

A Gendered Legacy: Librarianship and the Social Value of Women's Work

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Librarianship's struggles with compensation and social recognition are frequently centred around a concept of professionalization that expresses librarians' enduring defence of their legitimacy as professionals.¹ There is a long-standing tendency in LIS literature to miss a close examination of the broader social conditions and relations that have impacted the profession's evolution. Specifically, the diminished value of service and caring work, core to modern librarianship, reflects broader problematic views about the work that women perform. Librarians see a downward trend in full-time employment, experience dissatisfaction with the kind of recognition they receive in their work, and see continuing wage disparities between men and women.² Further, the historical roots of the profession, as a field hospitable to white, middle class women, greatly informs its present-day tensions

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- 1 Mattea Garcia and Joshua Barbour, "'Ask a Professional—Ask a Librarian': Librarianship and the Chronic Struggle for Professional Status," *Management Communication Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (November 2018): 565–92, doi:10.1177/0893318918776798.
 - 2 Laura Girmscheid and Meredith Schwartz, "Payday: Library Survey 2014," *Library Journal*, July 3, 2014, <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=payday-lj-salary-survey-2014>; Canadian Association of University Teachers, "Librarians in Canada's Universities & Colleges State of the Profession 2000–2014," CAUT Education Review, May 2017, https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/caut-education-review-2017-05_0.pdf; Mary Jo Lynch, "Library Directors: Gender and Salary," American Library Association, March 29, 2007, <http://www.ala.org/research/librarystaffstats/diversity/libdirectors>.

in creating a more socially and ethnically diverse workforce. Librarianship often turns inward, blaming itself and its constituents for its woes rather than turning its gaze towards the social structures that organize work. For example, library literature often tasks librarians with educating their external funding and management bodies, encouraging them to raise awareness and public profiles with public officials “about the nature of librarians’ work and the ways they meet community needs using specialized skills and knowledge.”³ Such advice ignores the ways librarianship is devalued as an occupation that relies on the cultivation and maintenance of relationships that “defy commodification”⁴ as part of caring work. To resist the stigma of “women’s work,” librarians aim to reframe their professional identity and professional contributions to conform to broader gendered narratives about professional authority and control.

Critical feminist scholarship offers a way of disrupting such tendencies, challenging professional self-blame to reveal the long-standing practices that shape what kinds of work are devalued. Such scholarship also provides insights into how professional women can better understand the problems they face so that they can form workable strategies for overcoming sexism and discrimination, and act for “emancipation and social change.”⁵ Through this lens, this chapter considers the historical development of North American librarianship, how it is tied to broader notions of service work as “women’s work,” and how the legacy of this history continues to inform the profession.

A Gendered Legacy Unfolds

Western librarianship was not always a field numerically dominated by women. For many centuries, libraries and male librarians were closely tied to the Church and places of higher learning. Prior to the humanist and democratic developments of the 19th century, access to education and libraries was limited, designed to specifically support the intellectual interests of the wealthy and the religious, focusing on subjects like theology

3 Garcia and Barbour, “Ask a Professional,” 587.

4 Arlie Hochschild, “The Time Bind,” *WorkingUSA* 1, no. 2 (1997): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-4580.1997.tb00019.x>.

5 Susan V. Iverson, “Glass Ceilings and Sticky Floors: Women and Advancement in Higher Education,” in *Women as Leaders in Education: Succeeding Despite Inequality, Discrimination, and Other Challenges*, ed. Jennifer L. Martin (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 80.

and philosophy.⁶ Intellectual works within libraries were produced by men and their care was supervised by men. The gendered legacy of these elites helped establish librarianship during the rise of public education in modern Western democracy. Nineteenth century figures who benefitted from access to education and employment opportunities like Melvil Dewey, Charles Ammi Cutter, Anthony Panizzi, Charles Gould, and Herbert Putnam founded many of the standards still used today in North American librarianship. Such men led librarianship in a time when libraries were experiencing tremendous growth that coincided with the increasing production of print materials and demand for access to information for the purposes of education and social advancement.⁷ They occupied positions of respect and authority as library educators, chief librarians, and leaders, rising to their positions as educated scholars. The pervasiveness of male management at this time is demonstrated in the leadership of the American Library Association (ALA), which did not elect a woman president for the first 34 years of its existence.

