lengthy career. Her current work which includes significant collaboration with American Indian nations on the dangers of pesticide residue is in many ways a direct result of these early influences.

From early on in her training, Dr. Odegaard was taught by her mentor conservator Carolyn Rose to “look at things differently” from established methods (Odegaard, 2011). In marked contrast to traditional conservation programs which usually had approaches more grounded in art history, to graduate from the ethnographic and archaeological conservation program students had to complete classes in anthropology and also pass the same exam the anthropology masters students took along with the requirements for the conservation program (Odegaard, 2011). Dr. Odegaard mentioned that in treatment reports, students always had to discuss what was known about the cultural use of the object and any other cultural contextual information known. It is important to note here that the anthropological perspective should not be confused with an indigenous perspective or more specifically the source community perspective it is mentioned here only to stress the emphasis which the program placed on thinking outside traditional parameters. Although this information was gathered only from secondary sources it showed an awareness of the importance of this type of information (information beyond the aesthetic and physical properties) in providing adequate care for cultural materials.

Dr. Odegaard has also noted the impact that NAGPRA, and its long process, has had on her as well as the larger museum community. These influences led her to consider “how the doctrines and protocols of conservation were not fitting” the situations that she found herself facing in actual practice. This was further exemplified at the Arizona State Museum, where one of Dr. Odegaard’s earliest projects was working on the “Paths of Life” exhibit which opened in 1987 (Odegaard, 1995, p. 187). Throughout this project Dr. Odegaard felt that the museum staff consulted heavily with consultants from involved communities, which was one of her first

professional experiences working in a way that she says “really brought people in” (Odegaard, 2011). As Dr. Odegaard returned to her education and worked towards her PhD she felt very aware of the sociopolitical climate of the time including the increasing recognition of the rights and struggles of indigenous peoples. This combination of awareness and fairly progressive early training paved the way for a unique approach to conservation science and a willingness to move beyond the established standards of practice in order to adapt to changing needs and times.

From out of the “Paths of Life” exhibit at ASM came an established “Southwest Native Nations Advisory Board”. This board was originally created to work with the museum staff involved in the exhibit and later on repatriation issues however it currently performs a larger role within the museum. Dr. Odegaard will often seek their guidance on much of her work, feeling that the dialogue that results is a large part of the conservation process. She does this not only with specific projects, but also with the formation of guidelines as in the case of the recent pottery project. The pottery project was a multiyear effort to enable the museum to better care for and store the museum’s collection which includes the largest “Southwest Indian ceramic collection in the world” (“3 Tribes, City and Museum Form Partnership to Protect Pottery,” 2005). During the planning stage for the move, Dr. Odegaard went to every tribe in the southwest, and held three workshops in order to collaborate on forming the guidelines for the storage and handling of the pottery in addition to working with the Southwest Native Nations Advisory Board. The pottery project was partly funded by financial contributions by several American Indian communities.

Some of her most collaborative work involves Dr. Odegaard’s work with American Indian nations to safeguard themselves from toxic chemicals on items being repatriated. When

NAGPRA was passed in 1990 it gave guidelines for the creation of inventories and the repatriation of certain funerary remains and cultural materials. The legislation was by far the most comprehensive of its kind; however it was in many parts left vague and open to interpretation. One such area was the subject of chemical contamination in museum collections. A popular method employed by conservators for preventing damage from insects, rodents and mold was to use large amounts of pesticides and other toxic chemicals (Spencer, Caldararo, Davis, & Palmer, 2000). Upon their repatriation many of these contaminated remains and cultural materials were going to be reburied or actively used in ceremonies which posed a massive public health danger to the communities. The only NAGPRA-mandated action for museum or federal agency officials repatriating these materials is to "...inform the recipients of repatriations of any presently known treatment...with pesticides, preservatives, or other substances that represent a potential hazard to the objects or to the person handling the objects" (Odegaard, 2005, p. xxiii) which not only doesn't require any research into potentially unknown hazardous treatments, it also doesn't require any explanation of the danger. As objects were being returned often little or no warning was being given to the communities receiving them, in the case of the Hopi it was reported that more than 60 repatriated objects had been received by the tribe before any notification was given them that the materials might be contaminated (Spencer et al., 2000).

It was through the Hopi tribe who, among the very first to recognize the problem, raised the alarm and sought assistance and dialogue with institutions in the late 90s that Dr. Odegaard first began to realize the extent of the danger posed to communities and sought to do something about it. She strongly felt that before anything else, Arizona tribes needed to be given as much

information as possible. With that in mind she, together with colleague Alyce Sadongei obtained a NAGPRA grant to fund a workshop on March 16-18, 2000 and presented some of what they learned from the workshop to the NAGPRA Review Committee the next month (Odegaard & Sadongei, 2000, p. 22). Before the workshop took place, consultations took place with various tribes in Arizona to determine what information was most wanted and needed. Presenters at the workshop included American Indian professionals and representatives. The workshop and its subsequent publications acknowledged the many contributions of Native Nations especially the Hopi tribe.

Dr. Odegaard has continued to work directly with tribes and collaborates with Native nation representatives when performing pesticides studies which she says are guided by them. Through this work, she has formed relationships and fostered communication with various tribes which has benefitted her work enormously.

The Anchorage Loan Conservation Project

In May of 2010 a new expansion to the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center (AMRC) was opened to the public. The expansion included an entire floor dedicated to exhibition space for the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center (ASC), the brainchild of a twenty year old agreement between AMRC and the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) ("The Anchorage Loan Conservation Project," n.d.). The opening exhibition for the new space is entitled "Living Our Cultures Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska" and contains over 600 objects of Alaskan Native patrimony from the collections of NMNH and NMAI (Crowell, 2010, p. 9). The ASC sought to have a very open approach to access and

consultation throughout the exhibit project, including in the conservation of the objects selected for inclusion. This is evident in the center's June 2009 newsletter where it explains that "...no amount of conservation expertise or background research can substitute for the insights gained during consultations with Alaska Native people. Native partners and conservators may be examining the same object, but see it through their own cultural knowledge and understanding" (p. 18). The high degree of collaboration and the large scale of the conservation project makes for a very good example of the benefits and progress that can be accomplished when conservators and Native consultants have the means to work together.

