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collezione del museo di Antropologia di Vancouver*

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People, Museums and the Rhetoric of Temporality: Considerations Regarding the Formation of the Collection at The Museum of Anthropology of Vancouver

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Emanuela Rossi

I want to consider the ways in which
anthropology, particularly through
its museums, structures the ways
we think about other cultures
(Ames 1992: 49)

Introduction

- 1 My interest in the representation of Indigenous peoples in museums began in 2001 with research in Vancouver for my Ph.D. Since then I have been researching continuously on this topic thanks to three different grants from the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS) and the support of the University of Florence, where I work¹. My research at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) in Vancouver, the focus of this article, involved the study of the formation, during the 1950s and 1960s, of the Indigenous Northwest Coast Collection, through the analysis of archival material, never studied before. My research confirmed that the collection was gathered according to the then standard assumption that museums had to “save” as much as possible artifacts and information from cultures thought of as disappearing. Today the reality is very different, many Indigenous groups persist and this complicates common narratives of

modernization and progress. History, James Clifford invites us to consider, is a multidirectional process, and the word "indigenous" is taking on new, unexpected meanings (Clifford 2013).

- 2 At the beginning of the 21st century, Canada is showing itself to be both vital and restless with respect to museology and museum exhibitions (Phillips 2011). Many Indigenous cultural centers have opened autonomous museum spaces in various parts of the country (Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2017). The Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay in British Columbia opened in 2007, the Huron-Wendat Museum, Wendake, Quebec, opened in 2008, the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, Quebec, opened in 2011 and several others (Rossi 2021). Those "tribal museums" of which Clifford had offered a glimpse at the end of the 1990s have therefore "exploded" and the important "majority museums", characterized by a more "cosmopolitan outlook", are showing great unease, changing names: the former Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau for instance is now the Canadian Museum of History; but, more radically, they changed their narratives and displays. The most important art museums in Canada have begun to include historical Indigenous artifacts in their narratives and galleries, re-categorized as works of art.
- 3 In recent years I have been doing research at the National Gallery of Canada and this museum, along with a new display, which for the first time included historic Indigenous artifacts (Rossi 2015 and 2018), also hired a few years ago the first Indigenous Curator. They are trying to incorporate, in the Gallery's practices, Indigenous traditions of caring for artifacts (Koebel Morse 2018). In 2022 the Gallery also opened the Department of Indigenous Ways and Decolonization. All strategies to decolonize the museum, in this case through a process of "indigenization" (Phillips 2011; Coombes and Phillips, 2015). The "explosion" of tribal museums - today we have more than one hundred of these institutions in the United States and Canada, and new tribal museums open every year (Child 2012) - has seen, at the same time, a great increase in indigenous scholarly literature on this topic. These include, Amy Lonetree (2012), Susan Sleeper-Smith (2009), Bryony Onciul (2017), Robert Hudson and Shannon Woodcock (2022). Today in Canada, and elsewhere, collaboration is a standard and institutions work closely with "source communities" on exhibitions focusing on their history and culture (Phillips 2003). In Canada a change in exhibition practices began during the Seventies when the Cranmer collection was returned to the Kwakwaka'wakw and two tribal museums were opened. Then in 1994 the *Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations Task Force on Museums*, established in 1988, published a report, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships Between Museums and First Peoples*, which recognized that native groups have moral claim to their heritage and own it, therefore should participate in its preservation and presentation (Phillips 2011; Lonetree 2012).
- 4 In this article I want to go back to my doctoral research to show, through the analysis of archival material, how the MOA, a majority museum, according to Clifford's definition, turned from "savior" to "patron" in relation to indigenous artifacts and became through the years, starting with the direction of Michael Ames (1974-97 and 2002-04), an international benchmark for collaborative approach in museums (Ames 2003). Indeed according to Lonetree: "the site [the MOA] is now viewed by many as the international leader in moving the museum world forward with efforts to share curatorial authority and collaborate with Indigenous communities in all aspects of

museum practice” (Lonetree 2012: 16). This essay, focusing on the 1950s and 1960s, still shows the outcomes of a salvage anthropology and the idea of disappearing cultures, although in the 1960s, as we shall see, the idea of new and original indigenous productions begins to make its way. This is a contribution to the history of ethnographic collecting in Canada reconstructed through the stories of some people. In fact first and foremost, the story I am going to tell is about people; Harry and Audrey Hawthorn, H.R. MacMillan, and a part of the collection at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) of the University of British Columbia. One tends to forget that institutions have their own biographies that often coincide with the life stories of the people who, for various reasons, work and live within their walls, as well as those who merely pass through them, all with their own passions, tastes, personalities, educational backgrounds, economic availability and so on. The biography of an institution, however, is something different from the sum of each one of these person’s life stories; often it is something which is not seen at first sight, but remains to be discovered. Perhaps it is precisely the methodology of ethnographic research, that which foresees the work done in the field, that offers the best instrument for analysis with its intrusive “up-close and personal” vantage point.

- 5 In writing anthropological essays, one often tends to exclude more personal and human factors, presenting both these elements at the end; the randomness of encounters and, now and then, certain discoveries in the results, as though these elements could damage the "scientific-ness" of the outcome. My research has taken a certain path for reasons which, I am not afraid to define as random and strongly bound to fortuitous encounters and to my anthropological education with Pietro Clemente. I agree with Schultz and Lavenda who affirm in their textbook, written for the education of young students, that the most beautiful aspect of the research done in the field is, in the end, its unpredictability.
- 6 In my case, it was an encounter with Audrey Hawthorn, (unfortunately in absentia), that influenced, more than anything else, the research which I conducted at MOA; examining the work which Audrey calls “a labour of love” and that, together with her husband Harry², they had taken up years before, gathering objects that are now a part of the great collection of the museum. When Harry and Audrey arrived in Canada from the United States, anthropology was part of the department of the University of Toronto, directed by T.F. McIlwraith (1899-1964), who had come from England to the University of Toronto and the associated *Royal Ontario Museum*. The discipline was not offered in any other Canadian university. During his first years as a teacher Harry gave conferences in various parts of the province and took every opportunity to meet with Indigenous peoples. It was in 1948 that, in cooperation with the *B.C. Indian Arts and Welfare Society*, he organized a conference on *Indian Welfare* in which many Natives participated. In 1954 within the department where Harry worked a study on the condition of the British Columbian Native People was commissioned by the *Department of Citizenship and Immigration*. The study, the effects of which were defined incalculable for the Administration of Indian Affairs, was finished in 1956 and that year a new Department was formed with Harry Hawthorn as director, a position that he would keep until 1968 (Inglis 1975).
- 7 My research at MOA began with a memorial ritual inside the actual museum. It was the second week of January 2001 in the early afternoon, and a ceremony was held in the main room of MOA, called the *Great Hall*; a sort of enchanted forest of totem poles. Just a

few months earlier Audrey had died. There were many people, many anthropologists, and Harry, her elderly husband, was also there. Michael Ames, who was the second director of the museum after Harry Hawthorn, spoke first, followed by the director at the time, Ruth Phillips. Many who spoke were students years earlier in the Museology courses that Audrey created and who are now directing some of the principal Canadian museums³.

