Alright y'all! Hello and welcome to tonight’s #critlib chat (which is chat number 119!). We’re discussing Melvil Dewey. The questions and a link to the recommended reading for tonight are available here: critlib.org/melvil-dewey/

Q1. When did you first learn about Melvil Dewey’s racism/anti-semitism/misogyny? How did you learn about it? #critlib

A1. Definitely not in library school. I learned of Dewey’s racism/anti-semitism/misogyny #onhere, through #librarytwitter. #critlib
A1. In library school, in basic "Organizing Information" proto-cataloging class. The professor (Arlene Taylor) told us that Dewey was a "reprobate" because of sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, etc. #critlib

Violet Fox 🦊
@violetbfox

A1. I keep seeing this "oh EVERYONE knows this" sentiment going around and I can speak from experience that that is definitely not true. Many people who have worked in libraries for decades have *not* heard about MD's foibles, nor thought much about classification bias. #critlib

Jamie Howe
@Gaymerbrarian

A1: I genuinely couldn't tell you. It def was fairly early on in library school, but not sure in class (tho likely). I can say I didn't touch all of it at once: it was his misogyny, then later racism, then later than that, the antisemitism. #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

Q1. When did you first learn about Melvil Dewey's racism/anti-semitism/misogyny? How did you learn about it? #critlib
A1 I was in last class graduating from the library school that M Dewey started. They were open about the seal harassment but not critical. They were like we can't be closed MD started this school. #critlib

A1: There was some discussion of Dewey's... predilections in library school, but not much. I read up on it outside of class. #critlib

A1. I hadn’t given him that much thought but one day, in passing in a @LISafterclass she had mentioned it and recommended a biography. Read it and while it was interesting it didn’t surprise me. I apparently have a low bar for humanity—haha #critlib

A1. I keep seeing this "oh EVERYONE knows this" sentiment going around and I can speak from experience that that is definitely not true. Many people who have worked in libraries for decades have *not* heard about MD's foibles, nor thought much about classification bias. #critlib

A librarian @ mfpow, who retired this year, was shocked literally this past January when it came up #critlib
Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

A1. For my part, I was fortunate to have Wayne Wiegand as a professor in library school (c. 2007). I don’t know that I gave MD much thought before Wiegand’s class, but WW didn’t pull punches re: Dewey and lots of other aspects of U.S. library history. #critlib #thankswayne

Jessica Schomberg @schomj

A2. Twitter? At least that’s when it stood out as more than just how things were #critlib
twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

Q1. When did you first learn about Melvil Dewey’s racism/anti-semitism/misogyny? How did you learn about it? #critlib

Jamie Howe @Gaymerbrarian

Hm, he came to speak about his recent book in my second year. I wonder if that was my introduction #critlib
Deborah @loislibrarian

Im a embedded librarian and didn't learn about Melville in library school. Learned about him at an ALA panel it was #critlib panel a few years ago.

Jessica Critten @JessicaCritten

A1: Same here (Hey FSU!); I didn't learn about MD separate from his bullshit #critlib
twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

A1. For my part, I was fortunate to have Wayne Wiegand as a professor in library school (c. 2007). I don't know that I gave MD much thought before Wiegand's class, but WW didn't pull punches re: Dewey and lots of other aspects of U.S. library history. #critlib #thankswayne
A1: First learned about Dewey’s misogyny and anti-semitism through a podcast (which is now defunct maybe? Idk: stuffmomnevertoldyou.com/podcasts/libra...).

Never learned about his misconduct in library school. Instead, we read one of his essays for a reference class. #critlib

Librarians, Part 1
Being a librarian was originally a man’s job. Then Melvil Dewey and his book-loving bros came along and changed stuffmomnevertoldyou.com

Q2. In addition to the DDC, Melvil Dewey made a huge impact. In your daily work in libraries, or when you study libraries, where do you see evidence of his influence? #critlib
A1 My middle & high school librarian (BIWOC) told me about his hateful mess when I was in middle school.
#critlib

Dr.EB@LNBel

A1 I was in last class graduating from the library school that M Dewey started. They were open about the seal harassment but not critical. They were like we can't be closed MD started this school. #critlib

Dr.EB@LNBel

\ sexual harassment \ was the foundation upon which @Columbia library school was founded. I think about that a lot given the way the university still handles it so badly. I got other degrees there  #critlib

Tina Gross@aboutness

A2. This may not be Dewey's influence exactly, but it's related to the Dewey phenomenon--the capacity for denial. Ability and willingness to pretend that everything is fine when it's clearly not. #critlib

