academicresearchJournals

International Journal of Academic Library and Information Science

Research

Academic Libraries in Postmodern Era: Prospects and Challenges in Nigeria

[1]Festus Onifade and [2]Bilikis Adefunke Babarinde

[1]J.C Pool Library, The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.
Corresponding author's E-mail:Onifadefestus19@gmail.com
[2]Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.
E-mail: babarindefunke3@gmail.com

The paper examine academic libraries in postmodern era, prospects and challenges in Nigeria.it discusses the terms pre-modern library to be the period of history that led through dark ages which consisted of achieves from early form of writing on clay and tablets, Modern library to be a library of recent, present and contemporary library which today called the "engine room". It is the library of 21st century, therefore it summaries believe system of modern era to be determining, individual, certainty, distance, design, totalitarian etc. Hence, for librarians to function well they need to accustomed themselves to information technological gadgets such as computers and familiar with the use of internets etc. while postmodern library is a library in the age of enlightenments, age of pre suppositions, postmodern library is subsequent library of the future. Nevertheless, the paper further discusses possible prospects of postmodern library, challenges of postmodern library, skills required for postmodern library, mentioned library collection in digital format, promoting library services, literacy skills, applications of new technologies among others. The paper recommends that the librarians of this present era should change their perceptive on the use of (ICT) and arise to the task of engaging themselves in skills required for postmodern librarians, to know how to use computer, open and save file on the computer, copy and paste, download and use internet effectively and the problems of postmodern library identified to be funds, technophobia and hierarchy control. The paper finally concluded that postmodern library has come to stay for real and there is need to embrace it and change us from traditional ways of doing things.

Keyword: postmodern, academic libraries, modern, prospects, challenges, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The most interesting part of the worldview today is how every aspect of human endeavors changes from time to time, from the way we communicate, relates, socializes, interacts and discuss with one another through the advent of various communication technological gadgets and the use of web 2.0. (Web 2.0 is the kinds of Internet services commonly associated with social media). In wrapping it together, the word postmodern appears to be new terminology to human race most especially to the field of librarianship. Postmodern is therefore consider as post-prefix meaning after, later, subsequent to, posterior to, occurring originally in loanwords from Latin (postscript) but now used freely in the formation of compound word.(source: https://www.dictionary.com).It is also seen literally as a word used to form or indicate that something takes place after a particular period time, state

or event. Modern therefore means something relating to or characteristics of the present or the immediate past, contemporary, modern is characterized with a period extending from a relevant to remote past to the present time.(source: https://www.collinsdictionary.com).

With above, the word postmodern can be described as a broad movement that developed in the mid- to-late 20th century across areas of philosophy, the arts, architecture and criticism of making a departure from modern era. The term has been more generally applied to the historical era following modernity and the tendencies of this era. Yoder A (2003) explains the dilemma of postmodernism for libraries as a paradigm shift incompatible with the profession origin story, further stated that not the roots of information and library science lie very firmly in the modern that not only majority libraries founded during modern times of (1750-1950). According to Slight O (2013) postulate that, the term of postmodernism is designates the state of our culture following the transformation, since the end of the 19th century the game rules for science, literature and the arts has been altered. However, todays academic libraries especially in Nigeria face with a lot of unaccustomed challenges the level of complexity and ambiguity are creating chaotic and turbulent work environment, even the wealthiest of libraries are straining themselves to cope or meet up with escalating demands for new technologies, new skills and new services in the midst of static or dwindling budget Ray K (2001). The researcher consider the positivism of reality of postmodernism seem almost impossible in the deplorable world of academic libraries of today. The question is how libraries and librarians meet these hard demands of scientific proof or evidence of postmodern era library?

The plight of academic libraries, especially general library system of universities and colleges, are signs and evidence that brings signal even more clearly today that the libraries increasingly fail to fulfill the expectations specified by their parent institutions. So it has come to this end that educational decision makers, economists, bankers including librarians are feeling the impact of postmodern technological transformation in our society today, with all of those, this paper set to examine the prospects and challenges of academic libraries in postmodern era in Nigeria.