- 8 That day a community, small enough for everyone to remain within the Great Hall, without leaving the confines of the totem poles exhibited in that space, commemorated a loss. Thus, those who had never seen Audrey were provided with a way to imagine her and the world in which she served as the first honorary curator of the museum, a position for which, seeing as she was the wife of the director, she worked without receiving a stipend. During the time in which the commemoration took place, the museum community was re-tracing the boundaries of its own identity. In just a few hours, everyone said something about Audrey, but of those two hours not a trace remains except in the memories of those who attended and in the registry book of the museum itself; yet those two hours allowed the museum to acquire a different character, bringing inside all the objects which the Hawthorns had collected long ago, including the totem poles around which all of us rallied. And perhaps, for at least a moment, one could perceive that density of local meaning, memories, and stories⁴ that do not emerge from the exhibition of the objects alone that had been collected over time by the Hawthorns and the help of others.
- 9 I think that it was during the commemoration ceremony that I decided to concentrate my research almost exclusively on the Hawthorns' work by researching the stories and memories that helped define the museum as it is now presented to people in the Great Hall, the heart of the museum which emphasizes the aesthetic aspect and the large dimensions of the native objects such as the totem poles, gigantic ceremonial plates, carved boxes, canoes and monumental sculptures. A few years before, in 1999, the Museum of Anthropology celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with an exhibition and the publication of a catalog. The showing was titled *Exhibit A: Objects of Intrigue and the catalog was called Objects and Expressions: Celebrating the collections of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia*. Exhibitions organized to celebrate anniversaries are meaningful because they create a platform for institutions, like museums (in this case), to present themselves to the public. They offer an occasion to remember, examine and reinvent the past, bringing the people and the institutions together in the present to work towards developing a vision of the future⁵. The exhibit came about with the idea of asking 50 people who had various relationships with the museum to pick a favorite object (an "object of affection")⁶ from the collection and to write a comment which would then be included in the design of *Exhibit A*. The objects in the exhibit created an opportunity to tell stories.

These stories of workers and curators in their daily proximity to cultural objects offer a picture of the museum as a lived experience and an everyday space of human interaction. They remind us that the museum is a busy place- cases are cleaned, sculptures are donated, artifacts are repaired; that sometimes objects are forgotten; and that, at other times, history is (Mathur 2000: 596).

- 10 Ideally, the work that I propose here is a continuation and methodic intensification of *Exhibit A*; of that show of "objects of affection" which has revealed a museum rich in History, stories, and voices not always easily heard, as well as of a place rich in constant dealings between people and cultures that meet and interact.

1. The Anatomy of a Collection

- 11 In 1947, when Audrey and Harry Hawthorn were arriving at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Cowan, the curator pro tempore at the Zoology department of the same university, received a letter dated the 13th of September in which Harvey Reginald MacMillan, a rich industrialist from Vancouver impassioned by native cultures from British Columbia, (from here on referred to as HR), wrote to send word that he was mailing some "Indian relics" given to him by Bert Robson, a guide that accompanied him when he went hunting in the area around the Bella Coola Valley.

I hope that in time you may build up a collection of Indian workmanship representative of the high-grade work done by tribes who inhabited this Province not so long ago. You will see that some of these articles come from Atnarko and the Bella Coola Valley. These were given to me for the University by Mr. Bert Robson who lives at Atnarko, which is reached via Bella Coola (Rossi 2006: 99).

- 12 The relics/articles in question were revealed, in a later letter, to be game sticks made of wood. The 25th of October 1947, MacMillan sent to Cowan an iron nose ring and a braided rope of cedar tree fibers. This time the response letter was from Harry Hawthorn, to whom the objects had been sent by Cowan, which, in addition to thanking HR for the pieces, says: «[I] hope that when we have reorganized our anthropological museum you will be able to come up and see them on display» (*ibidem*). After some months, MacMillan sent Harry a new package

Under separate cover today I am sending to you a package of Indian artifacts, which have been in my house a long time. There are seven stone pipes all of which, so far as I can remember, are from the Fraser Valley from Hope inland. Some of them might be from east of the Coast Range as Hope was a trading center to which the Indian came from the Coquihalla, or down the Anderson River, or over the summit of the Skagit. The remainder of the articles are skinning knives, spear heads, and arrow heads – most of which may have come from the same territory. Some may have come from elsewhere. There are two or three long slender stones which seem to have been used for sharpening or for some other purpose, respecting which I should like to be informed. One of the best is broken in the middle, but perhaps you can put it together. There is a badly decayed bone item, which looks as if it might have been used to make nets (*ivi*: 101).

- 13 January 13, 1949, Harry responds:

It was very good of you indeed to send the box of pipes and other artifacts. The pipes are excellent specimens, most of them of post-White manufacture, including some quite unusual types. The long slender stones are similar to one found by Harlan Smith at Lytton, and classed as whet stone. One of them has striations which indicate that it was used in this fashion...the piece of bone is a harpoon point. These items are of particular interest to us as we have little material from the Hope region... (*ibidem*).

- 14 This represents the initial "construction" of the Northwest Canadian Coast collection of objects in the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver; a collection that is world-renowned. Besides the occasional mailing of artifacts, over time MacMillan donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to make possible the acquisition of many objects and collections of objects from the northwest coast of Canada. Already from these fragments of exchanged letters, which continued for almost twenty-five years, one can sense the elements that can control the construction of a museum's collection. People of various types can play a part, in our case, a rich Canadian industrialist with a passion

for native cultures, or, as one could say freely at the time, for the Indians, a young and brilliant anthropologist who had just arrived from the United States, and a local guide who had created a collection of native objects that he wanted the most important University of the province to have. In short, there are the people, the relationships between them, and the objects which are sent that are meaningfully referred to with different names; at times they are called “relics,” other times they are “articles” or “pieces.” These were produced by a people perceived as no longer being active or in existence: «tribes who inhabited this Province not so long ago» (ivi: 99) as HR stated in one of his letter to Harry. Of this story, however, which is a story of collection, very little is seen when going to visit the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. A museum is also the history of its collections, the unity of its institutional programs, and the directors who follow in each other's footsteps. This absence was noted by James Clifford who asserted the necessity for institutions like MOA to display the story of the collections, (often also stories of oppression), which tend instead to be undernoted or to disappear altogether from an exhibition, which, in MOA's case, emphasizes above all the aesthetic aspect of the native objects, displayed as pieces of art.

