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Progress and Backwardness in Book Accumulation: Bancroft, Basadre, and Their Libraries

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In matters of book accumulation, there is generally progress at the center and backwardness in the periphery. Libraries at the center grow ever larger while those in the periphery stagnate or expand at a slow pace. This uneven concentration of book and manuscript collections is an old phenomenon that has been facilitated by colonialism, capitalist accumulation, and international wars. Under conditions of poverty, insecurity, and weak states, collections of books and manuscripts tend to flow out of the periphery to fill the libraries and archives of world centers of knowledge. This process has intensified since the late nineteenth century with the emergence of the research university and the development of professional knowledge institutions in Western Europe and North America. Because the dynamic of book accumulation is directly associated with the formation of disciplinary fields, it is crucial to understanding contemporary global inequalities in knowledge-producing capacity. While the contemporary digital revolution has changed the position of peripheral scholars in this regard, making available to them sources previously inaccessible, the long history of the concentration of documents and books in academic institutions of the North Atlantic has left a situation that will take many years to undo.

In this article, I examine narratives of two book collectors and librarians in order to tease out the mechanics and politics of knowledge embedded in book collecting. By contrasting the experiences of a wealthy book collector in the United States, Hubert H. Bancroft, with those of a historian and librarian in Peru, Jorge Basadre, I will elucidate the relationship between book accumulation and the location and scope of knowledge projects.[1] In the analysis that follows, the National Library of Lima exemplifies a collection formed on the

[1] Regarding the dynamic of imperial book accumulation, see Roe 2010, and Salvatore 2005. See also Salvatore 2007.

periphery, while Bancroft's private collection represents cultural accumulation at the center. Book-collecting strategies and outcomes pertain to knowledge projects generated in different economies, societies, and intellectual cultures. Scholars, book collectors, and librarians imagine the boundaries of their fields in relation to given countries, regions, or localities.[2] Bancroft made his library the foundation for a transnational history of Western America, while Basadre's National Library, once rebuilt, was thought of as a repository for the study of Peruvian history.

This essay speaks to the debate about the transnational nature of knowledge production. If the construction of modern scientific disciplines implied the collaboration of local, peripheral knowledge producers, the circulation of objects-evidence moved generally from the periphery to the center. Processes of cultural accumulation tend to be path-dependent, zero-sum games. The cultural artifacts taken from the peripheries accumulated in museums, archives, and libraries at the center, making it practically impossible to replicate, fifty or a hundred years later, similar collections in the periphery. Successful processes of book accumulation have produced great libraries, which validate the international prestige of particular centers of high learning. This academic prestige, together with the collections, attracts scientists and scholars to research centers in the North Atlantic. Past practices of collecting books, manuscripts, and artifacts were important determinants of knowledge inequalities that have congealed in the contemporary global economy.

Although there is a long tradition of studies in library history, the uneven distribution of library collections across the world and the hemisphere remains understudied. Many people take as given that only a small number of repositories in the world possess a wealth of "textual treasures," yet few wonder about their origins or how they were acquired, or the circumstances that made possible the concentration of these collections "there" (in The British Museum, the libraries of Harvard, Oxford, Yale, Chicago, Princeton, Cambridge, et cetera). Most recently, since World War II, the world has witnessed an unprecedented intensification of shipments of objects-evidence from the developing world to the United States, with that country's ascendance as a global power.[3] And yet, in contemporary studies of culture and representation, discussions of inequitable book accumulation have remained subdued.

The distribution of book collections across the development-underdevelopment divide is crucial for understanding the expansion or stagnation of different research projects. Processes of book accumulation influence crucial

[2] I am aware that a comparison between two libraries cannot answer adequately the larger question of the uneven cultural accumulation between center and peripheries. Nonetheless, this limited exercise is intended to highlight the importance of the subject and stimulate further research in comparative library development.

[3] See Joseph, Rubenstein, and Zolov 2001.

aspects of knowledge production, among them the demarcation of fields of study and the attraction they exert on scholars. For example, while a large library collection at the center can serve as the basis for a project of transnational history, more modest collections in the periphery are usually linked to projects of national history. Book narratives situated in the periphery make explicit a perspective I call the "subalternity of knowledge," a position of inferiority in relation to the main Western centers of books and culture accumulation, and this can translate into limited intellectual ambitions.[4]

In order to highlight the differential dynamics of book accumulation in center and periphery, I will employ two contrasting narratives of library development: Basadre's *Recuerdos de un bibliotecario peruano* (1975a), and Bancroft's *Literary Industries* (1890). Library narratives tend to connect collections with disciplines, financial capital with cultural capital, and libraries with socioeconomic development. By examining Basadre's and Bancroft's views on book collecting, library organization, and history writing, I seek to understand the mechanics and politics of knowledge embedded in narratives of book accumulation. Bringing books together in a central space, Hubert Bancroft discovered, could illuminate the possibilities for founding a whole new field of study. In Peru, Jorge Basadre found that intellectuals could mobilize popular support for the defense of Peruvian cultural patrimony and, from this position, attempt to bring about a fundamental revision of Peruvian history.

BOOK ACCUMULATION: AN OVERLOOKED DIMENSION

During the heyday of maritime colonial empires, the first museums, libraries, and archives were generally located at metropolitan centers of the world economy: Seville, Lisbon, London, Paris, and Amsterdam.[5] Later, with the onset of industrialization in the United States, Germany, and Japan, they too started to amass cultural assets from overseas countries. These were the nations that claimed supremacy in the production of knowledge in the twentieth century. The "library movement" that began in the United States in the 1890s strongly promoted the idea of a national library dedicated to the collection of useful knowledge. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress (1899–1939), turned the institution into the largest library dedicated to collecting materials about world cultures (Rosemberg 1993). As in other developing areas, the modernization of national libraries in Latin America was a post-World War II phenomenon that proceeded at a discouragingly slow pace. The colonial plunder of artifacts, documents, and books continued and intensified in the post-independence period, deepening the region's backwardness in the accumulation of cultural patrimony. Judging from recent denunciations, the

[4] See Salvatore 2004.

[5] The Biblioteque Nationale, though turned into a national library during revolutionary times, had been before a royal library containing materials from France's colonial possessions.

illicit commerce in books and historical documents has continued until the present. As a result, the artifacts of indigenous peoples, the *incunabula* produced by the colonial encounter, and a mass of historical documents pertaining to the Spanish and Portuguese empires are still part of the patrimony of European and U.S. repositories.

Industrialized nations' advantages over developing countries are usually measured in terms of income, investment, technology, and human capital. Yet it is in the sphere of cultural accumulation that developing countries lag furthest behind. Success in capitalist accumulation tends to promote the accumulation and concentration of cultural assets as well, such as books, documents, paintings, and ancient art, which endow industrialized, developed societies with an aura of superiority in the sphere of knowledge production. The accumulation of books at centers of world culture—universities, cities, and nations with imperial histories—presents a peculiar dynamic. At the center, wealth makes possible the massive concentration of materials coming from peripheral nations. This in time facilitates the construction of academic fields in which the peripheries themselves become objects of study. The centripetal logic of book collecting facilitates ambitious intellectual undertakings at the center.

In peripheral and underdeveloped countries, by contrast, book accumulation proceeds at a slower pace, animated by narrower ambitions. On the losing end of the colonial pillage of books, documents, and archeological artifacts, peripheral nations have trouble establishing control over cultural assets. There, reversals in book accumulation are common. Libraries are burnt, documents and books rapidly deteriorate, and important collections are dismantled and sold to foreign collectors.[6] Not only do peripheries lose to metropolitan centers in the competition for textual treasures, but at times they find themselves rebuilding from the ground up a cultural capital destroyed by natural disasters, official apathy, or external pillage.[7] This creates fertile ground for the emergence of a defensive cultural nationalism.

At the end of a long process of lopsided book accumulation, a relation of hegemony and subalternity is established. Central libraries, having gathered materials at the expense of the periphery, claim cultural superiority for having preserved and centralized the textual treasures of humanity. This has been the case with the Vatican Library, the Bodleian Library, the British Museum and Library, the Biblioteque Nationale, and the Library of Congress, among many others.[8] Meanwhile peripheral libraries mourn past and ongoing

[6] Where social inequalities are large, petty theft of books is more likely, and that is why library administrators resisted establishing open stack systems (Asheim 1965: 796).

