Building a Critical Culture: How Critical Librarianship Falls Short in the Workplace

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Abstract

Critical librarianship, or critlib, has made its way into the mainstream of library and information science through conferences, scholarly publications, social media, and other outlets. Over the past 10 years critical library instruction specifically has continued to be a much presented and published topic. Classes and other groups that come through our libraries are opportunities for us to teach, learn, and empower. The care and critical perspectives we bring into the classroom are necessary, but are we also fostering this type of environment in the workplace? Are we doing enough to turn the critical lens on ourselves? As a woman of color in a predominantly white profession, it is difficult to not feel as though critical librarianship is performative. There is a time and place to refer to theory and another to engage in practice. Throughout this article I will illustrate that while critical pedagogy in librarianship has changed the way we teach information literacy and think of the teacher/student relationship, it's been slower to change power relations between library colleagues. We ask our students to critically examine a resource and to see what is being left out of the conversation. It's time to not only ask the same of us and the profession but also for us to take action.

Keywords: critical librarianship, librarians of color, equity, workplace culture, *Critical Library Instruction*

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As a woman of color in a predominantly white profession (Rosa & Henke, 2017), I have many stories where I am celebrated for my difference—which does not just include race or ethnic background, but cultural difference such as knowledge building and approach to problem solving—and discounted for the same reasons. My friends and I are probably the ones getting photographed at a national conference, but also the ones getting microaggressed or worse in the same venue. Despite sanctioned spaces provided by professional organizations, the work of Black and Indigenous folks and People of Color (BIPOC), our intentions, need to convene, and narratives can still be called into question.

At the 3rd National Joint Conference for Librarians of Color (JCLC), Jennifer Brown, Sofia Leung, Marisa Méndez-Brady and I presented a workshop centered on the library worker of color and self-care titled "We Here: Community Building as Self-Care." JCLC is a conference that centers work done by and with communities of color, and because of this, we felt it was important to let possible attendees know that this would not devolve into a "Diversity 101" session in which we explain why something someone said or did is racist even though no racial slurs or stereotypes were used. We posted a sign outside the session room that read:

> DO NOT ENTER THIS ROOM IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE NARRATIVES OF PEOPLE OF COLOR.

> everything being made and said in this room is rooted in believing the narratives of people of color and recognizing systemic oppression.

I tweeted a photograph of this sign, with the following caption:

> .@sofiayleung @jeninthelib @msmendezbrady and I posted this outside our session room at #jclc2018 and now I want it outside every room I speak in ✌🏽

> [Image of JCLC room signage indicating sessions schedule for this room for the day with our sign tapes underneath]

> 7:12 PM Sep 29, 2018

To which a librarian (a white woman) publicly replied:

> This sign seems hostile. Have we given up on trying to educate and communicate? That said, Please know I'm trying to educate myself about intersectionality and I hope not to receive hate for this comment. I'm very well aware that I am not a POC.

The sign worked beautifully in real life but did not seem to have the same effect on Twitter, which is not entirely surprising. While I'm embarrassed to admit it, it's important for me to say how much this response angered me because owning up to that anger is a step toward self-improvement. My feelings prevented me from responding to this librarian, whom I will now call Twitter Commenter. Sofia Leung interacted with Twitter Commenter by asking questions in a public tweet reply, starting with, "Why do you find it hostile?" To which Twitter Commenter replied:

> "Do not enter this room" …seems a bit unwelcoming, especially to people who might really want to rid themselves of racist ideas (perhaps that were engrained [sic] in them as children) but are nervous to take the chance. Hard to explain in a tweet.