Pre- modern library

In order to understand the postmodern worldview, it is necessary to trace its baggage from its origin. After all, it did not appear out of the blue. Postmodernism is a fatalist response to a previous extremist worldview. The pendulum swung diametrically opposed from one end to the other. Understanding what caused such a deviation from previous worldviews is crucial to define, explain and criticize postmodernism Thomas C (1995).

Pre-modernism is the period of history that led through the dark ages, the Reformation and up to the 1700s Rick C (1999). The first libraries consisted of archives of the earliest form of writing the clay tablets in cuneiform script discovered in temple rooms in Sumer, Casson Lionel (2000). The earliest discovered private archives were kept at Ugarit (in present-day Syria); besides correspondence and inventories, texts of myths may have been standardized practice-texts for teaching new scribes. There is also evidence of libraries at Nippur about 1900 BC and those at Nineveh about 700 BC showing a library classification system Krasner Barbara (2010).

Over 30,000 clay tablets from the Library of Ashurbanipal have been discovered at Nineveh providing modern scholars with an amazing wealth of Mesopotamian literary, religious and administrative work Maclay Kathleen (2003). Among the findings were the Enuma Elish, also known as the Epic of Creation, Renfrew Colin (2008) depicts a traditional Babylonian view of creation, the Epic of Gilgamesh, Robert Morris (1997) a large selection of "omen texts" including Enuma Anu Enlil which "contained omens dealing with the moon, its visibility, eclipses, and conjunction with planets and fixed stars, the sun, its corona, spots, and eclipses, the weather, namely lightning, thunder, and clouds, and the planets and their visibility, appearance, and stations" The American International Encyclopedia (1954) established the fact that the astronomic/astrological texts, as well as standard lists used by scribes and scholars such as word lists, bilingual vocabularies, lists of signs and synonyms, and lists of medical diagnoses.

In pre-modern era libraries were filled with parchment scrolls as at Library of Pergamum and on papyrus scrolls at Alexandria: the export of prepared writing materials was a staple of commerce. There were a few institutional or royal libraries which were open to an educated public (such as the Serapeum collection of the Library of Alexandria, once the largest Great library in the ancient world) Dalley Stephanie (1989).But on the whole collections were private. In those rare cases where it was possible for scholars to consult library books there seems to have been no direct access to the stacks. In all recorded cases the books were kept in a relatively small room where the staff went to get them for the readers, who had to consult them in an adjoining hall or covered walkway, the pre-modern library reading room exemplified in the Figure 1.

Figure 1: Pre-Modern Library.

Modern Era and Modern Library

The term modern comes from the Latin word *modo* meaning just now. It originally meant something like recent, presents or contemporary. It shows the desire to the modern thought as a distinct entity from its predecessors. Today such a term express obsoleteness, the modern era therefore comprises the period of the ideology and the malaise of the time from 1789-1989, from the Bastille to the Berlin Wall Albert B (1992). Modern libraries were born in the modern world of today and could be called the "engine room" of the project of modernity, with the Librarian both educators and technicians is a kind of enlightened mechanic Muddiman (1999). The academic and public libraries can also be view as modern libraries in the era of industrialization, urbanization and other movement. Resmussen and Jochumsen (2007) submitted that, today's library especially public library wandering without a sense of direction. The book is dead, No it is not, so the idea of postmodernism in library should go cyberspace, and No libraries need a physical presence, again we are leaving modernity behind but do not mind what is ahead. Modern libraries and librarians are comfortable with stability of postmodern era more comfortable with fluidity, in communication, organizational, dynamics and information seeking certainly is preferred and accepted by modern librarians Frank (2004). Modern library is also known as the age of reason extended from renaissance to the mid-twentieth century in western civilization. Ray (2001) said a central theme of modern is the values of the age of enlightenment perfect practicability, certainty, reality,

