

The Unsuspected Library: Pacific Epistemology and the Unquestioned Acceptance of an American Institution

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Abstract

In 1967, following the inclusion of Micronesia – then known as the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands – into the U.S. Library Services and Construction Act which was primarily aimed at equitable access to “information” across a democratic America, the first fledging ideas that would lead to the first public and school libraries in Micronesia began. It was a time period of completely unquestioned – and today it continues to be historically, socially, and culturally unquestioned – implementation of information services and values that originated from the development, with its periodic struggles, of American librarianship that began to a large extent with Melvil Dewey’s idea of “the library spirit” in the 1880s with its pluralistic foundations and, until at least the 1970s, its self-congratulatory evaluative paradigms. This paper explores why “the library” and its mechanisms of access to “information” have been historically immunized from any considerations of colonial conflict embodied by this imported institution of information into societies in which indigenous sources, forms, expressions, and protocols of information form not only communal, non-pluralistic standards but often stand at the very center of indigenous societies themselves.

Virgin Territory

In 1967, following the inclusion of Micronesia – then known as the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands - into the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) that aspired to offer equitable access to “information” across a democratic America, the first fledging efforts to formally create public and school libraries in Micronesia began. That year the new Supervisor of Library Services, Daniel Peacock, typed a note to himself on San Francisco’s Hotel Plaza stationary. He expressed his primary concern as being not how many books LSCA funds might buy but rather “how to get a basically pre-literate society interested in books, in reading, and in the provision of reading matter.”

“A great deal of imagination” would be needed to “create and nourish this interest” which Peacock’s note gives the impression was essentially nonexistent at the time. This imagination plus “flexibility” was the main “challenge . . . not the mechanics of administration such as PPB [Planning, Programming and Budgeting] that engross so many administrators.” In fact “any system, any media” could be used but it was too early “to become the slave to any one of them.” A public library building (“Permanence”), if it were located in the right spot, “would be an asset.” But given the remoteness of Micronesia and the challenge of creating a need for reading in a “pre-literate society,” perhaps it would be more prudent to spend federal money on bookmobiles and the training of “librarians” first, almost none of whom, however, would possess a professional library degree thirty-five years later. “Mobile services” would increase in accordance with an increased interest in reading. In fact, “reading and learning materials” could be “packaged” and sent to wherever they were “desired” in the vast Micronesian region, as long as the packaging was practical but in an “appealing form.”

Peacock also planned to look for teachers and “civic leaders who themselves read and care.” The Trust Territory’s often transient intervening services would not work well for libraries

in the islands – instead, the anchorage would be a “well constructed building [that] could be a great source of pride and could provide services that people could grow up with secure in the knowledge that this source of learning and pleasure will abide almost in the sense of a monastery.” (Peacock, n.d.)

Among the many projects and personal efforts Peacock made to try to make this “basically pre-literate society” become “interested in books, in reading” was to occasionally bring check-out cards from the back of books to classes at the Pohnpei Island Central School (PICS) to show students that their colleagues, some of whom had graduated from PICS in 1962 (“forty boys and four girls”), had checked out (and one would assume, read) specific books for two week periods. Pohnpei graduate Marumo Lonno, for example, checked out Frederick H. Emerson’s *Martin Luther* four times; Basil Limed from Yap and also a 1962 PICS graduate checked out Sterling North’s *Abe Lincoln* (as did fellow graduate Frederick Heine), M.E. Carter’s *Franklin Roosevelt* (as did fellow graduates Sinchy Kapuich and Luke Moon, three times), Bruce Bliven’s *Invasion: The Story of D Day* (although the check-out card is missing the word *Invasion*), and Yukio Mishima’s *The Sound of Waves*; Raymond Magmy checked out Tom and Lydia Davis’ *Doctor to the Islands* six consecutive times and Magdalena Inoue perhaps liked H.F. M. Prescott’s *Son of Dust* enough to check it out twice in a row. Even Daniel Peacock’s wife Shirley took out John Steinbeck’s *Sweet Thursday* but only once. In his careful notes on book circulation as a means to understand the emerging dynamics of reading in this “pre-literate society,” Peacock noted that *The Sound of Waves* had circulated twenty-three times within two years which, along with apparent interest with books *Sayonora* [sic] and *Bridges* begged the question: “Is the interest emphasis on romance – Japanese style, or romance, period?” All three books seemed to suggest that “any first rate story involving the relations (romantic) between Japanese nationals and any other (Americans, etc.) is apt to be very popular.” “How to find out??” Peacock pondered. “Get more of this type,” he surmised, since “plane [sic] Japan does not go well.” (Peacock, n.d.)

Showing such cards today or, rather, electronic circulation records would of course be considered a violation of privacy. It was not that privacy and the protection of confidentiality of library patrons was a novel concept to American librarianship at the time. But in this great quest to get a “pre-literate society. . . interested in books, in reading, and in the provision of reading material,” standards were apparently adaptable as this Micronesian book frontier demanded.

It was a period then and now of an unquestioned transference of information services and values originating from American librarianship that began to a large extent with Meville Dewey’s ideas of “the library spirit,” initiated at least by 1884 in his School of Library Economy at Columbia College, including the proper female personality of grace, punctuality, and organization and, until at least the 1970s, its largely self-congratulatory evaluative paradigms. “The library” and its mechanisms of access to “information” have been immunized from any consideration of colonial conflict by the importation of this American institution into societies where indigenous sources and protocols of information exchange often form communal standards and can stand at the very center of indigenous Pacific societies themselves.

The idea of a place’s “social context” is a reasonable angle from which to consider the introduction of libraries and, now, electronic technology, into indigenous societies and the extent to which the social spheres of those societies accept, reject, or appropriate the colonial origins of that institution. J. D. Slack’s optimal form of a contextualized technology would have a historical construction and reconstruction of this impact by tracing “a technological object through time” so as to understand “who or what has been disempowered” in an acculturated

process so as to “rearticulate the terrain to empower the unjustly disenfranchised.” Slack stresses the “articulation” of the technological object in terms of determining who is empowered and who is not. This would in theory confront the “real resistance empowered by the persistence of our commitment to technology as object” – an object whose entrenched position in a society is dependent upon “allegiances to institutional structures . . . heavily invested in the kinds of results produced by research committed to the dominant articulation of technology as object, as well as to the dominant articulation of the development of new technology and progress” (Woodward, 1993, pp. 158-159).

