Introduction

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Introduction

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Theoretical Museology Stems from Naculture

The conception of theoretical museology in North America stems from Indigenous understandings of worldview on culture and nature, which aims to eliminate the divisive concept (Chung, 2005; Mohawk, 2005). I would like to name this worldview “naculture.” The tangible and intangible are a part of the narrative and practice of life for Indigenous peoples living in harmony in naculture. The objects that are preserved are concurrently in use. This attitude is completely different from the European foundations of museology: “At the Institute of American Indian Art, elders sing to the collection, and students are taught how to nurture the spiritual needs of museum collections” (Casey, 1996).

It is a totally different philosophical understanding of naculture in that the objects are considered living, and an interaction should be made not only by elders but by those with knowledge of the intangible. For example, Indigenous names are associated with naculture such as “Nee-hee-o-ee-woo-tis (the wolf on the hill, Fig. 115)...The chief of a party of that tribe, on a friendly visit to the Sioux, and the portrait also of a woman, Tis-see-woo-na-tis (she who bathes her knees, Fig. 116)” recorded in George Catlin’s (1913, chap. 2) guidebook on *North American Indians*.

Humans are born developing forms of communication and language that reflect the theory and practice of naculture, as described below on the description of the ornaments and clothing produced and named by naculture:

The Shiennes are a small tribe of about 3000 in numbers, living neighbours to the Sioux, on the west of them, and between the Black Hills and the Rocky Mountains. There is no finer race of men than these in North America, and none superior in stature, excepting the Osages; scarcely a man in the tribe, full grown, who is less than six feet in height...The chief represented in the picture was clothed in a handsome dress of deer skins, very neatly garnished with broad

bands of porcupine quill work down the sleeves of his shirt and his leggings, and all the way fringed with scalp-locks. His hair was very profuse, and flowing over his shoulders; and in his hand he held a beautiful Sioux pipe, which had just been presented to him by Mr M'Kenzie, the Trader. This was one of the finest looking and most dignified men that I have met in the Indian country; and from the account given of him by the Traders, a man of honour and strictest integrity. The woman was comely, and beautifully dressed; her dress of the mountain-sheep skins, tastefully ornamented with quills and beads, and her hair plaited in large braids, that hung down on her breast. (Catlin, 1913, chap. 2)

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The Sioux tribe's *The Flame's Winter Count, 1786–1799* n.d. Drawing shows the red feathers of the chief's headdress (Dakota Indians, 1786–1799, n.d.), which is evidence of the integration of naculture in all forms of dress, cookware, hunting gear, and housing exhibited in museums in the U.S. and tribal nations. Artifacts such as the parfleches (Unattributed Artist., c. 1900; Unattributed Artist, c. 1970), made of raw hide with natural dyes and used to carry goods, are another example of naculture.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (Pub. L. 101-601, 25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq., 104 Stat. 3048, 1990) provided groundwork in the repatriation and restitution of Indigenous naculture, especially human remains. Funerary objects, sacred objects, and sites are what make up the museology of Indigenous peoples. The colonization of the land and peoples on the continent by the Anglo-Europeans brought museological values from their “Old World” (Fuller & Fabricius, 1992; King, 2013). This meant the exploitation of Indigenous naculture through desacralization in exhibits and destruction through harmful chemicals to preserve naculture in museums (Fuller & Fabricius, 1992; King, 2013). Many artifacts are now toxic and cannot be used in ceremonies. The craze for, and fascination with, Indigenous naculture manifested in the acculturation of the Anglo-Saxon museography and worldview. Moreover, the Indigenous objects were musealized as “nature” through institutionalization, which has now slowly been changing to respect Indigenous museology and Indigenous objects as both a cultural and natural phenomenon.

