One Library, Two Cultures

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In many libraries it is axiomatic to speak of two cultures coexisting uncomfortably: the familiar "library culture," which exists in areas performing primarily traditional work, and the "new," disruptive culture of library IT. We see clear evidence of this divide in many places. In a recent Ithaka S+R issue brief, an academic library director "bemoaned the clashes associated with bringing 'people who do not share the culture and values' who nevertheless wish to drive decision-making in the library." In order to avoid these clashes, the director mused whether "the library would be better served by 'buying' services from campus IT with a strong service-level agreement."[1] This instrumental and reductionist view of IT—it is a set of concrete deliverables one can simply buy, not fibre in the organization's fabric—is not unique to this director nor uncommon in libraries of various sizes. In the past few years, we have seen a library as large as the University of British Columbia move nearly all of its IT staff and functions to central university IT. The core issue with this mindset is that it continues to posit the library as being about services and collections, ignoring the obvious shift that has made these two core functions interwoven with and driven by increasingly sophisticated technologies.

By musing about outsourcing IT to another campus unit—setting aside for the moment actually doing it—the director quoted in the Ithaka report is repeating a common refrain in libraries, namely,

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1 Roger Schonfeld, "Organizing the Work of the Research Library," Ithaka S+R, August 18, 2016, doi: 10.18665/sr.283717.

that IT work and library work belong in two separate categories, with overlap only occurring when it comes time to implement the technology. This mindset excludes the possibility that "library work" has become itself highly technical in nature and that librarian knowledge and IT have become inseparable. For many library staff, certainly those working in or in close proximity to technical work, this inseparability is not questioned. Yet many library leaders bring a perspective from an earlier automation generation, before Web and other technologies massively disrupted user expectations of libraries, and have never worked in a technology role. For many, IT remains a foreign body, typically viewed in instrumental terms. This mindset also results in an emphasis on traditional library services to a degree that serves neither the library nor its users in the academic landscape of today or tomorrow. This, in turn, affects the recruitment of people with different knowledge and skill sets to our detriment.

Frequent attempts to bridge the divide between traditional and new library work frame the issue as being primarily one of competing priorities. In a typical scenario, those on the library side perceive the IT staff as inflexible and rigid, while those in IT lament their exclusion from broader library planning and initiatives because they are not "librarians" (even though some are). In the era when library IT departments comprised a small cohort within the academic library system, this chasm between the two silos and the resulting misunderstanding or devaluing of the other group's priorities may have seemed unavoidable, as professionals engaged in library work sought to protect the status quo in the face of technological change. However, the mission of the library is changing and that change is altering the nature of library IT work and its role within the institution. With this shift and this work in mind, we are compelled to examine the professional discourse around technology in libraries and specifically to explore the gendered nature of this increasingly prominent IT element.

From the library IT vantage point, many of us have watched outbursts of bad behavior in the broader IT sector (#Gamergate[2] is a prominent example) and perhaps felt self-congratulatory for being in far more diverse and tolerant organizations. Yet while we have

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2 Gamergate is a name applied to a set of events in 2014 where a number of female game developers and social critics received severe abuse, including death threats, from men in the larger gaming community. It has become a shorthand way to refer to endemic sexism in broader tech communities.

typically not seen such openly hostile vitriol directed at women or minorities in our IT departments, a quick glance around the room at any library technology event will make clear that we have little to tout in terms of being more diverse or welcoming. While great strides have been made in recent years at conferences such as code4lib, Digital Library Federation, and others to include more women, progress at events has not translated into major changes in our libraries. Certainly, if we identify the technically oriented positions in our organizations, it would be hard for any of us to assert that we have achieved diversity reflective of the broader communities. Our role and position within the academy, a locus of open discourse, if not perfect policies on gender, sexuality, and race, means that we are vigilant about the more egregious and identifiable forms of discrimination. However, this does not guarantee that we are equally vigilant toward the subtler, yet perhaps even more pervasive and pernicious forms of discrimination and bias.