To see this introduction, this tracing of an technological object through time, to understand where and for whom disempowerment starts to occur in a Pacific society, or to challenge “the library” or the book or the computer screen as the dominant object of purpose, assumes an equity of original purpose and an object developed and used internally. But of course institutions and programs introduced into the U.S. Territory of the Pacific Islands were not begotten inside Micronesia. They were begotten through an American history with American contextualized purposes and with representative values that developed through the course of this history. In the case of the American library, the idea of a profession of librarianship has a lengthy history not only of professional socialization but of battles within itself to create its values and its own identity that in themselves have not come easily.

“The library”: the “the” and “library” seem to be often spoken in Micronesia with almost a tone of reverence (perhaps akin to Peacock’s “monastery”) that, like the absence of scholarly concern with its presence in Micronesia, seems to draw upon an idea of an indelible construct of “the library” - a simple image of a library building that passes through a mental night of exploration because of its insignificance.

The public library in Majuro under which more Marshallese gather to speak to each other than climb the stairs to read or the occasional elementary school libraries with copies of George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Hermann Hesse’s *The Glass Bead Game*, the public libraries with shelves filled with unborrowed books, and libraries that have occasionally received money, books, and expertise from organizations and occasionally less so from governments that have to varying degrees improved some collections – these libraries have as their fundamental focus of values, the equitable access to information.

But apart from small, localized displays of language and limited local historical texts, the bulk of information in commonly underused and aged collections in Micronesia are offered under the structures of a professional identity that floundered for decades: the pre-world War I obsession with promoting social virtues with good books that excluded fiction when that was actually the most desired kind of text, particularly among married, middle aged white women; librarianship’s drive to provide World War I soldiers with only the “best” reading materials followed by a depressing drop in professional purpose at the war’s end; the drive to become known as a science with the opening of the doctoral program at the University of Chicago’s Graduate Library School in 1927 spurred quantitative studies, leaving qualitative inquiries into what “knowledge” or “information” meant to specific peoples in specific situations practically untapped for sixty more years when the social sciences (within which librarianship obsessively attempted to encamp) had long since examined such social veins; the burning of German related books by librarians during World War II; the continued denial of equal rights for African Americans in the profession by librarians themselves; the discovery that the majority of librarians in California in the 1950s voluntarily censored their collections at the slightest threat of controversy (Fiske, 1959); the toppling of a largely self-congratulatory historical literature when

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it was discovered that the Boston Public Library was created in the 1850s not for the sake of a reading public but largely as an attempt to help control a growing Irish immigrant population (Harris, 1972); and eventually to librarianship's drive to identify itself as a leader in technology to such an extent that processes, procedures (as was ironically the obsession in Dewey's day), and instruments drove the people who were actually to be served into a disturbingly secondary level of understanding – all of this is what was moved into Micronesia with the granting of federal library funds through the Library Services and Construction Act.

Peacock's 1967 and 1972 "State Plans" for library development in Micronesia represent, as Peacock described the mission of librarianship in Micronesia, attempts to "pioneer virgin territory." High school libraries in each of the six administrative divisions of the Trust Territory became public libraries at night. Separate "technical" books for district officials were considered to be "complimentary" to the public library while a few "private book clubs" and collections owned by missionaries and Peace Corps volunteers were to "cooperate" with public libraries although it is not clear to what extent, if any, this transpired.

"Sound library practices" insured that books from the public library, serviced either by "persons" or "librarians" would be borrowed for free. Book mobiles (in the case of Chuuk lagoon, a book boat which caught fire after a short time and was abandoned and in the case of Yap, problematic and short lived due to mechanical problems and the lack of kinship connections to villages by the driver) were introduced in accordance with the general idea of bookmobiles in America to distribute knowledge equitably to rural areas. Because the physicality of atolls also made such an American vision unattainable, book boxes were sent infrequently to places where book mobiles did not exist or, after awhile, did not function. The June 25, 1971 book box list with 93 titles from the Department of Education's headquarters on Saipan were predominantly Pacific in focus with notable exceptions such as Eugene McCarthy's *The Limits of Power* and E. M. Forster's *Two Cheers for Democracy*. Works of academic integrity such as William Alkire's *Lamotrek Atoll*, Kenneth Emory's *Kapingamarangi*, Thomas Gladwin's *East is a Big Bird*, Ward Goodenough's *Property, Kin and Community in Truk*, and William Lessa's *Ulithi: A Micronesian Design for Living* were contrasted with titles such as Jon Caldwell's *Let's Visit Micronesia*, Joe Klass' *Amelia Earhart Lives*, and Judy Tudor's *Pim's Pacific: Stories from the South Seas*. (Peacock, n.d.)

In his effort to "discover" what "reading materials" people in this "pre-literate society," living in this "virgin territory" might actually be reading, Peacock examined check-out cards, and produced a few lists, the earliest in 1963, of the "reading interests" of PICS students. Three books on one list were "far in the lead" of others on the list: Philip Ketchum's novel on Nordic mythology and kings, *The Great Axe Bretwelda*, Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*, and Laura Adams Armer's young adult novel about a reservation of the Navaho people, *Waterless Mountain*. Other titles included an "adapted" version of *Moby Dick*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, biographies of *Sitting Bull*, *Thomas Jefferson*, and, again *Martin Luther*, and Edith Wharton's *O Pioneers*. According to a survey sheet on which PICS students were to mark the frequency with which they looked at them, popular "magazines" included *Life*, *National Geographic* and *Ladies Home Journal*. Several new books (including Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*) that were "popular in the United States" were also listed on the same survey against which students were to place an x if they "would really like to read" them. Meanwhile reading comprehension tests continued to contain passages concerned with the pilgrims and Indians at Plymouth Rock and their Thanksgiving dinner, life and work on an American farm, and the basic

fundamentals of Halloween (Goetzfridt, 1997, p. 202). These tests were part of the accelerated Americanization program initiated during the Kennedy administration and in keeping with the Americanization strategies detailed in the classified 1963 Solomon Report – a report that concentrated on strategies to align Micronesian sentiments toward a perennial political association with the United States. One of those strategies was to introduce school curricula positively oriented toward the United States along with daily “patriotic rituals.”