Nineteenth century librarianship began a transformation, turning from a narrowly focused field, designed to support the reading and information interests of Western elites, to serving the literacy needs of broader (middle-class) society by bureaucratizing public systems, like education, to promote “social and moral order through literate (male) citizenry.”⁸ To meet the labour demands stimulated by this liberal ideology, women were invited into library work as a source of cheap labour. Although librarianship was promoted as “an ideal occupation for the educated woman who wished to make a positive contribution to society,”⁹ many communities preferred to hire untrained, local women to organize materials or relied on middle-class “club women” volunteers to establish public libraries in small communities. Captured in various library histories, these predominantly white women are documented in providing access to books, instruction, and reference services to diverse populations, including the very poor, new

6 Paul Axelrod and John Reid, Youth, *University and Canadian Society: Essays in the School History of Higher Education* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), xv.

7 Michael F. Suarez, S. J. Woudhuysen, and H.R. Woudhuysen, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) Oxford Reference Online Premium.

8 Jill Blackmore, *Troubling Women: Feminism, Leadership and Educational Change* (Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 1999), 25.

9 Joanne Passet, *Cultural Crusaders: Women Librarians in the American West* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 2.

immigrants, and children.¹⁰ While women mainly performed work that actively strove to support literacy initiatives across North America, women's professional advancement was structured around male-dominated value systems that limited women's access to power and benefitted from their inexpensive (or even free) labour. This is further complicated by their civilizing and educating work to reproduce "citizens allegiant to white American ideologies regarding capitalism, gender, and authority"¹¹ The lasting effects of racism, segregation, and the ensuing economic and social barriers these systems produced (and continue to produce), limited women of colour's access to librarianship—a legacy that continues to inform the whiteness of the field.

Service Work and Femininity

Women seeking employment had to "fit" into class and race expectations that were narrowly "coupled with the existing social interests, economic structures, and patriarchal relations that supported the dominance of an ideology of domesticity in the larger society."¹² Middle-class women's suitability for certain forms of paid work, including librarianship, was predicated on their assumed "natural" affinity to mothering and domestic labour, enabling them to provide caring and routinized services that did not require extensive education or training. In turn, this work was subject to the rationality and supervision of more skilled professional men.¹³

As a largely white profession, women were expected to uphold moral standards through a configuration of femininity where white women's "natural" maternal abilities ensured their respectability as workers in organizations outside of the home.¹⁴ Women of colour, "marginalized in the

10 Passet, *Cultural Crusaders*; Kathleen Weibel, Kathleen Heim, and Dianne J. Ellsworth, eds., *The Role of Women in Librarianship, 1876–1976: The Entry, Advancement, and Struggle for Equalization in One Profession* (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1979); Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: Public Librarian and American Society, 1876–20* (Madison, WI: University of Madison Press, 2003).

11 Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, "The Legacy of Lady Bountiful: White Women in the Library," *Library Faculty Publications* 64, no. 4 (Spring 2016): 676, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/library-publications/34>.

12 Michael W. Apple, "Teaching and Women's Work: A Comparative Historical and Ideological Analysis," *Teachers College Record* 86, no. 3 (Spring 1985): 462.

13 Apple, "Teaching and Women's Work," 455–57.

14 Blackmore, *Troubling Women*, 26.

histories of the working class,”¹⁵ are largely invisible in this early period of librarianship, even after the establishment of segregated libraries like the Colored Carnegie Library in Houston in 1907.¹⁶ Librarianship’s connection to racialized and exclusionary practices “contributed to the ongoing white racial privilege,”¹⁷ where social advancement was contingent on assimilation into white culture.

Thus, early women library professionals, framed within this white culture, managed tensions between idealized white heterosexual femininity: physical attractiveness and care for husbands and children, and their interests in working outside the home. All women who entered the public sphere as workers were accepted as passive subjects, subordinate to men.¹⁸ Assumptions that masculinity dominated over femininity organized divisions in the workforce that placed men in positions to design, oversee, and supervise the work of women. These attitudes laid the groundwork for the ongoing gendered evolution of various professions where gender is “built in” to their construction reflecting, as Christine Williams describes, “a widespread cultural prejudice that men are simply better than women.”¹⁹ Women’s contributions were contained to library work that could be linked to mothering and the care and organization of the home including managing patron queries, promoting literacy, and processing materials.

