

Core Value-Focused Transition and Transformation of the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center Library

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It is man's greatest failing to strive passionately for things before finding out what they are worth.

Friedrich Hebbel *Diaries*, entry 4069, 1847

No people could live that did not *value*.

Friedrich Nietzsche *Nietzsche in Outline and Aphorism*: 'On Will and Value'

Abstract

There is much discussion about the necessity of communicating the value of the information in a special library. Indeed, Susan DiMattia, former president of the SLA, in "To Endings and Beginnings," suggested that librarians might share their value by using the seven "Cs": competencies, communication, creativity, correlation, culture, cheering, and chutzpah.¹ These are great mechanisms for communicating value. Nevertheless, there has been little discussion about the ways in which *values* themselves inform the manner in which special libraries organize themselves, nor the way in which these values facilitate the necessary transition and transformation that all special libraries encounter as integral components of larger institutions. Indeed, it is core values, which guide organization, transition, and transformation, that enable special libraries and their staff to communicate their value. This paper shall consider the intellectual, technological, and logistical challenges that emerge as a special library seeks to redefine itself both with the traditional ethnic community it has served for decades and with the larger community of local and remote universities, colleges, and research centers, while remaining attentive to a core value-focused organizational and action plan.

Introduction

A special library must utilize traditional hierarchical and relational systems in order to meet the changing information needs of the community it serves, while remaining cognizant of the mandate to evolve in order to meet the diverse information needs of those outside of its immediate community. How, then, does a special library, which has served a relatively small community, organize its information so that it continues to serve its traditional community, while making itself available to the needs of the larger community it seeks to serve? Indeed, how does a special library transition from serving the needs of the community in which it is located to providing information services to an audience with more diverse information requirements? The

aforementioned are the queries that the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center (HMCC), located in Chicago, Illinois, addresses as it embarks upon a multi-million dollar renovation of its library space and other facilities to become the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center Library (HMCCL).

This paper shall answer the above questions by considering the importance of remaining cognizant of the core values that inform all aspects of librarianship. I shall delineate the relationship between special library organization and the core values of librarianship. Then, I shall provide a case study description and analysis of the process by which an ethnic organization began the transformation from merely having some of the raw materials for a library to organizing those materials and acquiring new resources to become a special library. Ultimately, I shall discuss the way in which a core value-focused transitional and transformative plan guides the resolution of the intellectual, technological, and logistical challenges that emerge as a special library seeks to redefine itself both with the traditional ethnic community it has served for decades and with the larger community.