The exhibit largely arose out of the ASC's "Sharing Knowledge" project, an effort which began in earnest in 2001 and sought to increase access to and knowledge of the Smithsonian's Alaskan collections by collaborating with Alaskan Native community organizations and their chosen consultant representatives who traveled to Washington on "collections study trips" ("Sharing Knowledge: About This Project"). The project has already produced a massive amount of information in various forms including translations and interviews (recorded and disseminated only by permission of the interviewee) and is still ongoing. All of the objects included in the Anchorage loan were chosen as a result of the dialogue resulting from the Sharing Knowledge project. For example one rule set forth in these discussions was that only materials that were "fairly traded for" would be included (Briggs, 2010). Although the exhibit project certainly made a concentrated effort to involve Alaskan Native consultants in the process, it should be noted that some of the objects chosen for inclusion in the Anchorage exhibit were highly sensitive sacred materials that at least one consultant felt should not be publicly exhibited (Haakanson, 2011, p. 2).

Due to the scale of the exhibit and the number of objects being loaned to the AMRC from the two museums, a special team of conservators from NMNH and NMAI was put together to prepare the project materials for travel and exhibition. Project conservator Landis Smith felt that the conservators chosen were already fairly experienced and open to increasing collaboration and this combined with a very encouraging project environment enabled them to extensively partner with consultants and experts from source communities (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5, 2011). Ms. Smith's own experience developed largely at museums in the American southwest where she feels the approach has been more progressive in regards to forming relationships and performing repatriations with local American Indian communities. For her in person consultation and collaboration are always the goal though they are not always financially possible, and when that is the case other methods must be employed (Personal interview Smith, 2011). The Anchorage Loan project team used one such method when working with the large number of Athabaskan representatives. Because there were too many representatives involved to fly to Washington DC, the groups communicated with each other via videoconferencing. In this way the representatives and conservators could dialogue and look at the objects being discussed as close up as possible (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011).

Another important aspect of the collaborative relationship of the project came from the project conservators recognizing and respecting that the objects they were working with held intangible properties on which they were not the experts. They understood that these properties were important to the object's meaning and purpose in the source communities but also for the conservators. As Smith put it "...the best analogy I can use is that an object is like a document and you can try to read it, but you can't really read it without the people who created the

language” (Personal interview Smith, 2011). Some of these properties at times presented difficulties for the team, as in the case of gender protocols which limit handling. When the all-women project team worked with materials that had such restrictions for instance prohibiting handling by women, rather than ignoring the restrictions because of the logistical difficulties they presented, the team found a male colleague from the museum staff to handle the object for them (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011).

When community representatives were able to come to the labs in Washington, in addition to contributing their own experience and knowledge to the project, they often also benefitted from the expertise of the conservators. When Elaine Kingeekuk, an experienced doll-maker and skin sewer from the St. Lawrence Island Yup’ik community, went to collaborate with the team in Washington on a gut parka, she was also able to look at Yup’ik dolls at both museums. Through the conservators she was able to have objects analyzed to discover the types of dyes or other materials uses. Through x-ray analysis she could see the inner construction details, which would have been impossible to learn otherwise without ruining the dolls (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011). As an artist, this information can be incredibly useful to incorporating older traditional techniques and technologies into her future work. When Ms. Kingeekuk felt that it was important that one of the dolls was exhibited in Alaska, the project team saw that it was included (Smith, 2008, p. 6). All of the materials that resulted from the interviews, materials analyses, and other collaborations were, with permission, recorded and distributed to the tribes and remain accessible at the ASC for future use by the communities (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011). Ms. Smith described this as another form of access that needs to be increased to the community, access to information and knowledge.

Rather than the hoarding of information seen in the past by institutions, the project sought to ensure the communities had access to the information that they compiled together.

The goal of increasing access for Alaskan Natives to their cultural patrimony was particularly crucial and relevant to the team as the exhibit project envisioned a near unprecedented level of access to the materials, including the development of mounts which would allow the objects to be easily and safely removed from exhibition and moved to a private room where they could be seen more closely upon request (Crowell, 2009, p. 15). Since this type of system increases the risk of damage to an object, it seems to run counter to the objectives of modern conservation science. While acknowledging this, Ms. Smith justifies her support of increased access in spite of additional risk by explaining “as conservators, if we broaden our idea about what it means to preserve something to include all of the intangible...than access has to be part of what we are committed to” (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011). Smith stated that conservators in general should apply these approaches to their work as she believes that by increasing access, both intangible qualities and tangible ones are preserved better (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011). It is notable that while the project team made extensive efforts to keep the focus on access and to developing a dynamic approach to it they sometimes felt the disapproval of non-project conservators at the museums who resisted the levels of access the project was leaning towards (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011).

A very important aspect of the project in terms of collaboration was what Landis Smith called “access to the process” (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011). Essentially this was the involvement of Native consultants as experts in the decision-making and treatment

process. Landis Smith explained that this developed organically during the consultation process and credits much of this to Yup'ik collaborator Chuna McIntyre who was one of the first consultants involved with the project. Mr. McIntyre was perfectly suited to this role as he brought with him some experience in museum conservation and collaboration, and as a Yup'ik artist had experience in both making and using many of the Yup'ik objects (L. Smith, personal communication, May 5 2011). Previous to his work with the Anchorage project team, Chuna McIntyre had restored a pair of dance fans from the late 19th century held in the collections of the Fenimore Art Museum in New York (Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2010, p. 2). No stranger to navigating obstacles, Mr. McIntyre had with the aid of a computer also performed what he called a "virtual restoration" on an object to which he didn't have physical access (O'Connor, 2011; Personal interview Smith, 2011). Through the contributions and enthusiasm of consultants like Mr. McIntyre as well as the conservators, the process of repairing and conserving the exhibit materials became a much more collaborative one.

The first objects that Mr. McIntyre worked on with the conservators were Yup'ik masks. In the case of a diving seal mask he quickly pointed out that pieces, specifically the hand of the mask, were missing and explained why they were important. Old photographs showed the diving seal mask with its original hand but a search through the collections failed to turn up the appendage. The conservators and Mr. McIntyre decided together that the best course of treatment for this mask would be for a new hand, based on the photographs, to be carved in order to replace the missing one so that the original story told by the mask would be reinstated. It was further recognized that the most appropriate person to do this would be a qualified Yup'ik artist and it was decided that Mr. McIntyre should perform the work (O'Connor, 2011). In working

with another mask, Mr. McIntyre pointed out parts that seemed wrong to him including the placement and length of a caribou muff, it was subsequently discovered that earlier conservators had in the course of restoration efforts, added the piece to the mask. In addition to being inaccurate the muff also concealed important evidence of the mask's construction techniques. As a result of Mr. McIntyre's expert eye and the collaborative work of the whole team it was decided that since the muff was not original or correct, and access to the techniques of construction were very important, the muff should be removed (Personal interview Smith, 2011).

