*Who is the best conservator of artifacts: museums or the descendants of the people who created them? Is art an integral component in cultural or national identity? In this discussion, we will debate the problems involving the "ownership" of important cultural artifacts. Within a museum collection's context, these artifacts would be called "material culture."*

*Research*

*First, research Lord Elgin and the Elgin Marble controversy surrounding specific works removed from the Parthenon in Greece. Also visit:*

* + *Parthenon Sculptures*
  + *The Acropolis museum*

*When you are done with your research, answer the following questions in the discussion forum:*

* *Who owns material culture?*
* *Should members of specific cultural groups be entitled to art and artifacts that are part of their heritage and identity?*
  + *Using the example of the Elgin Marbles, explain how our ethics and concerns over maintaining the cultural heritage of "others" has changed over time.*
  + *Do you agree or disagree with Lord Elgin's 19th-century collection methods?*
  + *Should the scholarly value of the works outweigh issues of Greek cultural heritage?*
  + *Do you think Greece still has a claim on the marbles or not?*
  + *Defend your position against those students who disagree with you.*
* *Examine the larger ideas within the controversy.*
  + *Why are original artworks important?*
  + *If these marbles were stolen, how does this change your idea of the museum?*
  + *How do you see the role of the museum (past and present) and how are museums evolving to deal with problematic accessions?*

*Provide new insight, examples, and perspectives for those who do not agree with your point of view, and add further information or knowledge to those you agree with.*