# "Mr. Dewey is Crazy and Katharine Sharp Hates the University of Chicago:" Gender, Power, and Personality and the Demise of the University of Chicago Course in Library Science 1897–1903

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In 1897, the University of Chicago Extension Division began offering what we today would call "bibliographic instruction" under the aegis of the Bureau of Information of the Illinois State Library Association. The program was expanded under university librarian Zella Allen Dixson, and by 1900 was designed to train librarians and library assistants. The program was severely criticized by Melvil Dewey in 1902 and by the American Library Association's Committee on Library Training in 1903. In several letters of rebuttal, Dixson accused him and Katharine Sharp of conspiring to close the program for their own personal and professional reasons. This study examines the interactions among the three principals, and of gender, ego, and power in the demise of the program, as well as the ALA's attempts to construct librarianship as a masculine profession.

## Introduction

In 1896, the University of Chicago Extension Division began offering library use courses to the general public. Katharine L. Sharp (1898) reported favorably on the program, but cautioned that it "was not recommended for the purpose of fitting people for library positions in a short time, but rather for the purpose of arousing public sentiment to an appreciation of the modern library" (p. 76).

The program was expanded under university associate librarian, Zella Allen Dixson, and by 1900 was "designed to train librarians and library assistants in the best methods of modern library economy" (University College, 1901). The American Library Association's (ALA) Committee on Library Training in 1903 strongly criticized the program, resulting in its closure that same year. In several letters to University of Chicago president, William Rainey Harper, Dixson accused both Sharp and Melvil Dewey of conspiring to close the school to eliminate competition with the school in Urbana.

This study will examine the history of the program in light of the interactions among the three principals (Dixson, Sharp, and Dewey) and the role of gender, ego, and power in the demise of the program. It will increase our knowledge of the lives and careers of women in librarianship, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during the formative years of the profession, and the role that they played in the professionalization of librarianship within the cultural context in which they lived and worked.

## Literature Review

Studies of the history of education for librarianship tend to gloss over the early period through 1919, focusing on a few significant figures and institutions—Dewey and his schools (Dawe, 1932; Miksa, 1986; Vann, 1978; Wiegand, 1996), Katharine Sharp and her schools (Grotzinger,


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1966; Grotzinger, 1992), and Mary Wright Plummer and the Pratt Institute (Brand, 1996; Maack, 2000)—and then moving quickly through the various ALA committees on education to the Association of American Library Schools and the beginnings of graduate education (Churchwell, 1975; Davis, 1976; Downs, 1968; Wilson, 1949). Others are primarily descriptive and evaluative of the state of education at the time of their writing (Wheeler, 1946; White, 1976; Williamson, 1971). Richardson's (1982) history of the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago begins with the Chicago Library Club's involvement in 1919 and makes no mention of any library training at the University prior to the establishment of the Graduate Library School.

The only references to the University Extension program are in Grotzinger's biography of Katharine Sharp, where it covers only the period of Sharp's involvement (Grotzinger, 1992, 220-4) and in Vann's work (1960), where it is included as one of ten evaluated by the ALA's Committee on Library Training in 1903.

## History of the University of Chicago Course in Library Science

### *Zella Allen Dixson*

Zella Allen was born in Zanesville, Ohio on August 10, 1858 (*Who was who in America*, 1962). She graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1880 and married Joseph Ehrman Dixson the next year. When he died in 1885, she accepted a position at Columbia College library as assistant to Melvil Dewey and "special student" in library science, most likely one of Dewey's "pupil assistants" (Wiegand, 1996, p. 91; "Twenty-five years," 1910). In 1886, she became a traveling "library expert," and organized some twenty different libraries in the Midwest, among them the Denison University, Kenyon College and Baptist Union Theological libraries, as well as the public libraries of Elyria, La Crosse and Duluth (Dewey, 1889, p. 375; "Twenty-five years," 1910). She joined ALA in 1886 and was a charter member of the ILA (Moore, 1897) and the Chicago Library Club ("Twenty-five years," 1910). She was also a member of the Chicago woman's club, the college alumni of Mt. Holyoke, and president of the Mt. Holyoke association of the northwest (Johnson, 1904).

