
INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: All right guys, we are going to go ahead and get started. So first class of week 4. Want to remind everybody that Eliot White-Hill will be here on Thursday. So Elliot is a Nuu-chah-nulth and Coast Salish artist. His fatherly is a cultural leader and Indigenous scholar named Doug white. He wrote a chapter in *Northwest Coast Art a History of Changing Ideas*. So after many unsuccessful tries to scan this his dad just sent me a PDF and it is now uploaded to week 4. It's 40 pages I'm asking you to scan it. Have some familiarity with it because Elliot is going to be talking about it and just enough familiarity so you can ask me some questions and engage, you don't have to lock it down or anything, take a look at it, I know it's a lot of reading. Bruce Granville Miller who is going to be a speaker I believe the following week or two weeks after that is also going to be here. But he is going to be in the audience. He was Eliot's dad's, like, MA advisor when he was here. And was a big influence on his writing so Bruce asked if he could join and I thought that would be good the entirely possible that they are going to have a big dialogue but either way it will be good for you guys to hear and do a little read together be familiar with that.

Elliot is tally in the theme of what we look at this week with Michael Ames readings. He is also Indigenous

curator and he has a Coast Salish actually Salish, it's Coast Salish and interior Salish exhibiting open accessing at the Bill Reid gallery then he is flying down to Chicago he has semi permanent 10 year museum that is opening at the field museum, he is going to be here talk to us about his curating practice and his artistic practice and how they overlap and work with each other.

I upload a sill business over the weekend and that is the syllabus. Starting with week 4 for the next 11 weeks all of the readings are my readings all are what I know work or will have uploaded with Amanda or with Eliot's uploaded for you moving forward. The conservator at the Museum of Vancouver confirmed she will come in the week that we were supposed to be meeting with looking over conservation and so he will be here. Those readings are from when Heidi was here last time in 2023 with Nicky so I guess the caveat I would say the month of March which is a good ways away ^ there's still a little bit of wiggle room in term of what people are going to assign as for readings I will make sure those are in there with plenty of time for you guys to read them and be able to look them over but overall this is the final syllabus. There's no more weird readings that are going to pop up. Not any more dead links just going to be my class moving forward. This is how we are doing it and thank you for your patience. I am not great with technology you

probably figured that out with the Zoom talk but you know, I love teaching and sharing. This kind of dialogue with you. I want to thank everybody for moving online for Zoom, I had no why idea what I was doing in terms of the actual presentation I thought we had a great conversation I thought it was really fun to get a chance to look at that material and take Jordan's framework for Musqueam post and see how far we can take that in the Coast Salish world. I will be sending out some questions for you guys to look over regarding those. I've had a couple of folks asking me how to take notes or how to prepare for the midterm that is coming and I wanted to say that basically the way that I'm conceiving of this is anything that is in the PowerPoints, anything that is touched on by speakers and then brought forward through these questions of how to connect them to the readings and overall discussions and basically things that are discussions that we talk a lot about while we are in class are fair game. But you will know what those things are because I will mention them in the questions or in the -- I know you guys look at these PowerPoints you are it's a huge block of text I'm pulling out the text because there's something important in there for you to look over and think about. Plus the discussions. Anyway, I will never surprise you with something you've never seen or we haven't talked about.

And if you have any questions about that, by all means please come talk to me we have plenty of time to get you ready. I will remind you all that I have left the class before the midterm entirely open for us to do review of the term so we will be going back over everything. I know it's nerve-wracking to not have anything due for a long time and wonder how it's going but I think it's going great

What we did is we read instead of some other article again moving into the direction I want this class to take we read two chapters from *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes* written by Michael Ames. So this is a foundational text. How many have read this before? Okay just a couple of you. This is a foundational text for serving things. Especially for UBC and MOA this is the foundation from which all collaborative and decolonial processes started at the MOA. I am not saying that he is responsible for all the decolonizing work that when on but he was the director of MOA from 1974 to 1997 and then again in 2002 to 2004. I mean the man passed away in 2006. This guy worked at MOA for the last half of his life.. he did a ton of work to move the dial over from representing native people what non-native curators thought native people wanted to be represented as to actually working with Indigenous people to do that. And he was who collaborated with the Musqueam to come up with the collaborative process that they had. He was who started working towards hiring

Indigenous and broadly speaking around the world Indigenous curators and people from the communities from which belongings and objects in the collection exist that are from those communities where they are from. So hugely important text. It was originally published in 1986 under the name museums the public and anthropology, this is a much catchier title. He published this as expanded edition he mentioned if there that's seven more essays and a variety of things. As you saw it's not super long chapters, not hard reading. I recommend I am not telling you to do it I recommend everybody read this book and take a look at it. I mean, I can I think many of the folks in here were probably not born in 1929 so it's an interesting thing for you guys to take a look at this and see. By the way, 1992 this is something that gets brought up in the States not so much here in Canada, there was a lot of Indigenous curation and Indigenous for the first time ever Indigenous curation and Indigenous focus on art and representation in 1992. Because it was the 500 year anniversary of Columbus landing in North America. In the Americas. My undergrad mentor was a Koyukon Athabascan woman named Phyllis Fast. She entered Harvard in 1992 because they had a huge cohort of Indigenous scholars including Rosita Worl who is Tlingit scholar at SeaAlaska Heritage Institute. Bernie Perley the anthropologist here, the linguist, was also in her cohort in Harvard in 1992 for that. Just keeping that

in mind this 1992 was sort of a watershed moment for Indigenous curation, conversations around Indigenous people moving into the scholarly spaces. You don't need to know this beyond me just telling you right now, my work that I'm doing with my dissertation is looking at how some Alaska native folks were doing Indigenous curation all the way back to 1971, but largely speaking 1992 was the year you start seeing Indigenous curating Indigenous curators actually curating Indigenous artwork. So any questions?

