PROGRESSIVE LIBRARIAN
A Journal for Critical Studies & Progressive Politics in Librarianship

Issue #32                              Winter/Spring 2009

Libraries & Memory: Beyond White Privilege 101
Archival Landscape
Theory & Politics in Public Librarianship
Boom or Bust – Senior Services
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Progressive Librarian #32  
Winter/Spring 2009

## ARTICLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libraries &amp; Memories: Beyond White Privilege 101</td>
<td>George Lipsitz</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Landscape: Archives &amp; Human Rights</td>
<td>Graham Stinnett</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory &amp; Politics in Public Librarianship</td>
<td>Jason Burton</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boom or Bust: The Need for Senior Services Librarians</td>
<td>Katelyn Angell</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is Power in a Union – 2008-2009</td>
<td>Kathleen de la Peña McCook</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## BOOK REVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reviewer</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True Enough: Learning to Live in a Post-Fact Society</td>
<td>Seth Kershner</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Secrecy: Classic and Contemporary Readings</td>
<td>Peter McDonald</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning Library Neutrality: Essays from Progressive Librarian</td>
<td>Toni Samek</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## DOCUMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Free Choice Act, Statement</td>
<td>Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director, ALA Washington Office</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Living Wage Resolution, Passed by ALA-APA Council, July 15, 2008

Introducing CIRL: Community of Industrial Relations Librarians

Resolution Concerning ALA Policy Opposing Sweatshop Labor & Supporting Union Businesses

ALA Task Force Member Survey on Policy 61. “Library Services for the Poor”

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS
Progressive Librarian #32

LIBRARIES & MEMORIES: BEYOND WHITE PRIVILEGE 101

by George Lipsitz

Red Cliff Lake Ojibwe activist Walter Bresette found it remarkable that white Americans had such great libraries but such poor memories. He felt that with the Ojibwe it was the reverse, that they had virtually no libraries, but possessed great memories. Bresette’s observations grew out of his valiant efforts to implement the spearfishing rights guaranteed to the Ojibwe people in a treaty signed in 1847 but not honored until the 1980s. He wondered how a people with some of the best libraries in the world could know so little about the past, while the impoverished Ojibwe knew their history very well.

Of course, the Ojibwe gift for memory was no better or worse than that of whites. Native Americans remembered their treaty rights because they were essential to their survival as a people. White Americans with good libraries conveniently “forgot” about the rights ceded to the Ojibwe and others because they profited from refusing to implement them. Race and racism are matters of interests as well as of attitudes. They concern property as well as pigment.

As Cornel West observes, it is fundamentally depressing to confront the degree to which race still matters in our society. Although the civil rights movement of the 1960s secured important and lasting victories, people from different races still confront starkly unequal access to housing and health care, to education and employment. As much as one might hope to find gradual and ever increasing progress for social justice, in many ways things have stayed the same. Malcolm X used to say that if you stick a knife nine inches in my back and then pull it out nine inches, you cannot call that progress. It would not even be progress if you pulled the knife all the way out, because the wound would still have to heal. Moreover, Malcolm added, some people do not even admit that the knife is there.

Biologists and anthropologists now agree that dividing humanity into different races is fabricated and fraudulent; racial categories are scientific fictions. Yet scientific fictions can become social facts with deadly consequences. Malcolm used to say that racism was like a Cadillac, they make a new model every year. Just as it is impossible to fix a 1990s Cadillac with a 1960s owner’s manual, we will not address the racism of the 1990s and beyond with a 1960s philosophy and approach. Our challenge is to
develop a civil rights vision appropriate to our own time, to the challenges presented to us by the injustices inscribed in our everyday lives through racial inequality.

A broad range of private prejudices and public policies keep racism alive and functioning in our society, not so much through the direct, snarling, and referential racism of groups like the Ku Klux Klan, but more through the indirect, institutional, and inferential racism encoded within what I call the possessive investment in whiteness. In my view, the possessive investment in whiteness creates the racialized hierarchies of our society. It determines which families receive home loans and which families remain renters, whose children attend well-funded schools and whose children go to overcrowded underfunded institutions with inexperienced teachers and inadequate equipment. It determines which people breathe polluted air, ingest lead in their blood streams, or eat fish poisoned by mercury and which people are by and large protected from environmental hazards. It determines who can rely on inside information and personal networks to secure one of the eighty-five percent of all available jobs that are never listed in the classified ads and who will remain unemployed or underemployed. It helps shape the tax code in such a way as to give favored treatment to precisely the kinds of income that rest upon the fruits of past and present discrimination, allowing white parents to pass on unearned advantages to their children.

The persistence of residential segregation, educational inequality, environmental racism, and employment discrimination makes a mockery of the promises of fairness and equality inscribed within civil rights laws. It means that members of aggrieved racial groups experience their racial identities through impediments to the accumulation of assets that appreciate in value. People of color confront disproportionate obstacles to acquiring education, marketable skills, and job training. They face unparalleled exposure to health risks. Their racial identities confine them to the segments of the labor market where it is most difficult to bargain over their wages and working conditions. They face scrutiny and discipline from law enforcement officials, educators, and cultural brokers intent on restricting their cultural and political expressions. They are not so much disadvantaged as taken advantage of. At the same time, their unearned disadvantages structure unearned advantages for whites.

The possessive investment in whiteness is not simply a product of the past, the legacy of conquest, genocide, slavery, and segregation. Rather, it is a reality renewed every day through a broad span of practices ranging from urban renewal and freeway construction to discriminatory zoning and home loan policies, from the weaknesses and non-enforcement of civil rights laws to tax laws that give favored treatment to money made from past and present forms of discrimination while inhibiting inter-generational transfers of wealth within communities of color. The possessive investment in whiteness is about assets as well as attitudes; it is about property as well as pigment. It does not stem primarily from personal acts of prejudice by
individuals but from shared social structures that make some people’s lives worth more than other people’s lives.

In many ways, these grim realities confirm the wisdom of that great Willie Nelson song “Three Days” where Willie sings that we have only three days in our lives filled with tears and sorrow. Yet those three days are yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Our problems did not start yesterday and no matter how hard we work, they will not be solved tomorrow. St. Louis community organizer Ivory Perry used to say that being for social justice in this society was like being in love with someone who is not in love with you. You see how it could all work out, but the object of your love is just not buying it. This can be depressing indeed. Yet it is not depressing to realize that there are people of all races committed to social change, people who believe that there is important work to be done and that it is up to us to do it.

Yet we need to confront the enormous depth, dimensions, and duration of white supremacy. Catherine MacKinnon observes that change is not slow, it is resistance to change that takes a long time. When it comes to the possessive investment in whiteness, resistance flows from an epistemology of ignorance. It is not just that people do not know what is easily available to them in all of our good libraries, but that they do not want to know.

For the most part, white people appear ignorant of the privileges they derive from the possessive investment in whiteness. Seventy percent of white respondents to one public opinion poll claimed that “African Americans have the same opportunities to live a middle-class life as whites.” A National Opinion Research Council Report in 1990 disclosed that more than sixty percent of whites felt that Blacks suffered from unemployment and inadequate housing because of their own lack of will power. There is reason to believe that even these figures are too optimistic, that white responses to poll takers reveal more generosity than the actual behavior of whites in everyday life. Leonard Steinhorrm points to one poll where eighty percent of whites asserted that they have close personal friends who are Black. Yet for this to be true it would have to mean that “every American black, even those most isolated from whites, has five or six close white friends,” certainly an unlikely prospect. Similarly, another poll found that only six percent of whites identified themselves as prejudiced against Blacks. Yet nearly half of African American respondents reported direct experiences with racial discrimination within the previous thirty days. As Christopher Doob notes, if both responses are reliable “that small percentage of whites must have remained very busy solidifying their racist reputations.”

The possessive investment in whiteness can be combated, but only by changing our way of thinking about civil rights. For the most part, racial injuries in our society do not stem from aberrant acts by individual racists, but rather they originate from the indirect, inferential, institutional,
and systemic skewing of opportunities and life chances along racial lines. Whiteness is the most subsidized identity in our society; the most powerful identity politics are those that protect the value of whiteness. White advantages come from favoritism, not fitness, fortitude, or family formations.

In her exemplary study of racial attitudes among white college students, Karyn McKinney documents the tactics that whites use to deny that privileges accrue to them through the possessive investment in whiteness. She reports that when her students read Peggy McIntosh’s generative work on the taken-for-granted privileges that white people enjoy daily because of their race, the students zero in only on the micro-level privileges McIntosh identifies. They agree that it would be annoying to be unable to find “flesh colored” bandages that match their skin tones and that they would not like being followed by suspicious security personnel when they enter a department store. Yet they do not address the structural side of McIntosh’s examples, evading their privileged access to employment, education, housing, and health care. Instead, they complain that “reverse discrimination” against whites makes their race a liability, and that the society in which they live delivers unfair gains and unjust rewards to communities of color.

McKinney’s students should not be blamed for their unwillingness to face facts. As James Baldwin noted in another context, the entire history of the Republic has conspired to keep the truth from them. Ignorance has its costs, however. By failing to reckon with the rewards that come to them as a result of racial privilege, whites prevent themselves from seeing how privilege actually works in this society, how increasingly undemocratic and unequal their country has become. White workers and professionals eager to police the boundaries of whiteness against challenges from aggrieved communities of color do not see the systematic nature of inequality in their own lives. Whites who feel compelled by self-interest and ideology to defend racial inequality are poorly positioned to understand or critique class, gender, and regional inequalities that disadvantage them.

Most African Americans know all too well something that the students do not know, that past and present structural forces shape their lives. Blacks are not likely to number themselves among the forty-six million Americans today who can trace the origins of their family wealth to the Homestead Act of 1862, because almost all of that land was allocated to whites through restrictions expressly designed to deny access to blacks. They cannot include themselves among the major beneficiaries of the trillions of dollars of wealth accumulated through the appreciation of housing assets secured by federally insured loans between 1932 and 1962 because ninety-eight percent of FHA loans made during that era went to whites via the openly racist categories utilized in the agency’s official manuals for appraisers. Most blacks know that past discrimination continues to influence contemporary struggles to accumulate assets because wealth is inherited and passed down across generations. In recent years, moreover,
changes in the tax code have further skewed opportunities and life chances along racial lines by giving favored treatment to those forms of income most likely to represent the fruits of past and present discrimination like inheritance income and capital gains, while lessening the value of income gained through work. The living legacy of past discrimination combines with the impact of contemporary discriminatory practices in mortgage lending, real estate sales, automobile credit financing, and employment to impose artificial impediments against asset accumulation among African Americans.

Racism itself is an injury. Unequal access to home ownership has important health consequences. Access to a limited housing market makes members of aggrieved racial groups more likely than whites to live in communities with toxic hazards and less likely to have access to medical treatment. Whether insured or not, people of color receive fewer preventive medical services than whites. They do not get flu shots, cancer screening, heart bypass surgery, angioplasty, or eye care to the degree that they would if they were white. One out of every four African American mothers in 1999 received no prenatal care during the first trimester. Only twenty-six percent of elderly Blacks were vaccinated against pneumonia in 1998, while fifty-two percent of elderly whites received the pneumonia vaccine. One out of every four African American children between the ages of nineteen and thirty-five months did not receive their recommended vaccinations in 1999.

African Americans suffer onerous consequences – like limb amputation or radical cancer surgery – from this pattern of delayed medical attention to a much greater degree than is true of members of more privileged groups. The Office of Minority Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that the death rate among Blacks due to diabetes is more than double the rate for whites, that African Americans face a thirty percent greater likelihood of dying from heart disease compared to whites, that whites are forty percent less likely to die from strokes as Blacks are, that Blacks have a thirty percent greater chance of dying from cancer than whites. Black men have the highest age adjusted incidence of cancer and mortality of all groups of men, and life expectancy overall is six years less for Blacks than life expectancy for whites.

Moreover, being on the receiving end of racism creates intense and constant stress, boosts the risks of depression, anxiety, and anger, producing or aggravating heart disease. A British study found people who suffered from discrimination were twice as likely to develop psychotic episodes. Harvard researchers calculate a 1% increase in racist incidents translates to an increase of 350 deaths per 100,000 African Americans. Investigators at the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago contend that repeated exposure to discrimination can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease for African American women. Camara Jones of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that during childhood blood pressure rates of Blacks and whites show no differences. But as adults, Black blood pressure increases. It drops at night for whites but not for blacks. Jones attributes this pattern to the stress caused by racism. Her research shows that nearly
fifty percent of Blacks report that they think about race at least once a day, but whites rarely, if ever, think about race. “It’s the little things that count,” Jones observes, “like being treated differently by a store clerk. Each event may be insignificant, but the repetition builds up.”

Race also affects the quality of medical care. Members of “minority” groups get sicker and die younger than whites, regardless of social class. Black men in the U.S. can expect to die 7.1 years earlier than white men, to be 2.5 times more likely to die of heart disease than white women, to be twice as likely to die of cerebro-vascular disease as white men or white women. Increases in income do not necessarily produce increases in health; middle class African American men and women are more likely to suffer from hypertension and stress that those with lower incomes.

Impoverished African American children in cities across the country live in dwellings with lead-based paint on interior and exterior walls, exposing them to the dangers of developing toxic levels of lead in their bloodstreams. National studies reveal that poor Black children have a far greater degree of contracting lead poisoning than poor white children. Among the working poor, Black youths are three times as likely to develop lead poisoning compared to their white counterparts. Medical authorities in St. Louis in 1998 discovered 1,833 new cases of childhood lead poisoning, and estimated that somewhere between twenty and twenty-five percent of local youths had toxic levels of lead in their bloodstreams – nearly six times the national average. In some Black neighborhoods the figure was closer to forty percent. Yet the city of St. Louis has only enough money to screen fewer than half of the children who need to be tested every year.

At every level, African Americans face systematic obstacles to asset accumulation, wealth, and health. Inheritance helps whites secure unearned advantages in the form of transformative assets that increase the wealth gap between the races. These workings of whiteness reveal the systemic and structural contours of inequality in the United States. Yet Karyn McKinney’s white college students discern no particular advantage to them for being white, and instead present a torrent of complaints about reverse racism and the penalties they imagine they confront for being white.

In this society, whiteness is not so much a color as a condition. It is a structured advantage that channels unearned gains and unjust enrichments to some people while imposing unfair impediments against the accumulation of assets that appreciate in value and can best be passed down across generations to others. Although not all whites benefit from the possessive investment equally, even the poorest of the poor among whites do not face the concentrated poverty and level of exposure to environmental hazards that routinely confront Blacks. To paraphrase James Baldwin, whiteness means that when you pledge allegiance to your country, you can rest assured that your country has pledged allegiance to you. Claire Jean Kim shows that whiteness persists even when white people are not present. In her study of conflict between Black residents of Brooklyn and the owners
of a grocery store owned by Korean immigrants, Kim shows how the national racial order pits these groups against each other to the benefit of whites.

If we are to address and redress the cumulative, collective, and continuing consequences of the possessive investment in whiteness, we need to have both great libraries and great memories. We need to acknowledge that decisions about what libraries collect and how they make their collections available play an important role in what people know and what they do not know. We need to recognize that the privileges and exclusions that permeate U.S. society pervade the practices of libraries as well. We need to see that we have important work to do and that it is up to us to do it.

It is depressing to confront the degree to which race still matters in this society. Yet it is not depressing to join in the struggle for racial justice. We may not look or sound like the people who come to us pre-packaged as experts on race in the corporate media or the political system, but we have a role to play in deciding what will be remembered and what will be forgotten, who will be included and who will be excluded, who will speak and who is silenced. None of us chose our parents, but all of us are free to choose our politics and our principles. None of us chose our color, but all of us are free to choose our commitments. This is our time. We need to be on time, even if those around us seem to be late.

This article was delivered first as a presentation at the ALA conference in Anaheim, on June 29, 2008.
HUMAN RIGHTS AND ARCHIVES

by Graham Stinnett

Human rights and archives have a perpetual relationship, striding in front and behind one another throughout history. To state that human rights is indebted to archives, or vice versa, would oversimplify what has been a hard-fought evolution for both principled notions. These seminal foundations of society, both ethically and institutionally, can be seen as part and parcel of how we interpret our world. Both draw upon a documentary tradition, which carries into the future legacies of the past. In addition to this Westernized essential of documentation, human rights and archives have also experienced such intangibles as oral traditions, associated with indigenous cultures, and empathetic emotions embedded in human relationships. Though human rights and archives have made great strides in paving the way for democracy, challenges inevitably arise as history unfolds – often at the expense of memory and equality. From the Chinese occupation of Tibet to the fire-bombing of the Bosnian National Library, from oil pollution on indigenous lands in Ecuador to the torture of prisoners at Abu-Ghraib, challenges such as these force archives to reconceptualize their role as activists for the protection of human rights.

This essay will begin by discussing the contextual developments in history that have preceded the current academia on human rights and archives. By presenting a short history of human rights in the West followed by a brief history of progressive thinkers in the archival world, I can properly approach current gains that have been made. Following this narrative I will present the current discourse being developed around notions of human rights, activism and justice in the realm of archives. This essay will seek to portray a contextualized overview of human rights and archives. If portrayed correctly, a broad landscape, which bears the imprints of history, philosophy and politics, will open to the theoretical ground that archivists must walk. Ultimately, geographies of struggle, empathy and democracy will inform the agenda for human rights and archives.

Throughout history, humans have debated notions of rights. From ancient texts like the Bible, Quran and Hammurabi’s Code, notions of rights arose as privileges belonging to those of the human species, and thus the birth of universalism. However, the details of what these rights entailed became the task of religious, philosophic and political thinkers from one generation to the next. Human rights historian Micheline Ishay summarizes
this progression of the notions of rights, “History preserves the human rights record as each generation builds on the hopes and achievements of its predecessors while struggling to free itself from authoritarianism and improve its social conditions.”

Overwhelming, contemporary notions of human rights are founded in Eurocentric traditions. Due to the spread of mercantile capitalism from Europe, the secularization of religion with the Protestant Reformation and democratic revolutions of the 1700s, a European notion of human rights dominated and persisted up to the present day, regardless of their empowerment or disenfranchisement.

From an archival perspective, it is important to recognize the centrality of the record in the history of human rights. Three important documents of human rights have had the greatest impact on our present conception. Each of these documents retain their own contextual history, however two of them have a particularly similar circumstance: The United States Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789). The rights established by the Declaration of Independence provided for the articulation of rights to life, to liberty, to property, to manhood suffrage and the rights to rebel and create republican institutions. Though these rights were exclusively reserved for white landowning men, they nevertheless prompted international admiration for the colonial resistance to monarchs. Inspired in part by the U.S. movement, France underwent its own revolution thirteen years later and established a greatly expanded declaration of rights. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen guaranteed the principles of the revolutionary state: universal law, equal individual citizenship, and collective sovereignty of the people – bolstered in the slogan “Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité.”