control absolute truths and order are hallmarks of the modern age and still reflected in every aspect of our society, therefore the postulation of modern in librarianship is age of Information Communication Technology meaning that all social devices should be incorporated, integrated and use with services of library activities , inotherword bringing computer to replace old or traditional ways of doing the cataloging, classification, references services, circulations binding and all the services should be modernized through the use of computer and internet services. Thus, there is no wide space or clear distinction between the periods of modernism and postmodernism, the period of modernism led to postmodern era, therefore the two periods is close and cannot be totally separated.

A modern library is referred to as the 21st century library, changing and evolving to match modern society, many face financial issues and crises. However, they are finding ways to adapt to people's needs, such as providing digital services to patrons at home, and creating more user-friendly places Ebbitt (2015). Therefore, the believe system of modern era is summarized as Determinacy, Individual, Certainty, Distance, Design, Totalitarian, Universal and Stability, all of these mentioned values encompasses modern era in librarianship and make workability of library services easy through the use of ideology in modern era. Hence, the reality of modern library needs following Information Technologies to practically function well:

1.   Mobile Apps
2.   Open Libraries

3.   Cyberspace
4.   Maker Space
5.   Artificial Intelligence/ Machine e-learning
6.   Augmented reality
7.   Library book mark apps
8.   Digital maker Lab
9.   Big Data
10.   Finger link Nimble

   In the 20th century, many public libraries were built in different Modernist architecture styles, some are more functional, others more representative. For many of these buildings, the quality of the interior spaces, their lighting and atmosphere, was becoming more significant than the face design of the library building. Modernist architects like Alvar Aalto put great emphasis on the comfort and usability of library spaces. The Municipal Library he built 1958–62 for the German city of Wolfsburg features a great central room for which he used a series of specially designed skylights to bring in natural light, even though all the walls are covered with books. These are what libraries need at the period of modern era to function well. The diagram below explained and shows how the modern libraries or 21st library look like. However, most academic institutions are just struggling to meet up to the standard of modern academic library as below.

Figure 2: Wolfsburg Municipal Library by Alvar Aalto

Postmodern Library

Postmodern is age of enlightenments, age of pre suppositions out the window. Postmodern is a term used to designated a multitude of trends in the arts, philosophy, religion, technology and many others areas including Librarianship that came after and deviate from the many 20th century. Postmodern is also subsequent to or coming later than that which is modern. The postmodernism is the idea that reality is not mirrored in human understanding, but rather constructed as individuals find their own reality. It takes a micro rather than macro approach in looking after way individual identity they compared to the structuralism view, in which an entire society is looked, postmodernists believe that realities are subject to change and that apparent realities are actually social constructs which limit individuals (source: www.slideshare.net)
 However, postmodernists like Lyotard and Bauldvillard claim that society has moved on since modern period, this movement has been caused by;

Globalization

This reducing the poorer of the nation state beyond level of modernization

Economic Changes

This has fragmented social classes and diffusing their values.

Relativism

A way of looking at the world which rejects the so-called objective truth of grand narratives (one man's truth is seen is just as valid as another's)

Identity

This is the rise of importance of Identity rather than identifying with particular social classes. Postmodernists suggest that people construct their own identities like consumers in a market place picking and mixing as they see fit.

Once upon a time, looking for a book in the library involved an ancient mechanism called the card catalog now, most card catalogs are gone forever and patrons gaze at computer screens to find out for solutions for information materials. As electronic technology becomes more pervasive, or invasive, librarians and library users continue to be embraced in the controversy over the function of a library and its management crew i.e. staff. As "Knowledge" loses ground to information and techware book, budgets library collections are "purged" and reference librarians find their role diminished except to put more paper in the printer to serve the voracious wood-pulp appetite of the new paperless society which is postmodern library, library now and library in futures.