This social media interaction is reflective of many real-life conversations BIPOC library workers have to endure. For some, not only do we have to endure oppression, we are also expected to "educate" the oppressor, as Twitter Commenter alludes to here. For example, the expectation to take on "diversity" work, both in an official capacity, such as diversity committees, as well as through unofficial routes where the labor goes unrecognized. In the social media example above, Twitter Commenter believes asking people to respect the space BIPOC library workers are making for ourselves is hostile. The structural inequities in which the BIPOC library worker is oppressed by is *not* seen as hostile. Additionally, Twitter Commenter anticipates "hate" from either me or other Twitter users, preemptively creating innocence as a means to mitigate ignorance. The white normativity of the profession has rendered this sign hostile.[1]

While speaking directly to organizations, Victor Ray's (2019) assessment here can be applied to the JCLC signage: "While White organizations are seen as normative and neutral, non-White organizations are seen as deviations from the norm and often stigmatized" (p. 38). In this Twitter situation, both Twitter Commenter and I could have benefited from critical thinking, particularly what is focused on in critical library instruction. Throughout this article I will illustrate that while critical pedagogy in librarianship has changed the way we teach information literacy and think of the teacher/student relationship, it's been slower

to change power relations between library colleagues. I argue that what's needed is to embed insights from critical librarianship into the ways our work as library workers is organized.

The Ways in Which Library Workers Use Critical Pedagogy

Patron-focused practices such as active learning activities in the library classroom, methods of working with first-generation students and those of marginalized identities, and challenging archaic and regressive terminology in cataloging are typically associated with ways in which ones is a critical librarian (Hudson, 2016). How we utilize critical theory to perform instruction, provide access, or complete cataloging and classification work have made their way into conference programs and publications over the last 10 years. As a women of color in this predominantly white profession, the emphasis of critical librarianship can seem performative (Brown, Ferretti, Leung, & Méndez-Brady, 2018). If a call for papers, conference session, Twitter profile, or information literacy program includes the words "critical librarianship" or "critical pedagogy" it provides a status that can shadow the work of interrogating power and privilege and actively working toward dismantling structural inequities inherent in our workplaces. This includes further marginalization of BIPOC colleagues by those who claim the critical librarianship identity. Given the demographics of the profession, those claiming this identity are typically white women, which creates a race dynamic that is undeniable and unavoidable for the BIPOC library worker.

Critical librarianship is sometimes used interchangeably with #critlib, which typically refers to the online space, although critilib.org (n.d.) makes no distinction between the two. The critlib.org website indicates that the primary discussions have taken place on Twitter (using the #critlib hashtag) and at conferences. This article utilizes "critical librarianship" rather than "#critlib" in an effort to include those who do not identify or don't often engage with the online community. "Critical librarianship" also refers to social justice-oriented activism within the profession (Nicholson & Seale, 2018). This article is concerned with the impact those who identify as critical librarians have on BIPOC library workers. While I identify as a woman of color, I do not speak for all BIPOC. I am speaking from my experience as a first-generation American Latina/Mestiza and recognizing the privileges that come with my identity. Additionally, I make no assumption that all BIPOC experience the library and information science professions in the same way.

Now is the time for all library workers to turn the critical lens on our holistic selves in the workplace, particularly those who identify with the critical librarianship practice and those who have decision-making power and agency. Are we treating our colleagues with the same critical care as we strive to provide our students/patrons? Are we as reflective of our behavior in the workplace as we are instructors in the classroom? Are people with privileges sharing their platforms with workers of marginalized identities rather than keeping the "mic" for themselves in order to further their reputation? Answering these questions in the affirmative must become part of a critical praxis. Currently it's very possible for reputation and praxis to be in conflict with each other. When a critical librarian's reputation and praxis do not reconcile, it is something not only the BIPOC library worker must contend with but the entire critical librarianship community.