Kevin Seeber@kevinseeber

A2.1 It's pretty wild to dig into Dewey's work. He founded a company called The Library Bureau that sold furniture/card catalogs/basically defined the “library” aesthetic. Guy changed the spelling from “catalogue” to “catalog” in the U.S. #critlib
A2.1 It's pretty wild to dig into Dewey's work. He founded a company called The Library Bureau that sold furniture/card catalogs/basically defined the “library” aesthetic. Guy changed the spelling from “catalogue” to “catalog” in the U.S. #critlib

A2.2 But of course, the toxicity of his views on gender and race that guided DDC were mimicked in other classification schemas. The fact that he insisted on national standards over local guidelines resonates re: “illegal aliens” LCSH. #critlib

A2.3 Honestly, it wasn’t until preparing for this chat that I thought about parallels Dewey vs. Poole/National vs. Local/ InfoLit Standards vs. InfoLit Framework. Not equal by any means, but worth exploring. #critlib (cc: @donnarosemary)
A2. Low salaries, low value for work gendered as feminine, extension of efficiency and colonialism/supremacy as part of library work, "universal" organizing systems as a global goal #critlib

twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q2. In addition to the DDC, Melvil Dewey made a huge impact. In your daily work in libraries, or when you study libraries, where do you see evidence of his influence? #critlib

♥ 46  1:22 AM - Oct 2, 2019

See Jessica Schomberg's other Tweets

Violet Fox 🐱
@violetbfox

A2. The obsession with efficiency. This obviously isn't just Melvil's heritage, it comes of the whole Taylorism and scientific management movement of that era. But he certainly embodied and embraced it, founding the first library school, "School of Library Economy". #critlib

twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q2. In addition to the DDC, Melvil Dewey made a huge impact. In your daily work in libraries, or when you study libraries, where do you see evidence of his influence? #critlib

♥ 28  1:23 AM - Oct 2, 2019

See Violet Fox 🐱's other Tweets

Melissa Wong
@LISafterclass

A1. Wayne Wiegand's Irrepressible Reformer. Read it when it first came out, totally opened my eye to what a creeper Dewey was (and his obsession with order and standardization). #critlib

♥ 5  1:23 AM - Oct 2, 2019

See Melissa Wong's other Tweets
Q1, Not entirely sure— coulda been college or at work or Twitter, but since I’m not a cataloger I didn’t think I had a say in it. #critlib

A2: I was actually thinking about this on my way to work this evening. Undervaluing "feminine" work. Over-emphasis on Christianity. #critlib

A2. The obsession with efficiency. This obviously isn't just Melvil's heritage, it comes of the whole Taylorism and scientific management movement of that era. But he certainly embodied and embraced it, founding the first library school, "School of Library Economy". #critlib

twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Q2. In addition to the DDC, Melvil Dewey made a huge impact. In your daily work in libraries, or when you study libraries, where do you see evidence of his influence? #critlib

There's a direct line from his focus on teaching efficiency as the most important value to LIS students (who went on to become educators themselves) to cataloging practice in general, and today's neoliberal focus on efficiency and cost-management over all other values. #critlib
A2. Traditionally, Dewey's influence could be seen in the othering of non-Eurocentric subject matter in cataloging. sylvar.wordpress.com/2006/02/03/com...
#critlib

Come see the oppression inherent i...
This won't surprise my librarian friends, but the Dewey Decimal System is amazingly Eurocentric. Newspapers are in the 070s, sylvar.wordpress.com

Q2. In addition to the DDC, Melvil Dewey made a huge impact. In your daily work in libraries, or when you study libraries, where do you see evidence of his influence?
#critlib

A2 Dewey had a big influence on the structures of power in libraries- white males at the top and women and POC doing the real work at low wages. #critlib

A2. This may not be Dewey's influence exactly, but it's related to the Dewey phenomenon--the capacity for denial. Ability and willingness to pretend that everything is fine when it's clearly not. #critlib

GOODNESS YES. Baked into librarianship at its core in the U.S. The reckoning is maybe now coming? #critlib
A2. It shows up within libraries many times when things are not reckoned with or even acknowledged. Not telling the entire story of how we got here. #critlib

A2. Traditionally, Dewey's influence could be seen in the othering of non-Eurocentric subject matter in cataloging. sylvar.wordpress.com/2006/02/03/com...