Furthermore, concept of postmodern library, takes its place in history and social, progressive and is no longer a unified, national ideal, nor is its values accepted without quest. Indeed, some communities' label progressive a pejorative term, for it implies the silencing of certain discourses, environmental destruction, and greater stratification between the privileged and the marginalized Yoder (2003). According to Hubbard (1997) cited by Yoder (2003) suggested that the postmodern model of information requires a transformation in traditional methods of bibliographic instruction. Therefore the change re-envisions the personal of the academic library and librarians from one of rigid authority, handling down of information from on high, to a dynamic co-creator, facilitators to enables and to guide. The manifestation of performativity within academic library in the world as addressed by Owen (1998) predicted that academic library in the postmodern era have major changes in the mission and services of academic libraries performativity dictates institutional funding and resources, libraries and librarians must therefore demonstrate that they play a pivotal role within the life of the academic institution.

Nevertheless, postmodern library is hybrid library, *what is a hybrid*? The term hybrid is often used in description of activities or services that combine two established features for, example the term hybrid manager was in vogue in the 1970's and 1980's, then for managers in information technology (IT) intensive companies who combined knowledge of (IT) with understanding of personnel and other human issues Oppenheim and Smithson (1998). The hybrid library can also be called digital library, e-library, online library and virtual library. The digital library is information services in which all the information resources are available in computer processable (Processed) format and the functions of acquisition, storage, preservation, retrieval, access and display are carried out through the usage of the digital technologies. The hybrid library is not restricted to the provision of information in text format, audio, visual and video resources, it can be represented digitally.

To cap it all, the hybrid library which is postmodern library and future vision library, the simple way of defining the hybrid library is that of means of integrating the traditional library with digital library. Arguable, the postmodern library is now combining both hybrid and digital library to be a postmodern paperless library. Consider the below postmodern library which is interconnected and with full internet services, the materials in this age can be retrieved, accessed an use anywhere you go that is postmodern library.
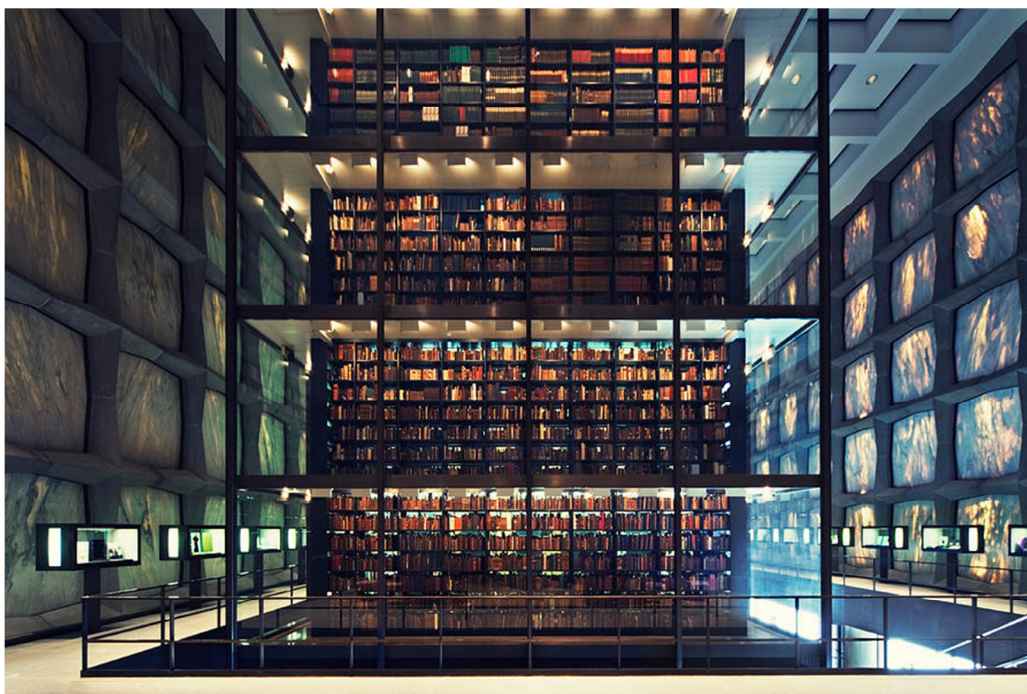
Figure 3: Postmodern library by Sebastian Julian.

