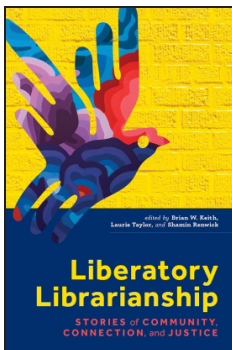


the discussion beyond higher education and into the realm of university libraries, offering examples of what successful partnerships with student parents can look like. Part 3 zooms out and looks to other organizations and institutions to examine how they are supporting parenting students. Part 4 dives into how the authors collected information for the book from their own institution, including survey results and methodology. Finally, the seven appendixes provide additional materials including project plans, budgeting, and surveys discussed throughout the work. Useful “Field Notes” contained throughout the book offered sound, practical advice on integrating parenting students into library services.

The need for closer study, along with better/more data, is vital for understanding student parents. If one of the primary issues is, as the authors argue, the lack of data that even acknowledges the presence of student parents, then pointing this out early is a necessary strategy; however, the amount of detail provided in the opening four chapters can feel very overwhelming. Keyes and Dworak examine and discuss every major reporting agency, offering takeaways as well as critiques. While it is helpful to acknowledge data gaps, starting with this level of detail left little room for excitement or momentum to move beyond the (lack of) numbers and into the bountiful practical advice, which is often desired early in an informational book, particularly one that is arguing for institution-wide change.

Part 2 leads off with a thorough discussion of policies and how academic libraries can and should do better at directly addressing children and student parents in their institutional policies. Chapter 5 “explores the academic libraries of eighty of the largest four-year institutions across the United States and analyzes their policies—or, rather, lack of policies—regarding children in the library,” an eye-opening examination that convincingly argues all academic libraries should directly address children and parenting students in an accessible and accepting manner within their written policies (83). These four chapters along with the final two, which discuss the authors’ own survey methods, have the most practical advice for librarians looking to examine and implement changes to their own libraries. Overall, Keyes and Dworak found that student parents are a “diverse group” who are not getting their needs met (or even considered) (243). *Supporting Student Parents in the Academic Library* is a detailed and well-rounded study examining the needs of student parents and how higher education should include them in planning library services; although, the reader may do well to pick and choose the chapters most applicable to their institution and interests. — *Hannah Cole, Research & Instruction Librarian, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

Liberatory Librarianship: Stories of Community, Connection, and Justice, Brian W. Keith, Laurie Taylor, and Shamin Renwick (eds.). ALA Editions, 2024. Softcover, 192p. \$64.99. 9780838936610.



With the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020 and the growing outrage related to police brutality, libraries began thinking more critically about how to respond to systemic discrimination and oppression. *Liberatory Librarianship* proposes that libraries can support marginalized groups of people and aims to inspire librarians to work toward equality, not just through diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, but through promoting social justice in the programming and services provided to their communities (xiii). The editors, along with chapter contributors, set out to prove that liberatory librarianship “goes beyond decolonizing.” They encourage the leveraging of library

resources through collaboration and utilization of library workers' expertise to improve the circumstances of marginalized and oppressed peoples by advocating for "freedom, justice, and community" (xiv). Collectively, the authors are able to achieve this goal by providing examples of how liberatory librarianship can be applied to different settings and include marginalized populations.

Following the editor's introduction, the book begins with biographical sketches of four librarians who, by the authors' account, exemplify liberatory librarianship. The next section examines library programs that can be considered successful liberatory librarianship, followed next by chapters which discuss the ways in which DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice) work crosses over into the personal lives of professionals who engage with it. Part IV includes several case studies of successful (or not so successful) liberatory librarianship. For instance, Tavernier et al. summarizes a project they completed to amplify primary sources that reveal hidden histories of Black communities. The final chapter, by Dantus, introduces readers to the concept of empathy as a form of liberation and resistance. Lastly, the book's appendices include a convenient list of acronyms used throughout the chapters, short biographies on the editors and authors, and an index.