There are no discernable statements in the historical record concerned with the potential impact that this American institution might have had on forms and protocols of indigenous knowledge and whether or not “the library” and those responsible for it might or might not be able to understand and respond to an indigenous social epistemology – a concept (“social epistemology”) that one of the most foundational of American library scholars – Jesse Shera – hounded the profession about achieving in the 1960s and 1970s (Shera, 1965). Shera seems however to have become largely lost in librarianship today, particularly during its drive to keep its noticeable place in the so-called technology revolution.

Although still centered in the imported functional authority of the American library, Peacock made a distinctive turn five years later from the fundamentals of an envisioned librarianship that could have functioned just as well as in Iowa or Alabama in his LSCA mandated 1972 “State Plan. Its more indigenous inclined format emphasized the training of indigenous “librarians” who Peacock wanted to work in “library programs and facilities operated by and for Micronesians. These programs and facilities [would] be so designed as to incorporate the priority needs as seen by Micronesians, offered in ways that can be completely handled by Micronesians with self-confidence.” (Goetzfridt, 1997, pp. 205-206). Of the seven so-called “service needs” in the 1972 Plan, four were directly concerned with the expression and preservation of indigenous cultures and languages, including locally produced and published texts, “reading materials in the language the library user wishes to have them,” another desire to push the book mobile and book box ideas, particularly for Micronesian “materials,” and the asserted preservation of “Micronesian cultures which [could] appropriately be housed in libraries or archives or made use of in library situations by use of tape recorders, photographs, and related media.” The movement from the 1967 Plan to the 1972 Plan in terms of a greater attention given to elements indigenous may very well have reflected a growing maturity in Peacock’s conceptualization of how this American institution might transform its principles of populism to advance a wider, Micronesian epistemology of self and culture albeit not only under the organizational confines of the American library but beneath a larger, overarching hegemonic goal of unity encompassing numerous diverse Micronesian cultures and languages and thus senses of reality in the context of the American goal to administer a singular Micronesian political entity.

“The Library” and Social Epistemologies

Suzanne Falgout has examined the impact that an American-based democratic model of education and its epistemologies and strategies for the management of knowledge has had upon Pohnpeian traditional and social hierarchical nature of knowledge and its transmission and protection (Falgout, 1992). The American model of education not only created a “new elite” status that overlaps with traditional means of societal advancement but also produced a highly visible consequence of this disconnect embodied in the synthesis of “traditional knowledge” in democratically distributed booklets developed through the Preservation of Pohnpeian Culture

and Heritage program. Defying the intense personhood that the possession of such knowledge entails in Pohnpei, periodic workshops drew from knowledgeable participants who were expected to reveal their knowledge – forms of which were withheld, differed and silenced in accordance with a predominant conviction of the personal constructs that the inner content of traditional knowledge provides for an individual. Eventually synthesizing knowledge volunteered so as not to offend anyone and leaving out the metaphorical basket contents of life that also characterizes information in Pohnpei, the program produced booklets on traditional knowledge and, in American educational epistemological actions, distributed them to every student as though such booklets accurately represented traditional Pohnpeian knowledge.

Given the fundamental epistemological constructs of our understanding of Micronesia or of the so-called “South Pacific” peoples where British models form the foundations of libraries, why has this epistemologically driven idea of “the library” in America transported to Micronesia never received any consideration on historical grounds? Why was “the library” so intangible in nature as it was being transplanted by the American administration with Congressional support and why has it remained intangible since? What does this say about how we look at libraries to the extent that their introduction into Pacific worlds of social and cultural epistemologies have gone completely unanalyzed and barred, at least conceptually, from participation in any legitimization of historical concern? Could it perhaps be that this long struggle for professional identity in American librarianship affected our own conceptualization of “the library” to such an extent that the introduction of its forms, organization, and distribution of knowledge into social and historically charged realms of indigenous knowledge simply did not merit our thoughts? Or is it something else?

An epistemological foundation for libraries in Micronesia – and, actually, a foundation for all American imported institutions that have long since grown their roots into indigenous soils – would require not only a coordinated “thematic continuity” which is sorely lacking in American librarianship today. It would also require questioning assumptions about what constitutes valid indigenous knowledge and reality that have often been hidden behind the imported mechanisms of American librarianship in Micronesia. Libraries, for all their historical origins and the issues of historical and social importation just outlined, are still places of meaning – and more so in contexts from which they did not originate. As poet and former Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish stresses, everything upon which libraries are founded “is a report of one kind or another and the sum of all of them together is our little knowledge of our world and of ourselves” (Dick, 1999, p. 308). Using this approach, all modes of knowledge are represented in collections that mirror this totality of meaning upon which the idea of a library as a place rests.

But if the platform upon which the idea of an epistemology rests is composed of the processes and procedures that librarians use – and in our case, used across a long historical swath of professional growth and identity before a representation of this platform was planted into Micronesia – then it becomes difficult to imagine how alternative positions – specifically those of indigenous positions – are to be formulated and, ultimately, acted upon. These issues that impinge upon the determination of social epistemologies in Micronesia - and in the rest of the Pacific for that matter - do not negate the library as a place of meaning but rather seem to suggest a need to work backwards from the level of “the library’s” historical placement in Micronesia toward an uncertain epistemological position that by colonialism’s very nature makes the process of honest discovery in which knowledge in context becomes a “justified true belief,” difficult to

imagine. But the very fundamental purpose of understanding epistemologies is to imagine and to ultimately discover.

As the Pohnpeian example demonstrates, imagining an alternative epistemological position, rooted in its functionality is, in this knowledge-in-context situation, highly social, personal and political in nature. Achieving an understanding and representation of indigenous knowledge as a justified true belief cannot happen if the platform, standards, and processes of this discovery originate from a foreign source or at least are not indicative of the very basis through which purposeful knowledge is generated. Western knowledge housed in “the library” is largely the result of rationality and empiricism as a process of constructivism that assumes also a process of engagement by a people over time – involving debate, revision, acceptance and rejection among a people who are also grounded in a world of their own making. To find and to understand an epistemology of a social world first requires finding a position of social thought and life within which such an epistemology might ultimately live and live with its most indigenous reasons for thought freely available to those who understand them.

