



Decolonizing Archaeology: A Conversation with George Nicholas

SFU Masterclass Series

IRMACS Centre, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby Campus

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Transcription by Mandy K. Nilson

Note: Transcription has been lightly edited to improve readability.

(1:45)

Introduction:

Welcome to the IRMACS Centre. My name is Veselin Jungic and I am the Deputy Director here. Today we are starting a new series: SFU Research Master Class. The main idea of the series is to have a group of prominent SFU Researchers that will, instead of an academic lecture on their research topic, tell the story of their research path and the best practices. So, I would like to invite Professor John Pierce, Dean of the Faculty of the Environment to introduce today's speaker.

(2:17)

Professor John Pierce introducing George Nicholas:

John Pierce: It is a real delight to be here. It is a genuine pleasure to be here. George and I have known each other for many years. Our paths have crossed in many different ways. I got to know George in Kamloops, when he was the founding Director of SFU Indigenous Archaeology Program from 1991 to 2005. He worked closely with the Secwepemc and other First Nations in the Interior of British Columbia and elsewhere in British Columbia. I think it was 2005 that you then came to Burnaby?

George Nicholas: "That's right".

John Pierce: It has been one success after another for George, which I will say something about in a moment here. In terms of George's research focus they include Indigenous peoples in archaeology, intellectual property, issues relating to archaeology, archaeology and human ecology of wetlands, and archaeological theory. All of which he has published extensively in these areas. His most recent book is titled *Being and Becoming Indigenous Archaeologists*.¹ This is an edited volume that represents the life stories of thirty-seven Indigenous archaeologists from around the world. He is also the

¹ Left Coast Press, 2010.

series co-editor of The World Archaeological Congresses recent handbook *Archaeology*, and former editor of *Canadian Archaeology*. George is also the Director of a very ambitious and very important research program—the acronym is IPinCH—which stands for Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage, and this is a seven year initiative funded by SSHRC [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council] and I think it is an MCRI [Major Collaborative Research Initiative] grant. I think it is, you are in your, sixth year?

George Nicholas:, “That is correct”.

John Pierce: That renewal just went through last year. Correct?

George Nicholas: (laughs).

John Pierce: If any of you have ever been involved in a sharp-paced MCRI, you will know how much work; how much bureaucracy is involved here. What it is more significant and important here with respect to this program is that it is an international program. It isn't just focused on these issues—cultural intellectual property issues—in Canada. But it is truly international with over fifty scholars and twenty-five partnering organizations concerned with the theoretical, ethical, and practical implications of commodification, appropriation, and other flows of knowledge about the past, and how these may affect communities, researchers, and other stakeholders. And to give you the significance and importance of what George has done here, and how unique his contributions have been with respect to this, is that just last year, 2013, George received the first Partnership Award from SSHRC. This is, if you are able to understand the degree of competition within Canada, first of all at SSHRC, and then with respect to these other large-scale research projects, this is a tremendous accolade for George and his colleagues, and he has provided enormous intellectual leadership here. And my feeling is that at the end of the seven years, this is going to continue in one form or another. That's what the purpose of one of these MCRI grants is, to kick start a very large international initiative. But the acknowledgement with the Partnership Award, which also came with a \$50,000 SSHRC prize, is really phenomenal.

Now if that wasn't enough, George has one other feather in his cap, which I just learned about, and it was confirmed today, which I learned about through the grapevine – George received the Excellence in Teaching Award from SFU.

(Applause)

Let me just underscore one other aspect of this award, because I sat on this committee. It is an amazingly competitive process. It is a delight to go through these files to see how seriously people take their teaching, and I think George had been nominated on a

number of different occasions. But I am delighted that he has succeeded in this very important endeavour. So with that I think we can start.

George: "Thank you."

Veselin Jungic (Director of IRMACS): Please welcome Professor Nicholas and Jenna Walsh, from the library who will be the interviewer.

(Applause)

The Interview:

Jenna Walsh (JW): Hello everyone, welcome, and welcome George. It is a great honour to have this opportunity to interview you today, and talk about your research story.

George Nicholas (GN): "Thank you."

(JW): I actually wanted to start at a place that connects your most recent published work with also the beginning. Well maybe not the real beginning of your career. In the dedication of *Being and Becoming an Indigenous Archaeologists* you wrote "This volume is dedicated to the students in the first class of the First Nations students I taught in Kamloops in British Columbia in 1991. They provided me with an education of more value than I can fully acknowledge and opened the door to a new kind of archaeology." Can you share a story that expands on how this shaped your research path and your interest in Indigenous archaeology?