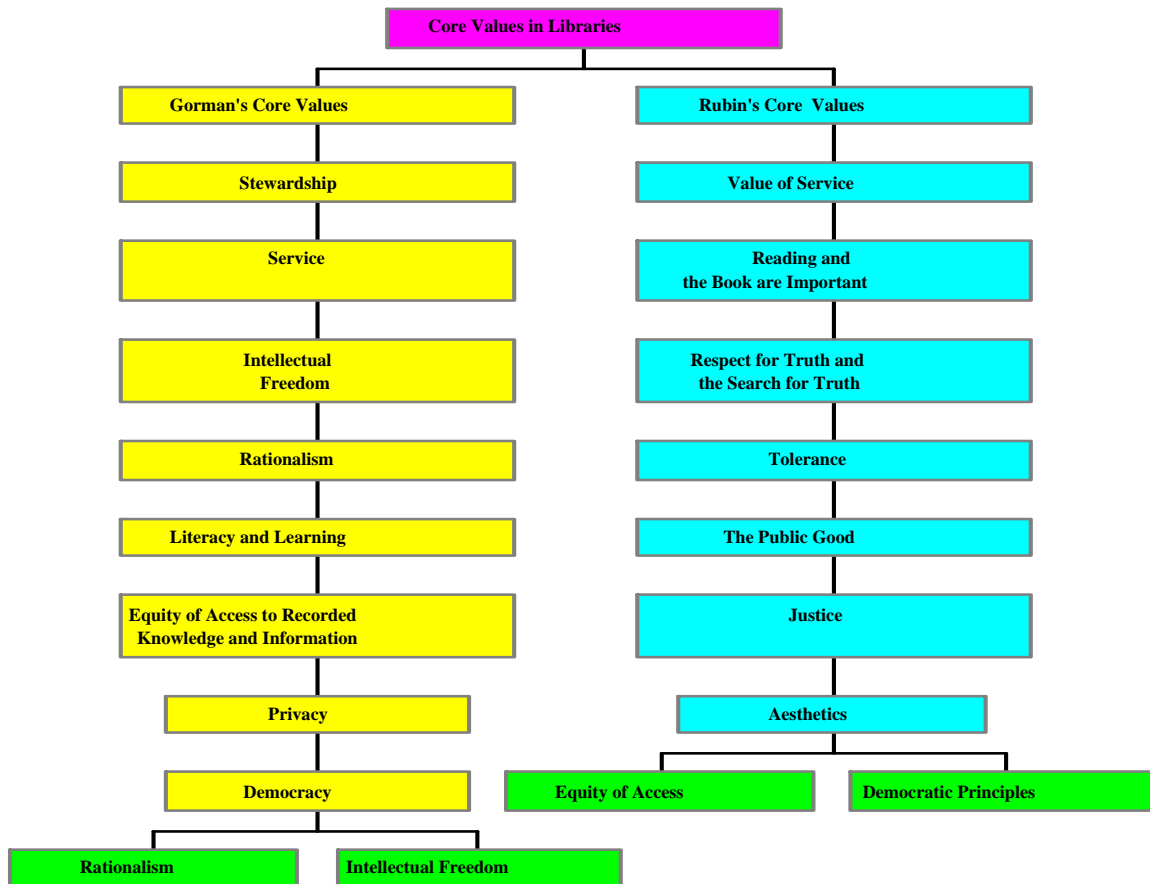
In order to delineate the relationship between special library organization and the core values of librarianship, it is necessary to consider Michael Gorman's and Richard Rubin's core values of librarianship in conjunction with Mount's and Massoud's prescriptions for special library organization. Indeed, it is the application of the abstract values that guide librarianship to the fundamental principles of special library organization that facilitate the transformation of a collection of "books and things" to a special library, which serves the traditional constituency and potential new users.

In *Our Enduring Values: Librarianship in the 21st Century*, Michael Gorman proposes that there are eight central values of librarianship, which he has distilled from the works of Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan, Jesse Hauck Shera, Samuel Rothstein, and Lee W. Finks. These values are: stewardship; service; intellectual freedom; rationalism; literacy and learning; equity of access to recorded knowledge and information; privacy; and, democracy.² Richard E. Rubin, in *Foundations of Library and Information Science*, condenses Gorman's eight core values of librarianship to seven. These values are: service; reading and the book are important; respect for truth and the search for truth; tolerance; the public good; justice; and, aesthetics.³ In *Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text*, Mount and Massoud articulate a six-pronged framework for special library organization, namely: management; user services; technical services; collection management; library facilities and equipment; and, professional activities and networks.⁴

For the purpose of this paper, I have condensed Gorman's and Rubin's core values to rationalism; intellectual freedom; equity of access; and democratic principles. The four core values for special libraries are derived from Gorman's and Rubin's core values in the following manner:

Figure 1

Representation of Core Value Genesis for Special Libraries

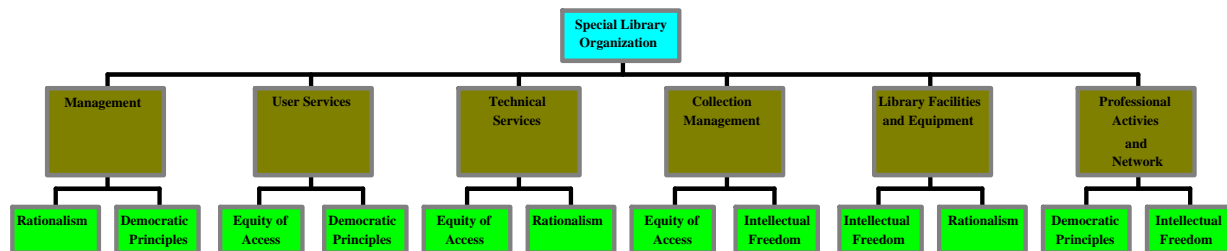


As it is applied to special libraries, rationalism is the practice of guiding one's opinions and actions by what is considered reasonable so that all decisions related to management, collection development, and access are rational.⁵ The policies and procedures of the special library must be guided by democratic principles, such as truth, tolerance, goodness, and justice in order that management, collection development, and access occur with integrity and for the good of the organization of which the library is a part and its constituencies – users.⁶ Intellectual freedom, which is the state of affairs in which each human being has the freedom to think, say, write, and promulgate any idea or belief, must support special library networking and collection development in order that the library maintain its currency and usefulness as well as that the library staff are empowered to facilitate change for the improvement of the library as a whole.⁷ Finally, equity of access, which entails ensuring that all special library resources and programs are accessible to all and overcoming technological and monetary barriers to access, is paramount to all special libraries because it is through the embracing of this value that the library itself is able to demonstrate its value to the organization of which it is a part and to its constituency.⁸ Further, it is through this value the library staff can make value-based proposals for additional funds to those in charge of budgetary allocations – if the users' need access, then management is unlikely to view library staff requests as superfluous.

The four aforementioned core values, which are derived from Gorman and Rubin, are connected to special library organization in the manner demonstrated in Figure 2. Indeed, the four core values are related to Mount's and Massoud's framework for special library organization in the following manner:

Figure 2

Representation of the Relationship between Special Library Organization and Core Values



Thus, in order for a special library to serve the needs of its traditional constituency as well as those of the potential new users, it is necessary that its organization be guided by core values, which are embedded in all area of librarianship, i.e., academic and special.

The six defining characteristics and practices of special library organization can be organized into two categories, namely: Organizational Integrity – management, library facilities and equipment, and professional activities and networks – and Access – user services, technical services, and collection management. In special libraries, both organizational integrity and access must be aligned with the four core values of rationalism, equity of access, intellectual freedom, and democratic principles in order to maintain value within the larger organization of which it is a part; to embrace necessary organizational transitions and logistic transformations; and, to facilitate effectively the access of primary and ancillary constituencies to library collections and services.

Case Study

Introduction

The Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center (HMCC) is in the not-for-profit industry along with other museums from all around the world. HMCC is currently located at 801 West Adams, 4th Floor in Chicago, Illinois, in the heart of Greektown. At the HMCC, there are five active staff members: Executive Director, Curator, Programs & Community Relations Coordinator, Media Relations Manager, and Office Manager. In addition, there are twenty-five members of the Board of Directors. In the short time since opening its doors on 8 May 1992, the HMCC has become a presence in the city, so much so that it has been designated by Mayor Richard M. Daley as the anchor of the new Greektown redevelopment project, which is transforming the Halsted Street area into a world-class ethnic neighborhood. The Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center's mission is to be the nation's foremost center of Hellenic history, culture and the arts, where the public can explore the legacy of the Greek immigrant experience in America and examine the influence of Hellenic culture and people and antiquity to the present.⁹

Figure 3: Chronological History of HMCC and HMCCL, 1992-2001

Year	Event
1992	HMCC opened on Michigan Avenue
2000 -1	Board hired the current curator
2001	Acquired temporary museum space for HMCC and HMCCL
2001	Moved and packed library collection to temporary location

The objective of the HMCC is two fold. First, the HMCC contributes to the Greek community by preserving Greek culture and traditions through the Museum's collections; cultural events; recorded oral and visual histories of the Greek immigrant experience; and, by presenting the stories of Greeks in America and throughout the world. Second, if not more importantly, the HMCC is engaging actively a broad and diverse audience through innovative exhibitions; educational outreach; original public programming; and, by serving as an information resource. In addition, the Museum collaborates with organizations and institutions to foster a greater appreciation of different cultures and shared human experiences.