I want to give one other caveat. Michael Ames when you are reading him obviously like I don't think of 1992 as that long ago but it was 34 years ago. It's important to keep in mind that some of the language he uses even in '92 is maybe not how we would talk about some of these frameworks today and maybe talking about Indigenous folks and you never see him use the word colonialism he talks about conquered peoples. He is talking about colonialism. The other and he was really on the right side of history because so much of what we do at MOA and then MOA influencing the rest of the world in terms of decolonization comes from him. Comes from this. The other thing if you are going to read more of him and even when thinking through the two chapters we did read that I want you guys to consider is Michael Ames had a somewhat sarcastic and offcolour sense of humour that seeped into all of his writing and everything he did. It's funny to

read archives where people didn't think that letter they wrote was ever going to get immortalized into some library or Michael Ames because he had a sense of humour that was maybe offputting but it does sneak into his writing. The title of the book is kind of cheeky. Keep that in mind while you are reading his work. That is my caution. He was brilliant and really a visionary. What I like about these two chapters looking at it 34 years later we can see he is talking about thing that is need to happen or wants to happen or whether or not he thinks they can happen and these are predictions that he made about museums and now we can talk about whether or not those things actually happened or not, how we are doing them where we can improve where we are heading what changed what didn't.

Okay. So Ames definition of museum, tongue and chief he says museums are cannibalistic ... [Reading] ... What do you guys think about that? What did you think about the readings? Is that still true today?

STUDENT: I would say it's still fairly true reminds me of the British museums and stuff like at that and how they have so many items that are oh you don't have proper facilities to host these items we are not going to give them back or something like that.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Right the resistance to repatriation, the idea that things need to be maintained in pristine state and kept

in temperature controlled even originally these things were kept in cedar boxes would be brought out and danced and cared for, absolutely.

STUDENT: I was at the MOA the other day and walked around all of the exhibits ways thinking to myself when is it going to be something I can resonate. I was waiting to mirror turn as I walked around I found some stuff in India. Some things that I've seen in my own family hope em we have similar artistry or similar patterns but it's funny how I didn't even think of how there is like a glass box for everyone.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Right. Absolutely. Does that change if you are thinking about going in curation does that impact how you think about that.

STUDENT: I thinks interesting the way that all of the exhibits are set up and how they move things around I really like it, I loved the Museum of Anthropology.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Thank you, that is a good point. Again we are going to talk about Cajun and Creole culture when I go to Louisiana, everything is set up and it's one hand very touristy and hokey on the other hand there is a glass box for everyone it's just where is that glass box.

STUDENT: To me it reminds me of the adage that if you have a hammer everything looks like a nail. The idea that we can museumify anything and everyone not because everyone is the same but because we can pick out whatever you know fits under the kind

of categorizations that we've decided are museumifiable.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: That gets to the heart of curation, you can curate anything. Which is something we talked about in heritage this idea going back to our first week with the UNESCO definitions, here in a couple of slides we are going to juxtapose his definition of museumification with the UNESCO definition and how they align. I think you are right that gets to the heart of curation you are making these decisions that then represent people to other people, so a third public to a third party that you are not even necessarily privy to. What do you guys think about the idea that museums are cannibalistic? That they are consuming humans.

STUDENT: I think it's true because the -- it is cannibalistic because in one way it takes in and never produces. You know, museums just take in from their collections, they collect things and for the most part things stay there and then they are sort of living off of that that people coming in to see things kind of is affirms their purpose and they are often creating different narratives to kind of sustain themselves.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Well that is the whole thing, sometimes your an Indigenous as an Indigenous person when you go in and you see how people are representing you and your community or other you go, what is that. Do you think museums are getting better about that?

STUDENT: I definitely think it's better but there's not -- there's never going to be 100 percent fix to the creation of a mythology and a space that is outside of the whole idea of anything being a spectacle accept rates it from the person and so ^ there's always going to be people if they don't have that real connection to something that interpret things very differently than to how they feel, yeah.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Absolutely and then that is one of the things that I worry about I think everybody worries about as anthropologists and museum professionals is how we are presenting people are we offending someone are we ... I know people who have written very, very good scholarly well meaning and grounded texts that have been picked up by someone else and used in a harmful way. You have no control to stop it once it's out there. Here we go.

STUDENT: I agree and I wanted to add that I think that especially because museums have such a backlog of objects that were obtained in non-ethical ways they have to reckon with that before they can get over that.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Absolutely. You have to be able to work with communities return what needs to be returned, be honest about the colonial past. He talks a little bit about the colonial past of museums. He gets further in the rest the book. Back there.

STUDENT: I can interpret it as people in museums especially in 1992 they

kind of take are museums have objects and stuff that are not from there and therefore they can't really like ask the people who owned those things what the objects are for or something like that. I remember when I went to MOA and I saw an object from Indonesia which I identified as something from my community, and I saw the description was like a baby carrier I am pretty sure that's not what it is.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Yeah. Well, so that is something that he doesn't touch on that I touch on a little bit when we are talking about deaccessioning figuring what you think about it is correct or not hugely important especially if it's going to get deaccessioned later because it didn't have a good provenance.