(GN): Thank you. It's been quite the adventure. I started out doing traditional archaeology, in fact, focusing on early postglacial land use, doing very ecologically-oriented archaeology. Then one thing led to another and I found myself in Kamloops, and the opportunity to teach a course in the newly-established collaborative program between Simon Fraser University and the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society. I remember that the first class was in the former residential school. I walked into what was the former girls dorm, where SFU the year before had set up the program. And I sat in the front of the class, and there are thirteen Secwepemc students sitting in front of me, including several in the first row with arms crossed and sunglasses on. I started into my usual introduction into archaeology class. Within literally one minute I knew a traditional format of lecturing was not going to work. So I put my notes aside, and began to have a conversation with them about heritage and archaeology, and how they saw the land around them, and what constituted their heritage. And that one course led to a full load the next semester, which led eventually to tenure, and the development of the archaeology program there. And over the course of fifteen years and thereafter I found those years have been so formative in my life — not replacing the other archaeology I

was doing but adding a whole new chapter to it—a whole new dimension to it that grounded these abstract ideas and issues about heritage... that grounded those ideas in people's lives. The result was to shift my thinking around, and come to appreciate what heritage means to Indigenous peoples in ways normally you cannot get to in any other way in a really deep fashion. So that dedication is just a small acknowledgement of the great debt I owe to those thirteen students, and to the many community members and others who were so accommodating of this white guy, who was sometimes asking difficult questions of them. But, the questions they were asking of me were far, far, more difficult.

(JW): So it does sound like a great deal of this was an introduction to relationship building and building trust and sort of learning to understand the different ways of knowing. It is often discussed that relationship building is essential to the decolonizing practice in archaeology, and in other disciplines as well. Do you have any tips or methods you can share that facilitate that kind of effective responsible relationship building for research and with research collaborators?

(GN): Yes, that points to one of the most important issues that has emerged in cultural heritage and archaeology—certainly in the last thirty years, if not longer—concerning the relationship that archaeologists have with descendent communities, whomever they are. They are not always Native Americans, First Nations. Too often these groups have been at loggerheads, not listening to each other, not understanding the fact that you have the intersection of different value systems, different priorities, and so on. I think the first lesson that I learned, and this is true of many of my other colleagues who have been so deeply involved with this kind of work—Larry Zimmerman, TJ Ferguson, Clare Smith, and many, many others—the first thing is to listen, to shut up and listen—to recognize that for much of the conversation that goes on with Indigenous peoples that they are the experts and not you. As Larry Zimmerman, my colleague, points out, the first thing you need to do is humble yourself. To recognize that your position is traditionally one of great power and authority—you are the scientist. And, yes, that is true at some levels, but the equation changes when you are talking to people about *their* heritage on *their* land. Not in the sense that you've got to put your real motives aside or you've got to defer, or water down, or try to be politically correct. That's not what I am talking about. It is this notion of recognizing there is this historic power imbalance, and that some Indigenous peoples... when you are talking to them in a meeting, some elders won't say anything. You cannot assume that silence means agreement. Some Indigenous peoples simply feel that you are the expert and think "whatever I have to say about my own heritage isn't as valuable as what you the expert have to say."

And these have been some really hard-learned lessons. One case in point is this, that after ten years or so of working with Indigenous peoples, and getting involved in what has become known as Indigenous archaeology, I was invited to give a talk at Flinders University in South Australia—I think this is 2000 or 2001—to talk about my involvement with Indigenous peoples, and that whole set of issues. While I was there I

had a chance to visit a number of archaeological sites, and meet with colleagues and so on. That was very gratifying, including the opportunity to go to one really important site, called Roonka Flat.

A few days later I was invited by a colleague to join her at a Truth and Reconciliation event. So I went there, and there were hundreds of people... aboriginal Australians, and anthropologists, and policy makers, and so on. And while I was there I heard from several people that “Richard Hunter is looking for you”. Richard was a tribal elder, who happened to be from the land where the one site I mentioned was located—Roonka Flat. I heard this from several people, so I was thinking maybe Richard has heard about the work I have been doing with Indigenous groups, and wanted to talk about that. When we finally connected later that night he laid into me. He said, “How dare you go my traditional land without asking me first”. I was taken aback. And then I realized that I had made an assumption. I had assumed that my colleagues who had been working at that site, including working with Richard, had followed the traditional protocols, and had asked permission and so on. But that was also my responsibility to have done that, and so that led to a very interesting conversation with Richard later that evening. There was an immediate reconciliation between us, when we finally sorted all of this out. So a really important piece of advice is not to make assumptions. And that goes for work with Indigenous people, as well as doing scientific research; too often we assume that the stuff that we are reading is tried and true, and is a given that we continue to build on. But it never hurts to sometimes go back to those foundational studies and say “well, let’s take another look at this.” I think we can all think of examples where someone looked at earlier work in the sciences or history and realized that “Gee, there is a bit missing,” or see that we can now look at this in a completely different way.