Come see the oppression inher...
This won't surprise my librarian friends, but the Dewey Decimal System is amazingly Eurocentric.
sylvar.wordpress.com

Absolutely. Very similar issues in LC. #critlib

Q3. How can we address Dewey's ongoing influence in libraries and repair some of the harm he caused? #critlib
A2 Dewey had a big influence on the structures of power in libraries—white males at the top and women and POC doing the real work at low wages. #critlib

A2 also of hierarchical control in libraries. When I worked at NYPL branches there was a dress code. Codes of conduct for our young pages #critlib

A2 Dewey had a big influence on the structures of power in libraries—white males at the top and women and POC doing the real work at low wages. #critlib

For sure! And we keep repeating this pattern. For a profession wrapped up in preserving info, we do a lousy job of looking at ourselves and how we got here. #critlib

A2: it’s baked into the entire institution of libraries. I think we kid ourselves when we think it isn’t foundational #critlib
A1. First year of library school, 1999 - I think first semester. Can't remember name of instructor for intro to info science, but she covered it. Think Jana Varlejs also covered in some other basic-ish class. #critlib

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

Thanks for sharing! I'm curious--did you find it on your own? Or was it referred to you? #critlib

Patty Dwyer @beadjunky18

I think there was an article in Library Journal in the 80s.

Violet Fox @violetbfox

As told in the Wiegand biography, Melvil wanted the female workers he hired to wear uniforms so they would be easily recognized as library workers. (It thankfully didn't catch on.) #critlib

Dr.EB @LNBel

A2 also of hierarchical control in libraries. When I worked at NYPL branches there was a dress code. Codes of conduct for our young pages #critlib
Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

Thanks for sharing! Seems like about half of the participants learned about it in grad school, half afterwards. (Some, very recently.) #critlib

Nancy Sims @CopyrightLibn · 15h

A1. First year of library school, 1999 - I think first semester. Can't remember name of instructor for intro to info science, but she covered it. Think Jana Varlejs also covered in some other basic-ish class. #critlib

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

A3.1 Been thinking a lot about this, but my best answer is: First, Let's Talk About It. (Hence, this chat.) Lots of library workers are still unaware of Dewey’s toxicity. ALA still uses his name and likeness on promos. Vendors still put him on swag. This has to stop. #critlib

Violet Fox 🦊 @violetbfox · 15h

Replying to @LNBel

As told in the Wiegand biography, Melvil wanted the female workers he hired to wear uniforms so they would be easily recognized as library workers. (It thankfully didn't catch on.) #critlib

Jessica Critten @jessicaCritten

and yet! the librarian bun-and-cardigan stereotype thrives! (She says, with her hair still in today's work bun) #critlib

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

17 1:33 AM - Oct 2, 2019
A3.1 Been thinking a lot about this, but my best answer is: First, Let's Talk About It. (Hence, this chat.) Lots of library workers are still unaware of Dewey's toxicity. ALA still uses his name and likeness on promos. Vendors still put him on swag. This has to stop. #critlib

A3.2 From there, I'm happy to see things like @ChangeTheSubject and other efforts to correct longstanding discrimination that exists in library classifications. We'll need to do a lot more, but The Work is happening. #critlib

A3. We're still not even past the first step, acknowledging the problem. I recognize that I live in a glass house here, but quit naming your library animals after him. Quit naming your podcasts after him. Quit with the punny Twitter handles. #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Q3. How can we address Dewey's ongoing influence in libraries and repair some of the harm he caused? #critlib

Omg I'm so waiting for cardigan weather! #critlib
A3. In terms of cataloging, radical catalogers are actively working to undo the damage, shifting the focus & updating/adding new terminology. #critlib

YES. Huge reason why I wanted to do this chat. "I always knew he sucked" is not an answer, not a reflection, not an interrogation of structures. It's a pass for a profession that doesn't deserve it. #critlib

A3 I was thinking about that podcast named after him. #critlib

And also—there are some subjects that will NEVER be efficient based on the system of dominance. BIPOC, Queer, disabled and non dominant groups are always going to be seen as inefficient to exist in their truest forms.

#critlib tag for this reply.
Jamie Howe
@Gaymerbrarian
I have #critpizza so back to #critlib

1:36 AM - Oct 2, 2019

Violet Fox
@violetbfox
A3. I was really disappointed that so many library people I respect lined up to bash that Slate article. And were so quick to absolve themselves of any complicity with the line of "oh *I* knew he was a creep all along". That is seriously messed up. #critlib

1:37 AM - Oct 2, 2019

Kevin Seeber
@kevinseeber
Q4. Dewey was censured during his life, though librarianship continued to revere him (his name was attached to the ALA Lifetime Achievement award until 2019). Why is librarianship only just now coming to terms with this legacy? #critlib

1:37 AM - Oct 2, 2019

Dr.EB
@LNBel
For anyone who wants to research MD there's material in the @nyplarchives #critlib

1:37 AM - Oct 2, 2019
Cathy @bibliocathy

Lurking on #critlib tonight and learning a lot! Very much appreciate it.