STUDENT: I was thinking about the word cannibalistic I think it's true in some sense but it's misleading almost because I feel like when I think about cannibalistic in nature I think it's like not going to change as soon as it's consumed there's no way of returning it. And I feel like that is less true nowadays with some of the deaccessioning and some things are returned although they might be changed and it's the culture that is being cannibalized more than the objects itself. Not just people's material. So it's like I was a little bit iffey about the word cannibalistic. I was hoping maybe we could elaborate on it.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Fair enough. I think one of the reasons he

went with he had that quote that he used but North American anthropology was born right here and it was born looking at First Nations from the Northwest Coast particular Kwakwaka'wakw people and the Hamat'sa and the Hamat'sa was glossed as a cannibal society in popular writing there was tours where people would come up and see Kwakwaka'wakw people dance during the potlatch band and a lot of Kwakwaka'wakw folks were happy to do it because they were practising their culture under the radar of the governmental forces. There's definitely a tongue and cheek nod he is from Vancouver he is from UBC. So I think there is that, but there's this idea that you are consuming he mentions here that caters to the urge to absorb the life of another into one's own life, museums are a form of cannibalism. There's ideas about appropriation. There's ideas fetishization exoticizing FOMO, all of that is built in there.

STUDENT: I like the word cannibalism I think it shocks you as you read it. Feels visceral and it not only is it appropriate in that it feels like you are appropriating things and everything but it feels violent, feels gory feels personal even. It elicits like an emotional response and I think it's a good word to us if this is what you are trying to get people to think about.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: It's really catchy, evocative. That is why I'm saying when you are reading him he likes to say some pithy things in there and that is one of them. So thank you guys I

am going to jump to the next slide. This is the single both most important paragraph I can probably ever show you of any museum anthropology course ever and it says the objective then is not simply to criticize museums but also it attempt to locate them and the critiques within their sociopolitical and economic contexts. Then he comes down and says what should then he basically he said people should stop trying to -- non-native people should stop trying to represent the views of native people. That is what he said in his first book people came back said what you talking about. You want to have museums with native artifacts with Indigenous belongings and not talk about that. And he came back and said what I should have said is that non-natives including curators and other scholars cannot themselves adequately represent the views of others and should no longer try. He says what they can do is report on those views and provide better opportunities for people to represent themselves within the established museum context through collaboration joint curatorships commissioned programs exhibition and other forms of empowerment. This requires a re-oriented point of view one in which the First Nations individuals take on identity as speaking subject rather than traditional object of museum classification and interpretation. That is what everything MOA has been doing for the last 40 years based on that paragraph right there. They have influenced museums all

over the world to continue doing it. And there were I don't want to down play this, there were Indigenous scholars have been working for decades longer than this to make sure things decolonized this is frankly in 1992 a much older white guy with a lot of power saying they are right let's do it which is also important to think about. What to you think about that sentence, have we succeeded have we surpassed what he asked for do we still have a lot of work to go what do you guys think.

STUDENT: Still a lot of work.

STUDENT: I think that it's a good sentiment but I think a big problem with it is MOA is that they fall short on actually including that when it comes to Indigenous peoples that aren't necessarily local. You go there and they really are missing a lot of information on let's say the Inuit and you know even other polices that are not North America there's just a lot less information and I think to have a little bit more information is better than to have kind of nothing there. Because there's a lot of items there that are simply labelled tool or.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Right.

STUDENT: Object. And I think it's kind of it feels, we should be doing something with those and if they can't get the information on them I don't think that we should necessarily it should be MOA's place to be presenting that stuff if they aren't going

to do their due diligence to research and properly present those objects.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Well, so what shall we do with them then? No no I mean.

STUDENT: Repatriate them.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Fair enough. So I think you are absolutely right, one of the things that you run into with particularly things that are archeological tool or little I am not defending not having good information on an object but sometimes if you don't have a whole lot of information it's hard to return it to a community because you don't know which community it is Inuit stretches from Greenland all the way to Chukchi the entire panel but you are absolutely right, I do think MOA has done a pretty good job of hiring Indigenous folks though for instance when Carol Myer she is great, when Carol Myer retired the new curator, the new curator he is Indigenous I believe, Indigenous Samoa for the pacific collection. He is awesome. He is great. The person in charge of the Asian collections is she is Japanese. They do hire but you know I agree with you there's so much more work to do that lot of that comes down to provenance research and reaching out to communities but it's so much. So do you think it would be better for MOA not even MOA but a museum like MOA to shrink to be the whole cal context that it's trying to be.

STUDENT: I think if they can't properly represent these communities then they shouldn't be representing them at all.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Fair enough. No, fair enough.