(17:28)

(JW): I also want to lead into the idea of how research done in community-based practice, for example, is research done with and for the community. Do you ever find that it is hard to balance your own research interests with those of the community? Or how do you approach meeting the two together?

(GN): That is a good question. I think all of us need to find a balance in our various research interests. In some cases, if you’ve made a commitment with working with a community, you really need to avoid the tendency—sometimes you have no control over this—but there is often the tendency where a group of archaeologists will work with a community for a particular project, and then they are gone. They have benefited from in the process, they have gained new scientific information, they publish, they get tenure, promotion and all of that and the community may receive a copy of the report in return, which is often of interest but sometimes it is written in technical language, so there is really little balance.

This is something that researchers need to realize is that they are imposing upon the community. Very often the community is looking to create or develop relationships—but long-term relations because, as you point out, much of this work involves developing

respect and trust in each other, which you cannot do in a single field season. In fact, sometimes it takes several years before the community even allows you into the community to do work there. So that is an important consideration, and all archaeologists, scientists, or whatever, even if they have the desire, don't have the means to make that kind of commitment. Or many universities, although they are encouraging faculty to get more involved in community-based research, which is increasingly common, may not have adjusted their tenure and promotion system accordingly, so that the kind of products that may be coming out of a community-based project, may not be the usual publications that count so heavily for tenure.

And this kind of research is potentially very risky for young scholars. If you are developing a project with a community that your thesis or dissertation is dependent on, it is not unknown for a new band council to come on with new priorities and suddenly the project that was approved by the last band council is now lower down in their priorities or may even be out the door. So you as a Ph.D. student are suddenly left with "Where's my dissertation?" Or the same thing with young scholars seeking tenure; if you cannot publish, and if you cannot build up your CV accordingly through this kind of research then you may have a hard time getting tenure. So there is a whole host of balances that one needs to be aware of, and to make decisions accordingly—whether you work with, and for how long, with a particular community.

(21:08)

(JW): That's very helpful and it sounds like it is an ongoing process within the academy. Within the community, and you mentioned some of the complications that can arise, but do you have any experiences with capacity-building as part of the research process that you would like to share?

(GN): I do, and I think a very good example that I've been involved with was the program we had in Kamloops. That over the course of the fifteen years that I was there, and for several other years until the program closed in 2010, this was the leading institution in Canada—and really one of very few in all of North America—that was explicitly directed to training First Nation students. And not just in the classroom, not just offering basically a full BA degree with several different themes prioritized in terms of linguistics, archaeology and so on. But to offer courses in cultural resource management, in all aspects of fieldwork. Over my tenure there, we probably trained more than five hundred First Nation students, many of whom have gone on to careers in archaeology, full or part-time. But I think even more important than that, many of those students have ended up on band councils, or are certainly voters in their nations, with a firsthand knowledge of archaeology. They are now able to make more informed decisions about their own heritage. Many of our students also went on to education, and in the classroom are able to develop in courses in Secwepemc heritage—not just the contemporary aspects, but also the pre-contact aspects. So capacity building is something that SFU has certainly had a very long involvement with. I would just like to thank John Pierce, and all the others here at SFU that have been so helpful and working

so hard over the course of the last two decades to use SFU as a platform to engage in—beyond the slogan of SFU—to engage in a really meaningful way with First Nation peoples, and with other descendent communities, and other stakeholders in British Columbia and elsewhere.

(23:51)

(JW): As part of that engagement and relationship, which obviously goes both ways, what can the—for lack of a better term—traditional academic world learn from the communities? What can researchers, within an academic institution like SFU, whether they are Indigenous, or not, learn from those communities?