A portion of what has animated academic libraries' attitudes toward inclusion and diversity can possibly be found in the traditional (and current) demographics of librarians themselves. Women are and have been a majority in the profession. But perhaps we have mistaken the presence of women in our organizations, certainly the presence of women in leadership roles, as evidence of two accomplishments. First, we assume that we are more egalitarian because we are not male-dominated, as the rest of academia tends to be. Second, many take for granted that the presence of women in leadership roles means that libraries benefit from leadership from a feminist perspective. Clearly, this is not the case, or else there would be no reason to write this chapter, nor produce this volume. Simply because libraries are a female-dominated industry, does not mean that libraries are feminist workplaces.

We argue that, rather than feminist, the work and organization of academic libraries is feminized. In her discussion of librarianship as a feminized profession, Roxanne Shirazi notes that "[t]he idea of a feminized profession is part of the larger idea of a sexual division of labor, an occupational stratification based on one's gender presentation."[3] Analogous to the caring professions we traditionally

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3 Roxanne Shirazi, "Reproducing the Academy: Librarians and the Question of Service in the Digital Humanities," (blog), July 15, 2014, https://roxanneshirazi. com/2014/07/15/reproducing-the-academy-librarians-and-the-question-of-service-in-the-digital-humanities/.

associate with feminized work, the library profession has traditionally been characterized as requiring not only a soft voice, but a soft skill set, including eagerness to help others complete work, find resources, or empower themselves with information. Shirazi examines the fraught relationship of librarians to digital humanities support—closely related to library technology both by nature and organizational positioning—by noting that feminized work is characterized by notions of service and emotional labor, which tend to relocate this work to a supporting role because it is associated with "little tangible productivity measures but… requires workers to appear as though they love their job."[4] This mirrors the assertions of some library leaders, such as those represented in the Ithaka report, who see the fundamental work of the library as that of supporting research and discovery, rather than collaborating directly within those enterprises. Applied to the dynamic at play in libraries between (largely female) library staff and (largely male, perhaps even external) IT staff, the stark cultural difference comes all the more to the fore. The former group assesses the need, makes the case, secures the resources, organizes the meetings, and solicits and analyzes user feedback, while the latter group is left to work within the protected—often quite literally, in a locked or inaccessible space—bubble of systems and coding, freed from people-oriented tasks. To assert that this clearly reflects a gendered dynamic is not challenging. Even the phrase "IT guys" provides evidence of this negative gendered interplay at work. In most libraries, there are men working as library staff and women in IT areas, but close observation of the expectations these individuals face within their cohorts will often underscore how we assign work and set expectations based on this underlying gendered conceptualization of emotional versus technical work.

Given the gender dynamic in play as it relates to specific kinds of work, assessing diversity in libraries by looking at staffing numbers doesn't provide a real indication of the gendered nature of library work. While the overall organization skews toward the norm, with a majority of employees being women, the further one moves across the organizational chart toward IT roles, the staff becomes distinctly male. The temptation exists to characterize this as exclusively a staffing problem, i.e. if we just put more women into the mix (or people of

4 Ibid.

color, or members of another identified minority group), the "diversity problem" would solve itself. We should by now be wary of this numbers approach, as it reflects facile and glib approaches to diversity on many academic campuses, where we congratulate ourselves for hiring transgender, queer, and/or people of color into faculty roles, while at the same time ignoring the lack of such representation in the ranks of senior faculty and in the higher administration. This lack of diverse leadership across most campuses, not only in their libraries, exists despite awareness of the problem and inclusion of diversity statements in job postings. Thus, we posit that promoting real and meaningful diversity in library IT divisions is not simply a matter of hiring a more diverse employee cohort, but rather one of institutional vision and priorities, where diversity is represented in the leadership, staffing, vision making, and research profile of the library.