She was offered the position of librarian at Denison University in 1888 as a result of her earlier work ("Mrs. J. E. Dixson," 1888). She remained in that position until 1890, when she moved to Baptist Union Theological Seminary.

She and Dewey maintained a cordial relationship during this period. In a letter dated July 30, 1890, he expressed his "trust & appreciation for the admirable missionary work you have been doing," and stated that "no one of all the hundred or so people who have worked with me has shown so much of this missionary spirit which you know I put first in my qualifications of the ideal librarian." He would reiterate in a letter dated November 6, 1890, "I am very proud of the excellent work you are doing" (Dixson Papers).

In 1891, she made the first of three trips to European libraries to study their methods of handling rare books. Dewey furnished her with a "circular letter of introduction" dated February 9, 1891 in which he recommends her as "an earnest, enthusiastic and successful apostle" (Dixson Papers).

When the Baptist Union Theological Seminary became the Divinity School of the University of Chicago in 1892, Dixson was appointed Assistant Librarian of the newly-established university. That same year, she earned an M.A. from Shephardson College for Women, which had been incorporated into Denison University in 1900. She was promoted to Associate Librarian in 1895, and in 1902, she earned an A.M. from Denison. None of the sources provide any information about the fields in which her degrees were earned.

She was appointed a member of the

Woman's Advisory Council on a Congress of Librarians, sponsored by the ALA in conjunction with the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, was invited to the World's Congresses on the Dept. of Literature, and was a member of the Advisory Council of the Woman's Branch of the Worlds' Congress Auxiliary and of the Committee on Literature Sub-Congress on Libraries ("Zella A. Dixon," 1893).

On April 23, 1894, Katharine Sharp requested Dixson's permission for her Armour Institute class to visit the University of Chicago library in order "to see all the working methods." She wrote again on May 26, 1894 and asked Dixson to speak "about your library studies in Europe, especially at the British Museum." She would ask to take Armour Institute students there again on April 1, 1895 and April 30, 1897 (Sharp Papers).

Having published her work *Library Science* in 1894 and a *Cataloger's Manual of Authors' Names* in 1895 (Johnson, 1904), Dixson completed her *Comprehensive Subject Index to Universal Prose Fiction* (Dixson, 1897) in 1896 and wrote to her "dear friend" Sharp on 2 October for the names of Armour graduates to create a mailing list and thanked her for her "own personal order" (Sharp Papers).

## Course in Library Economy

In the 1896/97 school year, a course in Library Economy was offered through the University of Chicago University Extension service under Sharp as director of the Bureau of Information of the newly-founded ILA (Grotzinger, 1966, p. 220-4). The purpose was "to furnish information in regard to the work of a comparatively new profession—information which may help people in their studies or which may incline them to help their local library" (Moore,1897, p. 29). It was designed for members of women's clubs, teachers, and high school students, and was expressly not intended to teach the technical details of library work (Moore, 1897, p. 28).

The course at the University of Chicago library began in January 1897, and was "designed to make students and readers more familiar with modern library methods and enable them to acquire greater facility in research work." It included the history of library economy to 1870, bookbinding, "how to obtain the greatest good from the library," and historical sketches of great libraries of the world (University Extension Division, 1896).

The course for the 1897/98 year had already moved away from making "students and researchers more familiar with modern library methods" and toward teaching the "technical details of library work." Three courses were offered: "The Modern Library Movement," two quarters in length; "Cataloging and Classification," three quarters; and "Bibliography and Reference Work," three quarters (Fogg, 1897).

## Course in Library Science

By 1898, contrary to Sharp's original vision and mandate, the program was described as "designed to train library assistants" and consisted of three courses: "Historical and Literary Outlines of Library Economy," "Technical Methods," and "Bibliography and Reference Work" (Dixson Papers). A fourth course was added in 1901, "Principles of Library Administration," and a "course certificate, signed by the proper University officers" was awarded on completion. It was designed "to train librarians and library assistants in the best methods of modern library economy," and students were required to matriculate (University College, 1901). Although no entrance examination was given, students were interviewed before acceptance and were required to have two years of college or the equivalent. Courses met once a week for two hours during two quarters "constituting the same amount of work as a Major of the University." It was designed to be completed in two years and included practical work in the university

library. Zella Allen Dixson was listed as the instructor of record (University College, 1901).