Following the success of the collaboration with the masks, the team moved on to a pair of Yup'ik dance fans which were missing their feathered borders. During the decision making process, Mr. McIntyre explained how imperative feathers were to the meaning of the dance fans and then visually demonstrated this by dancing the fans to show how the intended movement was impeded without them (Personal interview, Smith, 2011). Because of Mr. McIntyre's knowledge and demonstration the conservators were able to better understand the necessity of feathers being re-incorporated into the exhibition of these fans and the collaborators turned their attention to how to do so. However upon examination of the fans' original plumage holes, original material was found to be present. In order to insert new feathers this material would have to be removed, an action the curator refused to allow, so another solution had to be devised. The creative and collaborative backgrounds of Mr. McIntyre and the conservation team assisted them in determining the best course of action and the decision was made that a special mount would be constructed out of plexiglas with a backing consisting of holes drilled in alignment with the holes in the fans. These holes could then hold new feathers in place, providing for the intended appearance of the whole fans, while preserving the original material (Personal

interview, Smith, 2011). Again recognizing the expertise of trained Yup'ik artists, Mr. McIntyre was asked, and agreed, to harvest the appropriate materials and make the additions. The fans were sent to Anchorage sans feathers with the understanding that the feathers would be added in Alaska at the appropriate time by Mr. McIntyre. To further involve and benefit the Yup'ik community it was recommended that the process be incorporated into a community presentation or talk (Personal interview, Smith, 2011).

One of the other objects which required repair before it could be shipped and exhibited was a Yup'ik gut parka from the NMAI collection which had two tears in the gut and was missing several auklet plumes. The conservation team determined that the normal conservation treatment for the tears would be to patch the tear using adhesive, however they sought a consultant from the St. Lawrence Island Yup'ik community who could advise them on the matter (Personal interview, Smith, 2011; ICOM p13). They were referred to Elaine Kingeekuk who consulted with the conservation team for over a year and a half by phone using images of the parka before travelling to Washington DC. Ms. Kingeekuk felt that a traditional repair should be made using two gut patches sewn with sinew to sandwich each tear because it would be more permanent. She explained that this method would also be less damaging since adhesive would harm the parka by causing the affected area to stiffen (L. Smith, 2008, p. 13). The conservation team found plenty of evidence supporting Ms. Kingeekuk's argument as the gut parkas in the collections of both participating museums, which have examples of traditional repairs as well as adhesive-based repairs, showed that traditional Yup'ik patches lasted longer and maintained the appearance of the parka (Personal interview, Smith, 2011). A traditional repair of sewn gut skin patch would also be more appropriate for the continued meaning and the intended purpose of the

parka, as it would be functional in actual use, whereas an adhesive patch is solely for collections purposes. Ms. Kingeekuk also explained that it was important that the parka be “complete” again and that the missing auklet plumes should be replaced (ICOM, 14). Because the Anchorage exhibit was emphasizing increased access, the durability of any repairs would be thoroughly tested so it was decided that traditional methods of repair provided the most continuity and stability and that Ms. Kingeekuk as a trained Yup’ik gut sewer was the most appropriate person to make these repairs (Personal interview, Smith, 2011; ICOM p13). As she performed the repairs Ms. Kingeekuk, an experienced teacher, was able to share the process from material harvesting to finish with the conservation team and answer their questions (Personal interview, Smith, 2011).

The benefits from this collaborative project are many. The enthusiastic efforts of the project partners and their substantial combined knowledge created such a powerful educational force that the conservation project was given its own website on the NMNH server where the process is detailed extensively and available to anyone with access to the internet. Perhaps most importantly the partnerships that were formed on the project have outlived the project itself as Ms. Smith has worked with both Chuna McIntyre and Elaine Kingeekuk on more recent projects and they continue to keep in contact for future efforts (Personal interview, Smith, 2011). The Anchorage loan conservation project placed an emphasis on collaboration and the conservation team chosen reflected that. They had background experience in working with American Indian communities but their efforts to work together with experts from Alaskan Native communities showed that they truly understood its importance. They sought to reciprocate the knowledge shared with them by Alaskan Native representatives with their own specialized knowledge and

provide answers and information to the community as well. Because of these efforts the Anchorage loan project has the potential to positively affect many more people through the exhibit and associated programs but also through the collaborators themselves as they move forward and work on new projects and form new partnerships. It is an excellent example of the process and benefits of collaboration in conservation.

The Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository

Unsurprisingly, through the large and increasing number of tribal museums, cultural centers, keeping places and similar institutions, indigenous communities have gained significant traction in asserting their rights with regards to their own material culture. More important however is the way in which these institutions must navigate their roles both within their own communities and with outside institutions and museum professionals, often seeking collaborative partnerships and solutions. In this regard these institutions are often leading the way as institutions like the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository (Alutiiq Museum) in Kodiak Alaska show by example the benefits and importance of collaboration. Some of the successful collaborations that have taken place at the Alutiiq would be difficult to duplicate at larger non-Native institutions, they have been largely possible through the deep ties the museum has to its own community. However there is much to be learned from their efforts of which other institutions may take note as they seek to improve their own methods. To reflect the dual collaborative roles that the Alutiiq Museum takes on this section first looks at its collaboration within Alutiiq communities and follows with examples of outside collaborations.