The Anglo-Saxon epistemological and phenomenological concepts of objects stem from writings by the learned gentlemen and ladies who were curious and interested in museological activities to form Temporary Museums (or what are known as temporary exhibits today) and to discuss their findings within antiquarian, literary, philosophical, and later natural history and archaeology society journals and the formation of permanent museums (Chung, 2003). It was not until after 1743, when the American Philosophical Society (APS) was established, that any scientific disciplines were branched in the colony. The

Transactions of the APS (1838) and the *Proceedings of the APS* (1838) first published in 1838 list the donations received for the library and the cabinet (the museum). An early publication by Hermann August Hagen (1876), entomologist and curator of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, examines the philosophical fundamentals of the theory behind the practice, which also shows the religious timeframe of translations of texts in regard to museological practice:

The long space of time after Christ's death, nearly twelve centuries, is entirely devoid of interest concerning natural history. Curious enough, and perhaps explaining this lack of interest, is the fact that in the earlier centuries of the Christian era the study of natural history was believed to be in some way a proof of religious infidelity. The reason for this will probably be found in the lack of education and study of the disciples and nearly all the apostles. Discussion would have been impossible, difficult, or of doubtful result. Simple faith covered all. So it happened that the prominent works of Aristotle were nearly lost in Europe. Translations of these into the Arabian language, introduced in the 10th century through Spain, and again translated into Latin, were used, and the original text was perhaps not known until the 15th century in the west of Europe.
(p. 83)

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The most up-to-date publications on theoretical museology by ICOFOM members include *Key Concepts in Museology* (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010), *The History of Museology: Key Authors of Museological Theory* (Brulon Soares, 2019), “The Role of Z.Z. Stránský in Present-Day Museology” (Dolák, 2019), and *Zbynek Z. Stránský et la muséologie* (Mairesse, 2019). The earliest recognition of museology as a scientific discipline is attributed to Zbyněk Z. Stránský who established the museology department in the Philosophical Faculty of the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1962, thus, elevating the status of museology at the Moravian Museum (Brulon Soares, 2019, p. 19). Brulon Soares (2019, p. 24) marks three different stages of museology – normative, theoretical, and reflexive museology. Normative museology, which focuses on the practices and publications on museography, has been prevalent in the U.S. Because there has not been a discourse on the foundations of theoretical museology in North America, skipping to reflexive museology, if that ever happened, would leave a gap; therefore, moving from normative to theoretical museology would be the process. The basis for these discussions will come from the foundations of the *ICOFOM Study Series* and the *Museological Working Papers* (MuWop).

Museology, a Word or Not a Word?

As questioned in the Call for Papers, “What is the basis to name the discipline ‘museum studies’ as opposed to ‘museum studies?’” (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3) and “What is the history and philosophy of the word ‘museum studies,’ and where and how has this word been used in tribal and U.S. contexts?” (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3). The theme “Museology, a Word or Not a Word?” will be examined from the perspective of naculture. Firstly, a few ICOFOM U.S. museumologists’ views will be shared.

During the ICOFOM Symposium in 1980, Judith K. Spielbauer of Oxford, Ohio, gave an initial impression of the theoretical underpinnings on the concepts of museological data by adopting a systematic approach:

Any of these system orientations is an attempt to order, understand and explain a class of phenomena or body of data. The perception of what constitutes data, the methodology for determining the significant units for study within the totality of this data, and the relevant relationships within and between these units is determined by the theoretical basis of the specific discipline. In our discipline, the body of data consists of a wide variety of human-made, human-influenced and human-directed phenomena, and therefore, we lack an external, independent and uninfluenced phenomenological base from which essential systems and system relationships are to be deduced....We, in doing and thinking museum studies, are part of the phenomena we are studying. We are at one and the same time both subject and scientist....These potential problems in the development of a formally stated theoretical base for museum studies will be resolved only when we begin the actual analysis of museumological data from these perspectives. If, in the end, the results do not meet the hoped for scientific rigor, our efforts will have at least added insight to our field. (Spielbauer, 1981, p. 79)

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Spielbauer created a U.S. Working Group from 1991 to 1993, and a panel was established for the AAM conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1988 (Nash, 2019, p. 111). Other museumologists include James L. Swauger who concluded his thoughts on museum studies as philosophy and the prospects of the field on becoming a science (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3).