Kate Crowe @kcrowe

Hi #critlib I am exceptionally late bc I was trying to be a good @archivists_org student chapter advisor HIHIHI y name is Kate and I was your last critlib mod!

Jamie Howe @Gaymerbrarian

A3: in one of my first #critlib (almost 5 years ago???) I lamented that we keep having to talk about the myth of neutrality, when are we going to do any of the work! But it's still always someone's first time... I don't think we can do anything significant until more know

Josh @Auth0rityCTRL

I thought about this a lot in library school. There are several steps we need to take organizationally, ontologically, and epistemologically. I'm probably going to have to thread this one in order to make it readable because this is going to be too many words. #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

Q3. How can we address Dewey's ongoing influence in libraries and repair some of the harm he caused? #critlib
MT @chiuchiutrain I'd like to see librarianship acknowledge the reckoning process, incl. publicly interrogating nature of Dewey's hero/saint story, rather than erasing it. No "we knew all along, so we're good ppl;" no "he was a troubled genius whose art is still good." #critlib

@violetbfox
1:39 AM - Oct 2, 2019

Zoe Fisher (she/her)
@zoh_zoh
He had good intentions... he was bad... we have good intentions... could we also be... bad???? Less sarcastically: we are afraid of critical self-reflection & what it might mean. #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q4. Dewey was censured during his life, though librarianship continued to revere him (his name was attached to the ALA Lifetime Achievement award until 2019). Why is librarianship only just now coming to terms with this legacy? #critlib

@kevinseeber
1:40 AM - Oct 2, 2019

Kate Crowe
@kcrowe
I legit don't remember but I am fairly sure it wasn't during library school. #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q1. When did you first learn about Melvil Dewey's racism/anti-semitism/misogyny? How did you learn about it? #critlib

@kcrowe
1:40 AM - Oct 2, 2019
A4. Honestly? B/C as a collective we are generally not doing any kind of reading and self education outside of our small world. Critical Ethnic studies, feminist studies can give us tools and we mostly ignore these fields so we can't even see a problem. 1/? #critlib

A4: Sorry to answer this with another question, but yeah why wasn’t there a reckoning in the 1980’s when every upstanding librarian supposedly knew about his misconduct?? 😐 #critlib

A4. This leads into Q5, but I think engaging with the problems of the past involves acknowledging the persistent injustices of the present. It’s hard for white folks to acknowledge white supremacy, but that’s not an excuse. #critlib
It's also worth interrogating the very idea of being able to put these ideas in a structured hierarchy rather than the negotiation that takes place around identity.

Ms. T. Mo. @LibFeminista
Replying to @violetbfox
And also—there are some subjects that will NEVER be efficient based on the system of dominance. BIPOC, Queer, disabled and non dominant groups are always going to be seen as inefficient to exist in their truest forms.

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q4. Dewey was censured during his life, though librarianship continued to revere him (his name was attached to the ALA Lifetime Achievement award until 2019). Why is librarianship only just now coming to terms with this legacy?

Dr. EB @LNBel
Dewey is joining a large crowd of male mysognist 'icons' who are being toppled by the clarity of #metoo and #metoohighered it's no longer OK to say oh he was just one of those handsy guys.
Ms. T. Mo.  @LibFeminista  ·  15h

A4. Honestly? B/C as a collective we are generally not doing any kind of reading and self education outside of our small world. Critical Ethnic studies, feminist studies can give us tools and we mostly ignore these fields so we can’t even see a problem. #critlib

Ms. T. Mo.  @LibFeminista

And I’m going to say it DEI WORK WILL NOT SAVE US HERE. It won’t. It takes organizing and not corporate neo liberal models to fix it. It doesn’t work. #critlib

Jamia Williams, MLS  @LibrarianJamia

A3 I think we have to be honest about why this is a "feminine" profession. Since the residue of this is still present in regards to our salary inequities. Our profession should not be self sacrificing. We have a lot of work to do. This is just one aspect of Dewey's legacy. #critlib

Gina Murrell  @GinaMurrell1

A4. A major library association taking his name off an award jump-started much of the recent conversation, definitely. #critlib
Kevin Seeber
@kevinseeber

That is 100% a fair question for the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and today. #critlib
americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoo...