[7] The burning and pillage of Iraq's National Library and Museum in 2003 reminds us that this remains a problem. See Rayward and Jenkins 2007; Brodie 2003.

[8] See Craster 1952; Priebe 1982; Willison 1989; Grafton 1993; Cole 2005.

losses of documents and books to foreign book collectors, natural disasters, or invading armies. In the periphery, mounting difficulties in preserving cultural patrimony stimulate the emergence of preservationist movements. Local intellectuals see building a national history as a way to recoup past cultural losses.

The original backwardness in book accumulation tends to persist over time, however, since the peripheries find no motivation to engage in transnational knowledge projects that justify ambitious book-acquisition programs. Spatial inequalities in cultural accumulation affect also the circulation of scholars and scientists. Central libraries and archives are magnets for researchers residing in the hinterlands. To generate additional knowledge about their own culture, antiquity, or history, scholars in the periphery travel to the center's libraries, museums, or archives. The uneven accumulation of cultural assets should be at the center of current debates on the convergence and divergence of knowledge-producing capacities among nations. Yet, it has been mostly overlooked in the humanities and social sciences.

Scholars working within the "dependency paradigm" have paid attention to the "brain drain" caused by neocolonial development, but they seldom consider the exportation of object-evidence to world centers of learning. Most of these studies have taken for granted the center's possession of research capabilities (libraries, museums, archives, and laboratories).[9] No strand of dependency theory has critically examined the uneven global distribution of "academic capital." This same criticism could be extended to followers of world-systems approaches. Library science deals with this topic under the heading of "library development," defined as making existing library conditions in the periphery adequate to the modern library system developed in the North Atlantic. Librarians tend to consider existing asymmetries in cultural assets as mere organizational problems that could easily be solved with sufficient technical assistance. As a consequence, library historians tend to privilege issues of organization, accessibility, and the production of guides and bibliographies over that of the spatial distribution of books and documents.[10] The attention paid to library development in colonial situations has been inadequate.[11]

More specifically, researchers have not studied spatial differences in book accumulation. Cultural historians have studied libraries and museums in connection to the emergence of national literatures, heritage movements, and cosmopolitanism. The relationship between the accumulation of objects-evidence and intellectual developments has been highlighted in particular cases, such as those of the Italian Renaissance, modern archaeology, and British literary

[9] See Oteiza 1971; Portes 1976; and Castells and Laserna 1989, among others. On Latin America's scientific and technological backwardness, see Casas Guerrero 2004.

[10] See Buchanan and Hérubel 2011. On the state of library history, see Rose 2003.

[11] See Green 1988; Odi 1991; Jarvis 1995; Fitzpatrick 2008; Luyt 2009.

culture.[12] Yet the question of how the material dynamics of assembling collections of books, manuscripts, and artifacts prefigure, accompany, and influence the advance of disciplinary undertakings remains open.[13] Libraries and book collections have generally been considered mere ancillaries to intellectual developments and the emergence of new fields of study. Against this view, this article presents library collections as crucial factors in the location, scope, and development of knowledge projects.

The new social history of knowledge production has highlighted the participation of local agents in the making of Western science, presenting indigenous communities as field collaborators, providers of specimens or antiquities, and translators or interpreters of texts and images previously hidden from the European gaze.[14] Tributaries to the original work of Bruno Latour and Steven Shapin, these studies have presented a more complex view of knowledge production in a transatlantic context. Yet they have failed to seriously challenge the basic centripetal nature of evidence gathering—that objects-evidence generally move from the periphery to the center, not in the other direction.

In different incarnations, scholars have employed Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" to refer to certain predispositions of the mind, degree of "cultivation," and access to cultural goods that continue to reproduce social difference.[15] My use of the term is quite different; rather than focusing on an individual attribute, or a family asset, I treat library collections as a collective cultural asset, a public good that requires a long process of accumulation and is essential for the creation of academic human capital. It is a type of capital that is a precondition for establishing comprehensive research programs. It is a dormant capital, until activated by scholars to generate new knowledge.

I refer in this essay to the preconditions of knowledge production, as influenced or determined by spatial location. While library collections facilitate certain projects of knowledge, they are by themselves no guarantee of their success. What is interesting about "bookish capital" is that it is unevenly distributed across countries and regions of the world economy. As I have said, this uneven distribution significantly influences the spatial concentration of scholars and scientists, the production of intellectual innovations, and the formation of new fields of study. In a knowledge-based world economy, capitalist competition is less about markets, finance, and labor than about knowledge

[12] See Findlen 1998; Hosmer 2007; Connell 2000; Wang 2004.

[13] There are important exceptions, for instance Waples 1940; Casey 1981; Vakkari 1991.

[14] See Safier 2008; McClellan 1992; Drayton 2000; Hock and Mackenthun 2012; Golinski 2011.

[15] The notion of "cultural capital," as employed by Bourdieu, means three different things: elevated taste and cultural participation (the embodied state); educational credentials (the institutionalized state); and cultural goods such as pictures, books, and encyclopedias (the objectified state). See Bennet and Silva 2011; Dubois 2011; Darin 2012; Gaddis 2013.

production. While Bourdieu (1984) was concerned with children having access to books, music, and theatre, conditions that create the dispositions that make them socially "distinct" or "cultivated" as adults, I am concerned with the long-term effect that inequalities in library accumulation have on the emergence and consolidation of intellectual cultures and academic fields.

TWO NARRATIVES ABOUT BOOK ACCUMULATION

Bancroft and His "Literary Industries"

Hubert H. Brancroft's *Literary Industries* (1890) is an autobiographical work that recounts the author's transformation from businessman to book collector and then to historian. It contains advice about how to accumulate books and manuscripts massively and quickly. The author's reflections about money, value, and books speak to the new relationship between knowledge production and capitalist accumulation. From the start, Bancroft's private book collection appears subordinated to a specific project of knowledge: writing the history of the western part of North America. His book can be read as a treatise on the relationship between library accumulation and the creation of regional knowledge.

It was published at the time of great changes in the United States: the closing of the western frontier, the culmination of a process of rapid industrialization, and the emergence of a mass reading public. Bancroft showed how a fortune amassed in the western frontier could be transformed into a great library. *Literary Industries* is not just the traditional book collector's narrative celebrating the pleasure of reading and the craftsmanship of bookmakers; it is a book about the "mechanics of knowledge," and makes explicit how the physical assemblage of books relates to the formation of fields of study. Through the events narrated, Bancroft experiences a process of self-discovery, at the end of which he is transformed into a historian of the western side of the continent.

His library was one of the most impressive of his time. It was located in San Francisco, a city already developing into a center of commerce and industry in the Pacific. His reflections about book collecting, the ordering of a library, and the establishing of a "factory of history" are his book's most important contributions. His narrative anticipated conceptions of book accumulation and use later associated with the library movement and the research university. In a capitalist, democratic society, both the producer and the scholar had to be able to find in a public library all the materials they needed.

Basadre's "Memorias de un bibliotecario peruano"

Jorge Basadre is considered one of the most important Peruvian historians.[16] He is known for his contributions to the understanding of nineteenth-century

[16] For a summary view of Basadre's contributions, see Stewart 1949, and Yepes del Castillo 2003: 1–92.

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Peru and for addressing the problems and mission of Peruvian History. He believed national history should contribute to the construction of nationhood.[17] He was committed to a "problem-guided history," one capable of addressing the problem of the national question; that is, of discerning Peru's potentials and possibilities. In addition to being a historian Basadre was a trained librarian, who was appointed director of the National Library of Lima in 1943. The memoirs of his activities as a librarian, *Recuerdos de un bibliotecario peruano* (1975a), can be read as a lamentation about Peru's underdevelopment and its effect on book accumulation and local intellectual culture. In Lima, the historian-librarian attempts to rebuild a basic institution of national culture—the national library—in a situation characterized by severe limitations of resources and a popular disregard for high culture.

Central to the book is a tragic event: the 1943 destruction by fire of the Lima National Library. Basadre's narration of this tragedy leads to a general reflection on the possibility of preserving cultural patrimony in a peripheral nation. The memoir also addresses questions of cultural plunder by foreigners, the role of universities in the development of local intellectuals, and contemporary inter-American cultural cooperation. Throughout the book there flows a sense of a collective frustration. Prior to 1943, Peru has been unable to build a modern library where colonial and post-independence documents would be preserved. Basadre was appointed director of the library reconstruction committee and led a collective effort to replace lost historical materials. He wanted to demonstrate that, even in the midst of a careless national state, it was still possible to build a decent library at the service of national culture and history.

