OSU Libraries Undergraduate Research Prize
Library Research Journal

Name: Clayton Caroon

Course Title/Qtr & Yr.: English 583: Special Topics in World Literature
Literatures of Oceania ~ Winter 2006

Title of Research Project: Snowflake Plate Tectonics, Fingerprint Pou
& Shrimp Cocoanut Curry; “as we passed by this way at play in the fields of the Lord…”

Journal Form

I have completed one example of the form offered below to show my understanding of the
suggested process. However for my particular project, I believe the separately attached research
journal format offers a more thorough understanding of my research process and the project born
of it.

Aspects of information needed

a) I would like to locate and research lengthy segments of spoken Maori Language offered in
digital or other audio formats.

Research log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 2/1/06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research tool: OSU University Library Catalog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search terms: Songs, Maori, Songs -- New Zealand, Tuhoe (New Zealand people) -- Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| useful resources (provide citations):


2. The songs : scattered pieces from many canoe areas / collected by Sir Apirana Ngata ; [translated and revised by Pei Te Hurinui]. Auckland, N.Z. : Auckland University Press, 2004 |
**Resources selected for my project**


**Reflection**

This is precisely what I have been looking for! Finding it with Kathy’s advice has taught me how to use the catalog more thoroughly. In the process of gathering the discs I visited the Music and Dance Library for the first time. I have returned twice sense and the holdings of the University library continues to expand to generously accommodate my research.

**Librarian Assistance**

**Research Planning:**

Librarian: Prof. / Lib. Kathy Dean  
Date: 2/1/06  
Comments: This was a very early entry and the above comments convey the nature of the research found and how it affected my project during that stage of progression.

**Research Review:**

Librarian: Kathy Dean  
Date: Jan. 4, 2006  
Comments: Clayton Caroon was referred to me by Nancy O’Hanlon. He had come to my office after speaking with Nancy about the Undergraduate Research Prize. Clayton said Nancy had referred him to me since I was the librarian for English Studies.

At this impromptu meeting, Clay surprised me with his curiosity for Maori literature. My surprise derived from a recent meeting I had had with Professor Chad Allen of the English department. I knew Prof. Allen was teaching literatures of Oceania, and that he had recently returned from New Zealand where he studied on a Fulbright scholarship. Prof. Allen’s specialization in native literatures of Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, and Native America had begun to expand my collection development activities to cover the literary output of those regions. And, I was particularly glad to see that Prof. Allen had a student as passionately interested as himself in indigenous literatures and wide-spread influences of colonization and decolonization.
As we talked, I tried to help Clay determine which of the course readings he would select for the assignment and what his focus might be for the paper he would write. Clay mentioned his interest in *Potiki* a work by author, Patricia Grace. Because winter quarter classes had just begun, understandably, Clay expressed uncertainty about the direction of his project. He was not yet familiar with Professor Allen’s own approach to Maori literature or pedagogy; and Clay had developed his own interpretations, which were informed by his experiences and readings of contemporary indigenous literatures.

From the beginning to the end of our first meeting, I had a strong sense that Clay was distinctly motivated by deep curiosity and a genuine interest in human experience and its expression through language and literature. I knew I was going to enjoy working with Clay, regardless of how incidental my part might become because of his apparent intelligence and motivating qualities.

We agreed to meet again in a month, which would give Clay time to become familiar with the direction Prof. Allen had for the course and course readings.

Librarian: Kathy Dean  
Date: February 1, 2006  
Comments: I met with Clayton at 2:30 this afternoon for about an hour and a-half. I preplanned the time with a general listing of print guides and databases, which I thought would help him explore possible directions. I talked with Clay about prescriptive language and how this understanding could further his searches in the resources available, particularly for primary works of the Pacific Island region and Maori authors and works in English.

Clay gave me a copy of the course syllabus and he talked quite a lot of his interest in Maori language, issues of translation of Maori works in English, and the compromising of the literary integrity and authenticity; hence a cultural identity. Broadly, Clay expressed deep concern for what he and others considered a threat to Maori culture, language, and identity caused and furthered by global dominance of the English language. Clay was also interested in finding audio recordings of Maori people speaking the Maori language. He felt his own hearing of the language would heighten his sense of the linguistic cadence of the Maori culture and enhance his reading of their texts.

At this point in our meeting, I knew Clay should speak with a subject specialist in Linguistics. I told him of Miriam Conteh-Morgan, her specialization in French and Linguistics, and of her own personal interests in postcolonial literatures. I promised to talk with Miriam about his project, her interest in working with him, and to arrange a meeting among the three of us.