### *Dewey's Criticisms*

Dewey wrote to University of Chicago president William Rainey Harper in 1900, accusing Dixson of incompetence as both a librarian and library school director and of misrepresenting herself as a graduate of the New York State Library School. Although the letter was not preserved, the gist can be gathered from her lengthy written rebuttal of October 30, 1900 (Harper, 1900–1903). In this document, she called the letter "too contemptible to receive the least notice," "a tissue of falsehoods," and "carping criticism from the administrative officers of rival library schools." In the program's defense, she stated, "We have been training librarians for the last five years yet today every student who has taken our course has held a responsible position except only those young ladies who have given up the profession to enter married life," and claimed that Dewey's real motive was to reduce the competition with his school and his graduates, as "Our students are everywhere taking the places & doing the work that he seeks for his students . . . It is because our courses are a decided success that he tries to kill them."

She leveled her own criticism at Dewey and his school, saying that "The trouble is with his method of instruction" and that he was not preparing "the kind of trained librarians that trustees want." She quoted "an old librarian" who had recently told her that "Mr. Dewey is in a passion because so many of the big universities are introducing into their degree courses instruction in Library Science."

She claimed that their outreach to working librarians through the University Extension's correspondence courses and their acceptance of part-time students had "especially excited his anger because we have made it possible for librarians already in positions to hold them, by taking the training needed."

She also repudiated the charge of misrepresenting herself as a graduate of the Albany school, "I think too highly of my reputation to do that . . . The truth is Mr. Dewey has himself made the statement that I was from his school but I was not." She enclosed a handwritten copy of the relevant section of Dewey's 1889 address to the 12th Annual Meeting of the Library Association in England, where he referred to her as "one of our pupils who was doing good work," and claimed that she asked for his permission and a leave of absence to organize the Midwestern libraries (Dewey, 1889, p. 375). He represented himself as her mentor and inspiration, and held her up as an example of "One little woman with her heart full of the spirit we most prize in our pupils . . . " (Dewey, 1889, p. 375). She explained that she left the Columbia library because "finding myself somewhat at variance with the methods & motives taught I took the first opportunity to work elsewhere" (Harper, 1900–1903)

She concluded, "I have long held the opinion that Mr. Dewey is crazy, a statement often heard in library circles and the most Christian explanation I can cherish of his actions for more than a decade" (Harper, 1900–1903).

Representatives of each of the "classes of persons whose testimony on this subject is of value"—students, graduates, and employers—wrote to Harper in 1901 in support of the program, including the librarian of the Field Museum of Chicago and the director of the Aurora Public Library. Naturally they were uniformly positive about the program and Dixson's qualifications as a teacher. Katherine Ensign, a student from Duluth, noted that Dixson had been sent "with high recommendation from Mr. Dewey and others" to organize the public library in Duluth, and as a consequence, her father had sent her "with rejoicing and a confidence which was not misplaced . . . to receive my training in her classroom." (Harper, 1900–1903).

Josephine Robertson, a cataloger in the library and instructor in the program, also wrote a strong letter of support, saying that "this particular charge in regard to incompetence is only part of a longstanding effort . . . to unsettle Mrs. Dixson in her position." (Harper, 1900–1903). She explained that while she was visiting the Albany school in 1893, she was told that "Mrs. Dixson's position in the University was only temporary & [*sic*] from later developments it would seem that they had done what was in their power to make it such." She asserted that all of the criticism of Dixson which she had heard in the intervening years had been "traced directly or indirectly through many channels back to Mr. Dewey."

She gave her opinion that "library schools like the one at Champaign & the summer school at Madison are branches of the Albany school." She agreed with Dixson's earlier claims that the University of Chicago school had "drawn students from the neighboring library schools" and "increased the spirit of opposition which one cannot fail to notice even in escorting the visiting library classes through our library year after year."

