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Democratic Theory in LIS: Toward an Emendation

Abstract

Despite quantities of popular rhetoric, democratic theory holds an aposiopetic place within library and information science (LIS) in both senses of that word: it is both in a stasis holding to basic ideas outlined two hundred years ago, and also a silence largely maintained.   A review of a number of state-of-the-literature reviews make the case that it has not been systematically explored or applied, and most LIS work elides the questions democratic theory raises. It is time to emend this and both account for a relevant intellectual source which can more firmly ground LIS practice and research in normative terms. Toward that end, three productive wellsprings of democratic theory are reviewed: Jürgen Habermas, Sheldon Wolin, and those working on democratic education (Amy Gutmann, Richard Brosio, Maxine Greene). The article concludes with an outline of some possible LIS questions and approaches drawn from these democratic theorists.

Introduction

Give or take about twenty years either way, the familiar alpha and omega of democratic theory in library and information science[1] (LIS) thinking were stated two hundred years ago. In 1787 Thomas Jefferson (1944, p. 411-412) wrote that

> The people are the only censors of their governors; and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution. …The way to prevent these [errors] is to give them full information of their affairs through the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people. The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers, and be capable of reading them.

And, in 1822 James Madison (1973, p. 437) wrote that

> A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern

ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with

the power which knowledge gives.

The topic has not been ignored, and in fact has been broached frequently: "democracy" as a keyword search produces almost 1800 citations in *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts* since the mid-1960's as of this writing. This journal produced a special issue on "Information Resources and Democracy" (Lievrouw, 1994), and a solid edited book (Kranich, 2001) came out of a serious focus on democracy and civic life by a recent American Library Association president. In correspondence with journal editors about this article, the author was advised that "we have seen that opening quote a lot lately," however, the vast portion of this literature merely rehearses and repeats the basic ideas of Jefferson and Madison from two hundred years ago. For instance: "Democracy vests supreme power in the people. Libraries make democracy work by providing access to information so that citizens can make the decisions necessary to govern themselves" (12 Ways, 2000); "In the beginning of this country's existence, only a small proportion of Americans accessed available information. Over time … more and more citizens were given the opportunities to seek, use and benefit from information [and] it is universally believed now, but not necessarily practiced, that access to information is everybody's right" (Smith, 1995, p. 169-170). Testimonials to these ideas routinely come from the predictable public official to the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards who declares that "the public library is the great equalizer" (Why, 2004, p. 50-55).

It is not simply a matter of democratic theory epigones within LIS. When the aforementioned output of *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts* is limited to peer-reviewed articles, only 176 items are retrieved. This forty year span comes to about four articles per year commonly thought of as "serious" (i.e. peer reviewed). That is not much, even if articles such as one describing presidential libraries (versus libraries and their relationship to freedom of expression) are included. While neither a comprehensive review of the LIS literature nor proof of the point *per se*, it is a revealing rough measure indicating that, despite quantities of popular rhetoric, democracy may not hold such a central place and that LIS scholarship and democracy do not necessarily share a *raison d'etat*. It is the contention here that this relationship of LIS to democratic theory is aposiopetic in both senses of that word: democratic theory is an unfinished, discontinued idea in LIS, or, in its older Latin and Greek meaning, there is a silence maintained (*American Heritage Dictionary*).

When democratic theory in LIS has been truncated, beginning and ending with Jefferson and Madison and lacking further engagement as it has developed and/or regressed, this disjuncture is a problem. An intellectually viable LIS relationship to democracy simply must engage democratic theory at a level deeper than the aposiopetic situation currently in place. Otherwise we leave unanswered two challenges issued 70 years apart: Danton (1975, p. 82-83) granted in 1934 that libraries hold a pre-eminent place among democracy's institutions, but seriously questioned their centrality, while in 2004(b) Frohmann questioned the validity of the concept of democracy within LIS itself (p. 79-82). Our relationship to democratic theory is an instance of what Weigand (1993) described as our "tunnel vision and blind spots" and this paper is one step toward emending LIS thinking and work to connect it with more nuanced ideas about democracy and, ultimately, its relationship to libraries, education, and information

The paper will first review some of the most notable recent work along with a number of relevant state-of-the-literature reviews to make the case for an aposiopetic relationship in both meanings. The paper will then briefly delineate the concerns of democratic theory versus political philosophy, and then move on to the exploration of three wellsprings of productive insight for LIS: Jürgen Habermas, Sheldon Wolin, and some of the more specific, informative work on democratic education from Richard Brosio, Maxine Greene, and Amy Guttmann. While not an exhaustive exploration of their thought, these theorists provide productive arguments for professional and institutional purpose, future analysis, and research in a convergence of democratic theory and LIS outlined briefly in the conclusion to this paper.

Aposiopesis: the Unfinished, Discontinued Idea

Library history provides the grounding example of democracy as a discontinued idea. Though we have long recognized the anachronistic nature of the historical debate over "good" versus "bad" reading and the "library faith" explored in some depth (Wiegand 1989; 1993), the ideology which links libraries and literacy to democracy invokes familiar Jeffersonian/Madisonian democratic ideas. Serious research in library history was founded by Ditzion and Shera (Wiegand, 1990, p, 105), and they both explored the link between the movement for universal schooling and democracy - and the extension of that relationship via free public libraries: by this method "a wholesome capable citizenry would be fully schooled in the conduct of democratic life" (Ditzion, 1947, p. 74), a theme Shera called "democratic necessity" (1971, p. 148). Both have remained touchstones to this day (Stielow, 2001). In response, Harris critiqued the decline

of "democratic dogma" as a justification for the field (1976b) and historically contingent and contradictory missions for the field, none of which (including democratic information preservation and provision) was particularly deeply held in the profession (1976a), provoking responses (which continue). Dain (1996, p. 72) summarized her counter argument that "Public libraries belong to … the 'network of engagement' that anchors people to communities and fosters a sense of fellowship, civic participation, and democratic living. [They] represent a civilized and civilizing community institution that equalizes and enlarges access to knowledge, and in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and permissive use." This debate was characterized by Wiegand (1993, p. 20) as a simplistic "categoriz[ization of] new publications into two camps: pro- or anti-Harris" for many years.