Liberatory Librarianship does a fantastic job of revealing how collaboration and community building are major keys to engaging with libraries as a form of liberation. Boies discusses how their public library worked with a partner organization to plan an event to reach an ethnic group that was facing struggles in the community. Similarly, Smith reveals how student volunteers, alumni, and community members came together to complete the "KNOW Systemic Racism" project at Stanford University, and how librarians from other parts of the world were inspired by their work (34). The far reach of a project started by a single academic library is evidence of the limitlessness of librarianship inspiring other institutions and sparking comparable undertakings. Not only do many of the case studies demonstrate how libraries have successfully leveraged community assets and partnerships to contribute to or champion marginalized groups, but the book itself stands as an example of bringing together authors from different institutions across various locations who shared similar visions.

While it is certainly worthwhile to assess the progress libraries have made in response to the pandemic, the true measure of this book's applicability will be its ability to stand the test of time. Some of the reflections provided may already have lost some of their relevancy. For example, the chapter "Unsiloes, Cross-Jurisdictional DEI," the authors discuss how they established employee resource groups and communities of practice to work towards their institution's DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) goals. As with other chapters of the book, a primary goal of this chapter seems to be to inspire similar initiatives at other institutions; however, libraries across North America have already made DEI a priority in the last few years (Ciszek, 2020). Furthermore, the American Library Association (ALA) has incorporated equity, diversity, and inclusion tenants in its web pages during and since 2020. For instance, in June of 2020, the ALA issued a statement on its website claiming to have perpetuated racism in the past and vowed to make the professional association more equitable (American Library Association, 2020). This is not to say that DEI itself is irrelevant. Certainly, DEI is a priority for libraries; however, inspiring others to start DEI initiatives at their institutions may not be entirely worthwhile considering that most institutions have already done so. In addition, as Ciszek (2020) suggests, DEI alone is not enough to achieve liberation, and it may be time to

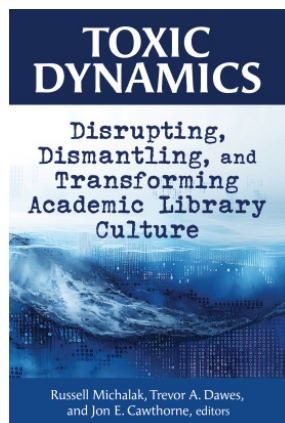
move on to advocating for social justice, which is another indicator why some of the chapters of this book fall short of relevancy to the current moment.

In conclusion, *Liberatory Librarianship* is worth the read to find inspiration and/or if there is interest in learning more about the initiatives that libraries have engaged in since the public's call for increased diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, even though some chapters do go beyond DEI and instead use terms such as "justice" and "resistance," there are few examples in this book of engagement with social justice beyond representation and accessibility, towards the dismantling of current systems to liberate oppressed peoples through librarianship the way the title suggests it does. — *Nadya Lim-Douglas, Librarian, Ontario Tech University*

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Toxic Dynamics: Disrupting, Dismantling, and Transforming Academic Library Culture, Edited by Russell Michalak, Trevor A. Dawes, and Jon E. Cawthorne, Association of College and Research Libraries, 2024, 347p. Softcover, \$90. 9798892555517



Toxic Dynamics: Disrupting, Dismantling, and Transforming Academic Library Culture, edited by Russell Michalak, Trevor A. Dawes, and Jon E. Cawthorne, is a comprehensive examination of the pervasive issue of toxic workplaces within academic libraries. Each chapter is authored by different contributors, bringing a rich diversity of perspectives and expertise to the subject. The book's primary argument is that toxic dynamics in academic libraries are a significant barrier to effective and healthy work environments. The chapter authors argue that toxic workplaces are often a result of poor leadership, systemic inequities, and institutional failures. They emphasize the need for supportive leadership, clear definitions of workplace toxicity, and actionable steps to address these issues. The introduction sets a clear roadmap for the book, emphasizing

its relevance to a broad audience within the academic library community. The chapters are credible and each of the authors communicate clearly to a general academic library audience. There are many unfamiliar terms and acronyms in the book, but each author explains and defines the terms used in their chapter. While there is already literature on this subject, many of the chapters address more nuanced topics relating to toxicity which have not received as much attention in the literature. The book is organized so that the early chapters lean more heavily on defining toxic workplaces and the following chapters lead into case studies and more specific topic areas.

Each of the chapters provides a thorough literature review, some more in-depth than others. The methodology varies across chapters, including case studies, an auto-ethnographic approach, action research methodology, as well as multiple chapters that derive insights from the source material in the literature review. This variety allows for a comprehensive exploration of the topic from multiple angles. For instance, the