She called Dixson's "Historical and Literary Outlines of Library Economy" course, "unique" and not "to be equalled [*sic*] in any library school in the country," and described the syllabus as "the result of careful study along the lines of a specialist."

She classed Dewey among those librarians who had "worked out an elaborate scheme with almost endless details . . . often more of a hindrance than help to those seeking information . . . not often practicable," while in Dixson's system, "the scholarly is made practical & system is used simply as a means to an end." She also considered Dewey's system too labor-intensive and so too expensive for most libraries to implement.

Before she accepted the staff position at the library, "knowing of Mr. Dewey's attitude toward Mrs. Dixson, I took no little pains . . . to investigate the different systems . . . It was my opinion formed then . . . that the general principles of library science for which Mrs. Dixson stands adapt themselves most perfectly to the management of a university library." She could find no other explanation for "Mr. Dewey's attitude except for the fact that Mrs. Dixson does not yield allegiance to him & the school which he represents" (Harper, 1900–1903).

In late 1901 or early 1902, Dixson responded to Harper's request for what she thought would be "necessary to add to our present arrangements to have a thoroughly good library school." In her detailed written response, she claimed that they were "ahead of any other Library School" in terms of enrollment and placement, and that none of their students had ever been fired for incompetence, "which is more than the School at Albany can say" (Harper, 1900–1903).

She gave it as her considered opinion that their faculty was adequate, consisting of herself, Robertson and alumna Mary E. Downey. According to her, this use of library staff was typical of "all of the other Schools." She also stated that the quality and hourly requirement were equivalent to other schools, "with the possible exception of the School at Florence, Italy which gives a course equal to a foreign doctorate."

Her only criticism of the school was that it fell short in laboratory facilities; she explained that the students were using their own personal collections for homework and therefore had "lost the greater variety of material that a proper laboratory could not fail to furnish." If room were provided in the new library building which was soon to open, "I feel sure we can have the best Library School in the country." She proposed that students would "practice their lessons by doing the work for the University . . . from the loan desk to the cataloging department." She also requested that she be given the title of "Professor of Library Science & Director of the

Library School," as it would "give dignity to the course." Finally, she suggested that the courses should count toward a University degree. These final two requests were never granted (Harper, 1900–1903).

Later that year, Harper received a letter from the "College and University Section [sic] of the American Library Association" (Harper, 1900–1903) [The copy of the document retained in the files is typed on plain paper, with no date and no signature. The rebuttal, also undated, is attached to it. Internal evidence in the letter and in Dixson's rebuttal places them in 1902. In 1902, the section name was College and Reference Library Section. The reason for the error is unknown.] The writer of the document charged that "the course in library training offered by the University of Chicago is not of as high a grade as is legitimate to expect of such an institution." In particular, it was not inspired by the proper library spirit to "do all the good they can, to all the people they can in all the ways they can."

Specific charges leveled in the document were that there was no entrance requirement for the course; that only 200 hours of study were required for completion; that the school employed only one instructor who was "regarded by the profession as not possessing the qualifications essential in such work, and one whose own library in use, administration and influence is considered by librarians in general as lamentably weak"; that the course is "wholly theoretical" without any opportunity for application; and that students "receive assurance of positions . . . [which] is not made good."

In a letter of rebuttal (undated), Dixson (Harper, 1900-1903) declared that "each and every statement . . . is untrue . . . [therefore] the conclusions drawn from them are equally false and misleading." She further made the accusation that articles sent to *Library Journal* and *Public Libraries* about the Course had been suppressed and that information about positions which graduates had secured was either suppressed or printed with all reference to the University of Chicago omitted.

Dixson sent a second letter to Harper on October 7, 1902. She reminded him that "the last matter of this kind was a letter from Dr. Dewey written under the inspiration and representation—or misrepresentation of Miss Sharp" in order to "prevent the close competition our library classes are making the . . . [University of ] Illinois school," which had opened under Katharine Sharp's direction in September 1897. "The same hand is in this matter . . . she now stirs up a small body of a dozen persons with a big name . . . to have our work stopped" (Harper, 1900–1903).