During the remainder of the meeting time, I showed Clay how to search local catalogs and databases with a focus on locating primary texts and other sources and how to identify authoritative secondary sources for interpreting texts. I introduced him to WorldCat and the RLG catalogs with a focus on finding audio materials. I also introduced him to Interlibrary Services, as well as standard literary research guides and bibliographies such as, Harner’s *Literary*
I mean no exaggeration when I write: Clay is every librarian’s dream of a receptive student. He expressed genuine amazement at the resources available to him and he also was appreciative to learn methods and techniques that would further his search for knowledge. I knew Miriam Conteh-Morgan could provide the subject help Clay’s project would require. But, I also felt some disappointment that Clay’s focus had taken an anthropological and linguistic turn, which meant I would lose the opportunity to work with him on this project.

2/13/2006  
Comments: Miriam, Clay, and me had arranged to meet to discuss the direction of his research project, to identify relevant finding aids to language recordings, and to talk about the linguistic and literary intersections of the project. This meeting was rescheduled for 2/16 at 3pm.

2/16/2006  
Comments: Miriam and Clay meet. I did not make this meeting because of other obligations. From my talk with Miriam following her meeting with Clay, I knew he was stepping more deliberately into his research project with a much clearer direction. Miriam and I discussed at this point whether it was appropriate for me to stay involved in the project. I agreed to continue to help in ways I could, but I felt confident that Clay would need and rely more on Miriam’s expertise.

3/13/2006  
Comments: Miriam, Clay, and I meet for approximately an hour to review the finalization of the project, Clay’s experiences, and to determine what still needed done so that the paper would meet both course and prize requirements. Clay outlined his work for us. His main concern was aligning the research prize deadline with Prof. Allen’s expectations and timetable.

We kept in touch by email following the 3/13 meeting, Clay letting Miriam and I know of his progress.

Final Comments:  
It was both a pleasure and a privilege to work with Clay Caroon. As a learner, he exemplifies the power of curiosity. As a librarian, my experience with Clay teaches me to respect students’ curiosity and to foster it.
On the day my research began, I decided to visit the Ohio State University Main library to start plugging in key words and ideas from my title and thesis into internet search engines and the library catalog. Traveling through a hallway near the restrooms I noticed a posting for the Ohio State University Library Undergraduate research award. The posting delighted me. I felt, as mentioned on the posting, that even if I did not win the prize, my research would benefit from the process of working closely with a librarian. I stood for a moment in the hall looking at the posting and then decided to gently knock on the office door on which the posting was taped. I spoke briefly about the contest with the librarian inside. She inquired about my idea for the project and after a few sentences of conversation she recommended that I meet Prof./Lib. Kathy Dean. I briefly asked a few logistical questions about the contest to be sure I understood its parameters correctly and then I thanked the librarian and walked back out into the library. (In hindsight I would like to know her name, though because I did write it down, I unable to offer it here.)

Walking back past the circulation desk and then the stair case, I pondered the good luck of finding out about such a contest. I sat down briefly at a desk and let my knapsack rest beside my chair. I found myself thinking the research through, and considering how to offer such a project to a librarian and academic whom I had never met. Not an easy task. It occurred to me that with the size of OSU’s student body, Prof./Lib. Dean may have already accepted another student’s project and that I should meet her soon to avoid being shut out by other students. I prepared a vocalizable thesis-style introduction to my ideas for the project and I went to Prof. Dean’s office. Enjoyably, Prof. Dean was working in her office when I knocked.

I met Prof/Lib. Miriam Counteh-Morgan two weeks later upon Prof./Lib. Dean’s recommendation. Each greeted the project with thoughtful enthusiasm. I felt they had each been very approachable and also patiently respectful as I articulated a project that was still quite new.
to me. After meeting with each, I felt I had indeed met two research oriented individuals who posed the kind of questions that both assisted my research to expand and also enabled me to view the project in thought provokingly-beneficial ways. As a budding scholar, to encounter professional academics interested in my research / work, not only as a finished project, but as a process; and who also offer their assistance, is a truly enjoyable and nourishing experience. It is in many ways empowering to be heard and respected as a budding scholar, and in hindsight their willingness to listen respectfully was interpreted by me as a form of welcoming to the halls of academia. The sun does indeed shine brighter on such days, and bags of books are much easier to carry.

Within a week I was into my first 15 books. I had located digital materials in the libraries collections that assisted me to watch films made by people indigenous to Hawaii and Aotearoa / New Zealand. Also I had accomplished one of the primary research objectives for which I had originally enlisted Prof. Deans assistance. During one of our meetings I asked for her assistance to learn how to locate sound recordings of the Maori language. My own initial searches had only brought me in contact with linguistic chunks and utterances. However, to prove that the patterns of indigenous oral literature and creation stories were indeed present in the Oceanic literature now published in English, it would be necessary to locate lengthy segments of spoken Maori for audio research. Prof. / Lib. Dean assisted me to understand some underlying principles of how information is organized upon the OSU libraries web pages. I soon located two sets of audio recordings held by the Music and Video Library ( Check) which gave me access to a audio text to study. *The Songs : Scattered Pieces from Many Canoe Areas / collected by Sir Apirana Ngata; [translated and revised by Pei Te Hurinui],* distributed by the University of Auckland included not only oral, audio text but also lengthy introductions and commentaries in both the English and Māori languages.