(GN): I think this is something that resonates with what we have been doing with the IPinCH Project, which is a whole story unto itself. It's been the adventure of a lifetime. As they say, adventures are never fun until they are over. This has been a lot of fun, but also a lot of challenges. Some of these challenges come back to the point that you have brought forward. I mean, what we are really good at doing as academics is theorizing, and figuring out how the world works. And sometimes we get it really right, and in other cases we don't know if we've gotten it really right, and of course sometimes we get it really wrong. And it is not until we really take these ideas, and go out there in the real world, and see how they relate, or see the goodness of fit between theory and practice, or theory and the real world, that we can start to have a fuller understanding of the depth of, and the nature of, the knowledge we deal with and create or evaluate.

With the IPinCH Project that is something we have had to face full on in just getting this project going in terms of the assumption that academics are the ones who are best situated to figure out how to develop research projects or what kind of research design works best. It took us four years to get the funds from SSHRC for IPinCH. They liked it from the start, and they kept encouraging us to apply again and again. But the problem that we finally figured out was that they didn't like our research methods. They liked this idea of figuring out and theorizing about intellectual property issues, and how it affects people, and commodification and appropriation—the whole host of things that we are dealing with here. But they didn't like the fact that a significant part of our project was focused on community-based research.

Our method with that aspect of the project was basically to put the communities in the driver's seat. That if we are talking about *their* heritage, and the issues that they are having, concerns they are having about commodification of rock art images, or whatever is of concern to them, doesn't it make sense to use that as our starting point? Not only to figure out from them what are the issues, but to basically turn over much of the control, if not the whole control, of that aspect of that particular project to them. And then to work with them, or to have some of the academics on our team work with them, to develop the research design and to facilitate the whole thing.

In the end, after the project is done—whether it had to do with identifying how the community sees a way to work with human skeletal remains, with outside scientists through protocols for dealing with outside researchers, or developing focus groups to

get a better sense of how Yukon First Nations policies over heritage can be comparable to, and articulate with those of the Provincial or Federal governments—once that research is done, then the community reviews the research results to determine what is appropriate, or not, and then release that to the IPinCH team for our theorizing and so on.

To get back to SSHRC, it took us four tries to finally convince them that this was the only way that we could conduct this kind of research. And they finally bought it. The great irony, and this goes back to this wonderful award we received—the team—received last November from SSHRC—the Partnership Award. What is so gratifying, in a sense so ironic, is that we got the award for doing exactly what we said we were going to do from the start. What this points to is over the last seven, eight or so years, there's been a change in the academic world, but also at the level of funders to acknowledge the value of this kind of research—whether in the health sciences or beyond—to acknowledge that there are different kinds of research methods that are needed to achieve the kind of knowledge production that then allows us to theorize until the cows come home.

So it has been a real challenge. I know Nancy [McNeil] and John [Pierce] and many others in the Office of Research Services have been well aware of the challenges that we have had with this project, including Greg Sasges, the university lawyer—tearing out our hair over the funding transfers, ethics applications, and all these things we have to go through as part of the normal business of running university research. They have gone through great strides to accommodate this change that has been occurring. So it has been quite the adventure, a huge learning curve for all of us. And in all of this we have been really grateful to the communities for their patience. I'm sure at times they have been amused to tears as to how long it takes us to get our act together to get \$24,000 to one of the communities. In some cases it has literally taken us three or four years, and we have one case study that is still unresolved in funding. So it's a whole new world out there. All of the students here, those in my class and elsewhere, you've got the opportunity now to see how some of these things are coming into being, as opposed to a world where community-based archaeology is simply part of the landscape. In watching the growing pains, I think you have the opportunity to learn much, and at the same time to hopefully benefit from the process, and to get involved with this. Because you are going to have your own challenges when you get into your careers. And there may be new political or cultural or social issues coming up that require a whole new way of working out some of these issues.

(31:30)

(JW): So speaking of the students in the room—and thank you so much for all of your great answers and stories—and I think before we open the room to some questions, I'd actually like to ask you what is one thing perhaps of many things you've learned through experience that you wish you had known as a novice researcher?

(GN): (Laughter) That's a good question that I don't know I can really answer in a really satisfying or clever way. I never thought I'd get to be doing the work that I am doing. Just a series of circumstances led me from doing early postglacial research to suddenly working with First Nations. In the process I've learned to be patient, I've learned to listen well, I've learned to be forceful when I need to be, which is not my personality. But I have also tried to be honest in my relations with people, and it comes around. I think this is a good way to close this before the questions.

