



Fig. 2.1. Haida artists Gwaai Edenshaw and Jaalen Edenshaw replicating the 'Great Box' (Pitt Rivers Museum 1884.57.25), Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, 2015. Photograph by Laura Peers. Copyright Pitt Rivers Museum.

# **Museums and Source Communities: Reflections and Implications**

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Museums and Source Communities (Peers and Brown, 2003) has been widely cited since its publication in 2003. Part of a powerful shift among museums internationally to better understand the communities they serve and the nature of their relationships with those groups, the volume highlights forms of collaboration and consultation, documents the kinds of relationships emerging between museums and various communities of origin for collections, and considers the implications of such relationships for processes of curation. It has become a key reference in museum anthropology, with the introduction reprinted in Sheila Watson's *Museums and Their Communities* (2007), and it is widely cited in literature on museology and museum anthropology. The volume helped to popularise the term 'source community', with more than two thousand references produced by a quick Google Scholar search for 'source community + museum'. Other key publications on the theme of museums and communities since 2003 have refined relevant concepts: Vivian Golding and Wayne Modest's (2013) *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections and Collaboration* usefully examines the assumption of duality in the museum/community relationship and explores processes of collaboration, as does Elizabeth Crooke's (2007) *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges*. Numerous case studies from around the globe have also illustrated the crucial kinds of 'social work' (Golding and Modest 2013, 1) arising from Indigenous community engagement with heritage collections.

Fifteen years after publication, at a time when the politics of museum relations with communities are shifting rapidly – with Emmanuel Macron's promise to return heritage items to Africa (Sarr and Savoy 2018), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples now a standard part of the museum landscape, and Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (2015) moving forward into museum praxis – it is useful to reflect on the book's goals and contexts. In this chapter, I reflect on how *Museums and Source Communities* came into being, on how its core concept has developed, and its impacts. While these reflections are my own, I wish to acknowledge with admiration and gratitude Alison K. Brown's significant intellectual work as co-editor in shaping the book and co-author of its introductory essay.

My impetus for creating *Museums and Source Communities* was a sense of frustration arising from the disconnect between the extraordinary historic collections from North American Indigenous communities in British museums and those communities themselves. Having trained in Canada and worked with Indigenous communities, I arrived at the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) in Oxford in 1998 to find that few museum professionals in the United Kingdom and the larger European Union had any deep understanding of the urgency with which Indigenous communities wanted – and needed – access to heritage collections to strengthen identity and cultural practice. Some UK colleagues were working closely with Indigenous communities in nuanced and careful ways, but often to create knowledge or exhibitions

for UK museums rather than to meet Indigenous needs. This seemed to be true for the entire range of museums in Britain, from local authority-run town and regional museums to the national and university museums. Given imperial and colonial histories, the earliest historic material culture from North American peoples is held in UK and EU museums – sometimes quite small institutions – and has been relatively inaccessible to the descendants of its makers. Much material was acquired in the late nineteenth century, during an era of intense pressure to assimilate Indigenous peoples: objects were collected and removed from Indigenous communities in a process parallel to the removal of Indigenous children from residential schools. In the latter half of the twentieth century, Indigenous cultural resurgence in North America has been fuelled by a desire to heal from the wounds caused by this era and by a determination to reclaim cultural practices and knowledge after the transmission of these was interrupted. Heritage items have been important repositories of knowledge, and learning from them has constituted a crucial part of stabilising identity and self-esteem – key elements of well-being critical for improved health – for Indigenous researchers and their communities (Peers 2013; Lincoln 2010; Adelson 2000, 110). Many Indigenous people feel a need to reconnect with and learn from ancestral items that had gone to museums, but have had difficulty finding those items (see Brown 2014, 156-92). The links between historic collections and the contemporary health of Indigenous communities were not widely discussed within museological practice in the United Kingdom or European Union, nor was there a strong sense of accountability to those communities. Indeed, I was advised by colleagues at several institutions that I should not invite Indigenous people from Canada to view collections at PRM, because ‘they’d just cause trouble’.