Violet Fox
@violetbfox

I'm frustrated about this too, but more importantly, how can we make sure we're not having this same discussion 30 years from now? How do we make it clear to new library workers and the public that this is not what/who we want to emulate? #critlib

Jessica Schomberg
@schomj

A3. Talk about it, engage in (hopefully generative) conflict about it, remember that systems are built by people #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...
All we do is cycle through buzz words around these issues without doing the actual work. Anti-racist means something and it doesn’t mean inclusion. We gotta stop invoking things without knowledge or actual course of action #critlib

And I’m going to say it DEI WORK WILL NOT SAVE US HERE. It won’t. It takes organizing and not corporate neo liberal models to fix it. It doesn’t work. #critlib

I am so old I read it at the time. ;-) #critlib

A4. This leads into Q5, but I think engaging with the problems of the past involves acknowledging the persistent injustices of the present. It’s hard for white folks to acknowledge white supremacy, but that’s not an excuse. #critlib

I think maybe this conversation needs to include your Q2 more often - it's not just "he was a creep" and "ddc has problems" but "he was a creep and that is part of why ddc has problems" #critlib
FYI some of those 1989-90s upstanding librarians were not so innocent of harrasement themselves #critlib

A4: Sorry to answer this with another question, but yeah why wasn’t there a reckoning in the 1980’s when every upstanding librarian supposedly knew about his misconduct?? 😞 #critlib

A4. Because taking on sacred cows involves conflict and potential loss of support from legislators/funders, and the type of library organizations he helped to define are terrified by both #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Q4. Dewey was censured during his life, though librarianship continued to revere him (his name was attached to the ALA Lifetime Achievement award until 2019). Why is librarianship only just now coming to terms with this legacy? #critlib

All we do is cycle through buzz words around these issues without doing the actual work. Anti-racist means something and it doesn’t mean inclusion. We gotta stop invoking things without knowledge or actual course of action #critlib

So the field isn’t really coming to terms with things because it’s never been about anti-racist work and the field hasn’t done its homework to figure out that they’re pathways that exist beyond corporate structures and neo liberal education strategies. #critlib
A4.2 But as libraries increasingly embrace diversity, equity & inclusion initiatives, they're questioning the old ways of librarian-ing. #critlib
I can see it in a weird way in my own family life. My mom was a lib school student at the inst where I am now an archivist & hello poor records mgmt we hadn't properly disposed of LIS student apps from the 60s. I found her eval by profs at the time of admission. #critlib

twitter.com/kevinseeber/st…

---

Not a word about her intellect, it was all abt her sweet disposition, pleasing voice, & calm demeanor (this was late 1960s). Mind you, my mother received a PhD in LIS and was involved in early automation research at OCLC. She was brilliant. THAT is Dewey's legacy. 2/2 #critlib
Q5. The example of Melvil Dewey indicates that librarianship often ignores its history. What resources would you recommend to help people learn more about how librarianship got to where it is today? #critlib

Josh @Auth0rityCTRL · 15h
I thought about this a lot in library school. There are several steps we need to take organizationally, ontologically, and epistemologically. I’m probably going to have to thread this one in order to make it readable because this is going to be too many words. #critlib

twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q3. How can we address Dewey’s ongoing influence in libraries and repair some of the harm he caused?
#critlib

Josh @Auth0rityCTRL
Organizationally, we have to reject the para/professional dichotomy. A hierarchy with pages, library technical assistants, librarians, etc. is in my mind a relic of sexist and classist designs carried over from Dewey’s era.
#CritLib 1/

Jaena Rae @jaenarae
Say it LOUDER. #critlib twitter.com/violetbfox/sta...

Violet Fox 🐲 @violetbfox
A3. We’re still not even past the first step, acknowledging the problem. I recognize that I live in a glass house here, but quit naming your library animals after him. Quit naming your podcasts after him. Quit with the punny Twitter handles.
#critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...
Can I ask the #critlib community in general? Do you think renaming the classification is a good idea?

twitter.com/cybrarerin/sta...

Erin 🌺🌸🌿🌸🌿🌸🌿@cybrarerin
A3: could also start mentioning it every time someone talks about it. Is it possible to rename the system? Can we choose a different one? #critlib

Erin 🌺🌸🌿🌸🌿🌸🌿@cybrarerin
Replies to @cybrarerin
Is it easier for academic librarians to criticize Dewey and start demanding action than public librarians? #critlib

Kevin Seeber
@kevinseeber
It's only easier for the academic librarians who turn a blind eye to the flaws of LC. And they deserve no corner.
#critlib

Josh @Auth0rityCTRL · 15h
Replies to @Auth0rityCTRL
Organizationally, we have to reject the para/professional dichotomy. A hierarchy with pages, library technical assistants, librarians, etc. is in my mind a relic of sexist and classist designs carried over from Dewey's era. #CritLib 1/

