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Making a Case for Local Relevance: Strategic Exhibition Planning for the Gordon W. Prange Collection

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Introduction

Area studies and special collections are defined as “distinctive collections” because of many distinct features shared by these two types of collections. Their commonalities include a high level of specialized accumulations of knowledge united by language, geographical region, and/or cultural resonance and strong engagement with international user communities. The distinctiveness of these collections provides both opportunities and constraints in the changing academic libraries environment, which urges these collections to be integrated more centrally into the core of the research libraries’ teaching, learning and research efforts.¹

On the one hand, distinctive collections are regarded as unique signifiers of an institution’s excellence, consisting of rare primary sources from which new knowledge, dynamic discovery, and intense learning experience can be generated.² They accordingly play a crucial role in enhancing the educational and research mission of the parent institution. On the other hand, distinctive collections are faced with the challenge of articulating their value and becoming connected with a broad range of local users. Because of a high level of expertise in a specialized area, distinctive collections predominantly attract international and visiting users, who are dispersed by their nature. This has led such collections to be regarded as resources that are little-used yet expensive to acquire, process, and maintain. In order to demonstrate the value of the distinctive collections to local users, they must be made relevant for the local population, which represents a critical stakeholder for the parent organization.³

This study suggests that exhibitions can be effective instruments for making the relevance of distinctive collections clear to a broad range of local users. In other words, distinctive collections can use exhibitions as a tool to put together and offer a coherent conceptual claim for why and how the local and institutional public can make use of the collection. As a model case of the strategic attainment of this goal, this study discusses an exhibition planning process pursued by the staff of the Gordon W. Prange Collection

¹ This article comparably discusses area studies and special collections as distinctive collections because of commonalities of these two types of collections. For details of their commonalities, please refer to Lisa R. Carter and Beth M. Whittaker, "Area Studies and Special Collections: Shared Challenges, Shared Strength," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 15, no. 2 (2015). 354-60.

² Lisa R. Carter, "Articulating Value: Building a Culture of Assessment in Special Collections," *A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 13, no. 2 (2012). 89.

³ Carter and Whittaker. 361.

(hereafter, the Prange Collection), which is one of the premier special collections housed in the University of Maryland (UMD) Libraries.

The Prange Collection is a comprehensive archive of Japanese-language print publications issued during the first four years of the US Occupation of Japan, from 1945 to 1949. The collection's narrow subject specialization and the limited geographical scope of its non-English materials has meant that its users and audience have predominantly been Japan-related external constituencies not affiliated with UMD. Given its overwhelming external appeal, the Prange Collection has found it challenging to fully embrace and pursue a key strategic goal of the UMD Libraries, which is to develop intra-institutional collaboration and to support the education and research agendas of UMD students and faculty members.

As a way to overcome this challenge, the Prange Collection staff took advantage of an opportunity to develop a large-scale gallery exhibition for the 2018-19 academic year, which marked the fortieth anniversary of the dedication of the Prange Collection. The annual exhibition, which is funded by the UMD Libraries, is one of the most significant outreach programs of the Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives (hereafter, SCUA) department. It seeks to achieve the dual purpose of highlighting and interpreting collection holdings while also functioning as an outreach and educational tool. Accordingly, the Prange exhibition development team (hereafter, "the Prange team") consisting of Prange Collection curator, manager, and coordinator decided to strategize its exhibition planning as a way to make the relevance of the collection materials clear to local users, promote the visibility of the collection, and increase the number of potential users across the university community.

This study begins by analyzing the historical reasons the Prange Collection has appeared to lack local relevance. It does so by borrowing the concept of the "difficult" museum, a concept used in the field of museology. It then reviews the museum, library and archival studies literature to discuss the potential of exhibitions as forms of scholarship that also promote communication, outreach and educational goals. Along with the theories of exhibition discussed in this literature, this study focuses on exhibition strategies that form and demonstrate the local relevance of the Prange Collection as a way to build connections to UMD's scholarly and educational settings.

By discussing the Prange team's approaches to exhibition development, this study seeks to illuminate the possibility that exhibitions can move beyond their primary target patrons and reach new communities of potential users. The existing library and archival science literature sheds little light on the potential of scholarly exhibitions to enhance the values and missions of academic libraries and their parent institutions. This article is one attempt to examine exhibition development as a potential way to advance the visibility of distinctive collections, to increase the number of potential users from campus communities, and thereby to promote the research and educational missions of their universities.

A “difficult” collection: The Prange Collection in the university and library contexts

Distinctive collections have tended to position themselves as outsiders, as siloed or as otherwise different from the larger library system.⁴ While the isolation of distinctive collections is predominantly functional, and/or structural, there are additional reasons for the Prange Collection’s detachment from its institutional and libraries’ environment. It is separated from its local context in many ways—historically, geographically, socio-culturally, and linguistically. The Prange Collection comprehensively archives Japanese language publications issued during the first four years of the US Occupation of Japan, from 1945 to 1949. The collection contains approximately 71,000 books, 18,000 newspaper titles, 13,800 magazine titles, 10,000 news agency photographs, and much more, dealing with virtually every conceivable subject area. These materials were transferred from Japan to the United States by Gordon W. Prange, Ph.D. (1910-1980), a European history professor at UMD. He joined the US Navy in 1943 and was transferred to the Allied Forces in Japan in November 1945, where he became Chief of the Historical Branch of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). SCAP founded an intelligence unit, the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD), which reviewed all civilian communications, including personal correspondence, telephone calls, radio broadcasts, films, and publications. In September 1945, immediately following the SCAP landing on Japanese soil, the CCD began requiring Japanese publishers to submit a pre-release copy of every potential publication for CCD review. Four years later, in November 1949, when Prange learned that SCAP planned to lift its censorship regime, he immediately arranged for the CCD collection to be archived at the UMD. As a professional historian, he was convinced of the historical value of the CCD’s collection and its great potential to become the best collection in the United States on the Occupation of Japan and the War in the Pacific. In acquiring this collection, Prange aspired to launch a research program in the field of American history with special emphasis on US-Japanese relations.⁵