At the same time, British social and political issues around immigrant populations, the disabled, and marginalised groups such as Roma did not exactly parallel the Canadian experience with Indigenous peoples, but they did share some dynamics with how museums in settler countries have engaged with Indigenous communities. In the 1990s, Canadian museology underwent profound shifts in relation to the politics of Indigeneity and postcolonialism, triggered by the furore over the exhibition *The Spirit Sings* and the resulting national Task Force on Museums and First Peoples (Phillips 2012; Hill and Nicks 1992). Museum staff undertook curatorial and exhibition work with the increasing understanding that Indigenous people had rights related to collections of heritage items, that repatriation was part of the standard work of museums, and that media and political pressure could be deployed against museums that failed to consult (and, increasingly, collaborate with) Indigenous communities. The dynamics during the 1990s and early 2000s were very different in the United Kingdom, where expectations that museums should consult with various audiences were driven by UK government policy (both national and locally devolved) and associated funding mechanisms; the profession did not embrace the idea of deep collaboration, the expectation that communities

held rights in relation to collections, or the concept that museums existed to serve Indigenous and other source communities. During this period the UK heritage field broadly embraced concepts of social inclusivity, as museums were pushed by government, funding, and policy bodies to broaden their audiences and reach out to marginalised groups within Britain (Lynch and Alberti 2010, 19; Watson 2007, 15-16). Some museums created community advisory forums, panels, or other mechanisms to consult or collaborate with local communities on exhibitions, programming, and policy. Initially there was, however, little sense that such audiences were core ones for museums, that museums existed to serve them and their goals, or that communities that were inconveniently located on other continents needed to be approached in the same ways.

As a lecturer teaching museum anthropology (focusing on relations between museums and Indigenous peoples), it was clear that the nature of museum relationships with communities was emerging as central to museological theory after the publication of Ivan Karp, Christine Kreamer, and Steven Lavine's (1992) *Museums and Communities* and James Clifford's (1997) adaptation of the contact zone concept for museums. Both began to articulate the responsibilities of museums to make heritage accessible to communities, to work with communities, to listen to them. There were many articles about emerging praxis in this area, but no book had yet gathered them together for teaching or for advancing developments across the museum profession.

I wondered if such a publication could introduce a strong, clear phrase to encompass the core relationship between museums and the communities their collections came from, in order to increase the use of that idea within the museum profession and in related scholarship. Several such terms were emerging in the 1990s, including 'community of origin' and 'source community'. I felt the need for a very direct term that would move beyond the neutral fiction of 'stakeholders' (then popular in the cultural sector), which implies that all parties – museum, community of origin, diverse public audiences – have equal stakes in the outcomes of a relationship. But the stakes are not the same: for Indigenous peoples, access to heritage items can be healing in the aftermath of colonial histories; it is a form of sovereignty (Field 2008, 1), the regaining of which is linked to physical and cultural survival. A member of an Indigenous community negotiating a relationship with a museum holding ancestral treasures has far more at stake than museum staff or a (still) typically white, middle-class museum visitor in England. I hoped also to communicate that the concept of source communities applied to all museums, local authority and university, national and regional, natural history museums and social history museums, 'ethnographic' museums and town museums. All hold heritage items from many communities, including overseas communities, and as such need to accept responsibility for providing access to heritage items to those communities as part of their core mandates.