STUDENT: I would okay add on to this I agree. I do think he can't though I think they are still working on it and they can work harder and there's the MOA is has the posterity and resources and connections to find that provenance so I don't think yeah if they continue to not do that yeah, reoperate rate but I think it's in their ability to discover the provenance of these things especially because that is a part of repatriation is clarifying the provenance. But I also wanted to add that I think you see with the temporary exhibitions and new exhibitions outstanding example of the self-representation and decolonization. I think the Nuxalk exhibit is a great example of this. In that way the MOA is excelling and achieving what they set out to do. With the permanent exhibit and the display exhibit the visual archives, that is where I see so much provenance lacking and I -- you cannot easily understand where things are and what things are.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: So I will say in MOA's defence, you know, I think that sue does an incredible job of reaching out to Indigenous communities working with folks I think Jennifer Kramer does Jordan Wilson is incredible scholar and they do a great job. We are looking at what he said and talking what he says up here basically to locate and critique these. So

that being said MOA hires me occasionally to do provenance research for them because they have so much stuff, like I work with Alaska native and Northwest Coast stuff that was made for sale in theory, some of that stuff that turned out to be not made for sale but I do that research so it can be correct and one thing you have to think of I get into this because in chapter 2 he talks about where museums come from how they historically reformed. Think of the streams of how things get to museums you have collectors, you have purchases, you have we quests you have museums speaking of cannibals absorbing other museums. The thing about check tors is they love the objects they collect and they build these narratives around the objects that they own and they become very invested in those narratives. And then those narratives maybe not so much now but in the past moved in the museums with the objects when they were accepted because museums wanted the objects so they said yes we'll take them but they are taking this kind of hokum not very good information with it and untangling that is hard because the very way that scholarship works is to reproduce information grounded in something. So if it's in the catalogue of museums somebody cites it and they publish it that gets cited and cited and cited and eventually you end up if a snowball rolling down a hill where you say this is wrong and someone says well, it's cited here here here here here for the last

150 years. Breaking through that is difficult because partially it undermines our very own idea of how ethical academic reproduction of knowledge works. So that is a real problem that museums face. I can think of an example at the Museum of Vancouver where an Indigenous scholar did an exhibit she took the attributions that many of the collectors had left in the museum and called it not going to say, deep detail but at the called this what they called it and then they reproduced that that has been reproduced by an Indigenous scholar even if it was perhaps not from that community so that is an issue that you can run into it becomes very difficult to break through that. So but I think MOA does a great job and sometimes I don't know what something is but I know what something isn't if they are calling something Tlingit or Nuxalk that is definitely not as a non-Nuxalk or Tlingit person it's not my person to say, I can say I don't think that is what it is and move it back to Northwest Coast general and show it to communities and get it started to go where it needs to go. But at least it wouldn't be misidentified as the wrong thing. Finally there is the last thing I Mr. Mention about it on this slide which is when we were talking the other day about Susan Point's gates at Stanley Park, so she is Musqueam but it's doing Squamish work and there's a lot of objects that were made by other communities at that do work in those other communities, so

even with something I think about all the time as a provenance researcher, I come in I say that's not Tlingit, because it wasn't made by a Tlingit person there's no context now, but maybe it was used about a Tlingit community. I don't actually know. So that is what is so difficult to untangle these sort of. Does that make sense the life of the object. Something to think about.

This is really interesting he was talking about Indigenous led museums particularly about I thought about U'mista while he was writing about this. One of the things I thought was interesting he said even though there are these Indigenous museums cultural centres propping up that doesn't museums can't abdicate their duties and their roles in Indigenous people's lives to return those objects and do the work that we call decolonization that he didn't have the language for at that point. What did you guys think?

STUDENT: This is more related to the last side but an example I can give is for the new... exhibit everyone seem to look like my mother you'll notice there's no labels for ... Breath work and yesterday I was there and I asked and I was like why is there so a little bit behind the scenes but basically they had prepped all the labels and right before the exhibit there's a lot of thought glad that she didn't feel comfortable, the labels were kind of tying into a colonial story of showing her work so instead of having any

information she wanted none and she wanted the experience for the person to go in and look at her work without any preconceived --

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: More experiential.

STUDENT: Yes, even though the team was not used to that kind of practice they went along with it because that was her choice to exhibit even though people would probably ask all the time what is this, where is it from. But instead they have to read her writing on the walls and make it more of an experience without having that name.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: That is the thing so people have the right to represent themselves as they wish. So it doesn't have to fit into these colonial boxes, it can be -- sometimes you can go to a show Nick Galanin who is going to be in a few two months he has a -- his shows are always, like his exhibits are always multimedia and kind of interesting. Always objects and there's film and there's projections and all sorts of stuff but he always hires a white guy who has got the handlebar moustache and dressed like a barbershop singer from the 1930s, sitting in the corner constantly whittling the entire time he is there. Not carving anything that is not true I am not going to tell you it was carving because it's wildly inappropriate but he was carving something, this thing the whole time and that white carver and he just sits by the end of the show he will be in a mounds of cedar chips but he

sits there are carving that is the experience of that show. He doesn't explain what it is. Then what he is carving gets displayed near him yeah. Gets put on the display but that is an experiential thing that Nick Galanin does. What he is carving is a wooden sex toy and when it move tos other case it's called I just love and the four has Os in it your culture. I leave it at that but he has this white carver carving it's part of this experience he won't talk to you. He won't look at you. He sits there carving the whole time. It's an amazing thing that he does. There's experiential moments in these yeah exhibits.

So I don't have a whole lot to say about this, he does say even the emergence of at the time like the emergence of these Indigenous led museums and cultural centres doesn't abdicate our duty as museum scholars to continue doing this decolonial and collaborative work.