Cultural historian Lynn Hunt emphasizes the revolutionary nature of this “peoples” document: “References to ‘men,’ ‘man,’ ‘everyman,’ ‘all men,’ ‘all citizens,’ ‘each citizen,’ ‘society,’ and ‘every society’ dwarfed the single reference to the French people.”

Overwhelmingly, liberal notions of universal rights were born out of revolutionary upheaval. However, the social and economic realities of these revolutionary ideas created horrific consequences as the industrial revolution made wage slaves of the peasantry and indentured servants of the colonized peoples. Opponents of capitalism in the 1800s argued for the rights of the working classes, woman suffrage and freedom from bondage for the slave. Karl Marx became recognized as the most noteworthy opponent of the realities born out of these revolutionary documents and bourgeois capital accumulation:

The right of property only guaranteed the right to pursue one’s own self-interest with no regard for others. The rights of man guaranteed religious freedom when what men needed was freedom from religion; they confirmed the right to own property when what was needed was freedom from property; they included the right to engage in business when what was needed was liberation from business.
The struggle for rights of the lower classes and the disenfranchised, articulated through socialism, contributed greatly to the opposition of liberal notions of individual self-fulfillment. The most noteworthy socialist battle for human rights in the 1800s occurred at the Paris Commune where like-minded thinkers demanded rights for the working classes, the development of workers cooperatives, reduction of working hours, free public education for all children, professional education for young workers, housing rights, women’s rights to equal pay for equal work and nurseries for single mothers. Though the Paris Commune of 1871 ended in the death of 15,000 protestors by the National Guard, these notions of human rights have also contributed greatly to this ever-evolving discourse.

The third document of significance, and most contemporary, in the evolution of human rights was born out of the ashes of World War II. The United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) was ethically grounded in the abhorrence to inhumane atrocities committed during the international conflict. This declaration, owing its clauses on human rights to the efforts of human rights non-governmental organizations (HRNGOs), furthered the liberal notion of universal rights with its first article stating: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” However, with the great-powers embarking on a cold war between capitalism and communism, human rights were promoted as by-products of these respective economic systems by those who espoused them. A third way between these two systems originated in anti-colonial struggles in the third world out of opposition to colonial domination, capitalist exploitation and Stalinist oppression. Prominent figures like Frantz Fanon, Ho Chi Minh, Jawaharlal Nehru and Ernesto “Ché” Guevara espoused the importance of cultural rights as a mainstay to defending against neo-colonial oppression. These struggles gave way to particularistic doctrines that observed rights to self-determination and the respect of indigenous cultures like the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1986).

With the victory of neo-liberalism over Soviet communism, and capitalism’s assault on the environment, labor and immigration as well as western culture’s global penetration, human rights, as an issue, are as prescient today as they ever were. As a memory institution, society depends upon archives to contextualize past, present and future histories, especially of those where rights have been denied, as well as those where rights have been respected and honored. With these historically grounded notions of human rights acting as the weathervane for the archival perspective, a discussion can begin of the progressive shift in archives.

Like human rights, archival thinking has also experienced its own history and evolution. As archival studies educator Professor Terry Cook states, “All acts of societal remembering, in short, are culturally bound and have momentous implications.” Also like human rights, archival thinking does not occur in a bubble; context shapes the changing notions and dominant
voices in the discourse. Beginning in the 1920’s Sir Hilary Jenkinson, the English founder of modern archival practice, depicted the archivist as an impartial defender of the record against time and interpretation. Jenkinson’s thinking promoted the notion that history is to be written by the victors, allowing records creators to appraise their own collections for “safe keeping.” Being highly steeped in what Cook calls “empirical positivism” of the late Victorian era, Jenkinson represented the elite, and as such exclusively maintained their records.

Jenkinsonian archival ideas remained the norm until U.S. archivist T.R. Schellenberg promoted the use-value of the record in the appraisal process. U.S. welfare-state policies during the 1930s, led by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal,” formed the context of Schellenberg’s statist ideals. Use-value became the primary importance in bringing records into the archives. These use-values, of both a primary and secondary nature, were dictated by the archivist in the vein of technocracy and efficiency. The incorporation of the archives with state mandates furthered a preservation of the hegemonic narrative by providing a state-sanctioned account of content-based history. As the welfare-state and Keynesian economics attempted to regulate society, archives continued to reinforce the status-quo up until the 1970s.

German archivist Hans Booms became one of the first to speak out against the inability of a statist archives to preserve a history that represented all sectors of society. Coming from (but rejecting) the German context of a highly authoritarian archival tradition beginning in the 1870s and proceeding on into the Cold War, Booms’ “Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources” spoke of the need for society and its collective values to define archival value rather than the state. Booms’ argument against the Marxist-Leninist archival approach is rooted in the ability of the individual to depend on both social institutions like the state as well as independence:

That the human being is bound to social structures is becoming obvious to us; but, at the same time, this means for us ‘neither absolute social determinism’ nor ‘absolute independence.’ We recognize that there exists a ‘peculiar relationship’ between the social conditioning of a human being and the possibilities arising out of his or her inner freedom; between an individual’s dependency on the powers of society and the dependency of society on the will and capacity of the individual. Only by recognizing this possibility for individual action is it worthwhile – given our basic view of the relationship between the individual and the whole – to investigate the role of the archivist in the formation of a documentary heritage as we have intended.

This approach, admittedly unable (nor attempting) to provide a purely capitalist-inspired alternative to that of the scientific Marxist approach, opened the way for a shift towards provenance and away from an appraisal
process based on the rigid state-based study of society or shifting trends in elite historiography. 

Canadian archival thinker Hugh Taylor played an integral part in depicting the role of the archivist as one that has deep relations with social issues. Taylor, an advocate of total archives and provenance, believed in the role of the archives as a cultural memory institution that stood as a critical foundation in society. The origins of the archivist as activist arguably can be located within Taylor’s publications. Such works as “Recycling the Past: The Archivist in the Age of Ecology,” “Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift?,” and “The Archivist, the Letter and the Spirit” attest to a re-conceptualizing of the role the archivist plays, not just in maintaining archives but in how they use their power to benefit the community. Taylor’s progressive understanding of the archives helped impact a new generation of archivists. Critical thinkers like Cook, Tom Nesmith and Helen Samuels incorporated Taylor’s thinking into their emphasis on postmodern archives of the 1980s, promoting a “vision of archives, one sanctioned in and reflective of society at large rather than one shaped primarily by powerful interest groups of either users or creators, or the state.”

Cook argues that archives of the current period have reached a breaking point with archives of old whereby they “are now of the people, for the people, even by the people.” Cook’s most prominent contribution to archives, the creation of macroappraisal, provides credence to the all-inclusive archives. In short, “the central theoretical tenet of macroappraisal is that the most sensitive part of... [citizen-state relationships], if appropriately researched and understood by archivists, will yield the clearest evidence of citizens, social dynamics, and public issues, and thus of ‘society.’” Nesmith’s contribution to the rediscovery of provenance and then into the articulation of the postmodern archives can be seen in many of his works on the mediating power of the archivist. The archivist becomes just as much a creator of the record as the initial inscriber based on the processes that archivists use in institutionalizing memory. This notion is also part of Samuels’ Orwellian perspective of “who controls the past, controls the future,” whereby a power is being exercised within the archives. The question remains of how to wield that power in an equitable way, primarily in documentation strategies and the retention of records. With postmodernism in archives, a notion that Cook defends as “[seeking] to emphasize the diversity of human experience by recovering marginalized voices in the face of such hegemony,” the historical notions of human rights become an integral context for addressing the archive of the “other.”

It must be recognized that the majority of archivists mentioned above are activists in their own right. Perhaps none explicitly discussed why the archivist belonged with those who stood with the U.S. founding fathers in 1775 or in France in 1789 or even at the Paris Commune in 1871. However, paving the way for those who have come after, so that ideas of human rights...
and archives can be discussed openly today, deserves recognition unto itself. With context being the archival mode of the day, the forebears of access to information and democratically driven representation in archives have shaped the current activist discourse.

One of the leading activists arguing for a re-conceptualizing of archives today is Verne Harris. Harris, being steeped in Derridean thought, states that archives open out of the future. In other words, the very notion of the archive is always becoming, like democracy, changing with new contexts, remembering and forgetting, and interacting with power and powerlessness. Harris’s personal struggle for human rights began at the National Archives of South Africa in which he states, “Under apartheid, the terrain of social memory, as with all social space, was a site of struggle.”

An adequate summation of the apartheid state archives can be seen in the book review by Nesmith of Harris’s *Exploring Archives: An Introduction to Archival Ideas and Practice in South Africa*:

White South African archival practice has been strongly influenced by the Europeans archival tradition, exemplified by the Dutch manual of 1898. This tradition maintains that the record is adequately managed when an archives keeps it inviolate, particularly by preserving a narrow range of its administrative history and diplomatic information (or ‘recordness’) intact, which then guarantees the record is reliable and authentic. Given the Orwellian world of apartheid South Africa, however, that information can hardly be taken at face value...The abuses of archives by the apartheid state also include the suppression, confiscation, destruction, and physical fragmentation of the archives of those who resisted it.

Working within this contextual framework, Harris acted as a whistleblower to the destruction of records depicting abuses by the state in the closing days of the apartheid regime. Between 1996 and 1998, he represented the National Archives in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigation into the destruction of those records. From that pivotal event in his archival career, Harris has continued to build on the role the archivist plays as activist as well as his personal role in building links in the archive of justice throughout South Africa, including the South African History Archive and the Nelson Mandela Center of Memory and Commemoration Project.

Of particular importance in arguing for the incorporation of human rights organizations into the archival discourse is Bruce Montgomery. His approach to records as both tools for change and evidence of the struggle for human rights provides a beneficial insight into how the archives address these sites of knowledge. Montgomery, head archivist at the University of Colorado at Boulder Human Rights Initiative (HRI), oversaw the temporary retention of the Iraqi secret police files after the Gulf War invasion in 1991. These archives provided evidence of President
Saddam Hussein’s massacre of Kurdish people in Northern Iraq. These records represented both the memory of human rights violations as well as documentation that was later used to indict Hussein for his crimes against humanity. Montgomery states,

The human rights archival record is important for historical accountability. Because of the past inability or unwillingness to bring perpetrators to justice, the historical verdict has often served as the only tribunal for human rights perpetrators. Even with the recent institution of the new International Criminal Court, the historical verdict will continue to play a pivotal role in preserving a record that has amply demonstrated the international community’s past reluctance in bringing many of this century’s most notorious dictators to justice.

In 2007, these records were returned to the Kurdish people on behalf of the HRI and the U.S. government. Montgomery’s insights into human rights records convey that use-value is a primary motive for HRNGOs. Thus as an archivist, access to these records remains the primary objective. By incorporating these sites of memory into the archives, justice and accountability become part and parcel of the duties as an archivist.

The seminal human rights documents outlined above began as doctrines that spoke for people, often to their detriment. In articulating rights for people, and yet withholding their true intent until after these notions were disseminated, an authoritarian narrative emerges from the benevolent climbs in the social hierarchy. Lisa Klopfer, archivist at Eastern Michigan University, explains that with the normative approach to oral histories and the collection of them, archivists have continued to speak for people rather than speak with them. This notion in its own right provides for a reexamination of how archivists seek to restore the proper voice of the disenfranchised.

A quintessential task for the activist archivist is providing access points for society into the archives. By conveying the importance of archives to the general public, memory can be recognized as the cornerstone of society, which archivists profess it to be. Archival educators Richard Cox and David Wallace’s compilation, Archives and the Public Good, was formed as an advocacy piece “to communicate and promote to a wider audience the significance of the roles records play in constituting society.” This important collaboration includes works by activist archivists discussed here, as well as others whose interaction with ideas of accountability, secrecy, memory and trust provide examples of the commonality between archives and social activism. Cox and Wallace attempt to go beyond the average story of how records are the by-product of accountability issues, when teased out, the recordkeeping dimensions – such as control and access, preservation, destruction, authenticity, and accuracy – demonstrate time and again that records are not mute observers.
and recordings of activity. Rather, they often actively constitute an activity in themselves and are frequently struggled over as objects of memory formation.

The record is in fact central to notions of accountability. The power embedded within the record as well as in the archivist promotes a need for democratic thinking around access, appraisal and public programming. By using this power in a way that acknowledges historical and cultural notions of human rights, archivists can move beyond the utilitarian notion of archivists as “hewers of wood and drawers of water,” and become the progressive “builders of public memory,” bringing new ideas from other disciplines and advocating themselves as social interpreters.

Globalization has ushered in a prevalence of information through the vast network of electronic communication. For this reason human rights information is now more accessible than ever. However, as electronic information becomes an increasing challenge to archives, it also begs questions of the human rights movement. Ishay pushes both the activist archivist and the human rights activist to address the less noticeable problems with electronic communication:

Despite the impact of globalization on human rights struggles, the popular voice seems less audible. Now digitized, this voice may be more easily subjugated to corporate interests and manipulations. New consumer needs are generated by the Gateses and Murdochs of a New World, in which control and dissemination of relevant information may be falling into the hands of the few.

If archives are to continue to document and protect the rights of citizens, an initiative must be developed to adequately collect electronic records that fall under the radar of the corporate interests which dominate technological mediums. David Bearman, currently leading the archival world in electronic record issues, sees a solution in creating abstract rules that are reviewed by outside authorities and implemented into a system that disallows room for human judgment, therefore using the technology and social consensus in appraising electronic records.

As archivists we must continue to be builders of the memory infrastructure, not in the liberal sense of progress which has been the great façade of the 20th century (often dictated through authoritarianism and exploitation), but through horizontal collaborative initiatives which perpetuate the growth of all things. Head Archivist of Canada Ian Wilson states, “archivists cannot simply be spectators.” In its simplicity, Wilson’s statement means a whole host of challenges to the traditional role of archivist, which has been undergoing a continual evolution over the course of history, as demonstrated. Yet as the profession steps to-and-fro in its ideas and practices, our history and archival memory will always remain as long as we maintain accountable records. The struggle for human rights will continue whether we address it or not. However, if archivists stand to
have a greater role in promoting democracy and preserving records that fly in the face of the hegemonic narrative, it is our job to elaborate on how records can buttress the seminal human rights documents of old. I for one will not only be at the next Paris Commune, I will provide the very records upon which it will be founded.

Footnotes

1. Arguably “progress” has been made, as will be shown, at stages in history when epochal change has occurred. The point of agitation for this author is the need to continually move forward, not waiting for epochal change but working towards it. Complacency via unchallenged thinking inevitably tramples on human rights. By addressing the historical progress made in human rights and archives, one hopes to prevent from “steps taken forwards but sleepwalking back again.” – David Gilmour, “High Hopes,” The Division Bell, See Toni Samek, Librarianship and Human Rights: A Twenty-First Century Guide. (Oxford; Chandos Publishing, 2007).


5. Capitalism (1600s) provided the right to own property, from feudal capitalism to mercantilism to free markets based on the rights of the individual.

6. The birth of secular universalism developed out of the assault on Roman Catholicism by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation (1517), which opened the way for humanist thought.

7. International trade during the 17th and 18th century created a bourgeois class that was restricted to national markets by the monarchy and noble classes. Due to the restrictions imposed, by those who controlled the government, public administration, the church and most other social institutions including the archive, bourgeois revolutions erupted in England (1642), America (1775) and France (1789), which provoked democratic traditions.

8. Ibid. p.61.

9. Ibid. p.73.

10. Ibid. p. 74. “Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood.”


14. Ibid.


20. Ibid. p.257.
22. Ibid. p.23. Both Jenkinson and Schellenberg owe their debt to the Dutch trio: Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin for their *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (1889). In fact, all Western archivists to this day owe their understanding of archives to this manual as well. As archives allow, having the ability to reflect on the past allows for change in the present.
23. Ibid. p.24
24. Ibid. p.27.
26. Ibid. p.75.
32. Cook, “What is Past is Prologue,” p.34.
33. Ibid. p.44.
42. Ibid.
48. This notion was coined by Jenkinson in reference to the neutral archivist simply bringing in records and showing them to researchers. Without acknowledging the bias and power behind every process of archiving, memory remains the byproduct of the historian.
54. Ibid.
THEORY AND POLITICS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIANSHIP

by Jason Burton

Who are we and what are we doing here? These are the metaphysical questions that are at not only the root of Western philosophy, but are the intellectual urges that define humanity against the backdrop of nature. Two particular questions deriving from these are the focus here; namely what is the philosophical orientation of librarianship, and from this, what is the justification of the role of politics in librarianship? These issues seem abstract and distant from the work of public librarians. But in reality, these issues are at the heart of public librarianship. This paper will demonstrate how theories of knowledge, politics, and neutrality become central issues to the day-to-day operation of public libraries.

Library science and the concept of professional librarianship begin in the 19th century. Zandonade (2004) places the beginning of librarianship at 1876 with the founding of the American Library Association (ALA). With a central event like the founding of a professional organization, it is easier to speak of a coherent discipline, if only in the sense of self-recognition. This is not to discredit numerous other milestone events in library history. From the earliest recorded information something related to professional librarianship existed. But the 19th century ushered in modernity, and for the library this means professionalization. The ideas motivating this move to professionalization are rooted in both Enlightenment thinking as well as work in the social sciences and modern economics (Herold, 2001).

The Enlightenment is the philosophical anchor of early librarianship (Weissinger, 2003). The very focus of what it meant to be a librarian shifted. Weissinger argues, from personal talents and calling to the mastery of standardized techniques and tasks (Weissinger). Cornelius makes an even stronger argument, “The belief in progress and individual betterment or empowerment through the application of reason and the use of knowledge is the engine of the library world, and documents are just its fuel.” He continues, “The techniques we have to manage documents are directionless without the sense of purpose, cultural context, and possibilities allowed by the epistemology of the Enlightenment” (Cornelius 2004, 384). Both highlight the epistemic shift in the conceptualization of professional librarianship. The methodologies of librarianship are based out of knowledge systems unique to the Enlightenment. The very philosophical character of knowledge shifted. An overarching sense of utilitarianism begins to define librarianship.
But this radical epistemic shift did not mean that a body of theory unique
to librarianship came with it. Ostler and Dahlin (1995) argue that in fact,
Melvil Dewey’s, and from Dewey we can generalize to the entirety of
the library intelligentsia, “adoption” of this epistemological orientation
towards professionalization and utility led to a direct de-emphasis on
theoretical thinking. Pierce (1992) argues that a revisionist theoretical
history is possible, but as Ostler and Dahlin point out, if this were to be the
case it surely should have developed sooner. Cornelius (2004) actually sees
the professionalization of librarianship as being a split from philosophy.
Librarianship, in hopes of defining itself as a profession, did not base itself
in a philosophy or theoretical school, but instead on tasks and solutions
to practical problems. This idea of an epistemology negating philosophy
seems on the surface to be logically impossible. But a closer examination
exposes the fact that this epistemology is not an \textit{a priori} philosophical
stance. It has morphed into an epistemological position \textit{a posteriori}.

