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Cultural Property Acquisitions: Navigating the Shifting Landscape. By Aimée L. Taberner. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press Inc, 2011. 209 pages. \$84.95 cloth; \$26.95 paper.

As a Native American graduate student specializing in the rights of Indigenous cultural properties, I am pleased to provide a critique of a work designed to establish effective policy in western institutions. As an Indigenous scholar advocating for implementation of these rights within colonial structures, most of my critiques scrutinize the failure of western institutions to acknowledge the legal rights of tribal groups, specifically the rights associated with cultural properties. A failure to embrace the legitimacy of Indigenous rights within museum-focused literature has also limited a multitude of positive and tremendous academic opportunities that could be presented by incorporating Indigenous rights. Aimée Taberner successfully demonstrates methods to establish a better museum acquisition policy when incorporating these rights, and my experience reviewing the book has provided the chance to reflect upon my perspective as a Native scholar advocating for similar solutions. Taberner has created not only a museum resource, but the anticipation for further academic work surrounding the possibilities of collaborative efforts regarding Indigenous peoples and western institutions. Her work identifies a solution regarding museum operation respectfully integrating Indigenous cultural property rights, and calls upon the possibilities of future scholarship collaboratively designed to advance global heritage accurately through cultural property.

Cultural Property Acquisitions: Navigating the Shifting Landscape is foremost a resource designed to assist museum staff with the process of acquiring archaeological and culturally antiquated material. This particular resource integrates into the museum's acquisition process an adherence to the current legal and ethical guidelines associated with the rapidly developing legal landscape of acquisition and policy development. Taberner offers guidance along each step in the acquisition policy process to assist museum staff with the development of ethically sound policies that mitigate potential risks associated with acquiring culturally antiquated and archaeological items. However, what establishes the book as an exceptional museum resource is the perspective Taberner contributes to the field of cultural resource management. She has developed a current, unbiased resource that embraces the diverse legal environment associated with acquiring archaeological and culturally antiquated materials, resulting in a resource manual that is truly designed to improve museum operation.

Taberner argues that the process of collecting culturally antiquated materials has proven not to be a seamless task, and has sometimes entailed criminal liability and public disapproval, simply because the previous practices of acquiring antiquated resources by museum institutions within the United States and other regions are no longer adequate (15). These practices have jeopardized the integrity of museum institutions in the public's perception, raising questions about the ethical and legal methods museums utilize when acquiring these materials. Instances of museums obtaining cultural properties in illegal, unethical ways from source regions and archaeological sites have become more prevalent, leading to questions about the standards

of policy development and implementation. These current practices have also had negative impacts on the archaeological record and have led to scrutiny by Indigenous groups and other primary stakeholders as the source of cultural patrimony operating in particular regions.

Although the museum community has been working proactively to improve standards of acquisitions, Taberner states that a majority of literature designed to engage these issues academically has failed to engage usefully the complex and politically charged debate that surrounds outdated methods of museum collection (16). Rather than exclude these issues from institutional development, Taberner has focused upon the overall impacts of evolving legislation, legal precedents, and federal investigations as opportunities to strengthen the public perception and the ethical expectations of museum operation. Taberner demonstrates in her manual that through effective policy design, cognizant of the emerging legal risks confronting the museum acquisition process, museums have a tremendous opportunity to improve acquisition protocol and public perception (17).

Taberner focuses on the integration of specific areas that have confronted museum acquisition, including the emerging topics of sovereignty, identity politics, and cultural stewardship, all of which are characteristics of Indigenous groups located in the United States (16). Indigenous rights associated with archaeological and cultural heritage properties have legally challenged museum collections tremendously in the past thirty years, requiring a higher standard of ethical expectations and cooperation when resolving these types of conflicts. The rights of Indigenous groups and other outside stakeholders concerning museum collections represent the conflicting party that contributes to a politically charged forum when discussing literature geared towards improving overall museum standards (16). The circulation of previous literature that supports the development of museum acquisition standards but fails to embrace the legal reality of claims that have become more prevalent among the acquisitions process also supports Indigenous claims of cultural patrimony by the museum institution.

Instances of illegal activity and a controversial history of acquiring articles of cultural heritage in an unethical manner requires a greater degree of transparency and cooperation with stakeholders concerning the disposition and ownership of cultural property items to resolve these negative implications. Taberner provides concise guidance on policy implementation and structuring within her resource manual, while integrating knowledge on current ethics and various laws which govern these types of acquisitions as the opportunity to strengthen museum practice from previous outdated methods.

Taberner utilizes these components to create an effective, unbiased resource equipped with a wide variety of strategies, resources, and the best practices available to museums. Furthermore, Taberner has reorganized this information to provide guidance to museum staff on the progressive steps required to develop comprehensive policies and procedures for cultural property acquisitions in a user-friendly, ethically sound format (17). This reorganization is the strongest component of *Navigating the Shifting Landscape*, as Taberner advocates for the opportunity to transition museum standards away from a long history of incidents. While remaining true to her core

philosophies—that education and cultural preservation remain the objective when acquiring museum collections—this book takes the position that change is not an obstacle, but rather an opportunity for improvement (17).

The redevelopment of policies and ethical standards designed primarily with the advancement of knowledge and the preservation of cultural heritage in mind creates an opportunity for the museum to relinquish outdated practices and begin to utilize a more advanced, holistic view of museum roles and responsibilities. The traditional museological model for acquiring museum antiquities has focused upon the expansive growth of physical collections and the importance of ownership, and preservation of such items in perpetuity (99). The opportunity for museums to embrace a holistic approach regarding the disposition of collections creates a positive opportunity for the museum institution to facilitate a unique academic environment that involves stakeholders and the public to create a multidimensional education experience. Rather than focusing on outdated principles of expanding a museum's ownership, this holistic approach centers on developing a museum's collaborative potential to advance cultural preservation and educational knowledge as representatives of global heritage preservation. Ownership is not a prerequisite to museum operation, and Taberner argues that the ability of museums to serve as the premier institutions to develop these academic atmospheres is an opportunity that should be embraced (100). Innovative collaborations regarding the ownership of cultural items by the museum institution actively reinforce a better ethics practice, building better communication and relationships with source regions and stakeholders.

This current climate has created an opportunity for museums to educate the public about provenance and provenience information, the negative impacts of illicit trade, and how these instances have shaped our understanding of global cultural heritage and preservation (108). However, museums must develop an acquisition policy available to the public, which reflects the professional and legal standards that support their own rhetoric and philosophy, prior to pursuing such endeavors. The continued destruction of the archeological record and cultural patrimony has become an international characteristic of the institution because of the museum's association with illegal activity and the illicit antiquities market.

Taberner has successfully provided the museum institution with a resource manual to establish an effective acquisition policy, one that advocates a philosophy of reshaping the museum role. Her perspective calls for a greater degree of transparency within the acquisition process as a catalyst to redevelop the museum institutionally from the "ground up" through sound acquisition policy. She calls on museums to utilize their full potential as stewards of global heritage, rather than stewards of their collections.

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