As Brown and I (2003, 2) noted in the introduction to the volume:

The term ‘source communities’ (sometimes referred to as ‘originating communities’) refers both to these groups in the past when artefacts were collected, as well as to their descendants today. These terms have most often been used to refer to indigenous peoples in the Americas and the Pacific, but apply to every cultural group from whom museums have collected: local people, diaspora and immigrant communities, religious groups, settlers, and indigenous peoples, whether those are First Nations, Aboriginal, Maori, or Scottish. Most importantly, the concept recognises that artefacts play an important role in the identities of source community members, that source communities have legitimate moral and cultural stakes or forms of ownership in museum collections, and that they may have special claims, needs, or rights of access to material heritage held by museums. In this new relationship, museums become stewards of artefacts on behalf of source communities. They are no longer the sole voices of authority in displaying and interpreting those objects, but acknowledge a moral and ethical (and sometimes political) obligation to involve source communities in decisions affecting their material heritage.

### Reflections on the Term ‘Source Community’ and Its Development Since 2003

Looking back, this characterisation captured key historical processes involved with such collections, especially for Indigenous and marginalised peoples. It also seems essentialist, as it fails to acknowledge the agency of many community members, emphasising instead only unequal relations of power involved in extractive collecting. The term therefore fails to capture the intentions or the complicated modernity and identity of Makareti Papakura, a Maori woman also known as Mrs Staples-Brown, who donated Maori items from her marital home in Oxfordshire to the Pitt Rivers Museum to be ambassadors for Maori culture.

The emphasis on extractive collecting also subsumes the many complex paths through which objects arrived at museums. The term does not entirely accommodate the origins of the Newton Turvey collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum, part of which was made by Lakota women travelling with a Wild West show who met and taught beadwork to an admiring Englishman, Newton Turvey, and sold him finished and half-finished items, which Turvey finished. Some of the material is made entirely by Lakota hands, and descendants of the makers have asked for photographs in order to replicate it for family use. Other items in the collection are made partly by Lakota women and partly by Turvey, and still others were made entirely by Turvey. For Lakotas, all of the material is intellectually Lakota, since it all involves family designs and techniques, and Lakotas consider themselves to be the source community for the collection, but the cross-cultural relationships involved

are not encompassed by the concept. The term 'source community' works strongly for Haida ancestral items, collected from Haida people on Haida Gwaii, although collectors seldom specified the village, moiety, clan, names, status, or occupational identity of people from whom items were acquired, making 'the Haida' sound more monolithic than they were. 'Source community' is less clear for other objects. Some historic Indigenous groups included wives from very different cultural groups, and while one can identify an object from, say, the plains Cree, the beadwork may have been done by an Ojibwa wife. What community is it from? The 'witch in the bottle' in the PRM collections was associated by its English collectors with a working class, regional and rural community of origin, but it is also an English object. The middle-class academics who were keen to acquire such 'folk' survivals would not have seen themselves as members of the same English 'source community'.

The concept of 'source communities' thus essentialises identities and communities, implying that there is a homogenous thing called a community, bounded and uniform in terms of identity, from which an object arises, and that such objects are expected to be purely English, or Haida, or Lakota. Such concepts of boundedness and homogeneity have spurred widespread critiques of the concept of 'community' across the social sciences for some decades (see, for example, Brint 2001; Amit and Rapport 2002; Young 1986). While some scholars have moved away from the term for these reasons, it persists as a fundamental organising principle in the social sciences and in popular usage. The Annual Review of Anthropology has offered articles about many kinds of communities, ranging from online communities to relationships between archaeological sites and descendant communities (e.g., Wilson and Peterson 2002; Bell 2017, Colwell 2016); and at Benedict Anderson's (2006) urging, scholars have considered nations as 'imagined communities'. As Gerd Baumann (1996, 4) realised during fieldwork among a complex multicultural community in London, 'community was a concept to be used and redefined contextually, but certainly it could not be written off as an irrelevancy'. Source communities are complex, but they are real, and we need to be wary of theory-based dismissals of the concept that fail to take on board lived, experiential realities. Indigenous peoples today are encountering anomie in museums due to perceptions – rooted in scholarly critique – that source communities are too diverse and complex to consult meaningfully (Sherry Farrell-Racette, personal communication, 2018). 'Community' is what binds humans together across their diversities, and the concept is valid to people who consider themselves to be part of various communities.