What is academic library?

This concept of academic libraries in postmodern period; Librarians, Knowledge, and Information is grounded in humanism for it acknowledge and respects the roles of the human and the human community in the creation of knowledge and in it subsequent unearthing during the search process; rather than simply to educate students/ users on how to locate materials relevant to their research, librarians must facilitate discovery. Academic are at the fore front of providing information resource and services to the respective communities of users which comprises of students, lecturers, researchers and scholars in order to support their teaching, learning and research needs. In addition, according to Abubarkar (2011) stressed that academic libraries are the libraries attached to tertiary intuitions, such as Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of education and Monotechnics to foster the services of parent institution by providing the need of the users at all levels to support scholarly research activities going on in the academic communities for good output. To bottled the neck, what brought us to postmodern library? Why technologies in the library? Why bothering about modern and postmodern library? Simply because there is a need for change and transformation from traditional ways of handling library services delivery, resources and activities, therefore libraries using technologies to:

- preserve information services in digital format
- makes services delivery easier and accessible to users
- inspire and inform about the new trends to librarians
- help librarians and clients to learn new skills in (ICT)
- adapt and update to postmodern changes in all performativity in library by librarians

Possible Prospects of Postmodern Library

The possible prospects of postmodern libraries which are futuristic in nature cannot be overemphasized because of tremendous multiples benefits to the libraries and librarians, to the extent that learning is translate into computer language machine and traditional teachers are replaceable by memory banks, machines linking, traditional memory (libraries) and computer data. The paper presents these following as prospects of postmodern library to entire librarianship which harmonized by LeMoine (2012), Yoder (2003) and Slight (1998) they are:

✓   **Library collection**

Library collection in postmodern era is no longer again

dominated by printed format, and the physical location of the library is no longer contains all possible information available, now postmodern period is saying that all sources and services are in paperless form which is basically in electronic format.

✓ **Promoting Libraries Services**

Promoting the library services and its reference services are also possible through the use of social networking by academic reference librarians, to also connect with students on campus by becoming roving librarians in postmodern period.

✓ **Information literacy skills**

Another prospect of postmodern library is that librarians can provide valuable help in form of instructional teaching areas amidst of the online information explosion i.e. life – long information literacy skills which will go far/a long way beyond how to use computer and databases.

✓ **Google and Wikipedia**

Postmodern library seek google, wikipedia, google scholar, Jstor, Ebsco, Open J-GATE, OCLC Worldcat, Universe Digital Library, New Jour, cyberspace, Mobile App, makespace, and MySpace, among other site answers questions more relevant and comfortably, quickly and effectively than librarians i.e. the physical form of the library is no longer the sole sacred custodians of all information.

✓ **Workstations library**

In postmodern library making workstation library workable, to open and be available twenty four hours each day for seven days every weeks of the month and of the year heavily use will be required that is the position of postmodern era.

✓ **Application of new technologies**

The application of new technologies and sciences in the academic libraries will be necessary in this postmodern era in order to optimized its collections, taxonomic and other curatorial functions for examples Libsys, Libsoft, CDS/ISIS,KOHA ,SOUL, Winisis, Greenstone, DSpace, Eprint tools would be expected to measures up to the requirements of the performances of operations in postmodern period.

✓ **Human machine**

In postmodern era, the academic librarians is a "human-machine" which is a physical being engaging in meaningful human interactions with students, researchers, scholars, lecturers and the whole academic community.