The women who sought work in libraries at this time participated in the advancement of liberal ideals to create an informed citizenry that was closely tied to a conditional form of egalitarianism that favoured white men. LIS historian Joanne Passet’s chronicle of early Western American women librarians highlights the extensive efforts some early women pioneers made to establish libraries and promote books and reading. Often

15 Sharon Harley, “Speaking Up: The Politics of Black Women’s Labor History,” in *Women and Work: Exploring Race, Ethnicity, and Class*, ed. Elizabeth Higginbotham and Mary Romero (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997), 29.

16 Cheryl Knott Malone, “Autonomy and Accommodation: Houston’s Colored Carnegie Library, 1907–22,” *Libraries & Culture* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 95–112.

17 Todd Honma, “Trippin’ Over the Color Line: The Invisibility of Race in Library and Information Studies,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (2005), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nj0w1mp>.

18 Donnalyn Pompper, *Rhetoric of Femininity: Female Body Image, Media, and Gender Role Stress/Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), ProQuest Ebook Central.

19 Christine L. Williams, ed., *Doing “Women’s Work”: Men in Nontraditional Occupations* (Newberry Park, CA: Sage, 1993), 3.

finding themselves working within a “masculine milieu”²⁰ of other community influencers, these women toiled to establish library services only to have their legacies absorbed into gendered hierarchical bureaucracies that they, ironically, helped to build. Later finding themselves relegated to more routinized and clerical roles, under the direction of men, these women forged access to libraries in communities where none existed and with few resources. They experienced notable frustration with inadequate funds as well as being underpaid and poorly recognized for their work. Women provided a labour solution because, unlike men, there was no social expectation that they would work after becoming married, justifying paltry wages and few opportunities for advancement.

Women were not passive subjects in this process, both championing early feminism by advancing the interests of working women while re-circulating sexist views of women’s abilities. They leveraged broader social assumptions about women’s “purity,” “morality,” and “sensitivity” to gain entry into the workforce by supporting claims that such attributes would “uplift” the profession.²¹ Women were not liberated by their training and education to challenge their social “place.” Rather, women were concerned with “their search for a respectable bourgeois professional role,”²² illustrating how they worked to validate their presence within male-dominated structures. While this did facilitate women’s entry into professions, this approach had the effect of embedding an enduring assumption that librarianship’s status issues were intrinsically related to the way women behaved.²³ This is visible in examples, like that of Mary Salome Culter Fairchild, a librarian and educator of this period, who wrote:

It is quite generally conceded that in positions which do not involve the highest degree of executive or business ability but which require a certain “gracious hospitality,” women as a class far surpass men. Such positions are:...the more important positions in the loan department and all work with

20 Passet, *Cultural Crusaders*, 153.

21 Jodi Newmeyer, “The Image Problem of the Librarian: Femininity and Social Control,” *Journal of Library History* 11, no. 1 (January 1976): 44–67.

22 Jill K. Conway, “Perspectives on the History of Women’s Education in the United States,” *History of Education Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1974): 10, doi:10.2307/367602

23 Rosalee McReynolds, “A Heritage Dismissed,” *Library Journal* 110, no. 18 (1985): 25–31; Newmeyer, “The Image Problem of the Librarian,” 44–67.

children, both in the children's room and in cooperation with schools. Here it is said her "broad sympathies, her quick wits, her intuitions and her delight in self sacrifice" give her an undoubted advantage.²⁴

Terms like "self sacrifice" and "intuition" are linked to discourses of domesticity and motherhood and are used to normalize problematic ideologies that women are naturally suited to specific forms of work, including service work. Such discourses define women as subjects that perform the affective labour associated with notions of the white, middle-class domestic sphere, establishing a persistent link between librarianship and women's work. The legacy of this connection is revealed in ongoing professional literature around the field's professional image, including stereotypes that continue to fixate on librarians' heteronormativity, whiteness, attractiveness and aspects of mothering.²⁵

Professionalization: Devaluing Service Work

Library studies education was built on the interests and aspirations of men like Melvil Dewey who founded the first college "library school" in 1887. The appearance of formal library education in Canada was later, with the first library school offering a three-week library program in 1904 at McGill University. These programs sought to attract "college-bred" women, offering a highly practical focus that "aided women's advancement" by offering women a range of diverse options in acquiring library skills to work in an assistive capacity to male librarians. The legacy of these programs remains today, having established differentiated workers that are derived from technical programs (undergraduate diplomas and certificates in library and information technology) and, for the more advantaged, degree programs.