Beginning with the assertion that traditional library work is feminized work, in what follows we explore the discursive divisions between IT culture and the library workplace in order to elucidate the gendered ramifications of the service mentality within academic libraries. Following that, we explore the agenda of the library as an instrument of cultural conservation and how the library's proclamations of itself as a neutral repository of information are inaccurate. As a conservative institution libraries replicate, to a certain extent, the libraries of the past, instead of looking forward to the needs of library users and workers of the future. As a way to conceptualize how diversity and the work of the academy intertwine, we turned to Audre Lorde's seminal essay, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House."[5] In this speech, given at a women's conference, Lorde exhorted her feminist colleagues to turn difference into strength. Anticipating some of the larger discursive trends in third-wave feminism, Lorde reminds her feminist peers that "women of today are still being called upon… to educate men as to our existence and our needs" and draws a parallel between that phenomenon and the way black feminists of her generation were being marginalized by their white peers.[6] Rejecting what we would now refer to as tokenism, Lorde demands that the feminist movement use

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5 Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984), 110-113.

6 Ibid., 113.

different methods, a different lens, and a different set of tools to create a different culture. Similarly, when thinking about the implications of feminist library leadership on digital culture in the library, we suggest that the methods and tools employed in library work need to change and, at the same time, the work libraries do needs to change as well. Rather than parachuting diversity into our institutions via targeted hires or special projects, what if intersectional feminism and inclusion of diverse viewpoints became the mode of operations for academic libraries? Would new tools, deployed on localized and embodied collections, projects, and practices, help create a new house, in which staff and librarians would represent and reflect the communities they serve? We suggest possibilities for changing the work of the library—bringing traditional services and emergent, technology-rich projects into productive dialogue—in a way that not only solidifies the relevance of the academic library in the future, but also diversifies the notion of library work and the culture libraries wish to preserve. As minority and marginalized populations have argued, representation in culture makes a difference. Seeing the experiences, values, community and interests of feminists, people of color, the LGBQT+ community reflected in the active work and the public face of the library will, we argue, do more to diversify the staff within the library than equal opportunity statements.

Libraries as Feminized Workplaces and Library IT

To be clear, parallels do exist between library IT culture and the broader IT culture, perhaps inevitably so because people can move between the two spheres and both define roles similarly, e.g. a system administrator occupies a fairly defined work niche regardless of the broader organization. As such, some of the dynamics that play out in IT workplaces manifest themselves in a variety of ways in the library workplace, ranging from superficial aspects such as office decor to more potent elements such as an over-reliance on jargon and the associated creation of an insider culture.

There are also some practical characteristics of IT work that contrast markedly with broader academic library culture. The acceptance of telecommuting arrangements is a notable example. Similarly, the organizing principle of most libraries is to devolve a

great deal of decision making to teams, committees, working groups, and task forces, i.e. to identify something that needs to be done and assign it out to one of these groups. In an IT environment, the task would have a project manager, and be conducted according to fairly rigid and standardized project management principles. Library professionals tend to prefer collaborative, committee-based decision making processes in groups, whereas IT professionals utilize a project management environment where tasks are delegated to groups and, frequently, the "scrum master" coordinates various components and shepherds them to completion.

Many people engaged in library IT work are keenly aware of these divergences in work culture and history and seek ways to bridge the gap. The resonance that the Ada Initiative found in libraries reflects that general phenomenon. The Ada Initiative existed between 2011 and 2015 and arose in response to the barriers and discrimination women face when working in IT. Many library IT leaders—the majority of whom are still men—embraced the Ada Initiative. With its emphasis on training and visibility, however, the Ada Initiative's efforts also fell into the category of the numbers game: highlighting barriers and aiming to increase the number of women in jobs in the technology sector.

Yet despite the Ada Initiative and the efforts of some library IT managers, gaps in diversity and differences in culture between library IT and academic libraries at large remain visible to anyone willing to cast a critical eye. We would like to suggest that these gaps exist at the foundational level and can be traced to the arguably feminized nature of much traditional library work—providing service, promoting faculty relations, and engaging in student instruction. These activities are laudable extensions of the library into campus culture, but also serve to position librarians in their own eyes, as well as in the eyes of their institutions, as "mere" service providers. The notion of librarians as support staff or service providers to those who do the "real" work of the university—professors and, secondarily, students—reinforces our tacit comprehension of library work as gendered and feminine. Faculty relations, instruction, and reference support are the customer service of the libraries and associated with them is a sense not of rigor or research, but rather of emotional labor and handholding.