Josh @Auth0rityCTRL
It has been the case in my experience that page jobs are typically not designed with the welfare of the employee in mind, and that pages are also either treated with disdain or their contributions downplayed. It's not a coincidence that many of them are young either. #Critlib 2/
**Violet Fox** 🦊 @violetbfox · 15h
A3. We’re still not even past the first step, acknowledging the problem. I recognize that I live in a glass house here, but quit naming your library animals after him. Quit naming your podcasts after him. Quit with the punny Twitter handles. #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

---

**Kevin Seeber** @kevinseeber
Q3. How can we address Dewey’s ongoing influence in libraries and repair some of the harm he caused? #critlib

---

**Kevin Seeber** @kevinseeber
QUIT PUTTING THAT BIGOT’S FACE ON A TOTE BAG. #critlib  
1 1:51 AM - Oct 2, 2019

---

**Alycia** @alyciaicyla
Missed Wiegand at UW but lived in the shadow of that book. Fav moment in zine librarianship was when a zinester read its index at a Quimby’s reading during ALA, very relevant to these discussions #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

---

**Kevin Seeber** @kevinseeber
A1. For my part, I was fortunate to have Wayne Wiegand as a professor in library school (c. 2007). I don’t know that I gave MD much thought before Wiegand’s class, but WW didn’t pull punches re: Dewey and lots of other aspects of U.S. library history. #critlib #thankswayne

---

1 1:51 AM - Oct 2, 2019

---
I wonder if that's an effect of Dewey in a way I'm struggling to put together coherently? Like, the director-staff relationship is different in publibs vs the independent researcher/scholar of the acadlib? I'm sort of throwing darts but it feels like at something

#critlib

---

REVOLTING LIBRARIANS REDUX (2003) and its original companion, REVOLTING LIBRARIANS (1972). Everything old is new again. #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

---

Q5. The example of Melvil Dewey indicates that librarianship often ignores its history. What resources would you recommend to help people learn more about how librarianship got to where it is today? #critlib

---

Can I ask the #critlib community in general? Do you think renaming the classification is a good idea?

twitter.com/cybrarerin/sta...

A3: could also start mentioning it every time someone talks about it. Is it possible to rename the system? Can we choose a different one? #critlib

---

There are other classification schemes. #critlib
Dr.EB @LNBel

Oh I loved my class with Arlene Taylor! I still use some of the concepts she taught me. #critlib

Tina Gross @aboutness · 15h

A1. In library school, in basic “Organizing Information” proto-cataloging class. The professor (Arlene Taylor) told us that Dewey was a "reprobate" because of sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, etc. #critlib

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

A5.1 Again, Wayne Wiegand is an authority on Dewey and lots of other library history. Read his books. I also recommend reading as much by Christine Pawley as you can. #critlib

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

A5.2 Two specific citations are Todd Honma digitalnais.org/wp-content/upl... and Gina Schlesselman-Tarango/ @ginaschless scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/library-public... #critlib

The Legacy of Lady Bountiful: White... White supremacy and patriarchy have acted upon and through the white female body, which has implications for library and scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu
@OCLC owns Dewey®, Dewey Decimal Classification®, WebDewey® and so forth. Trademark law and a history of suing people on specious copyright grounds is how they continue to control and profit from a system designed in 1876. The name won't let that go easily. #critlib

Erin @cybrarerin A3: could also start mentioning it every time someone talks about it. Is it possible to rename the system? Can we choose a different one? #critlib

Violet Fox @violetbfox A5. I just finished Cheryl Knott's "Not free, not for all: public libraries in the age of Jim Crow" worldcat.org/oclc/984775673. It is infuriating and necessary and highly recommended. #critlib

twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...
The answer to this issue is to spread the various responsibilities across the different positions in the library, and to adopt an approach of mentorship and stewardship that welcomes new library workers rather than subjecting them to sub-par employment conditions. #critlib 3/?

It has been the case in my experience that page jobs are typically not designed with the welfare of the employee in mind, and that pages are also either treated with disdain or their contributions downplayed. It's not a coincidence that many of them are young either. #Critlib 2/?

Can I ask the #critlib community in general? Do you think renaming the classification is a good idea?

twitter.com/cybrarerin/sta...