FORTUNE AND DESTRUCTION

The Origins of Bancroft's Library

In the early 1860s, after a successful business career, Hubert Bancroft decided to devote himself to book collecting. Bancroft was in the publishing business (ca. 1859–1860), and the origin of his library stemmed from the resolution of a business problem. In 1869, to help him decide whether to publish a proposed handbook on California, he gathered a collection of available publications about the state. In front of him, he realized, were not just books, but a potential field of study awaiting critical examination. After that, Bancroft expanded his interests from California to Mexico and later to the Pacific states. In three decades, he was able to amass the most impressive library on the west coast, containing over fifty thousand volumes (Caughey 1946: 67–68).

He made purchasing tours throughout Europe, bought valuable collections of Mexican documents, ordered his London agent to participate in book

[17] For recent works on Basadre, see Thurner 2008 and 2012.

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auctions, and toward the end he copied the entries of the British Library catalogue on Western Americana and tried to acquire most of the items on the list. Bancroft said he intended to buy everything he could that had been written about his chosen territory: the Pacific coast of North America.[18] Bancroft's "philosophy of collecting" can easily be summarized: collect all you can on a given subject, and assemble all the materials in a central location so as to be able to visualize the field open to investigation. Book collecting, he said, should serve a "practical purpose": the construction of regional knowledge (1890: 189). A fortune amassed from business enterprise could be turned into valuable cultural capital placed at the service of the community.

The 1943 Fire and Its Lessons

Basadre's narrative about library accumulation deals with his activities as head of the Lima National Library. At its center lies the tragic destruction of the National Library by fire in 1943. The historian-librarian presented this event with the violence of an act of war:

> It gave the impression of a bombarded place. Naked thick walls over which were suspended some calcinated beams, that protected half-way a debris full of mud, this was all that was left of the placid reading rooms [previously called] 'América,' 'Europa,' and 'Periódicos Peruanos,' with their beautiful shelves and their wide corridors, and all that was left from the deposit of recent publications. Papers and pieces of shelves, furniture, floors, and ceiling lie on the floor in confusion (1975a: 26).[19]

The building collapsed, destroying the documents and furnishings of the Geographic Society of Lima, housed in the same building. This fire had a devastating impact on the colonial and post-independence materials. The small portion of the collection spared by the flames was ruined by the firefighters. According to Basadre, not a single important book or document pertaining to the colonial history of Peru survived.

The fire had destroyed a capital in books accumulated over six decades. In 1883 Ricardo Palma, another historian, had undertaken a similar rebuilding of the National Library after the invading Chilean army ransacked it during the War of the Pacific and reduced its collection from fifty-six to twenty-seven thousand volumes.[20] The notion of a cyclical and recurrent loss of cultural assets dominates Basadre's narrative. The collection that disappeared in the flames in 1943 had nearly one hundred thousand volumes. The loss was catastrophic, and Basadre called the library's destruction "the most ominous and

[18] Bancroft's biographer wrote, "He was omnivorous. He seized on every picture, map, manuscript, pamphlet, or book that bore even slightly on his subject" (Caughey 1946: 68).

[19] All translations from Spanish are my own.

[20] Considered the father of Peruvian history, Ricardo Palma, author of *Tradiciones Peruanas*, devoted twenty-nine years of his life to rebuilding the library's collections, mostly through donations.

regrettable event that happened to Peru in the twentieth century" (Yepes del Castillo 2003: 67).

The burned library was not a modern one: it had neither sophisticated catalogues nor an appropriate building. It had been accessible only to the illustrious elite. The catastrophe marked Basadre's thinking about the relationship between nation, history, and culture. He expected that the fire would make Peruvians rethink their own culture and history. From this moment on, he applied his expert knowledge in bibliotecology, acquired in the United States, to the service of national culture. He first directed his efforts at salvaging the remnants of the old library, then oversaw the building of a new one, and then turned to directing the rebuilding of the new library's collections.

TWO DISCOVERIES

The Importance of Visibility and Spatial Concentration

At a critical moment in *Literary Industries*, Brancroft tells the reader about the origins of his library. As just noted, an examination of published materials about California gave him the idea that the state could be the focus of a new field of study. His revelation was that by simply placing together books about the state he could visualize what had been written about it and the themes still in need of investigation (1890: 173–74). This discovery, that visibility and spatial concentration made it possible to imagine a research field, was crucial to the future development of his library. A researcher's possibilities of knowing depended upon circumscribing the field of study to a given territory, and also upon "seeing" all of the materials written about it deployed before his or her eyes. Bancroft believed, in other words, that comprehensive visibility, was a necessary precondition for knowledge. To attain such visibility, the collector required sufficient library space and the orderly arrangement of books. The field of study he chose, western North Americana, was already prefigured in the shelves of his library.

Like the "forty-niners," scholars had to take possession of the field they intended to mine. A new field of study would emerge from the realization of two principles. One, as I have said, stated that researchers had to possess all possible materials relating to their given subject and, then, deploy them, in order, before their eyes. The other principle stated that the sources themselves—written byproducts of the expansion of Europe—would determine the areas where research remained to be done. Thus, the collector's quest for regional knowledge intersected with the embedded history of European expansionism.

When the State Abandons National Culture

Basadre's *Recuerdos* presents us with a detective-like investigation to determine who or what had caused the 1943 fire in the National Library. The national government appeared to be the principal suspect. Over decades, functionaries

had done nothing to improve the facilities, and the institution lacked the resources, equipment, and organization a modern library required. The fire made evident a long-term problem of underdeveloped societies generally: state abandonment of national culture. Regarding Peru specifically, Basadre claimed that state *desidia* (indolence and neglect) was an "endemic illness":

> For long years the state had abandoned this organism of culture…. Little by little, the institution's meager and constant budget, the limited number of employees, and building limitations, came to represent a countersense (*un contrasentido*) in relation to a state in the process of expansion. The Library continued at the rhythm of the past, aloof from all proposals for change. It lacked even the most modest work facilities. Its electric installations were so poor that one could imagine a fire caused by a short circuit. Its typewriters were few and antiquated. The Library could not order sufficient stationary and there was almost no correspondence with the rest of the country or with foreigners. Salaries remained absurdly low and the library's hours did not satisfy the needs of most readers. Cataloguing was left for a future time. Updated books about science and technical matters were almost nonexistent (1975a: 39–40).

As the secretary of the Reconstruction Commission, Basadre had to oversee the cleanup, evaluate the damages, and investigate the fire's cause. A previous investigation had concluded that there was no evidence of arson, that an electrical failure had sparked the fire, and thus the blaze was "accidental."

Not convinced, Basadre undertook his own investigation (ibid.: 33), which raised various other possibilities. One hypothesis was that President Prado's family had wanted to make inconvenient historical documents disappear, but Basadre rejected this hypothesis as an infamy. A second blamed library employees who supposedly tried to destroy evidence of their systematic thefts of documents and books, but Basadre discarded this idea, too. Finally, he came to accept the explanation of an accidental fire. During weekends, library employees had allowed their children into the library to practice typewriting, and they had produced the short circuit that sparked the conflagration. If this was indeed the case, Basadre reasoned, the former director's deficient administration was to blame.

When Basadre interviewed this former director, the now-elderly Carlos Romero, Romero started to criticize the work of the library's first director, historian Ricardo Palma. He said that Palma would hide old documents from sight, send them to provincial libraries, or give them away to individuals interested in the topics the documents addressed. At the end of the interview, however, Romero "confessed"—asked why he had opposed cataloguing the collection, the old man admitted his own inadequate preparation in librarianship. He also faulted the authorities for paying insufficient attention to the National Library, and at this point he broke down in tears (ibid.: 45).

Romero's tears expressed a profound sentiment of loss. The fire had destroyed unique issues of the first newspapers in Spanish America and sixteenth-century imprints that Romero had helped to collect. His "confession" led Basadre to reflect upon a more general phenomenon: the *desidia* of

Peruvian cultural and political elites. The Leguía administration (1919–1930) had completely neglected national culture, and subsequent governments did likewise. State neglect extended to all aspects of the cultural patrimony: archaeological ruins, Spanish architecture, and historical collections (ibid.: 42). Basadre pointed to a chronic problem: government's disinterest allowed the pillaging of Peru's cultural assets. The disregard of Peruvian politicians and bureaucrats, and also the public, revealed a broad acceptance of illegality. The robbery of documents from repositories, though a common occurrence, was never prosecuted or punished. Peru's disregard for the nation's cultural patrimony was the reverse of the situation found in industrialized economies, where national libraries were modern, well organized, and well supported.