These and other analyses (Tyckoson, 2000; Hall, 1996; Stielow, 2001; Cole, 2001; Schement, 2001) are only restatements of the basic ideas concerning an informed democratic polity, literacy, and the place of libraries and information provision within that framework. They do not extend the reach or analysis of democratic theory in LIS, but rather still revolve around the Jeffersonian/Madisonian ideas: "[John Cotton] Dana's influence is evident in the work of those who defend the public library's freedom from censorship today [and by] arguing that the government has no right to know what citizens borrow. [L]ibraries continue to serve as meeting places for civic organizations and as sources of information for local municipal reform" (Mattson, 2000, p. 529-530). Democratic theory remains stuck at this point in critical and intellectual LIS scholarship and state-of the-literature reviews and analyses concerning social equity (Doctor, 1992; Lievrouw, 2003), the marketplace of ideas (Heckart, 1991), libraries and the legal doctrine of the public forum (Gathegi, 2005), the civic role of libraries (Gray, 1993), information media policy (Duff, 2003), "small worlds" and information access (Jaeger & Burnett, 2005), and information poverty (Venturella, 1998). It is the primary basis of each and every chapter in an entire volume on libraries and democracy spanning twenty three authors (Kranich, 2001). Lacerating critiques concerning democracy and professional practice and courage from within the field do not extend it, but rather just point out the gaps between rhetoric and the reality of library non-engagement with actual democratic decision making in society (Berry, 2004; Schull, 2005).

The aforementioned issue of this journal (Lievrouw, 1994) is illustrative of how deep this unfinished, truncated idea goes. The issue contains six research and theory articles on the topic of information resources and democracy. Braman's (1994) article on the autopoietic state theoretically posits

a coevolution in growth of communication technology and democratic participation/information. Dervin's (1994) article seeks both to destabilize/problematize the information-equals-democracy narrative (and vice versa) and to reconceptualize and ground it. The remaining articles (Newhagan, 1994; Martinez, 1994; Rogers et. al., 1994; and Sun & Barnett, 1994) all posit a relationship between access to/facility with technology (and thus information resources) and citizen efficacy in a democracy. For example: "our analysis … illuminates how an interactive communication technology … helps us recapture the participatory democracy once found in the small rural community of the past" (Rogers, et. al., 1994, p. 409). All of these articles – including the most theoretically sophisticated (Dervin, 1994) – tend to instrumentalize democracy via information and its associated technology and equate access and exposure to information and communication technologies with more effective democratic participation. This basic form of analysis continues (Frechette, 2005). However sophisticated in technological and analytical terms, they fail in the end to intellectually move beyond Jefferson's and Madison's ideas.

It is not suggested here that this literature is wholly unproductive. For instance, de la Peña McCook's (2001; 2004) work stands as a serious attempt to explore the progressive role of libraries in a democracy - and what their absence means. However, in the main our endpoints are no more theoretically sophisticated than our beginnings in democratic terms:

> [P]olicy developments in the United States following September 11, 2001 … threaten to affect democratic deliberation negatively. …Libraries, based in their established role as providers of diverse sources of information, have the potential to serve as guardians of information access and exchange between small worlds in spite of these recent policy developments (Jaeger & Burnett, 2005, p. 465).

As Webster (1999, p. 373-375) suggests, it would be "perverse to dissent from this principle" of access to information in a democracy, but by itself it is not enough. We have not, for instance, closely examined the key concept of citizenship (Kelly, 1979) in relation to information and democracy – something done long ago in communication research (Murdoch & Golding, 1989). Democratic theory in the LIS literature, when it is approached, is an unfinished, truncated idea remaining at its Jeffersonian/Madisonian beginnings.

Aposiopesis: a Silence Largely Maintained

Perhaps more striking than the truncated nature of democratic theory within LIS is the silence within that literature concerning it. For instance, an article surveying the use of theory and various sources of theory in LIS research (Pettigrew & McKechnie, 2001) listed 143 separate examples. Only one - Habermas's discourse/dialog democracy - was specifically related to democratic theory, and while another six or so *may* have been related (e.g. alienation theory, Neo-marxism, Critical Theory), a chain of logical extrapolations would be needed to make that link. On the other hand, appropriations of Critical Theory (Lehr & Rice, 2002) and Habermas's work on communicative action (Benoit, 2002) demonstrates that LIS scholarship can extract, de-contextualize, and instrumentalize theory which at its core is concerned with epistemologically grounding democratic practice and uprooting positivist and instrumental methods which work against democratization. In other words, even scholarship which has appropriated potentially productive sources of democratic theory in LIS manages to remain silent on the heart of the democratic matter.

There is further evidence that LIS work at this intellectual level does not systematically take up democratic themes - or share its *raison d'etat*. For instance, theoretical work on discourse democracy has necessarily taken up the challenges of the philosophy of language, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. However, democratic theory is utterly absent in parallel recent literature reviews on information, information retrieval and the philosophy of language (Blair, 2003) and a related review on poststructuralism and information studies (Day, 2005), as well as on social epistemology and information science (Fallis, 2006). Reviews of work on the influence of Foucault on critical LIS literature (Buschman, in press b.), various attempts at a non-positivist epistemology in LIS (Buschman, in press a.), and postmodernism in LIS work generally (Buschman & Brosio) reveals silences as well. Two specific examples illustrate the point. First, responding specifically to the epistemological challenges posed by the deconstruction of language, a significant body of work by/based on Jürgen Habermas has been produced (Habermas, 1992; Alway, 1995, p. 99-127; Buschman, in press a.). The intention is to communicatively (and thus epistemologically) ground normative thought and democratic practice, but it is entirely absent in the review of the issues for LIS (Blair, 2003). Habermas's work provides both a basis for democracy and a critique of the cultural and economic practices that obviate it – an important consideration for LIS given the quantity of rhetoric on the topic, one would think. Second, the review of work on social epistemology and LIS (Fallis, 2006) made the argument that "social factors and social institutions … are clearly important when

people acquire knowledge from other people" (p. 477). Factors such as rights, equity, and intellectual freedom are discussed, but without reference to a democratic context which gives them meaning: "In other words, [social epistemology] can help information services to identify policies and practices that facilitate knowledge acquisition" (p. 508). It is as if the purposes of those policies (education for democratic decision-making, reform, or justice; totalitarian, manipulative, or legal sophistry) were irrelevant and the "social" part of the epistemology merely meant the existence of other people in *any* given social and political configuration. This state-of-the-literature review seemingly went some ways to avoid discussion of democracy - or even to use the word.