With audio texts to analyze, I gathered other samples of Pacific literature from both the OSU library and also through Ohio Link. For the other side of my research, I gathered texts which explored English grammar, syntax and semantics. I soon developed a scaffold of ideas that I mingled with research drawn from academic studies of both the Maori language, and also English language usage in Aotearoa / New Zealand and Oceania.

I continued to gather more research materials as I also began to draft. With gentle additions and revisions I soon developed a core text which I have placed within the introduction
to main text. While drafting I began to find materials that led me to study Post-Colonial Studies, Linguistics, and texts that considered the processes of translating texts and materials from one language to another. At the same time I amassed and began to read a collection of materials that negotiated the role of English in International settings and also how it is taught in those settings.

It occurs to me here that though I have thus far said little about my meetings with Prof. /Lib. Miriam Counteh-Morgan. By this time in the development of my research project, our work together was blossoming. Through her I became familiar with Alistair Pennycook and Braj B. Kachru. Also, she was only the second person I had ever met, (Dr. Chadwick Allen being the first) who recognized Ngũgi Wa Thiong'o by name. During our meetings she patiently listened as I tried to explain how his work had begun to affect my project. It was also with Mrs. Conteh-Morgan that I had my first conversations about the research and writings of Linda Tuhiwai Smith. I can still easily recall to mind the patient way she would listen as I drew together my freshest ideas, gathered from the works these authors into my own frameworks and patterns. She would gently nod when I would break off to scrawl some quick notes. My ideas during those meetings were frequently incomplete and unpolished and though I would later learn she knew the texts quite well, she let me find them for myself. She did not rush my understanding of the texts, and I grew during our meetings.

Likewise, Dr. Allen was very generous with his time and experience. The class discussions which opened during the Eng. 583 course also tempered my research project. Listening to the classes’ ideas and misunderstandings and surprisingly real understandings of the Post Colonial issues facing Pacific writers and the region itself, gave me some sense of how other people came to hold the information my research was beginning to digest. Though these early times frequently felt very solitary. I found few other academics that were familiar with the texts I was considering, and I must say that I often felt I had traveled off the map and into unchartered regions. Many of the faculty I knew from previous classes were predominately familiar with European or American literature. I began to realize the dominance of European centered English and education was a reality.

This is another reason why Prof. / Lib. Dean and Conteh-Morgan were very important to my project. Though they did not specialize in Pacific literature or Post Colonial studies, they listened as I began to. They respectfully listened to my ideas and when possible, (and with their combined library expertise it was frequently possible) to offer new direction in library research. I
learned how to specialize my searches, to find digital or audio media. They reminded me about Ohio link and the variety of research data bases available through the OSU library web pages. Prof./Lib. Dean introduced me to World Cat. When I asked question they did not know, they followed up on them. They kept e-mail regular e-mail correspondence with me and when I was distant, they respect that also. I met with them separately and occasionally together, and in each environment they comfortably functioned as patient and friendly collaborative researchers and their assistance was invaluable to my project.

Perhaps because they were not required to act educators responsible for grading my progress, they were able to work with me rather than direct me. This was essential for my development as a scholar. That I be given opportunity to think, explore and express the project as I felt it, grew with it and chose to shape it. This is research rather than exercise. Opportunities that allow and encourage young scholars to exist beyond the exercises that are taught and graded are one of the primary means of how scholars develop, rather than mimic or follow. Joining existing conversations in indeed important, however, there is much yet in our world and academic community that is yet established, and to negotiate such material one must explore rather than follow.

I am careful to also state that when I made the big decisions in my research, I made them of my own accord. It plagued me for days and then weeks that because I shifted to the genre of drama Prof. /Lib. Dean and Morgan, and also Dr. Allen would challenged or even held accountable for my actions. I recall standing in front of the large statue in front of the Main Library, ( something I often do; there is great power in that figure, draped in the regalia of academia and towering over all who stand before him) and I wondered if the contest could handle my submission. I imagined someone asking ask, “Why did you let him do that? He had something going that was legible and then it just turned into…” The missing adjectives can be filled by anyone who wishes to disagree with the project. I on the other hand have decided that the project was a great success.