A3: could also start mentioning it every time someone talks about it. Is it possible to rename the system? Can we choose a different one? #critlib

Someday. Maybe someday soon? But we (meaning exactly and explicitly WE) will have to put these issues on blast. #critlib #StartingToDoOurPart
A4. For the same reason we haven't come to terms with the whiteness of our profession overall. It's baked in. It's a feature, not a bug. #critlib
twitter.com/kevinseeber/st…

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q4. Dewey was censured during his life, though librarianship continued to revere him (his name was attached to the ALA Lifetime Achievement award until 2019). Why is librarianship only just now coming to terms with this legacy? #critlib

❤️ 25  1:56 AM - Oct 2, 2019

@ See Kate Crowe 🍁🇨🇦's other Tweets

anonymous critlib @critlib_anon
Announcements time? #critlib
❤️  1:56 AM - Oct 2, 2019

@ See anonymous critlib's other Tweets

Tim Spalding @librarythingtim · 15h
Replying to @cybrererin
@OCLC owns Dewey®, Dewey Decimal Classification®, WebDewey® and so forth. Trademark law and a history of suing people on specious copyright grounds is how they continue to control and profit from a system designed in 1876. The name won't let that go easily. #critlib

❤️  5  1:57 AM - Oct 2, 2019

@ See Tim Spalding's other Tweets

*They won't let go of the name easily.

But they'll do it if the name becomes sufficiently toxic. Or, perhaps, if they decide to really strike out and create something new. If it's really new, there'd be a lot of new services to sell, and they'd own them 100%. #critlib
Similarly, the fetishization and sexual harassment of women working in libraries is also something extending from Dewey's time and conceptualization of the role of women in libraries. We need to stand up for our colleagues and aggressively work to prevent this. #critlib

Well many black librarians struggled to be employed at PWIs prior to integration. Many worked at HBCUs and built impressive collections. And the biggest acad libraries are still some of the whitest places. #critlib
#critlib #SaveSCSU_Library allies & accomplices, here are some tweets from SCSU president Robbyn Wacker that are begging for critical responses: twitter.com/DrRobbynWacker...twitter.com/DrRobbynWacker...

Dr. Robbyn R Wacker @DrRobbynWacker
Thanks to Jim Maurice @jmaurice & Tom Steman, @stcloudstate SCSU Archivist @SCSU_Library for the opportunity to talk on air at noon today about St. Cloud State’s Sesquicentennial on @WJON_News WJON today. We have a wonderful history and a bright future ahead!

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Our hour is almost up, but two quick things before you leave: 1. Can we get a volunteer to archive this chat using Wakelet or something similar? 2. Use the hashtag #critpitch if you’d like to raise awareness among the #critlib community! What should people know about?
#critlib #SaveSCSU_Library allies & accomplices, here are two more tweets from SCSU president Robbyn Wacker that are begging for critical responses:
twitter.com/DrRobbynWacker…
twitter.com/DrRobbynWacker…

Dr. Robbyn R Wacker @DrRobbynWacker
Husky Library Lawn Party! Stay Curious! @stcloudstate @SCSU_Library #unleashCurious

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
My #critpitch is that you read about #SaveSCSU_Library and see what you can do to support library colleagues who are losing their jobs because their Provost (#clownshoes) can’t tell the difference between a cell phone and a library. #critlib
Ontologically, we need to reconsider how approach representation in cataloging and classification. We need to dispense with this white supremacist ethnographic approach, and allow for underrepresented voices to speak for themselves. We need to collaborate. #critlib

Similarly, the fetishization and sexual harassment of women working in libraries is also something extending from Dewey's time and conceptualization of the role of women in libraries. We need to stand up for our colleagues and aggressively work to prevent this. #critlib

Another #critpitch is that you--YES YOU--propose a #critlib chat. We did these every couple of weeks for a few years, and I think a lot of us learned and grew as a result. Only happens if people propose a topic and write Q's, though. critlib.org/twitter-chats/

#critlib #SaveSCSU_Library Other things to look out for:
- The hashtag #unleashAmazing (frothy promotional campaign)
- References to "It's time" (see today.stcloudstate.edu/its-time-presi...
Violet Fox @violetbfox

A5 (cont). Check out the reading list on the #critlib chat about the history of critical librarianship. critlib.org/history-of-crit... Critical librarianship certainly didn't start this conversation, it's just a continuation, with some differences. twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

Q5. The example of Melvil Dewey indicates that librarianship often ignores its history. What resources would you recommend to help people learn more about how librarianship got to where it is today? #critlib

Violet Fox @violetbfox

If anyone would like to start a library history reading book club with me, I would really like to make that happen. The more context I know, the easier it is to see damaging patterns and envision ways to break free. #critlib
Josh @Auth0rityCTRL · 14h

Ontologically, we need to reconsider how approach representation in cataloging and classification. We need to dispense with this white supremacist ethnographic approach, and allow for underrepresented voices to speak for themselves. We need to collaborate. #critlib 5/

Josh @Auth0rityCTRL

it is vitally important that we seek to elevate new conceptualizations, and while the push to do this institutionally is important, I think that institutions need to take more responsibility and begin making changes, whether endorsed by DDC or LCSH or not. #critlib 6/