While she used this letter to argue for the "success of the work," she stated, "Personally, I do not care how you finally decide the matter. I took up the work in obedience to your orders and shall be ready to lay it down in the same way." She continued "I very much prefer to use my private time for my own private work," and could "employ the energy and ability I am putting in these classes in ways that will bring better results to me financially" (Harper, 1900–1903), referring no doubt to the "interesting craft-print shop" she had recently opened in her home ("Twenty-five years," 1910, p. 211).

She reminded Harper that there were fifty-six students enrolled in the program, that library students were doing the work of "a half dozen assistants" in their apprenticeships, and it would require "a better excuse than the unreasonable envy of Mr. Dewey the president and founder of the College section of the A.L.A. and Miss Sharp, who hates everything connected with the University of Chicago" to hire that many additional library assistants as well as return $1120 in tuition (Harper, 1900–1903).

In conclusion, she reiterated, "feel perfectly free to decide it any way you please" and furthermore, "If I thought that my resignation would help you to be rid of this petty dictation, you should have it today." However, "nothing will satisfy them but to

have Mr. Dewey and his friends in charge of library administration."

In a letter of support, Mary E. Downey wrote that, after considering all options, she "chose the University of Chicago course because it was more practical than those of Albany, Champaign, Pratt or Drexel" (Harper, 1900–1903).

### *ALA Committee on Library Training Report*

Shortly thereafter, in July 1903, the ALA Committee on Library Training released its report. The Committee consisted of the heads of six of the library science programs under evaluation—Mary Wright Plummer, Pratt; Salome Cutler Fairchild, New York State Library School; Katharine L. Sharp, Illinois; Alice B. Kroeger, Drexel, and Mary E. Robbins, Simmons. Except for Fairchild, all were graduates of the New York State Library School (Vann, 1961, p. 107). In the preamble to the report, even the committee acknowledged that "it might have been composed of persons less likely to be thought prejudiced" (Plummer *et al.*, 1903, p. 83). Information was gathered by means of a questionnaire only. The report on the University of Chicago program was a mixture of fact and misinformation. It incorrectly named Robertson as the director and only instructor, but correctly noted that two years of college were required for admission, that a certificate was awarded for completion, and that two years of apprentice work in the University library were required. The committee, however, stated their opinion that the standard for admission should be three years of college or an entrance examination. It also reprimanded both the Chicago and Columbia programs for allowing students to complete only part of the program because of possible misrepresentation or misunderstanding by students or employers that they were fully qualified graduates (Plummer *et al.*, 1903; see also Vann, 1961, p. 108–111).

The decision to close the school, which Mary Wright Plummer later attributed to the impact of the report (Vann, 1961, p. 115), was made by October of that year and resulted in a flood of letters of protest to the dean of the University College, only one of which was forwarded to Harper by his secretary "just for courtesy's sake because it is somewhat representative" (Harper, 1900–1903). In this letter, Mary E. Downey wrote a strongly emotional appeal as "President of the University of Chicago Library Students Club," calling the closure "a great wrong—a most dishonorable injustice" and "a dishonor to the University of Chicago." She referred to the "humiliation suffered by the students, especially in this last year, from schools of Library Science elsewhere," and said that the University owed it to the students and graduates "to have a Department or School of Library Science second to none." She asked, "How can any University of Chicago library student ever be able to answer the thrusts given if the work is dropped?" She closed by appealing again to the University to "be more loyal" to the students, as they had been to it. Her pleas fell on deaf ears. [Mary E. Downey was later one of the women whose charges of sexual harassment led to Dewey's expulsion from ALA and NYLA in 1906 (Wiegand, 1996, p. 301)]

## Dixson's Final Years

Dixson remained at the University of Chicago as Associate Librarian until her retirement in 1910 ("Twenty-five years," 1910), just prior to the library moving into its new building. Although she served as administrative head of the library, Harper never promoted her to University Librarian. Her expressed reasons for retiring at the comparatively young age of 52 were that she had "moved the library five times and feels that in its sixth and final remove someone else should have the burden," and to "enable her to devote all her time and energy to her literary work" and craft-printing through her Wisteria Cottage

Press ("Twenty-five years," 1910, p. 211). A book-plate collector, she had printed and published her *Children's book-plates* in 1902 and *Concerning book-plates: a handbook for collectors* in 1903 (*Who was who*, 1961). She was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Shurtleff College (now part of Southern Illinois University) in 1906 and died January 12, 1924 in Chicago.