The Alutiiq like most tribal museums is, by definition, community-focused. First and foremost it is meant to be of use to the Alutiiq community. It's very first priority is the "care of

archaeological collections belonging to the Alutiiq community” (“Alutiiq Museum Collections Plan,” 2008, p. 1). As such, the museum’s foundation board consists of eleven member-representatives of the eight Alutiiq organizations in Kodiak. Executive Director, Sven Haakanson, describes the difference of being answerable directly to the community in this way: “Because we are responsible to the community it really makes you think ‘What is our real goal?’ to not only the collection but the perpetuation (and) preservation of these items... in a larger institution you can disassociate yourself from the collection, you can make it a research project... and not suffer the consequences of your decisions...but when you live in a smaller community you have that responsibility to the community and to making sure you are understood. Also, the decisions you make affect not only your job, your place in the community but also the future of the institution” (S. Haakanson, personal communication, May 13, 2011). This depth of responsibility to the community clearly influences the actions of the museum, and its executive director. Whereas in conventional institutions it can be argued that objects are treated (in display and storage) as “dead” objects from which community ties have been mostly severed, institutions like the Alutiiq Museum see themselves and the objects in their care as “ongoing” and “living”. This respect is also evident in the way that the museum responds to visiting community members. Dr. Haakanson notes that when knowledgeable community members come into the museum and suggest changes to the storage or exhibition of objects the museum immediately take them into consideration and implements corrections. This is just one example of an ongoing collaborative relationship between the community and the museum.

One of the clearest areas in which Native-run institutions are leading the collaborative way is the emphasis that is often placed on reciprocity with the community. Whereas

collaboration can sometimes be mistranslate into a process in which multiple parties work together but only one party primarily benefits, the reality is that true collaboration is a two way street. The museum and the community should both benefit from the partnership if the relationship is to be truly collaborative. At the Alutiiq Museum, this translates into a host of programs for the community in addition to the everyday ones. These include for example Alutiiq language programs, travelling exhibits, travelling classes in Alutiiq traditional arts, and community archaeology programs. Through the museum's travelling exhibits, the wider and often isolated Alutiiq communities are exposed to their cultural patrimony and history in tangible ways that would be difficult to experience otherwise. The museum's "Travelling Traditions" program also travels to different communities teaching Alutiiq children arts such as basket weaving (Haakanson, 2008).

Perhaps the greatest contribution to the communities it serves is the museum's role as a repository. Going beyond merely caring for its own collections in a way that reflects the communities' wishes, the Alutiiq Museum serves as guardian for roughly 80% of its holdings without possessing legal ownership (S. Haakanson, personal communication, May 13, 2011). While not owned by the museum, these objects are safeguarded and sometimes used through memorandums of agreement with the owners or corporations². The motivation behind these agreements and the museum's willingness to care for materials it doesn't own is to benefit the community and further the protection of its cultural patrimony. By creating a safe keeping place for the parts of the year when these pieces are not being used by the owners, the museum ensures to the greatest extent possible, that they will both continue their purposeful life in the community

² Following the 1971 passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, Alaskan Natives were stripped of their rights to aboriginal title in land claims and were organized into regional and village *corporations* which received monetary and land compensation.

as well as be available to the Alutiiq people for a long time. In addition, the staff at the museum is able to offer suggestions for care and use to the owners. This is in contrast to materials owned by larger institutions which may be loaned for ceremonial use but with tight restrictions. Dr. Haakanson gives one example of how this works out in practice at the museum:

We have oil lamps we want to loan out and we do risk the fact that they can be damaged, they can be stolen, they can be destroyed, multiple things can happen to them. Depending on the item we will work with an individual or the community in terms of preservation, but really we... are responsible for caring for the materials so...we try to set up the most accessible (plan) but also... take measures to protect those pieces so they aren't damaged and when you explain it to the person you're loaning it to or the community, or tribe you are loaning it to.. (you say) "Here is what we would like you to follow. The reasons are a, b, c and d." Almost one hundred percent of the time they understand and follow those requests. But you know we are here for the community we're not here to tell them what to do. We're not going to say 'hey you do this!' No, it's: "Here is what we would like you to do, so that we can continually share this and keep this within our community..." (S. Haakanson, personal communication, May 13, 2011).

This level of dedication to the collaborative relationship between the museum and the greater Alutiiq community is reflective of the principles upon which the museum was founded. In the museum's "Guidelines for the Spiritual Care of Objects", it states that "As a cultural center funded and governed by eight Kodiak Alutiiq organizations, the Alutiiq Museum serves the Alutiiq Nation first. As such, the museum is dedicated to establishing policies and procedures that meet the needs of Alutiiq people before those of others" (2010, p. 10). The

museum itself was founded by the Kodiak Area Native Association³ using funds resultant of the judgment against Exxon Shipping Co. for damages in the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill (“Welcome to the Alutiiq Museum,” n.d.). Through the museum and archaeological repository, the Alutiiq community is able to keep important archaeological, archival and cultural resources from leaving the community as well as determine and oversee appropriate research, exhibition and interpretation, and conservation care involving the materials.

As a Native-run institution, the museum appears to have a guiding perspective that if not entirely based on an Alutiiq experience, is heavily influenced by it. For example, whereas larger non-Native run institutions often collect more regional collections, the collections policy of the Alutiiq Museum clearly asserts its belief that cultural materials belong in their originating communities so as to assure appropriate care and representation, and to maintain their contextual relevancy (1999, p. 3). Also reflecting this belief is the museum’s refusal to exhibit or otherwise display the material culture of other peoples without their express consent (2004, p. 3). Similarly, the museum refuses to accept non-Alutiiq sacred materials and human remains except in cases where a written request has been received from the associated community asking the museum to do so (Haakanson & Steffian, 2010, p. 4). As a result of these policies the museum does not “actively seek” non-Alutiiq cultural materials but will sometimes accept them from donors on loan for other Native communities if they do not have an appropriate cultural museum. Donors are advised at the time of donation that when the cultural area involved has appropriate facilities to care for the material it will be immediately repatriated to them. One example of non-

³The Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) is a non-profit entity that provides health and social services to the Kodiak region’s Alaskan Native populations. This includes the city of Kodiak where the Alutiiq Museum is located (“KANA - Profile,” n.d.).