In this same strange sense metaphysics of librarianship formed. Nitecki
(1973) positions both the metaphysical substance of librarianship and
the metaphysical nature of librarianship. The metaphysical substance
of librarianship, “is a metaphorical relationship between the concept
expressed in any given medium and its perception by the medium’s
interpreter, the user of the library” (Nitecki, 33). He makes a similar,
but nuanced distinction when defining the nature of librarianship, “The
essential metaphysical nature of librarianship...a never ending process of
expanding knowledge by relating less-known to more familiar experiences”
(Nitecki, 38). Crucially, librarianship in both is a passive agent. He argues
for such an understanding by stating that library science does not add to
the expansion of knowledge, but instead facilitates it (Nitecki, 32). Floridi
(2002) makes a similar point when he states that the object of librarianship
is the container of information, not the knowledge within. He continues by
saying that this means librarianship, “...works at a more fundamental level
than epistemology” (Floridi 2002, 41).

A dominant theme is clear. Librarianship, to some extent, works at a level
that is sub-philosophical. The unit of study is pre-knowledge, the formal
precursor to knowledge. Librarianship deals in the units that make up
knowledge and knowledge systems. The metaphysics of librarianship is
defined by facilitation. The existence of librarianship, in this philosophical
sense, is solely to serve in the facilitation of knowledge acquisition and
processing. Epistemology is facilitated by librarianship more so than
librarianship acts from an epistemic position. As was mentioned, the
epistemology of librarianship is a product of technical formulations
independent of a philosophical program.

The idea of a discipline being somehow divorced from thought and
reflection is not intended here. McConnell (1992) argues that value
follows from the process of defining and actualizing a discipline. In a
similar vein, Shaughnessy (1976) contends that a discipline is derivative
of a body of knowledge and it is through that body of knowledge that
a system of values is constructed. Again we are faced with a somewhat puzzling problem. Where is reconciliation found between the concept constructed earlier that implies a level of uncritical work with this idea of knowledge-based discipline building? Again the answer is quite simple and in part answered already. A critical feature of the Enlightenment is the introduction of scientific thinking and the eventual adoption of positivism and empiricism. For now this can be limited to the ontological concept of “out there” (Gremmels, 1990). The scientific mode of thinking is based around the ontological assumption of an external reality; something distinct from the observer. This ontology, along with the methodological elements derived from it, is positioned within the intellectual space of librarianship. Dick (1995) argues that librarianship developed not as an original offshoot of the natural sciences, but adopted this methodology and ontology through social scientific disciplines maturing at the same time. Not only does this introduce another vital element to librarianship, but it produces a relationship where librarianship adopts the theories and methodologies being developed through a number of social scientific disciplines to its own needs. Olaisen (1985) presents a critical perspective on this phenomenon, arguing that in doing this, librarianship has limited itself to one narrow functionalist viewpoint at the expense of other research orientations.

This brings up the interesting question of a paradigm of librarianship. It would be easy to argue for such a scientific agenda, but in fact librarianship lacks any such thing. Again, a paradoxical situation presents itself. Librarianship on one hand has a monolithic “philosophical” orientation, including the adoption of empiricism, but yet no paradigmatic science has been developed. Östler and Dahlin (1995) argue that librarianship began before it had its “theoretical bearings.” The discipline was informed by external concepts and before any organic theory in librarianship could be thoughtfully developed the profession was moving full steam ahead. Shaughnessy (1976) sees the “preoccupation with its various institutional contexts” as a main reason a general body of theory could be developed in librarianship (169). Dick (1995) makes the most succinct point when he states that with the existence of competing paradigms, a product of a lack of general theory, the theoretical consensus that is at the heart of a paradigmatic science is missing.

To this point we have seen the philosophical character of librarianship and the effect this had on theory building. Namely, librarianship constructed a profession around social scientific principles, but in building a profession lost the theoretical aspect of other disciplines. There is one further philosophical aspect to librarianship, but there is a necessary step to get there that has, to this point, not been mentioned.

Libraries exist in the world with some purpose. Part of this purpose is obvious (the collection, maintenance, and borrowing of books, etc.), but there is a conceptual element that is worthy of discussion. Martin (1937) argues that the library, namely the public library, is a social institution. He defines a social institution as, “A social institution is an integrated
pattern of human relationships established by the common will and serving some vital human need” (547). The human need in this instance is the transmission of cultural heritage through the generations. Birdsall (1985) added another element to the transmission of cultural heritage, the passing on of “cosmopolitan values” (22).

The last philosophical element appears at this point. Birdsall’s statement that along with the fairly innocuous task of cultural heritage reproduction (this too will be criticized at a later point) librarians began passing on cosmopolitan values. They began to act, regardless of the slight degree, in a normative fashion. Librarians in the pre-professional days prior to the adoption of professional and scientific standards had acted in a normative, specifically moralistic, fashion. In reality, this practice had not waned. But Blanke (1989) makes clear the motivation behind the attempted banishment of such behavior, “A scientific mode of inquiry eschewing political commitments, social ideals, or value judgements have been desideratum of the social sciences since Max Webber...librarianship has embraced political neutrality as a means toward acquiring professional status” (39). Gremmels (1989) echoes this, arguing that librarianship works under an “axiological assumption” of neutrality (364). Dick (1995) goes as far as to argue that librarianship can be seen as “traditional liberal social science” for its adoption of neutrality (217). Neutrality, as an ethical position, is part of the philosophical program that defines librarianship. It is also a major part of the public policy of organizations like the American Library Association (ALA).

But it is not as simple as arguing that librarianship is neutral because a professional organization calls for that to be the case. Both Cornelius (2004) and Floridi (2002) argue that librarianship can be normative on philosophical grounds. Cornelius bases his argument on the concept of becoming part of the community in which the librarian is serving. This allows, if not outright demands, that the librarian adopts the normative values of the community. Floridi (2004) calls the work of the librarian steward of a semantic environment, an inherently non-neutral position. But this brings up larger issues, namely that of politics.

Public libraries, as with a great deal of libraries, exist in the political world of public institutions. Libraries by this point alone are not neutral. They must participate in the political process for their own survival and well being, and by doing this have destroyed claims of absolute neutrality. This facet is excusable, though Hennessey (1981) questions the logic of library-government interactions and the precarious support libraries are shown. The concept of neutrality being discussed here deals directly with the interaction of patrons with the library (through staff interactions or interactions with the collection).

The collection itself is a central feature in the debate over neutrality. Budd (2006) highlights how the collection can be used to support claims of political bias of librarians. Alfino and Pierce (2001) discuss an historical
example of collection development and neutrality. Popular works of fiction were originally not allowed in library collections. As the demand grew librarians chose a path of neutrality. In doing this, they allowed for the collection to grow in a way they may not have agreed with, while not taking responsibility for its inclusion. Neutrality became a form of blame removal. Moody (2004) argues that, “...it is likely that some librarians suppress controversial materials without considering their actions to be censorship” (169). The collection can be a divisive and political issue in a library. It is difficult for librarians to remain loyal to the professional and philosophical idea of neutrality when materials become problematic in the collection.

The issue of politics and librarianship goes further than the local politics of collection development. The perceived political demands of the profession coupled with the political leanings of individual librarians creates another political dynamic in libraries. Good (2006) is forceful in his stance on neutrality, “The proposition that a librarian is responsible for neutrally communicating both sides of an issue, merely for the sake of ensuring both sides are heard, seems fallacious, at best” (27). Durbani and Smallwood (2006) equate the politically neutral library to a McDonalds that serves the same identical food at every location, “Librarians trained to run such global libraries take professional pride in being ‘neutral’ in the social divide all around them. They thus become increasingly isolated from the majority of people in their local communities” (4). Joyce (2000) argues that the current social and political status quo is discriminatory and that neutrality in library service does nothing if not support this position. He concludes that neutrality is a false concept, choosing to be neutral is choosing to accept inequality.

Both Samek (2004) and Rosenzweig (2004) look to provide theoretical context to these progressive political ideas. Samek argues that progressive political discourse forces elites to reconsider ideas of neutrality and intellectual freedom. These ideas are part of the historical development beginning with the Library Bill of Rights in 1938. Rosenzweig positions progressive politics in the broader heading of democratic humanism. As such he sees progressive politics in librarianship as currently serving the role of contesting and challenging power structures both within the library and in the society at large.

It was mentioned earlier that even the idea of cultural heritage can and will be challenged. Lloyd (2007) argues that the act of granting significance to an act, the literal act of cultural preservation, is a “largely uncontested practice” (55). These acts of significance bring up a myriad of issues relating to cultural memory, power centers, and the democratic process of historical remembrance.

Politics and librarianship are not monolithically progressive or leftist. Bivens-Tatum (2006) discusses what he calls the creation of “dissident librarians.” These are alienated librarians who feel isolated by the non-
library related political actions of organizations like the ALA. The emphasis is on the fact that the political alienation is not based around issues of librarianship, but external political issues brought up through the mechanisms of the ALA. Wessells (2003) discusses an issue of anti-neutrality at the reference desk. Instead of progressive politics, he is referring to his religious faith and his calling to share it with others. Though he states that he does not preach to patrons, he does look to set an example that is based on faith with his behavior as a librarian. At the same time he is not shy in discussing his faith with the public in his role as a librarian.

Neutrality brings up several issues that were dealt with earlier, namely the existence of a position (neutrality, metaphysics, epistemology, ontology, etc.), but yet a lack of cohesiveness in regards to the formal position of these rules and/or philosophies. Again, librarianship has adopted a concept, in this case neutrality, and attached it to the discipline. There is an internal logic with the acceptance of the other philosophical elements of librarianship, but there is no theory or set of theories that unifies the discipline into something that could be called paradigmatic.

At the beginning of this paper the idea of these concepts being relevant to daily practice in the public library was introduced. This is an important idea in librarianship, the application of theory into practice, but is currently impossible to implement on a universal level. The lack of canonical theory in librarianship results in the inability for librarians nation- or worldwide from universally implementing any non-technical or non-law binding principles. To this point it has been shown that the adoption of philosophical principles by the discipline of librarianship has not created a scenario of universal implementation. Is it possible for this to happen in the future? It would be possible only if two current attributes of the discipline change. To begin with larger amounts of theoretical works must be produced and put under strict peer review. A theoretical shift in librarianship is only possible if a vibrant literature is there to support it. The second and more challenging shift would have to come on the working librarians end. It is the responsibility of librarians to engage with theoretical works and adopt a new reflective posture towards their own work. The opinion expressed by Plaiss (1983) is one major roadblock, “…drones may not ask philosophical questions or delve into the epistemology of librarianship, but they get the job done” (618). This recommendation is being made fully aware of the economic and political situation librarians currently face and the impediment these issues pose in the face of intellectually engaging work. But the point remains valid. The production of theory in a profession such as librarianship is useless if some part of it is not digested and utilized by the working public librarians across the nation.

This paper has attempted to highlight the philosophical issues that are at the heart of modern librarianship and how they affect politics and public librarianship. Librarianship is not a profession which has a rich philosophical and theoretical history. Instead it is an excellent example of vocation which was driven towards professionalization by the experiences
and problems faced by their members. In its place, librarianship adopted
the scientific and political philosophy of the Enlightenment through the
prism of modern social science and its own unique interaction with science
and philosophy. Librarianship as a result is a discipline without a pantheon
or cannon that defines it. Instead practical measures were proposed,
adopted, and implemented that for some period of time were sufficient
in governing the discipline. But in the broader scope of librarianship’s
own institutional memory there is a clear lack in historical guidance
and credible precedent. These issues manifest themselves in the role of
neutrality and the politics of librarianship. Issues originating from both
the left and the right challenge the dominant thinking of librarianship. It
is the responsibility of both scholars and practicing librarians to forge and
engage theory and philosophy. It is impossible to remedy the problems of
theory and philosophy post hoc, but it is possible to imagine librarianship
anew. Debates can begin, institutes founded, journals published all in the
hopes of not only clarifying theoretical issues in librarianship, but bringing
the discipline closer to the professional independence it has craved since
its inception.

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BOOM OR BUST: THE NEED FOR SENIOR SERVICES LIBRARIANS

by Katelyn Angell

In the grand scheme of things, a student of social justice deserves as high a grade as a left-brained economics major. As an undergraduate at a leftist liberal arts university, I quickly learned this paramount lesson. Perhaps neither the world nor the university administration personified perfection, but my arms and voice held steady and true, and from early on I determined to use them both as tools to mend as many snags in the fabric of social justice as possible. Specifically, I channeled the majority of my activism toward ameliorating the situations of senior citizens, as I perceived this group as a sector of the population often fringed by a culture socially and politically dominated by youth.

During my college years, I participated in a city-wide program in which volunteers delivered library books to homebound seniors. An aspiring librarian, I considered it part and parcel of my social and professional responsibility to provide information to older individuals physically unable to acquire it themselves. On a biweekly basis I brought two 90-year-old women books and conversation, and in return they unknowingly helped set me out on a specific yet roughly paved career path: I desired to become a librarian focused on the provision of materials and services to the senior population.

However, independent research, personal inquiry among public and academic librarians, and perusal of the syllabi of Master of Library Science graduate programs revealed a highly evident absence both of courses geared toward and library positions concentrating solely on serving senior citizens. The majority of courses seemed to be directed at either technical services aspects of librarianship or at students intending to work with children and/or young adults. While it is pivotal to recognize the enormous value and relevance of courses intended to produce future catalogers, indexers, and archivists, it is equally important to offer interested students courses on the social in addition to the technical aspects of librarianship.

In fact, according to the American Library Association (ALA), a major component of librarianship is a commitment to the rectification of social inequities. “‘The broad social responsibilities of the American Library Association are defined in terms of the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society.’ What could that be but a declaration of the social mission of librarianship?” (Rosensweig 40). Thus, a lack of attention paid to certain social responsibilities, such as adequate preparation for and formation of a field
of librarianship dedicated to serving specific underserved populations, in effect violates the very foundations of the ALA’s mantra. Despite this commitment, graduate library programs allot only minimum time and resources for students desiring to coordinate special programs for and learn proper methods of interacting with individuals from underserved populations, such as senior citizens.

Additionally, while library students are given the option of courses pertaining to several age groups, research shows that the vast majority of age-group-related classes are limited to children and young adults. According to Marks, “services to children are overemphasized in library programming, inevitably displacing library services to adults” (8). This statement describes the situation in library graduate school. A review of the catalogs of three New York MLIS graduate programs, St. John’s University, Pratt Institute, and Long Island University, clearly reveals that there is a startling lack of courses intended to prepare students for a future career in geriatric librarianship. While St. John’s catalog boasts seven elective classes targeted directly at children and young adults, including “Library Services for Young Adults” and “Library Services for Children,” only a single course mentions services to senior citizens.

Titled “Materials and Services to Diverse Populations,” the course is designed to educate students on “information needs of diverse populations, including the aged, illiterate, individuals with disabilities, and racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities” (St. John’s University). However, an asterisk next to the course description states that the course is only “offered upon sufficient demand.” Thus, the graduate program does not deem the objective of the class significant enough to maintain it as an annual course; students must band together and request it of their own volition. Additionally, several diverse groups are lumped into a single course, raising the question of the ability of an instructor to thoroughly cover the experiences and needs of all included groups.

The class might, of course, benefit students if the professor utilized critical teaching methods like those of Ira Shor. In the words of Shor, “my habit is to include students through a co-developed syllabus which gives preferences to subjects nominated by students. If the remote, abstract nature of schooling involves academic-teacher talk about topics unilaterally chosen by authorities, then a critical-democratic practice invites students to select materials for study” (39). With this instructional approach, a professor would invite library students to both spearhead research on and foster discussions regarding topics concerning the specific underserved populations that the students envision themselves working with in the future. Such a class would well serve individuals interested in less recognized fields of librarianship.

Some might argue that there is little need for senior services librarians; after all, perhaps older individuals rarely visit the library, or do not necessitate special services and treatments based solely upon an advanced
However, statistical research shows that 22% of present library users are 55+, and the inevitable aging of Baby Boomers will result in a doubling of the 65+ population over the next 25 years (“Lifelong Access Libraries Initiative”). Additionally, some older people are unable to frequent the library due to physical difficulties. Thus, as a group senior citizens certainly deserve to be a focus of library services.

In 1975, the ALA created a set of guidelines to aid librarians in the process of providing senior citizens top-quality services. Revised in 1999 to keep up-to-date with a changing landscape, the guidelines maintain that it is:

> essential for the leaders and policy makers of the library to understand that service for older adults is not a fad; that the need and demand for library services will only increase; that the stereotypical perceptions about older adults and libraries no longer holds; and that nothing short of a total moral and financial commitment to library services for older adults will meet the needs and demands of the present and future older library user.

(“Library Services to Older Adults Guidelines” 25-7)

From this statement it is evident that the ALA urges a commitment from both librarians and policy makers to devote more physical, mental, and financial resources to the senior population.

Despite the establishment of the above guidelines and the fact that seniors constitute nearly a quarter of library patrons, extensive Google and e-journal database searches yield very little information on librarian positions dedicated exclusively for the elderly. Many public libraries do offer services geared directly toward seniors, such as read-aloud programs (Tang), homebound library services (Joseph), computer training (Bean and Laven), bookmobiles (Karp) and reader’s advisory programs (Ahlvers). However, a legitimate question to posit is: Why does a sector of the American population, comprising roughly 36 million people ages 65 and up (“Senior Citizen Facts Provided by Census Bureau for Older American Month”), the majority of whom have funneled tax dollars into the maintenance of public institutions for decades, not to merit the creation of more specifically elder-services-focused jobs? Where is the fairness in a lifetime passed funding public entities only to be disregarded as a library user group? This especially at a time when, in retirement, the elderly possess both great amounts of time and need for library services, and maybe even have either new or increased desires to use libraries.

The prime reason for high library use among seniors is retirement with its often endless stretches of free time. As many people are employed for the majority of their adult lives, the onset of retirement can cause quite the shock. According to Roalkvam and Costabile:

> Individuals in the first throes of retirement often begin to do the math and realize with alacrity what a free treasure house of
information exists in their local library. The time they never had before for leisure activities stretches out before them and all the things that were put off become possible… Whether they are looking for information on new careers, volunteer opportunities, or just planning the next trip, this cohort will be a large, and perhaps new, user group in the library. (141)

Thus, the influx of senior citizens into the library system alone should justify the creation of more librarian jobs aimed at information retrieval for seniors. Such a claim clearly reiterates the idea that it would behoove library and information science professors, and the profession as a whole, to develop training programs dedicated to serving elderly patrons.

As people age, their social lives and health are subject to dramatic changes. Faced with serving individuals trying to navigate these life changes and attendant complications, it is only reasonable that senior service providers, such as librarians, should be aware of these difficulties, and should be prepared emotionally and professionally to understand how to help their elderly patrons meet such obstacles. Specific health problems like loss of vision, decrease in mobility, and loss of hearing only become handicaps in libraries if the system is not set up to accommodate afflicted individuals. Senior-specific librarians would be trained to offer such individuals high-quality services in spite of the existence of physical problems associated with advanced age.