How Language Can Aid Performativity

Language and the convention of naming things is an incredibly powerful system of communication that can both influence and be influenced by the culture of a particular community. Language can be both inclusionary for community members, exclusionary for non-community members, and exclusionary for community members of different backgrounds. As the equityxdesign (2016) collaborative describes, "There is an often-overlooked power in language and discourse to influence and control ideas, beliefs, actions, and ultimately culture" ("Design Principle 5", para. 3) A word considered slang in the United States has the potential to enter the lexicon of some of its citizens. Dissemination through outlets like traditional media and social media can sometimes lead to adoption in official dictionaries. For example, a new definition of the word "woke" was added to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* in September 2017, which they write is derived from African American Vernacular English (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-a) Merriam-Webster describes this word as meaning "aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of race and social justice)." A word that can be traced throughout Black culture, including a *New York Times* essay published in 1962 called "If You're Woke You Dig It" by William Melvin Kelley, hip hop songs, and a resurgence after the Black Lives Matter movement began, has now been co-opted into the mainstream. Sam Sanders (2018) explains one of Kelley's arguments, which is that once phrases or words from Black culture reach a white audience, they're already out of date. Sanders goes on to summarize, "A word meant to imply a constant state of striving, course-correcting and growth has been heard now, for almost a decade, as a static and performative state of being" (para. 23). The formalizing of a

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word or phrase is typically done without its creator, erasing the culture from which it comes from.

Again, language can also alienate those within the same movement or community, adding to its performativity. In an interview with *Democracy Now!,* writer D. Watkins commented on how words like woke can "demonize people who don't even know what you're talking about," creating "hierarchies within movements and these hierarchies within different classes of people." (Goodman & González, 2019, 52:06) This was certainly my feeling when I participated in my first #critlib Twitter chat. As someone who never had the opportunity to study critical theory in an academic institution (or at home under the influence of a parent, for example), I felt like I was a critical librarian but did not meet the standard in which to be one based on my lack of vocabulary and knowledge of critical theorists. Other words like "decolonization" and "intersectionality" have made their way into the mainstream, sometimes without a clear understanding of definition, origin, usage or intent, playing into performativity and illustrating the consequences of such co-optation. As Joyce Gabiola (2018) notes, "decolonization" and "decolonizing" can be heard or seen thrown around in the LIS field by practitioners who pursue critical inquiry or utilize social justice frameworks. "Decolonize" has certainly made its way into LIS workshops, conference sessions, blog posts, and more without much interrogation. Some, of course, have done and continue to do the work of decolonization. If one searches the internet for "library conference decolonization," there's multiple pages of sessions (and posts about sessions) that aim to discuss how workers and/or an institution have decolonized archives, classification, and digital humanities work. I myself have been asked (and declined) to lead such workshops that use this specific language. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) explain, "When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future" (p. 3). This is where the critical librarian can step in and ask more from organizers and panelists. Viet Thanh Nguyen spoke about decolonization non-metaphorically at the Association for College and Research Libraries conference in 2019. His keynote address charged up many on Twitter who shared words that resonated with them, including "the claim that representation matters (almost everyone agrees with that), but that is not enough. We need decolonization, which begins by recognizing that the USA is a colonial state." Nguyen argues that "successful colonization goes by the name of the American Dream" in this country and offered ways in which material decolonization could begin: "transfer of wealth, abolishment of the prison-industrial complex, and reparations."

Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced us to "intersectionality" in her 1989 article "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." Fobazi Ettarh (2018) has commented that the expansion of the word intersectionality has been so great, it has rendered it meaningless. She writes how white people love the word because

> it allows them to co-opt rhetoric around marginalization. Intersectionality becomes a catch-all phrase to describe anything that makes their life uncomfortable and amplifies the discomfort of marginalization, while ignoring all of the very real social, cultural, and political systems that positively influence their life. (p. xiii)

Crenshaw (2016) explains that she began using the term "to deal with the fact that many of our social justice problems, like racism and sexism, are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social justice" (04:45). Crenshaw developed this term as a way to explain the oppression of African American women, an important origin often lost in conversation about intersectionality.

When asked to discuss "intersectional erasure" in the Trump era during a 2017 Columbia Law School interview, Crenshaw points out the "complete irrelevance of women of color" in these conversations, while pointing out other constituencies, like working class white men, vote for someone outside of the establishment because they are angry because of the belief that their prospects are deteriorating. In response, Crenshaw explains that women of color, especially Black and Latina women, have been most impacted by things like deindustrialization. In her words,

> So if any group had a reason to respond to scapegoat politics, you would think it might be those workers who were subject to both racialized downward pressures and gendered downward pressures. Yet they were least likely to vote for someone not of the establishment.