Library history provides a final example. Wiegand's (2000, p. 13) survey of fifty years of the literature and its theoretical perspectives notes only Ditzion's (1947) consensus history which "set the tone for viewing the public library as an agency that facilitated democratic culture and an informed citizenry" - that is, the basic Jeffersonian/Madisonian notion. (Again, Shera [1971] is considered in the same category, but he was not limited to historical work over his career.} As noted, this was followed 25 years later by Harris's revisionist interpretations (1973; 1976a; 1976b). However, the debate Harris generated tended to focus much more often on the merits of historical revisionism (Harris's and otherwise) and the notable break with celebratory history (Wiegand, 1990; Goedeken, 2005; Harwell & Michener, 1974; Dain, 1975) than specific, nuanced historical examinations of libraries and democracy (Hilton, 1978). Lastly, Goedeken's (2000; 2005) surveys of the topics covered in the nine Library History Seminars since 1961 and the series of biennial library history literature reviews confirms the absence of the topic over these years: no notable or specific cluster of papers concerned in-depth historical examination of democracy and libraries in his reviews.

In sum, both the research and popular literature of LIS represents (perhaps even embodies) aposiopesis: it is both an unfinished, discontinued idea in stasis, and in some of the most theoretically sophisticated explorations of LIS appropriations of ideas in philosophy, linguistics, and history, it is a silence largely maintained. It is as if there have been no developments in democracy and therefore no further relevance within democratic theory to the field. Jefferson's newspapers-without-governments is apparently the extent of democratic theory needed.

Political Philosophy to Democratic Theory

Before reviewing the sources of democratic-theoretical insight for LIS, an introductory note on the relationship between political philosophy and democratic theory is in order. Political philosophy broadly concerns "the interest-laden question [of] power" (Ball, 1989, p. 76), and more specifically, the nature of the state (however defined), the classification of states (totalitarian, aristocracies, democracies, etc.) and the grounds on which authority is exercised and obeyed – and toward what possible ends (Political Philosophy, p. 319-321). In contrast, "democracy" as a word is both prescriptive and inadequate as a description given that the literalness of the Greek meaning of the democratic exercise of power has given way to a more abstract representative model. Hence democratic theory deals with "what *should* be [in] future oriented paradigms" (Sartori, 1968, pp. 116-117). This leads to divergences: democratic theory as "scientifically" based (Brecht, 1968); tension between concepts of mass society and democratic ideas of individual autonomy and decision making, and theories of elites in managing democracy (Bellamy. 2003, pp. 70, 100-101). Wolin (1969) and others focus democratic theory on the "historical fact ... that comes into being out of changing human relations between governors and the governed[:] when some large number of previously excluded ... secure the power not simply to select their governors but to oversee the institutions of government, as officeholders and as citizens free to assemble and criticize those in office" (Wilentz, 2005, p. xviii-xix) – which is the working meaning used here.

This is in direct contrast to the mechanics of political science and mere politics (deal making, logrolling, etc.) or descriptions and quantifications of "forms" of democratic government. In its stead, there is a concern with citizens and "their possibilities for becoming political beings through the self-discovery of common concerns and of modes of action for realizing them" (Wolin, 1996b, p. 31). Simplified, democratic theory seeks to identify the conditions for and obstacles to the exercise of democratic power by informed and engaged citizens in the interest of the commonweal. This focus taps a rich vein of concepts relevant to but largely untouched in the LIS literature - the democratic exercise of power and its meaning, obstacles to the democratic exercise of power, the mechanics of democracy versus its meaning, the common good, the determination of the common good, citizenship, effective citizenship, the state and its relationship to power, political deliberation, democratic deliberation, and without stretching the point, forms of power beyond definitions of the public and the commonweal (i.e. global corporations, instrumental reason) and their relationship to the functioning of democracy - going well beyond the stasis of the Jeffersonian/Madisonian basis and the silences beyond that basis.

Three Wellsprings of Thought for LIS in Democratic Theory

        The usual caveats apply here: coverage of the work of these scholars should not be considered remotely comprehensive or representative of their subtlety of analysis. In the case of Habermas there exists an extensive literature debating, refining, extending, and pursuing his ideas in research agendas, and this will not be a large scale review of that mass of scholarship. Finally, each thinker here grounds their work in an intellectual foundation and it would not be appropriate to explore them fully here. The idea is to re-introduce LIS to democratic theory via thinkers who can, in John Budd's formulations, deepen the centrality of "self-understanding of purpose" (1995, p. 315) and help bridge the "chasm" between theoretical work and practical training "that stands in the way (necessarily) of their intermingling" (2003, p. 20). Finally, they will be introduced in an order which moves from the (theoretically) general to the specific: Habermas, Wolin, and the instructive example of democratic education via Gutmann, Brosio, and then Greene.

        1. Jürgen Habermas

        Called "one of the very few indisputably great ... thinkers of our time," Habermas's work output is large and influential across many disciplines - among them philosophy of language, ethics, legal theory, sociology, education, and of course political theory – so that other theorists feel they must "situate [their] thought with respect to his" (Larmore, 1995 p. 55; Coles, 2000) even if they are in disagreement. The ongoing debate and refinement of his ideas often takes the form of deep philosophical parsing. To give one instance, does Habermas's contention that individual rights and democratic self-rule are "co-original" hold up throughout his thinking, or does one ultimately and subtly take precedence thereby giving more theoretical weight to democratic collective will formation versus the irreducible individual's rights (Larmore, 1995, p. 65-67)? Some of his earlier work on democratic origins and functioning are both more accessible and informative for our purposes.