✓ **Artificial intelligence**

Artificial intelligence is sometimes called machine intelligence, it is the intelligence demonstrated by machine, in the contrast to the natural intelligence displayed by humans

Challenges of postmodern library

The parading shift to postmodern era is a wakeup call that enables a clearer understanding of knowledge to be developed. Therefore, knowledge may no longer be accumulated and localized in a library as it was formally done. The challenge associated with the academic library in postmodern era has itemized by Owen (1998), LeMonie (2012) and Yoder (2003) highlights as follows:

▪ **Funding**

For postmodern library to be actualized there is need to be heavily funded and ensure that a high level of technological based capability is developed in academic libraries, but in today recession all over the palaces cut across all sectors in Nigeria affected libraries of any kind especially academic library, therefore funding is major challenge militating against postmodern library in Nigeria.

▪ **No experts**

Another problem identify with this postmodern period is that, librarian cannot present themselves as experts by embracing relativism and denying universal truth, interpreting this, postmodernism deny any notion of an experts in librarianship, however, if there is no absolute truth, how could an experts claim to know what is right for all information seekers and users.

▪ **Hierarchy control**

Postmodern resists hierarchy and control found in classification and cataloguing system, librarians using their subject headings, collects names and organized their objects, there is little or no flexibly in library

organization, rather there is consistency across the board.

Technophobia

This deals with fear of handling information communication technologies devices especially among librarians adapting to changes of new technological campaign is very difficult, if not it will take more time to adapts from traditional ways of doing thing in the library, technophobia is a general syndrome affecting academic library and librarians in this postmodern era.

- Postmodern argued that, in traditional library activities, collections building has been according to the laws and structures of classification. Librarians follow the proper format already established and any variance was usually looked at as poor procedure.
-
- Research findings produced on paper becoming prohibitively expensive as the demand for them decrease with the development of direct electronic through postmodern era.

- The cost of library materials on their own are now accelerating reality and are threating by and increasing percentage, the provision of fund available for purchase of information materials need to maintain services viable level.
- Postmodern library put the role of traditional references services in doubt, questions to google has replaced questions to reference librarians, some say reference is dead, never to recover again, while others think it can adapts under a new set of feature and services.

- Finally, challenges finds in this paper are: lack of interest by librarians to adapt to new system, inadequate fund to training librarians for new techno trend for postmodern period and outdated ICT facilities.

Skills required for postmodern Librarians

The postmodern librarians should be able to do the following according to Ekoja (2019) in paper presented at the Sixth (6th) Mandatory Conference and induction of Certified Librarians in Nigeria:

- open a file on a computer;
- save a computer document or file;
- delete a computer document or file;
- draw pictures by using mouse;
- print computer document or file;
- scroll a document up and down;

- create or edit a document;
- transfer files and copy a file from a CD,
- get into the Internet,
- copy/download files from the Internet,
- attach a file to an e-mail message,
- download music from Internet and,
- Write and send e-mail,
- use a database
- create a presentation and use a spread sheet
- use a software and get rid of computer viruses
- create a multimedia presentation
- construct a webpage and
- Create a computer program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Postmodern era in academic library, prospect and challenges has been laude. The postmodernists see the cyborg libraries as academic libraries becoming a human machine. The cyborg librarians is the interface between the library and its users and the vast potential of technological re-organisation of the postmodern world, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Librarians should change their perception/perspective towards idea of postmodern libraries that is (ICT tools)
2. Librarians should embrace ICT more through the use of online resources including massive, opened online courses.(MOOCS)
3. Library authorities should provide funds for training of staff in these postmodern trend
4. More staff are needed to be employed or redeployed to the digital library so that the work load will reduce to enable staff development
5. Provision of current ICT resources and facilities in academic libraries
6. Concept of DIY should be emphasize and encouraged among library staff when it comes to use of ICT devices to meet up with postmodern trend.