Going further back in time, the initial usage in a published text dates back to 1885 in “Comment and Criticism” in the journal *Science*. The text, written by Valentine Ball, Director of the Dublin Museum in the Science and Art Department, was a report on North American museums, especially the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Museum in the U.S., and noted the high

regard for “Professor Baird’s system of interchangeable drawers and cases” (“The Executive documents,” 1880, p. CCLV) :

THE REPORT ON THE MUSEUMS of America and Canada, recently made by Mr. Ball of the Dublin museum to the Science and art department of England, is not a very satisfactory document. Apparently designed to furnish hints to similar museums in the United Kingdom, it is nevertheless chiefly occupied with descriptions of the scope of the different establishments and of the contents, and to some extent the general arrangements of the several museums. But the account of the last is generally unsatisfactory and imperfect, while very slight or no mention is made of such devices as are characteristically American, and in which museology has been notably advanced by us. (“The Executive Documents,” 1880, p. CCLV)

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In this case, museology is interpreted to relate to museography in relation to the advancement of cases. Furthermore, it is during the Society of Naturalists Eastern U.S. conference held from December 29 to 30, 1886, in Boston, consisting of 130 geologists and “naturalists,” that the members discuss museum administration. Among the members, Alpheus Hyatt, paleontologist, zoologist, curator and founder of the journal *American Naturalist*, presented a talk on “Museology” (Proceedings of Scientific Societies, 1886, p. 207). The requisites of this membership were based on those scholars who had conducted “original work” (Proceedings of Scientific Societies, 1886, p. 207). Though the word “museology” has not been understood by many laypersons or even scholars in the 21st century, its usage in the U.S. stems back as far as the results of this research go, to the 19th century.

The most contemporary usage of the word “museology” was presented in *Representing Diaspora & Diverse Blackness in Museology – Revisiting Our Black Mosaic Symposium* organized by the Anacostia Community Museum, a part of the Smithsonian Institution (cited in Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 3). The most representative and foremost community museum paves the way to apply the concept of museology in the theoretical and philosophical discourse on the diversity of being black in the context and study of museums. Moreover, we witness the significance of Indigenous museology reflecting naculture through our keynote presentations and publications by Indigenous authors, such as Sadongei (2005; 2016), Lonetree (2012), and Ryker-Crawford (2017). Thus, data, science, diversity, and Indigenous are a result of naculture reflected in the usage of the word “museology.”

Teaching Theoretical Museology

Questions are posed on “What is taught in courses that have the underpinnings of theoretical museology?” and “What are the implications of Latino, African-American, and other culturally diverse programs in museums and academia?” (Chung & Denning, 2010, p. 3). Teaching theoretical museology should be perceived through the lens of *naculture*. As outlined during the *Defining the 21st Century Museum in the U.S.* online symposium, Alyce Sadongei (2019) introduced the training program and internships that she had initiated at the Smithsonian Institution. Universities run by Indigenous peoples demonstrate the worldview of Indigenous *naculture*. The Institute of American Indian Arts Museum established a two-year Museum Studies Program degree in 1971. At the heart of the courses are the “tribal needs and beliefs” (Casey, 1996).

In one of the earliest ICOFOM meetings, Daniel Porter (1980, p. 32) compared museum training in the U.S. to a swallow’s nest. He claimed that academia was not providing the best training for museum work, and it was by “instinct” that museum workers learned, as would a baby swallow. His conclusions were that universities were not preparing or remained “unevolved” in theory and in practice (Porter, 1980, p. 32). However, early evidence of a “Museology Curriculum” being developed at the Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts in Chickasha was published in 1972:

Required courses in art history, anthropology, administration, and museology will be supplemented by electives in history, sociology, and public speaking, among others. The program will conclude with an internship experience in which the student becomes familiar with museum techniques through on-site training. With final consideration of the curriculum still a month away, the college is planning a two-week summer institute on the history of philosophy of museology for which two credit hours can be earned. (American Association of State and Local History, 1972, p. 137)

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The article also discusses the American Museology Conference and Indian Arts Festival of 1972, which was considered the first in the U.S. focusing on the problematics and prospects of public awareness of Indian intangible heritage: contemporary opera, composition, literature, and dance in addition to the emphasis on the uniqueness of the study and curriculum (American Association of State and Local History, 1972, p. 137).