- 15 Museums and forms of collecting practices, according to some scholars, need to be interrogated in the same way as do practices such the famous potlatch ceremonies documented in the North American West Coast at the beginning of the twentieth century: “just as such practices raise questions about the specificity of cultural and historical context, motives and implications, as well as about possible similarities with other practices , so too does museum collecting and its relatives” (Macdonald 2006: 82).
- 16 In my work on the archival documents I tried to focus on the history surrounding the formation of the collection, without any pretense of my work being exhaustive; attempting to distinguish as well as to present some of the main themes that emerged, arranging them within a sort of history of ethnographic “collectionism” in this part of the world. That which I now feel pressed to emphasize is that if one works, as I have attempted to do, by studying the formation of the collections themselves, with the intention of revealing their "anatomy" (Phillips 1995), one puts emphasis on the nature of an object as historically determined and thus having much to tell about who is effected by that collection, the rules that guided the harvesting of certain objects as opposed to others, on continuous economic bargaining, significance, etc. By submitting the collection to this anatomical investigation one can single out the “prejudices” that have guided the harvesting of certain objects, such as, the theoretic orientations of the research, the collectors' opinion of the populations studied, their aesthetic preferences, as well as economic guidelines. These “prejudices” manifest themselves in a preliminary moment on the field during the harvesting phase and the subsequent transport to the museum of the collection; and then at a later time, after the arrival, when the collection is cataloged, stored, used and often dismembered so that the objects collected to form a single collection are then transferred to different institutions. According to this perspective it is the act of collecting that attributes, at the moment when the object is acquired, the characteristics and the qualities that are then associated with it in a certain historical moment, and thus, for a more correct interpretation of the objects it is necessary «to unpack the baggage of transcultural encounters with which they travel and search for meanings and memories stored» (Phillips, Steiner 1999:19)⁷.

17 Thus, if it is the entire collection process that attributes values and characteristics to the objects, then it is the harvesters/collectors of ethnographical finds, with their way of working, that produce ethnographical objects. In this way the native objects within the museum say, in a certain sense, much more about the Westerners than the Natives themselves. Everything that has to do with these objects, including the way in which they were collected as well as the why and how they were placed on exhibit, is all a part of the process by which Westerners have identified themselves and defined their relationship with the Other.

18 Douglas Cole, the author of the first systematic history of Collectionism in British Columbia, demonstrates how the invention of a “primitive” Other, on the part of the Westerners, and of the connection the museums have to this Other.

This invention of the primitive Other by Westerns and their museums served not merely to construct stereotypes of Indian cultures but, at least as much, to construct a Western identity opposite to all that was Native and primitive. A construction of the Other meant a simultaneous construction of the self (Cole 1995: IX).

19 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991) emphasizes that ethnographic finds are a creation, such as they are, of the ethnographers themselves. They become ethnographic because they are defined, isolated, collected and removed by the ethnographers and not because of their unique intrinsic characteristics. According to this perspective, ethnography creates its own objects and in doing so creates itself. At the moment in which it then goes on to construct the exhibition of those articles it also exposes the people who display them, their thought categories and their attitudes. In line with this perspective, one can say that it was the “historic” director of MOA, Michael M. Ames, successor to Harry Hawthorn as well as his collaborator, who theorized, at the same time as the so called “new museology” (Vergo 1989), a deconstruction of the notion of “museum” in order to highlight its nature as a product created by a certain society on equal level with the objects that are housed within it. And it was Ames again who started, in the nineties, the first exhibits⁸ done in collaboration with indigenous communities (Ames 2003).

20 A museum of anthropology is not so much, or at least not entirely, a “window” to other cultures that are therein represented, but a “mirror” that reflects us, and for this reason it can be analyzed in order to see what can be learned about anthropology, museums and the “We,” that produces both. Ames proposes seeing the museum as a product created by our own society and that it is necessary for the museums themselves to be considered ethnographically; by studying the museums in their social and cultural context one can observe the making of a culture in its concrete reality.

I want to look at museums as artefacts of society, as exhibits in their own right, to see what can be learned about them and, through them, about ourselves [...]. Their ostensible purpose is to provide windows on the other cultures of the world, but upon examination we will consider that they mirror as well the profession of anthropology itself and its socio-cultural context. I look at the anthropology museum in the Western world as both window and looking-glass to see what can be learned about museums and anthropology and their uncertain futures (Ames 1992: 15).

21 It is the “nature of the act of displaying,” like the act of collecting objects, that is under discussion. It is no longer possible to maintain that the ethnographic object, once removed from its context and inserted in a museum “container,” acquires the status of

a document. It is the history of Collectionism that presents a good point of view for grasping the strata of meaning that an ethnographic object carries once it has been introduced in a museum. In collections, as in museum designs, there exist artifices and ideological prejudices which are manifested when, for example, one observes older designs or designs that belong to other cultural backgrounds. In a now classic text, Steven Lavine and Ivan Karp affirm that:

22 Every museum exhibition, whatever its overt subject, inevitably draws on the cultural assumptions and resources of the people who make it. Decisions are made to emphasize one element and to downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others. The assumptions underpinning these decisions vary according to culture and over time, place, and type of museum exhibit. Exhibitions made today may seem obviously appropriate to some viewers precisely because those viewers share the same attitudes as the exhibition makers, and the exhibitions are cloaked in familiar presentational styles. We discover the artifice when we look at older installations or those made in other cultural contexts. The very nature of exhibiting, then, makes it a contested terrain (Lavine, Karp 1991: 1).

23 If, therefore, the formation process of a collection is one of the negotiating locations that makes the “constructed” nature of the museum more visible, that is, its being a product on equal level with the objects it contains, its archive then is the physical location the negotiation is made tangible by taking shape in the documents which are contained within it. By means of an examination on the archival documents, I worked on reconstructing the history of the collection’s formation at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia with the objective of demonstrating, as put by Clifford:

[...] the history of collections (not limited to museums) is central to an understanding of how those social groups that invented anthropology and modern art have appropriated exotic things, facts, and meanings. (Appropriate: “to make one’s own, from Latin proprius, “proper”, “property”). It is important to analyze how powerful discriminations made at particular moments constitute the general system of objects within which valued artifacts circulate and make sense (Clifford 1988: 220-21).