Accepting the role of the academic library as one of assistance or support conforms to "traditional" expectations around librarians

and librarianship. At the same time that some areas of the library are expanding their scope and mission, adding publishing platforms, digital research labs, and makerspaces, much of the work of the traditional library continues to rest firmly within the parameters of the helping professions, rather than the researching professions. We would suggest that greater attention to the opportunities afforded by the technological turn in libraries can offer colleagues across all departments of the academic library increased agency in their work, as well as in the research enterprise of the academy.

This notion of libraries and librarians as assistants to the larger academic research enterprise extends to and is reinforced by the software that most librarians use in their regular line of work. ILS interfaces and cataloging software reward unquestioning engagement with and commitment to working with the tools as they exist. Concurrently, these software packages penalize users for questioning workflows, attempting customization, or demanding transparency and collaboration in the creation of these tools. The corporations behind library software approach library professionals and their work paternalistically, removing any opportunity for professionals to bring their local expertise to bear on the design or implementation of the core tools of the trade. This technical arrangement essentially feminizes entire categories of librarianship, demanding that professionals working with these platforms defer their intellects and their professional curiosity to a commercial entity whose primary goal is to turn a profit by selling supposedly essential tools that, in fact, undermine autonomy and creativity within the profession they claim to serve. The parallels here to the creation of computers and operating systems as "black boxes" where the magic of computation happens and to which we, as users have little or no access, are apparent. And, as Wendy Chun has shown, the transition of computation from a physical, embodied job to an electronic, microscopic, digital job brought with it the decline and erasure of women, people of color, and the working classes from the history of computing.[7] The relationship between the working professional and her tools can be an empowering one. The relationship between the librarian and the software she works with is not.

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7 Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "On Sorcery and Source Codes," in *Programmed Visions: Software and Memory* (Boston: MIT Press, 2011), 19-54, 29.

This situation in the library leaves most librarians in a position akin to cogs in a machine, rather than independent, professional, and capable researchers, information specialists, subject-area experts, and the like. This situation also draws our attention to the relationship between the professional, the tool, the workflow, and the product in our examination of IT culture in academic libraries. If, as we posit, part of the problem of a lack of diversity in libraries is the traditional perception of librarianship and the library as a whole as a site of feminized work, then instead of looking at the people in these jobs as the solution to the problem, we can look at the nature of the job itself and examine whether there is opportunity to shift the nature of the work from passive and supportive to active and generative.

We are suggesting this examination not only because we are interested in and committed to diversity of all kinds within our organizations, but because to examine this landscape and explore possible changes in library jobs presents us with a real opportunity to participate in the creation of tomorrow's academic library. Such a library is a place of diversity, encompassing multiple knowledges and ways of knowing, striving for historical accuracy and social justice; in sum, a workplace defined by an intersectional feminist perspective. However, our current staffing decisions, library workflow patterns, and engagement with standard library software promote the recreation of tomorrow's academic library in the image of today's academic library. While myriad articles and experts across the academy insist that the nature of research, publishing, teaching, and learning is changing in response to the digital turn, to the economic downturn, and to demographic changes in university student populations, the work of the academic library has changed little. Asking today's library to create the personnel, service, and research diversity that our institutions and our world need is unrealistic.

Replicating Ourselves

Nearly every academic library, large or small, takes pride in their special collections, the rare and unique items that they possess. We compete with each other to secure significant gifts, often offering generous purchase terms and/or assuming extensive and costly processing work without receiving any funds from the donor. Once we have secured the collections, we hold celebrations and issue press

releases. Having expended such effort and gone to such lengths, we then make a virtue of holding these collections, whether or not they actually fit the profile and history of the university. (For example, McMaster University holds the papers of Bertrand Russell, although Russell had little to do with McMaster or Canada.) The trouble with this is that given the demographics of academic workers over the past century, the vast majority of these marquee collections stem from white, heterosexual men who dominated most academic disciplines or held prominent positions in society. This puts libraries in the role of championing, even reifying, canonical notions of scholarship and research, as well as serving a patriarchial agenda. While we typically have at least some holdings from members of underrepresented groups, these collections are much smaller and less comprehensive. We tend not to single them out in the same way that we tout the papers of well-known male figures. Inspecting the "Collection Highlights" segment of Yale's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library's website, one must click through to the third page (twelve collections per page) to hit the first collection by a woman, for example (Edith Wharton).[8] This is not an exceptional experience.