Figures like John Wallace, Herbert Putnam, and Melvil Dewey advanced notions of professionalism in librarianship that were built on the privileged, white, male assumption that "expertise [is] derived from formal education based on science and the control of knowledge and its

24 Mary Salome Cutler Fairchild, "Women in American Libraries," in *The Role of Women in Librarianship*, 54.

25 Christina Neigel, "Loveless Frumps, Old Maids, and Diabolical Deviants: Representations of Gender and Librarianship in Popular Culture" (EdD diss., Simon Fraser University, 2018), <https://theses.lib.sfu.ca/file/thesis/4932>.

application.”²⁶ Librarianship was no longer simply a calling or vocation. It was posited to be a profession where order, control, and standards were necessary. This view, influenced by the rise of scientific inquiry and misguided beliefs that libraries must act as “neutral” channels in the dissemination of information, obfuscates the power relations that continue to shape them as institutions, the people who work in them, and those who can access them. In fact, as Todd Honma critically points out, the process of “framing of the library within the terms of ‘democracy’ and ‘neutrality’ conceals the covert structural forms of racial exclusion that protect white racial interests,”²⁷ including the profession’s own ongoing difficulties with whiteness.

By formalizing training and education, men in power sought to control librarianship’s development, including the shape of service work. Dewey and his contemporaries served as the gatekeepers in accessing women’s labour to address practical concerns of managing the incredible growth of print publishing and responding to the reconfiguration of libraries as socializing and educating spaces that required increasing interactions with the public. Ironically, women’s influx into the field triggered a growing anxiety about the field’s status by male librarians, expressing fear that libraries had “become grossly over-feminized ...having a detrimental effect upon the importance and prestige of public librarianship.”²⁸ After having encouraged women to enter the field of librarianship as a “respectable” profession, these male librarians/leaders sought to rectify the profession’s status issues by creating educational structures that would further “professionalize” the work of librarians. Like other emerging professions at this time (e.g. education, social work, nursing), this approach established an educational system that continues to recycle assumptions that scientific and abstracted knowledge are valued above the people-centred work of reference, children’s services, and programming.

Despite highly visible forms of social strife that confronted people of the early 20th century, including world wars, economic depression, the exploitation of labourers, and a myriad of other forms of social inequality,

26 Suzanne M. Stauffer, “The Work Calls for Men: The Social Construction of Professionalism and Professional Education for Librarianship,” *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science* 57, no. 4 (Fall 2016): 312, doi:10.12783/issn.2328-2967/57/4/5.

27 Honma, “Trippin’ Over the Color Line.”

28 A.G.S. Enser, “Shall the Misses be Masters?,” in *The Role of Women in Librarianship*, 123.

library education embraced a positivist epistemology.²⁹ This worldview attempted to, literally, neutralize the politics of library work by scientizing the selection, organization, and classification of materials and hiving off reference work as a separate “specialization” deployed largely by women assistants. This division of labour was considered a necessary progression in the growing complexities of administering libraries where, “reference aid passed from the chief librarian to his assistants.”³⁰ The effect was to position women as public-facing service workers performing reference, while the management and oversight of these institutions remained under the control of men. This division of labour ensured that the “face” of library work, made visible to the public, was work performed by women. Women did not, necessarily, view this patriarchal structure as oppressive, with many embracing their roles and using them as sites of resistance to pursue social justice.³¹ Bookmobiles, for example, took place outside of brick-and-mortar libraries and offered women librarians the autonomy of working within communities to support literacy. Nevertheless, the quest to professionalize has been embraced by both men and women librarians.