Through this project I gained deeper understanding the issues and the conversation of them and how it directly relates to my chosen career. I have learned them early enough to realize that the field is broad and I have opportunities and choices about how I prepare for my future as a researching language educator. I have assembled a powerful and deeply valuable bibliography that has given me both knowledge of the ongoing academic conversations within my chosen
field, and has also assisted my to develop ideas for either an honors thesis and/or my graduate level work. As I continue my university studies the project and what I gathered from it will also continue to ripen. In the future this project and its bibliography will become part of the foundation for my work with curriculum development and language education studies.

I have been able to recognize my limitations as an undergraduate writer and I answered those limitations by undertaking a study of genre, format and language. I realized the project could have been limited to much fewer resources, tailored toward or away the perspectives discovered. The opportunity to allot extended time towards this project felt really good. I found myself living among books. My environment became the project and the inquiry into learning. The expression of the research expanded with in me. I came to know language intimately. A rich place indeed. It was so very nice to feel good going forward in the creation of knowledge and meaning. The project changed how and why I approached language studies and research, and it strengthened my resolve.

It was not an easy choice to shift genres. Standard Received Pronunciation and rigid literary formats have created a wide series of expectations for academic writing and the will to make meaning. I became quite concerned that my decisions would be answered with an over simplified misunderstanding on the part of the readers that failed to exert an effort to understand my process or product. Dr. Allen was supportive of thoughtful scholarship. He listened to my ideas for the assignment and welcomed the project.

During classes he encouraged the students to feel comfortable while speaking and participating in the classes discussions. I began to include the knowledge gained from my project to invite student to share their perspectives on the role of an English academic cannon in university curriculums and how this affects what students learn. It wasn’t planned, as live conversations go. Dr. Allen was introduced to these ideas, as the student were- on the cuff, in flowing class discussion. I found Dr. Allen to speak honestly and engaging of the idea and the pedagogical movements of open conversation opened among the students. I remember a girl in the front row who wrinkled her nose when I suggested that Albert Wendt’s writing, and the courses he taught in Aotearoa /New Zealand were decolonizing the International Academic English cannon. There was a long pause in the room. I find it rather sit-com like in my memories, the nose being wrinkled and the silent room. I began to think how I explain such an idea in merely a few sentences. A guy two rows over took a drink of from his water bottle.
Nothing. Waiting in silence. Looking around, I notice other than Dr. Allen, no one is making eye contact with me. I knew Dr. Allen was leaving the floor open for students to peak, however for this particular idea, there were no takers. It was not the kind of discourse these people wanted to have. After Dr. Allen and I spoke further about the role of an English academic cannon in university curriculums, a brief class discussions opened.

Occasionally reactionary ideas were flung back from classmate’s flustered ideologies irritated by indigenous perspectives. Colonial discourse and the subtleties of believing indigenous people are primitive came fourth from a few students still learning to share the world. Finding similar echoes during my project in a large body of research gathered by a predominately European centered academy was another aspect of negotiating research. There came upon me an image of generations of Pacific peoples reading the Bible and British literature. I realized that the despite the emergence and availability of quality Pacific Literature, there was still academic aim for the British- English Canon and Standard Received Pronunciation. Therefore, Pacific people have been largely offered a model of an ‘other’ nationality, one separate from them to aspire to linguistically. The writings used in there schools may in no way reflect Pacific culture or values. It is possible Pacific people are offered little more than a body of literature drawn from the writings of Shakespeare and other white European men.

The lack of interest shown by students upon the introduction of such ideas was one of the primary factors for my concerns about how to write about my research project. I recall one day listening to *The Songs : Scattered Pieces from Many Canoe Areas / Collected by Sir Apirana Ngata* offered in English and translated from Māori by an native Māori speaker. Then later the same afternoon listening to an irritated student barter back and fourth will a stylized “us and them” conversation. He would make sweeping statements about a ‘them’ (the indigenous people of Hawai’i) and then another wide countering generalization about an ‘us’ (which never failed to manipulate to reinforce his perspective). Listening to his discourse, I filtered it with my research. I listen to the rhetoric and pattern of his argument. From this analysis I deeply considered how to write to an audience to which he belonged. Perhaps my project does this, and perhaps it does not. Perhaps the project does it for me; it decolonizes my own mind. Perhaps this is the starting point of true understanding, and from such places grows authentic scholarship.

Coming to terms with all of this brought fourth a sense of self scholarship and integrity that is not calculatable externally.
When I chose to write to the developments of my research, rather than ignoring those developments and writing inside the lines of my previous familiarities or writing to my own ideas of what the contest would judge favorably, I won something that cannot be awarded. I developed an understanding my own sense of personal scholastic integrity. Thank you for reading my entry and becoming part of this research endeavor.