More communities should follow the lead of Glendale, Arizona, whose library “may be the first library in the country to have a Senior Advocate on staff who ‘directs and connects’ seniors and their children or caregivers to appropriate social service agencies and organization.” (Nevill 256) The advocate’s services are very much in demand, and she is kept busy planning and organizing senior-requested daytime activities such as memoir writing, scrapbooking, and webpage design. Additionally, she runs a once-a-month, themed Community Resource Day. On this day, “staff from agencies and organizations that provide particular services for seniors, according to the theme, are available in the library to talk to residents” (257). Such a position is one which other public libraries should quickly begin to emulate.

In regard to interacting with elderly patrons, Ahlvers recommends the following model: “Older adults are often cut off from their support systems… Try to keep in mind that some older adults crave human contact and may only get this from their library encounters. Look at this as a customer need and understand that you may have to spend more time working with older adults in order to help them find library materials” (306). As the system stands now, with librarians generally juggling senior services with other tasks, senior patrons could very well not be receiving proper amounts of attention. Social cues enable one human to perceive if another appears harried or rushed; in such a case, the latter would not likely approach the former, worried that it might be a disturbance. For example, Ahlvers observes “the ‘Silent Generation’ (aged approximately sixty-four
to eighty-four) has a strong stoic streak and doesn’t want to be a bother” (306). However, if elder-services librarians existed, and seniors were familiar with this special service, it is reasonable to assume that efforts and funding to create these positions would not be spent in vain.

One plausible explanation for the lack of senior services librarians is ageism. As a result of American society’s fixation with youth, aging individuals are “othered,” their wants and needs slighted by a population largely preoccupied by youth. American seniors constantly battle negative stereotypes created by an exceptionally ageist society. Despite the fact that the senior population is steadily increasing and will continue to do so, survey data suggest that with regards to age discrimination an end is not in sight. In a survey of 84 individuals 60+, Palmore discovered that “the majority [of respondents] reported several incidents of ageism and over half of the incidents were reported to have occurred ‘more than once.’ The most frequent types were persons showing disregard for older people, followed by persons showing assumptions about ailments or frailty caused by age” (572). Thus, encouraged by a youth-centric culture, people generate stereotypes about advanced age and project them onto senior citizens.

As a result of this tendency, seniors as a whole are assigned negative stigmas and are both discriminated against and ignored, their wants and needs deemed less pressing than those of younger people. Castelli, Zecchini, & Deamicis (135) describe the victimization of senior citizens, listing the various mechanisms through which ageism is practiced, either intentionally or accidentally, by non-seniors. “The interaction with an aged person is often characterized by the adoption of an oversimplified and patronizing language. In a related way, elder adults are less likely to be provided with important information than young adults” (135). This can certainly be applied to the plight of senior citizens in relation to the library, as it is commonplace for libraries to possess both a children’s/young adult’s room and accompanying librarians, while seniors are rarely offered either reserved space or their own information consultants. In addition, it is worth noting that those individuals who do work with senior populations should take extreme care not to condescend or generate assumptions about elderly patrons based on age.

As a result of age group disparities, pioneering senior services activists are beginning to advocate for both themselves and the elders of tomorrow, determined to increase the size of their slice of the community resources pie. The library is one such institution in which seniors and their allies are currently taking steady steps to literally get their money’s worth. Allan Kleinman, a librarian at a public library in Old Bridge, New Jersey, is currently working on an initiative which will create a designated room at the library for seniors. Called the Senior Spaces Project, Kleinman assures that it is “more than just tables and chairs… it is a shift in philosophy in public library services for older adults. Ten years ago very few libraries had ‘teen spaces’ – now that seems the norm. So, too, in ten years we will have ‘senior spaces!’” (Kleinman). Thus, he and his patrons recognized a
discrepancy in a system which did not fairly provide for the varying age-
groups prevalent at the library, and resolved to alter this practice. Although
he acknowledges that his project is not the current norm, Kleinman projects
that in the future more people will follow in his footsteps and increase the
level of services for seniors.

Another inspiring example in the burgeoning field of elder services
librarianship is Richard Bray, a librarian at Alameda County Library in
California. Bray’s official title is Senior Services Director, and he “has
become a librarian who helps seniors with their social and spiritual needs
as well as their intellectual ones” (“Interrupted Life” 43). In other words,
Bray does not serve solely as a bibliographic reference for his patrons; he
also provides vital life assistance which his clientele might not otherwise
receive. “Bray says that because the library’s senior services are well-
known in the community through its programming and the “Homeward
Bound” strategy (a “literary meals on wheels”), seniors often treat it as
a social service referral agency” (43). In my opinion, Bray exemplifies
the true spirit of librarianship – an individual who kindly and efficiently
supplies his community with assistance and answers to their information
inquiries.

In conclusion, the cultural obsession with youth has resulted in the
relegation of senior citizens to the ranks of the underserved in a wide
variety of settings, including the library. The lack of senior-specific library
positions both reflects and reinforces the paucity of substantial graduate
school preparation in this area, and vice versa – a cycle which slights, if
not abandons, seniors. A small but growing number of individuals have
realized the injustice of this situation, and are making strides against its
continuation. Although this process will take considerable time, money,
and advocacy, this paper demonstrates that there exist individuals staunchly
committed to the cause, and it can only be surmised that their ranks will
increase in the future, raising a collective voice of protest to a volume that
simply cannot be ignored.

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LIBRARY RHETORIC:
the Canadian Library Association
Statement of Diversity and Inclusion
& LGBTQ Advocacy

by Morya Lang

Definitions

Bisexual: Individuals who are attracted to both other-sex and same-sex individuals as sexual partners. A type of sexual orientation – see Sexual Orientation definition.

FTM: Female-to-Male. A person who transitions from female to male. Transition means to physically modify one’s body; physically modifying may include non-permanent modifications such as binding one’s chest or packing (wearing a dildo in one’s underwear) and/or more invasive such as hormone treatment, or surgery. FTM’s sometimes self-identify as transmen. See definitions of Trans, Transgender, and Transsexual.

Gay: A person who is homosexual, especially a male homosexual. The word “gay” in this regard may denote the homosexual individual or the lifestyle, particularly a male homosexual lifestyle. A type of sexual orientation. See definition of Sexual Orientation.

Gender: Gender is not the same as sex, although the term is often used interchangeably to have the same meaning. “The words “man” and “woman” refer to gender. No one is born a woman or a man – rather, as the saying goes, “one becomes one” through a complex process of socialization....Gender is historical (it changes through time), that it varies from place to place and culture to culture, and that it is contingent (it depends on a lot of different and seemingly unrelated things coming together)” (Stryker 11).

Gender Expression: How individuals “express the complex feelings they have about what others might label ‘gender identity’ versus what they feel about what others might label ‘sexual expression’” (Green 166) or how one lives their natively assigned sex category regardless of expectations associated with their sex category. How a person communicates themselves to others. Related to, but not the same as, gender identity.

Gender Identity Disorder (GID): Is recognized as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, Fourth Edition (DSM – IV – TR). GID includes strong and persistent cross gender identification (not merely a desire) of being the other sex. Including frequently passing as the other sex, living or being treated as the other sex. This medical diagnosis is required medically to diagnose a person as transsexual. See Transsexual definition.

Gender Identity: An individual’s internal sense of being female, male, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others. All persons have a gender identity, whether they are transgendered or not.

Heterosexual: A person sexually attracted to persons of the opposite sex.
Or a person who has sexual relations with the opposite sex. Colloquially known as “straight.” The dominant type of sexual orientation. See Sexual Orientation definition.

**Homosexual**: Individuals who are attracted to same-sex sexual partners (Helgeson 7). Homosexuals include males (gays) and females (lesbians). A type of sexual orientation. See Sexual Orientation definition.

**Intersex**: A term used for people who are born with external genitalia, chromosomes, or internal reproductive systems that are not traditionally associated with either a "standard" male or female. 4

**Lesbian**: Female homosexual. The name “lesbian” comes from the Greek island of Lesbos in the Aegean Sea where in antiquity the women were said to be homosexual. The poet Sappho who lived on Lesbos (circa 600 BCE) was a lesbian in both geographic location and sexual orientation. 5 See Sexual Orientation definition.

**MTF**: Male-to-Female A person who transitions from male to female. Transition means to physically modify one's body; physically modifying may include non-permanent modifications such as applying makeup or wearing a wig and/or more invasive means, such as hormone treatment, or surgery. MTFs sometimes self-identify as transwomen. See also trans, transgender, transsexual definitions.

**Queer**: Once a derogatory term, it is sometimes used as an alternative to lesbian, gay or homosexual. However, Queer is less about sexual orientation and more about opposition to heterosexual social norms. Queer can be a politically charged term. Queer is used by some as an attempt to be inclusive. Queer is an important term for some individuals who want to live in a gender other than the one natally assigned to them (Stryker 20). Queer is also used by some individuals who are generally judged to be heterosexual (straight) but are at odds with being assumed straight, such as members of BDSM communities or some partners of trans individuals.

**Sex**: Sex is not the same as gender, although the term is often used interchangeably to have the same meaning. Until the late eighteenth century scientists and philosophers thought there was one sex, male, and that women’s genitalia were merely the inverse of men’s. Current Western scientists think women and men are so different physically that at times they seem like two different species. “The bodies, which have been mapped inside and out for hundreds of years, have not changed. What has changed are the justifications for gender inequality…” (Lorber 15). Natally assigned sex categories are usually justified as biological and determined from external anatomical organization of reproductive anatomies visually inspected at birth.

**Sexual Orientation**: a term used to describe a person’s attraction to members of the same-sex or different sex. Sexual orientation categories usually include homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual, with heterosexual being the dominant category. 6

**Trans**: I draw on Krista Scott-Dixon’s work by using the word trans as an umbrella term, meaning transgender, transsexual and the many other boundary crossing expressions and identities that are limited by language. “A broad umbrella term suggests many forms of gender boundary crossing, whether in terms of behaviour, self-presentation or identity; or in terms of how such crossings are experienced and understood. Not all people who fit this definition will self-identity as trans” (Scott-Dixon 247).

**Transgender**: is a self-identity label, a political term, and a grassroots
term: “it is not a euphemism for transsexual, the way gender is often a euphemism for sex.” (Green 14) Transgender is often used as an umbrella term, which includes both transgender and transsexual; it is also used as a term that is distinct from transsexual. Transgender may include people who cross-dress, or identify as Transvestites, or who play with gender expression through drag performances, although not all people who fit these categories identify as transgender.

**Transsexual:** I use Jamison Green’s definition: “Transsexual is a term that the medical profession has applied to that subset of transgendered people who seek hormonal and surgical assistance to change the sexual characteristics of their body to bring their gender and their body into alignment, people for whom that physical change is the only possible satisfactory accommodation” (Green 14)

**Two-spirited:** Some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirited rather than as bisexual, gay, lesbian or trans-identified. Historically, some Aboriginal cultures two-spirited persons were respected leaders and medicine people. Before colonization, two-spirited persons may have been accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives (Schrader and Wells 6).

It is important to note that not all people who identify as transsexual seek medical help and that not all transsexual individuals identify as transsexual. Many transsexual individuals no longer identify as transsexual after they have medically transitioned. It is also important to note that medical discourse and legal discourse use the terms transgender and transsexual in different ways than I use them in this paper. Again, I will use the term trans to include both transgender and transsexual individuals, in order not to favour one more than the other.

A note about language: These terms are defined at the onset of this paper to counter any confusion about terms used throughout this paper. This list of definitions is incomplete, due in part to the limited focus of this paper.

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) adopted a *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* in February 2008. The statement directly references the CLA *Statement on Intellectual Freedom (1974)* and serves as an umbrella for other pre-existing statements, such as the *Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities (1997)* and the *Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for Older Adults (2000)*. This paper aims to identify and evaluate western library association rhetoric related to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals and groups. The key aim is to identify best practice for direct application to the possible development of a specific CLA position on diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ individuals and groups. This paper is highly relevant to the contemporary Canadian library community and to broader society as it addresses one of the groups (LGBTQ) most in need of access to the information that libraries can offer. Certain themes will be revisited throughout through various lenses. To date, the CLA has no statement specifically on LGBTQ issues, and more particularly, on trans issues.
The CLA’s Statement of Diversity and Inclusion suggests that librarians value Canada as a “pluralistic society” and directs librarians to recognize diversity and work towards inclusion of all Canadians. The goal of this paper is to create discussion about delineation of categories and language used in the Statement of Diversity and Inclusion and to provoke dialogue about how librarians can work towards providing open access. I argue that it is necessary to understand our own situatedness and the inherent privileges therein in order to work towards inclusivity in Canadian libraries. The Statement of Diversity and Inclusion suggests that librarians ensure patrons can enjoy services free from any attempts by others to impose values, customs or beliefs upon them. Yet how can librarians do so without first understanding the boundaries already imposed upon themselves and their libraries through societal customs of heteronormativity and correct sex and gender expression? To appreciate and accept diversity, an understanding of what is the norm and what is not, is foundational. It is difficult to negotiate structural barriers of diversity, as the Statement of Diversity and Inclusion aims to do, when terms such as sex and gender have become interchangeably understood to mean the same. In Canada, that which is not the norm is most often understood through a limited naming of categories such as race, religion, gender, age, and sexual orientation, which are understood as deviant. Are these categories inclusive? Who is left out? In this paper I argue that the Statement of Diversity and Inclusion reads as an authority by naming certain categories of diversity and not naming others. In particular I argue that sexual orientation refers to lesbian and gay (homosexuality) as the binary opposite of heterosexuality and formulates a commonsensical understanding of diversity and human rights discourses; an understanding that further marginalizes other categories of difference.

Canadian (and other) library strategies, policies, visions and values written on the topic of LGBTQ persons usually end up addressing homosexual/same-sex experiences, thereby excluding trans and bisexual persons who do not neatly fit into these categories. This paper explores how categorization based upon the acronym LGBTQ actually excludes people and perpetuations incorrect and inappropriate assumptions about sex, sexuality, and gender, as well as human rights. The growing need for information for those excluded is as great as or arguably greater than for those who fall neatly into established categories. Materials written for LGBTQ persons are often limited by the language of lesbian and gay experience. Serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens by Martin and Murdock (2004) mentions transgender and transsexual seven times in the entire book and two of these mentions are to define the terms. Over two hundred pages are devoted to lesbian, gay and occasionally bisexual youth needs. Librarians are aware that youth look for their experiences to be reflected in literature of their library collections; trans youth are likely to find a great void about their experiences. Librarians need to understand how the dominant terms and language restrict boundaries of sex, gender, and sexual orientation to a sticky matrix of conflated terms. We can begin to untangle the language and learn new ways to include patrons who are often excluded and provide access to much needed information.
The Pride Library at Western

The Pride Library is accessible online and is part of the University of Western Ontario, Canada. The Collection Policy for the Pride Library at Western begins with a commitment to uphold the values of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms with a quote from the CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom. The mandate of the Pride Library “is to acquire, preserve, organize, and give public access to information and materials by and about lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer communities (LGBTQ)” The mandate continues by stating the main purpose of the Pride Library is: “To foster gay and lesbian studies at Western; to collect, document, and conserve the evidence of local gay and lesbian history…” The quick and subtle shift from ‘lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer’ to simply ‘gay and lesbian’ demonstrates inclusive and exclusive language in this library’s mandate. If we stop including bisexual, trans, and queers in our library rhetoric we begin to exclude. Is it enough just to assume we mean all of those people? Can we trust that our understanding, as librarians, will just incorporate trans identity or bisexual identity into our policies, visions and values? Should we settle for not being named in policy statements?

The Charter of Rights, which will be explored in the next section, does not in fact, ensure coverage for all Canadians. The publication by Martin and Murdock and The Pride Library at Western demonstrate how language and terms are used to point at inclusion, while in reality they exclude. This shift in wording affects thousands of Canadians who become less mentioned, less visible, less represented. The Pride Library begins by using the terms LGBTQ which includes trans but soon drops the inclusive language by continually only referring to lesbian and gay. Systematically the Pride Library begins to erase individuals from their collections and policies, thereby affecting the accessibility of trans materials and to trans resources.

The Pride Library at Western is not unusual in deviating from terminology that at first includes trans individuals only to then exclude them. At first the exclusion appears small and rather insignificant until we realize that by excluding a group of people, by simply not mentioning them, we delete them from further conversations and ultimately from thought. The removal from language sets the stage for the erasure from our experience. In rendering a small number of people invisible or non-existent a harmful loss occurs – a loss to which librarians should no longer contribute.

A Brief and Recent and Canadian Homosexual History

Until very recently it has been socially, medically, and legally acceptable to discriminate against LGBTQ people in society. Homosexuality (same-sex desire) had been deemed a mental illness, diagnosable through the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) until it was removed in 1973 (Stryker 98). This is a controversial date as some scholars mark the removal as late as the 1986 publication. The Canadian Charter
The Canadian Constitution and the Charter were written to ensure rights and freedoms, but the language is exclusive thereby creating legal loopholes which have historically denied equality to all members of society. In 2005 Bill C-38 supplied the officially authorized recognition that allowed same-sex unions’ equal legal status. The power of inclusive language is best demonstrated by this legal recognition that Bill C-38 granted to thousands of couples and individuals as well as providing a means through which lesbians, gays, and bisexuals could name homophobic discrimination legally. Institutionalized and systemic homophobic discrimination previously provided no legal recourse for lesbians or gays to fight prejudice. Same-sex relationships have been accepted by many individual Canadians, and some institution. Assumptions that this form of discrimination has been dealt with are entirely too common, misconceived and naive.
A less recent but important example of prejudice within Canadian society is that of Delwin Vriend in Alberta. In 1991 Delwin Vriend was fired from his job at King’s University College in Edmonton for admitting that he was gay. Vriend then filed a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission, which refused to investigate his complaint because “discrimination on the basis of a person’s sexual orientation is not within the scope of the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act (IRPA).” Vriend took his case to the federal level. The Supreme Court determined that the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act violated the federal Charter of Rights and Freedom in the ruling of April 1998. Justice Peter Cory wrote the majority decision, including:

The exclusion [of gays and lesbians] sends a message to all Albertans that it is permissible and perhaps even acceptable, to discriminate against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation…Perhaps most important is the psychological harm which may ensue [sic] from this state of affairs. Fear of discrimination will logically lead to concealment of true identity, and this must be harmful to personal confidence and self-esteem.12

Reactions to this historic decision were varied but one local Albertan lawyer said “Slowly, the forced change in behaviour will change Albertans’ attitudes…” Ten years ago homosexuals won equality under the law and the shifting attitudes have begun to change.