The Museum Science graduate program at the Museum of Texas Tech University (Museum of TTU) was founded in 1974 and was one of two programs to have established a course specifically on theoretical museology under the aegis of “Museum Science” (Crawford, Denning, and Chung Interview, 2019). A plan to

establish a Heritage Management graduate program by Gary Edson, Director of the Museum of the TTU (1985–2009), and Eileen Johnson, Director of the Lubbock Lake Landmark, was executed in 2001 when the author was assigned to produce three Heritage Management courses including one that focused on principles and theories. Moreover, the syllabi for Museology and Material Culture, concentrating on theories, were structured and taught for the Museum Science graduate program. Museum work considered as a science stems back to the discourse on museology in ICOFOM, with Stránský (1980) who headed this argument. As of today, the only master's program in the U.S. that goes by the word "Museology," and is compatible with ICOFOM's understanding of the word, is the University of Washington's graduate program. Back in the 1960s, the University of Minnesota called its program "Museology," but this later changed to "Museum Studies."

Other usage of the word "museology" is in the texts by Robert Wilson Shufeldt (1907, 1918), an ornithologist, ethnographer, curator and surgeon at the Army Medical Museum. His views can be found in the book that he wrote on an extreme racist practice that was prominent at the turn of the 20th century: craniology. In relation to museology and museology as a science, Shufeldt uses the Army Medical Museum, now the National Museum of Health and Science, to connect collections management in 1918 with the needs of the user. In this case, the medical doctor who would come to research the collections of illustrations, models, moving images, archival documents, and other reference materials, emphasizes that the purpose of the museum is to teach:

In short, our museologist should be – in order to properly administer the affairs under his control, and have the institution fulfill its purpose – an expert in the matter of teaching, that is, teaching through the medium of a scientific arrangement and exhibition of a series of objects, fully illustrating the acquired knowledge of the science to which they refer. As a matter of fact, such a person should not only command as complete a knowledge as possible of the science for which the museum stands; but, above all else, he should appreciate, in its entirety, what constitutes the evolution of a growing museum and the science of museology as a whole. To this end, it is not essential that he be an expert in museography; but, upon the other hand, he should most assuredly be a good museographer, in all that that word means in its modern acceptance. (Shufeldt, 1918, p. 208)

”

Thus, the museologist as a teacher of the museum and museology as an evolving science is indicated in this passage.

As early as 1923, William Crawford, the Librarian at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, compiled the *Bibliography of Museums and Museology*, most

of which are publications in English, French, German, and Italian by American and European authors. In the 1960s and 1970s, there are developments in the museology curriculum and its practices in museums (American Association of State and Local History, 1972) and reference to curatorship training and museology discussing the role of the museum administrator as “part Madison Avenue huckster, part preacher, part pickpocket, part handyman” (Ishikawa, 1961, p. 238). Familiar textbooks that incorporate some history and theory of museums in the 1970s to the 1990s are *Museums in Motion* (Alexander, 1979) and *Introduction to Museum Work* (Burcaw, 1975; 1997) with two editions, which were both published by the American Association for State and Local History. In the '90s, *The Museum in America* focused on the “innovators and pioneers” in museum work and also included Paul Joseph Sachs who taught courses on “museum history, functions and ethics” as well as “museum problems” (Alexander, 1997, pp. 206–207). Therefore, the papers that are presented in this issue provide insights into the research findings in the 21st century on what it means to teach theoretical museology in U.S. and tribal contexts with an Indigenous worldview of naculture.