## Analysis

The immediate reaction to the history of the University of Chicago Course is confusion. The reader is left to wonder what happened to change "trust & pride" into accusations of incompetence and misrepresentation and "my dear friend" to someone who "hates everything to do with the University of Chicago." The answers are to be found in the intersections among gender, power and ego, as expressed through the personalities involved and their interactions with each other.

### *Gender, Power, Ego*

In turn-of-the-century America, gender and power were synonymous and interacted with socioeconomic status. This power expressed itself through the "ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality, in short to assert hegemony" (Connell, 1987, p. 107). And this was a power Melvil Dewey was never hesitant to employ.

Although Dewey's power and influence were declining due to his manipulations in securing the ALA presidency for Herbert Putnam in 1897 (Wiegand, 1996, p. 224-30), he would remain a force in American librarianship for several more years. As suggested by Wiegand's biography of Dewey (1996) and history of ALA (1896), Dixson's and Robertson's assessment of his actions was not far off the mark. Both studies provide evidence for Dewey's "huge ego," evangelical zeal for his cause, "obsessive need to control," insistence on "conformity to the order and rules he defined," demand for unquestioning loyalty, and vindictive nature, as well as his paternalistic attitude toward women (Wiegand, 1996, p. 376). He is depicted as an unconventional, if charismatic, teacher, whose eccentricities led at least one student to withdraw from his school because he could not endure such "rubbish" (Wiegand, 1996, p. 205-6).

The University of Chicago school was likely one of the inspirations for Dewey's 1903 criticisms against library training programs being offered in libraries, as summer schools, and through correspondence courses. He characterized their instructors as "dabblers and charlatans," and warned against the dangers of "the zeal of the unequipt [*sic*] or incompetent" (Vann, 1961, p. 103).

He also had a personal relationship with Harper which began in 1891, when Dewey invited Harper to speak in Albany (Dewey, 1891). The relationship was strengthened in 1892 when Harper attempted to hire him as head of the University of Chicago library and the extension division, as well as "dean of the library school" (Wiegand, 1996, p. 144). Such a relationship ensured that Dewey's opinions would carry far more weight than Dixson's. Whether Dewey recommended Dixson for the position in his stead is not known, but given that as late as November 1890, he was writing letters in praise of her work, it is entirely possible.

In addition, Harper was well known for his indifference to, not to say disdain for, the university library and the authority of its librarian, which included permitting faculty to take books from the library without checking them out (Shera, 1972, p. 229). He officially reprimanded Dixson for demanding that a university faculty member return such books to the library, writing that her tone did not convey the proper respect and deference due to a faculty member (Dixson Papers). He

appointed Ernest DeWitt Burton, a noted New Testament Scholar at the University as her successor and University Librarian, rather than a graduate of a library school.

The role of sex and sexuality in the relationships among Dewey, Sharp, and Dixson cannot be ignored. "There is an emotional dimension, and perhaps an erotic dimension, to all social relationships" (Connell, 1987, p. 111), and this dimension may be hostile as well as affectionate. The relationship between Dewey and Sharp appears to have taken the form of a paternal/filial relationship. His son, Godfrey, commented that "she had an understanding loyalty to my father's ideas and ideals, which made her a particularly valued member of the official family" beginning with her student days in Albany in 1890 (Grotzinger, 1966, p. 269). Dewey famously recommended her for the position at Armour Institute with the phrase, "The best man in America is a woman" (Grotzinger, 1966, p. 60) and to the University of Illinois as "the best woman librarian in America" (Grotzinger, 1966, p. 81). He wrote her more than once about the need to avoid overworking herself and she spent time vacationing at his resort in Lake Placid on numerous occasions (Grotzinger, 1966, p. 259–62, 265, 270–71). She retired there in 1907 and died as the result of an automobile accident in June 1914 (Grotzinger, 1966, p. 272–77).