But some of the most basic barriers toward initiating a search for the beginnings of an expressive social epistemology that American librarianship in Micronesia might take to heart are not only related to a foreign language and the mechanisms of knowledge organization of a profession. These barriers also relate to the emphasis that American librarianship places on epistemologies of the person, the individual who copes with a wider but ill-defined or not-defined-at-all social world within which he or she must etch out his or her individuality, perspectives and objectives in life. On the other hand, the social epistemologies that one might seek out in Micronesia under the guard of librarianship’s professional mechanisms of knowledge organization and its interpretation of what constitutes “information,” require not only a move away from the American emphasis on individual epistemologies and into the social epistemologies that often form the basis of Micronesian conduct, life, and realities but to actually do so despite these professional mechanisms for organizing and accessing “knowledge” and “information.”

At the same time, world political economies, along with their structural constraints resulting in the inequitable distribution of globally processed information, make the impact of economic dynamics on specific societies a viable source for examining not only changes that have occurred since the late 1960s on individualist versus cultural/social issues but also how technology has impacted the viability of an epistemology in a knowledge-in-context environment. The presence of unequal access to information and the critical examination of global political economies are two issues that can give us a contemporary approach to understanding the relevance and use of this global originating knowledge in Micronesia – even when seen from the humble confines of a public library in Majuro, Koror, or Colonia. What makes this new or contemporary outlook possible, however, is still the understanding and the acceptance of the structures of indigenous societies, information sharing protocols, and the extent to which information and its accessibility has changed the dichotomy of the individual and the society in specifically understood, cultural contexts – a relativism that may help to redefine an ever adjusting epistemology over time. An epistemology that is true to the basis for knowledge in a specific cultural society and to its inevitable changes over time maintains the integrity of inquiry or perhaps, in the case of Micronesia and the introduction of its public and school libraries, the simple beginnings of inquiry itself.

If one could accept MacLeish’s idea that “the library” represents the sum of reports of “one kind or another” which in turn represent “our little knowledge of our world and ourselves,”

it seems reasonable to conjecture that “reports” from cultural worlds within which epistemologies exist can function in the Micronesian context as repositories of indigenous knowledge and do so under the pretext of enabling this “little knowledge of our world” to stand on its own origins. If this is the case, why would the – at least historical – conceptualization of the political nature of Carolinian navigational knowledge in the context of the *sawei* system and Alkire’s conjecture that Yapese in the Gagil district coveted such knowledge for the purpose of the political predominance (Alkire, 1980), fall outside the confines of these “reports?” If not these reports then where should such knowledge reside? What makes this indigenous knowledge, in this context, subservient to the representative power of the “report” as MacLeish describes it? After all, not only did this knowledge protect outer islanders from the power of Yapese sorcerers by its mere Carolinian possession and its negotiated rendering to Yapese chiefs in the Gagil district under clear conditions of disaster relief protocols to the benefit of outer island Carolinians, such knowledge also formed an important component of social organization and authority throughout Micronesia. If such knowledge, its history, and its social function cannot be placed in such a “report” then under whose terms do organizational principles lie? And if such knowledge cannot subsist under the guise of an epistemological “report,” how does its structure form and under what standards of organization might a substitution for a report – a flow in the wind or perhaps the inevitable sacrifice of its value, of its reading, of its retention under the demands of a colonial construct – construct itself?

If given its rightful origins in terms of an epistemological report of culture embodied in a system of organization and recall, one would of course not find “the library” in its present form or perhaps any library at all. At its most bared-down level – at a level of independence, freedom, and of its own in-grained sources of deliberation and justification – such knowledge and its systems of indigenous origin, content, and relevance supplants, even supersedes or overshadows the less than benign standards for the origins of examination and the construction of mechanisms for information organization and recall. Under such basic elements of indigenous epistemological discovery also lies bare the discovery of colonial control, simply by making approximations of what falls short of a standard of discussion that tenaciously begins with the construction of a library building. The idea of an in-context indigenous epistemology is not obliged to occupy this building, even if it could formulate the structure of the epistemological “report” containing “our little knowledge of our worlds and ourselves.” Its structural occupation of itself lies at the core of the widely destructive disconnectiveness that derives from the colonial impasse with worlds of indigenous thought and indigenous epistemologies and its own requirement to set the standards for discussion.

And such discussions create systems for classifying information, making not only communal knowledge classification systems and protocols for access irrelevant but steeped in ways of approach and thought that make them symbolic of the consequences of defiance. “The library,” under colonial standards for foreign and indigenous information encounters, makes the equitable access of information under the institution’s guise of neutrality not only untenable but far from American librarianship’s purported standards of equity. The means by which such neutrality might be at least suggested would be to enable encounters under a requisite guise of “the library” and to therefore render an indigenous epistemology as a unique anomaly that is admitted but as a consequence of colonial origins and controlled in the confines of the structures of both a physical institution and the profession’s standards for the organization and access of “information.” In one of the few books dealing with issues of colonialism and librarianship, Adolphe Amadi reflects upon this dilemma when he writes that British libraries and formal

education were introduced into Africa “as a means for educating the target people in order to achieve the social and political and economic objectives of the colony, and to acculturate or brainwash the natives into European ways” and without the means to even recognize this anomaly (Amadi, 1981, p. 70).

“Information” Access and Authority

It becomes difficult, therefore, to also imagine how the field of information retrieval might explore more deeply into human consciousness (and in our case, indigenous human consciousness) - beyond the positivist nature of the library whose dominating image of a “depository of objective knowledge” (Radford, 1992, p. 412) achieved in the controlled languages of academic fields may be responsible for this air of awe that “the library” produces in Micronesia and probably elsewhere in the Pacific. This sense of awe perhaps reflects an unconscious, acculturated acceptance of a positivist conceptualization of knowledge through the American library. The dominant values embodied in “the library” – neutrality and access – have as their ultimate achievement the larger compilation of such knowledge in a system driven by a library’s structure that, as a depository, ideally expresses no interest in the contents of these “reports” of knowledge and thus achieves a kind of “science” of librarianship.