Despite a history of claiming libraries as neutral repositories, our collections, in particular our special collections, push a culturally biased agenda. Chris Bourg and Bess Sadler distill much of our current discontent with the library as repository of culture, and confronted this legacy directly in a 2015 essay in the *Code4Lib Journal*, opening with the blunt statement that "[i]n spite of the pride many libraries take in their neutrality, libraries have never been neutral repositories of knowledge."[9] Significantly, Bourg and Sadler take their argument past situating this flaw solely in our collections and note that our practices also tend to replicate "societal patterns of exclusion and inequality."[10] This is not only the case with long-established practices such as cataloging, they assert, but continues with newer form of work entering libraries, such as the

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8 "Collection Highlights," accessed April 13, 2016, http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/collections/highlights.

9 Bess Sadler and Chris Bourg, "Feminism and the Future of Library Discovery," *Code4Lib Journal* 28 (April 15, 2015), http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/10425.

10 Ibid.

creation of software tools. If the day-to-day work of the library, the work that engages both the librarians and the users, replicates the dominant social patterns of inclusion and exclusion, then libraries, as institutions, are not doing what they could in terms of becoming diverse and inclusive organizations and supporting diversity and inclusion across campuses and research agendas.

We suggest an extension of Bourg and Sadler's argument, which covers the implications of feminist theory for human-computer interaction, to an examination of the ways in which libraries pursue their mission. For the nature of the library's mission can attract or repel diverse groups in terms of work and in terms of the profession as a whole. While libraries often have mission statements that explain why we exist, these statements leave uncontested the notion that the library is a repository and conservator of canonical epistemes. Libraries reify the ways that librarians—people who have chosen to work in libraries—conceptualize libraries and where they place them within the academic experience.

The library of yesterday can't serve the university of today. Continuing to insist on the primacy of collections and the importance of cataloging at the expense, say, of digitization projects, digital scholarship centers, makerspaces, open data initiatives, or high-speed computing facilities may well translate into decreased interest on the part of our communities in what we have to offer. Additionally, by continuing to allow outside vendors and established tools and processes to dictate our workflow, we may also run the risk of becoming peripheral to the research and teaching agenda of our universities. For, as research and teaching demand more interaction, more computing power, more problem-based learning, more hands-on research even in the humanities and social sciences, traditional library instruction and reference services will not be able to meet the needs of the campus. The current situation, in which library work is conceptualized as feminized service work, represents an external problem in terms of libraries' relevance to their communities, as well as an internal problem in terms of the attractiveness of library work to diverse groups of employees. By consigning the library to being the helpmate of the academic enterprise, today's library professionals may well turn off the type of students, researchers, scholars, coders, builders, or makers who would be able to serve a new academic population.

There is no "digital library;" there is only the library

By bringing an intersectional feminist view to bear on the issues outlined above, we hope to create a framework both for understanding where we are as well as outlining new ways forward. We need to establish a path toward bringing the two cultures, library and IT, into harmony with each other, eliminating what we perceive to be false divisions.

We cannot persist with our current ways of doing things. More effort and more discussion will not resolve our lingering issues nor show us the way out of the cul-de-sac. In particular, if library leaders continue to insist on a division between library work and IT work and generally reject deeper, more critical engagement with technical work, we would continue with the feminized—and increasingly marginalized—support and service roles of the traditional library that risk becoming increasingly irrelevant to our uses. Moreover, as library work becomes more dependent on technology, this division means that library and campus administrators may view this work as something that can be excised from the library and outsourced to another campus entity or third party. This leads to multiple critical failures. For one, it fractures lines of communication that should exist between any part of the library with a stake in the outcomes of a project involving technology. It also creates significant logistical challenges; the library becomes just another client for those external parties, who prioritize their work based on their own perceptions of criticality, which will likely not favor libraries. Not least, given the well documented diversity issues in broader IT culture, we would essentially be outsourcing work to an environment that is notoriously hostile to diversity and seemingly incapable of unseating its current dominant culture.