AMASSING COLLECTIONS, AND RECONSTRUCTING A LIBRARY

Bancroft's Method of Collecting

In time, Bancroft became a full-time book collector. His method of collecting differed from that of traditional book collectors. Though, like many of them, he searched for textual treasures of the sixteenth century, he concentrated his purchases on a specific geographical area. At first, he limited himself mostly to California. He visited bookstores in San Francisco and nearby cities in a quest for pamphlets about the state and the Pacific coast. On a subsequent trip to the east coast he extended his search to second-hand bookstores in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia (Caughey 1946: 69; Bancroft 1890: 175). When his California collection had grown to five thousand volumes, he decided to "search all over Europe" in order to "complete" it.

Bancroft traveled across Mexico, the eastern U.S. coast, and various European cities seeking more books. Realizing that this method was slow, he contacted overseas book dealers and auction houses, which kept him informed of collections for sale. Eventually, his obsession with comprehensiveness led him to hire a bibliographer, Joseph Walden, who worked for him at the British Museum making "a transcript of the title of every book, manuscript, pamphlet, and magazine article touching" Western Americana (Caughey 1946: 72). Attaining complete visibility of the subject matter required a comprehensive bibliography, and the catalogue Walden compiled proved an invaluable guide to further acquisitions.

Bancroft spent much of his fortune gathering his library, and money gave him the power to shorten distances. For example, he bought the Andrade-Mexican collections at a Leipzig auction without leaving California—he simply wired $5,000 to his London agent and told him to buy at his own discretion.[21] He used the same method to purchase the Squier collection at a

[21] Bancroft's agent selected the best of Western Americana, and purchased three thousand of the seven thousand books put up for auction (Caughey1946: 74–75).

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New York auction in 1867, and in 1880 to acquire the Ramirez de Durango collection in London (ibid.: 76–77). By the late 1880s, Bancroft had assembled fifty thousand books. This accumulation led him to buy a fireproof building on Valencia Street, where he organized a true library, dividing his books into sections. On the first floor were travel books, periodicals, legal codes, almanacs, and pamphlets. On the second were the working library, rare books, manuscripts, and a reference section. Books and shelves were numbered, and references were copied into a leather-bound catalog. Twelve librarians worked to keep the burgeoning collection in proper order (Bancroft 1890: 205).

Reconstruction as a National Epic, 1943–1948

The reconstruction of the National Library of Peru from 1943–1947 proved arduous. The Reconstruction Commission began by "rescuing half-burned or wet papers, picking them up from the ground, cleaning them, and ordering them" (ibid.: 32). The library staff used a drying machine to save as many newspapers, manuscripts, pamphlets, and books as they could. Basadre moved the remainder of the collection and the furniture to the National School of Fine Arts. He ordered new steel stacks from France and started planning the new building's construction on the spot of the old one at the center of Lima, but this structure would be modern, more spacious, and fireproof.

Next, Basadre began rebuilding the lost collection through donations, purchase, and duplication. The task ahead was clear: "It was necessary to find in Lima, in the rest of our territory, or abroad … bibliographic material either from Peru or referring to Peru" (quoted in Yepes del Castillo 2003: 69). He placed advertisements in local periodicals asking for donations. In the provinces, he promoted the creation of committees that would organize contributions of money, books, and magazines. In this way, the National Library eventually recovered much of the lost collection. When it reopened to the public in 1947, the collection held 134,000 volumes, thirty-four thousand more than before the fire. Considering his mission accomplished, in 1948 Basadre resigned his post at the National Library to become the director of the Division of Cultural Affairs of the Pan American Union.[22]

In *Recuerdos*, Basadre presented "the Peruvian people" as the main protagonists of the National Library's reconstruction. Whereas rich families and foreign business corporations had failed to respond to the request for donations, the Peruvian people had contributed generously. Chauffeurs, teachers, factory workers, and employees joined the effort, giving part of their salaries toward rebuilding the cultural capital of the nation.[23] Cooperation between ordinary

[22] Before the end of his term, Basadre inaugurated the "Sala Peru," a reading room devoted to the nation's culture and history, and another devoted to sciences and arts.

[23] "The International Petroleum [Co.], the Cerro de Pasco Corporation, Graham Rowe Co., the Milne house, and many prominent families did nothing…. On the contrary, in the list [of

folks and intellectuals made all of this possible. A group of sensible Limeño intellectuals formed the association Friends of the National Library, and through their social connections these young notables found bibliographic treasures in the chests of aristocratic families and on the shelves of antique dealers (ibid.: 64–65). They organized bullfights to raise funds, cruised local bookshops in search of missing titles, and when possible purchased entire collections.[24]

TWO PROJECTS OF HISTORY

Book Collecting and the Definition of a Field

On an 1866 trip to London, Bancroft observed that books and manuscripts about California usually stood near to those of Mexico on the shelves. This proximity persuaded him to expand his collecting to include materials about that country as well (1890: 179–80). At the end of that year he traveled to Paris, and then in early 1867 to Spain, to collect Mexicana. Though he found Spain poor and lacking in good libraries, he was nevertheless able to fill two large boxes with books. He continued his book-buying tour through southern France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Poland.[25] Further purchases led to another significant expansion of his collecting field; having started with California, he ended up targeting "Western North America." The very process of collecting defined the boundaries of this new field of study. "Gradually and almost imperceptibly had the area of my efforts enlarged. From Oregon it was but a step to British Columbia and Alaska; and as I was obliged for California to go to Mexico and Spain, it finally became settled to my mind to make the *western half of North America as my field*, including in it the whole of Mexico and Central America" (ibid.: 180–81).

Bancroft's field expanded because of connections that were embedded in the documents and books he had already gathered. For example, reading a travel narrative by Nuño de Guzmán led to questions about Mexico and Hernán Cortés. Diplomatic tensions between the United States and Britain over the Oregon Territory pointed to documents about Florida and the Gulf Coast. The books themselves held clues that guided the collector's path, prefiguring histories to be written in future. In time, his collecting and reading led

contributors] appeared the administrative and teaching staff of various colleges, functionaries of different state agencies, societies, shooting clubs, workers' unions, chauffeurs' stations, book stores, and private individuals of the most variegated economic condition, predominantly from non-wealthy social sectors" (Basadre 1975a: 63).

[24] Years later, the library purchased the collection of books and pamphlets of General Agustin P. Justo, former President of Argentina. Basadre had personally seen the library in Buenos Aires and maintained good relations with the Justo family (1975a.: 68–70). It was from Argentina, the country of Groussac and Borges, that Peru purchased the Justo collection.

[25] See also Caughey 1946, ch. 7.

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him toward the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European colonization of America.

Mass-Produced Histories of Western America

Bancroft applied factory-style methods to both his library and his history writing. He employed from twenty to fifty men to organize the library, and hired copyists to search for Spanish materials in the archives of neighboring states. Other assistants he sent to interview settlers of the Pacific states and take down their recollections. He hired four men and a woman to help him write his multivolume history of the Pacific states, a massive undertaking that became *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*.[26] Bancroft is credited with assembling the first known "factory of history," which he called a "literary workshop." Between 1872 and 1890, he managed to publish thirty-nine volumes of *The Works*.[27]

When Bancroft first contemplated writing a comprehensive history of the Pacific states (ca. 1871–1872), his collection had reached eighteen to twenty thousand volumes. He knew it would take him decades to read through it all and extract the most salient information (Caughey 1946: 91), so he decided to hire assistants to help him consult authorities, take notes, summarize contents, and compile references. Ideally, they would do the preparatory work while Bancroft would draft the actual volumes. In practice, however, his assistants ended up sharing an important part of the writing of *The Works*.[28] Bancroft's failure to acknowledge their contributions generated scandals that undermined his prestige as a historian.[29]

The assistants were under constant pressure to produce more texts. Working ten hours a day, six days a week, they were expected to comply with Bancroft's demanding publication schedule, which usually meant one volume every four months. Assistants were classed into "indexers," "compliers," and "advanced writers." Salary incentives, the assistants' research and writing skills, and Bancroft's constant supervision facilitated high textual productivity: each of the thirty nine volumes exceeded eight hundred pages and was extensively footnoted in small print. As historians later acknowledged, *The Works* was an enormous storehouse of information.