This is interesting. So we have been talking a lot about intangible heritage we've been talking about it intangible inherent taking prerogatives knowledge that is owned by particular people, knowledge that can only be known by a certain group of folks. And he is talking about in this representation of Indigenous folks who has a right to share that kind of knowledge and information. Can a non-native person adequately represent an Indigenous points of view ever. And he says the two extremes are to be avoided. He is

against it. The imperialist assumption that the ...
[Reading] ... So again you can't bust down the door like you are Malinowski and start filming, it's not something you want to do. On the other hand the nihilistic post-modernist claim that all knowledge is relative all voices are equal and therefore we can only invent rather than more or less accurately come to know the other and only they can speak knowingly about themselves. He says reality is found somewhere in the middle. What do you guys think about that? I mean he wasn't right 100 percent of the time. Right. What do you guys think? Can because for instance with Jennifer Kramer we are talking about the Nuxalk exhibit she is working with Clyde Tallio, I worked on this exhibit collide didn't write all of it, Jennifer is working closely with Clyde but she wrote a good bit of it, I wrote some of it, everybody was involved. Is that sufficient? Is it sufficient to have to privilege and centre Indigenous voices or is it necessary to remove non-Indigenous voices to get to something that he is talking about like not the truth but something that more closely resembles life or real life or reality.

STUDENT: I think in an ideal world you would have Indigenous people doing everything but we are not in an ideal world and like we don't have or Indigenous people don't have that privilege of being able to do everything because of the majority of people who live in Vancouver is not Indigenous and so but I think that

to be able to know a culture, you have to -- or to be able to know -- I don't know how to phrase this. You have to be able to live a culture.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Lived experience. Like embodied lived knowledge.

STUDENT: Yeah, without that you don't really know and a lot of I guess non-native people don't have that experience so that is where it's lacking.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Well, I mean, obviously Ames isn't talking about this specifically but that is one of the issues that we see again and again with pretendians, have you been following that it's not just that someone is pretending to be Indigenous, it's someone is pretending to be Indigenous displacing Indigenous scholars and subsuming that experience as their own and presenting it to the world they haven't had that experience and it's displacing Indigenous people from those roles but appropriating oftentimes narratives of trauma or narratives of colonial violence that is not part of their lived experience. It's so important. We are also getting to ideas that have authenticity. Like the authenticity of voice. Who has a right to represent Indigenous point of views. Well, Indigenous folks do sometimes that is through a collaborative process. Sometimes that is them doing it themselves. Yeah.

STUDENT: I think to some extent people frame anthropology as almost

studying so you can have the skills to understand someone's lived experience without having actually lived it yourself and that is kind of a problematic approach to anthropology but it's also not entirely false, that that is a lot of the skills we as anthropologists seek to achieve. Although obviously not completely. And so I feel like just if you are embodied with those skills to understand someone else's lived experience, potentially in a very empathetic good way, potentially you could have some authority to with Jennifer Kramer help, assist the representation of a culture, obviously it's not a good idea to do it all by yourself and presume you can fully understand a lived experience but.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Rather than presenting that lifted experience maybe that you are sharing your platform. Jennifer sharing and this goes back to Portugal the Man, Eric Howk and I are from a very small town that has a very large native population and probably no coincidence that it was like Portugal the Man sharing. Sharing that, that was trying to represent a perspective. Sharing that platform.

STUDENT: That is huge part of anthropology is doing that so to completely be hands off completely is to some extent denying the skill of anthropologists to help uplift responsibly although I will admit the track record for anthropologists doing that, little sketchy, quite sketchy. So I understand where he is coming from but I think the entirely hands off approach denies that

anthropologists especially contemporary anthropologists like people in this classroom are doing their best to put in the work to be uplifting.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Which is also why we are also it's important to be reflexivity is important about where you come from. With Jennifer if you take her class, she talks about deep hanging out for participant observation. That is the way she talks about deep hanging out. Jennifer worked and lived with Nuxalk people for 30 years but she is not a Nuxalk person but she is empathetic to Nuxalk folks and also has deep relationships where she has been adopted into a family and shares the platform with them.

STUDENT: I think this is something that rubs me the wrong way this idea of reality rather than realities where we say reality is found I think there's kind of the implicit essentialization there that oh if for example someone is Indigenous we can label them as Indigenous or they self-define as Indigenous that is somehow they can't accurately represent what being Indigenous means. You know, like to take that kind of pretendian displacement of Indigenous scholars further you can also think argue that even within communities people might disagree and what is representative of me or us.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Because communities Indigenous people they are not monolithic. They are not static or monolithic.

STUDENT: And so I think the challenge for me is how do we present

something as rather than what is, what could oh this can be what being native means but it doesn't mean this is what native means.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Fair enough, this guy was born in 1933 and he passed away ten years before the ontological term took place but yes, I agree with you, he could have been more reflexive about that in general I think he is doing a ton of work. Yeah, back there.

STUDENT: A lot of ... This has made me think about the Portugal the Man search when they were in Indianapolis to have a representative come to the stage that was so difficult because of the mass displacement and I was is there a museum or is there a perspective that if they have a label for something and they don't know what it is it says tool or it just says this is there could they then take the perspective of listen, there was so much displacement and this is the perspective that we are coming from we true three don't know where it comes from because of the horrors of the past and taking educational route or is it, I don't know, is it better to try to find somebody still. I am not sure.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Are you talking about when Eric said they were in Indianapolis... the cool thing they did there, maybe someone to say they are displace. Amy Spark who is the ... Woman who is on their board to arrange to have communities meet with them, the cool thing is it's not cool what they did

was cool, by going back to Chicago many of the Indigenous people in int napless was displaced to chalk they did get folks who were originally from that area to talk. It wasn't any person from the midwest will do. she said that, Amy Sparks is said that it's kind of sad there are places we couldn't find anyone they talked about the displacement.