        At its most basic, Habermas's thesis is that democracy began in discourse (i.e. discursive or discourse democracy). The public sphere steadily developed via the interests of the newly self-conscious merchant class, coming to fruition in the eighteenth century with their dialogue and discourse over government authority and its legitimacy in the new public spaces of the time: coffee houses, salons, and the intellectual public press. The public sphere and notions of individual rights, the supervision of and

necessary consent to state authority, and written constitutional limitations on power were all self constituted together in Habermas's formulation (1989). This concept has been much explored, questioned, defended, and revised, and still maintains a central place in debate and conceptions of democratic theory after more than thirty years (Brady, 2004). In unfettered discursive exchange we find the source of a post-metaphysical legitimation of power and a just social order: "Weaving together pragmatic considerations, compromises, discourses of self-understanding, and justice, this democratic procedure grounds the presumption that reasonable or fair results are obtained" (Habermas, 1996, p. 26). Working backward from that language, one can see the foundational importance of his epistemology of communicative action: norms, knowledge and truth are grounded in the linguistic processes of argumentation and reaching intersubjective understanding for democracy (Habermas, 1983; McCarthy, 1984; Flyvbjerg, 1998). Looking ahead, Habermas sees in the rule of law a feedback loop. The law "protects the equal autonomy of each person" which is foundational to democracy, and must come about "according to the procedures of democratic opinion- and will-formation" to be legitimate (Habermas, 2001, p. 779; Habermas, 1994). He called the "catalogues of fundamental rights" embodied in early constitutions and their embedded concepts of private autonomy and limited public authority "the perfect image of the liberal model of the public sphere" (Habermas, 1974, p. 52).

This normative principle of democracy as McCarthy (1978, p. 332) points out, is also a standard for social and political critique, beginning with identifying "the suppression of generalizable interests" (Habermas, Legitimation Crisis quoted in McCarthy, 1978, p. 332). It is the identification of those social and economic processes and structures which thwart or pervert individual democratic autonomy and collective decision-making where Habermas speaks directly to problems we confront: while the public sphere remains vital, we must look to "conditions of communication" and the "conduciveness of specific processes of the democratic formation of opinion and will" which are now problematic (Habermas, 1992, p. 446). For example, "relieved of the pressure of its convictions," the press rediscovered its origins as a commercial undertaking (Habermas, 1974, p. 53), and from there, followed a steady path toward economic concentration, then technological development, then shifted to a forum for advertising, and finally became a form of advertising and public relations (Habermas, 1989, p. 181-195). Further, in a putatively democratic and equal society, obviously unequal economic arrangements - and the power which accompanies them - must be smoothed over: "Formally democratic government in systems of state-

regulated capitalism is subject to a need for legitimation [in the form of] government action designed to compensate for the dysfunctions of free exchange ... oblig[ing] the political system to maintain stabilizing conditions for [the] economy ... and bind the masses' loyalty" (Habermas, 1970, p. 102).

Habermas brings these two strands together. The media have been transformed from their role as facilitators of rational discourse and debate (and thus democracy) into a means of mass consumption and administering a public sphere taken over by corporations and elites in service to economic ends. It is the illusion of democracy - consumer choice, public opinion, and the rituals of voting and elections - which they now serve: "The world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only. [C]ritical discussion ... tends to give way to 'exchanges about tastes and preferences' between consumers [and] the mass media today strip away the ... husks from ... self-interpretation and utilize them as marketable forms for the public services provided in a culture of consumers [and] the original meaning is reversed." Corporations conflate the idea of consumption decisions with citizenship, and thus "the state has to 'address' its citizens like consumers" and political decision making becomes an exchange of symbols, "a stylized show," and a spectacle of "managed integration" (Habermas, 1989, p. 171, 195, 205-206; Kellner; Habermas, 1974). He has elaborated this through his concepts of colonization and de-integration of public and private life and non-linguistic "steering media" of money and power (Habermas, 1987, p. 355-357; McCarthy 1984, p. v-xxxvii).

Habermas's attempts to connect his theoretical work from the foundational (epistemology) through broad social and economic critique, the grounding of norms, and through theories of democracy have not been without problems - for instance, an issue with his epistemology will lead to critiques of conclusions drawn from those bases, including portions of his work on democracy (Coles, 2000; Larmore, 1995; Brady, 2004). A short list of these issues would include: an overly abstract account of political discourse, a narrow conception of the public sphere in terms of cultural variety, unclear distinctions between morality and ethics and their relationship to law, and of late, a lack of challenge to present circumstances. Habermas's admirable insistence on engaging current political and geopolitical issues to put his thinking into action has led to some missteps (Hanks, 1992; Cohen, 1999; Anderson, 2005, p. 113-128; Coles, 2000; Larmore, 1995; Brady, 2004). However, these criticisms tend to miss vital points. While there has been an intense parsing of definitions, methods, categories, and epistemological foundations, Habermas's focus has been on the colonization of private life and the transformation the public sphere and communicative

reasoning into something antithetical to democracy, and that basic critique still stands as the most fundamental one available (Kellner). Those who parse, critique, and amend his ideas end up either generating more serious theoretical problems (Coles, 2000; Larmore, 1995; Brady, 2004; Buschman, in press b) or simply deepening his framework. For instance, Larmore (1995) points out that people can reasonably disagree about moral bases (grounding them in religion for instance) and still fully participate in Habermasian political discourse, and McCarthy (cited in Coles, 2000, p. 553-555) argues that ethical-political dialogue need not be so logically-bound, instead producing mutual tolerance and respect and reasonable disagreement, and this in fact happens all the time (Hanks, 1992; Cohen, 1999; Brady, 2004). His work remains an enormously powerful and suggestive framework, and there are few better formulations of the centrality of communication to democracy and a just society: "[O]nly in an emancipated society, which had realized the autonomy of its members, would communication have developed into that free dialogue of all with all which we always hold up as the very paradigm of a mutually formed self-identity, as well as the ideal of true consensus. To this extent the truth of statements is based on the anticipation of a life without repression" (Habermas, 1966, p. 297).

    2. Sheldon Wolin

Wolin spent a distinguished and influential career in political philosophy, primarily at the University of California, Berkeley and then Princeton University, where he is now emeritus professor. His book *Politics and Vision* is a standard text in political and democratic theory. He is broadly concerned "with the task of interpreting the central topics in the western tradition of political philosophy in the context of clarifying our understanding of our own political world." As part of the Anglo-American branch of democratic theory, his lack of "qualms about positing the existence of such a tradition" (versus Continental theory) contributes to the sharpness of his insights (Lassman, 2005). Wolin contends that the theoretical antecedents and historical context of democracy can "contribute ... to sharpening our thinking ... should we choose to engage in the politics of our own day. [A] familiarity with the varied forms that, historically, political theory has taken may aid in the recognition of radically different recent and contemporary conceptions of the political and politics" (Politics and Vision, 2nd ed. quoted in Lassman, 2005). He revisits prior political thought (Socrates, Plato, the Romans, early Christians, Hobbes, Machiavelli, the Puritans) to situate our thinking about democracy (or point out how it has been situated in the case of Tocqueville) to

illustrate that "democracy [is] something other than a form of government" and has many iterations (Wolin, 1996b, p. 43). A longstanding theme of Wolin's is that "American democracy has always been dogged by a so-called Founding whose Fathers never intended a democracy and were scathing in their opinion of 'the turbulent democracies of ancient Greece'" (Wolin, 1993a, p. 475). He goes beyond the well-known inequalities in place at the founding of the country, noting that the celebrated constitution, federalism, the three branches of government and separation of powers are not the definition of democracy. They were instead, openly from the outset, a reaction to *encroaching* democracy, meant "to make it as difficult as possible for majorities to form" and by explicitly protecting property these structures perpetuated inequality and were designed manage and even thwart democracy (Wolin, 1981b, p. 48). That is a sharp contrast to our traditional reification of democratic "forms" of governing.