In spite of Prange’s ambitious vision, the collection materials were far from a good fit for UMD. When they arrived at UMD in the early 1950s, the university had yet to offer any program on East Asian language or East Asian studies⁶ unlike a number of elite institutions, such as Columbia or Harvard University, which had established Japan Studies programs in the early 1930s.⁷ UMD began to offer courses on East Asian history, languages and literatures in the early 1960s and their programs have gradually grown larger since then. The first full-time faculty of Japanese history was hired in the late 1960s, when the interdisciplinary Committee of East Asian Studies was founded. In 2005, the committee was rechristened the Center for East Asian Studies.⁸ As of today, however, only a total of four tenured or tenure-track faculty members specializing in Japan are affiliated with the institution. Nor are UMD’s Japanese language, literature, and culture programs equipped to offer graduate curricula

⁴ Ibid. 360.

⁵ Gordon W. Prange, "Byrd, Harry C.- Correspondence, 1948-1950," (1949).

⁶ Sara C. Snyder, "Odyssey of an Archives: What the History of the Gordon W. Prange Collection of Japanese Materials Teaches Us About Libraries, Censorship, and Keeping the Past Alive " (Master's Thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2007). 44. 53.

⁷ Atsuhiko Wada, *Shomotsu No Nichi-Bei Kankei: Riterashī-Shi Ni Mukete [The Japan-U.S. Relationship Viewed from Book Circulation]* (Tokyo: Shin'yō sha, 2007). 222.

⁸ <http://www.ceas.umd.edu/#about>. Accessed on January 30, 2019.

despite the fact that UMD is a doctoral university. As a result, few patrons on the UMD campus make use of these materials for research and education.

It was not only the UMD that had little demand for these rare collection materials. The UMD Libraries were faced with space constraints when these materials arrived at UMD in the early 1950s, and were therefore not ready to assimilate the more than 500 wooden crates in which they arrived. In addition, the Libraries prioritized the development of new collections in high demand by university patrons rather than archival or rare materials, which were less likely to be used.⁹ When the crates were finally opened in the 1960s, the Libraries organized these materials as an independent collection unit that was originally called the East Asia Collection before being renamed “Gordon W. Prange Collection” in 1979. While the Prange Collection came to be housed in the Department of Special Collections in 1983,¹⁰ it stands out as quite distinct from the department’s other collection units. The Prange Collection is the only international collection of non-Roman language materials; the other collection units’ materials were predominantly produced locally and/or nationally.¹¹ As is typical nature of special collections, these collection holdings resonate with “a localized enthusiasm for a topic or specialization in research that reflects an institution’s strength or a community’s passion” in the words of Lisa Carter and Beth Whittaker.¹² As the Prange Collection does not share any of these features, it remains completely unrelated to any of the other collections and is thus isolated in the department.

To borrow a concept from museum anthropology, the Prange Collection can be seen as a “difficult” collection. Museum scholars emphasize the significance of physical and cultural connections between the museum and its surroundings in defining the visibility of objects and their representation.¹³ In the words of Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, “museums are socially and historically located, and as such, they inevitably bear the imprint of social relations beyond their walls and beyond the present.”¹⁴ When museums are comprised of objects that were produced far away, their main features do not fit into the local network of museums and remain logistically and culturally isolated and neglected. Museum curators call this type of museum “difficult,” since its collections face problems of presentation and accessibility.¹⁵ Though not a museum, the Prange Collection also consists of materials produced outside of its institutional and local settings and does not benefit from any internal opportunity or local resource for the recontextualization of its materials.

⁹ Snyder. 49.

¹⁰ The Prange Collection was initially housed in the Catalog Department and then moved to the Public Service Division. Ibid. 63. 77. 116. 122. 126.

¹¹ The SCUA houses University Archives, National Public Broadcasting Archives, George Meany Memorial AFL-CIO Archive, State of Maryland Collection and many other rare materials in addition to the Prange Collection.

¹² Carter and Whittaker. 353.

¹³ Iside Carbone, "'Things Chinese' in Italian Museum Displays: Exploring Visibility," *Museum Anthropology* 35, no. 2 (2012). 136.

¹⁴ Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, Sociological Review Monograph Series; Sociological Review Monograph. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996). 4.

¹⁵ Carbone. 139.

Accordingly, the Prange materials have difficulty gaining visibility in institutional and local networks.