Policies, visions, values, and even laws have been carefully worded to reflect the societies they are designed to serve. The examples of the Vriend Charter challenge, Bill C-38, and the recent CLA Statement of Diversity and Inclusion reflect a growing trend of inclusive language that best reflects social, legal and other realities and works towards ensuring that individual rights and freedoms are protected. These attempts can help adjust attitudes and discriminatory behaviours and enable Canadians to understand the diversity of other Canadians outside of their own experiences. However, the Statement of Diversity and Inclusion does not mention gender identity, a category that would include trans individuals who do not congruently fit into categories based on sex or sexual orientation.

The CLA’s Statement of Diversity and Inclusion reads:

All persons in Canada will receive library and information services that are respectful to them as individuals. Libraries in Canada endeavor to provide services that recognize and affirm the dignity of those they serve, regardless of a person’s heritage, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental capabilities, or personal wealth.

Libraries understand that an acceptance of differences can place individual and collective values in conflict. Libraries are
committed to tolerance, understanding and personal discovery. Libraries act to ensure that people can enjoy services free from any attempt by others to impose values, customs or beliefs.

Canadian libraries recognize that a diverse and pluralistic society is central to our country’s identity. Public institutions, including libraries, have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that celebrates diversity and inclusion (www.cla.ca – position statements – Diversity and Inclusion).

Categorizes of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation or physical and mental capabilities are all categories that are now legally recognized in Canada. Despite these enhanced protections for lesbians and gays, there remain individuals who are on the margins of human rights protection and cannot easily access regular legal structures, such as, trans people. “The dominant model of anti-discrimination law as it is enunciated in Vriend and applied to ‘sexual orientation’ requires that claimants caricature themselves to fit within its strictures” (Gotell 107).

A Brief and Recent but Not Entirely Canadian nor Entirely Homosexual History

LGBTQ individuals are often classified together and represented with this acronym or some combination of these letters (GLBTQ/GLBT) to signify an assumed relatedness between Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Queer individuals. This common grouping presupposes relations of sexual orientation, and as anti-discrimination legislation suggests legal status and definition, where in reality little relation actually exists. Lesbians and Gays have secured equal legal access to human rights legislation; however these ‘normal’ categories of ‘queer’ still exclude bisexuals and trans people through the marked difference of ‘same-sex’ attraction (Gotell 106). The Human Rights Code exists to provide equality of opportunity and ensure people are not judged based on preconceived notions about ‘groups’ or categories to which they belong. Bisexuals and trans persons blur boundaries and categories, but yet remain grouped with lesbians and gays who identify solely upon their sexual orientation. Why then has this grouping of letters become common place in our society? To explain the differences between these commonly linked categories I must first discuss how sex and gender are conflated and how the resulting misunderstanding creates a portrayal of a narrowly constructed identity.

Sex Education or Gender Education: What’s in Your Pants Compared to What People Think is In Your Pants…

The terms sex and gender are used interchangeably to produce one meaning, genitals. Many western government documents require that one state their ‘gender’ from the choices given ‘M’ or ‘F’, meaning male or female, sex, not gender which is masculine or feminine. The interchange of terms (sex
and gender) are reproduced and repeated in language. Common definitions of masculine continue to be articulated as an expression of maleness. While feminine remains solely linked to female. Masculinity and maleness produce a gender and sex understood through the assumption of a penis. Femininity and femaleness produce a gender and sex understood through the assumption of a vulva. Gender appears inextricably bound to sex. There are different ways to be women or men, however there are limitations. A masculine body denotes male while a feminine body denotes female. Masculine bodies on females or feminine bodies on males are often understood as doing gender incorrectly. Correct behaviours and actions are ascribed from a sex (female/male) to the correctly corresponding gender (feminine/masculine). However we do not see people’s genitals, we see their gender and judge and evaluate it as their sex, thus discursively producing sex and gender as the same thing.

There is a need to know where everybody fits. As Geoffrey Bowker argues “our lives are hedged round with systems of classification, limned by standard formats, prescriptions, and objects...To classify is human” (Bowker and Star 1). The system of classification used to sort out sex and gender runs in only one direction, your sex defines your gender. Yet gender is what gets visually identified and then ascribed to indicate a person’s natal genital assignment and therefore their sex. The words sex and gender are used interchangeably on documents and forms which are ubiquitous within society. To open a bank account, apply for a job, or to obtain a library card, people are required to record their gender and/or sex upon documents that range from school forms, sports forms, medical forms, questionnaires, to movie rentals and library lending. The world wants to, needs to, and demands to know your sex and gender. The fact that we have constructed so much of the world around this ‘need’, this ‘demand’, to know other people’s natal genital assignment demonstrates more than mere curiosity. A person’s sex and gender ‘must’ correlate correctly. Disciplinary practices engender “docile bodies” that conform through correct gestures and appropriate displays to produce a body which is recognizably feminine or masculine (Bartky 65). Rigid control of sex, gender, and sexuality are inherent in society’s demand to define, document, and (legally) regulate these identity categories. However, the invisibility of such regulatory regimes provides the illusion that they do not exist. “The absence of a formal institutional structure and of authorities invested with the power to carry out institutional directives creates the impression that the production of femininity is either entirely voluntary or natural” (Bartky 75). The correct way to “do” feminine or masculine are only recognized in direct relation to when gender is done incorrectly, such as when women are masculine or men are feminine. Incorrect gender and sex correlations are then generally understood as being opposite to the correct alignment.

The natural male/female and masculine/feminine association generates a mould to ensure its on-going environment; a matrix is developed. The heterosexual matrix consists of (only) two sexes (male/female). (Butler “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” 17) These two sexes cause (only)
two genders, masculine and feminine. Two sexes (male/female) and two genders (masculine/feminine) correctly corresponding (male being masculine and female being feminine) result in normative heterosexuality. It is through this heterosexual matrix that gender presentation determines perceived sex and sexuality. Masculine and feminine gender expressions are attributed to a particular sex, which in turn produces a particular sexuality. Gender is what is seen and accredited as ‘sex’. Gender is understood to produce sexuality:

As individuals enter the social world through birth…the ‘expert,’ usually a medical doctor, proclaims one of two categories – ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ – making it appear as if the sex of the individual baby determines the category into which it is placed. From the pronunciation ‘boy’, certain natural/biological sexual traits are ‘determined’ and predicted, such as the presence of a penis, higher testosterone levels and even the amount of hair on the body. Gender predictions follow: he will enjoy sports, be good at math, have a good sense of direction (simpkins 80).

A boy will grow up to be masculine, seek a partner who is female and feminine and together they will create their offspring. Although this is not how the story always unfolds it is how the story is almost always told.

Normative heterosexuality consists of only two binaries of sex and gender, and regulates and controls this identity category as heterosexual. Female/Feminine attracts or is attracted to Male/Masculine and combined they (re)produce normative gender presentations which are reinforced by dominant discourses. If there is a discrepancy between gender and sex then sexuality is assumed to be outside the norm, not heterosexual. It is gender that gets conflated with sex and sexuality. Transgressions of gender are labeled homosexual regardless of the person’s sexual orientation or activities. Masculine females and/or feminine males do not do their gender ‘correctly’ thereby, constructing a consolidation of identity requirements coded as homosexual. The repetition of heterosexual normativity structures the identification of individuals as either heterosexual or homosexual; you are one or the other (Butler in “butch/femme” 227). Inappropriate gender expression is often rendered understandable this way. The conflation of sexuality and gender correlate so that one is constructed to express the other, both become identity categories that construct and regulate each other (Butler “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” 13).

Even with caveats explaining the limits of language, science continues to deploy gender differences in direct relation to gender situatedness. Bodies differ in numerous ways physiologically, but they are altered by scientific ‘truths’ and social practices to fit into salient categories. Categories of sex and gender are not pure (Lorber 15). Scientific reliance on only two sex and gender categories is epistemologically spurious. Language constructs, categories demarcate, and experts define. Scientific knowledge and power ‘innocently’ reinforce and privilege gendered normativities that support
Bisexuals challenge fixed boundaries between sexual identities of both heterosexual and homosexual by moving between two supposedly stable categories. The term bisexuality has been “deployed as a euphemism for gay” (Gotell 107). Bisexuality can, at times, be mapped onto one category or another, hetero or homo. Trans persons challenge gender situatedness, sexual orientation and identity by transitioning such categories. Moving through ‘fixed’ categories of hetero/homo and male/female and masculine/feminine, trans as a category does not map neatly onto one or the other. Through reductions of characteristics bisexuals and trans are not so neatly placed into the acronym LGBTQ. This clever assignment supports and regulates normative heterosexual discourse of two ‘fixed’ binaries of sex and gender and two ‘fixed’ sexual orientations: opposite sex desire, heterosexual, and its opposite, same-sex desire, homosexual. Gender boundary crossings cannot all be categorized by the term trans, but gender identity as a classification can function to include those that contravene normative and non-normative categories.

CLA Statements, Why?

The CLA adopted the Code of Ethics in June 1976 and it states that: “Members of the Canadian Library Association have the individual and collective responsibility to…. make every effort to promote and maintain the highest possible range and standards of library services to all segments of Canadian society… facilitate access to any or all sources of information which may be of assistance to library users…” (CLA website, see Position Statements). The CLA has since adopted position statements for people with disabilities in February 1997 and for services for older adults in November 2000. Young adult services (1987) and linguistic and ethnic minorities (1987) now also have national position statements that direct Canadian libraries to be aware of these smaller populations of library users. The CLA has formulated position statements as a type of professional tool to direct and develop awareness and encourage diverse coverage in Canadian libraries. The position statements direct librarians to mirror the mandate that all citizens have a right to equitable library and information services. Library leadership, management, and administration as well as all library workers must be familiar with what is in their collections and what is not and work towards inclusion of minority or underrepresented groups and people. Position statements provide opportunities for librarians to learn more about who is underrepresented and what can be done to meet the changing information needs of Canadians. The CLA current position Statement on Diversity and Inclusion specifically names: “a person’s heritage, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental capabilities, or personal wealth…” (CLA website) as possible places of discrimination. Many forms of discrimination are addressed through this statement and the language appears inclusive; however, language and its meanings change over time.
Language is fluid and political. There was a time when we were all “Mankind.”…When African Americans were “Black” or “Colored.” When the “N-word” was the actual word….When the “L-word” meant nothing at all. When terms such as “Homo,” “Fag,” “Queer” and “Dyke” were hurled like jagged rocks with the intent to cause injury (de la tierra 95).

Inclusive language applies to the period during which it is used. Individuals that do not neatly comply with one or more of these ‘inclusive’ language categories are generally excluded, or thought of as not needing inclusion or protection. Categorical boundaries of sexual orientation and gender expression are blurred by bisexuels and trans individuals but yet these individuals get understood through (or slotted into) the existing categories of sexual orientation (heterosexual/homosexual) and gender expression (the heterosexual matrix). A long history of a structured gender system of binary opposites supported by rigid boundaries and definitions is sustained through our current institutional frames. How can Canadian librarians ensure that library collections and staff work to include information and materials by, about and for all people, even those who fall outside the boundaries or are positioned on the margins of categories?

The CLA Statement on Diversity and Inclusion marks categories to be included thereby delineating all that fall outside or sit upon the margins of these groupings. By not including gender identity (or gender expression) in the statement of Diversity and Inclusion libraries continue to be unable and arguably unwilling, to provide resources for thousands of Canadians. A direct translation of this unwillingness is reflected in library policies, specifically collection development policies, and the lack of materials and resources that are provided. The exclusion of certain categories of diverse Canadians supports the current system of ‘identifying and regulating’ boundaries and definitions of what a person is and what a person can be in Canadian society. The statement of Diversity and Inclusion participates in the on-going creation of social norms about what is normal and what is not. The CLA’s position statements for older adults, people with disabilities, young adults and ethnic minorities set out to deal with areas that needed attention, and that without such focus might otherwise be neglected or not provided for. Position statements work to challenge assumed social norms. Professional directives keep Canadian librarians critically questioning by providing leadership in areas of human rights and social justice, as well as providing on-going opportunities for learning.

Library Idiom or Language that Reflects the Real

In 2007 the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a piece of American legislation, was created to guarantee LGBT people (the Q was not used by ENDA) the right not to be discriminated against; a privilege taken for granted by many. ENDA became a source of pride and achievement by those people who had created the concept and crafted the wording. Donna Rose was one of those people. Donna was the first
and only openly trans member of the Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign, and was the national co-chair for Diversity and co-chair for the Business Council. Donna Rose resigned October 8, 2007 after the Board of Human Rights Campaign took a ‘neutral stance’ in reaction to the purposed exclusion of the ‘T’ in the ‘LGBT’ in the anti-discrimination act. EDNA willing excluded trans individuals (the ‘T’) in order to ensure lesbians, gays and bisexuals (the ‘LGB’) would have coverage by the EDNA legislation. The committee reacted by stating that a victory had taken place and the winners, the lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, could now work on further legislation to protect trans individuals. The neutrality, in the case of lesbian, gay and bisexual committee members, might best be explained by the words of the late Paulo Freire, a scholar who is best known for his work titled, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970): “washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”

Trans individuals were left behind by the EDNA legislation. The American Library Association (ALA) went back for the “T’s” by tabling a resolution in 2008 insisting that the inclusion of gender identity be added to EDNA. Without inclusive language that reflects real people and real situations we do nothing more than maintain the current engrained systems of societal norms.

Also in 2008, the Social Responsibility Round Table (SRRT) within the ALA presented a new up-dated version of an interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. The changes are titled: *Access to Library Resources and Services regardless of Sex, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sexual Orientation: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Right* (See http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/statementsif/interpretations/accesslibrary.cfm). This resolution uses specific terms and direct language that aims to include gender identity and expression, which opens possibilities for trans people to have similar human rights as non-trans people. The ALA recognized what ENDA had given up; trans people must be included in policies, position statements, resolutions and legislation. Moreover, the new version of the changes to the Library Bill of Rights are explicit in arguing that by only prohibiting discrimination against certain individuals, such as on the grounds of sexual orientation they are condoning discrimination against other individuals, such as trans people, who face ongoing daily discrimination and hatred.

Historically the CLA has often followed the lead of the bigger and older organization, the ALA, in forming position statements and policies. However, the CLA’s 2008 statement on *Diversity and Inclusion* mentions neither gender identity nor expression, thereby ensuring a smooth narrative of normal sexuality and gender while casting trans people as less than human (Lloyd 155). Using terms such as gender identity and expression would begin to include trans people and alter our (mis)understanding of sex, gender and sexuality and push library rhetoric to a new attentiveness and responsiveness that would enable a growing awareness of what library patrons expect from their community libraries, academic libraries and specialized library collections. Changes to library discourse that reflect
changes in society and language facilitate Canadian librarians’ ability to respond to the growing and urgent demands for access to information and materials that represent our changing environment.

Collection development policies are structural components of libraries and as such provide opportunities to work towards inclusion and awareness raising. Library policies establish foundational tools to examine the scope of individual library collections and ensure community members are served: “policies describe current collections, assist with budgeting, establish priorities, serve as a communications link between the library and its constituents, support cooperative collection development, protect intellectual freedom, and assist with gifts, deselection, and cancellations” (McGuigan and White 18). Canadian communities include trans people, and collection policies should also reflect this. The continued reduction of sex to anatomy significantly hampers librarians’ abilities to provide access to information. Gender norms are the root of sex discrimination and must be (re)examined to prohibit all forms of normative gender stereotyping, regardless of one’s natally assigned sex. Current categorizations used in human rights legislation, government documentation, and institutional forms are exclusive because “sex” classification systems are still based primarily upon the assumptions that sex is binary, unambiguous and can be biologically determined, despite scientific research that indicates that none of these assumptions are completely accurate (Lloyd 153).

Who Uses Inclusive Language?

In April 2008 CUPW, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers published their national newsletter with a quarter page colored advertisement that states: “Trans rights are human rights. Celebrate Diversity. Challenge Transphobia.” A picture of a butterfly (see front cover) with colourful symbols in the wings is shown and in small print beneath states: “The butterfly is the symbol of total transformation. It represents a need for change and greater freedom. At the same time it represents the courage one requires to carry out the changes necessary in the process of growth.”

CUPW leads the way for other unions and institutions in its use of inclusive language; they extend human rights to clearly include trans rights. Acknowledging that transphobia exists in the workplace is the first step to challenging such forms of discrimination.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has also recognized gender identity must be included in human rights legislation and as of June 30, 2008 the Commission’s Policy states that “human rights complaints of discrimination and harassment based on gender identity will be accepted under the ground of sex.” The OHRC defines trans individuals and explains how steps towards anti-discrimination will be covered: “[i]ndividuals who are discriminated against or harassed because of gender identity are legally protected under the ground of ‘sex’. This includes transsexual, transgender, and intersex persons, cross-dressers, and others whose gender identity or expression is, or is seen to be, at variance with their birth-
identified sex” (OHRC Website). Accepting complaints under the category of sex serves as another example of how sex and gender continue to be conflated yet the OHRC provides hope that the systematically sanctioned discrimination against trans individuals (in Ontario at least) will no longer be acceptable. The recognition of gender identity in provincial legislation, even although it still misplaces gender identity under the category of ‘sex’, works towards creating changes and provides legal resources to fight such discrimination.

Earlier this year a report was released by The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute called Opening the door to the inclusion of transgender people: The Nine Keys to Making Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organizations Fully Transgender-Inclusive. Written by Lisa Mottet and Justin Tanis, April 2008, this publication concedes the conflation between sex and gender exists even within the communities of gays and lesbians who are so often the targets of such discrimination:

…women who break out of constricting gender roles and take leadership in their communities are often branded as “lesbian” to make them stop pushing for change – whether that change means better schools for their children, clean-up of a toxic waste dump, or marriage equality. Similarly, men who visibly challenge gender conformity – by confronting male violence, expressing emotion, or embracing their artistic or “feminine” sides – are punished both socially and in the world of work. Simply, gender bias and homophobia are inextricably entwined (Mottet and Tanis 2).

Non-conforming gender traits are common amongst homosexuals, but are not the defining feature of homosexuals. Gender expression that does not match gender stereotypes of heteronormative society exposes trans individuals to threats of limited or denied access to key social institutions, as well as significant personal violence and prejudices. This document, Opening the Door, can help librarians who struggle to use inclusive language and terms to write more comprehensive collection development policies and provide direction to library trustee’s who have little or no experience outside normative heterosexual gender conforming roles and language.

LGBTQ organizations have often added the “T” in name only, with no authentic effort to integrate trans experience into their organizations. Opening the Door exposes and challenges organizations that have typically overlooked trans experience so easily while pushing these edges: “…we might ask people if they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, rather than seeing that a person can be lesbian, gay, or bisexual and transgender.” (Mottet and Tanis 2). It is important to recognize the differences and stop making assumptions based on heterosexual norms that have historically constructed binary sexes with corresponding genders. The term heteronormative describes “the cultural view of heterosexuality as normal behaviour and homosexual as deviant” (Lloyd 156). These construed
binaries idealize behaviours and categorize individuals accordingly. The categories of lesbian, gay and bisexual are all derived from one’s sexual orientation and are based upon sexual desire; gender identity may have a correlation, but does not define one’s sexual preference. Appropriate inclusive language is important because without it assumptions, confusion, misunderstandings and out-right discrimination persist.