The relationship between Dewey and Dixson followed a different trajectory. While his initial attitude toward her was affectionate and paternal, it soon turned hostile and aggressive. He doubtless viewed her rejection of his methods of teaching and librarianship as a personal rejection, as well as professional disloyalty, and utilized all of his power and influence to punish her rebellion. There is no evidence that Dixson made any effort to repair the rift between them or even that she desired to do so. She also appears to have been unaware of or blind to the relationship between Dewey and Harper and its implications for her career and her school.

There is also indirect evidence that Sharp could very well have wanted to eliminate any rival schools in the state. In late 1902, she proposed moving library extension from the oversight of the ILA to the School of Library Science as part of a center that would be empowered to establish new libraries, reorganize existing ones, develop study clubs, and manage traveling, home and house libraries. It would be modeled on a similar center which Dewey had established in New York.

In a letter dated December 17, 1902, Dewey advised her on how best to approach Carnegie and ended "You better let me see the letter of application . . . when you have got it ready" (Sharp Papers). In his letter to Carnegie, dated January 14, 1903, he enumerated all of the advantages of the University and stated that "they have offered the best course of instruction in librarianship" in the state (Sharp Papers).

University of Illinois President W. S. Draper signed the January 19, 1903 letter sent to Carnegie, but the text suggests that it was written by Sharp or under her direction (Sharp Papers). The letter notes that "The School . . . has tried university extension lectures on the use of libraries to prove need of traveling instructor" (Sharp Papers, 1903). The impression given was that it was a project of the Illinois school, rather than of the ILA, and there is no mention of the University of Chicago.

The letter also claims that the University of Illinois is "the only school which offers library instruction in general undergraduate courses, preparing the general student . . . in addition to preparing library students," which was technically correct, if misleading (Sharp Papers, 1903). The University of Chicago Course was still open and admitting general students as well as library students in January, 1903. However, although it admitted general students to the courses, it did not allow students to apply the credits to their degree and, as a correspondence program it was not considered a *general* undergraduate course.

Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram, replied on April 17, 1903 with an unqualified negative: "The field which Mr. Carnegie has adopted . . . is proving more than sufficient to take up all the time he can give. . . therefore, your papers can not receive attention" (Sharp Papers).

### *Social Construction of Profession and Professional Education*

This, however, does not explain the motivation for the actions of all of the members of the Committee on Library Training. When viewed from a greater perspective, it is clear that the Course was part of the greater struggle over the appropriate preparation for librarianship, which was part of the conflict surrounding the construction of the profession itself.

Scholars recognize that the traditional construction of "profession" is a reflection of Western cultural masculine ideals which confirm masculine identity while repressing, denigrating or denying culturally-signed female qualities. Central to this construction is expertise derived from formal training based on science and the control of knowledge and its application (Lo, 2005; Witz, 1990). The conflict over education for librarianship and entrance into the profession can be seen as a struggle to establish the profession as "masculine" even while the majority of its practitioners were female.

As Shera (1972) established, early training for librarianship was driven by the sudden and immediate need for staff for the newly-constructed public libraries built in the aftermath of the Civil War, fueled in part, but by no means exclusively, by Andrew Carnegie's largesse. As such, it consisted primarily of apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training (Shera, 1972; Vann, 1961). It appealed to white, middle-class women who were entering the public sphere for the first time through the rubric of "municipal housekeeping," an extension of their role as caretakers of their homes and families, arbiters of culture, and guardians of social morality (Stauffer 2005a, p. 347; 2011, p. 135).