> Why aren't we talking about that? (Columbia Law School, 2017, "Intersectional erasure," paras. 2-3)

Intersectional erasure certainly happens in library spaces. During presentations in which race is discussed, many of us have heard white women ask the question, "what about poor white people?"

"Intersectionality" has also made its way into women's and gender studies department descriptions and faculty job announcements. This is similar to the ways in which "critical librarian" or "critical theory" has been added to conference sessions, job opportunities, and programmatic literature, albeit perhaps less prolific. Jennifer C. Nash (2019) argues that including "intersectionality" in departmental and job descriptions works to secure resources to make tenure-track and tenured hires, placing a value on these programs as well as on job seekers looking to make themselves more distinguishable in a competitive job market. Nash writes, "Here, intersectionality circulates far from its intellectual roots in black feminist investment in theorizing the complexity of structures of domination. Instead, it acts as something that confers value, that signal an alignment with intellectually and politically complex theories" (p.18). This might ring familiar to the BIPOC library worker who has either been involved with or witnessed their library or department be awarded a grant or temporary position in which "diversity" was a key part. One might argue the addition of anything social justice-related to a job announcement also has bestowed value. Someone who is excited by a job announcement that included terms like "social justice" might consider themselves to be a critical librarian. There seems to be such comfort in a white, self-proclaimed critical librarian; it's almost as if it's the new diversity hire.

Critical Librarianship Criticisms

Criticism of critical librarianship and #critlib in particular, is evident in the literature of the profession. It has been said that it is exclusionary to some and possibly becoming institutionalized (Almeida, 2018; Hudson, 2016; Nicholson & Seale, 2018). Nora Almeida (2018) speculates that perhaps the former is a result of those who have been social justice advocates, whether they call themselves critical librarians or progressive librarians, find themselves outside the #critlib community if they don't participate in online conversations, at conferences, or scholarly publications. For some BIPOC library workers, the #critlib community can be exclusionary by its overlooking decades of work by BIPOC workers who did not describe themselves as critical librarians (Brown, Ferretti, Leung, & Méndez-Brady, 2018). The #critlib community has publicly dedicated itself to recognize the profession's work under "regimes of white supremacy, capitalism, and a range of structural inequities," (critlib, n.d., para. 1) and asks its community members how librarians can intervene and disrupt these systems. Kenny Garcia (2015) provides a definition of critical librarianship as a librarianship that is "within a critical theorist framework that is epistemological, self-reflective and activist in nature" and "seeks to be transformative, empowering, and a direct

challenge to power and privilege"(para. 1). I have to admit when I first read the definition of "critical librarianship," I was confused, and it took several re-reads before I understood. My confusion was for two reasons: I thought everyone practiced librarianship in this way, and I had no critical theory background. BIPOC library workers sometimes have direct experience with challenging power and privilege, not because we've read about it, but because as BIPOC we have less of it.

Structural inequities exist within our institutions that deeply impact not only our patrons but also our workers, making critical librarianship an appropriate community to begin discussing these inequities and actively working to change them. Failure to move in this direction furthers inequities and performativity. The marginalized library worker is *subject* to inequities, while the white/heteronormative worker has the luxury of choosing whether or not to engage or interrogate inequities. Critical librarianship has entered the lexicon of LIS, but not all library workers consider themselves *critical* library workers. With this difference comes a presupposition of politics, traits, knowledge, and praxis of the person who self-describes as a critical librarian or library worker, regardless of whether or not there is tangible evidence of work to be shown, making this movement susceptible to internet activism and social reputation. As with the term "woke" as described earlier in this article to mean socially conscience, claiming the critical librarian or library worker identity can be tied to what a person can *be* rather than what a person *does.* Also similar to the term woke, it signifies the work has already been achieved to reach this status. This is not unique in any way; it is merely something to be acknowledged. It is easy to say a librarian who commits to critical librarianship *is* a critical librarian. However, the commitment to its definition is not the work.