STUDENT: I was think being it in the way that it's kind of hard to represent anything absolutely for anyone. It doesn't necessarily have to be Indigenous people. A lot of experiences are so varied across all cultures not everything is -- everything is super subjective so it's hard for museums to do their work if they can't represent anything. I think it's super important people have been saying to make sure people within the culture are being included in the process and stuff like that. It shouldn't just make major museums not want to express other people's cultures because sometimes if it goes too far then it's like we are going backwards.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Absolutely. So one of the things that I think about for instance, Jordan Wilson Musqueam scholar says in his booklet. I'm one guy who is Musqueam this isn't representing all Musqueam's perspective this is my perspective. So when we think this back into practice, curation is grounding your work in context, it's grounding your work in community knowledge and community consent. So maybe it's not everybody's perspective but it's enough that

people agree and then you can say this isn't everyone's perspective but we did this thing. I was think being with my masters thesis where I went to Bella Coola one guy doing this thing to identify objects and reclaim them for his family then there's other people going we don't like what is he doing but is he doing it he is a Nuxalk person so valid expression of Nuxalk identity for him and valid expression for them whatever they are doing there's no set way.

STUDENT: I think something that presents this idea really well in a good digestible way is Marie Lang's Zenon two-spirit identities in Toronto. It basically this was a -- I can't remember if she was a masters or PhD candidate that interviewed young people across Toronto Indigenous young people across Toronto about their own experiences with the two-spirit identity and kind of compiles it together as this is what two-spirit means to all of these people and all of these definitions of what two-spirit means to these people are valid and acceptable definitions of this even if they are not always overlapping in the same definition.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Absolutely. When we get around the to repatriation talk, I recently helped return a head dress some of you guys if you were in Jennifer's 431 this head dress actually had glitter plastered all over it but it was original to the head dress, and it was still almost 100 years old. Basically where mica schist would have been ground up

from the mountain tops and turned into a paste that is sparkly and applied no the paint. This guy named Jimmy John he went not climbing up that mountain he went and bought glitter, he put it on the mask the it does that same work in that piece when we got it my boss was like I don't know if this thing is real or not. Which is completely fair. I don't think if this is real. It was completely caked in eagle feathers eagle down it's too real for my liking we need to find out where it came from. We tracked it down were able to return to but that glitter which is the twinge of inauthenticity modern craft supply was enough to think maybe it should have gone home. It did we have photos of a potlatch and that was something.

STUDENT: This might be a stupid question but did you say Jimmy John was hiss name actually Jimmy John.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: His name is actually Jimmy John lived to be 112 years old. He was Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation from Yuquot. We will get into that later. He had a very distinctive style of carving. He was from Yuquot. I was able to track down the family. Where my attribution. We are talking about how Indigenous knowledge and non-Indigenous knowledge can come together I knew that was by Jimmy John I knew where that mask was the head dress the family knew what it meant who it belonged to why it was gone what the prerogatives are when we got it back to them they brought it

out in potlatch. They had songs that they had name that is they gave were related to this piece. There are ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge can come together and do good things.

Okay. I just want to talk quick about chapter 2 basically gives you a background of what you already know really rich elite royals, right, powerful people had own private museums. In the 19th century they started letting other people in the museums he became nationalistic led us to connect and get back Mawani's article about nations collecting and building collections to display for identity. That will come out in the questions that I send out later. But he is talking about this like it was in the past even in 1992. They were owned by elite and powerful people. How many people have been to the Pfizer wing of any major Museum of North America. I don't know Michael Audain and his museum up in Whistler where he is repatriating objects to North America or to Canada to his collection. So my question is how much have museums changed from these cabinets of curiosities. At the end of the day I think curators on the ground are doing great work. I think MOA does amazing work to push this dialogue forward and to be a good museum that does good in the world. I completely believe that. So hypothetical criticisms all the aside and critiques, I think MOA does a great job. However, museums have boards of

directors, museums have sponsors all of these corporate interests, have we switched out Robert Barrons for other Robert Barrons that have multinational corporations now? What do you think?

STUDENT: I think as long as museums exist in capitalist institutions and are funded by large corporations there's always going to be a problem.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: He said that in 1929 he was talking about money is going to -- there was that one museum magazine that he quoted said in 10 years museums won't exist. They were right, the funding dried up then you've got to go searching for other funding. We were talking about the reconciliation pole how that was funded.

STUDENT: It's okay that pretty much got at what I was trying to say.

STUDENT: I think that it has become less obvious to people outwardly which isn't saying that much because it's still you said the wings are labelled after people, but I feel like it's hard for these places to stay open otherwise. The board of directors has to get their money from somewhere, the people who work there, staff it's all about who can sponsor you because I don't imagine they get a ton of funding otherwise.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Yeah. It's hard. It's really hard. By the way, I won't get real specific but have you seen the problems the AGO has been having? Their board is constantly causing curators to either be fired or quit. It's like a rotating

door. Another person left again. It went back to a board of acquisition board that was they were fighting over.

STUDENT: I think that something that limits the work of decolonizing in museum social security the negotiation that has to happen between the people doing the work on the ground and the shareholders not stakeholders. And sometime that is work that is negotiated for the benefit of other parties is what we see more of so a lot of people don't understand how much repatriation happens at MOA because if they don't see a big news story about it they don't recognizing it happens but it still impacts what the public sees.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Absolutely. Again these -- if you go and look at museums you are right it's not as obvious but the halls are named for people, the wings are named for people, even just on this is maybe the most minimal but on the little tombstone labels you'll see donated by or something like that. Which is whatever, but sometimes it gets more egregious we are going to start seeing curators looking like Nascar drivers with sponsorship patches all over their suits.