Evidence, verification, proof, confirmation and other forms used to deny

Most of us know people do not neatly fit into categories that we have historically created; yet we continue to categorize based on one of two ‘allowed’ groupings: female or male. We believe that XY chromosomes are male and XX chromosomes are female, and that these two groupings cover everyone. But without chromosome testing, which select few ever have, how do we know what category we belong to? Chromosomes do not determine genitals, yet we usually define sex categories according to specific genitalia. One in twenty thousand men have two X chromosomes, rather than one X and one Y (Green 2). These men often do not know of their extra X chromosome until their ‘female’ partner cannot conceive and it has been determined through testing that she is not infertile. According to the Intersex Society of North America, one in one hundred people have bodies that differ from standard male or female. “That means that one out of one hundred bodies has some quality that doctors would specify as an abnormality of sexual differentiation. Roughly 1 in 1,000 births involves what’s called ambiguous genitalia, in which the doctors can’t tell by looking whether the infant is a boy or a girl” (Green 3). Scientific evidence does not support the two sex theory. Why then are we so confident that we know a person’s sex by looking at them?

In Western cultures, gender is defined by our genitals. We have no culturally defined category for people who are uncomfortable with their sex or who would like to combine roles. We are very uncomfortable when we cannot determine someone’s sex and we are very uncomfortable with people who try to create new gender categories (e.g., transsexuals). (Helgeson 11).

We are uncomfortable with those who choose to blur boundaries, such as trans individuals, but we presuppose that trans people have had the privilege of making such a choice. Masculine women and effeminate men serve as on-going examples of how instable the matrix of sex and gender is, as do men with vulvas or women with penises. Through the use of exclusive language, science has created theories that have since been repeatedly discredited; yet “we make assumptions based on what we observe, and when we find our observations were incorrect according to some arbitrary system of categorization, instead of recalibrating our categories we react with shock, horror, shame, anger, embarrassment, whatever, towards the person or object [about] which we were incorrect” (Green 5).
Gender is more than two categories. Gender is a deeply internalized sense of self. Trans people’s sense of self does not always line up with what their body displays. Gender is what gets seen, it is what gets understood as sex. But if you are one of the millions of people who are somewhere in-between the correct alignment then physical evidence does not mean so much. If we had a greater tolerance for variation in gender presentation we might not need such restrictive categories. Why then do we continue to slot people into such narrowly defined terms? How can we produce organizations and policies that are more inclusive and better demonstrate diversity? Librarians must enter into this important discussion and begin to critically question language that is currently used in policies and position statements and start to move towards inclusivity.

Language and Meaning…

“Language does not ‘reflect’ social reality, but produces meaning, creates social reality….Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (Richardson 928-929). Currently library policies and position statements need to include gender identity/gender expression as recognized categories of discrimination while providing the means to deal with these prejudices. Library collections need to supply resources and materials that trans individuals can access openly. If we agree that: “[g]ender and genitals are strongholds of control binding all people to a social order that has so far had serious difficulty acknowledging diversity” (Green 184), then how can we work towards needed changes without critically questioning current policies and positions? While librarians are committed to teaching and learning all that accompanies these goals must form the work of today’s librarian (Bade 90). Critically questioning how our collections and our services are developed is as important as challenging the silences that censor them.

The Statement of Diversity and Inclusion uses rhetoric that marks differences without acknowledging the discrimination of such limited terms. The majority seldom need examination to be understood, especially by those who, demographically, comprise what is ordinarily normal in Canadian society: heterosexual individuals whose physical bodies fit neatly into (only) two categories. These categories require no explanation because they are assumed to be experienced or at the very least understood, by everyone within society. These limitations exclude and reinforce strict boundaries that further ensure exclusion perpetuates.

Gender is not the same as sex. Discrimination against individuals whose perceived gender is misunderstood and/or confused with sexual preference takes place regularly. Best practice for librarians includes examination of how the current language creates and perpetuates assumptions about individuals whose information needs stand to be overlooked, forgotten, buried, negated, or worse ultimately erased from our collective memory by limited library policies.
Footnotes


2. Opening the Door to the inclusion of transgender people, p. 6.


4. Opening the Door, p. 7.


12. Ibid.

13. Religious Tolerance Website.

14. See Appendix B.

15. See Appendix C.


Works Cited


Progressive Librarian #32 Page 53


Websites Cited


THERE IS POWER IN A UNION – 2008–2009

by Kathleen de la Peña McCook,
AFT Local 7463

In 2008, union members accounted for 12.4 percent of employed wage and salary workers, up from 12.1 percent a year earlier according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The number of workers belonging to a union rose by 428,000 to 16.1 million. After democratic wins in the 2008 elections, working people and unions look forward to legislative changes under pro-worker president, Barack Obama. The first legislation signed in the Obama administration was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which allows more leeway for women and others seeking justice over pay discrimination (Abrams). George Miller, chair of the U.S. Congress Committee on Education and Labor stated:

With President Obama’s signature today, we ensure that women and other workers who are discriminated against while on the job have the ability to receive a fair remedy. Ongoing pay discrimination is an attack on all working Americans and must be stamped out. The Congress and the President restored the law today and ensured that discriminatory paychecks are not immune from challenge.

Congresswoman Hilda Solis, appointed as Secretary of the Department of Labor by president, Barack Obama is a progressive with a commitment to work with grassroots labor, environmental and immigrant worker movements. She has served on the board of American Rights at Work (Moberg). Solis is the daughter of immigrants from Mexico and Nicaragua. Her father was a union shop steward, and her mother was an assembly line worker.

In 2008 the only reporting and analysis of librarians and unions indexed in Library Literature & Information Science Full Text was published in the Progressive Librarian.


The lack of attention to union issues in the general library press continues to be a concern that should be addressed by those who believe that library workers and their conditions of worklife contribute to better library service. As posted at American Rights at Work, “Unions are an essential part of a strong democracy and play a crucial role in America’s public and community life. Not only do they give workers a voice on the job and help negotiate fair benefits and wages for their members, but they also use their political and economic resources to raise the floor for everyone who works for a living.”

January 2008

§ Scott County (MN) librarians were added to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) after the library board turned over operational control last year to county commissioners. That non-controversial move, approved by the state Legislature, removed legal responsibilities from the library board, while retaining its sovereignty on intellectual-freedom decisions (Fleck).

§ Unionized workers from the Greater Victoria Public Library walked off the job on January 17, 2008 to protest the suspension of a colleague, said union spokesman Ed Seedhouse. The job action closed all nine branches for the day. “This is in reaction to action by management, it wasn’t planned in advance,” said Seedhouse, a member of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 410. “One of our members has been in our opinion, illegally, but certainly unfairly, suspended for a day for taking part in lawful strike action.” (Bell)

February 2008

§ LSSI which operates 15 libraries in Jackson County (OR) was forced to recognize that a majority of its employees are a member of a union to resolve a complaint filed with the National Labor Relations Board. The county closed its libraries and terminated employees in April 2007 following a reduction of federal aid to timber counties. It later rejected an SEIU bid to run the library and instead entered into a five-year contract Maryland based LSSI. The union’s Marc Stefan explained to Library Journal that when a new employer takes over from a previous entity that operated with a unionized work force, as long as a majority of the workforce is made up of people who used to be represented by the union, the union can request that the new employer bargain with the union (Oder).

§ Complaints by the American Federation of Government Employees Council 238 that the EPA acted “unilaterally without the benefit of” employee input in regard to the library closures were sustained by Federal Labor Relations Board Arbitrator George Larney. Though the agency
has claimed to prioritize EPA staff access to information (while virtually ignoring the public’s), Larney heard the opposite from EPA scientists, enforcement agents, and other staff. Larney ordered the EPA “to engage the Union in impact and implementation bargaining in a timely manner” before taking any additional steps to reorganize the library network. The union had sought to have the closed libraries reopened, but the arbitrator declined such an order and noted that it would impossible for EPA to reopen those libraries that had been physically dismantled. (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, Orzehoskie, IN THE MATTER OF THE ARBITRATION). The Government Accountability Office in its report, EPA Needs to Ensure That Best Practices and Procedures Are Followed When Making Further Changes to Its Library Network, faulted EPA with failing to follow through with many of its own initial recommendations, most importantly a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis and user survey, before starting the library closures.

§ The Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs has been honored with the John Sessions Memorial Award 2008 for its website, “No Greater Calling” devoted to the history of Walter P. Reuther and his accomplishments. The John Sessions Memorial Award recognizes a library or library system which has made a significant effort to work with the labor community and by doing so has brought recognition to the history and contribution of the labor movement to the development of the United States. Such efforts may include outreach projects to local labor unions; establishment of, or significant expansion of, special labor collections; initiation of programs of special interest to the labor community; or other library activities that serve the labor community. It is awarded by the American Library Association Reference and User Services Association.

March 2008


§ In British Columbia members of CUPE Local 3966, representing Richmond’s library workers, ratified an agreement reached with the Richmond Public Library. The five-year includes pay increases, improved extended health benefits and improved group life benefits. Both parties will meet during the term of the agreement to discuss a new job evaluation plan.

§ Alex Youngberg, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 391 was honored as a Library Journal “Mover and Shaker” for the three-month strike she led against the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) which exemplified her belief that issues must come not from leaders
but from the ground up. The long-simmering issue of pay equity topped members’ list of grievances, particularly important in a province lacking equal pay laws. (On the Line, Galanopoulos).

§ “How to Work Positively and Constructively in a Unionized Environment” was a featured program at The Public Library Association Conference in March 2008. Managers often say that change is difficult or impossible because they “have a union.” Short-circuit this perceived barrier by learning from experienced managers and union leaders how they work together effectively and constructively, while maintaining their roles. (PLA Past Conferences).

April 2008

§ Shutdown ends at Greater Victoria Public Library. “As far as we are concerned, this contract fully achieves our pay equity goals,” said CUPE local 410 president Ed Seedhouse. The terms of the new contract had been overwhelmingly approved by the Victoria library staffers in his union earlier in the week. April 2, the Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association ratified a new four-year contract that will, both union and management sources agree, settle a dispute about pay equity for South Island librarians that has festered for decades. The GVLRA, which acts for the region’s libraries and municipalities in labour relations matters, agreed to contract language that will, within the course of the four-year agreement, bring library wages in the regional system into line with those paid to city employees doing comparable work in Oak Bay and Esquimalt. Late in the afternoon of April 2, some workers were already back at Victoria area libraries, which had been shut down when management locked out unionized workers on Feb. 17. All nine libraries will be open to the public again by April 8. (Sandborn).

§ AFSCME’s President, Gerald McEntee called for more library funding during National Library Week, 2008. AFSCME represents more than 10,000 workers in libraries nationwide, more than any other union. McEntee’s call came on National Library Workers Day, April 15, a day set aside for communities, schools and universities across the country to celebrate the contributions of librarians and library workers. “Library workers have shown tremendous resiliency during these difficult times. They have adapted to the demands of the digital age, and kept our libraries running smoothly, often on shoestring budgets,” he continued. AFSCME has been a leading advocate for pay increases for library workers and for funding increases for the public facilities they operate. AFSCME distributed more than 60,000 bookmarks at libraries nationwide to commemorate the work of librarians and library workers.

May 2008

§ Monroe County Public Library (Indiana) voted on Earth Day 2008 to join the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
MCPL labor organizer Phil Eskew said the “business-model” approach to library management is incongruent with the mission of a public library, which to serve the public good.

The Cook County, IL Treasurer recognized ALA-APA Director, Jennifer Grady, with a certificate in honor of National Library Workers Day. Ms. Grady was recognized for her efforts to honor all Library Workers and to encourage communities to recognize the valuable contributions made by all library workers (Cook County, ALA-APA).


What are library and information workers talking about on the job? Whose voices are coming through the library channels? To what extent is self-censorship or inside censorship a common practice? What is and is not acceptable when librarians participate in citizen journalism that criticizes employers in the blogosphere? And in a professional community that holds intellectual freedom so dear, why did the ALA see the need to adopt a 2005 Resolution on Workplace Speech which states: “Libraries should encourage discussion among library workers, including library administrators, of nonconfidential professional and policy matters about the operation of the library and matters of public concern within the framework of applicable laws?” Should the CLA adopt a sister-resolution? And what about our library administrations? The pros and cons of resolutions on workplace speech for library institutions are up for debate with panelists [Kathleen de la Peña McCook], Mitch Freedman, Sam Trosow, and Paul Whitney, who will discuss just what resolutions on workplace speech might look like and mean for the CLA, library administrations, and Canadian library and information work in the 21st century. (Samek)

Utah Phillips, a seminal figure in American folk music who performed extensively and tirelessly for audiences on two continents for 38 years died May 24, 2008. A stint as an archivist for the State of Utah in the 1960s taught Phillips the discipline of historical research; beneath the simplest and most folksy of his songs was a rigorous attention to detail and a strong and carefully-crafted narrative structure. He was a voracious reader in a surprising variety of fields. Phillips was a member of the IWW. (Folksinger)

June 2008

Thirty library leaders were honored as ALA-APA Angels at the American Library Association Annual Conference June 27. ALA-APA
celebrated five years of service by honoring some of the many people and organizations that have helped it grow and flourish in its missions of providing certification and supporting better salaries. Those honored included Patricia Anderson, Montville Township Public Library; Nancy Bolt; Nancy Davenport, District of Columbia Public Library; Diane Fay; Jenna Freedman, Barnard College; Maurice “Mitch” Freedman, past-president of ALA who created the Better Salaries Task Force; Joan Goddard; Arlita Harris, University of North Texas; Nancy Kranich; Michele Leber; Margaret Myers; Dan O’Connor, Rutgers University; David Orenstein, Warren County Community College; Robert Rohlf; Robert H. Rohlf Associates; Patricia Smith, Texas Library Association; Barbara Stripling, New York City Department of Education; Teri Switzer, University of Colorado; Tom Wilding; Denise Ziebinski, DuPage Library System; American Federation of State, Municipal and County Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME) - President Gerald McEntee; Association for Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) members - represented by President Barbara Mates; Better Salaries and Pay Equity Task Force members - represented by Kathleen de la Peña McCook and Patricia Glass Schuman; Committee on Education members - represented by President Kenley E. Neufeld; Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO - President Paul Almeida and Assistant to the President Pamela Wilson; LAMA/PLA/ASCLA Joint Committee on Certification members - represented by Eva Poole and Betty Turock; Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) members - represented by President W. Bede Mitchell; New York Public Library Guild Local 1930; District Council 37 AFSCME, AFL-CIO - represented by President Carol Thomas and Treasurer Nina Manning; Public Libraries Association (PLA) members - represented by President Jan Sanders; SirsiDynix Corporation; University of Illinois- Urbana-Champaign Graduate School of Information and Library Science LEEP Program - represented by Program Director Marianne Steadley. ALA-APA thanked the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the American Federation of State, Municipal and County Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME) for their support of this event. (ALA-APA names 30 leaders).

§ Managers Who Have the “Union Advantage” at ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim June 27, 2009. Speakers: Tom Galante, Director, Queens Borough Public Library; Susan Veltfort, President, Local 1857, WSCCCCE, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, King County Library System (WA); and John Buschman, Associate University Librarian, Georgetown University Library (DC). This program featured library managers who will offer ideas on how to achieve positive working relationships with unionized library staff.

§ The ALA-APA Council passed a living wage resolution for library employees at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif. On Monday, June 30, the ALA-APA Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers, represented by incoming chair Patty Anderson, brought forward a resolution supporting an increase
in minimum salary for librarians to $41,680 per year and library workers at $13 an hour.

WHEREAS, the American Library Assoc. – Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) council, at its January 2007 Midwinter Meeting, adopted a resolution entitled “Endorsement of a Nonbinding Minimum Salary for Professional Librarians;” and

WHEREAS, the resolution resulted in a nonbinding endorsement of a ”minimum salary for professional librarians of not less than $40,000 per year; which, adjusted for inflation now amounts to $41,680, and

WHEREAS, the ALA-APA Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers is charged “to guide ALA-APA activities in support of better salaries, comparable worth, pay equity, and similar programs related to the status of librarians and other library workers;” and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Standing Committee sees the need to strengthen ALA-ALA’s position with regard to wages and salaries for all library employees, and with regard to variable costs of living over time and across geographical locations; and

WHEREAS, a living wage is defined as “net” or “take home” pay earned during a full-time workweek, not to exceed forty (40) hours per week. A living wage provides for the basic needs (housing, energy, nutrition, clothing, healthcare, education, childcare, transportation, and savings) of an average family unit; and

WHEREAS, the family of four Federal poverty guideline for 2008 is $21,200, a recommended minimum hourly wage of $10.20 is necessary for a full-time, year-round worker to exceed the poverty guideline and sustain a basic living; and

WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes the All-Urban Consumer Price Index (CPI), the standard measure for inflation of goods and services, which is adjusted monthly to reflect price inflation; now, be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association endorses a minimum entry-level salary for professional librarians of $41,680 that is adjusted annually, according to the latest cost of living index/CPI data; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that in recognition of the skills and competencies required of all library workers, the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association endorses a minimum wage for all library workers of at least $13.00 per hour, to be adjusted annually in relation to the Federal poverty guidelines.

July 2008

The “Resolution Concerning ALA Policy Opposing Sweatshop Labor and Support Union Businesses” was passed by the American Library Association Council on July, 2008. Text:
WHEREAS, The American Library Association (ALA) has broad social responsibilities (Policy 1.1); and
WHEREAS, ALA and its divisions, round tables, and other various units purchase all kinds of products for distribution to membership, such as tee shirts, conference bags, etc; and
WHEREAS, A large proportion of those available products are produced in sweatshop conditions; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That the American Library Association (ALA) and its divisions, round tables, and all other units should purchase all products for distribution to membership from sweatshop free producers; and that this resolution and information about how to comply with it shall be distributed to all ALA divisions, round tables, all other units and ALA staff. (Kagan).

§ The “Guideline on Collective Bargaining” was reaffirmed for academic librarians in July 2008. It was originally developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Academic Status Committee and approved by the ACRL Board of Directors and the ALA Standards Committee at the 1993 Midwinter Meeting. It was reaffirmed in 2000 and the ACRL Board of Directors again reaffirmed the guideline at the 2008 Annual Conference: The guideline: “The policy of the Association of College and Research Libraries is that academic librarians shall be included on the same basis as their faculty colleagues in units for collective bargaining. Such units shall be guided by the standards and guidelines of ACRL pertaining to faculty and academic status.” (Association of College and Research Libraries).