Historians at the time, however, were reluctant to acknowledge Bancroft's contributions to western history.[30] To some, his multivolume history seemed a gigantic gathering of historical data with little reflection or theory, an assembly line history that was problematic in terms of its methodology and purpose.

[26] See Clark 1973: 14–18.
[27] See ibid.: 14–18; and Caughey 1946: 99–117.
[28] "Oaks, Mrs. Victor, William Nemos, and others wrote nearly twenty-nine of the thirty-nine volumes which Bancroft published under his own name" (Clark 1973: 19).
[29] See Morris 1903; Clark 1973, ch. 3; Caughey 1946, ch. 16.
[30] See Caughey 1946, ch. 20.

Others criticized his business approach to writing and selling the books. But with time some commentators portrayed *The Works* as innovative and useful. Bancroft was among the first American historians to draw upon the recollections of immigrants and settlers, and perhaps the first to include indigenous populations within a history of Western North America (Clark 1973: 159–60).

The grandiosity of Bancroft's historical undertaking would be difficult to exaggerate. *The Works* covered the entire history of the western half of the Continent, from Alaska to Panama, from the Pacific coast to the Continental Divide, and early colonization to the late nineteenth century. His plan included five volumes devoted to the history of "native races," followed by three on Central America, six on Mexico, two on North Mexico and Texas, one on Arizona and New Mexico, and seven dedicated to the history of California. This was to be followed by nine volumes dealing with the history of eleven states—Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, the Northwest Coast, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, British Columbia, and Alaska (Caughey 1946: 157–58, 201–2).

The Historian-Librarian and the National Problem

In contrast to Bancroft, Basadre never envisioned or attempted an international or transnational history; he was concerned only with Peruvian history. He regarded the Peruvian nation as an unfinished project; conflicts among regions, classes, and races, he was convinced, had prevented the complete integration of the nation, and history could contribute to completing the process (1931; 1947). He thought that Peruvian History had to deal with the construction of nationhood, a complex notion involving experience, thought, and spirituality. To contribute to nation-building, historians had to rescue from the archives all elements constitutive of "Peruvianidad," from pre-Inca times to the contemporary period.[31] Basadre fought for a comprehensive and integral history of Peru, one that would overcome provincial postures, localisms, and the glorification of particular periods.[32] A synthesis of Peruvian History, he felt, should reflect the respective contributions of the Incanato, the Viceroyalty, and the Republic.

Basadre envisioned the nation as an entity of continuity through time (Thurner 2008). From the time of the Incas, through the formative period of the Republic, and into the twentieth century, Peru had remained a single nation despite wars, foreign invasions, economic crises, and ethnic and regional tensions (Yepes del Castillo 2003: 198–200). Writing Peruvian History entailed selecting the "Peruvian" elements of each historical epoch in order to connect

[31] For a discussion of Basadre's contribution to Peruvian history see Stewart 1949, Jave 1981, and Thurner 2008.

[32] Basadre criticized the followers of "*incaismo*," "*colonialismo*," and "*procerismo*" (1978, in Yepes del Castillo 2003: 142–43.

them in a composite image of the nation. Basadre gave the name *promesa* (promise) to the anxious, collective desire to fulfill the nation's destiny, the aggregation of the ideals sustained by Peru's distinct, constituent parts. From the Incas, the country had inherited ideals of state social provision, and Peru's independent leadership brought ideals of political autonomy, popular sovereignty, and social equality. Basadre favored a pedagogic, constructive nationalism, one that did not depend on resentment towards other nationalities.[33]

ON THE COLONIALITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Colonial Libraries: Pillage and Purchase

Bancroft soon discovered that private libraries could be purchased in lots, as collections already assembled by historians and bibliophiles appeared on the market. Some of these came from former colonies or collapsing empires. In 1867 and 1879 Bancroft acquired important lots from two "imperial libraries." One had been gathered by the Mexican bibliophile and book dealer José María Andrade.[34] He had agreed to sell his library of Mexican history to Emperor Maximilian, but when the emperor fell in May of 1867, Andrade was forced to flee the country and took his library with him. When his collection was offered in auction at Leipzig (1869), Bancroft purchased from it $5,000 worth of rare Mexican books (ibid.: 187–89). The second important collection he purchased was the library of José F. Ramírez, the head of Maximilian's first ministry and the director of Mexico's National Museum. It contained many colonial documents obtained from convents after the suppression of monastic orders (Bancroft 1890: 195).[35] Between these purchases, in 1876, Bancroft purchased chosen pieces of the Squier collection, which contained a wealth of materials on Central American archaeology and history (ibid.: 93–194).[36]

Bancroft increased his collection substantially by such means, buying books originally pillaged from convent libraries or bought in times of political turmoil. He made no apologies for this, and expressed pride at his success in "ransacking" rare books and documents. At his return from his book-buying trip to Europe, Bancroft wrote enthusiastically, "Now, I thought, my task is done. I have rifled America of its treasures; Europe have I ransacked; and after my success in Spain, Asia and Africa may as well be passed by. I have

[33] While Basadre acknowledged that a deep-seated hatred against Chileans had existed among Peruvians since the War of the Pacific, he trusted that these negative feelings would disappear in time.

[34] See the contents of this library in Andrade 1869.

[35] Ramírez was a Mexican historian and bibliophile who discovered Mexican codices at the convent of San Francisco. One of them is known as the "Ramírez Codex" in his honor.

[36] On the wealth of materials Bancroft purchased on Mexican colonial history, see Fernández de Córdoba 1956.

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ten thousand volumes, and over fifty times more than ever I dreamed were in existence when the collecting began." (ibid.: 185) The pleasure of possession compensated for any moral anxiety associated with his collection's colonial origins. Bancroft's amassing of books was a clear case of what Marx called "primitive accumulation"—an expansion of capital achieved through the ravages of colonialism. Like many collectors of his day, Bancroft was proud to possess valuable sixteenth-century imprints of the colonial Spanish Empire.

Colonial Plunder and Intellectual Deficiency

Given his position, Basadre had a very different view of the ravages of foreign collectors. Even in the twentieth century, the pillaging of Peru's cultural assets continued unabated, assisted by state inaction and the apathy of the Peruvian people.[37] This greatly contributed to the difficulties in building a true modern library. The national government paid little attention to preserving Peru's cultural patrimony in terms of not only books and documents, but also colonial architecture, national art, and archaeological sites. In *Meditaciones sobre el destino histórico del Perú* (1947), Basadre presented this loss as an extended process stretching back to the colonial period.

> If in a religious reason or the simple greed for gold we find the cause of the destruction of indigenous monuments by the Spaniards, how to explain the blind and cold squandering of traditional wealth during the Republic? Brave and gallant caudillos were ordered to load their cannons with cartridges made of paper from the national archives. The reward that an individual obtained for having contributed to fighting a revolution was the permission to travel over the country extracting antique papers. Luxury mummies had awakened from their centuries-old dream in order to travel to another, unsuspected world: Europe or the United States. Who knows how the Harkness collection was formed, today deposited in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., containing valuable documents about the Almagros and the Pizarros and *actas de cabildos* from several Peruvian cities? (Basadre 1947, quoted in Yepes del Castillo 2003: 156).[38]

By linking the Spaniards' pillaging to that of creole *caudillos*, private entrepreneurs, and U.S. librarians, Basadre underscored the age-old persistence of colonial theft of Peruvian cultural assets.

The plundering of cultural assets placed Peruvian intellectuals in a peculiar position, since crucial primary sources for the study of Peru's colonial history were in Europe and the United States; libraries at San Marino, San Francisco, New Haven, New York, and Washington, D.C. had amassed the most important collections outside of Spain.[39] To help compensate for

[37] A battle over the possession of cultural assets had taken place in 1914–1915, when explorer Hiram Bingham confronted Peruvian intellectuals who opposed the exportation of Inca artifacts to Yale University. See Salvatore 2003.

[38] About the Library of Congress collection Basadre refers to, see *Harkness Collection in the Library of Congress* (Library of Congress 1932); and *Documents from Early Peru* (Library of Congress 1936). Edward S. Harkness donated the collection in 1929.

[39] See Hilton 1956.