24 The interpretation that I am here proposing of some of the archival documents at MOA, thus attempting to make explicit the “concrete social work” going into the creation of the collection, (or better yet, a part of it), aspires to take its place in this perspective. When, for example, Audrey Hawthorn writes, the 24th of March 1953, to Mr. Provost of Alert Bay (Island of Vancouver), who a few days before had sent the Museum a painted tray hoping to be able to sell it:

I am returning your painted tray. You should probably be able to sell it up there at one of the stores, during the tourist season. The museum is interested in collecting old pieces which were made by the Indians still living with their old traditions, before their way of life was much changed by contact with the white man. We cannot use any modern type pieces (Rossi 2006: 125).

25 What is she saying really? In these few lines, apart from making explicit the rules of acquisition by which objects are included in or excluded from a collection, (“we cannot use any modern type pieces”), is she not also providing a vision of the native cultures, as well as of a “contact” between natives and whites as a demarcation of time separating a “before,” worthy of the attention of anthropologists and collectors, and an “after” that is not worthy of consideration? Does it not furnish an image of

anthropology that gives life to their collection technique that can continue to profess itself, in harmony with the Boasian mould, a “salvaging” anthropology; reaching precisely towards the recuperation and rescue of that which seems the most authentic and least corrupt remaining of that which one considered to be the traditional “life-style?”

- 26 And so when HR MacMillan, the benefactor, writes to Harry Hawthorn in a letter dated September 25, 1951:

I think that it is important to get together, while they are still available, as good a representation of the work of our Indians as can be done: the time will soon come when the crop will have been gathered and no more will be produced. I should think that there must be quite a lot of material in the old towns in the interior [...] (*ivi*: 103).

- 27 Is he not perhaps suggesting to us that native cultures are thought of as no longer productive because they are nearly extinct, if not so already? And, that far away from their principal communication routes, having been trodden by collectors from every part of the world as the history of Collectionism in British Columbia teaches us, whether it is still possible for someone to find artifacts? An assertion in harmony with what he wrote on September 13, 1947, when, having sent “Indian relics” to the University of British Columbia in order to contribute to the formation of a collection of Indian objects, he spoke of the tribe as having been present in the area until recently, but that now he thinks has disappeared entirely.

2. Anthropology, Museums and Time

- 28 Yet museums, (and not only anthropology museums), are places that lend themselves to inquiries of an anthropological nature on more than one level⁹. The most immediate level is that of the objects. The «social history of the object» (Ames 1992: 46) is one of the themes upon which an anthropologist can work, that is, the study of what happens to the objects, and to the people that they attract once they have been appropriated by scholars, collectors, and museums of the wealthiest nations. Artifacts have their own biographies (Kopytoff 1986; Miller 2010) and they live beyond their own origins; they acquire new meanings, uses and owners.
- 29 Another level, as we have seen, is that which foresees extending the idea of the object in order to include within it the museum itself, in so far as the museum is a product created by our society. Museums are, in fact, «artifact(s) of our own society» (Ames 1992: 44) and to this effect they offer numerous possibilities for anthropologists to examine modern cultures. In addition, the study of the activities and programs of a museum as «cultural performances» (*ibidem*) is a way of seeing the museum as an object. An exhibit in which a museum presents artifacts of another culture can itself be examined as a cultural product of anthropological importance. The study itself of the organization of museums and their role in the community represents an ulterior way of analyzing them as ‘artifacts’.
- 30 Small museums, for example, provide opportunities to explore such topics as the interpersonal dynamic within small groups, the role differentiation between professional and amateur anthropologists and historians, and the genesis of community’s collective representations (*ibidem*).

31 The museum collection is obviously an ‘artifact’ produced in time according to certain rules and modalities, and, similar to an ethnographic text, represents an attempt to give an account of a cultural “otherness” by juxtaposing fragments (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998)¹⁰. In a way, in Anthropology one collects artifacts as one collects “cultural traits.” In both cases, the elements collected from the field acquire value in a new way, either as a collection of artifacts strictly speaking, or as a specialized “text.” As Clifford writes:

To see ethnography as a form of culture collecting (not, of course, the *only* way to see it) highlights the ways that diverse experiences and facts are selected, gathered, detached from their original temporal occasions, and given enduring value in a new arrangement. Collecting – at least in the West, where time is generally thought to be linear and irreversible – implies a rescue of phenomena from inevitable historical decay or loss. The collection contains what “deserves” to be kept, remembered, and treasured. Artifact and customs are saved out of time (Clifford 1988: 231).

32 Ethnography as well as the collection itself, in so far as they are both forms of cultural “appropriation,” implicate specific positionings in time on the part of the describer/collector and forms of narration that make reference to precise rhetorical strategies. The history of the collection, with its more or less explicit practices of appropriation, reveals a series of rhetorical devices that one can use to outline the boundaries of a discourse on the “Other,” that is simultaneously a discourse about ourselves. Among the most potent rhetorical devices, identified in the examined documents, there are those belonging to a “temporalizing discourse”, by means of which the “Other,” (the Indian in this case), is constructed in terms of distance that is above all temporal. Through a series of shifts, mostly visible in the forms and practices of the so-called “Salvaging” Anthropology, that up until the end of the 1940’s and the beginning of the 1950’s was still practiced, the “Other” was placed in a time that was not contemporary with the one in which the anthropologist lives; this is the allochronism about which Fabian writes. It is this “denial of coevalness,” that is the «persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse» (Fabian 1983: 31).

33 The “Salvaging” Anthropology starts with a presupposition that the anthropologist and the “Other” do not share the same time. The time of the “Other” is finished with and is no longer occurring; it is the time of cultures on their way to extinction and to which existence in the present is denied that belongs to History. To the anthropologist, who on the contrary moves in the present, nothing remains but to accept the inevitability of exhausting the “traditional” and of saving that which remains of the most authentic of a time that was. At the source is the idea, as Clifford writes, that:

[...] with rapid change something essential (“culture”), a coherent differential identity, vanishes. And I question, too the mode of scientific and moral authority associated with salvage, or redemptive, ethnography. It is assumed that the other society is weak and “needs” to be represented by an outsider (and that what matters in its life is its past, not present or future). The recorder and interpreter of fragile custom is custodian of an essence, an unimpeachable witness to an authenticity. (Moreover, since the “true” culture has always vanished, the salvaged version cannot be easily refuted) (Clifford 1986: 113).