§ In the July issue of Library Worklife Diane Faye describes how working within a union can be a very effective strategy to achieve pay equity and better salaries.

August 2008

§ There is a union difference for library workers. The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO analyzed 2006 data from the ALA Salary Survey: Non-MLS - Public and Academic and found that salaries were typically higher for staff in unionized libraries. This publication clearly demonstrates the power of unions to raise salaries in the predominantly female, underpaid library world. The percentages on the graphs indicate the union difference as the raise that would be required to equalize the union and non-union salaries. (Union Difference for Library Workers).

September 2008

§ “How a Librarians’ Guild Maneuvered a Win for Salary Increases,” by Roy Stone, president of the Librarians’ Guild at the Los Angeles Public Library System and affiliated with the library workers union, AFSCME. The speech, reprinted in the September 2008 issue of Library Worklife was
presented at the SirsiDynix - ALA-APA Networking Breakfast during the 2008 ALA conference in Anaheim, California.

October 2008

§ The 2008 ALA-APA Salary Survey: Librarian – Public and Academic (Librarian Salary Survey) indicates that real salary gains of recent years might be endangered by rising inflation (Bragg). According to the surveys, the mean salary of librarians did not outpace inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index. According to the 2008 Librarian Salary Survey, the mean librarian salary rose to $58,960, an increase of $1,151 from 2007. Significantly, this increase of 2.0 percent was half that of the Consumer Price Index for the same time period: 4.0 percent (February 2008).

§ The ALA document, “ALA Ahead to 2010,” included as an accomplishment that:

ALA-APA & ALA OGR joined labor coalitions monitoring the Universal Health Care & Employee Free Choice Act; OGR participated in AFL-CIO briefings on key issues.

November 2008.

§ In a grim November 6 speech in which he called for sweeping job cuts and service reductions in many city departments, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter announced the permanent closing of 11 out of 54 library branches and the elimination of Sunday hours at the three regional branches. (Branch Closings and Budget Cuts.)

§ National Labor College (NLC) president William E. Scheuerman announced the appointment of Dr. Thomas J. Kriger as the College’s new vice president of academic affairs and provost on November 7, 2008. The NLC, established as a training center by AFL-CIO in 1969 to strengthen union member education and organizing skills, is now the nation’s only accredited higher education institution devoted exclusively to educating union leaders, members and activists. The NLC became a degree granting college in 1997. The college is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, an independent, regional accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. (Labor Scholar and Unionist).

§ In the Library Worklife article, “Can We Bargain—Amicably? A Primer on Interest-Based Bargaining” Mary T. Kalnin discusses interest-based bargaining (IBB) – a process that requires commitment; at its very core. IBB requires that each participant respect others and their views. Interest-based bargaining requires brainstorming, discussion, exploration and willingness to seek a hidden solution. It requires the participants to change their thinking processes and to listen, really listen, to their colleagues and counterparts. Above all, interest-based bargaining requires absolute trust.
in their negotiating partners and their counterparts. Examples include the Camden County (NJ) Library System.

§ Jenifer Grady analyzed benefits offered by public and academic libraries using survey data from the ALA-APA Salary Survey. Both library types are offering fewer financial benefits (retirement savings, professional memberships, pension plans) than in 2003.

December 2008

§ Philadelphia library workers are members of AFSCME District Council 47 Locals 2186 and 2187. The city has forbidden library employees to speak publicly on the issue. But library workers, who hold union leadership, including Local 2187 recording secretary Steven Wright, are protected and can speak on behalf of their colleagues: “My colleagues feel they are tied to the communities. They feel they’re being ripped out of the communities and feel a great sense of loss. They feel a great responsibility towards the communities, especially the 11 branches that are targeted for closing.” (Marudas).

§ A Philadelphia judge has ordered Mayor Michael Nutter to halt his planned closing of 11 branches of the Free Library of Philadelphia. Court of Common Pleas Judge Idee C. Fox issued the ruling December 30 in response to an emergency motion filed by three city council members who argued that the closures would violate a 1988 city ordinance requiring the mayor to obtain council approval before shutting any city-owned facility. Cox’s order requires the branches, which were scheduled to close the last day of December, to remain open with reduced staff until city council or an appeals court decides otherwise, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported December 31. Some 40 branch library employees have already been laid off or reassigned, according to the mayor’s office. (Judge Overrules).

§ The closing 2008 issue of Library Worklife looked ahead to key labor issues. The review by Christine Martin identified equal pay for women, the Employee Free Choice Act, Expansion of the Family Medical Leave to include paid family leave, paid sick leave, and the closure of USEPA libraries. The American Library Association has issued a statement in support of the Employee Free Choice Act (Sheketoff).

References

CUPE Local 410. http://www.cupe410.ca/
Flecke, Shannon. “Union members, like it or not: AFSCME stakes claim on county library staff.” Shakopee Valley News (January 17, 2008).
Latham, J. M. “So Promising of Success: The Role of Local 88 in the Development

Progressive Librarian #32 Page 65
The truth that fails to persuade is a subject that receives a great deal of attention in Farhad Manjoo's new book on media bias in a fragmented world, *True Enough: Learning to Live in a Post-Fact Society*. The focus for Manjoo, who has here written his first book since retiring from Slate, is not on the media figures themselves. That is a subject that has been mined by writers on both sides of the political spectrum who claim that media institutions and personages are themselves the perpetrators of bias. Rather, as one reviewer aptly put it, Manjoo zags while the others zig, focusing instead on those who watch the news. This approach provides a compelling counterpoint to accusers of media bias like Bernard Goldberg and Eric Alterman. In fact, the author states in the introduction to his book that he intends to write a story about the media system: namely, those who consume the media. The system works in this way: Media-consumers, being human, are endowed with the innate prejudices that make bias an unconscious reflex. What we might call the corporate media simply see a profit to be made in pandering to these biases, while providing a truthy coating of journalistic integrity in order to reassure consumers and ultimately capture a greater share of the market. Note the irony here: the media “system” is everyman. The corporate media who are normally regarded as the “system” bent on winning wars or losing wars (choose your bias) come out as merely opportunistic.

To illustrate the kinds of perceptual prejudices media consumers are prone to, Manjoo’s first chapter – “‘Reality’ is Splitting” – cites the now-famous study of football fans at Princeton and Dartmouth. After watching film of a hotly contested game between the two teams, researchers Hadley Cantril and Albert Hastorf found that fans came away with radically different impressions of what occurred on the gridiron. Princeton fans were convinced that Dartmouth footballers had deliberately injured their star running back, Dick Kazmaier. On the other side, Dartmouth students who watched the film saw a clean game and accused the Princeton supporters of too much whining. This study from 1951 is still regarded as the example *par excellence* of what is known in the social sciences literature as “selective perception.” This is not merely to say that people have different attitudes about the same thing. That would be a truism. The crux of Cantril and Hastorf’s conclusion almost borders on the metaphysical: “the ‘thing’ simply is not the same for different people whether the ‘thing’ is a football game, a presidential candidate, Communism, or spinach.” This conclusion
underwrites much of Manjoo’s own thesis, which is that people in the
United States no longer just hold differing opinions on matters like the
economy. Today, in a digital age that now more than ever is able to carve
up the world into ideological niches, the citizens of this country adhere to
competing “versions of reality.” A third of Americans still believe Sadaam
Hussein had a hand in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Less than half believe
the science linking global warming to human activities. It’s enough to
make a progressive librarian dizzy. However, in his two final chapters
Manjoo’s narrative takes a turn that opens up opportunities for agents of
change to get to work within the library field.

Along the way, Manjoo cites more studies that highlight the human
desire to “tune out” dissonant thoughts and information. Moreover, the
author argues that the Web enables its users to select social groups on the
basis of this “selective exposure.” In a particularly compelling chapter,
entitled “The Twilight of Objectivity,” Manjoo discusses what scholars
call the “hostile media phenomenon,” which is basically shorthand for the
inclination among partisans to perceive even-handed treatment of an issue
(by, say, a reporter) as “biased.” This tendency springs from the notion –
also backed up by research in this brilliant book – that humans assume that
their views are essentially objective. Therefore anyone who disagrees must
be an unreasonable person. At this point in the game, the corporate media
understand very well that they can turn a hefty profit by tailoring their
news to a biased audience, to – as the author puts it – “satisfy audiences in
a culture of niches.” In fact, one of the more interesting discussions in this
book centers on CNN’s Lou Dobbs, a news anchor who has arguably been
the most successful in giving his audience exactly what they want to hear.

Having limned his dim vision of Truth’s fate in the “trillion channel
universe,” Manjoo turns to a different topic in the final chapter, “‘Truthiness’
Everywhere.” Here he describes the larger cultural ramifications of Truth’s
dismal rating, caused – paradoxically – by greater connectivity and greater
access to information. A de-centered media environment where viewers
can choose between “Red news and Blue news” has engendered a most
appropriate venue for the public relations industry. From pundits who
shill for the Bush administration to front groups for Big Tobacco, paid
propagandists have exploited the power of the internet to produce a patina
of authority in order to “sell lies softly.” Manjoo demonstrates how this
process works as he compares the persuasive techniques of yesteryear –
heavy-handed, direct and in-your-face – to the embedded marketing and
product placement of today. The forces of advertising and public relations
have taken the dark art of lying underground – and practiced it all around, to
the point, he says, where “one has to ask, is it really even a lie anymore?”

Librarians are those who are on the front lines in this contest for the purity
of the public mind, fielding questions from users who may need help in
detecting lies and covert propaganda. Those who commit to uncovering the
lies that dwell within “the Twilight of Objectivity” – lies that send young
men to war and elect unaccountable leaders – may do well to work with
the resources produced by the Center for Media and Democracy. This non-profit advocacy group runs a useful wiki at www.prwatch.org, where users can contribute to a common understanding of the public relations industry. This Website and the books produced by the site’s founders together make an excellent starting point for patrons who ask at the reference desk, What’s a video news release? By providing access to better information and alerting patrons to the “soft lies” of a certain resource, librarians can continue to – as Kathleen de la Peña McCook has put it – “offer the soil in which truth grows.”

Notes
2. Authors, respectively, of Bias: a CBS insider exposes how the media distort the news (New York: Perennial, 2003) and What Liberal Media: the truth about bias and the news (New York: Basic, 2003.).

Reviewed by Peter McDonald

Weighing in at almost 800 pages, this new compendium of readings on the nature of government secrecy is a must for any academic or public library. An antidote, perhaps, if not an exegesis of state secrecy, this edited work delves into the bloated paranoia that pours billions of taxpayer dollars into preserving a veil of official concealment that permits the American government to operate its global empire. No small potatoes, when one considers how steeped in secrecy a president like George W. Bush was, a chief executive who made light of the matter at an Alfalfa Club dinner in Washington (1/26/2008) quipping that the biggest secret of the day wasn’t the NSA but details of his daughter Jenna’s wedding, “Mom gave her a toaster, Dick [Cheney] here sent over a gift I could tell he’d picked out personally – a paper shredder!” The Washington Post reports the Alфalans present burst into loud guffaws of approval.1

But as Government Secrecy makes plain, this is no laughing matter. It was not always so in these United States, though several of the lead-in essays to the chapters by the editors suggest concerns of government secrecy date back to the plays of Euripides. But as a letter from Thomas Jefferson in the first entry says: “The people are the only censors of their governors,” whereupon stating, the only way to safeguard our liberty as citizens “is to give them full information of their affairs through the channel of the public papers…”2 How quaint. Obviously a time when “their affairs” e.g. the people’s and the government’s were synonymous, and the “public papers” mentioned were a vigilant and independent press, not the supine cheerleaders of empire that the popular press has become. But even in Jefferson’s day, as a note in Jan Goldman’s “Introduction” to Chapter 5 says, Benjamin Franklin by contrast was adamant that secrets of government must be kept even from the mob of elected officials of the government itself. “We find, by fatal experience, the Congress consists of too many members to keep secrets.”3 By the 1830’s, of course, Alexis de Tocqueville was decrying the penchant for government secrecy as Susan Maret describes in her own opening “Introduction.”

The compendium’s selection covers historical letters, seminal essays, investigations and recent government and NGO reports, an impressive range grouped topically into “chapters” that delve variously into perspectives of government secrecy including a short history, the regulations of secrecy, organizational aspects, alternative views, and a post 9/11 wrap-up. In all, 52 entries from authors as diverse as former CIA directors to government watchdog dot-orgs.

This reviewer confesses he did not read the book in its entirety, but he did read all the introductory remarks by the two editors, and a good selection
of the entries. But he did order it for his library and was pleased to be reading that copy. The editors are clearly steeped in the topic to hand. Dr. Susan Maret is a lecturer at the SLIS at San Jose, where she teaches courses on information secrecy. Dr. Jan Goldman teaches intelligence courses at the National Defense Intelligence College which is a branch of the Defense Intelligence Agency. What is noteworthy of their approach is that respective introductory entries each gives to the separate chapters are both insightful and analytical, providing exegesis of the articles that follow, an invaluable tool for anyone approaching a compendium such as this by helping the reader pick the essays deemed most useful in an overview.

One comes away from a reading of this book with very mixed feelings, however, with regards to the oft-quoted statement that government secrecy is indeed a “practical necessity.” Doubtless it is. But from the vantage of the progressive journal where this review is appearing, the fascination and machinations of secrecy seem to be an industry unto themselves, a prognosis that from those Left (sic) outside seems creepily hermetic and insular in extreme. And while the majority of the authors included in this work accept the premise of secrecy’s practical necessity, the alternative views included, such as they are, tend to focus on the issue from a position “inside the beltway,” that is to say, from within the intellectual corridors of secrecy studies and its practical uses and applications. A telling sub-heading in an excellent essay by Dennis Thompson, a Kennedy School professor at Harvard, is titled, “Transparency: How Thick is the Veil.” It is hard to know if Thompson is being ironic or just plain honest, but it certainly sums up the overarching view of secrecy as a practical necessity that permeates this exhaustive study. One realizes that all talk of transparency is always bookended by an a priori assumption of what’s not included and who’s excluded.

The four entries I enjoyed the most were Timothy Ericson’s “Building Our Own ‘Iron Curtain’: The Emergence of Secrecy in American Government” (2005, p. 146) because it got me up to speed on key issues quickly; Lewis Coser’s “The Dysfunction of Military Secrets” (1963, p. 311) because it is an impassioned insight into the topic at the height of the Cold War, re: Cuban Missile Crisis; Thomas Blanton’s “National Security and Open Government” (2003, p. 600) in part because it opens its polemic with these contradictory sentences: “National security is not a value in itself, but rather a condition that allows a nation to maintain its values. In contrast, open government is both a condition and a value of democratic societies.”; and finally, the entry from old liberal war-horse Patrick Leahy of Vermont’s impassioned plea from the Senate floor: “Attempts to Obtain Administration Memorandums” (2004, p. 627) mostly because the good senator is even today seeking publicly to investigate the Bush administration’s malfeasance regarding “state secrets” and illegal surveillance.

One minor quibble, to be sure, and true, nowhere do the editors state that the book is intended to peer into the veil of government secrecy from the far fringes of the debate (either from the hard Left or the Libertarian right
who, as it happens, come together on this topic like strange bedfellows
to excoriate the “practical necessity”), but one would have enjoyed some
sort of inclusion exploring the absolute necessity of government watchdog
groups (think ACLU) and a vigilant press (alternative journals like The
Nation, In These Times and Counterpunch, and one would hope, someday,
The New York Times and the networks) in unveiling the sackcloth that
permeates all of our government’s covert ops (read “secrecy,” be they budget
debate allocations in White House corridors, behind-the-scenes legislation
in Senate chambers, to CIA assassinations, name your country) and what
have you. What is evident in reading this book, is that the unveiling of
government secrecy cannot be left to scholars or policy makers alone as is
clear from the included authors, for in the end their approach is respectively
too polite, and on the other, too accommodating.

As noted, a minor quibble. The best kept secret about this important book
is that it covers the waterfront admirably and is likely to stand as the go-
to text for years to come. It is beautifully footnoted, amply indexed, well
edited, and the selections are uniformly broad in scope and satisfyingly
informative. It should stand on every library’s shelf along with Naomi
Wolf’s The End of America: Letter of warning to a young patriot, Alasdair
Roberts Blacked Out: Government secrecy in the information age, Harry
Helm’s Inside the Shadow Government: National emergencies and the cult
of secrecy, and Athan Theoharis’s A Culture of Secrecy: The government
versus the people’s right to know.

They are all in my library. Yours?

Notes

1. “Alfalfa Club Hears Bush speak as President for Last Time, By Marissa Newhall.
Washington Post Sunday, January 27, 2008; Page A05
2. Letter to Edward Carrington (1787)
(Written by Benjamin Franklin. October 1, 1776.)
Government Secrecy.
What constitutes library work? What is a library issue? What is a non-library issue? These are the enduring dilemmas at the heart of *Questioning Library Neutrality*, a stylishly muted grey-and-black paperback eco-printed in the United States on acid-free paper from publisher Library Juice. While you can read this work in one sitting, standing or stationary cycling, the intellectual endeavour should not stop there. One should keep this pocketbook kicking around for future reference, because the gut questions raised still need further exploration. The 11 varied essays were originally published in *Progressive Librarian* (the journal of the Progressive Librarians Guild) and range from three to 33 pages in length. They are presented in the chronological order of their original publication, beginning in 1991. Thus the content flow does not reflect the natural progression of the original events. Rather this book takes its readers, a bit abruptly, in and out of both rhetorical and activist perspectives offered up by the eclectic contributors (Jack Andersen, John J. Doherty, Shiraz Durrani, Joseph Good, Sandy Iverson, Robert Jensen, Steven Joyce, Peter McDonald, Mark C. Rosenzweig, Elizabeth Smallwood, and Ann Sparanese) who penned their words in Canada, Denmark, UK, USA, and African roots perspective. Some of the essays hold up over time better than others. Rosenzweig’s essay is the shortest and arguably the most potent. His prose is elegant. His phrasings are punchy. Smallwood and Durrani also do a great service with their unstuffy *the professional is political* message, which they grounded in a journey from Kenya to Britain. And we owe a lot to Iverson for coining the late 1990s phrasing *librarianship and resistance*, which best translates the neutrality debate into terms of present-day analysis. Other discussions on corporatism, objectivity, LGBTQ, alternative press, journalism and media studies, information criticism, self-reflection (or lack thereof) in LIS discourse, and moral relativism are deep and informative, but perhaps less fresh in 21st century context. Critical librarianship has come into its own; it is no longer nigh on impossible or unusual to encounter LIS writings that overtly acknowledge the political realities of library and information work. Berninghausen is no longer with us, but many of his 1973 *Library Journal* challengers remain on the scene (e.g., E.J. Josey, Jane Robbins, Patricia Schuman, and Robert Wedgeworth). What do they think now? I invite Library Juice to compile a companion volume to this book – an epilogue of views from that historic front. I would welcome it in the LIS classroom as well as my living room. This 149-page eighteen-dollar steal closes with a brief paragraph about each contributor, but no index. I would like to see an index created, not so much because this book needs one. Rather, taxonomies of neutrality makes for meaningful library and information work. That said, I am fully
ready to get on with librarianship and resistance (ode to Iverson), power, and social change studies, exemplified by such sites as the University of Göteborg Resistance Studies Network. There exists a host of resistance studies journals, websites, courses, conferences, and so on. As this books shows very well, some perceptive folk have brought the roles of the librarian and the library into this theoretical framework and political reality. Congratulations are in order to Library Journal, Progressive Librarian, and now Library Juice for building collective memory on the neutrality debate. The benefit is unquestionable. The one fault I find with the book is its curiously de-contextualized introduction by editor, Philadelphia-based library educator Alison Lewis. She provides a small snapshot of each essay at the outset, but fails to inform the reader about what else is published on the subject of library neutrality. Adding this context would help us better appreciate the collective work documented. What piece of the pie does it represent? How big or small is that pie? Indeed, what is the extent of the market competition for this little book (with a big fist drawn on its cover)?
Employee Free Choice Act

Statement by Emily Sheketoff,
Executive Director, ALA Washington Office
March 1, 2007

The American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) would like to take this opportunity to announce its support of H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act.

