

## Book Review

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**Knowledge Justice Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory** by Sofia Y. Leung and Jorge R. López-McKnight. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021. 358 pp. ISBN: 9780262043502, \$35.00.

What is it to know? Whose knowledge is deemed worthy of collecting, sharing, and citing? *Knowledge Justice* demands we destroy white supremacy, illuminate erasure, and radically work towards liberation for all. This work examines our knowledge practices through a lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and is an important and necessary reading for those of us who wish to make the information field more equitable.

The introduction begins with an acknowledgement of the history and provenance of critical work by LIS scholars but also critiques the shallow ways LIS as a field has attempted to address “the diversity problem” as only an issue of numbers. It also presents the problematic concept of neutrality that is so often being advocated within library schools. The introduction also successfully lays out the major components of Critical Race Theory and provides an argument for why this framework is useful for reimagining the library field as a liberatory space.

**Destroy white supremacy.** Part I gives us a foundational understanding of how CRT can challenge the status quo in LIS and is organized into four chapters. In Chapter 1, “Not the Shark, But the Water”, Chu, Ettarh, and Ferretti examine the ways in which neutrality and vocational awe work together to uphold white supremacy impacting our library service, collections, and metadata. Morales and Williams name the biases of epistemic supremacy and its role in manipulating scholarly communications and present Transformative Librarianship as a radical solution in Chapter 2, “Moving toward Transformative Librarianship”. In Chapter 3, “Leaning on our Labor” (Brown, Cline, and Méndez-Brady) elucidates how institutional diversity efforts devalue the labor of BIPOC scholars by disproportionately leaning on them to lead diversity and inclusion efforts and imagines what just labor looks like in the LIS field. Belarde-Lewis and Kostelecky investigate the relevance and applicability of TribalCrit for Indigenous LIS scholars and practitioners and then examine its usefulness for their tribal community in Chapter 4, “Tribal Critical Race Theory in Zuni Pueblo”. These chapters work together to give us a powerful foundation for understanding how to critique LIS using CRT and potential paths for addressing harms using liberatory frameworks.

**Illuminate erasure.** Part II functions as a counternarrative in action by giving voice to communities that have often been silenced and not represented in our LIS scholarly work. In Chapter 5, “Counterstoried Spaces and Unknowns”, Natarajan extends our understanding of CRT by introducing the concept of the *Queer of Color Critique* and provides a counterstory so we may consider the critique of a queer South Asian librarian. In the next chapter, Walker amplifies the story of a Black activist librarian

whose scholarship highlighted the importance of special collections in the Black community in Chapter 6, “Ann Allen Shockely”. In Chapter 7, “The Development of US Children’s Librarianship and Challenging the White Dominant Narratives” by Vázquez discusses CRT within the field of children’s literature and provides a useful framework for creating inclusive collection development practices. The final chapter in this section, Chapter 8, “Relegated to the Margins” by Inefuku provides a much needed critique of the gatekeeping in publishing practices and scholarly communications and inequities perpetuated through peer review and tenure practices. These chapters collectively call our attention to communities and conversations that have all too often been dismissed to the fringes of our field.

**Radical collective Imaginations toward liberation.** Part III moves us from considering CRT theoretically to utilizing it as a tool for liberation. Chapter 9, “De-whitening Librarianship” by Espinal, Hathcock, and Rios discusses the demographics of librarians and suggests a proposal for post baccalaureate fellowship positions to intentionally increase diversity in the LIS field. Quiñonez, Nataraj, and Olivás demonstrate how epistemologies are substantiated by validation theory and how they can empower students and librarians to participate more fully in the LIS field in Chapter 10, “The Praxis of Relation, Validation, and Motivation”. In Chapter 11, “*Precarious Labor and Radical Care in Libraries and Digital Humanities*” authors Cong-Huyen and Patel highlight the complex experiences of racialized or otherized identities working in libraries and the expectation they expend extra labor to both educate about oppression and create safe and non-critical diversity programs. Winston outlines an applied critical race praxis which will be foundational to critical archival studies in Chapter 12, “Praxis for the People”. Chapter 13, “Getting Inflation” is radical, counternarrative storytelling by Kumasi highlighting the harms and pervasiveness of privilege through various communication platforms.

This book successfully expands our understanding of how CRT functions within LIS. Individually, these chapters are a robust discussion of CRT in LIS but collectively, *Knowledge Justice* solidifies itself as a premier book on this topic in our field.

Beth Patin  
Syracuse University  
bjpatin@syr.edu