Countering the divisive mindset, feminist library technology politics acknowledges the non-neutrality of knowledge and establishes practices not only to dismantle entrenched systems of marginalization and oppression, but also to build up a knowledge and technology economy within the library that represents multiple epistemes and encourages knowledge production for the 21st century. We suggest that this will not happen through established diversity measures that seek to "fix" gender and racial imbalances in libraries through targeted

hiring. Rather, it requires critical examination of the work we do in libraries. This is how we create new tools.

One of the endemic disadvantages of a library bifurcated along the lines of library and IT cultures is that as we create these new tools, we are doing so in an environment that perpetuates the worst tendencies of both cultures by failing to create meaningful dialogue and interaction between those who know the collections and have extensive relationships with students and faculty, on the one hand, and those with the ability to create tools using coding and other technology skills. Put somewhat differently, it denies those from the library side access to learning about how to do the hands-on work of tool creation, as well as simultaneously denying those in the IT camp any possible competence when it comes to offering insights and suggestions for how the work of the library could take shape. Instead, the library side creates what in software development terms would be functional requirements—although these desires are often neither detailed nor explained but rather more typically expressed as "we need this"—and passes them to the IT side where the developers work in a partial vacuum when it comes to parsing context or influencing the requirements. While this is not the universal paradigm in academic libraries, it will sound fairly familiar to many.

What we need instead is to emphasize tool creation that acknowledges the local context, work, and collections that reflect the community's makeup and values. We can diversify our staff if we diversify our work. At present, we are rather myopic in our approach to tool creation, often framing our work in terms of competition with entities outside the academy, primarily Google. The discovery layer is our answer to Google's various search platforms; similarly, we promote our institutional repository as an alternative scholarly distribution mode to academic journals. Instead, we should seek to foster projects that elicit and address the needs of our community.

Given this, it is not surprising that we have major challenges solving two interconnected issues: recruiting and retaining a truly diverse workforce and bringing the two cultures in our walls into harmony. By changing the work we prioritize and shifting the emphasis away from the patriarchal legacy toward a more inclusive view of collections and their users, we stand a better chance of creating meaningful diversity in our libraries. By building a more diverse workforce and then—and this is the essential message we should be

hearing—actually giving them the space and authority to shape their work, we can begin to close the gap between the two cultures as well as build sustained, meaningful diversity.

We are beginning to see evidence of a new paradigm emerging. The evolution of the Code4Lib community serves as a bellwether for the path that we are hopefully following. As with many technically oriented groups, in its earlier years it was a small and largely male dominated community, yet as early as 2008, annual conference organizers began offering gender and diversity scholarships.[11] While it would be premature to state that Code4Lib is a truly diverse community, the adoption of a Code of Conduct for its activities and the community's sustained deliberate efforts to support inclusion are significant indicators of a permanent shift. The conference program has seen far better diversity; keynote speakers have included Valerie Aurora, Sumana Harihareswara, Kate Krauss, and Andromeda Yelton. Code4Lib and other library technology conferences, e.g. the Access Conference and the revitalized DLF Forum, are setting a new tone for library technology work.

Work in Progress—Not There Yet

Andromeda Yelton has a podcast, Open Paren, on which she interviews people who are building new structures with new tools. The ways that Yelton and her guests speak about their work with technology in and around libraries differs markedly in discursive tone and in word choice from the prevailing ways we talk about technology within IT, our libraries, and some of our conferences. One of Yelton's guests, Cecily Walker of the Vancouver Public Library, describes her work using entirely different language.[12] Speaking of her work on the quilt panel project dedicated to the murdered women from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, she barely even mentions method or tools. Instead, she evinces a passion for the material that the project will present to the world as well as interest in the stories it tells and

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11 "Code4lib 2008 Gender Diversity and Minority Scholarships," Code4Lib, accessed September 17, 2016, http://code4lib.org/node/208.