And as a system of neutrality, information retrieval and “the library” itself exist, specifically in Micronesia and other colonized worlds, as structures of knowledge formed under foreign values and histories that, even in their own origins, make human consciousness subservient and problematic in its own terms under the dominating and positivist means of the possessive and reproductive means of knowledge and its dominant structures of access. Given this positivistic world of discovery and communication that “the library” supports, objectivity (in the service mode of “the library” we could consider this to be “neutrality”) and the disciplinary acceptance of objectivity, cannot be achieved outside of these structures and their rules. Michel Foucault stressed the dependency that the achievement of scientific knowledge has upon specific structures and rules, including its expression in style manuals, creating “a system of control in the production of discourse” (Foucault 1972, p. 224). Discourse and the historical moment, according to Foucault, determine the structure of scientific knowledge and, ultimately its communication, essentially in the form of MacLeish’s “reports” that contain “our little knowledge of our world and of ourselves.”

Objectivity and truth struggle in the depths of discourse but could include at least the idea that truths which lie outside established scientific discourses can be “objectively described by a value-free scientific language” (Radford, 1992, p. 418). But as an institution that functions under rules of organization and access, “the library” – particularly in light of its perceived neutrality – offers an important clog in the legitimization of an established, closed scientific system. Book arrangements in this system allot controlled spaces for discovery between them, offering the capacity for new knowledge but only under the rules of engagement that it provides.

However, it was and it is possible to also imagine “the library” in the Pacific as possessing not merely books of content but also containing books of a labyrinth –a liberating, textual labyrinth where “every point can be connected with every other point, and, where the connections are not yet designed, they are, however, conceivable and designable” (Eco, 1984, p. 81). A text’s value is discovered in networks that in themselves constitute an “unlimited territory.” This territory was already accessible in bibliographic indexes, superseding the positivistic limitation of a library full of “reports” containing distinctive knowledge that comes

from distinguishable systems of organization. And certainly now, as was not the case when the American library first came to Micronesia, the Internet provides a multifaceted fantasia of knowledge if it is only understood as such.

Perhaps one is really awed at “the library” in Micronesia not merely because of the imposing positivistic standards that organize and facilitate the creation of more knowledge within these exclusive standards. One is also awed – and perhaps at the moment, unconsciously – by the inherent potential for change that suddenly becomes possible even in a foreign born and colonially inherited institution. Foucault calls this potential that all indigenous peoples have had and have within their grasps, the “fantasia of the library” – based on the structure of a fantasy upon which the exclusive and excluding systems of the library with its expectations of discovery are no longer superior to the user who seeks knowledge.

“Fantasies are carefully deployed in the hushed library,” Foucault writes, “with its columns of books, with its titles aligned on shelves to form a tight enclosure but within confines that also liberate impossible worlds The imaginary is not formed in opposition to reality as its denial or compensation; it grows among signs, from book to book, in the interstice of repetitions and commentaries; it is born and takes shape in the interval between books. It is a phenomenon of the library” (Foucault, 1977, pp. 90-91). The evocating text of dreams for Foucault is Flaubert’s *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (Flaubert, 1981) which, in its consummation of multiple levels of fantastic apparitions and stages of performances specific to newly opened literary spaces from between these textual sources of apparitions, represents the discovery of a “new imaginative space in the nineteenth century” igniting “the library” and activating modern literature (Foucault, 1977, p. 90).

David Hanlon has written about the “chill of history” felt in the systematic confinement of letters and personal journals stored in chilly basements and used by historians for the compiling and subsequent interpretation of the history of the places and peoples of the Pacific, resulting in the construction of numerous levels of historical consciousness and application – both blindly colonial in nature and far more critical analysis of indigenous lives-as-lived – the latter having been achieved to a large extent by indigenous scholars themselves (Hanlon, 1999). The confinement of ideas about what and where unwritten sources of historical texts and their forms reside or how they even exist, progressively contribute to this chill. The “chill of history” is also what is negatively seen as being unsystematic to the system. And this begins with the weakening of the assumptive, linear nature of history upon which, in colonial paradigms – in the tight, structured spaces between texts - progress is ultimately realized. And its chill continues with the unresolved status of unwritten “texts” in the confined arena that our paucity laced, ingrained, and much unquestioned vision of “the library” in Micronesia – even the humblest of them – entails. It is fundamentally at this entrance into imaginary space that an indigenous consciousness of self, of ideas and realities of communal standards, even in their acculturated passions, evokes new freedoms of thought and self-respect.

As Hanlon observes:

It is difficult to disentangle libraries and research collections from the imperial and colonial pasts that have made them possible, whose records they preserve, and whose written histories they advance (often to the exclusion or repression of their histories) . . . [as such] libraries and collections are not really neutral or innocent sites. We cannot fool ourselves into ignoring the ways in which knowledge serves power and how knowledge in the service of power is collected, housed, catalogued and preserved. In a real sense the existence of libraries and collections in the Pacific has been made possible by the

intrusion, contact, displacement and colonization of then extant local epistemologies. Knowledge written down needed a place to be kept, while other modes of knowledge were left to be forgotten (Hanlon, 1999, p. 15).

Cultural and historical misrepresentations find authority in systems of organization and access of knowledge that, on the basis of the foundations of library and information science, essentially replicates the positivistic notions of discovery, verification, and further discovery of knowledge within the confines of those notions. A profession's historical attempts to verify itself as a "science" has made the principles of cataloging and book organization that much more tenacious and non-adapting to the environments into which they are imported. This identification of knowledge, its management, and its preservation has behind itself a long history of self-justification and self-identity for librarianship and by not critically examining the arrival of "the library" in Micronesia, scholars have missed opportunities to understand the indigenous recognition and non-recognition of this conflicting epistemological dance and its nuanced impact.

Surely these misrepresentations, when they occur in published texts stored in these systems or archival materials stored under their own specialized rules but nevertheless also originating from worlds far apart from the Pacific, impact the lives about whom they speak. If librarianship persists in its illusions of systematic neutrality, it suggests that the democratization of access and the democratization of knowledge itself requires that these systems and their histories be enabled to enter into other realms, other realities of knowledge and, as it seems to stand at the moment, into other fantasies of knowing from which this democratization might begin to at least see its own skin.