Work since 2003 has refined thinking about the nature of 'community' linked to museums, including Watson's (2007, 4) discussion of communities as defined by shared historical or cultural experiences, specialist knowledge, or demographic/socioeconomic factors. All of these issues might come into play for different Indigenous members of a community. With regards to heritage items, the term 'source community' must encompass, rather than exclude, the nuances inherent in

community and identity. Taking Canadian Indigenous groups as an example, the concept of a source community such as Haida or Anishinaabeg includes persons with diverse perspectives and aspects of identity across different generations. It includes people who do speak and those who do not speak an Indigenous language, those who were removed during the Sixties Scoop and those who were raised in cities or on reserves. It includes residential school survivors and youth educated in community-run language immersion schools, people who feel they 'don't know much about their culture' as the result of generations of assimilation and those who have fought to retain cultural practices, and Christians and spiritual practitioners who are more traditionally oriented.

For all the refinements and critiques it has undergone, the term still usefully insists that there are groups of people who maintain relationships with heritage items in museums, and that items in overseas museum collections are tangible heritage, with all the politics and potential that implies. This is the element in which I remain most interested intellectually: the social and spiritual links between historic museum collections and contemporary social networks and cultural practices and identities, the meanings and potencies of historic material culture in the present, and the implications of these issues for museums.

For Indigenous people, relationships with ancestral items are profoundly social, for many different reasons. For some, objects are understood as actively or potentially animate beings embodied in material form and requiring social interaction; for others, they are material manifestations of cultural knowledge and history, calling to mind ancestors whose difficult lives enabled their descendants to exist in the present; for still others, objects engage the social networks in which knowledge of their materials, making, and associated cultural contexts is embedded. Such understandings challenge museological definitions of 'objects' and assumptions about who the museum is for. They provoke deeply affective responses: weeping on and with objects; playful performative handling by miming the intended uses of items; and storytelling, song, and dance. Through all of these, community members articulate both the joy of reconnection and the grief and anger of historical loss (Collison 2013, 187-89; Phillips 2005, 96-97; Brown and Peers 2015, 264; Lynch 2011, 150). These engagements also involve museum staff as mediators and gatekeepers. Staff are often included in performance and ritual involving ancestral items, and such moments can be profoundly moving and transformative for them.<sup>1</sup> These

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1 Encounters between Indigenous researchers and university students are also transformative for students, grounding theoretical readings and inspiring powerful learning moments. As a curator with teaching responsibilities, I have always invited visiting Indigenous researchers at PRM to speak to staff and students and have invited students to assist in many capacities during research visits. It has meant a great deal to Indigenous researchers to be able to teach at Oxford, to be able to speak in such a place, and it has similarly meant much to the students to learn directly from those engaged in such work and to witness the emotions and passion such work entails.

moments are consciously intended to teach staff why such access to collections matters (Peers 2017), and about the obligation of museums to relatives, both the living who visit and those we care for in the form of ancestral treasures in museum collections: we are being taught about the relationship of obligation inherent in the phrase 'source community'.

This relationship of obligation, or responsibility, has since 2003 also been addressed in the literature on heritage and cultural property. While there are concerns with conflating Western legal systems of property with the Indigenous moral and ethical expectations involved in museum collections, discussions in the cultural property literature have moved into useful areas. As Jane Anderson and Haidy Geismar (2018) state in their introduction to the Routledge Companion to Cultural Property, the phrase cultural property is 'used to describe ways of talking about collective entitlement, shared inheritance, the material nature of identity'. They write that their task is to examine 'this category of inalienable relationship between the state and its possessions. . . . The language of cultural property has been adopted and adapted by collectivities that actively resist the authority of the state over diverse cultural resources' (2018, 1). A section in the volume entitled 'Museums, Archives and Communities' suggests the durability and continued utility of the concept of the relationships between these entities. Their introductory essay resonates with a statement made to Alison Brown and me by the late Kainai elder Andy Blackwater about his sense of connection to Blackfoot ancestral items in UK museums: 'You are holding part of us there. We don't alienate ourselves from those items. We continue to include them in our prayers' (Brown and Peers 2015, 268).