The difficulty the Prange Collection faced in fitting into its local surroundings let it direct its energies into off-campus resources and into building relationships with external constituencies. UMD Libraries took advantage of the linguistic and scholarly expertise of scholars from Japan to process the Prange Collection materials.¹⁶ The Prange materials remained unknown for a long time because of SCAP's policy of protecting the confidentiality of its censorship operation and keeping the general public unaware of SCAP's censorship of Japanese publications. It was a Japanese scholar who officially publicized the existence of the vast amount of postwar Japanese print publications held at the Libraries. As an alumnus of the UMD School of Information Studies, he had worked at the Libraries, processing the Prange materials. After his return to Japan, he published an article on UMD's holdings of postwar Japanese publications in his Japanese alma mater's alumni newsletter in June 1971.¹⁷ In the wake of this "discovery" of the hidden collection, Japanese scholars began flocking to the Prange Collection. UMD Library staff members gave them access to both the cataloged materials as well as to those that had not yet been cataloged. Their publications created bibliographical records in various subject areas. They thus promoted the visibility of the Prange Collection among scholarly communities and spurred further use by Japan specialists from Japan, the United States, and beyond.¹⁸

The increase in the visibility and accessibility of the Prange materials created partnership opportunities with Japanese private and state institutions. In the 1980s, the Libraries secured financial sponsorship from a Japanese publishing agency and collectively embarked on preservation efforts.¹⁹ In the 1990s, the Libraries partnered with the National Diet Library of Japan (NDL), the Japanese equivalent of the US Library of Congress, in pursuit of preservation and access creation initiatives. This partnership with the NDL has continued over two decades, enabling a virtual repatriation of an immense amount the Prange holdings to Japan in either microform or digital formats.²⁰

Leveraged by strong partnerships with Japanese agencies, the Prange Collection has aligned itself predominantly with external constituencies specializing in Japan. The majority

¹⁶ For example, Jurō Fukushima (1936-2006), a public intellectual and collector of postwar print publications, discusses his experience in supporting UMD Libraries staff for cataloging the Prange holdings when he stayed in College Park in the 1970s. Eiji Takemae et al., "Discussion Meeting: Review on Accumulation of Occupation Period Studies," *Intelligence*, no. 3 (2003). 14-16. Atsuhiko Wada points out an inadequate number of staff with the professional and linguistic expertise as one of the causes of UMD Libraries' limited capacity of processing the Prange materials. Wada. 108-10.

¹⁷ Yukako Tatsumi, "Gordon W. Prange Collection: Origin, Growth and Prospects," *Records and Archives: Journal of the Japan Society of Archives Institutions*, no. 25 (2015). 33.

¹⁸ Frank Shulman, "Okuzumi Eizaburo at the University of Maryland Libraries, 1974-1984," *Research Bulletin of Education History of Postwar Japan*, no. 27 (2014). 8-9.

¹⁹ Snyder. 125-26.

²⁰ Yukako Tatsumi, "Toward a Comprehensive Collection on the Allied Occupation of Japan: A Partnership between the University of Maryland Libraries and the National Diet Library of Japan," in *The Globalized Library: American Academic Libraries and International Students, Collections, and Practices*, ed. Yelena Luckert and Lindsay Inge (Chicago: ACRL Press, 2019).

of the Prange Collection's patrons remain international scholars, information professionals, journalists, publishers, educators, and public intellectuals specializing in Japan-related subjects. Because of its comprehensive holdings available nowhere else, the Prange Collection has developed a reputation among Japanese scholarly communities as a world-renowned Japanese archival collection. The total number of external users far exceeds the number of students, faculty, and other scholars affiliated with UMD who use the collection. The Prange Collection has also developed strong partnerships with such international and national organizations as the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum,²¹ the Embassy of Japan in the United States of America,²² and the International Student Conferences.²³ The Prange Collection has collaborated with these partners on exhibitions, campus visits, and educational programs.

In contrast with this plethora of external relationships, the Prange Collection's regular intra-institutional contact has been limited to only two campus units, the Center for East Asian Studies and the Research Center affiliated with the Department of History. It co-hosts several annual events with each unit. Given the limited number of Japan-related courses and programs at UMD, the Prange Collection remains largely unknown to the campus community. The Prange team has been well aware of the obstacles its focus on Japan poses for the possibility of increasing its local users and advancing the mission of the parent institution and the libraries to support campus scholars. The team has accordingly sought to make use of exhibitions as a way to expand its audience beyond the limited scope of its natural user base and to convince new communities of potential users on campus of the potential of its materials as relevant resources. The team came to see exhibition as a powerful means of achieving this goal because they can function both as scholarship and as tools for communication, outreach, and education.

Exhibitions as a form of scholarship

Exhibitions can be a legitimate and important form of scholarship and a tool for developing new knowledge and interpretations. In academic library contexts, exhibitions are typically viewed as a less rigorous form of scholarship than monographs or peer-reviewed journal articles.²⁴ Recent library literature has, however, sought to make a case for the compatibility between scholarly exhibitions and publications in terms of intellectual process, resources to be used, authors' efforts and the dedication required to produce them.

Laurel Bowen and Peter Roberts, for example, have comparatively analyzed the intellectual and creative processes of writing a scholarly article and developing an exhibition,

²¹ From March 9 to July 31, 2018, the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum held a temporary exhibition featuring the Victor E. Delnore Papers, which is a digital collection donated by the Gordon W. Prange Collection.

²² The Prange Collection co-presented an exhibition held at the Japan Information and Culture Center, a facility of the Embassy of Japan in the United States of America, from June 13 to August 10, 2018. Please refer to <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/exhibits/baseball2018.html>. Accessed on January 30, 2019.

²³ Please refer to <https://prangecollection.wordpress.com/2016/08/29/the-japan-america-student-conference-jasc-visit/>. Accessed on January 30, 2019.