The positivist nature of library science and, by default of this nature, a cankering for universal laws both in practical and in sociologically redeeming senses, in Micronesia, also implies inflexibility in the planning and the carrying out of an importation – a consequence called colonialism at its most fundamental level. The implied certainty in values and reality is thus readily justified by an unimaginative system that by its broad, unquestioned acceptance has already implanted its roots into a society affected by larger and, in historical texts and interests, more noticeable American institutions and forces. "The library" becomes a supporting institution of colonial value but in an immediately redeeming and comforting non-indigenous sense just as we might envision our own library on any American main street.

But without this intellectual lethargy, it is possible to see a potential for a profession's paradigm to change at its most humble level in Micronesia – possible if the essence of existence (and this essence suggested by the conflict that American institutions in Micronesia have embodied in multifaceted ways), in a hermeneutic sense, draws upon indigenous ideas of reality. Knowledge is not meant to be perfected but rather to undergo changes in cultural and social contexts in which indigenously exists a debate of substance, of meaning, of the life giving credibility forming the present and the past and that past's capacity to structure lives and values. If we assume the positivistic essence of the "science" of the library, how can the essence of the act of seeking, forming, and using knowledge that has to be of value for it to be pursued, be comprehended? An understanding of the nature of existence – an ontological paradigm of inquiry – and particularly the unique processes of understanding that occurs endlessly in cultural worlds requires methods of interpretation that are contextual in nature. It was this lack of context that made Pacific libraries so invisible to policy makers and historians in the first place.

The Fantasia of Subversion

Our existence on a human plane of continuum not only requires that we accept our place there as a point in time but that we also recognize that our efforts to orientate ourselves in the middle of a conversation, as it were, does not require a determinacy of knowledge as a prerequisite for engagement. Interpretation is central to this engagement and to the idea that contextual features of this continuum create processes of knowledge formation within which there is no ultimate unity of knowledge, no structure of organizing knowledge that in turn makes the continuum understandable – and perhaps even controllable – in positivistic forms which “the library” readily mirrors.

What happens if a hermeneutical reliance on contextual culture and society as we exist on this continuum of time cannot make forms of unity redeemable in any acceptable way and interpretation itself becomes endlessly circular? Does this require that for the good of the creation of knowledge, an acculturating or a colonizing debate and the inevitable defeat of numerically weaker interpretative communities is imperative? After all, an endlessly circular hermeneutical world during our time on the continuum - that will inevitably end - cannot establish a unity of ideas on anything. Because “the library” stands outside the consciousness of the user, it is a designable structure that can embody the intentions of those who are not users *per se* and who are also not of communities whose hermeneutical knowledge bases, while in contextual worlds within the continuum, are capable of cooperating with a unified source of knowledge that such a structure as “the library” endeavors to provide. Thus is born the intent to dominate and to make the in-progress conversation joined on the continuum a systematic process of acceptance and rejection. As a seemingly inevitable mechanism of this intent, the structured library marginalizes communities of interpretation that cannot either achieve dominance in this system of structured knowledge or by the very nature of its hermeneutical essences cannot even create the means by which to question or challenge the knowledge encapsulated in “the library.” But what really is the nature of knowledge on this continuum?

I suggest that its structure is a small mirror of the will to dominate and dominate by the idea of the inevitability of structure which in itself, represented in whatever form, marks the standards by which “information” becomes what is understood to be as “knowledge” – but knowledge only in its sense and ability to be replicated and advanced within the walls of that structure. Classification schemes, also inherited from historical America, functioned in Micronesia as the most guardian-like enforcers of these standards by structure and by extension, the progress of the conversation on this continuum.

But these rationality structures can be subverted. They actually encompass a means of transcending order and its ingrained intent of control that in other cultural realms, constitute the substance of American colonialism and, in the historical Micronesian context, a specific rationality of order that dovetailed and contributed, in however small proportion, toward the unity of a singular, governmental entity called the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands against which Micronesian cultural diversities threatened to subvert its order. And as this order continued to remain unchallenged and reinforced by an unchallenged vision of the ubiquitous library of scientifically derived and organized knowledge dropped into the roaring contexts of the historically vibrant veins of indigenous experience and knowledge, Peacock’s concept of the library as a monastery reinforced the existent Main Street notions of libraries among historians and other scholars. Peacock’s plans and actions were well intended and would have inevitably impacted Micronesians and particularly Micronesian students in positive ways

that responded to the inevitability of change and the education opportunities therein. In the larger theoretical view, however, he, like others in the Trust Territory government were people of their time working with differing degrees of awareness or intent of political purpose but all perhaps, as we in our time, separated from broader strokes of historical perspective.

Monasteries have, as Peacock implied on his Hotel Plaza stationary, the notions of “security” that remain among us as we “grow up . . . secure in the knowledge that this source [the library] of learning and pleasure will abide” – abide as anything abides in the inexorable belief in this security, no matter how misplaced or illusionary it might be. The complete absence of historical concern with this imported American institution of knowledge replicates this surety. Such a relentless assumption feeds the image of the librarian-god as Jorge Borges conveys in his short story “The Library of Babel” in which the library’s structure is only successfully searchable by the ordained librarian upon which the searcher depends for satisfying his or her “information need” (Borges, 2000). The Micronesian “librarian,” never historically trained anywhere near the extent to which the American structure has historically demanded, nevertheless inherited this role and at least under the perhaps even inexpressible intentions of colonial acculturation to the library, maintained this stereotype of the “librarian” holding court over the domain of an impenetrable order.

Flaubert’s *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, however, presents us with a means for the fantastic embodied in an accurate, in an even scientific domain of dreams emanating from a vast network of discoveries that have no benevolent attachments of the structure from which these means emerge other than the anonymous existence of texts within a structure that progressively loses its means to dominate the production of knowledge. A new rationality not derivative of itself or of what follows is born. As Foucault stresses, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* “dreams other books . . . books that are taken up, fragmented, displaced, combined, lost, set at an unapproachable distance by dreams, but also brought closer to the imaginary and sparkling realization of desires” (Foucault, 1977, p. 92). The book becomes a library in itself and the rationality for the complexity of Saint Anthony’s visions of carnal temptations and questioned philosophical renderings of, even at his time of the third century, institutional authority, is a rationality based upon its own content and upon Flaubert’s own power of exhaustive research of mythological and spiritual nuances that bring madness to the library. The text cannot stand in a positivistic frame and as such is intellectually freed from a long historical assumption of not merely “the library” but of the blinded and purely grounded American political intentions in Micronesia.