Literature since the publication of *Museums and Source Communities* has explored significant difficulties inherent in its core messages. Bernadette Lynch and Sam Alberti (2010) and Robin Boast (2011) discuss the continuing inequities of power in relationships between museums and source communities, the failure of museums to serve the goals of source communities, and the ways that museums appear to offer access and support to communities while continuing to control access, voice, knowledge, and representation. Developing a perspective voiced by Tony Bennett in 1998, such critiques see the contact zone less as 'a space for cross-cultural dialogues and source community expertise' and more as 'an extension of the museum as an instrument of governmentality, expressed as multiculturalism' (Boast 2011, 59). Their concerns are summed up in Boast's (2011, 67) caveat that 'the new museum, the museum as contact zone, is and continues to be used instrumentally as a means of masking. . . fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases'. These critiques focus on how museums control the participation of communities within the 'invited space' of the museum (Lynch and Alberti 2010, 14). Far less literature examines such engagements from the perspectives of source community members, and what there is looks very different from mainstream museological and museum anthropological work. As an example, one might note

that rather than theoretical critiques of ‘community’, ‘contact zones’ or ‘invited spaces’, ‘source communities’ or ‘decolonisation’, or the severe budgetary and difficult governance constraints faced by many local authority museums in the United Kingdom, the 2018 meeting of the US Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums includes sessions on collections risk assessment, negotiating the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), grant writing, digitisation projects on a budget, respectful handling and storage of sacred items, and safeguarding cultural heritage from theft (see <http://www.atalm.org>). In refining understandings of the relationships between museums and source communities, we need to focus more clearly on the different goals, needs, opportunities, and pressures faced by both parties. Boast’s caveat about differential relations of power involved in the relationships between museums and source communities is true at fundamental levels.

I disagree, however, with Boast’s statement (2011, 63) that ‘no matter how much we try to make the spaces accommodating, they remain sites where the Others come to perform for us, not with us’. This disregards the agency of Indigenous researchers who come in ever-increasing numbers, usually self-funded, to museums across the United Kingdom and European Union to pursue their own goals. To use just one example, the Great Box Project (<https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/haidabox>), in which Haida artists Gwaai and Jaalen Edenshaw came to the Pitt Rivers Museum to replicate an ancestral masterpiece, fulfilled the artists’ dual goals of learning from the master artist of the box and repatriating a masterpiece for use within the community. The project also served the goals of the funding agencies and of the host museum (being featured, for instance, with the artists’ permission, on the cover of PRM’s annual report). Source community researchers such as these are not ‘performing’ for museums, and they are often experienced at working with museums and fully aware of museums’ desire to use these visits as ethical capital. I also feel that Lynch and Alberti’s position on museums as ‘invited spaces’ fails to fully consider the determination of Indigenous source communities who accept invitations and engage with museums, but with their own goals and on their own terms, with a sophisticated understanding of the political dynamics involved.

### Museums and Source Communities: Applied Praxis

For me, the phrase ‘source communities’ was a means to a key goal, encouraging museums to see themselves as responsible to those communities, just as they are responsible for the care of collections. In acting on the philosophy and overarching goals of the book, I have endeavoured to bridge in my own curatorial practice the enormous geographical, political and cultural gaps between Indigenous communities in North America and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, and to work in alignment with the goals of Indigenous peoples. Working with Alison Brown,



Fig. 2.2. The 'Great Box' (PRM 1884.57.25) and its child, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, 2015. Photograph by Robert Rappoport. Copyright Pitt Rivers Museum.