Wolin often returns to the Greeks, noting that a constitutional "representative democracy is not about the demos as an actor but as a voter, job-holder, tax-payer, and rule-observer." Elections are not the same as participation, and the state (even the putatively democratic) often stands, in the interests of stability, in opposition to the exercise of democracy, what he calls "the fullest possible participation by equals" (Wolin, 1994, p. 304). He draws from this base a very different conception of the citizen in relation to power, between the voter and the acting citizen (Wolin, 1993a, p. 475; 1996; 1993b). The difference is important since it shapes our thinking about the future (leaner prospects, public administration more directly tied to the economy) and directly reflects on the distribution of power and the current distance from the experience of real political engagement and actual decision making power - the source of the crisis in democratic legitimacy (Wolin, 1981c; 1994; 1993a; 1996a). For instance, the claim that "democracy is too simple for complex societies and too complex for simple ones" indicates the "degree to which democracy is attenuated so as to serve other ends" (Wolin, 1996b, p. 42; 1981b; 1993b).

Wolin recognizes and draws on the mythic and religious origins of fundamental political and democratic concepts. The struggles of the gods framed ideals concerning perfect power, and the myths of creation were "the labors of a political hero, a Moses, [or] Solon" consciously reenacted by eighteenth century Americans (Wolin, 1985, p. 230). Further, "the historical contribution of Western religions to the political education of ordinary and poor people is almost impossible to exaggerate."   Notions of community, being an object of power, and sacrifice were the lessons. It is these very notions which we return to for democratic renewal - in Wolin's terms, "democratic disorder." Historically it has been through

the disorder of revolutions ("ordinary individuals are capable of creating new cultural patterns of commonality at any moment") that democracy has been engaged and political participation enlarged (Wolin, 1996b, p. 37, 43).

Wolin has also turned considerable attention to an understanding theory (political and democratic) and its role, doing so initially in response to the movement to make the study of politics a "science." He contended that reducing politics and democracy to a behavioral science is "deflationary," tending toward a reductivism that, as noted, evacuates the concept of "citizen" and reduces it to the hollow, ritualistic and vicarious enactment of "democracy" by the "voter." Political "science" *redefines* the "excessive demands o [f] the 'real world' ... to suggest a more realistic version of democratic theory." The critique by political science of theory was that it is *merely* normative and metaphysical, "trans-empirical," and incapable of progressive (scientific) movement toward a better, verifiable truth. Wolin points out that far from transcending or obviating democratic theory, political science simply describes a flattened reality which it can then more easily measure, and contra the claim to theory's being superceded, "a society which is operating fairly normally has its theory in the form of the dominant paradigm" (Wolin, 1968, p. 151; 1969, p. 1082). It is the job of the democratic theorist to unsettle this: theory is not a "text to which the 'problems' of existing politics can be referred, but a form of criticism in which the 'text' itself [prevailing practices and understandings] becomes a problem. ...The underlying purpose is not to ... take sides in a debate over policies, but to expose hidden and troubling interconnections that call into question the authority of the 'text'" (Wolin, 1980, p. 200). He arrives at a series of penetrating critiques from this base.

Far from a settled question, "at the very moment when theory in the form of a Marxist 'utopia' is pronounced dead, theory in an equally doctrinaire, but more economistic, form" is triumphally ascendant (Wolin , 1993b, p. 163; 2000). This constitutes a "new public philosophy" displacing historically-grounded moral and democratic public concepts with "categories to supply the terms of discussion.... Economics thus becomes the paradigm of what public reason should be" (Wolin 1981c, p. 28; 1981b). Second, engaging in politics ("differences and the attempt to negotiate them") takes time, but politics and the economy have become intimately intertwined with crucial results for theory. The "temporalities of economy and popular culture are dictated by innovation, change and replacement through obsolescence," and in political terms, this speeded-up "reality" has produced "customized theory" (as in customer) to "sniff out domination at the slightest stirring of the breeze," attuned to the rapid turnover in consumer culture

(Wolin, 1997). Third (and related), democracy is at the same time both "undertheorized" and "overtheorized." The aforementioned academic conformity in the positivist search for an empirical "reality" in politics led to assumptions which narrowed conceptions of what could "count" as politics, thus draining politics of key notions like power or collective action (undertheorization), while an abundance of discourses of "domination and its variants" cast in terms that "once were reserved for the exceptional and abnormal" led to a conception of an "ongoing system of wrongs [with] various discourses specializing in wrongs" (overtheorization). *Everything* is "political" while at the same time *nothing* is political in terms of "commonality and shared fate" (Wolin, 2000, p. 10-14).   Wolin critiques this postmodernist theorizing-for-what-is-at-the-moment as intellectual avoidance of the deep disillusionments of the twentieth century, as evasion of "individual or corporate responsibility toward the systems of power shaping their society," and as largely avoiding engaging democracy itself (Wolin, 1993b, p. 166; 1990).

Wolin is not without his critics, most having to with his basic concepts as they evolved and the inevitable tension between the trajectory of his critiques and his long-running project to infuse ethical values and political possibility into his theories (Wiley, 2006; Lassman, 2005). His overarching value as a democratic theorist lies in his insistence on plumbing what is democratically unrealized or no longer thought of as workable, pursuing a fundamentally different relationship to autonomy and power:

> Democracy should not depend on elites making a one-time gift to the demos of a predesigned framework of equal rights. [R]ights in a democracy depend on the demos winning them, extending them substantively, and, in the process, acquiring experience of the political, that is, of participating in power, reflecting on the consequences of its exercise, and struggling to sort out the common well-being amid cultural differences and socioeconomic disparities. ...Democracy is about the continuing self-fashioning of the demos (Wolin, 1996c, p. 98).