It is ironically interesting to imagine a copy of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* in the high school library of Koror, Palau that for decades became a public library at dusk. It may have sat there for years and may still sit there, untouched by human hands and thus human minds that nevertheless have always possessed the means of imaginative, structural subversion that have become resoundingly present in our imagined modern age of the Internet. Every search now, but not then, has the potential to become another *Temptation of Saint Anthony* – and not necessarily in a written form but rather in the liberation of equal parts of access and thought within which indigenous contexts now not only have the power and not only the position but most importantly, the will and the vision to creation rationalities and, in the colonial contexts of “the library” in Micronesia, even the imagined madness against which all colonial structures endeavor to hide and defeat.

The fantasia of the library indeed is not merely confined to the library but also extends to far larger representations of indigenous sovereignty and known or sensed or yet to be fully

discovered epistemologies that are nevertheless in themselves practices of everyday life, whether or not they are mentally embodied as such. They are instinctual and by that very characteristic alone, these epistemologies are the authority of knowledge; they form the foundational nature of identity which only an asserted, strategic intention behind colonial institutions can subvert under the nuances of hegemony that were clearly represented in the Americanization theme of the 1962 Solomon Report (United States, 1962).

These institutions and the strategies of Americanization, institutionalization by standards of Western development, and the incorporation of vastly different cultural, social, and historical dimensions of Micronesian societies into a singular, controllable entity, are clearly the standard bearers of the U.S. governance of these northern Pacific entities in postwar contexts. This discovery of a positivist framework of colonial governance, embodied in the American democratic model under which federal programs were seamlessly extended to Micronesia and under which practically all Micronesians qualified as impoverished people, eventually gave way to the breaking up of this singular entity of governance that the United States tried so hard to maintain. Both the instinctual and the conscious awareness of this framework was reflected in the dual nature of Micronesian responses - at some level requiring cooperative political ventures across distinctive cultures and societies and at other times allowing for a more in-place fantasia of response that centered on benefits to a particular Micronesian society which governed its disparate and competing rivalries.

The *fantastique* of the library or the *fantastique* of the governance and the governed no long abides to a canon upon whose mastery can then lead one to a systematic withdrawal of benefits from a system that nevertheless restricts production to the same. The nature of this instinctual and, ultimately, conscious defiance of the system upon which knowledge or the understanding of governance or ideas of acceptable acculturation formerly depended upon cannot help but confound and defeat the positivist framework of the library or the structures of rationality that colonialism depends upon. With the rise of the Internet (or with the rise of indigenous consciousness), the fantasy of the library cannot restrict the searcher to search for a single fact or answer within the canon of the system - whatever it is that was imported and imposed - but rather every such fact that abides on its own and stands as though it was finally the most appropriate reflects the Flaubert-like projection of freedom that such a fact reveals. And the consciousness that empowered that fact has to take the place of the enigmatic tensions that perpetuate themselves in a system able to depend upon the permanence of its constructed and imposed otherworldly context.

The ideal model of governance, like the ideal library, requires its users to disrupt its realization in such a way that their actions reflect a new consciousness - an enhanced epistemology if you will - upon which the temptations of Saint Anthony give way to perpetually changing discoveries and means of discovery that depend only upon the will of those who search. Given the perhaps monastery nature of the library as Peacock described it and as it has seemingly stood for Pacific scholars and historians while it sailed past in the regions' histories, it is perhaps ironic that Peacock himself appears to have been the only one to speak of the desirous nature of having had the benefit of "old fashioned anthropology" when federally funded efforts were being made to establish "the library" in the six distinctive centers of the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Peacock wrote an undated note to Jack Tobin, an anthropologist and Community Development Advisor in the Marshall Islands and asked for his thoughts regarding the projected "Library/Museum project(s)" - the corporeal question being whether the Marshall Islands, which

achieved political but not economic independence fourteen years later, should have a museum/library or two separate buildings set apart from one another. “It would be good,” Peacock wrote, “to have some old fashioned anthropological input. I’m not at all sure that I understand how things tick in regard to this project. However, the fat is in the fire, and some kind of progress will have to develop soon or people might well suppose that there is more than ample apathy around” – the last comment perhaps referring to what Peacock described as an all pervasive administrative desire to “get the money” from federal programs earmarked for the Trust Territory.

Twenty-six years later Peacock reflected upon the fact that “it [“old fashioned anthropology”] would have been nice to had had it. All aspects. In other words you have someone who speaks the language, can go into the community, can go to the chief or go to whomever he thinks has a view on the matter and find out what the sentiment is. Do you want a library? Where do you think it should be? What do you think should be in it? You do that in the local language – you’re going to accomplish a lot more than I can do in English because a lot of these people spoke very little English or were too limited in their English that they would not feel at ease talking to me.” Peacock also noted the existence of an anthropologist working for the U.S. administration in Palau when he first went to work there in 1953 and maintained that if a public library was going to be built then, he also would have said to the anthropologist “hey, please advise us if you will as to, you know, some of these things” (Goetzfridt, 1997, p. 242). The lack of which however in the face also of cascading LSCA state plan reporting requirements further made at least an informed application of social and cultural values to the creation of libraries relatively implausible.

It is the equivocal nature of an invariant form of colonial intent that breeds a dominance of a known strength and subsequent ignorance toward a colonial target that is often not even known as such which led to the only recorded communication that the American Library Association (ALA) – the oldest and most pivotal organization through which American librarianship exists – had with the man primarily responsible for the presence of American librarianship in Micronesia. The purpose of the ALA’s Advisory Committee to the Proposed Public Goals Study’s survey sent to Peacock was ironically to determine the “relevance” of the public library to “current economic and social factors.”

“What are the unique roles of the public library, if any,” the survey asked.

“It is the last refuge of the individual,” Peacock responded.