3. Rhetorics of time in collection practices

- 34 In the examined documents the allochronism is constructed through a series of rhetorical strategies of temporalization. The effect of temporal distancing can be obtained not only by making reference to dates and specific periods of time, but also through more complex forms of discourse, the temporalizing functions of which are bound to the context in which they are used. For example, often a reference appears regarding the sources of artifacts that are already on their way to extinction, as if, while the museum was collecting artifacts the natives had stopped producing anything: «The time will soon come when the crop will have been gathered and no more will be produced» (Rossi 2006: 103); and when these resources seem to be exhausted, museums begin to acquire collections of objects created by other groups, for example the missionaries from the first European families that arrived on the coast. In other cases, an idea appears involving cultures that were present up until just before the beginning of the collection activities, however, in that moment, they ceased to exist. The notion of authenticity, like that of “traditionality,” is tied to a discourse about time. Authenticity, of objects in this case, is connected to a precise time that is identified as the “pre-contact” period of time. Contact between Whites and Natives in this sense is a strong marker of time, considering that starting with this point in time one speaks of a before and an after, that then, as we have seen, has strong repercussions regarding the practices of appropriation of artifacts. Objects that show tangible signs of this contact are left behind: «The museum is interested in collecting old pieces which were made by the Indians still living with their old traditions, before their way of life was much changed by contact with the white man» (Rossi 2006: 125).
- 35 At the bottom of this “Salvaging” Anthropology is the idea that, using the words of the German ethnologist Adolf Bastian written in 1881, «For us, primitive societies [*Naturvölker*] are ephemeral [...]. At the very instant they become known to us they are doomed» (Fabian 2003: 122)¹¹. In addition, actions that are seemingly more “ordinary,” for example monetary donations on the part of benefactors are interpreted in light of a conversation on temporalization. In fact, HR MacMillan reinforces the allochronic paradigm when he explicitly says that with his money he wants to save exclusively the evidence of those cultures left behind which are disappearing: «[...] I think that it is important to get together, while they are still available, as good a representation of the work of our Indians as can be done» (Rossi 2006: 103). Then there are those expressions which make a clearer temporal reference. That is to say, the time is evoked in an explicit way and the work of translating the documents has further displayed its ambiguity¹².
- 36 A singular “time” does not exist, as becomes evident the moment in which one translates the English word *old*; one of the attributes that renders certain objects valuable for a collector. Concerning this, Harry writes in a letter addressed to MacMillan, dated April 30th 1952, that he intends to acquire those totem poles that have the characteristics of being «good old totem poles» (Rossi 2006: 108). What depth does the time evoked in these documents have? How much must the work of translation distance the totem poles in Time and the other artifacts collected? In English, one is making a reference to a Time not long ago from that of the Hawthorns or MacMillan, and thus little more than what the Italian word *vecchio* is able to render; granting these items, however, a value that seems much less precious in the Italian.

(«Buoni e vecchi pali totemici»)? Or is it more appropriate to make use of the temporal depth evoked by the Italian word *antico* that gives a greater sense of preciousness to the objects, («buoni e antichi pali totemici»)? In a few words, can objects that were produced up until the end of the Eighteenth century and beyond be called *antico* in Italian? Perhaps they can be if one considers that the old of our documents refers more to a time that is qualitatively different, rather than to a more distant past¹³.

- 37 In short, we are dealing with an almost mythical time - far away from those of us who are trying to calculate its depth - mostly in qualitative terms, but not too far away from the point of view of its calculation. Thus, the way to give an account of this time that is qualitatively distant from us, that seems to me most appropriate, is to translate with the word *antico*; even if in Italian it evokes a different historical depth. Furthermore, the antiquity of the object is connected to its being “good,” and the goodness in this case is a synonym of genuine-ness. Those same totem poles, said to be old and therefore good by Hawthorn, MacMillan had previously defined as “genuine” (Rossi 2006: 108), contrasting them with those defined as “manufactured” (*ibidem*) or reproduced, were from his point of view are absolutely devoid of interest. In plain words, that which renders an object worth collecting, at least for MacMillan, is its age, which becomes a sign of genuine-ness. Conversely, Hawthorn finds that the reproductions are equally interesting. The different names attributed to the typology of the objects that the Hawthorns were collecting also join in a temporalizing discourse. We saw previously, after examining the documents, that the objects collected or acquired for the museum are referred to at times as “pieces”, on rare occasion as “relics,” very often as “articles and items,” frequently as “materials,” and also as “artifacts.” In certain cases they are referred to as “specimens,” less frequently as “works of art” or simply “art,” and in certain documents they are simultaneously referred to with more names.
- 38 The variety of names for the objects creates a powerful instrument in a temporalizing discussion; revealing, in this case, a different positioning in time of the producers or creators of these objects. One also situates within this context the present moves to reaffirm ownership on the part of the aboriginal communities that wish to rename in a more appropriate fashion certain ethnicons and toponyms, representing their desire to be a part of History. We have in fact considered these words an inheritance of precise historical moments and paradigms that saw those objects, from time to time, as curiosities or relics, and therefore as products of another era with forgotten meanings, or subsequently as specimens, equal to minerals or insects to be used in the reconstruction of the historical development of man; produced by populations on their way to extinction, or even after as works of art produced this time by living and thriving populations.
- 39 On a more general level, one can maintain that the disciplinary divisions that traditionally assign, or have assigned, an “ethnological fate”¹⁴ to the aboriginal populations of the world and their creations, that then, following their destiny, would “naturally” be placed inside Anthropological Museums, function as powerful temporalizing mechanisms. It isn’t astonishing then if in recent years those native populations, long considered done for, have wanted to free themselves from their ethnological destiny, which in this sense becomes an ulterior form of the allochroism from which we wish to keep a distance¹⁵.
- 40 In museum affairs the power that one conceals behind the attribution of names and consequently of control is carried out on a macro-classification level through the

partitioning of *Art, Archeology, Ethnology, History, Popular Traditions, Natural Science, and Science*¹⁶. This partitioning still has a force of representation so strong that it cancels out attempts made by the revisionist approach, practiced by many scholars and conservationists of museums inclined to point out that the categories which organize the museum system are left-over from ideologies belonging to the 19th century. The strategies by which a museum classifies objects have become so “natural” that they are no longer questioned¹⁷. The classification system used by museums, organized into History and the categories connected to it, Ethnology and Popular Culture, is to be situated within the scope of rhetorics of temporalization, and appears similar to on of those “ghosts” that manifest themselves when one is looking for the “mechanisms of power” hidden in the “mesh” of the discussions, texts, representations and classificatory systems.