²⁴ Elizabeth A. Novara and Vincent J. Novara, "Exhibits as Scholarship: Strategies for Acceptance, Documentation, and Evaluation in Academic Libraries," *The American Archivist* 80, no. 2 (2017). 355.

concluding that the process of a journal article publication and exhibition development is identical. They contend that exhibitions that offer “a new interpretation of information or presentation of ideas that leads to a new understanding” are “just as necessary in advancing knowledge as is the discovery of new facts.”²⁵ Jessica Lacher-Feldman, who specifically analyzes exhibits in the contexts of archives and special collections libraries, also argues that exhibition curatorship is a valid form of scholarship. For her, exhibits can provide a foundation for scholarly development because of their capacity to enable scholarly activities, research, and the other intellectual endeavors pursued by special collections librarians, curators, and archivists affiliated with academic institutions. Exhibitions demonstrate these professionals’ interpretations of the symbolic, historical, intellectual, social, and cultural significance of the holdings of their collections.²⁶ Elizabeth and Vincent Novara provide a broader perspective on recognizing exhibits as scholarship by reviewing the museum and history literature. They emphasize the museum scholars’ assessments of exhibits, which accept them as both scholarly and creative processes. Museum curators have established some general guidelines to follow in order to create exhibits, including qualities related to content and intellectual value. Nonetheless, they view the general standards of developing exhibits as a suggestive rather than prescriptive guidance. Museum curators highly evaluate the purposeful deviation from the norm by pursuing their own interpretations and creativity. Historians have similarly recognized exhibits as examples of successful public history scholarship. A 2010 report, collectively produced by the Organization of American Historians, the American Historical Association, and the National Council on Public History, defines the research for and creation of exhibits as scholarly work in public history. The report specifically emphasizes the need to recognize that community engagement is a vital part of evaluating public historians’ scholarship.²⁷

Exhibitions as a communication tool

Libraries, archives, and museums are collectively called “memory institutions” because each institution collects a portion of society’s memory. Mary Brown and Rebecca Power point out that exhibitions are a tool of communication for memory institutions, helping the public to access the memories these institutions hold.²⁸ Corinne Kratz shows that exhibitions provide occasions and resources for representing and reflecting on objects, ideas, institutions, social relations, histories, and memories. Visiting exhibitions can therefore enable people to formulate notions of quality, worth, and other social values and meanings.²⁹

For distinctive collections that consist of foreign-language materials, and non-Roman script materials in particular in Western nations, exhibitions are an ideal way to

²⁵ Laurel G. Bowen and Peter J. Roberts, "Exhibits: Illegitimate Children of Academic Libraries?" *College and Research Libraries* 54, no. 5 (1993). 408.

²⁶ Jessica Lacher-Feldman, *Exhibits in Archives and Special Collections Libraries* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2013). 9-10.

²⁷ Novara and Novara. 359-360.

²⁸ Mary E. Brown and Rebecca Power, *Exhibits in Libraries: A Practical Guide* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2006). 16.

²⁹ Corinne A. Kratz, "Rhetorics of Value: Constituting Worth and Meaning through Cultural Display," *Visual Anthropology Review* 27, no. 1 (2011). 21.

communicate with local audiences. Distinctive collection curators and librarians might assume that displays of unreadable materials will not make sense to non-readers of the language. Yet verbal texts in displayed materials differ from the texts or print materials that we usually read. Displayed texts are not only linguistic entities but also physical objects. Andrée Blais describes the materials displayed in exhibits as “scripto-visual documents,” documents not only meant to be read, but also as objects and images to be seen, to be visually examined.³⁰ Japanese-language materials are thus able to communicate to local, non-Japanese-speaking visitors not because they can understand their verbal meaning, but because they can appreciate the visual appearance of the materials.

Non-Roman verbal texts can transcend language barriers because they play a part in generating exhibition discourse. Exhibition discourse is a compound message created for a specific communication context, called the exhibition. All of the displayed materials, including verbal, graphical and pictorial elements, interrelate with each object and collectively and interactively produce the exhibition discourse. They are integrated into a process of mediating meaning as parts of a composite of exhibition discourse and intertwined to complement, support, and enhance the messages conveyed through the displayed materials.³¹ Since verbal texts are displayed together and not in isolation, they function as co-constitutive elements of an exhibition discourse that holistically conveys its overall message.

Exhibition as a tool for outreach and education

Exhibitions are ubiquitous in academic libraries as a means of outreach, which is defined as activity that fosters the use of materials and resources to enhance both education and research.³² They allow curators and librarians to share the holdings of their collections with a broader audience and provide opportunities to teach and create goodwill and interest, which can be construed as service to the campus and to the broader community.³³

Exhibitions make it possible to develop a wide array of public programs, including exhibit previews, opening receptions, brown-bag luncheons, guided tours, lecture series, and symposia, which together can attract a range of different types of audiences. Tying public events to the exhibits creates synergy and adds impact to the exhibition. Exhibits also provide opportunities to create artifacts that can help program hosts enhance visitors’ post-visit experiences. Creating and offering takeaways or keepsakes will attract people to the exhibition events and serve as souvenirs of their experience. Anything attractive, memorable and useful can serve as a memento and a tool for publicity of the exhibition.³⁴

Exhibitions can also serve as educational tools that support informal learning. In contrast to formal education guided by subject experts within structured curricula, informal

³⁰ Andrée Blais, *Text in the Exhibition Medium*, Collection Muséo; Collection Muséo. ([Québec]: Société des musées québécois, 1995). 51-52

³¹ *Ibid.* 49-50. 56.