“In what ways is the public library most successful?”

“Serving individuals.”

“What are the most serious problems confronting the public library today?”

“There is a danger that technology will replace scholarship and concern for progress replace concern for people.”

“Do you think the public library will survive as an institution?”

“Yes. Serve the individual – whoever he may be, wherever he may be – help him learn – ignorance is still the enemy.”

“What, if any, recent research studies have been done or are being done in your state?”

“None” (Goetzfridt, 1997, pp. 245-246).

The individual, as the ultimate, the only, the purpose of “the library” and its system reverberates through Peacock’s responses to other questions as well which gives pause to a projected notion of what “old fashioned anthropology” would have merited in terms of consequence. This would likely have clashed with the idea of individual achievement for which

librarianship surfaces no matter where its origin of import, despite the communal foundations of all Pacific societies and through which the tensions of acculturation and identity in a bifurcated struggle of communalism and individualism often strain indigenous societies from outside pressures. But also evident is the nature of a knowledge and information system itself whose design propagates and thus expects a complimentary response.

Thus Peacock's endeavor and struggle to grasp "how to get a basically pre-literate society interested in books, in reading" which in itself required "a great deal of imagination" in order for this "interest" to be "creat[ed] and nourished[ed]" in the first place, continued unabated during his tenure as the Supervisor of Library Services for the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. But such a struggle also necessarily involved understanding what kinds of "reading and learning materials" this "pre-literate society" "desired," assuming perhaps that "the library" also necessarily embodied the nurturing of this "desire" by its eventual Main Street presence in indigenous societies through which, in the nature of its histories, roared with the oral components of its identity. He continued in the 1960s to track the "reading interests" and potential "interests" of PIC students, at times conjecturing what might constitute popular themes and, immediately, book titles that might help meet the desirous nature of those themes. This was evident, for example, in his conjecture that the twenty-three circulations of Yukio Mishima's *The Sound of Waves* suggested that novels concerned with romance – romance between Japanese and "any other (Americans, etc.)" - would "apt to be very popular" and thus merited what would have a fairly lengthy process of ordering and receiving, most likely by ship, those selected novels of interracial romance.

Peacock compiled lists of books of "most likely possibilities" for various grade levels that included Pacific related books, although given the second language status of English for most Micronesian students, the subsequent canonical nature of many of the listed Pacific books might have been more appropriate "for use by teachers." However, even that might have strained perceptual credibility considering the paucity of teacher training in Micronesian and the predominance of the vernacular for them as well. Hope perhaps generated from the nature of the beast. And of course perhaps a persistent idea that anything less in achievement might give the idea that Micronesians were to be considered less capable, less intelligent than any other American.

Peacock also tried to employ the structure of the Dewey Decimal organization system to determine what "within these categories":

- 800 – Literature
- 100 – Philosophy
- 200 – Religion
- 700 – Arts/Recreation

were "titles [that] are the most read, or at least the most frequently circulated" – a seemingly nuanced admission that "circulated" did not necessarily equate to "read." Peacock wrote out the basic Dewey Decimal numeral categories in their entirety and marked off numbers of circulated titles in each category in accordance with individual months. It appears, however, that this exercise was meant to convey a global impression rather than for the pursuit of more thematic acquisitions. "Final totals" were stressed and compared. He found a "correlation" between social studies students and those who "habitually" read *Time* and the *Guam Daily News* but a "far less correlation" between "students in biology or physics and the magazines related to those fields" such as *Natural Science*, *Scientific American*, "etc. etc." To apparently make some of these periodical titles appear more attractive ("Boy's Life should do well in Int. Libraries"),

Peacock envisioned holding back, perhaps as a singular experiment, one subscribed title until there were enough to have them bound together “in the states” and then sent, “already bound (and, NEW!).”

Peacock’s lists of books that appeared to be “favorites” - at least based on circulation records - were sometimes followed by a paragraph of reflection: “There is food for thought,” he wrote in one such example, “both for students who read the books and the librarian and others who might have occasion [sic] to project this index of interest into wider meanings. For example, it is not surprising that biographies of Christian leaders should predominate” (most of Micronesia had been Christianized by the early 1900s). “Nor is it surprising that aids to learning English should enjoy a booming business. But what of the Fiction? Why does a relative unknown such as THE GREAT AXE [Bretwalda by Philip Ketchum, 1955] head the list? There is one way to find out, of course, and that is to read the book and talk to others who have read it” which Peacock did and likely did with other books he thought Micronesians had read, moving from one reader or potential reader to another, attempting to discover their secrets.

It is not the embodiment of “the library” in the efforts of one man that enables one to understand and appreciate the structural formations of inquiry that a colonial import but not an imported fantasia of intellectual means codified and pursued during the American administration of Micronesia, made evident. That man worked through the semblance of import in a world of epistemological mysteries under whose surface nevertheless surged the temptations of change and the defiance of organized knowledge from afar. Only by breaking the concrete of Main Street and the scientific nature of expected order could then or the future be any different.

As Cubarian noted back in 1971, a year before Peacock put together the second state library service plan required by the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), “we cannot regard librarianship as one stream of world dimensions, unconnected with the philosophy of this or that social structure” – the realization of which, however, is evident in the large swath of acculturating factors imbedded in colonial heritages and influences of the past and present in Micronesia. The importance of recognizing “dimensional identities” that Kotei (1977) also spoke about at a time when Micronesia still had yet another decade to go as trust territory wards of the United States – dimensions that groan upon the starboard vastnesses between cultures of distinct worlds – speak to the innate impossibilities of this stream. These impossibilities are riveted in the phenomenology of history and practice, of life and adjustment, of foundational values and change and thus external and internal hegemonic sources. “Objectivity creates its hegemonic function in the tradition of its practice and in the vision of its roots when it is applied indiscriminately across all social worlds” (Goetzfridt, 1997, p. 284).

In the history of American influence in Micronesia, “the library” has always had a negligible presence in the colonial criticism of texts and words in and out of air conditioned rooms, even though its most fundamental dimension of life – “information” and its conveyance – are also fundamental to the social worlds within which American librarianship has been placed. The unasked-about stealth with which it occurred purely through the innate realities of the time should give pause to any serious scholar of this region’s colonial history.

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