3. Democratic Education

Education is a place where the theoretical (and the political) is enacted in policies, communities, decisions, and systems. Theorists of democratic education thus are a particularly instructive example for LIS and its institutions, and Habermas and Wolin both provide a basis to turn to the on-the-ground considerations of education. Habermas's work informs educational-theoretical work on schools, colleges,

universities which is readily apparent in the work of Henry Giroux (1984; 1987; 1990; 2002) where classroom spaces are posited as alternative or oppositional democratic public spheres which should remain separate and distinct from the purposes and manipulations of media and market culture. Robert Young sees schools as the place to pedagogically enact communicative action (1990). For his part, Wolin makes clear that fundamental *political* ideas are the basis of core concepts about education and its purpose: "when all are roughly equal, any sure means of setting a permanent difference between human beings becomes an important form of social power. No group knew this better than the leaders of early Massachusetts. ...If knowledge was power, systematic instruction of the young was political and social power of the first magnitude." Throughout the development of education in America, there has been push-back from egalitarian and democratic forces "to shape education to the needs of political democracy" versus elite, then instrumental-economic ends. The ongoing tension remains: "education was [only] conferred on democracy because of the needs of a rapidly changing economy" while democracy infiltrated education in the form of widespread access and aspiration (Wolin, 1981a). Wolin establishes the inherent connection between politics (and power) and education. In turn, these theorists of democratic education flesh out education as an institutional *location* of the contestation of political and democratic ideas.

Amy Gutmann

A former Rockefeller Professor of Politics, then Provost at Princeton University, Gutmann is now president of the University of Pennsylvania. She has also published extensively on deliberative democracy - a concept which dovetails with her work on democratic education. Gutmann (1998; 1995; 1990; 1987) rejects "relentlessly abstract" conceptions, and instead consistently utilizes actual situations - like the challenges to educational laws and regulations by Old Order Amish and fundamentalist Christians, to "tough love" disciplinary tactics to bring needed order to unruly poor city schools, or to mandated remedies for bilingual education in order to overcome discrimination – to build her framework. That framework consists of something of an unavoidable tautology. Democracies philosophically require neither foundations ("certain rationally undeniable facts about human nature and politics"), nor non, or anti-foundations ("reason has nothing to do with defending democracy") and instead she settles on Churchill's agonistic formulation that it is "the worst form of government except all the others" (Gutmann, 1996, p. 341, 345). Further, since democratic societies have an inherent self-interest in fostering the necessary

conditions under which they operate, their "self-evident truths ... only become so if they are defended

publicly against the strongest challenges, ideally in open deliberative forms" (Gutmann, 2000, p. 17).

Hence we arrive at her formulation: democracies posit a tension in the form of both individual freedom/

liberty *and* collective responsibility; they require education for citizenship; that citizenship must be active,

deliberative, and critical for democracy to work; the tensions between the individual and society, freedom

and responsibility, the locality and the nation, the family and the community are best worked out within -

and thus strengthen - a critical, deliberative democratic education which operates within non-repressive

and non-discriminatory limits. Democracy justifies itself by giving children "an education that is adequate

to their becoming free and equal citizens" which, she argues, is necessarily critical (Gutmann, 2000, p. 18;

1987, p. 42-47; 1990).

Education as a state function is always "political education," and Gutmann in turn argues that

democratic education has "moral primacy over other purposes of education in a democratic society" - like

the economy (1987, p. 19-22, 283-291). At the same time, she clearly recognizes that the locus of the

freedom which lies at the heart of democracy is in families and local communities, and there will be

inevitable tensions between the general interests of democratic societies and the specific expectations of

individual, familial, and local liberty and autonomy. Schools are, in her thinking, *the* institutional location

to deliberate (thus *teaching* critical argumentation in the process) the boundaries of the state's authority in

the reach of its educational requirements and the boundaries of local and individual rights to set themselves

apart from those requirements (within the principles of non-repression and non-discrimination). So,

fundamentalist Christian parents *do* have the right to shield their children from required readings which

substantially violate their beliefs, but they do not have a veto for the whole community. Society's authority

is limited too: no majority no matter how large may impose separate schools for the races.   It is the self-

generation which she values:

> Democratic standards often do not yield either simple or single answers to questions -
>
> such as how much money schools should allocate for educating the handicapped, the
>
> gifted, and the average student. That [they] do not ... is a necessity [and] a virtue ... given
>
> the complexity of our collective life.... Democracy is valuable for far more than its
>
> capacity to achieve correct outcomes. It is also valuable for enabling societies to govern

themselves, rather than to be governed by an intelligence unrelated to their nature

(Gutmann, 1990, p. 17-18).

Gutmann's achievement is that she puts meat on the theoretical bones of a specific institutional location and mode of operation for educative institutions in democratic societies.

Richard Brosio

Brosio is Professor emeritus from Ball State University where he taught the social and philosophical foundations of education and is currently Lecturer in Educational Policy at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. His work has been recognized with awards from the American Educational Studies Association and the Educational Press Association of America. In a deceptively simple phrase, he sums up much of the thrust of his work: "[John] Dewey could serve as the schoolmaster for Marx's radical democracy" (Brosio, 2000, p. 153). Within that statement are four interconnected ideas. First, if there is a democratic imperative ("the state is answerable to democratic demands"), then it "can be said to exist only if active, organized and committed persons are available to make their individual and collective wills known -- and to translate them into political action" - an idea he draws from Marxist traditions with implications for capitalism and education (Brosio, 1994, p. 83, 446). Second, while Dewey rejected social class as a framework of critique and educational philosophy, Brosio argues that the trajectory of his work *is* radical: "schools must be characterized by community, democracy, and the moral use of the scientific method" (2000, p. 154). Third, Brosio (1994, p. 447, 609) establishes a commonality - primarily in terms of human agency and democracy - between Dewey's foundational ideas ("human striving to make stability prevail over the chaos of brute occurrence is the main task of human intelligence") and those of Marx ("human beings make their own histories, albeit not ... under conditions of their own choosing [and they] changed themselves as they engaged in struggle"). Education is inherently one of the prime terrains of that striving and contestation, and so Brosio's fourth basic idea embedded in that simple sentence is the open question drawn from both of these sources: "whether or not capitalism is compatible with authentic democracy" (Brosio, 2005, para. 75).