Our Racialized Past and Present

Libraries, like academia, are historically white serving, have been complicit in the white racial project of the United States during the 19th century, and perpetuate the racial inequity in the field today through mechanisms such as unpaid labor (Honma, 2005). There is a legacy of racial discrimination that has prevented BIPOC from entering libraries and the profession. Recognition must be especially paid to Black librarians, workers, and users for direct actions of desegregation and the building of separate branches to serve the needs of the Black population (Du Mont, 1986). Acknowledgement and engagement with this history is critical for contextualizing the profession today. Whenever I present the "librarianship is 87% white" statistic, it is done within this historic context. Leaving this

contextualization out might lead an audience to believe that BIPOC aren't interested in the LIS professions and the statistic is the result. Discussions, publications, and presentations on the library's discriminatory past and present have long existed, but perhaps only now has it become more widely discussed in white-dominated library spaces. Similarly, there are countless works on the profession's "diversity problem," particularly on its issues recruiting, maintaining, and supporting staff of color and other marginalized identities. As David James Hudson (2016) has expressed, in the LIS profession, "diversity" is used as short-hand in discussions of difference, and while problematic, remains the dominant framework for those discussions that are explicitly and specifically about race. As a result of the lack of historic context for the "diversity problem," the solution is seen as the responsibility of membership groups, human resources recruiting, and upper administrations to figure out. Additionally, much of this "diversity work" falls on BIPOC library workers. As Jennifer Brown and Sofia Leung (2018) describe,

> In the instances where librarians do want to be seen doing diversity work, sometimes because it makes them look good to care about diversity, the work is assigned to either a position (e.g., Diversity Librarian) or a committee as though that will be enough. It's easy to point to these as clear evidence that diversity work is being done—after all, it's in the name—and that absolves anyone else in the organization from having to do diversity work. (p. 335)

It is the critical praxis, utilized through the individual's areas of work that can aid the profession's efforts of inclusion and equity. Here "equity" is being used as cited in Novella P. Carter's (2018) work as to mean fair or fairness in terms of treatment of others, unlike "equality" which is to mean sameness. Carter goes on to say that the teacher that provides what is needed is more effective than the one who provides "the same for everyone" (p.3). bell hooks (1994) discusses treating students as whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply "seekers after compartmentalized bits of knowledge" (p. 15). It would stand to reason that this acknowledgement of the profession's discriminatory past, the state of things now, and personal experience (or inexperience) colleagues bring to the workplace should also be part of a critical praxis.

Critical Library Instruction

Critical librarianship can be practiced throughout all areas of library work. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on critical library instruction because the relationships, trust, and

vulnerability built in the classroom align with those built amongst colleagues. Additionally, I believe the intent of critical library instruction is most transferrable to situations in which we are around or have to work with colleagues. It should be noted that instruction is not specific to academic libraries, as other sectors, such as public libraries, host a number of pedagogically-focused classes. There are two key topics within critical library instruction: critical pedagogy and critical information literacy. A seminal work within the theory of critical pedagogy is Paulo Freire's (1970/2016) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which he describes the "banking" concept of education. Freire explains the result of this concept: "Education thus becomes an act of depositing in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communication, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat" (p. 58). The banking concept is akin to disempowerment as you are judged not by where you are and have grown in the education process but by how clearly you are able to repeat what has been said to you. Again, a level of performativity rather than true engagement. Nicole Pagowsky and Kelly McElroy (2016) define critical pedagogy as engaging with theory and praxis of inclusive and reflective teaching in an effort to expand the student's understanding of power structures not only within the education system but society. How could one be inclusive and reflective in the workplace in an effort to understand power structures within the institution and society? Wouldn't turning this effort on ourselves also be critical pedagogy?