Cara Krmpotich, and others, I have explored collaborative forms of research that meets museum, scholarly, and community needs. Specific projects have included returning copies of historic photographs from PRM to the Kainai (Blackfoot) people to understand what such images mean to them in the present (Brown, Peers, and Members of the Kainai Nation, 2006) and developing enhanced loans, by inviting community members to handle and learn from historic objects before the loan items are exhibited at the host venue. In one project, five Blackfoot shirts collected in 1841 were lent to museums in Blackfoot territory and over five hundred Blackfoot people were able to reconnect with them, before exhibitions at the host venues and back at PRM (Peers and Brown 2016). Other work has involved supporting visiting Indigenous artists researching historic techniques with PRM collections, and a large delegation of Haida Nation members who worked with hundreds of ancestral treasures at PRM and the British Museum (Krmpotich and Peers 2013). These focused projects also ranged outwards, including conferences bringing groups of UK museum professionals together with members of a community whose heritage they steward; claims for and eventual repatriation of ancestral remains; and the making of the Great Box's 'child' to be taken home for use in the community. These have been powerful engagements, opening dialogue and creating opportunities for museum colleagues to learn directly from Indigenous community representatives about the complexity and broadness of colonial collections, about their meanings past and present, and about Indigenous perspectives on material heritage and its links to postcolonial healing. They, and parallel initiatives by colleagues across the United Kingdom and European Union and internationally, have demonstrated an acceptance of the responsibility of museums toward source communities to support such healing through forms of access to collections, including study visits, digitisation, remaking, and repatriation.

The complex logistics of such projects ground and articulate the more abstract concepts embedded in the concept of 'source community'. Tellingly, all of the logistics needed to do this work seem to challenge the expectations and professional standards embedded in museums. Staff need to create new handling protocols to facilitate sensory reconnection with ancestral items, and new processes for financial reimbursement (with per diem payments up front, preferably in cash, to support visiting community members who may not have the finances to get them through a visit and claim afterwards). Smoke detectors need to be disabled in order to enable Indigenous research visitors to smudge for protection and purification. Staff hosting delegates who may not have travelled overseas before need to find ways of supporting the group, including attending meals with the group out of standard work hours or working on weekends (and persuade finance officers that their meals need to be reimbursed for this work). Short-notice visits sometimes happen when Indigenous researchers budget and plan for an overseas trip to Museum A, but find that Museum B in the same country has an important

collection: if museums are indeed serving communities, they need to support such requests for access to collections as best they can rather than refusing them on the grounds of insufficient advance notice.

These are real issues, but they are also surface difficulties masking deeper structural impediments to change. We might wonder why special projects always rely on external funding, and why funding applications need to be written in the language of scholarly research or foundation agendas in order to fund activities designed to meet community needs. Why can museum budgets routinely pay for IT or educational staff, but not for bringing source community members to the museum to work with staff and collections? Why do some museums have difficulty accepting that a history of encounters between local people and overseas groups means a responsibility today to provide Indigenous groups access? (On Britain's colonial aphasia affecting such perceptions, see Edwards [2018].) We might wonder why scholars have to make the argument (as we did to the Leverhulme Trust for the Haida project) that culture-bearers are equal to academic scholars (which the Trust accepted, but the argument had to be made). We might consider the hierarchical and departmental structures of power and territory within museums, which sometimes prevent staff from cooperating effectively to support all aspects of Indigenous research visits. Given the complex preparations for and facilitation of such visits, members of different museum staff teams may find themselves working together in the same room for the first time during such visits. We might consider the question of routine invigilation of research visits and the issues of ownership, authority, and the issues of power and control these raise when Indigenous source community members engage with heritage items in the museum space. We might also consider the museological control over knowledge and authority in the construction of museum records and the extent to which expert source community members are permitted to influence these (and see, on such issues, Brown 2016).