³² The majority of member institutions of Academic and Research Libraries (ARL) reported that they created exhibits based on their collections. Adam Berenbak and Libraries Association of Research, *Special Collections Engagement* (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2010). 11.

³³ Lacher-Feldman. 7.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 99-100.

learning is defined as self-directed and voluntary learning practices.³⁵ Informal learning in the context of scholarly exhibitions is an active process of reflection leading to self-awareness and change, an activity chosen by individuals based on their own interests and preferences.³⁶ In academic libraries, exhibitions thus have a strong potential to complement students' formal education by providing informal learning opportunities, which are more likely to occur when instructors include class visits in their curricula. Class visits allow individual students to pursue their own academic and personal interests in relation to the course objectives and contents. Exhibitions can serve as resources to enhance and complement their in-class learning by their own choice of specific topics and their own interest in the displayed materials.

Indeed, undergraduate engagement with the distinctive collections in academic libraries is a powerful trend in higher education. Specifically, exhibitions serve as a site of authenticity where real objects are encountered. In the quickly evolving digital environment, readily available digitized materials often spark interest in the "real thing."³⁷ The display of the original materials at exhibitions exposes the authentic objects that were once served a real-world purpose and bear historical significance. When visitors perceive the exhibition to be authentic, they discover meaning and are able to have a transformative experience that only exhibitions make possible.³⁸

Making a case for local relevance

The multiple functions of exhibitions—as scholarship and as tools for communication, outreach, and education—make it possible for the Prange team to strategize the exhibition development process: to interpret the Prange materials in a way that makes a public case for their local relevance and presents them as potential resources for research and education for the university communities.

As the first step in pursuing a new interpretation of the Prange materials, the Prange team decided to intertwine an American element to help local users understand how the Prange materials may be relevant to them. The Prange team thus chose to interpret the US Occupation of Japan as a history of the US-Japan relationship and to offer, as an exhibition theme, a history of encounters between American military and civilian personnel and Japanese people. Along with this approach to theme selection, the Prange team sought to focus on the reconstruction of postwar Japan as an interactive process between Americans and Japanese and brainstormed possible topics that would feature interplay between them.

³⁵ Lynda Kelly, "The Interrelationships between Adult Museum Visitors' Learning Identities and Thier Museum Experiences" (University of Technology, Sydney, 2007). 14.

³⁶ "Vistors and Learners: Investigating Adult Museum Learning Identities," in *AARE Annual Conference* (Adelaide, 2006). 4.

³⁷ Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba, *Past or Portal?: Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, 2012). ix.

³⁸ Barry Lord and Maria Piacente, *Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, Second edition. ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014). 11-12.

The topic they selected was the US military project of recreating American lifestyle in Occupied Tokyo. In the wake of Japan's defeat in World War II, US servicemen and their families flooded into Tokyo. To accommodate them, SCAP's Engineering Division launched an initiative of building "Little America" military housing enclaves, consisting of living quarters, schools, a chapel, and various service facilities that were off-limits to unauthorized Japanese. Ironically, however, recreating the American way of life in devastated Tokyo would not have been possible without Japanese ingenuity and labor. Ordinary Japanese, from highly skilled professionals to physical laborers, worked with American supervisors and colleagues in a variety of ways to provide comfortable living spaces and satisfy American residents' daily needs and desires. Interpreting this construction of an American middle-class lifestyle in war-torn Tokyo as an "American Dream," the Prange team titled the exhibition "Crossing the Divide: An American Dream Made in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952" in order to explicitly highlight the American element in it.

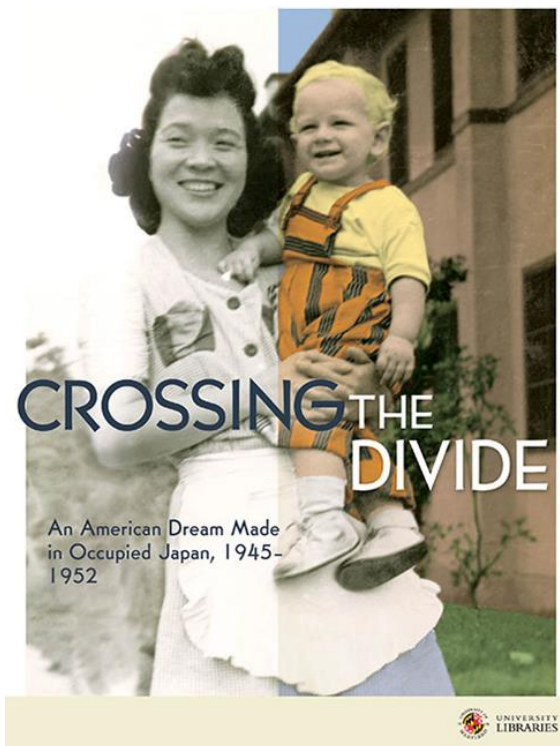


Figure 1. The exhibition poster, "Crossing the Divide: An American Dream Made in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952."

As another way to make the exhibition relevant to local users, the Prange team adopted the analytical notion of the "contact zone" as the main conceptual framework. Contact zone, as defined by Mary Louise Pratt, is "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today."³⁹ This concept makes it possible to perceive the Occupied Japan as a set of social spaces where Americans and Japanese interacted within hierarchical power relations and to

³⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991). 34.

highlight the ways in which they managed and negotiated the interactive process of recreating a version of everyday American life in this specific historical context.