Theoretical Museology and Ethics

The question, “Is there a need for theory in museums?” (Chung & Denning, 2020), necessitates the assertion that theoretical museology and ethics should be practiced from the perspective of naculture. In order to support this assertion, “The multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity of the museum field calls for consideration of what we do in museums become agents and actants to influence the functions of museums” (Chung & Denning, 2020). Evidence of initial forms of ethics related to museums provide insights into the philosophy of the workplace.

Tracing back through history, one of the earliest learned societies established in the colony, the American Philosophical Society, first produced and published its own “Laws and Regulations” in 1769. The “Laws and Regulations” included the role of curator to give a bond to the Presidents and Vice-Presidents “faithful performance of their duty”:

VIII. Of the Curators.

THE business of the CURATORS shall be to take charge of, and preserve, all Specimens of natural Productions, whether of the ANIMAL, VEGETABLE or FOSSIL Kingdom; all Models of Machines and Instruments, and all other matters and things belonging to the Society, which shall be committed to them; to class and arrange them in their proper order, and keep an, exact list of them, with the names of the respective donors, in a book provided for that purpose; which book shall be laid before the Society, as often as called for.

THE Curators, on entering upon their office, shall give such a receipt for every thing that is committed to their charge, as the Society shall think proper; and, at the end of their term; shall deliver up the same to their successors. For the faithful performance of their duty, and of the trust reposed in them, they shall give bond to the Presidents, and Vice-Presidents, in such a sum as they, or any three of them, shall require. (American Philosophical Society, 1769, p. x)

”

Therefore, theoretical museology of curatorial ethics was measured through an advanced monetary sum as insurance.

The AAM's Code of Ethics was produced in 1925. The Code lays out the relationships that the museum worker is bound to, defined as a “humble laborer” or “responsible trustee” in the museum that is responsible for “render[ing] the emotional and intellectual life of the people” (Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1925, p. 2). The values are in relation to the collections, other museum workers, institutions, and the public:

His conduct rests on a three-fold ethical basis.

1. DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE HE SERVES.
 2. FAITH IN THE UNSELFISH MOTIVES OF HIS COWORKERS.
 3. HONOR BASED ON A HIGH SENSE OF JUSTICE AS THE CONTROLLING MOTIVE OF HIS THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS.
- (Committee of the American Association of Museums, 1925, p. 2)*

”

Museum and museological activities were linked with The Museum of Texas Tech University's Master of Arts in Museum Science and Heritage Management, ICOM, and especially the Ethics Committee. Gary Edson (1997) edited and wrote the book *Museum Ethics*, with the contributions of notable museologists in the international museum community such as Tomislav Sola (1997), an ICOFOM Senior Advisor, incorporating diverse perspectives on ethics, museums, and museology.

Though laws and regulations are not synonymous with a code of ethics, they do place curators in a position of responsibility where they are “bound” to do their duties, whereas a code of ethics embodies institutional values in theory and in practice. The connection between theoretical museology and ethics is integral. The report of the Tribal Museums accounted for 16 museums out of the 39 that implemented a code of ethics statement. Their report shows that

“of these, they were about equally divided between using the tribal statement and having their own written statement” (Abrams, 2003, p.13). These results demonstrate promising circumstances in adopting an Indigenous worldview of naculture.

Theoretical Museology and the Functions of Museums in the Community

The final theme is on “Theoretical Museology and the Functions of Museums in the Community.” The core question we ask is, “What are some of the theories that have been introduced and/or forecasted by museologists that demonstrate the cause and effect between the community and museums?” (Chung & Denning, 2020, p. 4). This theme is linked with a community view of naculture. Like the learned societies that were created in the U.K. (Chung, 2003), in Colonial America they were the earliest forms of a museum.