Earlier I mentioned the conversation I had with the aboriginal elder, Richard Hunter. We came to our own reconciliation once we listened to what each other was saying about the circumstance. With the IPinCH Project we have been funding case studies all over the world: Canada, the United States, Kyrgyzstan, Japan, and Australia. Our project in Australia is with the Mannum River Aboriginal Association. A year or so into that project working with colleagues at Flinders University, and with members of the Mannum River Association including a young woman—the director there—Isobelle Campbell. I learned that Issy is (the late) Richard Hunter's daughter. So through IPinCH I have been able to work with and assist the community in ways in which Richard Hunter would have been so gratified to learn, which has been to me just one of those things, the moment you heard it, you get all wobbly inside. It just has been a really gratifying opportunity to work with all the folks in the IPinCH Project, all the community members we have all around the world, and all the students who have been involved with project. But also those in the classroom over the years, because they don't always ask easy questions. Those questions always force us to think a little deeper and harder about how we think about the world.

(34:27)

(JW): Is there anything else you want to add before I open it, before we go to questions.

(GN): No, I think that really covers it.

(34:46)

Questions from the floor:

Audience: In your experience how is Canada and SFU matching up with other nations, and other universities internationally, with regards to the issues you have talked about today. It is my understanding that Canada is a leader in this regard, but I wonder how they are doing in Australia? How are they doing in New Zealand? In their dealing with Indigenous people and the issues of archaeology that you have mentioned today?

(GN): It is certainly is in some terms. This is something I noticed years ago, in part due to the nature of, or in part lack thereof, of treaty negotiations in British Columbia. There is also a stronger presence, in a manner of speaking, of First Nations in the province

relative to archaeology. B.C. has been far ahead of everywhere else in Canada in terms of really being proactive, about really being ahead of everyone else in the country. Of course this is a gross generalization, but that has been my impression. It has been really born out in many different ways. In terms of facilitating, supporting innovative research—I say this not just because John here is my Dean, but because it is true - SFU has been one of the leaders in this realm. You see it in terms of its support for First Nation languages, for many other expressions of trying to address the real needs of real communities. Going beyond simply following through on what was a university is supposed to be doing in terms of creating knowledge, and so on. I mean that knowledge does not go very far unless you apply it. In terms of archaeology first, and at SFU, there have been really impressive strides. Some of the best that is coming out of Canada is on par with, with some of the best coming out of New Zealand, Australia, and the United States in terms of innovative cultural heritage policies, and working closely with First Nations or Indigenous peoples. Now in all of these cases it is not across the board. I mean not all archaeologists have bought into Indigenous archaeology. Some still see it as political correctness, and that also goes to community-based research in Canada, where you are dealing with, as someone put it, special interests. But I think this is, to be honest, just the type of engagement we as academics or university administrators or funders, need to be targeting: Where can we put our money? Where can we put our knowledge to the best use for whomever? So that is a roundabout way of addressing your question.

(38:10)

Audience: I am just wondering if there has ever been a situation in which what you genuinely and professionally thought was the best for a community, and they were actively against it? If there was that kind of communication breakdown and what you would do to help that? I am thinking in Canada a lot of communities are pro-pipeline, or something like that, and that you know your professional, what you know to be true or good for a community is not what they want, and how do you reconcile what you think is a greater good versus...?

(GN): There are many communities doing some really neat, some really important work. The Stó:lō First Nation, for example, Kamloops, Musqueam, and others, but they are all dealing with different issues, different priorities. And this is something I think many of us have been quick to learn in working in the realm of Indigenous archaeology. There is no cookbook solution; each community has a different history of engagement with the rest of the province, or with rest of the country. And in some cases, they've had good relations for a long time, and other cases it has been very problematic when it comes to lack of input that community may have over forestry or development. And in terms of cultural heritage, while First Nations are consulted as a part of the legal process, "consultation" is not the same thing as "collaboration." Consultation is: "Here's the report from the archaeologist, in terms of the potential impact. Please send us your comments on this within 30 days." While those comments may be sent in, what happens? And this

is all still really late in the process. So, with the Stó:lō First Nations, for example, they have really taken on control over their own heritage policies, and they are the ones who give permits to those working within Stó:lō First Nations land, in lieu of, or in some cases a parallel structure to that of the province of B.C., with the archaeology permits.

