**Prompt**

Aaron Lansky has noble reasons for saving Yiddish literature, both real and virtual.  And, you've shared your opinions on how he might react to Jason Merkoski's digital revolution.  Yet Merkoski admits in his book that eventually there will be a disconnect in authentic reproduction between print books and their e-counterparts.  So, consider that if we recognize that there is a "world culture" of books and reading held in common, which would be just one element of our globalized existence, where, when, and how will this disconnection take place, according to Merkoski?  Education in Third World nations? The ability of libraries - both general public ones and university/scholarly libraries - throughout the world to provide legitimate texts?  Will all of this eventually lead to a misinformed understanding of culture and heritage?

Examine Merkoski carefully in this regard, providing supporting quotes from his book.  Additionally, explore one library in another part of the world (i.e., non-United States and Canada) and what it is doing to share its holdings, both traditionally and innovatively.  Please note that each of you must select a different library so you will have to read each other's posts to avoid duplication.  For your outside source, provide the full url or bibliographic citation.

**Response**

Based on Merkoski’s thoughts on this topic, I think that the disconnect between digital and print or “physical” books will be on an entirely technological scale. We are fast approaching a point at which books will not be printed and will be put directly into digital format. Merkoski dedicates an entire chapter to the “superbook,” a kind of Facebook for books that will contain every book ever created (Merkoski, p. 134). These books will be linked via hyperlinks. Immediately, as a science student, my first thought is that this will allow citations and bibliographies to be much more quickly accessed; indeed, Merkoski mentions this in chapter (p. 135).

However, despite the accessibility of books through such a medium, I see one possible downside: a blurring of cultural lines. This is not necessarily a bad thing; diversity allows for thoughtful discussion and debate over every issue, past and present. However, what we begin to see is something like what Aaron Lansky discovered. Eventually, the younger generations, those that did not experience any cultural divide, will forget that they have a unique culture. Instead, they will become, in a sense, acclimated or assimilated. Merkoski mentions a push to make ebooks more globalized (p. 141). The problem is, every translator changes the writing to fit his or her own ideas and interpretations (Merkoski, p. 144). This can lead to very severe misunderstandings between nations and cultures. The blurring of these cultural boundaries, while allowing for the exchange of ideas, is also eliminating some of the cultural history of younger generations.

However, several libraries and institutions in Asia are working to preserve both their cultural heritage and the integrity of the translations as much as possible. The National Library of China has begun to create a National Digital Library of China, in order to preserve and disperse cultural histories and ideas to its people. The library is not only attending to books and manuscripts, but also taking on the role of preserving cultural landmarks and buildings, such as relics and statues from the Zhou and Han Dynasties. I also came across a document of the International Preservation News, which details events in various Asian countries (including China, India, and Japan) that move toward cultural preservation and rediscovery.

National Library of China: <http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/cdnlao/meetings/pdf/report_China1.pdf>

International Preservation News: <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/pac/ipn/ipn-59-60.pdf>