By making use of this theoretical construct, the Prange team sought to frame the US Occupation of Japan as a case study that provides evidence of complexity, hybridity, and the interwoven quality of processes that coproduce knowledge and practices within asymmetrical power relations. Along with the rise in the study of such phenomena as transnationalism, globalization, borderlands, and migration, “contact zone” has become a transdisciplinary notion encompassing museum studies, pedagogy, linguistics, literature, history, gender studies, postcolonial theory and beyond.⁴⁰ It is highly possible that a number of students who visit the Prange exhibition have explored this concept in other geopolitical contexts, and by seeing it in the exhibition, may connect their prior knowledge of other cases of this phenomenon with a model of American-Japanese encounters, which would help to make a case for Prange’s relevance to their learning experiences.

The concept of “contact zone” also enabled the Prange team to highlight the agency of the Japanese, an agency that played a key role in constructing and reshaping cultural forms in the Occupation period. Pratt introduced the term “transculturation” to capture the role of subordinates in the process of the adoption of one cultural form in a context distinct from the original one. She emphasizes the agency of members of marginal groups, who select from and invent based on materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture. “While subordinate peoples do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture,” Pratt argues that “they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for.”⁴¹

In accordance with this theory, the Prange team selected three subthemes: (1) the construction of housing for US military personnel and their dependents, (2) American home life and housework, and (3) US cultural practices, which include the performing arts, jazz, and baseball. By highlighting these three subthemes, the Prange team illuminated the ways that Japanese people revised, altered, appropriated, and repurposed the American practices within Japanese environmental, social, and cultural contexts that were radically different from the circumstances where the original forms emerged and evolved.

Highlighting three areas of transculturation enabled the Prange team to offer thematic relevance to several academic disciplines and open up the possibility of pedagogical use of the Prange materials for the curricula in UMD departments other than Japan Studies programs. The first subtheme, for example, features the US military project of building self-contained housing complexes for American military families. This undertaking resulted in a cross-cultural innovation, a new housing model incorporating modern American style with Japanese design elements. Such a concrete example of the hybridization of two distinct architectural styles to meet specific environmental and cultural conditions would likely be

⁴⁰ Markus Viehbeck, “Introduction: Cultural History as a History of Encounters—a ‘Contact Perspective,’” in *Transcultural Encounters in the Himalayan Borderlands: Kalimpong as a ‘Contact Zone’*, ed. Markus Viehbeck (Heidelberg University Publishing, 2017). 7.

⁴¹ Pratt. 36.

useful for, for instance, a historical survey of world architecture, which seeks to develop critical thinking and visual literacy with regard to the world legacy of design thinking and building innovation in architecture.⁴²

Both the second and third subthemes could be relevant to curricula on cultural studies, American Studies, performing arts and/or ethnomusicology. The second subtheme highlights how the everyday life of American military personnel and their family members was restructured and reinvented with locally available materials and resources. The recreation of the US model of a middle class lifestyle involved an interplay between American military housewives and Japanese servants as they attempted to recontextualize American home management practices and reshape new forms within the Japanese social and cultural contexts. The third subtheme also highlights the transformation and reinvention of US cultural practices. It focuses on the performing arts, music and sports in the social spaces of encounters between US military personnel and Japanese people. The second and third subthemes could together provide an example of the position and power of the US in post-World War II regional and international contexts. Accordingly, the exhibition could be relevant to courses on modern US history that explore the US as an emerging world power and study the American response to its changing status in world affairs.⁴³

Presenting local relevance

The Prange team strategically chose to display materials that had maximum relevance to local audiences. One of the most efficient ways of overcoming the language barrier was to select Japanese-language documents that either contained graphic images or had titles in English. These features can convey an idea of the contents and the message of the texts in an authentic way without the need for an annotated translation.

Another approach to transcending the language barrier is to include “CCD documents,” English-language lists of the contents and bibliographical data of the original Japanese language materials. These documents were written in English because they are reports by Japanese-English bilingual censorship examiners⁴⁴ to their monolingual American supervisors for censorship review. Like the materials containing titles in English, the CCD documents thus communicate the contents of the original Japanese language materials in an authentic way.

⁴² Please refer to the course description of ARCH226: History of World Architecture II offered by the School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. <https://app.testudo.umd.edu/soc/201808/ARCH>. Accessed on January 30, 2019.

⁴³ Please refer to the course description of HIST266: The United States in World Affairs. <https://app.testudo.umd.edu/soc/201808/HIST>. Accessed on January 30, 2019.

⁴⁴ An extensive number of Japanese Americans, who were known as Nisei (the second generation Japanese American) linguists worked as censorship examiners because of their English and Japanese bilingual skills. They served the SCAP intelligence units, including CCD, ATIS (Allied Translation and Interpretation Service), and CIC (Counter Intelligence Corps) as translators and interpreters. James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service During World War II*, Cmh Pub; 70-99-1 (Washington, DC: Dept. of the Army, 2006). 426-56.