The learned societies were affiliated with “philosophical” inquiry or scientific investigations and collecting artifacts and “naturfacts” (Stránský, 1974, p. 244) or together “naculturfacts.” In the following subject fields, the naculturfacts were related to the “political economy”:

XII. Of Committees.

THE Members of this Society shall be classed into one or more of the following COMMITTEES.

- 1. Geography, Mathematics, Natural, Philosophy and Astronomy.*
 - 2. Medicine and Anatomy.*
 - 3. Natural History and Chemistry.*
 - 4. Trade and Commerce.*
 - 5. Mechanics and Architecture.*
 - 6. Husbandry and American Improvement.*
- (American Philosophical Society, 1769, p. xii)*

”

Thus, it is later in the stages of separating the fields of study that we see more and more the disparate perspective of nature versus culture.

Different cultures and ethnic communities demonstrate naculture within theoretical museology and the functions of museums in the community. Jessie Ryker-Crawford (2017) traces back the early Indigenous initiatives of private and public museums. The museums that could be considered as a part of the concept of tribal community leadership would be realized in the 1930s (Ryker-Crawford, 2017). In 1962, a contemporary American Indian and Alaskan Native art collection made up the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, funded by the federal government (Casey, 1996). It does outreach

to the Indigenous communities and tribal museums through consultations, workshops, and traveling exhibits for a low price (Casey, 1996). Asian American museology is distinctly represented within American Studies – previously U.S.–Asian relations studies – at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (2020), which now provides core courses in “Museums, Theory, History, Practice,” including “Theories and methodologies utilized by scholars associated with the ‘new museology,’” “History of Western museums,” “Contemporary issues in museums including the representation of diverse communities and multiple points of view,” “Issues pertinent to Native peoples in the U.S., Hawai’i and the Pacific,” and “Overview of museum governance and ethical concerns.” The Anacostia Museum is one of the earliest museums with the active participation of the community. It is the very concept of the heritage diagram by van Mensch (1996) in which the community is representing heritage. In this case, it is the African American community representing its own heritage, which was also one of the Smithsonian Institution’s initiatives well before the 21st century.

The Hispanic-American initiatives are at both national and local programming levels with the Latino Museum Studies Program with affiliated organizations and a fellowship program established in 1994. There is a need to examine the relations between the Southwest and border relations with Spanish, Mexico, U.S., and Indigenous heritage and communities. One example is Taos Pueblo, the concept of the ecomuseum and World Heritage Site, the core image of this symposium’s theme. It is a living, breathing institution and community that is preserved as it evolves at the same time managed by its inhabitants. The Puerto Rican American Museum in Chicago, IL, though it is situated in a renovated 19th-century building, the ideals of the landscape architect and the Puerto Rican community surrounding the area now demonstrate the community-envisioned function of the museum. The park in which it is situated also incorporates the diversity of the Hispanic American community. Theoretical museology is demonstrated within the practices of community and management of the museums. Thus, naculture as projected in community surroundings connects theoretical museology and the functions of museums.

Conclusion

Preliminary research shows that the word “museology” was first published in 1885 but connoted to reflect museography of display cases. A museology curriculum with a theoretical focus began in the 1920s at Harvard University (Alexander, 1997, p. 205). Then, it was in the early 1970s that museology addressed the significance of public awareness of Indian intangible heritage from a U.S. museology and Indigenous arts conference. An early textbook that discussed theoretical museology was published in 1975 by Burcaw, though he was skeptical of ICOFOM museology. Ethics and theoretical museology are part and parcel of the tribal code of ethics in tribal museums. And theoretical museology and how it functions in the community can be studied from a

curriculum viewpoint to how museums, such as the Anacostia Museum and Taos Pueblo World Heritage Site, cater to their audience.

The epistemology of theoretical museology in the U.S. and tribal beginnings of naculture are framed within the four themes of this online symposium and publication. The objectives of this symposium were to incorporate diverse perspectives that are not only limited to the developments of ICOFOM in Europe but to understand and formulate some concepts and definitions that could contribute to the discourse on museology and specifically, theoretical museology, in U.S. and tribal contexts.

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