Alutiiq cultural materials that are currently being cared for at the museum is a necklace which was acquired in a large donation, while reading up on the collection, Dr. Haakanson discovered that the necklace was an Athabaskan women's menstrual necklace which was only meant to be seen and handled by women. Dr. Haakanson immediately refrained from handling or viewing the necklace further, and the museum took steps to clearly label where it came from and the restrictions on access that needed to be followed. Once the Athabaskan Dena'ina community is able to build an adequate cultural museum then the Alutiiq Museum will repatriate the necklace to them. In the meantime the necklace is in the safe care of an institution which is striving to provide for its spiritual as well as physical care (S. Haakanson, personal communication, May 13, 2011). Traditional Alutiiq hunting equipment also has gender restrictions, in this case restricted to handling only by men. Whenever possible, the Alutiiq Museum places men in charge of the care of these objects out of respect for these values but also acknowledges the reality that at times the situation will necessitate handling by female employee. The museum has prepared for this contingency by providing alternatives to directly touching (skin to object) these materials that still meet museum guidelines for the handling of cultural materials (e.g. carrying materials by the container they occupy, or using gloves as a barrier). Examples like these highlight the constant negotiation undertaken by the museum between honoring the traditional cultural protocols inherent in an object as well as the museum science protocols necessary for its long term preservation. They also show how the museum works as an auto-collaborator, putting in place dynamic policies which enable them to act in the best interest of the materials in their care as well as their source community in changing situations.

The museum's approach to conservation emanates from its philosophy for collections care as articulated in "The Alutiiq Museum's Guidelines for the Spiritual Care of Objects":

According to Alutiiq tradition, everything in the universe – the wind and the animals, the rocks and the trees, has a *sua*, a human-like consciousness. To Alutiiqs, the world is alive. It is a place where all objects are sentient - aware of and sensitive to human action. Caring for this world requires reverence – respect for natural resources, recognition of the accomplishments of ancestors, and a modest view of one's place on earth. Alutiiq people do not see themselves as conquerors of the land, but believe that they are one component of a complexly integrated, cyclical, life-giving system. In this system, the resources necessary for life give themselves to people, who must prove their worth through responsible acts...In this world carelessness, waste, and poor repair are signs of disrespect. They unsettle the natural balance and can poison a person's luck. Following this worldview, the Alutiiq Museum believes that caring for ancestral objects requires much more than maintaining their physical stability. Because all Alutiiq objects are animate, they are all sacred at the most basic level. The *sua* of the tree, that gives its wood to the carver to produce a bowl, continues to require respect. The carver shows his reverence by using the wood judiciously, by wasting little and creating a beautiful object that celebrates the tree's gift. Although ancient carvers could not imagine the role their crafts would play in twenty-first century Alutiiq society, the rules that govern the spiritual care of objects persist. To respect the gifts of spirits, objects made from natural materials must be kept clean, safe and in good repair. Moreover, their connections to ancestral

societies and the natural world must be recognized and honored... (Haakanson & Steffian, 2010, p. 1).

This philosophy, deeply expressive of the ties between experience, spirituality, community, cultural materials, and the museum as the current guardian of those materials, permeates the museum's conservation policies and practices. The museum recognizes the equal importance of the preservation of the spiritual components of an object and the physical components, yet separates the guidelines for each emphasizing their unique natures. Physical care guidelines can and have been precisely outlined and detailed with some rigidity. They also tend to remain fairly static, changing only when scientific advances or discoveries necessitate such change. In contrast the spiritual guidelines for care at the Alutiiq Museum were intentionally created to be dynamic and amenable to change in recognition that there are many different perspectives in the Alutiiq community and that concepts such as "sacredness" continue to change over time (Haakanson & Steffian, 2010, p. 3).

Pursuant to these guidelines staff working on conservation projects together with the rest of the museum staff, are held responsible for the "administrative, physical, and **spiritual**" care of all museum objects they interact with (Haakanson & Steffian, 2010, p. 6). Although the museum does not have a permanent dedicated conservation team, it collaborates with community experts, knowledgeable staff members, and outside resources like Alaska State Museum conservators (S. Haakanson, personal communication, May 13, 2011). As outlined in the spiritual care guidelines sacred objects are to be handled as infrequently as possible. Similarly conservation efforts at the museum are performed only when needed to provide for stabilization and physical preservation of an object (p. 6-7).

As discussed in this paper already, the ceremonial or other use of an object outside of the museum is a situation of concern for many conservators. The Alutiiq Museum accepts that use can be an integral part of an object's life. In a somewhat extreme test of this belief, the museum sent to a family their 110 year old star (an object used in Alaska during the Russian Orthodox Christmastime celebration known as starring) to be used by the family for their celebrations. During the time the star was with its owners, the materials were almost completely replaced with newer ones. While this may horrify many traditionally trained conservators, the museum respected the family's decision and incorporated an additional step into the process of returning the star to the museum's care, thoroughly documenting the changes that had been made to the star so as to have an ongoing record of the continuing life of the object in the community (S. Haakanson, personal communication 2011). For traditionally trained museum professionals like Dr. Haakanson, difficult decisions balancing the multiple needs of collections materials requires "thinking outside the box" and at times an acceptance that not everything is meant to be conserved. While physical deterioration is a part of a normal life cycle the knowledge embodied in an object can be preserved and perpetuated (S. Haakanson, personal communication 2011). When the museum accepts changes like those with the star, it does not result from a lack of concern nor does it reflect on the capabilities of the museum to provide conservation care. Rather it reflects a deep understanding of the need to conserve the "whole" object; recognition that an object in a museum collection is not a dead disassociated piece solely in need of protection, but that it is also meant to be learned from, and to be enabled to maintain its relevancy through use. Certainly this is a valid form of collections care: a practical conservation science that continues to value and preserve the physical aspects of an object along with the

equally important spiritual and cultural components. It is not a new concept nor is it an untried one. As Dr. Haakanson points out: “It is not that we don’t (care about / know how / want to preserve collections) it’s that we are following cultural protocols and respect that have allowed our people to sustain themselves for thousands of years” (S. Haakanson, personal communication 2011).

A key component of the Alutiiq Museum’s successful collaborative conservation efforts is its willingness to form strong relationships with other institutions. The focus of these relationships is not to accomplish a single project in a single area, but to build a solid framework for ongoing partnerships and dialogue. These relationships are successful largely because of the mutual respect between the Alutiiq Museum and their partners, and because of a strong commitment by all to work through the disagreements and difficulties which may arise to seek common ground upon which mutually beneficial solutions can be built (S. Haakanson, personal communication 2011). In the case of the Alutiiq Museum under Dr. Haakanson’s leadership, one of the foremost goals is what he calls “knowledge repatriation”; getting the embodied knowledge of an object back into the community and returning it to the culture in which it has relevance. In cases where the actual object is not being returned, this may be a hard concept for some to get behind as it could be construed as accepting or even legitimizing disputed non-Native museum ownership of cultural materials. The subject of ownership aside, Dr. Haakanson tries to keep in mind that the objects have been cared for in their current locations and focuses instead on working together to share the knowledge they hold and return that knowledge home to its community (S. Haakanson, personal communication 2011).