Your question is a good opportunity to bring forth the idea that First Nations also look at their heritage in different ways. I found this is Kamloops. The Kamloops Band and community was really concerned, was really interested, in their heritage and preserving it, and doing a much better job than the city of Kamloops, as a matter of fact; relating to the loss of the first trading post due to the construction of an arena. There you basically have white heritage being lost. But at the same time the Kamloops Indian Band put together a huge housing development that ended up destroying 30 significant archaeological sites that I had been working on with our field school students for 15 years. And they did so fully aware of the loss of those sites, but also knowing that they had the archaeological data that we had recovered, in lieu of preserving those sites. But they had other priorities, so it is one thing to lay this whole area aside to protect from development, but they had to also deal with issues of unemployment, with families dealing with substance abuse, inadequate education opportunities for their kids. That is where they needed the funds to bolster support. Those funds were coming from the lands developed for the Sun River Housing Development. So it was a really, really difficult decision for them, and I highly respect them for that, although it was very difficult to watch that development unfold because I was seeing those sites being destroyed. So communities, First Nations, look at their heritage in different ways; sometimes it is a physical presence, sometimes it is the knowledge, sometimes it's something else that captures that heritage and preserves it for them.

Audience: Thank you

(43:14)

Audience: Thank you, George, I have a question for you. Taking off on your discussion about community and community priorities, and the students that you have worked with, you mentioned that sometimes a student will be working on a project and then hoping to get a thesis out of the project, and suddenly that project is no longer at the top of the community's priority list. What happens to that student and their thesis? Do they have to reconsider a different project? Or do they pick a different topic?

(GN): I mean, this has not happened to any of my students. But I know there have been cases, and this is not just in terms of archaeology, but the broader field of anthropology. If the student has worked closely with their supervisory committee, and the supervisors are aware of the nature of community engagement, and so on, there should be a contingency plan; so that one is well-aware that this can be risky business. I mean, even in the absence of such a plan and the community has changed its' priorities, or there is no longer access to the samples, I think there are always ways to salvage

something, and sometimes it is a matter of: “my thesis is not about this site, but about the *process* by which I sought to do this, what unfolded, and what does this tell us at a different level about—a more theoretical level one might say—about how this unfolds.” This is a real challenge that I think universities need to engage with in terms of having discussions, having working groups, so that those who have been involved in this kind of research including health science workers in the lower east end of Vancouver for example, ...

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[This is illustrated by our approach with the IPinCH project, with many of our initiatives grounded in some of] our team member’s long-term association with some of these communities. So they are not going into it cold, they are going into it basically in the wake of others who have already established that long and mutually respectful relationship. This is really what provides a safety net. Many of these researchers have been able to, and willing to go, out on a limb themselves and become involved in some risky research over the years—and here I am talking about 10, 20, 30 years ago — when such things were not really being done, and some of my colleagues, like Larry Zimmerman, really paid a price for some of this, and yet he has facilitated and encouraged several generations of scholars to follow, who have learned from what he had done to build on the kinds of knowledge, protocols and policies that do turn out to be so useful or successful.

(47:05)

Audience: Hi George, how are you? So you had mentioned that it can take sometimes years for one of these communities to have enough trust to let you come in and do research within that community. So, I was just wondering if you could talk to, give us some pointers on, how you develop that trust in the community that might have some distrust of academic researchers?

(GN): In terms of my experiences with that, again we have seldom gone into a community cold. In some cases the communities have learned what we were doing and come to us. An example of that is the Inuit Heritage Trust, who came to ask us our advice in developing a comprehensive heritage management plan. Or the same thing with our Ainu partners, being the Indigenous people of Northern Japan. They became aware of what the IPinCH Project was trying to do, and contacted us to give them advice and help them start to develop their own heritage policies. It was only 2008 the Japanese government officially recognized the Ainu as the official Indigenous peoples of the country. So they’re basically at the bottom level of moving forward.

The issues that we have been having—the big hold-ups with established relationships we’ve had in trying to build our community-based research—has been with the practical side of things. Here at SFU we have to prepare an ethics application for every single project in IPinCH, because it is under the SFU umbrella. Any associated

universities—Indiana University for example, working with the Saginaw-Chippewa — they have to do an ethics review as well, and there has to be an ethics review within the community itself... whatever form that takes, and that can take some time. And there is also, to be frank about it, ethics policies at the university that are really designed to protect the researcher, and the university, and not the community per se, although there is of course protection there. There is one situation that is somewhat ironic where a member of the Saginaw-Chippewa Tribe, who was involved with our community-based initiative there and was one of the leaders of that project, she had to take an ethics test at Indiana University to make her qualified to conduct this research with her own people.