Feminist scholar Roma Harris describes this as librarianship’s tacit “attempt to escape its female identity”³² and control the public image of librarianship. As part of these efforts, there was a concerted movement to accredit and streamline library education in the 20th century, ultimately phasing out undergraduate degrees in library studies and advancing Master’s degrees which, according to LIS scholar Boyd Swigger, ultimately failed to enhance the overall social and monetary status of librarians.³³ The pursuit for improved status continues, however, through the relentless

29 Michael H. Harris, “State, Class, and Cultural Reproduction: Toward a Theory of Service in the United States,” *Advances in Librarianship*, no. 14 (1996): 211–52.

30 Louis Kaplan, “The Early History of Reference Service in the United States,” *Library Review* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1947): 289.

31 There are, for example, several biographies of women children’s librarians appearing in children’s books, such as: Cynthia Grady, *Write to Me: Letters from Japanese American Children to the Librarian They Left Behind* (Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Publishing, 2018); Lucia González, *The Storyteller’s Candle / La Velita de los Cuentos* (New York: Children’s Book Press, 2008); Gloria Houston, *Miss Dorothy and Her Bookmobile* (New York: Harper 2011); and Jeannette Winter, *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2005).

32 Roma Harris, *Librarianship: The Erosion of a Woman’s Profession* (Norwood, NJ: Alex Publishing, 1992), 1.

33 Keith Swigger, *The MLS Project: An Assessment After Sixty Years* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010).

development of Master's degrees in information "science", library "science," and information "management." A focus on management and technology curricula that embodies rules, standards, innovation, and the "digital" are preferred over the "soft" knowledge of teaching and service work. LIS scholar Suzanne Stauffer describes these projects as ongoing efforts by faculty to:

change the profession into something more culturally 'masculine' particularly by incorporating information science and technology into the curriculum and thereby increasing the number of men in the profession, as if a female-intensive profession is a problem to be solved.³⁴

In other areas of higher education, the experiences of women, as students and, later, graduates of colleges and universities, brought to light their limited access to power. This fueled feminist action, stimulated important critical scholarship and practical problem solving, and challenged normative discourses about gender and work. The personal became the political.³⁵ In the absence of being tightly aligned with high profile policy issues like public education and health, Suzanne Hildenbrand declares that there has been little public interest in people who work in libraries. She argues that this has limited librarianship's uptake of feminist projects and that "the women professionals in libraries who fight for gender justice wage an isolated struggle."³⁶ Librarianship skirted the incorporation of radical and, later, post-structuralist feminisms in its educational development, remaining centred on professionalization efforts that put assumptions about women in conflict with views on technical expertise, rationality, and power. Further, these pursuits continue to be contained within the frame of white, middle-class women. This has the effect of reproducing power relations that limit the possibilities for a more inclusive profession that can, at the very least, acknowledge its whiteness and invite more intersectional approaches to theory and practice. Denial of the value of service work, largely performed by women, has actually enabled the remaking of masculinities

34 Suzanne Stauffer, "The Work Calls for Men," 311.

35 A term popularized after Carol Hanisch's 1969 memo. See Carol Hanisch, "The Personal is Political." Writings by Carol Hanisch, February 1969, Last updated January 2006, <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html>.

36 Suzanne Hildenbrand, ed., *Reclaiming the American Library Past: Writing the Women In* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Co., 1996), 49.

to reassert male hegemonic worldviews, resulting in the further devaluation and intensification of control over service work.

Pushing Back

Given the slow uptake of feminist LIS work done by figures like Suzanne Hildenbrand, Roma Harris, Jane Anne Hannigan, Mary Niles Maack and others since the 1990s, it is not surprising that the field's struggle with professional image and respect continues. Harris calls on librarians to identify and challenge the external power structures that organize their work and impede their goals because of the patriarchal ways in "which the female endeavor is valued in this [Western] culture."³⁷ Librarians continue to be tasked with changing themselves, their professional image, their leadership style, and their service orientation to meet the expectations of neoliberal society, conforming to practices that move away from caring work to those which better align with corporatism.³⁸ The effects are material. For example, Lisa Sloniowski highlights hitting the ceiling in academic institutions where "we are viewed not as professionals, or scholars, but as support and administrative workers"³⁹ that limits librarian opportunities for advancement. A 2009 salary survey reported in *Library Journal* reveals an ongoing pay gap between men and women librarians, with men earning more than 7% more than women.⁴⁰ Despite the field being occupied by 80% women, there are more than 45% male faculty in LIS schools in the United States.⁴¹ The value society places on professions like librarianship are not predicated on the work itself but on the value placed on *who* performs that work. Librarian stereotypes that continue to recirculate images of old maids, mothering caregivers, peevish frumps, and spinsters, speak to perceptions of women held in broader Western culture. Harris warns:

37 Roma Harris, *Librarianship*, 164.

38 Jennifer Lyn Soutter, "The Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL (Canadian Association of Research Libraries) Librarians: Through a Neoliberal Lens," *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, no. 2 (2016): 56. <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/leddylibrariypub/44>.

39 Lisa Sloniowski, "Affective Labor, Resistance, and the Academic Librarian," *Library Trends* 64, no. 4 (Spring 2016): 660. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/lib.2016.0013>.

40 Stephanie Maatta, "Jobs & Pay Take a Hit," *Library Journal* 134, no. 17 (2009): 21–29.

41 Dan Albertson, Kaitlyn Spetka, and Kristen Snow, eds., *Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report 2015* (Seattle, WA: Association for Library and Information Science Education, 2015), 3, https://ali.memberclicks.net/assets/documents/statistical_reports/2015/alise_2015_statistical_report.pdf.

regardless of how sophisticated and expensive their image campaigns are, they [librarians] will not overcome negative stereotyping until they recognize that it is the image of women and the value of women's endeavor, not the image of particular occupations ...that is responsible for their status in the workforce.⁴²

If library education, scholarship, and professional literature continue to push critical feminist and intersectional work to the margins, the profession will continue to employ problematic approaches to service that reduce service work to routinized and technological systems that work "to the disadvantage of [white/non-white, dis/abled, working/middle class] women by progressively deskilling their labour."⁴³ Such practices privilege epistemological views that polarize management and service work and reassert that belief changing practices *within* the profession will transform its value in broader culture.

There is a need to push against the "self-reproducing monoculture"⁴⁴ of white male privilege that informs librarianship's efforts to deskill and devalue service work. This devaluation is rooted in the past, where women and their contributions as paid workers are valued differently from men. This othering of women's work limits the possibilities for difference (as seen in the ongoing whiteness of the field). LIS has been slow to address gender as a normative discourse in the field, particularly in its education programs, scholarship, and professional literature. However, the only way to properly address the field's ongoing issues with low pay and recognition is to first understand how they are connected to broader social assumptions about women and work. There is a pressing need to engage in a richer and more open dialogue about the ways in which libraries continue to operate as gendered workplaces. Increasingly subjected to neoliberal ideology, austerity measures, and corporatization, libraries face challenges that work to reinforce structural inequality, not liberate it. Librarian Kathleen Weibel cautions that without feminist values, librarianship "may result in ...

42 Roma Harris, *Librarianship*, 97.

43 Roma Harris, "Gender and Technology Relations in Librarianship," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 40, no. 4 (1999): 232. JSTOR.

44 Blackmore, *Troubling Women*, 202.

service built on expediency, and a lowering capacity to meet the user needs to a level below that of its worst days as a 'feminized' profession."⁴⁵

Feminist post-structuralist scholarship offers librarianship a theoretical lens that can assist in untangling its enduring issues with pay and social recognition. Such perspectives delve into the socially-constructed practices that are situated in the politics of everyday life, pointing to discourses like femininity and masculinity that work to differentiate men and women. In doing so, librarians can reveal the operational "rules" that establish the norms that organize our work and our lives. This is important and necessary work because it can offer insights and forms of resistance that change the way we approach librarianship *and* other professions that engage in caring/service work. Such approaches serve to unseat certain discursive forms of power and privilege and offer all people, of all abilities, colours, and genders, greater opportunities to participate in shaping a more nuanced and inclusive world.

45 Kathleen Weibel, "Towards a Feminist Profession," *The Role of Women in Librarianship*, 292.

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