Eamon Tewell (2015) describes critical information literacy as aiming to "understand how libraries participate in systems of oppression and find ways for librarians and students to act upon these systems," applying critical theory, often critical pedagogy, to that of the library (p. 11). According to Annie Downey (2016), librarians typically use one or more of these three approaches to teach critical information literacy: centering students in the learning environment, dialogue, and problem-posing methods. A student-centered learning environment is one where the librarian is removed from the position of authority or all-knowing, student voices are privileged, and the centering of student engagement in the research process. Amongst those Downey interviewed, dialogue or discussion goals included critical consciousness, which Freire describes as developing from a student's intervention in the world as transformers of that world. Many texts recognize the limitations of the goals of critical consciousness in the classroom, given the limited time librarians typically have with a class. Troy A. Swanson (2010) suggests instructors and librarians should "pose questions and create assignments that make implicit beliefs more explicit. Then students should be challenged to examine the origins and implications of these beliefs" (p. 274). Problem-

solving approaches utilize dialogue as part of the process, typically structuring an entire class around a real-world problem or creating a problem as basis for student discussions (Downey, 2016).

I'd like to argue that the approaches mentioned above could and should be transferrable to situations in which we find ourselves with colleagues: meetings, conference and membership-based events, collaborative projects, and more. The disempowerment of the banking model of education conjures similar feelings when librarians refer to rhetoric such as "this is the way we've always done things," when discussing topics such as labor issues or change in services like reference help. Many library workers have accepted a particular method of working without question or interrogation and view any proposal of change threatens not only their work but libraries as institutions *and* librarianship as profession.

No Easy Wins: Where Do We Go From Here?

The literature and work being done in critical library instruction is impressive. Critical library instruction was my path to reading critical theory. However, I can't help by wonder why we aren't focusing on empathy building, vulnerability, interrogating systems of structural inequities, and critical thinking when it comes to interacting with or working with colleagues. Kaetrena Davis Kendrick's (2017) work tells us behavior such as bullying, personal conflicts, verbal and emotional abuse contribute to the low morale of academic librarians. This particular study by Kendrick is not specific to BIPOC—it is the environment of the profession. This means the situation is compounded when it is experienced by a person of a racialized identity. How exactly low morale impacts those of racialized identities is outlined in Kendrick's most recent study, co-authored with Ione T. Damasco (2019), where they address specific impact factors such as stereotype threat, deauthentication, racism, and more. Additionally, workplace toxicity and burnout are also documented within the literature of the LIS profession. Dr. Nicole Cooke (2019) addresses issues within academia from when she was pre-tenure to post-tenure faculty member within LIS. From the latter position, she states, "Faculty of color are tasked with assimilation, maintaining a double consciousness, code switching, and living with fear of retaliation and alienation, on top of the already high demands of teaching, research, and service" (p. 28).

In explaining the "toxic cycle," Dr. Amelia Gibson (2019) writes,

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> Faculty of color who manage to make it through our PhD programs and into tenure-track positions often face racial and gendered contexts that put them at risk for high levels of anxiety and stress in the workplace, contribute to burnout, and bar junior faculty from promotion, even in the most polite environments. (p. 217)

Behavior such as actively working to diminish other people's work, gaslighting, microaggressing, and credit-stealing from BIPOC are inherent to the systems in which we work, and the work of authors cited in this section illustrate this point in addition to the countless many who have published, presented, and shared their stories more informally via social media, for example. The power of this truth is undeniable and is why Jen, Sofia, Marisa, and I posted the sign outside our session at JCLC. The work cannot begin until BIPOC narratives within this profession are believed and structural inequities in libraries and society are recognized. So, what is the work? Before I offer suggestions, I'd like to point out that there is not one way to build a critical culture in the workplace, and it is unrealistic to expect all the answers from an article. The latter point is also applicable to conference presentations, the BIPOC library worker, or friendly meeting with someone who doesn't work at or isn't being paid by your institution (a situation I've personally been in).

That being said, I'd like to offer four areas to focus on as a way to begin building a critical culture. The first being on the topic of management and leadership. Years of experience does not make someone a "good" manager and neither does desire to be regarded as a good manager. Just like anything else, it takes ongoing work, which includes reading about the topic, reflection, assessment, and subsequent action; dialogue with other managers; and more. It's difficult to want to build a critical culture and to practice critical librarianship if those in power do not see value in this work.