This is the chapter that talked about museumification. Basically I liked what he had to say about it which is when we museumify other cultures in our own past... [Reading] ... It's not just these glass boxes and I was thinking about this and versus this one that we had earlier from UNESCO, this was Harrison, a complex process

involving the transformation of cultural and natural heritage into museum objects with the aim of maximizing their preservation promotion and revealing historical cultural scientific artistic value. That is a much more optimistic view of it the but what do you think about this? Idea of with technology. I'm going to be honest with you I don't think he could have imagined how far technology has come in museums. You can have a conversation with George Washington's hologram, at mount Vernon now. It's come a long ways.

STUDENT: I don't know if anybody has been to the there's a little museum in around Sechelt that has a very specific example of this which is there was some ancestors who were excavated, whatever term you best like to use for that, and they went through this elaborate process of digital remodelling of what these ancestors would look like. And I remember seeing this, I went there I would have had to have been 15 maybe at the time. I remember thinking oh my god that's so cool. This is so crazy because you go in there and there's a big screen and you see these 3D models of these people so they have modelled based off of the their remains and they have gone into the community and then taken a bunch of research and modelled off of the people who are still living in that community. So very something that now as I would be like the ethics and the concept behind this is a little bit outlandish to me.

Especially when you are dealing with something like ancestral remains and even that excavation taking place in the first place. Those conversations around that. And then also thinking about community members even going into a space like that and being kind of confronted with that, that image. I remember feeling a little bit like goose bumpy myself being in that space especially when beside it are cases full of tens of thousands of small stone beads that were buried with the woman. And I mean, it's like a crazy scientific marvel that the technology was able to do this but it's interesting what that is -- what spectacle that is making for a viewer and what, I don't know it's very.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: It's unsettling. What about their consent what about -- I mean, it is uncomfortable.

STUDENT: I haven't done research on it it's something that was very striking that I saw as a teenager. I would love to actually look back into how that was done now. But it was done in combination with people from Paris specialized people. So I think it's like you ask yourself why and also how and just imagine what that process must have been like and also yeah what that is like to witness nowadays or if it would happen now.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: What it even happen now. Great question. Is there a collaborative process that would make that better or something that shouldn't be done.

STUDENT: And did they say yes.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Did they do it then.

STUDENT: Did they know everything that they knew about the situation to fully consent to that then.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Yeah. I agree.

STUDENT: I saw something really similar at the Canadian museum of history I think in 2019. And I remember feeling like I came away from it like they were saying look what we did for them and that wasn't I felt that wasn't what they were trying to say but the way that it was framed I still came away with that and felt very uncomfortable and where it was in relation to everything else it kind of weirdly felt out of place and just the context wasn't there enough for me. I was should I do I have the right to feel uncomfortable about this I don't know this is not my community but it gave me a weird vibe, yeah.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Absolutely. That can be really unsettling I tautly said the mound Vernon was I was there and they have a hologram of George Washington's head floating in space. It's like this is what they did is they actually took his DNA and reckon instructed him and found how close he looks compared to the paintings. It was super weird.

STUDENT: I think this is kind of been a problem for a while because you think about I don't remember which world's fair but Walt Disney did this to Abraham Lincoln people were freaked out then. We keep doing it even though people are kind of like

hey maybe we should stop.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: If you believe futurama, Abraham or Walt Disney's head is in a glass case somewhere. The thing I was going to mention about museumification, AI we are going to talk about AI with David Kirkpatrick there's two things that are coming together are great concern but is the digitization of everything in archives which is great because on the one hand it preserves the quality and levels it can be corrected, audio, for Indigenous communities to have songs and language and the voices of elders back but it can also be scraped by AI if museums are not very careful about how they are safeguarding intellectual property of Indigenous communities. Something to think about. It's obviously a huge problem. Even just intellectual property of scholars who work with Indigenous people and publish articles even that can be harmful because it's intended for a particular audience and picked up by AI, scraped and spread over the world and belongs to some corporation. The theft of information is a huge concern in regard to AI particularly when thinking about how information and knowledge is owned and held by Indigenous communities in trust with hopefully ideally museums and archives or has been taken by museums and archives. So something to think about. Emily Jean Lichner [phonetic] was another student who graduated recently she wrote about the return of Nuxalk voice recordings from the CMH. If you

wanted to look into her writing she's wonderful. I would have had her come talk to you but she started a job at Brown in the States her first day of work was the day there was a shooting she is is not in a place to talk to us right now, maybe next time. Emily Jean Lichner is her name. She does great stuff.

Returning back to technologies and closing up with Ames for the last ten minutes here I wanted to say he is talking about the different publics that museums serve and how that is shifting in 1929. He was talking about here how the publics then come to control the museum and I was think being influencers and Instagram and this whole Art influencer museum influencer space where everybody can broadcast all the time, tour museums. And he just obviously I know he couldn't have imagined that in 1992, I couldn't have. It's not anything on the radar whatsoever but it is something to think about in context with this quote. So I do want to get over deaccessioning. Touchy subject and then I have a funny story at the end. What do you guys think about deaccessioning. Is there ever a good reason to deaccession something. That article was also from 1992 or at least the deaccessioning began in 1992 they completed it in 1997. I left it in there it was something that Nicky had in hers and when we were talking about relationships to objects that we can go ahead and talk about this. Their justification for deaccessioning

was we didn't have a good provenance for this piece so we are going to let it G is that a good reason to deaccession. Somebody to send it to an auction. Is there ever a good reason for deaccession? Even if you have something that is fake couldn't you recontextualize it. What about curating that?