Zoe Fisher (she/hers) @zoh_zoh

1. The program for #acrlpnw19 is far more radical and inspiring than anything happening with ACRL National: acrlwa.org
2. Please come to Seattle in July for #liw20. The conference theme is Justice. Program/registration forthcoming in February. #critlib

Jamie Howe @Gaymerbrarian

Part of me wants to advocate fora required course in library school, but there are so many problems with implementing that #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st…

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber

Q5. The example of Melvil Dewey indicates that librarianship often ignores its history. What resources would you recommend to help people learn more about how librarianship got to where it is today? #critlib
Thanks for leading tonight's #critlib conversation, @kevinseeber. Thinking about how to work this into my teaching!

Josh @Auth0rityCTRL · 14h
Replying to @Auth0rityCTRL
it is vitally important that we seek to elevate new conceptualizations, and while the push to do this institutionally is important, I think that institutions need to take more responsibility and begin making changes, whether endorsed by DDC or LCSH or not. #critlib

Words can be weapons, and the way we present the conceptualization of different kinds of people can shape the public understanding and treatment of people. We need to be humanist in our approach to representation. This isn't science, we are knee-deep in subjectivity. #critlib

Gina Murrell @GinaMurrell1
A5. Radical librarian groups, POC/Black librarians like @AprilHathcock, & POC info/library communities like @librarieswehere & @wocandlib are great resources for looking at librarianship through a critical lens. And, of course, #critlib.
Violet Fox @violetbfox
I don't think that's the answer. I think we can and should use our intellectual curiosity to understand the profession we're a part of after our MLIS education. And educate each other, instead of this knee-jerk reaction of "oh EVERYBODY knows that already". #critlib

Jamie Howe @Gaymerbrarian · 14h
Part of me wants to advocate for a required course in library school, but there are so many problems with implementing that #critlib twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Q5. The example of Melvil Dewey indicates that librarianship often ignores its history. What resources would you recommend to help people learn more about how librarianship got to where it is today? #critlib

Dr.EB @LNBel
Can we blame Dewey for the false division of Technical and Reference Services? Everywhere I've been including where he had direct influence @columbia and @nypl it's been an upstairs/downstairs structure that damages all our work. #critlib
Related to this, we need to shift our epistemology to account for this understanding that none of our representations are necessarily empirical, and we need to work collaboratively to come to consensus as a larger body. We need to embrace push-back when we're wrong. #critlib 7/

Josh
@Auth0rityCTRL

Words can be weapons, and the way we present the conceptualization of different kinds of people can shape the public understanding and treatment of people. We need to be humanist in our approach to representation. This isn't science, we are knee-deep in subjectivity. #critlib 8/

Violet Fox
@violetbfox

This fabulous Audre Lorde pin by @jbbrager is an inspiration! jbrager.bigcartel.com/product/audre-... #critlib

Audre Lorde pin
1.5 inch soft enamel pin featuring a portrait of Black Lesbian Mother Warrior Poet Audre Lorde and the last line of jbrager.bigcartel.com

Ms. T. Mo. ❤️ @LibFeminista · 14h
Replying to @LibFeminista and 2 others
I’m also like not kidding! This would be fab!
1st #critlib discussion went well. I am glad that I can participate. I need to read the recommended reading. So when I am a professor in 2 years, I will be ready!

Dr. Karla J. Strand
@karlajstrand
Just lurked on #critlib tonight but in light of the fab convo, wanted to share a reading list: Disrupting #Whiteness in LIS. HMU w additions! Oh and I’m Karla, @GWSLibrarian! #critpitchlibrary.wisc.edu/gwslibrarian/b...

Violet Fox 🐱 @violetbfox · 15h
Can I ask the #critlib community in general? Do you think renaming the classification is a good idea? twitter.com/cybrarerin/sta...

Erin 🌈ındian 🌈 @cybrarerin
A3: could also start mentioning it every time someone talks about it. Is it possible to rename the system? Can we choose a different one? #critlib

Tina Gross
@aboutness
I go back and forth on this. For all the reasons other people are giving. I wonder if there's a way to have a deeper conversation about it? #critlib
Yes! I think y'all should make a pitch. I co-moderated a #critlib chat having never participated before & it was very rewarding. Do it if you are thinking about it and sitting on the fence! twitter.com/kevinseeber/st...

Kevin Seeber @kevinseeber
Another #critpitch is that you--YES YOU--propose a #critlib chat. We did these every couple of weeks for a few years, and I think a lot of us learned and grew as a result. Only happens if people propose a topic and write Q's, though. critlib.org/twitter-chats/...