The other challenge has been with funding transfers. I mentioned that we are talking about \$24,000 to support our community-based research (and by the way you can find out a lot more about our project on the website). The challenge here is that some of these communities routinely deal with hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars of grants, and yet for \$24,000 sometimes the paperwork isn't any less, and sometimes the paperwork is even more. And we had one project all set up, again with the Saginaw-Chippewa Tribe. The lead researcher moved universities and we have still not been able to come up with a viable funding arrangement since that happened. So that project has really been hold, and the problem here is that communities have invested so much time in this project. There is a real value that comes out of these projects, and yet they have had to wait and wait and wait, while we try to switch from a memorandum of agreement between universities to, when that does not work, an agreement for services, when that doesn't work, because the Saginaw-Chippewa say "there is an issue of sovereignty in the legal language in the contract that you expecting us to sign", we have to go back to the drawing board. So it is not just a matter of trust and respect being established, but the recognition too that with this kind of research you've got to be really patient, that there are different timelines that we find with Indigenous communities, but with also with what our priorities are in terms of getting things done may not be the same timeline that they have. Because again, they have other things that may be more pressing rather than involvement with an "academic project".

(52:18)

Audience: I am interested in the accessibility of information taken from archaeological research, not just back to the community but to the wider public at large. In terms of the academic world—I don't want to say it's academic snobbery—to get to this information you either have to be part of an institution or have a student ID or a professor ID, and this makes it really difficult for other people to learn about the kinds of things you are working on. I'm just wondering your opinion on the idea of becoming "archaeologist-at-large," becoming more accepting of working with the media or writing books that aren't as technical, and use more basic language. I'm just wondering if you think that this is something that is just going to take time or if there has to be an active push by archaeologists to get that knowledge out there?

(GN): Yes, in terms of the second question first, I think all of us as academics need to do a better job at explaining to others. Not to talk to each other here, but to talk to others outside of the university: “This is what we do, and this is the question that we are addressing, and this is how we are doing this”, in a way that is not watered down but told in plain language. This is something that a lot of universities are now trying to promote with the “describe your thesis in three minutes” kind of thing. Or the proverbial elevator explanation; being able to, in a short elevator conversation with someone, clearly tell them what you are up to. I think as a profession archaeology has gotten really much better at communicating with the public about what we do and why. We have a lot further to go with this, and that includes not just the Indigenous communities with whom we work, but the public at large because the public funds most research. If you can get them fired up about why they should care at all about some old 10,000-year-old site, with just bones and broken stone on it; if you can tell them what that means and why it should be preserved and the kind of knowledge that can come out of that, then they get a better sense of what heritage is all about, and maybe they can start relating their own more distant heritage, wherever in the world it is, and come to a better understanding. So as educators, as archaeologists, we’ve got a commitment there. And the first question, which I have now mostly forgotten, is it about taking care of the intellectual property of the knowledge?

Audience: I don’t mean talking about the things that some Indigenous people want to keep quite. I am not talking about sharing all knowledge. Basically you answered my question already.

(GN): I would just add that many Indigenous peoples want to share their culture, want to share their knowledge, but not all of it, because there are some things that simply are not meant to be shared. There may be knowledge that is limited to certain clans, or certain groups of initiated people, or to men, or to women, or whatever. But we have similar controls over knowledge, limits over knowledge in our own society, such as the secret formula for Coca-Cola for example, or many other things like that so. In terms of archaeology, we do not disclose the location of archaeological sites. That is our secret sacred knowledge, because if it becomes common or publically available knowledge, some people with not the best of intentions will know where to go for that site and dig up artefacts.

(56:27)

Audience: Well that was a perfect lead in to my next question because this is really fascinating research, and like you said, I think it is becoming easier to do in academia, but right now the majority of graduates in archaeology, for instance, but in a lot of other places I think, don’t end up in academia. And how do you see this sort of initiative, this sort of decolonizing of archaeology playing out in the real world, if you will, where the majority of Indigenous people won’t be relating

with academic archaeologists, they will be relating with cultural resource management archaeologists, who are hired by corporations essentially. So how do you see that relationship playing out?