STUDENT: I am a little undecided on my opinion on this but where I work the gulf of Georgia cannery museum they are planning to deaccession quite a bit because they have a very, very full archive that is not temperature controlled. The roof leaks very badly. It's very ridiculous. And when Parks Canada made that site a museum the interns in charge of accessioning quite literally had tagging races where they would stick tags on everything they saw that could possibly be of any relevance and so there are about five toilets with no provenance in the archives we don't know if they belong to the cannery itself to the next door cannery, to the grocery store next door. We have no idea where these five toilets came from. They really have no relevance to the museum's mission or any particular culture or group. And so they are kind of I would argue that is not a ridiculous thing to deaccession because it is taking up valuable space and it is part of the history of accessioning to this site that is not good accessioning practices.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: Fair enough yeah, you can make space for actual

community work that we are talking about or the different things like that. Other kind of historical, processes.

STUDENT: Anything can essentially become a value if you contextual analysed it properly. Arguably anything could end up in a collection. And have value but I think that there's a lot of the other layers of decisions, the space for the collection, if you can safely keep the collection and also the politics of how things ended up in the collection. Even just a donor passes away and they have had a lot of money they have given over the years and then their whole collection is given the museum feels like I have to take it this person contributed so much to us, but then there's things that they wouldn't have taken if they really had a choice or there's duplicates of things with no real reason to keep both of them. I think it's also a discussion of where they end up after that that is a big problem but I think there's space for it.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: I mean, as a curating tool it is a good -- it could be a good curating tool. I do think I was talking about collections that come in with stories of narratives these folks really attached to collections sometimes they strong arm museums a bit they say hey you want that you got to take this too. That is a real thing that happens. And space is not infinite. You are collecting for 200 years need to free up some space sometimes.

STUDENT: I wonder if you could tell us more about how sale or trade

works, sale auctioning or trade works. For example the museum wants to put item up for auction how does that work if they don't technically have the right to sell it or it's not theirs to begin with.

INSTR. CHRISTOPHER SMITH: I don't think a museum would be able to deaccession something that is not accessioned in for this process you do have right for it. Getting rid of something that is not accessioned in is a much bigger issue and something that basically there are architectural features and monuments that are not accessioned in because of a landscape. It's entirely different thing which is what happened with the Gitksan doors at MOA, they got moved into the gift shop. That is a different thing. Even selling something can be problematic. It's because oh my god it's from the MOA you get huge amount of money is get circulated to the world this thing of value was a toilet that they didn't know where it was coming from. That a real problem.

I put links in here I suspected we are going to run short on time, Detroit Institute of Arts was expected to deaccession huge chunks of their collection to pay for the city's bankruptcy about 13 years ago. I had an acquaintance that was supposed to sift through that ultimately they did sell some things but donors pulled out people pulled out their loans they were freaked out everybody it was terrible.

Detroit has made a big come back since then and DIA is now under the direction of Afro Indigenous woman who is awesome but at the time it was just going to be a free for all to pay for the city's debt. Got links for you to take a look at that. Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art and Baltimore Museum of Art both deaccessioned pieces of well known white men to enrich their collection with works by women people of colour, by under represented communities. Some of the money went to that, some of it didn't. So that is something to take a look at. Nice little link there. And last two minutes I talk about this guy. There was a total pole about this tall mod. I got a phone call from a well established east coast museum during COVID about three years ago, and they said Chris we would like you to take a look at this pole we think it's fake and we are going to invite Nick Galanin, I've known nick a long time, anyway we are going to invite Nick Galanin to come in and reinterpret it he takes Indonesia fake totem poles, he cuts them all up paints them white... As an installation at site specific installation. They were going to let him he reinterpret this. I looked at it on the one hand they were disturbed by this it was about that long it's a giant real beak they sent me the notes it's in New Jersey had wrote that he thought it was a Japanese imitation totem pole and that is the beak of a Dodo which is a giant pigeon that has been extinct for thousands of years. Here is what it is this

pretty good representation of a Nuu-chah-nulth face mass income profile, a Raven and another Nuu-chah-nulth figure in profile here. What I know about Nuu-chah-nulth totem poles back in the late 19th century they didn't have Salish folks they didn't have freestanding full totem poles when tourists show up we would love a totem pole to take home we'll try to figure out how to make that for you they kind of did these flat two dimensional things. One other thing I know, we don't have a them now but back in 1890 there were still giant albatrosses over the coast that is albatross beak. It could have been the curio shop person could have been the artist themselves I don't know you do those in a late 19th century Nuu-chah-nulth totem pole that came very close to getting chopped up and painted. I don't think he would have done it. They wanted him to chop it up and paint it they were thought it was fake and they were going to deaccessioning it. It's got abalone inlay. This bird giant albatross it's a very silly looking pole the rest of it is awesome it's got huge beak the. Literally the beak is foot long. Albatross is like a seagull that is giant. They used to be everywhere on Vancouver Island. This got saved from the chopping block, which is why I think it's so important to do provenance research before you decide to deaccession something and not get rid of it because it doesn't have provenance. You have been awesome, Eliot will be here on Thursday. The readings

are on Canvas already. Thanks.

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