According to an 1894 survey, seven years after Dewey opened his School at Columbia, the majority of the profession still believed that librarianship was best learned on the job, with 77 of the library directors preferring to train their own employees (Wiegand, 1986; Vann, 1961). ALA leaders themselves were split on the issue. The question of whether ALA even needed a library school committee was still being debated in 1899 (Vann, 1961, p. 113). The first section on "Professional Training for Librarianship" was not established by ALA until 1909 (Vann, 1961, p. 1986, 121)

The Committee on Library School and Training Classes refused to "distinguish between a library school program and a training class" and William I. Fletcher, director of the Amherst Summer School, declared that librarianship was not a "learned profession" (Vann, 1961, p. 80). Putnam urged in 1898 that educational or certification requirements be instituted, while William H. Brett proposed that librarianship follow the example of the legal profession by creating an examining board that would certify librarians, regardless of the source of their training (Vann, 1961). Although holding that all forms of training were valid, John Cotton Dana encouraged librarians to achieve equal status with "the learned professions" through establishing educational and training programs (Dana, 1900). Mary Wright Plummer, a strong advocate for university library schools, accepted apprenticeships as equally valid preparation, at least for certain positions. She argued against training for "the born librarian," reserving that for those who did not possess such native ability (Vann, 1961, p. 128). The Committee on Standards for Library Training agreed that formal training in a library school was preferable and also that experience and training on the job were perfectly adequate (Vann, 1961).

Formal training was seen as a way to

reconstruct the profession as masculine. In 1902, Arthur E. Bostwick reiterated that "library schools are trying to do for librarianship what the law school does for the legal profession, West Point for the army, the normal school for the teacher, or the theological school for the ministry" (Vann, 1961, p. 137). Aksel G. S. Josephson called for a "school of bibliography and library science, affiliated with one of the great universities" (Vann, 1961, p. 81), in order to improve the image and status of librarianship and attract more men to the profession while Fletcher and Ruben Gold Thwaites argued that library school training was beneath the dignity of "the men [known] foremost as bibliographers and scholarly librarians" (Vann, 1961, p. 87). H.L. Elmendorf proposed that a one-year program in library administration and policy be designed for men, who had no interest in or need for training in library methods (Vann, 1961). As late as 1912, Chalmers Hadley recommended that the curriculum provide instruction in administration and policy in order to attract more men to the field and criticized existing programs as appealing "largely to the house-wifely instincts" (Vann, 1961, p.149).

The leaders of the ALA envisioned librarianship as a traditional Western masculine profession. Entrance would be dependent upon formal training in the academic discipline of "library science" and accreditation or certification awarded by the professional organization. Professional roles would be those which were historically and culturally constructed as appropriate for each gender; leaders and administrators would be men, while women performed the routine, "house-wifely" tasks and provided the emotional and moral support on which the work of the administrators depended.

Unlike Dixson's school, Katharine Sharp's followed this model of professional education: the faculty were all library school graduates, three years of college were required for admission, a B.L.S. was awarded, and bibliography was a key component of the curriculum (Vann, 1961 ).

## Conclusion

Whether Dewey was, indeed, crazy, and whether Sharp hated everything to do with Chicago and manipulated the Committee on Library Training are conclusions which are beyond the scope of this paper. While it is possible to conclude that the Course closed because it was substandard, such an explanation ignores the complex factors which contributed to its demise, not the least of which was gender and its intersection with personality, power and profession. Sharp allied herself with a powerful, influential man in the library community, while Dixson not only failed to secure a powerful male ally, she made a personal and professional enemy of Sharp's mentor. He utilized all of his influence in support of the one and to the detriment of the other. In addition, Sharp had the confidence, respect and support of the president of her university, while the actions of Chicago's president suggest that he viewed Dixson as a subordinate charged with minor administrative duties. Dewey's influence in both relationships cannot be discounted. Harper's motives in closing the program are unknown, but, given his disdain for librarianship in general, he may have agreed with Dewey that the program detracted from the scholarly reputation of the University.

Sharp assimilated the masculine construction of profession that was current at the time and designed her school according to its dictates, while Dixson employed a different model, one which privileged the "house-wifely" duties of librarians, with its focus on practical, pragmatic solutions to everyday problems. The Committee was concerned with improving the image and status of librarianship as a profession and increasing the number of men in it by making it the equivalent of the other "learned professions," and evaluated the programs in that light.

The ALA's goal of reconstructing the profession and professional education as masculine predicts Harris' finding that "the gender gap in library education" continued through 1985, making Harris' article additional evidence for the validity of this interpretation. The ultimate conclusion is that librarianship continues to be a female-intensive profession that attempts to construct itself as masculine, denying its own history, values, and identity.

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