- 41 When a museum assigns certain objects to the domain of “History” it identifies the objects’ makers as participants in a dynamic, progressive, temporal process; its assignment of other objects to “Ethnology” or “Folk Culture” invests in them white notions of the traditional, the timeless and the technologically retrograde¹⁸.
- 42 The processes of acquiring possessions that, with their practices of inclusion and exclusion reveal implicit hierarchies of value, take form as potent mechanisms of power. The analysis of such processes, in so far as they are forms with which one appropriates the Other, makes clear, to use the words of Fabian, that «there is no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, a political action» (Fabian 1983: 1). Certain styles of classification that still survive in museums lend force to the concepts of out-dated otherness, which operate by means of negating an arrangement in the history of the objects made or used by the aboriginal populations and therefore metonymically of the populations themselves. Once more it is made evident how the representations made by the museum, which, different from other types of representation, are destined for a wide and generic public, have a strong political role which either contributes to the reinforcement of certain models of the colonial standard, through determined forms of classification, or is able to offer the occasion to work in the direction of a de-colonizing process, as the current collaborative museography proposes to do.

4. The Museum: from “Savior” to Patron

- 43 Visiting MOA today, the idea of “salvaging” that enlivened its collecting practices sixty years ago is not evident. The objects, collected during the years which we have examined in this essay, are displayed as works of art, often juxtaposing antique objects with those produced in more recent years, in order to clarify the message that the tribal works are part of a developing and dynamic tradition. The museum openly displays native works as part of a creative process, not as treasures salvaged from a vanished past. As stated on the museum's website: «MOA’s exhibitions and programs emphasize artistic diversity and the links between art, community and the contemporary social and political context in which youth, artists and communities are communicating their cultural traditions»¹⁹.
- 44 The strategies used to display these objects as works of art are those pointed out by Sally Price (2002) when she examines the difference between the staging of an object as an ethnological find or as a work of art. If an ethnological find is normally explained in

detail through a certain system of texts and legends, the same object seen as a work of art is subjected in the first place to an isolation process, in the sense that as such it is distanced from other objects as it would be from an explanatory context: all of the didactic explanations disappear. The visitor is invited to appreciate the formal qualities of the object and not to create an idea of it based on explanatory texts²⁰.

- 45 Thus at MOA one enters a ramp, along which are grouped by cultural zone, sculptures from the Salish community, dating from the late Eighteen hundreds to the early Nineteen hundreds. In this part of the museum the spectator is explicitly invited to confront, by means of the sculptural exhibition of various coastal areas, different styles.
- 46 At the end of this ramp, one arrives in the principal part of the museum: the Great Hall which ends with walls of glass 15 meters high. Displayed here are different objects of large dimensions coming from various communities (Haida, Kwakwaka'wakw, Gitksan, Nisga'a, Haisla, Oweekeno and others). The dominant figures are the totem poles, the large wooden containers and the ceremonial plates, often made in the shape of legendary mythical beings. Like the great contemporary sculpture, put on display in the space called the Rotunda, commissioned to Bill Reid in the 1980's, *The Raven and the First Men*, which depicts precisely the Raven, the great bird trickster of the native mythology, when it discovers the first men in a conch shell on the beach.
- 47 The design message of MOA, juxtaposing works of art from the past with contemporary works, suggests that the natives are not dead and buried, as was believed up until some decades ago, but that they are alive, thriving, and still productive. This time, elevated to the rank of artists, they seem to share the same Time as the anthropologist. And so they will no longer go into the field salvaging "remnants" of a time that once was, but they will transform themselves into patrons²¹, acting as sustainers and promoters of their work.²² And it was precisely MOA, as I previously mentioned, with its Great Hall of 1976 and with its aesthetic design message that publicly decreed, in Canada, the artistic nature of the native objects.
- 48 From the documents examined, this process of the "reintroduction into History" of the natives, by no means disappeared, but active and productive in new ways, seems to occur, more or less consciously, around the 1960s; more precisely when the natives reappeared with new roles. In this case as artists. Concerning this, it seems significant to me the epistolary exchange between Harry Hawthorn and another great benefactor of MOA, Walter Koerner, with regard to a sculpture of Bill Reid, who is now unanimously considered one of the greatest contemporary artists of the north-west coast of Canada, representing a bear.
- 49 The 30th of July 1963, Harry Hawthorn writes to Walter Koerner regarding Bill Reid's *Bear*²³, which, apparently, not everyone liked.

I went to see the bear carved by Bill Reid.

I am pleased to say that I disagree with the aesthetic judgments I have heard so far. I regard it as a very strong piece of sculpture suggesting great coiled strength and by its pose, just about to spring, it avoids any suggestion of clumsiness that its massiveness might confer. I apologize for the awkwardness of my language but I am not used to the vocabulary of aesthetics. However, you will gather that I liked the animal.

I also see it as a proper development of northwest coast tradition. As far as I know, nothing quite like it has ever been carved before, but it is reasonable to think that if the northwest coast traditions are to become creative again, this is the sort of

development we might hope for

Accordingly, I would be delighted to recommend its acceptance by the University if you wished to donate it. I would want to consult on its location but I myself would argue for its inclusion in the Totem Pole Park, probably on the edge of the woods behind some of the other carvings (Rossi 2006: 121).

- 50 Again on the 16th of September 1963, Harry writes to the president of the university to convince him to accept the sculpture.

Dear President Macdonald:

I am not sure of the status of Mr. Walter Koerner's gift to the University of a bear carved by Bill Reid. However, if it is of assistance to you in making a decision on its acceptance, I want, to recommend strongly that we accept it. I regard it as a very fine and interesting example of the new work of a north-west coast artist. It is not traditional but shows one of the sorts of development that must take place if the Indian arts are to remain alive (*ibidem*).