Brosio (2000) puts this into concrete form in his work to frame teacher education as critical and teachers as functioning critical intellectuals in the schools. In so doing, he has consistently reviewed the intellectual traditions of twentieth century progressive education as a means to realize education for a

critical citizenship. In turn, much of that intellectual tradition is traced through mining a large literature - from the Greeks through that of Marx and Marxism - for a vision of authentic democracy as a critical alternative, and the history of market-driven social and political thought back through Adam Smith. As a result Brosio repeatedly returns to a primary theme of relevance to LIS via many avenues: democracy has consistency been forced to take a back seat to capitalism, and education is an arena where the evidence of this is most obvious. The persistent and wide gap in educational outcomes between rich and poor and between the races, the patent obviousness of the differential in school resources and political clout of these differing communities, and the straightforward mathematics of economic redistribution upward through tax cuts while exhorting volunteerism as a substitute for public (i.e. tax-based) actions are not the mystified, intractable problems of social scientists, but the clear markers of the primacy of one set of social and political values over another. While absorbing the lessons of difference and inclusion, Brosio's achievement is to synthesize a range of thinking which critique and (perhaps unfashionably) describe a reality: economic reasons and means are not necessarily compatible with democratic ones, and may be antithetical. In education and in a critical form of teacher education, he seeks to uncover, illustrate, and address that tension.

  Maxine Greene

        Greene is the emerita William F. Russell Professor in Foundations of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and she has received numerous honorary degrees, a Fullbright lecturing fellowship and the Teachers College's medal of honor. At base, she considers questions of democracy and education to be primarily about possibility, engagement and the individual. Our persistent anomie is rooted in the chasm between our "freedom" and its hollow political celebrations and ritualization, too often "used to justify alien undertakings.... If freedom is considered to be an endowment or ... a possession to be released by the removal of constraints, its expression cannot but be a function of randomly distributed strengths and capacities. ...Crucial is the recognition that conditions must be deliberately created to enable the mass of people to act on their power to choose." Education is perhaps *the* "deliberately created condition" - a preparation for freedom, and the multiplicity of social and individual differences is at its core (Greene, 1988, p. 3, 18, 125). She returns repeatedly to the themes of possibility and the deadening influence of systems (educational and otherwise) which squeeze individual children into pre-set forms:

worker, voter, student, soldier, etc. Yet she refuses to concede defeat to them. Quoting and paraphrasing Saul Bellow, she rejects "received ideas as those 'maintaining all the usual things about mass society, dehumanization and the rest.' They represent us poorly [because] 'we are much more limber, versatile, better articulated; there is more to us'" (Greene, 1978, p. 89).

Education is an existential exercise in the ironic space between democratic possibility and stultifying control in Greene's terms: there are vast, impersonal forces/structures which have deep effects on human lives (especially schools) and people need (often hunger) to be equipped (educated) to realize their freedom, imagination and spontaneity (Greene, 1978, p. 113). Like Brosio, she draws on Dewey, equating his "intellectual possibility" with the cultivation of imagination, first and foremost through aesthetic education. If the opposite of aesthetic is "anaesthetic," then that "implies numbness, an emotional incapacity, and ... immobilize[ation], prevent[ing] people from questioning, from meeting the challenges of being in and naming and (perhaps) transforming the world" (Greene, 2000, p. x). Greene turns and returns to literature, poetry, drama, painting, music and dance for renewal: the education of Huck Finn and the runaway Jim on the Mississippi (1978, p. 113), Emily Dickinson's line that "The Possible's slow fuse is lit / By the Imagination," and the citizens in Albert Camus' *The Plague* are but a few of the "shocks of awareness of that sort [which] can be of great significance for learning in a world so characterized by routines, by a kind of drab everydayness." She is always looking for "spaces for action" and to communicate the idea of "something beyond the actual, [a] consciousness of alternative possibility" – or, as she has put it many times, "thinking of things as if they could be otherwise" (Greene, 2000, p. 116-117, 142-143; 1965). An aesthetic experience is always and ever an individual one, and the arts for her are the arena in which this freedom and possibility are most clearly expressed and kept alive. For Greene, authentic, collective democratic action begins with free *persons*, one by one, and education in aesthetic expression maintains a cross-grained nature in an increasingly homogenized world to create possible spaces and opportunities for individual freedom.

Conclusion: Back to LIS

It is clear, even from this brief review of these democratic theorists, that this is a wellspring of thought for LIS that has been tapped very little. Library and information science's relationship to democratic theory - from practical work in libraries through efforts to theoretically ground the field, from

construction of to use and verification of databases and archived information, from its popular through its research literature - is aposiopetic in both senses of that word. It has not been systematically explored or applied and the vast quantity of LIS work does not engage in intramural debate meant to, in Wolin's terms, unsettle settled realities toward the end of democratic efficacy. Wolin additionally has characterized the circumstance within LIS too: it is both undertheorized and overtheorized. LIS cast as a science has flattened libraries and information systems/products into objective and neutral entities studied without reference to context or power, and it remains undertheorized in this sense (Harris, 1986; Frohmann, 2004a; Budd, 1995; Buschman & Carbone, 1991; Radford, 1992). At the same time, an overtheorized notion of power and domination proliferates within areas of LIS theory adapted from postmodern sources (Buschman in press b.; Buschman & Brosio, 2006; for a critique of theories borrowed from business, the social sciences, and the sciences see Frohmann, 1992). If the popular rhetoric is shallow, our theoretical and research literature elides the questions democratic theory raises. It is time to emend this circumstance, and the reasons go beyond giving substance to rhetoric or accounting for a relevant intellectual resource.