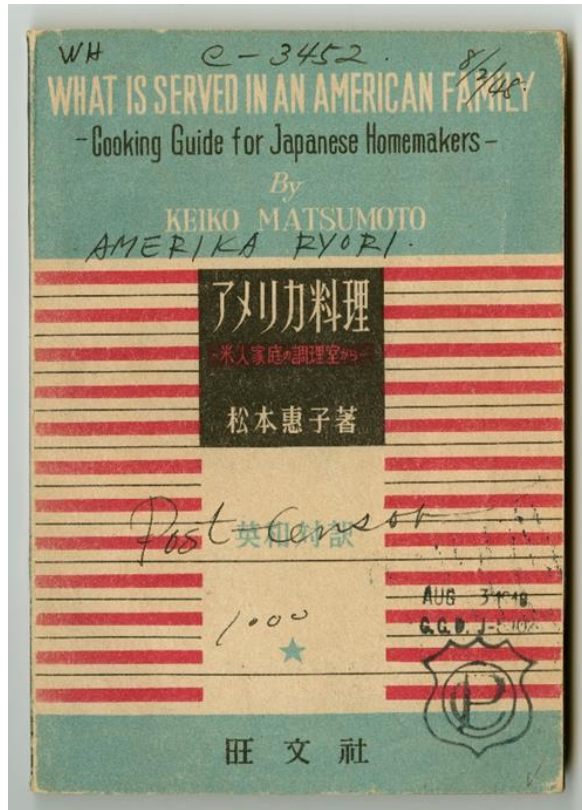


Figure 2. A sample of a book title written in English. What is Served in an American Family-Cooking Guide for Japanese Homemakers. 1948.

In addition to the CCD documents, the Prange exhibition team also included other English-language materials from the Prange Collection in the exhibition. The Prange Collection has acquired a number of gift collections donated by former US military and civilian personnel who served in the SCAP during the Occupation period. These gift collections include a wide array of English-language documents, photographs, and materials that vividly revealed their professional and personal lives during their stay in Occupied Japan. These materials uncover US military personnel and civilians' lived experiences and support the interpretation of the US Occupation of Japan as a history of their encounters with Japanese people.

The Prange team's strategic selection of display materials goes beyond the Prange's own collection. The team included one item from the SCUA collection in the panel, the *Baltimore News-Post*, a major Maryland newspaper that was published from 1936 to 1964. The Prange team was convinced of the need to provide a pre-Occupation history of US-Japan relationship to show its historical continuity and change. To illustrate the decisive moment that ended the prewar bilateral relationship between the US and Japan, the Prange team featured the December 8, 1941 issue of the *Baltimore News-Post*, which reported the Pearl Harbor Attack, the bombing on the US Naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, by the Japanese Imperial Navy Air Service.

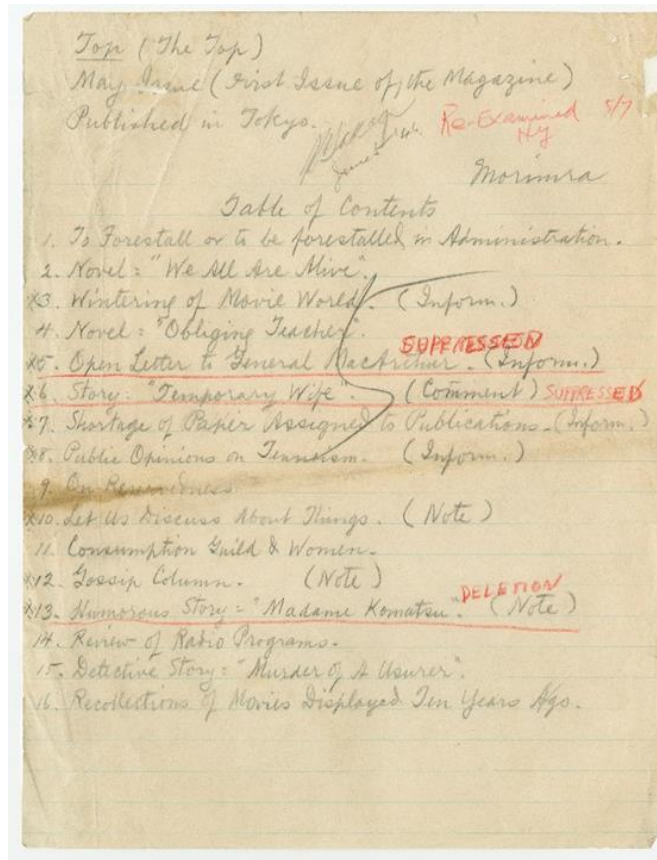


Figure 3. A sample of CCD document. It shows censorship actions in red, with such words as “suppressed” and “deletion.”
 A CCD document for a galley of Toppu [The Top], Vol. 1, No. 1, May 1946.

The Prange team’s effort to make a case for local relevance transcended the institutional boundaries. The Prange team included in the exhibition a number of still pictures held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). NARA is the federal institution that archives Federal Government records. If the Prange Collection is a treasure trove of the documents of the occupied Japanese, NARA is a treasure trove of American occupiers’ documents. NARA holds SCAP documents, which are crucial for contextualizing the Prange materials. The Prange team selected still pictures from NARA’s collection that featured Japanese people involved in the US military’s initiatives of recreating the American lifestyle in Japan. Japanese architects, engineers, designers, and craftsmen were involved in building living spaces and furniture while Japanese artists, performers, and musicians were involved in entertainment programs open exclusively to US military personnel. By displaying these images of Japanese people, the Prange team sought to show the interconnectedness of the NARA and Prange materials and to demonstrate the Prange Collection’s relevance to US historical records.



Figure 4. A sample of the NARA still picture. Japanese dancers on the stage of the Ernie Pyle Theatre, which was open exclusively to U.S. military personnel and their families. NARA Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer. Contact Prints: 285141-285420, Box 553.

Types of local relevance

The Prange team strategically elaborated and presented local relevance in order to attain its goals of promoting the visibility of the Prange materials and of increasing the number of potential users in the campus community. The local relevance that the Prange team developed and demonstrated includes (1) geopolitical relevance, (2) academic relevance and (3) linguistic relevance.