To begin to change the structural dynamics museums have inherited, staff might question and critically appraise the information that came with historic collections when museums acquired them, and consider with members of communities of origin how they might wish to respond to the ethnocentrism, racism, inaccuracies, and misunderstandings that such texts and comments typically articulate. We might ask members of source communities who are learning about their cultural heritage through museums as a result of colonialism what they wish to learn and how museum staff can support them. We might ask if we can supply images of objects in museums for language-learning classes to support endangered Indigenous languages, and we should certainly ask what community members want to say to the world about their heritage through museum displays and educational programmes. And we should take their comments seriously, even when we are uncomfortable with them. Working with source communities needs to be seen as an integral and essential part of collections care and a way to develop con-

versations between disparate museum audiences by enlivening exhibitions and programming. This should be true of all museums, not just ‘ethnographic’ ones or those with substantial ‘world cultures’ collections.

As Boast (2011) and Lynch and Alberti (2010) have noted, the key issue in relationships between museums and source communities is power. Museums may have begun to engage with source communities at the curatorial or programming level, but have not really done so in the United Kingdom and European Union at the governance level. The demographics of museum staff, directors, and board members do not reflect the origins of museum collections or the museum’s responsibilities to source communities. No one on staff is formally tasked with maintaining relationships developed after an externally funded project with a source community ends, or the curator responsible for the project is expected to do that informally (Brown 2016; Brown and Peers 2015, 282). Quite often, images from such projects are deployed as ethical capital by museums in conference presentations, annual reports, and funding documents and on websites – quite legitimately – but without routinely sending these images to community members so that they can do the same, or with the same attention to source community needs and goals. These patterns indicate that museums have not yet accepted Watson’s observation (2007, 9) that ‘[t]he relationship museums have with their communities must be based on the recognition that this is an unequal one, with the balance of power heavily tipped in favour of the institution’.

These difficulties, like the difficulties of working with source communities in all their complexity and diversity, do not mean that we cannot do this work; they indicate that such work is necessary. We need to embed this work in museum practice and in the training of museum staff. We need to make sure that every museum has a core, long-term staff member whose job description is ‘community liaison’, charged with maintaining relationships and a sense of community goals and finding ways the museum might meet them. We need to document the effects of community engagements on museums and on community partners, to find measures of efficacy of such work, and to respond to and influence funding bodies and institutional and government policies.

My own measures of efficacy for the work of museums and source communities are not easily quantified: ‘impact’ for such work is not about numbers. Measures of success in this work include watching a younger museum colleague, who was terrified at the thought of Haida performative handling of collections, learning to support and facilitate such handling. They also include watching a young, emerging Haida leader nervously give his first keynote speech to a group of museum professionals gathered at Oxford, and then watching over time as he has taken on an important leadership role in his community. They include laughter as historic gambling sticks were used to gamble within a museum research space, and the sound of drums resonating through the museum’s building. They include a Blackfeet col-

lege student who, after encountering powerful ancestral shirts, changed his college major to focus on Blackfeet art and went on to a national art college. They include moments of incredible tension as a fragile historic Blackfoot shirt was folded and passed reverently between men to revive a ceremony once illegal under assimilation policies. They include seeing the Great Box's child used as it was meant to be, as a box of clan treasures in a potlatch, and a toddler dancing in front of it as she was given her Haida name: witnessing an ancestral treasure removed from museum control and doing exactly what assimilation policies tried to destroy.

Moira Simpson (2009, 128) writes of 'museums as supporting actors in communities'. I would add that they have an obligation to be such supporting actors, and that source communities are also supporting actors in museums. That museological and Indigenous dialogues and relationships are now turning – after UNDRIP and Macron, after the calls for action following Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission – to repatriation and to the need for museum collections to serve as 'an active site of claim making that is about political recognition, cultural memory, and identity formation' (Anderson and Geismar 2018), demonstrates the continuing potency of relations between museums and source communities.

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