The Mission of the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center Library (HMCCL) supports the HMCC's educational and custodial mission. The HMCCL's collection is focused primarily on two areas: the Greek immigrant history and experience in the U.S. and, particularly, Chicago; and, the artistic and literary work of Hellenic people and the celebration of Hellenic heritage. Working towards fulfillment of both the educational and custodial purposes of the HMCC, the Library acquires, organizes, maintains and makes available for use books, periodicals, microforms, maps, music, pamphlets, online databases and archival materials. The HMCCL provides finding aids and other resource guides to facilitate patron use.

Figure 4: Chronological History of the HMCCL, 2005-2006

Year	Event
Aug. 2005	Selected Library Intern
Oct. 2005	Interim library space designed
Dec. 2005	Acquired two volunteers to transliterate the Greek books
Jan. 2006	Creation of HMCCL Consortium
Mar. 2006	First meeting of HMCCL Consortium in the temporary library
Mar. 2006	Finished unpacking all English related materials
April 2006	Began cataloguing and looking for another volunteer

The relationship between the HMCCL's organization and the previously mentioned core values reveals the process by which it has begun its transformation from having only the raw materials of an information center, from various donations, which is connected to a cultural center, to a library, which is an integral part of a museum. Indeed the ways in which intellectual, technical, and logistical challenges have been approached evinces the degree to which core values have guided the process of transition and transformation from the HMCC to the HMCCL.

Management

Management is the first aspect of the HMCCL's organization as a library. It is informed by rationalism and democratic principles. Management issues at the HMCCL are handled on a case-by-case basis. For example, in the current organizational structure of the HMCCL, a patron sends an email to the Museum Curator, who is a member of the Library Consortium, in order to discover if the library has a particular book. Although the library's catalogue is still in its early stages, the Library Intern, who is also a member of the Consortium, checks the shelves to see if the text can be found quickly. However, if the same patron is looking for books about a certain author, the Intern might ask the Greek volunteers if they have any knowledge about the author. In the first example, the Intern is "rational" in trying to find the text. In the second example, the Library Intern also shows democratic principles by allowing the volunteers to assist in helping the patron find the proper sources in an efficient manner. However, once the projected organizational structure is established, represented in Figure 6, the Librarian will receive requests directly and look at the catalogue to determine the progress of the text through technical services, then instruct the Intern to conduct physical search, which might require enlisting the assistance of the volunteers. Thus, even under the projected organization plan, rationalism and democratic principles inform organization and information dissemination.

Figure 5: Current Organizational Structure of the HMCCL

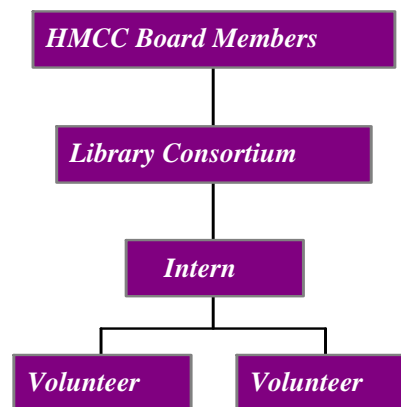
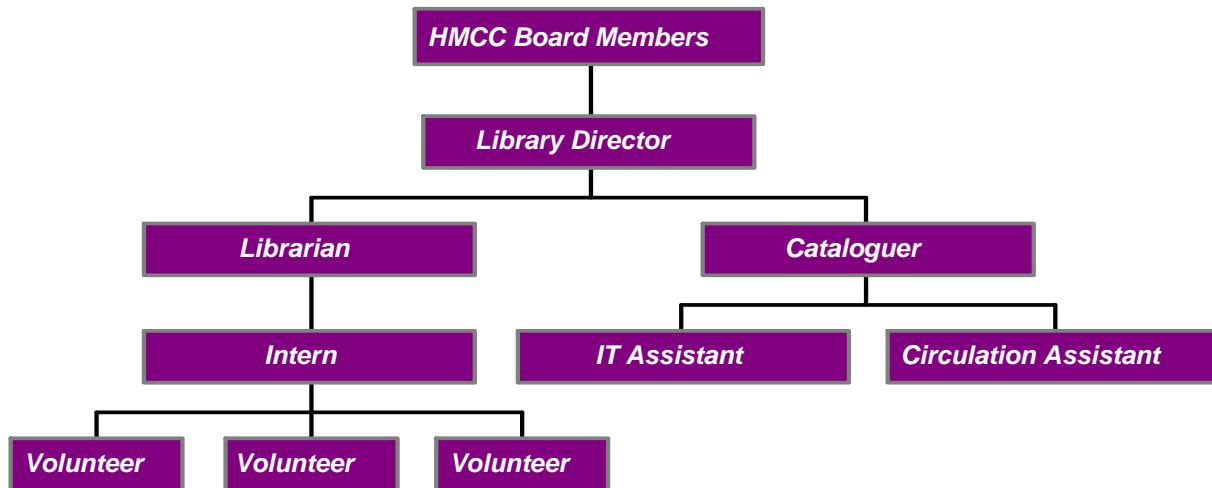