The Prange team highlighted the collection's geopolitical relevance to the local public by including the US element in its exhibition theme. This allowed the Prange team to interpret the US Occupation of Japan as a history of the US-Japan relationship and present a history of encounters between US military and civilian personnel and Japanese people as the exhibition theme. The team was thereby able to highlight not only Japanese but also Americans' everyday life experience and to show how it was an integral part of a history of the US Occupation of Japan.

Interpreting the US Occupation of Japan as a history of bilateral relationship is an innovative approach to feature the Prange Collection, one that contrasts sharply with the way the Prange materials were interpreted in the past. The 2009 exhibition title, "The Voices of the Vanquished: Censored Print Publications from Postwar Japan, 1945-1949," encapsulates its exclusively Japanese viewpoint, focusing solely on Japanese people's narratives of their postwar experiences. A decade later, the Prange team has taken a markedly different approach.

Second, reinterpreting the US Occupation of Japan as a history of encounters enabled the Prange team to adopt a concept of the "contact zone." The transdisciplinarity of this concept makes the exhibition academically relevant to local users because of the high likelihood of their familiarity to this phenomenon in other geopolitical contexts. They may

be able to connect their prior knowledge of other cases of this phenomenon with a model of the US-Japan relationship and gain new understanding of the similarities and differences in comparison with other cases. Adopting the notion of “contact zone” also made it possible to highlight everyday interactions between Americans and Japanese in specific arenas, such as the construction of American-style housing complexes, home life and spaces, and entertainment and recreation practices. These topics make the exhibition thematically relevant to a range of interdisciplinary studies, including American Studies, cultural studies, and US history. It can thus be connected to curricula offered by the pertinent departments.

Finally, the Prange team demonstrated the exhibition’s linguistic relevance to English language users by including a wide range of materials on display from within and beyond the Prange Collection. These non-Prange materials complement Prange’s Japanese-language materials, provide relevant information textually and graphically, and collectively form and convey the exhibition discourse. They show visitors the interconnectedness of the Prange holdings with English language materials and demonstrate the potential of the Prange holdings to meet English-speaking local users’ research and education needs.

Indeed, including a wide range of English-language materials not only allows the Prange team to transcend the language barriers but also makes a case to campus scholars for its academic relevance. The gift collections, for example, consist of materials issued by an array of SCAP organizational units whose donors were former high-ranking officials affiliated with the Government, Civil Intelligence, Natural Resources, and other sections of the SCAP.⁴⁵ It is likely that UMD faculty members specializing in these areas will find these collections relevant to their research and education agendas. The CCD materials could also provide insight into US intelligence policy or stimulate academic interests in censorship policies and practices relating to intelligence, journalism and/or mass communication.

Conclusion and future plans

“Crossing the Divide: An American Dream Made in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952” launched in October 2018 with a great success. At the grand-opening reception, the Prange team received several major campus stakeholders with a large turnout of library staff members, alumni, local scholars, students, and general public. Approximately 40 members of the University’s Philanthropy Society and Assistant Vice President of the University Relations joined the reception. The latter gave an opening remark and addressed the significance of Libraries’ outreach efforts to enhance the institutional mission. Attendance of the most valuable university donors and a high-ranking university administrator gave a great opportunity to highlight local relevance of the Prange Collection because of their first time experience in learning about the US-Japan historical relationship and the Prange Collection.

In order to outreach faculty and students beyond the Japan Studies program, the Prange team needs to plan and pursue outreach efforts targeting new user communities and

⁴⁵ For an overview of the gift collections housed in the Prange Collection, please refer to <http://lib.guides.umd.edu/c.php?g=516372&p=3541746>. Accessed on January 30, 2019.

assess the degree to which the Prange team has achieved the overall goals of the exhibition. The Prange Collection curator, who plays a lead role in outreach programming, is planning to target specific undergraduate courses outside of the Japan Studies program and promote the exhibition's local relevance. She is going to visit and ask relevant faculty members in the Department of History and American Studies to allow her to give a brief presentation on the online exhibit,⁴⁶ which corresponds to the physical one, and to disseminate an exhibition flyer at the beginning of their classes. She is also going to collaborate with a subject liaison librarian specializing in History and American Studies to do the same at the beginning of his library instruction sessions, which he regularly conducts upon faculty members' requests. Promoting the exhibit in these classes is the first step to raise the visibility of the Prange Collection and increase potential visitors across the campus community members.

It is also important to explore visitors' experiences with the exhibition. The Prange team needs to evaluate visitors' reactions and their potential future interest in using the Prange's resources in their education and research. Accordingly, Prange Collection curator is creating an exhibition assessment tool in collaboration with SCUA outreach coordinator. Analysis of these responses will enable the Prange team to create customized services and extend its outreach efforts to like-minded groups.

The Prange team also wants to monitor any new contacts and inquiries from campus community members and determine whether or not the exhibition was their source of information on the Prange Collection. This information might help the Prange staff locate the most effective target campus units and strategize campus outreach tools that meet any specific goals that these units may have. Assessing their reactions to the team's efforts to make the collection locally relevant will enable the Prange staff to strategize their future interpretations of the Prange materials in order to continue their efforts to reach new user communities on campus and thereby enhance the research and educational missions of the Libraries and of UMD as a whole.

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⁴⁶ Please refer to the online exhibit at <https://www.lib.umd.edu/crossing-the-divide>. Accessed on January 30, 2019.

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