(GN): Yeah, thanks for bringing that up. Although it's on the title, the one word I have not used so far is "decolonizing" or "decolonization." I think I have decolonized in a way through becoming self-aware, of being instructed, of being aware that there has been this power imbalance within archaeology in terms of who controls, who benefits from the knowledge of the past that we as archaeologists gain, or that knowledge holders share with us, or as we ascertain in some other way. I think the first step towards decolonization is of course acknowledging that there is this imbalance, that there are inequities. Once you do that, you can then make personal decisions in terms of how you approach that, or you may simply choose to avoid it. You are right that most students in our program do not go on to academia, do not go on to become teachers, and this is probably comparable in many other disciplines—and many other departments here. Whatever you set out to do, such as getting a degree in geography, chances are you are not going to become a geographer, you are not going to be teaching geography. In archaeology, right now probably more than 90% of all archaeologists worldwide are involved in cultural resource management. This is where you take archaeology, which is essentially the discovery of the past and all the methods we have for dating and describing and understanding how things are made and so on, this is the intersection of archaeology with heritage. And what heritage is are the values that contemporary peoples put on all of that old stuff. And it is not always old stuff too; in Japan there is a tradition of acknowledging living cultural treasures of individuals who possess this knowledge that is so vital to the preservation of heritage.

So because of this intersection, I think that all of our students and all archaeologists stand to benefit from understanding not only the processes of how archaeology works, and how we can do it better, but to also understand that archaeology has consequences as much as archaeology has benefits; where we share that information, where we make it understandable that is to benefit everyone. But also when we take the time to listen we can then determine that there is a disconnect between what we as archaeologists are saying about why this is important—because it is scientific value—and the community member saying "Well, this is important not because of the scientific value, but because our ancestors reside in this place right now. Not long ago, they are there right now, and that's why we do not want this place developed. Because it is not just the loss of artefacts it's an intersection with our living worldview." It is a whole different set of challenges. None of this is easy, and in a sense archaeology has lost its innocence of simply going out and doing archaeology because it's fun, which it really is. But again we need to be aware that there is this whole other dimension to it.

(1:01:15)

Audience: Before I joined “the man”, as I like to call administration, I was a teacher and a professor previously, and my area of expertise was First Nations Studies. When I started in that area there were few other First Nations academics, and teachers, in that field. In fact, I was so disturbed by that situation, I wrote an academic paper on that situation that got published. One of the lines in the paper was “where are all the brown faces?” And I still run in to colleagues years later that quote me that line, because they saw the paper and agreed with it. But how is that situation in archaeology today? Are there more and more First Nations peoples actually doing their own archaeology in these communities? (Kamloops, besides, as that is a special case). How is it going in other places?

(GN): That is something that I have certainly witnessed, I have been really privileged in that respect. When I started with the Kamloops program, I was basically thrown into the lion’s den in a sense. I had really no intention of ever working in the same way with Indigenous people, because that whole kind of relationship was only then just starting out as a glimmer in the work of some of my now colleagues. But a few years later, once I was fully immersed in this, and very much involved with what became one of the first Indigenous archaeology programs around, I became more and more aware that there were more Indigenous people becoming involved in archaeology. That led me to put together this volume *Being and Becoming Indigenous Archaeologists*, which John [Pierce] mentioned in his introduction. When I first started that project, I was reaching out to some of the people I knew personally or those that were recommended to me by some of my colleagues. But it was a real challenge to come up with 30 or so. There was a larger number but some of them simply could not do it. But by the time I finished and published that book in 2010, it came to the point where I could, at that point, do another 10 volumes.

It has been a real exponential growth in Indigenous peoples, either at a professional or lay level, getting involved in archaeology. One of my Ph.D. students, who is First Nations, is a senior archaeologist with Golder Associates in British Columbia. Others are working within the CRM—cultural resource management—industry, both part-time and full-time. We also have a growing number of Indigenous persons becoming scholars, and here at SFU I’ve got some great colleagues with Eldon Yellowhorn, and Rudy Reimer, both archaeologists, teaching archaeology. So we are starting to complete the cycle, and see this continued growth. Where it ends up, I don’t know. Indigenous archaeology is developing into this really rich, really exciting, sometimes, problematic realm. That on the one hand is unfolding separately from mainstream archaeology, which on one hand is good as it provides a safe space. But on the other hand I would also like to see it incorporated into mainstream archaeology. So that people say “Gee that is a really good innovative archaeological project,” without having to say “by an Indigenous person.” So that the work is acknowledged irrespective of race, or gender, or whatever that qualifier is, and I think when we get to that point we’ve seen some real growth.

Veselin Jungic: Thank you very much Dr. Nicholas, thank you very much, Ms. Walsh. Let us thank our speakers today once more.

(Applause)

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