CONCLUSION

With postmodern era, many other ideas presented in this paper also reveals what a postmodern library looks like, cataloguing, classification and structure of the past are not needed today as they once were. The libraries like many institutions whether they are educational, political, religion, academic or public is slow to response to change. But the library is in better shape than most as its very nature in service to its patron based on their needs and perspectives. The paper concludes on this note that, library is one of the

societies great good place which is distinctive and necessary social place to meet, discuss and interact outside the constraint of where they might work or live. Many academic libraries seeks to remake themselves into lively place where people can come and visit in postmodern era and ICT tool should be the watchword of library and librarians and they should admits and support this new trend of postmodern library, which is paperless. Finally, librarians should take cognizant that digital, hybrid, visual and e-library i.e postmodern library has come to stay for real and there is need to embrace it to support the parent institution to serve the users to its fullness.

REFERENCES

Abubakar B (2011). Academic Libraries in Nigeria in the 21st Century. *Lib. Phil. and Prac*. Retrieved May 1, 2019 from: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/446.

Albert B (1992). *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* Chicago: Chicago Press, pp 34-35.

Casson L (2002). Libraries in the Ancient World. Yale University Press,pp 23-24.

Dalley. S (1989) Myths from Mesopotamia. Oxford University Press, pp 45-46

Dave M (1999) "Towards a Postmodern Context for Information and Library Education," *Edu. for Infor.Res.* 17, 1 pp 4.

Ebbitt K (2015). Five Ways Libraries Are Changing In the Digital Age. Retrieved May 1,2019 from:https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/five-ways-libraries-are-changing-in-the-digital-ag/

Ekoja I (2019). Enhancing Capacities for Digital Librarianship: An overview A Paper Presented at Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria the Mandatory Conference of *Certified Librarians in Nigeria* on 25th November, 2019 at the Public Service Institute of Nigeria Auditorium.pp8-9

Frank, D. (2004) Effective Leadership in Postmodern

Science/Technology Libraries. *Sci & Tech. Lib.*, 24(3/4) Retrieved from EBSCO*host*. Pp4-5

Krasner B (2010). "Survivor: The History of the Library". *His. Mag.* Retrieved June 14th, 2019.from: http://www.history-magazine.com/libraries.html

LeMoine, B (2012) Nailing Jelly to the Wall: Understanding Postmodernism's Influence on Library Information Science, *Lib Phil and Prac.* Retrieved August 2nd 2019 from: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/701.

Maclay K (2003). Clay cuneiform tablets from ancient Mesopotamia to be placed "University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved May1, 2019.from http//berkeley.edu/news/media/releases2003/05/06_table.shtm

Oppenheim C & Smithson D (1998). What is the hybrid library, retrieved November13, 2019 From: http://journals.sagepub.com

Owen S (2013). The Academic Research Library in The Postmodern Era, Aus. Acad. & Res. Libr. 19:2, Retrieved August,2 2019 from: DOI:10.1080/00048623.1988.10754617

Rasmussen, C., & Jochumsen, H. (2007).Problems and Possibilities: the Public Library in the Borderline between Modernity and late Modernity. *Lib. Quart.*77(1), Retrieved May 1 2029. From EBSCO*host*.

Ray k (2001). The Postmodern Library in an Age of Assessment: Denver, Colorado ACRL Tenth National Conference.pp67

Renfrew, Colin (2008) Pre-history the Making of the Human Mind, New York: Modern Library.

Rick C (1999) "Postmodernism," *Jour. of Min. and Theo.* (Baptist Bible College) spring.pp87.

Roberts, J (1997) A Short History of the World. Oxford University Press. Retrieved May 1, 2019 from : https://books.google.com/books?id=3qzxvhgwhac&pg=pa35

Thomas C (1995) The Death of Modernity, in *the Challenge of Postmodernism*, (ed.) David Dockery Wheaton: Bridge Point pp89-92

Yoder, A. (2003).The cyborg librarian as interface: Interpreting postmodern discourse on Knowledge construction, validation, and navigation within academic libraries. *Por. Lib. & the Acad*, 3(3).