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this, the National Library held a small collection of post-independence documents that enabled a revisionist history of Republican Peru.[40] But it was hard to imagine piecing together a totalizing vision of Peru from these mere fragments of the past. Among Peruvian intellectuals, the dearth of comprehensive library collections created a sense of inferiority vis-à-vis North Atlantic scholars. In *La vida y la historia* (1975b), Basadre reflected upon the deficiency of the country's universities. The University of San Marcos provided him with a knowledge of contemporary ideas that was incomplete at best. With outdated textbooks, and no funds to invite foreign professors, it was difficult to access European and U.S. currents of thought (ibid.: 207). Furthermore, San Marcos lacked the social science disciplines—economics, anthropology, and sociology—essential to understanding modern social problems (ibid.: 207–8).[41]

Politics and social life in Lima provided Basadre a complementary education of a sort not found in local libraries or university classes. The university had taught him almost nothing about the condition of Peru's indigenous peoples and working classes, even though he attended during a period of great student agitation. These topics came up in discussions with fellow students, however, among them Carlos Mariátegui, Víctor R. Haya de la Torre, and Luis E. Valcárcel. Indeed, Basadre learned more from personal experience and his friends than from formal instruction.[42] In his recollection, he portrayed the education he received during his college years as peripheral and deficient. By comparison, his childhood in Tacna had afforded him a bounty of learning, since the "family library" was sufficient to cultivate his young mind (Basadre 1975a: 54–59; see also 1958). This private library held materials about the histories of Peru, Chile, and Bolivia, as well as encyclopedias, dictionaries, Spanish novels, and classic books on philosophy and politics. It was during these years that Basadre learned that a good library held the keys to knowledge.

IMPERIAL VISION, WEAK NATIONALISM

A California Library as the Foundation of Empire

Bancroft wanted to locate the largest library on Western Americana in California. The history of the Pacific states, still in its infancy, required the resources of a great library. The new energies of the nation were to be found on the Western frontier, where the powers of capitalist technologies could foster a higher civilization (1917: 216). Bancroft believed California had to accumulate a textual capital to match its industrial and commercial prowess. The Western states were

[40] As a student at the University of San Marcos, Basadre participated in a group led by historian Porras Barrenechea that ordered pamphlets from the post-independent period.

[41] Basadre later compensated for this uneven education by immersing himself in social science and history debates in Germany and the United States.

[42] Pedro Zulen, Basadre's boss at the Library of the University of San Marcos, talked to him about indigenous oppression, government centralism, and workers' rights.

pursuing a great experiment in social and cultural interaction, which would gauge the possibilities of and obstacles to an expanding U.S. empire (ibid.: 217).

Bancroft's library offered comprehensive, concentrated knowledge of the settler experience in North America at a time when it would be particularly useful, as the United States entered into competition with other industrial nations and colonial powers. He was certain that the United States would become the most powerful nation on earth: "The commonwealths of the New World are becoming more and more united under the beneficent influences of peace and progress; and the Monroe doctrine, at first negative rather than positive in its assertions, is pointing the way toward world-wide domination by American brotherhood. The greatest of republics, surrounded and sustained in all that is elevating and progressive by lesser free governments, enters upon its second century of national existence under circumstances more favorable than has ever before been vouchsafed to man" (ibid.: 216).

During World War I, Bancroft became enthusiastic about a California-centered transnational empire.[43] California had an abundance of most of the resources needed for industrial and commercial world supremacy: food, raw materials, shores, cheap energy, oil, metals, and financial capital. The San Francisco Bay would become the new center of trade and industry of an expanding American empire. Located at the crossroads of East and West, California could capture most of the commercial traffic coming from Asia. The decline of European trade and investment and the opening of the Panama Canal favored the state's rise as a world "commercial clearing house." This prophetic view was based upon Bancroft's grand western-centric vision of global history. Throughout history, Bancroft argued, empires have gradually moved westward, following the sun. The U.S. east coast had its moment of glory with the acquisition of Caribbean colonies from Spain, but now was the hour for the west coast to rise to prominence.

The United States and the Peruvian Intellectual

The United States played an important role in Basadre's career, and two moments are particularly notable: a trip he took to Washington, D.C. in 1931–1932 to study and practice librarianship, and the support he obtained from the Library of Congress to reconstruct Peru's National Library in 1944–1947. Whereas the visit helped Basadre build his own capital in specialized knowledge, the Library of Congress assistance proved decisive to consolidating his links with leading scholars in the United States.

Basadre's trip to the United States was made possible by a Carnegie Foundation scholarship to study library organization.[44] He remained there from

[43] See Bancroft 1917: 434–62.

[44] E. B. Sayre to H. Putnam, New York, 17 Sept. 1931, Herbert Putnam Archives, box 210, Library of Congress.

September 1931 until June 1932 studying library science and doing internships in selected libraries of the northeast (1975a: 21). The visit made a great impression on him, and made him an advocate of "the philosophy of the modern library." A modern library was an efficient institution at the service of the reading public, and its organization and catalogues provided readers easy access to the collections.[45] This early experience shaped Basadre's vision of an egalitarian library, a "house of knowledge" for all Peruvians.

After his return home, Basadre went to Germany for two years. Upon his return to San Marcos he worked as a librarian at San Marcos University. To improve this library, he contacted U.S. foundations in search of technical assistance.[46] In February 1937, Basadre wrote to Henry Haskell of the Carnegie Endowment informing him of the overall condition of Peruvian libraries.[47] Though his University of San Marcos library was slowly adopting the North American system, in the country's other libraries the situation was dismal. The National Library in Lima, for example, lacked both financial resources and trained personnel, and was disorganized. Lima's municipal library remained closed to the public and there were no children's libraries at all. He asked the Carnegie Foundation to send him a public speaker who could raise "library consciousness" in Peru.

During the years of reconstruction from 1944–1947, the National Library received an important contribution from the *Comité de Ayuda Norteamericana*.[48] The United States, through the Library of Congress, organized a Committee of Aid to Peru. The Committee donated over twenty-two thousand books and journals, and other gifts came from Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Spain, Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay, and a few European countries. In addition, The Committee of U.S. Aid assisted the new librarian school by paying half of its teachers' salaries. Basadre also acknowledged the help of Lewis Hanke and the Library of Congress. Through Hanke's mediation, Director of the Library of Congress Luther Evans visited Peru's National Library in 1944, a display of Pan-American cultural cooperation (ibid.: 82).

Once reopened, the National Library initiated a project to photocopy Peruvian documents held in the United States, carried out by graduates of the new school of librarians. This work restored parts of the lost collection, particularly colonial and post-colonial materials. As Peruvian librarians discovered, the

[45] In 1936, Basadre published an essay titled "El sentido de las bibliotecas" in which he expressed this philosophy.

[46] In 1932 Basadre obtained from the Library of Congress a collection of catalogue cards on materials dealing with Peru, financed by the Rockefeller Foundation. Herbert Putnam to Henry Haskell, 10 Feb. 1932, Herbert Putnam Archives, box 210, Library of Congress.

[47] Henry Haskell to Herbert Putnam, New York, 19 Feb. 1937, Herbert Putnam Archives, box 39, Library of Congress.

[48] On the influence of the American Library Association on Latin America, see Maymi-Sagrañes 2002.

most important manuscripts and rare books about Peru's colonial history resided on the shelves of U.S. libraries. Copies of missing materials were located at the university libraries of Yale, Harvard, Duke, Brown, and Michigan.[49] This illustrates a mode of cultural accumulation that conferred high value on library collections that could provide the foundation for the emerging field of Latin American Studies.[50]

U.S. cultural authority presented Basadre with a predicament; he had to answer to criticisms for having hired *norteamericanos* to fill professorial positions at the new librarian school. He responded that the profession was more advanced in the United States and that he could expect no technical assistant from Europe, which was then engulfed in war (1975a: 87). To counter criticisms from nationalists, Basadre presented U.S. technical assistance as an act of national affirmation. He pointed out that at all times during the library's reconstruction Peruvians controlled the book-selection process,[51] but this nationalistic gesture could not obscure the important role the United States played in the process.