Formed for the purpose of promoting “the mutual professional interests of librarians and other library workers,” the ALA-APA is a strong advocate of workers’ rights, and protecting the right to form unions is a cause we strongly support.

By being part of a union, library workers gain local allies who can help to achieve pay equity and better salaries. This is especially important in public libraries where the union brings greater power to win budget increases from local governments. Unions are one of many ways library workers may improve salaries.

The Employee Free Choice Act goes a long way toward protecting library employees who form unions: it levels the playing field by strengthening penalties against offending employers, requiring mediation and arbitration to help employers and employees reach a first contract in a reasonable period of time, and permitting workers to form a union through “majority sign-up,” a process in which workers present signed authorization cards as demonstration of their choice to belong to a union.

Librarians are the gateways to our country’s information and an essential resource for education and literacy. The ALA-APA thanks you for introducing the Employee Free Choice Act, which will protect those library employees who wish to form unions, and we join you in hoping for its success.

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(Chicago) The ALA-APA Council passed a living wage resolution for library employees at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif. On Monday, June 30, the ALA-APA Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers, represented by incoming chair Patty Anderson, brought forward a resolution supporting an increase in minimum salary for librarians to $41,680 per year and library workers at $13 an hour.

The librarian recommended salary increase is in response to the ALA-APA’s analysis of the All-Urban Consumer Price Index (CPI), the standard measure for inflation of goods and services, which is adjusted monthly to reflect price inflation. The library worker $13 adjustment is in relation to the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The resolution passed after some discussion.

The resolution, “Endorsement of a Living Wage for All Library Employees and a Minimum Salary for Professional Librarians,” APACD #8.2 (2007 – 2008) states:

WHEREAS, the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) Council, at its January 2007 Midwinter Meeting, adopted a resolution entitled “Endorsement of a Nonbinding Minimum Salary for Professional Librarians;” and

WHEREAS, the resolution resulted in a nonbinding endorsement of a “minimum salary for professional librarians of not less than $40,000 per year;” which, adjusted for inflation now amounts to $41,680, and

WHEREAS, the ALA-APA Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers is charged “to guide ALA-APA activities in support of better salaries, comparable worth, pay equity, and similar programs related to the status of librarians and other library workers;” and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Standing Committee sees the need to strengthen ALA-APA’s position with regard to wages and salaries for all library employees, and with regard to variable costs of living over time and across geographical locations; and

WHEREAS, a living wage is defined as “net” or “take home” pay earned during a full-time workweek, not to exceed forty (40) hours per week. A living wage provides for the basic needs (housing, energy, nutrition, clothing, healthcare, education, childcare, transportation, and savings) of an average family unit; and

Living Wage Resolution
Passed by ALA-APA Council, July 15, 2008
WHEREAS, the family of four Federal poverty guideline for 2008 is $21,200, a recommended minimum hourly wage of $10.20 is necessary for a full-time, year-round worker to exceed the poverty guideline and sustain a basic living; and

WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes the All-Urban Consumer Price Index (CPI), the standard measure for inflation of goods and services, which is adjusted monthly to reflect price inflation; now, be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association endorses a minimum entry-level salary for professional librarians of $41,680 that is adjusted annually according to the latest cost of living index/CPI data; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that in recognition of the skills and competencies required of all library workers, the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association endorses a minimum wage for all library workers of at least $13 per hour, to be adjusted annually in relation to the Federal poverty guidelines."

For more information on the ALA-APA Council’s living wage resolution, please contact Jenifer Grady, director of ALA-APA at 312-280-2424 or jgrady@ala.org, or visit http://ala-apa.org.

INTRODUCING CIRL:
Community of Industrial Relations Librarians

The Community of Industrial Relations Librarians (formerly the Committee of Industrial Relations Librarians) is an international group of information professionals from academic, union, government, corporate, and nonprofit organizations in the field of industrial relations and human resource management who cooperate on projects, share resources and information, and learn from one another.

CIRL’s goal is to serve researchers and practitioners by collecting, preserving, organizing, and making available specialized resources using both tested and new technologies, and to encourage instruction and training in the use of such resources.

CIRL further seeks to create awareness of the problems and issues in the workplace and to improve information dissemination about them.

All information for this introduction to CIRL comes from its website at http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cirl/default.html, accessed 8 April 2009.

Member Library Web Sites

Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE, Berkeley) http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/
Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE, UCLA) http://www.irle.ucla.edu/
School of Industrial & Labor Relations, Cornell University http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/
Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ler/
Labor and Industrial Relations Library, Michigan State University http://www2.lib.msu.edu/branches/lir/index.jsp
Center for Human Resources and Labor Studies, University of Minnesota http://www.carlsonschool.umn.edu/Page5888.aspx
Industrial Relations Library, Princeton University http://libguides.princeton.edu/industrel
James Carey Library at the School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University http://www.smlr.rutgers.edu/library/index.html
Jean & Dorothy Newman Industrial Relations Library, Centre for Industrial Relations, University of Toronto http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/cir/library/index.html
Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/

Progressive Librarian #32 Page 79
Canada Industrial Relations Board http://www.cirb-ccri.gc.ca/
BNA Library http://www.bna.com/
George Meany Memorial Arch Library http://www.georgemeany.org/
New York Public Library http://www.nypl.org/
National Labor Relations Board Library http://www.nlrb.gov/
NYS Dept of Labor Library http://www.labor.state.ny.us/
UAW Research Library http://www.uaw.org/
W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research http://www.upjohninst.org/
Social Development Canada Departmental Library http://www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/cs/fas/as/lib/library.shtml
Holt Labor Library http://www.holtlaborlibrary.org/
Resolution Concerning ALA Policy
Opposing Sweatshop Labor &
Supporting Union Businesses

This Resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on
Tuesday, July 1, 2008 in Anaheim, CA.

WHEREAS, The American Library Association (ALA) has broad social
responsibilities (Policy 1.1); and

WHEREAS, ALA and its divisions, round tables, and other various units
purchase all kinds of products for distribution to membership, such as tee
shirts, conference bags, etc; and

WHEREAS, A large proportion of those available products are produced
in sweatshop conditions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association (ALA) and its
divisions, round tables, and all other units should purchase all products for
distribution to membership from sweatshop free producers; and that this
resolution and information about how to comply with it shall be distributed
to all ALA divisions, round tables, all other units and ALA staff.
ALA Task Force Member Survey on Policy 61. “Library Services for the Poor”

The Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association, in partnership with the OLOS Subcommittee on Library Services to Poor and Homeless People, reported the findings from the ALA Task Force Member Survey on Policy 61.

Policy 61 Summary Report
by Lisa Gieskes, ALA SRRT HHPTF Coordinator.

Summary of the ALA Task Force Survey on ALA Policy 61 Library Services for the Poor Policy 61 states:

The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons, and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America. These people are affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination, which hamper the effectiveness of traditional library services. Therefore it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to sensitize and prepare library staff to identify poor people’s needs and deliver relevant services. And within the American Library Association the coordinating mechanisms of programs and activities dealing with poor people in various divisions, offices, and units should be strengthened, and support for low income liaison activities should be enhanced.

Policy 61.1 objectives are to:

1. Promote removal of all barriers to library and information services, particularly fees and overdue charges.

2. Promote the publication, production, purchase, and ready accessibility of print and non-print materials that honestly address the issues of poverty and homelessness, that deal with poor people in a respectful way, and that are of practical use to low-income patrons.

3. Promote full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs in support of low-income services and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites to poor children, adults, and families.
4. Promote training opportunities for librarians, in order to teach effective techniques for generating public funding to upgrade library services to poor people.

5. Promote the incorporation of low-income programs and services into regular library budgets in all types of libraries, rather than the tendency to support these projects solely with “soft money” like private or federal grants.

6. Promote equity in funding adequate library services for poor people in terms of materials, facilities, and equipment.

7. Promote supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations by urging local, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.

8. Promote increased public awareness—through programs, displays, bibliographies, and publicity—of the importance of poverty-related library resources and services in all segments of society.

9. Promote the determination of output measures through the encouragement of community needs assessments, giving special emphasis to assessing the needs of low-income people and involving both anti-poverty advocates and poor people themselves in such assessments.

10. Promote direct representation of poor people and anti-poverty advocates through appointment to local boards and creation of local advisory committees on service to low-income people, such appointments to include library-paid transportation and stipends.

11. Promote training to sensitize library staff to issues affecting poor people and to attitudinal and other barriers that hinder poor people’s use of libraries.

12. Promote networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups in order to develop programs and services that effectively reach poor people.

13. Promote the implementation of an expanded federal low-income housing program, national health insurance, full-employment policy, living minimum wage and welfare payments, affordable day care, and programs likely to reduce, if not eliminate, poverty itself.

14. Promote among library staff the collection of food and clothing donations, volunteering personal time to anti-poverty activities and contributing money to direct-aid organizations.

15. Promote related efforts concerning minorities and women, since these
groups are disproportionately represented among poor people.
ALA charged the Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force to do the following:

- Survey ALA members on their knowledge and implementation of ALA Policy 61:
- Evaluate member survey responses
- Identify key issues and trends
- Make recommendations

Findings:

A small percentage of ALA external members responded to the survey (648 people) and many participants failed to answer all survey questions. There was only one question that was answered by 100% of respondents (648 people), which was the first question, “At our library the poor are:” 32% said that poor people were a scarcity at their library, 31% said rather visible, 26% said numerous, and 8% said a majority and 4% said the poor do not use their library.

**Identifying “poor” people**

Some respondents took offense at the survey question number four, “My library identifies the poor in the following manner.” Respondents were upset about the idea of labeling their patrons. However, it is worth noting that 100% of respondents answered the question about the numbers of poor people using their library. This suggests that although the idea of patron categorization is appalling library workers do make class distinctions.

How do people identify poor people? Surprisingly, respondents said that they did not know their library’s “official” policy on this and many said that their library identifies the poor as people who use the public computers, people unaffiliated with the university, community members who use the library as a public space, and those who are seen as a nuisance and “high maintenance.” Respondents also mentioned that the poor were those who live near the downtown library. There were also traditional interpretations such as those who receive Pell grants, Head Start participants and those who fall within official federal poverty guidelines, and those who receive free or reduced lunches.

Over 58% of survey respondents skipped the question that asked what specific programs or services libraries provide for the poor even though 65% said that they could measure the impact the library had on their poor patrons. Some respondents who answered said that their library did not offer any discounts or deferred payment options to anyone, regardless of economic status. They also said that those people without a permanent address were not allowed to have a library card. Library workers did say that they offered listings of subsidized housing, offered General Educational Development (or GED) and English as a Second Language.
(ESL) programs, and a mobile library. 42% skipped the question that asked if their library partnered with other agencies and partners. Of those who answered a little more than half did. Partners mentioned were school districts, Head Start and charity groups.

No official ALA policy

When respondents were asked why they were not collaborating with agencies and partners to provide services or programs they overwhelming said because there was no process to do so and that there was no “official” policy. Nearly half of respondents did not consult poverty focused agencies for resources. Those who did consulted child care providers, ESL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) providers, community centers, health and human service agencies, Big Brother/Big Sister, regional councils, State Departments of Education, Department of Social Services Job Service, Legal Aid, Eldercare, domestic violence programs, local chambers of commerce, Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Urban League, and the United Way.

Lack of professional guidance on library services to poor people

Over 72% of respondents do not consult ALA Divisions or ALA resources in seeking assistance and information to serve the poor. Respondents suggested ALA publish a guide and provide web pages, programs and resources. Those who did consult ALA Divisions or ALA resources used the HHPTF, Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) Subcommittee to the Poor, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs, Public Library Association (PLA), Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), Association for Small and Rural Libraries and the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA).

Training and networking support needed

When asked about what libraries should do for the poor many (85%) advocated sponsor training to sensitize library staff to issues affecting the poor and to attitudinal and other barriers that hinder use of libraries by the poor. 82% said network with and cooperate with other libraries and local agencies, organizations and advocacy groups to develop programs and services to reach the poor. Respondents who chose other said libraries should invite Medicare and food stamp advocates to the library for outreach purposes, provide finding aids for social service agencies, address legislative issues before Congress, help poor and homeless people access needed books and materials, provide library cards to those people who do not have a permanent address, provide tutors for poor students, include
libraries in crisis planning programs (Katrina was used as an example), coordinate programming with social service agencies (especially on career day), provide sensitivity trainings, encourage donations to social service agencies, work with job loss programs, and provide language and re-entry into society programs.

Measurement issues

When answering whether or not respondents knew of any libraries successfully providing services for the poor over 70% of respondents said no. Some respondents questioned what the survey deemed successful. A large amount, over 41%, of respondents who filled out this survey said they were non-managerial and that they provide direct service to the public.

Suggestions

Since many survey respondents said they work directly with the public and therefore have an interest in and a stake in the library services for poor people ALA needs to address their concerns. “Serve the poor as well as we serve the better off.” When asked to complete the sentence, “For a library to serve the poor effectively, it is essential to” one survey respondent said “provide free and equal access to library resources” while another said “serve the poor as well as we serve the better off.” Given the low rate of ALA member survey response and certain hostilities shown when answering some questions the task force recommends that ALA clarify why library services to the poor is integral to our profession, the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read and not a fringe issue. Therefore, the task force recommends ALA take a broad based approach to addressing issues of class and library service starting with regular reportage on the subject such as a pro-active monthly American Libraries column as well as appointing a permanent ALA staff member to work on the issue. Since many poor patrons appear to be an invisible population ALA should adopt an all encompassing advocacy campaign similar to @ Your Library.

Team approach needed

Survey respondents remarked that this survey should have been open to all librarians regardless of their ALA membership status since many librarians cannot afford an ALA membership and, like their patrons, understand obstacles to participation and issues of poverty. Furthermore, survey respondents said poverty affects all librarians in some way and that there should be more cross collaboration between various library organizations. Though the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) sent out the survey to the OLOS listservs, which do not require ALA membership (for example poor, aging, and rural lists), the task force strongly suggests
that library administrators include poor people and poverty focused organizations in library decision-making. It should be noted that this survey should, at some future date, be distributed to homeless and poor people via service organizations and libraries. ALA membership and librarianship should not be a requirement for active participation on this issue.

**Action Items**

- Add class to article V of the Library Bill of Rights.
- Ask the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom to partner with the HHPTF and adopt ALA Policy 61 by including it in their Intellectual Freedom Manual.
- Ask the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom to educate librarians and the general public about the nature and importance of services to the poor as an issue of intellectual freedom in libraries.
- Ask the ALA Public Information Office and the Library Administration & Management Association (LAMA) to advocate for library services for poor people and to include poor people in library decision-making.
- Ask ALA to appoint a staff member devoted increasing awareness of ALA Policy 61 and needs of the poor and working class. Allow this staff member to work with all interested parties without regard to ALA member status since many librarians actively serving poor people cannot afford ALA membership.
- Provide pro-active advocacy columns (implement the @ Your Library Campaign) to American Libraries and Office for Literacy and Outreach Services.
- Provide a toolkit similar to the Office for Intellectual Freedom’s toolkit for libraries interested in serving the poor.
- Ask libraries who serve the poor to post their information and resources to the Library Success. Services for the Poor and Homeless. Wiki page.
- Offer ALA distinguished service awards to libraries that successfully serve the poor.
- Seek financial assistance for award winning libraries that serve the poor.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Katelyn Angell is a Library and Information Science Master’s student and graduate assistant at St. John’s University in Jamaica, NY. Her research interests include the intersection of feminism and librarianship and the enhancement of public library services to senior citizens. She is happy to make new contacts with other progressive librarians and can be reached at katelyn.angell@gmail.com.

Jason Burton finished his MLS at the University of South Florida in May 2008. He currently resides in Anchorage, Alaska where he works at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health as an embedded librarian or as they call it, a contract research assistant.

George Lipsitz is Professor of Black Studies and Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of eight books including The Possessive Investment in Whiteness. In addition to his research and teaching, Lipsitz is active in struggles for fair housing and educational equity as a member of the board of directors of the National Fair Housing Alliance and the African American Policy Forum.

Moyra Lang is a new graduate of the University of Alberta’s School of Library and Information Studies and a former spokesperson for the Alberta Status of Women Action Committee. Having successfully completed a practicum at the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, Moyra is eager to continue her career as an Academic Librarian! Moyra’s interests include social justice, harm reduction, poverty awareness, and all things Queer. Moyra (im)patiently awaits the day when an army of white haired women will quietly take over the world...

Peter McDonald is the Dean of Library Services at Fresno State. He has just opened a new 350,000 sq ft. library which is the centerpiece of academic life on campus. One area where he feels his efforts will have national impact, he chairs the university Green Team that is looking into how the library can be a regional lead on issues related to environmental stewardship, energy conservation and green programming. Their deliberations will hopefully be published by College and Research Library News and on LJ Academic Newswire.

Toni Samek is a Professor at the School of Library & Information Studies, University of Alberta. She authored Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in American Librarianship 1967-1974 (published in the USA in 2001 and then in Japan in 2003) and Librarianship and Human Rights: A twenty-first century guide (published in the UK in 2007 and then in Spain for distribution in the Latin American market in 2008). Toni received the debut Library Journal Teaching Award in 2007 and a University of Alberta Faculty of Education Graduate Teaching Award in 2008. Her current scholarship explores the intersections between library workplace speech, intellectual freedom, academic freedom, and the resistance studies movement. This past year, Toni’s writings appeared in Turkish, Swedish, and translations.

Graham Stinnett is an expatriate American currently pursuing his Masters in Archival Studies at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. His academic pursuits include incorporating human rights NGO’s into the archival discourse and Latin American anarchism post-1945. He is a vegan anarchivist who pursues social and professional activism and supports Barca.