- 51 Not exactly by chance, in the early 1960's when the "Indian question" began to gain ground, the new paradigm was spreading that would allow, in time, those objects collected years before as artifacts, produced by cultures close to disappearing, to be seen as works of art. In the same year Harry was commissioned by the Canadian Government to do a study, finished in 1967, on the "Canadian Indians" which had as a final result a famous report titled *Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada (1966-67)* and known as *The Hawthorn Report*. Harry was not new to this type of investigation with political and administrative repercussions. He had in fact already conducted a study on the Indians of British Columbia (1958) as well as on the Doukhobors (1955). Hawthorn and his research group worked on four principal focus points: 1) economic development, 2) questions of administrative and constitutional character, 3) instruction, 4) government and local power. The *Hawthorn Report* identifies a special citizenship status ("citizens plus status") for the people of the first nations (Weaver 1993). "Individuals carrying all the rights inferred by Canadian citizenship but additionally acknowledged as the bearers of ancient traditions that pre-existed European colonization" (Shelton 2007: 396). Harry's successor, Michael Ames, who began his direction in 1974, was a strong supporter of decolonizing museums and returning the voice of interpretation to First Nations. Not always supported by his colleagues (Shelton 2007). Since Clifford first visited the museum, significant changes have occurred. In the early 2000s the MOA received funding for the implementation of a new type of collaborative research, the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN), in which research is determined by the interests of the community rather than the museum or scholars (Phillips 2003)²⁴.

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NOTES

1. For a broader restitution of the research results, see Rossi 2006.
2. Harry Hawthorn (1910-2006) and Audrey (1917-2000) met at Yale where, in 1939, Harry had a scholarship, worked with George Murdock, and wrote his doctorate thesis under the supervision of Bronislaw Malinowski. Audrey, who had attained her *Bachelor of Arts* and *Master of Arts* degrees in Anthropology and Sociology from Columbia, where she had taken up a strong regard for the study of material culture from Ralph Linton, had as supervisor of her work on the Cross-Cultural Survey, Harry, who in the meantime had become her husband. Despite the fact that Murdock did not like a husband supervising the work of his wife, Audrey and Harry were married in 1941 and Harry did supervise Audrey's work.
3. Audrey's objective from the beginning was to make the UBC museum an institution with didactic ends. Audrey planned and created *Anthropology 431*, the first museum course proposed in a Canadian university, and *Anthropology 331* courses in *Primitive Art* and in *Museum Principles*. Many of the current directors and curators of the principal Canadian museums participated in these courses. For further study on MoA as a didactic museum please see the article by Mayer (2004).
4. James Clifford writes about this density of local meaning in his famous essay dedicated to four museums on the North-west coast of Canada (among which was the Museum of Vancouver). See Clifford (1997).
5. For an Anthropological study on institutions the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie et d'Histoire de l'institution de la culture* (LAHIC) should be noted. It speaks of a project launched in 2002 and destined to last for four years, its objective being a fundamental and general problem of Anthropology, the cultural institution. The fields of research are numerous; language, writing, literature and case studies, cultural heritage, monuments, works of art, buildings, places, practices, and knowledge. On this see Fabre (2003).
6. *Objects of My Affection* is the title of a book by the American artist Man Ray in which he displays photographs of objects created by the sculptor Man Ray. During the course of the 1996-97 academic year the title of this book became the name for a sort of experimental laboratory in the History of Popular Traditions course taught by Pietro Clemente at the University of Siena. The idea for this seminar-laboratory came about by considering, as Pietro Clemente writes, the necessity to "come out of the 'general' and 'average' nature of objects in order to comprehend their dimension of personalized use, their belonging and living within biographies: 'This is my father's spade.'" (Clemente, Rossi 1999: 151-152. It was asked of the students to choose objects that were for them "objects of affection" and "for this (reason), objects with a personal story, of an autobiographical promise or of the life story of another" (ivi: 153) The exhibit was envisioned as a sort of family album, with many images of the "parents", the Hawthorns, and of the subsequent generations; natives, artists, students and others. The spectator was therefore invited to take part in the memories of the family.
7. One category of objects, used traditionally as a dividing line or "lance" by historians of North American Art, to continue speaking within the metaphor in this anatomical practice, is "tourist art," which, for its being conceived as produced on the limits of the "authentic", taking its place in the margins of certain classificatory confines, is "good for thinking" on questions of identification in regard to domains of inclusion and exclusion. The most recent studies on North American tourist art have demonstrated that the debated question regarding its authenticity does not so much entail the specific characteristics of the object so much as the entire collecting

process. It is a certain collecting practice put into action at a certain moment and in certain places that determines whether an object is “good” enough to collect. See also Clifford (1985).

8. Two exhibits opened at MoA in 1996, *From under the Delta: Wet site Archaeology from the Fraser Valley* and *Written in the Earth*. The First Nations communities whose heritage was to be exhibited were first approached. The band council representatives offered support on the understanding that their representatives would be consulted on the selection and interpretation of materials.

9. On the relationship today between anthropology, intended as an academic discipline, and the world of museums please see Mary Bouquet (2001). In the introduction to the volume, Bouquet demonstrates that the notion that Anthropology is devoted to museums continues to be presented today in many European University courses, and that this idea has more to do with the past than the present. This vision, more or less “frozen” and inherited from the past, does not interact well with the current explosion of museums the world over and with the increasing interest in museums on the part of other academic disciplines.

10. See also Halpin (1991).

11. Adolf Bastian cited by Fabian (2003). Fabian indicates that the citation is found in a political agreement that asked for the recognition of Ethnology as a scientific discipline and proposed the creation of ethnographic museums to act as its principle institutions of research.

12. The original documents were translated by the author from the English into Italian. She here considers some of the dilemmas she ran into while trying to render the concept of time present in the English version into Italian in such a way as to preserve the concept without confounding its meaning in the Italian. Those familiar with the concept of time in Italian are aware that the Italian language specifies different periods of time by means of both its verb tenses (the simple past, the imperfect, the past perfect, and the past anterior) as well as through some adjectives such as *vecchio* and *antico* that both describe things from the past, but implicate various temporal distances of the past. The term *vecchio* refers to people and objects that are old, such as an old car, chair or person, however, the word *antico* refers to objects that are from the distant past such as the roman ruins. The term *vecchio* carries with it a negative connotation whereas *antico* carries a positive meaning that borders on reverence. The distinction is subtle to an English speaker but presents a very different image for an Italian speaker when the word *antico* as opposed to *vecchio* is used to describe an object.

13. The distinction between “two families” of time, “qualitative time” and “quantitative time,” was proposed by Krzysztof Pomian (1992) and from this idea I drew inspiration. It does not seem suitable to me, however, to begin a discussion of this complex and wide topic at this point. That which I felt necessary to demonstrate is the idea of a plurality of time, which is the base of the so-called Salvaging Anthropology.

14. Michael Ames, in an essay with the meaningful title *Free Indians from their ethnological fate*, demonstrates how relations between the Indians and Anthropological Museums, mostly those on the west coast of Canada, can be analyzed by arranging them in the wider context of the persistence and force with which the “Fourth World” reclaims for itself the ownership of its stories and its cultures, including the efforts of some Indian intellectuals who wish to liberate themselves from that which is described as their “ethnological destiny” which makes them into “anthropological specimens.” (Ames 1987).