   The work of Wolin, Habermas, and Gutmann suggests that democracy is not a specific *thing* to be attained (like a possession or a perfected structure), but rather a process that enables - even requires - debate about its meaning, limits, and problems in order to realize authentic collective democratic action. Further, in examining the relationship of states to education, Gutmann (1987, p. 19-20, 41-47) posits that "education must be guided by the *principles*, not the practices of a regime" which change with some frequency (in contrast to its principles). Those can be uncovered by examination of the alternatives (foundationalism, relativism, etc.) and the values revealed in the course of practical and contested decisions over the purpose and limitations of state authority in educating children. If states *and* families *and* local communities have an interest in the "ways of life most favored by parental and political authorities [- that is,] a commitment to share the rights and the obligations of citizenship with people who do not share our complete conception of the good life [- then] to the extent that [we] share ... this ... a democratic theory of education commands our allegiance." Neither an *a priori* foundation, nor a relativistic justification of the moment, this theory draws on questions of the public's interests in its families, children, and investments made in a system of institutions meant to influence and shape the future of society. At a time when public functions and public institutions are being (minimally) subjected to market forces and (maximally) fully

privatized (Buschman, 2003), a grounding purpose in democratic theory cuts through much of the dominant paradigm of neoliberal logic behind these social and economic choices of direction.

Far from a neutral separate realm, LIS substantially shares this same *raison d'etat*. The public continues to subsidize the internet in various ways (even if only as a delivery mechanism) and invests substantially in libraries, databases, e-commerce, technology acquisition, and on and on. The reasons for these investments speak to broad social goals and values: an open and dynamic society, equalizing access to information, facility and ease of use, and freeing up the marketplace of ideas *and* commerce (linked because they are considered synergistic). Gutmann's logic applies here too. Libraries and information systems, like education, can be and have been used to oppress, stifle, control and direct information toward goals opposite these. If LIS makes any claim in terms of social and normative values or if LIS stakes any normative claim to the substantial public investments in libraries and information systems, then a democratic theory of LIS linked to the principles of the regime would go some ways to ground the field beyond an instrumental or relativistic basis. It commands our allegiance in Gutmann's terms. I do not imply that there are no disagreements among these democratic theorists. The most obvious is Habermas's valorization of constitutions contrasted with Wolin's considerable skepticism concerning the functional meaning of constitutional limits. Rather than a set of answers or definitive directions toward a set end (like a roadmap), democratic theory raises different types of questions for LIS research. Rather than a focus on more and better refined techniques, democratic theory begins to answer the harder question: what are those techniques *for*? It is Gutmann who has sketched the outline of that answer: educative institutions and systems (like library and research resources) in democratic societies should be about replicating the bases of democratic culture. Her philosophical analysis bears close examination in LIS both for the significant parallels and areas of divergence.

Wolin's work would seem to firmly place those information systems and institutions (like education) within the reality of political interest (as does Gutmann). He further suggests that our formalized systems of rights (to information and perhaps its technologies, to balanced selections of materials, etc.) are mere formalities. The gap between these information structures and the polity as actor is now wider than ever, yet we live in a self-heralded age of vast information, more widely available, by easier means, with the implied claim that this translates to more/better democracy. Surely this disjuncture bears some relationship to or place within LIS research. Habermas in turn raises even broader research

questions concerning the scientization of discourse in LIS systems and research (and thus the lack of ethical and normative content), or the flip side of the same coin in terms of a debased public communicative rationality in the form of the products of information capitalism. These perspectives again raise different questions for LIS. Is research on information seeking behavior a social science intervention into learning and inquiry merely in service to the information industry (to better hone products and marketing)? Do various search softwares shape or obfuscate results? If so how? Alternately, why is the broad debasement of public access to public information *not* the subject of LIS research (OpenTheGovernment.org, 2005)? Both Wolin and Habermas issue a specific challenge as to whether postmodern thought is an intellectual adaptation to postmodern capitalism and its relationship to democracy, and thus ill-equipped to provide a basis (normative or intellectual) for critique. The relationship of this idea to information systems design or questions of the content of collections is an important one.

Democratic education provides a location for the theoretical, indicating that present institutions and systems represent contestation among conflicting values. This too has relevance for LIS. Gutmann's work is suggestive of a mode of operation. That is, an institution cannot foster democracy without practicing it. Broad based and critical debate over ends, means, choices, exceptions and non-exceptions are again suggestive for specific public educative institutions like libraries. Can, for instance, a library support intellectual freedom for its community without practicing it as a workplace? Brosio and Greene point us to overlooked insights into the subjects that LIS concerns itself with. Brosio for instance would ask whether LIS has empirically investigated what seems to be a clear bias toward the "new" economy in the funding of information resources (networked information in business, economics and the sciences) and he would also interrogate the interests served if there was a *lack* of investigating such questions. Ideas concerning critical, organic intellectuals – which Brosio applies to teachers and teacher training – have immediate relevance to LIS students in this same way. Greene on the other hand potently affirms that learning is not fully encompassed by systems and that LIS researches only a small portion of the "reality" that exists in information systems and institutions - and perhaps not even the most important one. Following her, the stock of aesthetic knowledge, and the indefinable aspects of discovery in libraries by individuals would hold a more central place than the instrumental notions largely guiding LIS research now. Such questions are perhaps the most marginalized ones now. Brosio's work is a challenge to uncover and contest antidemocratic interests within the purview of LIS subjects; Greene's is an argument for space (in both the

literal and figurative sense) and intellectual richness in information systems and institutions along with the less-quantifiable benefits to a public that they bring.

While this has not been anything like a comprehensive review of the issues of relevance, there is far more of democratic concern to LIS research and practice than the stasis of Jefferson's and Madison's statements or the silence largely maintained. LIS work (in its popular writing, scholarship, and various institutional forms) minimally needs to develop a self- and contextual awareness, such as that described by Wolin (2000, p. 20-21):

> The crisis of democracy is also the crisis for ... most of the social sciences and humanities [where] a climate of opinion is being developed in [higher education] in favor of even more managerial control. At the same time, the idea of the "virtual university" tailored to the needs of a technologically driven society is gaining support, not least because it offers the hope, mainly illusory, that by a severely practical curriculum its students can climb the wall separating the [classes]. When scrutinized according to such measures as cost-effectiveness ... and productivity, the ideals of the humanistic liberal arts education cannot survive, except as an appendage to the culture industry or as a Potemkin village where the sons and daughters of the rich ... receive a polish unobtainable elsewhere.

LIS must ask itself the question of where it stands in this configuration and in relation to democracy.

Endnote

[1.] The term library and information science (LIS) is here used inclusively of systems, resources, people and institutions and the three traditional areas of public, academic and school libraries as well as those who research and theorize about them. This is an inherent argument against common artificial divisions between practice, theory, and research.

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