Which leads to the next area of focus: community codes and norms. Those within the LIS profession who are privileged enough to attend conferences are probably familiar with codes of conduct, which are generally a set of rules, practices, and/or expectations set for individuals who enter a particular space, whether it be online or in real life. Typically, they also indicate steps one should take if they are witness to or victim of a code being violated. They can be used as a way to empower those who are marginalized and create a more inclusive environment. For example, the Digital Library Federation (DLF) Code of Conduct (2018) indicates "DLF is dedicated to providing collaborative and conference experiences that are free from all forms of harassment, and inclusive of all people" (para. 2). Obviously, codes of conduct do not prevent things like harassment, but they point to an agreed upon

norm for which everyone will be held accountable. Accountability happens when one feels empowered to raise an issue of violation, which might be difficult for a worker of marginalized identity, which is why being an active bystander is also important. If your work team does not already have a set of community norms, how would you develop them collaboratively? How would you enforce it? Along with that is my next area of focus: what is the buy-in for new hires coming into this already established culture? Will new hires have agency to effect change within the culture? Even just having a discussion of the type of work environment people want can change it for the better.

The last area of focus I can offer is transparent pay and promotion. Individuals, departments, libraries, and institutions can collectively contribute to this area, which is how it can become the norm for the LIS professions. Being dedicated to paid labor, providing the salary or salary range in job openings, having transparency in the pay structure and promotion process, and individuals being aware of salaries of colleagues are all ways in which to build a critical culture where workers feel valued and are appropriately compensated for their contribution to the organization.

Conclusion

Swanson (2010) outlined questions for critical consciousness raising in the classroom in order to challenge the origins and implications of students' implicit and explicit biases: "How do these beliefs align with other beliefs? What outcomes and worldview would arise from these beliefs? How should they be altered in the light of new information sources?" (p. 274). Just as we teach students to slow down and consider everything about a source, this type of dialogue (even if with ourselves) can be extremely impactful when working or speaking with colleagues.

Whether or not Twitter Commenter identifies as a critical librarian is of no interest to me. Her sentiments are reflective of the profession. You won't find it in the literature, but you'll find it in almost every workplace, conference, and online. It is also something the critical librarian who is continuing to do the work of critical theory and praxis must contend with. To ignore it is to be an active participant in structural inequity. Downey's (2016) approaches to teaching critical information literacy (student-centered learning environment, dialogue, and problem-posing methods) could transfer to work situations. Centering marginalized voices or those with the least power and privilege (and believing their positions), dialogue that approaches critical consciousness, and problem-posing methods, are all things we can

devote time to within the workplace, just as we do the classroom. In the classroom, we generally come prepared. How is the critical librarian or library worker preparing to make a more equitable workplace as colleague, manager, or mentor?

Critical librarians have produced an incredible amount of new literature and discussion about the ways in which we provide access to information, contend with regressive terms in cataloging and classification, and how we teach information literacy, with a focus on social justice and questioning power and privilege. The #critlib community in particular has been both critical of itself and continues to be criticized by others (critiquing #critlib, 2015). There are salient ways in which critical librarianship, particularly critical library instruction, can make for a more equitable workplace for marginalized communities. There is no-one-size-fits-all solution. Dr. Gibson (2019) provides a list of points to consider for improving the experiences of faculty of color in LIS, which include doing your own reading on racism, sexism, and ableism in academia; speaking up about inequities and injustice; and believing your faculty of color colleagues; among others. Those who identify with the critical librarian community in any way cannot do so in name or for reputation only. Performativity is highly noticeable to BIPOC library workers and further alienates us from the profession. Similar to how Tess Martin (2017) has written on allyship, "Being an ally is less of a noun and more of a verb," critical librarianship must be more about doing something than being something. Sometimes this work will go unrecognized. As Mia McKenzie (2015) puts it, "Real solidarity doesn't require an audience to witness what a good 'ally' you are."

EndNotes

[1] It should be noted that while I never responded to Twitter Commenter, in addition to Sofia Leung, many other library workers, including white women, responded to her tweet as I wish I had the emotional coherence to have responded. It should also be noted that Twitter Commenter direct messaged me an apology, and then promptly deleted her account.

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