A very good example of collaboration in conservation is taking place today between the Alutiiq Museum and conservators at Harvard's Peabody Museum. In 2011, when Dr. Haakanson was initially interviewed for this thesis, he mentioned an upcoming project involving a single person Alutiiq kayak which had been discovered by himself and Ronnie Lind, an Alutiiq elder, when they caught sight of its bifurcated bow while visiting the museum for NAGPRA consultations in 2003 (Haakanson, 2011). Alutiiq oral history pointed to its likely use as a warrior's kayak because of the use of human hair and other aspects of its construction (Bergeron, 2012). Currently it is the only known kayak of its kind in existence, largely because these types of kayaks would typically be buried with their owner. The goal at the time of Dr. Haakanson's interview was to raise enough money to bring the kayak home to the Alutiiq Museum for an extended loan. Within a year, and with the proceeds of a \$283,685 "Save America's Treasures" grant, the project has evolved into a highly collaborative two year conservation effort which will culminate in a ten year loan at the Alutiiq Museum ("Conserving Alutiiq Cultural Heritage | Peabody Museum," n.d.). Notably, the grant specifically designated the funding for the purpose of supporting collaboration between the two museums ("Save America's Treasures Grant Program Announces \$14.3 Million in Awards," 2011). It also recognized the importance of the kayak not in aesthetic or monetary value, but specifically in terms of its cultural and contextual value when it said "Kayaks and their accessories embody a chain of Indigenous technological knowledge, craftsmanship, and spiritual beliefs passed down through generations". Before the project was underway both Dr. Haakanson and the conservation team at the Peabody specifically expressed their enthusiasm for the collaboration and the importance of combining their knowledge for the best outcome (Bergeron, 2012; "Conserving Alutiiq Cultural Heritage | Peabody Museum," n.d.).

Another important aspect to the collaboration is that it appears from early on that the Alutiiq collaborators were seen as “experts” and not solely as community consultants. With a foundation so well constructed on recognition of the connection between the kayak and the Alutiiq community and of the necessity to partner Alutiiq experts and the Alutiiq Museum, the project was well on its way to collaboration.

The kayak is believed to be one of the last of its kind to be constructed, and the decline in kayak building and use has continued to the present day. Today there is only one traditionally trained Alutiiq kayak builder, Alfred Naumoff, who learned largely based on his own curiosity and persistence (Brown, 2012). Naumoff together with Dr. Haakanson, and Susan Malutin, an Alutiiq skin sewer who also learned traditional methods largely through her own initiative, form the team that has been working with the Peabody’s conservators to repair, research, document, and conserve the kayak (“Conserving Alutiiq Cultural Heritage | Peabody Museum,” n.d.). To bridge the thousands of miles between the two museums, collaborators keep in frequent contact with each other using the internet, writing emails or videoconferencing to communicate (Promise, 2012). In March of 2012 the three Alutiiq collaborators traveled to Massachusetts to work in person with the Peabody’s conservators to develop the conservation treatment plan (Haakanson, 2011).

The collaborative process has proven to be a fruitful one. The Alutiiq experts have shared information that has proven important both contextually as well as practically. They explained that the skin used was likely to be that of a female sea lion given the low number of scars present and because their skin was usually thinner and therefore easier to work with (Bergeron, 2012). They also gave a thorough explanation of the technique for preparing skins to

be used in kayak construction (Brown, 2012). The conservators, with the guidance of the Alutiiq experts, took small samples from the kayak in order to identify the substance used to waterproof the skin and the type of sinew used to sew the skins together (Promise, 2012). The Alutiiq collaborators showed how marks on one side of the kayak were made by straps which held the owner's gear and which indicated that he was right handed (Brown, 2012). They were also able to identify other pieces in the Peabody's collections that were associated with the kayak, including some of the whaling gear. At some point in its lifetime a portion of the bifurcated bow of the kayak was broken off and during its time at the Peabody the pieces have been lost (Brown, 2012). When it came time to discuss how best to restore and repair this section of the kayak, Alfred Naumoff and the Peabody team worked on it together, combining their knowledge to determine the best materials and techniques to replace the originals.

The knowledge being generated by the project is being shared with more than just the collaborators. The project has its own Facebook page, and is prominently discussed on the Peabody Museum's website. Collaborators including Dr. Haakanson and Peabody conservation intern Ellen Promise have given presentations to the Alutiiq and conservation communities (Haakanson, 2008; Promise, 2012). Another interesting feature of this project is the special "gallery" space at the Peabody which was arranged for the first time so that museum visitors can witness the ongoing conservation process and even interact with the conservators through questions and comments ("Conserving Alutiiq Cultural Heritage | Peabody Museum," n.d.). During their time at the museum, the three Alutiiq experts contributed to this interactive experience as well, giving a demonstration of the construction of a kayak model.

The Peabody staff and the Alutiiq experts have been quick to point out the many benefits of their collaborative approach. Trish Capone, the project's curator, remarked in an interview that "working with communities to engage with their traditional knowledge and . . . share that with the public makes (them) more effective at telling the stories of these objects" (Brown, 2012). In the same interview Capone asserted that the knowledge shared by Alfred Naumoff resulted from a different type of learning and was entirely new to the museum team. Dr. Haakanson also pointed out the benefit to Alutiiq communities: "the knowledge we gain from this exchange will not only help the Alutiiq people learn, but allow us to share and maintain a disappearing tradition of kayaking on Kodiak Island." (Bergeron, 2012).

The future impact of the Alutiiq Warrior Kayak Project will likely be significant. In preparation for the ten year loan at the Alutiiq Museum, a display space is being created which will allow Alutiiq community members and other museum visitors to interact with the kayak without endangering it (Brown, 2012). In keeping with his focus on knowledge repatriation Dr. Haakanson emphasizes the immense amount of information that the kayak holds as the only full size kayak of its kind, and the goal of trying to reincorporate that information into the community. He hopes that the project and the kayak's temporary return to the community will inspire interest in building traditional kayaks. Another promising perspective can be taken from the vantage point of a young conservator. When Conservation Intern Ellen Promise was asked how she felt the project's collaborative nature has influenced her future approach to working with Indigenous cultural material, she replied that for her this experience increased her awareness of the importance these materials can have in their source communities and has shown her how productive collaborations can be (Promise, 2012).

The Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository is a truly collaborative institution bringing Alutiiq knowledge and beliefs together with the best of museum practices and reaching out to other institutions as well as Alutiiq communities to enhance and protect Alutiiq cultural materials. Through the solid relationships the staff at the museum is forming with other museums they not only contribute to the appropriate care and treatment of Alutiiq cultural materials, they continue to influence the way non-Native conservators and institutions approach collaboration. The Alutiiq Museum is a prime example of how tribal museums and cultural centers are leading the way for collaboration, and empowering Indigenous communities in their ongoing efforts to protect their cultural material resources.

Through the examples of increasingly collaborative conservators like Dr. Nancy Odegaard, collaborative efforts like those undertaken during the Anchorage Loan Project, and dedicated collaborative institutions like the Alutiiq Museum under the guidance of Dr. Haakanson, a shift towards increased collaboration is evident. Participants are becoming partners and contacts, forming foundations for future dialogues and projects. Conservators involved in these projects, like Landis Smith and intern Ellen Promise will influence others they interact with; and collaborators like Chuna McIntyre and Susan Malutin continue to make inroads in working with museums. By looking at the contributions of participant partners as well as the difficulties encountered and benefits received, these efforts show that when museums recognize source communities as deeply involved and expert parties the resulting collaborative relationships can be demonstrably more beneficial to everyone and can contribute to a more congruous conservation and museum model.

V. Conclusions: Perspectives on the Future of Collaboration

As evidenced in the work of increasingly collaborative non-native conservators like Landis Smith and Nancy Odegaard it is clear that the ways in which collaboration with indigenous source communities is understood, approached, and accomplished is in some measure moving away from antiquated paradigms. Tribal institutions like the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository in particular are forging new paths to collaboration, taking the lead in building relationships with both their own communities and outside professionals and institutions. With such encouraging examples it is imperative that we constantly revisit many of the issues explored in this thesis and reevaluate the progress made.

One of the most important requirements for appropriate and effective collaborations is the development of dynamic guidelines and structure in conservation practice. The Alutiiq Museum has worked hard to put in place guidelines for the physical and spiritual care of their own cultural materials as well as that of other indigenous communities, and has a fairly flexible approach to working with larger outside institutions. By utilizing a more dynamic approach in this way they are better prepared to respond to all needs of their collections. Conservator Landis Smith expressed this best when she said "...if you are going to have a real process than it has to always be changing, different for every group, for every case, it has to be rethought". The Alutiiq's successful efforts exemplify the need for institutions to develop and follow dynamic guidelines for working with diverse communities in diverse situations.

Any guidelines of course, dynamic or otherwise, are only constructive if conservators understand the reasons behind them and therefore their necessity. In large part this responsibility

falls on the shoulders of conservation programs as they train the next generation of conservators to take on the profession in this (comparatively) new landscape. When conservation students like intern Ellen Promise working on the Alutiiq kayak project at the Peabody, work in environments which nurture these relationships the thought of collaboration is no longer intimidating or foreign to them, instead they see it as a key part of their approach to working with collections. One program that is attempting to integrate this into their curriculum is the joint UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Materials where required coursework places an emphasis on cultural contextual properties of materials as well as working with American Indian museums and experts as part of the education process (Bloomfield, 2013, p.5). One course in particular which involves partnering with the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum has among its stated goals: (1) “to create an environment where cultural and technical information would influence how students approach conservation” and (2) “to cultivate interest in the conservation profession amongst the tribal community, to meet increasing preservation needs in tribal museums in southern California” (Pearlstein p. 2).

Creating a curriculum which integrates collaboration and cultural context is extremely important; however it is arguably more important that these programs are made accessible to indigenous students as well. As discussed in section three, the number of trained indigenous conservators in the United States abysmally low, in addition to the daunting sociocultural and economic barriers facing indigenous students, most conservation programs have prerequisites and coursework that can be alienating and irrelevant⁴(Bloomfield 2013, 4-5). Although this is a

⁴ For more on this refer to the recent article “Engaging indigenous participation: toward a more diverse profession” by Tharron Bloomfield (2013)

simplified explanation of a complex undertaking, until the number of trained indigenous conservators⁵ increases substantially, the quality of collaborative partnerships and projects will suffer and to some extent stagnate.

One of the most important aspects of the case studies in section four was the way that forming constructive collaborative projects led to building and sustaining longer term relationships. These relationships take time and care to develop, as expressed by participant Gilbert W. Whiteduck in the 2008 Preserving Aboriginal Heritage symposium proceedings: “I would put it to you – the experts, the scientists, the representatives from institutions – that you need to be patient. You need to take the time to understand. Give us time, as we very often need to learn together. We will not get anywhere without a true, respectful, and collaborative partnership (p. 295). This type of open and ongoing dialogue and relationship building is of foremost importance to increasing collaboration. More solid relationships can go a long way in resolving difficulties as they breed respect and understanding. When solid and reciprocal relationships are formed between Indigenous source communities and museums they create a base for future collaborative efforts eliminating the need to always begin from “step one” and instead evolve organically and more often.

Whether or not the examples explored in this thesis are indicative of a larger shift in the conservation of objects of indigenous patrimony or simply isolates remain to be seen, however they certainly present positive advancements with encouraging results. What also remains to be seen is whether this increasing collaboration will continue to develop and improve or if it will become, as conservator Landis Smith put it: “a canned process”. Much like culture, conservation

⁵ Here I refer to graduates of professional conservation programs specifically

science is not static nor does it exist in a vacuum, it must continue to adapt and innovate. Many articles and publications have been made on the relationships between museums and indigenous peoples and currently “collaboration” has become a hot topic (although it is often still used interchangeably with consultation), however these works have increasingly been written by indigenous scholars and museum professionals including conservators. One such work by Dr. Amy Lonetree, “Decolonizing Museums”, was published just as this thesis was entering the final approval stage. The perspectives of these writers tend to give much more thorough examinations of complex issues and open up necessary debates for moving forward. The conservation profession has gone through a number of shifts from its somewhat humble early beginnings to its more scientific present, this paper has sought to make the case that the next shift in the conservation of objects of indigenous patrimony is the throwing open of the lab doors in welcome to the heirs of that patrimony.