Figure 6: Projected Organizational Structure of the HMCCL



User Services

User Services is the second aspect of the HMCCL's organization as a library. It is informed by equity of access and democratic principles. Although the HMCCL is in the early stages of development, patrons have already begun to inquire about the library's content. For example, a scholar from South Carolina was studying at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois and thought to come to the HMCCL to find information regarding one of his family members that had died recently. The HMCCL staff had reservations about allowing him to come to the library because the library has no "official" catalogue for public viewing, but did not want to turn him away. Thus, the patron was allowed to visit the library in order to access the collection because he had been a member of museum for a number of years before retiring to South Carolina. He knew that the library did not have a catalogue, but he was willing to use alternative means to gather the information he sought. In the example, both equity of access and democratic principles played an important role in user services at the HMCCL.

Technical Services

Technical services is the third aspect of the HMCCL's organization as a library. It is informed by equity of access and rationalism. By providing an electronic catalogue for the HMCCL's patrons to access, such as PastPerfect or Voyager, the HMCCL exemplifies both values equally. The HMCCL plans to use Voyager or a Voyager-like system for two reasons. In using PastPerfect, the HMCCL discovered that the use of multiple entry points are not allowed in the bibliographic record unless someone enters each MARC tag manually. In addition, PastPerfect holds only 50,000 entries and the HMCCL needs 60,000 entries in order to meet the Metropolitan Library System (MLS) requirements for becoming a full member of the MLS, which will enable the HMCCL to serve a broader and more diverse constituency because of heightened visibility, which might, in turn, result in more funding for staff and resources. Using

either Voyager or a Voyager-like system to catalogue the materials is a rational choice because using PastPerfect would not meet the future needs of the HMCCL and would require a significant financial investment in data entry clerks. In addition, using a Voyager-like electronic cataloguing system provides easy and equitable access to the patrons in order that they are able to search the library's collection of materials with ease.

Collection management

Collection management is the fourth aspect of the HMCCL's organization as a library. It too is informed by equity of access and rationalism. Collection management has been at the forefront since the HMCC decided to create a library for its members. After much discussion, the HMCCL will focus its collection on the Greek-American experience. Simply stated, the collection of the library will contain materials (i.e., newspapers, albums of events, yearbooks, and Greek and English texts) about and from Greek-Americans discussing their views related to Greek culture, economics, history, art, and literature. By focusing the collection on one topic with many subtopics, patrons will have access to learning about the Greek-American experience. Since there are no other libraries in the area, which focus on the Greek-American experience, it is/was a rational choice to build a library that focuses on the Greek-American experience.