Moreover, Basadre could not deny that his model for a national library came from the United States. His conception of a library at the service of national culture was quite similar to that held by Herbert Putnam and the pioneers of the U.S. library movement.[52] Nonetheless, in a political context steeped in nationalism, it was hard for Basadre to acknowledge that for Peru's National Library he had replicated the "American" model. In addition to bringing in U.S. professors, the Lima Library adopted the Dewey classification system and the cataloguing rules devised by the American Library Association.[53] In his book's discussion of underdevelopment and national culture, Basadre contrasted Peruvian *desidia* with the specialized efficiency and meritocratic practices in the United States. U.S. society valued expert knowledge and rewarded individual merit; obsessed with enhancing university

[49] "In this way arrived clear reproductions of the Harkness collection, the chronicle of Cabello Valboa Dr. Luis E. Valcárcel later used for his magnificent edition, the first *Actas* of the Cuzco Cabildo, whose reproduction the Morgan Library of New York authorized, after no few difficulties, … and many other bibliographic jewels a detailed list of which was published systematically in the *Boletín de la Biblioteca Nacional*. [The copies] came not only from the referred to libraries but also from public and scientific repositories in New York, Chicago, Boston, and the universities of Yale, Harvard, Duke, Brown and Michigan" (Basadre 1975a: 79).

[50] See Salvatore 2005.

[51] He wrote: "…neither the National Library nor the Librarian School ever produced any propaganda in favor of the United States. The direction [of the school] and the orientation of the teaching never escaped from our hands…. We gave priority to the study of Peruvian bibliography and culture (Basadre 1975a: 87).

[52] Herbert Putnam was the librarian who transformed the Library of Congress into one of the largest national libraries in the world (Wiegand 1986; Rosemberg 1993). Putnam thought that, in a democratic nation, accessibility to bibliographic materials should be the first and most important attribute of a national library.

[53] These rules were only slightly modified to "place them in tune with the geographic, historical, and anthropological reality of Peru and of Latin America" (Basadre 1975a: 57).

education and research capacities, its leaders paid special attention to libraries and archives. Basadre considered this a good model of cultural accumulation, which Peru should replicate.

ON THE MECHANICS AND POLITICS OF CULTURAL ACCUMULATION

Proximity, Concentration, and Money—The Mechanics of Knowledge

Knowledge production possesses its own mechanics, and Bancroft had realized the importance of physical concentration and visibility, that books had to be near to researchers and available for their gaze. Before hypotheses could be proposed and tested, the evidence had to be centralized, with the sources visible and stored in an orderly fashion: "An investigator should have before him all that has been said upon his subject; he will then make such use of it as his judgment dictates. Nearly every work in existence, or which was referred to by the various authorities, I found on my shelves. And this was the result of my method of collecting, which was to buy everything I could obtain, with the view of winnowing the information at my leisure" (1890: 180). Instead of traveling to different parts of the world to gather the information that he needed, Bancroft brought the world into his library, next to his writing space. "One of the chief differences between my way and that of others in gathering and arranging facts for history, … was, in so far as possible, to have all my material together, within instant and constant reach, so that I could place before me on my table the information lodged in the British Museum beside that contained in the archives of Mexico, and compare both with what Spain and California could yield, and not be obliged in the midst of my investigations to go from one library to another note-taking" (ibid.: 470).

To Bancroft, the possibility of gaining historical knowledge depended upon the building of a centralized, comprehensive library. Book collecting in its early stages required much travel, but success in accumulation meant that later the researcher could stay put in his library. This was part of the "mechanics of knowledge"—wealth permitted a massive concentration of textual evidence about a region, which made that region visible. A great library contained paths to new knowledge.

The Exhibition of Treasures in a Private Library

Bancroft arranged his collection of sixteenth-century Mexican materials according to degree of civilization, and put it on display. Near the library entrance, he placed the "scattered picture-writings of the wilder northern tribes." Following these were pre-Columbian records of the southern plateau. Next came painted records extracted from the Codex Mendoza, the tablets from Palenque, and hieroglyphs taken from Copán. To show visitors surviving records of the Maya language, Bancroft exhibited a copy of the Dresden Codex. Then visitors would come to various manuscripts dealing with Aztec and

Texcoco cultures. Next in line were the Spaniards and their exploits: Columbus' letters, papal bulls, voyage narratives, maps, and cosmographies documenting the early discoveries.[54]

Bancroft's years of collecting books had rendered a wealth of colonial textual treasures. He had an impressive selection of sixteenth-century prints: Cortés's letters and Martyr's 1532 *De Insulis*; the 1534 *Chronica of Amandus*; letters by Francisco Pizarro; and imprints of the 1540s and 1550s such as Cabeza de Vaca's *Relaciones*, Pedro Hernández's *Comentarios*, and Sepúlveda's *Apología* (1890: 206–7). He possessed also texts from the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries, and records of the independence and republican periods, most of them relating to Mexico and Central America. The vastness of his archival collection was difficult to summarize, so he referred readers to his own bibliographic essays, printed separately in *Essays and Miscellany* (Bancroft 1890: 211). He stressed his collection's unique nature: "First, as an historical library it stands apart from any other, being the largest collection in the world of books, maps, and manuscripts relating to a special territory, time, or subject" (ibid.: 212)…. It is made up exclusively of printed and manuscript matter pertaining to the Pacific States, from Alaska to Panama" (ibid.: 213).

Order and Accessibility

Bancroft understood the importance of organizing library materials before the "library movement" emerged. To have a comprehensive view of the contents of his collection, an "index system" was crucial. After trying several methods for summarizing his materials, his librarian Mr. Oaks recommended building a simplified index. This consisted of 3 × 5 inch slips containing the essential information for each book, pamphlet, archival document, or newspaper article.[55] The index gave his library its ultimate order, the key for gaining ready access to relevant materials on any given topic. Here was knowledge at one's calling, a tool that reaffirmed Bancroft's conviction regarding the physicality of knowledge production. Seated at a table, researchers could summon every item related to their chosen subject:

> A man may seat himself at a bare table and say to a boy, 'Bring me all that is known about the conquest of Darien, the mines of Nevada, the missions of Lower California, the agriculture of Oregon, the lumber interests of Washington, the state of Sonora, the town of Queretaro, or any other information extant, or any description, regarding any described portion of the western half of North America,' and straightaway, as at the call of a magician, such knowledge is spread before him with the volumes opened at the page. Aladdin's lamp could produce no such results. That commanded material

[54] Close to these were located Cortés' and Bernal Díaz's *relaciones*, the deeds of Pedrarias Dávila, and Oviedo's chronicle.

[55] Bancroft delimited the indexing work by defining forty to fifty headings under which all the material was to be classified.

wealth, but here is a sorcery that conjures up the wealth of mind and places it at the disposition of the seer (Bancroft 1890: 241, quoted by Caughey 1946: 97).

The index enhanced the researcher's vision, putting at reach information that facilitated the writing of history. This device, which took about twenty years to complete, served to produce the most comprehensive history of the western part of North America.

Building a Modern Democratic Library

Basadre approached the post-fire reconstruction as an opportunity to build a modern library at the service of national development and culture. The new National Library included an institute of bibliographic research and a school for librarians. The latter, inaugurated in June 1944, was one of Basadre's greatest achievements. Four U.S. professors taught there, paid by the Peruvian state and the U.S. Committee of Assistance to the Peruvian Library. Graduates helped with technical reconstruction work.

Two conditions constituted the foundations of a "modern library": democratic accessibility and practical use of knowledge. In the 1930s, the National Library had been an obscure institution whose collections were consulted by only a minority of educated Peruvians. The new one would be a democratic institution opened to people of all classes:

> The Library aspires to be the intellectual home of all social classes, without distinction of sex or age. Whoever enters the library will not be served as a favor or through personal discrimination; they all will have an equal right to be served kindly, and will be able to demand assistance from those paid to assist them. Without disregarding the erudite, the Library will seek the professional, the worker, the secondary pupil, and the student, supplying them with three types of readings: purely recreational readings, readings of spiritual formation, and readings of practical immediate utility" (1975a: 7).

Limited budgets meant they had to establish clear boundaries for acquisitions. The collection, Basadre said, should include: "a) products printed in Peru, or written by Peruvians, or referring to Peru; b) a substantial collection of the representative works of American culture; and c) the fundamental works of Western culture in general, together with the basic works of Oriental cultures" (1945: 645). He proposed important purchases of materials concerning Peru, so as to form a foundation for the study of national culture. Acquisitions of overseas materials were postponed into the future (ibid.: 656).