12 Andromeda Yelton. "Episode 1–Cecily Walker". *Open Paren*. Podcast audio, October 13, 2015, http://openparen.club/episode-1-cecily-walker. All subsequent Walker references are from this podcast.

including the voice of the community that the works represent. This was not a practiced speech nor a presentation, but rather a spontaneous conversation with a peer. Her enthusiasm for the material of the project doesn't diminish the legitimacy of her technical work on it; however, it appears that Walker employed technology as a librarian in order to complete a more traditional library project, rather than because she is a technology specialist.

Hearing Walker on Open Paren, it is easy to forget that the way she works and the reasons she does what she does are not universally found in all libraries. Typically, although not exclusively, the people with the passion for the materials and those with the technical ability to create tools are not one and the same. Many wonderfully impractical ideas coming from those who know the content wither in the atmosphere of technical vetting, mainly due to a lack of understanding and dialogue between the two camps.

Yelton's interviewees often speak directly as well as obliquely about the challenges of transgressing this divide. Walker describes how she and others in her library wanted to construct a specific type of user-friendly survey, but that doing so would require her to learn Ruby, as the IT staff had no expertise with Ruby and no capacity to learn it. Rather than giving up when faced with this obstacle—after all, it would be easy to select some other survey tool that might have been an approximation of the tool she envisioned—she opted instead to use it as motivation to learn Ruby. While it may be oversimplifying Lorde's dictum somewhat, this is a nearly literal example of seeking out new tools to build a new house, rather than persisting rigidly with the known and routine.

Progress in this direction is neither easy nor guaranteed, but rather requires effort on the part of individuals. Yelton, while speaking with Walker, addresses some of the cognitive dissonance she experiences as a programmer and a mathematician. While she does not explicitly state that she is speaking as a woman working in predominantly male spheres, intimations in this direction are clear. She noted that she doesn't "think like a programmer" and continues by noting that she did not think like a mathematician in university, either. As she framed it:

> "There's this incredibly cognitively demanding translation step from
> how I actually think about math to ways that I could admit in public

to thinking about math that wouldn't be stigmatized… How can I write it down in a way that won't fail…There are different ways to think that are legitimate."

In a subsequent podcast, Whitni Watkins, a library software developer, noted a similar fear of stigmatization, stating that she has "to reach out a lot, but it's really difficult because I think, hmm, should I, are they going to think I'm an idiot?"[13] If we stop and consider who Watkins signifies with "they" or who in Yelton's formulation will engage in stigmatizing ostensible outsiders, it is clear that the "other" they are engaging is typical programmers or mathematicians, i.e. men. These informal conversations indicate that library technical work may emphasize tools and process, expressed in particular non-inclusive ways, over and above creativity and customization of library projects. Bringing these two ways of engaging in library work together, in a person, a job description, or a unit in the library, offers us a new way of de-gendering expectations around technical competency.

In her interview with Miriam Posner, Yelton invokes the concept of "stereotype threat" and applies it to her own engagement with the library technology community, relating "I'm a lot more likely to ask for help in women-only chatrooms than in code4lib or something where I love the people but even so I still feel stereotype threat asking for help. I still feel like I can answer questions, but I shouldn't ask them."[14] Posner concurs, pointing out that on sites such as Stack Overflow that "the kind of grounds keeping and gatekeeping and disciplinary function that a lot of the commenters perform on sites like that can have a real silencing effect for a lot of people." Once we tune into these concerns, it becomes evident that it takes both courage and effort to overcome the barriers around technology communities, both within and across our organizations. These barriers are discursive and epistemological as well as physical and organizational.

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13 Andromeda Yelton. "Episode 4–Whitni Watkins". *Open Paren*. Podcast audio, November 18, 2015, http://openparen.club/episode-4-whitni-watkins.