15. Ruth Phillips relates that the efforts of native artists to come out of the Anthropological/Ethnological Museums in Canada in the 1990’s gave rise to an important showing at the National Gallery of Canada, which was called *Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*, that opened in 1992, as well as to the acquisition of Contemporary Indian Art for the permanent collection of the gallery (Phillips 2011).

16. The various forms of art that, on a classificatory level, are structured in: *Fine Arts*, *Decorative Arts*, *Applied Arts*, and *Popular Arts* can be read in the same way. While the classificatory dyad structured in *History* and *Ethnology* has most of all to do with concepts of race, the various forms

of art, here listed, implicate, according to Phillips, notions of gender and class. Here also history remains at the center and everything that is traditional is placed on the margins (Phillips 2011).

17. Museums have always been established in accord with the dominant epistemological context; this reading of the museum, openly inspired by Foucault, sees the museum as a conglomeration of the possibilities of knowledge determined by the operative structure in a precise historical moment (Hooper-Greenhill 1992).

18. Ruth Phillips demonstrates that the arrival of a new collection in a museum makes evident the fact that it operates like a centrifuge that separates all the component parts. The objects are classified according to criteria of homogeneity determined by abstract typologies, heritage of the classification of natural history and of the history of art of the 19th century. The collections, in Phillips' perspective, are seen as a mixture made from heterogeneous elements; the objects are not bound by stable relationships but by precarious juxtapositions. The documentation that makes clear these interconnections survives more frequently and more easily in museums of small dimensions that cultivate a strong link with the local history. In much larger museums this delicate veil of interconnections is generally destroyed by conventional practices of classification that tend to separate the objects reunited to form a collection. (Phillips 2011).

19. <https://moa.ubc.ca/about-moa/> (accessed March 20th, 2022).

20. Carol Mayer, professor of the course *Anthropology of Public Representation* and curator at MoA, in her doctoral thesis, speaking of the didactic apparatus of the *Great Hall* relevantly points out that the designer who had looked after the staging, Rudy Kovach, begged that the totem poles were not accompanied by any captions because they should "speak for themselves." The staff of the museum did not agree with this expository criterion and in the end next to the objects were placed some photographs that showed the poles before their removal from their original sites. These photographs showed them in terrible conditions with weeds growing over them. It seems however that the message which these photographs transmitted went to reinforce the concept that the cultures presented were extinct, dead. Thus, the photographs were substituted with the current metallic signs on which we find a simple enough drawing of the original location of the piece along with some information: its name, its original location, and the era to which it belongs written in both English and French (Mayer 1996).

21. Today the museums are only a few of the many *patrons* who sustain native art on the north-west coast. Others include the government, commercial businesses, collectors, tourists, and the natives themselves. The Province of British Columbia for example, through its *Provincial Museum*, is an important patron.

22. It should be noted that MoA up until the middle of the 20th century sustained, in numerous ways, the work of various sculptors: Mango Martin, Bill Reid, Robert Davidson, Douglas Cranmer, Norman Tait, Lyle Wilson and others. If one excludes small objects produced by Martin and his wife, the large part of the commissions made by the museum have been monumental sculptures. After two totem poles commissioned to Martin in 1951, the subsequent project was the reproduction of a Haida village, the work of Reid and Cranmer between 1959-1962, (on this see Hawthorn 1993). Reid sculpted a sea lion at MoA in 1962 and a bear in 1963 and then the sculpture *The Raven and the First Men* in 1980. By the end of the Sixties and the beginning of the Seventies, Davidson and Cranmer had made various sculptures at the museum, even though the large part their work ended up elsewhere. In addition to commission objects for its own collection, MoA also offered native artists, with personal funds available, the possibility to use the museum's equipment and services, with the understanding that some of their creations could be made available to the public as demonstrative works. For a reading of the museum as a *patron* see Jacknis (2002: 267-308).

23. Bill Reid's *Bear*, which, when sculpted, was not liked by many, is not only on display in the Great Hall of MoA, but, significantly, a small toy version was on sale in the museum store for about thirty dollars, at the time of my research in 2001. The toy was described as: "the Haida

grizzly bear is a soft and affectionate version of the great cedar bear displayed in the Great Hall of the museum. Sculpted in 1962 by the celebrated Haida artist Bill Reid, the original sculpture shows the distinctive features of a Haida bear. This toy version is the perfect toy or decorative piece for the most intimate corner of the house”.

24. My thanks go to the referees who read and commented on this article. To them my gratitude for helping me see my work with different eyes and suggesting how to improve it.

ABSTRACTS

In this article I went back to my doctoral research to show, through the analysis of archival material, how the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, a majority museum, according to Clifford's definition, turned from “savior” to “patron” in relation to indigenous artifacts and became through the years, starting with the direction of Michael Ames (1974-97 and 2002-04), an international benchmark for collaborative approach in museums. This article, focusing on the 1950s and 1960s, still shows the outcomes of a salvage anthropology and the idea of disappearing cultures, although in the 1960s the idea of new and original indigenous productions begins to make its way. Since Clifford first visited the museum in the 1990s, significant changes have occurred. In the early 2000's the MOA received funding for the implementation of a new type of collaborative research, the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN), in which research is determined by the interests of the Indigenous communities rather than the museum or scholars.

In questo articolo ritorno sulla mia ricerca di dottorato per mostrare, attraverso l'analisi di materiali d'archivio, come il museo di antropologia di Vancouver, un museo maggioritario, secondo la definizione data da Clifford, si è trasformato da “salvatore a “mecenate” per ciò che riguarda i manufatti delle popolazioni indigene e sia divenuto nel tempo, a cominciare dalla direzione di Michael Ames (1974-97 e 2002-04), un punto di riferimento importante per gli approcci collaborativi nei musei. L'articolo, che si concentra sugli anni '50 e '60 del '900, ancora mostra gli esiti di un'antropologia di salvataggio e l'idea di culture in via di sparizione, benchè negli anni '60 cominciano a farsi strada l'idea di produzioni indigene nuove e originali. Da quando Clifford ha visitato questo museo, negli anni '90, molte cose sono cambiate. All'inizio degli anni 2000 il MOA ha ricevuto i finanziamenti per l'implementazione di un nuovo tipo di ricerca collaborativa: il *Reciprocal Research Network* (RRN), nel quale la ricerca è stabilita dagli interessi delle comunità indigene piuttosto che da quelli del museo o degli studiosi.

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