In 1947, Basadre visited the private collection of Lessing J. Rosenwald, a founder of Sears, Roebuck & Company, in a Philadelphia suburb. There he found a library devoted to illustrated books, some of them incunabula. There were thousands, in colorful pasted volumes. From this he drew an optimistic conclusion: with enough money, anybody could build a specialized library containing rare books, even incunabula (1975b: 390). As Peru's National Library collection gained fame, private donations started to pour in, and the collection continued to grow. Yet Basadre knew that in Peru it was impossible to replicate

Rosenwald's achievement, to acquire textual treasures of other cultures. His collection never extended far beyond the boundaries of the national state.

PROGRESS AT THE CENTER, BACKWARDNESS AT THE PERIPHERY

The two narratives I have just examined could not be more different. Bancroft's *Literary Industries* presents a successful story of library accumulation placed at the service of a transnational history. Basadre's success was more limited—he managed to recover a lost book collection and place it at the service of Limeño educated readers. *Recuerdos de un bibliotecario Peruano* exemplifies the failure to accumulate books and documents in the periphery.

Bancroft's narrative exudes enthusiasm. A successful businessman turned book collector discovered his passion for history and wanted to help create a California and western heritage. Eight decades later, on the southern Pacific coast, Basadre put into writing his frustrations with the Peruvian state, with popular attitudes towards cultural accumulation, and even with his own university education. The catastrophe that had destroyed the previous collection highlighted the continuity of colonial pillaging. Long before the 1943 fire, Peruvian libraries had been losing books and documents to foreign collectors and libraries, and the fire simply made this loss more glaring. As we have seen, the trauma of cultural loss led Basadre to question the state's abandonment of culture and reexamine the unfinished project of the nation.

We can see from these narratives how center and periphery present different conditions for book accumulation. In Peru, a small, intellectual elite struggled to rebuild the National Library in a context of public apathy and state neglect of the national cultural patrimony. The burning of Peru's National Library appears here as a symptom of socioeconomic and political underdevelopment. The inaction of government, the librarians' lack of concern for preservation, and the insufficient valorization of the nation's library treasures were all related to the incomplete formation of Peru as a nation. This is why the library's reconstruction took on the meaning of a struggle for national culture. California, by contrast, in both its capitalist enterprise and its culture, presented all the conditions needed for successful accumulation. Bancroft's great library reflected the strength and wealth of a community and, indirectly, the success of modern industrial capitalism and its acquisitive and expansionist logic.

The two narratives follow two different types of scholarship. Basadre appears as leader of a process of cultural reconstruction and a local disseminator of the modern library model, and also as a critic of Peruvian society and the state. Bancroft appears as an entrepreneur and book collector who ventured into regional and transnational history, a collector-historian applying business methods to the humanities. Though both spoke from the privileged ivory tower of the library, their situations and goals were very different. Basadre

strove to construct a national culture, while Bancroft created the conditions for writing a transnational history that would provide an affirmation of empire.

Bancroft's memoirs gave historians and book collectors valuable lessons about the physicality of knowledge production. Any historian could envision a new field of study by examining a sufficiently large collection of materials that were properly ordered and systematized, and centralization was a precondition for transnational studies. Basadre's memoirs give no guidance to book collectors other than to replicate the experiences of successful North Atlantic modern libraries. With ample funds, Bancroft's collection expanded from California to include Mexico, and then the western half of North America. Basadre's constraints meant that he was limited to collecting mostly Peruvian materials.

Bancroft's library contained the traces of coloniality, since it included collections purchased during the demise of the French Empire in Mexico. The sixteenth-century imprints and documents he placed on exhibit represented cultural losses to countries such as Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Guatemala. In Peru, intellectuals had recurrently denounced the disappearance of rare books and documents. These losses resulted partly from the habits of Peruvian readers and the carelessness of library administrators, but more damaging were the activities of the book dealers who provided foreign collectors and libraries with precious books and documents. The loss of books and documents was only one facet of a general pillaging of national patrimony that had been going on for centuries.

During Bancroft's time, the library served as a workshop for the production of history. With perseverance, and the assistance of hired writers, he was able to write a monumental history of half a continent. Bancroft's histories dealt with the former provinces of the Spanish Empire that were either already incorporated into the U.S. national territory or within the reach of its economic influence. His conception of Western history was Turnerian: the history of an ever-expanding frontier, a synecdoche for the making of "America." In these mass-produced histories, the colonized were subordinated to and activated for the service of an expansionist nation. Bancroft advanced a regional and transnational perspective on history that blended different cultural heritages and imperial legacies.

Basadre, by contrast, was chiefly concerned with the direction of Peruvian History. In his view, national history had to further the integration of Peruvian society and culture. Peru was still a nation in the making, not truly modern in many respects. Politically and racially fragmented, it lacked meritocracy in statecraft and was ridden with political favoritism. The revision of its history required the reconstitution of archives, museums, and libraries, and this demanded cultural and institutional change. Basadre used documents stored at the National Library to revise the history of Peru during the Republican period, but extending this revisionist project to include the colonial and Inca

periods proved difficult. For the time being, an integral view of Peruvian history would remain only a "promise" and a "possibility."

Library narratives reveal aspects of the social and cultural milieus in which intellectuals worked. Bancroft's imperial vision was predicated upon a centripetal accumulation of books and documents that, transformed into historical narrative, could produce claims to cultural superiority. Having amassed a great library, Bancroft projected a bright future for capitalism and commerce in California. San Francisco would emerge as an emporium of trade and culture in the Pacific and expand its influence to South America. In Basadre's memoirs, the subalternity of knowledge generated ambivalence toward U.S. hemispheric policies in the era of "the good neighbor." In the United States, he discovered the potential of modern libraries, and the backwardness of Peruvian ones.

The varied situations of libraries reveal the problematic situation of peripheral intellectuals. Their situation could be characterized as the absence of a "primitive accumulation" of cultural assets. The frequent loss, destruction, and pillaging of elements of culture generates anxiety and disillusionment among local intellectuals. Their workspace appears as a ground in motion where nothing seems stable, not even the objects and artifacts that represent national culture. Books and documents are constantly leaving the country, purchased by foreign museum collectors, library acquisition personnel, and other wealthy foreigners.

In this situation of paucity, which sometimes verged on despair, Basadre nonetheless saw prospects for the affirmation of national culture. The shortage of government funds, the popular disdain for "culture," the poverty of historical sources, and the removal of protections for local antiquities all demanded ingenuity from local intellectuals. To reconstruct Peruvian history, local historians had to reassemble textual fragments dispersed in overseas institutions. The lack of professors and current materials in the modern social sciences placed Peruvian intellectuals at a disadvantage vis-à-vis North Atlantic scholars; the best Peruvians could hope for was that, every now and then, the machinery of Pan-American intellectual cooperation would put them in contact with U.S. scholars and experts.

Given their peripheral location, compiling a transnational collection was out of the question; they had to concentrate on national history and culture. Yet even this limited goal seemed daunting in a society marked by underdevelopment. Relative backwardness in book accumulation is only one aspect of the subalternity of knowledge, which is also evident in universities, research activities, publications, and the circulation of ideas. Library narratives can help us understand how cultural accumulation proceeds differently at different locations in the world economy. Over the course of the twentieth century, large university libraries in what used to be called the First World have accumulated immense collections of materials about Mexico, the Caribbean, and

Central and South America. Such bookish capital is now difficult to find elsewhere, and Latin American graduate students and scientists must travel to these foreign centers of learning in search of illumination, information, and expertise. The world of knowledge, and particularly Western knowledge, continues to operate according to this centripetal logic.

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Abstract: The essay examines the conditions of book accumulation in two places in the world economy, California and Peru, through the narratives left by book collector Hubert Bancroft and librarian and historian Jorge Basadre. A reading of these reveals the complex interrelations between socioeconomic development and cultural accumulation. In California, Bancroft turned his fortune accumulated through business into a unique book collection and this, in turn, was placed at the service of a "factory of history" that produced a multivolume "History of the Pacific States of North America." In the Peruvian case, after a fire destroyed most of the collections of the National Library of Lima, historian Basadre directed an effort of reconstruction that led him to reflect upon the state's neglect of cultural patrimony, popular disdain for high culture, and Peru's long tradition of exporting books and documents to foreign collectors and libraries. Basadre's reflections speak of the position of a peripheral intellectual within a context of underdevelopment. I examine the centripetal logic of book accumulation and call for further engagement with this neglected side of cultural history.

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