Appendix A

IRB Exemption Certification

11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

<http://ohrpp.research.ucla.edu>
GC-IRB: (310) 825-7122
M-IRB: (310) 825-5344

EXEMPTION CERTIFICATION

DATE:	8/18/2011
TO:	NICOLE TALAMANTES AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES CENTER
FROM:	AUGUSTINE FERNANDES Exemptions Coordinator
RE:	IRB#11-002150 The Conservator's Compass - Navigating a More Collaborative Future for the Preservation of Objects of Indigenous Patrimony Version: Version 2

The UCLA Institutional Review Board (UCLA IRB) has determined that the above-referenced study meets the criteria for an exemption from IRB review. The UCLA IRB's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) with Department of Health and Human Services is FWA00004642.

Any modifications to the research procedures must be submitted to the OHRPP for prospective review and certification of exemption prior to implementation. The project must be renewed by the expiration date if work is to continue.

Submission and Review Information:

Certification Date	8/18/2011
Expiration Date	8/17/2016

Regulatory Determinations

-- Exempt Certification - This research has been certified as exempt from IRB review per 45 CFR 46.101, category 2.
--

Documents Reviewed included, but were not limited to:

Document Name	Document Version #
Final letter Initial correspondence.docx.pdf	0.01

General Conditions of Approval

As indicated in the PI Assurances as part of the IRB requirements for approval, the PI has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the study, the ethical performance of the project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the IRB.

The PI and study team will comply with all UCLA policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Ensuring that the personnel performing the project are qualified, appropriately trained, and will adhere to the provisions of the approved protocol,
- Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent process or documents without prior IRB approval (except in an emergency, if necessary to safeguard the well-being of human subjects and then notifying the IRB as soon as possible afterwards),
- Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from human subjects of their legally responsible representative, and using only the currently approved consent process and stamped consent documents, as appropriate, with human subjects,
- Reporting serious or unexpected adverse events as well as protocol violations or other incidents related to the protocol to the IRB according to the OHRPP reporting requirements.
- Assuring that adequate resources to protect research participants (i.e., personnel, funding, time, equipment and space) are in place before implementing the research project, and that the research will stop if adequate resources become unavailable.
- Arranging for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility of the study if the PI will be unavailable to direct this research personally, for example, when on sabbatical leave or vacation or other absences. Either this person is named as co-investigator in this application, or advising IRB via webIRB in advance of such arrangements.

Appendix B

Initial email correspondence to prospective participants (generalized)

Hello {prospective participant},

My name is Nicole Loya Talamantes and I am a graduate student from the University of California, Los Angeles. I am majoring in American Indian Studies and currently working on my thesis. I am hoping you would be interested in being interviewed. You were highly recommended to me by {...}, because of your experience {*very brief reference to individual participant's work*}. I know you would be a very valuable source of information.

I am looking at ways that conservation and exhibition of objects of Indigenous patrimony have changed with regards to collaboration between Indigenous communities and museum professionals. In addition to looking at what has instigated this change I am more specifically analyzing how deeply collaboration has manifested itself in current museum practice and what promise this can hold moving forward.

As part of my research I intend to carry out interviews with museum professionals such as you who have experience in this field. The audio recording and subsequent transcript of your interview will be kept confidential and accessible only by me and only for the support of, and inclusion in, my thesis. The thesis will be published in the UCLA library and the American Indian Studies Library. They will be fully available to you on request and you have the right to review them in their entirety in order to determine whether they should be edited or erased in whole or part. Throughout the interview you also have the right to refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer and still remain in the study.

If you are interested in participating please include in your response your preferred form of communication (telephone or internet “chat” service) and a date and time that would be convenient for the interview. I realize you are doing important work and have a busy schedule; however I would deeply appreciate the opportunity to interview you. I look forward to hearing from you.

If you wish to ask questions about your rights as a research participant or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researcher, please call the Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122 or write to Office of the Human Research Protection Program, UCLA, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

Should you have any other questions regarding the interview, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Nicole Marie Loya Talamantes
Nicole.ML.Talamantes@UCLA.edu
(XXX)-XXX-XXXX

Appendix C

Questions for “Subject A”

- Looking at two articles you wrote for the Arctic Studies Center Newsletter, one in February 2008 when conservation was just starting on the living cultures exhibit and another one from June 2009. You make several points that resonate with my work that I’d like to ask you about.

- - One of the things I am looking at is access. In the 2008 article you said that conservators have to weigh the value of access for Alaska Natives against the physical risk to the object when considering a long term loan.
 - When weighing these considerations, how extensively were Alaskan Native peoples involved in the process?
 - What, if any, considerations in the process would you say were unique to Alaskan Natives as opposed to determining access for those who do not come from originating communities?
 - Were there any requests made by First Native consultants to limit public access to some objects? If so were they followed?
 - Another aspect of my research is the shift in how museums and conservators look at the value of an object. Recognizing the intangible values of an object. As a conservator do you see this *changing* the way that objects are conserved? How?
 - In the 2009 article you state that “conservators are uniquely suited to this sort of collaborative work with collections...” because you “share common ground” with native consultants regarding focus on technologies, materials, etc... Would you

be willing to share a particular experience where you saw this “common ground” come into play in a collaboration you participated in?

- In the same article you also said “Ideally, consultations become exchanges that flow both ways” and gave examples of Native artists utilizing collections. Have you experienced similar exchanges where originating communities have benefitted from, more specifically, the expertise of conservators?
- Two of the many interesting aspects of the collaboration that I read about were the Yup’ik dance fans and the gutskin parka. To have recognized both the importance of the objects being “whole”, but also the importance of the originating community being the ones to restore them to life seems fairly (progressive?). Was there any precedent that the conservation team drew on for this?
 - At the time was there any opposition on the conservation team to these approaches?
 - Clearly First Native consultants were integral to the conservation process for these objects. How involved were they with most objects?
- Compared to the ASC project how collaborative would you say your other work is? Can you give me some examples?
- My last question is fairly open-ended because I really want to hear your overall thoughts on the subject. Coming from such a collaborative project (and others?) where do you think the future of conservation and collaboration with originating communities is headed?

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