Library Facilities and Equipment

Library facilities and equipment is the fifth aspect of the HMCCL's organization as a library. It is informed by intellectual freedom and rationalism. At the HMCC and the HMCCL, like many other urban libraries and museums, space is a luxury. However, by building a larger facility, which will house a larger library, which the HMCC and the HMCCL plans to build in 2008, the library will provide greater access to more materials thus allowing patrons to learn more about the Greek-American experience. In addition, since the library will be larger, it will contain more library equipment, which is a rational approach to the problem of providing greater access to a diverse collection of materials, which, in turn, will also increase intellectual freedom.

Professional Activities and Networks

Professional activities and networks is the sixth and final aspect of the HMCCL's organization as a library. It is informed by democratic principles and intellectual freedom. By focusing on democratic principles, the professional activities at the HMCCL have included the development of a consortium in order to make decisions regarding the library. In addition, the consortium acts as a mediator between the board members of the museum and the members organizing the library. Networks or networking is guided by intellectual freedom at the HMCCL through the establishment of new contacts in order to discuss current issues that affect other Hellenic libraries – for example, using the LC transliteration table; ISO transliteration table; or, not using the transliteration tables and preserving the Greek language with a Greek language software program and keyboard is an issue that is encountered by all Hellenic libraries. By participating in listservs and discussion boards, the HMCCL not only shares information with others, but also gathers information for its own benefit, which supports and demonstrates a commitment to intellectual freedom and democratic principles.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Value is of great significance for special libraries. For, value is the way in which special libraries communicate their worth to the organizations of which they are a part and their constituencies. Nonetheless, as special libraries seek to maintain dynamism within the fast-changing information industry of which they are an integral part and as new special libraries and information centers emerge because of the needs of changing constituencies it is necessary to place *values* at the center of any and all transitions and transformations. Indeed, it is by focusing on core values that special libraries may adapt and emerge in order to serve their constituencies. Thus, while value is of extrinsic importance, value-based transition and transformation is of intrinsic importance to the dynamism and longevity of a special library. Furthermore, it is through guiding organizational and access decisions by core values that a special library maintains a keen focus on the needs of its parent-organization, staff, and constituencies.

In the case of the HMCC and HMCCL, it is clear that while core values may not have always been articulated consciously, all decisions, from management to networking, were focused on and guided by rationalism, intellectual freedom, equity of access, and democratic principles. Indeed, these values correspond to the typical organizational structure of a special library. Further, they exemplify the purpose of the special library for the constituency that it serves. Finally, the way in which the HMCCL has been able to resolve creatively and compassionately intellectual, technological, and logistical issues – reference questions; cataloguing and transliteration; and space allocation and networking – is a direct result of the degree to which it has remained vigilantly focused on the ways in which the four core values must guide decision making and planning. Ultimately, without values, it is nearly impossible to assess and to proclaim value as a special library. For, a special library is as worthy of support and patronage as its organizational and access plans demonstrate it to be.

ENDNOTES

¹ Joseph R. Mathews, *The Bottom Line: Determining and Communicating the Value of the Special Library* (Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2002), 143 and Susan DiMattia. To Endings and New Beginnings. *Information Outlook*, 4(5), May 2000, 5.

² Michael Gorman, *Our Enduring Values: Librarianship in the 21st Century* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000), 26-7.

³ Richard E. Rubin, *Foundations of Library and Information Science* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2004), 309-315.

⁴ Ellis Mount and Renée Massoud, *Special Libraries and Information Centers: An Introductory Text* (Washington: Special Libraries Association, 1999).

⁵ Michael Gorman, *Our Enduring Values: Librarianship in the 21st Century* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000), 26-7.

⁶ Richard E. Rubin, *Foundations of Library and Information Science* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2004), 309-315.

⁷ Michael Gorman, *Our Enduring Values: Librarianship in the 21st Century* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000), 26-7.

⁸ Richard E. Rubin, *Foundations of Library and Information Science* (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc, 2004), 309-315 and Michael Gorman, *Our Enduring Values: Librarianship in the 21st Century* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000), 26-7.

⁹ For further information, see <http://www.hellenicmuseum.org/>.