14 Andromeda Yelton. "Episode 3–Miriam Posner". *Open Paren*. Podcast audio, November 9, 2015, http://openparen.club/episode-3-miriam-posner. All subsequent Posner references are from this podcast.

Posner, in particular, makes clear the toll that this work takes on individuals. In reference to the Programming Historian[15], she notes that "it's not that women don't want to help," but that "they're already helping in so many other ways, all of us are, overcommitted and overtaxed and exhausted and volunteering for so many things." Yelton brings the matter to a succinct point: "It's one of the standard problems with trying to increase diversity in participation, right? All of the underrepresented people with excellent skills are already incredibly overcommitted. It's a fact." This mirrors an oft-repeated refrain one hears about increasing diversity in organizations, namely that organizations bring women or people of color into their organizations and then ask them to do not only the job they were hired to perform, but also the work of diversifying the organization.

This method does not work because it is grounded in the false notion that diversity is solved by hiring people who are different than those already in the organization. In order for libraries to become more diverse, however, they must change both the substance of their work as well as cede a share of decision-making and authority to those who represent different backgrounds and perspectives. Speaking with Yelton, Walker is unequivocal about the need to change the work:

> "There's been a lot of talk online about diversity in library and information science and it's great but all we're basically doing is trying… to fit people into a system that was not designed for them, that was basically set up for them to fail. And is that fair, or should we be looking at a way to radically redevelop the system so that it's equitable to everybody and no matter what you bring to the table. It's not a liability, it's a strength, and that can only help us be better."

We need to put the onus on organizations to change themselves, rather than expecting specific individuals to change organizations. The personal challenge an individual faces when joining an organization where their background, values, and traits are not well-represented is far from trivial, no matter how nice or well intentioned those in the dominant culture may be.

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15 The Programming Historian publishes peer-reviewed tutorials for various digital tools that humanities scholars can use to expand their research into the realm of the digital humanities (http://programminghistorian.org/).

Beyond changing the substance of our work to include more viewpoints and ways of doing, we also need to question how we are including others in our decision-making processes. Speaking with Yelton, both Posner and Walker addressed this point explicitly, perhaps signalling how widespread the issue is as well as how difficult it is to address. Walker advocates allowing library assistants or technicians, i.e. staff without an MLS, to take on more leadership, not least because they often have decades of experience in libraries. She recognizes that "some people will say 'well that contributes to the deprofessionalization of the profession,'" but brushes such objections aside, continuing "so be it, if it means that we're getting different people into the field. I'm kind of all for that." Relating her experiences with the Programming Historian, Posner noted that she and another woman who were new to it "were relegated to the outreach section of the editorial team" but that "a) we don't just do outreach, and b) outreach is kind of a devalued field… nobody wants to be just the outreach person." This raises the critical point of how the work around technically oriented projects is valued, something she addresses by noting that it's a question of what the community respects:

> If you need to have documentation or people hanging out in the beginner chat room or whatever to have that on-ramp but then the only thing you actually respect in your community is technical contributions, then asking people to do that work, however necessary, is even more problematic.

While Posner is speaking of a voluntary community, the dynamic she describes exists in libraries as well. Academic libraries are typically rigidly hierarchical. Accordingly, work is assigned and expectations set that one must first prove one's worth and value through minor roles before being asked to take on and lead more significant projects. In order to attract as well as to retain the most talented and diverse workforce, we need to upend this practice and allow people to lead from anywhere in the organization rather than paying lip service to the idea. To repeat: we cannot build a new library with old tools.

Good intentions are not enough. We have been deliberately well intentioned for two or three decades in the form of diversity and equal opportunity statements, but haven't moved the needle much

on diversity or in closing the cultural gap in our organizations. With our analysis here, we hope to have demonstrated the interrelated nature of these two issues as well as advocated for approaching the issues from an intersectional feminist perspective. This entails examining more critically the work we do within our organizations, deliberately changing our work to include voices and viewpoints that truly reflect the communities we serve, communicating this new focus to potential hires to encourage them to join the organization, and granting them the ability and authority to shape their work and direction.

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